



The Centre
for Children's Literature

BOOK LINKS QLD INC.

2023 - 2024 Report

Mission

Link people and groups throughout the community with stories and experiences to build literacy and learning; so as to enrich lives.

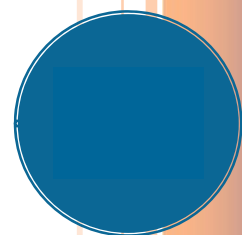
Objectives

Establish and grow vibrant spaces (fixed, flexible, and online) to nurture communities where children and young adults are exposed to literature; stimulated to be imaginative and artistic; and where stories and their creators are valued.

Support networking, events, learning, and an appreciation of story for children and young adults throughout the community.

Jenny Stubbs, President

5/10/2024



Book Links Qld Inc.

2023- 2024 Report

OUR HISTORY

In 2004, the Queensland Branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia celebrated its 50th anniversary. During that year members were keen to develop commemorative projects to celebrate this key milestone, whilst furthering the aims of the CBCA in Queensland in some distinct way.

A small group of dedicated and passionate lovers of children's literature took this opportunity to explore the establishment of a Children's Literature Centre in Queensland.

The outcome determined that initially establishing presence through the provision of wide ranging literary inspired activities, aimed primarily at school age children and others who have a strong interest in children's literature; namely librarians, parents, teachers, students and researchers, should precede and in turn support an actual physical centre.

In response, Book Links was registered as an Incorporated Association in February 2006. Book Links QLD Inc. is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and has Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Status. In 2017 a Symposium was held to examine literature-based centres for children in other states and to reignite support for a literature centre for children in Queensland.

Book Links administers two sub-groups, Write Links and StoryLinks.

Write Links was formed in April 2013 in response to a need to encourage and assist writers embarking on writing for children. Write Link members network, share information, motivate and support each other in working towards achieving personal writing goals. Write Links coordinates several critique groups: picture books, junior fiction, middle grade and young adult fiction.

StoryLinks is a children's book review site which was established in March 2018. It publishes Book reviews, reading lists on a range of topics, interviews and runs short story writing competitions for children and adults.



OUR PEOPLE

Executive

President - Jenny Stubbs
Vice-President - Danielle Freeland
Treasurer - Tyrion Perkins
Secretary - Kayt Duncan
Membership Secretary - Liane McDermott

Media

Newsletter Editor - Maria Parenti

StoryLinks

Editor - Mia Macrossan
Social Media - Jamie Willis

Write Links Team

Yvonne Mes, Rebecca Sheraton, Sandhya Parappukkaran, Sophia Beros

StoryArts Exhibition

Ayesha Uddin

Competitions

Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction Coordinator - Mia Macrossan
Short Story Writing Competition for Adults - Mia Macrossan, Liane McDermott
Short Story Writing Competition for Children - Yvonne Mes, Sophia Beros, Claire Monsour
Book Links Mentorship – Lara Cain Gray

Book Links StoryArts Brisbane Conference Committee

Jenny Stubbs
Danielle Freeland
Katrin Dreiling
Liane McDermott
Kayt Duncan
Jacqui Halpin
Lara Cain Gray
Yvonne Mes

Responsible Persons

Jenny Stubbs
Dr Andrew King
Dr Cherri Ryan

Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland

Vice-Patron: Jackie French AM

A MESSAGE FROM OUR VICE PATRON JACKIE FRENCH

Kids don't like reading – unless they're pointed towards the books they'll love. Kids, and most adults, don't have the skills to do this. I'm a 'book a day' reader, and even I find it difficult to find books that equal my old favourites. After half a century of book collecting, I have enough 'old favourites' to keep me going.



Kids don't. And it is so very easy for them to find enjoyment and insight with a few taps on their iPad.

A good book brings more than 'enjoyment and insight'. It's transcendent, taking you to places you never knew existed. You have succeeded in finding the right book for a kid when they become a 'book lover', not just a 'reader'.

It's harder in 2024 for kids to find a guide to the books they need than any time in the past 50 years. We won the battle to create the positions of children's librarians and trained school librarians. Now we are losing the war, as those professions become an endangered species.

I ask every school I speak at to look at their budget. Compare how much is spent on sport – a specialist teacher, oval, swimming pool, insurance, equipment – with the amount spent on literacy and the library. Mostly there is shock – and revaluation. We don't send kids to school to encourage them to play football- they'll probably get that at home. But in 2024, few kids will find books at home, even if their parents are book lovers. With high rents, and frequent moves, today's parents probably download eBooks. So does grandma. A US study showed that kids need a minimum of 70 books – paper books, including books borrowed from a library, in a house to become 'book lovers.'

The library has books, but once again, even there, kids need help to find 'their' book, and every year there are fewer children's librarian positions, and smaller budgets.

Enter Book Links. Book Links creates 'book lovers' - and every kid who becomes a book lover will convince some of their friends. The love of reading is contagious, but it does need those who know both books and kids to get the virus moving. Book Links also does the 'linking' for those of us passionate about every child's right to read, and to have the books they love and need. It is so very easy to be discouraged, unless you have companion book lovers – and book virus spreaders- along the way.

As in medieval times, we need beacons shining through the darkness to say 'Here are books, and they are WONDERFUL. Join us and share the joy.'

We need Book Links. But there's a PS to this. Book Links also needs us- and as many new members as possible. If every member could introduce just one new member every year that would....

.... Actually, I don't know what would happen if we could double our numbers every year. But I do know there would be many more of those miraculous moments when a kid holds a book they have found in the library or book shop and doesn't want to let it go. *Jackie French*



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Overview

2023-24 has been an amazingly productive year. We delivered 1 Narelle Oliver Lecture, 1 mentorship, 1 book award, 2 writing competitions, 2 exhibitions of illustration, 2 interstate guest author-illustrators, 3 Romancing the Stars events, 3 retreats for writers and illustrators, 11 Write Links gatherings, 14 workshops for children, and we lost count of the number of books launched by our members. The standout member highlight was Sandhya Parappukaran winning the prestigious Multicultural NSW Award at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards 2024.

Lee Fullarton's artist in residence and exhibition of *Mr Chippa the Woodblock Carver of Bagru* in the Write Gallery at The Lighthouse Toowoomba in November 2023 was another highlight of Book Links' year.

The illustrators' retreat in October 2023 was very well attended and this led to two more retreats, one for writers in April 2024 and one for illustrators in May 2024.

Jenny Stubbs



Thank you for a wonderful weekend.

I spend so much time alone, hunched over a computer, thinking about words, that to play with art materials again was simply a gift.

It was fun. It was soul-nourishing. And it was helpful to connect with other creative people.

Toni Risson

Promoted emerging and established authors, illustrators and storytellers for children and young people

Lee Fullarton Artist in Residence and Mr Chippa Exhibition

1 - 30 November 2023

With the help of an Arts Qld grant and support from The Lighthouse Toowoomba, Book Links employed artist and author Lee Fullarton to set up a quality exhibition in the Write Gallery based on her book *Mr Chippa the Wood Block Carver of Bagru*. All workshops for schools were filled and a few additional book readings were given to The Lighthouse early childhood book club for children. Of particular note were the students with special needs who attended from a local high school who showed great interest in the exhibition and art activities.



The adult workshops were a wonderful opportunity for two other creators Sandhya Parappukaran and Catherine Parker to work with Lee to deliver exciting workshops based on memory and rangolis.

Those who viewed the exhibition were amazed at the way the book was created and went away with a deeper understanding of the work of Indian craftworkers.

Artist in Residence time outside of the workshops allowed Lee to continue to work on creating the puppet characters to accompany the story and for others to observe this creation process.

The exhibition was open for 27 days, seen by 485 visitors including 274 children, and included an opening night event, twelve school sessions, one family workshop and two adult workshops.

A full report with images and media coverage can be found on our website.

<https://bit.ly/BLAIRT23>

“I loved how Lee was inspired to go to India and wrote a book about it and how she went to all the effort to print a whole book!”

A Student

Romancing the Stars

Sunshine Coast 27 October 2023

Brisbane 20 March 2024

Toowoomba 7 June 2024

2024 was the 13th year of Romancing the Stars in Queensland. We were able to deliver the Sunshine Coast event at Immanuel Lutheran College in October 2023 followed by the Brisbane event in March at Good News Lutheran School, Middle Park and added a new event at The Lighthouse Toowoomba in June 2024. All events were well attended and feedback from participants was very positive. This continues to be a popular event in our calendar.



Big Lit Quiz

12 November 2023



The Big Lit Quiz was held at Manly State School with Mia Macrossan as Quizmaster. We raised \$500 to donate to The Children's Laureate program. Seven teams competed in this annual event that raises funds for key charitable organisations that promote Australian children's literature nationally and internationally. A mix of authors, illustrators, teachers, librarians, teacher-librarians, library technicians and lovers of Kids Lit tested their knowledge of children's literature.

Sandhya Parappukaran, Ali Rutstein, Annaleise Byrd and Joanna Wisbey were *Four Writers and a Library Assistant*. This same team has won three years in a row.

Woodlands Retreats

25 -26 November - Illustrators Retreat

20 – 21 April - Writers Retreat

18 – 19 May - Illustrators Retreat



The first illustrators' retreat at Woodlands of Marburg was well attended with 32 people across the 2 days. There was very positive feedback, and the group asked for it to become an annual event. Award winning Gold Coast illustrator Lucia Masciullo provided the inspiration and tuition, catering for all levels from stick figures up, exploring a range of mediums.

“Events like these always blow my mind. Magic happens when we gather, sit and create in the same space. These moments are rich. They are rare. And they are transformative, nestled in our pockets to reflect upon when we hit those bumpy moments. We all experience them. But we never conquer them alone.” - Kristen Willis

The 2024 writers' retreat was another great weekend at Woodlands catering for 33 writers. This time, rather than unstructured we provided space for writing with other smaller spaces to meet with volunteer authors who provided feedback and guidance for each attendee. Volunteer authors were Yvonne Mes, Dave Lowe and Nette Hilton.



The 2024 illustrators' retreat provided one day of exploring mediums and techniques with Yvonne Mes and the second day working with either Sean Leahy using Procreate or Lucia Masciullo using collage. Attendance numbers were lower for this weekend than for previous retreats.

You can read a more detailed report on the Write Links website. <https://bit.ly/BLIR24>

Narelle Oliver Lecture

22 May 2024

The Narelle Oliver Lecture was held at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School. Over 70 teacher-librarians, authors, illustrators and community members interested in children's books listened to Katrina Nannestad's address on what makes a powerful story.

Katrina talked about growing up in a home that did not read but had a wonderful adventurous family life. As a result, she was a disinterested young reader, enjoying mainly comics until the right teacher switched her on to reading while at high school. Katrina drew upon her adventurous and full of fun childhood and her love of mischief to create the characters for her books, the type of characters she would love to have read about as a child.

StoryArt Exhibition

22 - 25 April 2024



The exhibition was held at the Richard Randall Gallery managed by Ayesha Uddin with the assistance of Mia Macrossan.

The aim of this annual exhibition is to raise awareness of the quality of children's book illustration, to support the artists on show, and to sell their books and artwork. A secondary aim is to promote the work of Book Links and StoryLinks.

Up Late on the Wednesday had fewer attending than last year, but still a lot of sales were made. Anzac Day itself pulled the biggest crowd. Art was displayed by Sona Babajanyan, Debbie Taylor-Worley, Ingrid

Bartkowiak and Sue Wright with a special Anzac Day display set up by Jacqui Halpin.

We continued our partnership with Where the Wild Things Are bookshop who supplied us with titles by the artists to sell on commission.

OUR CURRENT PROJECTS

Book Links Mentorship 2023

In its 5th year, the Book Links (Qld) Mentorship competition has again attracted excellent submissions. The winner was announced at the Book Links AGM on Saturday 7 October by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright who reported that *“This year an increased number of entries were submitted, and the standard was consistently high. Junior Fiction in particular, was difficult to judge given the calibre of the manuscripts.”*



The Winner of the 2023 Mentorship was Bethany Loveridge for *The Mega Division: Joey Macropod*. She received a 12-hour mentorship.

<https://booklinks.org.au/programs/mentorship/2023-mentorship/>

The winner of the 2024 mentorship will be announced at Book Links StoryArts Brisbane Conference 19 October 2024.

History Award



Book Links' annual award for children's historical fiction is for books published in a calendar year. The judges for 2024 were Sue Wright, Katrina Schulz and Mia Macrossan (chair). The 2024 winner, Rebecca Lim's *Two Sparrowhawks in a Lonely Sky*, published by Allen & Unwin, was announced 17 July via ZOOM with shortlisted authors and judges attending and taking part in a Q&A.

There were 26 books entered, 5 less than in 2023. A longlist of 7 and shortlist of 3 has been published on our website. These books excel at developing an understanding and appreciation of history for young readers.

The shortlisted titles have been reviewed on StoryLinks and authors' interviews published. <https://booklinks.org.au/historical-fiction-awards-2024/>

Travelling Suitcases



Book Links' "Travelling Suitcases" are filled with interesting and curious keepsakes from 6 of Queensland's top children's book authors and illustrators. They include their books, edited manuscripts and a DVD of the artists at work. Activities to use in the classroom and in public libraries are included to extend Literature and Arts learning.

Distribution of cases was low again this year with only two being borrowed. One to Kirwan in North Qld and one to the Ipswich area.

Read Up

The partnership with Moreton Bay Region Libraries allowing us to share the ReadUp loyalty scheme resources on our website has ended. It will now only be available in their own region.

Membership

Many thanks to Membership Secretary Liane McDermott for keeping track of memberships this year and communicating with members. We continue to use Try Booking to accept memberships online and collect data on members. Membership remains stable.

2024 membership as of 5 October:	2023 membership as of 7 October:
163 Personal members	134 Personal members
8 Family members	5 Family members
6 Corporate members	9 Corporate members
177 Total members	148 Total members

The following bookshops provide discounts for Book Links members: A Lot of Books - Ipswich, Books@Stones, Riverbend Books, The Book Warehouse, Little Gnome Bookshop, The Library Shop (SLQ) – Brisbane, Big B Books - Gold Coast, Under the Greenwood Tree - Mount Tamborine, The Little Book Nook – Palmwoods, Scrumptious Reads and The Mad Hatters Bookshop. One new bookshop was added to our bookshop partners this year, Quick Brown Fox Bookshop at the Grange.

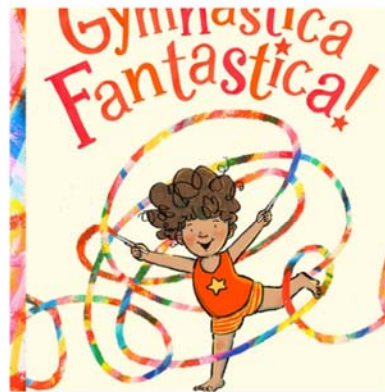
The Website, Social Media and the Newsletter



Book Links Mentorship

Book Links Mentorship 2024 – Shortlist Announced

The Book Links Mentorship is open to all member of Book Links residing in Australia. Applicants are invited to submit a synopsis and the first two chapters or first 6000 words of a work of fiction for either



BSAB 24 update

Book Links congratulates one of our BSAB presenters, Briony Stewart on winning the CBCA Book of the Year Award – Early Childhood 2024. We all look forward to seeing Briony in October at our wonderful BSAB conference. There are still [...]



Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction Shortlist 2024

2024 Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction Shortlist It is with great pleasure that we announce the shortlisted titles for this year's Book Links Award for

The current Book Links website has been edited throughout the year to keep it up to date with news, events, resources and projects.

Since the 2023 AGM, some website stats for Books Links are:

Total page views: 35,728

Views by Page title and screen class			COUNTRY		ACTIVE USERS	
PAGE TITLE AND SCREEN ...		VIEWS				
Book Links QLD Inc – The C...	1.8K	↑188.2%	Australia	4.8K	↑171.2%	
Writing competitions – Book...	1.1K	↑106.5%	United States	801	↑142.0%	
About StoryArts Brisbane – ...	1.3K	↑1,036.0%	China	126	↑231.6%	
StoryArts Bookings – Book L...	842	↑6,376.9%	Germany	69	↑102.9%	
Mentorship – Book Links QL...	293	↓36.6%	India	46	↑130.0%	
Author Visits – Book Links Q...	464	↑79.8%	United Kingdom	45	↑87.5%	
Event Bookings – Book Link...	547	↑241.9%	Canada	35	↑75.0%	

The Book Links Facebook page has had some growth, with followers increasing from 1,906 to 2,035. Our reach is 11.6K with 3.6K visits. The greatest page reaches over 1000 were Romancing the Stars Toowoomba, the Illustrators Retreat and the promo for the Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction announcement of the winner.

Book Links Instagram has 974 followers up from 794 in 2023 with 225 posts.

Our newsletter has been issued regularly after each meeting, edited by Maria Parenti. This year the number of subscribers increased to 864. This is made up of 518 subscribers to regular newsletters and 346 to Children's News.

Ten newsletters were sent to subscribers via MailChimp and 2 special edition newsletters were sent to children, families and schools providing them with relevant information.

OTHER

Partnerships and Strategic links

The Lighthouse Toowoomba

Book Links continues to cross promote events with the Queensland Writers Centre, The Children's Book Council of Australia, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, The Lighthouse Toowoomba and other like organisations.

Our partnership with **The Lighthouse Toowoomba** continued with our artists in residence and exhibition in November 2023, Romancing the Stars in June and our AGM October 2024.

Queensland Writers Centre

We continue to attend regular meetings run by State Library staff with the Level 2 tenants, sharing details of our programs. QWC continues to manage bookings for our meetings and events.

Council Libraries

Due to occasional issues with accessing SLQ spaces when needed, we have continued our relationship with the Brisbane City Council libraries and were able to hold a Suzanne Leal writing workshop at Brisbane Square Library and an illustration workshop for children with Yvonne Mes at Garden City Library. Another workshop for children was hosted by Moreton Regional Libraries at their North Lakes library. This was a writing workshop with Dave Lowe. We have been in conversation with both councils to deliver more programs next year.

The Children's Book Council of Australia (Qld Branch)

To support CBCA Qld in celebrating their 70th anniversary, we are providing some funding to help deliver workshops for children in Mt Isa Schools. Five authors have spent four days in schools 30 September – 3 October 2024.

IFLA

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions held a Research and Effective Practices Seminar 27 -29 September with the support of Book Links. We were able to provide advice on catering, speakers and book resources and manage the bookings for their event.

The Future

We will continue using ZOOM as a way of reaching out to our regional and interstate members and integrate it into face-to-face events wherever possible.

Book Links aims to continue its current partnerships and collaborations with other like-minded organisations.

We continue to seek ways to establish a centre for story in Queensland.

Thanks

I would like to acknowledge and thank all members of the management committee for their dedication and hard work: Danielle Freeland (Vice-President and BSAB Coordinator), Kayt Duncan (Secretary), Tyrion Perkins (Treasurer and Travelling Suitcases coordinator), Liane McDermott (Membership Secretary), Yvonne Mes, Sandhya Parappukaran, and Rebecca Sheraton (the Write Links Team), Mia Macrossan (Story Links Coordinator, Awards Committee), Lara Cain Gray (Mentorship Coordinator), Maria Parenti (Newsletter Editor).

Special thanks also to the judges for the history award Mia Macrossan, Sue Wright, and Kristina Schulz. Mia Macrossan and Liane McDermott for managing the adult short story writing competition and the team currently working on the children's story writing competition, Yvonne Mes, Clair Monsour and Sophie Beros.

Jenny Stubbs

President Book Links QLD Inc



STORY LINKS REPORT

There hasn't been much change or development in the year. The biggest impact has been made by the appointment of Jamie Willis as Social Media Manager. This has resulted in an increased media presence and more engagement with the site. People are sharing and tagging and the number of people engaging with the reviews is increasing. Jamie has only been working for the last couple of months and she has set herself a big task which may not be sustainable. We are very grateful for all she does for StoryLinks.

The number of people who review for the site varies from time to time. We aim to review a minimum of five titles a week and this has been maintained. Recently because Jamie has been asking for reviewers at the Write Links meetings, we have had more reviews coming in. It would be great if the quantity and quality of these reviews could be maintained.

The number of subscribers to the weekly newsletter is increasing slowly but the numbers on Instagram and Facebook is higher this year.

To date we have not published any reading lists this year because they are very time consuming to produce. We do give subject headings to all the reviewed books, and it could be more useful to make it easier for people to get lists by using the search bar.

Interviews with authors and people of interest have been a much-read feature this year. We focus on supporting local and debut authors such as Lara Cain Gray, Yvonne Mes, et al., and the illustrators of the annual StoryArt Exhibition.

I would like to incorporate the News and Reviews into one section. This brings all the activities on the site – competitions, interviews, reading lists, reviews together.

Most of the children's book publishers are continuing to support the site with review copies.

Jamie has made a number of suggestions for improving interaction the site which I heartily endorse. - Mia Macrossan

StoryLinks Social Media Update

Design. StoryLinks' social media has recently undergone a design change, with a focus on larger images, a reduction in text that was hard to read on small devices and more visible StoryLinks branding.

Before:



After:



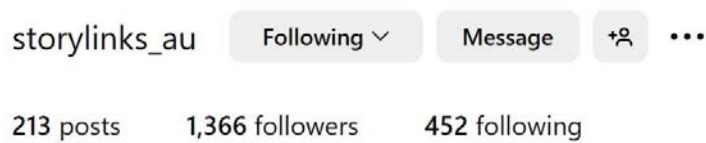
Frequency. Previously, most reviews were posted to Facebook, however only one review was posted to Instagram every few weeks (out of the 5-9 reviews per week). In the past three months, we've made considerable effort to ensure the majority of reviews are posted to both Facebook and Instagram. We've also updated Instagram with tiles for the website reviews since the beginning of the year – more than 180 posts.

Followers.

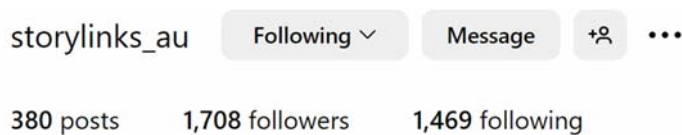
Facebook. The StoryLinks Facebook followers has remained consistent. At the start of July, StoryLinks had 954 Facebook followers and at the end of September, we have 983 -- 30 new followers.

Instagram. On Instagram, there has been an increase in followers. At the start of July, StoryLinks had 1,366 Instagram followers and at the end of September, we have 1,710 -- 376 new followers (a 27% increase).

Before:



After:



Engagement. While the likes and comments on both platforms remain very low, there has been a large increase in reposts, with more than 100 shares of StoryLinks reviews in the past three months, in the form of Instagram stories (which last 24 hours), permanent Instagram posts and Facebook shares.

Comparative Analysis. While StoryLinks' social media stats have been improving, there is room for growth. There are more than ten Australian bookstagrammers with average follower counts of 2,500 – 10,000 followers.

For example, Kids Book Review (www.kids-bookreview.com) has 7,500 followers on Facebook (www.facebook.com/KidsBookReview) and 4,500 followers on Instagram (www.instagram.com/kids_bookreview).

Proposal. StoryLinks has a reputation for quality reviews and ideally our social media and website stats would reflect that. I recommend we make some design changes to the StoryLinks website to improve our social media followers, newsletter subscribers and website visitors. – Jamie Willis



WRITE LINKS REPORT

2024 has been another wonderful year for Write Links. Hybrid meetings allow members to either attend the monthly meetings in person at the State Library of Queensland or online. As always, there are many highlights and successes from the past year.

The Facebook Group has grown from 399 members to 471 members in the last year. Write Links continues to attract new members, and it is exciting to see them become involved in the group and attend meetings.

A major highlight for this year is the creation of the new Upper Middle grade and Young YA critique group, coordinated by Liane McDermott. This new group has filled a gap in the critique groups at meetings and it has been great to see the uptake of members joining and participating in critiques.

In 2024, we have had two professional development sessions about 'How to critique' with a fantastic session focussed on novel critiques by Melanie Hill and another amazing session on picture book critiques by Ali Rutstein. This year Yvonne Mes developed critique guidelines used in each group, with the input of the critique group leaders and Write Links coordinators. The guidelines outline the expectations for members participating in critiques and provide ideas on how to critique, which have been a particularly useful tool for both new and existing members. Thank you, Yvonne for your hard work in putting these guidelines together.

After a callout at Write Links, Jamie Willis has readily stepped into the role of helping manage the review website Story Links. Jamie's enthusiasm has encouraged many members to select a book at meetings to review and she has been actively promoting it on social media to attract more participants. Thank you, Jamie for your commitment to Story Links.

Two incredible retreats have been held at Woodlands of Marburg this year, one for writing and one for illustration. The writing retreat in April 2024 provided members with dedicated time to just write, have one-on-one critiques from professional authors and illustrators Yvonne Mes, Dave Lowe and Nette Hilton and to socialise at meal breaks. Thank you, Yvonne, Dave and Nette for your time and invaluable feedback. The illustration retreat in May 2024 saw participants get hands on and learn new illustration techniques from Yvonne Mes, learn how to use the software Procreate from Sean Leahy and character creation by Lucia Masciullo. Thank you, Jenny Stubbs for organising these retreats which

provide members with time to dedicate to their craft or learn new skills in a beautiful and inspiring setting.

Members have been excited about participating or volunteering at literary events, like Romancing the Stars and the Narelle Oliver Lecture. The StoryArts Festival in Ipswich allowed members to see and interact with authors and illustrators who gave presentations to school children in August 2024. The upcoming BSAB in October 2024, allows members to learn more skills and craft from authors and illustrators, network and get feedback or pitch to editors. These events are an incredible opportunity for members to learn and experience the publishing industry in real life. Thank you, to all the people who have organised and given their time to these events.

Members have had lots of success this year in terms of launching new books into the world, placing in competitions and having pieces published in magazines or anthologies. We all celebrate these successes and show our support at meetings, attend events and in other ways. A few exciting highlights for members have been the opportunity to participate in the Story Links short story competition and several members have been shortlisted for the Book Links mentorship which will be announced at BSAB in October. Brisbane City Council approached Write Links to have members submit story ideas for the Christmas animation to be projected on Brisbane City Hall in December 2024. One of our members had their story selected and is working on the script with the animators and we cannot wait to see it.

Write Links meetings follow this format:

1-hour professional development

1-hour networking

2-hour in-person critique groups.

The group is always looking for feedback to keep meetings fresh and effective and evolving the format to cater to the interests and needs of members. For example, we are looking forward to trialling some new methods for the networking sessions in November and December 2024 to make this part of our meetings more fun, interactive and valuable for all members.

The topics for professional development were chosen based on member input and included volunteer and paid presentations given by members and industry professionals:

November 2023 – [Decodable Readers – Writing for Educational Publishing – Presented by Nicole Forrest and Mary Serenc](#)

December 2023 – Round up for 2023 and feedback for 2024

February 2024 – [Workshop with Kate Foster – Writing Diverse Characters and Deep Point of View](#)

March 2024 - [Quality Critiquing Workshop with Melanie Hill](#)

April 2024 – Critiquing Picture Books with Ali Rutstein [A New Critique Group at Write Links! – Write Links](#)

May 2024 - [Collective Wisdom: Insider Tips for Emerging Children’s Authors and Illustrators](#)

June 2024 – [5 Tips for Writing A Series with Charlotte Barkla](#)

July 2024 – [Writing Reviews with Mia Macrossan](#)

August 2024 – [Adaptable with Josie Montano](#)

September 2024 – Editing at an inhouse publisher or with a freelance editor – Kristy Bushnell

October 2024 – AGM for Book Links in Toowoomba at the Lighthouse and the Sound of Picture Books: How to Make a Bird with Matt Otley

Thank you to all the presenters for your time and effort you gave to developing your presentations and the information we learned from these wonderful sessions.

Write Links would not exist if it were not for the amazing team of volunteers who contribute their time, experience and skills to ensure the group runs smoothly. A huge thank you to:

- Yvonne Mes – Write Links Coordination Team Member, Hybrid Meetings and Emcee
- Rebecca Sheraton – Write Links Coordination Team Member, Facebook Group Moderator and Emcee
- Jenny Stubbs – Book Links President and Event Organiser
- Alison Rutstein – Picture Book Critique Group Coordinator
- Karen Tyrrell – Junior Fiction Critique Group Coordinator
- Liane McDermott – Upper Middle Grade and Young YA Critique Group Coordinator
- Pym Schaare – YA Critique Group Critique Group Coordinator
- Sophia Beros – Technical Support
- Sandhya Parappukaran – Write Links Coordination Team Member and Blog Coordinator

- Other valuable volunteers include Emma Mactaggart, Danielle Freeland, Mia Macrossan, Tyrion Perkins, Kayt Duncan, Lara Cain Gray, Jacqui Halpin, Ayesha Uddin and Jamie Willis.
- Any other members who have volunteered, for example, to write a blog post, write a review, share information or bring in name tags.

Next year Write Links will continue to provide hybrid meetings with professional development, networking and in-person critique groups. Write Links looks forward to growing and evolving to best support our members who are emerging and established children's literature creators in Brisbane and beyond.

Rebecca Sheraton, Write Links Coordination Team Member

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & THANK YOU

Book Links QLD Inc. would like to thank our members, supporters, partners and the many volunteers that are involved in the planning of events and the continuation of our projects. Thank you for giving your time, resources and donations and your ongoing support to Book Links and Children's Literature.

Supporters and Partners

Jackie French
The Children's Book Council of Australia – Qld Branch
Queensland Writers Centre
State Library of Queensland
Beyond the Book
Brisbane City Council Libraries
Moreton Bay Region Libraries
The Lighthouse Toowoomba
Local Book Shops
Good News Lutheran School
St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School

Successes

Points to note from our strategic plan which has been updated to 2023 - 2025.

1. *Maintain the website/s* – The three websites continue to be well maintained and continually reviewed: Book Links, Write Links and Story Links.
2. *Generate financial and in-kind support* – We received an Arts Qld Grant to run the Artists in residence and exhibition in Toowoomba November 2023 and an Arts Qld Grant to support Book Links StoryArts Brisbane Conference (BSAB). Venues were provided for free

by schools hosting Romancing the Stars and Big Lit Quiz events and the Lighthouse provided the venue for Romancing the Stars and the AGM 2024.

3. *Develop and promote products and resources* – We continue to provide links to resources for children on reading and writing and resource lists developed by Story Links.

4. *Research and lobby for a children’s centre based on story* – We continue to look for opportunities to promote the concept of a center.

5. *Up-skill Book Links committee members* – Members gained professional development via Write Links sessions.

6. *Maintain and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships* –Partners’ events are promoted via the calendar and newsletter. Partnerships are being developed with Brisbane City Libraries and Moreton Regional Libraries. Meetings for Level 2 tenants have been attended throughout the year. Publishers have continued to support our events, providing us with books.

7. *Develop and implement a Book Links promotional plan* – We continue to take part in the trade fair at the Future Libraries Conference. Program information is sent to a range of contacts such as Buzz Words as well as via social media channels.

8. *Maintain and expand the Book Links calendar of programs and events* – Events presented as per annual calendar. Write Links continues to provide a vehicle for engaging with and supporting emerging authors and illustrators. Online calendar is maintained.

9. *Maintain a Strategic Plan* – We are operating in reference to the Strategic plan 2023 - 2025. This will need to be updated October 2025.

10. *Develop and implement Operational Organisation Blue Card Portal and policy* – Policies have been created.

11. *Develop a Succession Plan* – this has still to be developed.