



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S

LAUREATE

PROJECT

2011-12





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Project Background

Formed in 2008, the Australian Children's Literature Alliance (ACLA) is a not-for-profit venture to provide a national spokesperson – the Australian Children's Laureate – to promote the power of story, influence the reading habits of Australian children and families, and champion young Australians' reading.

Since December 2011, with the official launch of the Laureate Program, the inaugural co-Laureates, Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor have traversed the country inspiring children, families and educators. As national and international ambassadors for Australian literature, the Laureates promote the value and importance of reading, creativity and story in the lives of young Australians.

With a national touring program and through media and online advocacy, the Laureates encourage an active literary culture, promoting reading for enjoyment, wellbeing and life success. They also work especially to promote reading and books to children in disadvantaged and remote communities.

The Laureates

Boori Monty Pryor's father is from the Birrigubba of the Bowen region and his mother from Yarrabah (near Cairns), a descendant of the Kungganji and Kukuimudji. Boori has written award-winning books with Meme McDonald including *Maybe Tomorrow*, *My Girragundji*, *The Binna Binna Man* and *Njunjul the Sun*. His picture book collaboration with Jan Ormerod, *Shake a Leg*, won the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Children's Fiction in 2011 and is on the Queensland curriculum.

Boori's stories are about finding strength within to deal with the challenges without, and his skill is to create positive visions of the future for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Alison Lester is a popular, best-selling and award-winning author/illustrator. Over a thirty-year career she has produced such classics as *Magic Beach* and *Imagine*, winning multiple CBCA awards and nominations and gaining a shortlisting for *Running with the Horses* for the 2010 Prime Minister's Literary Awards. *Are We There Yet?* was chosen as focus book for the 2012 National Year of Reading program.

Her picture books mix imaginary worlds with everyday life, encouraging children to believe in themselves and celebrate the differences that make them special. Alison is involved in many community art projects and spends part of every year travelling to remote Indigenous communities.



The official Children's Laureate launch at Carclew Youth Arts, South Australia

The Australian Children's Laureate: putting reading and books in the spotlight for young Australians



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LAUREATE – DECEMBER 2012

Since the launch of the laureate project in December 2011, Alison Lester and Boori Monty Pryor have spent **83 days touring the country**, working with an estimated **10,000 children/families in over 50 locations**. Nearly **270 media hits** have been achieved, **35 blog posts** written, as well as many online articles and interviews. The **Laureates have launched their 'special projects'**: Alison's: a collaborative book project by Alison and the children of Australia, *This is My Place*. Boori's: and a documentary film based on Boori's life – *Storykeepers*. – a collaboration with Meme McDonaids and Youthworx.



Alison Lester, Noni Hazlehurst and Boori Monty Pryor

The Laureate Support Team

EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Andrew Wilkins (VIC) Wilkins Farago Children's Publishers, ACLA Chair
- Ann James (VIC) Australian Society of Authors / Books Illustrated
- Libby O'Donnell (NSW) HarperCollins Australia, ACLA Treasurer
- Jane Covernton (SA) Working Title Press / Australian Publishers Association
- Robyn Sheahan-Bright (QLD) Justified Text Writing and Publishing Consulting Services

Patron Noni Hazlehurst

Program Manager Justine Alltimes manages the Laureate Touring Program under the guidance of the ACLA Board.

In-kind support is given by volunteer board members, the Australian Booksellers Association, the Australian Society of Authors, Books Illustrated, the Children's Publishing Committee of the Australian Publishers' Association, the



Australian School Libraries Association, Carclew Youth Arts, The Little Big Book Club, Micador Group, Penguin Books Australia and Allen & Unwin.

FUNDING BODIES

The support of the following generous funding bodies has enabled the Laureates to bring many children into the circle of story: The Australia Council for the Arts; Australian Government Office for the Arts; Australian Publishers' Association; CAGES Foundation; Children's Book Council of Australia; CA Cultural Fund; The Department for Education and Child Development South Australia; and The State Library of Victoria.



Reading changes lives!



Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development



AUSTRALIAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION



AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION





PROJECT AIMS

The aim of the Children's Laureate Project is to create a better Australia through increasing literacy for young people, the disadvantaged and Indigenous communities. Children Australia-wide, rich and poor, advantaged and disadvantaged, rural and city-based are participating in a wide variety of events, functions and workshops directly aimed at developing reading and literacy skills, enhancing a love of literature and establishing the worth and importance of becoming a writer or illustrator.

2011-12 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Public Events — Touring Program

To date, the Laureates have spent 83 days touring the country from Sydney to Fitzroy Crossing (WA), from Mount Surprise (Qld), to Bruny Island (Tas), participating in public events aimed at children and the general public, particularly those who are not already committed to reading, and with an emphasis on regional and remote communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

In February, Boori participated in **The Emerging Indigenous Author and Illustrator Project: Picture Book Workshop**, where he held developmental workshops with emerging Indigenous illustrators at Sydney's Tranby College.

In early July, Boori worked with a number of regional schools at the State Library of NSW for a joint celebration of **the National Year of Reading and NAIDOC Week** where he had 100 Year 5s in fits of laughter with his storytelling, rapping and didgeridoo playing.

In June, Alison worked with a number of local schools visiting **Kingston Library (Tas)** where they heard her about her touring exhibition *Are We There Yet?* She also spent two days in schools, including a special day at rural **Bruny Island District School** where the school's 55 students were keen to show her their farm, orchard and vegetable garden.

In August, Alison carried out a week-long book making workshop with students in **Borroloola in the Northern Territory**. With the rodeo in town just the weekend before, one of their stories was about bull riders and bucking broncos. Alison created laminated books of the students' stories for the children and school to keep.

November 2012: Boori shared his love of storytelling, dance and writing in schools and libraries in Perth, Busselton and Bunbury. This included a special day with students from **SIDE (School of Distance Education)** where 100 kids logged from all over regional, rural and remote WA as well as WA students overseas. He concluded his two week tour in isolated mining towns of Port Headland and Newman. All of the eight primary schools in the Headland District were involved in his visit.

Public Events — Major Book Events

HIGHLIGHTS

Alison participated in **Sydney Writers' Festival** in May 2012, talking about her adventures in Antarctica to audiences at the festival, as well as at the City of Sydney Library.

In May 2012, Alison was also **keynote speaker at the Children's Book Council of Australia Conference, Adelaide 2012**.

In June 2012, Boori had 100 teacher-librarians performing the Butterfly Dance at the **School Library Association of Queensland (SLAQ) Conference** during his Key Note speech.

In September both participated in the **Brisbane Writers' Festival** including opening for their 50th anniversary and launching the Great Book Swap for **Indigenous Literacy Day**.



Meet with VIPs and attend special one-off events

HIGHLIGHTS

Alison and Boori were guests of honour at the **launch of the Laureate project** in Adelaide on 10 December 2011, speaking to the Laureate program, mingling with other VIPs, children, authors, illustrators, funders and undertaking an awesome amount of media.

Boori was guest storyteller at the **launch of the National Year of Reading 2012**, in ACT in February, attended by a number of honorable guests including the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

To celebrate their first year as Laureate Alison and Boori held an illustrated talk at the City Library, Melbourne, with the audience in awe of the work they had achieved and the extremely talented work of children they'd met along the way.

A full list of the 2011-12 Touring Program is available from: office.acla@gmail.com on request.

Sue van der Veer, teacher/librarian, Elizabeth South PS:

'I had a student in a recent lesson tell me that she wanted to rewrite her rough draft: "Just like Alison Lester told us that she changes the words over and over and over, until it's right".'

Maryanne Hyde, children's and youth services coordinator, Geelong Regional Library:

'Many thanks for bringing Alison out to the regional areas where the children don't often get the opportunity to meet and hear authors of her calibre, or indeed any authors at all. I know her talk and workshop have inspired some young minds and that is what we are all here for!'

Steph, acting principal, Yakanarra School, Kimberley, WA:

'It was such a wonderful visit, as a school, we got so much out of it. Every day we have comments on the mosaic, just now a health worker took a photo of it!'

Public Campaign

The Laureates work to share their enthusiasm and publicly campaign for reading, to inspire children and young adults to become avid readers.

A special **Laureate poster** has been sent out to schools and libraries all over Australia, and every venue that holds a Laureate event receives extra posters for display.

Both Laureates are dedicated to keeping the **Laureate website** up-to-date, with regular blog posts and feedback from schools and libraries. We are engaging with a number of popular book and child-orientated blogs for '**blog tours**', to further extend the Laureates' reach. Our *YouTube* channel has proven particularly popular, reflecting a medium that young people respond to immediately.

Advocacy

Each Laureate has made significant progress with their **personal project**, driven by their individual notions of place and belonging and how this relates to story. They have taken workshops to promote and develop their projects, and initial funding has enabled them to establish and work with dedicated teams, locate appropriate resources, produce project outlines, and develop budgets and timelines.

Boori Monty Pryor is working with writer Meme McDonald, award-winning film cinematographer Ian Jones (*Ten Canoes*) and Jon Stanly, director of *Youthworx Productions*, an organisation providing media training for homeless children. This expert team is creating a film to document Boori's unique work over the last 20 years: *Storykeepers* will offer an insight into his inspirational performance workshops, as well as his personal story, which led him to become such a dedicated storyteller.

The full Storykeepers pitch is available at the Children's Laureate website.



Alison Lester is working on a book focused on the theme of hope: '*We are Australia/This Is My Place*'. This collection of works by around 60 Australian children from all over the country will talk about their lives, what makes them special, as well as their hopes and dreams. Alison is working with kids from Cape Barren Island to the Cocos Islands to draw, paint and photograph and talk about their lives.

ACLA has created simple project sheets for schools, libraries and families to get involved with the Laureates' projects, and is encouraging children to send in their own work inspired by these projects to show on the website.

Special project information sheets are available for viewing on the Laureate website.

PR and Media

The Laureates and the touring program have received substantial and diverse media coverage nationwide since the launch in December 2011, including over 200 unique 'traditional' media hits, encouraging and increasing the visibility of reading and book initiatives around the country.

A publicist from Allen & Unwin dedicates a day a week to Laureate media, working closely with our project manager to ensure distribution of media releases and coverage on our website and social media channels. A focus of our ongoing media is to engender discussion around the importance of reading, books and creativity in the lives of children, with a targeted campaign in regional and remote areas.

<http://www.childrenslaureate.org.au/>

Youtube: <http://www.Youtube.com/user/AustralianLaureate>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Australian-Childrens-Laureate/291140750928987>

A full listing of Laureate media is available on request.



Website

Developed and managed by ACLA, the Children's Laureate website is directed particularly at children; it promotes and reflects the Laureates' activities and projects, and celebrates reading and books. An up-to-date and inspirational experience for visitors, it's proving popular: an introductory film made about the Laureates received 149 views in its first month online.

With links to our dedicated YouTube, Twitter and Facebook pages, we are greatly extending the Laureates' reach and audience – spaces where the Laureates can 'meet' children they can't visit in person – with 'Meet the Laureates' video, project pages and wikispaces where schools, libraries, and families can take part in the Laureate Project.



Ben Jones' Youtube Book Review of 'Maybe Tomorrow'

See the Laureate website for twelve year old Ben Jones' video review of Boori's book *Maybe Tomorrow* – a link that has been shared extensively via social media.

Kevin Li (website comment):

'Thank You for coming to our school the other day. I really enjoyed your storytelling.'

musicxfan64(website comment):

'Man, Boori is the funniest guy in the world! I am serious :D I met him few days ago.'



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LAUREATE REGIONAL AND REMOTE TOURING

Feedback from Laureate events shows the impact of activities outside of the major cities has enormous potential. We see the bush telegraph in action, with new and prospective partners sharing their excitement about Laureate activities across Australia. In 2012 Alison and Boori participated in 31 regional and remote events across all states, from Kulkarriya Community School, Fitzroy Crossing and Bedrock Village Caravan Park in FNQ, to having 100 kids connecting to live workshops by Boori across the remotest areas in WA via The School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE).



Crocodile pizzas, milkshakes, and painting at Kulkarriya Community School

Schools of Isolated and Distance Education Quote:

'Your stories were so funny! I really like when you said "is this fence shaped liked a crocodile?" Thank you so much. We hope you come back again to tell more stories!'

The story continues January — December 2013

For the rest 2013, the Laureates will be busier than ever, with visits all over Australia planned from Newcastle Region Library, to the Big Sky Festival in Geraldton, WA, and they'll be taking the Children's Laureate show overseas, representing Australian stories in China and Italy. Here is just a snapshot of some of the highlights coming up.

Some of the touring already planned for 2013

- **January 2013, Newcastle, Australia**, Alison Lester will be the focus artist for Newcastle's first Big Draw – an international project initiated in the UK to 'get everyone drawing'.
- **February 2013, Victoria**, Alison Lester will be part of the Maurice Sendak *Where the Wild Things Are* Gala celebration organized by the Wheeler Centre.
- **March 2013, China** Alison Lester will represent the Laureate program as a guest of the Australian Embassy, with events in the capital as well as Chengdu in western China.
- **March 2013, Italy** The international community of laureates has teamed together for a Laureate Summit at Bologna Children's Book Fair to discuss and share their work in promoting a love of reading in children.
- **April 2013, Ireland** Alison and Boori have been invited as special guests to participate with the Irish Laureate in literary events in Belfast, London-Derry and Dublin
- **May 2013, Victoria**, Boori will work with the Educational Institute at the Royal Children's Hospital, carry out workshops with St Michael's Primary School, and visit elders in Victoria to talk about what it means to be a 'storykeeper' (as part of the *Storykeepers* documentary).
- **May 2013 Comeout Festival, SA** Boori will take part in the Big Family Day Out, plus visits to outer metropolitan schools with a high percentage of Indigenous students such as Kaurna Plains, Warriappendi and Christies Beach High. He'll address teachers, librarians and educators at the Dunstan Playhouse relating to Come Out 2013's theme, 'Dreaming the Future'.
- **May 2013 Carclew Youth Arts Initiative, remote touring** SA Alison to visit Aboriginal communities in APY lands, to facilitate children writing and illustrating their stories related to her project 'This is My Place' as part of the Tjitjiku Inma Project.
- **July 2013, QLD Whitsunday Voices Youth Literature Festival** Boori will be part of the festival program through a key note speech and workshops.
- **August, 2013, NSW**, Boori to take part in weekend story workshops at WestWords.
- **September 2013 Geraldton, WA** Boori at The Big Sky Festival, coordinated by the City of Geraldton Regional Library and with a strong community focus. His tour will include a visit to Mullewa, a town 100km east of Geraldton, where students are predominately Indigenous.
- **August and November 2013, Alice Springs NT** School of the Air has invited Alison and Boori to participate in their remote teaching program while on tour in NT to schools and communities.
- **2013 Regional NSW Tour**, Alison will tour regional NSW in collaboration with the CBCA including running a program in conjunction with Sydney Story Factory, a not-for-profit creative writing.
- **2013, Launceston and north Tasmania** Alison will highlight a CBCA-organised families event in the disadvantaged suburbs of northern Launceston. This will be the beginning of a tour of northern Tasmania involving regional schools and libraries.