

## Writing NSW Grants: 2017 recipients announced

MEDIA RELEASE 27.11.17

The NSW Writers' Centre has announced the recipients of its 2017 Writing NSW Grants for early career writers, emerging writing organisations, and a writer & scientist working on a joint project.

Four early career writers will receive a grant of \$5000 to support creation of new work, with projects including a novel exploring teen drug culture in a regional NSW town and a screenplay for a television series that explores themes of migration, ageing and family.

Two emerging organisations will each receive a \$5000 grant, including the Unspoken Words Storytelling Festival, a two-day festival that features young emerging writers from diverse backgrounds. An exciting range of projects were submitted for the Writer & Scientist Grant, in fields ranging from immunology to entomology. The \$2000 grant will assist a fictional work exploring issues around disability, genetic manipulation, and the parameters of what it means to be human.

The Early Career Writer Grants attracted excellent submissions in all major genres, including theatre, screen, poetry, children's literature, fiction and non-fiction. Applications showed an impressive diversity of themes, cultural backgrounds and geographic location. Nearly half the applicants were based in regional NSW. The judges noted funding was available for four writers, though at least another dozen deserved to be funded.

The Writing NSW Grants are offered by the NSW Writers' Centre with devolved funding from Create NSW.

"The judges were impressed by the quality and diversity of applications for the 2017 Writing NSW Grants," said NSW Writers' Centre Executive Director Jane McCredie.

"Through their support for exciting new writers and projects, these grants are helping to build the vibrant literary culture of our state."

The full list of recipients is on the next page.

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### *Early Career Writer Grants*

**Jarrah Dundler** (Kyogle) for his novel, *Shale*, exploring teen drug culture in a regional NSW town. This powerfully written book explores untold stories of contemporary, regional Australia through its themes of drug use, mental illness, violence and relationship breakdown.

**Alana Hicks** (Beecroft) for her screenplay, *Home is a Foreign Country*. The author draws on her Papua New Guinean heritage to produce a witty and technically accomplished screenplay for a television series that explores themes of migration, ageing and family set in suburban Sydney and regional NSW.

**Shankari Nadanachandran** (Roseville) for her novel, *Phantom Limb*, a political thriller set in Sri Lanka at the end of the civil war. To complete this powerfully written novel, the author will travel to Sri Lanka to conduct research with human rights activists, field surgeons, journalists, UN officials and survivors of the war.

**Stephen Pham** (Cabramatta) for his work of experimental non-fiction, *Vietnamatta*. The author's strong original voice brings a poetic precision to his exploration of youth culture and the hybrid identities forged in the diverse communities of Western Sydney.

### *Emerging Writing Organisation Grants*

**Unspoken Words Storytelling Festival** for a two-day festival in Sydney's Inner West and satellite events in Western Sydney and regional NSW. The festival, being staged for the second time in 2018, will feature young emerging writers from diverse backgrounds, with a particular focus on writers with disability and Indigenous, culturally diverse and LGBTI writers. The judges were impressed by the festival's ambitious programming, focus on audience participation, and commitment to giving a voice to often marginalised communities.

**Writes4Women** podcast team for a collaboration with regional NSW writers' festivals designed to bring these events to a larger audience. The grant will allow the Umina-based team to produce free podcasts from a number of festivals, showcasing the vibrant and diverse writing culture of regional NSW. The project will increase the reach of the festivals as well as providing a wider platform for the featured writers.

### *Writer & Scientist Grant*

The grant was awarded to writer and disability activist **Gaele Sobott** and molecular biologist and Farsi poet **Parisa Asvadi** who will collaborate on a fictional work exploring issues around disability, genetic manipulation, and the parameters of what it

means to be human. Together, they will draw on scientific concepts, including rhizomes, methods of bone construction, mutations, and cellular genetic switches to create new narrative structures for traditional and digital platforms.

*Judges*

Judges for the Early Career Writer and Emerging Writing Organisation Grants were writers Felicity Castagna and Miles Merrill and NSW Writers' Centre Executive Director Jane McCredie. Judges for the Writer & Scientist Grant were Jane McCredie and Sherry Landow of the NSW Writers' Centre, and Tea Uglow, creative director of the Google Creative Lab, Sydney.

