

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Wednesday, 10 November 2021

City of Literature authors win top prize

- **Christos Tsiolkas wins \$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021**
- **\$20,000 Professional Development Award and \$15,000 Writer's Prize winners announced**
- **Abundant writing talent on display in UNESCO City of Literature**
- **Melbourne Prize Trust congratulates winners and thanks all entrants**
- **Partner support enables Prize to continue despite the challenges of the past year**

The winners of one of the most valuable literature prizes in Australia have been announced today.

The winner of the **\$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021** is **CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS** for his body of work, which has made an outstanding contribution to Australian literature and to cultural and intellectual life. The Prize is supported by Major Partner, **The Vera Moore Foundation**.

The winner of the **NEW \$20,000 Professional Development Award 2021** is **EVELYN ARALUEN**. The funds are for a project to assist in pursuing the recipient's writing career. The Award is supported by the [Melbourne Prize Trust](#).

The winner of the **\$15,000 Writer's Prize 2021** is **ELOISE GRILLS** for her essay, which is of outstanding originality, literary merit and creative freshness. The Award is supported by its sole patron [The Robert Salzer Foundation](#). The finalist's essays are published at www.melbourneprize.org.

JUDGE'S STATEMENT.

The writers shortlisted for the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 have made an invaluable contribution to Australian literature and to our cultural life. The shortlist for the Writer's Prize 2021 spoke to the times in which we live, adopting a variety of methods and perspectives; each piece stood out for its considered approach to the essay form and the energy of the writing. The judges congratulate the winner of the new Professional Development Award and the other two category winners and would like to thank all entrants this year. Despite the challenging era we are living through, a record response was received across all categories this year.

Finalists will each receive \$1,000, which is generously supported by [Fed Square](#).

Judges this year include three leading literary identities: **Declan Fry**, Writer, **Alice Pung**, Writer and **Michael Williams**, Artistic Director, Sydney Writers Festival.

It has been a year of challenge for the community and the arts sector. The Melbourne Prize Trust thanks the overwhelming number of entrants this year and the Victorian literary sector for its support. The catalogue is now available at www.melbourneprize.org.

The success of the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 & Awards reflects a vibrant literary sector and reinforces Melbourne's designation as a [UNESCO City of Literature](#).

Now in its 17th year, the annual [Melbourne Prize](#) demonstrates the importance of recognising and rewarding creative talent and excellence and provides opportunities to Victorian musicians, writers and (urban) sculptors over its three-year prize cycle.

Public voting in the **\$3,000 Civic Choice Award 2021**, supported by [Readings](#) and [Hardie Grant Books](#) closed today at 5pm. The winner will be announced at www.melbourneprize.org on November 11. Voters have a chance to win a \$100 Readings Gift Voucher.

Minister for Creative Industries, Danny Pearson MP said, "Thank you to the Melbourne Prize Trust for once again shining a light on our brightest creative minds and continuing to back creative careers - this support is more important than ever. I congratulate this year's finalists and commend them for their resilience in continuing to inspire, challenge and entertain us through difficult times."

"This year's nominees represent our premier storytellers. If you haven't discovered their work, or caught up on their latest endeavours, then look no further than this group to create your summer reading list," he said.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said, "We're honoured to again support the annual Melbourne Prize, which offers financial and professional support to help our writers flourish and contribute to our wonderful arts scene.

"Melbourne's literary community enriches our city through their storytelling, and is essential to our status as the cultural capital of Australia. Congratulations to all shortlisted writers and recipients on their accomplishments, I wish you every success," the Lord Mayor said.

Fed Square CEO Ralph Ralphsmith said, "The Melbourne Prize is an exceptional platform for championing Victorian creatives, connecting communities and supporting the arts industry. Fed Square is proud of its longstanding association with the annual Melbourne Prize and to be again supporting the awards for literary excellence in 2021. The calibre of this year's finalists is a testament to the outstanding quality of Australian literature, and we congratulate all the finalists and award winners."

Melbourne Prize Trust Executive Director, Mr Simon Warrender, said: "It has been an outstanding year for the Prize, which supports the abundant literary talent we have in Victoria.

"Thank you to all entrants this year and congratulations to the three category recipients. The ongoing and generous support of our many partners and patrons is appreciated, especially during these challenging times.

"Melbourne is fortunate to be designated as a UNESCO City of Literature, which enhances our already thriving literary sector," Mr Warrender added.

Announcement of winners at www.melbourneprize.org 10 November 2021 at 6pm
Announcement of Civic Choice Award 2020 winner 11 November 2021

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 and Awards are made possible through the generous support of the many partners and patrons. Many of the partners and patrons have supported the Prize since its inception in 2005. Please see a full partner list below.

The Vera Moore Foundation is acknowledged and thanked for their outstanding support as a major patron and sole patron of the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021. Thank you to patrons, Diana Gibson AO and [The Tallis Foundation](#) and the [Sofitel Melbourne On Collins](#) as our Corporate Partner.

The visual identity and design for this year's Prize is the creation of leading Melbourne design studio [PLAYGROUND](#).

The Melbourne Prize Trust is proud to have [Kutcha Edwards](#) as its Cultural Advisor.

[Fed Square](#) is the Events partner and 'home' of the Melbourne Prize. The Melbourne Prize Trust appreciates Fed Square's generous support from inception of the annual Melbourne Prize.

The Melbourne Prize Trust is proud to have the **Victorian Government**, through [Creative Victoria](#) and the [City of Melbourne Awards - Arts Excellence Program](#), as Government Partners.

– Ends –

For more information or for interview opportunities call Adi Stevens at [RoyceComm](#) on 0407 411 088, or visit www.melbourneprize.org.

Progress of the Prize can be followed via our social media platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/MelbournePrize>
https://twitter.com/Melbourne_Prize

Notes to the editor:

Launched in 2004, the [Melbourne Prize Trust](#) was established to recognise and reward talent, excellence and inspire creative development. The Trust achieves this aim by running the annual Melbourne Prize, which is funded by a collaboration of partners and patrons. The Melbourne Prize

Trust and annual Melbourne Prize were founded by Executive Director, Simon Warrender. [Committee for Melbourne](#) is a founding supporter.

Now in its 17th year and being one of the most valuable arts prizes of its kind in Australia, the annual Melbourne Prize operates in a three-year cycle, including the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture (2020), the Melbourne Prize for Literature (2021) and the Melbourne Prize for Music (2022).

Since inception, the annual Melbourne Prize has made available more than \$1.8 million in prizes and award, artist residencies, equipment grants and an annual public exhibition at Federation Square to Victorian writers, sculptors and musicians.

The origins of the Melbourne Prize Trust date back to *The Magic Pudding* sculpture commission, as part of a children's garden concept, at the [Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne](#) – an initiative of Simon Warrender implemented in 1998 through Committee for Melbourne's Future Focus Group. Miniatures of this sculpture are available for purchase through the Melbourne Prize Trust; a Deductible Gift Recipient and Income Tax Exempt Charity.

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

Past recipients of the Melbourne Prize for Literature

2018 – Alison Lester
2015 - Prof. Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM
2012 - Alex Miller
2009 - Gerald Murnane
2006 - Helen Garner

Past recipients of the Best Writing Award

2018– Maria Turmakin, *Axiomatic* (Penguin, 2021)
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 Readings Residency Award

2018 - Jamie Marie Lau

Past recipients of the Civic Choice Award

2018 - Louise Milligan, *Cardinal* (MUP, 2017)
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)

Past recipient The Writer's Prize 2015

2015 – Kate Ryan, *Psychotherapy for Normal People* (2015)

Thank you to our 2021 partners and patrons

Government Partners	Major Patron	Melbourne Prize for Literature 2021 Partner	The Writers Prize 2021 Sole Patron	Civic Choice 2021 Partners
 	 vera moore FOUNDATION	 vera moore FOUNDATION	 THE ROBERT SALZER FOUNDATION	  B O O K S
Founding Partners	Patrons	Event Partner and Finalist Fees	Corporate Partner	Professional Development Award 2021 Partner
  Building a better working world 	Diana Gibson AO  BELEURA HOUSE & GARDEN MORNINGTON	 Creative Partner 	 Corporate Partner 	 Professional Development Award 2021 Partner  
Professional Services	Signage & AV	IT Services and Website	Banners	Trophies
	 architectural & environmental signage 	 IT Services and Website 	 Banners 	 Trophies 

Design by PLAYGROUND
 Committee for Melbourne a founding supporter



Christos Tsiolkas

WINNER – MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2021. **Christos Tsiolkas** is the author of seven novels, including *Loaded*, which was made into the feature film *Head-On*, *The Jesus Man* and *Dead Europe*, which won the 2006 Age Fiction Prize and the 2006 Melbourne Best Writing Award, as well as being made into a feature film. His fourth novel, the international bestseller *The Slap*, won Overall Best Book in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2009, was shortlisted for the 2009 Miles Franklin Literary Award, long listed for the 2010 Man Booker Prize and won the Australian Literary Society Gold, as well as the 2009 Australian Booksellers Association and Australian Book Industry Awards Books of the Year. Christos's fifth novel *Barracuda* was shortlisted for the ALS Gold Medal and the inaugural Voss Literary Prize. *The Slap* and *Barracuda* were both adapted into celebrated television series. Christos's acclaimed collection of short stories, *Merciless Gods*, was published in 2014 and his critical literary study *On Patrick White* came out in 2018. His sixth novel, *Damascus*, was published in 2019 and won the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction. He is also a playwright, essayist and screen writer. He lives in Melbourne.



Eloise Grills

WINNER - WRITER'S PRIZE 2021. **Eloise Grills** is an essayist, poet and comics artist who is currently working on her first full-length illustrated essay collection, *big beautiful female theory* (Affirm Press, 2022). Her work has been recognised in awards including the QPF Prize for Innovation in Spoken Word, the Lifted Brow/RMIT Experimental Nonfiction Prize, the Peter Blazey Fellowship, the Felix Meyer Scholarship and the Woollahra Digital Literary Prize. Her graphic novel, *Sexy Female Murderesses*, was named one of *The Saturday Paper's* best books of 2019, and her poetry collection, *If you're sexy and you know it slap your hams*, was shortlisted for the Mary Gilmore Award. She works as a creative writing tutor at RMIT and as a facilitating artist with Arthur Creative at Melba services. She holds a Masters in Creative Writing, Editing and Publishing from Melbourne University.



Evelyn Araluen

WINNER - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2021. **Evelyn Araluen** is a poet and co-editor of *Overland*, as well as a researcher working with Indigenous literatures at the University of Sydney. Her work has won the Nakata Brophy Prize for Young Indigenous Writers, the *Overland* Judith Wright Poetry Prize, a Wheeler Centre Next Chapter Fellowship and a Neilma Sidney Literary Travel Fund grant. Born, raised, and writing in Dharug country, she is a Bundjalung descendant.