

The Centre
for Children's Literature

BOOK LINKS QLD INC.

2024 - 2025 Report

Mission

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

Objectives

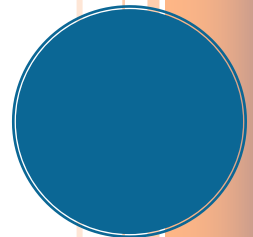
Establish and grow vibrant spaces (fixed, flexible, and online) to nurture communities where children and young adults are exposed to literature; stimulated to be imaginative and artistic; and where stories and their creators are valued.

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

Promote authors, illustrators and storytellers for children and young people.

Jenny Stubbs, President

4/10/2025



Book Links Qld Inc.

2024- 2025 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, interviews and reading lists on a range of topics.



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

Write Links Team

Yvonne Mes, Rebecca Sheraton, Sandhya Parappukkaran, Sophia Beros

StoryArts Exhibition

Ayesha Uddin

Romancing the Stars

Sophia Beros and Melissa Elk

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 - Claire Monsour, Alison Rutstein, Louise Dark and Ann Patchett Gough from the Write Links team
Book Links Mentorship – Dr. Lara Cain Gray

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

This is a year when both 'books' and 'links' are profoundly needed, perhaps more than any time before. As literacy declines throughout Australia, as kids turn to computer games instead of conversation or games of 'let's pretend', books don't just entice literacy. Books give power to see the world as every character within the pages, to focus on more than a few pages of summary, and to imagine what might be, or could be, and help give them the skills to help that 'might be' happen.

But it must be 'the right book'. The wrong book - especially one that *must* be read, *and* finished, can so easily make a kid believe they'll never want to read for pleasure, or even knowledge, when data can be summed up in two paragraphs by Google. Book Links' genius lies in how it helps kids and adults discover the 'right book', and then another and another. It reminds authors like myself to write just a little more deeply, and slightly more enticingly. It encourages those who have seen yet another teacher librarian post vanish, to keep on going, knowing that their values, and their conviction that books *matter*, is shared.

It is also worth asking principals to look at their budget. How many hours each week are spent on sport, compared to time in the library? Do you have a qualified sports teacher? Do you have a qualified teacher librarian too? How much money is spent on maintaining an oval or a swimming pool, compared to the budget for the library? How much time and how many student hours are devoted to winning a sport's cup compared to qualified help with literacy? How many school excursions each year or Saturday mornings are for sport? Sport is valuable for many reasons, but when you need to juggle a budget of money and school time, it can be worth comparing the sports' budget with what is given to books, and encouraging the love of books, and providing the skill reading so well that you don't even realise you're reading, but are there inside the book.

Economists measure, or at least give an educated guess, about the number of 'flow on jobs' that come from each profession. It's impossible to measure the 'flow on' effect of Book Links, where those of us who love books, write books, teach books, enable kids to find books, can find companionship and inspiration, even for those of us who are 1, 206.9 kilometres away from the AGM. AI just gave me the exact distance, but I would far rather be sitting with you all, listening, sharing ideas as well as book suggestions if I could drive the 12 hours and fifty-one minutes. I was just about to add 'with thanks again to Google' but Google neither wants nor understands gratitude, nor does it inspire. AI gives facts, but without context, without the need to think or feel, or to learn how to have the focus and patience to read a book on that subject, instead of pressing a few computer keys.

It is impossible to know how many tens of thousands of lives Book Links has changed, and the number of readers who have then gone on to change lives, too. Possibly they don't even realise that Book Links was the catalyst, inspiring the parent, the author, the teacher, the librarian, the speech and literacy specialist, the volunteer.

Thank you all, for every project in the past year that has enriched our society, not just this year, but for uncountable decades to come. I'm not sure how many times this year I've said, 'You need Book Links.' I hope some, at least have found you, an ever-generous community of 'people of the books'.

As always, it is an honour, a privilege and a joy to be your Vice Patron.
With love, gratitude and admiration to you all,
Jackie

Jackie French AM

A/Professor, University of Queensland

Author, Historian, Ecologist, Honorary Wombat

Senior Australian of the Year, 2015

Australian Children's Laureate 2014-15

Ambassador National Centre for Australian Children's Literature, Patron Monkey Baa Theatre Company, Vice Patron Book Links, Patron SPELD QLD,

Patron Wombat Protection Society, Code Read Ambassador, Patron Wombat Foundation, Ambassador ACT Children's Week

1. Overview

Thank you for joining us for our Annual General Meeting. It is my pleasure to present the Book Links report for the year covering **7 October 2024 to 3 October 2025**. Over this period, we have engaged in a wide variety of activities — mentorships, partnerships, events, competitions, exhibitions — each contributing to our mission of supporting writers, illustrators, readers, and the broader literary culture.

2. Mentorships

- The **2024 mentorship** winner was announced at BSAB, during the opening event. Our mentor, **Dr Robyn Sheahan Bright**, led the announcement with Yvonne Mes being the 2024 recipient for her novel *Novaraptor*.
 - Four of the shortlisted authors were offered **90 minutes of one-on-one support** by **Dave Lowe**.
 Helen Gearing *Gracie the Diamond* (JF)
 Cymbeline Buhler King *Short Cut Home* (JF)
 Liane McDermott *Fractured* (JF)
 Rebecca Sheraton *The Great Emu War* (JF)
 - For 2025, the mentorship round closed on **4 August**, with **23 submissions**. A longlist and shortlist were published on the website, with the winner to be announced at this AGM by our incoming mentor Kristy Bushnell. Additional mentoring will be provided by Jackie French and Dave Lowe. <https://booklinks.org.au/programs/mentorship/2025-mentorship/>
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3. Partnerships & Collaborations

- A raffle was held in lieu of the Big Lit Quiz November 2024 which raised just over \$600, and this was donated to IBBY Australia.
- We were invited by IBBY to create a video showcasing our organisation. <https://youtu.be/n4Ls9Ktm7w> This was incorporated into a longer video celebrating children's literature organisations for International Children's Book Day 2025. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sb9Y_p_ZJwA&t=8s
- We had a meeting with staff from the Minister for Education and Arts (Jarrod Bleijie) about our vision for a "World of Stories" centre — a potential cultural tourism destination. Follow-up materials and live links were sent. Around the same time, we learned that The Corner at State Library is moving to a larger space and may offer opportunities, especially for programming for children up to age 12 in the evenings and for adults.
- In April the Executive Committee approved the establishment of the '4 walls and a roof' Venue Viability Working Party (VVWP), marking an exciting milestone in Book Links' journey toward creating a dedicated physical space for children's literature and storytelling.

- We partnered with Moreton Bay Regional Libraries to deliver a “Create your own mini book” with Yvonne Mes on 22 September 2025. This was fully booked and well received. We are in negotiations with Ipswich and Brisbane City Council Libraries to deliver more workshops for children in 2026.
- Our partnership continues with The Lighthouse Toowoomba. We have had no joint events since the 2024 AGM in their gallery last October but continue to cross promote each other’s projects. We look forward to working with them in the future.
- 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, and we cross promote events through our newsletters.

4. Major Events & Activities

- **BSAB (Book Links StoryArts Brisbane)**

The BSAB conference was a highlight of 2025 with the weekend program 19-20 attracting 149 participants. The Arts Queensland QASP grant enables us to deliver the conference at a reasonable cost. The feedback has been extremely positive. Nearly all sessions were fully booked. The digital portfolio display showcasing illustrators worked particularly well. Attendees gained practical insights and techniques from workshops led by esteemed professionals like Amie Kaufman, Briony Stewart, Katrin Dreiling and Peter Carnavas. Feedback described the sessions as “invaluable writing and industry knowledge” and “excellent.”

Comments such as “This conference brings me closer to success,” reflect the event’s role in bridging the gap between creators and industry professionals. One person reported picking up a commission to illustrate a book by a self-published author at the conference, showing how the event created connections between creators.

- **Romancing the Stars Brisbane**

Romancing the Stars: Brisbane – 18th March 2025

Romancing the Stars: Sunshine Coast – 29th August 2025

Romancing the Stars is an annual event that has taken place since 2012. Starting in Brisbane, the event has been delivered in Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, and Gold Coast. This year’s events were held in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Each creator gave a short introduction to their latest publication in a small intimate circle, before answering audience questions then rotating on to the next group. Both events were well attended with an average of 50 attendees per event. Both events received positive feedback from attendees, stars and school staff. Stars reported that they had received invitations to present at schools following these events.

The Brisbane event featured 16 stars and was held at The Brisbane Boys’ College. It included a pop-up shop run by Where the Wild Things Are.

Brisbane Stars included: Yvonne Mes, Ali Rutstein, Brent Wilson, Helene Magisson, Jennifer Loakes, Katrin Dreiling, Rory Mather, Sandhya Parappukaran, Alison Stegert, Lara Cain Gray,

Michael Gerard Bauer (also PB), Pamela Rushby, Peter Carnavas, Rebecca Timmis, Sophie Beer, Tina Strachan

The Sunshine Coast event featured 21 stars and was held at Immanuel Lutheran College. The Sunshine Coast event included a pop-up book shop run by The Little Book Nook.

Sunshine Coast Stars included: Yvonne Mes, Aleesah Darlison, Caroline Magerl, Dimity Powell, Heidi Cooper Smith, Michelle Wilson, Laura Bunting, Rosi Ngwenya, Annaleise Byrd, Bethany Loveridge, Brent Wilson, Carla Salmon, Di Taylor, Josephine Moon, Lara Cain Gray, Peter Carnavas, Sarah Pye, Sophie Beer, Tylissa Elisara, Marg Gibbs and Sandra Severgnini



- **StoryArt Exhibition 2025 (April 2025)**

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

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.

The exhibition began with an Up Late opening event on the first Friday night with 26 registered to attend. Art was displayed by Niña Nill, Clare McFadden, Blithe Fielden, H el ene Magisson, Brent Wilson, Terry Whidborne and Sue Wright.

Attendance was highest on the Saturday when the write Links meeting was held in the Gardens Caf e.

We continued our partnership with Where the Wild Things Are bookshop who supplied us with titles by the artists to sell on commission. Total sales for the 10 days were \$5,873.

- **Narelle Oliver Lecture (May 2025)**

The Narelle Oliver Lecture was held at St Aidan's Anglican Girls School. 72 participants registered to listen to the 2024-2025 Australian Children's Laureate Sally Rippin, in conversation with Dr Lara Cain Gray on the topic Empowering Voices: The Intersection of Advocacy and Passionate Storytelling. It was once again a very successful event based on feedback from the attendees. Sally's appearance was supported by the ACLF.

5. Competitions & Awards

- **Adult Short Story Competition** (May 2025) from Liane McDermott

The Book Links Short Story Competition invites writers aged 18 and over to submit stories appropriate for children of all ages up to 15 years. This year's short story competition saw a record-breaking 75 entries, showcasing an impressive range of talent and creativity. Judges Mia Macrossan and Liane McDermott were delighted by the diversity and high calibre of submissions, praising the well-structured and emotionally satisfying narratives. The stories spanned a rich spectrum of genres and tones—from laugh-out-loud humour and spine-tingling horror to gentle, heartfelt tales and arresting, thought-provoking fiction. The depth and originality of this year's entries made for a truly memorable competition.

The 2025 competition winner, announced at the annual Narelle Oliver Lecture, was DC Nash for her story *Benji's Revenge*—a hilarious tale about a runaway brain and sibling payback. A blog post followed featuring an interview with the winner.

<https://booklinks.org.au/2025/05/24/winner-of-2025-short-story-competition/>

The shortlist winners included: Ali Rutstein – *It Must Have Been the Broccoli*, and Alicia Maskley – *Lafaek*. Honourable mentions were awarded to Louise Dark – *About a Beetle*; Marian McGuinness – *Kids in the Cosmos*; and Pamela Jones – *The Mammoth Hair Affair*.

We thank everyone for submitting their stories to the competition.

- **Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction** (August 2025)

There were twenty books entered for the award in 2025. A longlist and shortlist were produced and are listed on the website.

<https://booklinks.org.au/historical-fiction-awards-2025/>

Congratulations to Katrina Nannestad whose book *All the Beautiful Things* won this year's Book Links Award for Children's Historical Fiction.

This is the third time that she has won this award, having won in 2023 with *Waiting for the Storks* and in 2021 for *We Are Wolves*.

- **Book Links Children's Writing Competition** – 29th Sept 2025 - *Claire Monsour* – Judge

This year's competition is being judged by Claire Monsour, Alison Rutstein, Louise Dark, and Ann Pratchett Gough from the Write Links Team. The competition has been moved this year from the StoryLinks website to the Book Links website. Entries closed on September 19th, and approximately 82 submissions were received (compared to 94 submissions in 2024).

There were some issues this year with the link on the website not sending a confirmation email to entrants, which caused multiple copies of some stories to be submitted and an increase in email enquiries.

There were less repeated topics/themes across the entries than last year, with a wide variety of ideas influencing young writers. Hopefully this is the result of judging feedback from last year.

Story structure is the standout area of challenge this year, with a lot of stories having either a rushed ending or not having a clear ending at all. Several were following a “dream-like” structure of hopping from one event to another. Feedback from judges this year will encourage young writers to think about the reader’s perspective, and that working out a story frame before writing can be a helpful part of the planning process.

No short-list or winners available to announce yet for 2025 (to be announced 5th Oct).

The shortlist and winners for 2024 are listed on the Book Links website.

<https://booklinks.org.au/childrens-short-story-competition-winners/>

6. Griffith University Community Internship Report from Liane McDermott

This year, Book Links partnered with Griffith University’s Community Internship program, and we were very grateful to receive our first intern, Lauren Spencer, who volunteered her hours with us from 14th July to 10th October 2025.

Over the course of the internship, Lauren actively contributed to Story Links, Write Links, and Book Links, undertaking numerous roles including content creation for our websites and social media, author engagement, member communications, and archival support. Below is a summary of Lauren’s valuable contributions.

Story Links

- Book reviews for the Story Links website
- Conducted a ‘Meet the Author’ interview with Sandhya Parappukaran
- Commenced compiling a reading list of First Nations YA novels and began redesigning the layout for future and existing lists
- Social media and engagement, including multiple posts to Instagram and Facebook, with notable increase in Instagram engagement and follower growth.

Write Links

- Initiated and updated member profiles on the Write Links website
- Initiated a full member list review to identify updates and new additions
- Created a member questionnaire
- Social media and engagement, including the design of visuals for Instagram member spotlights and posting profiles.

Book Links

- Provided event support and development of promotional materials

- Supported review and update of Travelling Suitcase and conference materials.

On behalf of the entire team, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Lauren for the outstanding contributions made during her internship. Lauren's dedication, creativity, and initiative have brought tremendous value to Story Links, Write Links, and Book Links. We are deeply grateful for everything Lauren has achieved and her ongoing volunteering and support as she continues with Story Links and helping our next intern.

7. Membership Report from Liane McDermott

2025 membership as of 3 October:	2024 membership as of 4 October:
147 Personal members	163 Personal members
4 Family members	8 Family members
4 Corporate members	6 Corporate members
155 Total members	177 Total members

The following bookshops provided discounts for Book Links members in 2025: A Lot of Books Ipswich, Big B Books Burleigh, Books@Stones, Riverbend Books, Little Gnome, The Book Warehouse, The Library Shop, The Little Book Nook Palmwoods, Under the Greenwood Tree, Scrumptious Reads, The Mad Hatter's Bookshop, Quick Brown Fox Bookshop, Rosetta Books.

8. Websites and Social Media

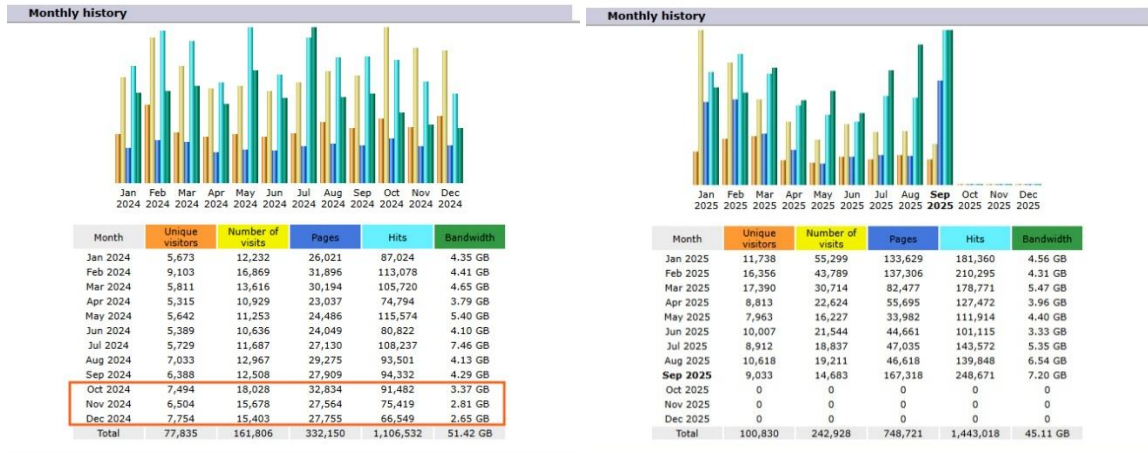
The three websites are maintained by our volunteers but have had several issues this year with error messages slowing access and causing problems with forms for the children's short story competition.

Book Links Website

Total number of unique visitors in past 12 months: 122,582

Most visited pages in last 12 months:

1. Home page
2. Children's short story competition guidelines
3. Competition for Adults
4. Writing Competitions
5. About StoryArts
6. Children's short story competition entry form
7. Romancing the Stars Brisbane 2025
8. Author Visits
9. Membership
10. Romancing the Stars



Book Links Facebook

Book Links has 2081 followers. Of these, 92% are from Australia with 43% from Brisbane, 12% Melbourne, 11% Sydney, 8% Gold Coast, 7.5% Sunshine Coast and 5% Ipswich.

In the past month there have been 2,788 views with the top content being the post relating to the Mentorship shortlist attracting 859 views.

Instagram

Book Links has 1,120 followers and in the past month 6,639 views. Top content based on views and interactions was the upcoming event Let’s Get Graphic.

9. Challenges & Lessons

- Ensuring funding arrives in time to support event planning.
- Volunteer capacity is very strong, but sustaining volunteer energy and recognising their contributions is essential.
- Communication & publicity: while blog posts are well received, having a dedicated person (or team) to capture events (photographs, write ups) consistently would enhance our reach.
- Space and infrastructure: as we consider expansion (e.g. the “World of Stories” centre, larger gallery spaces, more public programming), logistical and funding realities must be carefully planned.

10. Looking Forward (Goals for 2025-2026)

- Review our Strategic Plan
 - Finalise proposals, secure support, and begin laying groundwork for the “World of Stories” centre.
 - Strengthen partnerships (government, cultural organisations, libraries) to broaden our programming footprint (especially in underserved or regional communities).
 - Improve event documentation: ensure each major event has professional photos, timely blog posts, video where feasible.
 - Explore funding opportunities to recognise volunteer work (travel, time, etc.), and possibly stipends or grants for exhibition staff.
 - Expand membership, audience reach, especially through digital channels.
 - Develop new Travelling suitcases and promote existing cases, especially to regional Qld.
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11. Acknowledgements

I want to express deep gratitude to:

- Our dedicated committee members and volunteers — Tyrion Perkins, Kayt Duncan, Danielle Freeland, Sophia Beros, Liane McDermott, Lara Cain Gray, Mia Macrossan, Yvonne Mes, Rebecca Sheraton, Sandhya Parappukkaran, Katrin Dreiling, Melissa Elk, Jacqui Halpin, Lauren Draper, and Emma Mactaggart.
 - Our partners and supporters: Arts Queensland, Queensland Writers Centre, State Library of Queensland, The Lighthouse Toowoomba, CBCA Qld, Immanuel Lutheran College, St Aidan’s Anglican Girls School, QSLA, ACLF, and IBBY Australia.
 - Our local supporting bookshops
 - Our supporters, donors, and audience members — without whom none of this work would be possible.
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12. Conclusion

In closing, this has been a productive year for Book Links. We have expanded our programs, made strong partnerships, delivered high-quality events, upheld our mission, and laid plans for future growth. We look forward to the coming year with optimism and a commitment to making literature, reading, writing, and illustration ever more vibrant in our communities.

Write Links Report 2025



Write Links continues to meet its aims:

- To support children's book creators in the art and craft of creating their stories in line with the creators' thoughts, ideas, ideology, beliefs and views, within limits set by anti-discrimination and other laws.
- To support children's book creators in getting their stories published, whether online, in print, through self-publishing, traditional methods or other methods.
- To support children's book creators in navigating the business of writing and illustrating for children.

This year saw the development of Write Links Community Guidelines which were developed after a lengthy consultative process with Write Links members these guidelines were developed in order to:

- Foster a **supportive and inclusive** environment for all members.
- Encourage **respectful** discussions.
- Maintain a **focus on the aims** of Write Links.

Book Links intern Lauren Spencer updated our member profiles.

Meetings generally run monthly at the State Library Queensland from 1pm to 5pm and include networking, professional development and face to face critique sessions.

Professional development sessions held this year:

September: **Improv Games for Writers** with Annaleise Byrd

August: **A Deep Dive in Writing Scenes** with editor Melanie Hill

July: **Focus on Grants** with Karen Tyrrell and Jenny Stubbs

June: **Writing Activations**

May: **The Business of Writing** – Info on school visits/ promotion/ book sellers and more by **Dave Lowe**

April: **Writing Activations** at Mount Coot-tha by Yvonne Mes

March: **Collective Wisdom** session

February: **Character-based Approach to Writing** with Richard Yaxley

December: **Christmas gathering and J M Wisbey short play performance**

November: **The Hero's Journey** with Melanie Hill

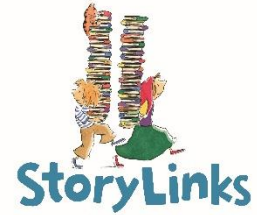
We made the decision to limit the Facebook group to financial members to ensure we are most effectively meeting our aims, this decision also shows the number of active and financial Write Links members at 127 members.

We would like to thank the many Write Links volunteers who manage the critique groups, update the Write Links website, technical support, after meeting dining opportunities and more. In particular we would like to thank Sandhya Parappukaran, Karen Tyrrell, Tyrion Perkins, Alison Rutstein, Liane McDermott, Pym Schaare, Sophie Beros, Victoria Ellen, Dave Lowe, Jamie Willis, Annaleise Byrd, Melissa Elk and Jenny Stubbs and the many other members who support Write Links in any way and make it the beautiful and supportive community it is.

Yvonne Mes & Rebecca Sheraton

Write Links Coordinators

StoryLinks Report 2025



The website continued to grow in 2025 with a slow but steady increase in subscribers.

Reviews

To date we have posted 1835 items, written of which I have written 1355 and the rest by a team of reviewers, whose numbers and members continue to fluctuate.

The reviews are the most read of our posts each week. I aim for three to five reviews a week. It is this part of the site that requires most work.

Interviews

We did 14 interviews this year with Zana Fraillon, Zanni Louise, Sandhya Parappukaran, Ashleigh Barton, Emma Lord, Amelia Mellor, Blythe Fielden, Clare McFadden, Helene Magisson, Nina Nill, Sue Wright and Terry Whidborne and Brent Wilson.

Reading Lists

We have not published any reading lists this year. I now look for and publish other lists from other respected websites, eg. NCACL – Drawing Words A Database of Picture Books for Older Readers. To date we have 66 Reading lists on the website.

News

Here we publish items of interest to our readers such as Resources for Earth Day, Nature Book Week, Children's Literature Award winners, both Australian and overseas, Book Links news. This could be developed a bit more.

Competitions

These have now moved to the Book Links website and are managed by other people. I would like to be kept informed of shortlists and winners so that I can write a news article about them

Social Media – managed by Lauren Spencer who has agreed to continue this work which is fabulous! She is doing an absolutely fantastic job. Thank you, Lauren.

- 228 subscribers to website
- Facebook No. of followers: 1055.
- Views in the last month: 1399.
- Instagram 25,386 views in the last 90 days.
- 2066 followers.

The Instagram is much more engaged than Facebook but both have grown in the last year.

Conclusion

The website continues to grow albeit slowly. Publishers are engaged with the reviews and look for them. Occasionally I see a quote from one of our reviews on a publisher's or author's website. I am satisfied StoryLinks is fulfilling its role of advocating for quality children's literature and supporting the work of Book Links.

Mia Macrossan – Coordinator/Managing Editor

4 walls and a roof

Venue Viability Working Party (VVWP) Annual Report

Prepared by: Kayt Duncan



Annual Report for AGM

In April the Executive Committee approved the establishment of the ‘4 walls and a roof’ Venue Viability Working Party (VVWP), marking an exciting milestone in Book Links' journey toward creating a dedicated physical space for children's literacy and storytelling.

Strategic alignment

This initiative directly supports our Strategic Plan (Table 1, Item 4: "Research and lobby for a children's centre based on story") and represents a significant step forward in realising Book Links' vision of establishing vibrant spaces where children and young people can engage with literature and connect with story creators.

The journey ahead

Over the next 12-15 months, the working party's aim is to undertake comprehensive research and planning activities, including:

1. **Research phase** - Investigating successful literacy centre models both nationally and internationally
2. **Stakeholder engagement** - Consulting with industry experts, educators, and community representatives
3. **Financial planning** - Developing detailed budget projections and identifying sustainable funding models
4. **Strategic planning** - Creating a comprehensive business plan with clear implementation pathways

Building our future

To demonstrate our commitment to this vision, the Executive Committee has authorised the allocation of 10% of all event profits and donations to a dedicated seed fund. This forward-

thinking approach will help us build financial capacity whilst we develop our comprehensive proposal.

Join our mission

The working party is seeking passionate individuals with diverse expertise to contribute to this exciting initiative. We particularly welcome members with experience or knowledge in:

- **Education and literacy programming** - Understanding of children's learning needs and effective literacy interventions
- **Property and facilities management** - Knowledge of commercial property, space planning, and operational requirements
- **Financial planning and business development** - Expertise in budgeting, financial modelling, and sustainable business practices
- **Community engagement and partnerships** - Skills in stakeholder relations, partnership development, and community consultation
- **Publishing and creative industries** - Industry knowledge and professional networks within children's literature
- **Grant writing and fundraising** - Experience securing funding from government, corporate, and philanthropic sources
- **Project management** - Skills in coordinating complex initiatives with multiple stakeholders and timelines

How to get involved

If you're interested in contributing to this transformative project, please contact the Executive committee via secretary@booklinks.org.au to discuss how your skills and passion can help shape Queensland's future centre for children's literacy and storytelling.

Together, we can create a lasting legacy that connects generations of children with the joy and power of story.



Book Links and The Lighthouse Toowoomba

It is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the Memorandum of Understanding and the ongoing partnership between Book Links and The Lighthouse Toowoomba.

In our three years, we have hosted *Romancing the Stars*, exhibitions with Caroline Magerl, Matt Ottley, Lucia Mascuillo, and Lee FullARTon, and bringing Book Links to regional Queensland is our privilege.

We are delighted to announce we have secured private funding (after our crushing lack of success with seeking Organisational Funding from Arts QLD!) and our doors will remain open for another three years.

Now the real work begins.

Thank you again Book Links for being so steadfast in your support of everything we are doing here.

Emma Mactaggart

Founder

The Lighthouse Toowoomba | International Read to Me Day