



**Darebin
Arts**

The Darebin Mayor's Writing Awards for Young People was a program made possible by Council's Community and Local Business Resilience and Recovery Package in response to COVID-19.

[Cushla Booth](#), winner of Darebin Mayor's Writing Awards for Young People (Primary School Category) read her winning entry 'The Girl and the Geese'.

[Watch Eva Gadsby](#), winner of Darebin Mayor's Writing Awards for Young People (Secondary School Category) read her winning entry 'The Smouldering Summer'.

Language and content warning: Content may cause distress or concern for some readers.

If you need to talk to someone, support is available. Lifeline: 13 11 14 – 24/7 confidential telephone crisis support.

Winners of the 2020 Darebin Mayor's Writing Awards for Young People:

Primary School:

- *First Prize: Cushla Booth*
- *Second Prize: Charlie Yong*
- *Highly Commended: Mika Lanz Forstner, Dana Tingwell, Thomas Lenne, Travis Le Packham, Thomas O'Grady.*

Secondary School:

- *First Prize: Eva Gadsby*
- *Second Prize: Tess Baker*
- *Highly Commended: Mila Guest, Maia Clisby de la Piedad, Scarlett Clare, Luke Ehlert, Mia Purcell.*

First prize received \$500 cash.

Second prize received \$250 cash.

High Commendations received a \$50 book voucher.

Congratulations from Darebin Council Mayor Susan Rennie

"Congratulations to Cushla Booth and Eva Gadsby for their incredible winning pieces, and to all who entered for an outstanding array of work," Darebin Council Mayor Susan Rennie said.

"Creativity and the arts are more important than ever, allowing us to connect with entire worlds that lay beyond our homes. I can't wait to see what the new generation of Darebin creatives produces next."

From the judges

With 236 entries, the competition was fierce for primary and secondary students in Darebin. The judges were impressed by the enthusiasm and hard work of the many young writers who entered this competition. We found the submissions overall to be imaginative, well thought out, and executed with a great deal of care.

The primary school entries showed a terrific willingness to jump into imaginary scenarios and experiment with language. The secondary entries were a strong field, tackling sophisticated subject matter with subtlety and insight. Together, they made the judges very excited for the future of Darebin's writers.

The first prize in the Primary School section was awarded to Cushla Booth for 'The Girl and the Geese', a bright, entertaining story about a family that saves the local geese from being driven out of town. Cushla's light touch with dialogue, her fresh descriptions, clear voice, and modulation of the story's momentum were most impressive.

Second prize in the Primary School section was awarded to Charlie Yong for 'Windows', a piece that explored a child's relationships with his father and grandfather. Charlie's piece stood out for its restrained tone, neat observations and wry humour tinged with melancholy.

In the Secondary School category, first prize was awarded to Eva Gadsby for 'The Smouldering Summer', an arresting prose poem evoking a group of families facing the threat and uncertainty of an approaching bushfire.

With precise, compact language, Eva immerses her readers in a constantly moving kaleidoscope of moments and impressions, deftly balancing the menace and tension of the fire with snatches of play and distraction and with the intimate moments of family and community.

Second Prize in the Secondary School category was awarded to Tess Baker for 'Selachimorpha', narrated by a girl whose mother is not coping, and who endures the well-meaning pieties of a school guidance counsellor. Tess's sharp voice and witty turn of phrase made this an engaging and entertaining read, with a twist in the end.

In awarding the additional prizes for both the Primary and Secondary sections, the judges found it difficult to choose just five entries per section, as there were so many quality pieces in the competition. The pieces that we

chose all showed imaginative flair, had a strong central idea and kept us turning the pages.

Thank you to everyone that participated, judged and helped this award come together – especially those that entered. Keep it up!

Big thanks to our fabulous judging panel of local writers for young people: Judith Rossell, Nicki Greenberg, Thai Snaith and Michael Pryor.