

Media Release

Winners announced for 2019 NSW Premier's Literary Awards

29/4/2019

The NSW Premier's Literary Awards were announced TONIGHT at the State Library of NSW, with a total of \$305,000 awarded across 13 prizes.

NSW Premier, The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP said: "2019 marks the 40-year anniversary of the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, which are the longest-standing and richest state-funded Awards in the country. Since 1979 the NSW Government has been supporting Australian writers and we look forward to continuing to do so for the next 40 years and beyond. Congratulations to all the winners this year who continue to provide work which inspires, informs and delights."

State Librarian John Vallance said: "The 2019 winners explore a vast range of ideas, once again, challenge us as readers to expand our thinking and to learn more from the society around us. They provide views into mental illness and dealing with grief; ancient Australian archaeology; war in Afghanistan; racism in Western Sydney; life as a transgender woman, to name a few."

"The State Library is the perfect place for the presentation of these important awards to such deserving and significant writers," Dr Vallance said.

According to Senior Judge, Suzanne Leal: "In their exploration of regret and forgiveness, hardship and resilience, loneliness and inclusion, this year's winning entries are rigorous in their interrogation of our past and consideration of our present. Curiosity and warmth, humour spanning from the gentle to the caustic, and clarity of thought and vision stand out in these exceptional works."

"The judging panels appreciate the Premier's strong support and continued interest in the Awards and in the ongoing work of Australian writers," Ms Leal said.

The 2019 prize winners are:

Categories and winners:

Book of the Year (\$10,000)

Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia by Billy Griffiths
(Black Inc. Books)

Special Award (\$10,000)

No Friend but the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison by Behrooz Boochani

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Christina Stead Prize for Fiction (\$40,000)

The Life to Come by Michelle de Kretser (Allen & Unwin)

UTS Glenda Adams Award for New Writing (\$5,000 – sponsored by UTS)

Boy Swallows Universe by Trent Dalton (HarperCollins Publishers)

Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-fiction (\$40,000) – joint winners

Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia by Billy Griffiths
(Black Inc. Books)

*The Trauma Cleaner: One Woman's Extraordinary Life in Death, Decay
and Disaster* by Sarah Krasnostein (Text Publishing)

Kenneth Slessor Prize for Poetry (\$30,000)

Interval by Judith Bishop (UQP)

Patricia Wrightson Prize for Children's Literature (\$30,000) – joint winners

Leave Taking by Lorraine Marwood (UQP)

Dingo by Claire Saxby and Tannya Harricks (Walker Books Australia)

Ethel Turner Prize for Young People's Literature (\$30,000)

Amelia Westlake by Erin Gough (Hardie Grant Egmont)

Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting (\$30,000)

The Almighty Sometimes by Kendall Feaver (Currency Press)

Betty Roland Prize for Scriptwriting (\$30,000)

Jirga by Benjamin Gilmour (Felix Media)

Multicultural NSW Award (\$20,000)

The Lebs by Michael Mohammed Ahmad (Hachette Australia)

NSW Premier's Translation Prize (\$30,000) – biennial award

Alison Entrekin

People's Choice Award

Boy Swallows Universe by Trent Dalton (HarperCollins Publishers)

BACKGROUND NOTES

- Works nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards must have been first published, performed or screened between 1 October 2017 and 30 September 2018. This period does not apply to the NSW Premier's Translation Prize.



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- Writers and illustrators whose works are nominated must be living Australian citizens or persons holding permanent resident status.
- The Awards are judged by an independent committee of writers, academics, critics and other sector professionals who have been appointed by the Premier or the Minister for the Arts or their delegates.
- The inaugural NSW Premier's Literary Awards were presented in 1979 by Premier Neville Wran and were the first Premier's literary awards to be offered in Australia. This year marks the 40-year anniversary of the Awards.
- The NSW Premier's Literary Awards are the richest state-based literary awards in the country.

The NSW Premier's Literary Awards are administered by the State Library of NSW in association with Create NSW. The State Library acknowledges the sponsorship of Multicultural NSW and the University of Technology Sydney. For more information please contact: Sara Fishwick, Senior Project Officer, Awards, State Library of NSW (02) 9273 1582 or awards@sl.nsw.gov.au

Visit the State Library of NSW's website for the list of winners and judges' comments: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/awards

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