

Media Release

Six 'absurd, disrespectful and very funny titles' shortlisted for Australia's only humour writing prize

10/5/17

Six of the most 'absurd, disrespectful and very funny' books published in the last two years have been shortlisted for Australia's only humour writing prize, the State Library of NSW announced today.

The shortlisted books for the 2017 Russell Prize for Humour Writing, selected from 48 entries, are:

- *Going Out Backwards: A Grafton Everest Adventure*, Ross Fitzgerald and Ian McFadyen (Hybrid Publishers)
- *True Girt: The Unauthorised History of Australia - Volume 2*, David Hunt (Black Inc.)
- *A Toaster on Mars*, Darrell Pitt (Text Publishing)
- *Error Australis*, Ben Pobjie (Affirm Press)
- *Quicksand*, Steve Toltz (Penguin Random House Australia)
- *The Anti-Cool Girl*, Rosie Waterland (HarperCollins Publishers)

Author Patti Miller, Chair of the judging panel, commented: "Humorous writing is not exclusive – it welcomes history, memoir, novels, science fiction, political satire – but with the extra twist of making us laugh, or at least making us lift our eyebrows with an ironic smile."

"When offering a sharp awareness of the absurdity of the human condition and a brave disrespect for sacred cows, humorous writing paradoxically makes life more bearable – this year's shortlisted titles for the Russell Prize for Humour Writing are properly absurd, disrespectful and very funny indeed," Ms Miller said.

The \$10,000 biennial prize is awarded to the best book of humour writing by an Australian author published in the previous two years and aims to celebrate, recognise and encourage the humour writing genre.

The prize has been made possible by the generous bequest of the late Peter Wentworth Russell, a farmer, businessman and passionate reader.

According to Lucy Milne, Acting NSW State Librarian and Chief Executive: "This year's shortlist reflects the power humour writing has to traverse genres. The State Library is pleased to administer a prize that recognises and celebrates the uniqueness of our Australian sense of humour. The Russell Prize for Humour Writing sits perfectly with the Library and its stable of literary awards."

The winner will be announced at the State Library of NSW on 8 June 2017.

The Russell Prize
HUMOUR
FOR
Writing

2017

Media Release



Background information:

- Works nominated for the 2017 Russell Prize for Humour Writing must have been first published between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2016, and commercially available within this period.
- Works of fiction and non-fiction, including collections of short stories, poetry and verse are eligible for consideration.
- The prize was first awarded in 2015 to Bernard Cohen's witty novel and political satire, *The Antibibliography of Robert F. Menzies* (HarperCollins Publishers).
- Writers whose works are nominated must be living Australian citizens or persons holding permanent resident status.

Media contact:

Vanessa Bond, State Library Media & Communications
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au