

**November 2015**

## **The tale of 'Taragus' wins ASG Literary Award**

Ten year old Benjamin Cullen admits writing is his passion, but every now and then he likes to 'take a break' and write poems.

"I prefer to write stories because I find it easier to create new worlds without having to stick to a set format. Whereas poetry is a bit less flexible, but frees you up to use more colourful language and be creative in a different way."

Benjamin's poem 'Taragus' is about a swordsman who was clad in silver and gold and heir of the Elven king, built a ship whose sails couldn't rip.

Benjamin who attends St Agatha's Primary School in Pennant Hills was presented with an ASG Literary Award on 28 November 2015, in an award ceremony held in Melbourne.

It is one of five award categories sponsored by ASG as part of the Young Australian Art and Writers' Awards.

The awards are an initiative of the Children's Charity Network (CCN), an organisation that helps build confidence and self-esteem in children. ASG has been supporting CCN since 2003.

ASG Chief Executive Officer, John Velegrinis said he was impressed by Benjamin's use of poetic devices weaved throughout the maiden voyage of 'Taragus'.

"I congratulate Benjamin and all the ASG students who are very deserving of these awards. ASG's core mission is about supporting children's education and by fostering young talent and encouraging creativity, this allows them to express themselves freely through art and literature and perhaps aspire to a career in these disciplines.

"These awards aren't just about the students but how the parents get involved too. We recently launched the 2015 ASG Parents Report Card which looked at parents' perceptions of the state of education in Australia. One of the key findings is that parents' aspirations are the most important driver for their children's educational success. When children know how their parents value their education and the high aspirations they have, this encourages them to want to do better. So a huge congratulations to all the parents who have supported their children in this journey," added Mr Velegrinis.

CCN Executive Director Rob Leonard says the awards showcase incredible talent.

"You only have to read these stories or see the artwork, to understand how much talent we really have in our young people. Their imagination is just incredible and some of their stories still bring a tear to my eye."

Ben who loves reading and writing said he was inspired to write 'Taragus' from lots of different ideas.

"At the time I wrote 'Taragus', I had just finished the 'Lord of the Rings', which has lots of poetry in it. It was the first time I had ever read anything like that. I had also just finished the 'Brother Band' series and 'Eragon', and this is where my idea for Taragus' ship came from. Then one morning I just woke up with all these ideas swimming round in my head, I scribbled them down into my notebook and before long they morphed into my poem."

Other ASG award recipients were:

Art Award-painting (Prep-grade 4): Himani Karki, Maroubra, NSW

Art Award-drawing (Prep-grade 4): Shanghavi Rathanthas

Literary Award (short story): Monica Rallabhandi, Rossmoyne, WA.

Indigenous Art Award: Shianne Kynuna, QLD.

Ends.

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**Editors notes:**

*The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 520,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2.3 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: [www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au).*