

LITERARY AWARDS REVIEW: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Key Objective

To undertake a review of the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards and the Australia-Asia Literary Award.

Aims

To assess the effectiveness of the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards and the Australia-Asia literary award in achieving their objectives and the impact of both award programs for the Western Australian writing community.

To make recommendations for the future of both award programs including any alternative options to deliver similar outcomes.

Background

The Premier's Book Awards have been running for the past 26 years. There are seven award categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, Script, Children's Books, Young Adults and History. The winners of each category comprise the shortlist of the Premier's Book Award.

These annual literary awards were inaugurated by the Western Australian Government in 1982 to honour and celebrate the literary achievements of Western Australian writers. Until 1990 they were called the WA Week Literary Awards. They are now known as the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards.

The Australia-Asia Literary Award (AALA) was a new initiative introduced in 2008. A fiction award open to authors from the Australasian region, the award was introduced as an addition to the existing Western Australian Premier's Book Awards. The AALA is the richest literary prize in Australia, with prize money of \$110,000. The inaugural award was presented along with the Western Australian Premier's Book Awards Premier's Prize by the Culture and the Arts Minister John Day on November 21, 2008.

The objectives of the Australia-Asia Literary Award are:

- To draw the attention of the international literary world to Western Australia.
- To provide professional development and network building opportunities for Western Australian writers.
- For Perth to be acknowledged in world media as the city with one of the world's richest literary prizes.
- To enhance cultural and economic relations with Asian countries.
- To attract cultural tourists and media for the Award and other associated cultural events.

The management of the Premier's Book Awards and Australia-Asia Literary Award in 2008 was overseen by a Steering Group of State Library of Western Australia and the Department of Culture and the Arts. In recognition of the aim of the Premier's Book Award the Steering Group agreed the following objective:

- Acknowledging and celebrating the best of WA writing.

All six objectives were to be addressed through the combination of the two award schemes.

Scope and definitions

In relation to the Premier's Book Awards the research should report on the outcomes of the past three years 2006 – 2008 and also include a broader overview of the historical impact of the awards.

In relation to the Australia-Asia Literary Award the research will focus on 2008.

This research project will report on:

- The effectiveness of the Premier's Book Awards in achieving the aim of honouring and celebrating the achievements of Western Australian writers.
- The effectiveness of the Australia-Asia Literary Award in achieving its objectives.
- The outcomes of combining the Premier's Book Awards and Australia-Asia Literary Award in 2008.
- A comparative review of similar literary award schemes within Australia and internationally.

Methodology

It is envisaged that this research will include desk based data collection and interviews with key stakeholders and representatives of the Western Australian writing community.

It is expected that the researcher will draw upon a range of qualitative and quantitative data.

The consultant should provide a proposed methodology to the Department of Culture and the Arts for approval prior to commencing the research.

Outputs

The final report will present the Department with an assessment of how successful each awards program has been in meeting its objectives and the impact that the introduction of the Australia-Asia Literary Award had on the Premier's Book Awards in 2008.

Consultant's Proposed Methodology

Methodology

The methodology requires consultative and documentary research, and survey of relevant stakeholders. As stated in the brief, the preliminary task of the project team would be to finalise the project methodology to the satisfaction of the Department.

Reference Group

We propose a small reference group to provide advice on the project and review the draft report. Membership of this group would be decided in consultation with the Department, but could be made up perhaps of a publisher, a former judge from each award, a writer and a book seller as well as Departmental representatives. The tasks of the reference group would be to:

- Workshop and finalise the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the awards and the anticipated outcomes;
- Suggest people and organisations who should be interviewed;
- Review the draft report.

Research

The initial task will be to finalise criteria for determining the effectiveness of the awards, and as stated above, will be undertaken in consultation with the reference group.

Research will include:

- Review of relevant departmental files;
- Survey of main interested parties in the management and administration of past awards, including coordinators, judges, writers, publishers and sellers. We propose drawing up a schedule of questions for this aspect of research, and suggest that confidential interviews would either be carried out in person or by phone.
- Identification of other awards for comparative purposes; interview of key managers of these awards, and review of documents.

Time frame

The three month time frame for the project is achievable but would depend on factors beyond the control of researchers, such as the availability of participants. We would work closely with Departmental staff to monitor the time frame and completion of the project.

Consultancy team, roles and biographical information

Resumes of consultancy team members are below. The division of roles for the project would be determined as it proceeds but is likely to be as follows:

- Haebich/Allbrook – meeting with reference group, finalizing criteria and methodology
- Allbrook – documentary research
- Haebich/Allbrook/Jebb – consultation with WA parties
- Haebich – discussion with other award managers
- Haebich/Allbrook – reporting.

Allbrook Jebb and Associates Pty. Ltd. will be the contracted party responsible for all administration and payments.

About the Consultants

Professor Anna Haebich

Professor Haebich is a scholar of international repute, known for her leadership in multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural approaches to historical research. Her multi-award winning book *Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000* was the first national history of Australia's Stolen Generation and the most comprehensive to date. She is also the author of the definitive history *For their Own Good: Aborigines and Government in the Southwest of Western Australia 1900-1940*. Her latest publication *Spinning the Dream: Assimilation in Australia* is a meticulously researched assessment of the implications of assimilation for Australia's Indigenous and ethnic minorities and for immigration and refugee policy.

Anna's career brings together university teaching and research, centre directorship, museum curatorship, visual arts practice, and work with Indigenous communities. Her research interests include histories of Indigenous peoples, migration, the body, the environment, the visual and performing arts, museums, representations of the past, crime and gender, and the new humanities. These various interests are evident in her wide ranging publications in academic and other journals and her videos and on line contributions.

Anna was foundation Director of the Centre for Public Culture and Ideas at Griffith University. This category-A research centre is now a major national centre for interdisciplinary research with an extensive network of academic and cultural industry partnerships. The Centre develops interdisciplinary collaborative research of international significance that addresses major contentious issues of our time, new publics forming around these issues, and contemporary debates in public culture and ideas.

Anna was the Griffith University UNESCO Orbicom Chair from 2004 to 2007. In this role she promoted the development of knowledge societies through cross-cultural, interdisciplinary research drawing on new technologies in national and international forums.

Anna was also an Australian Research Council Fellow from 2002 to 2007.

Anna is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences. She is also an Ideas Advisor for the Brisbane Ideas Festival.

In 2008 Anna was appointed as a Research Intensive Professor at Griffith University. In mid-2008 she was seconded for twelve months to work as Historian-in-Residence at the State Library of Queensland to contribute to the State's 150th celebrations and the 75th anniversary of the John Oxley Library.

Dr. Malcolm Allbrook

Dr Allbrook completed his doctoral thesis in history at Griffith University on the subject *Imperial Family: the Prinseps, Empire and Colonial Government in India and Australia* in

2008. He specialises in historical research and writing and has recently published articles in this field. He has recently completed projects in the area of Aboriginal history, and is currently working on a collaborative biography of a senior Aboriginal man from the Kimberley, and a manuscript for the publication of his thesis.

He has experience working with Indigenous organisations in native title, community and organisational development, including management of native title representative bodies, senior management and policy development experience in the WA public sector and 10 years managing his own consulting firm in research and policy development. He has held positions as Director of Research and Policy with the WA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission in the mid-1980s, lecturer at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University in the early 1990s, five years as Area Manager and then Executive Officer of the Kimberley Land Council in the mid 1990s and General Manager of the Yamatji Land and Sea Council and Pilbara Native Title Service between 1999 and 2001.

He has substantial experience designing, conducting and reporting on research projects in community based health services, in particular with Indigenous organisations in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne and Murchison regions of WA. Malcolm has contributed to the negotiation of resource and service agreements and their administration and implementation. He has also assisted organisations with their corporate management, including strategic and operational planning, Annual Reporting, developing funding strategies, and in the development of training strategies. In northern and central Western Australia, Malcolm has had an involvement in community development, and consultation and liaison with Indigenous communities.

Dr. Mary Anne Jebb

Dr Jebb obtained her doctorate in history from Murdoch University in 1998, and is the author of three books, and numerous articles on West Australian history. Her second book, *Blood, Sweat and Welfare; Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Kimberley* (UWA Press 2001) won three awards, and was short-listed for five others. She has recently authored and co-ordinated the publication of *Mowanjum: Fifty Years Community History*. She is currently working on the biography of a senior Aboriginal man from the Kimberley, acclaimed carver the late Jack Wheera.

Dr Jebb has extensive experience in historical and cultural research and oral history, and in the public sector. She has held academic positions at Murdoch University and Notre Dame, and is currently an Honorary Research Fellow in History at The University of Western Australia.

Over the past 20 years, she has held positions with the State Government Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority, the Kimberley Land Council, the Noongar Land Council and the National Native Title Tribunal, as well as undertaking numerous contracts with Government and community-based agencies. She has provided expert historical advice to the Federal Court in relation to native title claims in the Kimberley and Goldfields regions of WA, and curatorial and interpretation advice to museums and film makers, local government and Indigenous communities.

Dr Jebb specialises in historical and cultural research, oral history, cultural awareness training and developing management and research capacities in Indigenous communities. She is currently vice-president of the Australian Oral History Association, a committee member of the WA Oral History Association, a member of the Professional Historians Association, and is registered with the Heritage Commission of WA as a historian and interpretation consultant.