

The Centre
for Children's Literature

BOOK LINKS QLD INC.

2013- 2014 Report

Mission

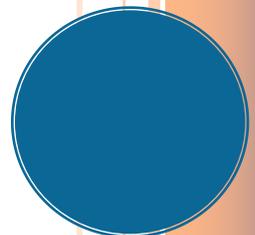
Link people and groups throughout the community with stories and experiences to build literacy and learning; so as to enrich lives.

Objectives

- **Establish and grow vibrant spaces** (fixed, flexible, and on line) to nurture communities where children and young adults are exposed to literature; stimulated to be imaginative and artistic; and where stories and their creators are valued.
- **Support networking, events, learning, and an appreciation of story** for children and young adults throughout the community.
- **Promote authors, illustrators and storytellers** for children and young people.

Jenny Stubbs

28/9/2014



Book Links Qld Inc.

2013- 2014 Report

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Strategic Planning

In 2013-2014 our major focus has been on strategic planning and working towards our objectives. In the second half of 2013 and into January 2014 Andrew King (Treasurer) and Jenny Stubbs (President) met with John Tsoukas to develop and refine a strategic plan for Book Links in consultation with the executive committee. John Tsoukas, an engineer with experience in strategic planning had been introduced to us by AbAF/Creative Partnerships Australia. This resulted in a final strategic planning document being adopted by the committee in February.

Book Links was also successful this year in being listed as a charitable organisation and has been granted Deductible Gift Recipient Status. This is a tax and legal classification that allows all donations, or gifts, over \$2 made to Book Links (QLD) Inc. to be a tax deductible expense for the donor. This is great news for us, as we can now approach individuals and organisations for sizeable donations whilst being able to offer a tax receipt so they can make the donation tax deductible.

In November Jenny Stubbs attended a Creative Partnerships master class on 'Time, Talent and Ties' - Tapping into the Next Generation of Donors. This workshop provided an opportunity to network and to gain more of an insight into the structure of GenX and GenY/Millennial generations, the next generation of major philanthropists.

Towards a Centre for Children

Towards the end of 2013 we learnt of a strategic plan to examine the future use of Brisbane's Cultural Precinct. The Government called for feedback from the public so we encouraged members of Book Links to make submissions supporting the inclusion of a dedicated space within the precinct for children, a space that had a focus on story in all its forms, spoken, written and performed.



Denise O'Connor, secretary and Beth Green, Travelling Suitcases manager

In December we were invited to meet with Shaun Clough, Principal Project Officer, Infrastructure & Digital Projects, Arts Queensland, where we presented him with documents to support the inclusion of a story space for children as well as concepts for the development of such a space. The same information, together with a copy of our strategic plan was sent to Ian Walker, Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. Our ideas were also sent to the planning consultants, Urbis. We received positive feedback from the Minister and were subsequently invited to a consultative meeting in May.

In early May concept plans were released for the Cultural Precinct which focused on expansion of QPAC and the Queensland Museum. There was no dedicated space for children included in the plans and the subsequent consultative meeting seemed to indicate that the stakeholders in the precinct were not in favour of such a space. Book Links Qld Inc and its members continue to put in submissions to the government urging them to consider our concept.

Book Links members attended a workshop in Ipswich in March to hear Matt Roden from The Sydney Story Factory talk about how they run writing workshops for young people in Redfern. Later in the year Sam Sochacka and Tracey Lennon visited the Sydney Story Factory to learn more about their operations and report back to Book Links with the view to a similar project being part of the operation of a centre for children in Queensland. Jenny Stubbs visited the English equivalent, The Ministry of Stories – Hoxton Street Monsters Supplies in London in August and the 100 Story Building in Melbourne in October.

Write Links

Write Links was established in April 2013 in response to adults seeking a writers group that catered to their specific needs of writing for children and young adults. Since then a few illustrators have also joined the group. It now has over 100 Facebook members and between 20 and 30 people attending monthly meetings. These meetings allow for networking, professional development and critiquing of writing in smaller groups.



Write Links member Tanya Hempson has designed a new logo which appears on their new blog style website <http://brisbanewritelinks.weebly.com/>

Other Write Links activity

- PD topics included social media for writers, pitching, CBCA Book of the Year talk, feedback from the SCBWI Sydney conference, a run-down on organisations available to children's writers
- At a very well-attended meeting at Black Cat Books Paddington, Stephanie Hogan gave an insight into what goes on behind the scenes in a book shop.
- Write Links had their first in-house short story competition organized by Melanie Hill and judged by Mia Macrossan
- Write Links now have their own email address: brisbanewritelinks@gmail.com
- Meetings are coordinated by Sam and Yvonne, supported by a subcommittee of members - Andrew, Peter, Renee, Jacqui, Rebecca, Melanie, Jenny

Regular members who have launched books this year include Samantha Wheeler, Andrew King, Caylie Jeffrey, Karen Tyrrell, Peter Taylor and Tracey Lennon with Yvonne Mes recently signing a contract with Random House. Melanie Hill, Jocelyn Hawes, and Betty Collarson have contributed to anthologies.

Samantha Wheeler has received a May Gibbs Trust Fellowship! That means a month in Adelaide working on a new book. *"Thanks to the support and encouragement of my fellow chapter bookers at Write Links, I was confident enough to send my current story off to apply for a May Gibbs Trust Fellowship. Guess what? They said YES!"* – Samantha Wheeler



Events

Romancing the Stars was once again a successful event in our calendar. Twenty-one authors and illustrators had speed dates with 60 guests, while MC Josie Montano kept the authors rotating. Isobelle Carmody in conversation with Rosie Borella was one highlight of the evening as was the mass launch of books by authors and illustrators published January to March.

Riverbend Books sold books by all authors at the venue, Bulimba State School hall. An opportunity was given for children to come in prior to the event to buy books and have them signed, but this did not prove to be a worthwhile concept, however authors enjoyed the extra time networking.

Government House Open Day - The Open Day at Government House held on 8 June to celebrate the Queen's Birthday provided a fitting opportunity for Book Links members to say 'Goodbye' and 'Thank You' to Ms Penelope Wensley AC, our very special patron. Ms Wensley has supported Book Links and our activities throughout her term as Governor of Queensland. She completed her term on 31st July and all Book Links members wish her well for the next phase of her life wherever that may take her.

This year we moved to a new area within the grounds called 'The Pavilion'. It allowed for much more space to do activities with children. Book Links again shared their allocated space with CBCA Qld Branch.

Peter Taylor and Andrew King provided activities for children based around their books *Once a Creepy Crocodile* and *Engibear's Bridge*.



A Book Week Event for children was planned to be delivered in collaboration with CBCA Qld Branch, following the format of Romancing the Stars with a quiz. This event did not proceed due to the low number of bookings. This identified the need for wider marketing of events to families through different modes other than our usual promotion to members of Book Links and CBCA and online Qld TL list.

A State of Writing and other Partnerships

Book Links remains a Partner Organisation of A State of Writing. No meetings of ASOW were organised during 2014 however a meeting was held with Meg Vann and Aimee Lindorf from QWC to explain more about what we do and discuss the concept of establishing an annual lecture in children's literature in partnership with them. We are currently working on this project to be delivered in June 2015. We also renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with QWC.

Mia Macrossan and I met with Kerry Mallan, Director of the Children's and Youth Research Centre, QUT to discuss our concept for an annual lecture in children's literature and seek her advice and support. Kerry was very supportive and we now have a new contact for networking in the future.

Travelling Suitcases

Beth Green organised a working bee on the Travelling Suitcases. Thanks to Sam and Beth for checking content and especially to Shirley for a massive cleaning of the cases. They look like new again. The cases were promoted at the Romancing the Stars Event in February which increased circulation and again at Government House Open Day.

Following a request from ACLA to develop a Travelling Suitcase for Children's Laureate Jackie French, we were told by Robyn Sheahan Bright that Jackie was interested in this project proceeding. Past laureates Boori Pryor and Alison Lester are also willing to have cases created for them, but due to the high cost of filming it was decided to focus on Jackie French as the current laureate.

We submitted an application for a grant to the Australia Council but despite letters of support from Lesley Reece at The Literature Centre in Fremantle, Judith Ridge at West Words in Sydney as well as support from CBCA branches in SA, ACT, Tas, Vic and NSW we did not succeed. We currently have another application in with Arts Qld and the promise of additional support from the Ipswich District Teacher-Librarian Network to ensure the project goes ahead. It is anticipated that we will commence production in January 2015.



Newsletter

Three newsletters have been compiled by Sam Sochacka this year, with other news disseminated via email to members as it occurs. Sam is currently learning how to distribute newsletters via Mail Chimp.

Online Presence

<http://booklinks.org.au/> is now our official site. Sam Sochacka migrated all content over from the website managed by Kerri McDonald to the WordPress site and changed the WordPress domain name to our registered domain. With the help of Kerri, we have also secured the email address of info@booklinks.org.au. Sam Sochacka continues to manage the Facebook page and the Twitter account and works hard to give us an active online presence.

Facebook Statistics

- October 2014: Likes – 286 (Sept. 2013: Likes - 229) an increase of about 25%
- Number of posts: - 136 (no figures for 2013)

Website/WordPress Blog

- Number of visitors Oct. 2013 – Oct. 2014: 5, 777 (2150 in 2013 – until September) an increase of about 170%
- 2014 – 39 people following blog by email (2013 -18 people following blog by email) an increase of about 120%

Twitter

2014 - 236 followers and 82 tweets

2013 - 67 followers and 22 tweets

Membership

Book Links currently has 67 financial members made up of 8 corporate and 65 personal members. The increase in personal membership (13 or 24%) and corporate membership (4 or 200%) are both in excess of our 20% annual target for membership growth.

Members are from a variety of professions including teacher-librarians, public librarians, professional and emerging authors and illustrators, speakers' agent, festival coordinators, academics and two book-sellers. The highest proportion of personal members comes from the writing sector with 33 listing writer or illustrator as their area of interest while 17 identify as teacher-librarians. There are an additional 17 honorary members comprised of authors and illustrators who have been involved in our projects since Book Links began.

Book Links continues to provide discount offers for members from the following bookshops: A Lot of Books Ipswich, Black Cat Books Paddington, Books@Stones, Rosetta Books Maleny, Secret Garden Children's Bookshop Tamborine (at Marks and Gardner Gallery), The Book Garden, The Book Warehouse and The Library Shop (SLQ), Brisbane.

Financial Report

The income and expenditure statement for the last financial year shows that Book Links has operated at a loss of \$1 118.61.

Income and expenses both fell from the previous financial year, with income falling by more than expenses. That said, it has been a year of consolidation and planning to grow the organisation – Book Links has invested in itself and its future.

Most significantly, income from DVD sales dropped by about 90% from \$2,975.50 to \$229.00. There were slight gains in all other income areas however, these were not enough to offset the reduced DVD sales incomes. We are planning to make at least one new video in the coming year and this should revitalise sales.

Advertising expenses were significantly increased (from \$0 to \$962.48) and this has helped with membership and promotion. Expenses for functions and postage also increased. Expenses of professional development and travelling suitcases were reduced.

(See Appendix for Income and Expenditure Statement)

Successes

Our strategic plan has been adopted and in looking at this plan we can say that we have achieved or are working towards the majority of the actions outlined in it.

1. *Redevelop and maintain the website* - The old website has been shut down and information migrated to the blog. We are currently looking at options to add online shopping, donations, and event bookings to the website

2. *Develop and implement a marketing plan for Book Links products, programs and events* - A brochure has been developed to promote Book Links.

3. *Generate financial and in kind support* – Contact has been made with Ipswich District Teacher-Librarian Network who have agreed to provide financial support for Travelling Suitcases. Grant applications have been submitted or under development for Travelling Suitcase project and Annual Lecture in Children’s Literature. Qld Writers Centre to partner in delivery of Annual Lecture in Children’s Literature. DGR status attained.

4. *Develop and promote products and resources* - New certificates have been developed for the Read Up! Program. Planning is underway for Children’s Laureate Jackie French’s Travelling Suitcase to commence production January 2015.

5. *Research and lobby for a children’s centre based on story* – Submissions sent to Qld Government re Cultural Precinct Strategy and attended consultative meetings in support of a centre. Made contact with an architect who showed interest in supporting our ideas. Jenny Stubbs visited a number of centres overseas as part of our research. Sam Sochacka made contact with Dave Eggers of 826 Valencia project to enlist his support.

6. *Up-skill Book Links committee members* – President attended Creative Partnerships workshop on philanthropy. Members visited Sydney Story Factory and attended sessions on concept at Story Arts Ipswich Workshops.

7. *Identify and promote Book Links specialist advisory services* – Met with QWC to explain purpose of Book Links.

8. *Maintain and enhance mutually beneficial partnerships* – Read Up! program in partnership with Moreton Regional Libraries, met with BWF and QWC staff to seek opportunities to collaborate, worked with CBCA Qld on Open Day and Future Libraries Conference, cross promoted events of partners,

9. *Develop and implement a Book Links promotional plan* – new brochure developed and used at conferences and events. Write Links developed new logo and marketing ideas.

10. *Maintain and expand the Book Links calendar of programs and events* – Events presented as per annual calendar.

11. *Develop, implement and maintain a Strategic Plan* – Strategic plan completed and reviewed.

Annual Targets

Table 1 Book Links Performance Indicators

Measuring Our Progress	Annual Target	Outcome
Increase in reach (the number of people attending / participating in programs and activities)	20%	28%
Increase in number of programs and activities offered (Note: Close to target but Children's Book Week event cancelled)	20%	18%
Increase in membership	20%	34%
Increase in fundraising to maintain current program and develop new programs (Note: Grants applied for did not succeed, however funding promised for early 2015)	20%	-37%

What next?

- Develop a sponsorship package.
- Explore avenues for public exhibitions based on authors and illustrators works.
- Explore the possibility of an author database on the website.
- Explore the option of shop front, other venue or in-school writing workshops.
- Conduct a skills audit of current members.

Appendix 1: Finances

BOOKLINKS(QUEENSLAND)INC.

ABN61948979764

Trading Profit & Loss Statement

Financial Year 1st July 2013 to 30th June 2014

Income	YEJ2014	YEJ2013	YEJ2012
Functions / Workshops	\$1,753.10	\$1,604.00	\$4,786.00
Grants & Donations	\$100.00	\$-	\$1,293.75
Interest Received	\$151.90	\$-	\$0.06
Membership	\$1,305.00	\$1,040.00	\$962.00
DVD sales	\$229.00	\$2,975.50	\$9,515.50
TOTALINCOME	\$3,539.00	\$5,619.50	\$16,557.31
Expenses			
Advertising	-\$962.48	\$-	\$2,497.43
Auditor / Accounting fees	-\$231.00	\$231.00	\$220.00
Depreciation	\$-	\$718.40	\$179.60
General expenses	\$-	\$15.95	\$17.65
Email, internet & website	-\$13.00	\$59.00	\$59.00
Functions & Travel	-\$1,111.26	\$662.82	\$592.64
Gifts	-\$250.00	\$425.00	\$241.99
Insurance	-\$660.00	\$626.72	\$-
Postage / Post Box	-\$279.03	\$113.40	\$1,020.40
Professional Development	-\$120.00	\$618.00	\$-
Rent	-\$798.00	\$882.00	\$1,260.00
Stationery Supplies	-\$38.14	\$52.30	\$-
Travelling Suitcases	-\$194.70	\$1,270.73	\$25,095.22
Office of Fair Trading	\$-	\$45.00	\$59.85
TOTALEXPENSES	-\$4,657.61	\$5,720.32	\$31,243.78
OPERATINGPROFIT/(LOSS)	-\$1,118.61	-\$100.82	-\$14,686.47

Appendix 2: On-line Presence

Facebook Statistics

- October 2014: Likes – 286 (Sept. 2013: Likes - 229) an increase of about 25%.
- Number of posts: - 136 (no figures for 2013)
- Our busiest week: 28th October – 3rd November – AGM, B.I.G. Exhibition Opening, SAFI Writing/Drawing Comp. Details, RTS date-saver, SAFI video clip (2013 9th Jan - 16th Jan 2013 with 777 visits to the Facebook page)

Website/WordPress Blog

- Number of visitors Oct. 2013 – Oct. 2014: 5, 777 (2150 in 2013 – until September) an increase of about 170%. (3,836 in 2012) = 2150 visitors since September 2012, 5,986 views all-time
- 2013/2014 top month: February with 832 visitors – Romancing the Stars (2013 Top Months were February 314 and March 419) (2013 Best ever 173 views – 24 March 2013 (Romancing the Stars video released)
- 2014 – 39 people following blog by email (2013 -18 people following blog by email) an increase of about 120%.

Top pages/posts viewed

2014	2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home – 1, 346 views • Romancing the Stars – 380 • The Stars of Romancing the Stars – 334 • The Travelling Suitcases – 259 • Write Links – 171 • Join Book Links – 141 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ReadUp Program - 114 views • About - 85 views • Our Goals - 65 views • Romancing the Stars Slideshow 2012 - 56 views • Romancing the Stars 2013 - 51

Twitter

2014	2013
236 followers 82 tweets	67 followers 22 tweets