

8.24. Nan Manefield Young Writers Award 2021

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ENDORSED BY: Rebecca Aukim, Acting Director Community and Library Services

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

PURPOSE:

This report provides a summary of the annual Nan Manefield Young Writer's Award as run by Stanton Library.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Winners of the 32nd Young Writers' Award were announced at a presentation evening at Stanton Library during Australian Library and Information Week, May 2021.

A total of 325 entries were received from across the Sydney Metropolitan region, with over 30 schools represented.

The presentation event was smaller than in previous years due to COVID restrictions, with the Winning and Highly Commended entrants attending with their families.

Judges of all five age categories were in attendance to speak about the entries, provide general feedback and give insight into their choices when awarding the prizes. Winners received prizes totaling nearly \$4,000.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There is an allocated budget of \$5,000 to deliver the Young Writers' Award annually.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report be received.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

4. Our Social Vitality

4.2 North Sydney is creative and home to popular events

4.3 North Sydney supports lifelong learning

BACKGROUND

The Young Writer's Award was first held in 1990. In 1998 it was named for former Councillor, the late Dr Bill Coppell, and in 2015, in honor of Nan Manefield.

The late Nan Manefield was a Librarian at North Sydney Boys High School and a lifelong champion of literacy and local history, giving 30 years of service as a citizen member on several of Council's Library and Historical Services Committees.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required.

DETAIL

This was the 32nd year of the Award and Library staff, judges and families were excited to see the 'in-person' presentation evening return to Stanton.

There was a total of 325 entries in 2021, which is consistent with recent years despite the difficulties that COVID has caused for families and schools over the last year. The largest proportion of entrants was in the 16-18 years category, showing the high level of independent interest in creative writing. Entries in many categories included talented students encouraged to enter by their teachers and included interest from schools across the Sydney metropolitan area. The judges noted that while there were fewer than usual entries in the younger categories, the overall quality was very high.

The Library is grateful for the ongoing support of the five judges, who are all award-winning, published authors: Will Kostakis, Ceridwen Dovey, Tim Sinclair, Erin Gough and Ursula Dubosarsky.

Judge Ursula Dubosarsky, current Australian Children's Laureate, will present writing masterclasses offered to all prize winners during the upcoming July school holidays.

The 2021 major prize winners for the five age groups were:

11 Years: Jonah Zreika
12 years: Liam Baker
13 years: Alanna Youssef
14-15 years: Ariane Saywell
16-18 years: Emily Tran

Feedback on both the competition and the presentation evening from parents and judges was overwhelmingly positive. A sample of comments appears below:

We would like to again thank you and your team for organising the whole competition and award ceremony. It is such a great opportunity for the young ones to have something like this that they can participate in.

Christine, parent of 12 years winner Liam Baker

I wanted to get in touch to thank you for an inspiring evening...

Congratulations, we loved it – a very entertaining evening. I especially enjoyed the judges' perspectives on what they read and how they assessed the work; and I loved hearing the pieces... I hope you realise how significant this recognition was for Adelaide. She will never forget it.

Holly, parent of 13 years highly commended, Adelaide Watts

Thank you! For making the night, and all the previous years' nights, such a genuine and joyful celebration of young people's creativity. It's a thing rarely celebrated in this world.

Tim Sinclair, author, poet and judge of the 13 years category.

Below: Judges pictured with the Winners of each age category. L-R Ceridwen Dovey, Liam Baker, Will Kostakis, Jonah Zreika, Emily Tran, Erin Gough, Ariane Saywell, Tim Sinclair, Alana Youssef, Ursula Dubosarsky.



Below: Stanton Children's and Youth Librarian, Yasmin Greenhalgh welcomes guests to the Presentation night on Thursday 20 May.

