

POPULAR CHILDREN'S BOOK



BY ANDY GIFFITHS AND TERRY DENTON IS THE

WINNER OF THE 2015 ABIA BOOK OF THE YEAR

This year marks the 15th year of the Australian Book Industry Awards. At the industry's night of nights last month in Sydney, the long-time partnership of Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton not only won Book of the Year, it also marked the first time a children's book and a book from a series claimed the title.

The Australian Book Industry Awards (ABIA) is the biggest industry event on the nation's literary calendar, created to acknowledge the best books and finest talent in the industry. A diverse and respected judging panel of more than 100 industry figures, publishers and booksellers compiled the ABIA books shortlist and selected the winners.

Andy Griffiths (right) and Terry Denton (left)



'It is fantastic to see such a talented pool of winners, from acclaimed writers to popular novelists and exciting debut authors, recognised for their creative vision and passion for sharing their stories and ideas,' said James Kellow, ABIA spokesperson and CEO of HarperCollins Australia.

Griffiths and Denton's winning book, *The 52-Storey Treehouse* is the fourth book in the popular Treehouse series, which has had a huge impact on encouraging young children to read, particularly boys. *The 52-Storey Treehouse* also won the Older Children Book of the Year. Writer Andy Griffiths and illustrator Terry Denton have been in creative partnership since 1997, and have published dozens of books together.

Acclaimed bookseller and internationally renowned debut author Brooke Davis took centre stage at the awards, winning General Fiction Book of the Year for her best selling novel *Lost & Found*, as well as the new Matt Richell New Writer of the Year award. *Lost & Found* has enjoyed stellar success in Australia and internationally, with the translation rights sold into 25 markets, and major deals secured in the US and the UK.

Fellow dynamic debut author Maxine Beneba Clarke won Literary Fiction Book of the Year for *Foreign Soil*, a collection of short stories that boldly addresses confronting themes including migration, racism and mistreatment. This award is a huge recognition of Maxine's talent given she was a debut writer in a category peppered with literary luminaries including Joan London and Peter Carey.

In a nod to Australia's obsession with twitching, biologist and prize-winning writer Tim Low took out General Non-Fiction Book of the Year for his intriguing book *Where Song Began*. Up against the likes of Don Watson, Annabel Crabb and Helen Garner, Tim's win marks the first time a nature book has won this competitive category.

Colourful arts trailblazer David Walsh also beat a strong category of nominees including Julia Gillard and Molly Meldrum, to win Biography of the Year for his unconventional memoir *A Bone of Fact*, documenting his journey from professional gambler to owner of Hobart's Museum of Old and New Art (MONA).

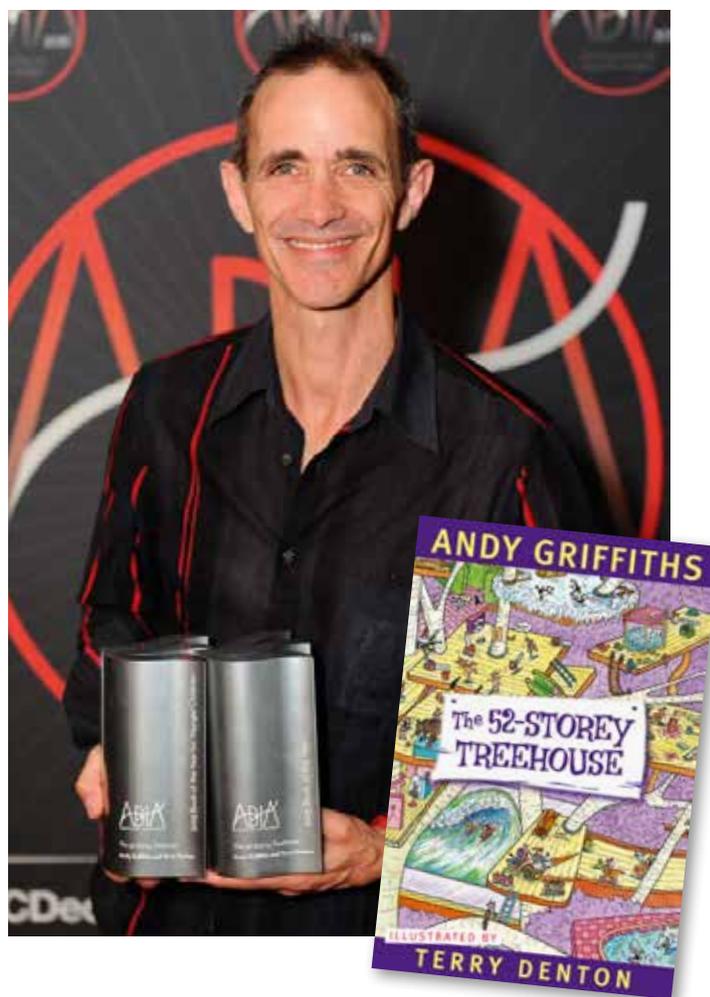
In other children's categories, *Withering-by-Sea* by Judith Rossell won the Older Children (age range 8 to 14 years) award; and in an other new ABIA category, the delightfully unique Australian Christmas story *Tea and Sugar Christmas* written by Jane Jolly and illustrated by Robert Ingpen, won Small Publishers' Children's Book of the Year.

This year's ABIA reflects on world wars with *Anzac Treasures* by Peter Pederson, a moving tribute to the Anzacs on the centenary of Gallipoli, awarded Illustrated Book of the Year; and *All the Light We Cannot See*, set in World War Two, by Pulitzer prize-winning American author Anthony Doerr winning the International Book of the Year category.

Bob Carr's *Diary of a Foreign Minister* won the new category Small Publishers' Adult Book of the Year for a compelling insight into the life of a foreign minister.

Contributing \$2 billion to the economy with more than 55 million books sold in Australia in 2014, the book industry is an incredibly important cultural export.

'The Australian Book Industry Awards is the only event that unites all the bookmakers of the industry, bringing together authors and publishers, and also the retailers, editors, marketers and industry professionals who help bring Australians great stories to read,' said Mr Kellow. 'While there are certainly challenges for the sector to continue to thrive and be innovative, I think it is safe to say that this year's ABIA book finalists and winners show there is no shortage of exciting Australian author talent, and a huge appetite among readers for great stories written well.'



Above: Andy Griffiths after he won the 2015 ABIA Book of the Year for *The 52-Storey Treehouse*.

Above Right: Popular children's book *The 52-Storey Treehouse* by Andy Griffiths and Terry Denton is the winner of the prestigious 2015 ABIA Book of the Year.