NOMINATION
IBBY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN AWARDS
2020
COUNTRY OF NOMINATION: AUSTRALIA

WRITER CANDIDATE: LIBBY GLEESON

DOSSIER
Acknowledgements

Dossier compiled by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright on behalf of IBBY Australia, December 2018

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Information contained in the dossier has also been supplied by Libby Gleeson, and has been drawn from Libby Gleeson’s website: <http://www.libbygleeson.com.au/> and from other bibliographical sources.

Contents of the dossier may be viewed by interested researchers and IBBY members, and is posted (in part) on the IBBY website. However, due to copyright restrictions on the reviews and articles by individual contributors, these are not included in the online document and cannot be copied or transmitted electronically.
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1. Biographical Information on the Candidate

**Libby Gleeson, AM** (1950–) was born in Young, a small town in south western NSW. After a few years the family moved to Glen Innes, on the northern tablelands and then when she was ten, they moved west to Dubbo. Her father’s work as a school teacher necessitated such moves as each change meant a promotion for him. ‘There were six children in the family. I was number three and there wasn’t a lot of money. We didn’t have television and of course there was no such thing as a computer. Books and reading were hugely important. I remember going to the library on a Saturday morning and borrowing five or six books and reading them all by Sunday night.’

After her secondary schooling Libby studied history at the University of Sydney (1969–73). She enjoyed both study and campus activities and became involved in ‘lots of things happening at the University and the city. It was the time of the anti-Vietnam war protests and the rise of the Women’s Movement’. She taught for two years in Picton, a small town just outside of Sydney. In 1976 she embarked on overseas travel and work for five years. She based herself in Italy where she taught English and then in London where she started writing her first novel, *Eleanor, Elizabeth* (2016, 1984). She attended a creative writing group there and developed her skills further. In London she also met her husband and together they returned to Sydney in 1980 and subsequently had three daughters.

She taught at the University of NSW initially, but has been a full-time writer since 1990. She has written more than thirty books, taught occasional courses in creative writing, and visited many schools throughout Australia to speak about her work. She has played a dedicated advocacy role in her work with the Australian Society of Authors, Copyright Agency and West Words. She writes picture books, and novels for young and older readers. She has also written three books about writing and done some writing for television programs, Bananas in Pyjamas and Magic Mountain.

Her awards include being appointed a member of the Order of Australia (AM) (2007), the Dromkeen Medal (2011), the Nan Chauncy Award for contributions to Australian children’s Literature (2015), and many book awards including 1992 Winner Prime Minister’s Multicultural Award for *Big Dog* (illustrated by Armin Greder), 2000 Bologna Ragazzi Award for *The Great Bear* (with Armin Greder), 2002 CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award for *An Ordinary Day* (illustrated by Armin Greder) and the 2013 Prime Minister’s Literary Award for *Red* (2012). Libby is much in demand as a speaker at conferences and Literary events and has been Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney since 2006. She is one of Australia’s most highly regarded writers for young people. [See also 5. Awards and Other Distinctions p 11.]
2. Portrait Photograph of the Candidate

[See copy in Appendix C. CD-Rom contained in dossier.]
3. Statement of Candidate’s Contribution

Libby Gleeson is not only one of Australia’s foremost writers of picture book texts but has also written sensitively for younger children, and important socially progressive works for young adults. Her body of work is astoundingly diverse and she is critically esteemed as one of the very best of Australian writers of literary fiction for young people. On her picture books she has collaborated with some of the finest internationally-regarded artists such as Armin Greder (with whom she won the Bologna Ragazzi for *The Great Bear*), and Kate Greenaway Medal winner, Freya Blackwood – both on a number of texts – and with Craig Smith, Julie Vivas and John Winch. Her junior fiction has included two delightful series – *Hannah* and *Cleo* – and she has also written award-winning stand-alone titles. On her teenage fiction she has been vocal about the need for strong female characters and has routinely been interested in social justice issues re the plight of refugees, outsiders and the dispossessed or powerless. Libby Gleeson has also demonstrated her interest in creative writing by penning a number of non-fiction texts on writing and is a sought-after lecturer, and speaker. Her body of work betrays an interest in several topics:

- **Importance of History:**
  ‘I am an historian by academic training I believe strongly that we are the fulfilment of our pasts. History is important. What goes before is important and particularly the history of families and the oral tradition.’ (Nieuwenhuizen, Agnes [’Interview’] *No Kidding: Top Writers for Young People Talk About their Work*, Chippendale, NSW: Pan Macmillan Publishers Australia, 1991, p 56.)

  In works such as *Eleanor Elizabeth* (1984) and *I am Susannah* (1987) she employed her training as an historian to explore the past in order to inform the present of her characters in an extremely perspicacious manner.

- **Positive Images of Girls and Women:**
  She has written of her interest in presenting strong role models for young women and has created several memorable female characters, has celebrated the role women played both in the early years of Australian settlement, and in contemporary domestic settings.

- **Social Justice:**

- **Finely Crafted Writing is the Key:**
  However, it is the writing which always comes first in Libby’s work: ‘I think that it is insulting to categorise quality fiction in terms of one issue when it’s quite obvious that they are complex and many-layered works in the same way that fiction for adult readers can be. It’s all part of the same push, I suppose, to moralise about children’s literature, and to assume that it only has an educative rôle. It comes down to whether you are writing books that are ideology-driven or story-driven, and in my case I would hope always that they are story-driven.’ Ridge, Judith ‘Interview with Libby Gleeson’ *Misrule* <http://misrule.com.au/wordpress/interviews/libby-gleeson>

Libby Gleeson’s writing style is distinguished by a range of literary devices:

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
Stream of Consciousness Style:
‘I have always felt that I wrote largely to satisfy myself and to challenge the reader. (Nieuwenhuizen, 1991, p 59.) Her writing of longer fiction utilises a stream of consciousness style which demands the reader’s attention. Her first two novels employed this style with great impact and she has continued in later fiction to challenge her readers with experimental narrative voice and perspective.

Authentic Dialogue:
‘I’m not hung up on the idea that dialogue has to be written in neat sentences.’ (Nieuwenhuizen, 1991, p 57.)

Finely Crafted ‘Pared Back’ Language:
‘I have a firm belief that you have to whittle away till you have the most significant parts there. You have to make every word count and be able to justify every word.’ (Nieuwenhuizen, 1991, p 74.) ‘I labour intensely with the novels and the short stories and the picture books in an attempt to find the best language. Writing to me is all about story in language which means we have to struggle to write in the best way possible...’ (Horsfield, Alan ‘Know the Author of Princesses and Spunky Little Girls – Libby Gleeson’ Magpies Vol 11, No 2, May 1996, p 16.)

Libby Gleeson’s work reveals how much she strives to choose the right words, and the economy with which she uses them.

Vivid Sense of Place and Setting:
Her settings are drawn with a keen eye for detail, evoked by appealing to all the senses.

Astute Observation of Children:
Libby Gleeson’s picture books such as Where’s Mum? (1992), Mum Goes to Work (1992), Cuddle Time (2004), Sleep Time (1993) and Amy and Louis (2006) demonstrate what an astute observer of children she is. She has always taken note of things she finds interesting in people, and likes to question young readers in order to gauge their interests and tastes in a changing world.

Characters and Relationships:
‘My main concern in all my books is depicting human relationships and the way they constantly ebb and flow, ...’ (Masson, Sophie ‘An Interview with Libby Gleeson’ Reading Time: The Journal of the Children’s Book Council of Australia Vol 39, No 1, February 1995, p 7.) There is a great veracity to the characters Libby imagines in her books. She traverses family relationships and the interaction between friends very carefully, so that the reader feels an immediate affinity with the people she creates.

Contributions to Australian Literature for Young People:
Libby Gleeson’s career has not faltered. She has been consistently recognised as one of Australia’s foremost writers since her debut in the late 1980s, and has also been a tremendous advocate for her fellow writers’ interests. Her work is extremely worthy of further international recognition and the HCA 2020 nomination is a fitting acknowledgement of that.
4. Essays, Interviews or Articles:

This dossier contains copies of the following two articles in Appendix A:


Other Biographical and Critical Sources Include:


IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson


**Selected Articles by Libby Gleeson:**


**Addresses at CBCA Conferences:**


IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
2016 Myriad of Possibilities. 12th National CBCA Conference.

Other Selected Lectures by Libby Gleeson:
1991 Becoming a Writer, Behind the Lines. ALIA.
2002 Unpacking the Hero. PETA Conference, October.
2004 Joy and Power of Literacy. UNSW.
2004 Values in Writing for Children. Get Real PETA Conference.
2004 A Book That Influenced Me. PEN event, Bowral.
2004 Closing Address. Illawarra Library Conference.
2006 Places to Play: Issues in Literacy from K-6, University of Sydney.
2010 From Billabong to Biggles and then Bankstown: A Writers’ Journey Through the Literature of War. Peace Conference, UTS, Sydney.
2013 The Centrality of Story. ALEA/TATE Tasmania.
2013 Creative and Critical Thinking: Enhancing Learning through Quality.
2013 Text and Creative Writing. COSIE Conference.

Intellectual Property & Library Addresses:
Libby has also presented papers updating the international lending right community on the Australian Public Lending Right Scheme at the following International Lending Right Conferences: 1997 Copenhagen 1999 Ottawa 2001 Canberra 2003 Oslo 2005 Berlin 2002 Intellectual Property: Access and Protection, ALIA.
5. Awards and other Distinctions
International Awards Arranged per Award Category:

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Bologna Ragazzi Award:
- 2000 *The Great Bear* (with Armin Greder)

International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY):
- Nominee, HCA Award 2020
- 1991 IBBY Honour Book *Dodger*

Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award:
- 2017, 2016, 2015 Nomination

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AWARDS FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

2018 Doctorate of letters, Honaris Causa, Australian Catholic University.
2017 Artist of the Year, The Dream Festival, Dubbo.
2017 Alumna Award, University of Sydney.
2015 The Nan Chauncy Award (presented every two years by the CBCA to acknowledge a significant contribution to Australian Children’s Literature.
2014 Recipient, The NSW Minister for Education Medal for Meritorious Service to Public Education.
2013 Doctorate of Letters, Honaris Causa, University of Sydney.
2011 Dromkeen Medal (made annually to an Australian citizen for a significant contribution to the appreciation and development of children’s literature in Australia.
2011 NSW Premier’s Literary Awards - Special Award (for general recognition of a writer’s achievements).
2007 Member of the Order of Australia (AM) (For service to literature as an author and as an advocate for the development of literacy and learning in schools, as a mentor to young writers, and through a range of executive roles with professional literary organisations).
2006 – present Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney.
2004 May Gibbs Fellow, University of Canberra.
1997 Lady Cutler Award for distinguished service to children’s literature in NSW.
1986/1987 New Writers Fellowship, Literature Board, Australia Council
Public Service & Advocacy Roles:

**2015 to present** Chair of WestWords Ltd, independent company formed from WestWords project in Western Sydney.

2011 Writer in Residence, UTS

2011 Writer in Residence, University of Sydney

2007–2016 Member NSW Public Education Foundation

2007–2014 Chair Advisory Committee Western Sydney Children’s and Youth Literature

2006–2008 Chair, Literature and History Committee, NSW Ministry for the Arts, Sport and Recreation

2005–2008 Member, NSW Dept. Education Panel to make awards for Excellence in Teaching

2005–2014 Director, Copyright Agency Ltd.

2003 Treasurer, Australian Society of Authors

2003 Chair, Judging Panel, NSW Premier’s Literary Awards

2003 Member, History and Literature Committee, NSW Ministry for the Arts.

2003 Returning Officer, PEN

2003 National Numeracy and Literacy Ambassador

2002 Deputy-Chair, Australian Society of Authors

2002 Member, Committee establishing Premier’s Reading Challenge Booklist.

1999–2001 Chair, Australian Society of Authors, and Director, OzAuthors

1996–2008 Member, Management Committee Australian Society of Authors.

1988/1995 Authors’ Representative, Public Lending Right Committee (Federal Govt Appointee.)

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CHILDREN’S & YA BOOK AWARDS

Australian Awards Arranged per Award Category:

**Angus & Robertson Award for Writers for Young Readers:**

- 1984 Winner *Eleanor, Elizabeth*

**Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Picture Book of the Year Award:**

- 2004 Honour Book *Shutting the Chooks In*
- 2002 Winner *An Ordinary Day*
- 2001 Shortlisted *The Great Bear*
- 1993 Honour Book *Where’s Mum?*

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Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA): Younger Readers Award:

- 2000 Honour Book *Hannah and the Tomorrow Room*
- 1998 Shortlisted *Junior Book of the Year, CBCA 1998*. *The Queen of the Universe*
- 1997 Winner *Hannah Plus One*

Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book of the Year: Early Childhood Award:

- 2015 Winner *Go To Sleep, Jessie!* Illustrated by Freya Blackwood.
- 2007 Winner *Amy and Louis* by Libby Gleeson. Illustrated by Freya Blackwood.

Children’s Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Book of the Year: Older Readers Award:

- 1994 Shortlisted *Love Me, Love Me Not*
- 1989 Honour Book *I am Susannah*
- 1985 Highly Commended *Eleanor, Elizabeth*

Children’s Literature Peace Prize:

- 1991 *Dodger*

NSW Premier’s Literary Awards, Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children’s Literature:

- 1985 Shortlisted *Eleanor, Elizabeth*

Guardian Award for Children:

- 1985 Shortlisted *Eleanor, Elizabeth*

Prime Minister’s Literary Award for Children’s Fiction:

- 2013 Winner *Red*

Prime Minister’s Multicultural Award:

- 1993: Shortlisted *Mum Goes To Work* by Libby Gleeson. Illustrated by Penn Azar.

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
South Australian State Literary Awards:

- 1985 Shortlisted Eleanor, Elizabeth

Victorian Premier’s Literary Award:

- 1989 Shortlisted I am Susannah

YARA Young Australian Readers Award:

- 2002 Winner Dear Writer

International and Australian Awards Arranged per Book Title:

YA Fiction:

Eleanor, Elizabeth (1984)

Highly Commended, CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers Award, 1985.
Shortlisted, NSW Premiers’ Award, 1985.

I am Susannah (1987)


Dodger (1990)


Love Me, Love Me Not (1993)

Awards: Shortlisted CBCA Book of the Year: Older Readers Award, 1994.

Red (2012)

Awards: Winner Prime Minister’s Literary Award for Children’s Literature, 2013.

Junior Fiction:


Awards: Shortlisted CBCA Book of the Year: Younger Readers Award, 2016.

Awards: YARA Young Australian Readers Award, 2002.

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The Queen of the Universe (1997) Illustrated by David Cox.
Awards: Shortlisted, CBCA Junior Book of the Year Award, 1998.


Picture Books:

Awards: Winner, Prime Minister’s Multicultural Award, 1992.

Awards: Honour Book CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award, 1993.

Mum Goes To Work (1992) Illustrated by Penny Azar.
Awards: Shortlisted Prime Minister’s Multicultural Award, 1993.


Awards: Winner CBCA Picture Book of the Year Award, 2002.


6. Complete Bibliography

PICTURE BOOKS:


**JUNIOR NOVELS:**


**JUNIOR NOVELS IN SERIES:**

Cleo Series:


Hannah Series:


**YA NOVELS:**


**SHORT STORY COLLECTION:**


**SHORT STORIES IN COLLECTIONS:**

**1989** ‘The Boy Who Wouldn’t Get Out Of the Pool’:


**1990** ‘Bedtime Story’:


IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson

1992 ‘Farewell’:

1991 ‘In the Swim’:

1993 ‘Her Room’:

1994 ‘Painting the Kitchen’:

1995 ‘For Anna’:

1996 ‘Thomas’:

1997 ‘Swimming the Length’:

2001 ‘A Lady Long Resident in New South Wales’:

2003 ‘Going For Kebabs’:

2003 ‘Rain’:

2005 ‘Rain’:

2006 Poems

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2006 ‘Annie and Me’:

NON-FICTION:


NON-BOOK MATERIAL:

1995 The Libby Gleeson Video, Insight Profile (26min)
1996/7 Bananas in Pyjamas, ABC TV,
The Magic Pumpkin
Springtime Party
Magic Mountain, ABC and Southern Star
The Hollow Tree
Bedtime Story

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
7. Translated Editions


China: Tiao wu shuo zai jian = Clare's goodbye / wen / Libi Gelisen ; tu / Anna Pinaluuo ; yi / Xie Jingwen 跳舞說再見 = Clare's goodbye / 文/莉比·葛利森；圖安娜·琵尼塔洛；譯/謝靜雯 Taibei Shi : Xin zhan wen hua shi ye you xian gong si, ©2017.

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China: Lao ban yu Xiaohong / wen Libi Gelisen; tu Feiya Buleikewude ; yi zhe Liu Qingyan 老班與小紅 / 文 莉比 · 葛利森；圖 菲雅 · 布雷克伍德；譯者 劉清彥Taibei Shi : Shi bao wen hua chu ban qi ye gu fen you xian gong si, 2015

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Italy: Guardo, un Libro, Officina Libraria, 2011.


USA: Officina Librari, 2011.

Korea: 2011.


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Germany: Published as: Leo & Lena und das schonste haus der Welt, Urachhaus, 2010.


China: Dolphin Media Co.

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IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson


Korea: Eimi wa Lui / Libi Külüsün kül ; P’ürüya Püllaekudû kürim ; Chang Mi-ran omgim 에이미 와 루이 / 리비 클레슨 글 ; 프레야 블랙우드 그림 ; 장 미란 옴김 Sõul-si : Tada Puksû, 2007 서울시 : 다다 북스, 2007.


Finland: Anni ja Lasse, translated Tytti Traff, Karisto oy Hameenlinna, FINLAND.

Germany: Lara und Leo, Coppenrath, Germany, 2007.


USA (in Spanish): Al Otro Lado del Mundo (Spanish) Pearson, USA.


USA: Candlewick, 2012.

Brazil: Edicoes SM Brazil, 2012.


IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson


USA: Scholastic, 1996.


USA: Scholastic, 1995.

Italy: Che cosa fanno le mamme quando i bambini sono alla scuola materna? / Libby Gleeson & Leila Rudge Milano: La Margherita Edizioni, [2017].

IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
China: Ma ma qu shang ban / wen Libi Gelisen ; tu Laila Luoju ; yi Huang Xiaoyin
媽媽去上班 / 文 莉比·格利森；圖 萊拉·洛居；譯 黃筱茵 Chu ban. 初版.
Taipei Shi : Wei jing gu ji gu fen you xian gong si, 2017 ©2017
臺北市：維京國際股份有限公司, 2017.

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Denmark: Eleanor, Elizabeth [Danish] / Brix, Birgitte / Frederiksberg: Sommer & Sørensen [Denmark], 1986. 138 p. Eleanor, Elizabeth [English]
8. Ten Most Important Books by the Candidate


9. List of Five Books Sent to Jurors


10. Published Reviews of Works:
The following is a list of ten reviews, two of each of five books, copies of which are contained in Appendix B:


11. Reproductions of Book Covers and Illustrations
IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
IBBY Australia Nomination for Hans Christian Andersen Award for Writing 2020: Libby Gleeson
Appendix A. Articles

Articles removed for online publication.

Appendix B. Reviews

Reviews removed for online publication.
Appendix C. CD-Rom
[Contains photo of author, electronic copies of books, and an electronic copy of the dossier.]