STEM in libraries: inquiry, fun and community

I'm not a science, technology, engineering or maths teacher. Maths? I can't build complex Dewey numbers for the life of me! I'm a voc-ed teacher and a librarian. My undergraduate qualification is in visual arts!

So, what can I say here that will be of interest to you, and how do I get to be the expert on STEM in libraries?

Models of facilitation and inquiry

When I first studied vocational education, we were introduced to a variety of approaches beyond didactic teaching: facilitator, coach, mentor. Over the years, my one key approach has been setting tasks that are inquiry based.

As a library studies teacher at TAFE, I adjust the level of inquiry to suit the student or student cohort and the outcomes I'm assessing. I often utilise an open inquiry approach with a degree of support from class peers. Sometimes I'm a coach, sometimes a mentor and often I'm just an observer.

When developing a STEM course for library practitioners, I looked to incorporate levels of inquiry and independence, seeing my role as facilitating (providing opportunities) rather than lecturing.

Some participants are surprised at first. This often takes the form 'You are the teacher and I am the learner', 'Where do I start?' or, in response to prompts, 'I need to directly answer the teacher's question', 'I need to be correct.' However, most

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Term 3

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Level 5, 44 Collins St, Melbourne. Morning tea provided.

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6 September 2021

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(available on August 30)

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- **Series headings and authorities** This tutorial covers how series authorities can assist with searching, and also the difference between series heading and series statements in SCIS records.
- **Four free digital collections to import into your catalogue** This short tutorial shows how to import free eBooks, websites and apps into your LMS.
- **SCIS doesn't have a record for my resource – what now?** This tutorial presents three ways to place cataloguing requests to SCIS.
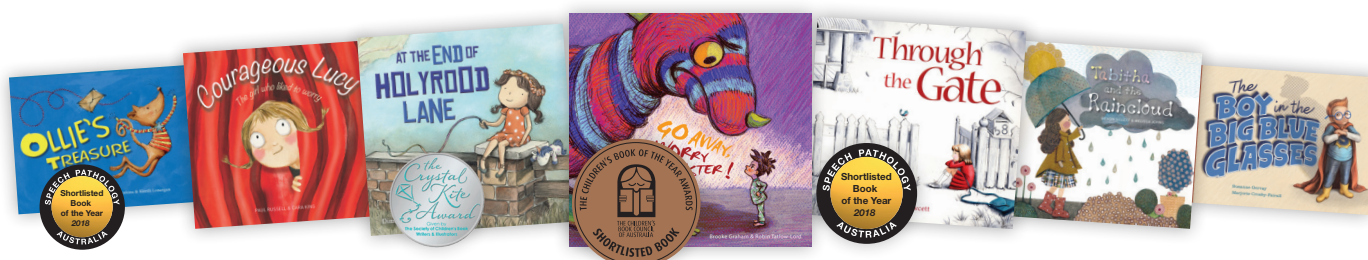
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quickly grasp that engaging with the group might help them frame their understanding or reveal new approaches (which is what the teacher wants!).

Most library staff see underpinning approaches to STEM as a good fit for the library. They are used to situations where they may not know all of the answers – but can find out.

In the coursework, participants examine their diverse situations and ambitions and work towards solutions. This could be an initial exploration of setting up a podcast facility, looking at an environment citizen science project, exploring code clubs for over-60s, or researching funding avenues. Participants are encouraged to share ideas and seek like minds.

Within this structure, I have populated the learning environment with prompts and starting and talking points – the 'ask' or orientation phase of the engineering process.

Voices of experience

I contacted people in schools and public libraries. My knowledge, and the course itself, was populated by these 'voices of experience'. I'm not the expert but, just like a librarian, I can find and share expertise.

Each year I've discovered new voices of experience, in many cases participants from the previous year's course.

In encouraging sharing and discussion, the course became a place to learn from others. Participants found others with similar situations, or were given different perspectives by those in different situations. Underpinning this is the idea of a community of practice.

I am also a learner. Here are some of the things I learnt from current participants.

- Imposter syndrome often affects girls or women in STEM, but also us, the 'accidental STEM librarians'.
- Many of us have maker spaces in our homes.
- STEM education at secondary and higher education levels often teaches facts, skills and processes but not critical thinking, particularly in relation to qualitative claims. Libraries can have a role here.
- The disparity between libraries that have and those that have not in terms of space, time and technology is still vast.
- Inclusion is often thought of in an 'if we

build they will come' way, rather than by identifying and targeting audiences.
- '3 before me'. You all know this one, I'll bet – I didn't!

There are also numerous valuable voices available through research. *Connections* magazine, thank you! And of course there is the recognition that participants are in libraries, surrounded by information.

> **STEM activities, programming and collections in libraries are intrinsically linked to individuals and communities developing the ability and desire to learn.**

2020
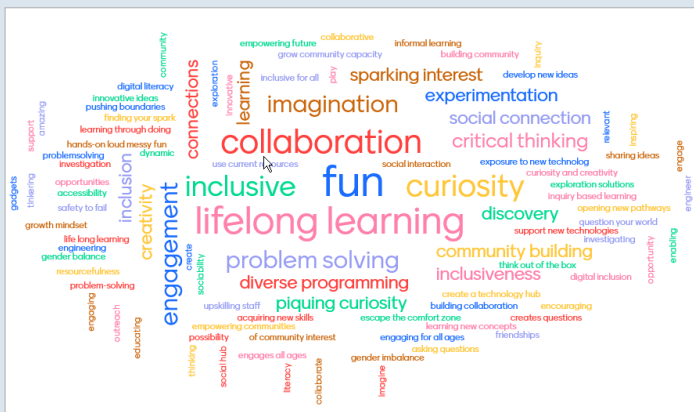
2021

Collection of words describing positive aspects of STEM activities in libraries.

2020
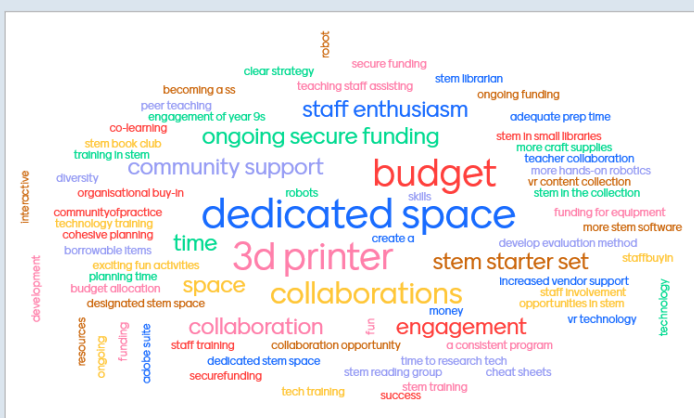
2021

Collection of words describing future plans.

As one voice said: 'You need to think about who you have around you who can help you – if the expectation is that you do it alone, you can't. Believe me, I've tried!'

While that may relate directly to a staffing situation, it also applies more generally. Ask, network, make friends, see how others do it. Librarians are a sharing bunch – it's one of the things we do.

Aims

Each year one of the course prompts involves the idea of aims. Why does your library want to incorporate STEM-based activities? The two word clouds (top) from the past two courses visualise participants' initial thoughts. These are then turned into discussion points.

Fun and learning

The most striking thing is that in both word clouds fun takes centre place. This is borne out by comments throughout the course.

'Consider the importance of fun! Is everyone having a good time?' 'I usually

have as much fun as the children :)' 'I think one of the best things about STEM is that … it's fun learning.'

The connection between learning and fun includes the idea that a library-based approach to learning was likely to be more enticing because it wasn't a classroom and there were no tests. Failure was reframed as part of a process, but difficulties were also discussed; for example, challenging the common perception of the library as a tidy and quiet space.

Community and collaboration

The introduction of STEM activities created and developed concepts of, and spaces for, community and collaboration. Libraries and STEM activities can work to develop civil and civic discourse. This might start as early as sharing or asking for Lego pieces.

Alongside this is the concept of the library's place in enabling lifelong learning. STEM activities, programming and collections in libraries are intrinsically linked to individuals and communities developing

the ability and desire to learn. Libraries provide the necessary spaces and resources – with collections of books, databases and also of people. 'Exploring, observing, discussing and developing awareness' as one participant put it.

Going forward

At the end of each course, the participants are asked to make three wishes for the future. The collections of words above describe future plans – I'll leave you with these wishes and encouragement for your STEM adventures!

Image credits

Main photo by Adam Winger on Unsplash and figures supplied by Gary Lom.

Gary Lom
Gary has taught library studies at TAFENSW for 16 years. He has run courses for ALIA for the past 8 years, including the online course 'STEM in libraries'.

SCIS is more

Welcome to Term 3, 2021 and to *Connections* Issue 118.

In reflecting on the past 12 months, I want to acknowledge the power of school libraries and the important role they play as arguably the heart of the school.

School libraries have been evolving over recent decades from traditional knowledge centres that house print collections and archives and where quiet reading, research and individual study are the norm, into modern and interactive learning hubs based on the library learning commons model.

School libraries are reinventing themselves as contemporary places of connection, collaboration and content creation. There is a growing trend towards modular, flexible learning spaces that meet the needs of individuals, groups and classes with multiple creative uses such as maker spaces, coding clubs and student-led groups. Welcoming spaces that support both the curriculum and social development goals of their schools can benefit students in their literacy attainment and reinforce the development of digital citizenship skills.

When students are asked what their school library means to them, their answers are really compelling. Feedback from Dr Hillary Hughes's research shows that the library is important to students because they can 'learn and have fun at the same time'; they can be themselves; they feel safe and have the opportunity to think and learn. (Hughes et al. 2019)

Future-focused school libraries led by teacher librarians support the educational vision and philosophy of their schools and contribute to student learning in unique and specialised ways. Teacher librarians are more than managers of information, they are uniquely placed to provide professional expertise as both managers and users of information services and as leaders of curriculum planning.

Digital learning technology plays a vital role in schools and was indispensable as a means of remote learning as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response. We saw the incredibly agile and collaborative response of technology directors, teacher librarians and classroom teachers in leading the shift of learning delivery from the physical classroom to the online environment.

We've heard many stories from wonderful teacher librarians that demonstrate their adaptability, resilience and creativity in developing strategies for engaging students and maintaining connections while in isolation. Digital storytelling, developing research guides and how-to videos, curating content lists, embedding scaffolded support into learning management systems, and introducing click-and-collect book options were some of the many strategies employed to continue providing essential services to the school community while the physical space was unavailable. Their efforts are truly remarkable.

The phrase 'libraries are at the heart of the school' was developed by Caroline Roche, Chair of the School Libraries Group at CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) in the UK. Caroline is founder of the Heart of the School website, a wonderful resource developed ten years ago to share best practices and help other librarians. The Heart website took off across the globe and has kept the notion that libraries are at the heart of the school at the forefront of our thinking. (Roche 2018)

Our heartfelt thanks to the extraordinarily talented and passionate school library community that we are honoured to work alongside.

ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year 2021

SCIS is very pleased to join the Australian School Library Association in supporting the **ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year 2021** award.

Nominations were received from principals, professional colleagues and members of the school community, recognising individuals with an outstanding contribution to the profession of school librarianship. All nominees demonstrated a high level of achievement in professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement, and have had a positive impact on teaching and learning in their school.

We are thrilled that Anne Girolami, Learning Leader – Information Services at Mercy College, Coburg, Victoria, was recognised and awarded the honour of ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year 2021. Anne has over 30 years' experience as a teacher librarian and has a Master of Business (Information Technology), a Bachelor of Education and a Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies. Anne has made a significant contribution to ASLA and ALIA, and is recognised for her extraordinary and exemplary work in advocacy to progress the profession of teacher librarianship in Australia.

We congratulate Anne and thank her for her outstanding contribution to students' life-long learning and the school library community.

Welcome to new staff at SCIS: Laura Iseman and Adam Styles

We are very pleased to have two new staff join us at SCIS. Laura Iseman joins us as a Cataloguing Officer. Laura is a highly experienced librarian who has worked across a range of library settings and has extensive knowledge of MARC, RDA and Dewey. We also welcome Adam Styles, a qualified librarian with extensive experience in systems administration, data migration, full stack web development and library metadata management across public and school libraries. Adam is our SCIS Systems Coordinator.

Upcoming conference attendance for SCIS

SCIS is attending the APPA/NZPF Trans-Tasman Conference (20–23 July), and EduTECH (17–18 August). We are also supporting the New Zealand Association of Teachers of English Conference (14–16 July). As always, please keep in touch with SCIS via social media or help@scisdata.com.

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Hughes H, Franz J, Willis J, Bland D and Rolfe A (2019) 'High school spaces and student transitioning: designing for student wellbeing', in Hughes H, Franz J, and Willis J (eds) *School spaces for student wellbeing and learning: Insights from research and practice, Springer, Singapore* pp. 97-119.

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Caroline Hartley
SCIS Manager
Education Services Australia

Alternate worlds – Paul Collins reflects on his writing and publishing career

I've read a great many articles by Australian writers. It's apparent that quite a few of them have two things in common (apart from the obvious) and that is that they were – at some stage in their lives – teachers and, understandably, strong readers from an early age.

I part ways with these observations. I do remember reading some educational readers when I was about nine. From memory, the characters were pirates. I remember their 'names' were Blue, Yellow, Red, etc. But that's all I recall.

At the age of 11 or thereabouts, I discovered black-and-white war comics. I was quite enamoured of them but was quickly lured away by the more heroic and colourful Marvel comics. I collected about seven sets, including *Spider-Man*, *Captain America*, *Daredevil*, *The Hulk* and a lingering war series called *Sgt. Fury and his howling commandos*. My father would read them but not pay for them – no, that responsibility was on me and my minuscule amount of pocket money. He only read them, he said, because they were there. My brother, too, read comics, although he was more into *Superman*.

All which of which leads me to the fact there was never a book in our house. I did see one, once. It was a green-spined Erle Stanley Green Penguin detective novel. Funny how we remember such minor scenes. I opened up a drawer one day and saw it. I remember being a bit confused and wondering 'what's that book doing there?'

You can imagine my father's surprise at my answer to that oft-asked question, 'What do you want to do when you leave school?' We both knew I was leaving at age 15. 'I want to be a writer' I said. He had a chuckle. 'You have to be university-educated to be a writer,' he said with some authority. I can't blame him his cynicism. After all, I didn't read books. Skip about 30 years and after I'd had about 40 books published, I asked him if he remembered saying that. 'No,' he said. 'But if I did, then it's because I knew you'd set out to prove me wrong.'

And so in saying we can deduce that I'm rather stubborn. This is possibly why I've stuck at writing all these years. With more than 140 books under my belt, I'm not wealthy, nor for that matter 'famous'. I'm

no longer trying to prove my father wrong, either. So why do I keep writing? The money certainly isn't the reason. Most writers make more money from going into schools and teaching the craft of writing than they do from their books. I'm fortunate enough to be a prolific writer working in the halcyon days of education publishing. At least half of the books I wrote were for this sector. Although the pay wasn't great, I knew that we have Public Lending Right (PLR) and Educational Lending Right (ELR). These are initiatives of the Australian Government and delivered through the Office for the Arts. It's how information is collected about which books are in our precious libraries and providing reimbursement for the creatives. The payments give recompense to writers and illustrators for potential loss of sales in bookstores. This is ever more relevant now in the digital age where readers can purchase long-ago out-of-print books. It could have been argued that a book that was no longer available from the publisher wasn't losing the author royalties, but we've moved on. For every person accessing a book in a library, that could well be costing the creator income. And of course, this is particularly important to us after the impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns on the Arts, when creatives lost most of their school visit income due to schools and libraries being closed. I have several arms to my business – one of which is organising literary festivals for schools. I had been commissioned to create four festivals last year, all of which were postponed to 2021. I also run Creative Net Speakers' Agency and represent 170 or

so authors/illustrators across the nation. Sadly, most of their work dried up last year, too, but virtual presentations did kick in once schools were open again.

I don't squander my ELR/PLR on holidays, flash cars, high-class restaurants or the like. I reinvest it into a micro press I started back in 2007. Ford Street Publishing produces between 12 and 15 books a year. Anyone with knowledge of the publishing business will know that it's nigh impossible to make money from it. This is where ELR/PLR comes to my assistance. Were it not for this source of income, this writer/publisher at least wouldn't still be writing and definitely not publishing. The latter would mean (maybe!) that the CBCA award-winning Picture Book of the Year 2020, Chris McKimmie's *I NEED a parrot*, wouldn't have been published. Nor would Peter Vu's *Paper cranes don't fly*, which won the Gold INKY award, or Gabrielle Reid's *The things we can't undo,* which took out the Family Therapist's award. There are a great many other titles, but you get the message.

I hear there's a downward trend of schools participating in the ELR scheme. Understandable when you realise fewer schools have librarians and even fewer teacher-librarians. These are people who are passionate about books, yet many principals seem oblivious to their worth. The ELR survey shouldn't take long. If schools have library captains, they could be involved in the survey or classes could support this work during their library times. What a great opportunity for students to support their favourite authors and illustrators!

Image credits
Image supplied by Paul Collins.

Paul Collins is a publisher at Ford Street Publishing (fordstreetpublishing.com) and CEO of Creative Net Speakers' Agency (creativenetspeakers.com). He still writes books for younger people. His last book was *James Gong – The big hit*. A sequel is on its way. *James Gong – The Chinese dragon* should be published by Hybrid Publishers later in 2021. Paul's at www.paulcollins.com.au.

REVIEW BUILDING A LIBRARY READING CULTURE:
A SELECTION OF ARTICLES FROM FYI & SYNERGY

Building a library reading culture: a selection of articles from FYI & Synergy
compiled by Susan La Marca and Pam Macintyre
School Library Association of Victoria, 2021. ISBN 9780909978044 (ebook) 291pp.

Highly recommended. When finishing this wonderful collection of articles published in FYI and Synergy, I found myself enthused about the importance of promoting reading in schools and really enjoyed the historical overview given by the articles, ranging from some written in 2000 to those written in 2020. The book is divided into three sections: Research and Reflections, Practice, and Organisations. The Introduction by Dr Kasey, Senior Lecturer in the School of Information Studies at Charles Sturt University, summarises the content of the book in a masterly manner and gives an excellent overview of what the reader will find in each section.

Readers coming to *Building a library reading culture* could examine all the articles or, as many may do, select articles that are pertinent to them at the time of need. What stood out for me and challenged my ideas in the Research and Reflections section was 'Current and historical perspectives on Australian teenagers' reading practices and preferences' by Dr Jacqueline Manuel and Don Carter (2016) which shows the genres that teens most liked to read and emphasised the importance of the English teacher on selection. This was echoed in 'Teen reading in the digital era' by Leonie Rutherford (2017), showing the top genres as fantasy, contemporary realistic, science fiction, autobiography and biography, and action/adventure. In 'Myths about children, teenagers, books and reading' by Margaret Merga, the myth that all reading is equally beneficial made me think and sent me off to Merga's website (researchgate.net/profile/Margaret-Merga-2) where I found many useful articles. 'Anatomy of a dissertation: What Emily discovered about gendered literacy' by Carol A Gordon (2015) also emphasises the importance of free voluntary reading but advises not to label books according to boy or girl in reading lists.

SLAV has chosen to make the Practice section of the book into a print and ebook (ISBN: 9780909978037), which will be perfect for those who are mainly interested in improving their practice. In this section it was hard for me to pick articles that stood out as all were very helpful. 'Windows and mirrors: visibility and representation in Australian LGBTQIA+ YA fiction'

by Nell Day (2019) gives ideas and book lists to grow a more diverse collection. 'Banned books week' by Sue Bursztynski was inspirational: with a limited budget, students filmed readings from banned or challenged books, engendering much enthusiasm. Practitioners would find many gems among the advice ranging from building a whole-school reading culture and the importance of using data in a reading program, boys' reading and book clubs, setting up a collection based on genres with the help of students, the use of ebooks and print collections, to guidance on starting a literary festival.

In the Organisations section, more ideas to inform can be found. The importance of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation is described, and Victorians will learn about the Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre, while some school libraries may wish to take the opportunity to join the Stella Prize School's Program or the ISLM bookmark exchange project.

The Contents page is clearly set out and titles of the articles give an indication of their subject matter. Bibliographies for all the articles are extensive and will provide scope for the reader to move on to a more in-depth perusal of the subject matter.

Building a library reading culture will validate the programs that many school libraries are conducting, stimulate staff with new ideas, challenge them to improve their practice and give them access to articles and research that will be invaluable when presenting ideas to principals, staff, and parents. And it will be a boon for those updating their qualifications at university. For me it was an inspiring read, encouraging me to continue organising and promoting books through fiction reviews.

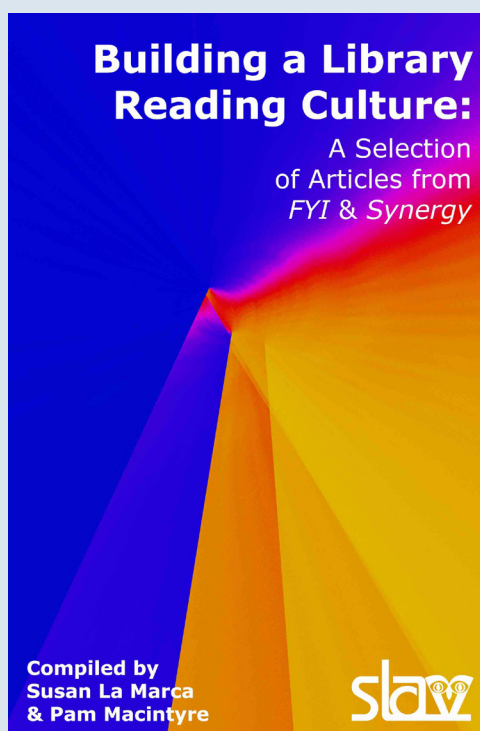**Themes: Reading, Research, Reading culture, School libraries.**

Pat Pledger
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FIVE POWERFUL DIGITAL TOOLS
FOR TEACHER LIBRARIANS

Ceinwen Jones, SCIS Cataloguing Officer, explores five digital tools she enjoyed using as a teacher librarian.

Some of these may be new to you. Some of them may seem obvious. But here are five digital tools I enjoyed using as a teacher librarian!

Trello

Currently my favourite for to-do lists, one way I regularly use Trello is for my daily brain-dump of jobs I need to do. I then allocate tasks to future dates in the week if I know I don't have time to do them right away, but don't want to forget them. I can drag and drop an email that I need to follow up on from Outlook mail into Trello, and create a task that way too.

Trello works like a bunch of lists grouped together by topic on a board. I can have a board for the current week and a list for each day – then I just add cards (tasks) as I need to, so I can remember all the things I need to do. When I've done a task, I move it into the 'Done' list – very satisfying! I also have a board called 'Things I need to ask people' (then when I see that person I can refer to the list). And another list called 'Things to remember', which has a whole lot of random stuff like the postal address of where I work (which Í always forget and never know where to find, but often need to use) and keyboard shortcuts for our library software.

But the powerful thing about Trello is that you can collaborate on boards, so if you have a project to organise – like Book Week – you can make lists of tasks, grouped by topic, and allocate them to different people in your team. That way, everyone knows what they're doing and what everyone else is doing. If you need even more communication, you can integrate Trello with Teams or Slack, for corresponding chat.

> **"** Remember that these tools are intended to make your life as a librarian easier. **"**

Outlook

Maybe you use Outlook regularly to check your emails; but have you ever tried using the tasks feature of it? If you're looking for something simpler than Trello, then perhaps you could consider using Outlook more. If, for example, you are going through your emails in the morning and receive something that you need to follow up on – and don't want to forget – one of the choices you have is to make it into a task (you do that by clicking on the Follow Up flag on the top ribbon). Then later, after you've finished dealing with that bunch of emails, you can look back at the tasks list and work through it. You can also attach reminders to the tasks, and set their due date in the future if you want to deal with them later.

The Outlook calendar is great too if you want to remind yourself of tasks or appointments. If you're teaching as well as running a library, being able to block out times for meetings, admin and teaching can help you easily see where you can squeeze in a task or meet with a colleague. You can use it like you would a diary. There's always space to put extra notes on appointments, so you can jot down things like meeting notes or other observations in the appointments themselves. If you forget where you've written your notes, the search function in the calendar works really well!

Canva

I regarded myself as an atypical teacher librarian, because I've never been good at displays, but Canva has changed my life! Any signs, flyers or posters I make are now so professional because I can use templates and layouts that have been generated by actual graphic designers. I can edit and adapt the colour scheme or the theme to fit with whatever my topic is. If you're looking for a tool to produce professional-looking graphics for the library, for social media posts, or even in the classroom with your students, I highly recommend Canva.

Canva design created by Ceinwen for her school library

Excel

Honestly, I do know that this one seems a little obvious, but Excel has so much functionality, and we deal with statistics and data so much now, I just think it's got to be in the conversation.

Excel is excellent for so many tasks. For term planning, it's the easiest way to set out a table for a 10-week term, with subsequent tabs for info, planning and reflecting for each week. It's also great for library stocktake and charts for reporting frequently used (and frequently unused!) resources – and subsequently for weeding and acquisitions planning.

Even if you just love making tables, the simplicity of a plain table in Excel has a lot of appeal in contrast to the often problematic and tricky-to-edit Word tables.

Padlet

Do you want to:

- curate a bunch of trustworthy websites on a topic, or several topics
- create a quick, interactive warm-up for a new unit of work
- have students add content and knowledge to a map or a timeline
- enable an easy-to-use, collaborative brainstorm?

Padlet is an intuitive, collaborative and extremely flexible tool that enables the class to chat, collaborate and share in real time. You can have it up on your interactive board and simultaneously on individual student devices. You can add media, links and files, customise the colour schemes and choose from a range of formats. It's fun for everyone!

Remember that these tools are intended to make your life as a librarian easier. Not all of them will be suitable for your particular situation and they should definitely not induce extra stress. Perhaps start with Trello – once you know what all your deadlines are and who is doing what, it is easier to turn your attention to other, more creative aspects of running a library. There are many other tools out there, but I can vouch that these have worked for me.

Image credits

Image supplied by Ceinwen Jones.

Ceinwen Jones
SCIS Cataloguing Officer and qualified teacher librarian
Education Services Australia

SIX WAYS TO FOCUS ON WELLBEING IN YOUR SCHOOL

Nicole Richardson shares six ways to use the Student Wellbeing Hub to promote wellbeing, resilience and inclusion in your school community.

The school library has long been a safe haven where students feel welcome. It is a place where ideas and creativity can run free, students can learn about cultures and identities outside of their own, diversity is celebrated, and mindfulness is embraced. For students who feel isolated, the school library is a much-needed space that offers the promise of safety and connection.

The uncertainty of life in a pandemic has demonstrated the importance of creating environments like this where student mental health and wellbeing can flourish. Heightened uncertainty and anxiety, particularly in hard-hit areas like Victoria that have faced lengthy lockdowns and fluctuating restrictions, have taken a strain on the mental health of students and teachers alike.

Wellbeing takes many shapes and forms, but the pandemic has drawn our attention to building resilience in the face of adversity. Lyn O'Grady, community psychologist and contributor for the Student Wellbeing Hub, explains resilience in the context of the pandemic:

> " Resilience helps us understand how to get through these times, draw on our inner strengths, work together to support each other, and strengthen relationships so that we're not alone. "

O'Grady describes resilience as a 'useful and hopeful' concept that allows us to use our experiences to create meaningful change for the future. Even as we see glimpses of hope in the introduction of vaccine programs across Australia, schools are encouraged to refresh their wellbeing policies and processes to continue building resilience beyond the pandemic.

The Student Wellbeing Hub (https://studentwellbeinghub.edu.au) is a free resource that can equip you with the skills and knowledge to get you started. Whether you want to enhance your wellbeing activities in the library or liaise with your school leadership team to introduce a whole-school focus, the Hub is full of handy resources to guide you every step of the way.

Here are six ways you can use the Student Wellbeing Hub to help all students – and their wellbeing – thrive.

- **Unpack the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework**
  The Australian Student Wellbeing Framework provides the foundation for building positive, safe and resilient learning communities that allow every student to reach their full potential. Based on evidence recognising the connection between student safety, wellbeing and learning, it offers a set of guiding principles and practices across five pillars – leadership, student voice, support, inclusion and partnerships – that enable a whole-school approach to student wellbeing. Read through the Framework and browse the Illustrations of Practice to discover practical ways to use it in your school, such as introducing student-led forums to empower student voice.

- **Check in with the School Wellbeing Check**
  The School Wellbeing Check is a brief survey that you can take to assess your current practices, aligned to the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework. Complete the survey yourself or share it with your leadership and wellbeing teams to

help your school identify priority areas in building a safe, inclusive and positive learning community. The survey can be completed as a group to compare results and gain insight into how existing programs are perceived.

- **Enhance your understanding of wellbeing topics**
  The Hub offers free, self-paced professional learning modules to give you the confidence to talk about themes around wellbeing. Equip yourself with an understanding of a range of wellbeing topics, from online safety to alcohol and drug use. The Resilient and Inclusive Classrooms course is a great place to start and has recently been updated to better understand resilience in the context of disasters such as the pandemic and bushfires. All courses on the Hub are aligned to the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework and AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

- **Explore resources to support your students**
  So, you're ready to start introducing wellbeing initiatives in your classroom or library – but where do you start? The Hub hosts a suite of free, curated online resources to spark inspiration and initiate conversations, covering topics from bullying prevention to respectful relationships. Browse through the resources to hear from schools that have successfully implemented wellbeing programs, find activities to use in your library or classroom, and learn strategies to drive positive change in your school.

- **Invite families to the conversation**
  Student wellbeing starts at home and feeds into the classroom, so bridging the gap between the two will strengthen the support networks available for students. Share the Student Wellbeing Hub with parents to invite them to play an active role in supporting their child's wellbeing. Parents are encouraged to explore resources that will help them understand wellbeing themes such as mental health and bullying, how to approach sensitive conversations at home, and how to keep their children safe and healthy.

- **Remember to look after your own wellbeing**
  We know that it isn't just students who have felt the strain of the pandemic on their mental health – teachers also need support as they continue to navigate life in, and beyond, the pandemic (Dabrowski 2020). The Hub offers a professional learning module on principal and teacher wellbeing to give educators a framework within which to work, and provides practical strategies for building personal and professional wellbeing.

Make wellbeing a priority in your library or classroom

Once you have the tools and framework to understand student wellbeing, you will be better supported to take an active approach to promoting it in your library or classroom.

While libraries have often led the way in promoting wellbeing, the Student Wellbeing Hub encourages a whole-school approach to ensure wellbeing seeps into the fabric of the entire learning community. It is when this happens that students – and their wellbeing – can truly flourish.

Image credits

Illustrations by Jess Racklyeft, © Education Services Australia.

References

Dabrowski (2020), 'Teacher wellbeing during a pandemic: surviving or thriving?', *Social education research* 2(1): 35–40, https://doi.org/10.37256/ser.212021588

Nicole Richardson
Marketing & Communications Team Leader
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SCHOOL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT: MERCY COLLEGE, COBURG

SCIS speaks with Anne Girolami from Mercy College in Coburg about their school library.

What is your job title, and what does your role entail?

I am the Learning Leader Information Services at Mercy College, Coburg, a Catholic secondary school for girls in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, approximately 10 km from the CBD.

I am responsible for leading and managing the Information Centre. The library team comprises a 1.0 FTE teacher librarian position, shared between myself and another teacher who is studying to be a teacher librarian, and 2.0 FTE library technicians.

Anne Girolami assisting student to find a resource.

There are many aspects to my role: assisting all students and staff with solving their information or reading needs; teaching in the Year 7 and 8 Wide Reading program; collaborating in the Year 7 Humanities program with explicit teaching of information skills; and generally providing support for the learning and teaching program. I have responsibility for managing the library team, overseeing budget expenditure, developing and maintaining the collection – including working with the Learning Leaders to select new resources – and performing circulation duties. I also ensure central resource management, the promotion of the library, and attend meetings with the library team and a range

of other school groups. Finally, I ensure that the library supports the College's initiatives and current strategic plan and provides a welcoming and safe environment for all users.

> " I believe that the school library underpins the learning and teaching of the whole school. It supports students in their learning and teachers in their teaching to enable all students to achieve success. "

What is the most rewarding aspect of working in a school library, and why?

The most rewarding aspect is the opportunity I have to interact and work with all members of the school community. Our school is relatively small and at various times students come to the library to do their work, borrow or read books, use the printing facilities, attend the Homework Club, meet up with their friends or simply chat to a member of the library team.

What do you see as the most important part of the library's role in the school community?

I believe that the school library underpins the learning and teaching of the whole school. It supports students in their learning and teachers in their teaching to enable all students to achieve success. At Mercy College, the school library has always been valued. This has been demonstrated by the employment of suitably qualified staff, the provision of an ample annual budget and the understanding of the library as being

central to the core business of the College.

Building positive relationships is also crucial and I have the advantage of knowing each student and staff member by name. The library belongs to the whole school community with the library team as caretakers. Observing students and staff use the library and seeking their feedback on how to improve the services or programs, as well as keeping abreast of trends in school libraries, is important to enable the Library Team to deliver effectively.

Are there any current issues or challenges facing your library? How are you working to overcome these?

Being a small school, our major challenge is giving students access to a variety of resources. It is imperative that the budget allocation is spent wisely over the course of the school year; we cannot waste money or resources. Central resource management is key. All items purchased are catalogued, processed and mostly centrally housed. This procedure avoids the unnecessary doubling-up of resources. Working in partnership with learning leaders to order resources on their behalf or to share the cost of particular resources has been a positive step.

How do you promote reading and literacy in your school? Are there any challenges in doing this?

The fiction collection is an important aspect of our resourcing. A significant portion of the budget is devoted to the purchase of current and diverse titles. Students and staff can make suggestions for new titles – Year 7 students are particularly delighted when they learn this. An important aspect of this process is that the person suggesting is the first one to borrow the title when it becomes available.

The formal Wide Reading program for Year 7 and 8 students is valued and supported via the English Domain. Every class has a set timetabled lesson once per cycle with a particular focus for each year level. Overall the strategic intent is to improve the reading aptitude and attitude of our students. A special aspect of our approach is the reading competitions in Term 3. Year 7s participate in the Seven

Million Words reading quest, Year 8s in the Year 8 Genre Reading Challenge and the rest of the school in the Year 9–12+Staff House Reading Competition.

Another part of the promotion of reading and literacy is the fortnightly Freedom Readers Book Club. Members discuss the book they are currently reading and suggest titles that might pique each other's interest.

Colourful and eye-catching displays are another example of promotion. At the beginning of each school year, the library team plans for different aspects. It could be new books, books you should read by the end of a particular year level, books that suit a unit of work, or holiday reading selections. We ensure that before each term holiday we have a selection of books for staff to read.

The school has a long history of celebrating National Literacy and Numeracy Week with a plethora of activities planned by the English, Mathematics and Information Centre staff. Focusing on words and numbers, the Week has developed into one of the highlights on the school calendar.

How do you encourage students to make use of the library?

The library is available for class or individual use throughout the school day and into the early evening. At the beginning of the year there are orientation sessions for new students and staff.

At lunchtime students are able to eat their lunch in the library as long as they are sitting at a table and clean up after themselves. This has proven very popular as students eat their lunch whilst working with a friend, finishing their work or studying for a test.

The Homework Club operates in the library each afternoon, and during lunchtime there is also support available for students with regard to their work.

While COVID has altered our routines, games are available for students to play during break times. There are a number of clubs run by the library, including Chess Club, Crafty Club and K-Pop Club.

> " The school has a long history of celebrating National Literacy and Numeracy Week with a plethora of activities planned by the English, Mathematics and Information Centre staff. "

What is your favourite thing about SCIS?

By far my favourite thing is that for all my years working in school libraries, SCIS has offered a central base to catalogue resources, Australia wide. This database is specifically designed to serve schools by providing a consistent approach to the cataloguing of all types of resources used in schools. It is a fantastic tool. The efficiency of how new resources are catalogued and added is such a time-saver for a hectic school library. This database has enabled me to get resources catalogued and processed in a timely manner, adding value to our service provision. What is even more special is that it is easy to send resources in to be catalogued. This not only frees up time for me but also ensures that the catalogue details for new resources are available for all schools around the nation.

Image credits

Images supplied by Anne Girolami.

Year 8 History in library Fiction view.

Student lunchtime activity at Mercy College Coburg.

Anne Girolami
Learning Leader Information Services
Mercy College, Coburg

ASLA AUSTRALIAN TEACHER LIBRARIAN AWARD 2021

Congratulations to Anne Girolami, Learning Leader – Information Services, Mercy College, Coburg, Victoria.

Anne Girolami was announced as the winner of Australian School Library Association (ASLA) Australian Teacher Librarian of the Year for 2021 by Kerry Pope, ASLA Vice President, on 13 April at the ASLA/SLASA National Conference. The presentation was made by Caroline Hartley, the Schools Catalogue Information Service (SCIS) manager. SCIS is the proud sponsor of this prestigious award.

Anne's passion for school libraries and teacher librarians has been a driving force in her career and she has devoted many hours to this cause. She has more than 30 years' experience as a teacher librarian in school libraries and loves sharing her knowledge and expertise with colleagues.

Anne's work at Mercy College in Melbourne has been exceptional. Anne is a key member of the Curriculum and Pedagogy Team and meets regularly with her school leaders. She works enthusiastically with the library team to deliver services and programs that are at the heart of learning and teaching and that adhere to best practice in library standards. She continually shares her love of reading and literature with her students. Anne works hard with staff to analyse data and identify student needs. She works closely with teachers and support staff to build their capacity to prepare students for life-long learning. Anne is highly respected and valued by her principal, the students, staff, parents and members of her school community.

Anne has made a significant contribution to ASLA over many years, as an active and committed member. She has served as an ASLA Board Director, presented at ASLA Conferences, reviewed policies and reported at ASLA Annual General Meetings.

Anne has led a number of joint working parties with ASLA and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), responsible for reviewing and writing national policies for teacher librarians. Anne was chair of the ASLA Policy and Advisory Project Team (PAPT) to produce evidence guides for teacher librarians in the areas of 'Proficient' and 'Highly Accomplished' accreditation to support AITSL's Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. These documents have proved to be invaluable, and are referred to constantly by teacher librarians undertaking accreditation today. Throughout 2019 and 2020, Anne chaired the team reviewing and updating Table 6 in the combined ASLA/ALIA publication, *Learning for the future*. Recommendations of minimum information services staffing were thoroughly researched and documented. With Anne's calm, intelligent and thoughtful leadership approach, these working parties progressed diligently and consistently with the task at hand, resulting in the production of current, relevant and outstanding documents for Australian teacher librarians.

Anne is to be highly commended for her extraordinary and exemplary work in advocacy. She has been a Fellow of ALIA since 2020 and is a long-term convenor of ALIA Schools, working hard for the promotion and development of school libraries in Australia. She is an active member of the School Library Coalition and the FAIR Great School Libraries Campaign. Anne is an extremely worthy recipient of the award for 2021.

Over the years, this national award has recognised and honoured Australian teacher librarians who have made outstanding contributions to the profession of school librarianship. Through their high level of achievement in professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement, they have had a positive impact on teaching and learning in their schools. A special thank you to SCIS for their sponsorship of the award in 2021 and their ongoing support of school libraries and teacher librarians in Australia.

In Anne's acceptance speech she made the following comment:

'I would like to acknowledge Caroline Hartley, manager for the Schools Cataloguing Information Service, or, as we know it, SCIS. SCIS has been a wonderful sponsor of ASLA and school libraries. In particular, the service that it offers in having a centrally based cataloguing service has enabled many schools the opportunity to access catalogue records. This frees up time for school library staff to undertake other tasks that need to be performed in the school library. I have been a proud supporter of SCIS right from the beginning of my career. And it is wonderful that they are able to make this sponsorship available. I am grateful for their part of the prize for 2021.'

ASLA Australian Teacher Librarian Award winners since 2003:

- 2021 – Anne Girolami, Mercy College, Coburg, VIC
- 2019 – Holly Godfree, Lake Tuggeranong College, Tuggeranong, ACT
- 2017 – Jane Viner, Kilvington Grammar School, Ormond, VIC
- 2012 – Alinda Sheerman, Broughton Anglican College, Menangle Park, NSW
- 2011 – Maureen Twomey, Assisi Catholic College, Upper Coomera, QLD
- 2010 – Janice Wilson, Lake Tuggeranong College, Greenway, ACT
- 2009 – Nareeda Tillman, Mindarie Senior College, Mindarie, WA
- 2008 – Jan Radford, Delany College, Granville, NSW
- 2007 – Helen Reynolds, The Southport School, Southport, QLD
- 2006 – Carol Miller, Hamilton Secondary College, Mitchell, SA
- 2005 – Jennie Bales, Summerdale Primary School, Summerhill, TAS
- 2004 – Margaret Holman, Black Forest Primary School, Black Forest, SA
- 2003 – Beverley Endersbee, East Para Primary School, Para Hills, SA

Image credits
Image supplied by Anne Girolami.

Kerry Pope
ASLA Awards Team Leader 2021

WEBSITE + APP REVIEWS

EARLY YEARS HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT
https://learningplace.eq.edu.au/cx/resources/file/d1fe14fb-4339-4210-80e7-27637e4e6411/1/portal/index.html
A subsection of the Queensland Department of Education's website featuring a range of resources, information and guidelines relating to early childhood students. Content includes emotional wellbeing, health conditions, language and literacy development, hygiene, and physical activity.
SCIS No. 5363629

FIRST LANGUAGES AUSTRALIA
https://www.firstlanguages.org.au
This website aims to promote awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and to advocate for their use. A variety of resources for schools are available, including language maps, current projects, news, lessons and web resources.
SCIS No. 1883878

LINKING SCIENCE WITH LITERACY
https://www.primaryconnections.org.au
Established with the aim to 'enhance primary school teachers' confidence and competence for teaching science', this resource presents teachers with units of work aligned to the Australian Curriculum. Related content includes details of e-resources, equipment lists, incorporating First Nations Australian perspectives into units, and online professional learning for staff.
SCIS No. 5363652

MOVE EASE
https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/rap/resource/access/5cf286f4-0b11-409b-906f-742147c9ec35/1
The NSW Department of Education has produced this resource to assist K-6 teachers with the techniques, skills and processes to teach dance in their classrooms. Content includes the importance of dance in various cultures, the role of dance in historical times, and how dance is inspired by life.
SCIS No. 5360202

NASA STEM ENGAGEMENT
https://www.nasa.gov/stem/foreducators/k-12/index.html
An initiative of NASA, this topical website focuses attention on the increasing importance of STEM, specifically in relation to space. A plethora of engrossing videos, games, lessons, activities, and virtual tours are available for both primary and secondary teachers to use with their students.
SCIS No. 5363679

OUR LAND AND WATER
https://ourlandandwater.nz
New Zealand's AgResearch and the associated National Science Challenge are looking at ways stakeholders can preserve 'the land, water and associated ecosystems – while producing value from those same treasures'. Primary and secondary students and teachers can access a variety of pertinent resources focussing on this challenge.
SCIS No. 5363696

OXFAM AUSTRALIA'S SCHOOLS PROGRAM
https://www.oxfam.org.au/education-2/
Teachers and students can use Oxfam Australia's curriculum-linked resources to integrate a variety of global issues into the classroom. Issues tackled include climate change, gender inequality, humanitarian emergencies and economic imbalances.
SCIS No. 5364134

RECOMMENDED LITERACY APPS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/ccchdev/Information%20Sheet%2036%20-%20Recommended%20Literacy%20Apps%20for%20primary.pdf
AUSPELD supports students and adults throughout Australia struggling with both learning difficulties and specific learning disorders. A directory of selected apps is available in the target areas of phonological awareness, phonics, reading, writing and vocabulary/grammar.
SCIS No. 5364143

RESOLVE: MATHS BY INQUIRY
https://www.resolve.edu.au
Collaboratively managed by the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, this free program has been designed to promote engaging and relevant mathematics for K-10 students. The exemplary lesson plans are linked to the Australian Curriculum, and teachers also have access to professional learning modules.
SCIS No. 1864576

TEDED@HOME
https://ed.ted.com/
TEDEd has created an array of video-based lessons to assist teachers, students and parents around the world who are engaged in schooling from home. The free resources are organised by grade level from K to university and cover a wide range of subject areas. Daily updates are delivered to nominated inboxes.
SCIS No. 1562966

TERRAGENESIS – SPACE SETTLERS
https://apps.apple.com/au/app/terragenesis-space-settlers/id1039841501
Based on informative and authoritative data from NASA, this immersive free app aims to help make barren planets ultimately habitable. Scientific technologies are employed to combat a variety of scenarios that need to be overcome. Available for most mobile platforms.
SCIS No. 5363706

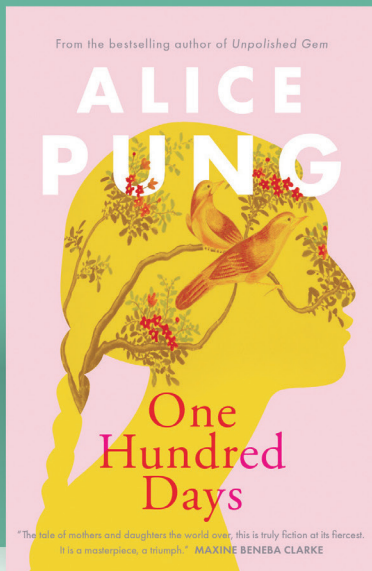### YALE ENVIRONMENT 360
https://e360.yale.edu
Senior secondary students studying global environmental issues will find a wealth of pertinent and authoritative information, analysis, and debate from this online magazine published at the Yale School of the Environment. Content is available by topic, region or author.
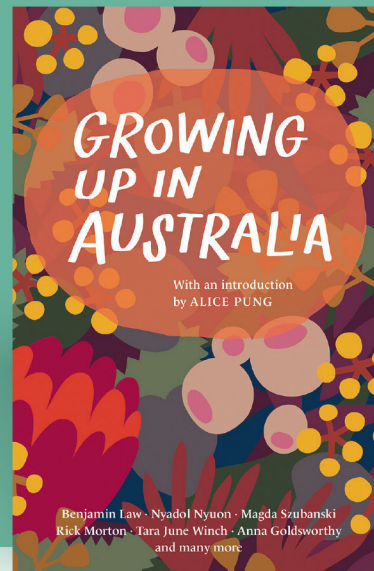SCIS No. 5364108

Nigel Paull
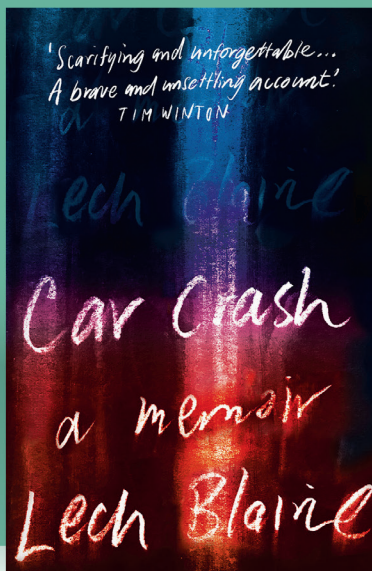Teacher Librarian
North Coast, NSW

The websites and apps selected for review are often of a professional nature and should be initially viewed by teachers and library staff to determine suitability for students. The links and content of these sites are subject to change.

ALICE PUNG

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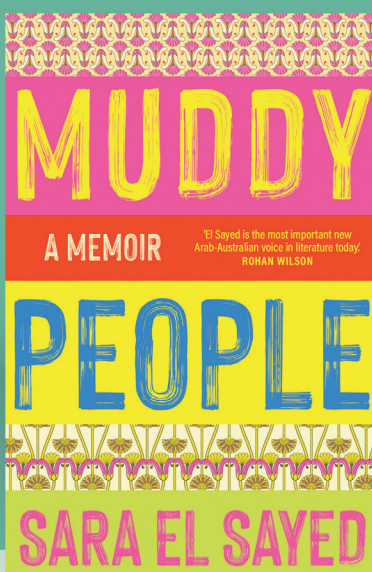
'Scarifying and unforgettable... A brave and unsettling account!' **TIM WINTON**

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'Scarifying and unforgettable.'
TIM WINTON

A heart-soaring act of literary bravery.'
TRENT DALTON

'One of the best writers of his generation.'
BENJAMIN LAW

GROWING UP DISABLED IN AUSTRALIA

EDITED BY CARLY FINDLAY

A rich collection of writing from those negotiating disability in their lives - a group whose voices are not heard often enough

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A MEMOIR
'El Sayed is the most important new Arab-Australian voice in literature today.'
ROHAN WILSON
PEOPLE
SARA EL SAYED

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EDITED BY ANITA HEISS
Growing Up Aboriginal in Australia

2019 ABIA WINNER
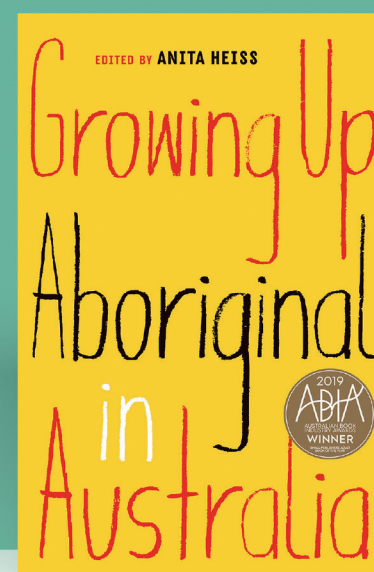
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