



Melbourne  
Prize for  
Literature  
2015

[melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org)

## Finalist Catalogue & Voting Form

Finalist Exhibition  
9–23 November 2015  
Federation Square  
Melbourne



### **Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 finalists**

Steven Carroll  
Brenda Niall  
Christos Tsiolkas  
Chris Wallace-  
Crabbe AM  
Alexis Wright

### **Best Writing Award 2015 finalists**

James Button  
Patricia Cornelius  
Andrea Goldsmith  
Gideon Haigh  
Daniel Keene  
Alex Miller  
John Safran  
Maria Takolander  
Abigail Ulman  
Don Watson

### **Writers Prize 2015 finalists**

Robyn Annear  
Nick Gadd  
Kate Ryan  
David Sornig  
Maria Tumarkin







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Prize Trust



Public exhibition 9 to 23 November 2015  
Federation Square, Melbourne  
[melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org)

# Our Partners

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 is made possible by the generous support of the following partners and patrons

Thank you to the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 partners and patrons

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<p>Government Partners</p> <p><b>CREATIVE VICTORIA</b></p> <p>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</p> <p>MELBOURNE CITY OF LITERATURE</p>	<p><b>EY</b> Building a better working world</p> <p>MinterEllison</p>	<p>Corporate Partners</p> <p><b>QANTAS</b> Spirit of Australia</p> <p><b>SOFITEL</b> LUXURY HOTELS</p>	<p><b>BELEURA</b> HOUSE &amp; GARDEN MORNINGTON</p>
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<p>Residency</p> <p> THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE</p>	<p>Exhibition Signage &amp; AV</p> <p><b>premiergraphics</b> architectural &amp; environmental signage</p> <p><b>CVAD CORPORATE VISION AUSTRALIA</b></p>	<p>Wine Partner</p> <p> ROBERT OATLEY</p>	<p>IT Services</p> <p><b>The Mighty Wonton</b></p> <p><b>Names24.com.au</b></p>
	<p>e-Book Partner</p> <p><b>GriffithReview</b></p>	<p>Committee for Melbourne a founding supporter</p> <p><b>Design by Cornwell</b></p>	

# A Message from the Executive Director of the Melbourne Prize Trust

The Melbourne Prize Trust offers the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015, Best Writing Award 2015, Writers Prize 2015 and Civic Choice Award 2015 as one of the most valuable literary awards in Australia. This catalogue provides details of the prize and awards, and the finalists in each category, as well as how to vote for the Civic Choice Award 2015.

To showcase the work of the finalists and enable the public to engage with the abundant literary talent in Victoria, the finalists work will be exhibited at Federation Square between 9 and 23 November 2015. The public will have an opportunity to vote for their favourite finalist to win the \$6,000 Civic Choice Award 2015, both online and in this catalogue.

By voting for the Civic Choice Award 2015, voters will enter a draw to win an overnight stay at Sofitel Melbourne On Collins, Melbourne's hotel for the arts.

In 2008, Melbourne was designated by UNESCO as an international City of Literature. The designation recognises the importance of literature to the City and State and the central role that writers have played, and continue to play, in the cultural life of our community.

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 and Awards support Melbourne's status as a UNESCO City of Literature, recognising and rewarding literary talent and providing opportunities for writers. We are proud to have the Victorian Government as a partner through Creative Victoria.

With the support of the City of Melbourne through its 2015 Arts Grants Program, and our partners and patrons this year, we are delighted to provide opportunities for writers and demonstrate the importance of literature in a vibrant and creative community.

Thank you to all the entrants this year and congratulations to the finalists. The dedication of our 2015 judges is greatly appreciated.

Please refer to the opposite page and to our Acknowledgements on page 48 of this catalogue. We would like to thank the literary sector and the many organisations, publications and websites that are immensely supportive in raising awareness of our 2015 program.

Please visit our website at **[melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org)** for further information or call (03) 9696 4410.

**Simon Warrender**  
Executive Director & Founder  
Melbourne Prize Trust  
[melbourneprizetrust.org](http://melbourneprizetrust.org)

MELBOURNE  
PRIZE TRUST™



# About the Finalist Exhibition

## Key Dates

**Finalist Exhibition  
at Federation Square**  
9 to 23 November 2015

**Winners Announced at  
melbourneprize.org**  
11 November 2015

**Civic Choice Award 2015  
Winner Announced at  
melbourneprize.org**  
27 November 2015

The finalist exhibition is held in the Atrium at Federation Square Melbourne – see site map on the opposite page.

The exhibition provides information on the finalists in the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015, Best Writing Award 2015 and the new Writers Prize 2015.

The voting box for the Civic Choice Award 2015 will be located at the exhibition—see the voting form in the catalogue on page 13.

This 2015 finalist catalogue is designed by our partner Cornwell, printed by Rothfield Print Management with paper generously provided by Spicers.

Federation Square is the exhibition and events partner and ‘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. The exhibition 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.



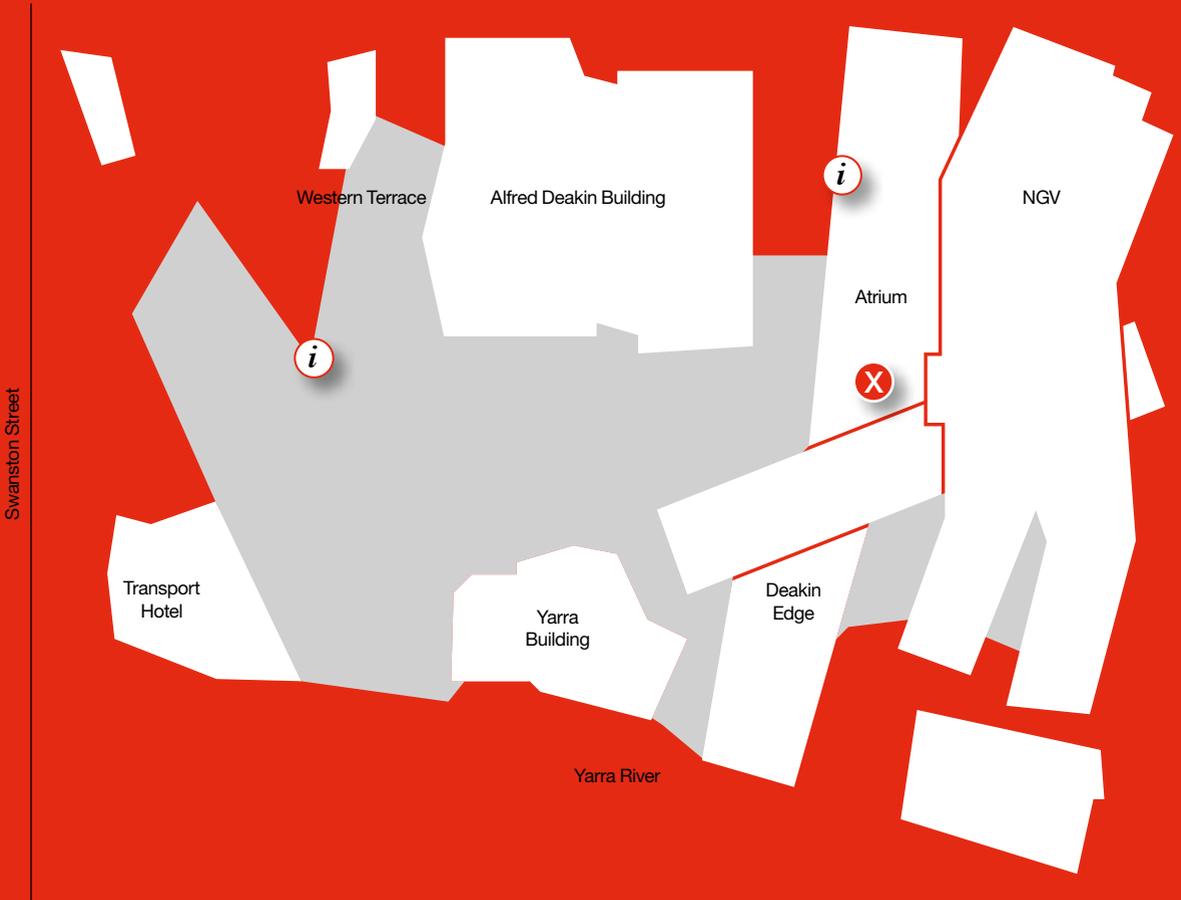
# Finalist Exhibition and Civic Choice Award 2015 voting point.



## Location Map Federation Square, Melbourne



Flinders Street



### Information

-  Main touchpoint, voting point and catalogue collection
-  Finalist Exhibition

# 2015 Prize & Awards

Please visit [readings.com.au](http://readings.com.au)  
for the finalists books.

## Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015

**\$60,000**

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 is for a Victorian author whose body of published work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian literature and to cultural and intellectual life. The author's work must be published and can include all genres and forms, for example, fiction, non-fiction, essays, plays, screenplays and poetry.

**The Prize is supported by  
The Vera Moore Foundation  
and The Tallis Foundation.**



## Best Writing Award 2015

**\$30,000**

The Best Writing Award 2015 is for a piece of published work of outstanding clarity, originality and creativity by a Victorian writer. The submitted work must be published and can be any genre or form for example, fiction, non-fiction, essays, plays, screenplays and poetry.

**The Best Writing Award 2015  
is supported by its sole patron,  
The Robert Salzer Foundation.**



The recipient of this award will also receive Qantas international air travel to the value of \$2,500 (including GST).



## Residency – The University of Melbourne

A residency at the School of Culture and Communication, The University of Melbourne will be awarded, at the discretion of the judges, to either the recipient of the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015, Writers Prize 2015 or the Best Writing Award 2015.



## Writers Prize 2015

**\$20,000**

(Plus \$2,000 to each of the five finalists)

The Writers Prize 2015 is a new category made available this year to continue the 10th anniversary celebrations of the annual Melbourne Prize. The Award provides opportunities for writers to produce new work.

Entrants to the Writers Prize 2015 are invited to submit an essay of up to 20,000 words (10,000 words minimum). The essay must include Melbourne, Victoria or Australia in its subject. Entrants to this award must be a published author.

**Supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund, in association with The Malcolm Robertson Foundation.**

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CULTURAL  
FUND**

In association with



The five finalists essays have been published through the generous support of the Griffith Review.

**GriffithReview**

## Civic Choice Award 2015

**\$6,000**

Vote for your favourite finalist in either category.

To be awarded to one of the finalists in the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015, Best Writing Award 2015 and the Writers Prize 2015 with the most public votes cast during the exhibition held between 9 to 23 November 2015 (voting opened online at the announcement of the finalists on 2 September).

The award winner will be announced on 27 November 2015 at [melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org).

Votes may be cast the following two ways until the close of the exhibition on 23 November 2015

1. By completing the voting slip in this exhibition catalogue and posting in the voting box at the exhibition.
2. Visit [melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org) and complete the online voting form.

The Civic Choice Award 2015 is supported by Readings and Hardie Grant Books.

**Readings**® BOOKS  
MUSIC  
FILM  
MELBOURNE'S OWN SINCE 1969



Hardie Grant Books

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**All prize and award announcements will be made at [melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org)**

**Please see the location map on page 9 for where to vote for the Civic Choice Award 2015 at the Federation Square Finalist Exhibition – 9 to 23 November.**



# Civic Choice Award 2015 Voting Slip

Please tear off and complete the form over the page.  
Post this slip in the voting box – see location on page 9.



The Civic Choice Award 2015 is to be awarded to the finalist in the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 and Award categories with the most public votes.

You may vote for only one (1) of the twenty (20) finalists. Votes may be cast by completing the voting slip over the page and posting in the voting box at the finalist exhibition from 9 November to 23 November 2015, or on the website.

The recipient of the Civic Choice Award 2015 will be announced at [melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org) on 27 November 2015.

Postal votes may be made by completing this voting slip and mailing to Melbourne Prize Trust, 234 St Kilda Road, Southbank VIC 3006.

Please tick only ONE (1) box of the 20 finalists in the form over the page to vote. Post the completed slip in the voting box in the Atrium (see location map in the catalogue on page 9).

**The Civic Choice Award 2015 is supported by Readings and Hardie Grant Books.**



# Civic Choice Award 2015

## Voting Slip

Please fill in this voting slip or go to **melbourneprize.org** and vote for your favourite finalist to win the \$6,000 Civic Choice Award 2015.

You may vote for only one (1) of the following twenty (20) finalists – please tick a box and provide your name and email address opposite.

### Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015

- Steven Carroll
- Brenda Niall
- Christos Tsiolkas
- Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM
- Alexis Wright

### Best Writing Award 2015

- James Button
- Patricia Cornelius
- Andrea Goldsmith
- Gideon Haigh
- Daniel Keene
- Alex Miller
- John Safran
- Maria Takolander
- Abigail Ulman
- Don Watson

### Writers Prize Award 2015

- Robyn Annear
- Nick Gadd
- Kate Ryan
- David Sornig
- Maria Tumarkin

## Sofitel Overnight Stay

By voting you will have the chance to win an overnight stay at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.

The recipient of the Sofitel accommodation will be drawn from completed catalogue voting slips and online voting. The recipient will be notified after the exhibition by email.

Please provide your name and email address.

Name

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Email

---

Melbourne's 'hotel for the arts', Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, is donating the accommodation package for an overnight stay in a classic king room, including a buffet breakfast for two and valet parking.

One of Australia's most luxurious hotels, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins is located at the 'Paris' end of Collins Street in the heart of the city's premier dining, shopping and entertainment precincts, offering spectacular views over the city from every room.

Supported by

**S O F I T E L**  
LUXURY HOTELS

**Please tear off and post  
at the voting point – see  
location map on page 9**



# Government Partners



Each year the Melbourne Prize honours and showcases the talents of Victorian artists and, in doing so, celebrates one of the great strengths of our city - creativity.

This year we turn our attention to literature with an impressive group of finalists, from exciting emerging voices to international bestsellers. It's a shortlist that spans poetry and politics, theatre and sport and much more.

Congratulations to all of this year's finalists and thank you for the contribution you make to our City of Literature and our creative state.

The Andrews Labor Government is proud to partner the Melbourne Prize Trust as it celebrates more than a decade of promoting and supporting our creative talent.

**Martin Foley MP**  
**Minister for Creative Industries**



Melbourne is one of the world's great creative cities. We have a thriving music scene, dynamic arts industry and we are a UNESCO City of Literature.

For more than ten years, the annual Melbourne Prize has made a significant contribution to our city's rich cultural life. This prize is all about celebrating creative excellence and talent, and providing exceptional career development opportunities for writers, musicians and sculptors from Melbourne and Victoria.

I congratulate the winners and wish the finalists every success in their future creative pursuits.

**Robert Doyle**  
**Lord Mayor of Melbourne**

# Judges



The Melbourne Prize for Literature is a wonderful celebration of the quality of Victorian writing, and the writers who have made a significant cultural and creative impact. I was honoured to judge the prize, and with my fellow distinguished judges felt the weight of the decisions to be made in choosing the shortlist and awarding the winners. The difficulty lay not in the quantity of entries – for me, the reading was a pleasure – but in the quality. The brilliant and brave literature submitted to this prize is a testament to the vibrancy of Victoria’s literary culture.

**Lisa Dempster**  
**Festival Director & CEO,**  
**Melbourne Writers Festival**



Judging the Melbourne Prize has been such a great pleasure, at least it feels like that in hindsight!; the breadth and scope of the work coming out of Victoria is so impressive that it reminds us why Melbourne’s designation as a UNESCO City of Literature is so well deserved. There has been some criticism lately of literary Prizes and of the judging process; nothing is perfect and judging is inevitably a subjective process. Having said that, I strongly believe the Melbourne Prize is such a wonderful way to recognise Victoria’s literary creativity and it does that with imagination and integrity.

**Mark Rubbo**  
**OAM Managing Director,**  
**Readings Books Music & Film**



Poets, memoirists, writers for young people and writers for old; essayists, novelists, philosophers and journalists; new and original voices and career artists with thousands of words behind them; funny, sad, thoughtful, angry, and always surprising. The idea of comparing and parsing the many outstanding entries for this year's Melbourne Prize for Literature – much less determining greatest achievements in the mix – was daunting at the start and unthinkable by the end. Oh, to judge a prize for an inferior artform like music or public sculpture where the choice is more straightforward. But with the insights and wisdom of my fellow judges, we were able to acknowledge a shortlist of outstanding quality and once again celebrating the achievement and prize that is contemporary writing in this city and state.

**Michael Williams**  
**Director**  
**The Wheeler Centre**



It was an honour to be a judge for this year's Melbourne Prize. What a vast list of books and manuscripts to read across so many forms! Selecting my list for consideration for the general shortlists was one of the most difficult tasks I've had for a long time. It was a delight to read established writers working at their best. And to discover brilliant new ones who suggest the future of Victorian literature will be in good hands.

**Craig Sherborne**  
**Writer**



Melbourne  
Prize for  
Literature  
2015

**The annual  
Melbourne Prize  
Alumni 2005–2014**

The bronze presentation trophies are designed by Cornwell and hand made by Fundere Fine Art Foundry Melbourne.

[funderestudios.com.au](http://funderestudios.com.au)

## 2014

**Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2014**  
Geoff Robinson

**Professional Development Award 2014**  
Kay Abude

**Civic Choice Award 2014**  
Kay Abude

**Rural & Regional Development Award 2014**  
Aleks Danko

## 2013

**Melbourne Prize for Music 2013**  
Brett Dean

**Outstanding Musicians Award 2013**  
Stephen Magnusson

**Development Award 2013**  
Kate Kelsey–Sugg

**Civic Choice Award 2013**  
Mick Harvey

## 2012

**Melbourne Prize for Literature 2012**  
Alex Miller

**Best Writing Award 2012**  
Craig Sherborne

**Civic Choice Award 2012**  
Tony Birch

## 2011

**Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture 2011**  
Bianca Hester

**Professional Development Award 2011**  
Isaac Greener & Lucas Maddock

**Civic Choice Award 2011**  
Isaac Greener & Lucas Maddock

## 2010

**Melbourne Prize for Music 2010**  
David Jones

**Outstanding Musicians Award 2010**  
Ben Northey

**Development Award 2010**  
Natalie Bartsch



## 2009

**Melbourne Prize  
for Literature 2009**  
Gerald Murnane

**Best Writing  
Award 2009**  
Nam Le

**Civic Choice  
Award 2009**  
Amra Pajalic

## 2008

**Melbourne Prize for  
Urban Sculpture 2008**  
Alexander Knox

**Professional  
Development  
Award 2008**  
Tom Nicholson

**Vic Urban  
Award 2008**  
Louise Paramor

**Civic Choice  
Award 2008**  
Elaine Miles

## 2007

**Melbourne Prize  
for Music 2007**  
Paul Grabowsky

**Outstanding Musicians  
Award 2007**  
Genevieve Lacey

**Development  
Award 2007**  
Julian Langdon

## 2006

**Melbourne Prize  
for Literature 2006**  
Helen Garner

**Best Writing  
Award 2006**  
Christos Tsiolkas

**Civic Choice  
Award 2006**  
Henry von Doussa

## 2005

**Melbourne Prize  
for Urban  
Sculpture 2005**  
Open Spatial Workshop

**Professional  
Development  
Award 2005**  
Karen Abernethy

**Civic Choice  
Award 2005**  
Matthew de Moiser



# Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015

## Finalists

**Steven Carroll**  
**Brenda Niall**  
**Christos Tsiolkas**  
**Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM**  
**Alexis Wright**

Please visit  
[readings.com.au](http://readings.com.au)  
for the finalists books.

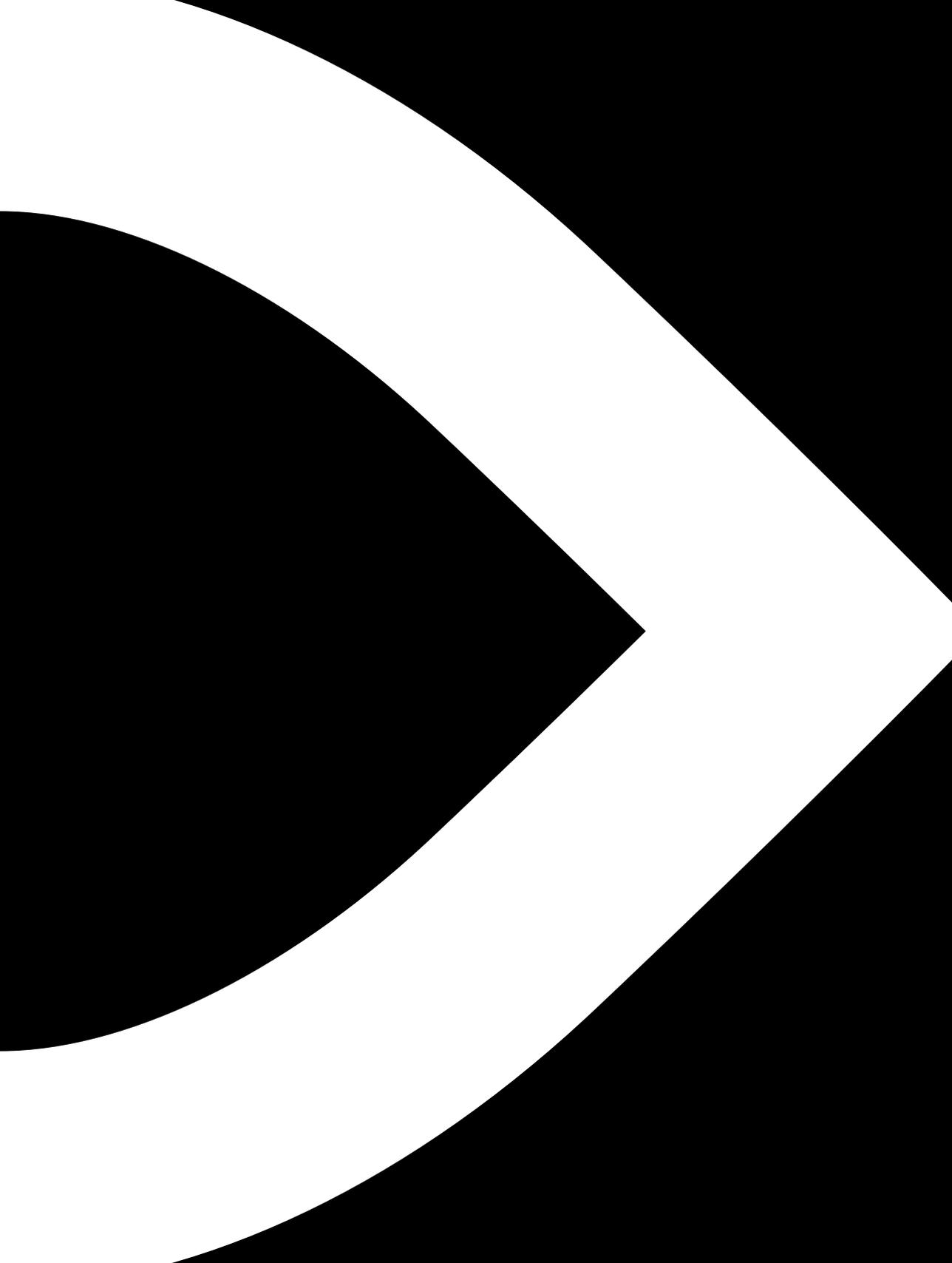
## Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015

**\$60,000**

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 is for a Victorian author whose body of published work has made an outstanding contribution to Australian literature and to cultural and intellectual life. The author's work must be published and can include all genres and forms, for example, fiction, non-fiction, essays, plays, screenplays and poetry. There is no age limit for this prize.

**The Prize is supported by  
The Vera Moore Foundation  
and The Tallis Foundation.**





# Steven Carroll

## Biography

Steven Carroll's latest novel *Forever Young* (2015) continues his award-winning Glenroy series. The author of ten novels including *A World of Other People* (2013) and *The Spirit of Progress* (2011), he won the Miles Franklin Award for *The Time We Have Taken* in 2008. Steven lives in Melbourne with his partner and son.



## Key Published Works

*Forever Young*, Harper Collins Australia, June 2015

*A World of Other People*, Harper Collins Australia, May 2013

*Spirit of Progress*, Harper Collins Australia, August 2011

*The Lost Life*, Harper Collins Australia, April 2009

*The Time We Have Taken*, Harper Collins Australia, March 2007, Liebeskind (Germany) February 2009, Editions Phebus (France) March 2009, Random House (UK), August 2009

*The Gift of Speed*, Harper Collins Australia, August, 2004, Editions Phebus (France), September 2006, Liebeskind (Germany), September 2007, Random House (UK), 2011

*The Art of the Engine Driver*, Harper Collins Australia, 2001, Editions Phebus (France), 2005, Liebeskind (Germany), September 2006, Random House (UK), 2010

*The Love Song of Lucy McBride*, Allen & Unwin, 1997, MIRA Publications, UK, Germany, Russia, Czech Republic, Serbia and Australia, 2008

*Momoko*, McPhee/Gribble, 1994, MIRA Publications, UK, Germany, Russia, Czech Republic, Serbia and Australia, March 2007

*Remember Me*, Jimmy James, McPhee/Gribble, 1992

# Brenda Niall

## Biography

Brenda Niall is one of Australia's foremost biographers. She is the author of four award-winning biographies, including her acclaimed accounts of the Boyd family. Brenda has degrees from the University of Melbourne, the Australian National University and Monash University. In 2004 she was awarded the Order of Australia (AO) for services to Australian Literature as academic, biographer and literary critic.



## Key Published Works

Literary criticism: *Seven Little Billabongs: The World of Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce* (Melbourne University Press, 1979)

Literary criticism: *Australia Through the Looking Glass: Children's Fiction 1830-1980* (Melbourne University Press, 1984)

Biography: *Martin Boyd: A Life* (Melbourne University Press, 1988)

Biography: *Georgiana: A Biography of Georgiana McCrae, painter, diarist, pioneer* (Melbourne University Press, 1994)

Biography: *The Boyds: A Family Biography* (Melbourne University Press, 2002)

Biography: *Judy Cassab: A Portrait* (Allen & Unwin, 2005)

Memoir: *Life Class: The Education of a Biographer* (Melbourne University Press, 2007)

Biography: *The Riddle of Father Hackett: A Life in Ireland and Australia* (National Library of Australia, 2009)

Biography: *True North: The Story of Mary and Elizabeth Durack* (Text Publishing, 2012)

Biography: *Mannix* (Text Publishing, 2015)

[textpublishing.com.au/authors/brendaniall](http://textpublishing.com.au/authors/brendaniall)

# Christos Tsiolkas

## Biography

Christos Tsiolkas is the author of five novels: *Loaded* (which was made into the feature film *Head-On*, directed by Ana Kokkinos), *The Jesus Man*, and *Dead Europe*, which won the 2006 Age Fiction Prize and the 2006 Melbourne Prize Best Writing Award. (It was adapted into a feature film by director Tony Krawitz). He won Overall Best Book in the Commonwealth Writers' Prize 2009, was shortlisted for the 2009 Miles Franklin Literary Award, longlisted for the 2010 Man Booker Prize and won the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal for his novel, *The Slap*, which was also announced as the 2009 Australian Booksellers Association and Australian Book Industry Awards Books of the Year. *The Slap* was adapted into an eight-part drama series by Matchbox Pictures and premiered in late 2011 on ABC TV, the series received a positive response and went on to air around the world. Christos' latest novel is *Barracuda*, which was published here and in the UK to rave reviews in late 2013 and became an instant bestseller. In late 2014 Christos published a collection of short stories, *Merciless Gods*, to critical acclaim. Christos' work has been published in over 28 countries. He is also a playwright, essayist and screen writer. He is the film critic for *The Saturday Paper*. He lives in Melbourne.



## Key Published Works

*Loaded*, Random House Australia, 1995  
*Jump Cuts* (with Sasha Soldatow), Random House Australia, 1996  
*The Jesus Man*, Random House Australia, 1999  
*The Devil's Playground*, Currency Press, 2002  
*Dead Europe*, Random House Australia, 2005  
*The Slap*, Allen & Unwin, 2008  
*Barracuda*, Allen & Unwin, 2013  
*Merciless Gods*, Allen & Unwin, 2014

### Theatre:

*Who's Afraid of the Working Class?* (with Andrew Bovell, Melissa Reeves and Patricia Cornelius, 1999, adapted for film as *Blessed Elektra AD* (1999)  
*Viewing Blue Poles* (2000)  
*Fever* (with Andrew Bovell, Melissa Reeves and Patricia Cornelius, 2002)  
*Dead Caucasians* (2002)  
*Non Parlo di Salo* (with Spiro Economopoulos, 2005)  
*The Hit* (with Netta Yashin 2006)  
*Without Prejudice – Two plays* by Christos Tsiolkas: *Carburettor & The Trauma Report* (2007)  
*Tenderness: Ugly by Christos Tsiolkas & Slut* by Patricia Cornelius (2008)

### Screenplays:

*Thug* (with Spiro Economopoulos, 1998)  
*Saturn's Return* (2000)  
*Blessed* (with Andrew Bovell, Patricia Cornelius & Melissa Reeves, 2009)  
*Biography: Mannix* (Text Publishing, 2015)

# Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM

## Biography

Chris Wallace-Crabbe AM is a poet based in Melbourne, yet known worldwide over the years. He writes essays, but is known for verbally rich poetry, for his diverse range of interests. He also taught at Melbourne University for decades. Since 1988 he has practiced his buoyant, renewable art full time.



## Key Published Works

### Poetry:

*The Amorous Cannibal*,  
OUP, 1985

*For Crying Out Loud*,  
OUP, 1990

*The Universe Looks Down*,  
Brandl & Schlesinger,  
Sydney, 2005

*Telling a Hawk from a Handsaw*,  
Carcenet Oxford Poets, 2008

*New and Selected Poems*,  
Carcenet Oxford Poets,  
Manchester, 2013

*My Feet Are Hungry*,  
Pitt Street Poets, Sydney, 2014

*Afternoon in the Central Nervous System*,  
George Braziller,  
NY, 2015

### Prose:

*Falling into Language*,  
OUP, Melbourne, 1990

*Read It Again*, Salt,  
Cambridge, 2005

### Record:

*The Domestic Sublime*,  
River Road Poetry, Sydney, 2009

# Alexis Wright

## Biography

Alexis Wright is a member of the Waanyi nation of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Her books include *Grog War*, a study of alcohol abuse in *Tennant Creek*, and the novels *Plains of Promise*, and *Carpentaria*, which won the Miles Franklin Literary Award and was sold to seven territories and *The Swan Book*. She is a Distinguished Fellow at Western Sydney University's Writing and Society Research Centre.



## Key Published Works

Non-fiction: *Grog War*,  
Magabala Books 1997

Fiction: *Plains of Promise*,  
UQP, 1997

Fiction: *Carpentaria*,  
Giramondo, 2006

Fiction: *The Swan Book*,  
Giramondo, 2013

[giramondopublishing.com/  
fiction/the-swan-book](http://giramondopublishing.com/fiction/the-swan-book)



# Best Writing Award 2015

## Finalists & Entered Work

### **James Button**

*Speechless A Year In  
My Father's Business*  
MUP 2012

### **Patricia Cornelius**

*Savages*  
Playlab 2014

### **Andrea Goldsmith**

*The Memory Trap*  
4th Estate 2014

### **Gideon Haigh**

*On Warne*  
Penguin Books 2012

### **Daniel Keene**

*Mother*  
Currency Press 2015

### **Alex Miller**

*Coal Creek*  
Allen & Unwin 2013

### **John Safran**

*Murder in Mississippi*  
Penguin Books 2013

### **Maria Takolander**

*The Double*  
Text Publishing 2013

### **Abigail Ulman**

*Hot Little Hands*  
Hamish Hamilton  
Penguin Books, 2015

### **Don Watson**

*The Bush*  
Hamish Hamilton  
Penguin Books, 2014

Please visit [readings.com.au](http://readings.com.au)  
for the finalists book.



## **Best Writing Award 2015**

**\$30,000**

The Best Writing Award 2015 is for a piece of published work of outstanding clarity, originality and creativity by a Victorian writer. The submitted work must be published and can be any genre or form for example, fiction, non-fiction, essays, plays, screenplays and poetry.

The Best Writing Award 2015 is supported by its sole patron, The Robert Salzer Foundation.



The recipient of this award will also receive Qantas international air travel to the value of \$2,500.



## Entered Work:

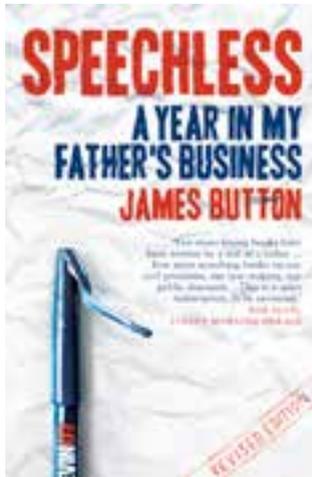
### ***Speechless: A Year in My Father's Business***

Melbourne University Press 2012

James Button spent a year writing speeches for Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

A journalist by trade, James also has politics in the blood: his father was the diminutive but larger-than-life Senator John Button, a minister in the Hawke and Keating governments. Growing up, James saw great Labor victories and defeats at close hand, and believes both his father and his family paid a heavy price for politics.

*Speechless* is his highly personal account of a year working in Canberra: his reflection on the failures of Kevin Rudd's Prime Ministership, on the largely secret world of the public service, and on what he learnt of his father's life through a year in his father's business.



# James Button

## Biography

James Button is a non-fiction writer who worked in 2009 as a speech-writer to the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd. He was previously Europe Correspondent for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. He is a former deputy editor and opinion editor of *The Age*, and has won two *Walkley Awards* for feature writing.

[mup.com.au](http://mup.com.au)

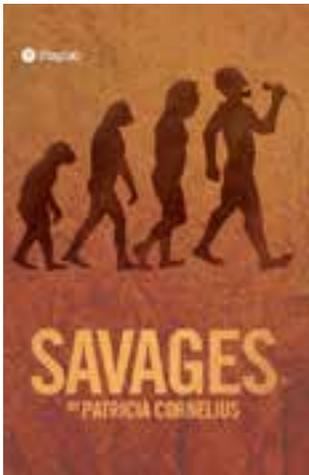
[mup.com.au/items/135698](http://mup.com.au/items/135698)



**Entered Work:****Savages**

Playlab 2014

*Savages* is about men, in a pack, on the loose, dangerous men, angry with the life they believe has not served them well. These are men who are desperately holding on to a sense of themselves that is in shreds. There are four of them, excited, full of expectation, on a holiday of a life time. It's a holiday they've been talking about for a long time. It's all planned. They're going to let loose, going to have a wow of a time, eat and drink, and drink some more, get high, and higher and have sex, they're going to have sex the entire time. This is a holiday ripe for disaster.



# Patricia Cornelius

**Biography**

Patricia Cornelius is a founding member of Melbourne Workers Theatre. She's a playwright, novelist and film writer. She's a recipient of many awards and her plays have earned her 11 Australian Writers Guild awards. She's written over 30 plays including: *Shit*, *Savages*, *Do not go gentle...*, *Love and The Call*.



**Entered Work:*****Memory Trap***

4th Estate 2013

Nina Jameson, an international consultant on memorial projects, has been happily married for twelve years. When her life in London falls apart, she accepts a commission in her home town of Melbourne. There she joins her sister, Zoe, embroiled in marital problems with Elliot, an American biographer of literary women. Elliot has a stronger attachment to his dead biographical subjects than he does to his wife, while Zoe's own passions have long been directed towards the renowned pianist, Ramsay Blake, a genius at the piano but a half-baked human being in every other respect.

Astute and thought-provoking, *The Memory Trap* tells a story of marriage, music, the illusions of love and the deceits of memory.



# Andrea Goldsmith

**Biography**

The *Memory Trap* is Andrea Goldsmith's seventh novel. Her literary essays have been published widely and she is a lively speaker and performer of her work. She has taught creative writing at universities and in the community, and has mentored many new writers. She lives in inner Melbourne.

[andreagoldsmith.com.au](http://andreagoldsmith.com.au)



**Entered Work:****On Warne***Penguin 2012*

*On Warne* is an extended appreciation of Australia's most dynamic and charismatic postwar cricketer, Shane Warne, who took 1000 international wickets in a 15-year career. More than that, Warne was Australian cricket's first bona fide celebrity, notable not only for what he did but who he was.

Few popular Australian figures have achieved so much in their chosen sphere; fewer still have led a private life so relentlessly public; none, perhaps, have exhibited such a consistent relish for fame and its trappings.



# Gideon Haigh

**Biography**

Gideon Haigh has been a journalist for 31 years, published 31 books and edited seven others. He began his career at *The Age*, and now contributes to *The Australian* and *The Times*. He lives in Melbourne with his wife and daughter.

[gideonhaigh.com](http://gideonhaigh.com)



## Entered Work:

### ***Mother***

*Currency Press 2015*

*Mother* is a one woman play that tells the story of Christie, a homeless woman living on the fringes of Melbourne. Devoid of self pity, stubbornly independent, she pieces together the fragments of her past to tell the story of the home she once had and the love and hope she once knew. Her language is by turns irreverent and tender, profane and lyric.

The loneliness, poverty and violence she has endured have failed to destroy her spirit or diminish the grief she feels for the child she lost in circumstances of her own making.



# Daniel Keene

## Biography

Daniel Keene has written over 70 plays. He has been produced in every Australian capital city and his work has been presented at the Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide International Arts Festivals. Since 2000 over 80 main stage and dozens more small scale productions of his work have been presented in Europe, predominately in France.

[danielkeene.com.au](http://danielkeene.com.au)

Photo credit: F. Passerini



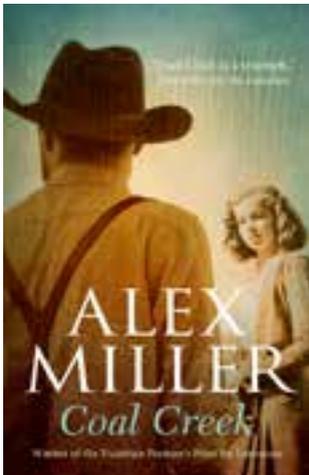
**Entered Work:****Coal Creek**

Allen &amp; Unwin 2013

*Coal Creek* is an extraordinarily powerful exploration of tragedy, betrayal, the true nature of friendship and the beauty of lasting love from one of Australia's most highly acclaimed literary writers.

Bobby Blue is caught between loyalty to his only friend, Ben Tobin, and his boss, Daniel Collins, the new constable at Mount Hay. Collins is increasingly bewildered and goaded to action by his wife and Bobby's love for Collins' wilful young daughter Irie is exposed, leading to tragic consequences for them all.

*Coal Creek* carries all the wisdom and emotional depth we have come to expect from Miller's richly evocative novels.



# Alex Miller

**Biography**

Alex Miller has won numerous awards for his eleven novels including twice winning Australia's premier literary prize, the Miles Franklin and was awarded the Centenary Medal for services to Australian Society. He is published internationally and widely in translation and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Photo credit: John Tsiavis



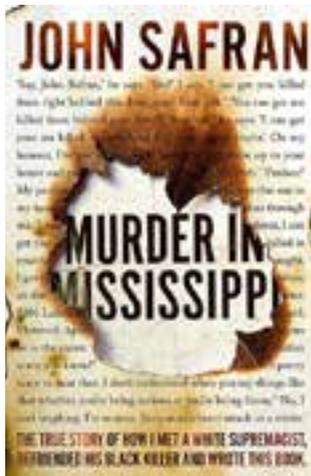
## Entered Work:

### ***Murder in Mississippi***

Penguin 2013

When filming his TV series *Race Relations*, John Safran spent an uneasy couple of days with one of Mississippi's most notorious white supremacists. A year later, he heard that the man had been murdered – and what was more, the killer was black. Over six months, Safran got deeper and deeper into the South, becoming entwined in the lives of those connected with the murder – white separatists, black campaigners, lawyers, investigators, neighbours, even the killer himself.

Safran paints an engrossing, revealing portrait of a dead man, his murderer, the place they lived and the process of trying to find out the truth about anything.



## John Safran

### Biography

John Safran is an award-winning documentary-maker of provocative and hilarious takes on race, the media, religion and other issues. John currently co-hosts *Sunday Night Safran*, a radio talk show on Triple J with cranky but beloved Catholic priest, Father Bob Maguire.



**Entered Work:*****The Double***

Text 2013

A student travels to Estonia to investigate his violent father's upbringing. A woman is possessed by visions of her brother's brutal death at a lake in Finland. A bride plumbs the depths of her loathing for her husband on a honeymoon in Africa. A poet undertakes a bizarre quest for the source of his inspiration. Ranging from futuristic Australia to the dark past of the Soviet era, from the terrifying to the absurd, each story in this collection is unsettling and unforgettable.

Reviewing for *The Australian*, Geordie Williamson has said: 'Fiercely intelligent and idiosyncratic ... Takolander's stories ... are thrilling.'



# Maria Takolander

**Biography**

Maria Takolander is an Australian author of Finnish descent.

*The Double (and Other Stories)* was named one of 2013's best books by *The Australian*, *Overland*, *Readings*, and the New Zealand Listener.

The author of two acclaimed poetry collections, and now writing a novel, Maria is an Associate Professor at Deakin University in Geelong.

[textpublishing.com.au/books/the-double](http://textpublishing.com.au/books/the-double)



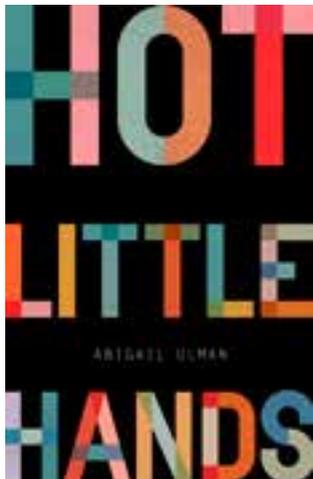
## Entered Work:

### ***Hot Little Hands***

Penguin 2015

*Hot Little Hands* contains nine funny, confronting and pitch-perfect stories about stumbling on the fringes of innocence, and the marks desire can leave. These are tales about now – about first encounters with lasting impressions, and break-ups that last longer than the relationships; about a time when late-night text messages are considered a courtship, and the most personal secrets get casually revealed online.

It is the debut of a striking, wry, utterly fresh new voice in Australian literature.



## Abigail Ulman

### **Biography**

Abigail Ulman was born and raised in Melbourne. She has a Bachelor of Creative Arts from the University of Melbourne/VCA and was a recent Wallace Stegner Fellow in Fiction at Stanford University. *Hot Little Hands* is her first book.

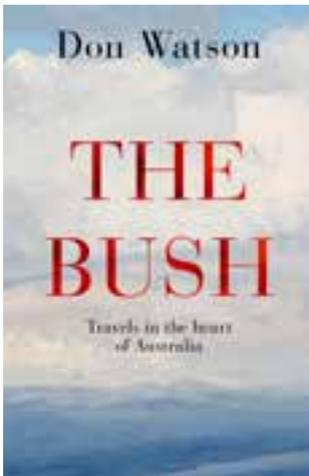


**Entered Work:*****The Bush***

Penguin 2014

Starting with his forebears' battle to drive back nature and eke a living from the land, Don Watson explores the bush as it was and as it now is: the triumphs and the ruination, the commonplace and the bizarre, the stories we like to tell about ourselves and the national character, and those we don't.

At once magisterial in scope and alive with telling, wry detail, *The Bush* lets us see our landscape and its inhabitants afresh, examining what we have made, what we have destroyed, and what we have become in the process.



# Don Watson

**Biography**

Don Watson is an award-winning author and former speechwriter for Paul Keating. His books include *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart*, *Death Sentence*, *Watson's Dictionary of Weasel Words*, *American Journeys* and *The Bush*. He has won The Age Book of the Year twice, a Walkley non-fiction award and many others.



# Writers Prize 2015

## Finalists and Essays

**Robyn Annear**  
*Places Without Poetry*

**Nick Gadd**  
*The Unconscious  
of the City*

**Kate Ryan**  
*Psychotherapy for  
Normal People*

**David Sornig**  
*Jubilee: A Hymn for  
Elsie Williams on Dudley Flats*

**Maria Tumarkin**  
*No Skin*



## Writers Prize 2015

**\$20,000**

(plus \$2,000 to each  
of the five finalists)

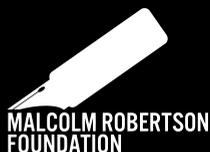
The Writers Prize 2015 is a new category made available this year to continue the 10th anniversary celebrations of the annual Melbourne Prize. The Award provides opportunities for writers to produce new work.

Entrants to the Writers Prize 2015 are invited to submit an essay of up to 20,000 words (10,000 words minimum). The essay must include Melbourne, Victoria or Australia in its subject. Entrants to this award must be a published author.

Supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund, in association with The Malcolm Robertson Foundation.

**COPYRIGHT AGENCY  
CULTURAL  
FUND**

In association with



The five finalist essays in the Writers Prize 2015 have been published through the generous support of the Griffith Review.

Please visit [griffithreview.com](http://griffithreview.com) to download this exclusive e-book.

**GriffithReview**

**Entered Essay:*****Places Without Poetry***

The essay takes its title from a reputed plaint by Camus, on first acquaintance with Paris, that ‘What the heart craves, at certain moments, is places without poetry.’ In Melbourne, such a place is not far to seek: buses bound for Doncaster Shoppingtown leave from Lonsdale Street every 20 minutes.

With Camus-ards thus dispatched, the essay weaves a meandering course through central Melbourne, guided restively by historical fact and imagining.

**Robyn Annear****Biography**

Robyn writes about history, but is no historian. Besides five non-fiction books and an unpublishable novel, she has written for *The Monthly* and *The Saturday Paper*. She lives in country Victoria, where she works as a medical records clerk and, as a hobby, collects dust.

[robynannear.com](http://robynannear.com)

**Key Published Works**

*The Man Who Lost Himself*: The unbelievable story of the Tichborne Claimant; History/Biography; Text Publishing, 2002

*Fly a Rebel Flag: The Eureka Stockade*; History/Children's; Black Dog Books, 2004

*A City Lost and Found: Whelan the Wrecker's Melbourne*; History; Black Inc., 2005

*Bearbrass: Imagining early Melbourne*; History; Mandarin, 1995/Black Inc., 2005

**Entered Essay:*****The Unconscious of the City***

*'The Unconscious of the City'* is an exploration of the psychogeography of Melbourne. Its starting point is a quote from the Californian essayist Rebecca Solnit, who wrote that 'ruins are the unconscious of the city'.

I have broadened Solnit's definition to include many kinds of industrial traces, ghostsigns and remnants that linger in cities from previous eras.

**Nick Gadd****Biography**

Nick Gadd writes essays and fiction about Melbourne, history, literature, music and sport. His blog Melbourne Circle [melbournecircle.net](http://melbournecircle.net) describes a journey around Melbourne on foot. He won the 2015 Nature Conservancy Australia Nature Writing Prize and his work has recently appeared in *The Guardian*, *Eureka Street* and several anthologies.

**Key Published Works**

*Ghostlines* (2008), novel, winner of a Victorian Premier's Literary Award and a Ned Kelly Award

[melbournecircle.net](http://melbournecircle.net)

**Entered Essay:*****Psychotherapy for Normal People***

*'Psychotherapy for Normal People'* interweaves psychotherapy, the growth of the self and the creative process. Taking as its subject the author after almost twenty years of therapy and using Melbourne as its setting, the essay ranges widely to consider the effects of parental death on children, the *'Black Rose'* project by photographer Trent Parke and novelist William Styron's account of his descent into depression in *Darkness Visible*. Popular culture relating to psychotherapy such as the HBO series *In Treatment* and the cartoon *TopCat* are discussed in order to explore how the psychoanalytic process has found expression in everyday life. The essay considers the complicated relationship between therapist and patient and its role in fostering creativity and the growth of a writer.

**Kate Ryan****Biography**

Kate Ryan writes fiction and non-fiction. Her work has appeared in publications including *New Australian Writing 2*, *The Sleepers Almanac*, *Kill Your Darlings* and *The Griffith Review*. Her picture books have been published by Penguin and Lothian. Kate's story 'Sunday Nights' was shortlisted for the 2015 Josephine Ulrick Literature Award. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from La Trobe University (2013) and is working on an adult novel.

**Key Published Works****Fiction:**

'Eyes', *Microstories*, 1994  
*Australian Book Review*

'Good Mother', *New Australian Writing 2*, 2010 (Scribe Publications)

'The Leaves', *Sleepers Almanac no 7*, 2011 (Sleepers Publishing)

'Windows', *Kill Your Darlings*, 2012 (Affirm Press)

**Non fiction:**

'The Good Woman of Bangkok', *The Filmmaker and the Prostitute*, 2006 (Power Publications).

'A Story in Clothes', *Essay in Griffith Review 44 online*, Cultural Solutions, 2014

**Children's picture books:**

*Belvedere Dreaming*, 2002,  
*Belvedere in the City*, 2002,  
and *Belvedere Is Bleached*, 2003, illustrated by Roland Harvey (Penguin Books).

*The Search of Fred Beaney*, 2007, illustrated by Sally Rippen, (Lothian Books), Noable Book in the 2008 Children's Book Council of Australia Awards.

**Entered Essay:*****Jubilee***

*'Jubilee'* explores the troubled life and abject death of the singer Elsie Williams (1901-1942), self-described as 'Australian born, of American parents, African blood'. Williams' death on Dudley Flats, Melbourne's Depression-era shanty town that had been her home on-and-off for a decade, was the final act in a life begun with ambition and talent but ruined not just by alcoholism, violence and imprisonment, but also by the systemic racism that defined Australia's early nationhood. The essay faces the ethical difficulties of narrating the life of a marginalised person who is known chiefly through sensationalised fragments that appear in the public record.



# David Sornig

**Biography**

David Sornig's novel *Spiel* was published in 2009. His fiction and non-fiction have appeared in publications including Harvard Review, Griffith Review and Best Australian Stories. He was a writing fellow at the University of East Anglia and is currently a Creative Fellow at the State Library of Victoria.

[davidcornig.com](http://davidcornig.com)

**Key Published Works**

*Spiel*, UWAP, 2009

**Entered Essay:****No Skin**

'No Skin' is about physical places, local and global, where traumatic events have happened and lives have been lost brutally and unexpectedly. They are the places where, to quote Hilary Mantel, 'the skin came off the surface of the world'. I've been researching these places for more than fifteen years – I call them 'traumascaples' – and have come to believe that the question of what to do with traumascaples (erase? rebuild? erect a monument? maybe just a plaque? leave as is?) obscures the inherently bigger, pressing, culturally significant and explosive question of what they do with us. Oh, they do things!



# Maria Tumarkin

**Biography**

Maria Tumarkin writes books (three to date, fourth on the way), reviews, pieces for performance and essays (included in *Best Australian Essays* 2011, 2012 and 2015); she collaborates with visual artists, psychologists and public historians. Her work has been published, performed, carved into dockside tiles, and set to music.

**Key Published Works**

Non-Fiction: *Traumascapes*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2005

Creative Non-Fiction: *Courage*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2007

Creative Non-Fiction: *Otherland*, Vintage, 2010



# Thank You

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 and Awards and the Federation Square exhibition have been made possible by the generous support of the many partners and patrons this year, many of whom has been with the Trust since inception in 2004. Thank you to the many entrants this year and finalists, whose interest in the prize is greatly appreciated.

The Melbourne Prize Trust would like to thank The Vera Moore Foundation for their partnership and most generous support as our Principal Patron this year. With their support we have been able to undertake and achieve our objective to provide opportunities to Victorian writers and develop our literary sector.

The Melbourne Prize Trust would like to thank Creative Victorian and the City of Melbourne, as our Government Partners, for their ongoing and generous support. The Melbourne Prize Trust supports Melbourne's status as a UNESCO City of Literature.

Thank you to the 2015 Judges, Lisa Dempster, Mark Rubbo OAM, Craig Sherborne and Michael Williams for their dedication and time in judging this year.

The ongoing direction of Melbourne Prize Trust Directors, Dr Janine Kirk AM, Professor Andrea Hull AO, David Laidlaw and Pamela Warrender OAM is appreciated, along with Dr Janine Kirk AM and Anthony Poynton as members of the Management Committee.

Founding Partners Cornwell, Ernst & Young, Minter Ellison and Committee for Melbourne have played an integral role in establishing and maintaining the project since inception in 2004. The brand identity and exhibition design for the 2015 Melbourne Prize, including the catalogue and exhibition, is developed by Sally Dobell and the team at Cornwell Design – thank you all.

Our Events Partner, Federation Square, enables the Melbourne Prize to have its 'home' in one of the highest profile public spaces in Australia and generous supporters of the exhibition in the Atrium between 9 and 23 November. Thank you to Premier Graphics for building the 2015 exhibition and Corporate Vision Australia for their support. The Trust greatly appreciates the generous support of Corporate Partners, Qantas to foster overseas travel of our awards recipients and Sofitel Luxury Hotels, who have made available our partner events and an overnight stay to be given away to a voter on our website during the finalist exhibition.

The Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015 would not be possible without the support of The Vera Moore Foundation and The Tallis Foundation – thank you. The Best Writing Award 2015 is generously supported by its sole patron,

The Robert Salzer Foundation, with an airfare credit provided by Qantas. The new Writers Prize 2015 is made available by the generous partnership of the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund, in association with The Malcolm Robertson Foundation. The five finalists essays have been published into an eBook with the generous support of the Griffith Review. The Civic Choice Award 2015 is kindly made possible by Readings and Hardie Grant Books, with the accommodation prize kindly provided by the Sofitel Melbourne On Collins.

Thank you to The University of Melbourne's School of Culture and Communications for providing the Residency this year. The Victorian College of the Arts generously make available the head office of the Melbourne Prize Trust.

Our patrons are acknowledged for their generous donations this year. These include Diana Gibson AO, the Sidney Myer Fund, Lisa Hill of ANZ LitLovers and Dr Ronald Benson.

Thank you to David Mann OAM and 3AW for their support as Broadcast Partner this year.

There are a number of organisations that provide valued professional services to the annual Melbourne Prize, for which the Trust is thankful for their generous and ongoing partnership.

Royce provide strategic media and communications advice, along with Grant Thornton who undertake the annual audit of the Trust and its activities. Rothfield Print Management and Spicers Paper are generous supporters of the Trust's print requirements.

Thank you to Evan Evans for supporting our digital printing, to Bill Coleby and Coleby Consulting for our risk management, to Lee Wong and Celine David of The Mighty Wonton for our website management and hosting, Rod Birrell for IT support and Micro PLS for IT service. The Trust would like to thank Fundere Fine Art Foundry Melbourne for crafting the unique presentation trophies for the awards and for fabricating the miniatures of *The Magic Pudding* sculpture (located at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne).

The Trust would like to thank Robert Oatley Vineyards as our wine partner this year and Pratika Lal for her support. Thank you to George, Naya and Bokchoy Tang restaurant at Federation Square for their generous support on catering for many years.

The Trust would like to thank the many organisation supporting the literary sector in Victoria for their interest in our activities and support in raising awareness of the opportunity. The many sector journals, peak bodies, commercial organisation and websites made it possible to promote the prize during the 2015 program.

The Trust is fortunate to have the support of a number of people whose contribution this year is greatly appreciated. These include Melbourne Prize Trust Administration and Operations Assistant Sarah Kempson and our volunteers, Sara Cook and Gillian Cameron.

The Trust would like to thank the community and visitors to the Federation Square exhibition for their interest in the Melbourne Prize for Literature 2015.

**Melbourne Prize Trust**  
Melbourne, Australia

# About the annual Melbourne Prize & Melbourne Prize Trust



Melbourne  
Prize for  
Literature  
2015

Launched in 2004, the Melbourne Prize Trust recognises and rewards excellence and talent, inspires creative development and enriches public life. The Trust achieves these aims by running the annual Melbourne Prize, which is funded by a collaboration of partnerships and patrons. The Trust is an Income Exempt Charity with Deductible Gift Recipient status. In 2014 the annual Melbourne Prize celebrated its 10th anniversary.

The annual Melbourne Prize is one of the most valuable creative development initiatives of its kind in Australia. It runs on a three-year cycle and rewards sculptors, writers and musicians in turn. The current cycle is:

/ Melbourne Prize  
for Urban Sculpture (2014)

/ Melbourne Prize  
for Literature (2015)

/ Melbourne Prize  
for Music (2016)

The Prize is unique, celebrating artistic excellence under the banner of Melbourne.

The major event of the annual Melbourne Prize is the free two-week public exhibition of finalists' work and the prize announcement held each November at Federation Square. The public have the ability to vote for a finalist to win the Civic Choice Award.

The exhibition increases the public's exposure and access to the creativity of our community and enhances Melbourne's reputation as a cultural capital.

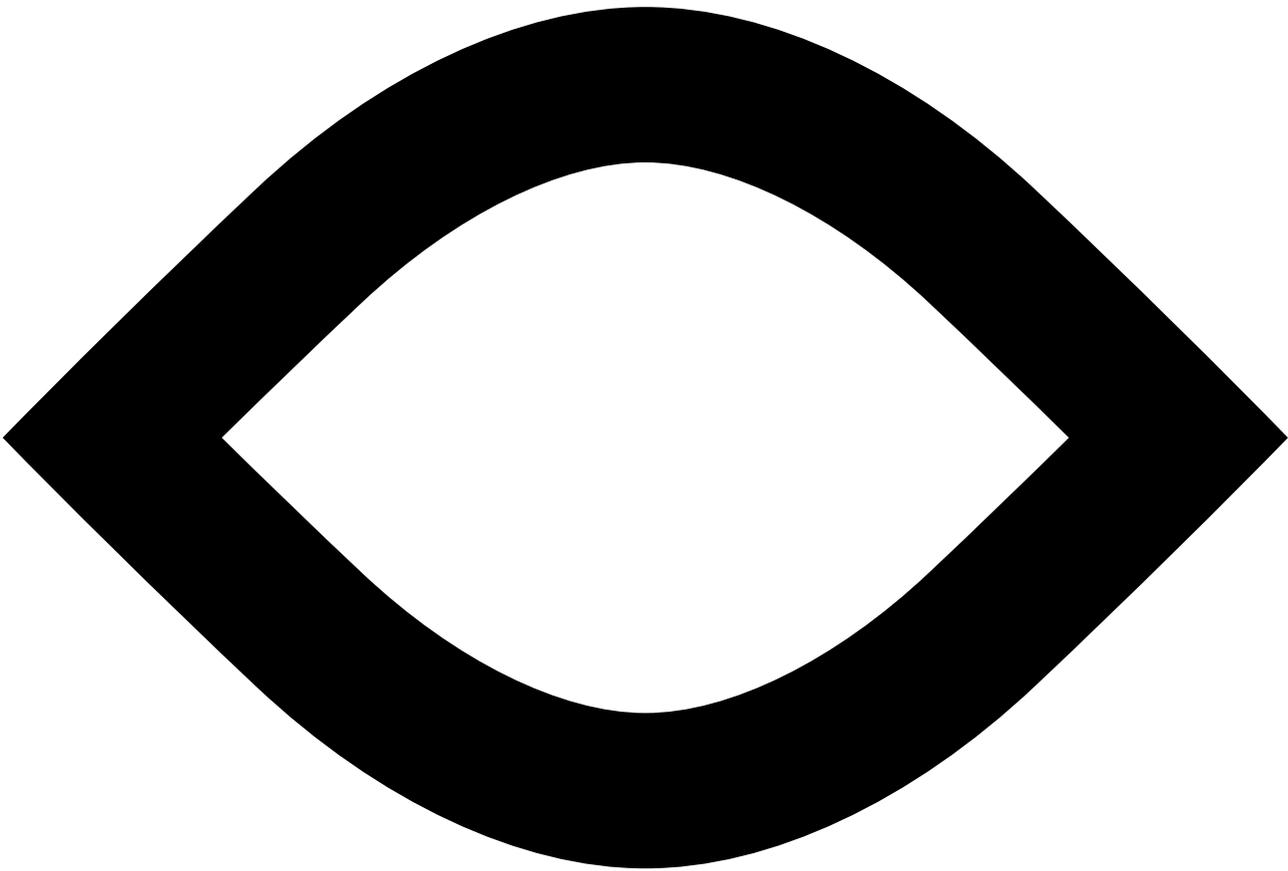
The origins of the Trust date back to the establishment of the children's garden precinct at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and the commissioning of The Magic Pudding sculpture in 2000.

Proceeds from the sale of limited edition miniatures of this landmark sculpture contribute to the Trust.

Please contact the Melbourne Prize Trust regarding the miniatures.

For further information visit [melbourneprizetrust.org](http://melbourneprizetrust.org) or call (03) 9696 4410.

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[melbourneprize.org](http://melbourneprize.org)