

MEDIA RELEASE

15 July 2021

Three-time Miles Franklin nominee Amanda Lohrey wins the 2021 Miles Franklin Literary Award for *The Labyrinth*

Acclaimed Tasmanian author Amanda Lohrey has been awarded Australia's prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award for her novel *The Labyrinth*, published by Text Publishing.

For the second time in the Award's history, trustee Perpetual announced the winner via live stream, enabling literary enthusiasts across the nation to tune in and celebrate unique Australian literature.

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".

Seven-time novelist Ms Lohrey has appeared on the Miles Franklin longlist three times and on the shortlist twice, making this a well-deserved win. Ms Lohrey will receive \$60,000 in prize money for *The Labyrinth*. She is the second Tasmanian author to be honoured with the Award in its 64-year history.

On winning the award, Ms Lohrey said, "It's a tremendous honour to be associated with the remarkable Stella Miles Franklin, one of the great Australian mavericks.

"Awards like the Miles Franklin are so valuable because in attracting public attention they help Australian literature to flourish, and to compete with imported books. And that's important because Australian literature is not an add on, a mere diversion, a sideshow to the main game. It sits at the heart of our national culture."

Ms Lohrey now joins a group of distinguished and revered alumni of Miles Franklin prize winners, including last year's winner Tara June Winch (for *The Yield*), and fellow Tasmanian, the late Christopher Koch (for *The Doubleman*, in 1985 and *Highways to a War*, in 1996).

The Labyrinth explores the state of grief in a lyrical and evocative story about loneliness, violence and art. The novel follows Erica Marsden, who retreats to a quiet hamlet near the prison where her son has been incarcerated for homicidal negligence. Living in a rundown shack, she obsesses over creating a labyrinth by the ocean. To build it, Erica will need the help of strangers.

Judge and Mitchell Librarian of the State Library of NSW and Chair, Richard Neville, said, "*The Labyrinth* is an elegiac novel, soaked in sadness. It is a beautifully written reflection on the conflicts between parents and children, men and women, and the value and purpose of creative work."

Mr Neville was joined on the judging panel by book critic Dr Melinda Harvey, author and literary critic Dr Bernadette Brennan, book critic Dr James Ley and author and activist Sisonke Msimang.

The Labyrinth was selected from a shortlist that included Booker Prize winner Aravind Adiga, emerging talent and fellow Tasmanian Robbie Arnott, expatriate writer Daniel Davis Wood, and first-time novelists Andrew Pippas and Madeleine Watts.

Perpetual, trustee of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, is proud to be steward of Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin's legacy, which has provided more than \$1.3 million to Australian authors since its inception in 1957.

The 2021 winner announcement was streamed live on 15 July at 4pm and can be viewed via the following link: www.perpetual.com.au/milesfranklin

The Award's media partner for 2021 is the ABC for the second consecutive year.

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For further information about the Miles Franklin Literary Award:

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

For enquiries or to request interviews, please contact:

Jane Morey

Morey Media

0416 097 678

jane@moreymedia.com.au

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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.

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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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.