



## Media release content

### The Maurice Saxby Award 2022

The Maurice Saxby Award recognises service to children's and/or young adult literature. It is awarded to individuals or organisations that have displayed excellence and passion in promoting reading and/or writing for young people in NSW.



The recipient of the School Library Association of New South Wales Maurice Saxby Award for 2022 is author, Susanne Gervay. Susanne's passion for, and commitment to, the promotion of reading and children's literature in New South Wales and beyond over a long period is evidenced in numerous ways.

As a lecturer, teacher, and educational specialist with a Master of Education and a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, Susanne writes with insight into issues that affect both children and young adults. Through her award-winning writing, she has tackled important questions head-on for children and young adults about divorce, bullying, physical trauma, consent, feminism, cancer, the Holocaust, war, and peace through books that include: 'I am Jack,' 'Butterflies,' 'Gracie and Josh,' 'Elephants Have Wings,' 'Ship in the Fields,' 'The Boy in the Big Blue Glasses,' 'Shadows of Olive Trees,' 'Heroes of the Secret Underground,' and, most recently, 'The Edge of Limits.'

Susanne's honest and, at times, confronting, writing combined with personal experiences encourage readers to walk vicariously with her characters; validating and celebrating courage, difference, and resilience.

Susanne's ability to connect with young readers and promote social justice, has been recognised nationally and internationally. 'I Am Jack' has been endorsed by Life Education Australia and is used extensively in anti-bullying programs, while 'Butterflies, a rite of passage novel for young adults, was recognised as Outstanding Youth Literature on Disability by The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) and is endorsed by the Burn Unit at The Children's Hospital Westmead and by Louise Sauvage, the Sportsperson of the World for Disability.

Beyond writing for children and young adults, Susanne is currently the Regional Advisor for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrator Australia East, a Writer Ambassador for Room to Read, a Role Model on the committee of Books in Homes, an Ambassador for the Premier's Reading Challenge, and an Australia Day Ambassador. Susanne has also been involved in 'Littlescribe' since its inauguration in 2017 as an author and partner with students. A national writing program and festival, 'Littlescribe' provides opportunities for students from ages 5 to 16 to select on-demand author workshops, discover resources, access writing activities, and work with Australian authors.

In recognition of her work, Susanne has been awarded the International Social Justice Literature Award by the International Literacy Association and an Order of Australia for her service to children's literature.

Susanne's passion for promoting reading and improving literacy in young people is perhaps best encapsulated in the words of a teacher librarian who wrote in support of Susanne's nomination for the Saxby Award:

We must never underestimate the power and spread of the ripples in the pond when a rock is thrown into it. It is not the physical aspects of writing books and giving talks that have garnered the awards that are Susanne's most important contributions to the literacy development of our students, but the unseen impact her writing has had on helping them understand that they are worthy and worthwhile and thus they have been inspired to go on and do so much more than they ever believed they could.

The members of the School Library Association of New South Wales congratulate Susanne Gervay on the receipt of the 2022 Maurice Saxby Award.



The [School Library Association of New South Wales](http://www.slansw.net.au) (SLANSW) is a professional association centered on professional learning, advocacy and research. Our membership is interested in learning about, and supporting and advocating for, the importance of school libraries as a part of the K-12 educational experience.

**For media inquiries contact:**

**Kaylene Taylor - Executive Officer**

Email: [info@slansw.net.au](mailto:info@slansw.net.au)

**ENDS**