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Abstract
This study examines the portrayal of gender in Australian Children's Book Council award and honour books in the Younger Reader and Older Reader categories over the years 1981-1993. Its purpose is to discover whether the books portray females and males in equally positive ways, which both reflect their changing roles in our society and provide models for gender construction to young readers. This is done by means of a qualitative analysis of the text from selected books, supported by a quantitative analysis in the form of frequency counts of gender representations. Relevant Government policies and feminist ideologies which have influenced them are reviewed, and compared with the study’s findings to ascertain how far the CBC books’ gender portrayals are in line with current education policies and research. The findings suggest a review of CBC judging criteria, and highlight the need for a critical literacy approach in classroom literacy teaching. Recommendations for the broadening of research in literature are made.

Keywords
Children's Book Council of Australia; awards for Australian children's literature; gender identity in literature
Books for children still contain gender stereotypical behavior, and most of the characters in literature for children are males. Ernst (1995) surveyed the titles of books written for children to determine if boys or girls names were more frequently included in the title. His findings were that boys names appeared twice as many times as girls names. Books that did have a gender neutral name, or a girls name, were in fact books about boys (Ernst, 1995). Male characters in award winning books were adventurers, risk takers, and explorers. Culturally authentic children's literatures. The literary canon is still bereft of authentic representations of African-Americans. In the coming decades expectations are that mainstreaming of disabled children will increase. The Children's Book Council of Australia presents annual awards for books of literary merit, for outstanding contribution to Australian children's literature. Notable winners and shortlisted works have inspired several well known Australian films from original novels, including The Silver Brumby series, a collection by Elyne Mitchell which recount the life and adventures of Thowra, a Snowy Mountains brumby stallion; Storm Boy (1964), by Colin Thiele, about a boy and his pelican and the relationships he has with his father, the pelican, and an outcast. James Clavell in The Asian Saga discusses an important feature of Australian literature: its portrayal of far eastern culture, from the admittedly even further east, but nevertheless western cultural viewpoint, as Nevil Shute did. Not surviving but thriving. Children's book sales have been on the rise on the back of vibrant stories from Mem Fox, Jackie French and Bob Graham and many others. Information books are alive in the digital age. War appeared as a theme in every category and refugees, fantasy, humour, animals, bullying, family and relationships all featured prominently. And though judges found cultural diversity and social change missing from entries this year, children couldn't be better spoilt for choice. Robert Ingpen: Lifetime achievement award. Mr Huff by Anna Walker. Alice in Wonderland extract with permission from The Complete Alice. Illustrations coloured by Diz Wallis. Copyright Macmillan Publishers Limited 1995 Credit:John Tennel.