

PRESS RELEASE

Announcing the results of the 2021 New England Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing

The New England Writers' Centre is delighted to announce the results of the 2021 New England Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing. The New England Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing is a national award for unpublished short-form crime writing in three main categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction and Poetry. There are also three special awards: New England Award for a writer resident in New England; Emerging Author Award, for an unpublished writer over 18; and Youth Award, for writers under 18 years.

The competition is managed and promoted by the New England Writers' Centre and supported by New England businesses. Our sponsors this year include the New England Brewing Co., the University of New England, Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Education; Golden Orb Creative, Burnet's Books, and the Armidale Branch of the Australian Decorative & Fine Arts Society.

We are very excited to announce the winners of the 2021 New England Thunderbolt Prize, as follows:

Fiction: Wayne Strudwick (NSW) for *Reunion*.

Non-Fiction: David Vernon (ACT) for *The Kaarimba Horror*.

Poetry: Natalie Prior (QLD), for *The True Ballad of Hester Hosken*.

New England Award: Linda Brandon (NSW) for *Shatter*.

Emerging Author Award: Xavier Masson-Leach (NSW) for *Crimes Against Humanity*

Youth Award: Isabelle Schubert, age 14 (NSW) for *The Ghost Train*.

Now in its ninth year in 2021, the Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing attracted a strong field of entries from all over Australia, by writers both published and unpublished.

It was exciting to see the Youth category so well-represented, with strong submissions receiving commendations from the judges. A number of Highly Commended and Commended citations were awarded by judges in every category, with successful entries coming from all over Australia.

The New England Writers' Centre warmly congratulates all the winners, as well as everyone who received Highly Commended and Commended citations. A full list of winners, as well as all those highly commended and commended, is attached.

Judges this year were: Dinuka McKenzie (Fiction); Maryrose Cuskelly (Non-Fiction); Yumna Kassab (Poetry), and mother-daughter writing team, 'Phoebe McArthur' (Youth). All entries were judged anonymously, and the New England Award and Emerging Author Awards were chosen based on final commendations across all categories. All successful entries, along with judges' reports, will be published on the New England Writers' Centre website.

The New England Writers' Centre wishes to thank our wonderful judges and the generous sponsorship of local businesses for helping to make 2021 another successful year for the Thunderbolt Prize. And a big thank you to all entrants!

More information about the Thunderbolt Prize for Crime Writing can be found at on our website:
<https://www.newc.org.au/2021-thunderbolt-winners.html>

2021 New England Thunderbolt Prize Winners & Commended

Fiction

First Prize: "Reunion" by Wayne Strudwick (NSW)

Highly Commended: "Men's Shed" by Scott Hoffman (QLD)

Commended: "The Dead Girl" by Julianne Negri (VIC)

Commended: "Not of the Sea" by Barry Divola (WA)

Non-Fiction

First Prize: "The Kaarimba Horror" by David Vernon (ACT)

Highly Commended: "Dattilo's Vendetta" by Roger Vickery (NSW)

Commended: "Crimes Against Humanity" by Xavier Masson-Leach (NSW)

Poetry

First Prize: "The True Ballad of Hester Hosken" by Natalie Prior (QLD)

Highly Commended: "Neverland" by Jenny Blackford (NSW)

Commended: "Monologue of a Boss" by Margaret Ruckert (NSW)

The Youth Award

First Prize: "The Ghost Train" by Isabelle Schubert (NSW)

Highly Commended: "The Lockdown" by Finn Single (NSW)

Commended: "Wayne's Bread" by Joseph Daniel (TAS)

The New England Award

"Shatter" by Linda Brandon (NSW)

The Emerging Authors Award

"Crimes Against Humanity" by Xavier Masson-Leach (NSW)