



WINNERS OF THE 2025 VICTORIAN PREMIER'S LITERARY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Wednesday 19 March

The winners of the 2025 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards (VPLAs) have been announced at a ceremony in Melbourne this evening. Nukgal Wurra author-artist, Wanda Gibson has been awarded the prestigious Victorian Prize for Literature, for her elegant picture book *Three Dresses* – marking the first time the winner of the Children's Prize for Literature has taken out the overall prize.

Prizes were distributed in nine categories over the course of the evening with many of this year's winning authors and writers in attendance. Now in its 40th year, the VPLAs stand as one of the most lucrative literary awards in the country with a total prize pool of AUD\$315,000 gifted across the awards suite. Along with their category earnings, the overarching winner of the Victorian Prize for Literature also receives a further \$100,000, Australia's single richest literary prize.

Minister for Creative industries Colin Brooks said: 'Congratulations to all of this year's Victorian Premier's Literary Award Winners and shortlisted writers. Collectively their work reflects the richness and diversity of Australian stories and storytelling, and there is plenty for people of all ages to dive into and read. It's wonderful to see a book written for children take out the Victorian Prize for Literature for the first time this year, congratulations to Wanda Gibson on this extraordinary achievement.'

Erin Vincent, CEO, The Wheeler Centre, said: 'The Wheeler Centre is proud to present these prestigious awards on behalf of the Victorian Government, especially in the 40th anniversary year for the awards. For forty years these awards have honoured and celebrated Australia's best writers and this year's exceptional shortlist of storytellers have created moving, informative and provocative work. Congratulations to all the shortlisted and highly commended writers.'

Awarded the **Children Prize for Literature**, **Wanda Gibson's *Three Dresses*** has made history as the first winner of the Children's Prize category to also receive the VPLAs' top prize.

Wanda's beautiful picture book takes inspiration from her own childhood in Far North Queensland and the annual beach holidays she and her family would take on the coast. A master weaver, painter and artist, Gibson's own illustrations imbue the heart-warming family story with a visual celebration of country and home. Still based in Hope Vale on the Cape York Peninsula today, Gibson's award was accepted by a family member on the night.

The inaugural winner of the newly instated **John Clarke Prize for Humour Writing** is **Robert Skinner** for his wryly funny memoir, ***I'd Rather Not***. Named in honour of the late, great comedy luminary, John

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Clarke, the prize sought to champion the work of the country's funniest writing talent. John's daughter, writer-director Lorin Clarke, announced the category's first winner, having also served on the award's judging panel.

Along with **Wanda Gibson's** top prize win, First Nations writers were recognised across multiple categories, including **Jeanine Leane's** win for the **Prize for Poetry** with her 'generous and deftly executed' collection, **Gawimarra: Gathering**, and **Nathan Maynard's** awarding in the **Prize for Drama** category for his 'buoyant, accessible, kinetic and important' stagemusical, **37**. The **Prize for Indigenous Writing** was given to **Black Witness** by **Amy McQuire**, an essential collection of essays and journalism that 'restores undeniable power to the scores of unheard Black Witnesses.'

Other category winners include **Fiona McFarlane**, who was awarded the **Prize for Fiction** for the gripping **Highway 13**; **Susan Hampton**, whose laconic and artful memoir, **anything can happen**, was selected for the **Prize for Non-Fiction**; and **Emma Lord's** high octane YA debut, **Anomaly**, which was named winner of the **Prize for Writing for Young Adults**.

With a legacy of discovering future bestsellers, the **Prize for an Unpublished Manuscript** has become a pipeline for unearthing fresh literary talent. This year's winner is **Chris Ames** for **I Made This Just for You**. A short story collection that considers the nature of work, intimacy and selfhood as mediated via technology, the judges praised Ames for his craft, calling the manuscript 'tight, polished and beautiful at both structural and sentence levels.'

The winners of the Fiction, Non-Fiction, Drama, Poetry, Award for Indigenous Writing, Children's Literature, Writing for Young Adults and Humour Writing categories are each awarded \$25,000. The winner of the Award for an Unpublished Manuscript receives \$15,000 in prize money and a two-week residency at McCraith House in Dromana, as part of a partnership between The Wheeler Centre and RMIT Culture.

Taking out the **People's Choice Award** was **I'd Rather Not** by **Robert Skinner**. Voted for by the public, Skinner receives a further \$2,000 in prize money, gifted by The Wheeler Centre.

In 2026, the **Writing for Young Adults** category will be renamed the **John Marsden Prize for Writing for Young Adults**. This is in honour of the late John Marsden who passed away in December last year. The award-winning writer and educator published over 40 books including the one of the most successful ever Australian book series for young adults, the seven-book *Tomorrow* series. The prize will be renamed for the 2026 awards and recognises his contribution to Australian literature, and to the lives of many young people.



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Media centre

Images of the 2025 VPLA winners are available for download [here](#).

Judges' reports

Judges' reports for all titles available [here](#).

NOTES TO EDITOR

- The winners of the 2025 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards (VPLAs) were announced at the ceremony held at The Edge in Federation Square on Wednesday 19 March
- 2025 marks the 40th anniversary of the VPLAs, with the awards originally established by the Victorian government in 1985
- The VPLAs are administered by The Wheeler Centre on behalf of the Premier of Victoria
- The winner of the Victorian Prize for Literature is awarded AUD\$100,000
- The winners of the Fiction, Non-Fiction, Drama, Poetry, Award for Indigenous Writing, Children's Literature, Writing for Young Adults and John Clarke Prize for Humour Writing categories are each awarded AUD\$25,000
- The Award for an Unpublished Manuscript receives AUD\$15,000 and a two-week residency at McCraith House through RMIT Culture
- The total VPLAs prize pool is AUD\$317,000 this includes the AUD\$2,000 People's Choice Award (awarded by The Wheeler Centre)

FULL LIST OF WINNERS BELOW

2025 VICTORIAN PREMIER'S LITERARY AWARDS WINNERS

Victorian Prize for Literature

Three Dresses by Wanda Gibson (University of Queensland Press)

Prize for Fiction

Highway 13 by Fiona McFarlane (Allen & Unwin)

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Prize for Non-Fiction

anything can happen by Susan Hampton (Puncher & Wattmann)

Prize for Poetry

Gawimarra: Gathering by Jeanine Leane (University of Queensland Press)

Prize for Drama

37 by Nathan Maynard (Currency Press & Melbourne Theatre Company. *37* was commissioned and developed through Melbourne Theatre Company's NEXT STAGE Writers' Program and co-produced by Melbourne Theatre Company and Queensland Theatre)

Prize for Indigenous Writing

Black Witness by Amy McQuire (University of Queensland Press)

Prize for Children's Literature

Three Dresses by Wanda Gibson (University of Queensland Press)

Prize for Writing for Young Adults

Anomaly by Emma Lord (Affirm Press)

John Clarke Prize for Humour Writing

I'd Rather Not by Robert Skinner (Black Inc.)

Prize for an Unpublished Manuscript

I Made This Just for You by Chris Ames

People's Choice Award

I'd Rather Not by Robert Skinner (Black Inc.)

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