

MEDIA RELEASE

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Local author Stephanie Owen Reeder discusses the importance of Children's Literature

As part of ACT Children's Week, Dr. Stephanie Owen Reeder will be appearing at Tuggeranong Arts Centre for a special edition of the *Lakeside Literary Lounge* series, 'Animals in Children's Literature.'

Reeder is the author and illustrator of 10 children's books, including the acclaimed *Lennie the Legend*, part of her Heritage Heroes series of historical novels for children.

In conversation with author and editor Irma Gold, Reeder will discuss the educational importance of children's literature and of bringing Australian history to life for a young audience.

Their discussion will draw upon the 2017 Children's Week theme drawn from Article 29 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which states, 'education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.'

Reeder is especially well placed to discuss the educational importance of children's literature critically, having researched children's books for both her Masters and PhD studies. Reeder's PhD looked at visual literacy and the relationship between images and texts in children's books, which she says has influenced the prominence of images in her own books.

Writing for children however, is part of what Reeder describes as an ongoing love affair with children's literature, noting that she wrote and illustrated her first book at age seven.

Drawing inspiration from Tuggeranong Arts Centre's annual theme, Reeder and Gold will also talk about the central role that animals – especially horses - play in Reeder's historical children's books.

One horse, named Ginger Mick, has particular prominence in Reeder's acclaimed book *Lennie the Legend*, which tells the true story of a 9-year-old boy who rode solo from Leongatha in southern Victoria to the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932.

In early October, Reeder will be travelling to Leongatha for the unveiling of a statue of Lennie and his horse. Reeder says the local community raised the money for a life-sized statue to commemorate this remarkable story. She promises to bring photos of the newly revealed statue to share at the *Literary Lounge* event.

Animals in Children's Literature is a FREE event and will be held at Tuggeranong Arts Centre at 6pm on Thursday 26th October.