Stuart Kells’ *Penguin and the Lane Brothers* wins prestigious $30,000 Ashurst Business Literature Prize

Author and antiquarian book publisher Stuart Kells has won the 2015 Ashurst Business Literature Prize for his ground-breaking counter-history of the 20th century’s greatest publishing house.

In *Penguin and The Lane Brothers* (Black Inc.), Kells, relying on unprecedented access to Lane family sources, sheds new light on the intimate partnership of brothers Alan, Richard and John, the drivers of Penguin’s success.

Launched in 2004 by Ashurst (then Blake Dawson) and administered by the State Library of NSW, the $30,000 prize is Australia’s largest and most significant award for business literature. It was established to encourage the highest possible standards of literary commentary on Australian business and financial affairs.

An independent judging panel - Alan Cameron AO, Narelle Hooper; and Richard Fisher AM – selected Kells’ book as the winner from a shortlist of five including:

- **Quentin Beresford** – *The Rise and Fall of Gunns Ltd* (NewSouth Publishing)
- **Matt O’Sullivan** – *Mayday: How Warring Egos Forced Qantas Off Course* (Penguin)
- **David Uren** – *Takeover: Foreign Investment and the Australian Psyche* (Black Inc.)

Kells’ agent Sheila Drummond accepted the prize on his behalf from The Honourable Gabrielle Upton MP, guest speaker at a special award dinner hosted by leading international law firm, Ashurst, in Sydney tonight (12 April).

Ashurst Global Vice Chairman Mary Padbury said: "Now in its twelfth year, the Ashurst Business Literature Prize has recognised some of Australia’s finest writers who have canvassed a diverse range of business and financial topics that affect all Australians. Ashurst is proud to have established this important prize and congratulate both Stuart and all of the other worthy short listed authors."

NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive Alex Byrne said: “We are delighted that this award which celebrates literary commentary on Australian business is thriving, attracting a growing number of submissions. The Library and its Foundation are grateful for Ashurst’s continuing support for Australian writers.”

Alan Cameron AO, chair of the judging panel commented: “We were impressed by the quality of all the short listed books, but we found the winner was a delight to read - informative and entertaining at the same time. The author has drawn out many of the complications which can attach to the intersections between family and business, and left the reader wishing for more.”
About Stuart Kells
Stuart Kells is the author of *Penguin and the Lane Brothers: The Untold Story of a Publishing Revolution*. His previous book, the critically acclaimed biography of Kay Craddock, *Rare: A Life Among Antiquarian Books*, was published in 2011. Kells is a rare and antiquarian books expert and a member of the board of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Antiquarian Booksellers. He has a PhD from Monash University and lives with his family in Melbourne.

To organise an interview after the announcement, please contact:
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Background

Past Ashurst Business Literature Prize winners:

- 2014 *Twiggy: The High Stakes Life of Andrew Forrest* - Andrew Burrell
- 2013 *Boom: The Underground History of Australia, from Gold Rush to GFC* – Malcolm Knox
- 2012 *The Sweet Spot: How Australia made its own luck – and could now throw it all away* – Peter Hartcher
- 2011 *Six Months of Panic* – Trevor Sykes
- 2010 *Who Wants to be a Billionaire* – Paul Barry
- 2009 *The Big Fella: The rise and rise of BHP Billiton* – Peter Thompson and Robert Macklin
- 2008 *Funny Business* – Leonie Wood
- 2007 *Kickback: Inside the Australian Wheat Board scandal* – Caroline Overington
- 2006 *Asbestos House* – Gideon Haigh
- 2005 *Public Private Partnerships: The worldwide revolution in infrastructure provision and project finance* – Mervyn Lewis and Darrin Grimsey
- 2004 *A Portrait of Power: Allan Fels* – Fred Brenchley

The past award dinner keynote speakers:

- 2014 Kate McClymont
- 2013 Honourable James Spigelman AC QC
- 2012 The Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP, Federal Member for Wentworth and Shadow Minister for Communications and Broadband
- 2011 Mr Gideon Haigh
- 2010 Emeritus Professor Ron McCallum
- 2009 Thomas Keneally, AO
- 2008 John Hartigan, then CEO and Chairman, News Limited
- 2007 Professor Geoffrey Blainey
- 2006 General Peter Cosgrove, AC MC
- 2005 Geoff Dixon, CEO and then Managing Director of Qantas Airways Limited
- 2004 Trevor Sykes, business journalist, author and then assistant editor at the Australian Financial Review