‘Very impressive … demonstrates how colonial storytelling contributed to the serial and legal lies on which Australia was built.’

Alexis Wright
Finding Eliza: Power and Colonial Storytelling by Larissa Behrendt (UQP)

Judges' Comments

Larissa Behrendt's writing simply can't be ignored. She goes to the heart of Australia's blind predicament in relating to Aboriginal people. This book is a meticulous examination of how stories about Aboriginal people are entwined with our nation's legal status, and it speaks to the legitimacy of our nationhood. Every Australian should be aware of the implications raised by this book.

Inspired by similar work in the Americas, Behrendt has chosen to examine the racism underlying the Eliza Fraser shipwreck story as well as other works in the literary canon. She undertakes this important work with both fierce intellect and a clear vision. Sharp-eyed and fair, she has understood what Eliza Fraser was up against and what Fraser thought she needed to do to survive as a woman of her times. Finding Eliza is a rigorous and very readable look at some of the dishonest fables that have embellished colonial history for far too long.

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