

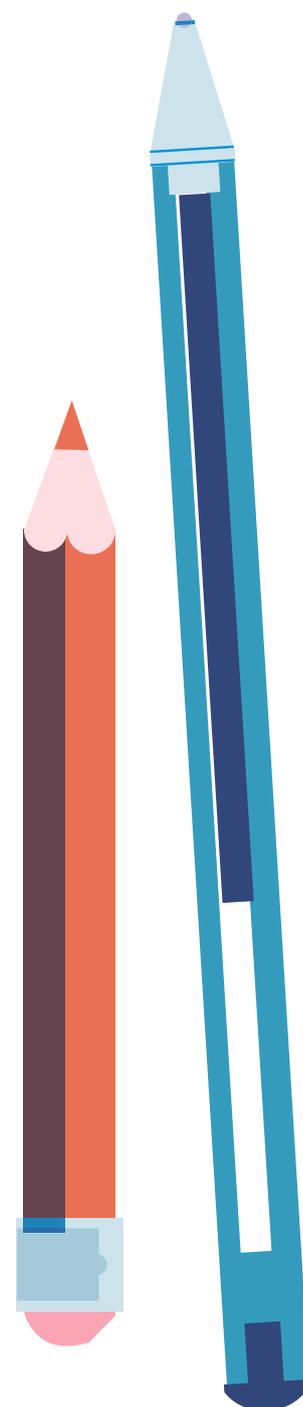
Sydney Story FACTORY



**2015 - 2016
ANNUAL REPORT**

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The Pendant

By Jasper

The falcon abandoned by his flock
taken and put inside a pendant
dreaming of the sky
his sleek wings flapping
but not escaping
he tries every time
but can never escape
spinning indefinitely
flying while asleep
suddenly lifted
the feeling of exhilaration
being lifted by hands
and put around a neck.

Flags

by Latisha

Inside the pen, the colours combine.
Inside the colours, the medal collides.
Inside the Medal, the history lies.
Inside the history, there is pride.
Inside the Pride, there's people alive.
Inside the people, there's no more cries.

"When we returned to school we screened the video we made of the students reading out their poems to the group. When Laura saw herself appear on screen, she began to cry. I went to her to apologise for showing the video without warning her she'd be on there and she said, 'No, it's not that - I'm so happy and proud of myself for the poem I wrote and reading my poetry to the group. I didn't think I could do that.'"

Elizabeth Leal, teacher at St Michael's Catholic Primary, Daceyville



State of Mind

by Blake

It was a full moon in winter. It was late at night, street light covering the road and footpath. My brother and I were playing tips and he was in. I was running for my life and I tried to jump a corner but I failed.

I woke up in the ambulance truck with an oxygen mask and a heart rate monitor. They took me to Westmead Children's Hospital. My nan, Dad, my brother Josh, my sister and my other brothers were waiting for me at the emergency ward.

They lifted me up in the bed and gently ran with me into the emergency room. I was looking up and saw lights flashing. I looked at my arms as if I was seeing if this was real. My left arm was covered in blood, and the left part of my head was covered too. They pushed me into a surgery room. They put a happy gas mask on me but I refused to put it on while the nurse put a heated blanket on me. I fell asleep.

I woke up with my family waiting in the waiting room. I came in in a wheelchair. My dad looks to his left and sees me. He jumps up in joy that I was still alive. I look to my left and a colour ball that was being pushed up by water. The water sculpture was made out of black stone and looked like a volcano. I took the ball and the nurse said, "you can't have that" but my mum bought it for \$30-\$50.

I was going home after three days, I had to have medicine every four hours. I was on the way home when they told me what had happened when I was knocked out.

Josh told me my head was bent back on my neck and he said, "omg Blake's dead."
My dad said Josh was feeling guilty because he thought he killed me.

I sat there laughing, while Josh was looking at Dad like he was going to hurt him. Dad said that the doctor said I had plastic surgery on my head and eleven stitches. They had KFC without me so Dad got me a box of wicked wings and my brother Kyle got jealous.

Two to three weeks later I had to have my stitches removed. My nan took me to the doctor's to get them removed from my head. They made me lay down on a bed while they cut the stitches out. I wanted my nan to do it and they allowed it so she carefully cut them out and when we got home I pulled them out. It hurt so my dad put cream on it and it felt better. That was the most hectic four weeks of my life.

The End

P.S. Don't jump corners unless you think you can make it.

President's Report



It seems almost impossible to believe now but when Cath and Tim came to see me with their idea for what is now The Sydney Story Factory, it was just a concept on a page.

Who'd have guessed that five years later Cath's visionary zeal, creative drive and determined hard work would be recognised and acclaimed on the national stage with one of the greatest recognitions this country can bestow.

The Australian of the Year Awards profile leading citizens who are role models for us all. They inspire us through their achievements and challenge us to make our own contribution to creating a better Australia. That's exactly what Cath has done as director of the Sydney Story Factory. All of us who have watched that crazy concept blossom and grow, and have worked with her to make it happen, are immensely proud of all she has led us to achieve.

Over 2015 and 2016 the Sydney Story Factory has continued to power forward towards our strategic goal of becoming a flourishing small enterprise, helping many thousands of young people a year. We can comfortably say that we are having a deep impact on students and are a leading force in creative writing education for young people in Australia.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our core group of partners who took the risk from the first and have continued their steadfast support - UBS, Dusseldorp Forum, McLean Foundation and the Limb Family Foundation being first among them. Thank you all.

Thank you too to each and every one of the volunteers, individual donors, businesses, schools, local organisations and members of the community who have continued to show their support in countless ways.

Thanks to you all we finished the financial year in a very strong and healthy position. It's also thanks to you we're now very well placed to begin accelerating plans for expansion, and opening a new creative writing centre in Western Sydney.

These are exciting times for the Sydney Story Factory and we look forward - led from the front, as always, by the visionary Cath - to growing from strength to strength in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M Gonski', written in a cursive style.

Michael Gonski
President, Sydney Story Factory
Board of Directors

"There is something so exciting about seeing children explore their creativity and discover a way to have their voice heard. When those children get that opportunity at the Martian Embassy and have the support of professional storytellers and a band of committed and caring volunteers, it can be life changing. That is why the Limb Family Foundation is proud to support the Sydney Story Factory and the work it does with disadvantaged children, particularly from Indigenous backgrounds. We believe in supporting change that will make the world a better place for every child, and the Sydney Story Factory is doing just that."

Julia Limb, Chair, Limb Family Foundation

On Australia Day 2016 executive director and co-founder of the Sydney Story Factory Cath Keenan was named 2016 Australian of the Year Local Hero. This is the speech she gave at the official outdoor ceremony in Canberra to accept her award.

Thank you. I want to sincerely congratulate all the finalists, who are doing such important work around the country. I share this award with them, and with all the extraordinary people – and particularly the amazing young people, our students – at the Sydney Story Factory.

Telling stories is a fundamental part of being human. It's how we understand the world around us, and how we convince others to work with us to change it. It's also – and anyone who has sat with an eight year old to write a story recently will tell you this – a profoundly, often wildly, creative act. Telling stories is the way we take our complicated emotions, and the weird spirallings of imagination, and give them shape and form. It is how we take what's inside us and show it to the world.

We know the huge benefits of helping young people tell their stories. We know it because a growing body of research, from all around the world, demonstrates the many and varied benefits of engaging young people in quality arts experiences. Young people given creative opportunities to express themselves through stories, or painting, or music will, on average, do better at school and watch less TV; they're more likely to go on to tertiary education; and they're more likely to volunteer in their community, among other things.

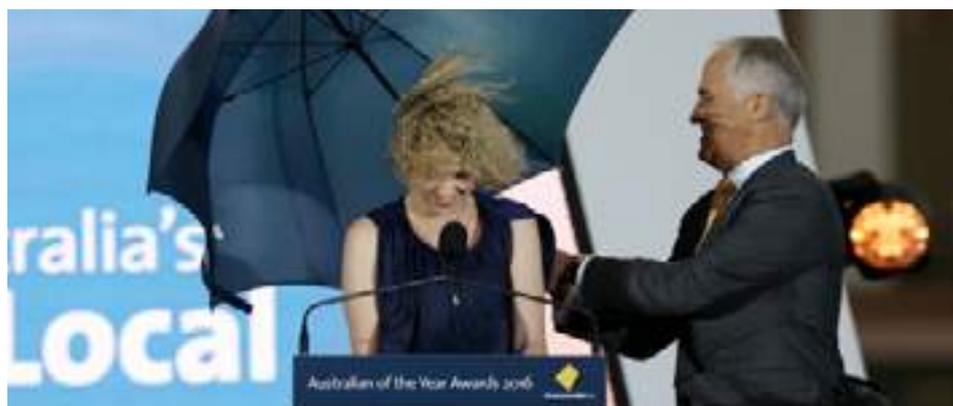
I've seen it, time after time, how telling their stories helps kids grow in confidence, helps them stand that little bit taller. It's very simple, really: giving young people creative opportunities amplifies who they are, and who they might become.

Wouldn't it be fantastic if all children in Australia had equal access to these creative opportunities? Wouldn't it be fantastic if every child – particularly our Indigenous children, who unfortunately still suffer the most in this area – had the basic literacy skills required for each and every one of them to tell their own, unique story? How much richer we, as a nation, would be.

If you are a parent, instead of just reading to your children, help them write a story too. If you have some free time, don't just go see a movie, volunteer with an organisation that helps kids make their own movies, about the things that matter to them. If you have enough money to go to an exhibition or the theatre, consider giving some of it to the thousands of dedicated Australians out there who need your help to give young people the creative opportunities that could turn their life around.

Then let's see what the story of Australia could become.

Australian of the Year Address



1 Audi called **AUDREY** on loan to the SYDNEY STORY FACTORY for one year

Our Mission and Purpose



Strong writing skills are one of the foundations of a successful life, yet marginalised young people, particularly those from Indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds, have consistently lower literacy levels than their peers. Meanwhile, a crucial part of any young person's education in our rapidly changing world should be learning to think flexibly and adapt to new situations. Creativity becomes vital.

A growing body of international research demonstrates that quality arts programs can enhance creativity and significantly improve literacy rates and academic engagement. They also provide many other social and emotional benefits.

Marginalised young people have limited access to the arts generally and few opportunities to participate in arts-based learning experiences. We aim to fill that gap.

Scoping Growth Western Sydney

In May and June 2016, Boston Consulting Group undertook a scoping project that explored in detail options for growth in an area of considerable need - Western Sydney. This intensive process was undertaken pro-bono by BCG and represents a significant investment in the future of Sydney Story Factory. It provides a clear blueprint for expansion and recommends establishing a new centre, most likely in Parramatta. We hope to make this next dream a reality by mid-2018.





33%
increase in
ENROLMENTS
this year

50%
increase in
**STUDENT
HOURS**

Our Mission

At the Sydney Story Factory we're on a mission to change the lives of young people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, through creative writing and storytelling.

Our Purpose

Every day we set out to:

- * Run innovative and fun creative writing programs, with expert teaching and one-on-one tutoring.
- * Encourage young people to communicate ideas, giving them more confidence in their skills, themselves and each other.
- * Create and sustain a vital contribution to the community, by respecting and giving voice to the stories around us.

For all of our programs our focus is marginalised young people - those most at risk of losing confidence in their writing abilities and switching off at school. We make writing fun and rewarding, improving essential skills and boosting their confidence. We help them find their voice so they can live their lives to their full potential.

This year we have continued to build and grow as we have moved into the second phase of our three year strategic plan. This has meant extending our reach, optimising effectiveness, extending our role in the education community, increasing capacity through staff and volunteers and ensuring sustainability.

Having successfully consolidated our base we have begun actively exploring options for expansion, so that we are now well positioned and ready for significant growth in the years to come.

2015-16
By The Numbers
2,893 Student enrolments
28% Indigenous young people
32% Young people from language backgrounds other than English
12,055 Student workshop hours
4.17 Average hours of personal tuition per student

30 mins more
**QUALITY
TUITION TIME**
per student



Out of this World Workshops

There's no such thing as boring at the Sydney Story Factory, and that's true for every workshop we run.

We know that if we're going to light the spark of creativity for each individual student we work with, the old rules do not apply. Sometimes being in one of our workshops really is like being on a different planet, or a whole new world. And in this crazy, colourful, wordy world of creativity we see imaginations unleashed and young minds taking flight every day.

All Sydney Story Factory workshops, for young people 7 to 17, are designed by creative writing and literacy experts to:

- * **improve written and oral communication skills;**
- * **enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy;**
- * **nurture creativity and empathy; and**
- * **deepen engagement with learning.**

Our innovative model sees all workshops devised, planned and led by our expert storytelling team and delivered with the help of volunteer tutors who give students the one-on-one attention and support even the best teachers struggle to provide.

In each workshop we use different tools and techniques to help young people explore their creativity, while breaking down the writing process step-by-step and providing the scaffolding for them to build on. Workshops can include elements of drawing, filming, audio recording, cartooning, dressing in costume or theatre, whatever works best to help our young writers explore their ideas.

All students complete every workshop having finished a piece of original writing, often more imaginative and polished than anything they have written before. We celebrate that achievement with publication - every student leaves our workshops as a published author.



18
FEARSOME
visits from
**Marcia the
Martian
Librarian**

From our Redfern base, we have established a core set of programs that ensure that we can reach as many as possible of the marginalised young people who most stand to benefit from participation in our workshops.

UBS School Workshop Program

With school groups from as near as Waterloo and Darlington, to La Perouse and Cabramatta, and as far afield as Warilla, we ran 66 workshop programs during school hours. All schools were from lower socioeconomic areas or with high proportions of students who are Indigenous or from language backgrounds other than English. Some workshops were one-offs where writing short stories, robot bird poems or comedy scripts was enhanced by the added dimension of a visit from the inimitable Marcia the Martian Librarian. For others, such as students from Wilcannia High and Warilla High, we ran 'My Zine of Home' workshops. We ran term-long programs such as our 'Letters from Quarantine' program with students at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Primary School or our awesome 'Me & You & Woolloomooloo' program with all of the students at Plunkett Street Primary School. In many cases students came to the Martian Embassy, but increasingly we delivered our workshops at the school. This meant we could bring all the specialist expertise of our creative writing programs right into each school, without disrupting timetables and students having to travel.

UBS SCHOOL WORKSHOP PROGRAM

1,450 Young people had a one-of-a-kind school-hours creative writing experience

45 Groups of primary school students from 17 schools

21 Groups of high school students from 12 schools

21 Workshop series or term-long programs

45 One-off workshops

"They had a wonderful morning and came back and shared everything that they did with their classes. We would love to come again one day. Thank you for everything."

Anne Morgan, Our Lady of Fatima teacher, Book Making workshop

"It was a phenomenal day; the kids had abundant fun and took a lot out of it. Thank you very much for your time and energy along with that of the tutors."

Kirk Ng, teacher at Merrylands High, 'What Would You Do?' Monologues

AFTER SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

18 Term-long after school workshop programs

309 Enrolled participants

62 Young writers enrolled in more than one program

55% Indigenous young people

8 Community partners



After School Workshops

While most kids were hurling their school bags aside and rushing for the beach or the basketball court there was a bunch of young people who were switching into creative mode instead, in our after school workshops. These programs ran for seven or eight weeks in parallel with the school term. Monday to Wednesday we ran programs for children up to 14, with workshops on Thursdays for eager writers 13 plus. All but our teen program were run in conjunction with community partners, including Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre and Woolloomooloo After School Care. Again, most were delivered on-site at their premises, to make participation as easy as possible.

Pen Pal Program

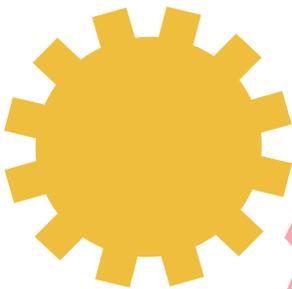
For young writers unable to attend one of our workshops, or happier writing at their own speed on their own projects at home, our Pen Pal Program offers personal guidance and support via email. This year we had seven students take up this option, ably supported by 11 specially trained volunteer writing tutors. While still small, this option is growing in popularity, especially for graduates from our term-long programs.

We ran a 'Let Me Tell You Something Funny' comedy scripts workshop for students from Ashfield Primary. They said:

"I liked to make people laugh."
"This workshop was amazing, it was very informative, fun and brief."
"Well, you made me confident about acting out to people."
"It was a fun experience of writing comic scripts and I really liked it."
"Story Factory was the best because we had so much funny and good actors!"
"I liked it so much and I want to come back."
"It was great I loved it I can't believe there was aliens."
"[I loved] the whole group of students doing it together."

We ran a 'Robot Bird Poetry' workshop for students from Kogarah Intensive English Centre. They said:

"I liked the rhyming words best, because they were funny."
"When I came in I felt shy, but when the activities were given I felt so happy and fun."
"It was really so much amazingly really fun."
"It was fantastic and I want to come again to this place."



Sundays at the Story Factory

Sundays are all on at the Martian Embassy as writers from 7 to 15 rev up their creativity and let their pens (or pencils, or textas) fly. This year we rolled out new morning and afternoon workshops every term, with themes as different as 'Secret Societies' and 'Beach Stories', 'Songwriting For Non-Songwriters' and 'Fantasy Worlds'. Workshops were booked to capacity and ran for two hours each week for seven or eight weeks. That meant a minimum of 14 hours of personal tuition for every student. Many of them had such a great time they came back more than once, instantly doubling the impact.

**"Sydney Story Factory bridges the education gap for Indigenous kids to enjoy and connect to the power of education."
Parent of student from La Perouse**

**"She had a fantastic time last term. She was so proud of her story she took it into class yesterday to show her teacher and she let her read out some of it to the class, so she was beaming when I picked her up from school."
Sheryl, mother to Holly, Sunday program**

SUNDAY WORKSHOPS

8 Term-long Sunday workshops

169 Enrolled participants

44 Young writers enrolled in more than one workshop

60% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

16 Donald Trump
CONSPIRACY THEORIES
appearing in stories and scripts

Holiday Workshops

8 School holiday workshops

159 Enrolled participants

43% Indigenous young people

20% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

7 Community partners

“Everyone is astounded at the quality of the writing, especially given that some of the children had absolutely no English just a few months ago when they arrived.”

Jenny Tracey, Asylum Seekers Centre



School Holiday Workshops

Partnerships with seven community organisations saw us deliver eight workshop programs during school holidays. Many of the children and young people we reached this way would never be able to get to our workshops during the term so this was a chance for us to work with some often vulnerable youngsters we simply wouldn't see otherwise. Children from the Asylum Seekers Centre wrote letters to introduce themselves to kids from St Brigid's Catholic Primary School in Marrickville, students from the Boys & Girls Brigade wrote scripts involving audio oddities in our 'I Spy With My Ears' workshops, and Indigenous teens who came to us through Compass (the University of Sydney's outreach program) explored what it means to be 'Change Agents in the Community'.

We ran a term-long workshop program called 'Me & You & Woolloomooloo' with all the students at Plunkett Street Primary School. They said:

“Very cool and fun the work is the best work and the shortest work I have done.”

“It was a cool place to learn more stuff.”

“I liked the co-operation.”

“When we did it it made it more creative.”

“It's awesome.”

Meet Jennayah

Jennayah has been coming in for some time now with Redfern Jarjum college, a school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the heart of Redfern. All of Jarjum's students struggle with learning difficulties and find mainstream education very challenging, Jennayah included.

In term two 2016, something clicked for Jennayah. During the seven-week workshop, she and her fellow Jarjum students created a motley crew of apartment block residents for the fictional and fantastical Hell Block. Jennayah came up with a fully-realised character, Captain America, and gave him a baby to look after, and a dog, and had him spend most of his time being a superhero to his family.

But it isn't just Jennayah's writing achievement that impressed us. It's her dedication. Each week she was the first at her desk writing, and was keen to update students who had missed a week as to where we were up to. She worked incredibly hard and was a shining role model for her peers.

Josh, Jennayah's teacher, says that he watched Jennayah really switch on. He says that like all her classmates she's got really great creative and imaginative ideas but struggles to get them down on paper.

"She really wants to be able to produce something...[But] before if she made a mistake that would be it, she'd tear it up and throw it away. Now she's working really hard to be more independent and confident."

Jennayah was supported by her volunteer writing tutor, Charlie, who worked with her one-on-one. Josh says Charlie's willingness to put in the time and genuinely engage with Jennayah was the crucial factor. "She's been open to working with Charlie, because he's the right person. He's been laid back, friendly and natural, not trying to force anything. It's been a genuine relationship," says Josh.

And the changes Josh has seen in Jennayah have gone back to the classroom as well. "She's working more at having a go herself," he says.

But what does Jennayah have to say about her experience of writing at the Sydney Story Factory? She's not one for getting wordy, but this is what she had to say when workshop leader Craig sat her down for an interview:

Craig: Are you a good writer ?

Jennayah: Kinda.

Craig: Have you gotten better at writing ?

Jennayah: Yeah.

Craig: Is it easier to write stories at school now ?

Jennayah: No.

Craig: Has coming here made you different ?

Jennayah: More confident. Spelling, writing, reading.

Craig: Favourite story ?

Jennayah: Captain America. I like Captain America.



Our Collaborative Community

Being actively involved and embedded in the community we live in has been important for the Sydney Story Factory right from the start. This has meant establishing relationships and working consistently not just with local schools but also community groups and Aboriginal organisations striving, like us, to provide marginalised young people every encouragement and support.

We know, as they do, that by working together we can be more effective and have a greater impact than with each of us working in isolation. This means that we consult closely with our partners on the content and structure for every workshop program, to ensure maximum engagement and inspiration, and the best possible outcomes for all. It also means we share ideas, stay connected and pool resources wherever we can.

In the last year we doubled the number of community organisations we partnered with - 17 in total - to deliver bespoke creative writing workshops for the young people they support:

- * National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)
- * National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA)
- * Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre
- * Redfern Jarjum College
- * The Pyjama Foundation
- * Redfern Community Centre
- * Settlement Neighbourhood Centre
- * Weave
- * Kool Kids
- * Woolloomooloo After School Care
- * Asylum Seekers Centre
- * Boys & Girls Brigade
- * Centipede
- * Compass (University of Sydney)
- * Ronald McDonald House
- * Australian Refugee Volunteers
- * Telopea Family Support



17 stalls
hosted at
COMMUNITY
EVENTS
and activity
days

Young writers who took part in our Crazy Neighbours, Crazy Stories after school workshops at NCIE had this to say:

“I like collecting [the achievement] cards each week. I love knowing that you actually care.”

“I like making stories up, it’s like my games come true which I love.”

“I like showing them the cards and book, because Mum and Dad can read it and be proud because now I write more.”

“Writing the story was hard... but I finished it!”

The volunteers who worked with them thought they were pretty fabulous too:

“The students who’ve been with us every week have grown in confidence and their writing has flourished. The children who drop in from time to time seeking respite from the frenetic activity exploding around them also benefit from the safe, creative environment we offer. Sometimes forty-five minutes is all that’s needed to test an idea, sound out an emotion, or explore a different way of looking at things.”

“These young participants are just so delightful to work with - they love us coming in, recognise me in the street, and really respond to the challenges of improving their writing.”

Special Projects & Programs



“At school there’s a time limit and [the kids] don’t get a chance to interact with community... [With the Sydney Story Factory] they’re given a VIP opportunity to express themselves, that they don’t get at home or school.”

Uncle Bruce Shillingsworth, community elder at Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre

In addition to our established base of core programs, over 2015-16 we ran a number of larger special projects. These provided innovative new ways for us to excite our students about writing and creativity, enabled us to test new teaching models, and allowed us to reach more young people than ever before.

See My Story

Over two terms, 178 students in years five, six and seven at Alexandria Park Community School explored their personalities and passions through words and photography. For this program we partnered with the Australian Centre for Photography and Flashpoint Labs and had some fun with written and visual storytelling. The project culminated in a vivid and colourful exhibition that amazed and impressed everyone at the school.

Creative Residency Pilot

Once a week, for a full term at the end of 2015, Sydney Story Factory took over a classroom and brought all the zany creativity of the Martian Embassy right into the heart of Briar Road Public School, Campbelltown. We inspired 39 keen young writers who worked together in small groups to create their own digital animations which we screened for a mini film festival finale. In a school rarely offered such opportunities, feedback from teachers and students alike was overwhelmingly positive.

NASCA Newspapers

Throughout the year we partnered with the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA) to work with Indigenous teenagers visiting from all over Australia to attend NASCA’s week-long ‘Career-Fit’ residential camps. In two-hour workshops these 173 teens reflected

on their time in Sydney and worked together to create unique newspapers - a lasting record of their experiences and what they meant to them.

Dramatic Monologues with Belvoir

Twenty-nine students from Alexandria Park Community School and Holy Spirit College, Lakemba, spent a term transforming personal stories into fictional narratives. By the end of the series each student had completed their own unique dramatic monologue, ready to perform on stage under lights at Belvoir St Theatre.

Matraville Sports High Creative Writing Challenge

Matraville Sports High School is a community-centred school striving to find innovative ways to engage students. Most live locally, 30% are Indigenous, and a high proportion are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In 2016 we’re spending a whole year with them challenging two classes of students each term to finish a piece of creative writing more fully realised than anything they’ve written before.

Let’s Write, Redfern!

We ran two of five programs planned for 2016 with community groups in Redfern and Waterloo where we’re supporting young writers to explore their creativity in meaningful ways. Twenty-three children at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence brought all of their skills to bear writing tales about animals pulling off a bank heist to save the zoo. Meanwhile, 21 children at Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre packed up their imaginations and set off on an Australian Odyssey.

"Just wanted to thank you for coming this week and giving our students some wonderful new opportunities to develop their writing. I spoke to the kids afterwards and they were very positive about the workshops and grateful for the chance to develop their skills and confidence."

Sarah Trapman, Head Teacher (Teaching & Learning), Brewarrina Central School

"Thank you so much for [the State of Mind workshop] yesterday - the kids were raving when they got back..."

Shauna Pollard, Head Teacher English and Drama, Rooty Hill High

"It really surprised me that Ricky's imagination of his story was amazing. Thank you so much, you were doing really good job, and he loves the way you guide him into the story. We can't wait to know what the end of the story going to be."

Joanna, mother to Ricky, Support Needs program

Digital Pilot Programs

Run in conjunction with ED TV, the Powerhouse Museum and Reconciliation Australia, video conferencing workshops allowed us to reach students in 30 schools across New South Wales, in nine sessions, plus 13 teachers for a professional development session. While not as satisfying as face-to-face workshops, this trial afforded excellent opportunities to explore digital delivery options.

State of Mind

In early 2016 we began workshops in our first regional program, an 18-month project involving 600 plus teenagers in Sydney, Western Sydney and regional New South Wales. By the end of June we'd worked with 268 students, from as far afield as Warilla, Dubbo and Gilgandra, for an average of three hours each, supporting them to write poems and non-fiction narratives that reflect their unique lived experience. A year of writing will culminate in an anthology, to be professionally published in 2017. Like no other collection of contemporary writing in Australia, it will represent the teenagers of New South Wales in all their diversity - their State of Mind.

Year of the Novella

Our longest ever program involves nine long-term Sydney Story Factory students who were hungry for a big project they could get their teeth into. Over 2016 they're each writing a novella of around 20,000 words which they'll see published and officially launched at the end of the year. Their volunteer tutors are writing alongside them, with everyone exchanging insight and feedback along the way.

Support Needs 'Proof of Concept' Program

Building on pilot programs, we grew our support needs program significantly in terms one and two of 2016 and proved we have a model that works. Twelve young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder were tutored individually for an average of 13.5 hours each. With all the supports they required in place, they were then invited to transition and continue in a larger group workshop, and did so happily. Training from Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) deepened our skills in this area, plus those of 10 volunteers.



1,009 kms
travelled by
storytellers for
STATE OF MIND
workshops

We asked our students at Briar Road Public what they thought of our workshops. They said:

"It was the best time of my life!!!"

"I really liked it. It was very very nice to be able to be doing this."

"It was awesome and I wanna do it again. 5/5 stars."

"This is the best thing in school."

"It is fun to work with others."

"My experience here was perfectly fun, great and perfect."

Milestones & Celebrations



London Calling

In July 2015, we attended the first international get-together of creative writing centres inspired by 826 Valencia, featuring 18 groups from Stockholm to Buenos Aires to Paris. We got to share what we've learned in our first four years and were gratified by the responses and feedback we received. Of course, it was also a chance for us to soak up all that was to be learned from the experience of others. The conference spawned our first international book project, comprising writing lesson plans from across the globe. Edited by our own Cath Keenan, this will be published in 2017.

Innovation Recognised

Amongst a stellar line up of some of the country's top performing not-for-profits, including Hello Sunday Morning, The Smith Family and Social Ventures Australia, we were named a finalist in the prestigious Macquarie Social Innovation Awards 2015. The awards recognise, promote and reward new ideas that meet pressing community needs, alleviate disadvantage and promote social inclusion.

Whelp

In September 2015 we launched a year's worth of student writing bundled together in a perfectly pink anthology called *Whelp*. Lord Mayor Clover Moore was there to do the honours, students turned the tables and led adults through creative writing activities, Benjamin Law added celebrity appeal, and our sponsors Piazza D'Oro laid on the most creative coconut mocktails we've ever encountered. But it was Kaden, and his story Poopy the One-eyed Dinosaur who stole the show, hands-down.





Indigenous Storyteller

In October 2015 we welcomed our first Indigenous storyteller to our storytelling team. This was important to maximise our engagement with Indigenous students and boost their performance, as well as increasing our teaching capacity overall. The role is now filled by John Blair who is from the Nucoorilma Clan of the Gamilaroi Nation. We've seen a positive shift in the way many Indigenous students engage in our workshops, and our increased enrolments and student hours bear ready testimony to the increased capacity that this additional role has given us.

Radio Blah Blah

A year's worth of interviews, imaginary talk back, podcasts and shockjock rants concocted by students in our after school programs concluded at the end of 2015 with a live performance at Giant Dwarf Theatre. Our students' scripts were performed live by a colourfully motley cast of students and professional actors, with flawless foley artistry providing extra theatrical drama throughout. Parents, teachers, friends, neighbours and storytellers alike laughed till they cried and showed their appreciation in the only way they could - very loudly.

Australian of the Year Local Hero 2016

We were all completely chuffed in November when Cath Keenan was announced New South Wales Australian of the Year Local Hero. When, on Australia Day, she was announced Australian of the Year Local Hero 2016, we were beside ourselves. This hard-earned and well-deserved honour recognises Cath's vision and leadership over four years. It's also a wonderful recognition of all the work that has gone into making the Sydney Story Factory a success, by staff, board, volunteers and supporters alike. As 2016 continued Cath took to the road, and the speaking circuit, spreading the word and championing the vital importance of boosting young people's creativity and writing skills to open up their prospects for the future.

Helping Young Voices Be Heard

During the April 2016 school holidays we worked with the City of Sydney to ensure that young people from the Redfern/Waterloo area had an opportunity to have their say about priorities for city planning. Over four workshops they were given the freedom to speak their minds about what they think is important for their city. Their input was taken straight back to the Town Hall where it will be heard alongside others from all over Sydney.

Changes

by Sandra

Excuse me! I was in front of you! It's my turn! Ohhh WAIT! I know you! I studied with you a long time ago. Do you remember? Do you remember when you went to my house in Portugal and we cooked with my grandfather? Do you remember how he is funny, kind and creative? I miss him, I miss his funny moustache. And the way he touched it ALL the time.

Big changes happened when I came to Australia. OMG do you remember Portuguese food and the smell? Do you remember the smell of my grandmother's food and the taste? Do you remember? It's a home smell and I LOVE IT - that traditional smell. The smell here is not the same. It is less natural. There are more people, more pollution, more cars and more culture. I think there are many things different to my country.

Oh wait, we can talk more but first I need to eat my BEAUTIFUL Big Mac. What were we talking about? Oh yes, I remember.

I'm sorry but I need to say this in Portuguese, is more easy for me.

O chiero em Portugal é diferente porque é mais tradicional e mais natural do que na Austrália. Eu penso que aqui na Austrália o chiro é mais de comida plástica. Em Portugal existe mais gente idosa e é por issa que na minha vila o cheiro é mais tradicional. Tu podes sentir o chiero a comida acabada de fazer em muitos lados e é um cheiro maravilhosa.

I also miss my noisy and smelly dogs. One was smart, beautiful and coloured light brown like old oranges. The other dog was stupid, ugly but cute and coloured grey. They are mother and daughter. Now my house in Australia is quiet and not messy with no socks on the floor because I don't have dogs here. I know I don't have my dogs here but this is not so bad, when they want they are aggressive to other animals. Once my dogs killed my chickens and my cat. But I'm in Australia now and I can have another dog but I don't want another dog because I don't want a substitute for my Portuguese dog for an Australian dog. They can't be friends because they don't talk the same language.

Do you miss these things? I miss these things too. Maybe it's time to have a pet.

Grossaurus Disgustory

What is the grossest...

By Naethen

Colour: Yellow with black and green

Smell: Dead fish and ten garbage bins of fart

Texture: Octopus skin with guts of rats

Taste: Black liquorice and spew

Sound: Fart noises when he walks

Hot thing: Rotten cheese

Wet thing: 12 wet dogs

Dry thing: Scaly skins

Animal: Leach

Bird: Pigeon

Insect: 5 earthworms

Machine: Slime machine

Clothing: Ripped clothes with dirty rags and smelly fish

Activity: Ugly and gross competition

School subject: Guts removing from a sea

Food: Raw octopus with dead humans

Drink: Spew with animal blood and snake poison

Thing: Everything on my list put together

"We had a great session with Richard. These kids are mainly of low socioeconomic backgrounds which means they grow up with less language in their homes which impacts them for years. We were very happy with their creations but more importantly they were. We are yet to find out how they fared in the competition but that's secondary to their Story Factory experience."

Helen Rhodes, teacher at Sanctuary Point Public, Illuminate Poetry workshop





Volunteers in Action

“Children face many legitimate challenges as they grow. Increasingly they have to make sense of challenges not of their own making. Helping kids to express their hopes, ideas, frustrations, dreams and fears ... is deeply rewarding. Assisting in helping kids to discover and use, in even the smallest way, their ‘voice’ is a gift I am willing to give over and over again.”

Anthony Hunt

At the Sydney Story Factory we often say that it is our volunteers who deliver the X factor in our programs. Many of the children and young people we work with struggle at school but when you put them together with someone who is not a parent, or a teacher, or any of the usual adults they bump up against, then add time, patience and a genuine interest in helping that youngster succeed, something quite magical happens.

Trained volunteer writing tutors are essential to our innovative teaching model. In each workshop, they provide the sustained personal attention to a young person and their writing that supports them through whatever challenges the writing process might throw at them. Gently and encouragingly, they help guide the student, or point out the ideas that could be explored and developed, keeping a young writer who might otherwise be inclined to abandon the project on task and writing. Time and again it’s not just what goes down on paper that’s important, but the relationship that forms between tutor and student which allows that young person to test and develop new ways of sharing their ideas, and boosts their confidence in doing so.

The fabulous community of volunteers that has gathered around the Sydney Story Factory takes in people of all ages and from all walks of life. They share a love of writing and common desire to give back to the community. This year we have been delighted to have young people who have attended our workshops as students coming back to volunteer as tutors for younger students.

Meanwhile, that awesome group of our most committed volunteers who have completed more than 42 volunteer hours - our Ambassadors of Ink - has continued to grow. They now number a fabulous 117 and we are immensely grateful to all of them.



As people's lives and commitments change it's critical that we keep welcoming new volunteers into our community. Over this year we ran volunteer orientation days (involving interviews and training) every month, with all of them full to capacity. Also, in late 2015 we launched a team volunteering package where corporate groups can train as tutors then go straight into supporting students in a workshop. All groups who volunteered with us this way found it an immensely satisfying and rewarding experience, with many pledging immediately to volunteer again.

It's also important that we continue to ensure that we support our volunteers in whatever ways we can and provide training that will expand their skills and make their volunteering experience even more rewarding. Over the last year we have run eight professional development training sessions for our volunteers, including training with Aspect about working with young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder; cultural competence training led by our Indigenous storyteller; and a master class in creativity with Dr Michael Anderson.

Volunteers help and support the organisation not just as writing tutors but in many other ways too - meeting and greeting at the Martian Embassy, typing students' stories at the end of term, representing us at community stalls, assisting with the running of major projects, and so much more. This huge community input means that the Sydney Story Factory can operate extremely efficiently and effectively as we continue to work with more and more young writers each year.

BY THE NUMBERS

1,472 Total
volunteers trained

668 Volunteers
workshop ready

316 New volunteers
trained this year

53% New volunteers
became active

7,371 Volunteer hours

2,666
PENCILS
SHARPENED
during Thursday
afternoon retail
shifts

"As a newbie to the team, Sydney Story Factory has been a completely eye opening experience for me. I have loved connecting with kids from such diverse backgrounds and feel so nourished from their positive energy and creativity. A workshop at SSF always reminds me why I'm becoming a teacher."

Julia Readett

"Volunteering with the Sydney Story Factory is a privilege and a joy. The team is outstanding. The kids are inventive, brave, hilarious, and challenging, in the best sense of the word."

Amy Denmeade

Changing Young Lives

Feedback from teachers, parents, caregivers, volunteers and our students themselves has been overwhelmingly positive for all our programs this year.

Every day in our workshops we have seen young people have breakthrough moments when something shifts and they suddenly discover what they are capable of. And at the end of each term, when seven or eight weeks of workshops have come to a close with a screening, or performance, or readings we have been awestruck and humbled by the courage of our young writers as they've stood up to share a piece of writing that's completely original, and completely their own.

We, and their significant adults, have often found ourselves overwhelmed with pride at what our students have achieved, but not half as much as our kids themselves. Knowing that they will take that feeling away, and the bundle of skills that has come with it, to apply to other aspects of their lives is what's most important of all.

Over and over again we are told that what has happened in a Sydney Story Factory workshop program has been transformative for a young person and has changed their lives.

Measuring the impacts of our programs for participating young people is important for them, and us, so that we know we're doing right by each and every young person we have the privilege to work with. This year the formal long-term evaluation being conducted by the University of Sydney has continued into its third and final year. This evaluation has been undertaken by Associate Professor Jackie Manuel and Honorary Associate Professor David Smith at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney, under the direction of Professor Robyn Ewing, AM.

Using a qualitative case-study model, the evaluation investigates the impact of our creative writing workshops in four main areas: writing skills, self confidence, motivation to write, and perceived impact on school work. The study tracks changes in students' creativity, and develops a model of creativity based on five central dimensions: imagination, collaboration, persistence, inquisitiveness, and discipline.

Preliminary results from the evaluation (published February 2015) were very positive, with a rich and complex picture emerging of the many educational, social and emotional benefits of attending Sydney Story Factory programs. Results suggested that the deepest impacts are achieved through repeat and long-term participation in our programs, with some students involved in two or more workshops demonstrating significant development in their creative writing and literacy skills, coupled with a growing awareness of aspects of the creative process, including an understanding of the benefits of working collaboratively.

Ten case studies are now nearing completion, and will provide a full picture of program impacts. The final evaluation report will be available in early 2017.

"She came running towards us with the biggest smile, chatted to us in the car about her characters and what seemed like a very involved story with lots of twists and turns. She loved her tutor and she even gave us a summary of her other little friend's story. The other lovely thing she said when I asked how she went over the 2 hours, me thinking it may have been too long for her (silly me), was, '2 hours, it felt like 10 minutes'. ... We're so happy for her to be so happy and excited about learning. Thank you to you and your wonderful team."

Lisa, mother to Nareema, Sunday program

1
article detailing preliminary findings from
LONG-TERM EVALUATION published in
Australian Literacy Educators' Association academic anthology

Sharing Our Skills

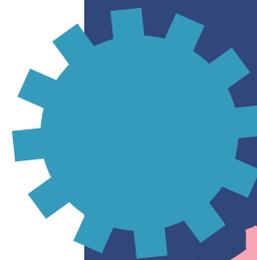
In the latter part of 2015 storyteller-in-chief Richard Short sat down and distilled all that we have learned over four years of running crazy, fun, colourful creative writing workshops into four professional development programs for teachers. These were approved and endorsed by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) in March so that we could begin rolling them out to teachers across New South Wales.

In our Teacher Professional Development programs we are sharing the specialist expertise we have gained with teachers eager to find new ways to engage their students and introduce more creativity into their own classrooms. As the roll-out began we delivered six workshops on-site at specific schools and conferences, and began taking bookings for workshops to be held at the Martian Embassy during school holidays.

As a mission-focused enterprise, this important new initiative is a win-win for us. It creates a significant new revenue stream for the Sydney Story Factory which will help ensure the sustainability of operations into the future. As more teachers take our successful program formats and teaching styles back into their schools there will be benefits and impacts for the students they work with over many years to come. Knowing that we can't possibly reach every young person who stands to benefit from participation in our programs, this becomes a dynamic and exciting new way of continually expanding our reach.

Sharing our insights and knowledge gained within the broader educational community also remains important to us as we cement our position as a leader in creative writing in the classroom. During 2015-2016 we delivered 8 papers and presentations at conferences and forums, including ALEA (Australian Literacy Educators' Association) 2015 Annual Conference, ETA (English Teachers' Association) 2015 Annual Conference, Write for a Bright Future Conference, London, and papers to students in creativity, education and media courses at the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney.

In October, we were also pleased to partner with the University of Sydney to deliver a Sydney Ideas event - Creativity and Education. In this high-profile panel discussion, attended by over 100 people and hosted in the awe-inspiring Great Hall, executive director Cath Keenan led a conversation exploring what exactly nurturing creativity looks like in practice, and how you motivate children to write creatively. Panellists included Professor Robyn Ewing, AM (Professor of Teacher Education and the Arts, Faculty of Education and Social work, University of Sydney) and past Sydney Story Factory student Yarrie Bangura.



250 teachers equipped to take **ROBOT BIRD POETRY** workshops back to their classrooms

"Just wanted to thank you all once again for taking the time... to provide a fabulous day of learning for us at The Story Factory. My staff were thrilled with the day and can't wait to start embedding visual literacy strategies into their pedagogy. We can't speak highly enough of the great work you and your team do."

Steve Gately, Principal, Mount Hutton Primary School

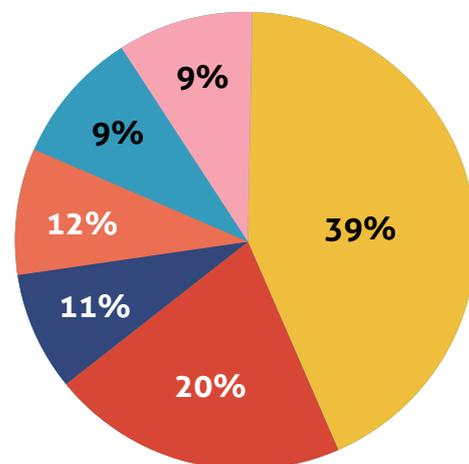
"It was such an enjoyable day with you last week doing both workshops. Certainly lit a creative fuse for me!"

Edwina Cowdery

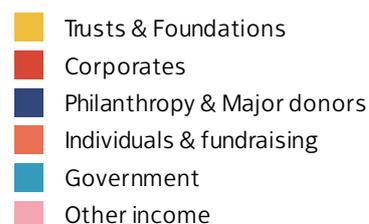
Financial Statements

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
REVENUE		
Donations (see pie chart for breakdown of donations received)	829,378	647,000
Donated consulting services (one-off in-kind donation of pro-bono consulting services from Boston Consulting Group)	250,000	-
Membership dues	209	364
Workshop income	25,520	5,473
Event proceeds (Art Auction)	62,100	-
Shop sales	12,761	22,269
Interest income	9,688	12,805
Venue hire income	5,301	3,091
Other Income	35,639	-
Total Revenue From Ordinary Activities	1,230,596	691,002
EXPENSES		
Cost of sales	(3,652)	(6,542)
Employee expense	(515,399)	(424,142)
Property expense	(72,718)	(81,174)
Audit fee expense	(6,000)	(15,000)
Promotion and fundraising	(6,895)	(7,199)
Workshop expense	(14,613)	(17,641)
Home Project consulting fees	(15,583)	(686)
Insurance	(9,732)	(8,361)
Association administration	(40,905)	(33,266)
Depreciation	(96,788)	(94,214)
Evaluation expenses	(19,912)	(17,760)
Consulting services (one-off in-kind donation of pro-bono consulting services from Boston Consulting Group)	(250,000)	-
Other expenses	(56,992)	(12,199)
Total Expenses from Ordinary Activities	(1,105,537)	(718,184)
Net Surplus / (Deficit) From Ordinary Activities Before Tax	121,407	(27,182)
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	121,407	(27,182)
Total Changes in Equity	121,407	(27,182)
Total Comprehensive Profit / (Loss)	121,407	(27,182)



WHERE OUR REVENUE COMES FROM



NB. Not including one-off in-kind donation of pro-bono consulting services from BCG

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016 (Summary)

	2016 \$	2015 \$
ASSETS		
Total Current Assets	940,242	708,876
Total Non-Current Assets	154,070	250,059
Total Assets	1,094,312	958,935
LIABILITIES		
Total Current Liabilities	424,782	405,449
Total Non-Current Liabilities	2,530	7,893
Total Liabilities	427,312	413,342
Net Assets	667,000	545,593
Retained Profits	667,000	545,593
Total Equity	667,000	545,593

The full Annual Financial Report 2015-2016 for Sydney Story Factory Inc is available on request.

Meet Ricky

Ricky participated as a student in the Sydney Story Factory's Support Needs Proof of Concept Program, February - March 2016.

Before coming to the Sydney Story Factory, Ricky had never written a story. He is a conscientious student who wants to do well at school but this was the first time he had ever delved into his own imagination to see what he might find.

Ricky, aged 10, has speech development delays and autism. Though his family speaks English at home, his Chinese Mum Joanna speaks English as a second language and isn't always confident in her speech. Ricky worked with storyteller Craig in individual weekly tutorials and wrote a Beach Story, in parallel with our Sunday morning students.



Joanna says that because of his struggles with speech, Ricky often forgets what he wants to say and gets stuck. This makes him nervous, and the more nervous he gets the more stuck he feels.

In his workshops at the Sydney Story Factory Ricky has the time to say what he means. He says that coming to the Sydney Story Factory makes him feel happy. "Very, very happy." He says that he comes because it "helps my brains get better at my work." Now when he gets stuck at school, he thinks back to writing with Craig. "I can remember things that make me not stuck. My teacher was very happy when I was doing my work, and then in one second, done!"

Joanna has seen the transformation too. She says, "He's so proud of himself, and feels confident. It's good to have someone here to help him, to practice speaking, and organising his sentences. It's important for him and his future."

Ricky is simply gleeful talking about his writing sessions, especially the crazy names he came up with for his characters. His favourite is Power Parmixing. "I never, never, never know that name, I just make it, it just came out of my own ideas!"

Every week, after a furious hour of imagining and writing, Ricky asked Craig, "Did I do good?" and Craig reassured him that he had done great. After every workshop he greets his Mum with a triumphant double fist pump and a beaming grin. Ricky came along to the end-of-term celebration with the Sunday morning students - the first time he had joined a group here. Not only did he meet other students who'd been doing the same program as him, he was also able to read his story out to the group. After one read-through with Craig's help, he practised by himself until it was his turn. He read in front of everyone with confidence and excitement, needing only the occasional prompt. His smile at the round of applause he received was ear-to-ear.

Ricky says that now he's started he has so many more stories to do in his head. His brains are firing and he's raring to go.

Our Board

Michael Gonski President

Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills

Michael is a solicitor specialising in employment law. In 2014 he was awarded Philanthropy Australia's Emerging Philanthropy Leader Award. He is a member of the board of Philanthropy Australia.



Paul Martin

Executive Director of Teaching Standards and Strategic Policy, Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES).

Paul has played key roles in the implementation of the NSW Government's Great Teaching, Inspired Learning initiative with both BOSTES and NSW Institute of Teachers.



Teya Dusseldorp

Executive Director, Dusseldorp Forum

Teya is executive director of the foundation established by her grandfather which has worked to improve the life opportunities of young Australians for 25 years.



Dr Catherine Keenan

Co-founder, Executive Director

Cath was formerly a journalist with The Sydney Morning Herald, working as an arts writer and as literary editor. She is 2016 Australian of the Year Local Hero.



Leanne Townsend

Chief Executive Officer, National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA).

Leanne is a Chamber 3 Delegate for the National Congress for Australia's First Peoples, a board member for youth social enterprise Heaps Decent, and a founder of Flashpoint Labs. She proudly identifies as Anaiwan.

Angus Stuart

Director, Wolseley Private Equity

Angus Stuart is Director at Wolseley Private Equity, a leading Australian mid-market investor. He has extensive board experience as chairman or director of the businesses owned by Wolseley.



Grant Lovett

Treasurer

Head of Australia, Global Market Solutions, Credit Suisse

Grant has a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) from the University of New South Wales and a Master of Applied Finance from Macquarie University. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.



Gail Hambly

General Counsel/
Company Secretary

Fairfax Media

Gail is responsible for the provision of legal, company secretarial, corporate governance and internal audit services across the Fairfax group.



Jonathan Barouch

Internet Entrepreneur

Jonathan is CEO and founder of Sydney-based technology startup Local Measure.



Tim Dick

Secretary, Co-founder

Solicitor

Tim is a criminal lawyer with Legal Aid. He was formerly a journalist with The Sydney Morning Herald.



Markus Zusak

Author

Markus Zusak is the author of five books, including the international bestseller *The Book Thief*.



Annie Baxter

Head of Brand Marketing, Europe Middle East and Africa, Google

Annie was Head of Communications and Public Affairs for Google in Australia and New Zealand up to March 2016. She is now based in London.





Our Generous Community

Throughout the year we are constantly amazed by - and deeply grateful to - each and every person who makes a donation to help keep the lights on and the creativity pumping at the Sydney Story Factory. We say a huge thank you to every parent who has shown their appreciation, every volunteer who has taken their support that bit further, every school that has had a whip around, every person who donates at work and all those who give what they can because they want to see young lives changed through creative writing and storytelling as much as we do.

As part of our drive to ensure the sustainability of the Sydney Story Factory we pursued a number of fundraising initiatives this year.

Fine Lines

Our biennial art auction, held in October, was a great success. Fine Lines was a unique exhibition of over 40 artworks inspired or influenced by poetry and generously donated by some of Australia's leading artists. The silent auction saw every piece snapped up and raised a very fine \$62,000.

Comedy for Kids!

We were delighted to be chosen as the charity partner for the first ever Comedy for Kids! Festival, run in April 2016 in conjunction with the Sydney Comedy Festival. Not only did this partnership raise over \$11,000 for us, it was a great opportunity for us to share what we do with the broader community.

Inkwells

With the launch of our new and more user-friendly website in December 2015, we relaunched our regular giving program. Our wonderful Sydney Story Factory Inkwells are all deeply committed to changing the lives of marginalised young people and fuel that change with a monthly gift of \$30 or more.

Eat Your Words

In April and May 2016 we encouraged supporters to host a dinner, invite friends and family, and ask them to donate to support the Sydney Story Factory. This fundraising initiative raised over \$9,000 to ensure that our ambitious Year of the Novella program could go ahead in full.

26
animated student
discussions
about whether
or not there is
ANYTHING
inside a can of **GRAVITY**

Our Partners

The Sydney Story Factory has continued to enjoy the ongoing support of a wonderfully generous group of corporates, businesses, philanthropic foundations and private individuals. This year we have also welcomed a number of new partners who have recognised the value and impact of our work and have joined with us to make a difference. For specific projects, we are also very pleased to have secured funding from three tiers of government - federal, state and local - for the first time.

We and all our partners share a common vision, for an Australia where all young people, no matter their background, have the communication skills and belief in themselves to be able to live life to their full potential. It is a pleasure and privilege to partner and grow with each and every one of you. For all you do to help us keep expanding and delivering on our mission every day we say a huge thank you.



**Principal and
Founding Partner**

Pride of Place

UBS took a chance on the Sydney Story Factory when it was still barely more than a concept. As principal and founding partner they have been more than generous, working with us to accelerate from fledgling to flourishing in four short years. The UBS School Workshops Program is now established as a core program for us, one that has seen us change many hundreds of young lives together. UBS's consistent support represents a considerable investment in the future of Australia's young people. It has been pivotal to our reaching a position where we are now poised for significant expansion. A sincere thank you to the UBS Foundation and UBS staff at every level.

To all of our partners, on behalf of every one of the young people who have discovered a love of writing in our workshops, we sincerely thank you for your support.





The MacKenzie Family
Campbell Edwards Trust
Richard & Susan Henshall
Maxine Stewart



Barbara Alice Trust

Commonwealth Bank of Australia



Nautilus Foundation

Wilson Asset Management (International)

The Sky Foundation

Rotary Club of Sydney Cove



Penguin Random House Australia



Bruce & Annie Corlett

Deborah Fullwood

Key Foundation

Mark Nelson



Mike & Kerry Gonski

Ward Family Foundation

Louise & Martyn Myer Foundation



Fouress Foundation

Mary Haines

ANZ Staff Foundation



KONICA MINOLTA



Baly Douglass Foundation

Gail Hambly

Markus Kahlbetzer

Albert Fisher Family Trust

Doc Ross Family Foundation

Bronwyn Gould & Ian Portek

Markus Zusak

Betty Barton Foundation

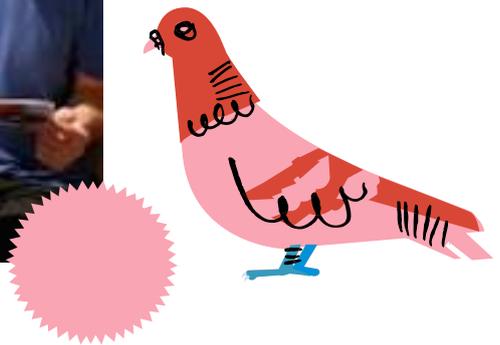
Richard Willis

Wendy Fitzgerald



News Corp Australia





Our Staff

Sydney Story Factory is run by a hard-working team of committed creatives who love words and writing, but only half as much as they love the looks on the faces of kids who have just discovered they can WRITE!

Above, we are: Matt, Richard, John, Jayne, Amber (back); Helen, Sheila, Cath, Craig (front).

Cath Keenan

Executive Director

Cath oversees all aspects of everything, is never far from her email, and particularly loves working with the team to come up with new workshop ideas. She is also the 2016 Australian of the Year Local Hero.

Helen Coolican

Deputy Storyteller

Helen has over 20 years' experience as a teacher, and is passionate about putting creativity back at the heart of education. Helen plays a key role in maintaining the Sydney Story Factory's connections with the local community.

Jayne Wasmuth

Development Manager

Jayne is responsible for donor relations, partnerships and fundraising. Prior to joining the Sydney Story Factory, she worked in the book industry for many years, before transitioning to the non-profit sector.

Richard Short

Storyteller-in-Chief

Richard taught English at high schools in Western Sydney before joining the Sydney Story Factory. A published poet, he oversees the development and delivery of all programs.

John Blair

Indigenous Storyteller

John is from the Nucoorilma Clan of the Gamilaroi Nation. He's a drama teacher who has worked in performing arts and Aboriginal cultural education for many years.

Sheila Pham

Project Manager

Sheila Pham is a CAL WestWords Western Sydney Emerging Writer Fellow, and has worked on many projects promoting under-represented voices. She manages our State of Mind project and our Teacher Professional Development program.

Matt Roden

Creative Projects Manager

Matt helped set up The Ministry of Stories in London, and is completing a degree in education. He stamps his mark on the Sydney Story Factory both as a workshop leader and as our in-house designer.

Craig New

Volunteer Manager & Mission Control

Craig manages all volunteers, workshop scheduling and every aspect of keeping the Martian Embassy ship-shape and fully operational at all times.

Amber Dalrymple

Mission Control Co-pilot

Amber shares ownership of the Mission Control joystick. She takes responsibility for key aspects of behind-the-scenes operations and keeps all things admin humming along smoothly.

Meet Cian

When Cian completed his fourth term at Sydney Story Factory he was, as always, excited to receive the end of term publication containing his work.

You can tell Cian is excited because he has one of those sunlight-through-the-clouds smiles, and he's grinning widely and bouncing about at the beginning of the final workshop.

He wasn't always excited about Story Factory - the first workshops were "scary, because I didn't know anyone. But when I got started on making a story it was fun". This year saw Cian slide into the role of workshop veteran, showing newer students the ropes and volunteering first to share his story with the audience of students, tutors, and parents at the end of term presentation.

"When I'm at school I just want to finish my writing. When I'm here I want to make it good so it's ready to share with everyone."

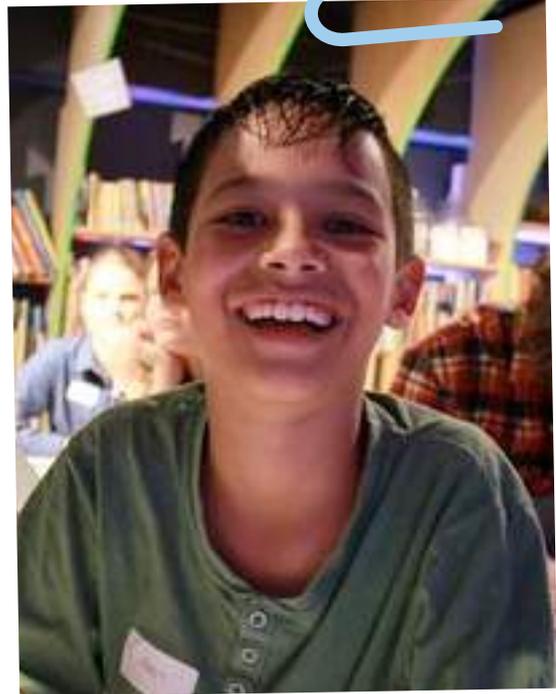
Prior to attending Sydney Story Factory, Cian's teachers were worried and frustrated. They had a student with lots of potential who couldn't focus in the classroom, especially where writing and comprehension were concerned. Cian had been assessed by education psychologists and was found to have a high IQ, but with consistent working memory difficulties, leading him to be categorised as gifted with a learning disability. The teaching staff knew that he had a high level of potential, but he couldn't seem to meet it.

Since coming to Sydney Story Factory, Cian's teachers and parents have noticed a considerable difference. Improvements include his comfort at working with other people, his confidence in sharing his work and reading in front of the class, and the ability to be a good audience member when it's his peers' turn to talk.

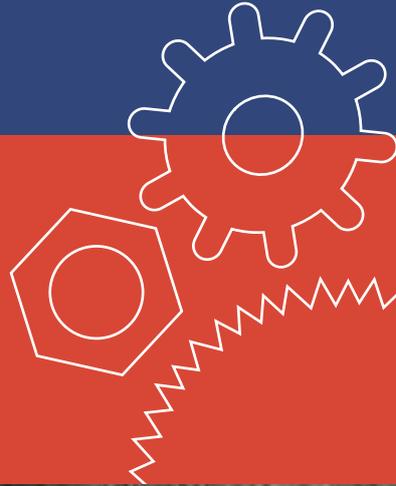
His Mum describes Cian as "a kind, thoughtful boy who thinks about things a lot. When his younger brother struggled at cross country Cian ran alongside him to cheer him on. Kids are aware when they're not meeting expectations, and part of children mucking up in class can be them struggling with this. His confidence has led to better behaviour in the classroom."

"If you asked him if he liked writing a year ago he'd have said no. Now he's so happy to come here."

"It's exciting to see him grow as a reader, and to talk about books with him at home," says his mum. He also writes lots of stories now, and includes his friends and family. "Though if he's annoyed at you, you might disappear down a portal."



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