

# q awards: **SCARLET STILETTO**

Sisters in Crime Australia's 25th Scarlet Stiletto Awards were launched by Dr Angela Savage at Melbourne's Athenaeum Library on 27 April. Almost \$10,000 is on offer in prize money. The event included dramatic readings of three winning 'body in the library' stories – "Jane" by Narrelle M Harris (read by Jane Clifton), "Caught on Camera" by Jenny Spence (read by Susanna Lobez) and "Brought to Book" by Kath Harper (read by Leigh Redhead).

Savage, the 2011 shoe winner and now Director of Writers' Victoria, declared the awards "a milestone for Australian crime – at least of the literary persuasion".

The awards, she said, had "springboarded the careers of many writers, including myself. To date, 3084 stories have been entered with 23 Scarlet Stiletto Award winners –including category winners – going on to have novels published. Like many of Sisters in Crime's best ideas, it sprang from a well-lubricated meeting in St Kilda when the convenors debated how they could unearth the female criminal talent they were convinced was lurking everywhere. Once a competition was settled on, it didn't take long to settle on a name – the scarlet stiletto, a feminist play on the traditions of the genre. The stiletto is both a weapon and a shoe worn by women. And of course, the colour scarlet has a special association for us as women. And they were right – talent is lurking everywhere, sometimes in the most unlikely places!"

The success and longevity of the awards have been hugely dependent on the generosity of Australian publishers, booksellers, the film and television industry, authors and other parties.

There are two brand-new awards on offer this year: Writers Victoria Crime and Punishment Award (\$660) for the story with the most satisfying retribution (the winner gets a three-month spell in prison in the guise of a studio residency at Old Melbourne Gaol) and the International Association of Forensic Linguistics (IALF) Award for Best Forensic Linguistics Story (\$1000).

IALF President, Dr Georgina Heydon from RMIT, told the crowd that the award was designed to foster understanding of forensic linguistics which uses a scientific approach to language analysis in legal and criminal investigations.

The full list of awards is:

- The Swinburne University Award: 1st Prize: \$1500
- The Simon & Schuster Award: 2nd prize: \$1000
- The Sun Bookshop Award: 3rd Prize: \$500
- The Fleurieu Consult Award for Best Young Writer (18 and under): \$500
- The Athenaeum Library 'Body in the Library' Award: \$1000 (\$500 runner-up)
- International Association of Forensic Linguists Award: \$1000 for Best Forensic Linguistics Story
- The Every Cloud Award for Best Mystery with History Story: \$750
- Kerry Greenwood Award for Best Malice Domestic Story: \$750
- Writers Victoria Crime and Punishment Award: \$660 (studio residency, Old Melbourne Gaol) for the Story with the Most Satisfying Retribution
- HarperCollins Publishers Award for Best Romantic Suspense Story: \$500
- Scarlet Stiletto Award for Best Financial Crime Story: \$500
- Clan Destine Press Award for Best Cross-genre Story: \$500
- Liz Navratil Award for Best Story with a Disabled Protagonist Award: \$400
- ScriptWorks Award for a Great Film Idea: \$200



Nine collections of winning stories are available from Clan Destine Press - <https://clandestinepress.com.au>

Closing date for the awards is 31 August 2018. Entry fee is \$20 (Sisters in Crime members) or \$25 (others). Maximum length is 5000 words. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Melbourne in late November. To download an entry form, pay the entry fee and read the FAQs, go to <https://www.sistersincrime.org.au/the-scarlet-stiletto-awards>