



## The 2025 Children's Peace Literature Award Short List

*A biennial award to Australian authors of books for children that encourage the peaceful resolution of conflict or promote peace at the global, local or interpersonal level.*

The 2025 *Children's Peace Literature Award* attracted over 100 entries submitted by publishers and authors. A judging panel of eight psychologists and children's literature specialists met over a number of evenings to reach their decision. A shortlist of the entries which best demonstrate the aims of the award has been chosen by the judging panel.

The winner of the 2025 *Children's Peace Literature Award* will be announced in November 2025, at an event yet to be confirmed.

Psychologists for Peace (SA) thanks the judges for their commitment and support.

### 2025 SHORT LIST

***Amigo the Capybara*** Amy Freund, illustrated by Kooky Chooky (Five Mile Press)

Amigo the capybara really wants to be a good friend to his grumpy neighbour, Mila the chinchilla. Amigo loves to party with a mid-day fiesta, but Mila likes to have a mid-day siesta. Amigo has a plan to win her over by arranging a performance with lots of entertainment and invites all his friends including Mila. Even though the trick wasn't successful it did lead to them becoming friends and gave Mila a chance to explain to Amigo that he needs to be quiet sometimes. There is a wonderful illustration on the last page showing that Amigo has found a compromise which suits them both.

***Bigfoot vs Yeti*** James Foley (Fremantle Press)

For longer than anyone could remember, the clans of the Bigfoot and the Yeti kept guard from each other across the endless rift that separated them. They would hurl snowballs or fruit and believed the others were trouble, until two young people on guard fell into the rift and saw each other clearly for the first time. They began sharing and discovered that the rift was not endless. The two adventurers fell in love and broke the pattern of hostility, eventually coming up with something new.

Easily relatable for kids, this is a quaint, yet realistic monster-based tale describing how wars and conflicts are waged and maintained. As in reality, some accommodate the new information whereas others return to their original prejudices and actions.

***Getting Dusty*** Jared Thomas (Magabala Books)

When the school bully deliberately causes Dusty to crash to the ground just as he's about to score a goal in the lunchtime football match, Dusty retaliates, giving the bully a bloody nose and setting himself up for two days' suspension. His Uncle Rick, known as Uncle Xbox, responds by taking Dusty back home to Nukunu Country and to a secret super surfing beach, using the trip to connect deeply with his nephew and help him to see that actions have consequences and that there are safer and more productive ways of counteracting bullying. The bully gets his comeuppance when Dusty's friends report him to the school principal, who subsequently witnesses him in thuggish action on the football field and wipes Dusty's suspension from his school record.

Dusty's enthusiasm, his formative experience on Country and his hard-won understanding of the need to stop and think before acting make for an enjoyable and instructive read.

***The Kindness Project*** Deborah Abela (Penguin Random House Australia)

Written in verse, this book sees four seemingly incompatible students thrown together by their class teacher to work on a "Kindness Project", to make the world a kinder place. The result is a positive story about a classroom assignment and the relationships that develop and change throughout the team effort. Friendships grow, and their importance is highlighted.

A secondary theme is the family stories showing the challenges faced by the children, including Alzheimer's disease, mental health issues and a missing father.

***The Paperbark Tree Committee*** Karys McEwen (Text Publishing)

Art and his family, younger brother Hilary, dad and stepmum, Sally, move to the city. Art is in conflict with himself, his dad and the school bully. His relationship with his brother, and best friend, becomes a little strained as Art tries to navigate the problems of starting a new school and growing up. Art is the target of school bully, Jack, who picks on Art for reasons that Art can't understand. After one particularly embarrassing incident, Art and his new friends, Micah and Lexie, plot revenge on Jack, which doesn't go to plan. At the same time Art is worried that his stepmum might leave his dad and devises a plan to get his dad to propose to Sally, which doesn't work out quite as he hoped. This is a gentle story with well written characters and respectful and positive relationships at the heart of it. Ultimately, Art is able to solve the conflict peacefully.

***The Truth of It*** David Metzenthen (Ford Street Publishing) A novel for the 12+

The novel is set in Colonial Van Diemen's Land and includes diverse cultural, colonial and class friction that centres on a sheep stolen from the major property holder. The theft was observed by Isaac and accusations arise due to prejudice around racial and class assumptions. The dilemma for Isaac is the potential unintended outcomes for him if he informs the landowner directly. Isaac, Jemma and Mimmy, the young protagonists from very different backgrounds, work together to come up with a solution. The story focuses on untruths, ignorance and misinformation and how that is handled by the kids who resolve the issues when they collaborate peacefully, and speak the truth to appropriate adults. A thought-provoking historical novel with issues around conflict resolution that are relevant today.

***Two Rabbits*** Larissa Ferencuk and Prue Pittock (EK Books)

After an argument between Little Brown Rabbit and Little Grey Rabbit on a dark rainy night, they walk in separate directions and feel alone. The wind whispers help them recall their sharp words to each other. They decide to make a change, and seek each other out again. The story shows that admitting mistakes can overcome the disagreements and challenges in the friendship journey.

***These summaries of the shortlisted books will be posted shortly on:***

<https://groups.psychology.org.au/awards/literature/>

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For the judging panel, and Psychologists for Peace (SA)