

State Library of South Australia

Media Release



A place to read and play at the State Library in celebration of Mem Fox

12 April 2022

The State Library of South Australia is excited to be working with Mem Fox, one of Australia's most celebrated children's authors, to create a dedicated space for children and families in the library's Institute Building.

Named in honour of Mem Fox's contribution to children's literature and early childhood literacy, this special place will be where families can come to read and play together, engage in creative activities, and attend children's programs and events. The library aims to provide a space for children and families to explore stories and storytelling in an inclusive and inspiring environment. The Institute Building has long been a place to celebrate literacy, history and culture. It is fitting then that it is to be revitalised as a child and family friendly space, celebrating children's literature.

Mem Fox's iconic books are hugely popular with children, parents, teachers, librarians and the wider community. She has published more than 45 titles to date, and *Possum Magic* and *Where is the Green Sheep?* frequently appear on lists of most borrowed library books.

In acknowledging the honour Mem Fox says “The phrase ‘I’m truly humbled is so often used that it’s lost much of its currency, so I hesitate to use it yet again. But I am indeed truly humbled, to the point of embarrassment, at being the focus of the State Library initiative to celebrate my life’s achievements. I don’t want it merely to be a memorial or static archive used solely by adults. I want it to be a vibrant destination for children, parents and grandparents – all generations.”

Along with celebrating contemporary children’s literature and authors, the area will showcase the library’s renowned Children’s Literature Research Collection. Established in 1959, this collection contains books, magazines, toys and games played with by South Australian children from European settlement up to the present day.

Though in its early stages the library looks forward to working with our public libraries colleagues, child development experts, designers and others to make sure that this dedicated area is enchanting, engaging and appropriate for children of all ages. This area forms part of a wider plan to provide the community of South Australia with richly engaging and memorable experiences across the State Library.

Geoff Stempel, Director State Library of South Australia, says “We are looking forward to welcoming children into this space and introducing them to their State Library. Libraries play an important part in encouraging children to read, play and explore, sparking their imagination. Connecting children with libraries from an early age shows them they have access to a world of valuable print and online resources.”

Updates about the development of this exciting space within the library will be available on the websites of the [State Library of South Australia](#) and [Mem Fox](#), and also on the library’s social media platforms.

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Image: Illustration by Julie Vivas for Mem Fox’s *Possum Magic*.