

For Immediate Release

11.30am, Thursday, 4 September 2025

Four finalists announced in Melbourne's top music prize

- Four finalists selected for the \$60,000 Melbourne Prize for Music 2025
- Public voting opens today for the Civic Choice Award 2025
- Record number of entries received this year
- Total prize pool valued at over \$90,000 – visit www.melbourneprize.org
- Winners in all four categories to be announced on 13 November

Four renowned Victorian musicians have been selected as finalists in the prestigious **Melbourne Prize for Music 2025** - one of Australia's most valuable music prizes. The finalists are:

[Deborah Conway AM](#) – singer, songwriter and guitarist

[Emma Donovan](#) – singer and songwriter

[Nicolette Fraillon AM](#) – conductor

[Shane Howard AM](#) – singer and songwriter

Judge's statement: "The applications for the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 form a collection of profound commitment, expression, and contribution to music in Australia. From those who have given a lifetime to their art form, through to those just beginning their journey in music, one thing is obvious, that Victoria is enriched by an absolutely incredible community of musicians and creative artists. It was a deeply moving experience to read all of the applications. Selecting recipients for prizes was no easy task, as there were many deserving submissions. We would like to congratulate all artists who have expressed interest in the annual Melbourne Prize this year, your work is seen, valued and deeply appreciated. These awards are testament to the remarkable ecosystem of music in Victoria, thanks to the many personal and public investments in music education, access and participation, over decades. Let's individually and collectively continue to prioritise, participate in and support music. And to all those musicians who applied, please continue with your music, continue to express your creativity, and continue to change the world through music."

An exhibition of the finalists and information on the 2025 program will be on display in the Atrium at [Fed Square](#) from 30 October to 13 November, when the winners in all four categories will be announced. From today, the public can vote for one of the four finalists to win the \$2,000 Civic Choice Award 2025 at www.melbourneprize.org.

With over \$90,000 in prizes, the 2025 prize program offers four categories, including cash awards and musician residencies in Victoria's High Country.

This year's judging panel includes three highly-respected figures in the Australian music sector – singer, songwriter, and former Melbourne Prize for Music recipient **Missy Higgins**, conductor **Benjamin Northey**, and musician and arts advocate **Genevieve Lacey**.

Melbourne Prize Trust Founder and Executive Director, Simon Warrender, said, "we received record entries this year and I want to thank the local music sector for their support. This year's activities would not be possible without the generosity of all our partners and patrons – thank you one and all."

The Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards include the following categories:

\$60,000 MELBOURNE PRIZE FOR MUSIC 2025 awarded to a Victorian musician or group whose body of work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian music and to cultural life. Open to performers and composers across all genres. Supported by **Major Patron, The Vera Moore Foundation** and **The Tallis Foundation**. All finalists in the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 will receive \$1,000 each, **supported by Fed Square**.

\$20,000 BELEURA JOHN TALLIS AWARD FOR EMERGING COMPOSERS 2025 awarded to an emerging Victorian composer to support their career development. Open to composers of all genres. **Supported by The Tallis Foundation, in memory of John Tallis (1911-1996).**

\$10,000 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD 2025 awarded to a Victorian musician or group, including performers and composers, to fund project/s, travel or other proposals to assist with their music career. **Supported by Dr Alastair Jackson AM.**

FALLS CREEK MUSICIANS' RESIDENCIES 2025 - Falls Creek Alpine Resort is offering two 14-day residencies in Victoria's High Country to Victorian musicians. Each recipient will also receive a **\$1,000 prize, supported by the Melbourne Prize Trust.**

\$2,000 CIVIC CHOICE AWARD 2025 will be awarded to the finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 with the highest number of public votes. Public voting opens on **7 September 2025 and closes at 5pm on 9 November 2025.**

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Melbourne Prize Trust operates, the People of the Kulin Nation, and pay our respects to the elders, past, present and future.

KEY DATES:

Finalists announced: Thursday 4 September 2025 at melbourneprize.org

Winners announced: Thursday 13 November 2025 at melbourneprize.org

Winner of the Civic Choice Award 2025 announced: Friday 14 November 2025

For more information or for interview opportunities contact Adi Stevens at Royce on 0407411088.

- ENDS -

Notes to the editor:

The [Melbourne Prize Trust](#) was established in 2005 to recognise and reward talent, excellence and inspire creative development. The Trust achieves this by running the annual Melbourne Prize, which is funded by private and public sector partnerships and patrons. The Melbourne Prize Trust and annual Melbourne Prize were founded by Executive Director, Simon Warrender. [Committee for Melbourne](#) is a founding partner.

In its 21st 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 Literature & Awards (2024), the Melbourne Prize for Music & Awards (2025) and Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture & Awards (2026).

Since inception, the annual Melbourne Prize has made available more than \$2.5 million in prizes, residencies, equipment grants and an annual public exhibition at Fed Square to Victorian writers, sculptors and musicians.

The origins of the Melbourne Prize Trust date back to *The Magic Pudding* sculpture commission and CBD-based 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.

Thank you to our Partners and Patrons:

The Vera Moore Foundation is acknowledged and thanked for their most generous support as Major Patron and key partner of the Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 & Awards, along with [The Tallis Foundation](#).

The Tallis Foundation are the patrons of the Beleura John Tallis Award for Emerging Composers.

We acknowledge and thank **Dr Alastair Jackson AM** as the patron of the Professional Development Award 2025 and [Falls Creek Alpine Resort](#) for supporting the new Falls Creek Musicians' Residencies.

[Fed Square](#) is the Finalist Fee and Foundation Events Partner and 'home' of the annual Melbourne Prize. Their generous support from inception is greatly appreciated.

The Melbourne Prize Trust is proud to have the **Victorian Government**, through [Creative Victoria](#) and the [City of Melbourne](#) multi-year grant funding, as Government Partners.

Thank you to our Founding Partners [Playground Studio](#), [Committee for Melbourne](#), [MinterEllison](#) and [EY](#).

The visual identity and design for this year's Prize is the creation of leading Melbourne design studio and Founding & Creative Identity Partner, [Playground](#). Thank you to CEO Sally Dobell, studio manager Kim Hankin, this year's brand designer Angelina Bassovitch, with assistance from Macario Manis and the studio one and all, for the generous partnership and for providing the head office of the Trust.

Thank you to this year's patrons **Diana Gibson AO**, **The Yulgilbar Foundation**, **Bill Kirk & Janine Kirk AO**, **Lindy M Shelmerdine** and **David K H Moffatt**, the **Sidney Myer Fund** and **The Scanlon Foundation**.

Thank you to Corporate Partners [Sofitel Melbourne On Collins](#), *the Hotel for the Arts*.

Thank you [Grant Thornton](#) and **Jamison Alliot** for professional services. Many thanks to [Kine Graffiti](#) for the videography for the finalist interview and event photography. Thank you to [360Q](#) as our catering partner and [Evan Evans](#) for providing the exhibition banners and signage.

Thank you to [The Mighty Wonton](#) for our IT support and website development and [Royce](#) for media services. Thank you to our Print Partners [Ellikon](#), [Spicers](#) and [Rothfield](#) and [Nyora Studio Gallery](#) for hand-crafting the presentation trophy this year.

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

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

Past recipients - Melbourne Prize for Music & Awards

Melbourne Prize for Music

2022 Missy Higgins
2019 Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO
2016 Kutcha Edwards
2013 Brett Dean
2010 David Jones
2007 Professor Paul Grabowsky AO

Outstanding Musicians Award

2016 Scott Tinkler
2013 Stephen Magnusson
2010 Ben Northey
2007 Genevieve Lacey

Development Award

2022 Jess Hitchcock
2019 Mojo Juju
2016 Matthias Schack-Arnott
2013 Kate Kelsey-Sugg
2010 Natalie Bartsch
2007 Julian Langdon




















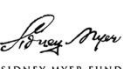





Beleura Emerging Composers Award

2022 Annie Hui-Hsin Hseih
2019 Andrea Keller
2016 Kate Neal

Distinguished Musicians Fellowship

2019 - Erkki Veltheim

Thank you to our 2025 partners and patrons.

Major Patron	Government Partners	Event and Finalist Fee Partner	Melbourne Prize for Music 2025 Partners	The Beleura John Tallis Award for Emerging Composers 2025	Professional Development Award 2025	Falls Creek Musicians Residencies 2025 Partner
	 		 		Dr Alastair Jackson AM	
Patrons	Founding Partners	Professional Services	Hotel Partner	Media Communications	Trophies	Print Partners
Diana Gibson AO 	 	  <small>CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS BUSINESS ADVISORS</small>	 Creative Partner 2025 Identity 	 Videography & Event Photography 		
Bill Kirk & Janine Kirk AO  Lindy M Sheldermine & David K H Moffatt 	 Building a better working world MinterEllison	Civic Choice Awards 2025 Partner 	Exhibition Signage & Banners 	Catering Partner 	Website Partner The Mighty Wonton	