

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 12 September 2018

For Immediate Release

Five Victorian Writers vie for \$60,000 Prize

- Victorian writer to win \$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature for outstanding contribution to Australian literature
- \$120,000 + total prize pool, plus international travel and a residency
- Over \$1.6 million awarded to Victorian sculptors, writers, musicians since inception through the annual Melbourne Prize

The finalists in one of Australia's most esteemed literary awards, the **Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018**, along with the **Best Writing Award 2018** and the **Readings Residency Award 2018**, have been announced today.

This year's finalists represent the abundant literary talent in Victoria. As a UNESCO City of Literature, Melbourne is one of the world's most celebrated literary cities. With the support of the 2018 partners and patrons, the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 and Awards provide recognition and opportunities for Victorian writers.

The **\$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018** is open to all literary genres and is awarded to a Victorian author whose body of published work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian literature and to cultural and intellectual life. **The Melbourne Prize is supported by Principal Partner The Vera Moore Foundation, The Tallis Foundation and the Melbourne Prize Trust. The finalists are:**

Tony Birch Gideon Haigh Alison Lester Christos Tsiolkas Alexis Wright

The **\$30,000 Best Writing Award 2018** is open to all literary genres and awarded to a Victorian author for a work, published between 2015 and 2018, of outstanding clarity, originality and creativity. **This Award is supported by its sole patron, The Robert Salzer Foundation. The finalists are:**

Judith Bishop Angus Cerini Kate Cole-Adams Briohny Doyle A. Frances Johnson

Maria Tumarkin Sarah Krasnostein Louise Milligan Jock Serong Jeff Sparrow

The new **Readings Residency Award 2018** is for an early career Victorian author and is open to all literary genres and includes a **residency at The University of Melbourne's Norma Redpath Studio** and an affiliation with the **School of Culture and Communication**, \$5,000 supported by **Readings** and a \$2,500 **Qantas** travel voucher. **The finalists are:**

Jamie Marina Lau Micheline Lee Marlee Jane Ward

This year's judges comprise some of Australia's most respected literary identities. The 2018 judges include celebrated authors **Andrea Goldsmith** and **Nam Le**, **Marieke Hardy**, Artistic Director, Melbourne Writers Festival, **Khalid Warsame**, Writer and Creative Producer and **Michael Williams**, Director, The Wheeler Centre.

Judges Statement: "The written word is flourishing in the State of Victoria. This year, there were a record number of entries over the three categories for the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 and Awards. The writers revealed a diversity of background and interest, and the styles of writing covered the entire range of traditional to experimental. The judges were particularly impressed with the depth of literary imagination revealed in this year's entries. It was both a privilege and a pleasure to be involved, and we thank all the entrants. Our congratulations to the short-listed authors."

Launched in May and with a record number of entries across all award categories, Melbourne Prize Trust Executive Director Simon Warrender said he is delighted with the outstanding quality, diversity and creativity of this year's entries.

"The finalists for the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018, the Best Writing Award 2018 and the new Readings Residency Award 2018 have been chosen from an immensely strong field".

"If the quantity, quality and creativity of this year's entries are anything to go by, the future of the Victorian literary scene is incredibly exciting".

"With the generous support and community investment of our 2018 partners and patrons, the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 and Awards reinforce Melbourne and Victoria's reputation as a centre of opportunity for writers".

"This year marks the fourteenth year of the annual Melbourne Prize, which runs in a three-year cycle to benefit and demonstrate the importance of our creative sectors in Victoria in literature, music and sculpture," Mr Warrender said.

The winners in each category will be announced on Wednesday, 14 November at www.melbourneprize.org.

Each of the finalists across all awards categories will also be in the running for the publically-voted **\$4,000 Civic Choice Award 2018**. **Supported by Hardie Grant Books**, the winner will be determined by popular vote. Voting for the Civic Choice Award 2018 opens today at www.melbourneprize.org. Voters will have a chance to win an overnight stay at **Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, Melbourne's Hotel for the Arts**.

Federation Square is the exhibition and events partner and 'home' of the annual Melbourne Prize. This long-term partnership makes it possible for the public, visiting the free public exhibition each November, to engage with abundant talent in literature, music and (urban) sculpture. It provides artists with public exposure in one of the country's most visited public spaces.

A free public exhibition of finalists' work will be held at **Federation Square** from 12 to 26 November 2018.

"The Melbourne Prize Trust appreciates Federation Square's generous support, which enhances our creative resources and provides opportunities to promote our abundant artistic talent through the annual Melbourne Prize.

"The Victorian Government through **Creative Victoria** and the **City of Melbourne** are the Government Partners this year. Thank you to all our 2018 partners and patrons whose support has made it possible to offer the program this year (please see our partners and patrons below). In conjunction with **Mr P Studios**, Founding Partner, **Cornwell**, has created the unique identity this year and their creative excellence and generous support since inception is greatly appreciated. **Committee for Melbourne's** ongoing support as a Founding Partner and for proving our head office is appreciated," Mr Warrender concluded.

--- Ends ---

Twitter: @Melbourne_Prize

FACEBOOK: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Melbourne-Prize/165519083499496>

Interviews with Melbourne Prize Trust Executive Director, Simon Warrender are available upon request. For more information, please visit www.melbourneprize.org or contact:

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Notes to the editor

Key dates:

Finalists work exhibited at Federation Square - Monday 12 to Monday 26 November 2018

Winners announced - 14 November 2018

Civic Choice Award recipient announced - 30 November 2018

All announcements and information will be available at www.melbourneprize.org

Past recipients of the Melbourne Prize for Literature

2015 - Prof. Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM

2012 - Alex Miller

2009 - Gerald Murnane

2006 - Helen Garner

Past recipients of the Best Writing Award

2015 - Andrea Goldsmith, *Memory Trap* (4th Estate, 2013)

2012 - Craig Sherborne, *The Amateur Science of Love* (Text, 2011)

2009 - Nam Le, *The Boat* (Penguin, 2008)

2006 - Christos Tsiolkas, *Dead Europe* (Random House, 2006)

Past recipients of the Civic Choice Award

2015 - Robyn Annear, *Place Without Poetry* (Essay, 2015)

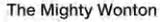
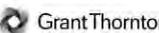
2012 - Tony Birch, *Blood* (UQP, 2011)

2009 - Amra Pajalic, *The Good Daughter* (Text, 2009)

2006 - Henry von Doussa, *The Park Bench* (Thompson Walker, 2006)

The annual Melbourne Prize is one of the most valuable prizes of its kind in Australia and runs in a three-year cycle, which includes the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture (2017), the Melbourne Prize for Music (2016), and the Melbourne Prize for Literature (2018).

2018 Partners and Patrons:

Government Partners	Patrons	Best Writing Award 2018 Sole Patron	Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 Partners	Readings Residency Award 2018	Civic Choice Award 2018 Partner	Exhibition Signage & AV
 	 vera moore		 vera moore	 		 
Exhibition & Event Partner 	Marc Besen AC & Eva Besen AO Diana Gibson AO	Corporate Partners 		Print Partners 	Media Communications 	IT Services  
Founding Partners    MinterEllison	  	Creative Partners  	Professional Services 	Exhibition Consultant  	Banners 	Wine Partner 
Design by Cornwell and Mr P Committee for Melbourne a founding supporter						