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Diana Noonan wins Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal 2022



Writer Diana Noonan, author of more than 100 titles for children and young adults, is the 2022 winner of the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal for lifetime achievement and outstanding contribution to New Zealand's literature for young people.

The premier award is made annually by Storylines Children's Literature Charitable Trust of New Zealand Te Whare Waituhi Tamariki o Aotearoa.

"Diana's extraordinary track record and success in publishing a wide range of books and genres, and as an editor, make her a deserving winner of this prestigious award," says Storylines Trust chair Christine Young.

"Add in her support for the Christchurch earthquake recovery effort with her beautifully written and well-timed *Quaky Cat*, her tireless work to engage young people with books through school visits, and her numerous guest speaker appearances, and there is little question that Storylines is delighted to honour her with this award."

Dunedin-born and now resident in the Catlins, Diana graduated from the University of Otago, and taught for four years before committing in mid '80s to writing full-time. One of New Zealand's most versatile authors, she has written for radio, television and film as well as picture books, non-fiction and novels for both junior and older readers. She has written extensively for educational programmes and was editor of the *School Journal* for eight years.

Her debut novel, *The Silent People*, won the New Zealand Library Association's 1990 Esther Glen Award, to be followed by a regular outpouring of new works, almost one every year.

Among her best-known titles are *A Dolphin in the Bay* (AIM Junior Fiction Award), *The Best-loved Bear* (AIM Picture Book Award), and *The Know, Sow & Grow Kids' Book of Plants* (New Zealand Post Non-fiction Award and New Zealand Libraries' Non-fiction Award, written jointly with her husband Keith Olsen).

Following the 2011 Christchurch earthquake she received the North West Christchurch Award 2012 for services to the community for the picture book *Quaky Cat*, illustrated by Gavin Bishop, which raised over \$150,000 for the Christchurch earthquake appeal.

Many of her books have been named as Storylines Notable Books, as well as shortlisted for the major New Zealand children's literature prizes. Her 1996 book *Hercules* was shortlisted for the Australian Wilderness Society Environment Award for Children's Literature. Her latest book, a gritty young adult novel titled *Half My Life*, was published by OneTree House in 2020.

Writer in Residence in 1993 at the Dunedin College of Education, Diana has been a regular visitor for more than three decades to schools for Storylines and Read New Zealand, and guest speaker at numerous libraries, conferences, book festivals and writers' workshops.

The Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal and Lecture Award is acknowledged as New Zealand's premier award for children's and young adult writers. Previous winners since the award's inception in 1991 have included authors Joy Cowley, Maurice Gee, David Hill, Fleur Beale, Mandy Hager, illustrators Gavin Bishop and David Elliot, publishers Ann Mallinson and Julia Marshall, and Kids' Lit quizmaster Wayne Mills.

The award will be presented to Diana Noonan at Storylines' annual Margaret Mahy National Awards Day in Auckland on 3 April 2022.

Diana Noonan is available for interview.

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Awards:

- Winner of the NZ Library Association Esther Glen Award for *The Silent People*
- Inclusion in the International Youth Library Collection 1992 for *Leaving the Snow Country*
- Inclusion in the International Youth Library Collection 1994 for the novel *A Sonnet for the City*
- University of Otago College of Education Children Writer in Residence 1993
- AIM Junior Fiction Award 1994 for *A Dolphin in the Bay*
- White Ravens List 1994 for *A Sonnet for the City*
- AIM Picture Book Award 1995 for *The Best-loved Bear*
- New Zealand Library & Information Non-fiction Award 1997 for *The Field*
- New Zealand Library & Information Non-fiction Award 1997 Shortlist for *The Garden*
- New Zealand Post Non-fiction Award 1997 Shortlist for *The Garden*
- New Zealand Post Non-fiction Award 1997 Shortlist for *I Spy: The Rocky Shore*
- Winner of the New Zealand Library and Information Non-fiction Award 1997 for *I Spy: Wildlife*
- New Zealand Post Children's Book Award 1997 shortlist for *I Spy: The Pond*
- Recipient of the Wilderness Society of Australia's Environment Award for Children's Literature 1997 for *Hercules*
- New Zealand Library & Information Non-fiction Award 1997 Shortlist for *The Know, Sow & Grow Kids' Book of Plants*
- New Zealand Post Non-fiction Award 1998 Winner for *The Know, Sow & Grow Kids' Book of Plants*
- Storylines Notable Book Awards 2001 Junior Fiction List for *A Whistle from the Blunder*
- New Zealand Post Children's Book Awards 2003 Picture Book Shortlist for *Auntie Rose and the Rabbit*
- Storylines Notable Book Awards 2003 Picture Books List for *Auntie Rose and the Rabbit*
- Storylines Notable Books Picture Books list 2004 for *The Best-Dressed Bear*
- Booksellers' NZ Premier Bestseller Gold Award 2004 for *The Best-Loved Bear*
- Storylines Notable Book Awards 2011 Picture Books List for *Quaky Cat*
- Elsie Locke Award 2011 Shortlist for *The Tui New Zealand Kids' Garden*
- Recipient of the North West Christchurch Award 2012 for services to the community following the 2011 earthquake for *Quaky Cat*. Donated royalties from this book raised over \$150,000 for the Christchurch earthquake appeal.
- Storylines Notable Picture Books List 2014 for *The Teddy Bear's Promise*
- LIANZA award shortlist 2014 for *The Teddy Bear's Promise*

Selected bibliography:

- *The Silent People* (McIndoe Publishers 1990).
- *Leaving the Snow Country* (McIndoe Publishers 1991).
- *A Sonnet for the City* (McIndoe Publishers 1992).
- *The Last Steam Train*, illustrated by Brent Putze (Ashton Scholastic 1992).
- *A Dolphin in the Bay* (Omnibus Books 1993).
- *Goodbye Toss*, illustrated by Keith Olsen (HarperCollins 1993).
- *The Whalers' Garden* (McIndoe Publishers 1994).
- *Kangaroo Bill and the Forest behind the Bay: A Story of Old New Zealand*, illustrated by Lyn Kriegler (Reed 1994).
- *The Best-Loved Bear*, illustrated by Elizabeth Fuller (Ashton Scholastic 1994).
- *Hercules*, illustrated by Margaret Power (Omnibus Books 1996).
- *The Field*, with Nic Bishop [I Spy Wildlife series] (Heinemann Education 1996).
- *The Garden*, with Nic Bishop [I Spy Wildlife series] (Heinemann Education 1996).
- *The Pond*, with Nic Bishop [I Spy Wildlife series] (Heinemann Education 1996).
- *The Rocky Shore*, with Nic Bishop [I Spy Wildlife series] (Heinemann Education 1996).
- *The Know, Sow & Grow Kids' Book of Plants*, with Keith Olsen (Bridge Hill 1997).
- *A Whistle from the Blunder* (Longacre Press 2000).
- *Auntie Rosie and the Rabbit*, illustrated by Christine Ross (Scholastic 2002).
- *The Best-Dressed Bear*, illustrated by Elizabeth Fuller (Scholastic 2002).
- *Google Eyes*, illustrated by Keith Olsen [Kiwi Bites] (Puffin 2007).
- *Dear Toby*, illustrated by Linda McClelland (Scholastic 2010).
- *The Tui New Zealand Kids' Garden* (Penguin 2010).
- *Quaky Cat*, illustrated by Gavin Bishop (Scholastic 2010).
- *Treetop Treasure*, illustrated by Sarah Healey (Pearson 2011).
- *Come Down, Golden*, illustrated by Renée Hault (Pearson 2011).
- *Quaky Cat Helps Out* (Scholastic NZ 2015)
- *Women of The Catlins, life in the deep south*, written jointly with Cris Antona (a social documentary Otago, University Press 2016)
- *Half My Life* (One Tree House 2020)

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