

16 May 2024

Media release

Miles Franklin Literary Award 2024 longlist announced

Perpetual, the trustee of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, today announced ten authors have been included on the 2024 longlist. They will be competing for one of the most recognised literary prizes in Australia, with the winner also receiving \$60,000.

Selected from 104 books, the Award celebrates novels of the highest literary merit that tell stories about Australian life.

The 2024 Miles Franklin Literary Award longlist is:

Author	Novel	Publisher
Hossein Asgari	<i>Only Sound Remains</i>	Puncher & Wattmann
Jen Craig	<i>Wall</i>	Puncher & Wattmann
Lauren Aimee Curtis	<i>Strangers at the Port</i>	Hachette UK
André Dao	<i>Anam</i>	Hamish Hamilton (Penguin Random House)
Gregory Day	<i>The Bell of the World</i>	Transit Lounge
Melissa Lucashenko	<i>Edenglassie</i>	University of Queensland Press
Angela O’Keeffe	<i>The Sitter</i>	University of Queensland Press
Sanya Rushdi	<i>Hospital</i>	Giramondo Publishing
Charlotte Wood	<i>Stone Yard Devotional</i>	Allen & Unwin
Alexis Wright	<i>Praiseworthy</i>	Giramondo Publishing

According to the judging panel, “The 2024 longlist engages profoundly with the historical, cultural, philosophical, artistic and environmental concerns of present-day Australia, spanning a breadth of narrative forms and literary styles. The list includes powerful stories of the legacies of colonisation and dispossession, and the strength, richness and humour of First Nation responses.

Historical novels explore hitherto untold and unexpected stories of First Nations contact with settler-colonials as well as the multinational, multicultural roots of present-day Australian society. There are elegiac explorations of the diverse historical, political, economic, environmental, and ecological drivers of immigration. Some contemporary novels engage experimentally with ekphrastic responses to international poetry, music, art and artists. Others provide insightful portraits of individual and imaginative responses to mental health and present some highly unusual, and thought-provoking, vignettes of life during the pandemic.

The tyranny of distance often ascribed to Australian literature is challenged by these novels that span generations and geo-political spaces.”

The 2024 judges are Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian of the State Library of NSW and Chair; literary scholar, A/Prof Jumana Bayeh; literary scholar and translator, Dr Mridula Nath Chakraborty; book critic, Dr James Ley; and author and literary scholar, Prof Hsu-Ming Teo.

Last year, the Miles Franklin Literary Award was awarded to Shankari Chandran for her novel, *Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens* (2023).

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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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#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 \$1.48 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.

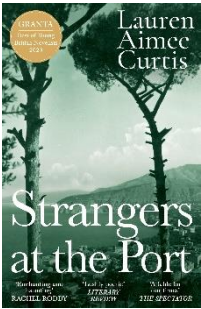
About Perpetual Philanthropic Services

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers of philanthropic funds, with \$3.3 billion in funds under advice for charitable trusts and endowment funds (as at 30 June 2023). Perpetual is trustee for over 1000 [charitable trusts and endowments](#) and provides individuals and families with advice on establishing charitable foundations and structured giving programs. Each year Perpetual distributes more than \$129 million to community organisations on behalf of its clients. Perpetual also assists charities and not-for-profit organisations with [investment advice and management](#).

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Background Information – 2024 Miles Franklin Longlist

	<p>Hossein Asgari <i>Only Sound Remains</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Hossein Asgari studied physics and creative writing. His short stories have appeared in <i>The Saltbush Review</i>, <i>Overland</i>, and <i>The Suburban Review</i>. His debut novel, <i>Only Sound Remains</i> is shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards in 2024.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: Saeed has not returned to Iran after publishing his novel <i>The Imaginary Narrative of a Real Murder</i> for fear of political persecution. He is surprised when Ismael, his father who has never left Iran, announces that he is travelling to Adelaide to visit him. During his short stay, Ismael tells Saeed the story of his unrequited love for Forugh Farrokhzad — the most controversial poet of modern Iran. The story makes Saeed see his father in a new light, and leaves him with the haunting question: had his father, unwittingly, played a role in Forugh's death?</p>
	<p>Jen Craig <i>Wall</i></p> <p>BIOGRAPHY: Jen Craig lives on Gundungurra and Darug lands in NSW. She is the author of three novels: <i>Since the Accident</i> (2009), <i>Panthers and the Museum of Fire</i> (2015), and most recently <i>Wall</i> (2023), which was simultaneously released in Australia and North America, and shortlisted for the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards 2024. Her body of work features, among many published pieces of short and micro fiction, essays, and reviews, the opera libretto <i>A Dictionary of Maladies</i>, for Swiss composer Michael Schneider, which saw a concert production in Lenzburg, Switzerland, in 2005. Jen holds a doctorate on transgenerational trauma, writing, anorexia, and the gothic from Western Sydney University, and now works as a trauma-informed psychotherapist.</p> <p>SYNOPSIS: A woman returns to Sydney from London after the death of her father to clear out the family house in Chatswood. Shortly before she leaves, she attends the opening of a group art show to which she has contributed pieces and runs into an important mentor from her past. This is the influential Nathaniel Lord whose brand-new gallery in Sydney is looking for innovative work. Anxious and confused by his probing questions, her earlier intention to construct what she calls a Wall of "Still Lives" out of the pieces she has been making these last several years yields to something new: a plan to transform the contents of the family house into an installation in the tradition of the internationally revered Chinese artist, Song Dong. Lord's attention is immediately captured. What the woman hasn't reckoned with, however, is the abject nature of the material in the house and the tangle of unresolved family issues, as well as the jealousies and resentments among her old friends from art school – all of which she had thought, in leaving Australia some decades earlier, she'd put well behind her. It is a tangle that ensnares her as soon as she arrives.</p>



Lauren Aimee Curtis
Strangers at the Port

BIOGRAPHY:

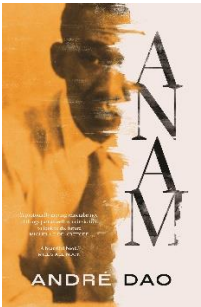
Lauren Aimee Curtis was born in Sydney. Her first book, *Dolores*, was shortlisted for the Readings Prize, the UTS Glenda Adams Award for New Writing, and was selected as a *New Statesman* Book of the Year. She has written for *Granta*, *The White Review* and *Sydney Review of Books*, among other publications. In 2023, she was named one of *Granta's* Best Young British Novelists.

SYNOPSIS:

Giulia is ten. She lives on the greenest island in a volcanic archipelago. She has never left. Her best friend, apart from her older sister Giovanna, is a donkey. Giulia and Giovanna's days on the island are shaped by ritual, community, superstition and isolation.

Until the men arrive. And a foreign yacht anchors at the port. And the vines begin to fail. And everything changes.

From the author of *Dolores*, *Strangers at the Port* is an exquisite, enchanted, atmospheric novel about myth and memory, suspicion and dislocation, emigrants and explorers.



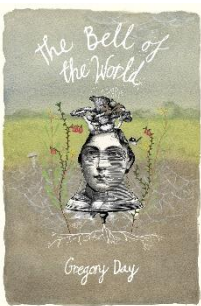
Andre Dao
Anam

BIOGRAPHY:

André Dao is a Melbourne-based writer, editor and artist. His debut novel, *Anam*, won the 2021 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript. His writing has appeared in *Meanjin*, *Sydney Review of Books*, *Griffith Review*, *The Monthly*, *The Lifted Brow*, *Cordite*, *The Saturday Paper*, *New Philosopher*, *Arena Magazine*, *Asia Literary Review* and elsewhere.

SYNOPSIS:

Anam blends fiction and essay, theory and everyday life to imagine that which has been repressed, left out, and forgotten. The grandson mines his family and personal stories to turn over ideas that resonate with all of us around place and home, legacy and expectation, ambition and sacrifice. As he sifts through letters, photographs, government documents and memories, he has his own family to think about: a partner and an infant daughter. Is there a way to remember the past that creates a future for them? Or does coming home always involve a certain amount of forgetting?



Gregory Day
The Bell of the World

BIOGRAPHY:

Gregory Day is a writer and musician from the Eastern Otways region of southwest Victoria, Australia. He lives on Wadawurrung tabayl. Gregory's writing has won many awards, including the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal. In 2019 his novel *A Sand Archive* was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award. In 2020 Gregory received the prestigious Patrick White Award for his ongoing body of work.

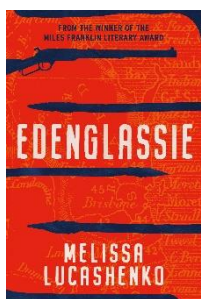
SYNOPSIS:

When a troubled Sarah Hutchinson returns to Australia from boarding school in England and time spent in Europe, she is sent to live with her eccentric Uncle Ferny on the family property, Ngangahook. With the sound of the ocean surrounding everything they do on the farm, Sarah and her uncle form an inspired bond hosting visiting field naturalists and holding soirees in which Sarah performs

on a piano whose sound she has altered with items and objects from the bush and shore.

As Sarah's world is nourished by music and poetry, Ferny's life is marked by *Such is Life*, a book he has read and reread, so much so that the volume is falling apart. Its saviour is Jones the Bookbinder of Moolap, who performs a miraculous act. To shock and surprise, Jones interleaves Ferny's volume with a book he bought from an American sailor, a once obscure tale of whales and the sea. In art as in life nature seems supreme. Ngangahook and its environs are threatened, however, when members of the community ask the Hutchinsons to help 'make a savage landscape sacred' by financing the installation of a town bell. The fearless musician and her idealistic uncle refuse to buckle to local pressures, mounting their own defence of 'the bell of the world'.

Gregory Day's new novel embodies a cultural reckoning in a breathtakingly beautiful and lyrical way. *The Bell of the World* is both a song to the natural wonders that are not yet gone and a luminous prehistory of contemporary climate change and its connection to colonialism. It is a book immersed in the early to mid-twentieth century but written very much for the hearts of the future.



Melissa Lucashenko
Edenglassie

BIOGRAPHY:

Melissa Lucashenko is a Goorie (Aboriginal) author of Bundjalung and European heritage. Her first novel was published in 1997 and since then her work has received acclaim in many literary awards. *Killing Darcy* won the Royal Blind Society Award and was shortlisted for an Aurealis award. Her sixth novel, *Too Much Lip*, won the 2019 Miles Franklin Literary Award and the Queensland Premier's Award for a work of State Significance. It was also shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, the Stella Prize, two Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, two Queensland Literary Awards and two NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Melissa is a Walkley Award winner for her non-fiction, and a founding member of human rights organisation Sisters Inside. She writes about ordinary Australians and the extraordinary lives they lead. Her latest book is *Edenglassie*.

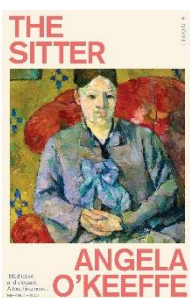
SYNOPSIS:

In this epic novel set in Brisbane when First Nations people still outnumber the colonists, award-winning Goorie author Melissa Lucashenko tells two extraordinary stories set five generations apart.

When Mulanyin meets the beautiful Nita in *Edenglassie*, their saltwater people still outnumber the British. As colonial unrest peaks, Mulanyin dreams of taking his bride home to Yugambeh Country, but his plans for independence collide with white justice.

Two centuries later, fiery activist Winona meets Dr Johnny. Together they care for obstinate centenarian Granny Eddie, and sparks fly, but not always in the right direction. What nobody knows is how far the legacies of the past will reach into their modern lives.

In this brilliant epic, Melissa Lucashenko torches Queensland's colonial myths, while reimagining an Australian future.



Angela O'Keeffe
The Sitter

BIOGRAPHY:

Angela O'Keeffe grew up with nine siblings on a farm in the Lockyer Valley, Queensland. She completed a Master of Arts in Writing at UTS, and her first novel, *Night Blue*, was shortlisted for the UTS Glenda Adams Award for New Writing and the Prime Minister's Literary Awards. She was awarded the 2023 Varuna Eleanor Dark Fellowship.

SYNOPSIS:

A highly original work narrated by Hortense Cezanne, the wife of the celebrated artist, as she witnesses an author in 2020 write a book about her life.

Paris, 2020. A writer is confined to her hotel room during the early days of the pandemic, struggling to finish a novel about Hortense Cezanne, wife and sometime muse of the famous painter. Dead for more than a century, Hortense has been reawakened by this creative endeavour, and now shadows the writer through the locked-down city. But Hortense, always subject to the gaze of others, is increasingly intrigued by the woman before her. Who is she and what event hides in her past?

Heartbreaking and perfectly formed, *The Sitter* explores the tension between artist and subject, and between the stories told about us and the stories we choose to tell.



Sanya Rushdi
Hospital

BIOGRAPHY:

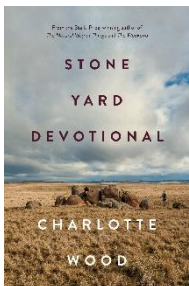
Sanya Rushdi was born in Bangladesh and studied the biological sciences and psychology at Monash University, the University of Sydney and Deakin University. *Hospital*, her first novel, was shortlisted for the 2024 Stella Prize. She currently lives in Melbourne, Australia.

SYNOPSIS:

A daring literary account of a young woman's experience of psychosis by Bengali-Australian writer Sanya Rushdi.

In Melbourne a one-time research student with interests in philosophy and psychology is diagnosed with her third episode of psychosis. As she is moved from her family home to a community house and then to hospital, she questions the diagnosis of her sanity or insanity, as determined and defined by a medical model which seems less than convincing to her. Indeed questioning seems to be at the heart of her psychosis, in her over-active interpretations of signs and gestures, thoughts and emotions – and one understands these to be an expression of her intelligence, even if they seem illusory. She tells her story in a calm, rational voice, with an acute sense of detail and an objective air, as she wonders when the next psychotic episode will materialise, or if it hasn't arrived already.

Based on real-life events, translated from Bengali by the award-winning Indian translator Arunava Sinha, *Hospital* is an extraordinary novel that portrays the experience of psychosis and its treatments in an unflinching and understated way, while struggling more broadly with the definition of sanity in our society.



Charlotte Wood
Stone Yard Devotional

BIOGRAPHY:

Charlotte Wood is the author of ten books - seven novels and three non-fiction works. She has won the Stella Prize and the Prime Minister's Literary Award, among others, and her features and essays have appeared in *The Guardian*, *New York Times*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Monthly*, *Saturday Paper* and others. She lives in Sydney.

SYNOPSIS:

A woman abandons her city life and marriage to return to the place of her childhood, holing up in a small religious community hidden away on the stark plains of the Monaro.

She does not believe in God, doesn't know what prayer is, and finds herself living this strange, reclusive life almost by accident. As she gradually adjusts to the rhythms of monastic life, she finds herself turning again and again to thoughts of her mother, whose early death she can't forget.

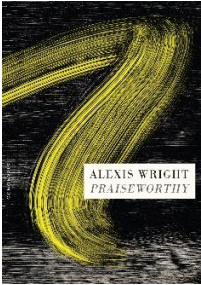
Disquiet interrupts this secluded life with three visitations. First comes a terrible mouse plague, each day signalling a new battle against the rising infestation.

Second is the return of the skeletal remains of a sister who left the community decades before to minister to deprived women in Thailand - then disappeared, presumed murdered.

Finally, a troubling visitor to the monastery pulls the narrator further back into her past.

With each of these disturbing arrivals, the woman faces some deep questions. Can a person be truly good? What is forgiveness? Is loss of hope a moral failure? And can the business of grief ever really be finished?

A meditative and deeply moving novel from one of Australia's most acclaimed and best loved writers.



Alexis Wright
Praiseworthy

BIOGRAPHY:

Alexis Wright is a member of the Waanyi nation of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The author of the prize-winning novels *Praiseworthy*, *Carpentaria* and *The Swan Book*, Wright has published three works of non-fiction: *Take Power*, an oral history of the Central Land Council; *Grog War*, a study of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory; and *Tracker*, an award-winning collective memoir of Aboriginal leader, Tracker Tilmouth. Her books have been published widely overseas, including in China, the US, the UK, Italy, France and Poland. Wright has won a number of literary awards, including the Miles Franklin Literary Award for *Carpentaria*, and a Queensland Literary Award for *Praiseworthy*, which was also shortlisted for the Dublin Literary Award, one of the world's richest literary prizes. She is the first author to win the Stella Prize twice – for *Tracker* in 2018, and for *Praiseworthy* in 2024. She held the position of Boisbouvier Chair in Australian Literature at the University of Melbourne, and was honoured with the title of Distinguished Professor at Western Sydney University. She is the inaugural winner of the Creative Australia Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature.

SYNOPSIS:

Praiseworthy is an epic set in the north of Australia, told with the richness of language and scale of imagery for which Alexis Wright has become renowned. In a small town dominated by a haze cloud, which heralds both an ecological catastrophe and a gathering of the ancestors, a crazed visionary seeks out donkeys as the solution to the global climate crisis and the economic dependency of the Aboriginal people. His wife seeks solace from his madness in following the dance of butterflies and scouring the internet to find out how she can seek repatriation for her Aboriginal/Chinese family to China. One of their sons, called Aboriginal Sovereignty, is determined to commit suicide. The other, Tommyhawk, wishes his brother dead so that he can pursue his dream of becoming white and powerful. This is a novel which pushes allegory and language to its limits, a cry of outrage against oppression and disadvantage, and a fable for the end of days.