



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PREMIER'S BOOK AWARDS

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22 September 2014 - Winners announced for Premier's Book Awards

Premier Colin Barnett announced Richard Flanagan as the winner of the Premier's Prize at the Premier's Book Awards for his work *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

Mount Lawley-based novelist Yvette Walker received the Western Australian Emerging Writers Award for her first book, *Letters to the End of Love*.

Mr Barnett said 11 of Australia's top authors and two illustrators were recognised in this year's awards. The winners will share \$130,000 in prize money.



"The Premier's Book Awards recognise literary excellence and I would like to congratulate all of this year's winners," he said.

"Literature is an important element of a culturally rich society. Reading and understanding the written word is not only empowering, it can be life changing. These awards help to encourage more West Australians to pick up a book."

"Each year the awards receive hundreds of entries from authors across Australia and this year was no different. I am thrilled that two of the world's finest literary talents, Richard Flanagan and Tim Winton, have been recognised in this year's awards."

Culture and the Arts Minister John Day said the inaugural Western Australian Emerging Writers category received 14 entrants, testament to the abundance of talent in the State.

"I would like to congratulate first-time published author, Yvette Walker, who was selected from a strong list of Western Australian writers for her book about love and loss," Mr Day said.

This year the Western Australian public voted Tim Winton's *Eyrie* as their favourite nominated work and winner of the People's Choice Award sponsored by The West Australian.

Western Australian Premier's Book Awards - 2014 Winners

Children's Books (jointly awarded)



Light Horse Boy by Dianne Wolfier (Albany, WA)
Illustrator: Brian Simmonds (Duncraig, WA)

This masterful mix of fact and fiction explores the actions of the 10th Light Horse throughout the course of World War I. Symbolic of the ANZACS, a simple farmer and his horse from rural Victoria join the fleet from Albany to Cairo and thence to Gallipoli, later remaining in Egypt to guard the Suez Canal. Life in the trenches and the desert is vividly depicted in words, and illustrated by evocative charcoal drawings, a range of documentary material and fictional letters that capture the sweep and drama of the fighting which contrasts with intimate details and private emotions of those at war and at home.



The Swap by Jan Ormerod (VIC)
Illustrator: Andrew Joyner (SA)

A simple yet masterful tale exploring the issue of sibling rivalry where a jealous sister, Caroline Crocodile, tries to swap her baby brother with hilarious results. Gradually she realises that perhaps he is perfect after all and all ends happily. Exuberant illustrations complement the text beautifully, adding colour, humour and interest.

Digital Narrative

AUTHENTIC IN ALL CAPS by Christy Dena (QLD)

AUTHENTIC IN ALL CAPS is transmedia storytelling at its finest, borrowing the best of existing narrative techniques across a range of media, harnessing these to tell a compelling story about mortality and materiality in a playful but meaningful manner. **AUTHENTIC IN ALL CAPS** is held together by a luscious audio story, not dissimilar to radio plays in their heyday, but now updated with interactive pathways, bespoke online locales and a series of beautifully designed interactive web pages.

Fiction



The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flanagan (TAS)

In this ambitious and very moving novel, Dorrigo Evans, a retired Australian doctor recalls his youth which is often at odds with his well-crafted, heroic media profile, built on his leadership as an officer in the POW camps on the Thai-Burma Railway. Our expectations are constantly undermined by Flanagan's unsettling and visceral narrative, with its psychologically and ethically complex exploration of war and its devastating aftermath. The novel contests idealized Australian myths of heroism and mate ship forged in war by revealing the reality of trauma and damage.

Non-fiction



Boy, Lost: A Family Memoir by Kristina Olsson (QLD)

Boy, Lost is a painful, resonant and exquisitely written memoir. Employing extraordinary intimacy, love and humanity, Olsson draws the reader progressively into the unfolding and intriguing story of her brother's abduction. In doing so Olsson examines the role and circumstances of women, children and their families in post-war Australia, and reveals how such loss resonates through the generations.

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Poetry



Six Different Windows by Paul Hetherington (ACT)

The six sections of this collection range widely in time, place and theme, moving from reflections on youth in 'corrugations' to meditations mainly on women in 'Findings, Keepings'. Hetherington's constant theme is art, his narrator reminding us of how 'finding words' demands 'a looking about/to bring something back/a scent or something dragged from the ground...'

Scripts

The Bull, the Moon and the Coronet of Stars by Van Badham (NSW)

This play is an excellent example of strong theatrical writing. Drawing on ancient Greek myth, but neatly contextualised into the present, it is a gripping narrative of love and desire, and inventive in its demands on staging and acting.

Western Australian History Award



Kerry Stokes: Self-Made Man by Margaret Simons (VIC)

Writing unauthorised biographies presents authors with great challenges. The big one Margaret Simons faced in this fascinating biography of a very public-and private-man, being Stokes's resolute refusal to cooperate with her. But, with her journalist's eye for the good story and her skill in ferreting out hidden histories, she 'got beneath his skin', so to speak. So we read about Stokes' difficult private life, his striving for wealth, the way he managed and manages his public image and, in a brilliant analysis, his life as a media mogul, wheeling and dealing his way to power. The book pulls no punches about Stokes, but is not a hostile biography, and one even gets the impression that Simons came to

admire her subject.

Western Australian Emerging Writers Award



Letters to the End of Love by Yvette Walker (Mount Lawley, WA)

This is a beautifully written and intelligent epistolary novel that works as an extended meditation on the nature of love, sexuality, art, illness and identity. It uses three alternating historical time frames and locations to explore both the historically specific social circumstances of sexual relationships and the universal need for intimacy, understanding and compassion in the face of illness, abuse and injustice. Written with a painter's eye for visual detail and composition, and with a musician's ear for the cadences of language, *Letters to the End of Love* integrates its extensive research into three carefully crafted stories.

Writing for Young Adults



Alex As Well by Alyssa Brugman (NSW)

Alex As Well is a moving, confronting story that explores issues of gender, sexuality and identity with compassion and honesty. Alex was born intersexed and raised as a boy but now wants to become a girl. His/her story is gripping and covers the journey towards a new self, as well as dealing with his/her parents' falling marriage, a new school, decisions about hormone medication and the responses of peers. Narrative tension is tight and the text never falters. Funny and powerful, this unique book tackles a brave subject in a very accessible way.

Premier's Prize



The Narrow Road to the Deep North by Richard Flanagan (TAS)

In this ambitious and very moving novel, Dorrigo Evans, a retired Australian doctor recalls his youth which is often at odds with his well-crafted, heroic media profile, built on his leadership as an officer in the POW camps on the Thai-Burma Railway. Our expectations are constantly undermined by Flanagan's unsettling and visceral narrative, with its psychologically and ethically complex exploration of war and its devastating aftermath. The novel contests idealized Australian myths of heroism and mate ship forged in war by revealing the reality of trauma and damage.

People's Choice Award presented by The West Australian



Eyrle by Tim Winton (WA)

Holed up in a seedy Fremantle high rise, Tom Keely is disgraced, disillusioned and divorced. A cynical and self-pitying lapsed idealist, Keely's chance meeting with a childhood acquaintance and concern for the welfare of her young grandson turn his attention to the problems of someone even more worn down and dislocated than himself. Winton's grittiness and distinctive dialogue combine with flashes of dark humour and an unexpected tenderness.