

## Media Release

### Top Australian authors shortlisted

October 13, 2015

The winner of one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious literary awards will be announced next week by the Foundation for Australian Literary Studies.

Now in its 48<sup>th</sup> year, the Foundation presents the annual Colin Roderick Award to the value of \$10,000, as well as the H T Priestley Memorial Medal. The Foundation is based at James Cook University and aims to foster the study and appreciation of Australian literature.

**The announcement will take place on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October in Townsville (George Coates Restaurant, Pimlico Campus, TAFE). The dinner commences at 6.30pm with the announcement at approximately 8pm.**

The award and medal are presented to the author of the best book, in the judges' opinion, that is published in Australia in the previous calendar year, which deals with any aspect of Australian life.

**This year's winner is Michael Wilding for *Wild Bleak Bohemia*.** Using contemporary newspaper reports, court records, published memoirs, private letters and diaries, Michael Wilding tells the story of three troubled geniuses of Australian writing (Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall) and their world of poetry and poverty, alcohol and opiates, horse-racing and theatre, journalism and publishing.

Gordon shot himself, unable to pay the printer of his poems; Kendall ended up in a mental hospital after forging a cheque, and Clarke died a bankrupt.

The judges were impressed by the standard of the seven shortlisted books, but reserved their highest praise for *Wild Bleak Bohemia*.

They said at its heart, the book is a meticulously researched yet extraordinarily understanding account of the painful blend of melancholia and tragedy on one side, and achievement and elation on the other, which characterised the lives of these three foundational Australian literary figures.

#### Further information:

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