

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **'Creativity' leads schoolyard prose in 2018**

***Oxford University Press announces the 2018 Australian Children's Word of the Year***

*Bravery, pollution, technology and environment* were all strong contenders for the 2018 Australian Children's Word of the Year but it was *creativity* that was named this year's winner by Oxford University Press Australia and New Zealand (OUP ANZ) today.

More than 500 entries were submitted by primary school and home-schooled children across rural, regional, and metropolitan Australia. Students submitted a piece of writing, of up to 500 words, based on a word they chose to reflect their lives and interests. Their work could be fiction or non-fiction, funny or serious, using the theme of their choosing. A judging panel, consisting of academics and experts in children's English language, then evaluated the entries based on a word's popularity, use of the word in context, and frequency, to determine the Australian Children's Word of the Year for 2018.

OUP ANZ director of School Publishing, Lee Walker, said the strong theme of 'creativity' in this year's written submissions gave her confidence that this generation of children will have the skills to confront some of the world's greatest challenges in new ways.

'This year's children's writing submissions were filled with imagination, insights, and possibilities. Children wrote of 'magic hens', 'happy lands', 'adventurous snails,' and many creative ideas linked to improving the world around them.

'Some of Australia's greatest visionaries, such as Professor Graeme Clarke and Howard Florey, dared to imagine new concepts, inventions, and technologies that transformed the world we live in today. The originality and richness of the writing submitted by Australian children illustrates that this generation has the potential to do the same,' Ms Walker said.

Ms Walker also said this year's creative pieces reflected children's aptitude for good structural writing: 'It's evident when reviewing this year's submissions that children across Australia are making excellent progress in the classroom. The communication of ideas and the quality of writing has been particularly impressive. This indicates a high level of student engagement, comprehension, and academic capability.'

*Resilience* and *technology* were also noted as strong themes in children's writing, with recurring words including *persistence*, *courage*, and *confidence*, as well as some previously less common terms, such as *meme*, *pixels*, *programming*, and *gaming*. Fortnite was the most popular game mentioned.

Seven winning wordsmiths ranging from prep to year six, and one class winner from Victoria, will receive Oxford University Press book vouchers. All participants will be rewarded for their efforts with an age-appropriate free Oxford dictionary.

OUP ANZ is dedicated to recording Australian English and improving literacy. For more information about the competition visit the Children's Word of the Year at [oup.com.au/cwoty](http://oup.com.au/cwoty).

### **About the judges**

#### **Lee Walker**

Lee Walker is Director of School Publishing for Oxford University Press in Australia. She is also President of the Australian Publishers Association. Having worked in the Australian educational publishing industry for 27 years, Lee has extensive publishing experience in primary literacy and mathematics.

#### **Mark Gwynn**

Mark Gwynn is a researcher and editor at the Australian National Dictionary Centre at the Australian National University. The ANDC edits Australian Oxford dictionaries for Primary and Secondary schools, 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 Pocket Oxford Dictionary*.

#### **James Arvanitakis**

Professor James Arvanitakis is Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Graduate Research School at Western Sydney University. He is also a lecturer in Humanities and a member of the University's Institute for Cultural and Society. James is internationally recognised for his innovative teaching style and was the recipient of the Prime Minister's University Teacher of the Year Award in 2012.

#### **David Astle**

David Astle is a full-time word nerd, making crosswords, writing columns, and penning more than 12 books, including *Wordburger* and *The Gargantuan Book of Words*. David is a regular presenter on ABC Radio Melbourne, as well as the language guru on ABC's News Breakfast.

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