

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Wednesday 14 November 2018

Victorian writers receive literary acclaim and rewards

- Children's book author and illustrator **Alison Lester** takes home the esteemed **\$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018** for her outstanding contribution to Australian literature.
- **\$30,000 Best Writing Award 2018** awarded to **Maria Tumarkin** for her work ***Axiomatic, 2018*** (Brow Books).
- Early career author **Jamie Marina Lau** wins new **Readings Residency Award**.
- The announcement marks the annual Melbourne Prize's 14th year.

The winners of the esteemed Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018, Best Writing Award 2018 and new Readings Residency Award 2018 were announced tonight at a special awards ceremony.

The recipient of the **\$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018** is much-loved children's book author and illustrator **Alison Lester**, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Australian literature and cultural and intellectual life. The Prize is supported by Principal Partner The Vera Moore Foundation, the Tallis Foundation and the Melbourne Prize Trust.

The recipient of the **\$30,000 Best Writing Award 2018** is **Maria Tumarkin** for her work ***Axiomatic, 2018*** which has been recognised as a work of outstanding clarity, originality and creativity. The Award is supported by its sole patron, The Robert Salzer Foundation.

The recipient of the new **Readings Residency Award 2018** for an early-career published Victorian author is **Jamie Marina Lau**. This Award 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 announcement of this year's winners was made at Federation Square, the exhibition and event partner of the annual Melbourne Prize, to coincide with the opening of the two-week free exhibition of all 2018 finalists' work, which will run until November 26.

Each of the finalists across all 2018 award categories are still in the running for the publically-voted **\$4,000 Civic Choice Award 2018**. Supported by Hardie Grant Books, voting for the Civic Choice Award is now open 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.

The 2018 winners were selected by the Melbourne Prize judging panel, comprising some of Australia's most respected literary identities. The 2018 judges included celebrated authors Andrea Goldsmith and Nam Le; Artistic Director of the Melbourne Writers Festival, Marieke Hardy; Writer and Creative Producer, Khalid Warsame and Director of The Wheeler Centre, Michael Williams.

Winner - Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018

Alison Lester

For more than 30 years, through an extraordinarily rich output, writer and illustrator, Alison Lester, has provided children in Australia and overseas with books that delight, educate and inculcate a love of reading. Her ongoing contribution to Australian literary life has been extended through her work with children in remote indigenous communities and the Royal Children's Hospital. There's hardly an Australian who has not read her work. Alison Lester is truly a national treasure.

Winner - Best Writing Award 2018

Maria Tumarkin - *Axiomatic*, 2018 (Brow Books)

Maria Tumarkin's winning book, *Axiomatic*, is a highly original work of creative non-fiction, that addresses some of the most difficult of human experiences in an uncompromising yet deeply humane and personal way. Broad in its scope and generous in its understanding, *Axiomatic* challenges the reader at the same time that it enlightens.

Winner - Readings Residency Award 2018

Jamie Marina Lau

Jamie Marina Lau is a writer, artist and author and is currently working on her next novel exploring East/West entertainment industries and ideas of beauty. Jamie's career objective is to continue to write and produce works which challenge and dissect traditional forms of literature.

City of Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp said she was incredibly excited for this year's worthy winners and the contribution they will make to the city's creative community.

"This award recognises the hard work and exceptional talent on offer within our city and the important role they play in making Melbourne the nation's cultural capital," The Lord Mayor said.

"As we celebrate 10 years as a UNESCO City of Literature, the City of Melbourne is proud to support the Melbourne Prize for Literature and the many incredible writers involved," The Lord Mayor added.

Melbourne Prize Trust Executive Director Simon Warrender was delighted with the record response to this year's Prize.

"The response to this year's prize I am sure made choosing a winner a challenging task for the judges," Mr Warrender said.

"I would like to congratulate this year's winners, finalists and entrants.

"The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 & Awards program and exhibition would not be possible with the generous support of our 2018 partners and patrons. This year's outcome certainly reinforces Melbourne and Victoria's reputation as a place of opportunity for writers," Mr Warrender said.

Federation Square is the 'home' of the 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 and provides artists, writers and musicians with public exposure, in one of the country's most visited public spaces.

"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 our major patron The Vera Moore Foundation and all our 2018 partners and patrons whose support has made it possible to offer the program,” Mr Warrender concluded.

Founding Partner, cornwell.com.au has created this year’s unique identity and has supported the annual Melbourne Prize since its inception in. Mr P Studios are responsible for the unique visualizations across the 2018 designs. Their generous support is greatly appreciated.

--- 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
Civic Choice Award recipient announced - Friday 30 November 2018. All announcements and information will be available at www.melbourneprize.org

Past recipients - Melbourne Prize for Literature

2015 - Prof. Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM
2012 - Alex Miller
2009 - Gerald Murnane
2006 - Helen Garner

Past recipients - 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 - 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 Music (2016), the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture (2017) and the Melbourne Prize for Literature (2018).

Please refer to the 2018 Partner & Patrons over the page.

2018 Partners & Patrons:

Thank you to our 2018 partners and patrons

Government Partners	Patrons	Melbourne Prize for Literature 2018 Partners	Best Writing Award 2018 Sole Patron	Reading Residency Award 2018
 CITY OF MELBOURNE CREATIVE VICTORIA Exhibition & Event Partner	 vera moore FOUNDATION Marc Besen AC & Eva Besen AO Diana Gibson AO	 vera moore FOUNDATION BELEURA HOUSE & GARDEN MORNINGTON MELBOURNE PRIZE TRUST	 THE ROBERT SALZER FOUNDATION Creative Partners	 Readings <small>BOOKS MUSIC FILM</small> CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2018 Partner
 FED SQUARE Corporate Partners	 YULGILBAR <small>The Yulgilbar Foundation</small> D&C <small>DESIGN-ART CONSULTANTS GUTLAUSE & STANGE DESIGN MELBOURNE PRIZE</small>	 BELEURA HOUSE & GARDEN MORNINGTON MELBOURNE PRIZE TRUST Media Communications	 Cornwell MR.P Exhibition Signage & AV	 Hardie Grant BOOKS Print Partners
 SOFITEL <small>HOTELS & RESORTS</small> QANTAS <small>Spirit of Australia</small> Founding Partners	 scanlon foundation Professional Services	 ROYCE COMMUNICATIONS Exhibition Consultant	 premiergraphics <small>architectural & environmental signage</small> CREATIVE VISION AUDIO IT Services	 ROTHFIELD <small>Print & Image Management</small> Spicers ELLIKON <small>FINE PRINTERS</small>
 Cornwell COMMITTEE FOR MELBOURNE EY <small>Building a better working world</small> MinterEllison	 Grant Thornton	 Coley Consulting Awards Catering	 The Mighty Wonton Names24 Banners	 WINE PARTNER ROBERT OATLEY Trophies
 MinterEllison	 Grant Thornton	 TREAT <small>CATERING & EVENTS</small>	 Evan Evans	 Fundere Foundry

Creative direction and design by Cornwell, visuals by MR.P
 Committee for Melbourne a founding supporter