

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Brave’ new world for children in 2019

Oxford University Press announces the 2019 Australian Children’s Word of the Year

Oxford University Press Australia & New Zealand (OUP ANZ) has today announced its 2019 Children’s Word of the Year: Bravery.

OUP ANZ invited primary school students across the country to submit a piece of free writing, up to 500 words about their ‘Word of the Year’. Students were encouraged to be creative, factual, serious or funny in writing about why the word was important to them.

A judging panel, consisting of academics and experts in children’s English language, evaluated more than 400 writing submissions and selected one winning entry for each year group and one class prize across the country. In their entries, children referenced ‘bravery’ in relation to:

1. climate change
2. adventure
3. self confidence
4. injustice
5. trying something new
6. helping others.

The Australian Children’s Word of the Year was then chosen based on popularity and use of the word in context.

OUP ANZ Publishing Manager (Primary), and member of the judging panel for the 2019 Children’s Word of the Year, Emma Magill said the word ‘bravery’ was an example of how Australian primary school children are engaged in social issues taking place outside the school yard.

“The word ‘bravery’ was used in different ways; showing bravery every day when it’s needed, overcoming nerves in competitions, standing up to bullies, and voicing something you believe in to try and effect change, be that in reference to issues like equality or the environment,” Ms Magill said.

Understanding consequences, taking ownership, overcoming obstacles and initiating action were clear themes in the submissions, speaking to the bravery and optimism of young writers.

James Arvanitakis, Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Graduate Research School at Western Sydney University and social commentator, found that the word ‘bravery’ has changed dramatically over the years.

“Once the focus of outstanding individual acts, the word ‘bravery’ now includes the actions of ‘everyday’ heroes. These are people like all of us who undertake acts that inspire us. Bravery is evident in the stories that inspire young people: acts of bravery such as standing up to bullies or being honest when things have gone wrong. But there are also more high-profile acts such as Greta Thunburg standing up to world leaders and demanding action on human-induced climate change.

“Greta’s acts of bravery included fronting the world media, confronting world leaders and refusing to back down despite the many criticisms she faced. What we must also remember about Greta is it all started with her ‘striking’: being brave enough to defy one of the most influential institutions in her life – the school,” Mr Arvanitakis said.

Other words that appeared in shortlisted and winning entries included ‘determination’, ‘fearless’, ‘adaptability’ and ‘courage.’

For more information about the Oxford Australian Children’s Word of the Year visit the website at www.oup.com.au/cwoty.

ENDS

Join the conversation online #cwoty

For more information and interview opportunities, please contact Porter Novelli:

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ABOUT OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press (OUP) is dedicated to improving communication through an understanding of, and a passion for, language around the globe. As experts in children’s language, OUP is constantly listening to Australian children, and reflecting on their use of language, in order to develop an understanding of the challenges they are facing.

The Oxford Children’s Word of the Year is one of the ways OUP engages with the ever changing language of Australian children. Previous Words of the Year: ‘Creativity’ (2018) and ‘Equality’ (2019).

ABOUT THE JUDGING PANEL

EMMA MAGILL

Emma Magill is the Publishing Manager for Primary at Oxford University Press ANZ. She has worked in educational publishing for 20 years in both the UK and Australia, and has experience across academic journals, higher education, secondary and primary. In her spare time she was a freelance culture writer in London, volunteered on the Education and Training Committee of the Music Publishers Association (UK), volunteered on the Schools Committee of the Australian Publishers Association (Aus), and chaired the Educational Publishing Awards Australia in 2017. Passionate about the publishing industry, Emma has a life-long personal love of literature, and a firm commitment to producing resources that help children learn to read, read to learn, and read for pleasure.

PROFESSOR ROSEMARY ROSS JOHNSTON AM

Professor Rosemary Johnston AM is the author of *Australian Literature for Young People* (OUP 2017) and of the Literature section (one third of the book) of *Literacy: Reading, Writing and Children’s Literature* (OUP) which was first published 2001 and is about to go into its sixth edition. She has led several research projects including *New Ways of Doing School: Mixing story and technology to generate innovative learning, social and cultural communities* (funded by the Australian Research Council); as well as other large externally-funded projects, notably Sky High!, working in areas of educational disadvantage.

MARK GWYNN

Mark Gwynn is a senior researcher at the Australian National Dictionary Centre (ANDC) based at the Australian National University. The ANDC edits Australian Oxford Dictionaries, and is Australia’s premier research centre on the Australian English lexicon. Mark is the editor of numerous dictionaries including the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* and the *Australian Student’s Oxford Dictionary*.

LANA SCHWARCZ

Lana is the Family Programs Officer at State Library Victoria. She also variously works as playwright, performer, puppeteer or comedian. Her hobbies include dogs, other dogs, and avoiding writing proper artist biographies.