

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL
Botanic Gardens

Media release

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Author returns to Black Mountain

Remember the childhood excitement of discovering insects, lichens, a coloured leaf, or a tiny mushroom; when time stood still to study new found treasures with wide eyes?

Author Julia Cooke has transformed her childhood walking adventures into an enchanting children's book, *My Little World*.

Julia wrote the original story as an English assignment at Narrabundah College Canberra in 1998. This 'book' was illustrated and included a fictitious publisher and a barcode cut from a muesli bar box.

Now a PhD student in plant ecology at Macquarie University in Sydney, Julia used her science background to research the illustrations which were vividly drawn by Marjorie Crosby-Fairall.

My Little World will be launched at the Australian National Botanic Gardens at the foot of Black Mountain where the book is set.

"I hope it's a story that resonates because it's based on a true story from my own childhood," Ms Cooke said. "It's a light-hearted story, which incorporates many biological concepts such as animal behaviour, plant-animal interactions, camouflage and species identification. We included real animals and plants that might be found on Black Mountain during October.

"Children really do see many things differently and because of this they can make a unique contribution to their family. I want to encourage children to carefully observe nature so it was important to me that the illustrations are realistic. Marjorie's illustrations are so detailed and vibrant that I keep expecting something to crawl off the page!

"I hope kids enjoy reading it and that they learn something new about the natural world. But most of all I want to excite them to get outside and see what they can find for themselves."

With carefully researched illustrations this book is a wonderful introduction to the natural world for primary school aged children. Marjorie's illustrations show the perspective of the main character so readers really feel like they are part of the story.

The story is written in verse and there is an information page at the back of the book with details of the main species featured and their habitat. A teacher's guide has been prepared with science, art, drama and English activities available:

<http://www.scholastic.com.au/schools/education/teacherresources/assets/pdfs/MyLittleWorld.pdf>

For more information see <https://sites.google.com/site/cookejulia/writer/My-little-world>

Launch details: To be officially launched by Canberra naturalist Ian Fraser

2pm Saturday 9 April 2011, Visitors Centre, Australian National Botanic Gardens

Media contact:

Jenny Blake Australian National Botanic Gardens e jenny.blake@environment.gov.au m 0408 611 014

Karen Markwort Parks Australia e Karen.markwort@environment.gov.au m 0439 582 686