**2017 Dromkeen Medal Citation**

**Erica Wagner**

Erica Wagner's commitment to championing innovative creators has shaped and changed Australian children's publishing. For thirty years, she has nurtured the careers of many of Australia's most gifted writers and illustrators of young people's literature. Her ability to recognise talent and her courage in promoting new voices and innovative forms of story-telling sets a benchmark for dynamic publishing.

Throughout her career, and in every publishing house that she has worked with, Erica has been a cutting-edge innovator, a risk taker and a passionate creative thinker. Erica has long been a champion of the work of Australian indigenous stories - from Boori Monty Pryor's ground-breaking 1998 memoir *Maybe Tomorrow,* written with meme McDonald,through to her recent advocacy of the Emerging Indigenous Picture Book Mentoring Project.  She has been instrumental in the development of YA literary fiction in Australia and was the powerhouse behind Australia's first trade children's and YA graphic novels.

Erica has enthusiastically and generously involved herself in all branches of Australian children's publishing, beyond her immediate employment, to support not only creators and her colleagues but initiatives such as the Australian Children's Laureate Alliance and the establishment of the Style File of Australian illustrators.

Countless authors and illustrators have benefited from Erica's passion and advocacy as she has broadened the concept of what is possible in children's and YA publishing. When a publisher is bold enough to take risks on behalf of writers and illustrators the benefits flow beyond the books, beyond the industry, and beyond the readers to enrich the whole of society.

Erica Wagner's dedication to the creation and promotion of Australian children's and YA literature makes her an outstanding and worthy recipient of the 2017 Dromkeen Medal.