

MEDIA RELEASE

Perpetual announces longlist for prestigious Miles Franklin Literary Award

Perpetual, the trustee of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, today announced eleven authors have been included on the 2023 Longlist. They will be competing for one of the most prominent literary prizes in Australia, with the winner also 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 accomplished writers.

The 2023 Miles Franklin Literary Award longlist is:

Author	Novel	Publisher
Kgshak Akec	<i>Hopeless Kingdom</i>	UWA Publishing
Robbie Arnott	<i>Limberlost</i>	Text Publishing
Jessica Au	<i>Cold Enough for Snow</i>	Giramondo Publishing
Shankari Chandran	<i>Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens</i>	Ultimo Press
Claire G Coleman	<i>Enclave</i>	Hachette Australia
George Haddad	<i>Losing Face</i>	University of Queensland Press
Pirooz Jafari	<i>Forty Nights</i>	Ultimo Press
Julie Janson	<i>Madukka: The River Serpent</i>	UWA Publishing
Yumna Kassab	<i>The Lovers</i>	Ultimo Press
Fiona Kelly McGregor	<i>Iris</i>	Pan Macmillan Australia
Adam Ouston	<i>Waypoints</i>	Puncher & Wattmann

According to the judging panel, “The 2023 longlist is a reflection of the breadth and depth of contemporary Australian story-telling. The eleven longlisted novels define Australian literature as a transformative space where writers are singing the songs of the nation today. They reverberate with the cadences of this land where Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded, but also bring to us mellifluous sounds from far-away lands, weaving together literary traditions from around the world. The words of our novelists, grounded in personal experience, poetry and philosophy, are heralds of the new dawn of Australian fiction: they hum and hiss with language that is newly potent and styles that are imaginative and fresh.”

The 2023 judges are Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian of the State Library of NSW and Chair; author and literary critic, Dr Bernadette Brennan; literary scholar and translator, Dr Mridula Nath Chakraborty; book critic, Dr James Ley; and author and editor, Dr Elfie Shiosaki.

Last year, the Miles Franklin Literary Award was awarded to Jennifer Down for her novel, *Bodies of Light* (2022).

The shortlisted finalists will be revealed on 20 June 2023 and the winner announced on 25 July 2023.

ENDS

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 \$1.42 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.

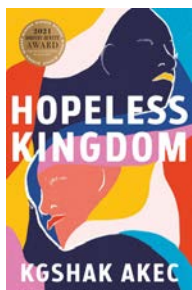
Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund is a long-time supporter of the Miles Franklin Literary Award, providing \$5,000 to each of the finalists and granting more than half a million dollars to this premier Australian literary prize since 2004.

About Perpetual Philanthropic Services

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers of philanthropic funds, with \$3.5 billion in funds under advice for charitable trusts and endowment funds (as at 30 June 2022). 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 \$100 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 – 2023 Miles Franklin Longlist



Kgshak Akec
Hopeless Kingdom

BIOGRAPHY:

Kgshak Akec is a South-Sudanese writer, performing artist, storyteller, and a lover of words. Since the moment she learned how to write in English at the age of six, Kgshak has been writing out the stories that live inside her mind. As a migrant and non-native English speaker, Kgshak is fascinated by the unspoken words and unsung songs of the day-to-day, she finds herself drawn to stories that challenge perception and go against the grain of the expected while also being grounded in truth. Her debut novel *Hopeless Kingdom* (UWAP 2022), inspired by her own journey of migrating to Australia, explores the relationship of a mother and daughter as they settle, break, evolve, and adapt in new lands through multiple heartaches and triumphs.

SYNOPSIS:

Akita's family have always kept moving to survive. Sudan to Cairo. Cairo to Sydney. Sydney to Geelong.

Each new place challenges Akita, her siblings and her parents. Just when eight-year-old Akita is feeling settled for the first time in her life, her parents decide to relocate to Geelong. The move is the beginning of a downward spiral that threatens to unravel the fabric of their family and any hope for finding peace and belonging. Told through the interchanging perspectives of Akita and her mother, Taresai, this coming of age story shines a light on the generational curses of trauma, complex family dynamics, and how it feels to love someone unconditionally, even when it hurts. Individually, the female narrators experience racism, rejection and despair, but together their narratives reveal a resilience of spirit and determination to transcend expectations of what a daughter, a sister, and a mother can be. *Hopeless Kingdom* gives a voice to the silent heartache of searching for acceptance in an adopted society which can't look past the surface of skin colour.

Hopeless Kingdom is the winner of the 2021 Dorothy Hewett Award. Inspired by the author's own experience of migration from Africa to Australia, this story signals a powerful new voice in Australian writing.



Robbie Arnott
Limberlost

BIOGRAPHY:

Robbie Arnott's acclaimed debut, *Flames* (2018), won a *Sydney Morning Herald* Best Young Novelist award and a Tasmanian Premier's Literary Prize, and 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 the Not the Booker Prize. His follow-up, *The Rain Heron* (2020), won the *Age* Book of the Year award, and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the ALS Gold Medal, the Voss Literary Prize and an Adelaide Festival Award. He lives in Hobart.

SYNOPSIS:

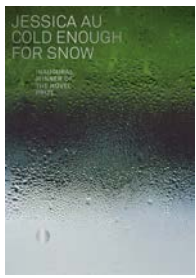
In the heat of a long summer Ned hunts rabbits in a river valley, hoping the pelts will earn him enough money to buy a small boat.

His two brothers are away at war, their whereabouts unknown. His father and older sister struggle to hold things together on the family orchard, Limberlost.

Desperate to ignore it all—to avoid the future rushing towards him—Ned dreams of open water.

As his story unfolds over the following decades, we see how Ned's choices that summer come to shape the course of his life, the fate of his family and the future of the valley, with its seasons of death and rebirth.

The third novel by the award-winning author of *Flames* and *The Rain Heron*, *Limberlost* is an extraordinary chronicle of life and land: of carnage and kindness, blood ties and love.



Jessica Au
Cold Enough for Snow

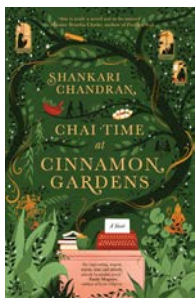
BIOGRAPHY:

Jessica Au is a writer based in Melbourne. She has worked as deputy editor at the quarterly journal *Meanjin* and as a fact-checker for *Aeon* magazine. Her novel, *Cold Enough for Snow* (2022), is the inaugural winner of The Novel Prize and was published by Giramondo, New Directions and Fitzcarraldo Editions, with translation in eighteen languages.

SYNOPSIS:

A young woman has arranged a holiday with her mother in Japan. They travel by train, visit galleries and churches chosen for their art and architecture, eat together in small cafés and restaurants and walk along the canals at night, on guard against the autumn rain and the prospect of snow. All the while, they talk, or seem to talk: about the weather, horoscopes, clothes and objects; about the mother's family in Hong Kong, and the daughter's own formative experiences. But uncertainties abound. How much is spoken between them, how much is thought but unspoken?

Cold Enough for Snow is a reckoning and an elegy: with extraordinary skill, Au creates an enveloping atmosphere that expresses both the tenderness between mother and daughter, and the distance between them.



Shankari Chandran
Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens

BIOGRAPHY:

Shankari Chandran was raised in Canberra, Australia. She spent a decade in London, working as a lawyer in the social justice field. She eventually returned home to Australia, where she now lives with her husband, four children and their cavoodle puppy, Benji. She has published three works of fiction, *Chai Time At Cinnamon Gardens*, *Song of the Sun God* and *The Barrier*.

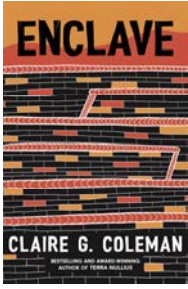
SYNOPSIS:

Welcome to Cinnamon Gardens, a home for those who are lost and the stories they treasure.

Cinnamon Gardens Nursing Home is nestled in the quiet suburb of Westgrove, Sydney – populated with residents with colourful histories, each with their own secrets, triumphs and failings. This is their safe place, an oasis of familiar delights – a beautiful garden, a busy kitchen and a bountiful recreation schedule.

But this ordinary neighbourhood is not without its prejudices. The serenity of Cinnamon Gardens is threatened by malignant forces more interested in what makes this refuge different rather than embracing the calm companionship that makes this place home to so many. As those who challenge the residents' existence make their stand against the nursing home with devastating consequences, our characters are forced to reckon with a country divided.

Chai Time at Cinnamon Gardens is about family and memory, community and race, but is ultimately a love letter to storytelling and how our stories shape who we are.



Claire G Coleman
Enclave

BIOGRAPHY:

Claire G. Coleman is a Noongar writer, born in Western Australia, and now based in Naarm. Her family have been from the area around Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun on the south coast of WA since before time started being recorded. Claire wrote her black&write! Fellowship-winning book *Terra Nullius* while travelling around Australia in a caravan. *The Old Lie* (2019) was her second novel and in 2021 her acclaimed non-fiction book, *Lies Damned Lies* was published by Ultimo Press. *Enclave* is her third novel.

SYNOPSIS:

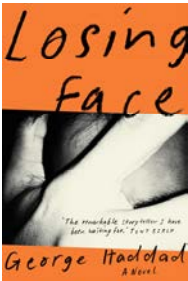
'These are troubling times. The world is a dangerous place,' the voice of the Chairman said. 'I can continue to assure you of this: within the Wall you are perfectly safe.'

Christine could not sleep, she could not wake, she could not think. She stared, half-blind, at the cold screen of her smartphone. She was told the Agency was keeping them safe from the dangers outside, an outside world she would never see.

She never imagined questioning what she was told, what she was allowed to know, what she was permitted to think. She never even thought there were questions to ask.

The enclave was the only world she knew, the world outside was not safe. Staying or leaving was not a choice she had the power to make. But then Christine dared start thinking . . . and from that moment, danger was everywhere.

In our turbulent times, Claire G. Coleman's *Enclave* is a powerful dystopian allegory that confronts the ugly realities of racism, homophobia, surveillance, greed and privilege and the self-destructive distortions that occur when we ignore our shared humanity.



George Haddad
Losing Face

BIOGRAPHY:

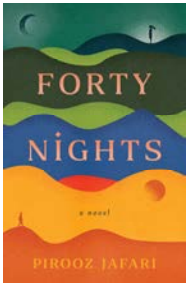
George Haddad is a writer, artist and academic practising on Gadigal land. His novella, [Populate and Perish](#), was the winner of the 2016 Viva La Novella competition and his short story [Kátharsis](#) was awarded the 2018 Neilma Sidney Prize. George's novel, [Losing Face](#), was published by UQP in 2022 and shortlisted for The Readings new Australian fiction prize. He is a creative writing lecturer at the Writing and Society Research Centre, Western Sydney University where his research addresses the intersection of masculinities, shame and suburbia.

SYNOPSIS:

Joey is young, indifferent. He's drifting around Western Sydney unaware that his passivity is leading him astray. And then one day he is involved in a violent crime, one that threatens to upend his life entirely.

Elaine, his grandmother, is a proud Lebanese woman with problems of her own. When Joey is arrested, she is desperate to save face and hold herself together. In her family, history repeats itself, vices come and go, and uncovering long-buried secrets isn't always cathartic.

This gripping and hard-hitting novel reveals the richness and complexity of contemporary Australian life and tests the idea that facing consequences will make us better people.



Pirooz Jafari
Forty Nights

BIOGRAPHY:

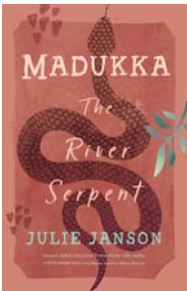
Born in Iran, Pirooz Jafari migrated to Australia more than two decades ago as an ambitious photographer. His experience of witnessing violations of human rights of every imaginable kind throughout his childhood, adolescence and young adult life in Iran ignited a passion in him to pursue legal studies and Pirooz graduated as a lawyer in Australia in the summer of 2003. Pirooz has since worked in various community-based organisations and statutory bodies. *Forty Nights* is his first literary fiction novel.

SYNOPSIS:

Tishtar runs a small legal practice in Melbourne where he has a new client, Habiba, who seeks to bring her orphan nieces to Australia from war-torn Somalia. He is also a migrant, having left the civil unrest in Iran to find a new life in a new country.

As Tishtar becomes consumed with Habiba's tales of war-torn Somalia, his own childhood memories return and he reflects on the time he spent at his grandmother's house to escape the atrocities that unravelled post the Islamic Revolution. While at his grandmother's house he comes to know Gretel, another lost soul who has experienced a community torn apart by division. Tishtar embarks on a journey in search of peace – for Habiba, for Gretel, for himself.

Spanning continents and centuries, *Forty Nights* is a tale of the ongoing effects of dispossession and dislocation – a struggle humankind has faced long into its past. Ultimately it is the story of finding home, wherever that might be.



Julie Janson
Madukka: The River Serpent

BIOGRAPHY:

Julie is a NSW Burruberongal woman of Darug Aboriginal nation. Novelist, playwright, and poet. *Madukka the River Serpent* UWA Publishing, an Indigenous crime novel. *Benevolence* Indigenous historical novel - Magabala 2020 and HarperVia USA, UK 2022. Nominated for NIB Literary Award 2020, Voss Literary Award 2020, Barbara Jefferis Award 2022. New novel *Compassion* to be published 2024 by Magabala. She is co-recipient of the Oodgeroo Noonuccal Poetry Prize 2016, winner Judith Wright Poetry Prize 2019. Her career as a playwright of 10 plays began with productions at Belvoir St Theatre, Adelaide Festival Centre, Sydney Opera House, USA and Indonesia.

SYNOPSIS:

Aunty June is the proud owner of a TAFE certificate III in Investigative Services. It took her thirty hours to complete online. Now, she has set up her own private investigation service: Yanakirri Investigative Services – Confidentiality Guaranteed.

When environmental activist, Thommo, suddenly goes missing and the police ignore the case Aunty June takes it upon herself to uncover the secrets surrounding her nephew, Thommo's, disappearance. Corruption, commercial cotton farmers, bikies, racism, water theft, and unreliable local police – Aunty June is really up against it. Lies and corruption are hiding the truth from reaching the surface. And the Darling River, the sacred Barka is running out of water. Aunty June may be out of her depth, but nothing will stop her fighting for her people and her land.

Madukka The River Serpent is a striking novel about family and resistance from Australian Darug Burruberongal writer and playwright Julie Janson.



Yumna Kassab
The Lovers

BIOGRAPHY:

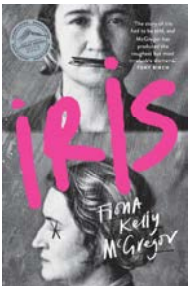
Yumna Kassab is a writer from Western Sydney. She studied medical science and neuroscience at university. Her fiction (*The House of Youssef*, *Australiana*, *The Lovers*) has been listed for prizes including the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards, Queensland Literary Awards, NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and The Stella Prize.

SYNOPSIS:

Every couple has a story. How they met, how they fell in love – their ups, their downs. What made them want to be in each other's arms day and night. The struggle of family expectations. The need to please each other, the desire to go their separate ways. It is about the private universe between two people as they try to hold to each other despite the barriers of geography, culture and class.

Every couple has a beginning, a middle, and maybe an end.

The Lovers is an enchanting fable that explores the light and dark of a relationship – a love distilled down to its barest form. You might think you know this story. Maybe you do.



Fiona Kelly McGregor
Iris

BIOGRAPHY:

Fiona Kelly McGregor's most recent novel *Iris*, is shortlisted for the NSW Premiers Awards and was longlisted for the Stella Prize. Previously, *Indelible ink* won Age Book of the Year and was published in French by Actes-Sud. Non fiction includes essay collection *Buried not dead*, shortlisted for the VPLA, genre-busting photoessay *A novel idea*, *Strange museums*, a travel memoir of a performance art tour through Poland, and the underground classic *chemical palace*. Short story collection *Suck my toes/Dirt* won the Steele Rudd Award. McGregor has decades' experience as a performance artist as well as curator of events, and writes for *The Saturday Paper*, *Sydney Review of Books*, *Art Monthly* and more.

SYNOPSIS:

Who is Iris Webber?

A thief, a fighter, a wife, a lover.

A scammer, a schemer, a friend.

A musician, a worker, a big-hearted fool.

A woman who has prevailed against the toughest gangsters of the day, defying police time and again, yet is now trapped in a prison cell.

Guilty or innocent?

Rollicking through the underbelly of 1930s sly-grog Sydney, *Iris* is a dazzling literary achievement from one of Australia's finest writers. Based on actual events and set in an era of cataclysmic change, here is a fierce, fascinating tale of a woman who couldn't be held back.



Adam Ouston
Waypoints

BIOGRAPHY:

Adam Ouston lives in Nipaluna/Hobart. He is the recipient of the 2014 Erica Bell Literary Award as well as the manuscript prize at the Tasmanian Premier's Literary Awards in 2017. He holds a PhD and has worked as a copywriter, ghostwriter, editor and bookseller. As a musician he performs as Costume. *Waypoints*, his first novel, was shortlisted for the 2022 Tasmanian Premier's Prize for Fiction.

SYNOPSIS:

In 1910 the famed escapologist Harry Houdini made an ill-fated attempt to become the first person to fly an aircraft over Australian soil—yet while Houdini is remembered today for his failure, the true record-holder has been forgotten. This quirk of history becomes the focus for the obsessions of Bernard Cripp, world-weary scion of an ailing family circus, who tries to unearth every detail of Houdini's flight in order to re-enact it. But *why* is Bernard so single-minded? As his manic testimony unspools, his story takes on a darker tone: he is, in fact, in mourning for a wife and child he has lost to the skies, and paralysed by the uncertainty surrounding their deaths. If his efforts to re-create history cannot bring back his loved ones, can they at least bring him peace as he struggles to live with his loss?

In *Waypoints*, his outlandish debut novel, Adam Ouston embarks on a journey to reclaim a lost sense of awe and wonder from subjects as diverse as Victorian vaudeville and cutting-edge data storage, from the early history of Alzheimer's disease to the immortality of human consciousness. Blending the solemnity of Sebald with the breathlessness of Bernhard, the result is equal parts rambunctious and ruminative, poignant and hilarious—a wild ride through a storm of grief, ambition, integrity, remembrance, and love.