

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Big Issue celebrates fresh Australian literary talent in annual Fiction Edition

Brilliant storytelling meets social impact in *The Big Issue* magazine's special Fiction Edition, on sale from *The Big Issue* street vendors and online from Friday 29 August.

The Big Issue's Fiction Edition is the biggest-selling fiction magazine in Australia. For 21 years the short story competition has provided a rare opportunity for new and emerging writers to have their work published in a national print magazine, and provided a launchpad for writers to have prolific literary careers in Australia and overseas.

This year the annual Fiction Edition showcases new short fiction work from 11 writers in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland, including award-winning writer Ellen Van Neerven and acclaimed YA author Zana Fraillon.

The 2025 edition boasts eight more pages than usual, thanks to the support of the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund. Stories were chosen from 863 submissions and were anonymously judged by Danielle Binks, Claire Cao and Ben Hickey, as well as *The Big Issue* editorial team and Melbourne vendor Mariann B. Each published author receives \$500. Original illustrations are by Adelaide artist Chris Edser.

The Big Issue editor Amy Hetherington says that the issue is a highlight on *The Big Issue* and literary calendars alike.

"Our Fiction Edition is beloved for its independence, dynamism and creativity. Over its 21 years, this annual special has helped amplify the careers of some of Ozlit's most glittering lights, including Jane Harper, Melissa Manning, Emily O'Grady and A.S. Patrić. This year is no different, giving *Big Issue* readers an opportunity to discover their new favourite writer – *before* everyone else.

"The Fiction Edition is also a powerful opportunity for *The Big Issue* vendors to connect with customers new and old, creating a meaningful boost in sales as one of the most in-demand magazines of the year. I encourage everyone to pick up a copy where they can!"

Copies are available for \$9 each from *The Big Issue* vendors around the country. Vendors can accept payments by cash, card or PayID. Readers who aren't close to a vendor can purchase the magazine through *The Big Issue*'s [Shopify store](#) or [subscribe](#) and support *The Big Issue*'s Women's Workforce program.

ENDS

The Big Issue spokespersons, authors and judges are available for media. Contributor bios are below. For more information and to confirm media opportunities, contact:

Maree Agapitos | Media and Communications Lead
magapitos@bigissue.org.au | (03) 9663 4533 | 0418 124 190

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The Big Issue Fiction Edition 2025 Authors

ELLEN VAN NEERVEN

Ellen van Neerven is a Mununjali and Dutch writer and editor. Their books include *Heat and Light*, *Comfort Food*, *Throat* and *Personal Score*.

STEPHANIE WEST

Stephanie West is a Naarm-based writer and film producer, interested in speculative fiction that explores intimate relationships or laughs at political doom. She has been published in *Splinter Journal*, *The Suburban Review*, *Overland*, and in various zines scattered around cities and the internet.

JOSHUA LEE SHIMMEN

Joshua Lee Shimmen is a reader, writer, and general ratbag. He grew up in Frankston, Victoria on Bunurong Country. He has published fiction in *Overland*, *Meniscus* and elsewhere.

JOSHUA TRISTAN WOO

Joshua Tristan Woo is completing his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English at the University of Sydney. His short fiction has appeared previously in *Ricepaper*.

ALEXANDRA O'SULLIVAN

Alexandra O'Sullivan lives in Regional Victoria, Australia. She writes fiction, creative non-fiction, articles and reviews. Her work has appeared in publications such as *Westerly*, *Meanjin* and *Brevity*. She works as an English teacher and was included in the anthology *Teacher, Teacher* published by Affirm Press, while her short story about teaching, *Things Mean Other Things*, recently won the Apollo Bay Short Story Award.

EILISH ALEXANDER

Eilish Alexander is an emerging writer and playwright based in Nipaluna/Hobart. She has been published in *Visual Verse*, shortlisted in the 2024 Albury City Short Story Award and her play *Animals of the Court* was produced in 2022. Eilish graduated from the University of Tasmania with a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours in English and Writing in 2023. Eilish is an alumnus of Australian Theatre for Young People's 2025 National Studio residency and the 2024 Fresh Ink National Mentoring Program.

LILIAN JAMES

Lilian James (she/her) is an emerging writer, currently pursuing a Master of Theatre (Writing) at the University of Melbourne. She completed her undergraduate in English at the Australian National University, where she first began to contemplate the power of a drunken pash.

SHIVANI PRABHU

Shivani Prabhu is a Naarm based writer and medical student who loves magical realism and big cups of chai. Her work has previously appeared in *Voiceworks*, *Verandah*, *The Big Issue* and *Rabbit*.

ZANA FRAILLON

Zana Fraillon is the award-winning author of 18 books for young people. She has also had pieces published in *The Guardian*, *Island Magazine*, *Dark Mountain* and *Abridged*. Having completed her PhD exploring future ancestorship and everyday engagement with voices from our deep past, she is now officially a doctor of ghosts.

SAM SWEENEY

Sam Sweeney is an emerging writer based in Naarm/Melbourne. She writes fiction and non-fiction, or more accurately, things that fall somewhere in between, exploring place, class and queerness, among other

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things. Her work has also appeared in *Demure Magazine*, and she is currently undertaking a Masters of Creative Writing, Publishing and Editing at the University of Melbourne.

JULIA RICHARDSON

Julia Richardson began her creative life as a songwriter and singer, performing and writing music before moving into work that champions social impact. She co-founded The Friday Collective, an all-women business that works with organisations driving meaningful change in communities. Now she is reconnecting with her own writing, beginning with this story for *The Big Issue* Fiction Edition.

The Big Issue Fiction Edition 2025 Judges

DANIELLE BINKS

Danielle Binks is a Melbourne-based author and literary agent with Jacinta di Mase Management. She also teaches creative writing at RMIT University.

CLAIRE CAO

Claire Cao is a writer and editor based in Western Sydney. She is the currently film editor of *The Big Issue* and fiction editor of *Meanjin*.

BEN HICKEY

Ben Hickey is a writer, editor and teacher whose short fiction has won multiple awards. Ben lives in Naarm/Melbourne and teaches at RMIT.

About The Big Issue

The Big Issue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and creating work opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, marginalisation and disadvantage. The Big Issue is best known for its fortnightly street magazine, which has put more than \$40 million collectively into vendors' pockets.

Alongside the magazine The Big Issue has additional programs such as the Women's Workforce, Community Street Soccer Program and Classroom. For more information visit thebigissue.org.au.

About the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

The Copyright Agency is a not-for-profit rights management organisation that ensures artists, writers and publishers are fairly rewarded for the reproduction of their work.

The Agency's Cultural Fund provides grants to creative individuals and organisations for a diverse range of projects which aim to enrich Australian cultural life. This project is supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund.

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