

MEDIA RELEASE

Perpetual reveals esteemed 2021 Miles Franklin Literary Award longlist

Perpetual, the trustee of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, has today announced the 2021 longlist which includes a mix of acclaimed Australian authors and new voices showcasing the richness of Australian literature. One of the 12 authors will win arguably one of the most prestigious literary prizes in Australia, along with receiving \$60,000.

The Miles Franklin Literary Award was established by feminist and author of *My Brilliant Career*, Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin. First presented in 1957, the Award celebrates novels of the highest literary merit that tell stories about Australian life, shining a light on some of the country's most talented writers.

The 2021 Miles Franklin Literary Award longlist is:

Author	Novel	Publisher
Aravind Adiga	<i>Amnesty</i>	Pan Macmillan Australia
Robbie Arnott	<i>The Rain Heron</i>	Text Publishing
Daniel Davis Wood	<i>At the Edge of the Solid World</i>	Brio
Gail Jones	<i>Our Shadows</i>	Text Publishing
Sofie Laguna	<i>Infinite Splendours</i>	Allen & Unwin
Amanda Lohrey	<i>The Labyrinth</i>	Text Publishing
Laura Jean McKay	<i>The Animals in That Country</i>	Scribe Publications
Andrew Pippas	<i>Lucky's</i>	Pan Macmillan Australia
Mirandi Riwoe	<i>Stone Sky Gold Mountain</i>	University of Queensland Press
Philip Salom	<i>The Fifth Season</i>	Transit Lounge
Nardi Simpson	<i>Song of the Crocodile</i>	Hachette Australia
Madeleine Watts	<i>The Inland Sea</i>	Pushkin Press

"The 2021 Miles Franklin longlist is a rich mix of well-established, early career and debut novelists whose work ranges from historical fiction to fabulism and psychologism. Through an array of distinctive voices these works invite their readers to engage with questions regarding the natural and animal worlds, asylum, sexual abuse, colonialism, racism and grief. These are stories about trauma and loss, and also about beauty, resilience and hope," said Richard Neville, State Library of NSW Mitchell Librarian.

The judging panel comprises Richard Neville – Mitchell Librarian of the State Library of NSW and Chair, book critic Dr Melinda Harvey, author and literary critic Dr Bernadette Brennan, book critic Dr James Ley and author and activist Sisonke Msimang.

Last year, the Miles Franklin Literary Award was awarded to Tara June Winch for her novel, *The Yield* (2020).

The shortlisted finalists will be revealed on 16 June 2021 and the winner announced on 15 July 2021.

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For further information about the Miles Franklin Literary Award:

<http://www.milesfranklin.com.au/>

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#milesfranklin

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 \$1.24 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.

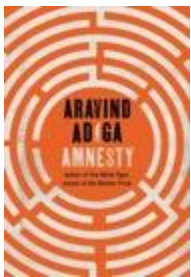

Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund is a long-time supporter of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, providing \$5,000 to each of the finalists and granting more than half a million dollars to this premier Australian literary prize since 2004.

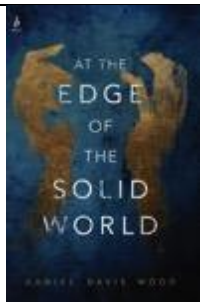
About Perpetual Philanthropic Services

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers of philanthropic funds, with \$2.9 billion in funds under advice for charitable trusts and endowment funds (as at 30 June 2020). 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](#).

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Background Information – 2021 Miles Franklin Longlist

	<p>Aravind Adiga <i>Amnesty</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Aravind Adiga was born in 1974 in Madras (now Chennai). He was educated at Columbia University in New York and Magdalen College, Oxford. His articles have appeared in publications including the <i>New Yorker</i>, the <i>Sunday Times</i>, the <i>Financial Times</i>, and the <i>Times of India</i>. His first novel, <i>The White Tiger</i>, won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2008.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Danny – Dhananjaya Rajaratnam – is an illegal immigrant in Sydney, denied refugee status after he has fled from his native Sri Lanka. Working as a cleaner, living out of a grocery storeroom, for three years he's been trying to create a new identity for himself. And now, with his beloved vegan girlfriend, Sonja, with his hidden accent and highlights in his hair, he is as close as he has ever come to living a normal Australian life.</p> <p>But then one morning, Danny learns a female client of his has been murdered. When Danny recognizes a jacket left at the murder scene, he believes it belongs to another of his clients - a doctor with whom he knows the woman was having an affair. Suddenly Danny is confronted with a choice: come forward with his knowledge about the crime and risk being deported, or say nothing, and let justice go undone? Over the course of a single day, evaluating the weight of his past, his dreams for the future, and the unpredictable, often absurd reality of living invisibly and undocumented, he must wrestle with his conscience and decide if a person without rights still has responsibilities.</p>
	<p>Robbie Arnott <i>The Rain Heron</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Robbie Arnott was a 2019 <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> Best Young Novelist and won the Margaret Scott Prize in the 2019 Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prizes. His widely acclaimed debut, <i>Flames</i> (2018), was shortlisted for a Victorian Premier's Literary Award, a New South Wales Premier's Literary Award, a Queensland Literary Award, the Readings Prize for New Australian Fiction and Not the Booker Prize. He lives in Hobart.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Ren lives alone on the remote frontier of a country devastated by a coup. High on the forested slopes, she survives by hunting and trading—and forgetting.</p> <p>But when a young soldier comes to the mountains in search of a local myth, Ren is inexorably drawn into her impossible mission.</p> <p>As their lives entwine, unravel and erupt—as myths merge with reality—both Ren and the soldier are forced to confront what they regret, what they love, and what they fear.</p> <p>Robbie Arnott's stunning second novel remakes our relationship with the natural world. <i>The Rain Heron</i> is equal parts horror and wonder, and utterly gripping.</p>



Daniel Davis Wood
At the Edge of the Solid World

BIOGRAPHY:

Daniel Davis Wood was born in Sydney and is currently based in Birmingham, England. Between 2009 and 2012, he worked on a PhD thesis in Literary Studies at the University of Melbourne. He also helped to organise an international humanities symposium, co-ordinated a fortnightly reading group, co-edited the academic journal *Antithesis*, and edited and published a collection of essays on the work of the American writer Edward P. Jones. His first book, *Blood and Bone* won the 2014 Seizure Viva La Novella Prize.

SYNOPSIS:

In a snowbound village in the heart of the Alps, a husband and wife find their lives breaking apart in the days and months following the death of their firstborn. On the far side of the world, in their hometown of Sydney, a man on the margins of Australian society commits an act of shocking violence that galvanises international attention. As the husband recognises signs of his own grief in both the survivors and the perpetrator, his fixation on the details of the case feeds into insomnia, trauma, and an obsession with the terms on which we give value to human lives.

A compulsive, compelling and lyrical novel, told with extraordinary empathy and emotional intelligence, this sweeping saga examines the nature of loss, the resilience and fragility of the family unit and the stories we tell to explain the world.



Gail Jones
Our Shadows

BIOGRAPHY:

Gail Jones is one of Australia's most celebrated writers. She is the author of two short story collections and eight novels, and her work has been translated into several languages. She has received numerous literary awards, including the Prime Minister's Literary Award, the Age Book of the Year, the South Australian Premier's Award, the ALS Gold Medal and the Kibble Award, and has been shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the International Dublin Literary Award and the Prix Femina Étranger. Originally from Western Australia, she now lives in Sydney.

SYNOPSIS:

Our Shadows tells the story of three generations of family living in Kalgoorlie, where gold was discovered in 1893 by an Irish-born prospector named Paddy Hannan, whose own history weaves in and out of this beguiling novel.


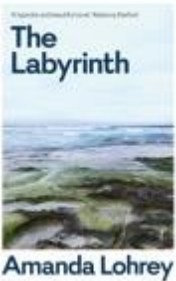
Sisters Nell and Frances were raised by their grandparents and were once closely bound by reading and fantasy. Now they live in Sydney and are estranged. Each in her own way struggles with the loss of their parents.

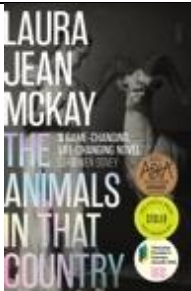
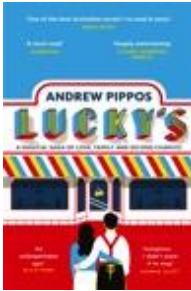
Little by little the sisters grow to understand the imaginative force of the past and the legacy of their shared orphanhood. Then Frances decides to make a journey home to the goldfields to explore what lies hidden and unspoken in their lives, in the shadowy tunnels of the past.

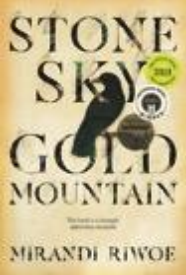

Sofie Laguna
Infinite Splendours

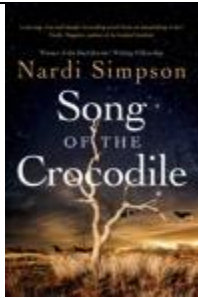
BIOGRAPHY:

Sofie Laguna's first novel for adults, *One Foot Wrong*, was published throughout Europe, the US and the UK, was longlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award and shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award. Her second novel for

	<p>adults, <i>The Eye of the Sheep</i>, won the 2015 Miles Franklin Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Stella Prize and longlisted for the International Dublin IMPAC Award. Sofie Laguna's third novel, <i>The Choke</i>, won the 2018 Indie Book Award for Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Award, the Voss Literary Prize, the Australian Literary Society Gold Medal and the Australian Book Industry Award, and longlisted for the Stella Prize, the Kibble Award and the International Dublin IMPAC Award. Sofie's many books for young people have been published in the US, the UK and in translation throughout Europe and Asia. She has been shortlisted for the Queensland Premier's Award, and her books have been named Honour Books and Notable Books by the Children's Book Council of Australia.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS:</p> <p>Lawrence Loman is a bright, caring, curious boy with a gift for painting. He lives at home with his mother and younger brother, and the future is laid out before him, full of promise. But when he is ten, an experience of betrayal takes it all away, and Lawrence is left to deal with the devastating aftermath.</p> <p>As he grows into a man, how will he make sense of what he has suffered? He cannot rewrite history, but must he be condemned to repeat it?</p> <p>Lawrence finds meaning in the best way he knows. By surrendering himself to art and nature, he creates beauty - beauty made all the more astonishing and soulful for the deprivation that gives rise to it.</p> <p><i>Infinite Splendours</i> is an extraordinary novel, incandescent with love and compassion, rich in colour and character. The power and virtuosity of Laguna's writing make it impossible for us to look away; by being seen, Lawrence is redeemed. And we, as readers, have had our minds and hearts opened in ways we can't forget.</p>
	<p>Amanda Lohrey <i>The Labyrinth</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY:</p> <p>Amanda Lohrey lives in Tasmania and writes fiction and non-fiction. She has taught Politics at the University of Tasmania and Writing and Textual Studies at the University of Technology Sydney and the University of Queensland. Amanda is a regular contributor to the <i>Monthly</i> magazine and is a former Senior Fellow of the Literature Board of the Australia Council. In November 2012 she received the Patrick White Award for literature.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS:</p> <p>Erica Marsden's son, an artist, has been imprisoned for homicidal negligence. In a state of grief, Erica cuts off all ties to family and friends, and retreats to a quiet hamlet on the south-east coast near the prison where he is serving his sentence.</p> <p>There, in a rundown shack, she obsesses over creating a labyrinth by the ocean. To build it—to find a way out of her quandary—Erica will need the help of strangers. And that will require her to trust, and to reckon with her past.</p> <p><i>The Labyrinth</i> is a hypnotic story of guilt and denial, of the fraught relationship between parents and children, that is also a meditation on how art can both be ruthlessly destructive and restore sanity. It shows Amanda Lohrey to be at the peak of her powers.</p>
	<p>Laura Jean McKay <i>The Animals in That Country</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY:</p>

	<p>Laura Jean McKay is the author of <i>The Animals in That Country</i> (Scribe 2020) — winner of The Victorian Prize for Literature and Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Fiction 2021. She is also the author of <i>Holiday in Cambodia</i> (Black Inc., 2013). Laura is a lecturer in Creative Writing at Massey University.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Out on the road, no one speaks, everything talks.</p> <p>Hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, and allergic to bullshit, Jean is not your usual grandma. She's never been good at getting on with other humans, apart from her beloved granddaughter, Kimberly. Instead, she surrounds herself with animals, working as a guide in an outback wildlife park. And although Jean talks to all her charges, she has a particular soft spot for a young dingo called Sue.</p> <p>As disturbing news arrives of a pandemic sweeping the country, Jean realises this is no ordinary flu: its chief symptom is that its victims begin to understand the language of animals — first mammals, then birds and insects, too. As the flu progresses, the unstoppable voices become overwhelming, and many people begin to lose their minds, including Jean's infected son, Lee. When he takes off with Kimberly, heading south, Jean feels the pull to follow her kin.</p> <p>Setting off on their trail, with Sue the dingo riding shotgun, they find themselves in a stark, strange world in which the animal apocalypse has only further isolated people from other species. Bold, exhilarating, and wholly original, <i>The Animals in That Country</i> asks what would happen, for better or worse, if we finally understood what animals were saying.</p>
	<p>Andrew Pippas <i>Lucky's</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Andrew Pippas spent part of his childhood getting underfoot in his family's Greek-Australian café. When he grew up, he worked in newspapers and taught in universities. This is his first novel, and it packs in everything he knows about growing up in a noisy, complicated, loving family. He lives in Sydney.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: <i>Lucky's</i> is a story of family. A story about migration. It is also about a man called Lucky. His restaurant chain. A fire that changed everything. A <i>New Yorker</i> article which might save a career. The mystery of a missing father. An impostor who got the girl. An unthinkable tragedy. A roll of the dice. And a story of love - lost, sought and won again (at last).</p> <p>Following a trail of cause and effect that spans decades, this unforgettable epic tells a story about lives bound together by the pursuit of love, family, and new beginnings.</p>
	<p>Mirandi Riwoe <i>Stone Sky Gold Mountain</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Mirandi Riwoe is the author of the novella <i>The Fish Girl</i>, which won Seizure's Viva la Novella V and was shortlisted for the Stella Prize and the Queensland Literary Award's UQ Fiction Prize, and <i>Stone Sky Gold Mountain</i>, which won the 2020</p>

	<p>Queensland Literary Award – Fiction Book Award and the inaugural ARA Historical Novel Prize and was shortlisted for the 2021 Stella Prize. Her work has appeared in <i>Best Australian Stories</i>, <i>Meanjin</i>, <i>Review of Australian Fiction</i>, <i>Griffith Review</i> and <i>Best Summer Stories</i>. Mirandi has a PhD in Creative Writing and Literary Studies and lives in Brisbane.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Family circumstances force siblings Ying and Lai Yue to flee their home in China to seek their fortunes in Australia. Life on the gold fields is hard, and they soon abandon the diggings and head to nearby Maytown. Once there, Lai Yue gets a job as a carrier on an overland expedition, while Ying finds work in a local store and strikes up a friendship with Meriem, a young white woman with her own troubled past. When a serious crime is committed, suspicion falls on all those who are considered outsiders.</p> <p>Evoking the rich, unfolding tapestry of Australian life in the late nineteenth century, <i>Stone Sky Gold Mountain</i> is a heartbreaking and universal story about the exiled and displaced, about those who encounter discrimination yet yearn for acceptance.</p>
	<p>Philip Salom <i>The Fifth Season</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Philip Salom lives in North Melbourne, Australia. In 2017 his novel <i>Waiting</i> was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award, the Prime Minister's Award and the Victorian Premiers Prize. This was followed by <i>The Returns</i> shortlisted for The Miles Franklin Award and the Queensland Premier's Prize. His earlier novel <i>Playback</i> won the WA Premier's Prize. His poetry books have twice won: the Commonwealth Poetry Prize in London and the Western Australia Premier's Prize. Philip was born in Bunbury, Western Australia, and raised on a dairy farm in Brunswick Junction. After several years working in farming districts he went to University in Perth. Over the years he has lectured in Creative Writing at the Universities of Murdoch, Curtin, Deakin and the University of Melbourne. He now writes full time.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Jack retreats to an Airbnb cottage in a small coastal town. As a writer he is pre-occupied with the phenomenon of found people: the Somerton Man, the Gippsland Man, the Isdal Woman, people who are found dead – their identities unknown or erased – and the mysterious pull this has on the public mind.</p> <p>In Blue Bay, as well as encountering the town's colourful inhabitants, Jack befriends Sarah, whose sister Alice is one of the many thousands of people who go missing every year. Sarah has been painting her sister's likeness in murals throughout the country, hoping that Alice will be found. Then Jack discovers a book about the people of the town, and about Sarah, which was written by a man who called himself Simon. Who once lived in the same cottage and created a backyard garden comprised of crazy mosaics. Until he too disappeared.</p> <p>While Sarah's life seems beholden to an ambiguous grief, Jack's own condition is unclear. Is he writing or dying? In <i>The Fifth Season</i> Philip Salom brings his virtuoso gifts for storytelling, humour and character to a haunting and unforgettable novel about the tenuousness of life and what it means to be both lost and found.</p>



Nardi Simpson
Song of the Crocodile

BIOGRAPHY:

Nardi Simpson is a Yuwaalaraay writer, musician, composer and educator from North West NSW freshwater plains. A founding member of Indigenous folk duo Stiff Gins, Nardi has been performing nationally and internationally for 20 years. Her debut novel, *Song of the Crocodile* was a 2018 winner of a black&write! writing fellowship.

SYNOPSIS:

Darnmoor, The Gateway to Happiness. The sign taunts a fool into feeling some sense of achievement, some kind of end- that you have reached a destination in the very least. Yet as the sign states, Darnmoor is merely a gateway, a waypoint on the road to where you really want to be.

Darnmoor is the home of the Billymil family, three generations who have lived in this 'gateway town'. Race relations between Indigenous and settler families are fraught, though the rigid status quo is upheld through threats and soft power rather than the overt violence of yesteryear.

As progress marches forwards, Darnmoor and its surrounds undergo rapid social and environmental changes, but as some things change, some stay exactly the same. The Billymil family are watched (and sometimes visited) by ancestral spirits and spirits of the recently deceased, who look out for their descendants and attempt to help them on the right path. When the town's secrets start to be uncovered the town will be rocked by a violent act that forever shatters a century of silence.

Full of music, Yuwaalaraay language and exquisite description, *Song of the Crocodile* is a lament to choice and change, and the unyielding land that sustains us all, if only we could listen to it.



Madeleine Watts
The Inland Sea

BIOGRAPHY:

Madeleine Watts grew up in Sydney, Australia and has lived in New York since 2013. She has an MFA in creative writing from Columbia University, and her fiction has been published in *The White Review* and *The Lifted Brow*. Her novella, *Afraid of Waking It* was awarded the 2015 Griffith Review Novella Prize. Her non-fiction has appeared in *The Believer* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. *The Inland Sea* is her first novel.

SYNOPSIS:

As she faces the open wilderness of adulthood, our young narrator finds that the world around her is coming undone. She works part-time as an emergency dispatch operator, tracking the fires and floods that rage across Australia during an increasingly unstable year. Drinking heavily, sleeping with strangers, she finds herself wandering Sydney's streets late at night as she navigates a troubled affair with an ex-lover. Reckless and adrift, she begins to contemplate leaving.

Writing with down-to-earth lucidity and ethereal breeziness, Watts builds to a tightly controlled bushfire of ecological and personal crisis. This is an unforgettable debut about coming of age in a dying world.