

## MEDIA RELEASE

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## SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED FOR THE 2021 INDIE BOOK AWARDS

*Celebrating the best Australian writing*

Australian independent booksellers are thrilled to announce their Shortlist for the Indie Book Awards 2021, their favourite Australian books published in 2020!

Established in 2008, the Indie Book Awards recognise and celebrate this country's incredible literary talent and who better to nominate and judge the best-of-the-best than indie booksellers – the ultimate champions of great Australian writing!

Who will win each category in 2021?

Who will take out the overall '2021 Book of the Year' Award?!

The **Category Winners** and the **Overall Book of the Year Winner** will be announced at a virtual awards event on **Monday 22 March 2021**.

### The Shortlist for the Indie Book Awards 2021 is:

#### FICTION

**All Our Shimmering Skies** by Trent Dalton (HarperCollins Australia)  
**The Living Sea of Waking Dreams** by Richard Flanagan (Knopf Australia)  
**Mammoth** by Chris Flynn (University of Queensland Press)  
**Honeybee** by Craig Silvey (Allen & Unwin)

#### NON-FICTION

**Phosphorescence** by Julia Baird (Fourth Estate Australia)  
**The Happiest Man on Earth** by Eddie Jaku (Macmillan Australia)  
**People of the River** by Grace Karskens (Allen & Unwin)  
**Truganini** by Cassandra Pybus (Allen & Unwin)

#### DEBUT FICTION

**The Bluffs** by Kyle Perry (Michael Joseph Australia)  
**Song of the Crocodile** by Nardi Simpson (Hachette Australia)  
**A Lonely Girl is a Dangerous Thing** by Jessie Tu (Allen & Unwin)  
**The Dictionary of Lost Words** by Pip Williams (Affirm Press)

#### ILLUSTRATED NON-FICTION

**Sam Bloom: Heartache & Birdsong** by Samantha Bloom, Cameron Bloom & Bradley Trevor Greive (ABC Books, HarperCollins Australia)  
**Plantopedia** by Lauren Camilleri & Sophia Kaplan (Smith Street Books)  
**Beatrix Bakes** by Natalie Paull (Hardie Grant Books)  
**In Praise of Veg** by Alice Zaslavsky (Murdoch Books)

## CHILDREN'S

**The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Dangerous Animals** by Sami Bayly (Lothian Children's Books)

**Sing Me The Summer** by Jane Godwin, illustrated by Alison Lester (Affirm Press)

**The Grandest Bookshop in the World** by Amelia Mellor (Affirm Press)

**Hollowpox: The Hunt for Morrigan Crow** by Jessica Townsend (Lothian Children's Books)

## YOUNG ADULT

**Future Girl** by Asphyxia (Allen & Unwin Children's)

**Catch Me If I Fall** by Barry Jonsberg (Allen & Unwin Children's)

**The Left-Handed Booksellers of London** by Garth Nix (Allen & Unwin Children's)

**This One is Ours** by Kate O'Donnell (University of Queensland Press)

The twenty-four shortlisted books, the best titles of the year as nominated by Australian independent booksellers themselves, will be vying for the top spot as the Overall Indie 'Book of the Year' for 2021. Panels of expert judges (all indie booksellers and avid readers) will choose the winners in the six book categories – Fiction, Debut Fiction, Non-Fiction, Illustrated Non-Fiction, Children's books (up to 12yo) and Young Adult (12+). Independent booksellers from around the country will then vote to select their favourite book of the year from the six category winners.

Since the Awards inception in 2008, the Indies have a well-deserved reputation for picking the best of the best in Australian writing. Past Book of the Year winners have gone on to be bestsellers and win other major literary awards. Previous winners include: *There Was Still Love* by Favel Parrett, *Boy Swallows Universe* by Trent Dalton; *Nevermoor* by Jessica Townsend; *The Dry* by Jane Harper; *The Natural Way of Things* by Charlotte Wood; *The Bush* by Don Watson; *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* by Richard Flanagan; *The Light Between Oceans* by M.L. Stedman; *All That I Am* by Anna Funder; *The Happiest Refugee* by Anh Do; *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silvey; and *Breath* by Tim Winton.

The Awards recognise and celebrate indie booksellers as the number one supporters of Australian authors. What makes our Indies uniquely placed to judge and recommend the best Aussie books of the past year to their customers and readers, is their incredible passion and knowledge, their contribution to the cultural diversity of the Australian reading public by recommending books beyond the big brands, and their love of quality writing.

## Statements from some of the 2021 Indie Book Awards shortlisted authors:

"I am thrilled to be shortlisted for the 2021 Indie Book Awards and I'd like to say why.

*The Dictionary of Lost Words* was published just days into Australia's first pandemic lockdown. The timing was awful for a debut novel and I lowered all expectations that my book would find its tribe of readers. But then something wonderful happened – independent booksellers refused to shut up shop. While their doors might have been closed, they found myriad ways to get books into the hands of people who would enjoy them, perhaps even need them, during the long weeks of isolation. As a reader and a writer, I was enormously grateful.

Australian independent booksellers helped my novel thrive at a time when it seemed least likely. If I were in the business of giving out awards for outstanding achievement in 2020, independent booksellers would certainly make the shortlist. For this reason, it is a particularly special honour that *The Dictionary of Lost Words* has been short listed for a 2021 Indie Book Award."

—Pip Williams, *The Dictionary of Lost Words* (Affirm Press)

"I am shocked and delighted to be shortlisted for the Indie Book Awards, especially to be amongst such esteemed company! *Mammoth* was released just as the pandemic tightened its grip on Australian society. Rather than postponing, we forged ahead and I'm so glad we did. Despite all the obstacles, independent bookstores made this book a success. I will be forever grateful for that. As a former bookstore employee, I was determined to do my small part in keeping the wolves from the doors by providing an uplifting title that offered a little hope and light and laughter in an otherwise grim year. The relationship between independent bookstores and authors is symbiotic, and vital. As you have been *Mammoth's* champion, I will always be yours."

—Chris Flynn, *Mammoth* (UQP)

"It's a genuine honour to be counted among the good books by those who really know: our independent booksellers."

—Richard Flanagan, *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams* (Knopf Australia)

"Thank you so much for supporting my book and spreading my message of hope and happiness. In a year when I was not able to visit bookshops myself, it has meant so much to know that so many people are reading my words and sharing joy. At 100 years of age, I am so proud and excited to be a debut Australian writer!"

—Eddie Jaku, *The Happiest Man on Earth* (Macmillan Australia)

"I'm thrilled to be selected as a finalist for the Indie Book Awards! How glorious it is that even after a hundred and fifty years, indie books, publishers and booksellers are still thriving in Australia. Thank you, indie booksellers, for championing *The Grandest Bookshop in the World* and keeping the spirit of Cole's Book Arcade alive!"

—Amelia Mellor, *The Grandest Bookshop in the World* (Affirm Press)

"Thank you for shortlisting *Plantopedia*! To receive this recognition from the passionate booksellers who provide such a brilliant platform for the book is a real honour. To know that people are exploring the world of indoor gardening and loving it as we do is hugely gratifying."

—Lauren Camilleri & Sophia Kaplan, *Plantopedia* (Smith Street Books)

"I'm thrilled and very grateful that *Sing Me the Summer* is on the Indie Book Awards shortlist. Independent bookshops contribute so much to our culture and community, and it's often a labour of love. I value them deeply, and so it means a lot to me to be shortlisted for this award. Thank you."

—Jane Godwin, *Sing Me the Summer*, illustrated by Alison Lester (Affirm Press)

"I'm very happy that *Sing Me the Summer* is on the Indie Book Awards shortlist. It was a joy to illustrate this book for Janie Godwin. I love Australia's independent bookshops - they shine like lighthouses of knowledge and beauty and give hope to us all for a better world. Thank you."

—Alison Lester, *Illustrator, Sing Me the Summer by Jane Godwin* (Affirm Press)

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**FOR FURTHER INFO, OR TO REQUEST AN INTERVIEW, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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For more info on the Indie Book Awards visit [www.indiebookawards.com.au](http://www.indiebookawards.com.au)