



## **Welcome to the 67th edition of The Beacon**

It's on! Everything is up and running and we are FLYING THE FLAG for children's literacy in this community! Our energy and excitement is as effervescent as the image above from The Bright Hope Reading Initiative - who like us, are counting down to International Read To Me Day on March 19.

Emily has stepped into the role as The Lighthouse Keeper #1 with a great deal of gusto; Emma is wrangling the writers centre preparing for entries for our first anthology, and is writing a unique program for schools 'Ready Pens... Ignite... Write!'; Leonie is curating a masterful exhibition 'Seeing Painting' with Dr Tarn McLean; and Jane has revived The Quirky Lecture Series and the Twinkles Outreach Program.

Our Term One workshops have commenced and we held our first free writers workshop last Saturday with lots of eager young authors

'Overcoming The Monster' with our very own Emma.

We are bubbling away with ideas for the months ahead and we are looking forward to bringing you events and activities to inspire the reader, writer and creative in all of you!



## TWINKLES has a new star!

Last week, we introduced you to our newest Lighthouse member, Jane Williamson. Since joining, Jane has been learning lots – in her words, *'Phew, what a learning curve! So many things going on.'*

As part of her role with us Jane will be responsible for corralling our littles Lighthouse supporters as she coordinates our TWINKLES program.

TWINKLES is a beautiful program reading to littlies from pre-school to grade 3. We already have 5 wonderful volunteers who once again have signed up and are reading for an hour a week in a particular school or hub. We are very keen to find at least 5 more volunteers who would love to be part of this fabulous program – just one hour a week– to entice young children into the wonders of stories, books and reading.

You will be fully supported by Jane at the Lighthouse, to obtain your blue card and other practicalities to ease you into this essential contribution to the community. Please email Jane at [hello@thetoowoombalighthouse.org](mailto:hello@thetoowoombalighthouse.org) who will organise a discussion time and send you application links.

For schools and early childhood organisations who would benefit by having the gift of an amazing volunteer come to read to your children once a week, you too can email Jane with your expression of interest at [hello@thetoowoombalighthouse.org](mailto:hello@thetoowoombalighthouse.org) to discuss possibilities.



## Overcoming The Monster

On Saturday 1 February a group of eager and engaged children met in The Lighthouse for a free three hour workshop.

We explored:

- the idea of getting to know someone (aka – how to have a conversation to find similarities and difference)
- employing all of the senses to describe how a hero exists in the world – what they hear, see, taste, touch, and smell, as well as the sixth

sense of feeling, either in the gut or in the heart!)

- the idea of creating a hero and creating a 'monster' (which can be a physical being (human or actual monster!), or internal and something that could limit us (aka fear) )
- then using the story guide, how to string together a series of incidents to make a story that is satisfying for a reader!

The budding authors were then asked to write, write, write, and finish a task in their own time, with the opportunity being having the story edited (so a number of drafts) for inclusion in a published collection of stories!

It was a joyful morning of learning (on both sides!) and creativity and we are so excited to see what our young writers send through.



# Battle of the Blades

It was a real life turf war in The Write Gallery this week when [Mort and Co](#) hosted their [Lawn of Fame](#) awards on Friday 31 January. A Toowoomba couple's lawn took out the citywide competition judged by Broncos captain Adam Reynolds.

The lawn king on the night was Brenton Rouhan (pictured above with Emma) who took out first place with wife Kiri. Brenton's hard work and passion for his lawn have earned him the grassy crown and a luxury trip to Singapore!



## A LITTLE LOVE NOTE

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others" the wise words Roman philosopher Cicero. And we were tickled pink to receive a lovely letter of appreciation from the Toowoomba North Child Safety Service Centre

*Dear Lighthouse Toowoomba,*

*Please accept this letter as a token of our deepest appreciation for the incredibly kind and generous work you did on behalf of our children last year. The books donated to our office by you, your team and your generous benefactors had an incredibly*

*positive affect on our children and young people. All the children were incredibly excited to receive your gift, many of them insisting on us staying to read it with them. This also provided a lovely opportunity for the child and adult to form a bond over a shared interest and activity. Your books will have a lasting effect on all our children. You also boosted the mood in the office, changing often challenging and unrewarding days into moments of celebration and joy.*

*Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.*

*Toowoomba North Child Safety Service Centre*

It is wonderful to hear that the books donated by you - all of our supporters - which in turn were then donated by us to Child Safety, have had such a wonderful impact. A true domino effect.



**And some more gratitude  
for all the books!**

Officer In Charge at St George, Megan Down, was happily selecting bundles of books to distribute to children in custody in her region. She also stocked up the Domestic Violence Safe Room in Mungindi. Yet another excellent example of the community supporting children's literacy, safety and care.



## WHAT'S ON IN THE WRITE GALLERY

We are delighted welcome Leonie Hart as a contributor to The Beacon. As mentioned in our last edition Leonie has taken up the helm at The Write Gallery.

Leonie has penned a few words to let us know what is in store in the coming months:

2025 has started with a BANG here at The Write Gallery and we are incredibly excited about the line-up of exhibitions that are coming your way!

Seeing Painting opens in March and asks the audience "what does it mean to paint today?", a poignant question in an era dominated by digital imaginal and fleeting visual content. This exhibition challenges the viewer to reconsider how they perceive and create; to think differently about art's place and purpose in the 21st Century.

Seeing Painting is a wonderful opportunity for students and teachers but is OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY! Click [HERE](#) to ensure your place is booked.

Soon we will be honouring military women over ANZAC Day, celebrating Pride Month with Inclusive Counselling Collective & Amnesty International and diving deep into what it means to belong, celebrating our refugee diaspora with the stunning book My Two Blankets.

2025 in The Write Gallery is off to a smashing start Toowoomba!



## Laugh in the Bath Book Launch

Don't miss an opportunity to see the dynamic duo of Rory Mather and illustrator Brent Wilson in action when they Launch their wonderful collaboration 'Laugh in the Bath'. Illustrator Brent Wilson and local author Rory H. Mather will be unveiling their new book Laugh in the Bath in the Write Gallery at The Lighthouse Toowoomba on Saturday 15 February.

The event will involve a Q&A between Brent and Rory on how the book came about and a reading-drawing demonstration and Craft Activity-Book signing. Dymocks Toowoomba will be there on the day if you would like to purchase Laugh in the Bath or any others of Rory and Brents books.

TO RSVP and find out more click [ere](#).





## Durong South State School Donation

Natalie from Durong South State School arranged for hundreds of ex-library books to be donated. Her lovely father Robert was then tasked with the job of transporting them all up to us and moving them somewhere safe until our volunteers can process them.

Thank you Durong South State School for the generous donation. Also everyone needs a Robert on call to help. He is a gem :)

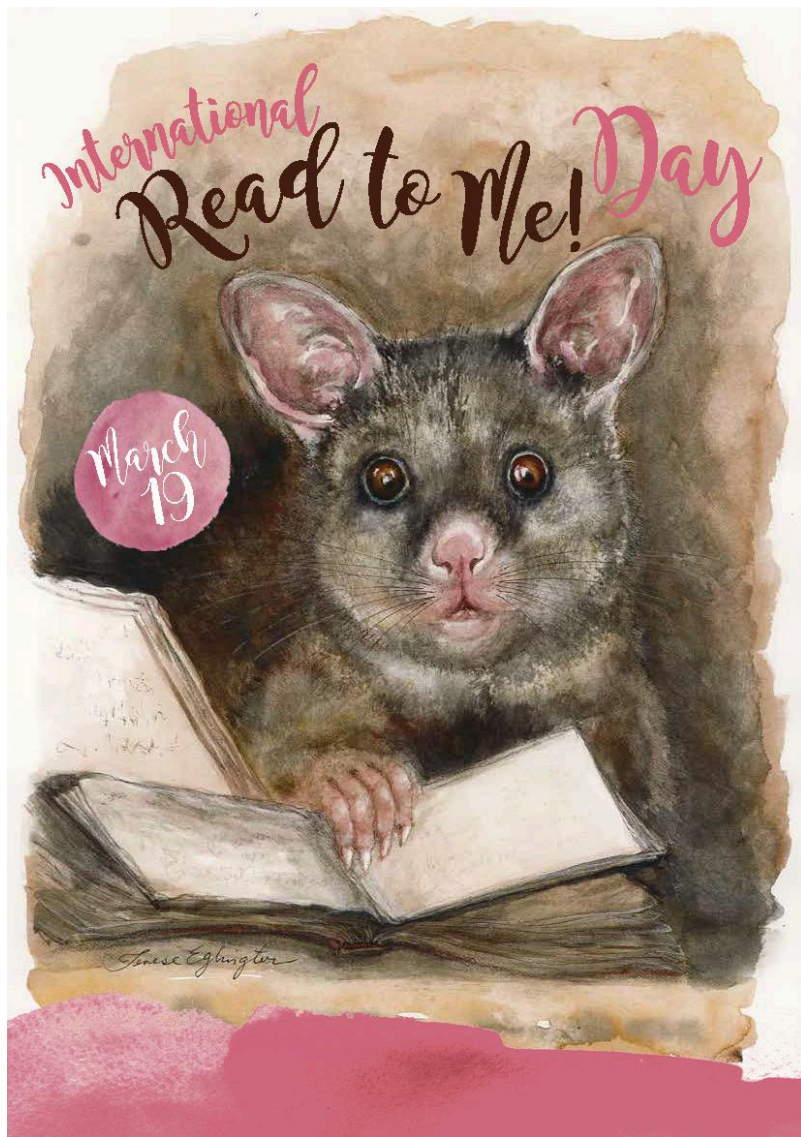


## How many books can you fit in a standard SUV?

1200! A big thankyou to Councillor Melissa Taylor for being our magic book fairy / courier and delivering said 1200 books to Pittsworth State School. This amazing donation means there is enough books for a book pack to every child at Pittsworth State School!

This is our first school book delivery for 2025 and Glenda (our chief Lighthouse librarian and book collator) is busy sorting and packing for many more school recipients this year!

We are always looking for donations so please remember us when you have books to rehome!



## International Read to Me Day

'Every day is International Read to Me Day!' is an audacious campaign working to build a community where volunteers from around the globe read every ten minutes, 24 hours a day, supporting families by sharing the love of reading!

That's right only ten minutes out of 24 hours to encourage literacy and a life love of reading in this generation and the next and the next and the next! The countdown is on to March 19. To find out more and how you too can be a party of this mighty (easy) movement click [here](#).



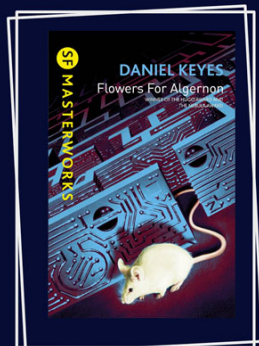
## We Are Family

We always love a friendly face dropping into the Lighthouse but it is even more fun when it is the face of a former Lighthouse team member's mum! Many of you will remember the lovely Bronte Geitz who helped manage our programs and had a big hand in kickstarting The Write Gallery. Bronte moved to Melbourne in 2023 and she is missed at 126 Margaret St. It was so nice to have her mum Sharon join us at Write Mondays - our open writing group, which is great place to get creative juices going!

## Toowoomba's Biggest Book Club

Hosted by local prize-winning author Thomas Alan

Have you ever been curious about book clubs?  
This is your chance to see one in action, and get involved!



Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes  
The Lighthouse Toowoomba, 126 Margaret Street  
Sunday 30th March 3:00pm to 5:00pm

- What to do? Read the book, and come along...
- Bring: a gold coin!
- Expect: to be grouped with other curious readers, and the conversation will be facilitated by Thomas.
- Why: to be part of a book club, and perhaps find other book lovers who would happily be involved again!

[BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL](#)



## The Festival of Small Schools

The Lighthouse Toowoomba called on the community to make 2024 Christmas a special one for small schools in the Toowoomba region, by supporting our Festival of Small Schools 2025 initiative.

This campaign is a first-of-its-kind event for the Darling Downs and has a wonderful snowball effect for literacy in the community. Funds raised will be used to organise author visits during Terms One and Two.

**We are so proud and happy to announce (cue more confetti cannons) you've helped us raise \$3299 to date!**

It is awesome to think that Ramsay State School, Back Plains State School, Brookstead State School, Greenmount State School, and Emu Creek State School have already signed up to happily have an author visit.

Now for the other 12 tiny schools in the region...

# ADVENTURES IN ART

THE LIGHTHOUSE TOOWOOMBA

ART CLASSES FOR 9 - 12 YEAR OLDS

WEDNESDAY 6 FEB TO 26 MAR



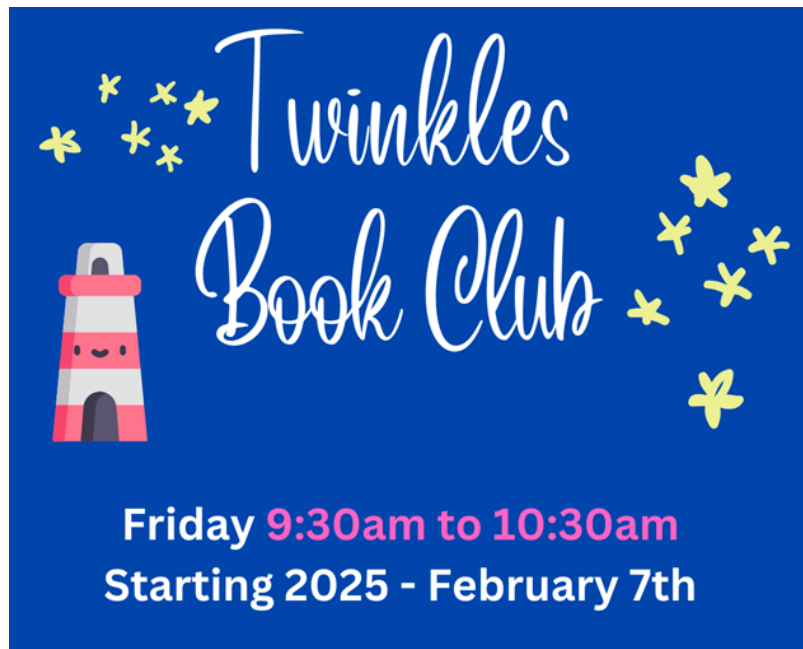
Are you aged 9-13 and interested in art?

Let's explore story setting and illustration ideas using a variety of art media and activities to encourage creativity. Term 1 workshops are designed to help children further utilise their art skills in drawing, and painting, and explore mixed media as an illustrative style.

## 8 weeks...

- Wednesday 5th February 3:45-5:15pm until Wednesday 26th March 2025.
- Full Term Fees: **\$200 and includes 8 full comprehensive** 1.5hr workshops and ALL materials.
- Don't worry if you are late reading this, there are still spots. Please contact us and we will adjust the term fees accordingly.

[Sign up for Adventures in Art in Term 1, 2025](#)



Gosh - no wonder we can't sit still! It is great to share that Helen Brownlie is our in-house Twinkle Book Club volunteer for Term 1, so you can say 'YES' to that lovely routine of bringing in your toddler. No bookings are required.



## EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK BIENNIAL

The Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image Imprimée (CGII) will be hosting the international children's book biennial «MOTAMO». The theme chosen for this eighth edition is «FABULANIMO». The exhibition will be on view from Saturday 5 April to Sunday 18 May 2025 during the museum's opening hours. The exhibition will open on 6 April, the first Sunday of the month.

BOOKS CAN BE SENT IN FROM NOW UNTIL 4 APRIL 2025.

ATHÉNÉE PROVINCIAL DE LA LOUVIÈRE - 28 boulevard du Tivoli - 7100 LA LOUVIÈRE - BELGIQUE  
OR CENTRE DE LA GRAVURE ET DE L'IMAGE IMPRIMÉE - 10 rue des Amours - 7100 LA LOUVIÈRE - BELGIQUE

FOR ALL INFORMATION : +32 (0)475 81 42 90 - aregnier@raeditions.net

## You wouldn't happen to be heading to Belgium would you...

Motamo is getting closer, and we can't believe our luck that a handful of children will have their work exhibited in a book created just for the Biennale.

If you think you may actually indeed be in the area, please please PLEASE consider visiting on our behalf. It would be our pleasure to introduce you to the Festival Director and we are sure you will be the VIP's you deserve to be.





## Upskilling In A Book

Meet Steph Piper, a creative technologist, passionate about maker culture, hardware dev and edutech!

Steph has recently written and published her very own book: *Skill Seeker*. Skill Seeker is a book filled with real life skill trees, and allows you to visualise your skill progress across 15 different maker skills. Identify skill gaps, get inspired to try new things and calculate your maker XP score.

To find out more about Steph and her super skillset click [here](#).



**EMPOWER** *HER* **youBelong**  
LEADERSHIP FOR LASTING IMPACT

**MENTOR A  
FUTURE LEADER!**

You Belong's new EmpowerHER program is equipping refugee Waymaker women to lead and create change in their communities.

We're seeking inspiring female community and business leaders to be mentors—sharing experience, offering guidance, and empowering the next generation.

Your time and wisdom can make a lasting impact.

**INTERESTED?**  
Email [kelsey@youbelong.org.au](mailto:kelsey@youbelong.org.au)



[hello@thelighthouseotoowoomba.org](mailto:hello@thelighthouseotoowoomba.org)

**VOLUNTEERS  
WANTED  
AND NEEDED!**

## Volunteers - wanted, needed, adored!

If you have an hour spare each week, or a superpower looking to be unleashed in 2025, please consider us.

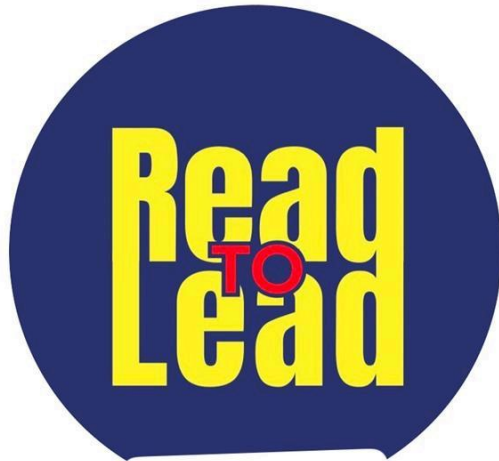
### DESCRIPTIONS:

- Regular readers for Twinkles Outreach
  - Read to groups of children in a school setting

- Time: 1 hour per week for 8 weeks in the school term
- Blue Card required
- Gallery Supervisors
  - Staff the gallery
  - Time: 2 hour blocks during exhibitions
- The One-Way Library
  - Regularly popping in to 'sticker' books, or deliver books
  - Time: 1 to 2 hours per week
- Apple for the Teacher...
  - We constantly hear of children who are struggling with their reading, and the family cannot afford a tutor... Reach out and let us know if you have time so we can organise to support a little one who needs a boost!
- Merchandise Creators | Arty Crafty People Wanted
  - to help with making 'stuff' for our quirky shop The Explorers Emporium
  - Time: as much or as little as you would like to share!

For more information, please email:


[hello@thelighthouseoowoomba.org](mailto:hello@thelighthouseoowoomba.org)



@READTOLEAD\_

**Read to Lead**

Welcome to our new page!  
Read aloud to your child every day  
@thelighthouseoowomba

 Nonprofit organization



Grab your picnic blanket and a hamper and get ready for chilled weekends with great tunes, warm weather and good times.




## FREE LIVE MUSIC

DATE	WHERE	TIME	BAND
<b>SATURDAY 1 FEB 2025</b>	Pioneer Park, Clifton	4pm - 7pm	Lodi
<b>SATURDAY 8 FEB 2025</b>	Rocky Creek Hall, Rocky Creek	4pm - 7pm	Aussie and the Menace
<b>SATURDAY 15 FEB 2025</b>	Queensland State Rose Garden, Newtown	4pm - 7pm	Elizabeth Rae
<b>SATURDAY 22 FEB 2025</b>	Haden Public Hall, Haden	4pm - 7pm	Then That

Visit [www.tr.qld.gov.au/summertunes](http://www.tr.qld.gov.au/summertunes) for more information.

Correct at time of printing. Outdoor events are subject to weather conditions.

  
**Toowoomba**  
 Royal Show

# CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION *Enter now!*


**\$650 PRIZE POOL FREE ENTRY**


**OPEN SHORT STORY**  
 Open to all writers  
 Max 1000 word short story, open theme  
 Winner receives \$200 prize package  
 2nd and 3rd awarded

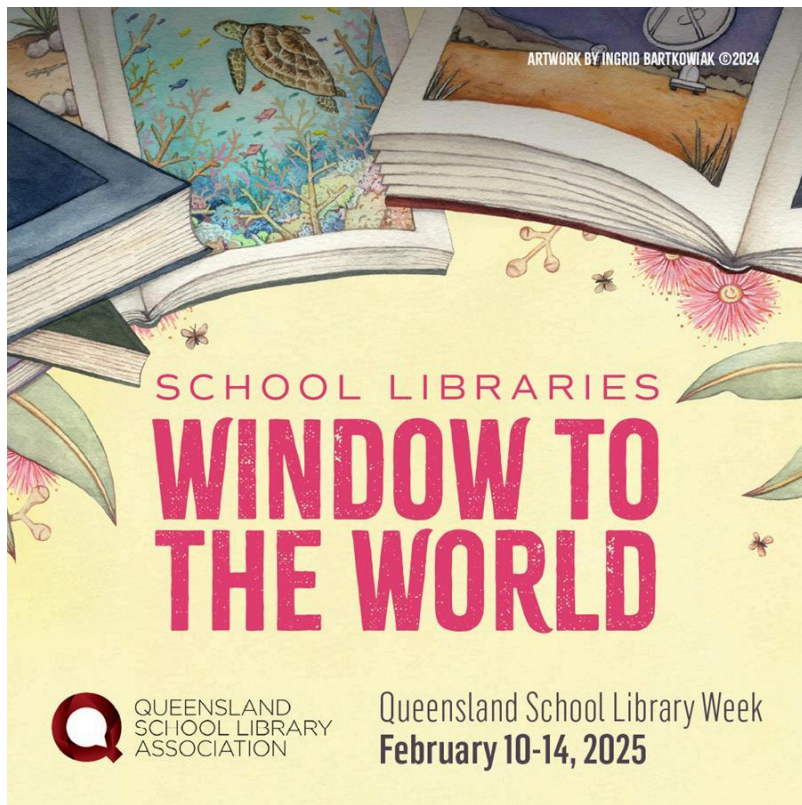
**OPEN POETRY**  
 Open to all writers  
 Max 2 pages of poetry, responding to the theme "Voices in the Dust"  
 Winner receives \$200 prize package  
 2nd and 3rd awarded

**ENTRIES CLOSE THE 28TH OF FEBRUARY**

**THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SPONSORS:**

  
**TEXAS ROADHOUSE**  
Locally owned, providing all your travelling needs.

  
**The Book Tree**



Here's a thought...

if you go to the Bookfest and pick up a bundle of children's books to donate to us to give them to children in the region, then literally, everyone is a winner!

## DATE CLAIMERS (got your diary handy?)

Feb 14 - [International Book Giving Day](#).

March 19 - [International Read to Me Day](#).

March 19 - The launch of The Festival of Small Schools

May 14 - [Book Links Narelle Oliver Lecture](#), Brisbane

May 22-24 - Sydney Writers Festival 'Live and Local' at The Empire



## A reminder...

We have sung this from our soapbox the past few weeks but it really is at the heart of what we do.

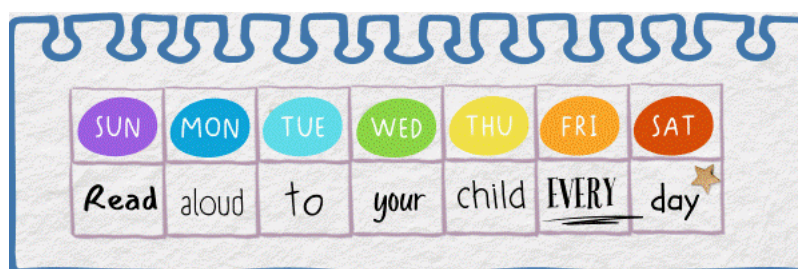
***It is our non-negotiable, wanting to ensure every child in Australia reads, writes, and creates with confidence.***

This goal informs everything we do at The Lighthouse, and in translating this goal into programs, projects, and publications, we have:

- A library inspiring parents to read to their children every day, fostering a love for stories, the joy of reading, and prioritising getting books into homes.
- A writers' centre empowering children to experience the impact of their own words, sparking a passion for expression and for writing.
- A gallery igniting children's curiosity and wonder by engaging them with cultural experiences, nurturing their imagination and their creativity.

## Did you know...

The Lighthouse is supported by The Child Writes Fund Ltd and it is a **registered charity** and [All donations over \\$2 are tax deductible.](#)







The Lighthouse Toowoomba  
126 Margaret Street, Toowoomba, 4350

We acknowledge the First Nations storytellers of the land on which we work and tell our stories. We respect the ongoing relationships with water, land, and story by the people of this place, their elders, their ancestors, and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

If you wish to unsubscribe from our newsletter please use the button below or email us at [hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org](mailto:hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org)

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