



MEDIA RELEASE

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VETERAN COROMANDEL AUTOHR WINS STORYLINES MARGARET MAHY MEDAL 2017

Veteran children's novelist Des Hunt has been announced as the recipient of the 2017 Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal.



The Margaret Mahy Medal has been given since 1991 for an outstanding contribution and lifetime achievement in the field of New Zealand children's literature and literacy.

"Des Hunt's greatest contribution is his ability to 'hook' young people into reading through his riveting stories situated in familiar contexts, with characters similar to their friends and families. His school presentations make children feel that books are pivotal to their lives," says Storylines Chair, Dr Libby Limbrick.

Des Hunt is the author of more than 20 acclaimed children's and young adult novels, most set in New Zealand with strong environment and science themes.

Since his first novel for children in 2001, *A Friend in Paradise*, he has produced one or two novels nearly every year, winning places on Storylines Notable Books and New Zealand Post book awards short lists. *Cry of the Taniwha* won the 2016 Storylines Gaelyn Gordon Award for a Much-loved Book, and his latest *Sunken Forest* is a 2017 Storylines Notable Book.

A secondary teacher for 40 years in physics, computing and electronics, Des has also won the Woolf Fisher Memorial Award for Services to Education, and a New Zealand Institute of Physics Award. He has helped to develop science curricula in New Zealand, the Pacific and Scotland, and published two text books on science education.

Since retiring from teaching in 2007 to concentrate on writing fiction for children, Des has become a popular visitor to schools and libraries throughout New Zealand, combining his love of storytelling, the environment and science.

Previous winners of the Margaret Mahy Medal have included Joy Cowley, David Hill, Kate De Goldi, Fleur Beale, illustrators Lynley Dodd, Gavin Bishop and David Elliot.

The Margaret Mahy Medal and Des Hunt's lecture, entitled "Stories Out Loud", will be presented at the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal and National Awards Day on Sunday 2 April 2017 at the Epsom Campus of the University of Auckland.

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