

EMBARGOED until 8pm, Friday 4 September 2020

Queensland Literary Awards winners announced

A “superbly written” book with “compelling insight” into rugby league has won the richest prize at the 2020 Queensland Literary Awards this evening.

Journalist Joe Gorman won the \$25,000 Queensland Premier's Award for a work of State Significance for his non-fiction book *Heartland: How Rugby League Explains Queensland* (UQP) at tonight's special online announcement. Judges praised his examination of the State of Origin and the role it plays “in the identity of Queensland”.

“Gorman moves the narrative seamlessly, shining a light on key individuals and events within a social and political context,” the judges said.

Winners took home a total of \$238,500 in prize money across 11 categories that include fiction, non-fiction, poetry and unpublished work.

The Queensland Premier's Young Publishers and Writers Awards (two \$12,500 packages) were awarded to poet Zenobia Frost and essayist and publisher Yen-Rong Wong.

The judges noted that Wong was “simply impressive”, lauding her exploration of “vulnerability, identity, culture, and power and its myriad misuses”. Judges also congratulated Frost on poems that “seem to be crafted from small observations, moments, rituals and edges”.

This year's David Unaipon Award for an Emerging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Writer was awarded to poet Jazz Money from NSW for 'The Space Between the Paperbark'. Her unpublished work was described as “a luminous and beautifully sculpted, seamless collection of poems”.

The Glendower Award for an Emerging Queensland Writer went to Fiona Robertson whose “stories display subtlety and empathy as they reveal people at moments of change or crisis, grappling with how to repair fractures in their lives and relationships, in the pursuit of happier existences”.

The Courier-Mail People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year Award, which was open to public voting, was awarded to *A Lifetime of Impossible Days* by Tabitha Bird.

State Library of Queensland proudly manages the awards in collaboration with sponsors, industry partners and the writing community.

See full list below

Quotes from the Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk:

“The Queensland Government is committed to helping Queenslanders tell their stories – whether it's supporting the work of established authors, or emerging writers still working on their first masterpiece,” the Premier said.

Media enquiries

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“While we’ve celebrated the Queensland Literary Awards differently this year, the spotlight on our diverse writing community shines just as bright.

“I thank State Library of Queensland and the judges, faced with the difficult task of selecting recipients from an impressive shortlist of Queensland talent.

“And I congratulate all the winners of 2020 Queensland Literary Awards, whose lauded works will be enjoyed, admired and added to Queensland reading stacks and shelves for years to come.”

Quotes from the Arts Minister Leeanne Enoch:

“The 2020 Queensland Literary Awards have proven their excellence as we once again recognise Queensland’s talented writers who inspire, challenge and delight us through their stories.

“Congratulations to local authors Sara El Sayed, Anna Jacobson and Amanda Niehaus who have been awarded Queensland Writers Fellowships for their literary talents and their contribution to the rich cultural landscape of our state.

“The Palaszczuk Government is proud to support local writers through these awards, which provide opportunities for new projects and career development.”

Quotes from State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald AM:

“Congratulations to all the finalists and award winners. Their work keeps us connected to new ideas and forms of creative expressions.

“It was particularly pleasing to see 2019 State Library black&write! Fellow Lisa Fuller take out the Griffith University Young Adult Book Award for *Ghost Bird*.

“Previous winners of Queensland Writers Fellowships, including Mirandi Riwoe, are also now winning top prizes in these awards.

“Such wins demonstrate the importance of investing in emerging voices who have different perspectives to share.

“These awards would not be possible without the crucial support of our partners – the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, The University of Queensland, Griffith University, the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund, University of Southern Queensland, *The Courier-Mail*, Jenny Summerson, and Susan Hocking and Ian Mackie, and their family, of the Hocking Mackie Fund at APS Foundation.”

2020 Queensland Literary Awards winners

Queensland Premier's Award for a work of State Significance

Awarded to an outstanding work, by an Australian writer, focused on documenting, discussing or highlighting a uniquely Queensland story.

Prize: \$25,000

- *Heartland: How Rugby League Explains Queensland* by Joe Gorman (UQP)

Queensland Writers Fellowships

Awarded to three (3) established Queensland authors to advance a writing project over a 12-month period.

Prize: three Fellowships of \$15,000 each, plus professional development support to the value of \$4,500

- Sara El Sayed, 'The Blind Pussy Cat'
- Anna Jacobson, 'Anxious in a Sweet Store'
- Amanda Niehaus, 'Relativity'

Queensland Premier's Young Publishers and Writers Awards

Awarded to two (2) outstanding Queensland writers up to 30 years of age.

Prize: two awards of \$10,000 plus career development support to the value of \$2,500 each

- Zenobia Frost
- Yen-Rong Wong

The University of Queensland Fiction Book Award

Awarded to an outstanding work of fiction by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *Stone Sky Gold Mountain* by Mirandi Riwoe (UQP)

The University of Queensland Non-Fiction Book Award

Awarded to an outstanding work of non-fiction by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *Olive Cotton: A Life in Photography* by Helen Ennis (HarperCollins)

Griffith University Children's Book Award

Awarded to a work, suitable for children up to 12 years old, by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *As Fast As I Can* by Penny Tangey (UQP)

Griffith University Young Adult Book Award

Awarded to a work, suitable for young adults aged 13 to 19, by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *Ghost Bird* by Lisa Fuller (UQP)

University of Southern Queensland Steele Rudd Award for a Short Story Collection

Awarded to an outstanding collection of short stories by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *Lucky Ticket* by Joey Bui (Text Publishing)

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Judith Wright Calanthe Award for a Poetry Collection

Awarded to an outstanding collection of poetry by an Australian writer.

Prize: \$15,000

- *Heide* by Pi.O (Giramondo Publishing)

David Unaipon Award for an Emerging Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Writer

Awarded for an outstanding manuscript by an unpublished Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander writer.

Prize: \$15,000, plus publication with UQP

- 'The Space Between the Paperbark' by Jazz Money (poetry, NSW)

Glendower Award for an Emerging Queensland Writer

Awarded for an outstanding manuscript by an unpublished Queensland writer.

Prize: \$15,000, plus publication with UQP

- 'If You're Happy' by Fiona Robertson

***The Courier-Mail* People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year Award**

Awarded to an outstanding book by a Queensland author, taken from eligible books entered in the Fiction and Non-Fiction categories. The winner of *The Courier-Mail* People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year Award is determined by public vote.

Prize: \$10,000

- *A Lifetime of Impossible Days* by Tabitha Bird

For more information: [Queensland Literary Awards](#)