

21st Annual Aurealis Awards

Hotel Jen, Brisbane

25 March 2016

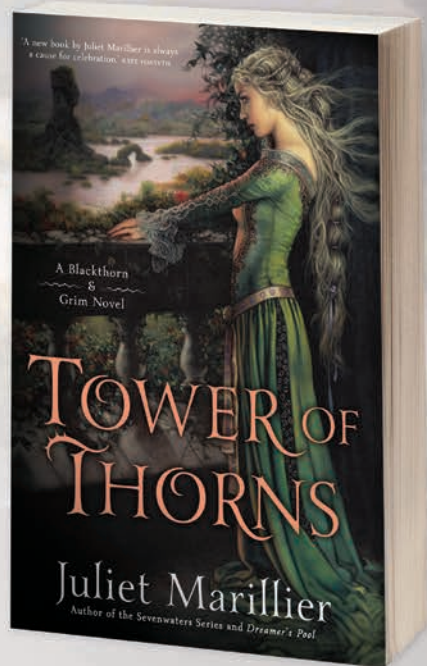


Congratulations to
Juliet Marillier

Shortlisted for:

Tower of Thorns
FOR BEST FANTASY NOVEL

The Sevenwaters series
FOR THE SARA DOUGLASS AWARD



‘Marillier is a fine folklorist and a gifted narrator.’

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

‘A new book by Juliet Marillier is always a cause for celebration.’

KATE FORSYTH



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PROGRAM

7.00pm Opening Address: Master of Ceremonies,
Rowena Cory Daniells and Marianne de Pierres
Convenors' Address:
PRK

Awards Best Children's Fiction
presented by Kathleen Jennings
Best Graphic Novel/Illustrated Work
presented by Kathleen Jennings
Best Young Adult Short Story
presented by Liz Barr
Best Horror Short Story
presented by Helen Stubbs
Best Horror Novella
presented by Helen Stubbs
Best Fantasy Short Story
presented by Nike Sulway
Best Fantasy Novella
presented by Nike Sulway
Best Science Fiction Short Story
presented by Lisa Hannett & Angela Slatter
Best Science Fiction Novella
presented by Lisa Hannett & Angela Slatter
Best Collection
presented by Cat Sparks
Best Anthology
presented by Cat Sparks
Best Young Adult Novel
presented by Jill Pantozzi
Best Horror Novel
presented by Keri Arthur
Best Fantasy Novel
presented by Kate Eltham
Best Science Fiction Novel
presented by Kaaron Warren
The Sara Douglass Book Series Award
presented by Kate Forsyth
The Convenors' Award for Excellence
presented by Tehani Wessely
Judging Coordinator Remarks:
Tehani Wessely

Hachette Australia congratulates



A. L. TAIT

Shortlisted for
BEST CHILDREN'S FICTION



GLENDALARKE

Shortlisted for
BEST FANTASY NOVEL

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CHIMAERA

We're all aware that the pace of change is constantly accelerating, and that speculative fiction is always at the pointy end of developments. Last year was the final year for the Aurealis Awards to be held in the nation's capital. We would like to thank Conflux Inc., the team behind the annual Canberra SF convention, which ran the Awards for two years, for throwing their enthusiasm, proficiency and experience behind the Awards. Through its efforts the Awards can now claim to be truly national.

2015 saw the start of the stewardship of the Aurealis Awards by WASFF, the Western Australian Science Fiction Foundation. They have now become a trans-Australian affair with the ceremony being held as part of Contact 2016 in Brisbane. We are also pleased that a new award, the inaugural Sara Douglass Book Series Award, has been launched as part of this year's proceedings. We would like thank the coalition that has formed to ensure that the level of expertise and professionalism behind the Awards continues to accelerate.

In the best speculative fiction tradition: here's to the future!

Dirk Strasser

Chimaera Publications

MESSAGE FROM THE JUDGING COORDINATOR

In 2015, we welcomed our new WASFF overlords to facilitate the operation of the Auralis Awards. And they promptly sent us off to the EXACT OPPOSITE side of the country to celebrate! In all seriousness though, without the oversight of the Western Australian Science Fiction Foundation, following in the footsteps of Conflux Inc, SpecFaction NSW and Fantastic Queensland and other organisers before them, the Awards simply couldn't take place. I would like to thank PRK for taking point on the deal which gave the Awards a continued home, and for taking on the quite thankless role of Awards Convenor, and supporting Katharine and I in our daily duties as Judging Coordinators. He's pretty awesome.

Thank you also to our amazing judging panels—the job they do is intimidating, with some panels reading over 100 entries and somehow managing to all stay sane and pleasant while wrangling the wonderful shortlists you have seen tonight. Particular thanks to the short story panels, who took a change to the Award structure in their stride, and to the inaugural Sara Douglass Book Series Award judges, comprising Katharine, PRK and Belle—these guys had a MASSIVE job, with more than 50 series entered, for a total of nearly 200 books! An astonishing task, and one they handled with aplomb. Thanks to all the panelists for giving their time and expertise in the 2015 reading year—our appreciation for their dedication can scarcely be expressed in words, but is genuine nonetheless.

As I mentioned, the 2015 Auralis Awards saw two quite important changes being made in the structure of the Awards. The first was the addition of the Sara Douglass Book Series Award, an award designed to recognise that often, there are book series that are greater as a whole than the sum of their parts—that is, the judges looked for a series that tells a story across the series, not one that just uses the same characters/setting across loosely connected books. The shortlisted works are best enjoyed read in succession, with an arc that begins in the first book and is completed in the last. Named for one of Australia's best known speculative fiction writers, Sara Douglass was the flagship author of the HarperVoyager Australian line, which launched the careers of many of our most popular writers, and paved the way for the vibrant and diverse speculative fiction scene Australia has today. Sara's contribution to the state of speculative fiction in Australia cannot be underestimated, and we are proud to commemorate her in this Award.

The second change was to institute three new categories for novella-length fiction, extracting stories between 7,500 and 39,999 words in length from the existing short story categories and highlighting them as separate entities. This change reflects a growth in the longer form, which has been recognised in other Australian and international awards for many years, and has the added bonus of allowing our judges to showcase even more excellent work in the Auralis Awards each year.

It is essential that I thank Katharine Stubbs, who takes on a huge amount of the behind-the-scenes work for the judging coordinator role. I would also like to thank Cat Sparks for doing our beautiful program booklet again (even though

she really should have been writing for her PhD), Aimee Lindorff, for ensuring this collaboration with the Contact 2016 event came together, and Lewis Hutton, who did an incredible amount of work to create new entry forms for us and made them work.

Congratulations to all the entrants, finalists and winners, and your publishers. We are so lucky to have a vibrant speculative fiction scene in Australia, with an enormously talented pool of creators writing (and making) excellent work—it's been an amazing year!

Tehani Wessely
Judging Coordinator

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENOR

The Western Australian Science Fiction Foundation (WASFF) is a non-profit, community based organisation that aims to promote science fiction in all mediums. WASFF is very pleased to take on oversight of the Aurealis Awards for the next few years, and to bring the ceremony to you in conjunction with the 2016 Natcon, Contact. It's a fantastic thing to see organisations working together to ensure the ongoing promotion and support of the excellent work being done in the Australian writing scene, and wonderful to see the Awards ceremony return to Brisbane this year. WASFF is looking forward to the exciting process of hosting the ceremony in Perth in 2017, which will be a first for the Awards, and continuing to showcase the very best of Australia speculative fiction through the Aurealis Awards.

Congratulations to all the finalists, and to everyone involved in making the Awards happen.

P.R. Khangure
Convenor, 2015 Aurealis Awards

BEST CHILDREN'S FICTION

Panel Members: Lyn Battersby (convenor), Alethea Kinsela, Helen Merrick.

Number of Entries: 47

Judging Criteria: The Children's panel judged the entries against seven criteria—speculative fiction elements, plot, characterisation, world building, originality, style and X-factor. Illustrated works were also judged by the quality of their illustrations in addition to their writing.

Overview of Nominations: The entries within this category were not quite as diverse as in previous years, with the majority of entries tending towards the fantasy range with action, travel and adventure being a common theme. There were some novels based within futuristic settings and others took a humorous approach.

The entries tended to come from major and small publishing houses with only a few self-published novels or works making an appearance. It is important for the authors of self-published works to realise the importance of being professionally critiqued and edited.

The final shortlist represents work at its most original, with strong, developed storylines, interesting characters and an ability to tell a story that kept the reader interested. The crafting of the five finalists was of the highest calibre and reading the work proved to be a pleasure for the judges.

The judges read works aimed at all ages ranging from the very young (age 4) to the upper end of the Children's spectrum (age 12). The shortlist reflects the strength of the Australian children's speculative fiction market within all age groups.

Shortlist:

A Week Without Tuesday, Angelica Banks (Allen & Unwin)

The Cut-Out, Jack Heath (Allen & Unwin)

A Single Stone, Meg McKinlay (Walker Books Australia)

Bella and the Wandering House, Meg McKinlay (Fremantle Press)

The Mapmaker Chronicles: Prisoner of the Black Hawk, A.L. Tait (Hachette Australia).

GRAPHIC NOVEL/ILLUSTRATED WORK

Panel Members: Robert Hood, Heather Iveson, Amy Maynard, Bethwyn Walker (convenor).

Number of Entries: 28

Judging Criteria: The panellists this year looked for originality of story, and pieces that produced an overall sense of being absorbed within the tale itself. The judges sought works where text and images worked together to create the overall story, and built upon each other to create an experience that could not be achieved by text or image alone. Finally, the judges were looking for entries that showcased artistic talent and showed how engaging graphic and illustrated works can be.

Overview of Nominations: The amount of nominations was good and fairly easy to handle, and the vast majority were in e-format. While this was helpful, it also brought attention to the importance of good formatting and editing for each e-entry, as some were difficult for the panel to read and that occasionally made the experience of judging them more frustrating. Many of the nominations were a little lacklustre in content and overall story, and didn't manage to hold attention. This means that the entries that were of a higher quality were much easier to notice and place into the shortlist. As such, the final shortlist indicates a high level of quality, originality, and an overall excellent standard of artwork.

Shortlist:

The Undertaker Morton Stone Vol. 1, Gary Chaloner, Ben Templesmith, and Ashley Wood (Gestalt)

The Diemenois, Jamie Clennett (Hunter Publishers)

Unmasked Vol. 1: Going Straight is No Way to Die, Christian Read (Gestalt)

The Singing Bones, Shaun Tan (Allen & Unwin)

Fly the Colour Fantastica, various authors (Veriko Operative).

BEST YOUNG ADULT SHORT STORY

Panel Members: Lorraine Cormack, Miffy Farquharson (convenor), Grace Nye.

Number of Entries: 41

Judging Criteria: The Young Adult Short Story panel judged the entries against four criteria—originality, plotting, characterisation and writing style. Consideration was also given to suitability for a young adult audience.

Overview of Nominations: The standard of entries in this category was quite variable, although the top end was strong and the panel spent some considerable time discussing which titles would be included on the shortlist. A number of entries were considered to be under-developed, and needed further work to marry a good idea to good writing. There were also a few titles that were quite clearly intended for younger readers, and therefore entered in the wrong category. The shortlisted titles were chosen for their strong characterisation, and plotting, and a sense that some conclusion had been reached.

Shortlist:

'In Sheep's Clothing', Kimberly Gaal (*Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* #61)

'The Nexus Tree', Kimberly Gaal (*The Never Never Land*, CSFG)

'The Miseducation of Mara Lys', Deborah Kalin (*Cherry Crow Children*, Twelfth Planet Press)

'The Heart of the Labyrinth', DK Mok (*In Memory: A Tribute to Sir Terry Pratchett*, Sorin Suci)

'Blueblood', Faith Mudge (*Hear Me Roar*, Ticonderoga Publications)

Welcome to Orphancorp, Marlee Jane Ward (Seizure).

BEST HORROR SHORT STORY AND NOVELLA

Panel Members: Talitha Kalago, Maree Kimberley, Blake Liddell, Cathie Tasker (convenor).

Number of Entries: 115 (short story); 33 (novella)

Judging Criteria: The panel wanted stories that stood out from the first sentence and lingered long after they had finished reading. Clear, strong and inventive prose supported by memorable characters, solid structure and the ability to elicit an authentic emotional response from the reader. The judges looked for horror that inspired fear, ranging from the adrenaline pumping heart-stopper to the disturbing, disquieting subtle terror. The selection process examined the plot, prose, theme, worldbuilding and creativity of each novella, considering not only their place within the horror genre but also their merit as works of literary art.

Overview of Nominations: There was a lot of talent in the short story pool, and to a large degree it came down to splitting hairs between degrees of excellence in the stories listed as finalists. The importance of the horror element varied and many stories deftly incorporated elements of science fiction, fantasy and magic realism with horror. The judges were treated to some ground-breaking work that pushes the boundaries of horror in richly imagined worlds. The best stories unsettled and chilled with writing that revealed the dark corners of humanity and the world.

The first year of the Best Horror Novella has yielded exciting talent and engrossing horror, setting a high standard for years to come.

Shortlist: Short Story

- 'Bullets', Joanne Anderton (*In Sunshine Bright and Darkness Deep*, AHWA)
- 'Consorting with Filth', Lisa L Hannett (*Blurring the Line*, Cohesion Press)
- 'Heirloom Pieces', Lisa L Hannett (*Apex Magazine*, Apex Publications)
- 'The Briskwater Mare', Deborah Kalin (*Cherry Crow Children*, Twelfth Planet Press)
- 'Breaking Windows', Tracie McBride (*Aurealis* #84)
- 'Self, Contained', Kirstyn McDermott (*The Dark*, TDM Press).

Shortlist: Novella

- 'Night Shift', Dirk Flinchart (*Striking Fire*, FableCroit Publishing)
- 'The Cherry Crow Children of Haverny Wood', Deborah Kalin (*Cherry Crow Children*, Twelfth Planet Press)
- 'The Miseducation of Mara Lys', Deborah Kalin (*Cherry Crow Children*, Twelfth Planet Press)
- 'Wages of Honey', Deborah Kalin (*Cherry Crow Children*, Twelfth Planet Press)
- 'Sleepless', Jay Kristoff (*Slasher Girls and Monster Boys*, Penguin)
- 'Ripper', Angela Slatter (*Horrorology*, Jo Fletcher Books).

BEST FANTASY SHORT STORY AND NOVELLA

Panel Members: Deb Gates, Adrik Kemp, Fergus McCartan, Karen Simpson Nikakis (convenor).

Number of Entries: 116 (short story); 35 (novella)

Judging Criteria: The panel looked for strong story beginnings, cohesion and satisfying conclusions; character construction; vibrant, well-formed secondary worlds; extension of fantasy tropes and possibilities; ability to engage readers; saying something new or in a new/original way.

Overview of Nominations: A great many excellent, unique and sometimes genre-bending stories were submitted for consideration in the Fantasy Short Story and Novella categories for this year's Aurealis Awards. It has been a privilege to read and consider the merits of each. There was a terrific range in the style of writing, strength and diversity of characterisation and narratives explored. There were fantasies with a distinctive Australian flavour, new takes on older tropes, and the classics revisited via fresh angles. The judges felt as if they had travelled to a hundred different places and times and been welcomed into the arms of thousands of incredible, well-rounded characters, and were appreciative of so many authors putting their works forward. While the stronger stories were complex, cohesively plotted, emotionally engaging and reached satisfying conclusions, all stories reflected aspects of the richly diverse and flourishing genre of fantasy.

Shortlist: Short Story

'The Giant's Lady', Rowena Cory Daniells (*Legends 2*, Newcon Press)

'The Jellyfish Collector', Michelle Goldsmith (*Review of Australian Fiction Vol. 13 Issue 6*)

'A Shot of Salt Water', Lisa L Hannett (*The Dark*, TDM Press)

'Almost Days', DK Mok (*Insert Title Here*, FableCroft Publishing)

'Blueblood', Faith Mudge (*Hear Me Roar*, Ticonderoga Publications)

'Husk and Sheaf', Suzanne Willis (*SQ Mag 22*, IFWG Publishing Australia).

Shortlist: Novella

'Lodloc and The Bear', Steve Cameron (*Dimension6*, coeur de lion)

'Defy the Grey Kings', Jason Fischer (*Beneath Ceaseless Skies*, Firkin Press)

'Broken Glass', Stephanie Gunn (*Hear Me Roar*, Ticonderoga Publications)

'The Flowers that Bloom Where Blood Touches the Earth', Stephanie Gunn (*Bloodlines*, Ticonderoga Publications)

'Haunting Matilda', Dmetri Kakmi (*Cthulhu: Deep Down Under*, Horror Australis)

'Of Sorrow and Such', Angela Slatter (*Tor.com*).

BEST SCIENCE FICTION SHORT STORY AND NOVELLA

Panel Members: Alexandra Pierce (convenor), Ben Payne, Rivqa Rafael, Jonathan Strahan.

Number of Entries: 107 (short story); 21 (novella)

Judging Criteria: The panel was interested in stories that demonstrated originality, featured strong science fictional ideas, were well plotted, and were generally well-written. Vignettes—brief presentations of ideas with little actual story—were not highly regarded.

Overview of Nominations: The 128 entries came from 74 different writers. No single venue dominated in publishing science fiction in 2015, with Australian magazines having a poor year publishing short SF and very few Australian anthologies or collections highlighting science fiction.

Panelists observed that many of the stories submitted were either underdeveloped or incomplete, and felt that it was likely that they could have been significantly improved with further editorial guidance. This observation seemed to hold true regardless of the publication.

It is interesting to note that five out of the eight stories on the shortlists were published outside of Australia. This is not to say that work published overseas was intrinsically of higher quality or of greater interest, but rather that the panel was disappointed not to see more high quality work from local venues or by new writers.

Shortlist: Short Story

‘2B’, Joanne Anderton (*Insert Title Here*, Fablecroft)

‘The Marriage of the Corn King’, Claire McKenna (*Cosmos*)

‘Alchemy and Ice’, Charlotte Nash (*Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* #61)

‘Witnessing’, Kaaron Warren (*The Canary Press Story Magazine* #6)

‘All the Wrong Places’, Sean Williams (*Meeting Infinity*, Solaris).

Shortlist: Novella

‘Blood and Ink’, Jack Bridges, Prizm Books

‘The Molenstraat Music Festival’, Sean Monaghan (*Asimov’s Science Fiction*)

‘By Frogsled and Lizardback to Outcast Venusian Lepers’, Garth Nix (*Old Venus*, Random House).

BEST COLLECTION

Panel Members: Zara Baxter (convenor), Anna Hepworth, Gene Melzack, Rob Riel.

Number of Entries: 12

Judging Criteria: The judges were looking for a collection which was cohesive in writing style and voice, without being repetitive. They wanted sophistication in writing, characters and characterisation, immersive world-building and skill at storytelling, with originality valued highly. On top of this, the panel wanted a collection to contain stories that affect how readers respond to the world, and for the collection to either give a representation of the depth and breadth of their work, or to deliver insights that wouldn't be apparent if the stories were read individually, rather than as part of a collection.

Overview of Nominations: While the number of entries this year was small, a good proportion were of high quality. Australia's current strength of horror writing and writers is well-represented, with around half the entries being either horror or horror together with another genre. The majority of works were published by small press outlets, with two self-published works, and two from larger publishers. The shortlist includes collections from each of these groups.

Shortlist:

The Abandonment of Grace and Everything After, Shane Jiraiya Cummings (Brimstone Press)

Striking Fire, Dirk Flinthart (FableCroft Publishing)

Cherry Crow Children, Deborah Kalin (Twelfth Planet Press)

To Hold the Bridge, Garth Nix (Allen & Unwin)

The Fading, Carole Nomarhas (self-published)

The Finest Ass in the Universe, Anna Tambour (Ticonderoga Publications).

BEST ANTHOLOGY

Panel Members: Zara Baxter (convenor), Anna Hepworth, Gene Melzack, Rob Riel.

Number of Entries: 24

Judging Criteria: The judges were looking for strong story selection and ordering, presented well, and offering both freshness and depth, as well as cracking stories executed well. Aside from overall literary quality, the panel took into account the different nature of the entries. For “year’s best” collections, they particularly wanted to see anthologies that lived up to that name—that introduced them to stories they would be sorry to have missed and for the editors to have provided a genuine service to readers. For themed anthologies and magazines, the judges wanted the kind of cohesiveness and intersections between stories that reflected the editor’s influence and skill.

Overview of Nominations: Entries this year were a mix of themed anthologies, year’s best collections, and magazines. Themed topics covered everything from lighthouses to werewolves, with trans-humanism in-between. Overall, the diversity of voices and the variety in genre and theme was excellent, but the judges found they had reservations about a number of anthologies proceeding from instances of uneven tone, proofing issues, and story selection. Despite this, they felt that all the anthologies are worthy of consideration. The shortlist contains anthologies that each paint an engaging picture of a different space within the genre.

Shortlist:

Hear Me Roar, Liz Grzyb (ed.) (Ticonderoga Publications)

The Year’s Best Australian Fantasy and Horror 2014, Liz Grzyb and Talie Helene (eds.) (Ticonderoga Publications)

Bloodlines, Amanda Pillar (ed.) (Ticonderoga Publications)

Meeting Infinity, Jonathan Strahan (ed.), (Solaris)

The Best Science Fiction and Fantasy of the Year: Volume 9, Jonathan Strahan (ed.) (Solaris)

Focus 2014: highlights of Australian short fiction, Tehani Wessely (ed.) (FableCroft Publishing).

BEST YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

Panel Members: Lorraine Cormack, Miffy Farquharson (convenor), Grace Nye.

Number of Entries: 56

Judging Criteria: The Young Adult Novel panel judged the entries against four criteria—originality, plotting, characterisation and writing style. Although these four elements were the primary criteria, consideration was also given to suitability for a Young Adult audience.

Overview of Nominations: The standard of entries in this category was very strong, and much robust discussion was had to decide the winner and the shortlist. Many of the entries were both entertaining and thoughtful, without preaching to readers. The panel cannot stress enough the importance of having professional and experienced editors critique and refine works. The final shortlist represents strong and entertaining work of an excellent standard of writing.

Shortlist:

In The Skin of a Monster, Kathryn Barker (Allen & Unwin)

Lady Helen and the Dark Days Club, Alison Goodman (HarperCollins)

The Fire Sermon, Francesca Haig (HarperVoyager)

Day Boy, Trent Jamieson (Text Publishing)

Illuminae, Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff (Allen & Unwin)

The Hush, Skye Melki-Wagner (Penguin Random House Australia).

BEST HORROR NOVEL

Panel Members: Talitha Kalago, Maree Kimberley, Blake Liddell, Cathie Tasker (convenor).

Number of Entries: 13

Judging Criteria: A work in the Horror category should be intended to disturb or inspire fear, dread or trepidation in the reader. Stories may include psychological suspense, occult fiction, dark fiction, and paranormal fiction. A work need not contain supernatural elements to be considered horror. Literary merit is of paramount importance.

Overview of Nominations: While there were thirteen novels submitted, none of them spoke equally to all the judges, so it was decided that no shortlist would be released. Some of the novels entered had a great story premise, or were disturbing and chilling, or had great characters, or lyrical prose, were well-structured, or had other strengths, but the winner was a stand-out, especially with regards to style, story structure and compelling writing working as a cohesive whole.

BEST FANTASY NOVEL

Panel Members: Stuart Dunstan, Maureen Flynn, Emma Kate, Russell Kirkpatrick (chair).

Number of Entries: 61

Judging Criteria: The panel valued originality and writing technique above other criteria, but also paid close attention to characterisation, plotting and worldbuilding. Judges sought a shortlist that reflected Australia's place in the genre.

Overview of Nominations: The panellists were frequently disappointed by widespread failure in the basics of the craft, with many entries ruling themselves out of consideration due to poor writing, editing, plotting and characterisation. However, the shortlist represents a combination of the best 'new takes' on familiar worlds and tropes (Celtic, Georgian and paranormal) plus some truly adventurous and original material. While numbers by no means tell the whole story, it is worth noting that roughly four-fifths of entrants were female, and this is reflected in the shortlist.

Shortlist:

In The Skin of a Monster, Kathryn Barker (Allen & Unwin)

Lady Helen and the Dark Days Club, Alison Goodman (HarperCollins)

Day Boy, Trent Jamieson (Text Publishing)

The Dagger's Path, Glenda Larke (Hachette Australia)

Tower Of Thorns, Juliet Marillier (Pan Macmillan Australia)

Skin, Ilka Tampke (Text Publishing).

BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

Panel Members: Shane Charles, Stephanie Gunn (panel convenor), Rob Porteous, Trisha Suhr.

Number of Entries: 45

Judging Criteria: The Science Fiction novel judged the works by several criteria. Writing quality was extremely important, as was engaging plot and characterization. Emphasis was also made on originality, especially in terms of the use of science fictional tropes and conventions.

Overview of Nominations: The works received this year were varied in many aspects. Many sub-genres were represented, from classic space opera through to science fiction romance. Novels targeted to a young adult audience were among the strongest of the works, indicating the strong health of the young adult science fiction market in Australia.

The quality of many of the entered works was not as high as the panel would have liked to see, and the judges would like to remind entrants of the absolute need for thorough critiquing and editing of works, as well as the need to have read widely in the field, so as not to repeat the same old plots and tropes with little originality.

The shortlist represents excellent work, with both varied sub-genres and target audiences. It is of note that while most of the shortlist have been produced by large publishers, two self-published works are also included.

Shortlist:

Crossed, Evelyn Blackwell (Self published)

Clade, James Bradley (Penguin)

Illuminae, Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff (Allen & Unwin)

Their Fractured Light, Amie Kaufman and Meagan Spooner (Allen & Unwin)

Renegade, Joel Shepherd (Kindle Direct)

Twinmaker: Fall, Sean Williams (Allen & Unwin).

THE SARA DOUGLASS BOOK SERIES AWARD

Panel Members: P.R. Khangure, Belle McQuattie, Katharine Stubbs (convenor).

Number of Entries: 55 series (196 novels)

Judging Criteria: This Award is named for one of Australia's best known speculative fiction writers. Sara Douglass was the flagship author of the Australian HarperVoyager line, which launched the careers of many of our most popular writers, and paved the way for the vibrant and diverse speculative fiction scene Australia has today. Sara's contribution to the state of speculative fiction in Australia cannot be underestimated, and we are proud to commemorate her in this Award.

The Sara Douglass Book Series Award is a WASFF-hosted trial, and covers series ending (in its original publication) between January 2011 and December 2014. This award is to recognise that there are book series that are greater as a whole than the sum of their parts—that is, the judges are looking for a series that tells a story across the series. It is anticipated that shortlisted works will be best enjoyed read in succession, with an arc that begins in the first book and is completed in the last.

Overview of Nominations: In the inaugural year of the award, the judges were deluged by the number of entries (almost 200 books in 55 series), with series length varying between two and twelve books. All deserved detailed note taking as we progressed through them, focusing not only on what made each an excellent piece of work, but also how it contributed to a cohesive series.

It has been a fascinating journey to see what Australia had to offer in the speculative fiction genre over a defined number of years. Generally, even a voracious reader may stick to one genre or may not manage to get to the lesser known authors, whereas thanks to this award, the judges had the rare opportunity to truly see what was concluded between 2011 and 2014.

Though the discussion to whittle down to a manageable shortlist took many weeks, the judges were all on the same page for which handful of series stuck in their mind the longest, earned the most praise, and gave the most enjoyment whilst reading.

With 55 series submitted, across several sub genres, it is interesting to note the high representation of fantasy series in both the nominations and the final shortlist. In addition to reflecting the high quality of fantasy in Australian speculative fiction this does raise the question of whether fantasy works are particularly suited to a series format, possibly due to story scope or perhaps due to reader and publisher expectations.

Shortlist:

The Chronicles of King Rolen's Kin [*The King's Bastard* (2010), *The Uncrowned King* (2010), *The Usurper* (2010), *The King's Man* (2012), *King Breaker* (2013)], Rowena Cory Daniells (Solaris Press)

Creature Court [*Power and Majesty* (2010), *Shattered City* (2011), *Reign of Beasts* (2012)], Tansy Rayner Roberts (HarperVoyager)

The Laws of Magic [*Blaze Of Glory* (2007), *Heart Of Gold* (2007), *Word Of Honour* (2008), *Time Of Trial* (2009), *Moment Of Truth* (2010), *Hour Of Need* (2011)], Michael Pryor (Random House Australia)

The Lumatere Chronicles [*Finnikin of the Rock* (2008), *Froi of the Exiles* (2011), *Quintana of Charyn* (2012)], Melina Marchetta (Penguin Random House)

Sevenwaters [*Daughter of the Forest* (2000), *Son of the Shadows* (2001), *Child of the Prophecy* (2002), *Heir to Sevenwaters* (2009), *Seer of Sevenwaters* (2011), *Flame of Sevenwaters* (2013)], Juliet Marillier (Pan Macmillan Australia)

The Watergivers [*The Last Stormlord* (2009), *Stormlord Rising* (2010), *Stormlord's Exile* (2011)], Glenda Larke (HarperVoyager).

JUDGES

Children's Fiction

Lyn Battersby is a Western Australian author with over 20 publishing credits to her name, including appearances in *Electric Velocipede*, *ASIM*, *Borderlands* and several Australian anthologies. She has worked as an editor/slush reader for *ASIM* and *Ticonderoga* and has acted as an Aurealis Awards judge and panel co-ordinator several times in the past. She is happily married to author Lee Battersby and his Lego collection.

For a brief stint, **Alethea Kinsela** was an archaeologist, and after a few years digging in various interesting places around the world she worked as the Project Officer of the Young Archaeologists' Program at La Trobe University, designing and delivering school education programs. After discovering a cavernous gap in curriculum resources for Ancient Australia, she wrote a textbook, *Ancient Australia Unearthed*, which uses archaeology to tell the history of Australia's ancient past. She now devotes her time to freelance writing and editing, as well as teaching in the Faculty of Education at La Trobe University. In 2014, her particular passion for children's and YA literature drove her to enrol in a PhD in Creative Writing, for which she is working on a YA novel that explores the impact of social media on young people's futures. As a result of her research into online surveillance, you won't find her on Facebook.

Helen Merrick is an academic, reader and fan of all things speculative fiction. She writes non-fiction about science fiction, fantasy feminism and sustainability. Her publications include the co-authored *Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Haraway* and the Hugo-nominated book *The Secret Feminist Cabal: A cultural history of sf feminisms*. She has been an Aurealis judge most years since 2008. Her interest in children's speculative fiction stems at least in part from keeping up with her 10 year-old daughter's voracious reading habit.

Graphic Novel/Illustrated Work

Robert Hood's long career in the fantasy/horror/SF/crime genres has seen the publication of over 150 stories worldwide. Many of these have been reprinted in his four collections to date. He has been called 'Australia's master of dark fantasy' as well as 'Aussie horror's wicked godfather'. His novels include *Backstreets*, the *Shades* series, and an epic dark fantasy novel, *Fragments of a Broken Land: Valarl Undead* (Borgo/Wildside Press), which won the 2014 Ditmar Award for Best Novel. His latest book is *Peripheral Visions: The Collected Ghost Stories* (IFWG Publishing Australia, 2015), a reference volume containing 44 stories and copious notes, as well as (in the clothbound hardcover and single edition ebook formats) seven original images by Nick Stathopoulos. He reads a lot of graphic novels. Hood's website can be found at www.roberthood.net and www.roberthoodwriter.com. He also maintains an award-winning blog called *Undead Backbrain* that focuses on giant monster and zombie films, ghost cinema, horror film and fiction, and anything else of a strange nature that takes his fancy.

Heather Iveson discovered *Star Wars* and David Eddings' *Belgariad* at the age of ten and has been a voracious reader of science fiction and fantasy ever since. She discovered graphic novels ten years later when a friend introduced her to Kouta Hirano's *Hellsing* and she found her local library's well-stocked graphic novel section. In her professional life Heather is a librarian and loves to share her enthusiasm for great stories and encourage others to try new things. She can be found online at her blog *Triple Threat Librarian* www.triplethreatlibrarian.com and on Twitter as @TripleThreatLib where she talks libraries, books, and life.

Amy Louise Maynard is researching a PhD thesis on modern Australian comics production at the University of Adelaide. In 2014 she was honoured to be a judge at the 2014 Ledger Awards, recognising excellence in Australian comics craftsmanship, and in 2014 and 2015 she was the co-organiser of the Inkers and Thinkers Symposium, a nationally recognised comics studies conference. She has written for *Sequart*, *The Australian Comics Journal*, *Comics Forum*, *Hell Yeah Writers Bloc*, *On the Record*, *Aspire Magazine*, and *Fringe Review*. As well as comics, Amy enjoys cold beers, warm coats, red lipsticks and small dogs. You can find her on that newfangled bird site known as 'twitter dot com', @amybetweenin.

Bethwyn Walker is a writer, chronic student and avid reader. Originally a Psychology student, she spends (too) much of her time analysing mental states. Luckily, now she is a writing student, she can write about them. Her first 'proper book' was *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, and she feels she has modelled herself accordingly (though, unfortunately, still no telekinesis). She can be found online at www.butterfly-elephant.blogspot.com.

Young Adult

Lorraine Cormack has loved reading for as long as she can remember, with a strong—but by no means exclusive—preference for speculative fiction. She is a book reviewer, and enjoys the opportunity to bring really good books to other people's attention. She lives in Canberra with her family.

Miffy Farquharson has been working in libraries for 25 years across the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. She was the CBCA Vic Branch Book of the Year judge in 2008-2009, WAPBA judge in 2011-2012 and has three previous stints as an Aurealis judge and panel convenor. Miffy has a particular interest in speculative fiction and books for young people in general, and is looking forward to reading entries in the 2015 awards.

Grace Nye is a writer, critic, and passionate fan of speculative fiction. She interviews authors and discusses the latest book news on a nationally syndicated community radio program, *The Book Club*, and has contributed to *Australian Book Review* and *The Courier Mail*. Having finished a Master's in Writing, Editing, and Publishing at the University of Queensland, she now tutors in writing and is working on a young adult alternate-history fantasy novel.

Horror

Talitha Kalago is a geeky Australian author who spends an unhealthy amount of time reading, playing video games and watching horror movies. She also loves fresh water shrimps and snakes. She advises that shrimps are the best companions for writers; as they always look like they are typing. Snakes on the other hand, simply knock everything off your desk—including keyboards, mugs, entire computers and shrimp tanks. Talitha's other interests include entomology, psychology and sociology, rock climbing, aquascaping, web design, photography and graphic design. She also writes romance novels under a pseudonym. There is a 30% chance she is watching a horror movie as you read this. Her website can be found here: www.traditionalevolution.com.

Maree Kimberley is a writer and independent scholar from Brisbane, Australia. She has a Bachelor of Creative Industries, an MA and a creative-practice led PhD, which examines young adult fiction through a posthuman framework. She has published articles, short stories, flash fiction and a children's novella and her work has appeared in academic and literary journals as well as in a number of anthologies. She is a member of the Australian Horror Writers Association and is currently on editorial team for the speculative fiction magazine, *Aurealis*. Her obsessions include neuroscience, the grotesque, bizarre and somewhat strange and she also has a thing for circuses, so it's no surprise that the one book Maree wishes she'd written is Katherine Dunn's *Geek Love*.

Blake Liddell is an obsessive reader, spending vast swathes of her time immersed in the fantastical. She has a particular love of speculative fiction. The way to her heart is to ply her with books, coffee and chocolate. Cake is also very effective. Blake is an up and coming writer, with her first story appearing in print in 2014. She created the Newcastle Speculative Fiction Writers Group and has written reviews for online publications and blogs. She recently lived in a brooding Victorian mansion, complete with outdoor plumbing, gardens gone wild and disembodied voices—the perfect setting to prepare her mind for horror novels and short stories. This is Blake's first time as a judge for the Aurealis Awards and she is ecstatic to be part of the Horror Panel.

Cathie Tasker is addicted to reading, and especially to reading genre fiction. She likes nothing more than having to stay awake all night because she's too fascinated or too afraid to stop reading. Since she first walked into the adult section of the local public library, she has been reading a wide range of genre and literary fiction. She has been a fiction editor and publisher and now works as a Creative Writing teacher for the Australian Writers' Centre, working online and face-to-face. She also does some freelance structural editing. Cathie has previously been an Aurealis Awards judge for Fantasy novels and Science Fiction short stories. She has also judged the CBCA fiction awards.

Fantasy Short Story/Novella

Deb Gates has been an avid reader of Fantasy, Sci-Fi and Spec Fic since she first read the *Lord of the Rings* at age thirteen. Her interests largely lay in picking out editorial mistakes in the books she reads, and she has done some continuity

editing and proofreading for a couple of Aussie authors. Deb hopes to continue editing into the future. She is currently in the third year of a BA majoring in Literature and Composition and Communications, focusing on creative writing.

Adrik Kemp is a speculative fiction author with stories appearing in web-based and print anthologies. He holds a Master of Arts in Creative Writing which he enjoys looking at from time to time, and is an avid reader, writer and occasional drinker. His all time favourite novels are the original *Dune* series by Frank Herbert because they are rich in detail and back-story and contain a multitude of fascinating allegories for contemporary society despite being written decades ago. He works as a Digital Assistant for Pan Macmillan Australia and loves every bit of his job. He also loves travelling the world, but wouldn't be caught dead in a hostel. You can find him on Twitter @shadowadrik and on Facebook.

Fergus McCartan is a reviewer, blogger and interviewer, and when his head isn't stuck in a book he likes to entertain the delusion of finishing his first novel (hopefully within his own lifetime) and pretending his skill in playing the guitar is more like Hendrix and less like Dave Lister (that's a *Red Dwarf* joke in case you were wondering). As an Irish man in Queensland he frequently wishes for the cooler climate of Hoth, but some dreams probably won't come true. Fergus operates his own blog <http://thequietfantasybookblog.wordpress.com> containing a menagerie of topics from reviews, interviews, flash fan fiction and fantasy based games. This is his first year as a judge and he is very excited to get started.

Associate Professor **Karen Simpson Nikakis** is foundation head of Melbourne Polytechnic's Bachelor of Writing and Publishing. Karen's M.Ed explored the purposes of dragons in selected literature and her PhD applied Campbell's hero myth to a female hero. Karen writes deep fantasy—fantasy with a focus on individual hero journeys with a subtextual metaphysical question. Her Kira Chronicles trilogy was published by Allen and Unwin and her reference book on dragons—*Dragon Tales*—by Heidelberg Press. She has authored a number of children's book apps produced by Zero Cut Entertainment (as Chrys Andreas). Her fourth deep fantasy novel is presently contracted to Satalyte Publishing. She has a number of other deep fantasy novels in process which she will independently publish over 2015-16.

Science Fiction Short Story/Novella

Ben Payne is a local writer, editor and publisher who has been honourably mentioned in Ellen Datlow's Year's Best Horror. He has judged periodically for the Aurealis Awards for more than 10 years.

Alexandra Pierce has been reading science fiction for a long time. When she's not reading, she's teaching history and English. When she's not doing that, she's likely to be running, cooking, knitting, podcasting (*Galactic Suburbia*) or observing the stars. Or maybe sleeping.

Rivqa Rafael is based in Sydney, where she works as a freelance science editor. The subject material often finds its way into the fiction she writes, sometimes in unexpected ways. Her first two short stories were published in 2015 in *The Never Never Land* and *Hear Me Roar*. She is an avid reader of speculative fiction—mostly science fiction, but any subgenre will do as long as it's well-written. She has a degree in microbiology and a master's in professional writing. She can be found at rivqa.net and on Twitter as @enoughsnark, and is excited to be judging the Aurealis Awards for the first time.

Jonathan Strahan is the World Fantasy Award winning and multiple Hugo Award nominated editor of more than 45 anthologies, including *Engineering Infinity*, *Edge of Infinity*, the *Eclipse* anthologies, and *The New Space Opera* anthologies. He is the editor of the annual anthology series' *The Best Science Fiction* and *Fantasy of the Year* (now in its 10th year) and has been Reviews Editor for *Locus: the Magazine of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Fields* since 2002. He has won the Australian National Science Fiction Achievement Award, the William J Atheling Award for Criticism or Review, and the Peter McNamara Achievement Award.

Collection and Anthology

Zara Baxter has been reading horror ever since she can remember. Her older sister stapled together the pages of a short story in an R Chetwynd-Hayes collection so she couldn't read about sex at an impressionable age, and she devoured James Herbert's *The Rats* well before reaching high school. She's worked as a university lecturer in microbiology, a technology writer and editor, and a webmonkey, and wonders what on earth her next career might be. She attended Clarion South Writer's workshop in 2004, was a member (layout geek, slushwrangler and sometime editor) of *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* for six years, writes whenever she gets a spare minute and wishes she had more time to cook. Zara has previously been an Aurealis Awards judge for Horror, Fantasy long-form and Science Fiction short stories.

Anna Hepworth is a long time fan of short stories, possibly triggered by a near accidental purchase of a copy of *Dangerous Visions* c.1988. She currently indulges this love by collecting 'best of' anthologies and reading shorter fanfic in a multitude of fandoms; previous indulgences include judging short story competitions, and being a contributing editor for the *Borderlands* magazine. In her day job she is a research statistician with a focus on breastfeeding; the rest of her awake hours are spread across such hobbies as reading, crafting, and driving teenagers to activities.

Gene Melzack is a short story reader by preference and long-time speculative fiction reader and fan. In the past he has reviewed for semi-prozines such as *Strange Horizons* and academic journals such as *Foundation*. He served as secretary of the Science Fiction Foundation from 2004-2005 and was features co-editor of *Vector*, the journal of the British Science Fiction Association from 2005-2006. He was sub-editor for review site *Australian Speculative Fiction in Focus* from 2008-2009. He previously served as a judge for the British Science Fiction Association's non-fiction award.

Rob Riel has been reading, writing and enjoying speculative fiction for decades. He's worked as a sailor, electronics technician, metallurgical engineer, electron microscopist, university lecturer in creative writing, founder and publisher of Picaro Press, and disability services coordinator. He currently mentors HSC students in English. He lives in Cardiff, NSW, and this year he intends to get back into writing for publication in a serious way.

Fantasy Novel

Stuart Dunstan works for a library supplier, selecting fiction for public libraries across Australia and New Zealand, and ensuring their collections have the best fantastical fiction from local authors, small press publishers, and the mainstream. He finds it extremely satisfying to be able to give back to the libraries that nurtured his love of reading as a child. Apart from being an avid reader of fantasy, SF and horror, Stuart has also been a bookseller and a book reviewer for industry and street press publications. He recently had his first short story published inside a Christmas cracker and hopes to have more published soon—though not necessarily inside crackers. Stuart lives in Brisbane. You can follow him on Twitter at @SRDunstan.

Maureen Flynn works for a small national peak working across disability, aged care, mental health and carer support federal reform. In her spare time, she writes young adult speculative fiction novels and short stories, verse poetry and she has just ventured into writing crime. Currently, she is looking for a home for her YA fantasy manuscript and is working on a crime novel and a verse novel about 'the historical Merlin'. Maureen reviews speculative fiction novels at her wordpress blog, InkAshlings. Never one for saying no to a challenge, she also reviews genre books, films and TV shows and has interviewed authors for her blog. Her self published verse novella, *My Heart's Choir Sings* is available from Amazon and Smashwords. You can follow Maureen at her website, on Goodreads or Twitter.

Emma Kate is a qualified teacher librarian with 15 years of experience who currently works in a middle/senior school library where she gets to read all the Young Adult she likes. Emma has been a previous Aurealis Awards judge for the Fantasy Novel and Horror categories. She can be found online as herself at @wagem and emmakate.me and as the editor of *Elaia* ezine at @Elaia_Ezine and elaiaezine.me. She lives with her partner and daughter in Southern Tasmania where she reads every night before sleep and sometimes instead of.

Russell Kirkpatrick is originally from New Zealand but now lives in Canberra. He has written two fantasy trilogies, published by HarperCollins in Australasia and Orbit in the UK and US markets, and is a three-time Julius Vogel award winner. His debut novel, *Across The Face Of The World*, was the biggest-selling debut fantasy novel in the USA in 2008. Until 2014 he was a part-time lecturer in Geography at the University of Waikato and has had a number of non-fiction titles published, including the *New Zealand Historical Atlas* (winner of the Montana People's Choice award in 1998) and *Contemporary Atlas New Zealand* (Montana awards finalist). His most recent non-fiction project, *Walks to Waterfalls*, was published in November 2011.

Science Fiction Novel

By day, **Shane Charles** is a mild mannered HR manager at a busy public hospital but at night he becomes the superhero known as...well not really. After a busy day at work Shane likes nothing more than spending time with his wife and three kids before relaxing with a good book or three. An avid reader since starting reading comics as a four year old, Shane has spent the last 40-odd years spending the majority of his spare time venturing to other galaxies, battling invading aliens, saving Jimmy Olsen from trouble and all of the myriad other scenarios that the world of fiction can welcome you into. This is Shane's first time as a judge at the Aurealis Awards and he is looking forward to catching up with the best genre fiction our Australian talent has to offer.

Stephanie Gunn is a Ditmar-nominated writer of speculative fiction, with short stories published in anthologies such as *Bloodstones*, *Epilogue* and *Kisses by Clockwork*. In another life she was a scientist, but now spends her time writing, reading and reviewing. She has judged the Australian Shadows Awards and is a frequent judge and convenor of the Aurealis Awards. She lives in Perth with her husband, son and requisite cat and is currently at work on a contemporary fantasy novel, amongst too many other projects. She can be found online at www.stephaniegunn.com.

Rob Porteous writes science fiction and fantasy stories. His short stories have been published in *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine* and overseas. In 2013, he co-edited *Next*, a collection of Australian spec-fic short stories with Simon Petrie. He is currently working on a debut fantasy novel.

Trisha Suhr is a wandering Texan currently living in Canberra. After spending 6.5 years at university, she walked away with a Bachelor's in English and History and a Master's in English. Since then, she's tried to find a publisher for her thesis (a young adult fantasy novel); taught ESL; traveled in South Korea, Japan, and Australia; and edited books for Asymmetrical Press. She is currently working on her first speculative fiction novel. You can find her on Twitter @trishasmash.

The Sara Douglass Book Series Award

Voracious reader and online reviewer, **Belle McQuattie** has been devouring fantasy for almost as long as she's been reading. She will forever be thankful for high school English teachers that think Isobelle Carmody and Terry Pratchett are appropriate study texts, spending many years living a couple of blocks away from the library, and the shenanigans found in the HarperVoyager Purple Zone. One day, she plans to write again, but often finds she can't put books down for long enough to start. She can be found on twitter @theresaninkspot, and blogging at <http://thereareinkspotsonmypage.tumblr.com>.

PRK is a long time speculative fiction enthusiast who regularly escaped to Middle Earth during primary school. Since then he's become more omnivorous in his spec-fic reading, enjoying and reviewing works in a wide variety of genres including fantasy, science fiction, horror, cyberpunk and paranormal romance. PRK is an IT Geek by day, which provides him the means to fund his spec-fic habit

and devour whatever books he can get his hands on. Contributing to spec-fic in Australia, PRK runs conventions as a hobby, and is on the Boards of the Western Australian Science Fiction Foundation and Continuum Foundation. You'll usually find him roaming the corridors at Swancon and Continuum, or online via Twitter: @prkaye or his website: www.prkaye.com

Katharine Stubbs has been a book reviewer for a couple of years now (most recently on her own book blog (ventureadlaxre.wordpress.com), and in the past has been a judge of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards in 2013/2014. This is Katharine's fifth year as an Aurealis judge after previously convening Fantasy Novel for two years, and anthologies/collections two years before that. Katharine is now joining Tehani as judging co ordinator for the Aurealis Awards, and loves seeing how it all works!

THANK YOU

The Aurealis Awards organising team would like to thank the following people:

The WASFF committee, especially treasurer Lexi, for helping us get stuff done;

Nicole R Murphy, for her continuing advice and support of the Awards;

Lewis Hutton, who did an incredible amount of work to create new entry forms for us and made them work;

Aimee Lindorff and the Contact 2016 team, for ensuring this collaboration event came together;

Cat Sparks for doing our beautiful program booklet again;

AwardsandTrophies.com.au for once again supplying the gorgeous trophies; and

Snap in Ann Street, for printing the con books and making sure they arrived on time.



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“TA VERY MUCH”

This book would not have been possible if not for the support of my family and friends. Tom, thanks a heap for your truly sagacious wordsmith advice. I love you dearly as I do our Jonno. To Mr Hunter, thank you ever so much for leaping into the void with me. To Mum and Dad, for the loads of help. To my dear Kate, don't think for one second that I'm not aware of how much your love and help has been critical to me, and not just in the making of this book but for my life in general. To my Murray and Olive I hope that one day you can hold this book in your hands and feel as proud of me, as I am of you. Other thanks goes out to Markus Kellow, Karlis Zaid, Sze Sze Rowlinson, Al MacInnes, and to anyone who has said nice words about this project..

“Ta very much for your super awesomeness”.

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THE NEVER NEVER LAND

edited by Mitchell Akhurst, Phillip Berrie and Ian McHugh

The CSFG wishes to congratulate the contributors to its tenth anthology *The Never Never Land* on their nominations for the 2016 Aurealis Awards.

Kimberley Gaal (nominee: Best YA Short Story)
Shauna O'Meara (nominee: Best Artwork)

The Never Never Land is available now in trade paperback (\$25 + postage).
Order from **canberra.specfic@gmail.com** or through the website: **www.csfg.org.au**