



PRESS RELEASE

Announcing the winner of the 2020 New England Writers' Centre Fellowship

In partnership with Varuna, The National Writers' House, the New England Writers' Centre is delighted to announce Armidale writer **Helena Pastor** as the winner of the 2020 Varuna/New England Writers' Centre Fellowship.

The Fellowship, to be taken up in 2021, will give Helena a week's inspirational writing residency in the beautiful surroundings of Varuna, in the Blue Mountains. It includes full board and accommodation at Varuna, funds towards travel, a one-on-one consultation with a Varuna expert and more.

This is the second year of the Fellowship--the inaugural year, in 2019, was supported by a generous grant from the Copyright Agency, with the Fellowship winner being emerging speculative fiction author Anna Thomson.

Chosen by Varuna judges from a shortlist of two previously selected by judges from the New England Writers' Centre, Helena's winning submission included an extract from her non-fiction manuscript *One Fork, One Knife, One Life*, which she will be working on during her residency. It is a memoir based around the wartime and migration experiences of the author's Dutch mother, and the relationship between mother and daughter, and was praised by the judges as lucidly, evocatively and accessibly written, with an honesty and understanding that reveals the complex layers of relationships.

Varuna Executive Director Veechi Stuart said: 'Varuna selected Helena's work because of the strength of her craft in exploring the psyche of immigration and multicultural Australia through her personal experiences. We look forward to welcoming her to Varuna in 2021.'

'Helena is a fine writer of creative non-fiction whose first book, *Wild Boys*, attracted wide acclaim,' said Sophie Masson, chair of the New England Writers' Centre. 'We are delighted that she has won the 2020 Fellowship, to work on what sounds like a wonderful new project.'

Reacting to news of her win, Helena Pastor said, 'I'm honoured (and so happy!) to be awarded the 2020 Varuna NEWC Fellowship. A fully-funded residency at Varuna is a rare and wonderful gift, and I'm really pleased that my new memoir project *One Fork, One Knife, One Life* is already resonating with readers. Thank you Varuna and NEWC for creating this fabulous opportunity for writers in the New England region!'

Varuna and the New England Writers' Centre warmly congratulate Helena Pastor for winning the 2020 Varuna/New England Writers' Centre Fellowship and wish her a wonderful week at Varuna in 2021. We also congratulate shortlisted finalist Jax Bakewell on her excellent achievement and wish her all the best for her writing.