

Shortlists announced for 2020 NSW Premier's Literary Awards

20/3/2020

Contemporary works by leading and emerging Australian writers have been shortlisted for the 2020 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the State Library of NSW announced today.

Twenty-nine judges considered almost 600 entries across 10 prize categories. Up to \$295,000 in prize money will be handed out including sponsored awards, making them the richest state-funded literary awards in the country.

NSW Premier, The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP, said: "The NSW Premier's Literary Awards have celebrated local writers since 1979 and it's fantastic our State continues to foster Australian talent every year. The diversity of the works produced by this year's shortlisted writers makes for compelling reading. I congratulate each and every one of you and wish you luck ahead of the winners' announcements next month."

State Librarian John Vallance said: "The Premier's Literary Awards are a highlight of our annual literary calendar. This year's judges have been working through 595 entries to create a shortlist that shows the strength of writing and publishing in Australia."

2020 Senior Judge, Jane McCredie, commented: "This year's shortlists feature a dazzling array of stories from talented writers delving into Australian and universal themes. How we relate to each other and to a natural world in crisis, our fractured histories, our possible futures: no topic is too big or too challenging. I congratulate all the shortlisted writers on their extraordinary achievement."

The shortlists for the 2020 NSW Premier's Literary Awards:

(arranged in alphabetical order by author surname)

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

The White Girl by Tony Birch (University of Queensland Press)

The Palace of Angels by Mohammed Massoud Morsi (Wild Dingo Press)

The Electric Hotel by Dominic Smith (Allen & Unwin)

Exploded View by Carrie Tiffany (Text Publishing)

Wolfe Island by Lucy Treloar (Picador Australia)

The Yield by Tara June Winch (Penguin Random House)

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

The Seventies by Michelle Arrow (NewSouth Publishing)

The Enchantment of the Long-haired Rat: A Rodent History of Australia by Tim Bonyhady (Text Publishing)

Dr Space Junk vs the Universe: Archaeology and the Future by Alice Gorman (NewSouth Publishing)

Australianama: The South Asian Odyssey in Australia by Samia Khatun (University of Queensland Press)

Tiberius with a Telephone: The Life and Stories of William McMahon by Patrick Mullins (Scribe Publications)

The World Was Whole by Fiona Wright (Giramondo Publishing)

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

Enfolded in the Wings of a Great Darkness by Peter Boyle (Vagabond Press)

apparently by Joanne Burns (Giramondo Publishing)

After the Demolition by Zenobia Frost (Cordite Publishing Inc.)

Empirical by Lisa Gorton (Giramondo Publishing)

Archival-Poetics by Natalie Harkin (Vagabond Press)

An Open Book by David Malouf (University of Queensland Press)

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

Detention by Tristan Bancks (Penguin Random House)

One Tree by Christopher Cheng (Penguin Random House)

Catch a Falling Star by Meg McKinlay (Walker Books)

Wilam. A Birrarung Story by Auntie Joy Murphy (Black Dog Books)

Young Dark Emu by Bruce Pascoe (Magabala Books)

Ella and the Ocean by Lian Tanner (Allen & Unwin)

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

How it Feels to Float by Helena Fox (Pan Macmillan Australia)

Lenny's Book of Everything by Karen Foxlee (Allen & Unwin)

The Little Wave by Pip Harry (University of Queensland Press)

It Sounded Better in My Head by Nina Kenwood (Text Publishing)

This Is How We Change the Ending by Vikki Wakefield (Text Publishing)

Impossible Music by Sean Williams (Allen & Unwin)

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

Banging Denmark by Van Badham (Sydney Theatre Company)

The Feather in the Web by Nick Coyle (Griffin Theatre Company)

The Mares by Kate Mulvany (Tasmanian Theatre Company)

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THEM by Samah Sabawi (Samah Sabawi and Lara Week, in collaboration with La Mama Courthouse)

Counting and Cracking by S. Shakthidharan, Associate Writer Eamon Flack (Belvoir and Co-curious)

City of Gold by Meyne Wyatt (Queensland Theatre)

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

On the Ropes, Episode 1, by Tamara Asmar (Lingo Pictures)

Missing by Kylie Bolton (SBS)

H is for Happiness by Lisa Hoppe (Happiness Film Productions)

The Cry, Episode 2 by Jacqueline Peske (Synchronicity Films)

Buoyancy by Rodd Rathjen (Causeway Films)

Multicultural NSW Award (\$20,000)

Growing Up African in Australia by Maxine Beneba-Clarke (Black Inc.)

Room for a Stranger by Melanie Cheng (Text Publishing)

White Tears/ Brown Scars by Ruby Hamad (Melbourne University Press)

Australianama: The South Asian Odyssey in Australia by Samia Khatun (University of Queensland Press)

The Pillars by Peter Polites (Hachette Australia)

The Lost Arabs by Omar Sakr (University of Queensland Press)

Indigenous Writers' Prize (\$30,000 - biennial award)

Alfred's War by Rachel Bin Salleh and Samantha Fry (Magabala Books)

The White Girl by Tony Birch (University of Queensland Press)

Too Much Lip by Melissa Lucashenko (University of Queensland Press)

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

Lucky Ticket by Joey Bui (Text Publishing)

Dolores by Lauren Aimee Curtis (Hachette Australia)

An-Tan-Tiri Mogodan by Florina Enache (Adelaide Books)

The House of Youssef by Yumna Kassab (Giramondo Publishing)

Little Stones by Elizabeth Kuiper (University of Queensland Press)

Real Differences by SL Lim (Transit Lounge)

People's Choice Award

Voting opens today for the People's Choice Award. The winner will be chosen by the public from the shortlist for the 2020 Christina Stead Prize for Fiction. Vote today via the State Library of NSW website.

The 2020 NSW Premier's Literary Awards winners will be announced on 27 April.

NSW PREMIER'S LITERARY AWARDS 2020

ESD-5405-9/2019

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Background notes

- Works nominated for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards must have been first published, performed or screened between 1 October 2018 and 30 September 2019. This period does not apply to the Indigenous Writers' Prize.
- 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.
- A *Book of the Year* may be chosen by the judging panel from among the winners of the individual prizes, and the Government may, at its discretion, make an additional payment of \$10,000 prize money to the writer of the work so designated. Previous *Book of the Year* winners include: Billy Griffiths for *Deep Time Dreaming* in 2019, Kim Scott for *Taboo* in 2018, Leah Purcell for *The Drover's Wife* in 2017, Bruce Pascoe for *Dark Emu* in 2016, Don Watson for *The Bush* in 2015, Michelle de Kretser for *Questions of Travel* in 2014 and Ali Cobby-Eckermann for *Ruby Moonlight* in 2013.

The NSW Premier's Literary Awards are administered by the State Library of NSW in association with Create NSW. The State Library of NSW acknowledges the sponsorship of Multicultural NSW and the University of Technology Sydney. For more information please contact: The Senior Project Officer, Awards, State Library of NSW (02) 9273 1582 or (02) 9273 1605 or awards@sl.nsw.gov.au

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