



19th DAVITT AWARDS CEREMONY

Rising Sun Hotel, 2 Raglan St., South Melbourne

6.30 for 7pm Saturday 31 August 2019

SCRIPT

7.15pm WELCOME BY EMMA VISKIC

EMMA VISKIC: [Ask people to take their seats.]

Sisters in Crime, Brothers-in-Law welcome to the 19th Davitt Awards, the night of nights for Australian women's crime... writing.

My name is **EMMA VISKIC** and I am delighted that you have joined us tonight for what promises to be a night of fun, food, felonies and forensics.

Indigenous welcome:

At the outset, on behalf of Sisters in Crime Australia, we respectfully acknowledge the Yalukit Wilam Clan (Yal-ick Wil-um) of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land. Thank you.

Our Davitt's presenter tonight is the multi-talented New Zealand author **Dr JOANNE DRAYTON** whom I will introduce properly a bit later but give her a big cheer for now. Please stand and take a bow Joanne.

[Pause for applause.]

Apart from Joanne and me, we can welcome 14 women authors with crime books under their belts.

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.

- **Lindy Cameron**
- **Tania Chandler**
- **Aoife Clifford**
- **Sarah Epstein**
- **Kelly Gardiner**
- **Jane Harper**
- **Chloe Hooper**
- **Bri Lee (from Sydney)**
- **Janet Lee (all the way from Gympie, Queensland)**
- **Leigh Redhead**
- **Judith Rossell**
- **Loretta Smith**
- **Jaz Stutley**
- **Jane Sullivan**

Have we left anyone out?

The books of all shortlisted authors and some others are on sale here thanks to the Sun Bookshop. Many thanks for their great support.

It is now my pleasure to introduce **Greg Every** who is representing **Dr Carolyn Beasley**, Deputy Department Chair, Media and Communication, Program Director and Senior Lecturer, Writing, at Swinburne University of Technology, the Davitt's sponsor.

Greg Every: "Swinburne is so very, very, honoured to be able to support the incredible work of Sisters in Crime, of each of you, and the Davitt Awards.

For those of you who don't know, Swinburne University offers writing programs for those of you who want to commit your own writerly crimes.

We run a TAFE professional writing and editing diploma headed by Nic Brasch. He's the chair of Writers Victoria and emcees the open mic night Spirit of Punk where no reading can be longer than a Ramone's song.

"Just try explaining that to an 18-year-old student who wants to read his first five-page poem about breaking up with his lover and waking up drunk on St Kilda Beach. Those of you who are creative writing teachers out here, I know you will understand.

"We also run two writing undergraduate majors. One in Creative Writing and Literature and the other in Professional Writing and Editing. I'm excited to report that you can now pair these with criminology and radio journalism to give your true crime podcast that extra authority. We're also happy to play your product on our streamed Swinburne Radio Station too. Our airwaves are your airwaves.

"We also offer an online Masters of Arts. This one is an all-purpose degree – study in your pyjamas, study at your work desk when your boss is out, or study in your prison cell if your research for your stories gets a little too real -- and you get a little confused, and instead of withdrawing money from the bank you find yourself jumping over a counter, stashing some cash and leading an entourage of flashing blue lights down the street.

"Don't worry though, I'm sure the judge will think that researching a crime novel is a perfectly justifiable defence. But if not, rest assured we'll be there with you to do the time, and help you write the crime.

"And of course, there is another special type of course, the *PhD*. I too am a victim currently undergoing that special type of torture. Oops. I mean research.

When it comes to a Masters or PhD, you do have to serve the time to write the crime, and we'll gladly serve that sentence with you.

"So as I wrap up, thank you all so much for giving voice to vibrant, diverse, and hidden voices in your storytelling. And thank you Jane Harper for making me too afraid to go to a country town, too afraid to climb a mountain, and way, way, too afraid to go near a cow.

"And all of you at Sisters in Crime should be proud of the contribution you have made to crime writing, and recognising the women who create it.

"At Swinburne we would like to continue our relationship with you and your storytelling by offering you free use of our media and communication facilities. We have excellent new radio and podcasting studios that we are happy to offer for use for no fee if you're interested in working on audio projects.

"So on that note, thanks to unstoppable Carmel and the Sisters in Crime crew for putting on such an exciting and much needed evening. And again, thank you for letting us help keep Ellen Davitt's spirit and your own great work, alive."

EMMA VISKIC: [Thanks Greg.]

And thank you to everyone else who contributed to our appeal through the Australian Cultural Fund.

Also, Sisters in Crime wants some new reviewers – we get an enormous number of books to review. If you're interested, please have a chat to Sisters in Crime's review editor, **MORAIG KISLER**. Could you please stand up Moraig?

Thank you!

You can buy all the shortlisted Davitt books at the Sun Bookshop stall. **DEB FORCE** and the Sun Bookshop are great supporters of Sisters in Crime. 10% discount for members.

Meanwhile enjoy your food.

7.30pm MAIN COURSE

8pm **EMMA VISKIC INTERROGATES DR JOANNE DRAYTON ABOUT HER LIFE IN CRIME**

Please join with me in welcoming the presenter of Sisters in Crime's 19th Davitt Awards – the multitalented **Dr JOANNE DRAYTON**, all the way from New Zealand.

[Pause for applause.]

JOANNE DRAYTON is a writer, teacher and historian with a PhD in art history. Her first foray into the world of crime writing was to delve into the life of Ngaio Marsh, the 1930s' and 1940s' New Zealand-born 'Queen of Crime' whose tightly written, stylish whodunits rated alongside those of Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers. *Ngaio Marsh: Her life in crime* (2008) was a Christmas pick of the Independent newspaper when it was released in the UK in 2009.

Joanne's research later took her to the case of Juliet Hulme who in 1954, at the age of fifteen, was convicted of participating in the murder of her friend's mother (the subject of the movie *Heavenly Creatures*) and later went on to write over 50 Victorian-era mysteries, selling more than 20 million copies internationally.

The Search for Anne Perry: The hidden life of a bestselling crime writer (2012) was among the top 10 non-fiction books on the *New York Times* best seller list and a finalist in the 2013 New Zealand Book Awards. Joanne's latest book, *Hudson & Halls: The food of love* (2018), won the Royal Society Te Apārangi Award for General Non-fiction in May. Hudson and Halls were pioneering TV chefs in New Zealand who camped-up television in a repressed era, but they kept a lid on a larger secret than just their sexual orientation.

The Search for Anne Perry and *Hudson & Halls* have both been optioned for feature films.

[EMMA VISKIC and JOANNE DRAYTON in conversation]

8.40pm EMMA VISKIC: [Thanks Joanne]

[Pause for applause.]

8.45pm DESSERT

9.15pm **INTRODUCTION TO THE AWARDS BY EMMA VISKIC**

As many of you will know, the Davitt Awards were set up at SheKilda 2001 Women's Crime Convention to celebrate the crime writing achievements of Australian women. 19 years later, we're still celebrating and there's a lot more to celebrate – something for which the Davitts can take some credit.

Back in 2001, there were 7 books in contention although the awards didn't then extend to true crime – or what we're now calling non-fiction. This year a record 127 books have been battling it out.

[Pause for applause]

More and more women are turning to crime – and for good reason. Crime is the most popular – and best-selling – literary genre and it's a broad church. Crime allows authors to apply the blow torch to contemporary issues whether it's the gendered nature of so much violence or the dangers lurking in the dark web. Whether your books are littered with gore or recipes, set in the mean streets of Melbourne or the dusty roads of Rusty Bore, population 147, there is a place for everyone.

When a lot of fiction has literally lost the plot (and a large readership), crime writing stands tall with compelling narratives, a keen sense of place, strong female characters and an acute sense of justice. And it's not all deadly serious – there is lots of fun, lots of humour, and lots of irony. It's just that the outcome is often deadly.

It is particularly gratifying to see the Davitts becoming a springboard to global success.

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The Dry is being produced by Reese Witherspoon who co-produced and co-starred in the *Big Little Lies* series with Nicole Kidman. The drama was based on the work of Liane Moriarty, the 2015 Davitt best adult novel winner. In June, HBO screened the second series which, this time round, featured Meryl Streep. Kidman will star in an adaptation of the Moriarty's latest novel, *Nine Perfect Strangers*, which was on the long list for this year's Davitts.

The film, *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears*, based on Kerry Greenwood's Davitt Award-winning series, is out later this year. Sisters in Crime is planning a group outing.

Only Daughter, the debut novel of Anna Snoekstra, which was shortlisted in 2017, is currently in the works to be turned into a feature film with Universal Pictures.

[Pause for applause]

The trophies were crafted by President **Lindy Cameron's** real-life sister **Fin J Ross** and a new designer, **Rose Boddam-Whetham**.

JUDGES' REPORT

On behalf of Sisters in Crime, I'd like to thank the judges for all their hard work: **Dr Kelly Gardiner, Debbie Stephen, Moraig Kisler, Pauline Meaney, Michaela Lobb** and **Jacqui Horwood**.

Unfortunately, Michaela and Debbie can't be with us tonight but could Kelly, Moraig, Pauline and Jacqui please stand and take a bow.

[Pause for applause]

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

Judges' Report from JACQUI HORWOOD:

"Good evening Sisters in Crime and Brothers-in-Law. I'm Jacqui Horwood, judge wrangler for the 2019 Davitt Awards. Tonight's my last judges' report. I've been involved with the Davitts as a judge since 2010 and it's time for me to hand in my whip. As much as I enjoy reading lots and lots of crime, I'm ready to hand the baton to someone with fresh eyes and more energy.

"Thank you as always to my fellow judges. This year we had stalwarts Pauline Meaney, Debbie Stephen and Michaela Lobb and two new fabulous additions – Kelly Gardiner and Moraig Kisler. Thank you for all your hard work and your insights.

"As you have heard we had bucket loads of crime novels to read this year. It's always heartening to know that Australian women are being nurtured, supported and encouraged in their crime writing endeavours.

"Two things stood out for us this year – the sheer number of fabulous debut books and the high standard of non-fiction writing.

"It's heartening to know that publishers are taking a chance with first time writers and these writers are producing such accomplished debut books. This can only mean well written second and third books. It bodes well for readers of crime.

"With the non-fiction books, we've always had stand-out books but this year the sheer volume of well-written, well-researched and well-considered books was a joy for the judges. There's been a renewal in interest for true crime, helped by podcasting, and the outcome for us as readers is an amazing array of books covering important issues like mental health, intellectual disability, terrorism, family violence and childhood sexual abuse.

"Well done to all our Australian women crime writers, longlisted, shortlisted or not. You are producing fantastic work and we want you to keep at it. To our wonderful publishers, keep taking chances with new writers and keep supporting both our Australian women crime writers and our Australian crime writers in general. Enjoy your night."

EMMA VISKIC: [Thanks Jacqui. **Presents bottle of wine.**]

[Pause for applause.]

9.25pm DAVITTS PRESENTATION

DAVITT (BEST NON-FICTION CRIME BOOK)

EMMA VISKIC: 22 books competed this year for the Davitt (Best Non-Fiction Book) with 6 shortlisted. Please refer to your program.

JOANNE DRAYTON: It is my great pleasure to announce the Non-Fiction winner – **CHLOE HOOPER** for *The Arsonist* (Penguin Random House).

CHLOE HOOPER is an award-winning writer of fiction and nonfiction. *The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island* (2008) won the Victorian, New South Wales, West Australian and Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, as well as the John Button Prize for Political Writing, the 2009 Davitt (True Crime) and a Ned Kelly

Award for crime writing. She is also the author of two novels, *A Child's Book of True Crime*, the joint winner of the 2003 Davitt (Adult Fiction), plus *The Engagement*.

The Arsonist is Chloe's latest book and was shortlisted for the 2019 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.

EMMA VISKIC: The Davitt judges report notes:

"*The Arsonist* by Chloe Hooper chronicles the horrors of the 2019 Black Saturday bushfires in the Latrobe Valley and the man subsequently arrested for starting the fires, Brendan Sokaluk.

"Judges admired Chloe's wonderful descriptive writing, especially the recreation of the fires in the opening chapters, and her even-handed approach to both Brendan and his family, and the Latrobe Valley community. *The Arsonist* also reveals the inadequacies of the criminal justice system when it comes to dealing with people with intellectual disabilities."

[Joanne presents trophy to Chloe Hooper.]

CHLOE HOOPER: [speech]

[JOANNE DRAYTON and CHLOE HOOPER pose for pics.]

DAVITT (BEST CHILDREN'S NOVEL)

EMMA VISKIC: This year 15 crime books competed for the Davitt for Best Children's Novel. 5 were shortlisted, as you'll see from the program.

JOANNE DRAYTON: And the Davitt for the Best Children's Crime Novel goes to **JUDITH ROSSELL** for *Wakestone Hall* (ABC Books, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers Australia)

JUDITH ROSSELL is the multi-award-winning author-illustrator of the bestselling Stella Montgomery series (*Withering-by-Sea*, *Wormwood Mire*, *Wakestone Hall*). Each of these books has won this award!

[Pause for applause.]

Judith is also the author of *A Garden of Lilies*. Before beginning her career in children's books, Judith worked as a government scientist (not a mad scientist, a normal kind of scientist) and also for a cotton-spinning company (making threads for T-shirts and denim jeans and mops and teabag strings). Judith has written fifteen books and illustrated more than eighty. Her work has been published in the US and UK, and translated into more than twenty languages.

EMMA VISKIC: This is what the judges had to say:

"*Wakestone Hall* is the conclusion to **JUDITH ROSSELL'S** consistently wonderful series about orphaned Stella Montgomery. Stella finds herself at Wakestone Hall, a grim and forbidding boarding school. Before long, she is chasing mysteries including the one about her own past with a group of like-minded friends.

"The judges loved the beautiful and atmospheric writing, the determined Stella and the engaging, well developed characters, each with their own idiosyncrasies'. *Wakestone Hall* ends the Stella Montgomery series on a high."

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents trophy to JUDITH ROSSELL.]

JUDITH ROSSELL:

"Thank you so much. It was a wonderful surprise to find out that *Wakestone Hall* had won a Davitt Award this year. Thank you to the Sisters in Crime, and thank you to the judges for all your hard work. And on behalf of the other children's writers as well, thank you for recognising children's books, and including them in these awards.

“Writing is a lonely business, and I’m a very angsty writer, so awards like this are incredibly encouraging.

“Big thanks to ABC Books and HarperCollins. Thank you to all the kids’ team, to Chren Byng and Kate Burnitt and Hazel Lam, and Chris Kunz who is here tonight. Whenever someone says something they like about this series, it’s usually something that one of these people did.

“Thank you to all my friends and family, and anyone who has had to listen to me tell them fascinating information about Victorian History over the last five years. Everyone’s been very patient and tolerant. And so you’ll be happy to hear that I’ve moved on from Victoriana, and I’m now looking at the 1920s. And I have lots of new, super-interesting facts to know and share. Thank you.”

[JOANNE DRAYTON and JUDITH ROSSELL pose for pics.]

DAVITT (BEST YOUNG ADULT NOVEL)

EMMA VISKIC: This year’s Young Adult field was again strongly competitive with the books just more compelling and more enjoyable every year. An amazing 17 books were in contention with 5 shortlisted. Please refer to your program.

JOANNE DRAYTON: The winner of the Davitt for Best Young Adult is **SARAH EPSTEIN**, for her debut novel, *Small Spaces* (Walker Books).

SARAH EPSTEIN is an author, illustrator and designer who grew up in suburban Sydney and now lives in Melbourne with her family. After achieving a design degree and enjoying a 25-year graphic design career, Sarah returned to her first loves of writing and illustrating. *Small Spaces* is her debut novel, and it was shortlisted for numerous awards including the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards and the Australian Book Industry Awards. It was also named an Honour book by the Children’s Book Council of Australia. Sarah’s next YA crime novel will be released in 2020.

EMMA VISKIC: And now for the judges’ report:

“*Small Spaces* by **SARAH EPSTEIN** is about Tash, a young teenager traumatised since childhood from seeing a young girl taken by her imaginary friend, Sparrow. No-one has ever believed Tash and when Tash thinks she sees Sparrow again, her foundations are rocked.

“This book is a genuinely creepy thriller that scared one judge so much she could barely muster the courage to finish it. Sarah Epstein not only admirably maintains the tension and is able to crank up it when needed. *Small Spaces* is an outstanding debut and the judges can’t wait for Sarah’s next book.”

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents trophy to SARAH EPSTEIN.]

SARAH EPSTEIN:

“I’m absolutely thrilled to win this award, especially in the company of such a stunning shortlist of LoveOzYA royalty – Fleur, Ellie, Lili and Kate. Fleur kindly helped me launch this debut novel in April last year, so it’s a true fangirl moment for me to be alongside her in the same shortlist.

“This award wraps up an amazing debut year for *Small Spaces*, and it’s lovely to come full circle with Sisters in Crime, who invited me to speak on my first ever panel as a newly minted author. I’m so delighted and grateful my first award win is courtesy of the Sisters in Crime Davitt Awards judges.

“Heartfelt appreciation goes to my editor, Nicola Santilli, who plucked this novel from obscurity as her first acquisition and championed it every step of the way through publication and beyond. Her support and guidance have been invaluable. Also to Linsay Knight and the whole team at Walker Books who got behind this debut and worked so hard to get it into the hands of teen readers who love a good page-turner.

“To the #LoveOzYA community of readers, reviewers, bloggers, booksellers and librarians, I appreciate every ounce of support you’ve been kind enough to show me, and I look forward to writing more Aussie crime and thrillers to keep you up late.

“Finally, to my partner in crime, Tony, and our two accomplices, Hugo and Harvey, thank you for making me feel like a winner long before I ever put pen to paper.”

[JOANNE DRAYTON and SARAH EPSTEIN pose for pics.]

DAVITT (BEST ADULT NOVEL)

EMMA VISKIC: Tonight, a record, astonishing 73 novels compete for the Davitt Best Adult Novel for the best crime novel with 9 books shortlisted. It sounds a lot but what a lot of talent is presented in this list! Please refer to your program. Get the drums beating!!

JOANNE DRAYTON: Highly commended is **AOIFE [Ee-fa] CLIFFORD** for *Second Sight* (Simon & Schuster).

AOIFE [Ee-fa] CLIFFORD was born in London of Irish parents, studied Arts/Law at the Australian National University, and now lives in Melbourne. Aoife is the author of the literary crime novels *All These Perfect Strangers* and *Second Sight*, also published in the UK and US. *All These Perfect Strangers* was long listed for both the ABIA General Fiction Book of the Year and the Voss Literary Prize. Her short stories have been published in Australia, UK and US and she has won the two premier short story prizes for crime fiction in Australia as well as also being runners up for both – the Scarlet Stiletto and Ned Kelly Award among other prizes.

EMMA VISKIC: According to the judges:

“**AOIFE [Ee-fa] CLIFFORD’S** *Second Sight* follows lawyer Eliza Carmody who returns to her home town to defend a large organisation against a bushfire class action. From day one, she’s pulled into uncovering long held home town secrets.

“The judges highly commend **AOIFFE [Ee-fa] CLIFFORD’S** pacy and tense novel. The judges enjoyed all the unexpected twists and never being quite sure what the ending was going to be. The writing is evocative and the judges could clearly picture the town of Kinsale. A deftly handled and exciting novel.”

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents AOIFE CLIFFORD with framed certificate and poses for pics.]

JOANNE DRAYTON: Big drum roll please... loud enough to be heard in Perth!!!

And the winner of the 2019 Davitt Award for Best Adult Novel is **DERVLA MCTIERNAN** for *The Rúin* (HarperCollins Publishers Australia).

Dervla is an internationally bestselling and critically acclaimed writer who is the author of *The Rúin*, *The Scholar* and *The Good Turn*. *The Rúin* was published in 2018 and is the first in her detective Cormac Reilly series. It was a top ten bestseller and an Amazon Best Book of July 2018. Dervla was a New Blood Panellist at Harrogate Festival. *The Scholar* was published in 2019 and was a top five bestseller. *The Good Turn* will be published in 2020.

The Rúin has been optioned for TV by Hopscotch Features and shortlisted for more than 5 awards.

Dervla spent twelve years working as a lawyer. Following the global financial crisis, she moved from Ireland to Australia and turned her hand to writing. Dervla is a member of Sisters in Crime and Crime Writers Association, and lives in Perth, Australia, with her husband and two children.

EMMA VISKIC: And here’s what the judges report says:

"The Rúin by **DERVLA MCTIERNAN** opens in Galway in 1993 with young policeman Cormac Reilly finding two neglected children and their dead mother. Twenty years later this long ago case revisits Cormac and he must investigate what was really going on that house of horrors.

"The Rúin grips you by the throat from the opening the scenes with the neglected Maude and Jack and never lets go. The judges loved the atmosphere and the twists and turns that kept us hooked and guessing until the end."

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents trophy to CHRIS KUNZ, HarperCollins Australia, representing DERVLA MCTIERNAN]

Dervla couldn't be here tonight but, thanks to the miracles of modern technology, has sent us her acceptance speech.

[In case technology fails:

DERVLA MCTIERNAN: "I'm thrilled that *The Rúin* has won the Davitt award for best adult crime. In many ways my writing career started with the Sisters in Crime Scarlett Stiletto short story competition, so to have won the Davitt feels like coming full circle.]

[CHELE – PLAY VIDEO.]

As you can tell, Dervla has adopted a noir approach despite living in sunny Perth. This is not surprising since she is an author who, before firing up her computer for a day's writing, closes the curtains, turns up the air conditioner, and starts listening to the sound of rain in her headphones, trying to recreate the feeling of being in her home town of Galway.

[JOANNE DRAYTON and CHRIS KUNZ pose for pics]

READERS' CHOICE AWARD

EMMA VISKIC: It's now our great privilege to present The Davitt (Readers' Choice) award. All 127 books competed for this award as decided by the 500+ members of Sisters in Crime.

And the winner is ... **drum roll please...** is

JANE HARPER for *The Lost Man* (Pan Macmillan Australia).

JANE HARPER is the New York Times bestselling author of Australian crime novels *The Dry*, *Force of Nature* and *The Lost Man*.

Her first two books both won the Davitt Readers' Choice Award, with *The Dry* also scooping the Davitt Award for Best Adult Crime Novel. Jane has won numerous other top awards including CWA Gold Dagger Award for Best Crime Novel, the British Book Awards Crime and Thriller Book of the Year, the Australian Book Industry Awards Book of the Year and the Australian Indie Awards Book of the Year.

Jane's books are published in more than 35 territories worldwide.

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents trophy to JANE HARPER]

JANE HARPER:

"I'm incredibly grateful to the Sisters in Crime for their tireless support, not just for my books but for all Australian women crime writers.

"It's so important that readers connect with your work so it's wonderful to hear *The Lost Man* has won the readers' choice prize.

"My aim is always to create a story that resonates and I want readers to enjoy my books so to win this award for the third year is fantastic. A huge thank you to the Sisters in Crime and everyone who voted for the novel."

[JOANNE DRAYTON and JANE HARPER pose for photos.]

DAVITT (DEBUT AWARD)

EMMA VISKIC: The judges shortlisted 12 books for the Davitt (Best Debut Book) from a record 51 debut books across all 4 categories. Again, take a peek at your program for the list.

JOANNE DRAYTON: Another drum roll needed...

And the winner is **BRI LEE** for *Eggshell Skull* (Allen & Unwin).

BRI LEE is a freelance writer based in Sydney, with by-lines in *The Monthly*, *The Saturday Paper*, *The Guardian*, *Crikey*, and elsewhere. Her first book, *Eggshell Skull* won several awards including the Biography of the Year at the ABIA's, and was listed for many others including a longlisting for The Stella Prize. Bri is also a non-practicing lawyer and legal researcher whose advocacy most recently lead to the Queensland Attorney-General referring consent and the 'mistake of fact' defence to the Law Reform Commission. Bri's second book, an essay titled *Beauty*, will be out in November.

EMMA VISKIC: The judges said:

"Bri Lee's *Eggshell Skull* is a passionate and emotional journey through the criminal justice system's treatment of victims of sexual assault. It is nuanced and complex, and never takes the easy road in its treatment of the impacts of the legal system on survivors and their families.

"The judges commend **BRI LEE** for her courage in both discussing her own experiences and in pulling the curtain on the trauma of childhood sexual assault. The writing is raw and pulls no punches on a highly sensitive topic."

[JOANNE DRAYTON presents trophy to Bri Lee.]

BRI LEE:

"Good evening everyone. Thank you so much to the judges, to the Sisters in Crime organisation, to my publisher Jane Palfreyman at Allen & Unwin, and to all the people who sit in between first drafts and finished proofs.

"I'm very aware that my book is about crime in Australia, in particular the inequalities in our system, and I can't go around this beautiful country without acknowledging that the pain of violent colonisation is still felt, and White Australia's refusal to reckon with this past is directly connected to it being a source of ongoing trauma.

"We are seeing absolutely no statistical improvement to the rate of Aboriginal deaths in custody, and they are the most incarcerated peoples per capita on the planet. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are still significantly more likely to be targeted for both physical and sexual gendered violence, and then they are mistreated and disbelieved at our hospitals, and disrespected at our police stations.

"I was born on Jagera and Turrbul land, and I now live on the lands of the Gadidal in the Eora Nation. This is a privilege. It is a privilege to win an award for a nonfiction crime book in a country where I get to walk down the street and not be presumed a criminal.

"There were 11 of us in the debut category this year, and I offer huge congratulations and best wishes to all the shortlisted authors. As well, being shortlisted in the nonfiction category, I congratulate the other 5 shortlisted authors and the winner.

"Special thanks to Krissy Kneen, the author of the incredible book *Wintering*, for having been a friends and mentor to me for many years. Back in 2016 when my writing started getting serious, Krissy was my first real

mentor. I have always been able to turn to her for advice in both life and writing. She is smart and funny and always so refreshingly no-bullshit. I wouldn't have had such a successful 2018 if not for the seeds she helped me plant in 2016 and 2017. Thank you to her."

[**JOANNE DRAYTON to pose for pics with BRI LEE.**]

EMMA VISKIC:

- [JOANNE DRAYTON to draw raffle winners –3rd, 2nd, 1st]
- [JOANNE DRAYTON to draw the 'Be Immortalised in Fiction' competition]
- Auction Piccoli Portraits Gift Certificate Worth \$845

- [Thank JOANNE DRAYTON – present gift bag.]

EMMA VISKIC: Just before closing, some announcements:

Sunday September 8: Our darling Val McDermid will be appearing at 3 different events at the Melbourne Writers Festival

Wednesday 11 September, 6.30 pm: Open invitation: A.M. Stuart will be talking about the first in her Harriet Gordon Mystery series, *Singapore Sapphire*, at Williamstown Library.

- **Thursday 19 September, 6 for 6.30pm:** Sarah to the power of two – Event Launch with authors **Sarah Bailey** and **Sarah Thornton** who will be in conversation with **Dr Robyn Walton** about their books, *Where the dead go* and *Lapse*. Readings St Kilda.

- **Friday September 27, 8:00 pm.** We'll be back here for Domestic noir goes bush with **Kylie Kaden**, **Petronella McGovern** and **Felicity McLean** talking to **Karina Kilmore-Barrymore**. Give us a wave Karina.
- **31 October- 5 November:** Across Bass Strait in Tasmania's Huon Valley is **Terror Australis Readers & Writers Festival**, a new Tasmanian literary festival inspired by Agatha Christie and organised by Sisters in Crime member, L.J.M. Owen (otherwise known as Alphabet Owen). The inaugural theme is Murder She Wrote, a four-day book spree of deadly Masterclasses, grave Workshops and incisive literary discussions. Details on the book mark in front of you. Grab a brochure on your way out.

More details on the Sisters in Crime website.

We'd also like to thank Sisters in Crime convenors **Caz Brown**, **Tara Mitchell**, **Lindy Cameron**, **Maryanne Webb**, **Pauline Meaney**, **Moraig Kisler**, **Carmel Shute**, and **Lesley Gillis** and judges **Pauline Meaney**, **Michaela Lobb**, **Debbie Stephen**, **Moraig Kisler**, **Kelly Gardiner** and retiring judges' wrangler **Jacqui Horwood** and also **Chele Cooper** and **Karina Barrymore**.

Please stick around for a bit, buy books and get them signed by the authors.

10% discount for members at the Sun Bookshop stall.

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

Could you also please leave your name tag. It's part of Sisters in Crime's war on waste.

Grab some notices on your way out.

Please also put your hands together again for **JOANNE DRAYTON**.

[Pause for applause] Thank you. See you again next year.

Could all the winners come up here for a group photo with their trophies/framed certificates.