

#LoveOzYA Committee 2017 Annual Report

The #LoveOzYA Committee underwent major changes in its line-up at the beginning of 2017. In preparation for a changing of the guard, we said farewell to founding members Adele Walsh and then-Chair Danielle Binks. We are extremely grateful for their tireless work and commitment to the movement, and everything they achieved during their tenures.

In February, Michael Earp (VIC) took over Chair commitments. He was joined by ex-Publicity Manager and writer Amanda Diaz (ACT), finance worker and qualified librarian Kevin Lee (VIC), editor Nicola Santilli (NSW), and teacher and author Jess Walton (VIC). In May, the Committee was rounded out by the addition of radio/TV presenter Rhianna Patrick (QLD).

One of the main focuses for the Committee in 2017 was updating and expanding the #LoveOzYA website (loveozya.com.au). In our continued efforts for transparency, the [About page](#) was edited to include short descriptions of the Committee members, and we created [Social Media Guidelines](#) and a [Privacy Policy](#). Perhaps most significantly, we launched a [Blog](#) for original content created by the Committee, to more strongly position and cement the website as a resource for interesting and helpful #LoveOzYA discussion and information.

We introduced a [regular Q&A blog series](#), interviewing established and debut #LoveOzYA authors about how they became writers; their favourite books, bookshops and libraries; the best/worst pieces of writing advice they've received; and what #LoveOzYA means to them.

Our *#LoveOzYA Spotlight* blog series highlighted important bookish initiatives that promote Australian YA, and which may not be as well-known as they should be. We featured the [NSW Premier's Reading Challenge](#), the [ABA Kids' Reading Guide](#), the [Readings Young](#)

#LoveOzYA Committee 2017 Annual Report

[Adult Book Prize](#), [Get YA Words Out](#), the [Inky Awards](#) (with our first teen interviewee!), the [Girls Write Up Festival](#) and the [black&write! Indigenous Writing and Editing Project](#).

Our [#LoveOzYA in the USA blog series](#) featured questions and answers with Australian YA authors who have been published in the USA, delving into the ways their books may or may not have been changed for this new audience in terms of covers, titles and content.

Community engagement and interaction is always at the forefront of the Committee's mind. In 2017 we started [#LoveOzYA Instagram Takeover](#), which showcases the diversity and talent of the community. Over five set days, community members "take over" the official #LoveOzYA account, posting photos and captions in response to prompts from the Committee about their favourite #LoveOzYA books, bookshops, libraries and reading places.

Throughout the year the Committee continued to promote and expand our [monthly #LoveOzYA newsletter](#), using it not only as a vehicle to deliver news on the latest #LoveOzYA releases, but also to highlight original website content and resources.

We ran [an online survey into the reading habits of the #LoveOzYA community](#) over several months. We hoped to find out more about how new reads are discovered and how the community engages with one another. The survey returned over 800 responses from across Australia, which required massive data crunching. Results will be released soon.

After Amazon Australia launched at the end of the year, the Committee felt we needed to publicly and officially respond. We released an [official statement in support of local authors and businesses](#) to encourage community members and beyond to be mindful of where they buy their books and to #shoplocal #readlocal whenever they can.

#LoveOzYA Committee 2017 Annual Report

The #LoveOzYA Committee explored many new exciting avenues and partnerships in 2017 in order to expand the movement's reach and visibility. Some highlights include:

- Michael Earp joined ABC Radio's monthly OZ YAY program as an official representative of the Committee to discuss all things #LoveOzYA.
- We published a feature article in the *ABA News on Bookselling* about the #LoveOzYA movement, how booksellers could participate and make the most of our resources.
- We collaborated with AusYABloggers to create a monthly [#LoveOzYABloggers meme](#) to fuel online conversation around #LoveOzYA in response to themed prompts.
- The Committee participated in our first official cover reveal on our website and social media, for the #LoveOzYA debut *Small Spaces* by Sarah Epstein.
- We announced an official partnership with UPLIT (Brisbane Writers Festival) to collaborate on and support the 2018 LOVE YA event.

It has been incredible to see the movement grow in leaps and bounds this year in part due to community successes unrelated to the Committee. Here are some highlights:

- Throughout the year, #LoveOzYA began to feature heavily at writers' festivals panels and events around Australia, including Sydney Writers' Festival, Newcastle Writers Festival, Bendigo Writers Festival, Melbourne Writers Festival and many more.
- In May 2017, HarperCollins released *Begin, End, Begin: A #LoveOzYA Anthology* of ten YA short stories edited by Danielle Binks. The book was launched to much fanfare, and many of the contributors travelled interstate, touring the book and promoting it at literary festivals. It was named #3 in the ABC TV's The Book Club Five of the Best Books for 2017. And in early 2018, five stories from the anthology were shortlisted for Best Young Adult Short Story at the Aurealis Awards. Additionally, several stories were each

#LoveOzYA Committee 2017 Annual Report

shortlisted for Best Fantasy Short Story, Best Science Fiction Short Story and Best Science Fiction Novella. A massive achievement. Well done to all involved!

- In June 2017, the Centre for Youth Literature ran another amazing Reading Matters Conference for teachers, librarians and publishing professionals. It featured a fantastic and diverse array of panels and keynotes by #LoveOzYA authors, debut and established. Attendees brainstormed a list of diverse books and resources, which the Committee was asked to host on the #LoveOzYA website: [Reading Matters Diversity Recommendations](#)
- The darling of awards success in 2017 was undoubtedly *Words in Deep Blue* by Cath Crowley. It won the Indie Book Award for Young Adult Fiction, the Gold Inky Award, the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Young Adult Fiction and the Griffith University Young Adult Book Award. It was also a Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Honour Book for Older Readers. What a #LoveOzYA legend!!
- Other awards successes include *When Michael Met Mina* by Randa Abdel-Fattah winning both the Victorian Premier's Literary Award Prize for Writing for Young Adults and the People's Choice Award, and *One Would Think the Deep* by Claire Zorn beating out a ridiculously strong shortlist to win the CBCA Book of the Year Award for Older Readers. At the Aurealis Awards, *Lady Helen and the Dark Days Pact* by Alison Goodman won Best Young Adult Novel at the Aurealis Awards and *Gemina (Illuminae Files 2)* by Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff won Best Science Fiction Award, triumphing over adult books!
- The #LoveOzYA movement inspired another grassroots movement, #AusQueerYA, which celebrates Australian LGBTQIA+ YA fiction. Current Committee Chair Michael Earp created a [#AusQueerYA tumblr](#) that lists queer books, while freelance writer and youth literature advocate Jordi Kerr wrote an excellent [four-part series on Examining Australian queer fiction](#) for *Archer* magazine. And [Get YA Words Out](#), a platform for supporting the writing, reading and publishing of #AusQueerYA, also launched.

#LoveOzYA Committee 2017 Annual Report

- Adaptations: *Zac & Mia* by AJ Betts was released as a US digital TV series and NITV announced a TV series of *Grace Beside Me* by Sue McPherson (which aired in Feb 2018).
- There's been an increase in YA-specific bookclubs, e.g. YA'll for Brunch (VIC), The YA Room (VIC) and The YA Circle (SA). In December, The YA Room held a month-long celebration of #LoveOzYA and in January they hosted their inaugural #LoveOzYA Day, which featured not only a teen blogger panel, but panels on booktubing, a tell-all panel of #LoveOzYA authors and industry insights from publishing professionals.
- Podcasts about #LoveOzYA or featuring #LoveOzYA authors talking about writing popped up throughout the year, e.g. [Seeking Tumnus](#), [That YA Podcast](#), [Better Words, On Writing podcast](#), [Conversations With Writers podcast](#) and [The Garret podcast](#).
- And in December, the Centre for Youth Literature ran their annual and much-loved [YA Showcase](#), looking ahead at the fabulous #LoveOzYA that will grace our shelves in 2018.

2017 has been a wonderful year for the Committee, but we couldn't do it without you, the #LoveOzYA community. Thank you for your ongoing support of local authors and books. We are proud to represent you all. Here's to a fantastic 2018!

Amanda Diaz

Michael Earp (Chair)

Kevin Lee

Rhianna Patrick

Nicola Santilli

Jess Walton