



Media release content

The John Hirst Award 2024

The John Hirst Award honours the memory of the Association's founder, who had a vision and a passionate drive to establish the primary place of libraries in every NSW school. The award recognises excellence in professional leadership and/or service by an Association member who is either a teacher librarian or who supports school libraries in New South Wales.



The recipient of the School Library Association of New South Wales John Hirst Award for 2024 is Gabrielle Mace. Gabrielle is Head of Library Services at St Augustine's College – Sydney.

Gabrielle Mace has been proactive in promoting literacy and has demonstrated leadership through research and continuous improvement in the school libraries in which she has worked. In her previous school, Gabrielle led the implementation of a successful whole-school literacy intervention program and continues in her current school to advocate for the creation of a reading culture

through activities such as her co-presentation for the International Boys' Schools Coalition (IBSC) on 'Developing a School-wide Reading Culture for Boys in 2023'. Furthermore, as the sole presenter on 'Boys & Books: Breaking Down the Barriers' podcast at the IBSC's

'Exploring Boys Education' event in 2023, Gabrielle actively engaged in discussions surrounding the challenges and opportunities in boys' education, specifically in the context of literature, and advocated for the school library space and the imperative for school libraries to be staffed by qualified professionals. Gabrielle has generously shared her practice with others in the profession on her contribution to research into the development of a whole-school reading program. In this regard, she has contributed to various publications, such as *Connections* magazine, *ACCESS*, *The Book Curator* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* throughout 2021, 2022, and 2023. Gabrielle has also presented her work at conferences, such as the AIS 'Teacher Librarians Reading Symposium' in 2022, the ALIA/LARK Applied Library Research event at UTS in 2022, the AIS Research Symposium in 2022, and the SLANSW 'Just Read' Online Meet-Up in 2021. Gabrielle's research has led to invitations to continue to speak both nationally and internationally.

Gabrielle continues to advocate for school libraries as a member of the SLANSW Management Committee and the IBSC's Special Interest Group on Libraries & Reading Culture. She also actively uses social media to advocate for school library spaces and the critical importance of library spaces run by professional qualified, knowledgeable staff.

Through her leadership, professional practice, passion and willingness to advocate for the profession, Gabrielle has demonstrated dedication to the advancement of school libraries in a variety of contexts. Gabrielle Mace is a worthy recipient of the John Hirst Award 2024 and members of the School Library Association of NSW congratulate her on this achievement.



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.

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