

## Andy Griffiths

### On why humour is not taken seriously enough

**Kate Temple:** 'I don't believe in censorship'

**Jared Thomas** on diversity and representation

**Tui Raven** on contextualising culture



**Kay Oddone** on collection curation, new websites and apps, and professional reading for library staff



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### Connections

A quarterly magazine by SCIS  
Schools Catalogue Information Service  
[scisdata.com/connections](http://scisdata.com/connections)



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# Library love letters

In this section we share readers' thoughts, opinions and feedback on topics that matter most to them. We'd love to hear your responses to our articles, opinions on current library issues or even a brag photo of your latest fantastic library display! Send your letters to [help@scisdata.com](mailto:help@scisdata.com) with the subject line **Library Love Letter** to join the discussion.

Dear editor,

I've been thinking about change over the length of my career in school libraries and remembered a conference I went to back in the early '90s where a speaker used Heraclitus' quote 'change is the only constant', or words to that effect. I've also been thinking about how the Information Fluency Framework may develop. So, then I realised that SCIS is the only constant in school libraries! As library staff, we all look ahead – adapting services to the future context in which we operate. As we know, change has been continual and often relentless. The challenge is looking forward while maintaining standards, which is what SCIS has done since its inception back in the '80s. Who would have thought we would have moved so quickly from

physical to digital, and then adding more and more data to how we describe resources!

SCIS enabled me as a teacher librarian to focus on key programs – supporting reading, research, and information fluency – while developing new initiatives tailored to students' needs. When I was Library Coordinator in the NSW Department of Education, I often had conversations with library staff about the value of SCIS and how it supports life in the fast lane of a busy school: saving time by providing detailed, consistent cataloguing records, providing a constant service despite changes in library management systems and schools, and providing professional learning to library staff.

Thanks to SCIS, which remains a cornerstone for school libraries, helping them manage continual change while upholding the standards that define quality, which is after all what we are about as educators. I hope SCIS has a wonderful future ahead!

– June Wall



June Wall works in learning design and with educators to develop digital literacies and lifelong learning capacities.

She has been a K-12 teacher, a lecturer, a professional development and education consultant, special librarian, teacher librarian, president of ASLA and SLANSW, and worked in both government and non-government sectors.





# Andy Griffiths: King without a crown

*Connections* editor Ceinwen Jones sat down with the ninth-best children's author in Australia,<sup>1</sup> Andy Griffiths, to chat about appropriate children's literature, different ways of depicting diversity, authenticity in storytelling and inventing AI.

I'm not going to lie, I'm slightly disappointed in the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation, because upon meeting this year's laureate, Andy Griffiths, I discovered he had not yet been given a crown – or even a laurel wreath – to mark his 2026–27 reign. He seemed unsure whether he would ever receive one, saying, 'They haven't sent me one yet, but I already have my cardboard box adventure helmet, which is the only headgear I need. It keeps me safe on all my adventures—both real and imaginary.'

They are lucky he is a versatile and forgiving person.

In Andy Griffiths, Australia has a children's literature advocate who is serious, funny, thoughtful and articulate, with an imagination that has kickstarted generations of lifelong readers.

As a kid, Andy liked creating little magazines and jokes and comics for the entertainment of his friends and family. He thinks that Child Andy would have been pleased to know that Adult Andy still gets to do that. 'I think he [Child Andy] would be delighted to know that he will avoid having a "proper" job all his life and will continue on with the same playful messing around that he enjoys so much at school.'



**Ceinwen Jones:** You like humour in the absurd and you identify with Holden Caulfield. Would you say you're a little bit of a Peter Pan? And do you think all children's authors have that quality?

**Andy:** I think all children's authors, to quote Roald Dahl, have a solid block of childhood within them. And then to quote Morris Gleitzman, the window stays open for children's writers so that you can go back through that window any time to enter the mindset of a much younger person. And it doesn't mean that you act like a child all the time, because I can be an adult when I need to be. But when I pick up a pen, it's the child who takes over ... and my adult self is really just there to supervise and edit and negotiate with the other adults.

Andy has thoughts about libraries, censorship and the role of adults as gatekeepers of what children read – and he has a story that will make you check whether you have an up-to-date [Challenged resources policy](#) for your school library!

**Andy:** [In the early years] there was a small number of people, gatekeepers, who thought I was encouraging kids to be crazy, out of control and disobey their parents. And I said, 'I think kids can tell the difference between real life and what's appropriate in a book. And the reason they enjoy my books is because they know my characters are actors, acting way outside the bounds of common sense, and sometimes decency, but they always get some sort of comeuppance. They don't get rewarded for that behaviour. And it does not encourage kids to act like those characters in real life. That's the cathartic benefit of reading and also of humour ... that you can entertain the most outlandish ideas and not have to do it yourself. So that's what I feel I spent the first 10 years of my career explaining ... And many adults came around when they saw the kids just rolling on the floor laughing as I presented, and then rushing for the library to read those books.'

**CJ:** Which is not the kind of crazy behaviour that your critics might have been dreading: rushing to the library.

**Andy:** No, and my readers are some of the nicest kids you'll ever want to meet. As I hope I was in many ways, but I was attracted to the dark side and the crazy side in my reading. And I guess that's where I came in and I thought, there's not enough of that going on in modern children's literature – we're losing them to television and movies, which don't have this idea that everything should be a message that we can learn from – which I think books somehow got saddled with.

When publishers told Andy that his books were entertaining but they couldn't see a market for them, this was illustrative of the

<sup>1</sup> Andy proclaimed himself thus in [this interview on ABC Radio](#) on 14 February 2026, due to being the ninth author chosen as Australian Children's Laureate.

“And so, what I would say to all parents and teachers, if I could, is: don’t worry about whatever grades they’re getting, make sure they’re getting literacy. Fill the house with books. Make sure you’re going to libraries, bookshops, exposing them to whatever books might turn them on. And it may not be what you want, but if they’re engaged, that’s great. If they have the bedrock of literacy, they’ll be able to find their way in the world without you pushing and without you transmitting anxiety to them.”

(Right) Andy Griffiths and illustrator Bill Hope, who collaborate to make the *You & Me* series



perception that books should have a message, a purpose. But to Andy, the purpose is the act of reading itself. The lack of purpose is what kids enjoy about Andy’s books.

**Andy:** That’s called play ... Some librarians were saying, ‘We had to remove your books from the library because a parent complained.’ And I said, ‘One parent complained?’ And they went, ‘Yeah, well, you know, what can you do?’ And I said, ‘You can explain to that parent that kids are all different and they need many different types of books, and that you have the right to say to your child, ‘No, I don’t want you reading this book,’ but you don’t have the right to dictate that to a whole school community. I really admired one librarian who would give a complaining parent a 20-page form to complete where they had to explain very specifically what their issues with the book were. The librarian said, ‘Faced with such a document, not many people followed through with their complaint.’

Did you know that Andy Griffiths invented generative AI in 2013 when he and Terry Denton wrote *The 39-Storey Treehouse*? It started with an idea about being obsessed with the end product versus the process of getting the product ... and turned into a story about Andy and Terry inventing a writing and drawing machine.

**Andy:** I thought, what if we could just have the book without the work? Wouldn’t that be great? Then we could just play. And what Andy and Terry discover is that they get bored because

they haven’t got a problem to exercise their creativity on. So they want to continue writing the book, but the machine says, ‘No, I’ve got this. In fact, I’m better than you. You’re only going to make it worse.’ And so they have to get rid of the machine so they can have the fun of writing and drawing the book themselves. So to me, the important bit is the process of thinking it through ... the reason I like writing books is because it gives me a problem to chew on for a whole year. That’s really fun.

**CJ:** I want to ask you about the tension between schools and the fun in reading, because schools are constantly under pressure for results and measurable literacy outcomes and academic focus. How do we, as teachers and librarians and people who love reading, reconcile that with promoting joy and imagination and adventure in reading, like you do?

**Andy:** The glib answer is to stop being obsessed with assessment and measurement, because you cannot measure the infinite joy that a book, a powerful book, gives you. It infuses every area of your life. The way you see the world shapes what you feel are the possibilities. So I think we took a wrong turn ... [An American academic at an educational conference in the early 2000s] said, ‘Do not go down the road of testing. We’ve done it in America. It doesn’t lead anywhere.’ But Australia went, ‘Okay, thanks.’ And off we went ... I think it’s a misunderstanding of what education is. There’s an anxiety amongst parents, and clearly educators,



“A reader will identify with any character, animal, vegetable or mineral if the writer is doing their job right. For me as a writer and a reader, representation is not the prime thing.”

but I think parents have a bit to do with it: ‘Why isn’t my child at this standard,’ you know? We’re preparing this child for, you know, university and a good job and it’s very serious and we need to do this. And the irony is if they just backed off, took the anxiety out of it, let the child embrace whatever it is that they are into – whether it’s books or car engines or horses – and read books about that, that’s what’s going to give them a satisfying life. Not cracking the whip and shutting creativity and imagination down ...

**CJ:** How do you think authors can convey an authentic representation of diversity without being accused of being performative or just ticking boxes?

**Andy:** I did have one kid in America ask me, ‘Will you ever be including a transgender character in your books?’ And I went, ‘Well, I’m not going to just put a token character in, because I’m writing from my experience, and with my friends Terry and Jill, and we’re writing what’s true to us.’ But it did increasingly bother me, and that’s why the new series with illustrator Bill Hope, *You and Me*, features two characters who are genderless ... they’re completely covered head to toe with their adventure suits. Kids had been asking me to put them in the book – I was really working on that problem. How could I represent all readers as one single character, as one *you*? Because I write to an imagined *you*. But yeah, Bill Hope helped me solve it, just by saying, ‘We’ll put a cardboard box on their head’ ... But the other thing we did was to populate our worlds with non-human characters. By using animals and other objects as characters, we sidestep issues of representation. So that’s my solution. You can’t do it tokenistically, because kids will pick you for a fake like that. So it has to be real. It doesn’t have to be moralistic – and

that’s something I steered away from as a kid. Any book that smelled of worthiness, I was like, ‘uh-uh.’ I think story is of prime importance; just once upon a time, and you sweep them up and take them into that world of adventure and imagination.

**Andy:** When I first started writing ... I tried to be a ‘serious writer’. I was like, ‘Oh, I better put all this silliness aside now and write properly.’ But it just wasn’t in me. Anything that was worth reading that I wrote was always amusing or it had some left-of-centre, wacky angle. And I just, after a while, went, ‘Oh, I’m never going to be a serious writer. I must be a clown. All right, I’ll lean into it’ ... I think that’s what made the kids respond to it at a very deep level. They just went, ‘This guy’s nuts. We love him, you know, because he’s not trying.’

**CJ:** They love the authenticity of it. I mean, that’s what you were saying about diversity and that’s what you’re saying about writing in general, isn’t it? That you’ve got to be authentic, number one, right?

**Andy:** Yeah. Attend to authenticity. That is your main problem as a writer, whether it’s for children or adults. I feel like if I’m having fun and genuinely amusing myself and co-writers then I trust that enjoyment will transmit to the reader.

Andy Griffiths is the Australian Children’s Laureate 2026–2027. His books include the *JUST!* books, the *Treehouse* series, *Let’s Go!*, and the *YOU & ME* series, the latest of which, *You and Me and the Gigantic Knucklehead*, will be published on 28 July.



# SCIS: News for subscribers

How quickly mornings have shifted from the blinding starkness of the summer sun to a fight for sun's influence over dawn's chill. Dog walks in the morning are heavy with the weight of darkness, as Rudy and I traipse about the streets and bike paths of inner-city Melbourne. Soon, morning and evening walks will be shrouded in the darkness of winter. Australia has reverted to only three time zones again, as Term 1 has quickly morphed into Term 2.

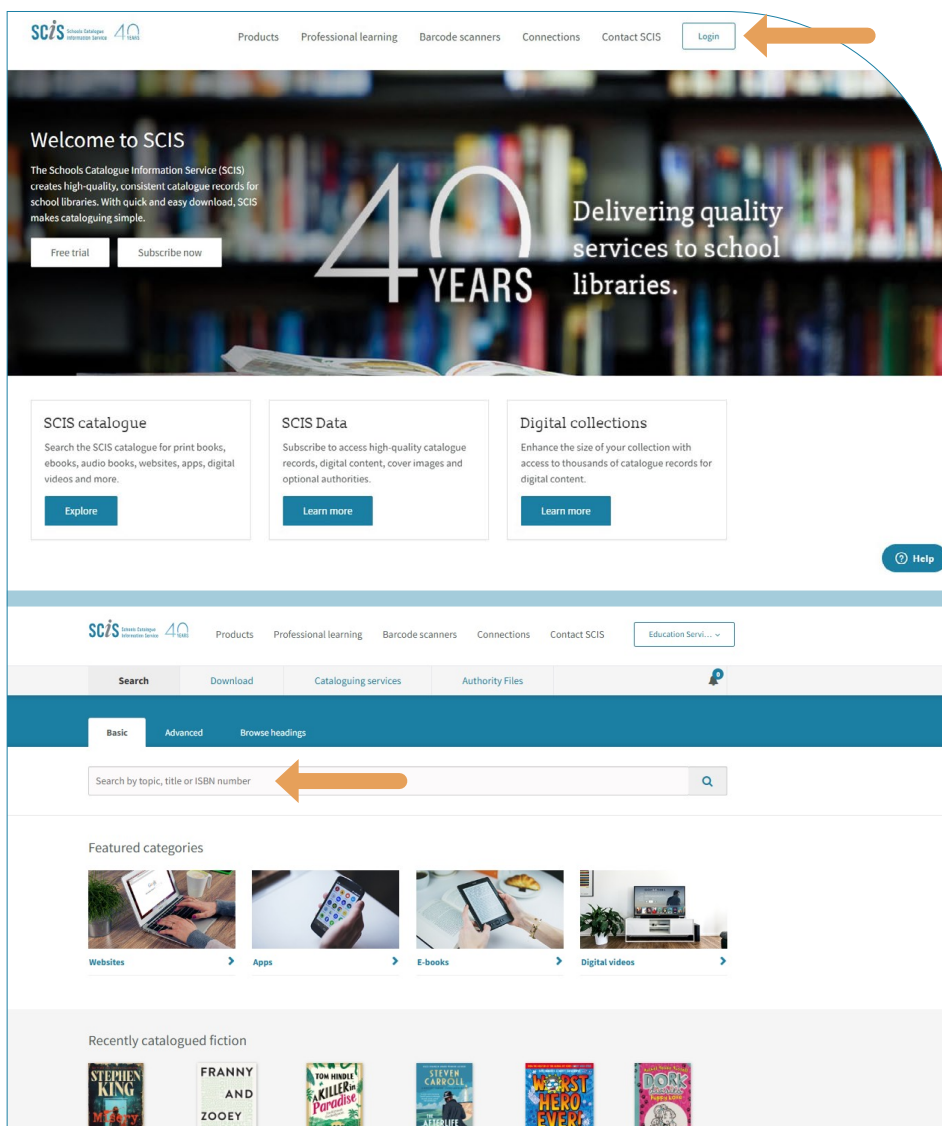
From everyone at SCIS, a cosy autumnal welcome to Issue 137 of Connections, and to Term 2. We hope that you find some time to curl up in a warm sunny spot to indulge in reading for pleasure.

As you'll recall, we have embarked on a program of improving the scisdata.com user experience for our customers. Over the coming months you'll notice that there will be several enhancements delivered which will make it easier for users to find the high quality and consistent SCIS catalogue records on our website.

Hopefully you have noticed an enhancement when you log into [scisdata.com](https://scisdata.com). From the login screen, rather than being automatically directed to the Quick scan screen, you'll go to Search. From here you can search the SCIS Data database of over 1.8 million resources by topic, title or ISBN. Users can also select Advanced search or the Browse Headings to customise their search further. You can also select from our featured categories (Websites, Apps, E-books and Digital videos) and see recently catalogued fiction and non-fiction resources.

Over the coming months you'll see more enhancements and improvements to [scisdata.com](https://scisdata.com). As each enhancement is delivered, we'll email users who have agreed to receive marketing from SCIS, to let them know what's changed and how it helps them. If you have any feedback about the changes we're making, please email [help@scisdata.com](mailto:help@scisdata.com).

Term 2 is usually the start of school library conference season and 2026 is no exception. Keep your eyes peeled for SCIS



team members at the TLPLC Conference in Campbelltown (NSW), the SLA NSW Professional Learning Summit and the SLASA Conference. Make certain that you book in for any SCIS presentations to make the most of your conference time. Bring your questions and suggestions with you, as we're always happy to talk with customers and answer any questions – even the curly ones.

A reminder also to book in for SCIS professional learning in Term 2. To see what's planned for this term and through to the end of the year, go to: [scisdata.com/professional-learning](https://scisdata.com/professional-learning). Don't forget that our online professional learning sessions are free to attend and that all registered attendees, even those who can't make

the session, receive a link to the recording, which they can view at their leisure.

Have a wonderful Term 2 supporting better outcomes for students, and we hope you enjoy reading Issue 137 of *Connections*.



**Anthony Shaw**  
Product Manager  
SCIS



# How to build a collection for purpose, with purpose

## Why more information is not the answer.

Since generative AI (GenAI) leapt into public view with ChatGPT in late 2022, the conversation about AI in schools has felt relentless. Journals, professional learning, conference sessions and social media are saturated with frameworks, tools and opinions. At first, this avalanche sparked lively reflection on our use of digital technologies (Selwyn & Szili, 2025). Over time, though, the pace and volume of material have left many feeling overwhelmed. Some people feel they *must* read everything to keep up, and others simply switch off (Stillwaggon Swan, 2025). When there is too much information, meaning gets lost and decisions can become reactive, people feel stressed and misinformation is more easily spread (Harvey, 2025; Shahrzadi et al., 2024).

As school library professionals, sensemaking, synthesis and curation sit at the core of professional practice. It's time to promote this expertise, as making meaning and guiding others through information overload is an incredibly valuable contribution we can make in this area.

### From volume to value: why we need curation, not collection

Curation is not about saving everything that looks vaguely useful or sharing every link that crosses a screen. It is a deliberate process of selecting, annotating and sharing with intent and purpose (Cameron, 2023). Saving articles 'for later' may feel productive, but it is collecting, not curating. Chimero (2011) captures the difference between collecting and curating when he compares a bowl of loose pearls to a pearl necklace. Individual pearls may be valuable, but it is only when they are selected, ordered and strung together that they gain meaning and purpose. Collecting is additive. Curation is selective and often subtractive. It turns accumulation into something usable, coherent and worth sharing.

### School library professionals as expert curators: established practice in action

Evaluating sources, synthesising ideas and sharing information where it will have the greatest impact is part of everyday work for school library professionals. Whether it is finding the perfect picture book for a Foundation year student, identifying a reliable website that is also at the right reading level, or selecting teaching resources for a newly developed unit of work, decisions that balance authority, relevance, currency and context are made frequently in school libraries. This means that school library professionals are expert curators who can apply these transferable skills to any topic; and no information topic requires curation more than GenAI and its impact upon education.



Image by Copilot with prompt "imagine a world where librarians are curators and guides for the enormous volume of gen ai content that students need to contend with."

### Curating GenAI information: applying professional judgement

When faced with multiple sources competing for your (and your school community's) attention, applying these strategies can make the evaluation process easier.

- Investigate the credentials of the author or creator. Is their background in education, computer science or sales? What did they do *before* GenAI became their focus? What are their qualifications, and in what field?
- What is the intent of the article? Is the article providing useful guidance, or is it marketing disguised as advice? The blurring of boundaries between information and advertising can make this a challenging but important decision.
- Whose voices are not being heard or represented? As algorithms increasingly drive similar content based on previous engagement, it is vitally important to seek out a range of sources to ensure you are curating a balanced, unbiased set of resources and information.

These are strategies similar to what we teach students when scaffolding critical evaluation skills; but it is easy to forget that they should also underpin our own professional judgement.

## Contextualising the works: making meaning for your school

Every school is at a different stage in its engagement with GenAI, and resources that are useful in one context may not be appropriate in another. Interpreting information through local values, priorities and needs requires an understanding of the school community and its day-to-day realities. Developing a small, high-quality and trusted resource hub tailored to a specific school is often more effective than relying on large discussion lists or generic professional learning designed for broad audiences.

Timing and restraint also matter. Periodic updates that highlight one or two carefully selected resources can be more impactful than frequent alerts. Sharing a high-value article or tool once or twice a term allows time for reflection and discussion and is more likely to support meaningful engagement than regular newsletters filled with links that few have the capacity to explore.

## Everyday strategies for reducing overload

### What earns space

Before adding a resource, check it against a small, consistent set of criteria.

- Is it directly relevant to current teaching, learning or governance priorities?
- Is the advice supported by evidence, research or credible professional experience?
- Is the author appropriately qualified for the type of guidance being offered?
- Does it add something new or clarify thinking, rather than repeat existing material?

If a resource cannot clearly meet these criteria, it may not need to be included.

### What stays off the shelf

Deciding what not to share is an essential part of curation. Consider steering clear of:

- resources driven by hype or urgency rather than substance
- promotional content that positions a product as a complete solution
- generic advice that does not translate easily to your school context
- duplicates of information already available in your curated set.

Holding these back helps reduce noise and protects colleagues' time.

### How to label and frame

Well-framed resources are more likely to be used.

- Add a short annotation explaining why the resource was selected.
- Indicate who it is most relevant for and how it might be used.
- Highlight one or two key takeaways rather than sharing a long summary.

## Curatorial leadership: guiding without overwhelming

Schools do not need every resource, framework or response to move forward with confidence in the area of GenAI. What they need is thoughtful curation grounded in professional expertise and local context. School library professionals bring discernment to complex information landscapes, making careful choices that prioritise clarity over volume. This work is not just practical; it is ethical. Deciding what to share and what to hold back protects time, attention and wellbeing across the school community. Trusting in professional judgement and focusing on context-aligned guidance allows schools to develop responses to the challenges of GenAI with purpose rather than urgency. In crowded information spaces, thoughtful curation creates clarity, confidence and calm.

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### Kay Oddone

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Kay Oddone has over 25 years' experience in the fields of education and librarianship. Having taught at all levels from Foundation to post-grad, she has worked in higher education since 2015, holding several different roles including lecturer and learning designer. Her research interests include personal learning networks, networked and connected learning, critical and digital literacies, and critical digital and open pedagogies.



# Stereotypes and the mythology of race: legacy thinking that keeps us divided

A conversation with Dr Jared Thomas, Nukunu person of the Southern Flinders Ranges and children's author.

*We respectfully caution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers that this article may contain images of people who have passed away.*

If we're talking about similarities and differences between people, and categories we can put them in, I fall in to the 'not very good on the telephone' category. Even though I grew up with a phone book full of my friends' and relatives' landline numbers, a phone call to me now is a scripted and prepared event, and the result of an undue amount of overthinking!

But Jared Thomas is the opposite: obviously used to picking up the phone and having a chat, he suggested we talk during his work commute, when he had an uninterrupted 45 minutes. And sure enough, there was no awkward small talk! We dived straight into the big issues in a totally natural and thoughtful way. Here are the insights and thoughts Jared shared with me at the start of his working day a few weeks ago.

## On race

The concept of race, and the use of it to divide and hierarchically organise societies based on physical or circumstantial differences between people, began in the late 16th century (Smedley, 2026). Contemporary scientists now agree, however, that human physical variations should be understood as environmental adaptations, rather than fundamental genetic differences.

'Race is a political and social construct that is fluid. Racial categorization can change over time, place, and context. Race has been used historically to establish a social hierarchy, whereby individuals are treated differently resulting in racism.' (Bonham, 2026)

Jared explained to me the long-ranging and deep effect of this type of thinking on Australian society – not in the way that colonising Australians think about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but in the way the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples think about themselves.

“[from the time of the colonisation of Australia], there was a whole lot of biological determinist understandings placed on Aboriginal people. So some of the thinking is that Aboriginal people are just naturally inherently violent, uncivilised ... unintelligent ... These were the dominant types of thinking ... [and] a lot of the early writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and [indigenous] people around the world is based on all of these false assumptions; not only non-indigenous people but even indigenous people ourselves.”

These assumptions lead to stereotypes about people – both in the negative and positive sense. For First Nations Australians, a dominant negative narrative is that First Nations people are not good at maths or literature; and a positive narrative is that they are good at sport and art. The reality is that there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors, lawyers, engineers, footballers, librarians, teachers, politicians, authors ... so varied representations of First Nations peoples, reflecting the reality, is appropriate and important. And that should be reflected in library collections too.



## On authorial intent

“What I’m trying to do is show ... the sophistication of our culture and the commonality between us. I’m trying to show you our humanity. And that Aboriginal culture is a very collective culture rather than individualistic. I want to challenge myths around Aboriginal people [and show] three-dimensional characters, not stereotypes ... or if there are stereotypes, making sure they’re explained and contextualised.”

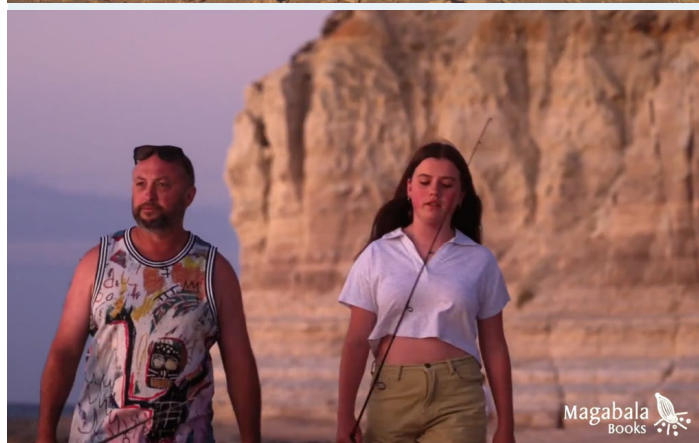
In this sense, depiction of diverse characters is not just about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeing themselves in stories, but about them seeing themselves, and non-Aboriginal and non-Torres Strait Islanders seeing *themselves*, all within the context of society as a whole. Jared emphasises that it is the role of school library staff to ensure collections are diverse and representative, and there are plenty of resources available to enable this. It’s the author’s responsibility to ensure integrity in representation, by consulting with the appropriate community and involving the relevant people in the research and writing of the work. But the work of publishers is also important.

‘There’s such a proliferation of Aboriginal children’s authors and fantastic publishers like Magabala Books that dedicate all of their time to producing the best quality Aboriginal children’s material that they can, and for young adults ... the publishers are now working with real intent to produce quality work that has integrity – it’s about trying to populate your collection with those works.’

## On labels, content warnings and decolonisation of the school library

Jared has the following advice for library staff assessing their collection – especially in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Staff should consider the following.

1. Is the resource accurate?
2. Does it have sensitivities?
3. Is it misrepresentative or defamatory?
4. Is the author an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?
  - a. If yes, are they speaking for themselves and their people, or for another Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander group?
  - b. If not, are they a non-indigenous person speaking on behalf of First Nations people?



Still images from Jared Thomas’ video introduction to Uncle Xbox [magabala.com/products/uncle-xbox](https://magabala.com/products/uncle-xbox). Reproduced with permission.



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When Jared speaks about decolonisation, he's very concerned that we do not erase history. 'I think in terms of ... decolonisation ... it's not just about complete removing [of resources from school libraries]'. Materials may contain offensive ideas and language, but it's important for people to understand that past policies, media representation and the discourse around people's kitchen tables all led to poor treatment of First Nations peoples historically, over time and into the present.

There should be a warning that prepares the reader for what they're going to look at, so that they understand the cultural context and engage with it critically. 'It's very important to be aware of what you have in your collection and make sure that ... if it needs a label, it's got a label. And if it doesn't have a label, maybe you need to set it aside until you give it a label.'

Our conversation ended as Jared drew close to the end of his journey, but not before he had emphasised his investment in continuing the conversation. By ensuring that our school libraries contain diverse and varied resources that depict the nuances and realities of modern life, school library staff can also continue this conversation.

## References

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- Smedley, A. (2026, March). *The history of the idea of race*. Britannica. [britannica.com/topic/race-human/The-history-of-the-idea-of-race](https://britannica.com/topic/race-human/The-history-of-the-idea-of-race)



### Dr Jared Thomas

Author and Research Fellow  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Material  
Culture and Art, South Australian Museum.

Dr Jared Thomas is a Nukunu person of the Southern Flinders Ranges and the Adelaide University Coordinator of Indigenous Collections and Archives. He is also the author of children's and young adult books, including the award-winning *Calypso Summer* and the *Game Day* series with Patty Mills. Jared is concerned with contextualising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences. His Churchill Fellowship reported on First Nations and marginalised people's interpretative strategies in permanent gallery displays in Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Norway and the United States.



# How ELR benefits authors – and readers!

The Australian Government's Educational Lending Right (ELR) Scheme ensures that Australian book creators (authors, illustrators, translators, compilers and editors) and publishers are compensated for the free use of their books in Australian educational lending libraries.

**Samantha Bound spoke with author, creative writing teacher and literary agent Danielle Binks on the importance of the ELR Scheme and the symbiotic relationship between children's authors and schools.**

## How has the Educational Lending Right Scheme helped you, as an author?

Many of the books that I have written have been studied and are on the curriculum at various schools, and one of the ways I really benefit from this is via income earned from Educational Lending Rights. I don't know if you know this, but there's not a lot of money in being a children's author! According to the Australian Society of Authors, the majority of authors in Australia are living well and truly below the minimum wage in terms of the profit that we make from sales of our books alone. Supplementary income for children's authors comes in the form of visiting schools, doing school talks, workshops, Q&As, book clubs and speaking engagements. This is true for me: as a children's and young adult author, I make the majority of my income from visiting schools.

But the other way we make income, in order to sustain ourselves and have a creative career, is via the Educational Lending Rights scheme. ELR helps us be compensated for the sales we would have otherwise made from our books being taught in schools and circulated in school libraries.

## Why is it important that school libraries support the Educational Lending Right program?

I think this goes hand in hand with why students need school libraries. School libraries are the beating heart of any school community. We know that librarians, teacher librarians and English teachers utilise their school library in numerous ways, and one of those is talking about appropriate books for curriculum and classroom study and inviting authors to come and talk about the books, the themes, the characters. It is the highlight and honour of my life getting to write for young people and then actually meeting those young people in classroom and library environments and having the most engaged discussions about my books. It's a wonderful symbiotic relationship children's authors have with school libraries, and the Educational Lending Right Scheme allows that relationship to remain healthy and be a kind of two-way street.

It also helps authors in that it extends the life and reach of their books – we don't just make one book and then it fades away and you never hear about it again. Having books in rotation in school libraries helps to maintain discussion around them. Libraries simply ask students, 'Hey, take this book away and if it impacts you that's beautiful, but bring it back so another student can be impacted by it, too.' It's the

best kind of harmonious relationship there is, especially in the society and community we live in right now. Educational Lending Rights helps authors to keep making more books and continue that relationship.

## Why is it important that children read, especially in a digital age?

Look, the fact of the matter is, generationally, we're not reading as much. We're not reading specifically **for pleasure** as much. We're heading towards mass illiteracy and a drop in critical thinking and media literacy right at the time when, in the digital age, we're seeing deepfakes and generative AI come up again and again.

Reading has also been proven to improve vocabulary and literacy. If that matters to young people in terms of grades in school and education, fantastic. But more than that, it will make them better members of society. It will grant them empathy and the ability to sympathise with other people. If they can care about a fictional character that's not real, then they can also care about somebody on the other side of the world who's going through something that they may never experience themselves. And that is a gift they can then pass on to others and use to raise them up.



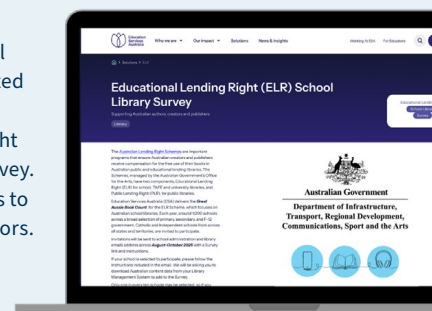
**Samantha Bound**  
Author and Engagement Coordinator, Digital Services  
Education Services Australia (ESA)

Read the extend interview online!



In Term 3, invitations will be sent to schools selected to participate in the Educational Lending Right (ELR) School Library Survey. Ten minutes is all it takes to support Australian creators.

Learn more [here](#).





# Yours Troolie, Kate Temple

Author Kate Temple's thoughts on current issues in children's literature.

## Is there ever a place for censorship, in particular in the context of school libraries?

In a world where book banning has been regularly in the news, Kate Temple finds the idea of censorship very concerning. However, in the context of school libraries, a nuanced approach is needed: 'I don't believe in censorship broadly ... It's not censorship to think about whether or not a book is age appropriate for a child.'

## Who makes the decision about what's age appropriate for children?

In a school library setting, Temple observes that there is a range of professionals who are gatekeepers. Parents are the first and most important voices, but teacher librarians often understand the landscape better than most – they know what books are out there, why they're out there, what's doing a good job of imparting a particular message. Being thoughtful about choices is really important: 'Taking a moment to go, well, is this the best way that we can explore this issue? And fortunately, there are so many books that explore difficult issues very well.'



## What about community values and inclusivity?

Temple says that libraries should be safe spaces for all students, and places where all families and all people can find something that reflects them, their lives and their families. Showing representation in a library isn't just for the benefit of any one group – it also benefits the whole community: 'It's vital to have a range of different families, different people, different lifestyles in the book, and not in a way that is didactic, but just in a way that's really incidental because that's what life looks like.'

As for the criticism that children's books are preoccupied with inclusivity – and virtue signalling – Temple says this is an incredibly naive view that suggests 'people are not reading these books, because you would only have to open these books to see these are interesting stories ... that are telling a greater narrative and those elements of diversity are just part of the story and they are part of life.'

## What could we see more of in children's literature?

Temple has been told by lots of her readers, particularly girls, that they love Alice Toolie and her incredible energy and vision. Alice's belief that she has everything under control – when she often doesn't – makes her character realistic, fallible and very funny. Temple is always looking for ways to give her girl characters different roles to those they often have in books:

'I don't think there are enough funny girls out there ... And when I talk to kids in schools [about this], the girls are immediately like, "Exactly. We agree with that. There are not enough funny girls in books." And I always say to girls, "Well, there should be, because we're hilarious." And they agree, because girls are hilarious. And I think there needs to be more kinds of funny girls, because the [only] two you get are the clever, wry humour girl or the real, *There's something about Mary* stumbly kind.'

## Did you really say that *Mega rich guinea pigs* teaches children about the ethics surrounding late-stage capitalism?

In an internet culture with creators like Mr Beast who promote an aspiration for money that is totally out of sync with real life, Temple feels that *Mega rich guinea pigs* is a way of talking to kids who watch that content and asking them to consider it critically.

She started noticing the obsession with billionaire culture on school visits and thought it was really interesting. 'And what we love to do is use fun and humour and fiction to unpack those kinds of themes. So it sort of pulls apart what is the value of money ... how much money is enough, and does anyone ever really deserve to have so much money?'

Temple admits that some of these ethical issues are dry and hard to get into, 'But we're looking at the ethics of billionaire culture through the lens of guinea pigs. And ... there aren't a lot of [children's] books that talk about money and kind of question it critically.'

### How do we approach sensitive or tricky topics with a children's audience in mind?

Temple emphasises that there are many books for children that explore difficult issues very well, and that different age groups require different treatment: 'often very subtly for a younger audience or within an allegory ... and then there are much more pointed ones, which in older stages is appropriate as well. For example, our book *Room on our rock* (Temple & Temple, 2018) and the picture book *The Mediterranean* (Greder, 2018), they're on the same topic. One is so much heavier and could be inappropriate for a really young audience, but they're both unpacking the same issue.'

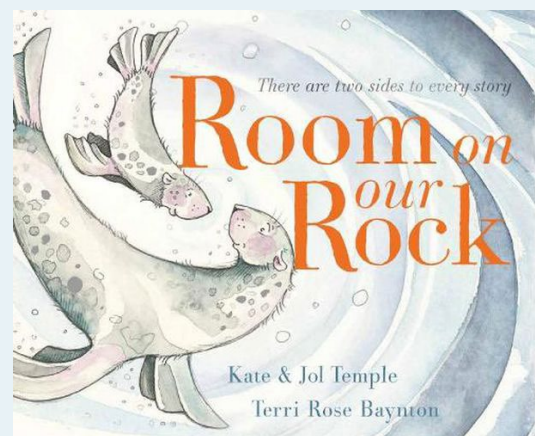
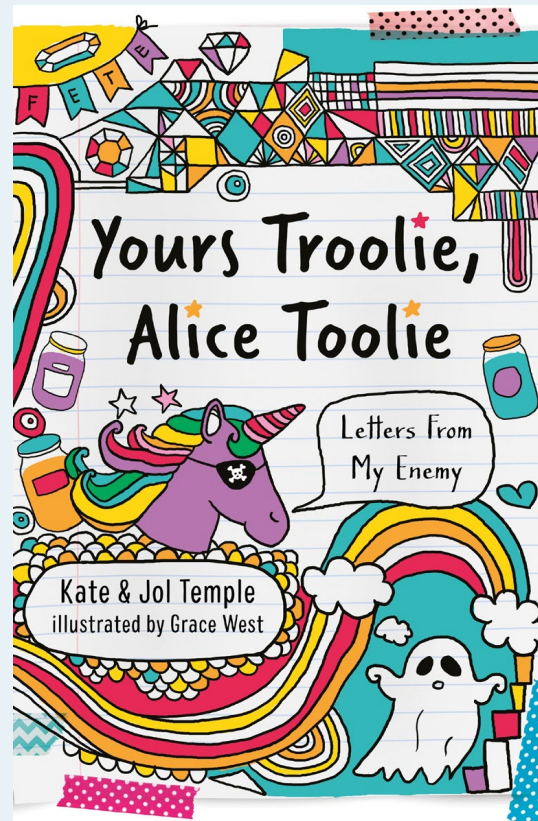
### Some final praise for teacher librarians and library staff

'I think we're just so fortunate, you know, to have teacher librarians where we do because ... they do think very deeply about their collection. They do consider the issues. They are completely aware of what's age appropriate for kids and I think, without that thought that a teacher librarian brings to the literacy that's available to their cohort, you'd really be in trouble because they do take these issues very seriously and think about what is on their shelves.'

### References

- Greder, A. (2018). *The Mediterranean*. A & U Children.
- Temple, K. & Temple, J. (2025). *Bin chicken lights up the night*. Scholastic Australia.
- Temple, K. and Temple, J. (2018). *Room on our rock*. Scholastic Australia.

Kate and Jol Temple are the authoring duo behind more than 40 books for kids, from the best-selling *Bin chicken* series to the new middle grade book *Mega rich guinea pigs*. Kate has also written, solo, the middle grade novels *The dangerous business of being Trilby Moffat* and *The perilous promotion of Trilby Moffat*.





# Tui Raven – from guerilla cataloguing to inclusive cataloguing

Tui Raven discusses the past, present and future of reparative collection description in Australia.

The abiding message of Tui Raven's *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description* is that the words we use are important. They're important on the surface level because we want to be able to find things and we need to use language that is instinctive and intuitive and that people recognise. But words also have a historical legacy and an influence, politically, socially and collectively. There's a real responsibility when a library catalogue names an authorised term for something: when library users go to a library catalogue and see that a particular term is being used, the assumption is that it's the officially accepted term.

Tui Raven's *Guidelines for First Nations Collection Description* was published in 2023 and quickly became a seminal reference document for library professionals wanting to ensure First Nations materials – from archival ephemera in museum collections, to books on school library shelves – are accessible and discoverable. Raven's interest in catalogue description grew out of her starting a PhD, enquiring about how Noongar cultural items were described in Western Australian collections.

After studying fine arts and linguistics, focusing on Indigenous languages, Raven became a project officer for Indigenous literacy at the State Library of Western Australia. Raven then went onto become the Project Coordinator for the *From Another View* project where she quickly realised, when working with archives, that it was difficult to find what was needed. 'We actually had to go and pick the boxes out and have a look through them [to know what they contained] ... and we were also finding that there were things within books that might have contained Aboriginal languages or culture heritage ... but it wasn't on the catalogue record. There was no way of notifying [the researcher] that a particular group was mentioned in a book.'

Before all of this, Raven admits that as a high school student she 'did a bit of guerilla editing, as I called it, because there were books that had words in them that were just inappropriate, all the descriptions were inappropriate ... So I just went through with a pencil, and ... wrote a comment ... and at the time I wanted the book removed, but now I wouldn't actually remove the book at all. I would actually put a statement now ... to say that [our library] contains historical collections that were reflective of the practices and thinking at that time.'

Raven faced a number of challenges when developing the *Guidelines*: learning about collection description and MARC 21 without having a library background; creating one set of guidelines that groups over 200 language groups into one entity; and ensuring that the *Guidelines* were usable for a wide range of purposes, both now and into the future. Raven also highlights the problematic nature of describing cultural resources using a different culture's framework. 'Studying linguistics is studying

the metalanguage of language. And when you look at library systems, that's the metalanguage of information systems ... I can see the similarity between them ... [but also] the difference between how things are being described from a linguistic language point of view as opposed to an information system which in libraries is based on Western concepts of knowledge.'

Raven illustrates this with the example of the magpie (Koolbardi).

“As a Noongar person ... I think about the Koolbardi in terms of seasons, not in terms of other birds. The Koolbardi is the bird that sings in the season and closes out the season. So you know the seasons are changing and you know it's going to get warmer or cooler because the birds have come out ... so when the Koolbardis start to sing, the weather's about to change. And by weather I mean season ... and so I would probably catalogue the Koolbardi a very different way [that is, in relationship with the seasons] than, say, someone who's looking at a Western biological framework or taxonomy.”

Authorship is another point of cultural dissonance. 'The way that we think about authorship and ownership in library systems is different to the way that we think about authorship in an Indigenous knowledge system.' Where an Indigenous person has shared their knowledge with a researcher, in Western library systems, the researcher would be named as the publisher, and the Indigenous person may be named as a contributor or not named at all. In an Indigenous knowledge system, the Indigenous person would be the author and the researcher would be the contributor.

Raven points out that language offers clues and insights into the time period of works, and the people who used them.

“I’m of my era: I sometimes say ‘Indigenous’ and I sometimes say ‘Aboriginal’, but I know older [Indigenous] people who use the word Aborigine ... they’re of their era and so they should be allowed to use it in their own self-determined way.”

She believes we should keep those older terminologies in collections as a way of signposting the era they’re from.

For school libraries, Raven emphasises that referring to the [AIATSIS codes for language groups](#) enables library staff to recognise which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and peoples are represented in their collections, whether their local community is represented and if there are gaps. She recommends that collections be audited to see what needs to be edited, what needs labelling and how the materials can be organised in a way that is accessible for everyone. If possible, Australian First Nations materials should be contextualised with materials about Indigenous peoples from other parts of the world.

Following the release of the *Guidelines*, Raven is particularly proud of the establishment of the [Reparative Description Community of Practice](#), which currently has around 150 members and is an opportunity to discuss what reparative description for First Nations collections looks like at a large scale. She is also proud of the inclusion of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property concepts and terms in the *Guidelines*, enabling a direct relationship between them for future developments in legal areas like patents and intellectual property.

Raven’s *Guidelines* formalise the commitment which began for her as a grassroots campaign in high school. Her framework assists cataloguers and library staff in their responsibility to use respectful and thoughtful language in describing their collections and reminds us that reparative cataloguing is an ongoing and collaborative process.



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### Further reading

Indigenous Archives Collective, Faulkhead, S., Thorpe, K., Sentence, N., Booker, L., & Barrowcliffe, R. (2023). *Indigenous referencing guidance for Indigenous knowledges*. Indigenous Archives Collective and the UTS Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research. [caval.edu.au/referencing-toolkit](http://caval.edu.au/referencing-toolkit)

Indigenous Archives Collective. (2026). *Indigenous Archives Collective position statement on the right of reply to Indigenous knowledges and information held in archives*. [indigenousarchives.net/indigenous-archives-collective-position-statement-on-the-right-of-reply-to-indigenous-knowledges-and-information-held-in-archives/](https://indigenousarchives.net/indigenous-archives-collective-position-statement-on-the-right-of-reply-to-indigenous-knowledges-and-information-held-in-archives/)

Raven, T., National and State Libraries Australasia, Council of Australian University Libraries, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, CAVAL Limited, et al. (2023). *Guidelines for First Nations collection description*. National and State Libraries Australasia, Deakin, Australian Capital Territory. [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3250767341/view](https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3250767341/view)

Tui Raven is Yamaji Nyungar based in Naarm/Melbourne, and is Senior Manager of Indigenous Programs at Deakin Library. Tui is a member of the ALIA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Expert Group and of the IFLA Indigenous Matters Section. In 2023, she authored the *Guidelines for First Nations Collections Description* for the Australian library sector as a joint project with ALIA, AIATSIS, CAVAL & CAUL. Tui is also a co-founder of the Australian Reparative Description Community of Practice.



# New websites and apps

Download the entire collection of records for these digital resources, plus a few more, which you can upload directly into your library management system. Select 'Connections Term 2 2026' and click on the Download button.

## Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges

<b>Type:</b> Website document	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559747
<b>Audience:</b> Secondary, teachers, library staff	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://libguides.anu.edu.au/ld.php?content_id=52529037">libguides.anu.edu.au/ld.php?content_id=52529037</a>	
<p>This document outlines the Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges project undertaken by Indigenous Archives Collective (IAC) members as a research and consultation partner with CAVAL. The report includes a preamble that sets the context of the work in both Australian academic libraries and within library and information studies nationally and internationally. It considers the intersections of library practices with Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. The project has created an Indigenous Knowledge Attribution Toolkit (IKAT) that includes a decision tree to provide guidance for assessing content and attribution, and a citation and referencing guide with examples that include Indigenous attribution.</p>	

## Yoorrook Justice Commission

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5558113
<b>Audience:</b> Secondary, teachers, library staff	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://yoorrook.org.au">yoorrook.org.au</a>	
<p>This website is the official public record of the Yoorrook Justice Commission. It shares truths, evidence and recommendations from the Commission's historic truth-telling process in Victoria.</p>	

## First Nations Initiatives

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559717
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://education.gov.au/first-nations-education-policy/first-nations-initiatives">education.gov.au/first-nations-education-policy/first-nations-initiatives</a>	
<p>This page provides links to important information on First Nations education past and current initiatives, and resources associated with First Nations education policy.</p>	

## The Little Bookroom: articles and booklists

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559684
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers, library staff	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://littlebookroom.com.au/book-lists">littlebookroom.com.au/book-lists</a>	
<p>A collection of articles and topical book lists curated by the staff of the children's bookstore The Little Bookroom in Melbourne. An excellent resource for assisting with collection development, particularly with specific topics in mind.</p>	

## Australian Framework for Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Schools

<b>Type:</b> Website and document	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559702
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers, library staff	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://education.gov.au/schooling/resources/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools">education.gov.au/schooling/resources/australian-framework-generative-artificial-intelligence-ai-schools</a>	
<p>The Australian Framework for Generative AI in Schools (the Framework) was developed by the National AI in Schools Taskforce, which included representatives from all jurisdictions, education sectors and the national education agencies. It seeks to guide the responsible and ethical use of generative AI tools in ways that benefit students, schools and society. It gives educators a guide on how AI should be used in terms of teaching and learning, human and social wellbeing, transparency, fairness, accountability, privacy, security and safety. The site has a downloadable PDF reference poster.</p>	

## Reconciliation Australia

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 1033394
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers, students	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://reconciliation.org.au">reconciliation.org.au</a>	
<p>Reconciliation Australia promotes and facilitates respect, trust and positive relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In particular they have a range of resources about Reconciliation Action Plans, including a process specifically designed for schools and early learning services.</p>	

### Burraga First Nations Languages Platform

<b>Type:</b> App	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559717
<b>Audience:</b> Students, teachers	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://burraga.org/first-nations-languages">burraga.org/first-nations-languages</a>	
<p>This app provides First Nations communities, language groups and organisations with the tools to design and deliver flexible, accessible and respectful digital language learning pathways in the Burraga languages. Students can access interactive language learning games and authentic cultural learning materials, contributed and managed by local First Nations communities from across Australia.</p>	

### Education Daily

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559678
<b>Audience:</b> Parents, teachers	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://educationdaily.au">educationdaily.au</a>	
<p>EducationDaily supports families and education professionals to make smart, informed choices to get the most out of the education system from preschool, through primary and secondary, and right through to tertiary schooling at TAFE/University. Throughout the day EducationDaily updates with topical news and useful information for parents, students and teachers about schools and education in Australia.</p>	

### LoveOzYA

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559693
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers, students	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://loveozya.com.au">loveozya.com.au</a>	
<p>The Australian Young Adult Literature Alliance, more affectionately known by our social media hashtag #LoveOzYA, is a national organisation promoting Australian youth literature, supporting diverse representation and 'own voices' in Australian YA. #LoveOzYA aims to support teachers, librarians, writers and readers of Australian YA with news, resources and events.</p>	

### Squiz Kids Planet Warriors series

<b>Type:</b> Podcast	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5559667
<b>Audience:</b> Primary	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://squizkids.com.au/planetwarriors">squizkids.com.au/planetwarriors</a>	
<p>This six-part podcast series introduces kids to the different types of renewable energy that will power the world they will grow up to live in. In each episode, a different energy superhero walks kids through the basic science of how each renewable energy source works, while an academic addresses the most common myths surrounding them. Each episode comes complete with a dedicated classroom worksheet.</p>	

### Narragunnawali

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 5377845
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://narragunnawali.org.au">narragunnawali.org.au</a>	
<p>Narragunnawali supports schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions. The site includes a large range of professional learning resources designed to strengthen school staff understanding of reconciliation and support respectful teaching practice.</p>	

### Wingaru

<b>Type:</b> Website	<b>SCIS ID:</b> 1964786
<b>Audience:</b> Teachers, students	
<b>URL:</b> <a href="http://wingaru.com.au">wingaru.com.au</a>	
<p>Wingaru means 'to think' in Darug, the language group of the family behind Wingaru. The website aims to make Aboriginal Studies accessible to all children by developing culturally appropriate educational resources for mainstream classes. A digital subscription service that bundles all resources is available, as well as an online store for purchase of Aboriginal Education resources.</p>	

# The Last Word

This regular column is your digital TBR list, bringing you school library news and research for your professional reading.

Read the whole lot.



- Devour the latest Connections
- Coffee
- Further reading - The Last Word

**One college's experience of decolonising their library**

Caprano, L. et al. (2022)

**Watch Tui Raven provide an overview of the First Nations collection description guidelines**

National and State Libraries Australasia (2023)



**The State Library of NSW's toolkit for Indigenous spaces in library places**

State Library of NSW (2025)

**Reading Australia's list of fantastic teacher resources for books published by Magabala Books**

Copyright Agency (2026)

**An article reflecting the growing realisation of the downsides of AI in education**

Vilcarino, J. & Langreo, L. (2025, 8 October)

**A technical but interesting deep dive into AI prompts**

Tay, A. (2026, 11 January)

**The UK National Literacy Trust's report on the state of teenage reading**

Clark, C. et al. (2026)



**How a New Zealand library replaced Dewey classification with the Te Ao Māori classification system**

Burns, J. (2025)

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