

A ROYAL VISIT

A recent visit by the Duchess of Cornwall to the State Library of Western Australia highlighted her support of the importance of literacy.

The State Library of Western Australia had a very special visitor late last year – Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall. During her 45-minute visit to the library, the Duchess joined in a Learning English Through Storytelling (LETS) group activity, heard from a group of West Australians about how the Storylines program assists with exploring family history (Storylines is an online archive for the library's digitised heritage collections relating to Aboriginal history in Western Australia) and viewed the Lynley Dodd Story exhibition, which showcases the ever-popular books and illustrations of the bestselling author of the 'Hairy Maclary' books.

The Duchess is an avid reader herself. Her father frequently read to her when she was young, and she regularly read books aloud to her own children. As visitors



The Duchess of Cornwall with Margaret Allen, CEO and State Librarian at the State Library of Western Australia.

to the exhibition will see, the Duchess read the Lynley Dodd books to her grandchildren as they were growing up.

The library told the Duchess about their programs that encourage parents to read to their children, such as Better Beginnings. This program 'supports parents in reading to their children so that they build the early literacy skills they need to become better readers and to succeed at school'. 

AND THE WINNERS ARE

The 2015 ALIA Excellence Awards were held on 18 November 2015 at the State Library of New South Wales. ANGUS DALTON sums up a night of celebrations.

Holger Aman, the first prize-winner honoured on the night, was presented with the Metcalfe Award, which recognises outstanding contribution by an ALIA Member in their first five years of practice. ALIA Vice-President Patricia Genat introduced Holger as 'an active member of ALIA from the start of his career'. Holger was working as a bartender and postman before his master's degree, and was spurred to study librarianship after reading Audrey Niffenegger's 2003 novel *The Time Traveler's Wife*, which features a librarian who involuntarily travels through time. Holger currently works as the reference librarian in the Law Courts Library, a position that he described as initially 'terrifying'.

'It's both incredibly humbling and incredibly inspiring,' he said of winning the Metcalfe Award. 'It's meant a lot to me in terms of professional recognition.'

The HCL Anderson Award is given in recognition of an Associate Member of ALIA who has provided outstanding service to the library and information sector in Australia. It was presented to NSW State Librarian and Chief Executive Dr Alex Byrne, who for the night was an honoured guest in his own library.

Jackie French, author of more than 140 books, was presented with the Redmond Barry Award, ALIA's



ALIA Excellence Awards winners (from left to right) Holger Aman, Jackie French and Dr Alex Byrne

highest honour for an individual outside the library profession who acts as an outstanding advocate for library and information services.

'This award either means everything or nothing to people, but to me it means everything. It is most important because of you, the custodians of the written heritage of humanity. In today's increasingly shredded world, where none of us are really quite sure who the enemy is or who the friends are, where it is too easy not to see the faces of who we might classify as enemies, the greatest weapon against that is giving books to children. When we give our children books, we are teaching them to look at the faces of their fellows in the world. This matters more than anything else. We will fight with books of complexity, which make our children think. We will fight with books of imagination, that will make them create a future. We will fight with books that show them compassion. And we will never surrender. Because these, the libraries, are the heart of the future of humanity.' 