

**PREMIER'S BOOK AWARDS — REINSTATEMENT**

*Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts)** [12.08 pm]: I would like to bring to the attention of the house the achievement of another election commitment in the successful reinstating of the Premier's Book Awards, with the 2018 Western Australian Premier's Book Awards hosted at the State Library of Western Australia on Friday, 26 July 2019, as part of the sixth annual Disrupted Festival of Ideas. Reinstating the Premier's Book Awards as the annual literary highlight of the state's cultural calendar was a key McGowan Labor government election commitment for the creative sector. Funding for the awards has been reinstated following cuts by the former Barnett Liberal government, which saw the program reduced to a biannual event. A review undertaken of the Western Australian writing sector found that there was a greater need to support and develop Western Australian writing and writers. The Premier's Book Awards has been redesigned to be unashamedly Western Australian in its focus. Making a living from writing is not easy. It is important to promote our writers because our stories are important. The major prize in the awards—a \$60 000 writers' fellowship—is significant, because it will allow a writer the opportunity to be financially supported to write and create.

The number of award categories has been reduced to focus on emerging writers and writing for children, and to make nominations for these categories available to only Western Australian writers. In addition, for the first time the awards incorporated the Daisy Utemorra Award for unpublished Indigenous junior and young adult writing. This award is supported by Australia's leading Indigenous publisher, Broome-based Magabala Books, and recognises Indigenous writers from across Australia.

I would like to congratulate the winners of the 2018 Western Australian Premier's Book Awards. The \$60 000 Western Australian Writer's Fellowship was won by bestselling young adult author A.J. Betts, who will utilise the fellowship to write a young adult novel focusing on a teenage band trying to record a song to enter the Triple J *Unearthed High* competition. The Premier's Prize for an emerging writer was won by the poet Reneé Pettitt-Schipp for her book *The Sky Runs Right Through Us*, published by UWA Publishing. The Premier's Prize for writing for children was won by Kelly Canby for *The Hole Story*, published by Fremantle Press. The Daisy Utemorra Award was won by Kirli Saunders for her moving story in verse for children, *Mother Speaks*.

The Premier's Book Awards are Western Australia's peak awards for writers, with a focus on supporting Western Australian writers. I would like to commend all the winners and shortlisted writers for these significant awards.