

Books BC 2022 Activities Report



THE ASSOCIATION OF
BOOK PUBLISHERS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

2022 Books BC Activity Highlights

GOVERNMENT AND FUNDER ADVOCACY

On November 25th, Board Chair Andrew Wooldridge and Executive Director Matea Kulic submitted a [Supply chain briefing and subsidy request to the Provincial Government](#).

The briefing outlined how the pandemic and its aftermath have exposed glaring issues with the global supply chain and with logistics and systems that affect book publishing. Chief among these are printing, shipping, and distribution. All publishers are impacted by these challenges, whether they self distribute or are part of a larger distribution group. Paper costs, in particular, have increased and continue to increase exponentially.

The association called on government to assist the BC publishing industry in facing these extraordinary cost pressures by implementing a subsidy to assist publishers in meeting these challenges. ***We are happy to report that in April of 2023, the government responded positively to our funding request with \$600,000 allocated over three years.

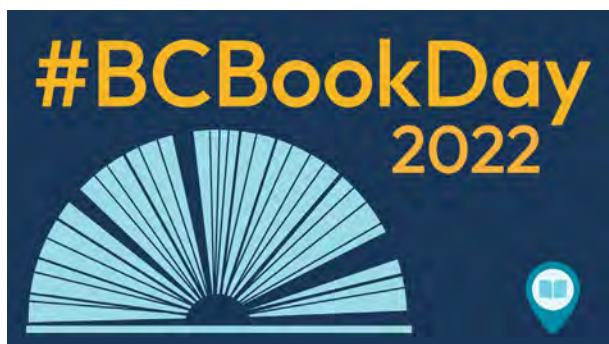
In December of 2022, we welcomed the new Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport (TACS) the Honourable Lana Popham, and have had a number of introductory

meetings and roundtables with her since her appointment. We continue to regularly submit to provincial budget consultations and keep TACS senior staff informed of industry developments on the topics of copyright, supply chain issues, and industry opportunities.

BC Book Day/Creative Industries Week

For BC Book Day on May 16, 2022, we organized a hybrid digital-physical campaign, providing text and visual assets for sharing on social media (www.readlocalbc.ca/bcbookday). Additionally, with the help of Graphite Public Affairs, we curated individualized book bags highlighting BC titles, promotional materials, and our advocacy priorities that were delivered to MLA offices on May 16th. We promoted the campaign widely to an audience of booksellers, librarians, and readers, and enlisted the support of our members to spread our messaging. Between Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, we tracked more than 100 social media posts using the #BCBookDay hashtag, including from publishers, libraries, bookstores, festivals, authors, and government. We also participated with our creative industry partners in the first in-person showcase at the legislature since 2020, aimed at highlighting our work for a government audience. The association's contribution to the event was a reading and performance by Arsenal Pulp Press author, Jillian Christmas.

BC Book Day is a day highly regarded by government officials, and it is fantastic to see the support for it widening among the public.



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The association's activities continued to be guided by the [2021–24 Strategic Plan](#) and its five strategic pillars: advocating for BC's diverse published content; marketing and promotion of BC publishers; member development and engagement; building a strong association; building a strong sector.

In 2022, we hired Grace Telfer in a 6-month Project Assistant position, while former Project Assistant Marianna Schultz moved into a Communications role. These staff changes were undertaken towards the strategic goal of building a new brand platform (more on this under Rebrand) and strengthening our Read Local BC brand strategy.

We also began work with organizational consultant [Alison Brewin](#) to undertake an organizational capacity assessment and align our capacity with our strategic goals. The consultation process with Alison included 1-1 coaching sessions with our Executive Director, Matea Kulic, facilitated board sessions, and an organizational assessment in four key areas of capacity: Governance, Staff Leadership, Administrative Systems, and Business Model. This work was undertaken in an effort toward building alignment around the key purpose of the association's work amidst internal and external changes. The consultation work with Alison will be completed during a May 2023 organizational retreat where the results of the assessment and next steps will be outlined.

Governance committee

Committee chair: Nadine Pedersen (UBC Press)
Committee members: Jennifer Gauthier (Greystone Books), Karen Green (Anvil Press), Melissa Pitts (UBC Press); Matea Kulic (Books BC)

The committee continued its work developing a robust governance manual outlining all of the organization's guiding policies. The group met regularly during 2022, and had a completed draft of the manual ready by the end of the year to share with an EDI consultant for review. The finalized governance manual will be presented to the new board after the 2023 AGM.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Overview

In 2022, in light of staff turnovers, we took the opportunity to stay on course with our regular marketing and promotional activities while gearing up to re-evaluate and improve programs and services in 2023. We continued to explore new and expanded opportunities for online promotion, program delivery, and cross-sector collaboration.

Educational marketing

Educational catalogues: In 2022 we continued to explore new components to this long-running project, which aims to market Canadian-published books for use in Canadian classrooms and school libraries through the independent recommendation of teacher-librarians and educators.

In the last few years, publishers have seen major shifts in how schools want to access resources and make purchasing decisions. To address these shifts, in 2021 we launched our digital catalogue database [BooksForSchools.ca](#), in addition to the print catalogues, in order to create a resource that could be at educators' fingertips all year round. This change in how we deliver our educational catalogues prompted the need to

review our educational marketing initiatives to better align them with the needs of our members as well as those of BC educators.

In 2022 we paused the production of our annual BC books and Indigenous books catalogues in order to review the program through a marketing committee and explore ROI improvements, marketing activities, and revenue opportunities. While this committee process was moved to 2023, in 2022 we continued to discuss updates to the [BooksForSchools.ca](https://www.booksforschools.ca) website with the 49th Shelf development team in order to improve searchability, functionality, and accessibility. We created a new access point to the catalogue website through [ReadLocalBC.ca](https://www.readlocalbc.ca) in order to increase reach and exposure.

Educator outreach: In December we exhibited at the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) Conference. We promoted the Indigenous Voice criteria

used in the evaluation of Indigenous titles in our educational catalogues as a way to evaluate any text for use in the classroom. We highlighted the unique evaluation and annotation process that each title in our catalogues undergoes. We also solicited feedback on our educational catalogues through a survey to support the review of our educational marketing initiatives in 2023.

Read Local BC

The Read Local BC campaign encompasses our public-facing marketing efforts: it includes our web presence ([ReadLocalBC.ca](https://www.ReadLocalBC.ca), editorial coverage including interviews and profiles, weekly blog content, and social media profiles on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ReadLocalBC), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ReadLocalBC), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ReadLocalBC)); the weekly BC Bestseller list; the monthly Read Local BC newsletter; print and digital advertising; events and festival partnerships; collective exhibits



When we share our stories, we liberate ourselves. We're in the business of meaning-making, bringing people together, and allowing traditionally over-excluded voices be the guiding light of liberation and change.

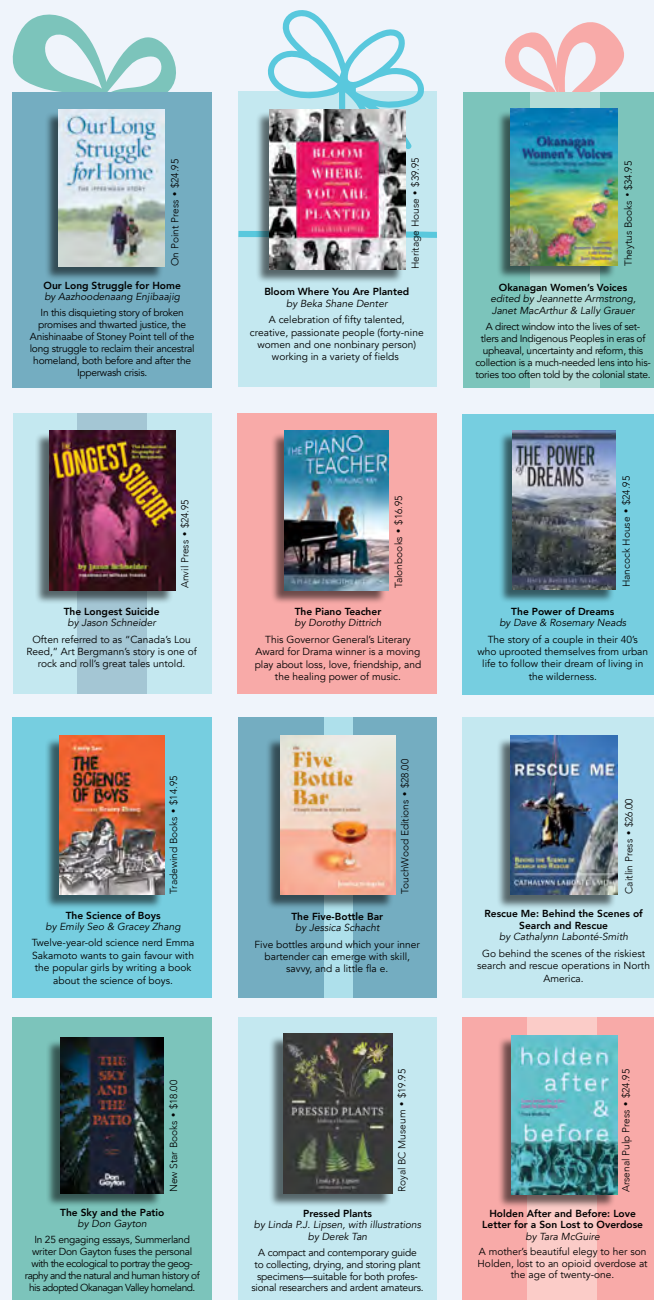
at trade shows and conferences; and promotional material for bookstores, schools, and libraries.

Editorial and content marketing: We renewed our contract with Zg Stories to execute the Read Local BC content strategy we created with their support in 2020, and which includes weekly blog editorial content and regular social media content on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#). We continued the established process of soliciting title submissions from members via quarterly coverage surveys. We continued to work with the supporting documents created in 2021, i.e. a style guide, a best practices protocol for our blog and social media, and content templates. We began planning further process improvements that would benefit the team as well our target audiences, namely the creation of a database of hashtags and publisher and author account handles for social media promotions, and the plans for the launch of a public-facing events calendar on the Read Local BC website. We continued to publish a monthly Read Local BC newsletter, which began as the weekly “Read Local BC At Home” newsletter in the early months of the pandemic.

Advertising: Our advertising program offered Books BC members placement in collective advertising at a subsidized cost. In 2022 we ran collective advertising in the Vancouver Writers Festival program guide (print), The Tyee (digital), and The Globe & Mail BC section (print). These ads represented a combined 30 books from 15 publishers. Additionally, we ran print and digital house ads for Read Local BC in the BC & Yukon Book Prizes gala program and newsletter, the Victoria Festival of Authors program and newsletter, on The BC Review website, and with the Federation of BC Writers.

Wrap up local books!

 **READ LOCAL BC**
Find these and other BC books at your local indie bookstore



The Association of Book Publishers of BC acknowledges the support of





Event and festival relationships: We hosted two virtual events at Word Vancouver. “The Launch of Poetry in Transit” featured seven BC authors and “Demystifying the Publishing Process: Working With a Small, Independent, or ‘Micro’ Press” was a panel discussion between recently published authors. We sponsored the BC & Yukon Book Prizes gala in September. We sponsored three door prizes at Delta’s UnBound Poetry Festival.

We continued to develop relationships with festival partners and look for opportunities to support BC-published programming wherever possible. Event organizers continued to get in touch with us to be added to our [Literary Festivals and Reading Series dedicated landing page](#) on Read Local BC, and to submit events for inclusion in our monthly Read Local BC newsletter.

In December of 2022, we began discussions with our Read Local BC web developer to create a plug-in for an [events calendar on our site](#), for which work is now complete. We are pleased to report that



uptake for the event calendar has been high, and this is quickly becoming a go-to resource for sharing BC-based publisher and author events.

Website upgrades: We continued to work with our contracted web developer to update [ReadLocalBC.ca](#). The updates focused on improving discoverability, refreshing and streamlining the look of the site, and conducting a plug-in audit to make the website easier to load for readers. We continued the work of bringing the site into compliance with current WCAG accessibility guidelines. We also continue to integrate TBM BookManager’s “Shop Local” widget across the website. We refreshed the content categories on the website to make them more audience-oriented, including updating the categories on the home navigation bar as well the editorial content categories. We linked the website of our educational catalogues, [BooksForSchools.ca](#), to [ReadLocalBC.ca](#) to boost visibility and connect the two projects together.



Poetry in Transit

Annual campaign: The 2022/23 Poetry in Transit campaign received 137 submissions highlighting 59 poets from 23 Canadian-owned publishers. Jury members (poets Evelyn Lau and Rob Taylor and TransLink representative Jennifer Froese) met in May to make the final selections of 10 poems by BC poets. We launched the campaign with an in-person Poetry Bus! event that was well attended at Word Vancouver. To promote the campaign and launch event, we secured bus shelter ad space through the City of Vancouver's Transit Shelter Advertising Programs. Ten posters featuring the selected poems were on display for five weeks from late August to September. We also ran a #PoetryinTransit contest encouraging readers and transit goers to post pictures of their buscard sightings. The contest was highly engaged with and the winner received a selection from Poetry in Transit authors.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In February of 2022, we held an online session on the topic of "Controlled Digital Lending of Library Books in Canada" featuring the speakers Christina de

Castell & Robert Tiessen, and presented in collaboration with the ACP. The session was attended by over 70 participants.

In November of 2022, we held our first in-person PD event since 2020 pandemic closures, including a full afternoon session at SFU Harbourside on the topic: "Evolving strategies for effective book publicity in a changing retail market." The two-part panel included key players in the retail and publicity process with topics ranging from effective email strategies for publicity staff; the use of online catalogues by sales reps; what booksellers think are the most effective media and publicity influencers; and how those responsible for selling books use reviews, blurbs, and other publisher-supplied marketing information to attract audiences.

The PD session was strategized by the PD committee, and logistics were supported by Don Gorman (RMB).

The 2022 awards night was coordinated for the evening of the PD session to encourage in-person attendance. Many members told us that it was so good to meet again in person after a number of years of online connection. However, we also heard from publishers and staff who were not able to attend in-person meetings and who were able to participate more readily through online events. While aiming to provide at least one in-person PD session or other event per year, we intend to continue online PD opportunities going forward.

MEMBERSHIP

Books BC represents 26 active and associate member publishers, and is further supported by the participation of 28 industry "Friends" of the association.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES

Rebrand

In September of 2022, supported by a BC Arts Council Arts Impact Grant, the association developed a RFP and hired marketing and advertising agency [Sticks & Stones](#) to facilitate the rebrand process.

The rebrand and new visual identity was strategized through a rebrand committee made up of committee chairs, Teddy Anderson (Publisher at Medicine Wheel Education) and Matea Kulić (Books BC), and members Andrew Chesham (Associate Director, Creative Writing Program at SFU Continuing Studies), Lisa Escudero (Brand Lead, Creative BC), Rachel Page (Lead Designer, Orca Book Publishing), and Curtis Samuel (Publicist & Social Media Coordinator, TouchWood Editions).

Committee and board members provided feedback and input throughout the rebrand process, and a final logo and the new operational name “Books BC” was arrived at in March of 2023.



Accessible Digital Books

We worked with eBOUND and the National Network for Equitable Library Services (NNELS) to remediate 280 files from 12

Books BC members into accessible ebooks which were uploaded for distribution. In evaluating the program, we found that:

- Nine out of nine publishers recognized that the project improved their capacity to create born-accessible ebooks, and/or their ability to develop ebooks to sell to libraries and retailers.
- Six out of nine publishers agreed that the support of a collective remediation process free up time to devote to other publishing activities.

As of December 2022, seven of the 12 participating publishers submitted a total of 137 titles to NNELS. We are grateful to the Canada Book Fund Accessible Digital Books Fund for supporting this project, and to Marianna Schultz for ensuring successful delivery of the project via her facilitation of communication with publishers, eBOUND, and NNELS.

Job Board Incentive

In early 2021, we launched a pilot program, the Job Board Incentive that offered Books BC members support and resources for creating and advertising job postings, with the aim of promoting greater equity and inclusion in the BC book publishing industry. In 2022, the Board voted to extend the program until the end of 2023. More information on the Job Board Incentive [can be found here](#).



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