

Media Release



NSW State Library announces new humour writing prize for young people

16/12/2020

Australia's only humour writing prize is now giving authors two reasons to smile when entries open today, with the State Library of NSW announcing a new category aimed at making sure that everyone can laugh as we emerge from a year not exactly characterised by humour!

Applications are now being accepted for the \$10,000 Russell Prize for Humour Writing and an inaugural \$5,000 award for Humour Writing with a younger audience in mind.

According to State Librarian John Vallance said: "We all need a good laugh now more than ever and the State Library is thrilled to administer not one but two prizes which celebrate the value and importance of humour writing. Someone far wiser than I once noticed that if you can't laugh, you can't be serious."

The biennial Russell Prize for Humour Writing, established by the bequest of Peter Wentworth Russell, is awarded to the best work of literary humour by an Australian author published in the previous two years.

The new Humour Writing for Young People award is offered for a published work intended for readers between the ages of 5–12 years.

The Russell Prize for Humour Writing is administered and presented by the State Library of NSW and supported by its Foundation.

Rachel Hill, goddaughter of Peter Russell, worked closely with the State Library to realise his dream of establishing a prize for humour writing. Having lost her godfather suddenly due to a decline in his mental health, Rachel feels it is particularly important to highlight the benefit of humour for enjoyment, as a coping mechanism and also a way of communicating serious messages in a lighthearted way that enables everyone to feel comfortable.

"This year we are going beyond what my godfather envisioned by launching the inaugural Russell Prize for Humour Writing for Young People," said Rachel. "This year has proved how valuable humour is in getting through tough times and creating new ways to come together, so we are looking forward to celebrating and inspiring people to write for all generations."

Previous winners are *The Hunter and Other Stories of Men* by David Cohen (2019) and *Quicksand* by Steve Toltz (2017).

INCLUDING

Humour Writing for
Young People



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
Writing 2021

The Russell Prize
Humour
Writing 2021

Media Release



Eligible works must have been first published between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2020 and be commercially available within this period.

Entries close: 5pm, Monday 8 February 2021.

Guidelines and the online nomination form are available at www.sl.nsw.gov.au/awards

The 2021 winners will be announced in June 2021.

Media contact:

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

INCLUDING

Humour Writing for
Young People

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