

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Creative Industries



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MELBOURNE AUTHOR WINS AUSTRALIA'S RICHEST LITERARY PRIZE

Writers from across the country have been celebrated through the 2023 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, which includes Australia's single richest literary award backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

The coveted \$100,000 Victorian Prize for Literature and the \$25,000 Prize for Fiction have been awarded to Melbourne's Jessica Au, for her quietly powerful novel *Cold Enough for Snow*.

Slipping between the past and present, *Cold Enough for Snow* is the story of a mother and daughter's trip to Japan. Written in just over 100 pages, judges commended the deftly woven novel from a writer in command of her craft.

Debut works have made waves across the non-fiction, Indigenous writing, poetry and young adult categories, launching exciting new voices, while celebrating unique styles and diverse perspectives from across the nation.

Turkish-Australian essayist Eda Gunaydin received the Prize for Non-Fiction for *Root & Branch: Essays on inheritance* which explores legacies of migration, belonging and place.

Lystra Rose won the Prize for Indigenous Writing for her young adult fantasy fiction novel *The Upwelling*, an exciting surf, time-travel, dream-fuelled adventure that heroes the culture, language and practices of the Yugambah people.

Gavin Yuan Gao's lucid, lyrical collection of poems about family, loss, heartbreak, history and erasure *At the Altar of Touch* received the Prize for Poetry – while Kate Murray's *We Who Hunt the Hollow*, set in a fantastical future Melbourne, was awarded the Prize for Writing for Young Adults.

Esteemed Torres Strait Islander dramatist John Harvey won the Prize for Drama for the repatriation story *The Return* which made its stage debut at Malthouse Theatre, as part of RISING Festival last year.

Melbourne writer Mick Cummins took home the coveted \$15,000 Unpublished Manuscript Award for *One Divine Night* which explores homelessness, social systems and family complexities.

The People's Choice Award, awarded to the best book of 2022 as voted by Australian readers, went to *Astronomy: Sky Country* by Karlie Noon and Krystal De Napoli, which draws on a deep understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the world's oldest scientists.

Winners of the Fiction, Non-Fiction, Indigenous Writing, Poetry, Young Adult and Drama categories each received \$25,000. The People's Choice award comes with a \$2,000 prize.

The Victorian Premier's Literary Awards are awarded on excellence and literary merit. Each category is judged by a panel of experts – comprising writers, critics, academics, journalists, booksellers and librarians – who select the shortlisted and winning works.

Administered by the Wheeler Centre on behalf of the Victorian Government, a full list of winners, the shortlist and highly commended works for this year's Victorian Premier's Literary Awards can be found at wheelercentre.com.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Steve Dimopoulos

"Gripping, tender, thought-provoking and funny – this year's winning works reflect the diversity of Australian stories and the breadth of literary talent across the country."

Media contact: Corey Croft 0468 897 764 | corey.croft@minstaff.vic.gov.au

“Writers play a vital role in our creative industries and cultural life, telling the stories that shape and reflect who we are. Through the awards we’re backing the careers of writers, while showcasing Victoria as a driving force behind the industry.”

Quote attributable to Wheeler Centre CEO Caro Llewellyn

“The Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards are wonderful recognition of the amazing talent this country has to offer. The fact that debut works account for five of the eight winning works this year means that fresh perspectives and compelling new voices are being amplified in the Australian literary community.”

2023 VICTORIAN PREMIER’S LITERARY AWARDS

Victorian Prize for Literature

Cold Enough for Snow by Jessica Au (Giramondo Publishing)

Prize for Drama

The Return by John Harvey (Malthouse Theatre)

Prize for Fiction

Cold Enough for Snow by Jessica Au (Giramondo Publishing)

Prize for Indigenous Writing

The Upwelling by Lystra Rose (Hachette Australia)

Prize for Non-Fiction

Root & Branch: Essays on inheritance by Eda Gunaydin (NewSouth)

Prize for Poetry

At the Altar of Touch by Gavin Yuan Gao (University of Queensland Press)

Prize for Writing for Young Adults

We Who Hunt the Hollow by Kate Murray (Hardie Grant Children’s Publishing)

Prize for an Unpublished Manuscript

One Divine Night by Mick Cummins

People’s Choice Award

Astronomy: Sky Country by Karlie Noon and Krystal De Napoli (Thames & Hudson Australia)