

2019 CBCA Nan Chauncy Award Citation – James Moloney

The recipient of the 2019 Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Nan Chauncy Award for outstanding contribution to Australian children’s literature is James Moloney.

A multi award-winning author and passionate advocate for children’s literature, James has encouraged generations of young people, especially boys, to read for pleasure. His commitment to the children’s literature industry in Australia is further demonstrated through his participation on the Australia Council for the Arts and in his advocacy for Public Lending Right and Educational Lending Right.

James is more than a creator of excellent children’s literature. He is a passionate advocate for literacy and encouraging children to read. His investigation of the importance of building a reading culture amongst boys and active engagement with young people in a variety of settings, has influenced many children. This has been further enhanced by his attendance at literature festivals, school workshops and public library programs, as well as his writings aimed at helping parents. As writer-in-residence in schools he has influenced young writers to “respect language and its ability to shape and change lives” while also demonstrating this skill through his own writings. In doing so, he has also influenced the participating educators.

Since the publication of *Crossfire* in 1992, James has published more than forty books and many of his titles have been recognised through awards and shortlists. His most recent publication *The Young Vikings*, is included in the 2019 CBCA Notable Books. He has demonstrated his understanding of young readers: his successful titles range from those for beginning readers through to more sophisticated older teenagers. His influence and impact in encouraging young people to read can be traced beyond his writing career to his time as a Teacher Librarian.

To quote James himself, “The novel is a powerful means of communication in Australian culture.” Through *Dougy*, *Gracey* and *Angela*, James brought insight into the lives and experiences of Aboriginal young people and into the lives of many young Australians. As a non-Aboriginal writer, he said, “Writing about it, exploring it through story is a valuable way of encouraging intellectual discourse...thinking, discussing, arguing, becoming self-aware and moving, ever so slowly, towards understanding.”

James has willingly committed time to encouraging literacy and reading beyond his paid author duties, continually demonstrating his responsiveness, generosity and outreach to others. He has been Quiz Master at CBCA Queensland Readers’ Cup events. He has also undertaken online book-gigs to help students in small regional schools, over the past twenty or so years. All papers to do with his writing career have been donated to the State Library of Queensland.

Several of his books have been translated into French, Korean, Lithuanian and Dutch, spreading Australian cultural concepts and proving that many of his themes are universal: family, love, belonging, body image, rites of passage, mateship/friendship, identity, disability and racial issues. His peers hold him in high esteem. As his nominator said, “Over four decades, Moloney’s contribution to children’s literature has been fundamental to framing an Australian identity. His work is groundbreaking in reflecting race and masculinity. His sense of place and depiction of Australia as character has allowed young readers to identify with this truly unique Australian landscape.”

James Moloney is indeed a very worthy recipient of the 2019 CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for his outstanding and committed contribution to Australian children’s literature.