

Aurealis Awards 2021



Hellenic Club in the City
Canberra
28 May 2022

Acknowledgment of Country

On behalf of the Aurealis Awards owners, organisers and guests, we acknowledge the Ngunnawal people who are the traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting and pay respect to the Elders of the Ngunnawal Nation both past and present. We extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in attendance today.

Ngunnawal Country

Canberra is Ngunnawal country. The Ngunnawal are the Indigenous people of this region and its first inhabitants. The neighbouring people are the Gundungurra to the north, the Ngarigo to the south, the Yuin on the coast, and the Wiradjuri inland.

The 2021 Aurealis Awards are brought to you by

Chimaera Publications - Dirk Strasser, Stephen Higgins, Michael Pryor

Aurealis Judging Coordinator - Tehani Croft

Aurealis Judging Administrator - Joanne Anderton

CSFG Aurealis Subcommittee - Paula Boer (Chair), Mitchell Akhurst, Amelia Elwick, Nicole Murphy, Nathan Phillips, Robert Porteous, David Versace

The Aurealis Award organisers extend their thanks and gratitude to all the judges, and especially the judging panel convenors, for their hard work and dedication. Their names are listed with their respective award categories in the pages following.

We are grateful to the management and staff of the Civic Hellenic Club for their assistance and hospitality.

CSFG Committee Chair's Statement

The CSFG Aurealis Awards Sub-committee made a brave decision this year to have an in-person event as well as streaming live. To add further benefit to catching up with fellow writers at the award ceremony, taking into account the excited buzz that was created, we put together an afternoon of presentations and workshops.

We hope this event will be the first of many exciting gatherings of speculative fiction folk in Canberra, and welcome feedback, whether that be what was good, what needs improvement, or what you would welcome at future events.

Good luck to all the finalists, and I hope everyone has an enjoyable time.

Paula Boer paula@paulaboer.com

Chair, CSFG Aurealis Awards Sub-committee

Judging Coordinator's Statement

Well, what a decade it's been...

No, wait, that's not right. It might have **been** last decade that we were last able to come together to celebrate the Aurealis Awards in person, but it's only actually been three years in the "real world"!

The Aurealis Awards did of course continue during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic (ain't nothin' gonna stop us!), under the oversight of the Continuum Foundation, with two splendid online ceremonies taking place to applaud the breadth, diversity and excellence of Australian speculative fiction, even in the face of absolutely unprecedented times (I know, we're all so tired of the phrase, but it remains a true one).

All good things come to an end, however, and we bid farewell to our Melbourne overlords last year, and in 2022 became the underlings of our new masters – the Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild. It is such a great pleasure to return to Canberra for the Awards, and to finally be able to come back together outside the Matrix to celebrate our finalists this year. I'm sure you will agree it's a wonderful occasion to eat, drink and be merry with old friends and new, and we are grateful to the team at CSFG for taking on the oversight of the Awards.

I have some other thanks to offer, because it can never be said enough. Our judges are amazing, and the fact they volunteer for the job of reading dozens, sometimes hundreds of entries each year says a great deal about the fantastic community we have in the spec fic world. That so many of them come back again and again to share their expertise and passion is something I am forever grateful for – we literally could not do this without them.

It is essential that I thank Joanne Anderton, who came to my rescue this year and took on the bulk of the massive behind-the-scenes administrative work that occurs. I'm genuinely not sure if there would even have BEEN an Aurealis Awards this year if it hadn't been for her capable handling of the enormous quantity of emails we receive throughout the process

The Aurealis Awards shortlists this year showcase a brilliant range of fiction across the various genres and subgenres of our field, with works ranging from the shortest of stories to the Sara Douglass Book Series Award that encompass several volumes, presented for the third time since we introduced it in 2015. Named for one of Australia's best known speculative fiction writers, Sara Douglass was the flagship author of the HarperVoyager Australian line, which launched the careers of many of our most popular writers, and paved the way for the vibrant and diverse speculative fiction scene Australia has today. Sara's contribution to the state of speculative fiction in Australia cannot be underestimated, and we remain very proud to commemorate her in this Award. We are also delighted to continue to recognise Australian work not otherwise eligible for any of the regular categories in the Convenors' Award for Excellence – in the past few years, we have seen PhD dissertations, non-fiction collections, speculative fiction research projects, and a comedy podcast take out this honour. It is a privilege to be able to showcase some of the excellent work being produced in all the Australian speculative fiction realms.

Congratulations to all the entrants, finalists and winners, and your publishers. We are so lucky to have a vibrant speculative fiction scene in Australia, with an enormously talented pool of creators writing (and making) excellent work – it's been another amazing year!

Tehani Croft

Aurealis Awards Judging Coordinator

Writers' Development Afternoon program

Time	Atlas Room (small)
12:00	Welcome – Craig Cormick
12:05	Acknowledgement of country – Craig Cormick
12:10	It's All About Weird panel – Alan Baxter (moderator), Joseph Ashley Smith, Aaron Dries, Matthew R Davis, J S Breukelaar, Joanne Anderton
1:00	Break
1:10	Green Shed workshop – Kaaron Warren
2:00	Break
2:10	Creative PhDs: Wicked or Wondrous panel – Cat Sparks (moderator), Jo Anderton, Rik Lagarto, Kirstyn McDermott (online)
3:00	Break
3:10	Terms and Conditions – Awards and Their Values presentation – Tehani Croft
4:00	Break
	Poseidon Room (large)
5:00	Start of Evening (drinks and nibbles)
5:30	Welcome to Awards – Craig Cormick
5:35	Keynote Speech – David Henley
5:45	Awards Ceremony
7:00	End

MC – Craig Cormick

Dr Craig Cormick OAM is an award-winning author and science communicator. He has published over 35 books of fiction and non-fiction across several different genres. His awards include a Queensland Premier's Literary Award, the ACT Book of the Year, a Victorian Community History Award and the Tasmanian Writers Prize - but of course they all pale in comparison to his being shortlisted for an Aurealis Award! He is a former chair of the ACT Writers Centre and is co-host of the podcast *Secrets from the Green Room*. His 13-year-old son tells him that MC stands for 'Mostly Cool!'

www.craigcormick.com

Keynote Speaker – David Henley

David Henley is an author of science fiction, once touted as 'a bold new voice' in *The Australian*, who has been working in publishing for over 20 years. He worked his way up from receptionist to designer, editor and founder of the literary incubator Seizure and Brio Books.

<http://www.davidmhenley.com/>

<http://briobooks.com.au/>



Craig Cormick



David Henley

BEST CHILDREN'S FICTION

Finalists

The Boy Who Stepped Through Time, Anna Ciddor (Allen & Unwin)

Stellarphant, James Foley (Fremantle Press)

Dragon Skin, Karen Foxlee (Allen & Unwin)

The Curiosities, Zana Fraillon & Phil Lesnie (illustrator) (Hachette Australia)

Elsewhere Girls, Emily Gale & Nova Weetman (Text Publishing)

Barebum Billy, Nicholas Snelling (BAD DAD Publishing)

Judging Panel

Eugen Bacon (convenor), Miffy Farquharson, Kate Lomas Glendenning, Elizabeth Luchjenbroers, T R Napper

Number of entries

31

Judging criteria

Originality, fun, imagination, beauty, wonderment, characterisation, relatability to children under 12 years, quality of writing, contribution to genre, engaging with difference.

Overview of nominations:

We received a decent number of nominations across the industry, from the big five publishers to small presses, even self-published books. Authors and illustrators also spanned across known and lesser-known names. The quality of the shortlisted entries was irrespective of the publisher or an author's 'weight'. Some unusual storytelling astonished the judges, leaving an unforgettable imprint. The winning entry was unanimous.

BEST GRAPHIC NOVEL / ILLUSTRATED WORK

Finalists

The Curiosities, Zana Fraillon & Phil Lesnie (illustrator) (Hachette Australia)

Treasure in the Lake, Jason Pamment (Allen & Unwin)

Mechanix, Ben Slabak & Edoardo Natalini (Cloud 9 Comix)

Killeroo: Semper Fidelis, Matthew Soall & Ignacio Di Meglio (illustrator) (OzComics)

Judging Panel

Jessica Gately, Bryn Hepworth, Mia Macrossan, Iurgi Urrutia (convenor), Jacqueline Wheadon

Number of entries

19

Judging criteria

The panel judged this category on criteria of originality, literary value, concept, writing and art style.

Overview of nominations

A wide range of graphic novels and illustrated work were received this year. Due to the open nature of this category, the entries ranged from picture books, to micro-fiction with illustrations, to short comics and graphic novels.

Fantasy, science fiction and horror were all well represented, with a diversity and range of entries received. From throwback retro, horror-action, to polished animation style mystery adventures; from sci-fi, time travelling family adventures, to myth-infused, sensitive and moving fantasy; the entries received show a wide range and quality of art and writing.

The panel would like to highlight how complex ideas and themes are made accessible to a variety of people through the combination of visual and linguistic storytelling techniques. The panel considered titles that hold a widespread appeal.

BEST YOUNG ADULT SHORT STORY

Finalists

“The Woods Echo Back”, Tania Fordwalker (*Beneath Ceaseless Skies* #331)

“Don’t Look!”, Lisa Fuller (*Hometown Haunts: #LoveOzYA Horror Tales*, Wakefield Press)

“Of Slaves and Lions”, Pamela Jeffs (*Stories of Survival*, Deadset Press)

“Slaughterhouse Boys”, Emma Osborne (*Hometown Haunts: #LoveOzYA Horror Tales*, Wakefield Press)

“Way-bread Rising”, Tansy Rayner Roberts (*Stories of Survival*, Deadset Press)

“Hunger”, Marianna Shek (*Hometown Haunts: #LoveOzYA Horror Tales*, Wakefield Press)

Judging Panel

Sarah Custance, Amanda Diaz, Andrew Finegan (convenor), Linda Sengsourinho

Number of Entries

45

Judging criteria

The Young Adult Short Fiction category was judged on originality, writing style, characterisation, and literary value. Works were also required to be both suitable and engaging to a teenage audience.

Overview of nominations

This year’s nominations presented entries that spanned across all three main genres - particularly horror and dystopia stories. There were also a notable number of entries that were not considered suitable for a teenage audience.

Our shortlisted stories were particularly evocative in their settings, each skilfully crafting a story that swiftly immerses the reader into the moment - some thrilling and others terrifying - leaving a lasting impression upon completion.

The panel was also impressed by the diversity in cultural representation and re-interpretations of storytelling traditions, contributing to a stronger reader awareness of different perspectives.

BEST HORROR SHORT STORY

Finalists

“Don’t Look!”, Lisa Fuller (*Hometown Haunts: #LoveOzYA Horror Tales*, Wakefield Press)

“Traces of Us, Hot Enough for Dinner”, Ephiny Gale (*The Dread Machine 1.3*)

“The House that Hungers”, Maria Lewis (*Aurealis #146*, Chimaera Publications)

“The Quiet Room”, Martin Livings (*Midnight Echo #16*, The Australasian Horror Writers Association)

“Sins of the Mother”, Tracie McBride (*Spawn: Weird Horror Tales About Pregnancy, Birth and Babies*, IFWG Publishing Australia)

“Mother Dandelion”, Antoinette Rydyr (*Spawn: Weird Horror Tales About Pregnancy, Birth and Babies*, IFWG Publishing Australia)

Judging Panel

Caitlin Chisholm (convenor), Blake Curran, Leah Rose, Sharita Russell, Bryn Smith

Number of Entries:

129

Judging criteria

The panel judged works on the basis of originality, writing style, completeness of plot/ideas and literary merit.

Overview of nominations

It was great to see so many short stories get nominated. There were nominations spanning many different subgenres which shows the diversity that is the genre of horror. It was interesting to see the frequency that the short stories also included elements of other genres.

Many did a great job at exploring multiple genres but some unfortunately were very light on the horror. There were many great stories that would have been deserving of a place on the shortlist. The stories chosen showcase the variety found within horror. They tell a complete story and develop characters deftly within the limitations of a short story.

BEST HORROR NOVELLA

When the Cicadas Stop Singing, Zachary Ashford (Horrific Tales Press)

“The Band Plays On”, Alan Baxter (*The Gulp*, self-published)

“Hell’s Teeth”, Matthew R Davis (*Haunted: An Anthology*, Specul8 Publishing)

Cryptid Killers, Alister Hodge (Severed Press)

“All The Long Way Down”, Alf Simpson (*Cthulhu Deep Down Under Volume 3*, IFWG Publishing Australia)

Judging Panel

Benjamin Corby, Emma Cutting, Mark Lingane (convenor), Alannah Pearson, Allister Smith

Number of entries

23

Judging criteria

The Horror Novel/Novella panel judged on literary value, genre conventions, tension and writing style.

Overview of nominations

This year’s collection of entries demonstrated the broad range of originality, ambition and variety in the Australian horror market and indicates exciting times ahead in this genre. Some of the strongest works were featured in collections and anthologies. Stories that demonstrated a strong understanding of the genre through unique perspectives were often standouts.

BEST FANTASY SHORT STORY

“Who Wants to be a Reaper”, Jane Brown (*The Centropic Oracle*)

“So-called Bin Chicken”, E J Delaney (*Curiouser Magazine #2*)

“All my Tuesdays”, Laura J Fitzwilson (*Cicerone Journal Issue 5: Curious Worlds*)

“Old Souls”, Aiki Flinthart (*Relics, Wrecks & Ruins*, CAT Press)

“The Woods Echo Back”, Tania Fordwalker (*Beneath Ceaseless Skies #331*)

“Frabjous”, Alexander Gibbs (*Cicerone Journal Issue 5: Curious Worlds*)

Judging Panel

Jan-Andrew Henderson (convenor), Ella Kurz, Carey Lenehan, Karen Seeneevassen

Number of entries

128

Judging criteria

The panellists concentrated on writing style, story execution and originality. We were looking for stories that most successfully tied all these together.

Overview of nominations

It was encouraging that we found it so difficult to choose a shortlist from a huge range of excellent tales. It was also satisfying that the winner was a unanimous choice.

Fantasy sometimes leans towards florid language, or tried and tested tropes which have become a bit stale, but this year the majority of the entries were concisely written, soundly plotted, and highly engaging. It was wonderful to read so many well written and original stories. We were honestly blown away.

BEST FANTASY NOVELLA

“Mother in Bloom”, Alan Baxter (*The Gulp*, self-published)

“The Little One”, Rebecca Fraser (*Coralesque and Other Tales to Disturb and Distract*, IFWG Publishing Australia)

“Bones Of The Sea”, Amy Laurens (Inkprint Press)

“Echo and Narcissus”, Tansy Rayner Roberts (*Sheep Might Fly* podcast, self-published)

“The Scarab Children of Montague”, Suzanne J Willis (Falstaff Books)

Judging Panel

Melody Beier (convenor), David Brine, Shannon Kelly, Ruth Lawlor, Lynda Young

Number of entries

23

Judging criteria

The panel judged the entries submitted on criteria of creative world building, compelling characterisations, concise and well edited writing, and originality.

Overview of nominations

Although only 23 entries were submitted for the Fantasy Novella section of this year’s awards, there was a wide spectrum of quality. Many of the entrants contributed excellent and engaging stories that our panellists thoroughly enjoyed with “quippy quirky characters” and compelling plots set in “cool worlds”. These entertaining stories embodied the important aspects of fantasy writing such as complex characters, world building, magical elements, and conflict.

Of note was that several stories built their fantasy worlds in a distinctly Australian setting which contributed a great sense of local pride. Contrarily, there were also a significant number of entries that while technically could be classified as fantasy, certainly had a very strong focus on horror. Overall, our shortlist represents a strong cross section of talented Australian fantasy writers.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION SHORT STORY

“He Leaps for the Stars, He Leaps for the Stars” Grace Chan
(*Clarkesworld* #178)

“For Autumn”, Melissa Ferguson (*Revolutions*, Deadset Press)

“Honey and a Hanging”, Aiki Flinthart (*Tribute*, Black Hart Publishing)

“The Reunion”, Emily Fox (*Nature: Futures*)

“Relict: (noun) A Widow; a Thing Remaining From the Past”, Alison Goodman (*Relics, Wrecks & Ruins*, CAT Press)

“Legacy of the Species”, Pamela Jeffs, (*The Terralight Collection*, Four Ink Press)

Judging Panel

Paula Boer (convenor), David James, Emilie Morscheck, Louise Nice, Mark Phillips

Number of entries

102

Judging criteria

The panel focused on originality, reader engagement and quality of writing. It was essential for the ending to be satisfying. Character development, worldbuilding and pace were also major considerations.

Overview of nominations

There was a wide range of entries this year, in terms of quality of writing and story lines. The shortlist could easily have been twice as long. The stories that made it through looked beyond current issues and explored universal themes. They had intriguing characters and respected readers’ time. The worlds were well crafted and the endings left the panel wanting to read more from the author.

In general, where otherwise good stories were let down was in slow starts, rushed endings or too much ambiguity, all of which could be resolved with further development. Overall, there were some great reads among the entries, which made judging a pleasure.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVELLA

“Access Denied”, Baden Chant (*Aurealis* #142, Chimaera Publications)

The Cruise to the End of the World, Craig Cormick (Merino Press)

“The Birdsong Fossil”, D K Mok (*Multispecies Cities: Solarpunk Urban Futures*, World Weaver Press)

“Problem Landing”, Sean Monaghan (*Analog Science Fiction and Science Fact* Mar/Apr)

“Preserved in Amber”, Samantha Murray (*Clarkesworld* #178)

“A Vast Silence”, T R Napper (*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* Nov/Dec)

Judging Panel

Mark Fazackerley (convenor), Natalie Haigh, Christine Sun, Rebecca Sutherland

Number of entries

13

Judging criteria

The panel felt our selection should focus on writing quality and use of sci-fi concepts, while taking into consideration originality both overall and around the genre-specific elements.

Overview of nominations

We had a great range of stories this year, with a good spread across the sci-fi spectrum; from high concept mood pieces to space aliens, with fast-paced adventures and apocalyptic dystopias represented.

Many displayed a high quality of writing and inventiveness, which made the scoring very tight; however the judges were very much in alignment on the shortlist and the winning story.

BEST COLLECTION

The Gulp, Alan Baxter, (self-published)

Danged Black Thing, Eugen Bacon (Transit Lounge Publishing)

The Terralight Collection, Pamela Jeffs (Four Ink Press)

The Tallow-Wife & Other Tales, Angela Slatter (Tartarus Press)

Little Labyrinths: Collected Microfictions, Sean Williams (Brain Jar Press)

Judging Panel

Jemimah Brewster, Penelope Cottier, Amy Laurens, Rowena Specht-Whyte
(convenor)

Number of entries

15

Judging criteria

The criteria used were structure and theme overall, as well as originality, literary value, concept and writing style through the entire anthology or collection. The judges also considered whether or not the work was speculative fiction, and considered that where the majority of an anthology or collection contained realist fiction, this did not meet the criteria for a speculative fiction award for the anthology or collection.

Overview of nominations

(See Best Anthology)

BEST ANTHOLOGY

Who Sleuthed It?, Lindy Cameron (Ed.) (Clan Destine Press)

Relics, Wrecks & Ruins, Aiki Flinthart (Ed.), Lauren Elise Daniels & Geneve Flynn (assistant Eds.), CAT Press

Hometown Haunts: #LoveOzYA Horror Tales, Poppy Nwosu (Ed.) (Wakefield Press)

Spawn: Weird Horror Tales About Pregnancy, Birth and Babies, Deborah Sheldon (Ed.) (IFWG Publishing Australia)

Judging Panel

Jemimah Brewster, Penelope Cottier, Amy Laurens, Rowena Specht-Whyte (convenor)

Number of entries

16

Overview of nominations (Collections and Anthologies)

The judging panel found the wide and diverse range of themes, voices, and audiences in the Anthologies category very refreshing. From Cthulhu and body horror, to trees and talking animal sleuths, the anthologies reflected a rainbow of speculative fiction.

With respect to the Collections categories, the judging panel found that authors were exploring horror and dark themes in many of the nominations. A few very strong entries were excluded from consideration because they did not meet the criteria for speculative fiction.

Overall, the judging panel was very impressed with the calibre of the finalists, and commend the Australian authors, editors and publishers on rich and diverse speculative fiction.

BEST YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

Waking Romeo, Kathryn Barker (Allen & Unwin)

Aurora's End, Amie Kaufman & Jay Kristoff (Allen & Unwin)

Terciel and Elinor, Garth Nix (Allen & Unwin)

Echo in the Memory, Cameron Nunn (Walker Books Australia)

Dirt Circus League, Maree Kimberley (Text Publishing)

It's Not You, It's Me, Gabrielle Williams (Allen & Unwin)

Judging Panel

Sarah Custance, Amanda Diaz, Andrew Finegan (convenor), Linda Sengsourinho

Number of entries:

40

Judging Criteria

The Young Adult Novel category was judged on originality, writing style, characterisation and literary value. Novels were also required to be both suitable and engaging to a teenage audience.

Overview of nominations:

This year's nominations presented a wide range of novels in this category spanning across speculative fiction genres. It was wonderful to see many highly original books from high fantasy to dystopian future all written for a teenage audience.

Our shortlisted novels were all excellent, each bringing a unique contribution to Australian YA genre fiction. Some works showcased the craft of their respective genres through exceptional prose and worldbuilding, whilst others demonstrated a valuable contribution to their genres through ambitious and inventive storytelling.

BEST HORROR NOVEL

The Bridge, J S Breukelaar (Meerkat Press)

Midnight in the Chapel of Love, Matthew R Davis (JournalStone Publishing)

Papa Lucy & The Boneman, Jason Fischer (Outland Entertainment)

The Airways, Jennifer Mills (Picador Australia)

Holly and the Nobodies, Ben Pienaar (Hellbound Books LLC)

Judging Panel

Benjamin Corby, Emma Cutting, Mark Lingane (convenor), Alannah Pearson, Allister Smith

Number of entries

23

Judging criteria

The Horror Novel/Novella panel judged on literary value, genre conventions, tension and writing style.

Overview of nominations

It was great to see an increased number of publications entered in this category in 2021. This year's nominations demonstrated the broad range of originality, ambition and variety in the Australian horror market and indicates exciting times ahead in this genre. Books that demonstrated a strong understanding of the genre through unique perspectives were often standouts.

BEST FANTASY NOVEL

Supermums – And So It Begins, Meg Grace (self-published)

The Rose Daughter, Maria Lewis (Piatkus / Hachette / Little Brown)

A Marvellous Light, Freya Marske (Tor)

Dark Rise, C S Pacat (Allen & Unwin)

She Who Became the Sun, Shelley Parker-Chan (Mantle)

All the Murmuring Bones, Angela Slatter (Titan Books)

Judging Panel

Rachel Aitken, Deb Gates, Bronwyn Swasbrick, Cathie Tasker (convenor), Caylee Tierney

Number of entries

56

Judging criteria

The panel judged on criteria of originality, worldbuilding, literary merit, genre conventions, and production values.

Overview of nominations

We were impressed that the boundaries of the genre are being extended with quite a few books successfully combining elements from other genres into fantasy. These included some refreshing combinations — a chicklit, humour, crime, historical fiction and books from more inclusion of non-binary and neuro-diverse people.

There were good entries across a variety of publisher types (big publishers, smaller/micro pubs and self-published), which leads us to conclude that Australian fantasy is in a really exciting space right now, and there is a quality read for everyone.

BEST SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

Waking Romeo, Kathryn Barker (Allen & Unwin)

The 22 Murders of Madison May, Max Barry (Hachette Australia)

Stealing Time, Rebecca Bowyer (Story Addict Publishing)

Papa Lucy & The Boneman, Jason Fischer (Outland Entertainment)

Aurora's End, Amie Kaufman & Jay Kristoff (Allen & Unwin)

Deepwater King, Claire McKenna (HarperCollins Publishers)

Judging Panel

Dorothy-Jane Daniels, Dianne De Bellis (convenor), Anna Hepworth, Rick Keuning

Number of entries

27

Judging criteria

The judges were looking for stories that were original, lively and full of ideas to expand the reader's way of seeing the world; allowing escape from personal and ideological lockdowns. We wanted a well-paced, balanced plot with a credible premise of scientific or technological advances on this world or others, reflecting the present or an imagined future. Invented elements must be plausible within the context of the story.

We were looking for engaging protagonists with nuanced and complicated relationships that could be explored in the longer novel form. Characters needed to be believable with authentic psychology. Literary merit was paramount. The writing needed to be clear and concise and serve the story.

Overview of nominations

The entries this year included many stories from alternate worlds. There were themes of escape and time travel. There were some interesting and thought-provoking ideas of social, environmental and technological changes.

Overall, the editing and presentation of entries met professional standards.

SARA DOUGLASS BOOK SERIES AWARD

Lifespan of Starlight [*Lifespan of Starlight* (2015); *Split Infinity* (2016); *Edge of Time* (2018)], Thalia Kalkipsakis (Hardie Grant Egmont)

Elementals [*Ice Wolves* (2018); *Scorch Dragons* (2019); *Battle Born* (2020)], Amie Kaufman (HarperCollins)

Unearthed [*Unearthed* (2017); *Undying* (2018)], Amie Kaufman & Meagan Spooner (Allen & Unwin)

Lifelike [*LIFELIK3* (2018); *DEVIAT3* (2019); *TRUELIF3* (2020)], Jay Kristoff (Allen & Unwin)

Winter [*The Road to Winter* (2016); *Wilder Country* (2017); *Land of Fences* (2019)], Mark Smith (Text Publishing)

Blood and Gold [*Crown of Rowan* (novella, 2014); *Daughters of the Storm* (2014); *Sisters of the Fire* (2016); *Queens of the Sea* (2019)], Kim Wilkins (HarperCollins)

Judging Panel

Lorraine Cormack, Tehani Croft, Stephanie Gunn, Nathan Phillips

Number of entries

47

Judging criteria

This award recognises that the strength of a book series is that it is greater than the sum of its parts. The panel therefore primarily looked for strong story arcs which continued through all novels in the series.

The judges also valued characteristics such as well-developed plots, strong characterisation and world building, and original ideas. Readability – how much the judges enjoyed each entry – was also a factor.

Overview of nominations

This year produced a field of excellent entries which covered the full gamut of speculative fiction writing: most sub genres were represented, as were works for all age groups. Some authors submitted multiple entries which demonstrated their ability to work across genres and audiences.

The majority of entries recognised the unique characteristic of the Sara Douglass Award, and told stories which began in volume one and concluded in the last book of the series. The strongest entries were those in which this main story arc remained

prominent in each volume, and each novel was essential to progressing the overall story.

There was a lot of variety in the entries, underlining the strength and diversity of the speculative fiction field in Australia. Series length varied from two to 15 volumes. The strongest entries – and there were many of them – were entertaining and engaging, showing all the hallmarks of good writing. Individual volumes held the readers' interest and drew them into the next in the series, and the series as a whole concluded in a satisfying fashion.

The Aurealis Awards

The Aurealis Awards were established in 1995 by Chimaera Publications, the publishers of *Aurealis* magazine, to recognise the achievements of Australian science fiction, fantasy and horror writers.

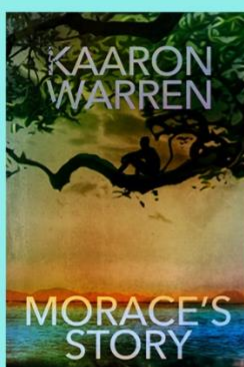
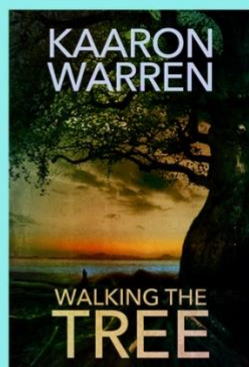
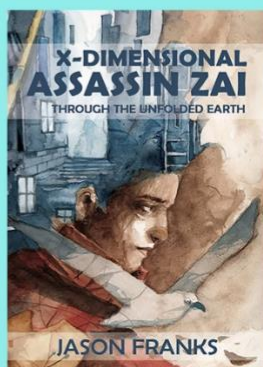
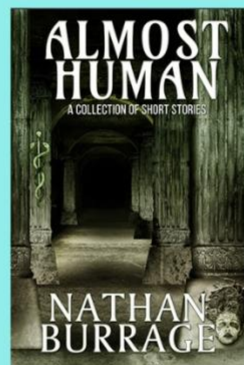
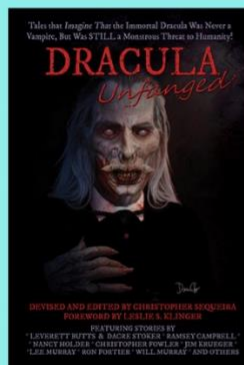
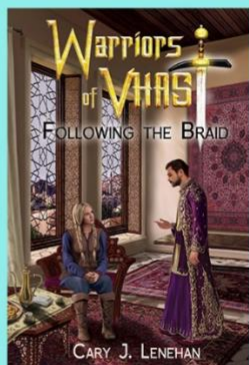
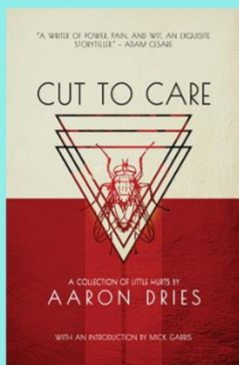
The Aurealis Awards are intended to complement the Annual Australian National Science Fiction Convention's Ditmar Awards and the Australian Children's Book Council Awards and the various other state-based and national literary awards. None of those awards distinguishes between the different categories of speculative fiction. We anticipate that the growing list of Aurealis Awards finalists and winners will increase the profile of Australian science fiction, fantasy, and horror, and provide an essential reading list for anyone interested in these genres.

The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild (CSFG)

The Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild (CSFG) is an incorporated association for Canberra-based creators of speculative fiction – science fiction, fantasy or horror – in any medium. Most of our members are writers of short stories, novels or both.

CSFG's goal is to support and provide development opportunities for our members as they move from aspiring, to published to (fingers crossed) professional makers of spec-fic.

IFWG Publishing Australia's 2022 Slate



**Available in all good online &
bricks & mortar stores**