

**35<sup>th</sup> IBBY World Congress 2016,  
Literature in a Multi-literate World,  
Aotea Centre, Auckland, New Zealand 18<sup>th</sup> - 21st  
August 2016.**

the 35<sup>th</sup>  
IBBY  
INTERNATIONAL  
CONGRESS

## **OVERVIEW**

The Congress was hosted by Storylines Children's Literature Charitable Trust of New Zealand, which acts as the National Section of IBBY - IBBY NZ. To support the effective and efficient running of the Congress a charitable company, IBBY CONGRESS 2016 Ltd, was established and The Conference Company (TCC), a professional company who provided huge support, in-house systems and knowledge, was contracted to work closely with the IBBY Congress Organising Committee.

**The theme:** Literature in a Multi-literate World, was chosen to encompass two of the major opportunities and challenges for literature for young people in the twenty-first century: literature in the multiple languages, and from the multiple cultures, of the world, and multi-modal literature, that is in multiple formats.

**Timing:** Due to being in the Southern Hemisphere, it meant we would have to hold the Congress in winter. We did look at having it in September or early October, our spring, but we took advice from various IBBY members who advised us about the Northern Hemisphere's university calendars, holding it outside of their holidays. In the end, we decided Auckland has a mild winter comparatively, and the Congress would be towards the end of the winter. While at the Mexico Congress, at a similar time of year to ours, we observed the temperature was in fact similar to what we experienced at the same time back in New Zealand – about 17°C. And it can rain in summer so we knew we had no control over the weather!

In the end, we had a week of sunshine and wonderful weather, and on either side of the Congress (for those travelling), better than the September/October dates we had originally considered.



## **IBBY CONGRESS ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

We had a supportive committee of twelve people, all volunteers with fulltime work commitments, and all with a broad range of skills and contacts. The committee included representatives of the following: Storylines Children's Literature Charitable Trust of New Zealand, the New Zealand Book Council, the National Library of New Zealand, the Publishing Association of New Zealand, Booksellers New Zealand, and other individuals with strong

involvement in children’s literature in New Zealand. We formed in November 2011, five years before the Congress, and met quarterly until about two years out, when we met monthly. Each member of the committee was responsible for one organising aspect of the Congress: Abstracts, Programme, Speakers, Gifts, Minute taking, Volunteers etc. It is important from the outset, to get commitment from people who know it will take their time and encourage them to be a sub-committee coordinator and find a team of people to support their part of the Congress. We worked closely with our conference organiser, The Conference Company, whose experience helped keep us on track.

The design company, Insight Creative, was asked to develop the branding for the Congress. They decided it was important to excite people about the prospect of seeing New Zealand to entice them to invest in travelling so far for this Congress. An illustration of a pop-up book was selected and a proven New Zealand’s children’s book illustrator/author, Ben Galbraith, was approached. We asked that his imagery included children – who are at the centre of IBBY’s aims– as well as distinct New Zealand imagery. We were able to transpose various elements of the overall design plan into all aspects of the Congress: decor, programme, communication and of course the website.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

- Paying delegates: 441
  - Level 1-4: 191
  - Level 5-6: 27
  - Level 7-8: 25
  - New Zealand: 107
  - Storylines members: 69



(New Zealand/ Storylines delegates would normally be Level 5 but were offered special rates as being from the host country and host organisation, Storylines).

- Day registrations: 8
- IBBY Support: 18
- Complementary: 91  
(IBBY staff, Elected and Ex-Officio Executive Committee members, Organising Committee, Invited Speakers, Sponsors, 2018 Congress Organiser, Bookshop staff, Media)

Total Attending: 536

Attendees at the Hans Christian Andersen Dinner: 550

## COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

The Congress was attended by delegates from these countries:

Argentina 5	Australia 46	Austria 2	Belgium 3	Bolivia 1	Brazil 5
Cambodia 3	Canada 7	Chile 1	China 30	Croatia 1	Cyprus 1
Denmark 3	Ecuador 1	Egypt 1	Estonia 3	Finland 2	France 1
Germany 4	Ghana 1	Greece 1	Greenland 1	Haiti 1	Holland 5
Hong Kong 4	Iceland 1	Indonesia 3	Iran 3	Ireland 1	Italy 2
Japan 18	Laos 3	Latvia 3	Lebanon 1	Lithuania 11	Malaysia 2
Mexico 3	Moldova 1	New Zealand 212	Nigeria 1	Norway 3	Palestine 2
Russia 2	Rwanda 2	Samoa 3	Singapore 4	Slovakia 2	Slovenia 2
South Africa 4	South Korea 4	Spain 1	Sweden 10	Switzerland 3	Thailand 7
Turkey 2	United Arab Rep 6	United Kingdom 8	USA 44	Uruguay 2	Venezuela 1

Unfortunately, three delegates from Afghanistan and eight delegates from Uganda were denied visas despite sponsorship and support correspondence from us and IBBY.

## VENUE

The primary venue for the Congress was the Aotea Centre situated in the heart of Auckland's CBD (Central Business District) and close to hotels. We opted for the Aotea Centre as Storylines has a long association with the venue for its annual Storylines Festival. We wondered if the five-storey building would be difficult to navigate for delegates, but in the end, it provided wonderful spaces for different programming events to take place in. The main auditorium, the ASB theatre, was recently refurbished and worked well with its raked seating, providing clear views of the stage for all audience members. A range of well-appointed breakout rooms with technical support was available.



Trade exhibitions and catering were held on the top floor thus encouraging delegates to interact with the exhibiting publishers and sponsors. The walk up to the top floor for refreshments enabled people to stretch their legs after sitting for so long, or there was a lift! The Exhibitors were well spaced on this same top level allowing access for delegates to view easily. The caterers were able to use the space well to have several stations to get food from which helped shorten queue time. We should have provided more seats for people to eat their lunch.

The book and illustration displays worked well on the main floor.

A number of events were held at the closely adjacent (AUT) Auckland University of Technology as they were our main sponsor and were keen to host events. These included IBBY meetings (Executive Committee, Hans Christian Andersen Workshop on dossiers for nomination, the General Assembly, Honour List lunch) and two early morning Author Breakfasts. The location was within easy walking distance to the main Congress venue, and rooms were comfortable and had a good variety in size for us to select according to the needs of the meeting or event. Technological needs of microphones and projections were readily available and staffed.

The Hans Christian Andersen Award Gala Dinner was held at an historic building on the Auckland waterfront large enough to accommodate over 500 diners.

## **PROGRAMME**

### ***Programme Overview***

The Congress Programme covered four days. Prior to the Congress opening on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August visits to libraries in Auckland were arranged for delegates.

We looked carefully at what we could add to the usual elements of an IBBY Congress programme (i.e. General Assembly, Open Forum, IBBY-Asahi Awards, HCA dinner). We were keen to add a New Zealand flavour and thought it incredibly important to have children involved.

The programme content consisted of presentations by 17 invited speakers, 101 papers presented by delegates, and 43 posters exhibited by delegates from 21 countries.

***Opening:*** We worked closely with the local Maori community to develop the best Powhiri (Maori welcome) we could, without it being too difficult for visitors to understand, or too long. What ensued was a perfect blend



of Maori protocol and keynotes from a few of our treasured writers. This was rounded off with the children from Bairds Mainfreight School, singing and dancing, in their national costumes.

**Closing:** We included keynote speakers from Weta Workshop and a performance of *The Whale Rider*, by Tim Bray Productions. To close, a finale of three school choirs performed a piece specially written and narrated by Joy Cowley.

Storylines Family Day, as part of their annual Festival of Writers and Illustrators for Children, deliberately coincided with the last day of the Congress to allow delegates to experience this unique day of celebrating New Zealand authors and illustrators.

We did not provide translation of the speakers, as it was difficult to know which language we would use. There was no one language other than English that was represented among the delegates.

### ***Invited Speakers***

We aimed to both highlight writers and illustrators from New Zealand, and to provide a balance of antipodean and international keynote speakers whose contribution was directly relevant to the theme of the Congress, Literature in a Multi-literate World. Our aim to represent the continents of the world was successful, with keynote speakers from Europe, North America, South America, Asia, and Australasia (unfortunately we did not have anyone from Antarctica!). As noted above, we had made a decision that translation services were not going to be possible. Therefore in most cases, we were constrained to inviting speakers who could present in English (or could bring their own English translator). We also wanted to acknowledge, where possible, previous Hans Christian Andersen winners. Plus, we aimed for a balance of individual speakers and panels spread across the days of the Congress. Unfortunately many speakers we initially invited were unable to attend.

The keynote speakers were as follows:

Joy Cowley, Witi Ihimaera, Kate De Goldi, Sir Richard Taylor, Martin Baynton, Gavin Bishop and Chris Szekely, Zak Waipara (New Zealand)  
Markus Zusak, Ursula Dubosarsky, Bronwyn Bancroft, Nadia Wheatley, Leigh Hobbs (Australia)  
Katherine Paterson, Leonard Marcus, Raina Telgemeier (USA)  
Julia Eccleshare (UK)  
Nahoko Uehashi (Japan)

Meshack Asare (Ghana)  
Roger Mello (Brazil)

### ***Parallel Paper and Poster Sessions***

Initially, 241 abstracts were received under the headings of Paper, Paper or Poster and just Poster. Only one abstract was accepted from each person. All abstracts were sent out to two blind peer reviewers who included four academic reviewers (for abstracts of an academic nature), and four professional reviewers (for abstracts concerning programmes and initiatives).

Once all peer reviews were received, the grades and comments were collated, and the full IBBY Congress Organising Committee met to decide which abstracts would be accepted into the 101 programme slots for the five paper parallel sessions and which posters for the Thursday and Saturday poster sessions. The committee declined 30 abstracts. Over the 10-month period prior to the congress, there were 67 abstracts withdrawn. Posters were divided into four sessions. Communication with these presenters was regular prior to the congress, and posters were deliberately placed in a high traffic area for a day and a half, to ensure their visibility. The sessions were very well attended, with much discussion.

### ***Hans Christian Andersen Gala Dinner***

The dinner was held on the penultimate night of the Congress, the Saturday, in a historic building on Auckland's waterfront. Over 500 guests walked through a path of New Zealand shrubs with bird song, upstairs to a children's orchestra playing while drinks were served.

On the fanfare of trumpets by school children, an extremely large book was popped open to reveal a fairy tale castle.

This set the mood for the evening of enchantment with speeches by Cao Wenxuan, the Chinese winner of the Hans Christian Andersen award for writing, followed by the illustration winner from Germany's Susanne Rotraut Berner's talk via video. She was unfortunately unable to attend the Congress. A three-course dinner was served to guests seated at tables beautifully decorated with traditional Maori flax floral displays.

### ***Exhibitions/Displays***

The various IBBY book displays (Hans Christian Andersen, Silent, Disabilities, Honour List) were all on display on bespoke shelving units,

provided by generous support of a company called Plankwall. They all looked very good with face-out display of the books and people could access them easily.

The BIB (Biennial of Illustrations, Bratislava) was independently displayed alongside the book exhibitions and attracted much interest also.

A display of much of Margaret Mahy's oeuvre and personal attributes was well received by both international and New Zealand delegates, as was the display of New Zealand award-winning books.

Painted Stories, an organisation that is focused on the archiving of children's illustration of New Zealand, mounted an impressive display of 21 New Zealand illustrators' work. These were displayed in an area that was light and open allowing good viewing. It was in the public space of the Aotea Centre so members of the public were able to see a good representation of some of the best of New Zealand's children's illustrators' work.

Accompanying text gave some biographical details about each illustrator.

### ***Meetings***

Several meetings were held during the Congress and these worked in smoothly during lunchtimes – Bookbird, IBBY Australia and the twinning/partner countries. It would be useful to have details of these meetings well in advance of the Congress to assist with planning – what size spaces are needed and any equipment required.

## **CONGRESS EVENTS (ADDITIONAL TO THOSE INCLUDED IN THE REGISTRATION FEE)**

### ***Library Tour***

The day before the Congress officially started, a fine winter's day showed Auckland off to its best as over eighty IBBY Congress delegates travelled across our sprawling city on two separate tours to some of our most inspiring school libraries. Both groups met at the National Library of New Zealand for a tour and lunch, before heading over the Harbour Bridge to finish at the newly built, and internationally recognised, Devonport Public Library. The day concluded with a quick ferry ride across the sparkling harbour back to the city. Feedback shows that 97% of participants were very satisfied with the Tour.

### ***Author Breakfasts***

Two concurrent author breakfasts were organised on the Friday and Saturday mornings (i.e. four in total), providing 120 delegates with an opportunity to learn more about New Zealand authors and illustrators. Each breakfast involved three different New Zealand authors/illustrators who were asked to speak for ten minutes each while delegates ate a hot breakfast. The authors included Donovan Bixley, Mandy Hager, Maria Gill,

Des Hunt, Kate De Goldi, Philippa Werry, Gavin Bishop, Sandra Morris, Ruth Paul, Kyle Mewburn, Melinda Szymanik and Sally Sutton. After speaking the authors signed copies of their books, which were available for purchase.

### ***Kids' Lit Quiz***

Holding the World Final of the Kids' Lit Quiz provided a platform in which to showcase the event to the wider IBBY community who may have been unaware of it. It brought young people into the event and was highly memorable for the young competitors to meet keynote speakers and international delegates. Results: Particularly exciting for New Zealand was that we won! Wellesley College from Wellington. Hamilton College, Scotland, from the United Kingdom, came second and Kinross Wolaroi School, Australia, was third.

### ***Follow Up Event with Leonard Marcus and Julia Eccleshare***

After the formal Congress concluded a special evening event was held at the National Library Auckland with international experts Julia Eccleshare and Leonard Marcus. Over sixty-five people attended the panel discussion chaired by Elizabeth Jones from the National Library with Leonard and Julia providing their personal perspectives and views on a wide range of topics. They were charming and open, sharing fascinating insights into their own careers and the factors that shaped their lives working with children's books and reading. For guests attending the event it was also an opportunity to view the special exhibition developed by the National Library for IBBY Congress showcasing the development of children's literature and publishing in New Zealand with the focus on our strong connection to landscape. Feedback on the event was extremely appreciative.



### **FINANCE** (see attached summary)

The Congress was established as a charitable company with the Storylines Trust Board as the shareholders, which provided a small loan as a startup fund. Seeding funds to get started on preparing for a Congress is one of the biggest hurdles many organisers experience.

Finance was a challenge from the outset. A number of factors led to high expense and potentially low income

- With an organising committee consisting entirely of volunteers with mainly full time employment, it was decided to work with the support of a conference organiser, which added substantially to the budget expenses; as it turned out a very sound decision because of the outstanding support we received.
- Costs of travel for invited overseas speakers to New Zealand were high.

- Registration fees were set to be consistent with IBBY guidelines, the equivalent of no more than 800 Swiss Francs and graduated according to the levels. It was decided however that although New Zealand was at IBBY Level 5 we would encourage local attendance by setting fees equivalent to Level 7/8 with a further reduction for people who were Storylines members. This fee structure put a strain on the budget but we received more registrations for New Zealanders than we expected.
- Due to the need to encourage people to commit to travel to New Zealand early it was decided to have a three-stage registration fee so that the full fee was not charged until close to the Congress.
- Venue and catering costs are relatively high in New Zealand.
- About the time that New Zealand was offered the opportunity to host the 2016 35<sup>th</sup> IBBY Congress one of our biggest cities, Christchurch, was devastated by two earthquakes that destroyed much of the city. Rebuilding and development of infrastructure put a huge demand on both government, institutional and philanthropic funding. Early attempts to attract funding to supplement delegates registration fees met with little success.
- Publishers in New Zealand, as in many countries, were consolidating and unable to provide substantial support.

Two and a half years out it looked as though New Zealand would have to withdraw from hosting the Congress. Thanks to generous sponsorship, this catastrophe was averted in time.

Eventually we not only exceeded our expected registrations we were also able to cut back unnecessary expenditure. Consequently we had a small surplus which has enabled a donation to IBBY of NZ\$14,000.

The support of the following major sponsors was greatly appreciated:

- AUT (Auckland University of Technology): Diamond
- Mainfreight: Platinum
- Pearson: Platinum
- New Zealand Ministry of Education: Platinum
- Faculty of Education, University of Auckland: keynote speaker sponsorship
- Creative New Zealand
- Auckland Regional Facilities

We would like to express our gratitude for the support from:

- Publishers Association of New Zealand
- Clean Slate Publishers
- Lift Education
- Unicef
- UNESCO
- Penguin Random House Publishers

- Plankwall
- Chartwell Trust
- Freemasons Trust
- Wheelers Publishers
- Dorothy Butler Bookshop (Official Congress Bookshop)
- Insight Creative

Other sponsorship was received closer to the Congress from local publishers and some income was received from sale of Congress memorabilia, and the sale of additional tickets to selected keynote sessions. Publishers of some of our international speakers were able to provide some financial assistance for travel.

## **EVALUATION**

All delegates were sent an evaluation survey: responses were received from 44% of the delegates. There were three versions of the evaluation form: International delegates, New Zealand delegates and Exhibitors. A summary of the response is appended to this report.

Overall, feedback was incredibly positive, with 95% of New Zealand delegates and 72% of international delegates rating it high or very high in relation to their experience of other conferences/congresses. Furthermore, 100% of New Zealand delegates and 95% of international delegates rated their satisfaction with the Congress organisation overall as high or very high. Only one respondent indicated that their satisfaction with the congress overall was less than moderate.

97% or greater of all responding delegates were highly satisfied or very highly satisfied with: communication with the Congress organisers; the venue; the process of abstract submission; the Congress website; the usefulness of the pre-Congress newsletters; the programme handbook; the HCA dinner; IBBY-ASAHI presentation; the Welcome Reception, and felt the Congress met their needs. All three of the additional activities - the Library Tour, Author Breakfasts and Kids' Lit Quiz finals - were also responded to very positively.

The percentage of responding delegates not attending the IBBY-ASAHI presentation was a bit disappointing (52 % New Zealand and 33 % international delegates) or the HCA dinner (27% and 8% respectively).

Particularly pleasing was the impact of the Congress on the increased awareness of New Zealand children's writers and illustrators by both New

Zealand and international delegates, as well as the potential of international contact and collaboration as a result of attending the Congress. Also gratifying was the evidence of greater awareness of the role of IBBY, and of Storylines by New Zealand delegates.

This comment represents many received following the Congress: *“I wanted to say that this was the best organised conference I have ever attended, with a fantastic variety of content, and which, most definitely, had the best food!”*

From the evaluations and subsequent comments we have learnt that successful Congresses will have

- 1) A warm inclusive environment with a balance of informality as well as formality
- 2) Congress activities that are easy to access
- 3) Regular, clear, pertinent information distributed prior to the Congress
- 4) A balance of academic and professional focused content and both papers and posters (with time allocated to viewing of posters)
- 5) Clear informative signage and information throughout the Congress
- 6) Good seating arrangements for meal breaks
- 7) Some form of seeding funding to support planning from the outset.

## **LEGACY**

Hosting the 35<sup>th</sup> IBBY Congress was indeed a privilege. A legacy of the Congress, we believe, is a greater awareness of literature for young people in New Zealand, and of New Zealand writers and illustrators both internationally and within New Zealand itself. The opportunity and incentive to bring together groups and agencies interested in children’s literature through the Congress has led to the potential for greater collaboration, internationally and within New Zealand, to achieve the aims of Storylines and of IBBY. Prior to the Congress, even the children’s writing community in New Zealand, had little knowledge of IBBY and the international networks and projects with which IBBY is involved but now, through the Congress, the role of IBBY and of Storylines is better known in New Zealand.

Currently negotiations are underway to find a publisher for a themed book, *Understanding Ourselves and Others through Children's Literature in a Multi-literate World*, which will consist of selected papers from participants together with Cao Wenxuan’s Hans Christian Andersen Award acceptance paper. If this initiative is successful it will provide a further legacy of the outcomes from the 35<sup>th</sup> IBBY Congress held in New Zealand.



Finally, we hope that a corollary outcome from the Congress will be convincing colleagues from countries on the other side of the world that travel to New Zealand, and the antipodes, is not difficult and worth the effort!

Handwritten signatures of Libby Limbrick and Rosemary Tisdall in black ink.

Dr Libby Limbrick and Rosemary Tisdall  
IBBY Congress 2016 Co-Directors