

RESULTS  
2009  
NATIONAL  
LITERARY  
AWARDS

*conducted by the*

*Fellowship of Australian Writers (Victoria)*

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**From the President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Victoria)**

*The Fellowship of Australian Writers has great pleasure in announcing the results of its 2009 National Literary Awards. I would like to sincerely thank all entrants, sponsors and judges for their interest and support this year, and I congratulate those who have received awards.*

**Philip Rainford, 2009 President**

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**2010 NATIONAL LITERARY AWARDS**

The 2010 National Literary Awards will open on 1st September and close on 30th November 2010.

From August 2010 you will be able to download an entry form from the FAW website: "www.writers.asn.au" or you can obtain one by sending a SSAE to: FAW, PO Box 973, Eltham Vic. 3095

Entry forms are also included in the August/September issue of The Australian Writer, the regular publication of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) Inc.

**ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP OF AUSTRALIAN WRITERS (FAW)**

*FAW was established in 1928 and has branches across Australia. With over 2000 members, the Victorian branch is the biggest and operates without government funding. Its daily activities are carried out by a voluntary committee who are dedicated to nurturing, supporting and providing opportunities for writers at all stages of their careers. FAW members receive 4 issues of "The Australian Writer" per year, advice on contracts, publishing and other matters, the chance to participate in the Poetry at the Peacock readings, Readings at Fed Square and ongoing information about the National Literary Awards.*

*If you would like information about FAW membership, please visit [www.writers.asn.au](http://www.writers.asn.au) or write to: Fellowship of Australian Writers, PO Box 973, Eltham Vic. 3095*

**FAW SID HARTA LITERATURE AWARD**

*Sponsored by Sid Harta Publishing*

In its thirty-seventh year, an award for a non-fiction book first published in Australia, of sustained quality and distinction with an Australian theme.

Commenced in 1978 originally titled the FAW Australian Literature Award. From 1988 to 1993 it was renamed the FAW Australian Natives Association Literature Award, from 1994 to 2000 it was known as the FAW Australian Unity Literature Award and between 2001 and 2008 it was known as the FAW Melbourne University Publishing Award. From 2009 we are proud to have this award sponsored by Sid Harta Publishing and look forward to a long association under its present name.

**WinnerS (\$500 Each)**

Dr Marina Larsson	Shattered Anzacs: Living with The Scars of War	NSW	UNSW Press
Iain McCalman	Darwin's Armada	VIC	Penguin Group (Australia)

**Highly Commended**

Michael McGier	The Lost Art of Sleep	NSW	Pan Macmillan
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**Judges: Jean Thornton and Dr Bill Anderson**

There was a disappointingly low number of entries this year. There were, however, a number of excellent books. Given the quality of the winning entries it was difficult to decide on the order of the final selection. The judges eventually agreed that it was impossible to settle on one winner, given two really outstanding books.

Marina Lawson's book on mentally and physically wounded ANZACS during and after World War One is an important book and an outstanding contribution to Australian historiography. It is well researched, faultlessly written and intensely moving.

Iain McCalman's book on Darwin, Huxley, Wallace and Hooker is another really outstanding book. Prodigious research, informative and vastly entertaining, it gives new breadth and life to the Darwin Story.

Both of these books display academic and literary distinction of the highest order.

Michael McGier's book on sleep is a wonderfully amusing and hugely entertaining book that is also well-written, informative and full of wisdom.



**FAW CHRISTINA STEAD AWARD**

Sponsored by **Merchant of Fairness Bookshop**

In its twenty third year, an award for a work of fiction first published in Australia.

Commenced in 1987 and has never changed its name. Named after Christina Stead who was born and raised in Australia but spent the bulk of her life abroad, living in London (1928-29), Paris (1929-37), USA (1937-47), Europe (1947-53), and England (1953-1974) before returning to Australia to live.

After graduating from Sydney Teachers' College in 1921, Stead taught only until 1924 when she resigned to work as an office clerk. She left Australia for London in 1928 in order to fulfill a longing that would be similarly reflected by greater numbers of Australian literary figures some forty years later. She met her husband, William Blake, a successful Marxist banker, in London and moved with him to Paris in 1929. There she worked as a secretary in a French bank for five years. She followed her husband around the USA and Europe until he died in 1968. The next year Stead visited Australia for the first time since she departed some forty years earlier, and returned to live there permanently in 1974.

Considered by many to have been one of Australia's greatest novelists, she was often spoken of in Nobel Prize terms, especially in regards to her greatest novel *The Man Who Loved Children* which was based heavily on her childhood.

Christina Stead died in Australia in 1983

**Winner (\$500)**

Justine Larbalestier	Liar	NSW	Allen & Unwin
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**Highly Commended**

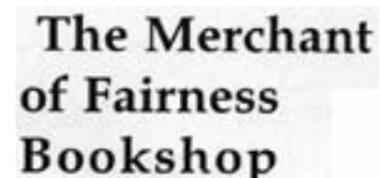
Sonia Hartnett	Butterfly	VIC	Penguin Group (Australia)
HM Brown	Red Queen	VIC	Penguin Group (Australia)
Amy Baker	Omega Park	QLD	University of Queensland Press
Adair Robin	Death & the Running Patterer	VIC	Penguin Group (Australia)

**Commended**

David Brooks	The Umbrella Club	QLD	University of Queensland Press
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**Judges: Molly Travers, Gail Blundell and Philip Rainford**

It is always difficult to judge an award that compares different genres, we try and get around this by having several judges with different tastes so that every entry gets a fair go. This year was no different with entries from multiple genres including Fantasy, Romance, murder mystery and many others. This year's choices were interesting with the winner *Liar* striking the attention of all three judges by its unusual style and moving story. The key to success is firstly a story that grabs the attention of the reader early in the book and maintain it, then comes a mastery of the craft, the use of the words, imagery and the flow of the piece. Originality; skilful writing and plotting; and insight into the human condition were the common threads that linked all the books that made it on to the short-list. At least two of the books – including the winner – had storylines that could not even be guessed at by the readers. The compulsion to keep reading was strong in each of the short-listed titles. The themes were varied and unpredictable, with a high level of research undertaken in a number of the books (or seeming to have been undertaken). Un-put-down-ability was a box that each of the short-listed books ticked.


**FAW ANNE ELDER AWARD**

Sponsored by **Anne Elder Trust, managed by Catherine Elder and FAW**

In its thirty third year, an award for a first book of poetry first published in Australia.

Commenced in 1977 and has never changed its name. Named after Anne Josephine Chloe Elder (1918-1976), ballet dancer and poet, born on 4 January 1918 at Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand, elder daughter of Norman Robert Mackintosh, an insurance-manager from Victoria, and his New Zealand-born wife Rena Dillon, née Bell. Anne came to Melbourne with her parents in 1921. Educated at home by a governess and at St Margaret's School, Berwick, she travelled with her family to Norfolk Island and New Zealand, and at the age of 15 to England and Scotland.

After suffering a heart attack about 1968, Elder declined in health and spirits. Passionately attached to natural beauty, she felt the encroachment of suburbia on her home at Eaglemont until in 1972 she and John moved to Parkville while awaiting the completion of Ballindean, their home near Romsey. She died of cardiopulmonary disease complicating scleroderma on 23 October 1976 in Royal Melbourne Hospital and was cremated. Her husband and children survived her. Administered by the Victorian Fellowship of Australian Writers, the Anne Elder award for a first book of poetry was initially presented in 1977.

**Winner (\$1000)**

Emma Jones	The Striped World	NSW	Allen & Unwin
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**Highly Commended**

Emily Ballou	The Darwin Poems	WA	UWA Press
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**Commended**

Jennifer Mackenzie	Borobudur	VIC	Transit Lounge Publishing
Kate Middleton	Fire Season	NSW	Giramondo Publishing
Felicity Plunkett	Vanishing Point	QLD	University of Queensland Press

**Judges: Connie Barber, Jennifer Harrison**

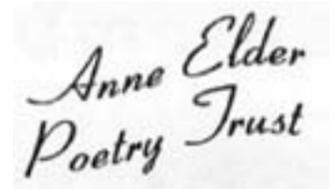
We read collections and individual poems which had already received prizes and prestigious publication. Styles of writing varied, from the classical use of the English language to experimentation, with references not easy to disentangle, where startling language tends to take priority over concern for the impact of the work as a whole.

Another contrast was between collections with a contained thread and collections of relatively unrelated pieces of writing.

There are examples of these trends in current writing in the awards list. It is difficult to say which kind is 'better' and also to assess the difference between 'fashion' and modification of conventional language use.

We were impressed by the maturity and ambition of many of the books. Jones's *The Striped World* is a collection of quietly observant poems: self-contained, yet soaring, enlarging the experience of the reader within the poem. Sonnets sit beside experimental forms. Word choice, masterful alliteration, and subtle rhyme create a richness beyond the individual line or poem. Ballou's *The Darwin Poems*, written as a 'verse novel', demonstrates remarkable handling of language, pace and drama, and evokes a startling portrait of Charles Darwin. Other books explore contemporary culture, self, movie icons and subjects as diverse as the architect of Borobudur, Freud's theory of hysteria and a Bronzino in the Uffizi Gallery.

The excellence of the writing in nearly half the work submitted is worthy of notice. All awarded titles are by women. It appears to have been a strong year for new women's writing



**BARBARA RAMSDEN AWARD**

Sponsored by **Society of Editors & the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Victoria)**

In its twenty sixth year for a major literary award for a book of quality writing in any field of literature and recognises the contribution by both author and editor in producing the final product.

The Fellowship supplies two specially cast bronze plaques designed by renowned sculptor and medallionist, Michael Meszaros, which is presented to the author and the publisher's editor to recognise the combined effort of both parties to achieve final result. The design is of the Origin of Art, showing the creator at work, and a figure representing the forces that ensure its effective communication.

This award commenced in 1971 and ran twenty two years until 1992 and was revived in 2006 with the support of the Society of Editors.

Named in honour of Barbara Mary Ramsden (1903-1971), editor, born on 27 December 1903 at Annandale, Sydney, eldest of three children and only daughter of Edward Maxwell Ramsden, a Melbourne-born medical student, and his wife Edith Johnson, née Hindley, who came from England. The family moved to Richmond, Melbourne, and later to Adaminaby and Bathurst, both in New South Wales. From 1919 Barbara boarded at Ascham school, Sydney. Her early interest in medicine appeared to wane and in 1924 she enrolled in arts at the University of Sydney. In the following year she moved with her mother and youngest brother to Melbourne and in 1926 entered the University of Melbourne (B.A., 1928). She obtained employment as a clerk in the university's engineering and metallurgy library in May 1928. Transferred to the central library in June 1931, she worked there part time and in the book-room of Melbourne University Press before performing the duties of assistant-reader with the publishers.

**Winners:**

**Editor: Nicola Young**

**Writer: Alasdair McGregor**

**Judges: Virginia Wilton, Stephanie Holt**

Trophy by  
**Michael  
Meszaros**


**FAW COMMUNITY WRITERS' AWARD**

Sponsored by the **Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) Inc**

In its thirteenth year, for an anthology by a community writers' group. Commenced in 1997 originally titled the FAW SAAB Community Writers Award, it was renamed in 1999 the FAW Community Writers Award and gained its present title in 2001 when the Malvern Newsheet community publication wound up and donated part of its capital to sponsor this award. This year this award is now back to its original form. We thank all those involved with the Malvern News Sheet for their previous sponsorship of this award.

**Winner (\$500)**

Williamstown Writers	The Secret Life of Suburbs	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Harvest Writers	Allsorts	VIC
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**Commended**

Mersey Writers' Group	Unexpected Turns	TAS
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Tuesday Writers	Melbourne	VIC
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Maryborough Writers Group	Life Patterns	VIC
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**Judge: Elizabeth Owen**

It was wonderful to see how many people are recording significant memories and feelings in this year's entries. As noted in one anthology each contributor was 'kanting to share, in some eventually coherent way possible, one's own inner self'.

As expected the quality of the entries varied between and within anthologies which celebrated the rich variety of people's lives in an inclusive way without necessarily having to compete in an economic forum.

Memories recorded were as disparate as those of World War II, fire and drought, Saturday oarvom" ovies and even old domestic appliances such as hot water services. Unfortunately violence was also a common topic.

The writing throughout was generally spare, transparent and evocative with little evidence of overwriting and only occasional intrusive word use. The sardonic, selfdeprecating Australian sense of humour was also evident.

More short stories than poems were included. Generally the former were of the higher quality. In particular the often decisive endings of the stories were original and interesting. Too often, the poems resembled chopped up prose whereas the structure of a poem should enhance communication. There were, however, lyrical and beautiful exceptions. Rhyme was often used effectively.

It is worth considering the value of organising anthologies by author or thematically. Titles such as "Mish Mash" and "Allsorts" indicate the pot pourri approach while those like "Melbourne" and "The Secret Life of Suburbs" indicate the other.

The winning entry: "The Secret Life of Suburbs" was chosen for its consistent quality with many excellent contributors. It was the only entry to include biographies of these. "Allsorts" was highly commended and, by comparison, the writers remained anonymous, as did those of the commended: "Melbourne". Life Patterns: Anthology 2009", also commended, was longer with many named and distinctive contributors. "Unexpected Turns", commended, was the only entry to arrange contributions of each author together.

**FAW JENNIFER BURBIDGE SHORT STORY AWARD**

Sponsored by **Mary Burbidge**

In its ninth year, in honour of Jennifer Burbidge, for a story dealing with any aspect of the lives of those who suffer from some form of mental disability and/or its impact on their families.

Commenced in 2000 and has never changed its name.

**Winner (\$250)**

Carmel Lillis	My People Shall Be Your People	VIC
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**Commended**

Daan Spijer	A Different Slant	VIC
Vicky Daddo	The Baby Blanket	VIC

**Judge: Mary Burbidge**

I found both the number and standard of entries a little disappointing. Perhaps disability is a difficult topic to tackle if the writer has no personal experience of living with it. Perhaps when one has living experience of disability, it is hard to find the distance to shape the experience in to a story.

The winning story, *My People shall be Your People*, stood out. It explores the tumultuous and ambivalent emotions of a vulnerable and sensitive woman coming to terms with the birth of a child with an obvious disability. It is impossible to be sure whether this well written and edited story with is a skilled presentation of a personal experience or the creation of a thoughtful imagination.

*A Different Slant* is a short, quirky story that somehow says much more than is stated about the life and aspirations of the protagonist.

*The Baby Blanket* looks at a young boy taking on new responsibilities after a family tragedy.

# Mary Burbidge

**FAW MARY GRANT BRUCE SHORT STORY AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

Sponsored by **Wellington Shire Council**

In its twenty-ninth year, for a manuscript written for readers aged 10-15 years with a special prize for winners from Gippsland. Commenced in 1981 and has never changed its name. Named after Mary Grant Bruce born: 24 May 1878 in Sale, Victoria, Australia. Died: 2 July 1958 Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex, England.

The author of the Billabong series of books, Mary Grant Bruce began writing poetry and short stories at the age of seven. Later she became editor of her school magazine. After completing her matriculation Bruce moved to Melbourne where she worked as an editor and wrote weekly stories for the Leader children's page. Her first book *A Little Bush Maid*, originally a serial, was published in 1910. Between 1910 and 1942 she published 37 children's novels. During her career Bruce was a contributor to Blackwood's Magazine, Morning Post, Daily Mail, Windsor Magazine, Cassell's Magazine, Strand, Argus, Age, Herald (Melbourne), Australasian, Leader, Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney Mail, Lone Hand Auckland Weekly Press, Woman's World, West Australian and the British Australasian. During World War II Bruce worked for the AIF Women's Association, sold her autograph at charity auctions for the war effort and broadcast a series of talks for the Department of Information.

**Winner (\$600)**

Kathryn Lomer	Blackberry Boys	TAS
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**Second Prize (\$300)**

Rebecca Hayman	Gum Creek Mystery	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Amanda Clarke	The Haunting of Deep Water Bend	QLD
Carmel Lillis	Ozzie Bone All-Along	VIC

**Commended**

Sarah Billington	Life Was Easier When Boys Were Stupid	VIC
Peter Watts	Ferret and Metal Mouth	WA

**Gippsland Regional Award (\$200)**

Sarah Billington	Life Was Easier When Boys Were Stupid	VIC
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**Judge: Margaret Campbell**

The entries this year varied in style and standard. Although there were some fantasy entries they were, for some reason, considerably fewer and the JK Rowling repeats were missing. Subjects included drought, family violence, homosexuality and reconciliation making judging a very enjoyable challenge.

Story is a powerful way of connecting, and to connect with readers of any age, the author must engage him/her emotionally. The winning entries achieved this with their creation of believable characters, place and dialogue, and most particularly, language to add authenticity to the topics and themes chosen. For this age group, didactic and 'older person's' language and style are not page-turners.

On first reading, *Blackberry Boys* was a stand out entry and its impact stayed with me long after I completed judging. A poignant multi-layered story of friendship, it relies on an economy of language and, although subtly told, its true meaning is clearly understood. Second prize winner, *Gum Creek Mystery*, explores generational attitudes to and repercussions of European invasion/settlement; it is a journey towards reconciliation. The Gippsland Award winner, *Life was easier when boys were stupid*, situates the reader in the middle of party expectations and the impact of peer pressure. Choosing placegetters was not an easy task and all short-listed stories required multiple readings. Congratulations to all.



**FAW JOHN SHAW NEILSON POETRY AWARD**

Sponsored by **Collected Works Bookshop**

In its thirty-ninth year, for a poem or suite of poems of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author.

Commenced in 1971 and has never changed its name.

John Shaw Neilson was born in 1872 in Penola in South Australia. (His father was John Neilson who gained a reputation as a bush poet in the 1870s.) Due to the family's precarious lifestyle on the land, Neilson only completed two and a half years of schooling before returning to work on his family's farm. His first work was published in the Bulletin magazine in 1896 and he continued to write in the years that followed. During his lifetime he published 3 collections of his poetry: Heart of Spring in 1919, Ballad and Lyrical Poems in 1923 and New Poems in 1927. His Collected Poems edited by R.H. Croll was published in 1934. In the latter part of his life poor health and a move to Melbourne diminished his writing output and he died in 1942.

**Winner (\$600)**

Laura Jane Shore	Invincible Summer	NSW
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**Second Prize (\$150)**

Robert Wallis	Rooming House	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

James WF Roberts	The Echo of You	VIC
Joan Kerr	Expatriate	VIC
Dominique Hecq	Rain	VIC

**Commended**

Ross Donlon	Boys Dying	VIC
David Morisset	Persian Princess	NSW
Maree Dawes	Who's Counting?	WA

**Judge: Garth Madson**

The stand-out poem in this year's competition was 'Invincible Summer'. A clear winner, it illustrated how no one can write a narrative like a poet. The story follows the relationship of two friends through marriages, children and sickness. No image is accidental and the details are just delicious. No matter how much I found myself wanting to hate its main subject, there were still tears in my eyes, each time I reached that last stanza. Similarly, 'Rooming House' is a tiny narrative sparked by its details and engulfed by its own flame. The entries in this competition were of an extraordinarily high quality. There was not one work unworthy of being there. There was always something that intrigued me and made me want to read the poem a second time. Even when a subject seemed trite to me, the poet always found some way of twisting it around and showing me a fresh side to a familiar theme. My one complaint was that sometimes the rhythm of the poem was truncated for no apparent thematic reason. However, all poems were based on strong imagery and fresh metaphors. Poets also showed a depth of knowledge when it came to their subject matter and a vocabulary that enriched the final work. So many of these poems were worthy of mention, but 'Crossing the Nullarbor', 'Dark Places in Paradise', 'Next to me in Row P', 'On alien Shores', 'Qtilting', 'Reflections', 'Sea by Night', 'Seamstress' and 'She speaks' were just out of the money'

**FAW JIM HAMILTON AWARD**

Sponsored by **Eltham High School**

In its sixteenth year, for an unpublished novel of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author.

Commenced in 1994 and has never changed its name. Named in honour of Jim Hamilton in recognition of his contribution and that of his family for thirty years of service to the FAW, Australian writers and writing.

**Winner (\$600)**

John Somerville	Dry	NSW
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**Commended**

Michael Turner	Julie	NSW
Christina Clark	Spirit of the Jaguar	NSW

**Judges: Robert Watson and Clare Carlin**

This year's winning entry exhibited a raw power and a strong sense of the author's vision: of a slow-burn outrage finding vent in grim flight from and grimmer return to society. The author's own journey has only just begun, however: there remains much to do on this MS. Likewise, many submissions came to us with insufficient editorial work evident; writing is always also editing- selection, elimination, order. And an ending. Writers are advised to conclude in advance how they wish to finish the thing.

Relying on spell-check creates mistakes that are obvious to the reader. Get a dictionary and thesaurus and use them!

Many submissions displayed a good sense of story and character but lacked descriptive depth. How do things smell, taste, feel? What can you hear? Use your senses when writing. (Cf. the winning entry)

Genre novels were also popular but tended to hide behind the devices of their chosen genre, forgetting that all the tenets of good writing still apply.

'Historical fiction' brings its own editorial challenges and was a popular genre. Few writers bore in mind the by now famous dictum- 'The past is another country' -and allowed our society's contemporary mores to infiltrate the narrative voice. The same principle applies if the story is set in another country.

Finally, if you are writing, you need to read, read, read.

**FAW ANGELO B. NATOLI SHORT STORY AWARD**

Sponsored by **A.B Natoli Pty**

In its tenth year, for a short story of up to 3,000 words of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author.

Commenced in 1999. Named in memory of Angelo B. Natoli who for many years served as Honorary Solicitor to the FAW and whose firm still retains that office.

It has its origins in the FAW "K&M Teychenne" Short Story Award (1990 to 1993) and the Lyn Anne Simmonds Short Story Award (1994 to 1998).

**Winner (\$600)**

Claire Aman	Communion	NSW
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**Second Prize (\$400)**

Dr Leah Kaminsky	The Cat Feeders	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Matt Blackwood	Ants	VIC
Claire Aman	Love Me Tender	NSW
Dr Tangea Tansley	The Gambler	WA

**Commended**

Judith McLean	Lamingtons and liturgy	VIC
Nick Smith	The Non-field Guide To Animals (Office Use Only)	ACT

**Judge: Louise Le Nay**

The shortlist of about twenty is always difficult to pare down and separate. This year, the winner emerged quite quickly, and the other places were more difficult to award.

The winning story "Communion" describes commonplace events with luminous imagery. Its observations of flawed characters, frailty and loneliness are moving and truthful. In this story a lonely, sick woman looks for connection in church, but finds it, instead, in her relationship with the children in her street.

The second place winner "The Cat Feeders" also tells a story disconnection. We are given an instantly recognisable description of the world of back yards and lanes and rubbish piles, where stray cats are always found, where the self-appointed cat feeder wields unusual power.

The winning and commended entries are all stories of skill and insight. They lack sentimentality; they do not dictate the emotional response of the reader; they take us to a place where there is no judgement – allowing the reader to judge without influence. These entries use imagery and descriptions that are original and unusual but always underpinned by truth. They describe the commonplace with tenderness and empathy. They do not always resolve triumphantly. In fact, resolution is often unsatisfactory, and always subtextual.

Virginia Woolf writes: "Let a man get up and say 'Behold, this is the truth' and instantly I perceive a sandy cat filching a piece of fish in the background. Look, you have forgotten the cat, I say."

I believe the secret of all great stories lies in noticing the cat.

My sincere congratulations to the winners and commended, and thanks, as always, to the FAW for the privilege and pleasure of reading the entries.


**FAW DI CRANSTON AWARD**

Sponsored by **Di Cranston**

In its twenty-second year for a play, screenplay or TV script of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author under aged 25.

Commenced in 1988 as the FAW Young Writers Script Award with two categories titled the FAW Adele Shelton-Smith Award and the FAW Di Cranston Award. These categories were merged into one award in 2004.

**Winner (\$250)**

Nathaniel Moncrieff	Sleepyhead	WA
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**Highly Commended**

Amedeo Astorino	Demens	VIC
Megan Short	Another Man's Grave	VIC
Glenda Tobias	Hail Mary	VIC

**Commended**

Dr Anne Morgan	Warts & All	TAS
Lucia Nardo	Wildwood	VIC
Jane Waite	Apocalypse: A Love Story	TAS

**Judge: Peter Krausz**

Although there appeared to be fewer entries in this category this year, the quality was high overall. The range of writing approaches, including screenplays, plays and television scripts, indicate an interest in using a variety of forms. However I noticed that a number of entries were happy to be quite derivative in topic and theme, which is not necessarily a negative, but genre approaches need to do something fresh with the ideas rather than conforming to predictable templates. Indeed the commended, highly commended and winning entries, tried to do something a little unusual with the expected formulae. My advice is always to try and be more original, play with genre expectations rather than be lost in them, and find more challenging ways of capturing reader interest. I encourage writers to think outside the square and draft and redraft plays and screenplays in order to improve the story-telling process and the connection with the reader. Screenplays in particular need a sturdy script to support any visual elaboration contained in the narrative.

The winning entry, "Sleepyhead" is a play that utilizes dramatic devices along the lines of Pinter and Brechtian theatre, but reinvents them into a compelling, character driven thriller with elusive qualities. There is freshness to the writing, punctuated with short, sharp dialogue and evocative, mysterious story development, which creates an unsettling and compelling atmosphere to the end. I was impressed by the startling nature of the writing and the eschewing of deliberate padding and reflexiveness. I continue my challenge to all writers to go beyond the predicted approaches.



**FAW WHITELIGHT TV DRAMA SCRIPT AWARD**

 Sponsored by **White Light Productions**
**Winner (\$250)**

Sue Parritt                                      The Last Fling                                      VIC

**HIGHLY Commended**

Lucia Nardo                                      Table Manners                                      VIC

**Commended**

Suzan Dalziel                                      Revelations                                      VIC

Heather Gallagher                                      Sweet Meat                                      VIC

**FAW WHITELIGHT SHORT FILM SCRIPT AWARD**

 Sponsored by **White Light Productions**
**Winner (\$250)**

Sue Parritt                                      A Far White Fire                                      VIC

**HIGHLY Commended**

Mary-Louise Phillips                                      My Keeper                                      VIC

Glenda Tobias                                      Hail Mary                                      VIC

**Commended**

Sophie Langley                                      The List                                      NSW

Lucia Nardo                                      Third Time Lucky                                      VIC

**Judge: Angelo Salamanca**

The "FAW White Light Short Film and TV Script Award" received 21 entries. It was good to see screenwriters tackle different genres including animation and live action children's material.

Themes and subject matter were also diverse: a self-doubting hero on a mystical journey; love re-discovered by an elderly couple in a nursing home; both the darker and lighter side of religion; an exploration of sexuality and identity amongst twins; dealing with dementia, painful memories and its repercussions on family; straddling the realms of life and death; a singing dog and accordion-playing Italian grandfather – to name but a few.

Unfortunately some writers neglected to present their screenplays in the industry standard format. I would urge anyone unsure of correct formatting to look up relevant websites such as Film Victoria's, and download information.

Prospective producers / assessors appreciate the effort taken to correctly format a script. I hasten to add, however, that in this case, the incorrectly formatted scripts were not disadvantaged.

I would also urge writers tackling screenwriting for the first time to read scripts of produced works so as to gauge the success (or otherwise) of the transition from the page to screen.

As a teacher or screenwriting and judge for this award, I eagerly seek compelling story-lines affording strong imagery through gripping big print; engaging dialogue and subtext; non hackneyed scenarios.

Notwithstanding some under-developed scripts, the writing overall was of a high standard. I believe the winners and those commended stand a good chance of attracting producers with a view to having their work developed further and possibly produced.


**FAW YOUNG POET OF THE YEAR AWARD Part A**

 Sponsored by **Fellowship of Australian (FAW) Inc**

In its thirty third year, (for writers aged 8 – 12 years) for a poem of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author under 16 years.

Commenced in 1976 and was originally the FAW CJ Dennis Poetry Award. It was renamed in 2003 as there were a number of CJ Dennis awards run by other organisations and the new name reflected the spirit of the award.

**Winner (\$100)**

Antonia Langenegger                                      Relief                                      VIC

**Highly Commended**

Antonia Langenegger                                      A July Morning                                      VIC

**Commended**

Maia Loeffler                                      Cat And Mouse                                      VIC

Mahalia Chapman                                      My Nan                                      QLD

**Judge: Shirley Randles**

Choosing winners for this year was an extremely difficult task. Almost all entries were written in free verse and most poems dealt with issues concerning emotions or the environment. Care was taken with presentation and all contestants showed a sincere effort to plan their poems and express their work with depth and thought. Those who did not quite make a place should keep writing and not be discouraged.

'*Relief*' demonstrates the human fears and emotional helplessness of those who battle against natural forces.

'*July Morning*' is a joyful 'feel good' poem which celebrates nature's beauty.

**FAW YOUNG POET OF THE YEAR AWARD Part B**

Sponsored by **Fellowship of Australian (FAW) Inc**

In its sixteenth year, (for writers aged 13 – 16 years) for a poem of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author under 16 years.

Commenced in 1976 and was originally the FAW CJ Dennis Poetry Award. It was renamed in 2003 as there were a number of CJ Dennis awards run by other organisations and the new name reflected the spirit of the award.

**Winner (\$150)**

Alon Loeffler	Corner Swanston And Burke	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Benjamin Clark	Here Comes The Blaze!	VIC
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**Commended**

Laura Skipworth	A Friend, My Life	TAS
Hamet Cowan-Debont	Sutton Grange	VIC

**Judge: Shirley Randles**

Poems were neatly presented and many dealt with our recent bushfires. Entries varied in length from several lines to several pages.

When writing poetry it is helpful to read the work aloud and listen critically for unnecessary or over-used words. Listen carefully to the rhythm and make sure when using rhyme that it is not too contrived. Do not rely on 'spell check'. Incorrect spelling of words such as *their* and *there* are not corrected. 'A lot' is two words.

*Corner Swanston and Burke* demonstrates how a minimum of well chosen words can invoke a strong emotional response in the reader.

*Here Comes the Blaze* gives insight into the courage and despair of those who battle the bush fires.

**FAW MICHAEL DUGAN SHORT STORY AWARD Part A**

Sponsored by **Penguin Books Australia**

In its fifteenth year, (for writers aged 8 – 12 years) for a short story of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author under 16 years.

Commenced some thirty-two years ago in 1976 as the FAW Alan Marshall Award. In 1994, it changed its nature from an award for a work of fiction or long poem which contained strong narrative element to a short story award for young writers. It was renamed in 2006 in memory of Michael Dugan and his contributions to writers and writing in general in Australia and for nearly thirty-five years service to the FAW. As there were a number of Alan Marshall awards run by other organisations it was felt appropriate that the name change occur.

**Winner (\$100)**

Phillippa Hall	The Country	ACT
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**Highly Commended**

Tasma Fay Allen	Indiana And The Strawberry Prince	WA
Harvey Andrew	Sugar Blush 2	QLD

**Commended**

Elizabeth O'Brien	The Magic Hat	NSW
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**Judge: Shirley Hassen**

I have read and judged the story entries to the best of my ability. Each entry qualifying in its own right, I found, as usual, the judging to be a hard task.

Placing each entry was difficult as all were well written and told a story.

I marvel at the talent of our young writers that could be nurtured.

Until next year.



**FAW MICHAEL DUGAN SHORT STORY AWARD Part B**

Sponsored by **Penguin Books Australia**

In its fifteenth year, (for writers aged 13 – 16 years) for a short story of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author under 16 years.

Commenced some thirty-two years ago in 1976 as the FAW Alan Marshall Award. In 1994, it changed its nature from an award for a work of fiction or long poem which contained strong narrative element to a short story award for young writers. It was renamed in 2006 in memory of Michael Dugan and his contributions to writers and writing in general in Australia and for nearly thirty-five years service to the FAW. As there were a number of Alan Marshall awards run by other organisations it was felt appropriate that the name change occur.

**Winner (\$150)**

Georgia Goodwin	The Bully	SA
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**second prize**

Ella Loeffler	Monday Blue	VIC
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**third prize**

Benjamin Clark	Mrs Spencer's Class!	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Amelia Ivy Rose Towler	The Nomad's Dance	QLD
Louise Michelle Almeida	Euthanasia Of A Best Friend	VIC
Matthew Wilson	Blue On Grey	VIC

**Commended**

Matthew Wilson	Mr Carter's Personal War	VIC
Louise Michelle Almeida	Revenge	VIC
Georgia Goodwin	A Dangerous Flavour	SA

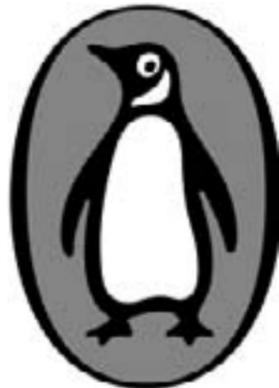
**Judge: Shirley Hassen**

I have read and judged the story entries to the best of my ability. Each entry qualifying in its own right, I found, as usual, the judging to be a hard task.

Placing each entry was difficult as all were well written and told a story.

I marvel at the talent of our young writers that could be nurtured.

Until next year.


**FAW COLIN THIELE POETRY AWARD**

Sponsored by **Be Published Pty Ltd**

In its twenty-fifth year for a poem of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author between 15-20 years.

Commenced in 1984 and has never changed its name. Named after Colin Thiele, one of Australia's most prolific and popular writers for children. He was born in 1920 in Eudunda, South Australia. His paternal grandfather migrated from Germany to South Australia in 1855. In 1945, Thiele married Rhonda Gill and they have two daughters.

**Winner (\$200)**

Michael Cramer	Another New Zero-appreciation Celebration AND Crazy	TAS
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**Judge: Grant Caldwell**

What has steered me away from most of the entries is an apparent lack of knowledge or appreciation of what is occurring in contemporary poetry. The great majority of poems were quite old-fashioned in style and structure, and many were most unoriginal in their subject matter or treatment. The winning entry stood out for its suggestion of assuredness and irony, as well as a willingness to explore more contemporary language and style, even in the second poem of the pair, a metered rhyming sonnet. The first poem of the pair, conversely a prose-poem, bravely attacks convention in a tongue-firmly-in-cheek "celebration" of *Another New-Zero Appreciation Celebration*.



**FAW JOHN MORRISON SHORT STORY AWARD**

Sponsored by **Paul Jennings**

In its forty-fourth year for a short story of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian Author between 15-20 years.

Commenced in 1965 as the FAW State of Victoria Short Story Award, which ceased in 1989. Named after John Gordon Morrison, born in Sunderland, England in 1904 and migrated to Australia in 1923. Initially working on sheep-stations in NSW, in the 1930s he began a ten-year stint working on the Melbourne waterfront and subsequently joined the Communist Party. He published his first stories under the name of "Gordon" in trade union magazines during this time. He was later a member of the Realist Writer Group and went on to publish two novels, four collections of stories and a book of essays. After leaving the waterfront he worked as a gardener until 1963 when he became a full-time writer, publishing also book reviews and journalism. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the Australian Literature Society, the Patrick White Literary Award in 1986 and the Order of Australia in 1989. He died in 1998.

**Winner (\$200)**

Isabel Di Tommaso	Siete Diferente	TAS
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**Second Prize (\$100)**

Claire Jago	Bao Xi Babe	TAS
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**Third Prize**

Emily Louise Bowman	The Minor Official's Dinner	VIC
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**Highly Commended**

Jacob Debets	The Final Round	VIC
Claire Jago	The Philosophy Student	TAS
Lucy Rose Gott	Entrapment	TAS

**Commended**

Lucy Rose Gott	Internal	TAS
Pascale Dreyer	The Light	TAS
Michael Cramer	Father Tells Me I Am Lucky	TAS

**Judge: Fred Curtis**

'Siete Diferente' tells us of a day in the life of a girl living in a mountain village. This narrative could well belong to a young Australian writing about the childhood of her Italian grandmother. A delightful atmosphere is created by seeing people and places through the eyes of a child.

'Bao Xi Babe' captures the reader's imagination with the very first sentence: It's the smell that's...different...' The narrator takes us to a small orphanage in the village of Bao Xi where his Chinese born mother intends to adopt an abandoned child. When the formalities are completed the family will return to Tasmania and a very different way of life. A sensitive, biographical story.

'The Minor Official's Dinner' introduces us to the unloved glutton, Novikov a self-styled epicurean who dines alone and yet has company of a sort. Irony, dry humour and the hero's dialogue help keep the reader's interest.

All texts are neatly typed with double spacing (and no fancy fonts): nice, clean easy to read copy. However, needless repetition and/or lack of dialogue often results in exposition, long descriptive and/or explanatory passages that impede the narrative flow. Too many adjectives (often inappropriate modifiers) tend to weaken the nouns and sometimes create unwanted clichés which, like bad grammar, spoil a good story.


**FAW MAVIS THORPE CLARK AWARD PART 1**

Sponsored by **Graeme & Robyn Base**

In its fifteenth year for an anthology of sustained quality and distinction by an Australian student.

Commenced in 1994 with no name changes. Named in honour of Mavis Thorpe Clark who was born 26 June, 1909 in Melbourne, Australia. Died: 8 July, 1999 Melbourne, Australia.

Mavis Thorpe Clark was a prolific writer of children's fiction who, in late life, also wrote for adults. In the process of researching her first adult book, Pastor Doug, the biography of Sir Douglas Nicholls, she created a large archive of letters and correspondence of relevance to indigenous scholarship.

Mavis Thorpe Clark was born in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1909. Her writing career began at the age of 14, when the Australasian published, as a children's serial, her work *The Red School*, by no means a masterpiece, but her first literary endeavour. Her first published book, written when she was 18 and sold to Whitcombe and Tombs in 1930 for the then handsome sum of £30, was *Hatherley's First Fifteen*, a boy's adventure story about Rugby football.

**Winner (\$350)**

Yani Armbruster	Waves Of Green Into Blue	TAS
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**Second Prize**

Claire Jago	The Observations Of A Child	TAS
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**Judge: Helen Cerne**

Diverse and engaging, the eleven entries in this category displayed an enthusiasm for written creative expression and for the most part, a competent range of writing styles and subject matter. Although varied in standard, it was pleasing to read fiction with well delineated characters often incorporating different narrative perspectives. Several fluent, well structured non-fiction pieces such as autobiographical and personal essays about contemporary issues were engaging and purposeful. The best writing was also evocative and fresh, with an effective narrative voice, a strong sense of place, good sentence variety and where appropriate, selective figurative imagery. However, students do need to read the criteria carefully...only one entry per student can be submitted which must be their own work. Several entries contained the same stories which disqualified them.

*Waves of Green and Blue*: A memorable collection of stories and poetry displaying good variety in structure and sentences, sparse but effective dialogue and a strong consistent voice. The longer lyrical story, 'A Seasoned Childhood,' evoking the four seasons with fine sensory imagery captured life's rhythms and changes very well.

*The Observations of a Child*: Fluent and expressive, this entry, with five diverse prose examples exploring adoption, politics and philosophy and poetry interrogating aspects of identity, was rich in thought and content.

<b>GRAEME &amp; ROBYN</b>
<b>BASE</b>

**FAW MAVIS THORPE CLARK AWARD PART 2**

Sponsored by **Graeme & Robyn Base**

In its fifteenth year for an anthology of sustained quality and distinction by a group of secondary school students.

Commenced in 1994 with no name changes. Named in honour of Mavis Thorpe Clark who was born 26 June, 1909 in Melbourne, Australia. Died: 8 July, 1999 Melbourne, Australia.

Mavis Thorpe Clark was a prolific writer of children's fiction who, in late life, also wrote for adults. In the process of researching her first adult book, Pastor Doug, the biography of Sir Douglas Nicholls, she created a large archive of letters and correspondence of relevance to indigenous scholarship.

Mavis Thorpe Clark was born in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1909. Her writing career began at the age of 14, when the Australasian published, as a children's serial, her work The Red School, by no means a masterpiece, but her first literary endeavour. Her first published book, written when she was 18 and sold to Whitcombe and Tombs in 1930 for the then handsome sum of £30, was Hatherley's First Fifteen, a boy's adventure story about Rugby football.

**Winner (\$200)**

Cantebury Girls Secondary College	Evensongs	VIC
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**Second Prize**

The Friend's School Writing Class	The Friend's School Writing Class Collection	TAS
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**Commended**

Year 12 St Michael's Collegiate	A Quail Called Anna And Other Works	TAS
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**Judge: Helen Cerne**

The standard of writing for this group award was impressive. Although there were not many entries, those submitted showed narrative and lyrical skill, strong voices and diverse writing genres exploring social and environmental issues, cultural identity and relationship concerns. The high quality of style and content this year augurs well for this new generation of young Victorian writers.

*Evensongs*: This strong poetry collection of fifteen poems displayed a love of language, maturing poetic ability and skilled craftsmanship. The rich metaphorical subject matter, restrained emotional content and diverse themes such as cultural difference, school bullying, moon phases and AC/DC were memorable. Clever modernist parodic poems in the structure and style of poets such as Eliot also displayed a lyrical dexterity. The varied figurative language use, the sound and movement of each poem but particularly the fresh imagery made this poetic entry arresting.

*The Friend's School Writing Class*: Divided into three sections, opinion/autobiography, poetry and prose, this collection displayed narrative ability, good character development and compelling contemporary subject matter such as cultural identity, consumerism, life changes. A well crafted anthology exploring competently three different genres, it featured eight young writers displaying strong individual voices and an enjoyment of creative expression.

*A Quail Called Anna and Other Works*: Strong and fresh voice in prose and poetry.

<b>GRAEME &amp; ROBYN</b>
<b>BASE</b>

**FAW CHRISTOPHER BRENNAN AWARD**

Sponsored by **SALLY DUGAN**

The thirty-fifth year of an award to honour an Australian poet who has written work of sustained quality and distinction.

The Fellowship supplies a special cast bronze plaque designed by Michael Meszaros. The recipient each year is chosen by judges on behalf of the Fellowship.

Commenced in 1973 and has had no name changes. Named after Christopher Brennan (1870-1932) was born in Sydney and educated at St Ignatius College on a scholarship founded by Cardinal Moran. After school he was expected to enrol in theology college but instead opted for Arts at the University of Sydney. He studied classics and philosophy and graduated in 1892. He won a scholarship in that year and travelled to the University of Berlin where he studied philosophy. Distracted by a love-affair and the attraction of French symbolist writers, he didn't complete his doctorate but returned to Sydney in 1894. He worked in the Public Library - while writing his first poetry - until 1909 when he was finally offered a position as a lecturer in modern literature at the University of Sydney, raising to associate professor in German and comparative literature. In 1897 Brennan published a booklet of his poems titled XVIII Poems: Being the First Collection of Verse and Prose by Christopher Brennan, and followed this later in the year with XXI Poems: (1893-1897) Towards the Source. In December 1914 he published his major collection of works titled simply Poems, but which is usually referred to as Poems (1913).

**Judges: Sheryl Clark, Kristen Henry and Kris Hemensley**

**Winner: Jennifer Strauss**

Sally  
Dugan

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