

## **Magarey Medal 2014 Judges' Report**

### **Medal Terms**

The Magarey Medal for biography is a biennial prize of at least \$10,000. The prize is awarded to the female author who has published the work judged to be the best biographical writing on an Australian subject in the preceding two years. The awarding of the prize is administered and judged by a panel set up by the Association for the Study of Australian Literature and the Australian Historical Association. The prize is very generously donated by Professor Emerita Susan Magarey.

### **Judges:**

Professor Susan K Martin, English, La Trobe University (Chair)

Professor Katie Holmes, History, La Trobe University (AHA Representative)

Associate Professor Meg Tasker, Humanities, Federation University

The judges noted that there were a number of excellent entries, and that the shortlist demonstrated the rich range of possibilities represented in biographical writing.

**The winner of the 2014 Magarey Medal for Biography: Fiona Paisley, for *The Lone Protestor: A. M. Fernando in Australia and London*.**

### **Shortlist (in alphabetical order):**

**Janet Butler, *Kitty's War*. UQP 2013**

The judges noted this biography of WW1 nurse, Kit McNaughton was particularly impressive for the way it contextualised the detailed life with nuanced readings of ideas of self-construction and national identity.

**Patricia Clarke, *Eilean Giblin: A feminist between the wars*. Monash U Publishing 2013**

A carefully researched study of this activist in women's education and potter. This biography brings forward and makes a compelling case for marginalised and almost forgotten figures in the historical record.

**Evelyn Juers, *The Recluse*. Giramondo 2012**

This study of Eliza Donnithorn, the supposed source of Dickens' Miss Havisham, was praised by the judges as a creative and evocative biography; poetic in the way it addresses a recurring fascination and in the process engages with location, myth and literary desire.

**Fiona Paisley, *The Lone Protestor: A. M. Fernando in Australia and London*. Aboriginal Studies Press, 2012.**

Fiona Paisley's biography is a study of little-known Aboriginal activist, A.M. Fernando, and his extraordinary acts of resistance in Australia and Europe in the first half of the twentieth-century. This work is notable for its meticulous research, its grasp on and evocation of the national and international context, and of the politics of the archive. Paisley's assured narrative reveals without pronouncing. This is an intelligent, nuanced and compelling biography set within an insightful analytical frame.