

Media Release



Shortlist announced for Australia's richest biography and memoir prize

10/7/2024

The remarkable biographies of celebrated writers Donald Horne, Frank Moorhouse and Shirley Hazzard, pioneering composer Margaret Sutherland, bohemian rebel Bee Miles and a memoir of a daughter's quest to free her imprisoned father have been shortlisted for the National Biography Award, the State Library of NSW announced **TODAY [10 July 2024]**.

Selected from a record 107 entries, the six shortlisted works — five of which are debut biographies/memoirs — are:

- *Donald Horne: A Life in the Lucky Country* by Ryan Cropp (La Trobe University Press/Black Inc.) — debut biography
- *Bee Miles: Australia's famous bohemian rebel, and the untold story behind the legend* by Rose Ellis (Allen & Unwin) — debut biography
- *Inner Song: A Biography of Margaret Sutherland* by Jillian Graham (Melbourne University Publishing) — debut biography
- *The Shape of Dust: A father wrongly imprisoned. A daughter's quest to free him* by Lamisse Hamouda (Pantera Press) — debut memoir
- *Frank Moorhouse: A life* by Catharine Lumby (Allen & Unwin)
- *Shirley Hazzard: A Writing Life* by Brigitta Olubas (Virago) — debut biography

Senior Judge Dr Melinda Harvey commented: "This magnificent shortlist is united in a single pursuit: to understand Australian lives, from the famous to the forgotten, as snapshots of political and social history. But not only that: these books harbour the belief that the act of remembering what Australians have experienced and contributed is, itself, potentially transformative for our country's future."

The judging panel, comprising Dr Melinda Harvey (chair), Eda Gunaydin and Jason Om, also gave a highly commended mention to *Graft: Motherhood, Family and a Year on the Land* by Maggie MacKellar (Penguin Random House).

According to State Librarian Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon: "The State Library is at the heart of literature, research and writing and we're pleased that the National Biography

Media Release



Award —Australia’s richest biography and memoir prize — continues to thrive thanks to the generosity of the John Lamble Foundation, Graham & Charlene Bradley Foundation and Sarah Crouch.”

The National Biography Award has a total prize pool of \$42,000. The overall winner will receive \$25,000. The \$5,000 Michael Crouch AC Award will be awarded to the best debut biography or memoir, in honour of the late Library benefactor and former Award supporter. In addition, each shortlisted author will receive \$2,000.

The winners will be announced in late July 2024.

The Library will host an event with the winners on Saturday 17 August 2024. Tickets are available now. Places are strictly limited.

For more information about the National Biography Award, please contact the Awards team at awards@sl.nsw.gov.au

Media contact:

Vanessa Bond, Media & Communication Branch, State Library of NSW
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vanessa.bond@sl.nsw.gov.au

National
Biography
AWARD
2024