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CANADA/AUSTRALIA LITERARY AWARD WINNER 1980

The Department of External Affairs, the Canada Council, and the Australia Council announced jointly today that the winner of the Canada/Australia Literary Prize for 1980 is the Australian novelist and poet Roger McDonald.

The prize, valued at \$2,500 Canadian, is intended to help make better known in Australia and Canada the work of each other's writers. McDonald is the fifth recipient of this annual award.

The inaugural award in 1976 went to Australian playwright John Romeril, followed by Canadian writer Alice Munro (1977), Australian poet Thomas Shapcott (1978), and Canadian poet Michael Ondaatje (1979).

Each year an Australian or Canadian writer is chosen by a jury from the other country. This year the Australia Council submitted works by six writers to the Canadian jury. Next year the procedure will again be reversed.

The prize is not restricted to any particular genre: novelists, poets and playwrights are equally eligible. It is awarded for a writer's total output rather than for a single work.

The prize is funded on the Australian side by the Australia Council and on the Canadian side by the Department of External Affairs as part of its programme for the promotion of Canadian literature in foreign countries. The award is administered by the Writing and Publishing Section of the Canada Council on behalf of the Department.

This year the Canadian jury consisted of Jack Hodgins, Eli Mandel, Michael Ondaatje, Alice Munro and was chaired by Naim Kattan on behalf of the Canada Council.

Roger McDonald was born in Young, New South Wales in 1941. He attended Scots College and the University of Sydney and now lives in Canberra. His volumes of poetry "Citizens of Mist" (1968) and "Airship" (1975), as well as the "First Paperback Poets Anthology", which he edited, preceded the novel "1915", a powerful depiction of Australia's emergence from its sheltered beginnings onto the world stage amid the carnage of the Gallipoli landings, as seen through the experiences of two boys from the bush who go off to World War I with the Anzac Brigade.

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