

MEDIA RELEASE

Jennifer Down Wins the 2022 Miles Franklin Literary Award for *Bodies of Light*

Jennifer Down has won the prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award for her novel, *Bodies of Light*, published by Text Publishing. As one of the youngest authors to be honoured with the Award in its 65-year history – the youngest being Randolph Stow for *To the Islands* in 1958 at 23 – Jennifer Down has established herself as a potent voice in the new generation of Australian writers.

On winning the award, Ms Down said: “It’s a profound honour to be awarded the Miles Franklin Literary Award—I’m still pinching myself. To be longlisted, and then shortlisted, among authors whose works I’ve long read and admired, already felt like a stroke of exceptional fortune. I was, and am, elated to be in the company of writers embracing stylistic, thematic and formal diversity, whose works explore such different slivers of ‘Australian life’.”

“*Bodies of Light* took me a long time to write, and, many times over, I doubted I would finish it at all. It is not an easy book. It demands quite a lot from the reader, I think; not in the sense of being academic or intellectually challenging, but in what it asks the reader to sit with and witness. I’m grateful to the judges for their willingness to do so, and for considering this a story worthy of recognition,” added Ms Down.

Established through the will of *My Brilliant Career* author, Miles Franklin, for the “advancement, improvement and betterment of Australian literature”, the Miles Franklin Literary Award recognises a novel of “the highest literary merit” that presents “Australian life in any of its phases”. Perpetual serves as Trustee for the Award.

Ms Down will receive \$60,000 in prize money. Her novel was chosen from a shortlist that included two-time Miles Franklin shortlisted author Michael Mohammed Ahmad, two-time Miles Franklin winner Michelle de Kretser, award-winning novelist Alice Pung and self-published writer Michael Winkler.

When describing this year’s winning novel, the judges said, “*Bodies of Light* invites readers to witness the all-too-often concealed, destructive forces of institutionalised care. With extraordinary skill and compassion, Down has written an important book which speaks to an urgent issue in contemporary Australian life.”

The 2022 judging panel comprised of author and literary critic, Dr Bernadette Brennan; literary scholar, Dr Mridula Nath Chakraborty; book critic, Dr James Ley; NSW Mitchell Librarian and Chair, Richard Neville; and author and editor, Dr Elfie Shiosaki.

The 2022 winner announcement was streamed live on 20 July and can be viewed via the following link: www.perpetual.com.au/milesfranklin

For the third consecutive year the ABC is the award’s media partner.

ENDS

For further information about the Miles Franklin Literary Award: <http://www.milesfranklin.com.au/>

For enquiries or to request interviews, please contact:
Jane Morey

Join the Miles Franklin conversation on social media:

Twitter: [@_milesfranklin](https://twitter.com/_milesfranklin)

Instagram: [@milesfranklinliteraryaward](https://www.instagram.com/milesfranklinliteraryaward)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MilesFranklinLiteraryAward>
[#milesfranklin](https://www.facebook.com/MilesFranklinLiteraryAward)

About the Miles Franklin Literary Award www.milesfranklin.com.au

Perpetual is the Trustee for the Miles Franklin Literary Award. The Award was established in 1954 by the estate of *My Brilliant Career* author Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin to celebrate the Australian character and creativity. It supports the betterment of Australian literature by each year recognising the novel of the highest literary merit which presents Australian Life in any of its phases. Since being established, the Award has distributed over \$1.4 million in philanthropic funds to authors. Those wishing to be part of the Miles Franklin legacy can donate to the [Franklin Support Fund](#) to become a friend of the Award. Please visit the website for further details.

About Perpetual Philanthropic Services

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers of philanthropic funds, with \$3.7 billion in funds under advice for charitable trusts and endowment funds (as at 31 December 2021). Perpetual is trustee for many [charitable trusts and endowments](#) and provides individuals and families with advice on establishing charitable foundations and structured giving programs. Perpetual also assists charities and not-for-profit organisations with [investment advice and management](#).

Perpetual's Philanthropic Services and advice are provided by Perpetual Trustee Company Limited (PTCo), ABN 42 000 001 007, AFSL 236643. This publication has been prepared by PTCo and contains information contributed by third parties. It contains general information only and is not intended to provide advice or take into account personal objectives, financial situation or needs. The information is believed to be accurate at the time of compilation and is provided by PTCo in good faith. To the extent permitted by law, no liability is accepted for any loss or damage as a result of any reliance on this information. PTCo does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of any information included in this document which was contributed by a third party.

About the Copyright Agency and Cultural Fund

The Copyright Agency is an Australian not-for-profit organisation that has been standing up for creators for more than 40 years. We enable the reuse of copyright-protected words and images in return for fair payment to creators. The Cultural Fund is the philanthropic arm of the Copyright Agency, contributing meaningfully to a wide range of Australian cultural, educational and artistic programs and creators. Through its support it fosters greater understanding and engagement of national culture both locally and internationally. Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund is a long-time supporter of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, providing \$5,000 to each of the finalists and granting more than half a million dollars to this premier Australian literary prize since 2004.