



# MEDIA RELEASE

## The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

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### **Judges announced for 2008 Prime Minister's Literary Awards**

I am pleased to announce today the six eminent Australians who will form the judging panel for the 2008 inaugural Prime Minister's Literary Awards.

Australian author and academic Peter Pierce will chair the judging panel for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, with popular author John Marsden and award-winning broadcaster Margaret Throsby also on the panel.

Academic and author Professor Hilary Charlesworth will chair the Non-Fiction panel, which also includes Indigenous author and artist Sally Morgan and scriptwriter, documentary film maker and comedian John Doyle.

These new awards for Australian authors will be the nation's most prestigious and richest literary awards, recognising the central role of literature in Australian culture.

The six panel members have each made a valuable contribution to Australian cultural life and I am delighted they will bring their experience and expertise to the judging process.

The Prime Minister's Literary Awards will showcase the strength, breadth and depth of Australia's literary talent and help celebrate the cultural value of books and writing in Australian society.

Entries for the awards closed on Friday 28 March, with more than 170 entries received.

The awards provide prizes of \$100,000 to the winners of both the Fiction and Non-Fiction categories, with a final decision on a short list and award winners made by the Prime Minister, after considering the recommendations made by the panel.

To be eligible to enter, authors must be Australian citizens or permanent residents and books must have been first published between 1 January and 31 December 2007. Two short lists of Fiction and Non-Fiction works will be announced in mid-2008 and the award winners will be announced later in the year.

Further details on the Prime Minister's Literary Awards judges are attached. For more information on the awards visit [www.arts.gov.au/pmliteraryawards](http://www.arts.gov.au/pmliteraryawards).

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## Selection panels for the 2008 Prime Minister's Literary Awards

### Fiction panel

#### Chair

**Peter Pierce** is the immediate past Chair of Australian Literature at James Cook University and a non-fiction author. He writes for the national press as a book reviewer and has co-edited several books including the anthology *Clubbing of the Gun-fire: 101 War Poems* and the critical study *Vietnam Days: Australia and the Impact of Vietnam*, and is also the author of *Australian Melodramas: Thomas Keneally's Fiction* and *The Country of Lost Children: An Australian Anxiety*.

#### Australian author

**John Marsden** taught for nine years at Geelong Grammar School, and became Head of English at the school's Timbertop campus. His first book, *So Much To Tell You* was published in 1987. This was followed by *Take My Word For It*, a half-sequel written from the point of view of another character. His landmark *Tomorrow* series is recognised as the most popular book series for young adults ever written in Australia. The first book of this series, *Tomorrow When The War Began*, has been reprinted 26 times in Australia. He has sold more than 2.5 million books in Australia and is also an international best selling author and winner of many awards.

#### Recognised cultural figure

**Margaret Throsby** is one of Australia's leading broadcasters and has been an inspiration for women in broadcasting. Margaret Throsby presents ABC *Classic FM's Morning Program* daily. She was the first woman to read major news bulletins on national radio since World War II and in 1978 became the first woman to read Australian television news. Margaret has hosted a series of her own radio and television programs and has been involved in all facets of broadcast at local and national levels. Margaret has won several awards, including the Golden Gavel Award of the Law Society of NSW, for Excellence in Legal Reporting, the 1990 Rostrum Speaker of the Year Award and the Variety Club Radio Award for 1993.

## **Non-Fiction Panel**

### **Chair**

**Professor Hilary Charlesworth** is Professor in the Regulatory Institutions Network in the Research School of Social Sciences and Professor of International Law and Human Rights in the Law Faculty, Australian National University and the Director of the Centre for International Governance and Justice. She has published books including *The Fluid State* and *Australia's First Bill of Rights*. She has worked with various non-governmental human rights organisations on ways to implement international human rights standards and was chair of the ACT Government's inquiry into an ACT bill of rights.

### **Australian author**

**Sally Morgan** is an Indigenous Australian author and artist. Her works are on display in numerous private and public collections in both Australia and around the world. The story of her family's past is told in *My Place* (1987), which sold over half a million copies in Australia. It has also been published in Europe, Asia and the United States. Her second book, *Wanamurraganya*, was published in 1989, a biography of her great uncle, Jack McPhee. She has written numerous children's books. She is the Director at the Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts, in the School of Indigenous Studies, at the University of Western Australia. She has received many awards: *My Place* won the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission humanitarian award in 1987, the Western Australia Week literary award for non-fiction in 1988, and the 1990 Order of Australia Book Prize.

### **Recognised cultural figure**

**John Doyle** was born in 1953. He graduated from the then Newcastle Teachers College in 1973 with a Diploma of Teaching. He completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Newcastle in 1978, before joining the Hunter Valley Theatre Company. He commenced his radio career in 1986, when he and Greg Pickhaver created the characters of "*Rampaging*" *Roy Slaven and HG Nelson*. Doyle has also developed a successful parallel career as a writer of serious television drama, including the ABC-TV miniseries *Changi* and the drama series *Marking Time*, which examines contemporary racial and cultural tensions in Australian society.