

Media Release

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Top authors awarded for excellence in children's language and literacy development in Darwin

Speech Pathology Australia will award four authors for excellence in the development of children's speech, language and literacy skills at a ceremony in Darwin tomorrow.

Authors Carol Goess (*Can we lick the spoon now?*), Elizabeth Frankel (*Hairy Nose Itchy Butt*) and Morris Gleitzman (*Now*) received a Speech Pathology Australia's 2011 Book of the Year Award, while representatives from the One Arm Point Remote Community School were present to receive the inaugural *Best Book for Language & Literacy Development - Indigenous Children* award for their book 'Our World: Bardi Jaawi Life at Ardiyooloon'.

"Literacy is a fundamental life skill - poor literacy skills make it difficult to access an education, find a job and even take part in the community," said Speech Pathology Australia National President, Christine Stone.

"Research has found that between 7 and 8 million Australians are in danger of being confined to low-wage jobs with little prospect of improvement due to literacy difficulties, highlighting the importance of developing children's language and literacy from an early age."

"This is especially important in the Indigenous community - the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children is depressingly wide, and continues to widen with each year. By the age of 15, more than one-third of Australia's Indigenous students will not have adequate literacy skills to meet real-life challenges, something we hope our new award will draw attention to and help address."

"As the peak professional body for speech pathologists, Speech Pathology Australia is in a unique position to recommend books to parents and educators that can assist children's speech, language and literacy development."

Speech pathologists play a vital role in the development of key speaking and listening skills, including awareness of the sounds in words and language comprehension. These skills provide the foundation on which literacy is built and each year, Speech Pathology Australia selects four children's books based on their appeal to children, educational value, graphics and design, as well as their ability to facilitate communication, interaction and discussion.

The Awards, which began in 2003, will be presented at the Millner Primary School in Darwin on Tuesday 18 October.

The ceremony will be opened by Darwin Lord Mayor Graeme Sawyer and include the winning authors reading from their books.

For more information visit: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

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Notes to Media:

- Speech Pathology Australia National President Christine Stone is available for interview.
- Images of book covers are available in jpeg format.

Book of the Year Awards winners – Best Books for Language & Literacy Development:

Award category	Author	Book
Young Children (2 – 5 years)	Carol Goess	Can we lick the spoon now? What’s the best thing about making a cake? Licking the spoon, of course! What’s the worst thing about making a cake? Waiting!
Lower Primary (5 – 8 years)	Elizabeth Frankel	Hairy Nose Itchy Butt Ever had an itch you couldn’t scratch? Hairy-Nosed Wombat has one, and somebody has chopped down his favourite scratching tree. Join our marsupial hero on an itchy, scratchy adventure as he tries to find the perfect place to scratch his butt.
Upper Primary (8 – 12 years)	Morris Gleitzman	Now Once I didn’t know about my grandfather Felix’s scary childhood. Then I found out what the Nazis did to his best friend Zelda. Now I understand why Felix does the things he does. At least he’s got me. My name is Zelda too. This is our story.
Indigenous Children	One Arm Point Remote Community School	Our World: Bardi Jaawi Life at Ardiyooloon Our World gives a rare glimpse into the lives of the children of a remote Indigenous community. The children carry on the culture of the Bardi Jaawi people as they build fish traps, make spears and boomerangs, hunt crabs, turtles and dugong, learn traditional dances and share traditional stories.

About Speech Pathology Australia:

Speech Pathology Australia is the national peak body for more than 4,500 members who specialise in working with people of all ages who have communication or swallowing difficulties.

The Association supports and regulates the ethical, clinical and professional standards of its members. The Association also lobbies and advocates for people with communication and swallowing difficulties.

For further information please visit: www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

