



## 16th DAVITT AWARD CEREMONY

Thornbury Theatre, 859 High Street, Thornbury

7pm Saturday 27 August 2016

### SCRIPT

**7.30pm Vikki Petraitis:** [Ask people to take their seats.]

**7.40pm Vikki Petraitis:** Sisters in Crime, Brothers-in-Law welcome to the 16th Davitt Awards, the night of nights for Australian women's crime...writing.

As some of you will know, the Davitts were set up at SheKilda 2001 Women's Crime Convention to celebrate the crime writing achievements of Australian women. 16 years later, we're still celebrating and there's a lot more to celebrate – something for which the Davitts can take some credit.

My name is Vikki Petraitis, I'm an author, long-term member of Sisters in Crime and a former national co-convenor. I am delighted that so many of you have joined us tonight for what will be a night of fun, food and forensics.

There are over 120 of us here tonight – in fact this dinner is totally booked out! Our Davitt presenter – award-winning, best-selling author and global literary sensation, **Liane Moriarty** – is coming from the Melbourne Writers' Festival and won't be here until 8pm so I will save the introductions till then.

Liane will be signing books in the intermission from 9-9.30pm so please feel free to buy books before then.

#### **Indigenous welcome:**

At the outset, on behalf of Sisters in Crime Australia, I would also like to pay my respects to the people and elders, past and present, of the Wurundjeri [Wurr- UND-joo-ree] people and the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge and uphold their relationship to this land. Thank you.

When Sisters in Crime set up the Davitt Awards at our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary SheKilda Women's Crime Convention back in 2001, there were 7 books in contention though the awards then didn't then extend to True Crime – or what we're now calling Non-Fiction. This year there are 77 books in contention.

Apart from Liane and me, we can welcome 23 women authors with crime books under their belts. Some have come from interstate and one from Singapore.

When I mention your name, please make your presence known – and, if you have books in contention tonight, get your pens ready for signings later.

- Deborah Benson
- Lindy Cameron
- Tania Chandler
- Kat Clay
- Cheryl Critchley
- Caroline de Costa
- Cath Ferla
- Fleur Ferris

- J M Green
- Susan Green
- Kate Kyriacou
- Kathryn Ledson
- Ellie Marney
- Helen McGrath
- Leigh Redhead
- Judith Rodriguez
- Angela Savage
- Alecia Simmonds
- Sue Smethurst
- R A Splatt
- Ann Turner
- Emma Viskic

A special welcome to Singaporean writer, Shamini Flint, who was an international guest at SheKilda2 and also presented the 2011 Davitts.

A special welcome also to our 'brother-in-law' and frequent debater at Sisters in Crime events, Robert Gott. Robert, I'm told, has also signed up to the Dicks Vs Dames Great Debate at SheKilda3: Men should stick to hardboiled and women should stick to cozies.

Have we left anyone out?

The books of all shortlisted authors and some others are on sale here thanks to Deb Force from the Sun Bookshop. Please take a bow Deb and many thanks for your great support. Deb is also a Davitt judge.

After the main course, I'll be interrogating Liane up here about 45 minutes before we break for dessert and the awards.

Meanwhile you can enter the 'Be Immortalised in Fiction' competition – for \$5 each or three for \$10 you can compete to have your name in the next crime novel by the winner of the Davitt (Best Adult Novel) award.

Slips of paper are on every table and we'll be sending Sandra Nicholson around to collect the money (and it may be with menaces!).

There's also Sisters in Crime's traditional book raffle (\$5 a ticket/3 for \$10). There are 3 bags of fabulous crime books by women on offer for 1st, 2nd & 3rd prizes, as you can see [point].

At Sisters in Crime's front desk you can join, rejoin or put your name on the email event notification list.

Also, on the screen you'll be seeing pics from previous Davitts for the past 13 years. A warning if you're a regular attendee: you may no longer look as young as you used to.

But first, a word from our sponsors Booktopia, Australia's preeminent online bookseller. Tony Nash, the founder and CEO, has done his back so we'll be hearing from John Purcell, Booktopia's Head of Marketing.

**[PAUSE FOR VIDEO]**

Thank you.

**7.45pm Main courses start arriving**

**8.15pm Vikki Petraitis interrogates Liane Moriarty**

Please join with me in welcoming the presenter of Sisters in Crime's 16<sup>th</sup> Davitt Awards – award-winning, best-selling author and global literary sensation, **Liane Moriarty**.

**[Pause for applause.]**

Liane is the author of 7 internationally best-selling novels, *Three Wishes*, *The Last Anniversary*, *What Alice Forgot*, *The Hypnotist's Love Story* and the number 1 *New York Times* bestsellers, *The Husband's Secret*, *Big Little Lies*, which won last year's Davitt for Best Adult Novel and, just out, *Truly Madly Guilty*. She has sold over six million copies worldwide!

With *Big Little Lies*, which sold over one million copies in the US alone, Liane became the first Australian author to have a novel debut at number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Rights were acquired by Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon who both took roles in the TV production, scripted by David E Kelley, with HBO winning the screen rights after a battle with Netflix.

Liane has often not got the recognition she deserves here in Australia but *Truly Madly Guilty* also debuted here at top of the best seller list. Please give Liane the welcome that can be heard in Sydney where she hails from.

**Vikki Petraitis:** [Thanks Liane]

**[Pause for applause.]**

**9.00pm Intermission:**

**Vikki Petraitis:**

Now is your chance to buy raffle tickets (\$5 a ticket/3 for \$10) and enter the 'Be Immortalised in Fiction' competition – for \$5 each or three for \$10 you can compete to have your name in the next crime novel by of the Davitt (Best Adult Novel) award.

Last year, Sisters in Crime's treasurer, Robyn Byrne, won the competition and her name is in Liane's new book, *Truly, Madly, Guilty*. I hear that she was disappointed not to be a corpse!

Liane is also happy to sign books – over near the Sun Bookshop stall.

**9.15pm Dessert**

**9.30pm Vikki Petraitis**

The books in contention for this year's Davitt awards show just wait a broad church crime is (pun intended).

There's Kathryn Barker's genre-bending young adult novel, *In the Skin of a Monster* and Caroline de Costa's depiction of psycho-sexual depravity in Cairns (*Double Madness*) – and Caroline's here from Cairns tonight if you want to talk about that!! There's also Ann Turner's more literary approach with *The Lost Swimmer*.

The sleuths range from Anne Buist's bi-polar forensic psychiatrist in *Medea's Curse* to Emma Viskic's deaf PI in *Resurrection Bay* and J. M. Green's grungy social worker, Stella Hardy in *Good Money*. There are, of course, some cops but they also defy the stereotypes. J. M. Peace's character in *A Time to Run* a female police officer who is abducted and she brings her own experience as a cop on the Sunshine Coast to create a riveting plot.

What's also remarkable are the opportunities now opening up to Australian women crime writers, despite the fluctuating fortunes of the Australian and global publishing industries. We've heard about Liane's brilliant career and there are other positive signs. Ann Turner's book, *The Lost Swimmer*, has been optioned by Sue Maslin, the producer of *The Dressmaker*.

J.M Peace's debut novel, *A Time to Run*, has also been optioned and is slated for release in Germany in April 2017. Fleur Ferris's *Risk* has been translated in to 3 foreign language and even staged as a play in Sweden!

Jane Harper's book *The Dry*, which will be on contention next year, has been sold to over 20 territories and has been optioned by Reese Witherspoon's production company. Hooray for Reese!

The trophies were again crafted by convenor Lindy Cameron's real life brother-in-law, Steve Ross.

On behalf of Sisters in Crime, I'd like to thank the judges for all their hard work: **Maggie Baron, Deborah Crabtree, Jacqui Horwood, Michaela Lobb, Deb Force and Debbie Stephen**. Could you all please stand except for Maggie who is overseas?

**[Pause for applause.]**

I'll now hand over to Jacqui Horwood who will present the judges' report:

**9.40pm Judges' Report from Jacqui Horwood:**

This year saw an onslaught of judges named Deborah. We welcomed new judge Debbie Stephens to the fray and also welcomed Deb Force from the Sun Bookshop back into the fold. These Debs joined Deb Crabtree. I'm not sure what the collective noun for a group of Debs is. Something to ponder for next year. The Debs were ably supported by Sisters in crime convenors Maggie Baron and Michaela Lobb, and me.

It was also the year of the travelling judges with Debbie Stephens and Deb Crabtree travelling to Europe at various stages of the judging period, and Maggie Baron leaving for Europe just after the judging night.

As always my fellow judges and I had a ball judging the Davitt Awards. Who wouldn't enjoy reading the best crime that Australian women have to offer? Every year is difficult to judge with so many fabulous entries and this year was no exception. In particular there was a strong field in the non-fiction section and a plethora of impressive debut authors.

The stories were set all over the world and as well as in all parts of Australia. In particular we read quite a few books situated in Queensland, including far north Queensland. It is so fantastic to see writers emerge from all corners of Australia.

I'd like to thank my fellow judges for their hard work and thank the publishers for continuing to support Australian crime writers overall, and women crime writers in particular.

Special thanks to all the writers whose work was submitted. There is so much talent out there and I'm as ever grateful for the opportunity to read your work.

**Vikki Petraitis:** [Thank Jacqui.]

**[Pause for applause.]**

**9.45pm Davitts Presentation.**

In addition to picking a winner, the judges have highly commended some books. I will be announcing the highly commended books first, followed by the overall winner.

**Davitt (Best Non-Fiction Crime Book)**

**Vikki Petraitis:**

14 books competed this year for the Davitt (Best Non-Fiction Book) with 6 shortlisted.

- Carol Baxter, *Black Widow* (Allen & Unwin)

- Cheryl Critchley and Helen McGrath, *Why Did They Do It?* (Pan Macmillan Australia)
- Kate Kyriacou, *The Sting* (Echo Publishing)
- Alecia Simmonds, *Wild Man* (Affirm Press)
- Sue Smethurst, *Behind Closed Doors* (Simon & Schuster)
- Sofija Stefanovic, *You're Just Too Good to Be True* (Penguin Random House)

**Liane Moriarty:** It is now my pleasure to announce Cheryl Critchley and Helen McGrath's book, *Why Did They Do It?* has been highly commended.

**Cheryl Critchley** has been a journalist for 31 years, including 21 at the Herald Sun. She has a strong interest in psychology and wrote two pre-teen novels and books on parenting and AFL football before turning to crime. Cheryl is also investigating the controversial Facilitated Communication technique, which was developed in Melbourne during the 1970s with children who had severe physical and intellectual disabilities and sparked furious and ongoing international debate about whether it works.

**Helen McGrath** is an Adjunct Professor at both Deakin University and RMIT University. She has also been a psychologist in part-time private practice for many years & is the author or co-author of 22 books including 'Difficult Personalities' and the 'Bounce Back Resilience Program'. She has been a consultant on State and Commonwealth government projects and is a member of the National Centre Against Bullying. She has always been an avid reader of true crime books.

**Vikki Petraitis:** This is what the Davitt Judges had to say:  
In *Why Did They Do It?*, Cheryl Critchley and Helen McGrath skilfully examine a range of crimes and identify and discuss the personality disorders of each of the offenders. The discussions are well written and accessible, and are supported by evidence and psycho-analysis.

The judges felt this book was a valuable resource for readers wanting to understand the reasoning and motives of the men and women who commit shocking crimes.

**[Liane Moriarty to present framed certificates to Cheryl Critchley and Helen McGrath]**

**Cheryl Critchley and Helen McGrath:**

Thanks Liane and to everyone involved with Sisters in Crime. We appreciate your recognition of our project, which took four years and a lot of mental toughness to complete.

Writing about true crime is not easy as the stories are horrific and there are no happy endings. By analysing some of Australia's worst murders we wanted to help people understand the motivational, situational and psychological factors that explained the perpetrators' actions.

We would also like to acknowledge the generosity of Alastair Nicholson, former Chief Justice of the Family Law Court, in writing the foreword to our book. It is gratifying to know that some sections have already been introduced into at least two, maybe more legal cases. Thank you all.

**[Liane, Cheryl and Helen to pose for pics.]**

**Liane Moriarty: It is now my great pleasure to announce the Non-Fiction winner: Alecia Simmonds for *Wild Man*.**

Alecia Simmonds is an inter-disciplinary scholar in law and history and a columnist for *Womankind* magazine and Fairfax Media. She is the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellow in law at UTS and a lecturer in Pacific History and Australian Cultural History at New York University- Sydney. True to stereotype, she loves riding her bicycle, perambulating around food markets, reading novels and sitting in pubs in Redfern bemoaning the decline of it all. She is currently working on her next book: *Courting: A History of Love and Law in Australia* which tells the story of the more than 1000 women from 1823-1975 who took their lovers to court for jilting them, or in legal terminology, for 'breach of promise of marriage'.

**Vikki Petraitis:** The Davitt judges report notes:

*Wild Man* follows the story of a man who was shot dead by police after he terrorized a group of people staying at a remote farm in country NSW. He had been using drugs and had a history of mental illness.

Alecia Simmonds brings us a compelling and insightful story of mental illness, family violence and masculinity. The questions she raises on mental health in particular enables to the reader to consider issues from many angles.

The judges found *Wild Man* to be a well written and compelling book.

### **Alecia Simmonds**

I am immensely honoured to be here tonight. Firstly, for my book to be mingling in the very fine company of the other books shortlisted for this award and also to find myself among such clever women committed to cracking stories. Aside from the obvious thrill I feel at having won this prize, I am also genuinely glad that a book about mental illness would win a crime-writing award.

This is because crime these days is usually a story of mental illness. In *Wild Man* crime and mental illness meet in extraordinary ways— there's a hippy festival, a husband and wife cop team, a famous football player and a cross-bow – and in ways that are tragically banal – it's about a man whose illness and violence gets excused as larrikinism and whose family find it difficult to cope in the absence of properly funded care. When we closed the asylums and failed to fund community care, people with no psychological training, such as police and female family members, found themselves on the frontline of mental illness.

This book shines a light on some of those people who are usually relegated to the wings. On a happier note, awards like this bring attention to these issues and to this extent

I would firstly like to thank the Sisters in Crime for organizing such a great event and evening, I'd like to thank my editor Aviva Tuffield for her unwavering support and brilliant advice, my publishers Affirm and my family and friends who endured a year of me directing all dinner party conversations towards depressing mental health statistics. Thanks once again, it's a great honour.

**[Liane and Alecia to pose for pics.]**

### **Davitt (Best Children's Novel)**

**Vikki Petraitis:** This year 8 crime books compete for the Davitt for Best Children's Novel. 3 were shortlisted:

- Susan Green, *Verity Sparks and the Scarlet Hand* (Walker Books Australia)
- Catherine Jinks, *Theophilus Grey and the Demon Thief* (Allen & Unwin)
- R.A. Spratt, *Friday Barnes 2: Under Suspicion* (Penguin Random House)

**Liane Moriarty:** Highly commended was Susan Green for *Verity Sparks and the Scarlet Hand*.

Susan Green has published ten books for children and young adults since 1987 – including teenage romances, picture storybooks and junior novels – but it is her gifted Confidential Inquiry Agent, Verity Sparks, who has brought her the most success.

*The Truth About Verity Sparks* was Honour Book in the CBCA awards in 2012. It was also a 2012 White Raven selection and will be released in the UK (as *Diamonds and Deception*) later this year. The sequels are *Verity Sparks Lost and Found* and *Verity Sparks and the Scarlet Hand*.

Susan inherited her love of crime and detection fiction from her mother, Helen, whose crime library numbered into the thousands. She lives in Castlemaine with her husband and miniature schnauzer, and when she isn't writing, works at the local bookshop.

**Vikki Petraitis:** Here's what the judges had to say:

*Verity Sparks and the Scarlet Hand* is the third in this impressive series, set in Victorian England and Australia, about a young girl with unusual talents.

In this book, the action moves to Castlemaine as Verity must solve a kidnapping and the mystery of a red glove, and work out a why a strange woman is following her.

The judges were impressed by Susan Green's work, which is consistently well researched and well written. She has given young readers a resourceful and intelligent heroine in Verity.

**Susan Green:**

It's a real thrill to be here tonight, and I would like to thank Sisters in Crime for recognising junior fiction writers with the award and this fabulous celebration. I joined Sisters in Crime over 20 years ago and in fact still have the story I meant to submit for the Scarlet Stiletto. It's unfinished. Perhaps I should do something about that.

Thank you also to my agent, Sheila Drummond: Walker Books Australia for continuing the Verity series; my wonderful editor, the lovely Mary Verney, who is here tonight; my family and friends for their tolerance – writers do tend to 'go missing' for periods of time; and finally a huge thank-you to my husband Howard, who's so proud of me, for his unstinting support.

**[Liane Moriarty to present framed certificate to Susan Green]**

**[Liane and Susan to pose for pics.]**

**Liane Moriarty:** And the Davitt for the Best Children's Crime Novel goes to R A Spratt for *Friday Barnes 2: Under Suspicion*.

R A Spratt is the author of the Friday Barnes, Girl Detective series. She is currently writing the 6th book in this gripping school-based mystery series. She enjoys getting hate tweets from exasperated readers who claim to be dying of frustration due to the cliff-hanger endings.

R A Spratt also wrote the *The Adventures of Nanny Piggins*. This is a nine book series about an impossibly glamorous flying pig who ran away from a circus to become a childcare worker, and flagrantly ignore all contemporary theories about healthy eating.

R A has written for 32 different television shows. Even she has trouble remembering what they were all called.

R A Spratt lives in Bowral, Australia with her husband and two daughters. She has a puppy, three chickens and five goldfish, and her next-door-neighbour's cat thinks it lives in her house.

**Vikki Petraitis:** Here's what the judges had to say:

The second outing for the quirky Friday Barnes series is a laugh out loud story of how Friday and her oddball friend, Melanie, solve a whole lot of mysteries when negotiating the politics being a teenager in a boarding school.

The book opens with Friday being carted off to the police station, and meeting a just released ex-convict and doesn't stop until the final pages when a new mystery emerges to keep us wanting more.

The judges felt that *Under Suspicion* is a great addition to a series that keeps getting better.

**[Liane Moriarty to present trophy to R A Spratt]**

**R A Spratt:** This is wonderful. I've always felt I deserved an award. I'm so pleased that finally other people have come to agree with me. Thank you Sisters in Crime for having such brilliant literary insight.

You've no idea how happy this makes me - to be standing here holding this award. Obviously because it is an honour to receive an award from a group of fellow crime fiction fans, and also

because I appreciate how many talented authors I've had to beat off with a stick to win the children's fiction category...

But the main reason I'm so happy to finally have won an award. An actual physical award that I can hold in my hand. Is that it is such a lovely blunt instrument.

And no-one can appreciate more, than the women (and token men) here tonight in this room, the potential of a really interesting blunt instrument.

I shall treasure this, I will be inspired by this, although hopefully I will never have to use it... except in self-defence.

**[Liane and Rachel to pose for pics.]**

### **Davitt (Best Young Adult Novel)**

#### **Vikki Petraitis:**

This year's Young Adult field was strongly competitive with the books just getting better and better. 9 books were in contention with 4 shortlisted:

- Kathryn Barker, *In the Skin of a Monster* (Allen & Unwin)
- Fleur Ferris, *Risk* (Penguin Random House)
- Ellie Marney, *Every Move* (Allen & Unwin)
- Maureen McCarthy, *Stay with Me* (Allen & Unwin)

**Liane Moriarty:** The winner of the Davitt for Best Young Adult is Fleur Ferris for *Risk*.

Fleur grew up on a farm in Patchewollock, North West Victoria. Fleur's main careers have been in police and ambulance services in Victoria and South Australia. Fleur now lives on a rice farm in southern NSW with her husband and three children, and writes contemporary thrillers for young adults.

*Risk* was Fleur's debut, published by Penguin Random House in 2015. It has been translated to French, German and Korean and was produced as an audiobook.

Since its release, *Risk* has been added to the curriculum of many Australian schools for Years 7-10 and is listed as an official resource on the public library eSmart program. *Risk* was adapted to stage by a school in Sweden and was performed in May, 2016.

*Risk* was also longlisted for the 2016 Indie Book Awards.

Fleur's latest release, *Black*, is already making its way onto the curriculum of Australian schools and is being published internationally.

**Vikki Petraitis:** And now for the judges' report:

*Risk* is the story of two best teenage friends, Sierra and Taylor, and the murky world of online dating. Both girls are interested in the same boy who has contacted them online. Taylor thinks she's met the one but when Sierra makes a date to meet the boy, Taylor is angry with her friend. When Sierra fails to reappear after the date, Taylor is unsure whether her friend is in trouble or looking for attention.

The judges felt debut author Fleur Ferris delivered a tense and compelling cautionary tale without being didactic. She examines the grey areas of teenage relationships, grief, guilt and hooking up. More impressively, this book doesn't pull any punches emotionally.

**[Liane presents trophy to Fleur Ferris.]**

#### **Fleur Ferris:**

Thank you Liane. I am so inspired by your work and success. Thank you for being a part of the awards ceremony tonight.



When I was a teenager I overdosed on mystery thrillers because my mum is an avid crime reader and she passed on her books to me. If she was here tonight I would thank her for that, because that is where my love and passion for crime stories came from.

It is therefore such an honour to accept an award for best crime book and I couldn't be more proud.

Thanks goes to Carmel Shute and everyone else who works behind the scenes of Sisters in Crime and supports and recognises the value of the work of every woman crime writer in this room.

I'd like to thank my husband, Dave, who has supported me through the whole process.

*Risk* was my debut, but it was actually the sixth book I had written. I wrote five novels before I found the courage to let anyone read my work because I was certain they weren't good enough. I want to thank Tara Wynne, my agent, and Zoe Walton and the team at Penguin Random House for believing in me as an author and doing such a great job of publishing *Risk*.

Congratulations to Ellie Marney, Maureen McCarthy, and Kathryn Barker, the authors of the shortlisted books for this category. I love and admire your work and I am so honoured to be amongst you. When I saw the shortlist I didn't envy the job of the judges. So huge thanks goes to the judges – thank you so much for choosing *Risk*.

**[Liane and Fleur to pose for pics.]**

### **Davitt (Best Adult Novel)**

**Vikki Petraitis:** Tonight, a record 46 novels compete for the Davitt Best Adult Novel for the best crime novel of 2015 with 6 books shortlisted:

- Anne Buist, *Medea's Curse: Natalie King, Forensic Psychiatrist* (Text Publishing)
- Candice Fox, *Fall* (Penguin Random House)
- Sulari Gentill, *Give the Devil His Due* (Pantera Press)
- Bronwyn Parry, *Storm Clouds* (Hachette Australia)
- J. M. Peace, *Time to Run* (Pan Macmillan Australia)
- Emma Viskic [Vis-kitch], *Resurrection Bay* (Echo Publishing)

**Liane Moriarty:** Drum roll please...

And the winner of the 2015 Davitt Award for Best Novel is Emma Viskic [Vis-kitch] for *Resurrection Bay*.

Emma Viskic has won two of Australia's top short story awards for crime fiction: the Ned Kelly S.D. Harvey Award, and the Thunderbolt Prize. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Resurrection Bay*, was iBook Australia's Crime Novel of the Year in 2015. She is currently writing the sequel to *Resurrection Bay* with the help of a grant from Creative Victoria.

Also a classical clarinetist, Emma studied at the Victorian College of the Arts, and the Rotterdam Conservatorium in The Netherlands. Her musical career has ranged from concerts with José Carreras and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, to busking in the London Underground. She lives in Melbourne and divides her time between writing, performing and teaching.

**Vikki Petraitis:** And here's what the judges report says:

Not only has Emma Viskic written an enjoyable and tense debut crime book but she has created a memorable main character in Caleb Zelic who is an investigator and profoundly deaf. In the opening chapters, Caleb discovers the dead body of his best mate and his business partner goes missing. The pace doesn't let up as the reader travels with Caleb through his past and gains an insight into the complexities of deafness and disability, and of Aboriginal Australia. Throughout, Caleb refuses to be held back by anything or anyone.

The judges found *Resurrection Bay* to be an impressive debut, and felt Emma maintained tight control of the action and the tension right to the conclusion. We hope to see more of Caleb's adventures in the future.

### **[Liane Moriarty to present trophy to Emma Viskic]**

**Emma Viskic:** It's an honour not just to win the Davitt Award, but to have my name listed alongside so many fantastic authors.

When I first started writing *Resurrection Bay*, I didn't know any other writers. It was just me and my computer, trying to grow a novel from words. There were days when those words blossomed, and days when they turned into weeds. And, very often, the feeling of standing alone in a quagmire. But, towards the end, something amazing happened – I lifted my head and saw that there were people who wanted to help. *Women* who wanted to help.

Standing here tonight, surrounded by this amazing group of women, it's easy to think that we've achieved equality, but things like the Stella count show that we haven't. The Stella count, which tallies the gender balance of book reviews, is only one way of gauging the equality of women in publishing and the wider world, but it's a stark one.

The latest figures show that although women write over 70% of the books published in Australia, we still receive less than half the reviews in the press. Awards like the Davitts, and organisations like Sisters in Crime, are crucial in redressing this imbalance.

As well as Sisters in Crime, so many women have helped me on my way. The wonderful Janette Currie who mentored me through the final draft of *Resurrection Bay* via the WoMentoring Project; Angela Meyer and the Echo Publishing team; and many of the women in this room. None of whom I knew eighteen months ago, but all of whom have been incredibly supportive.

I'm currently wading through the quagmire of my second book, but I know that when I poke my head up again, you'll all be there with whisky and advice. So thank you, and know that I'm paying your help forward by supporting other women.

### **[Liane & Emma to pose for pics]**

#### **Davitt (Debut Award)**

**Vikki Petraitis:** The judges shortlisted an amazing 9 books for the Davitt (Debut) Award from 18 debut books across all 4 categories:

- Kathryn Barker, *In the Skin of a Monster* (Allen & Unwin)
- Anne Buist, *Medea's Curse: Natalie King, Forensic Psychiatrist* (Text Publishing)
- Tania Chandler, *Please Don't Leave Me Here* (Scribe)
- Caroline de Costa, *Double Madness* (Margaret River Press)
- Fleur Ferris, *Risk* (Penguin Random House)
- J M Green, *Good Money* (Scribe)
- J M Peace, *Time to Run* (Pan Macmillan Australia)
- Ann Turner, *The Lost Swimmer* (Simon & Schuster)
- Emma Viskic, *Resurrection Bay* (Echo Publishing)

**Liane Moriarty:** And it was a tie! The joint winners are Fleur Ferris for *Risk* and Emma Viskic [Vis-kitch], for *Resurrection Bay*. You've heard about both these authors so we'll go straight to the judges' report.

**Vikki Petraitis:** These were both outstanding books and both deserved to be recognized with Debut Awards.

### **[Liane Moriarty presents trophies to Fleur Ferris and Emma Viskic [Vis-kitch]]**

**Fleur Ferris:**

It's so special to win an award for a debut. Congratulations to the joint winner, it's an honour to be up here with you.

Congratulations to everyone shortlisted and longlisted in this category and to anyone else in this room who had their debut published this year or last. There are so many great writers out there trying to get published. I am so grateful to be one that made it through and to be here alongside you tonight. I wish each and everyone one of you wonderful, long, successful writing careers.

Thanks again to Carmel Shute and everyone who makes Sisters in Crime what it is.

And Dave, again, thank you. You were around well before *Risk*. Thank you for being a part of my writing journey.

And many many many thanks to the judges for awarding *Risk* joint winner of best debut.

**Emma Viskic:** [To thank family and publisher]

**Judges Special Award:**

**Vikki Petraitis:** There were so many wonderful books this year that the judges decided to award a special award.

**Liane Moriarty:** And the award goes to J. M. Peace for *A Time to Run* (Pan Macmillan Australia).

J M Peace is a police officer who would rather be a writer. Currently working as a senior constable on the Sunshine Coast, she juggles policing with family responsibilities and squeezes in some writing in as well. She writes police procedurals with a voice of authority.

Her debut novel, *A Time to Run*, was released in July 2015 by Pan Macmillan. An Australian film producer currently has a short option on it and it is slated for release in Germany in April 2017.

The sequel, *The Twisted Knot*, was warmly received upon its release in July 2016. Jay intends on continuing to write until she can give up her 'day job'.

J M Peace can't be here tonight but she's sent an acceptance speech by video

**PLAY VIDEO**

**[J. M Peace:** It's a funny old thing pretending to be someone else. During the day, I have my real life as a police officer, juggling that with family responsibilities and raising kids. It's only really once my shift is done and the kids are in bed, then I get to be a crime writer – J.M. Peace. Unfortunately, Jay doesn't get out much and I'm sorry I can't join you there tonight.

I am however absolutely thrilled and honoured to have been selected for this award. Enormous thanks to the Sisters in Crime for all the things they do to support female crime writers. Thanks especially to the judges and also chief offender, Carmel Shute.

I'd also like to thank Haylee Nash from Pan Macmillan because without her taking a chance on me as an unknown and untested author, I'm not sure the book would have seen the light of day. I am living proof that you can leap free of the slush pile. Also, to all the other people at Pan Macmillan who helped turn my scratchings into an actual book.

Congratulations to not just the other winners, but to everyone who made the longlist as well as the shortlist. I think simply being published is a fine achievement in itself with so many great crime novels already on the shelves.

So I'd like to raise my glass and toast all my Sisters in Crime, especially the writers. May your muse be on speed dial, may your hard drive never fail. And may your writer's block get a particularly nasty case of dry rot. Thank you and cheers.]

**[Liane to present trophy to Sandra Nicholson. Pose for photos]**

**Readers' Choice Award**

**Liane Moriarty:** It's now our great privilege to present The Davitt (Readers' Choice) award. All 77 books competed for this award as decided by the 600 members of Sisters in Crime.

And the winner is ... **drum roll please**... Emma Viskic [Vis-kitch] for *Resurrection Bay*.

This is unprecedented trifecta in the 16 years of the Davitts. Have we left you speechless Emma or can you come up again and say a few words?

**Emma Viskic:** [Short speech]

**Liane Moriarty:** *Resurrection Bay* is also shortlisted for a Ned Kelly First Fiction Award tomorrow night so keep your fingers crossed everyone. It could be a quadrella!

Also keep your eyes out for *The Sunday Herald Sun* and *The Age* on Monday and your ears out for Emma on Radio National Books and Arts on Tuesday, 10-11am.

Please give Emma a big big hand everyone!

**10.20pm Vikki Petraitis:**

- [Liane Moriarty to draw raffle winners – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>]
- [Liane Moriarty to draw the 'Be Immortalised in Fiction' competition]
- [Thank Liane – present gifts.]

**Vikki Petraitis:** Thank you all for coming. Special thanks to Sisters in Crime convenor, **Michaela Lobb**, who has managed tonight's event; **Lindy Cameron, Robyn Byrne, Caz Brown, Sandra Nicholson, Robyn Walton** and **Carmel Shute**; and the judges – **Maggie Baron, Deborah Crabtree, Jacqui Horwood, Debbie Stephen, Deb Force and Michaela Lobb**.

I'm now handing over to Lindy Cameron, Sisters in Crime's Vice-President who has a special announcement.:

**Lindy:** Thanks Vikki and can everyone put their hands together to thank Vikki.

**[Pause for applause.]**

Sisters in Crime is proud to announce its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention – *SheKilda 3: One Day Crime Spree* – to be held in Melbourne on Saturday 19 November 2016.

*SheKilda3* will involve more than 40 leading novelists, true-crime writers, screenwriters, producers, publishers, and scholars.

The scene of the crime is St Kilda Town Hall, the site of Sisters in Crime's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention.

Preceding the convention is an afternoon of writing workshops – how to write Young Adult crime and how to write a winning Scarlet Stiletto short story – at St Kilda Library Community Room, opposite the

town hall, on Friday 18 July. It will be followed by Booze, Books and Broads with a leading crime writer in the spotlight.

*SheKilda3* will open at 9.30am on Saturday 19 November with a keynote address by Professor Sue Turnbull, a Sisters in Crime national co-convenor and crime reviewer for Fairfax Media.

Throughout the day, there will be simultaneous sessions in the hall and council chamber, together with children's crime writing workshops and speed pitching sessions with publishers and producers.

At 4pm, we will gather in the hall for The Great Debate: Dicks vs Dames: Dicks should stick to writing hardboiled and dames should stick to writing cosies.

After a cocktail party from 5.15-6.15 pm, the 23rd Scarlet Stiletto Awards for short stories will commence.

This year, to mark our 25th anniversary, a special Silver Stiletto Award, open only to previous trophy (first-prize) winners, is being offered.

Afterwards, we'll be off for dinner at the nearby Grosvenor Hotel.

We will also be launching books recent winning Scarlet Stiletto stories, including those from 2016, to both publicise the winning stories themselves and celebrate the short story form.

We are expecting at least 300 crime fans from all over Australia. Men, or 'Brothers-in-Law', are welcome.

The program is almost finalised and the following panellists have signed on:

Sisters in Crime: Robin Bowles; Honey Brown; Anne Buist; Fiona Eagger; Cath Ferla; Fleur Ferris; Kylie Fox; Candice Fox; Sulari Gentill; Anna George; Kerry Greenwood; Narelle M Harris; Wendy James; Louisa Larkin; Kathryn Ledson; Kelly Lefever; Christina Lee; Rebecca Lim; Emily Maguire; Eleanor Marney; P D Martin; L J M Owen; Bronwyn Parry; Vikki Petraitis; Shivaun Plozza; Leigh Redhead; Angela Savage; Janice Simpson; Lucy Sussex; Kendall Talbot; Sue Turnbull; Ann Turner; Emma Viskic; Nova Weetman; and Sue Williams.

Brothers-in-Law: Robert Gott; Andrew Nette

Ticketing information will be available next. In the meantime, you can put put your name down on our website for alerts.

Grab the *SheKilda3* bookmark on your table and if you can hand out some out at the Melbourne Writers Festival or anywhere else, please grab a stack.

Just another plug before we close:

- The Australian Crime Writers Association's **Ned Kelly Awards** are on tomorrow at 4pm, at Toff of the Town, 252 Swanston Street. A number of Sisters are shortlisted and Carmel Shute is to receive a Life Time Achievement Award. Free and no bookings required.
- **8pm Friday 7 October: Antarctic Noir: The Ice Women Cometh!**  
Ann Turner and L A (Louisa) Larkin talk to Hazel Edwards about their new thrillers, both set in Antarctica, and why the landscape provides such an appealing, if chilling, scene of the crime. Followed by Sisters in Crime's AGM.

Please also put your hands together again for Liane Moriarty.  
**[Pause for applause]** Thank you. See you again next year.