



Media Release

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Leigh Hobbs is the new Australian Children's Laureate

Leigh Hobbs, best-selling author of more than 20 books, including the iconic *Old Tom*, *Mr Chicken Goes to Paris* and *Horrible Harriet* has today been announced as the Australian Children's Laureate for 2016 – 2017. His subversive humour has delighted children for more than two decades.

Hobbs will be presented with his Magpie Award, the symbol of the Laureate, at a ceremony at the State Library of Victoria in Melbourne on Friday 12 February.

He will succeed the writer Jackie French, who concluded her role as Laureate at the end of 2015.

The Australian Children's Laureate is an initiative developed by the Australian Children's Literature Alliance (ACLA), a not-for-profit organisation founded in 2008. The Laureate's role is to promote the importance of reading, creativity and story in the lives of young Australians

The theme for Hobbs's two-year term as Australian Children's Laureate will be 'to champion creative opportunities for children, and to highlight the essential role libraries play in nurturing our creative lives'.

"Libraries have played an enormous role in my life", Hobbs said. "Reading and exploring history and art is something I have been able to do because of libraries. I'm passionately interested in histories and cultures and I hope that through my work I can encourage children to explore and experience these things too."

Leigh's first public appearance as Laureate will be on Saturday 13th February at State Library Victoria's Kids' Big Book Spectacular, which includes workshops, a pop-up exhibition and storytelling in celebration of his contribution to children's literature.

To find out more about what the new Australian Children's Laureate, Leigh Hobbs, will be doing and how to get involved with Laureate projects, visit childrenslaureate.org.au

Leigh Hobbs is available for interview

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