

Media Release



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NEW SOUTH WALES

Quirky collection of stories about 'dysfunctional men' takes out Australia's only humour writing prize

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David Cohen's wry, eclectic collection of short stories about 'dysfunctional men' has won the \$10,000 biennial Russell Prize for Humour Writing, Australia's only humour writing prize, the State Library of NSW announced **TONIGHT (Thursday 2 May 2019)**.

The judges praised Cohen's *The Hunter and Other Stories of Men* (Transit Lounge) for "its original and imaginative narratives, its assured evocative style, the obvious warmth of the narrator for all his flawed characters, and most of all, for its sustained comic vision."

The Hunter and Other Stories of Men is Cohen's third novel, and was selected from a diverse field of 56 entries by judges Patti Miller, Lex Marininos and David Hunt.

The shortlist included:

- *Boy Swallows Universe* by Trent Dalton (HarperCollins Publishers)
- *Deadly Kerfuffle* by Tony Martin (Affirm Press)
- *The Drover's Wives* by Ryan O'Neill (Brio Books)
- *The Helen 100* by Helen Razer (Allen & Unwin)
- *The Lucky Galah* by Tracy Sorensen (Picador Australia)

Cohen's stories range widely and wildly: the tale of the developers and the coffee-addicted ibis; the employee whose job it is to pose as a woodcutter in the forest for tourists, the lament of the fake (but vocal) bus-stop at a dementia unit, the handless piano player; all of them variations on a theme of dysfunctional men – and one dysfunctional bus-stop.

"Good comic writers might challenge us on our foolishness," the judges observed, "but they always include themselves as The Fool. Cohen's wry voice lets us know, yes, we are all a little mad, but let's kick on anyway."

State Librarian John Vallance explained that the Prize has been made possible by a generous bequest from the late Peter Wentworth Russell.

THIS AWARD IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE STATE LIBRARY OF NSW FOUNDATION AND THE GENEROSITY OF THE LATE PETER WENTWORTH RUSSELL.

The Russell Prize
HUMOUR
FOR
Writing

2019

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Mr Russell's goddaughter Rachel Hill said: "Peter had such a sense of the ridiculous and loved a good belly laugh. He would be thrilled to be sharing the joy of humour. Thank you to all the authors that submitted for the Russell Prize for Humour Writing and congratulations to the shortlisted authors and the winner."

The Russell Prize for Humour Writing is part of a suite of awards administered and presented by the State Library, including the NSW Premier's Literary and History Awards.

For more information and to organise an interview please contact:

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