



## Media Release

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Speech Pathology Week  
24 – 30 July 2005

### Winner of the 'Book of the Year' award announced

Speech Pathology Australia, the professional body representing more than 3500 speech pathologists, today announced the winners of the annual 'Book of the Year' Award in the Best Language Development Category.

The 'Book of the Year' initiative was established to acknowledge excellence in the educational value of children's books in relation to the development of children's speech, language and literacy skills.

"Research has shown that approximately 577,000 school aged children have difficulties with language. As a professional body we recognised a real need to assist parents in identifying the books that best promote speech and language learning excellence," says Gai Rollings, Project Leader for the Book of the Year Award.

"We found that some children's books are clearly better than others in the way they encourage readers to develop their imagination and curiosity and to explore new ideas and concepts which is vital for good language skills," says Ms Rollings.

Awarded in three age levels, young children, lower and upper primary school, the books were judged by a panel of speech pathology experts. The books were assessed on their ability to foster language and literacy development, to appeal to children, to facilitate interaction and communication and showed high levels of quality graphics, design and production.

#### **Winner of Best Language Development Book for Young Children**

**Title: *Where is the Green Sheep?***

Written by Mem Fox (illustrated by Judy Horacek)

*In this simple and endearing story about the search for a missing sheep, Mem Fox encourages the reader to embrace concepts such as colour, size and position using simple and humorous language. Using repetition, it builds suspense and encourages children to 'read along'. Its sense of ridiculous and Judy Horacek's eye-catching illustrations will generate discussion and vocabulary expansion in young children.*

#### **Winner of Best Language Development Book for Lower Primary Children**

**Title: *Jungle Drums***

Written by Graeme Base

*Graeme Base's wonderful vocabulary brings the jungle alive in this captivating book. Teaching children to embrace difference, it introduces a broad range of complex language and concepts and enlists an excellent use of tag questions and adjectives. Its superb illustrations are imaginative and appealing, with plenty of character and intrigue in an easy to read format. A beautiful read that will lead to conversation and discussion.*

**Winner of Best Language Development Book for Upper Primary Children**

**Title: By the River**

Written by Steven Herrick

*Suitable for older children, Stephen Herrick takes the reader on a journey with a boy as he deals with the loss of key figures in his life. With its strong narrative flow and use of poetry, the book allows the reader to connect with the characters through simple language and a wonderful use of metaphor. Although the language and form makes the book seem deceptively simple, it allows the older child the chance to explore the complex and universal themes of life, death, love, loss, grief and prejudice.*

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**For further information on the awards or to interview Gai Rollings please contact Adelle Coote on 03 9600 0006 or 0402 328 138.**