



Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic., Inc.

## National Literary Awards Results 2014

The winners and place-getters were honoured at an Awards Ceremony in Brunswick, Victoria on 10 April 2015

Fellowship of Australian Writers in Victoria: Celebrating 77 Years

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The Fellowship of Australian Writers Vic. Inc. National Literary Awards open on 1 September and close on 30 November of each year.

Like the Fellowship branches in other states, the Victorian branch is run by volunteers and exists without ongoing government funding. Our judges are volunteers too. The boxes of entries are posted at the same time that people are receiving Christmas presents, and the judges do the serious work of judging at a time of year when most of the population is celebrating the silly season or on holidays.

The prizes come from a diverse range of individuals and companies who sponsor the award categories with little fanfare and a great deal of passion for Australian literature. The Fellowship thanks all who keep these awards running—our awards team, the judges and the sponsors. We congratulate the writers who won awards in 2014, and encourage those who were not placed to read the reports of the judges carefully and consider entering in 2015.



The FAW Christopher Brennan plaque (above) was created by Michael Meszaros in 1979. It expresses the idea that all artists set out to clarify for their audience something worthwhile and relevant they have perceived in the world around them. The plaque shows a hand drawing aside a curtain to reveal an array of faces. Through the curtain we can only dimly make out the suggestion of these faces. With the curtain drawn aside, we can see them in fine detail. The hand is the artist's.

Michael Meszaros provides the plaques for the FAW Christopher Brennan Award and the FAW Barbara Ramsden Award (designed by Andor Meszaros) at cost.

## PART 1—BOOK AWARDS

### 1. FAW Excellence in Non-Fiction Award

*Sponsored by Dulcie Stone*

An award for a NON-FICTION work, including biography and autobiography, of sustained quality and distinction with an Australian theme, first published after 30/11/13

**Winner \$500**

Don Watson *The Bush: Travels in the Heart of Australia* Hamish Hamilton/Penguin Books

**Highly Commended** (alphabetical order)

James Brown *ANZAC'S Long Shadow: The Cost of our National Obsession* Redback/Schwartz Publishing

Mark Dapin *The Nashos' War: Australia's National Servicemen and Vietnam* Viking /Penguin Books

Tim Low *Where Song Began: Australia's Birds and how they Changed the World* Viking/Penguin Books

### Judges' Report: Jean Thornton and Dr Bill Anderson

A fine selection of books were entered this year. The entries were of a high standard.

Don Watson's *The Bush* is outstanding, a superbly written, vastly entertaining contribution to our understanding of Australia. It is a worthy winner from a strong field.

Tim Low's *Where Song Began* is an absorbing, fascinating account of our native bird life. Mark Dapin's *The Nashos' War* gives valuable insight into the Australian National Service Scheme and its effect on the individual serviceman. James Brown's *Anzac's Long Shadow* is the clear-sighted work of a former Australian Army Officer, shedding valuable new light on what has become a controversial subject. Each of these meticulously researched, well written books makes an important, highly readable contribution to our historical understanding.

### 2. FAW Christina Stead Award

*Sponsored by Colin Peterson*

An award for a work of fiction by an Australian author, first published after 30/11/13, and not previously published locally or overseas.

**Winner \$500**

John Marsden *South of Darkness* Pan Macmillan

**Highly Commended**

Rohan Wilson *To Name those Lost* Allen & Unwin

M.J. Stevens *Bound* M.J. Stevens

Judith Colquhoun *Thicker than Water* Black Pepper Publishing

**Commended**

Sue Parritt *Sannah And The Pilgrim* Odyssey Books

Sofie Laguna *The Eye of the Sheep* Allen & Unwin

Josephine Moon *The Tea Chest* Allen & Unwin

### Judges' Report: Gail Blundell and Philip Rainford

Having judged this award for some years now, we find that there are an increasing number of novels that lose steam about three quarters of the way through—as if the author became bored and took the quickest route to finish the story. If the writer appears bored, the reader will be bored too. When we choose a winner we always look for new ideas or new ways of treating old ideas, something that catches the attention of the reader early and holds that interest by laying out a trail of interesting breadcrumbs for the reader to follow. Many novels spend too much time on setting the scene and creating the characters at the start, rather than drawing the reader into the story and painting the landscape along the way. We are not going into the specifics of this year's winners, but suggest that upcoming novelists read their work and consider these golden rules along the way.

### 3. FAW Anne Elder Award

*Sponsored by Cathie Elder and the FAW as trustees of the Anne Elder Trust*

An award for a first book of poetry first published after 30/11/13

#### Winner \$1000

Cathy Altmann, *Circumnavigation Poetica* Christi Press

#### High Commended

James Stuart, *Anonymous Folk Songs* Vagabond Press

#### Commended

Dick Alderson, *The Astronomer's Wife* Sunline Press

Zenobia Frost, *Salt and Bone* Walleah Press

Ruth McIver, *The Sunset Club*

#### Judges' Report: Anne Elvey and Garth Madsen

All the entrants in this year's competition were commendable in some aspect of their writing. Some books handled political, ecological and domestic themes very well. The best books of poetry work as a cohesive whole. This quality is hard to define but is usually a matter of balance. It might be about theme or style or narrative but should not come at the expense of poetry's ability to surprise. Many of the collections would have benefitted from a more rigorous selection process and some needed further editing. Poems that work well in readings sometimes do not read well on the page. Poets should work hard to eliminate clichés, lists and ineffective repetitions.

The winner, *Circumnavigation*, is about a journey through the experience of and recovery from breast cancer. As such, it holds together as a single collection. This is a common theme in contemporary poetry but these poems continually surprise the reader with their freshness. The style is crisp and spare, the imagery simple but powerful. *Anonymous Folk Songs* has a surety of voice. Beauty pushes against tragedy and danger, and the poet's lyricism avoids the pitfalls of sentimentality. *The Sunset Club* has a strong narrative moved by characters with real psychological depth. *Salt and Bone* shows intelligent writing with a brilliant use of metaphor, poems that twist their way and are always surprising. In the astronomer's wife, the simple imagery oozes out of complex but familiar domestic memories. Also short-listed were *An Existential Grammar*, *Woodsmoke* and *Embracing the Razor*.

### 4. FAW Barbara Ramsden Award

*Sponsored by Penguin Random House Australia*

An award that recognises the roles of editors and authors in producing literary works of outstanding quality.

#### Winner of the FAW Barbara Ramsden Plaque by Andor Meszaros

*Gough Whitlam: His Time (The Biography Volume 2)* by Professor Jenny Hocking, edited by Susan Keogh  
The Miegunyah Press

#### Highly Commended

*The Feel-Good Hit of the Year: A Memoir* by Liam Pieper, edited by Cate Blake, Penguin Hamish Hamilton

#### Judges' Report: Christina Crossley Ratcliffe and Julia Maurus

This year's entries were all biographical. *Gough* deserves the prize for the sheer volume of information presented in a structure that flows well. Despite the dauntingly dense text and long sentences, the narrative seldom misses a beat, except where it misses a comma. Occasional ambiguities are easier to forgive amongst thousands of facts and quotations.

The authorial voice is consistently that of a scrupulously fair journalist with the wit to insert a fine needlepoint of irony into irrefutable fact. Where hindsight and narrative structure required a reprise of a controversial event, the near-total avoidance of repetition in phrasing and quotations is masterly.

Hocking's acknowledgement of Keogh's copy-editing as 'expert' speaks volumes. They are both veterans of their craft with personal experience of the relevant timeframe, and their joint commitment to this monumental project of several years' duration is reminiscent of the glory days of publishing.

*The Feel-Good Hit of the Year* presents the tragicomic pitfalls and pratfalls of the author's journey from muddled flower child to reformed criminal in a frank, easy-to-read style. Although it takes a while to live up to the promise (on the cover) of an 'achingly funny' read, the stranger-than-fiction moments in this memoir are truly hilarious. This memoir is a testament to the author-editor partnership. As Pieper states, 'My editor was a chiropractor, breaking down the structure so it could move more easily; a field medic sawing away at the gangrene; a psychiatrist giving the book a moral compass as well as a narrative one. She recognised potential that nobody else could see and forced both the author and the publisher to rise to the occasion.'

## PART 2—MANUSCRIPT AWARDS

### 5. FAW Community Writers Award

*Sponsored by Impact Digital*

An award for an unpublished manuscript of short prose and/or poetry which was compiled, written and edited after 30/11/13 by a group of writers.

#### Winner \$500 Impact Digital Voucher

Bayside Poetry Group *Bayviews Vic*

#### Judge's Report: Louise Davenport and Sandra Di Fransesco

The anthology of poems *Bay Views* is of a high standard with the poems displaying acute sense of place and atmosphere. In addition they have strong evocative detailed descriptions using the theme of the beach. The landscape imagery of the beach is particularly poignant to the reader. There is clever use of metaphors linking the beach to themes like the seasons and human life which is philosophical. Other poems included in the collection by members were also of a high standard and covered various themes from magpies to red knickers. There was a lot of originality shown. The collection of short stories that make up *Flung* highlight high standards of grammar and spelling which is always a great bonus to the reader not having to backtrack what has been read. In particular two of them combined superb grammar with strong metaphor and imagery. However as a whole the stories needed more character development, maturity and originality. The stories were not as strong as those in *Bay Views*. However this group of writers is to be congratulated in working together for a shared vision that produced volumes of consistent style with stories that are fast paced. This writer's group is to be encouraged to continue to develop as a group to improve characterisation while including demonstrated strengths in plot and pace.

### 6. FAW Jennifer Burbidge Short Story Award

*Sponsored by Mary Burbidge*

An award for a short story of up to 3000 words dealing with any aspect of the lives of those who suffer some form of physical, intellectual or mental health disability and/or the impact of disability on their families.

#### Winner \$250

Sarah Endacott, *Happy birthday, Denise 2014 Vic*

#### Highly Commended

Sarah Endacott, *Happy birthday, Denise 1976 Vic*

#### Commended

Sarah Endacott, *MNN Vic*

Carmel Lillis *The Anatomy of a Perfect Match Vic*

#### Judge's Report: Mary Burbidge

This was an interesting collection to read, covering many aspects of the impact of disability on individuals and the people in their lives. All were on the topic and shaped as stories rather than accounts, with fictional and biographical offerings largely indistinguishable. Most stories were well edited but some were over-written with a rather forced structure or excessive descriptiveness. It is not necessary to have a simile in every sentence.

*Happy birthday, Denise 2014* stood out on first reading, not only for the powerful poignancy of story-line, but for the engaging simplicity and clarity of the writing. The reader learns so much about Denise's life, character and emotions, but none of this is 'told', it is all 'shown' as Denise lives the days of her life. *Happy birthday, Denise 1976* reveals another day in the life of Denise and her twin brother, told with the same skill. Each story stands alone but the two complement each other to produce a heart-wrenching whole. I was glad I happened to read of the later birthday first and then could enrich my appreciation of the adult Denise with an understanding of her childhood experience.

*Mnn* and *The Anatomy of a Perfect Match* explore the importance of effective communication in dealing with disability.

## 7. FAW Mary Grant Bruce Award

*Sponsored by the Shire of Wellington*

An award for short stories of up to 5000 words aimed at readers aged 10-15 years.

### First Prize \$600

Linda Fitzpatrick *The Day Mum Sold the Touchscreen* Vic

### Second Prize \$300

Vicky Daddo *Billy Watkins* Vic

### Highly Commended

Janice Williams *Coals of Fire* Vic

Bruna Romanin *Minmi Crossing* Vic

Neridah McMullin *Connor and the Whale Rescue* Vic

### Commended

Janice Williams *An 'L' of a Problem* Vic

Petrina Meldrum *Better than Best* Tas

Adrian Peniston-Bird *The Weirdos* Vic

### Shire of Wellington Prize \$200

Vicky Daddo *Billy Watkins* Vic

### Judge's Report: Margaret Campbell

It was a surprise this year to find such an Australian theme in the entries—bushfires, Indigenous people, convicts, soccer, WW1 and the sea. Some excellent use of imagery transported me to place and event, keeping me absorbed for the length of the narrative. Some very well written stories stood out with their attention to detail in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Unfortunately, some were excellent while this attention to detail was lacking.

From the short list of nine, first prize winner, *The Day Mum Sold the Touchscreen*, stood out from first reading with its immediacy and authentic dialogue and humour—sibling rivalry and its repercussions with an unexpected ending. Second prize winner, *Billy Watkins*, is a poignant narrative of the first meeting of an Aboriginal group and a young son of a convict. A devastating story so simply told. *Billy Watkins* is also the Gippsland Regional Winner.

## 8. FAW John Shaw Neilson Poetry Award

*Sponsored by Collected Works*

An award for an unpublished poem, or a suite of poems, between 14 and 60 lines, including epigraphs.

### First Prize \$600

Simon Kennedy *Water's Edge* Qld

### Second Prize \$150

Sue Cartledge *Suite: Nijinsky and Mahler Litter of Seven* NSW

### Highly Commended

James Hughes *During a Difficult Phase* Vic

John Jenkins *Kelly at the Mines (1948)* Vic

Gemma White *Things Taken for Granted* Vic

### Commended

David Campbell *And So We Come To This* Vic

Marjorie Lewis-Jones *Dark Rendezvous* NSW

Anthony Watson *Portraits* Vic

### Judge's Report: Garth Madsen

Some entries in this competition seemed to state the obvious and it was hard to understand why the poet felt the need to repeat what had been said so many times before. Others seemed to rejoice in obscurity and it was hard to understand where they were coming from or where they were going. Still other poems missed their target. Some needed just to reach a millimeter further while others stretched too far. A large number of poems needed to find a finer balance. This is a skill that cannot be taught, cannot be adequately measured. Perhaps, it can never wholly be realised, but it can be something for which poets should aim.

Some poems astound us with the scope of their own achievement. They taunt our emotions and they tease our intellects. In one line, they speak bluntly; in the next, they cloak with metaphors. This year's winner, *Water's Edge*, is one such poem. It is about birth and it does not deviate from the so familiar storyline but the poet is totally original in the presentation of these details.

Second was *Suite: Nijinski and Mahler*. Like many other entries, this was an ekphrastic poem but the poet added extra dimensions with vivid and dynamic imagery as well as a strong narrative. The first part, 'Nijinski', is a pas de deux. Both partners are real and imagined. The second, 'Mahler', is no less of a dance. It reveals the artist in the art, the art in the artist.

### **9. FAW Jim Hamilton Award**

*Sponsored by Allen & Unwin (Part A) and Twelfth Planet Press (Part B)*

Awarded for manuscripts with a minimum length of 30,000 words. The prize is a review by the sponsors.

#### **Part A (Fiction)**

##### **Winner**

Clinton Caward *Ground Truth* NSW

##### **Highly Commended**

Ben Walter *A Guide to Bushwalking in Tasmania: Twenty-Five Short Walks* Tas

##### **Commended**

Dorothy Simmons *Living Like a Kelly* NSW

Holly Zwalf *Lolly Poppins* NSW

Gabrielle Gardner *The Tenant at Holders Farm* Vic

Carolyn Miley *The Competition* Vic

#### **Part B Science Fiction and Fantasy**

##### **Winner**

Dorothy-Jane Daniels *Green Jay and Crow* NSW

##### **Commended**

Judith Bridge *Imprised* WA

#### **Judges' Report:**

##### **Part A: Clare Carlin and Robert Watson**

This year the field was unusually even, a fact reflected in our extensive list of 'commended' entries. Many entries fell short by dint of an obvious problem not evident to the authors, who may have been blindsided by their closeness to their creations: missing, for example, an unreliable and excessive reliance on adjectives ('the poorest of linguistic categories'—Roland Barthes), a striving for unadorned realism that slips on its own bile, or the sacrifice of (all too) human character at the altar of message. The judges encourage all writers to allow their immaculate creations to be sullied under the critical gaze of a stranger.

The winning entry appeared to have a well thought out strategy that would anticipate the reader's qualms and misgivings. Creating a lively and active texture that works on several different levels of signification, the author allows the narrative to charge along, powered by its characters' dynamism and instability, carrying the threat of breakdown at any moment. The narrative is brought to an arresting stop and proceeds in contrasting 'factoid' style. This caesura and contrast illuminates what has come before in a most satisfying fashion.

The runner-up was a difficult entry to assess, thanks to its uncompromising method and style and the density of the prose—stretches of which provided the best writing in the competition. It is a sad tale of accumulating alienation, wherein the narrator appears to become subsumed in 'his' landscape. (Appropriately enough, the setting is Tasmania.) The judges believe some readers would be pulled in by the imbedded, ultra-subjective narration; others would cry out loud 'Where's the story?'

All the works on the 'commended' list—and some that weren't—were full of merit, and the judges recommend their authors to persevere, seek out readers' opinions—professional or otherwise. It has been our privilege to read them.

##### **Part B: Michael Foster**

There is always a sense of excitement when reading a manuscript, when within the first few sentences realising that the author is gifted and might just need this final nudge of encouragement to make the leap from talented to ... well, talented and possessing an award for it. As such, it is heartening to see the FAW Jim Hamilton award for science fiction and fantasy progressing into its second year, and with an ever-improving standard of entries.

Manuscripts were well formatted and presented. As happens, some suffered from typographical and punctuation errors, but the overall standard was respectable. The only comment I can make for all entrants (and it might seem redundant to say this) is that the authors would benefit from having more experience. One writer might have all the elements of storytelling, but struggle with arranging them in order; another might drop words in the most spellbinding manner, but fail in launching the narrative on any voyage of interest. What all entrants deserve is applause for having the strength and dedication to get what so many find impossible: getting their work finished.

The winning entry demanded attention from its opening sentence—something to which all stories should aspire. *Green Jay and Crow* exists in a captivating environment, where exist aliens, robots, clones, time-travel and all manner of sci-fi staple, all eased in, side by side, with realistic characters without visible edge or seam. The story was intelligent and well-developed, not unlike something I'd hope to discover in my local book store. Switching between lead characters was not quite as successful, complicated by parallel use of the first person point-of-view. Characters needed more differentiation and discrete segmentation to avoid confusing the reader. Varying the section title is not enough in this respect.

*Imprised* was commended for its effortless and amiable narrative; however, the whimsical style also impeded the story's progression, and what was unusual and stimulating in the short term outlived its welcome. A more assertive narrative would have served well. The author has an attractive writing style that is to be envied, yet requires more refinement and reigning in.

### **10. FAW Angelo B Natoli Short Story Award**

*Sponsored by AB Natoli Pty*

An award for a short story on any theme to a maximum of 3,000 words.

#### **First Prize \$600**

Sarah Endacott *Mnn* Vic

#### **Second Prize \$400**

Frances Olive *Mother, Grandmother Grandmother* NSW

#### **Highly commended**

Carmel Lillis *The Sky is Perfect Tonight* Vic

Kate Elkington *Old Light* Qld

Kate Elkington *DNA* Qld

#### **Commended**

Ben Walter *Days of Yielding* Tas

Melanie Cheng *Neuroplasticity* Vic

Jennifer Porter *Death Rattle* Vic

#### **Judge's Report: Louise Le Nay**

The winning story, *Mnn*, is a masterful study of human frailty, misunderstanding and prejudice. The writer shows insight and empathy in exploring a character who cannot communicate verbally. Denny accepts the failings of her carers, who are less skilled in Auslan than she is. But her acceptance is not reciprocated when she confronts a difficult experience on a day out at the zoo. The story is told with pragmatism, love and humour. The underlying sadness of the piece is unmistakable.

The second place-getter, *Mother, Grandmother, Grandchild*, is masterful in its descriptions. Dylan Thomas lurks in the shadows of this piece. It is a story of three individual but interconnected lives characterised by longing, frailty and innocence.

The Highly Commended and Commended stories are characterized by strong characters, flawed understanding, deceptions and, always, love. Very little separated the finalists.

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

### **11. FAW Di Cranston Award**

*Sponsored by Whitelight Productions*

An award for a stage play, radio play, television script or screenplay of no more than 120 pages in script format.

#### **Winner \$250**

Kuni Hashimoto *Far From Cowra* NSW

#### **Highly Commended**

Nathaniel Moncrieff, *A Perfect Specimen* Vic

Mark Cashion *The Intercession* Vic

#### **Commended**

John Jenkins, *Heaven HQ* Vic

Geoffrey Greves, *News Watch* NSW

Agi Dobson *For a Kiss of Love* Vic

Michael Ball *Fighting for Artemis* Qld

### **Judge's Report: Peter Krausz**

It is very gratifying to see the improvement in the number and quality of entries for this year's Di Cranston Awards. Writers are clearly more willing to tackle important and obscure Australian historical events and people, and are also willing to play around with the usual formats and approaches to plays and screenplays.

What makes a good piece of writing, deserving an award, is the attention to detail, in both character development and story, evidence of redrafting in order to highlight key elements of the narrative, and some challenging aspects to the predictable way that many stories develop. Good writing is epitomised by playing with audience expectations and using language in occasionally creative ways.

The winning entry demonstrates this well by presenting a historic and significant event in Australian history during World War 2, the Cowra breakout and investigating the causes and outcomes of this event from both the Japanese and Australian perspective. Dialogue is incisive, and characters are well developed, leading to a strong climactic conclusion for the audience to ponder.

The other highly commended and commended entries demonstrate unusual and insightful approaches to events, characters or ideas. I like to be challenged by incisive writing, ways of approaching ideas in an unexpected way, and clever approaches to highlighting historic events. After a lull last year, this year's entries overall proved to be more thoughtful and articulate in their story development. Congratulations to all the writers for taking up the cudgels of quality, sustained writing.

I hope to see more of this in the future, especially more quality screenplays and the almost extinct radio play, demonstrating an understanding of strong, literary approaches to topics and themes. I especially encourage writers to explore our rich Australian history and turn this into well-crafted plays and screenplays. I challenge all writers to rise to this opportunity.

## **PART 3—YOUNG WRITERS' AWARDS**

### **12. FAW Young Poet of the Year Award**

*Sponsored by Clare's Desk*

An award for a poem on any theme. There is no word limit.

#### **Part A: Winner \$150**

Celine Ng *The Chambers of your Heart* WA

#### **Highly Commended \$50**

Miranda Plowman *Birds of Play* Vic

#### **Commended \$50**

Jayde Rumoro *The Amazing Idea* Vic

#### **Part B: Winner \$250**

Freya Cox *And the Orchestra Played on* Tas

#### **Highly Commended \$50**

Ella Fox- Martens *The Landscape of Loss* WA

#### **Commended 2 x \$25**

Amelia Hosie *Life of the Sea* NSW

Neel Iyer *Inferno* NSW

### **Judge's Report: Shirley Randles**

Most of the submissions for Part A were in free verse. Only few rhymed and most themes dealt with the environment or personal relationships. At times unnecessary words or detailed explanations slowed the poetry and interrupted the rhythm of the words. Reading the poetry aloud several times will assist in eliminating this problem. Several writers attempted to describe adult relationships but at a level the younger authors had not yet experienced. This affected the 'reality' of the poems. However young poets must not be discouraged. They must continue writing and with increased maturity will achieve excellent results. All entries displayed a careful and sincere approach by the writers. Those that didn't gain a place deserve to be congratulated and encouraged to continue writing.

In Part B submissions were either free verse or rhymed. Environment or personal relationship themes dominated the submissions. Care was taken with rhythm and rhyme. There were very few unnecessary words. It appears these poets have learnt 'less is more.' The carefully selected words set the scene and sensitive use of repetition provided an emotional impact. Those that did not gain a place in the judging shouldn't be discouraged. Each poem highlighted sensitivity to the particular topic and the overall high standard was pleasing. My advice to all poets: Keep writing poetry.



### 13. FAW Michael Dugan Short Story Award

*Sponsored by the Harlequin Group of Companies*

An award for a short story on any theme of up to 3000 words.

#### **Part A: Winner \$100**

Elliot Perez *The Fairytale Crisis* Vic

#### **Highly Commended**

Hayley Drake *The Big Picture* Vic

Bastiaan Swart *Murder at the Mansion* Vic

#### **Commended**

Jalen Atkins *Bushfire Danger* Vic

Jasmine Holding *Rachel's Nightmare* Vic

Jack Hulls *The Determined* Vic

#### **Part B: Winner \$150**

Jason Cleary-Gorton *Only Hope* NSW

#### **Highly Commended**

Thanh-Mai Nguyen *Riptide* SA

Daisy Shnier *The Howling* Vic

#### **Commended**

Amelia Hosie *Armistice* NSW

Pascale Kahn *The City Where They Caught the Stars* NSW

Zac Fernandez *The Woods That Were Painted Red* Vic

#### **Judge's Report: Shirley Hassen**

As usual, stories were interesting and well written but some stories lost their ending or ended too abruptly. This is an aspect worth paying attention to as it can make the difference between winning an award and missing out. It is important to observe correct formatting for competitions—some entries were not page numbered. There were many good stories entered this year. It is impossible for every entrant to be mentioned, but I would encourage young writers to keep writing and entering the awards.

### 14. FAW John Morrison Short Story Award

*Sponsored by Paul Jennings*

An award for a story of up to 3000 words on any theme.

#### **First Prize \$200**

Free Vreman *Flight* Tas

#### **Second Prize \$100**

Cameron Croese *Rachel* NSW

#### **Commended**

Alessandra Prunotto *Dad* Vic

#### **Judges' Report: Louise Davenport and Sandra Di Francesco**

It was an absolute joy reading all the short stories for this award. Each was so different from one another and on the whole displayed good writing from such a young age group (17–20). However two stories clearly stood out. *Flight* is an enthralling, gripping tale of a convict's escape. It uses powerful imagery and metaphor of a cockatoo to represent the notion of freedom. It takes the reader along a journey from start and finish with intense action taking place along the way. 'Rachel' recalls the young male narrator's first love—a girl named Rachel. It makes one question the concept of love. It takes the reader on a journey of their first love. There is strong maturity, strong realism and acute attention to details of place and emotion. The winning stories contained such elements. Furthermore, they contained outstanding maturity, strong openings, good flowing prose, excellent grammar, even pace, coherence and strong imagery. These elements helped cement the judges' decisions. Hence it's strongly advisable that future entrants aim for such elements in their writing. Some of the entries clearly needed work on these aspects. They had potential with interesting and often highly imaginative themes but lacked often in attributes like coherence, good pace, proper grammar etc. Two stories in particular were hard to follow from start to finish with weak coherence and flow. The judges got lost along the way and had to find their way back several times.

### 15. FAW Mavis Thorpe Clark Award Part A (Individual Entry)

*Sponsored by Robyn and Graeme Base*

An award for a collection of up to 10 pieces (poetry and/or prose) by an individual secondary school student.

**Winner \$350**

Alice Bleathman *Why is a Raven like a Writing Desk?* [St Michael's Collegiate] Tas

**Highly Commended**

Aimee Collard *Sun Come, Sun Go* [Northcote High School] Vic

**Commended**

Cameron Allen *A Penchant for Oppression* [St Michael's Collegiate] Tas

#### **Judge's Report: Georgina Luck**

I enjoyed reading the entries and was pleased with the diversity of the writing. The three winning writers demonstrated a strong narrative voice and very good use of dialogue to engage the reader and build character.

The writer of the winning entry, *Why is a raven like a writing desk?*, seems to be a natural story-teller. The pieces are vivid, refreshingly idiosyncratic and gave me some laugh-out-loud moments. (For example, when a narrator tells us that at the age of six she invested in a puce mustard brown t-shirt that brandished the words 'You Are Not The Boss Of Me' across the front. Lovely.)

The highly commended entry, *Sun Come, Sun Go*, displays an impressive range—it includes comedy, drama and a lovely modern fairytale which for me was the standout piece. The narrator also captures the ambiguity of adolescence very well.

The commended entry, *A Penchant for Oppression* engages satirically with contemporary issues, including politics and reality television. Satire can be difficult to pull off without making a reader feel patronised, and the writer succeeds well with strong characterisation.

I encourage future entrants to read widely, including contemporary literary journals that publish emerging writers such as *Overland* and *The Lifted Brow*. I also advise entrants to use adjectives and adverbs sparingly; for example, instead of telling the reader that a character is speaking 'irately', try to show how a character is speaking or feeling by their words and actions.

Congratulations to everyone for their commitment in entering—I hope you all submit again.

### 16. FAW Mavis Thorpe Clark Award Part B (Group Entry)

*Sponsored by Robyn and Graeme Base*

An award for a collection of up to 15 pieces (poetry and/or prose) by a group of secondary school students.

**Winner \$200**

St Michael's Collegiate *Why Is a Raven Like A Writer's Desk?* Tas

**Highly Commended**

St Michael's Collegiate *Quid est Veritas?* Tas

**Commended**

St Michael's Collegiate *Shadow and Light* Tas

#### **Judge's Report: Pauline Csuba**

I was delighted once again to have the opportunity to read anthologies from Australian secondary schools. This year I was extremely impressed by the overall standard of entries. I want to highlight the importance of presentation and the need to proof read; to leave wide margins and use a reader friendly font and follow all conditions of entry for submission. Remember, this could be the first point of elimination for any written work in competitions or any manuscript you might be wishing to send in. I encourage students to develop their craft of writing for personal pleasure or for their families as all writing is a worthwhile read. Several stories dealt with current issues of injustice against refugees, women's rights, reality television and bullying in the home. Incredible word usage of ignominy, unctuous, chortled and nefariousness caught my attention. It was pleasurable reading the short stories, novel extracts and poetry. I really was impressed by the content in this year's anthologies. These students have spent many hours refining their craft and this was noticeable in the final submissions. I congratulate all students who participated in this year's awards as the writings exceeded my expectations.

## 17. FAW Ivy Hart Peace and Environment Rhyming Poetry Award

*sponsored by Meryl Tobin*

An award for rhyming poetry of sustained quality and distinction with the theme of Peace OR the Environment.

### Part A: Yrs 3-4 primary school children

**First Prize: (\$100)**

Olivia Hosie *What's in a Colour?* NSW

**Runner-up: (\$25)**

Marion Scott *Wild Horses* Tas

**Highly Commended**

Tessa Mei Lin Yu *War and Peace* Tas

### Part B: Yrs 5-6 primary school children

**First Prize: \$100**

Celine Ng *Reflections of a Polar Bear* WA

No Runner-up prize was awarded due to insufficient entries.

### Judge's Report: Meryl Tobin

There were six entries in Part A and three in Part B, one of which was ineligible because it was not a rhyming poem. All entries were worthy efforts, and I encourage all poets to continue to write poetry. Part A's winning poem *What's in a Colour?* was an excellent example of a colour poem. Though a simply constructed poem, it was admirably executed with perfect rhyme and a rollicking beat. Images such as 'Orange is the colour of a glowing ember/Orange is the colour of a daffodil's centre' were well-chosen. The Runner-up poem *Wild Horses* captured the sight, sound and feel of wild horses galloping: 'They run along the orange bank/Nose to nose, flank to flank'. A powerful start. However the last stanza did not quite seem to fit.

The Highly Commended Poem *War and Peace* is a moving poem about a young bomber pilot being shot down. Part B's winning poem, *Reflections of a Polar Bear*, is an outstanding poem that tackled the theme of Global Warming in a mature way. Its beginning grabs the reader: 'I wonder if the humans know/My home has been reduced to snow'. All poets chose a strong theme about nature, war and/or peace and illustrated it with vivid images. However, they must read their poems aloud until satisfied the rhyme and rhythm works and all words make sense. Winning poets deserve immediate publication, and other poets should work some more on their poems and then offer them up for publication.

## PART 4— COMMENDATION AWARD

### 18. FAW Christopher Brennan Award

*Sponsored by Sally Dugan*

**Winner of the FAW plaque designed by Michael Meszaros**

Alan Wearne

### Judges: Jennifer Harrison and Philip Salom

Alan Wearne has been involved with the Australian poetry scene since the late sixties. After publishing two poetry collections, *Public Relations* (1972) and *New Devil, New Parish* (1976), he played a pivotal role in introducing the verse novel to mainstream Australian poetry with *Out Here* (1976) and *The Nightmarkets* (1986). *The Nightmarkets* won the Banjo Award and was adapted for performance. Wearne wrote a satirical novel on Melbourne's football (*Kicking in Danger* 1997) and hosted *Conversations with a Dead Poet*—a documentary film on his friend the late poet John Forbes—before his next verse novel was published. That verse novel, *The Lovemakers* (2001), was awarded the 2002 NSW Premier's (Kenneth Slessor) Prize for Poetry, NSW Book of the Year and the Arts Queensland Judith Wright Calanthe Award. *The Lovemakers, Book Two* was the co-winner of the 2004 Foundation for Australian Literary Studies' Colin Roderick Award. *The Lovemakers* has been republished in one volume by Shearsman Press. Alan Wearne's most recent works are *Sarsparilla: a Calypso*, a limited edition, one-off poem (2007), *The Australian Popular Songbook* (2008) and *Prepare the Cabin for Landing* (2012). He is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Wollongong and publisher at Grand Parade Poets.

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