

**November 2015**

## **ASG student wins Young Australian Writer of the Year for 'The Lyrics of War'**

In Brianne Gatehouse's own words, 'The Lyrics of War' is a "metaphorical symbol that nothing has really changed on the war front. We're more developed and advanced in our ways of killing each other, but it's still the same".

The year 10 student who attends St Augustine's College in Queensland, wrote 'The Lyrics of War' as part of a term three English assignment based on the novel, 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan.

Brianne and her fellow classmates were asked to write their own story based on an illustration from the book chosen by them.

'The Lyrics of War' is about two brothers, John and Bill Doe who were conscripted as young men and stationed together at Campi Della Morte. The Fields of Death. They weren't interested in the politics of war but saw it as an escape from their dysfunctional family.

Brianne's story follows their plight in the battlefields amongst the shots of thunder through the ground and corpses piling around them. Trying to make their way to relative safety, a shower of pellets rains down on Billy with John overcome with guilt and the feeling of immeasurable pain in his chest, as his brother, the young private was never to come home.

Not too long after, John is greeted at gunpoint and slowly raises his arms. The soldiers commence their gunshot opera. In the end, it's all the same. Only the names will change.

Brianne was presented with the Bic Young Australian Writer of the Year Award at an awards ceremony on 28 November 2015, held in Melbourne.

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 and sponsors five award categories.

ASG Chief Executive Officer, John Velegrinis said he was astounded by Brianne's writing, which revealed much depth and emotion.

"I congratulate Brianne 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."

Brianne said she's only just starting to comprehend what winning the award means.

"When I found out it was assignment week, so I was so focussed on that, but I'm wrapped and it's starting to sink in now.

"I've been entering short stories and snippets of poetry since I was nine years old. I've always loved reading and writing and once I finish school, I'd like to do a Bachelor of Arts specialised degree in screenwriting and directing".

Other ASG award recipients were:

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

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

Literary Award (poetry): Ben Cullen, Westleigh, NSW

Indigenous Art Award: Shianne Kynuna, QLD.

Ends.

**Media contact:**

To arrange an interview with ASG CEO John Velegrinis or Brianne Gatehouse please contact:

Nicole Gundi

Media and Communications Adviser

(03) 9276 7250 / 0448 167 578

[publicrelations@asg.com.au](mailto:publicrelations@asg.com.au)

**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).*