AUSTRALIA DAY WINS 2016 UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT AWARD

Author and Doctor Melanie Cheng has taken out the 2016 Victorian Premier’s Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript for Australia Day, a collection of short stories that explore contemporary Australian life.

Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley named Cheng the winner of the $15,000 award from a shortlist of three as yet unpublished Victorian writers at the opening of the 2016 Emerging Writers Festival tonight.

The 2016 shortlist included Jay Carmichael’s Ironbark, a novel set among the backdrop of a small country town, and Susan Johnston’s young adult fiction work Wildgirl. The two runners up will receive a Writers Victoria membership and professional development support.

Established in 2003, the Victorian Premier’s Literary Award for an Unpublished Manuscript seeks to uncover new Victorian literary talent.

Many previous winners and shortlisted authors have gone on to have books published – including last year’s winner Jane Harper, whose winning work The Dry was released in May and has already been optioned by a US film production company.

The 2014 winner Miles Allinson received the award for Fever of Animals, which was published in 2015 and went on to win the People’s Choice Award at the 2016 Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards. Maxine Beneba Clarke won in 2013 and quickly landed a three-book deal.

Other previous winners include crime writer Angela Savage, Carrie Tiffany, whose winning work Everyman’s Rules for Scientific Living was shortlisted for The Miles Franklin Award, and Graeme Simsion whose work The Rosie Project went on to hit bestseller lists across the globe.

The Award for an Unpublished Manuscript is part of the annual Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards, administered by the Wheeler Centre on behalf of the Victorian Government.

The final category for 2016 Awards program, the biennial Award for Indigenous Writing, will open for entries on 24 June 2016.

Find out more about the Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards at www.wheelercentre.com

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley

“We’re proud to celebrate the best Australian literature with the Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards. The Unpublished Manuscript Award is an opportunity for emerging Victorian writers to showcase their talents and take the next step in their creative careers.”

“Congratulations to Melanie and to each of this year’s finalists. Their work illustrates the depth of local writing talent and shows why Melbourne is not only a City of Literature, but the capital of our creative state.”

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