

stella



Stella is a major voice for gender
Australian literature. Founded in
program is the annual Stella Prize –
Australian women's writing. Stella is
by Australian women and non-binary writers
participation in the world of literature, and creati
and vibrant national culture.

At Stella, we know women need two precious resource
and space. Each year, Stella awards significant funds direc
writers through the Stella Prize, which can literally buy their





Lectum



STATE LIBRARY
VICTORIA

stella
PRIZE 2024

*The Stella promotes and nurtures
the rich diversity and excellence
of our literary talent both
nationally and beyond our shores.
The recognition it provides
encourages our writers to think
big, take risks, and pursue creative
pathways to meet the challenges of
our time. Alexis Wright*

Stella acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work. We acknowledge their sovereignty and songlines. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We embrace and celebrate the earliest storytellers and the oldest cultures in the world.

This report is intended to:	Letter from the Creative Director and CEO	4
• Reiterate the vision and purpose of Stella	Letter from the Chair of the Board	
• Share the progress in 2024 towards achieving our mission	Letter from the Treasurer	
	Overview of Annual Impact	
	Our Australian footprint	
• Articulate our aspiration for the future and the strategic initiatives that realise these aspirations	The Stella Prize	10
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Now in its 13th year, Stella continues to evolve, expand and attract curious audiences which, most importantly, support renowned Australian women writers. In my inaugural year as CEO I have enjoyed literature which has deeply impacted and changed me. Looking back at our achievements in the last financial year, I am humbled by the support of our vast Stella network. The Prize, our ambassadors and Stella Day Out are helping us become a truly national organisation with broad reach across the whole country.

I am thrilled to announce that we have seven new ambassadors all of whom have a major role to play in sharing Stella's message with the broader community. I would like to thank the following fabulous women for their wisdom and willingness to engage with all things Stella: Catherine Andrews, VIC; Virginia Haussegger AM, ACT; Tanya Hosch, SA; Clare Martin AO, NT; Paula McLean, NSW; Anna Reynolds, TAS; Courtney Stewart, QLD.

In keeping with our national strategy, this financial year we celebrated the first two Stella Days Out in Melbourne and Hobart with attentive and appreciative audiences. Six more Stella Days Out are taking place in the second half of 2024, across both regional and metropolitan Australia. I have been overwhelmed by the significance of these events for our audiences.

Stella Days Out ensure that our mission to promote books by women writers does not only extend to the current prize winners, but to all of our 144 past long listers, short listers and winners. People don't respond to facts, they respond to stories. We know that in order to change the conversation we must continue sharing these stories.

*When we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard or
welcomed. But when we are
silent, we are still afraid. So it is
better to speak.* Audre Lorde

This year we had a very special milestone for the Stella Prize with Alexis Wright being the first person to win for the second time with *Praiseworthy*, a novel that defies category and linearity to tell a story of land, culture and community. Alexis' second Stella win signifies a changing Australian literary canon.

Our programs include talks within Australian writers' festivals, corporate events and a strong partnership with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education which enables us to expand our educational impact.

I have been overwhelmed by the support and care of our invaluable donors. Many have been with us since Stella's



inception in 2012. They are the backbone of the work we do. I am proud to continue delivering Stella's promise to be the major voice for gender equity and cultural change in Australian literature.

Although the Prize money is now endowed, thanks to the generous support of our donors and the hard work of the board, operational and program funding requires our ongoing attention. We are focusing on growing self-generated income, diversifying our funding streams with government support and increasing philanthropy. We will continue this focus in 2025.

Stella has punched above its weight for the last 13 years, increasing women writers' prominence and media presence, sharing stories and creating a national focus for literature. Looking ahead, I am seeking to expand our impact by connecting Stella stories with men and adolescent boys, so they too can experience the essence of our great storytellers.

Finally I want to thank Keren Murray, our outgoing Board Chair for her invaluable contributions over the last 7 years, all the supporters, the staff, the readers, the Board, donors, Government funders and interns/volunteers who have all entrusted us to continue the journey to support women writers and help to significantly change the conversation about gender.



Stella is a heart project. It reflects a collective love of books, reading and stories. Founded in 2012, it is driven by a collective commitment to gender equality and generating cultural change through literature.

Stella is also a mind project. Stories help us to understand ourselves and connect with others and the world. Stories shape what we value as a culture and what we see as possible.

Since I joined the board 7 years ago, it has been a privilege to see Stella achieve so much.

- In 2018, we became one of few literary prizes to award money to long listed authors, as well as short-listees and the winner.
- In 2019, we expanded the Prize to include non-binary authors, recognising that the concept of gender and experience of gender inequality is not static.
- In 2020, the Stella Count found that the number of books by women reviewed in major Australian publications reached and surpassed parity with the number of reviews of books by men.
- Throughout 2020 and 2021, we weathered lockdowns, becoming the first literary prize in Australia to go online.
- In 2022, we included collections of poetry as contenders for the Prize, with two extraordinary poets winning in 2022 and 2023.
- In 2022, we increased the money awarded to the winner from \$50,000 to \$60,000.
- On our tenth anniversary, we endowed the Prize through the Stella Forever Fund with the generous support of many donors.
- In 2023, we launched Stella Day Out to bring Stella writers to communities across Australia.
- In 2024, we made history as First Nations writer, Alexis Wright, won the Prize for the second time with her beautiful work, *Praiseworthy*.

Throughout this time, we have collaborated on educational initiatives, writers' residencies and with writers' festivals around the country.

Thank you to our supporters, donors and partners who make it possible for Stella to promote gender equality in Australian literature and ensure that women's stories are widely read and celebrated. As I step down as chair, I thank the wonderful Stella board and team for your commitment, creativity and hard work. I warmly welcome Stella's new Chair, Megan McCracken. Stella's future is bright.



As Treasurer, I work closely with the board and the executive team to oversee the financial health and sustainability of the Stella Prize and its various programs. We work to ensure transparent financial reporting, and the alignment of our resources with our strategic goals. By enhancing Stella's financial resilience, we are able to support a diverse range of programs, awards, and initiatives that spotlight and empower Australian women authors.

The financial year had its challenges, as we faced increases in our costs and a constrained fundraising environment. However, despite this we were able to achieve:

- An operating surplus, with no significant cost increases.
- Growth in our Endowment Reserve - which funds the annual Stella Prize money in perpetuity.
- Grants from new donors and revenue from new events - part of our strategy of expanding our sources of revenue.

With the ongoing support of our donors and funders, and our sustainable financial practices, we will ensure that Stella remains a dynamic, forward-looking organisation dedicated to advancing gender equity in Australian literature.

Stella is the major voice for gender equity and cultural change in Australian literature.

Our vision is to create an Australian society that recognises and values the cultural contribution and diversity of women's stories.

Stella strives to promote books by Australian women, support greater participation in the world of literature, and create a more equitable and vibrant national culture.

OUR PILLARS

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS (FY24)

OUR LOOK-AHEAD

The
Stella
Prize

1.5B+
TOTAL AUDIENCE for all
local publication outlets
featuring coverage

**International
PR reach**
via media channels

2x
SALES increase for titles
announced for shortlist

Stella
Research

15%
Demonstrated uplift in
women authors in review
pages between 2012-20
through the Stella Count

Beyond The Count
New research to understand the
gender balance of books being
studied in schools

Stella
Programs

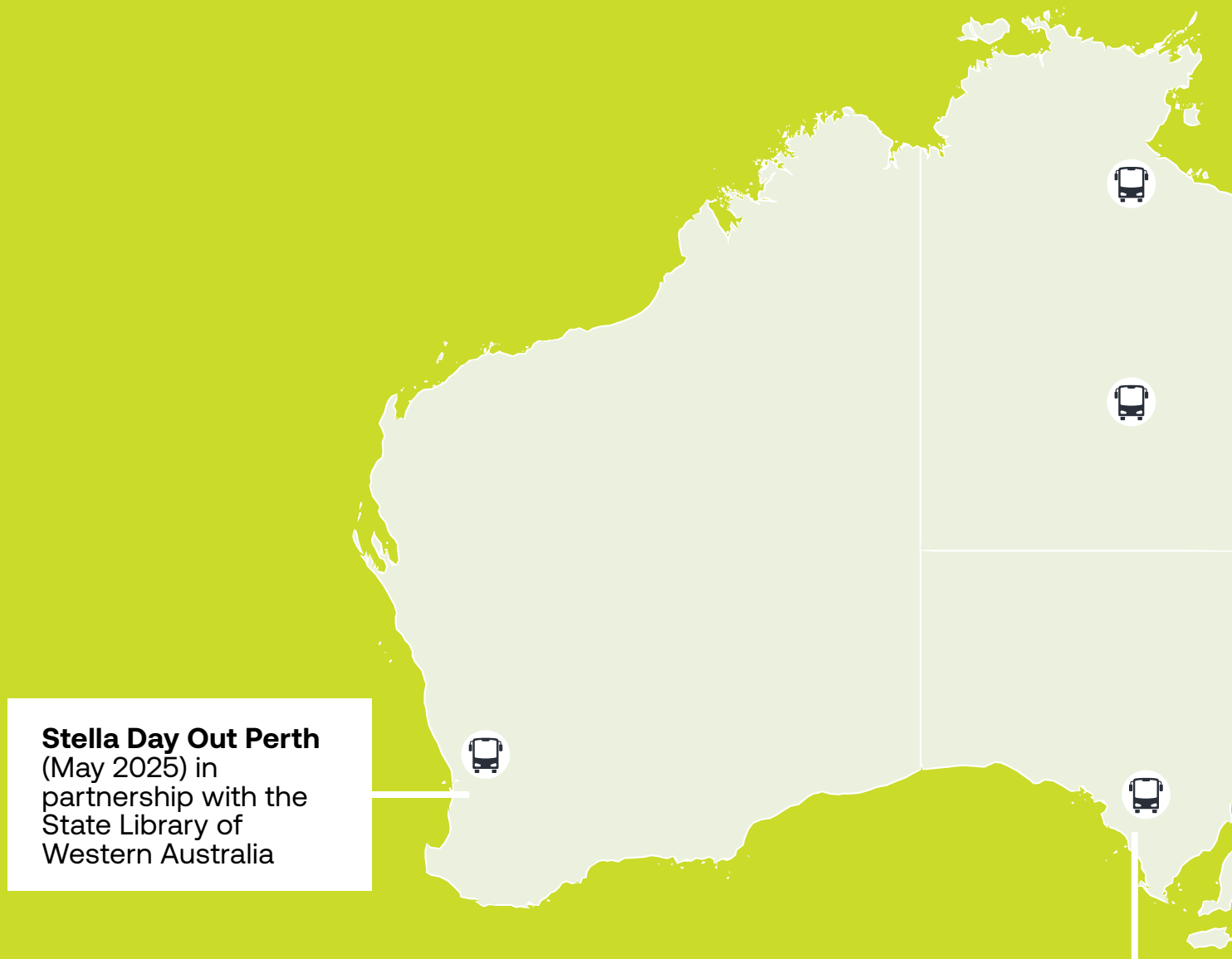
2K+
Stella Day Out attendees
across Hobart and
Melbourne

7+
Stella Day Out events planned
for Brisbane, Curban, Canberra,
Sydney, Ballarat, Orange and
Melbourne

5+
National Writers Festivals
hosting Stella writers
(Sydney, Bendigo,
Sorrento, Melbourne and
Canberra)

Global festivals
Stella-listed authors invited to
international festivals

Stella's presence is national
and we are expanding to
regional centres



Stella Day Out Perth
(May 2025) in
partnership with the
State Library of
Western Australia

Stella Prize Longlist
(March 2024 and 2025)
in partnership with the
Adelaide Writer's Week



Stella on the Go - the free Stella book program - launched in June 2024, reaching public transport users across Australia



Stella Day Out Hobart
(2024) reaching 254 people

**Stella Day Out
Brisbane (2024)**
reaching 530 people

**Sydney Stella Shortlist
announcement (2023)**
reaching 1,354 people

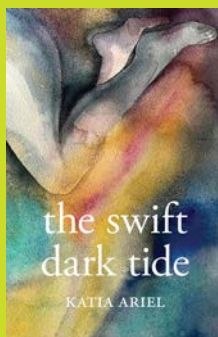
Stella Prize (2024)
reaching 10,000+

**Stella Day Out
Melbourne (2023)**
reaching 435 people

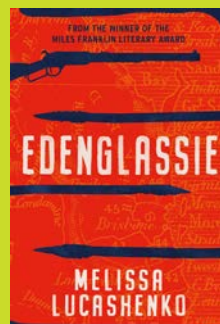
STELLA PRIZE 2024 LONGLIST



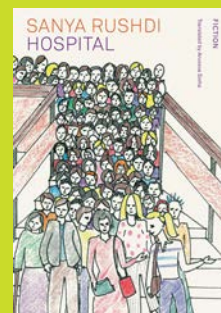
In 2024 we partnered with the Adelaide Writers Week for the first time to announce the 2024 longlisted writers.



Katia Ariel
The Swift Dark Tide
SHORTLISTED



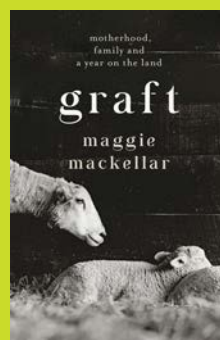
Melissa Lucashenko
Edenglassie



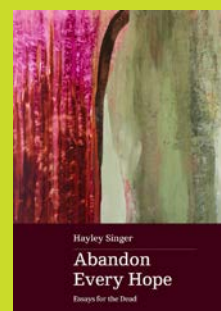
Sanya Rushdi
Hospital
SHORTLISTED



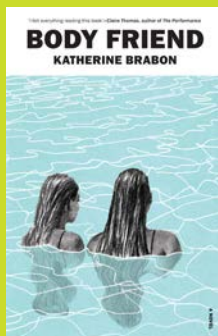
Stephanie Bishop
The Anniversary



Maggie MacKellar
Graft



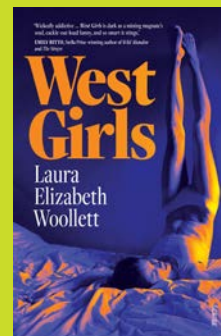
Hayley Singer
Abandon Every Hope: Essays for the Dead
SHORTLISTED



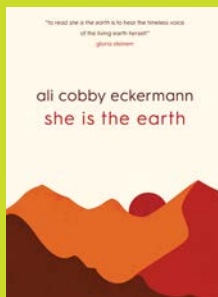
Katherine Brabon
Body Friend
SHORTLISTED



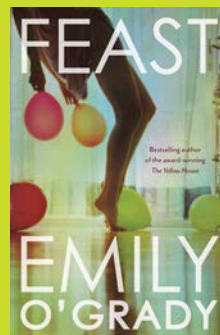
Kate Mildenhall
The Hummingbird Effect



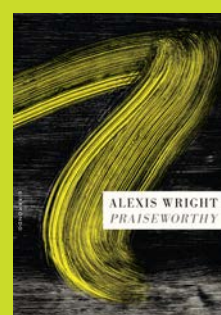
Laura Elizabeth Woollett
West Girls



Ali Cobby Eckermann
She is the Earth



Emily O'Grady
Feast
SHORTLISTED



Alexis Wright
Praiseworthy
WINNER

STELLA PRIZE 2024 JUDGES

Each year Stella is proud to bring together an incredible group of Australian writers, critics, journalists, broadcasters, and thinkers to judge the Stella Prize.

Thank you to Beejay Silcox (Chair), Eleanor Jackson, Cheryl Leavy, Bram Presser, and Dr Yves Rees for their enthusiasm, intelligence, and rigour in judging the 2024 Stella Prize.



Beejay Silcox (Chair)



Eleanor Jackson



Cheryl Leavy



Bram Presser



Dr Yves Rees

STELLA PRIZE 2024 WINNER

ALEXIS WRIGHT PRAISEWORTHY

The Stella has now achieved international recognition as an important benchmark of literary achievement.

ALEXIS WRIGHT 2024

Praiseworthy is mighty in every conceivable way: mighty of scope, mighty of fury, mighty of craft, mighty of humour, mighty of language, mighty of heart. Praiseworthy is not only a great Australian novel – perhaps the great Australian novel – it is also a great Waanyi novel. And it is written in the wild hope that, one day, all Australian readers might understand just what that means. I do not understand. Not yet. But I can feel history calling to me in these pages. Calling to all of us. Imagine if we listened.

BEEJAY SILCOX, JUDGES' CHAIR



In May, Stella was delighted to award the twelfth annual Stella Prize to First Nations writer Alexis Wright for her remarkable *Praiseworthy*. Wright, a proud member of the Waanyi Nation, has long been celebrated for her profound narratives that intertwine Indigenous wisdom, cultural heritage and contemporary realities. *Praiseworthy* continues this tradition by offering readers a mesmerizing journey into the heart of Australia's landscapes and the human spirit.

The announcement was made at a major celebration of Australian women's writing, held at the Ian Potter Queen's Hall in partnership with State Library Victoria.

Alexis Wright has made history by becoming the first author to win the Stella Prize twice, receiving \$60,000 thanks to the generous support of the Copyright Agency, McLean Foundation and Stella Forever Fund. This monumental achievement marks a historic moment in Australian literature and underscores Wright's exceptional talent and contribution to storytelling.

The Stella Prize continues to fortify its place as a vital presence in Australia's literary landscape by platforming and amplifying the voices and stories of women authors.

- Amount awarded to winner \$60,000
- Views of Award Night Speech on YouTube 20,000+

*The quality of this year's books has been extraordinary. The twelve longlisted and six shortlisted books for the 2024 Stella Prize have earned a well-deserved place in the history of the Stella Prize. Today we celebrate these 12 books and announce the winner of the 2024 Stella Prize, Alexis Wright, for *Praiseworthy*, a gender-bending, canon-breaking novel that has been described by international media as the most ambitious and accomplished Australian novel of this century.* FIONA SWEET, STELLA CEO

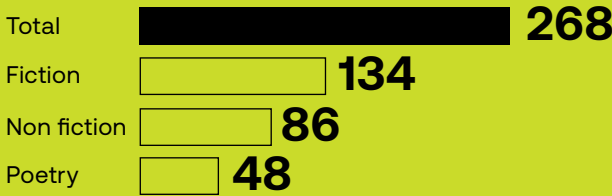


LOONGLIST COMPOSITION



ENTRY STATISTICS

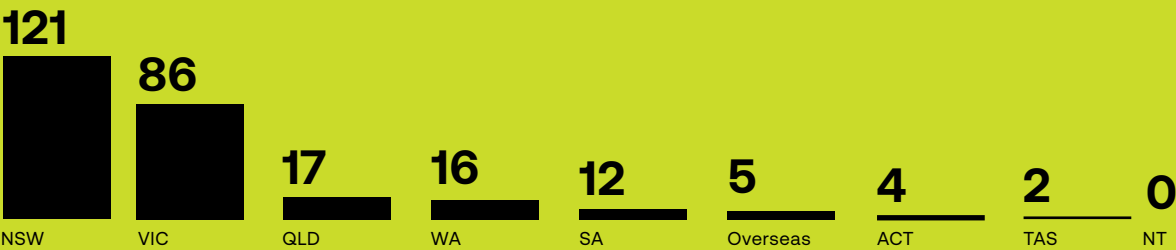
Entries to 2024 Prize - one of the strongest entry pools in the Stella Prize's 13 year history.



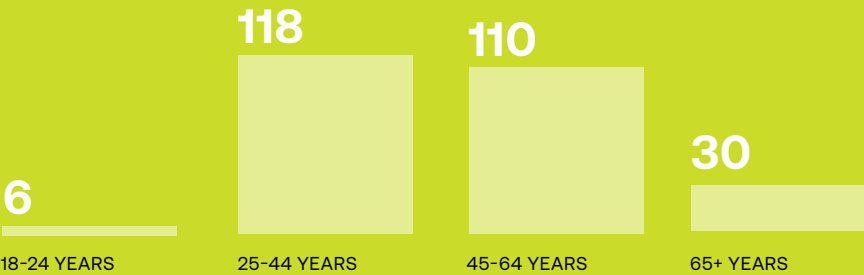
Segmentation



LOCATION - NUMBER OF ENTRIES BY STATE



AGE OF ENTRANTS



SALES INCREASE OF LONGLISTED TITLES AFTER SHORTLIST ANNOUNCEMENT

268%



After long list announcement

153%



After short list announcement

56%

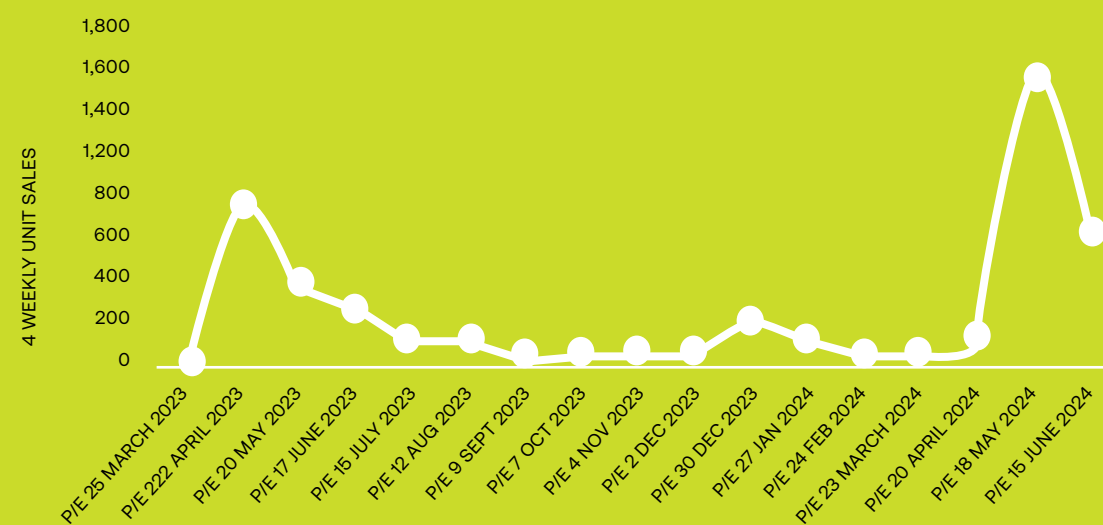


After winning announcement

AVERAGE SALES VOLUME PER WEEK FOR LONGLISTED TITLES OVER 4-WEEKLY PERIODS



4 WEEKLY UNIT SALES OF LONGLISTED BOOKS DURING PRIZE CYCLE



It has been an honour to chair the 2024 Stella Prize, and to read alongside such a compassionate and insightful panel. My deepest thanks to my fellow judges: Eleanor Jackson, Bram Presser, Yves Rees and Cheryl Leavy. It is my second year in a row reading for Stella. Since August of 2022, I've read close to 500 works by Australian women writers. The heartbeat of Australian writing is here. These writers deserve a global readership. It is culturally damning that the great majority of them struggle to eke out a sustainable career at home.

Beejay Silcox, Chair of judges

LIVE AUDIENCES

220

Prize night

134

Long & Short
List Events

578

Stella Day Out

LIVESTREAM VIEWS

1,458

2024 Prize
Night

691

Winner's
Speech

562

Stella Day Out
Melbourne & Hobart

DIGITAL MARKETING

42

Newsletters

71%

Open rate

9,998

Subscriber Newsletter
Audience

SOCIAL MEDIA

23

Giveaways

12.8K

Instagram
Followers

23.6K

Instagram views

9.4K

Facebook
Followers

445

Social Post
engagement

871

LinkedIn
Followers

9,429

TikTok views

THE STELLA COUNT

The first Stella Count findings in 2012 showed that the representation of women authors in literary reviews was only 40% compared to their male counterparts.

In comparison, the 2019 Stella Count showed 53% of books reviewed in Australian publications were by women, with this trend increasing to a remarkable 55% in 2020.

But it wasn't all good news. Our findings showed that feature reviews continue to be dominated by men and 'gender siloing' (e.g. men reviewing books by men and women reviewing books by women) continues to be a feature of the book reviewing landscape.

The Stella Count is the leading statistical analysis of gender bias in the field of book reviewing in Australia. The Count surveys all Australian publications to collect and interpret data on the gender of authors and reviewers, length and genre of books reviewed.

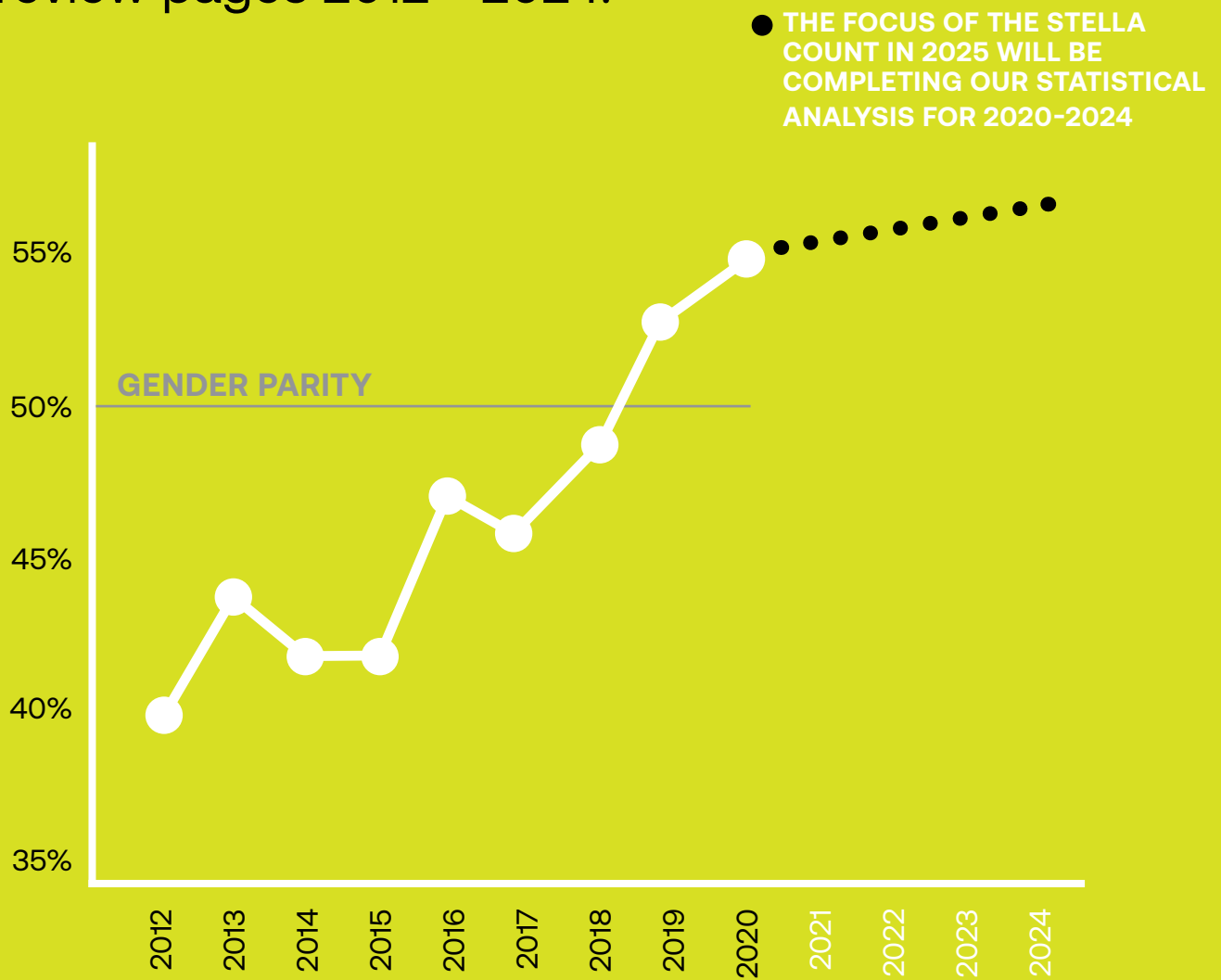
Due to the unforeseen disruptions of the Covid-19 Pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, The Count has not been conducted since 2020. This year marked the revival of The Count in partnership with our supporter Isentia, the leading media monitoring company, completing 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 research this year with the final reports available in 2025. In the next phase of The Count, Stella will dissect the data focusing on regions, age, intersectionality, cultural background and alternative review platforms such as booktok and bookstagram.

We want to personally thank our long time researchers Julianne Lamond, Associate Professor of English in the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics at Australian National University and Dr Melinda Harvey Lecturer in English, Program Coordinator, Literary Studies, School of Languages, Literatures, Cultures and Linguistics, Monash University.

These new findings – which see gender parity not only reached, but exceeded – show that actively holding the sector to account works. Through our research and advocacy work, Stella is proud to have prompted meaningful change within the Australian book reviewing industry.

The Count is proudly supported by Isentia, Monash University, Australian National University.

Overall representation of women writers in Australian review pages 2012 - 2024.



STELLA DAY OUT

A literary festival that celebrates the work of Australian women writers.

Stella Day Out is a free one-day literary festival that celebrates and promotes the outstanding contributions of women writers to Australian literature. Stella Day Out ensures continued support for all Stella authors keeping the festival free, we engage a diverse range of audiences across Australia and connect communities to literary events which help to empower women writers.

This year we programmed:

Stella Day Out Hobart – 16 February 2024

1pm – 2pm | Exploring hope and trust in fiction

2:30pm – 3:30pm | Nothing bad ever happens here

Supported by University of Tasmania, Spiral Foods and Charlies Cookies

● Audience 954

Stella Day Out Melbourne – 9 November 2023

11am – 12pm The Language of Poetry

12:15pm – 1:15pm Talking Graphic Novels

2:30pm – 3:30pm The Stella Prize Story

4pm After the Jaguar

Supported by Creative Victoria, Spiral Foods and Charlies Cookies

● Audience 1,032

Coming 2025:

Stella Day Out Brisbane – 31 August 2024

Stella Day Out Curban – 8 September 2024

Stella Day Out Canberra – 21 September 2024

Stella Day Out Sydney – 19 October 2024

Stella Day Out Ballarat – 16 November 2024

Stella Day Out Orange – 23 November 2024

Stella Day Out Melbourne – 28 November 2024



Thank you for the opportunity to meet readers, talk about my book, meet a new writer friend in Jessie Tu and travel outside of a capital city and be part of a wonderful community event. Maggie McKeller

I loved being part of the Stella Day Out program this year. As an author, we don't get a lot of opportunities to promote our books, especially in smaller cities. Having the chance to not only be part of a literary program from an organisation of the calibre and profile as the Stella, but to also get the chance to meet readers and sell books, was truly wonderful. Zoya Patel



Stella DAY OUT Tasmania: University of Tasmania, Hobart, Amanda Lohrey (L) interviewed by Michelle Cahill (R)

STELLA ON THE GO

Stella launched a new national initiative to promote literature and get us off of our screens with free books on public transport: stella ON THE GO.

- Take it
- Read it
- Keep it or pass on

Stella placed a selection of free books written by Australian women writers on trams, trains, buses and public spaces across the country for people to pick up, start reading and then share again.

Stella ON THE GO fosters a national conversation about reading – it does not matter if you love books or haven't read one in ages, the invitation is open to everyone to read as much or as little as they like from these free books.

Reading has multiple benefits:

- Even if it is only for a few minutes a day, reading can be as effective as a yoga class to calm you down.
- Reading allows us to inhabit and understand others' perspectives, nurturing empathy.
- Researchers have shown that reading for 20 minutes a day can help you live longer.

This campaign has been driven by Instagram, TikTok and Facebook using the hashtag #stellaonthego. If you have books you'd like to donate, please email info@stella.org.au.



STELLA EDUCATION

The Reading Climate project saw Stella and Melbourne Graduate School of Education deliver a targeted pilot program of professional development bookclubs for secondary school teachers. It recognises that writing by First Nations authors is significantly under-represented in Australian secondary schools and that climate fiction is a growing genre where women writers are making major literary contributions.

Using the anthology of First Nations speculative fiction, *This All Comes Back Now* (UQP) as its starting point, the Reading Climate bookclubs investigated the power of storytelling to address environmental issues. By putting teachers and authors in dialogue with each other, teachers were able to develop a greater understanding of the texts and how to engage young people with these works in the classroom. This project continues as part of the Australian Research Council (ARC) grant into 2024.

Our in-school Stella society program continues with English teachers partnering with Stella to create lunchtime reading groups that read the 12 long-listed winners each year, culminating in a Stella Society presentation where students present their reflections with a writer keynote presentation.



STELLA @FESTIVALS

We have continued with our strong focus on community and outreach in 2024 supporting writers festivals Australia wide and partnering to provide insightful talks celebrating the Stella listed and winning writers.

Stella writers were represented in Sydney Writers Festival, Bendigo Writers Festival, Adelaide Writers Week, Melbourne Writers Festival, Sorrento Writers Festival and Canberra Writers Festival.

Connecting Stella writers with audiences across Australia is a key appt of our year-round support for Stella listed authors. With over 100 writers festivals Australia wide in major cities and regional centres, this project continues to grow.



STELLA SALONS

Stella Salons provide further exposure for Stella writers via bespoke workplace conversations held at prominent professional service firms and the corporate sector.

Stella curates an exclusive conversation between an outstanding Stella Prize-listed author and a high-profile host. Guests have the opportunity to ask questions and mingle with the speakers, and signed copies of the Stella Prize-listed book are provided.

Stella Salons promote and celebrate gender equality, storytelling, and the role of books and reading in society.

The specific themes, hosts, and timing are all adaptable, and we respond to the needs of the organisation with a customised program for the event.

While perfect for any time of the year, many of our Salons are activated during the week of International Women's Day on 8 March every year, profiling the importance of promoting women writer's stories and perspectives for all audiences alike.



PUBLIC RELATIONS 2024

206

PIECES OF COVERAGE
Total number of online, offline and social clips

4.49M

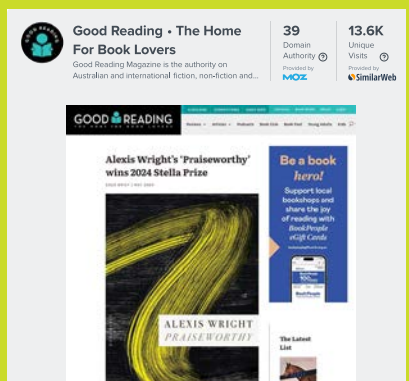
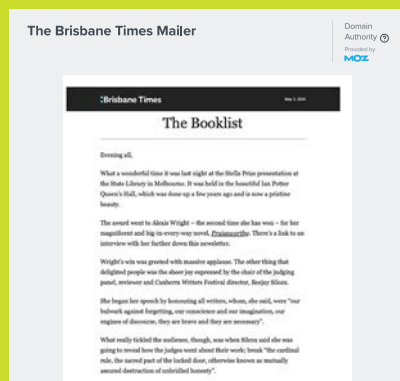
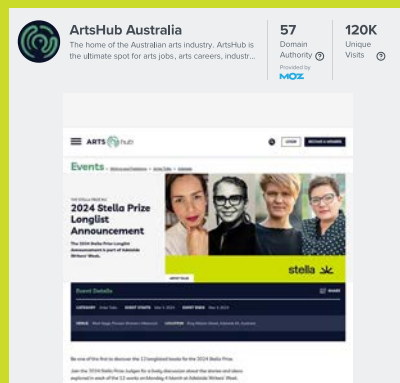
ESTIMATED VIEWS
Prediction of lifetime views of coverage, based on audience reach & engagement rate on social

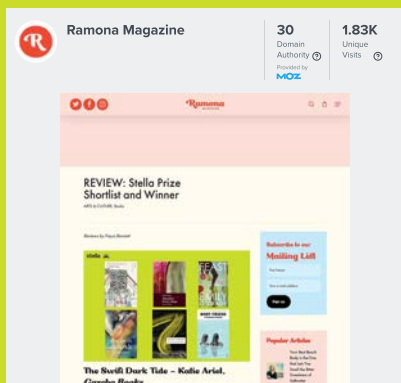
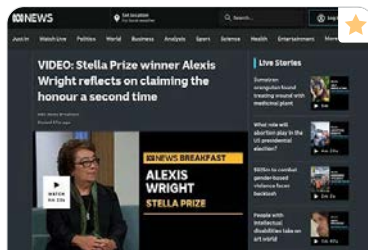
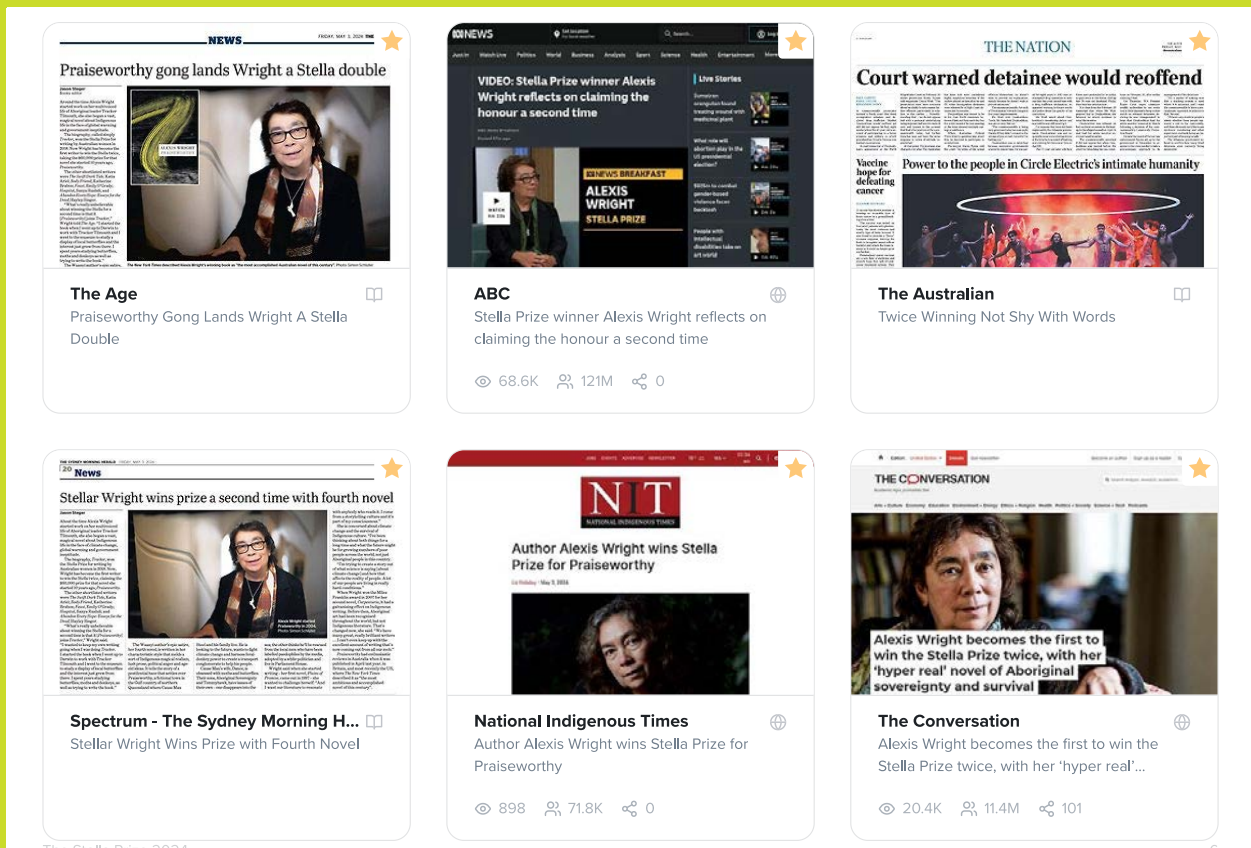
1.5B

AUDIENCE
Combined total of publication-wide audience figures for all outlets featuring coverage

24.2K

ENGAGEMENT
Combined total of likes, comments and shares on social media platforms





BOOKSELLER SUPPORT AND OTHER OUTREACH

OUTDOOR AND RETAIL SUPPORT

In 2024, we significantly expanded our bookseller liaison program, which ensures that bookshops are ready to promote Stella listed and winning books.

Following a major brand uplift in 2023 in partnership with our pro bono agency Canyon Brand, and with support from Spicers Paper, Southern Impact printing, and Alliance Distribution Services, we provided free generic and long list bookmarks, book stickers, A3 posters and A4 window decals to 400+ bookstores across Australia.

We also provided content for bookstore and writing association newsletters, increasing our reach through shared audiences. Our CEO attended Collins Booksellers' 2024 national conference, engaging with their 80+ national book stores. Dymocks Australia posted social media tiles for The Stella Prize on all their channels.

Bakehouse Studios displayed an 8 sheet rock poster of the winning book, Praiseworthy on Hoddle Street Melbourne, which was viewed by 4 million cars per week.

Six exquisite videos featuring well known actors reading from the 2024 shortlisted titles were produced and disseminated via social media channels - a Stella first.

- 229 Bookstores
- 12,000 Bookmarks
- 5,000 A3 Posters



The beautiful design and colour of The Stella Prize marketing material stands out bringing sunshine into the book shop, alongside a sense of pending delight. Christine Gordon, Readings



2013: Carrie Tiffany, *Mateship with Birds*
2014: Clare Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*
2015: Emily Bitto, *The Strays*
2016: Charlotte Wood, *The Natural Way of Things*
2017: Heather Rose, *The Museum of Modern Love*
2018: Alexis Wright, *Tracker*
2019: Vicki Laveau-Harvie, *The Erratics*
2020: Jess Hill, *See What You Made Me Do*
2021: Evie Wyld, *The Bass Rock*
2022: Evelyn Araluen, *Dropbear*
2023: Sarah Holland-Batt, *The Jaguar*
2024: Alexis Wright, *Praiseworthy*

(left to right top to bottom)



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