

Media Release

Shortlist announced for Australia's richest biography prize

5/8/2021

Compelling biographies of trailblazers and survivors have been shortlisted alongside raw-edged memoirs by debut authors for the 2021 National Biography Award, the richest prize in Australia for biography and life stories, the State Library of NSW announced **TODAY [Thursday 5 August 2021]**.

The shortlisted works, selected from 101 entries are:

- *The Lotus Eaters* by Emily Clements (Hardie Grant Books)
- *One Bright Moon* by Andrew Kwong (HarperCollins Publishers)
- *Max* by Alex Miller (Allen & Unwin)
- *Truganini: Journey through the apocalypse* by Cassandra Pybus (Allen & Unwin)
- *Tell Me Why* by Archie Roach (Simon & Schuster Australia)
- *Penny Wong: Passion and Principle* by Margaret Simons (Black Inc. Books)

The 2021 Award was assessed by a judging panel comprising of Suzanne Falkiner, Rick Morton and Mandy Sayer.

Senior Judge, Suzanne Falkiner commented: "In this difficult period of confinement it was a privilege to enter the worlds of such a diverse set of writers — almost half the works were from first-time biographers from mainstream publishers which demonstrates a healthy appetite among readers for fresh and innovative life stories from all corners of Australian society."

"The strong showing of debut works made for a difficult task of narrowing them down to the most worthy contenders for inclusion in the shortlist, which is why we have requested to mention these further titles as 'highly commended'," said Ms Falkiner.

- *The Shelf Life of Zora Cross* by Cathy Perkins (Monash University Publishing)
- *Into the Suburbs: A Migrant's Story* by Christopher Raja (University of Queensland Press)
- *Lowitja* by Stuart Rintoul (Allen & Unwin)



National Biography AWARD 2021

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The National Biography Award is generously supported by the Nelson Meers Foundation and has a total prize pool of \$42,000. The overall winner receives \$25,000. The \$5,000 Michael Crouch AC Award is awarded to the best debut biography or memoir in honour of the late Library benefactor and former Award supporter. In addition, each shortlisted author receives \$2,000.

According to State Librarian John Vallance: “Our ancient curiosity about other people’s lives and their importance is as strong today as ever. So much of what we understand of the world, we grasp through the ways others have lived. Read these books and you will see what I mean.”

Established in 1996 by Dr Geoffrey Cains and endowed by the late Michael Crouch AC until 2017, the National Biography Award encourages the highest standards of writing in the fields of biography and autobiography and promotes public interest in these genres.

The winner will be announced on 26 August 2021.

For more information, interviews and images, please contact:

Vanessa Bond, Media & Communication Branch, State Library of NSW
0411 259 898, vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au

