



From the Executive Director's Desk



In his letter refusing the Pulitzer Prize, American novelist Sinclair Lewis wrote: “[All prizes, like all titles, are dangerous](#)”. Lewis is not the only person to ever feel this way. [William Saroyan](#) also rejected a Pulitzer and [Marlon Brando](#) famously refused an Oscar.

It is not just artists who turn their back on glory. The brilliant Russian mathematician [Grigori Perelman](#) turned down the Millennium Prize, which was worth one million dollars. Perelman did not “want to be on display like an animal in a zoo.” The late Christopher Hitchens would have understood. For Hitch, artistic awards exist solely to “[pacify egos, to generate sales and to puff reputations](#)”.

Lewis, Saroyan, Brando and Hitchens have all departed this earthly life, but the Pulitzers and Oscars live on. They have been supplemented with the Tony Awards, the Booker, the Costa and dozens of others. At a time when the book is supposedly disappearing, the number of book awards grows larger every year. There are prizes for novels, non-fiction books, poetry, stories and essays. There are prizes for single books and for a lifetime's work. There is even a prize for the best [fourth book of fiction](#) by a single author! Australia is particularly blessed. From the Miles Franklin to the state Premier's Prizes, Australian prizes cover all of the major book genres, and a few minor ones as well.

And it's not just book prizes; fourteen Australian fine art prizes were awarded in July alone. There are now so many art prizes that [web diaries](#) have been created just to keep track of them. There are prizes for acting, dance, music and television, and let's not forget science. The Eureka Prizes and the Premier's Science Award have been supplemented by many new prizes—so many, in fact, that there is a [web calendar](#) for them as well. Crossing disciplinary boundaries, the [Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize](#) combines science and art.

Is the proliferation of prizes just another deplorable manifestation of our narcissistic age? I don't think so. As publishers, producers and broadcasters find their marketing budgets shrinking, prizes are a way to fill the void. They not only attract the public to books, films, plays, concerts, museums and galleries, but they also “discover” new talent. Tim Winton, Kate Grenville, Gillian Mears, Brian Castro, Mandy Sayer and Andrew McGahan all started their careers by winning the [Australian/Vogel Literary Award](#). DBC Pierre was rocketed into stardom when “Vernon God Little” won the Booker Prize.

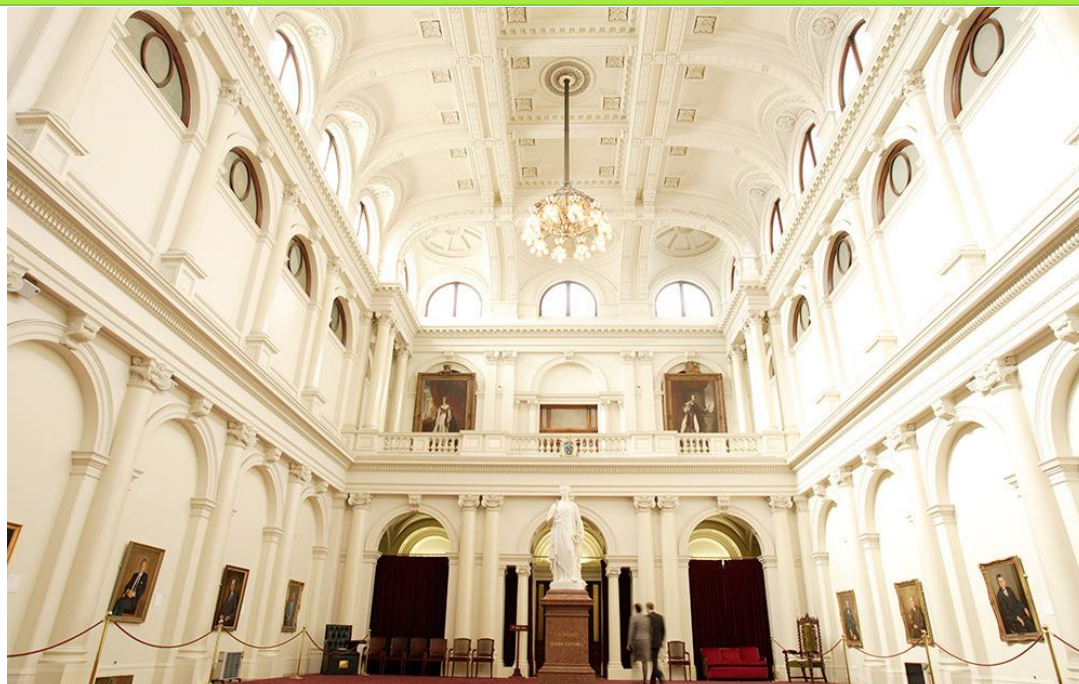
Prizes help to promote nominated books and prize-giving ceremonies are not only a chance to have a party but also to make contacts, learn about new work and make deals. These are all essential elements in any healthy economy, including (dare I say it) the arts market.

Prizes can also be fun. The [Man Booker International](#) has widely publicised betting odds. The Morning News' [Tournament of Books](#) works like the soccer world cup, with an opening round, followed by quarter- and semi-finals. In each round, two books are judged head to head. Before the final championship, there is a Zombie Round in which previously eliminated books are brought back from the dead for another go. At every round, the judges reveal their biases and interests by writing detailed explanations of their choice. The organisers and readers can add their thoughts online.

Recognition, promotion and fun are the reasons the [Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences \(CHASS\)](#) established the [CHASS Australia Prizes](#). These prizes are for books and distinctive work in the arts and social sciences. There are prizes for students as well as professionals, and leadership is recognised in its own prize. The prizes will be awarded at the [CHASS Forum](#) on 8 October in Melbourne. There will certainly be a party, but more importantly, there will be an opportunity to celebrate, promote and recognise the work of artists, humanists and social scientists—those who help us to understand ourselves and our place in the universe.

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM

2014 CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner - 8 October 2014



Join us as we honour the distinguished achievements by Australians working, studying or training in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, including academics, practitioners, philanthropists, policy makers and students. This year, four prizes will be given out. Two cash prizes of **\$3,500** each are sponsored by Routledge: one for a **Book** and the second for **Distinctive Work**. A cash prize of **\$2,000** sponsored by Future Leaders is for a **Future Leader**. The Co-Op has sponsored the fourth prize valued at **\$500**, for a **Student**.

Venue: Queen's Hall, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne

Keynote speakers: Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, Attorney-General and Minister for Arts, and Rupert Myer AM, Chair, Australia Council for the Arts.

The evening will also include poetry reading by Les Murray AO, one of Australia's most well regarded poets.

General and student/concession tickets are available, please [click here](#) for more information. Pre-booking required, tickets will not be available at the venue. Tables of 10 are also available. Seats are limited, please book early to avoid disappointment.

2014 CHASS National Forum Registrations

Get Social!

[Only nine days left for early bird registration!](#)

Register before 31 August and **save \$50 per person** on General and Student/Concession packages.

Individual tickets for Day 1, Day 2 and the CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner are also available.

Convenient booking: Delegates have the option of booking via [Eventbrite](#) (additional fees apply) or using the [CHASS National Forum website](#) and paying via EFT/Cheque/Credit Card (only credit card fees apply).

Venue details, including special access information, are available [here](#). For further information, please call us on (03) 9925 3935.

For regular updates about the 2014 CHASS National Forum and the CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner, please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Feel free to take part in the discussion and also to share the updates with your social media networks.

Reminder: 2014-15 Membership Renewal

This is a gentle reminder for all members to renew their annual membership subscription, if not done so already. Should you have any queries or would like to discuss your membership status, please contact us on (03) 9925 3935.

If your organisation is not a member and would like to join, please contact us to discuss the most appropriate membership category.

When Science Meets Philosophy: Understanding the Ethical Implications of Overdiagnosis

Macquarie University's Professor Wendy Rogers brings her philosophical perspective to the issue of overdiagnosis in the healthcare sector. Awarded a Future Fellowship in the latest rounds of ARC grants, Professor Rogers' research project will develop an account of disease that can help to distinguish risk factors from disease, provide ethical reasons for screening or not screening, and be useful in addressing the problems of overdiagnosis.



Overdiagnosis refers to a range of healthcare activities or interventions which end up harming rather than helping patients. Overdiagnosis arises in a number of ways, such as when the definitions of disease are widened, when harmless or clinically insignificant lesions are diagnosed or treated, or when screening identifies harmless as well as progressive cancers.

"Apart from causing harm to patients who are diagnosed with conditions that, if left undiagnosed, would cause them no harm, overdiagnosis increases health care costs and diverts healthcare resources away from the treatment of diseases with significant morbidity and mortality. Thus overdiagnosis is a problem, not only for individual patients who may be harmed, but also for healthcare providers and policy makers," says Professor Rogers.

Trained as a general practitioner before undertaking philosophy honours and a PhD in medical ethics, this research project continues to combine her passion for medicine and ethics.

"One of the drivers for overdiagnosis is the lack of an account of disease that will ground distinctions between normal or healthy, abnormal or increased risk, and presence of disease. Philosophy can help with this kind of definitional work," she explains.

She is currently working on taxonomy of overdiagnosis, examining the different ways in which it arises, and the various ethical issues that these entail. She has already presented the work at the University of Sydney, the Australian Catholic University, and Medical Grand Rounds at St Vincent's hospital. In September she will be leading a booked out workshop at the international Preventing Overdiagnosis conference at Oxford University. [Learn more about Professor Wendy Rogers and her research project.](#)

Member and Sector Updates

[Public Symposium: Rwanda Revisited – International Aftermath Conference 2014, Monash University, 24 August, Melbourne](#)

This symposium is open to general public and will bring together a select group of scholars from the Rwanda Revisited: International Aftermath Conference 2014 in order to reflect on the ongoing challenges of writing the history of the Rwandan genocide, including the events associated with its development, implementation, and aftermath. While twenty years have now passed since the perpetration of that genocide, many crucial questions remain unanswered or unaddressed. This symposium will engage those issues through rigorous scholarship and open public debate. Moderator: Erin Mosely (Harvard University). Panel: Jennie Burnet (University of Louisville), Bert Ingelaere (University of Antwerp), Charles Mironko (Royal Bafokeng Institute) and Olivier Nyirubugara (Erasmus University Rotterdam). Free admission, no prior bookings required.

[QUT's Gala 25th Anniversary Dinner, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, 10 September](#)

QUT will celebrate 25 years of being a university at the QUT Gala 25th Anniversary Dinner for staff, former staff, alumni and QUT friends. The anniversary commemorates the passing of the Queensland University Technology Act and the approval of QIT's new university status to open its doors as QUT from January 1989. The gala dinner is an opportunity for people to catch up, remember earlier times and imagine what the next 25 years might bring for QUT. Earlybird tickets on sale till 29 August.

[NMIT Yarra Edge Music Festival 2014, 16-19 September, Melbourne](#)

The annual Yarra Edge Music Festival is an opportunity for NMIT Music students to showcase their talents in front of industry representatives. The event is run by students from our Music Performance, Music Business, Sound Production, Live Production, and Screen and Media programs, and is held at the Yarra Edge Music Centre, Fairfield campus. All events are free, although booking is advised. This year's special guest artist is Georgia Fields who won critical acclaim for her debut album released in 2010. Georgia was also the Music Industry Award recipient of the 2009 NMIT Songwriting Competition while studying music at the Fairfield campus

[Human Rights Lecture - Australian Exceptionalism: International Human Rights and Australian Law by Professor Gillian Triggs, The University of Melbourne, 18 September](#)

Australia is unique among comparable legal systems in that it has very few constitutional or legislative protections for most human rights, and has no bill of rights or rights charter. Rather, Australia has developed an ad-hoc approach to the protection of human rights through the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, administrative law, common law and through normative culture. This fragmented approach to human rights has produced a significant gap in legal protections placing particular groups, such as asylum seekers, at risk. During the 2013 election the Coalition Government outlined its intention of placing greater emphasis on fundamental freedoms, and restore what it sees as an imbalance of human rights in Australia. One way the Government hopes to achieve this is by amending the Racial Discrimination Act 1975. The ensuing 'freedoms debate' has shone a spotlight on how human rights are protected in Australia, revealing that there are very few protections for the freedoms most Australians take for granted. All are welcome.

[Art and Mortality: Symposium, 19-20 September, Canberra](#)

Death is one of the enduring themes in the arts, engaging visual artists working in all media. How do their art works, from the past and present, relate to contemporary concerns about dying and death? This symposium brings together leading art historians, curators and artists to discuss ideas associated with mortality and the visual arts. Topics to be addressed include: the symbolism of death, death and anatomy, death masks, photography and the limits of representation, the scene of death, and ethical and social issues. On the second day there is a special focus on works in the National Gallery's collection and a viewing of the exhibition Arthur Boyd: Agony and Ecstasy. Convened by Professor Helen Ennis, Sir William Dobell Chair of Art History, Director of the Centre for Art History and Art Theory, ANU School of Art. Art and Mortality has been organised by the ANU School of Art [Centre for Art History and Art Theory](#) in partnership with the National Gallery of Australia. Attendance is free and all are welcome.

[Museums Australia Education \(MAEd\) New Professional Development Day Term 3 'History: Not Horrible at All', 20 September, Sydney](#)

Keynote speaker Dr Louise Zarmati will address 'What do teachers want from history excursions?' Venue: Cockatoo Island, Sydney. Ferries are available from Circular Quay, Darling Harbour and other Sydney Harbour wharves. Cost: \$55 members of Museum Australia Education, \$70 non members (MA members can join MAE for \$16.50 by contacting the National Office on 02 6230 0346). A light morning tea and lunch will be provided. Event enquiries: Jo Henwood jo7hanna@tpg.com.au

[Australia Council's Visions Of Australia: Regional Exhibition Touring Fund: Round opens 13 October](#)

Visions of Australia: Regional Exhibition Touring Fund supports the development and touring of exhibitions of contemporary visual artists and crafts to regional and remote communities in Australia. Applications close 1 December 2014. Potential applicants are encouraged to discuss their application. For information and any questions relating to this grants program, please contact: Tara Kita, Program Officer, Market Development, on (02) 9215 9176 or Toll free 1800 226 912.

[The Undiscovered: A National Focus on Western Australian Art, The University of Western Australia, 20 October, Crawley](#)

This is the first of a proposed series of symposia that will emerge over the next three years, presented by [Artsource](#) and The University of Western Australia [Cultural Precinct](#). This symposium intends to focus on Western Australian art and artists in the context of the national and global visual arts discourse. Its purpose is to convene scholars, curators, artists, arts administrators, gallery directors and the public to consider the place of Western Australian art and artists within the national and international art worlds. Keynote speakers will offer insights into different aspects of contemporary practice, art history and theory, to interrogate the national art discourses that appear to exclude artists outside the major Eastern and Southern seaboard capitals. This symposium provides the WA visual arts community the platform to engage in a crucial conversation on the current position of Western Australian art nationally.

[Free exhibition - Abstraction-Création: J.W. Power in Europe 1921-1938, National Library of Australia, open till 26 October, Canberra](#)

The exhibition features the work of J. W. Power, one of Australia's most successful and accomplished expatriate painters of the interwar years. Power studied art in Paris with Fernand Léger at his Académie Moderne and was part of the international group of artists known as Abstraction-Création. This exhibition brings together, for the first time, Power's paintings from the University of Sydney and his sketchbooks held by the National Library.

[Call for papers and presentations: Grounding the Sacred through Literature and the Arts Conference, Australian Catholic University, 23-26 July 2015, Sydney](#)

The Grounding the Sacred conference invites papers and presentations from artists, writers, musicians, academics and religious who are interested in the interplay between the arts and the sacred. The conference asks how literature and the arts can make the sacred tangible: Do they enable us to touch the sacred? Do they offer a way of structuring our experiences of the sacred? Do they provide a common ground for people of

different faiths - or none - to explore the ineffable? And where does creativity sit in relation to religion and the search for meaning? Are a sense of the sacred and the means to express it essential for human flourishing? Abstracts of 250 words are invited for 20-minute papers and presentations that address the theme. Potential presenters who wish to have their work considered for inclusion in a special Australian issue of Literature and Theology should forward full papers. Abstracts should be sent to [Elaine Lindsay](#) by 27 February 2015.