

**ALBERT HAS TWO HOMES NOW
BOOK LAUNCH SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
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Good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to launch *Albert Has Two Homes Now* — written by Kate Kelly and her 4-year-old son, Albert, and published by Tasmania's very own Forty South Publishing.

The book is beautifully written, and I will come back to that in a moment.

Because what I want to say right away is that this book is not just full of “illustrations” — it's a gorgeous work of art!

Albert, your compositions, and your colours, and your eye for details in each of your pictures is pretty special for your age.

So you and your Mum Kate can be very proud of *Albert Has Two Homes Now*.

The concept of “art as therapy” — which underpins the book — is well and truly exemplified in Albert's 16 principal images, which is a lot of work in one slim children's book.

And as you will see when you read the book, the pictures each tell their own stories with remarkable artistic accuracy; Happy — Sad — Busy — Together — Scared — Having Fun — and so on.

But of course, like a lot of children's art that expresses personal responses to barely understood “grown-ups” business, we as the reader can only infer so much from them.

Which is where Kate Kelly's beautiful writing comes in, to complement her son's work.

Albert Has Two Homes Now is the story of a real-life family separation told from the perspective of a child. So it is that Kate's words tell us from her personal adult-as-child perspective of the difficult and complex changes around break ups; and how a positive approach is possible in what can be difficult, life-changing experiences.

Another aspect of the book that struck me is what helped to inspire the book in the first place. I will quote Kate:

“When my partner and I separated in 2016, our son, Albert, was 3 years old. To help Albert navigate his way through what was going on, I sought out books to help explain what was happening. Although I found numerous books for children on divorce and separation, they were consistently written from an adult point of view, often focusing on the reasons for separation, which in itself is a very adult concept. Albert found many of these books baffling, sad, and scary.”

And here are some more of Kate’s words, in describing the resulting process:

“As an artist and writer, creativity has always helped me find solace and sense in times where words fail me, and I thought that making art could also help my son, who was still too young to talk about his feeling in words alone. We sat down together and he talked and drew. I transcribed and queried and doodled alongside him. Through the process, this book was born.’

And Kate has also said:

“The process revealed that Albert did not need explanations, but reassurances that the important things would stay the same; that he was safe, secure, and would always have his mummy and daddy close by. Interestingly, he also focused on the gains in the situation, on now having two homes, rather than losing one.”

These are simple yet remarkable insights into how to assist young children through difficulties for which there simply is no magic solution.

I am really pleased to see children’s books being used in this way – helping children deal with difficult situations and helping teachers and parents to start the conversation about a difficult issue or problem and offer some advice. Just last week I launched another children’s book, *Queenie’s Little Book of Comfort* which is designed to give children some strategies to cope with family violence. Using children’s literature in this way is a welcome development, one that I understand is now referred to as ‘bibliotherapy’.

I remember in the 1990s reading here in Fullers, when shopping for Christmas presents for my nephews, Babette Cole's books such as *Mummy Laid an Egg* and also *Dr Dog*, with its memorable lines of medical advice. But this little book, *Albert Has Two Homes Now* takes this trend a step further and combines bibliotherapy with art as therapy.

I am sure that this book will be of inspiration and help to other families, and that will be a terrific result for Kate and Albert.

Furthermore, I note that at the back of the book, where there is a photo of them together, the caption to that photo ends with the sentence: "This is their first children's book."

Which means more on the way! Congratulations, therefore, Kate Kelly and Albert Evans, on this lovely and positive publication of yours and we look forward to more.

And congratulations as well to Lucinda Sharp and her Forty South Publishing colleagues for a truly professional design of the book. It will hold its own in any market, in my opinion.

I therefore happily declare launched *Albert Has Two Homes Now*.

Thank you.