

7 December 2020

Mischief-making animals leap onto the shelves at public libraries

A story about a cow's hapless journey down a flooded Brisbane River and an alphabet book featuring echidnas exercising in Emerald are among a series of new children's books available this week in all Queensland public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

The *Stories for Little Queenslanders* series, published by State Library of Queensland, has been created by 21 authors and illustrators as part of the Queensland Government funded First 5 Forever initiative.

The project represents a publishing first for State Library and a significant investment in telling Queensland stories while supporting emerging and established authors and illustrators.

They include much-loved children's authors Pamela Rushby and Samantha Wheeler, illustrators Sophie Beer and Simon Howe, and first-time children's book authors and illustrators Emma Cracknell, Janet Turner and Eunice Day (2020 black&write! Fellowship winner).

The books promote early literacy and inspire a love of reading for children 0-5 and feature the adventures of mischief-making animals, quirky local settings and charming young characters reflecting the diversity of families in Queensland.

This series of high-quality local stories helps Queensland children develop a sense of identity and belonging through stories and connects them with their environment and local communities.

The stories will be available in print, electronic and audio formats through State Library and Queensland's network of more than 320 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

First 5 Forever provides tools and resources to help parents and caregivers support their child's early literacy development. Free Baby Play, Story Time and Rhyme Time sessions for families are available online or at public libraries and a range of free resources is available [online](#).

First 5 Forever is an initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library.

(Titles listed below)

Quotes from Arts Minister Leeanne Enoch

"In what has been a challenging year, it's wonderful to see this project come to fruition and authors and illustrators from across Queensland provided with a chance to shine as they share their stories and art."

"*Stories for Little Queenslanders* has generated employment opportunities for our creative sector, and will offer hours of reading delight for Queensland children and families.

"The Palaszczuk Government provides \$5 million per annum ongoing funding to First 5 Forever to provide strong early literacy foundations for Queensland children aged 0-5 years, and I applaud *Stories for Little Queenslanders* in its aim to actively engage our youngest readers."

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Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“Sharing stories from birth has a positive impact that lasts a lifetime, and these locally inspired stories, rhymes and illustrations are an absolute delight to share with little ones.

“We are proud to invest in telling Queensland stories, and supporting authors and illustrators.

“Books that parents enjoy are the ones that children enjoy sharing.

“I look forward to seeing them in public libraries across the state.”

Stories for Little Queenslanders books

- ***Hotel for bees***, written by Alison McLennan (Albany Creek, Qld) and illustrated by Erin Dunne (The Range, Qld)
- ***In the deep end***, written and illustrated by Charlie Thomson (Boonah, Qld)
- ***Is this your egg?***, written by Ella Kris (Thursday Island, Qld) and illustrated by Emma Cracknell (Bundamba, Qld)
- ***Koalas like to ...***, written by Shae Millward (Torquay, Qld) and illustrated by Brent Wilson (Birkdale, Qld)
- ***My people***, written by Billie-Jean Taylor (Gordonvale, Qld)
- ***Once I munched a mango***, written by Samantha Wheeler (Chandler, Qld) and illustrated by Shannon Horsfall (Bellara, Qld)
- ***One remarkable reef***, written by Kellie Byrnes (Buderim, Qld) and illustrated by Rachel Tribout (Auchenflower, Qld)
- ***Shoosh!***, written and illustrated by Simon Howe (Preston, Vic)
- ***The coloured echidna***, written and illustrated by Eunice Day (Blackwater, Qld)
- ***The cow that swam out to sea***, written by Pamela Rushby (Seventeen Mile Rocks, Qld) and illustrated by Nicola Hooper (Shailer Park, Qld)
- ***The little Queenslanders' alphabet book***, written by Sally Scudamore (Goondiwindi, Qld, currently residing in the UK) and illustrated by Sophie Beer (Annerley, Qld)
- ***Up and down on a rainy day*** by Kathryn Apel (Mount Tom, Qld) illustrated by Janet Turner (Upper Mount Gravatt, Qld)