



Student Awards Ceremony

2024 Academic Year

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND
COMMUNICATION ARTS

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Acknowledgement of Country

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands. Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands (Greater Western Sydney and beyond).

Message from the Executive Director, Advancement



At Western Sydney University, student success is at the heart of everything we do. The Student Awards Ceremony are a chance to celebrate the hard work, dedication, and achievements of our hardworking and ambitious students – recognising not just academic excellence, but also the passion and perseverance that will shape their and our collective futures.

These awards would not be possible without the generosity of our donors. By funding prizes and academic awards, donors play a vital role in encouraging students to aim high, supporting their aspirations, and giving them an edge as they step into the workforce. To our donors—thank you for believing in our students and helping them reach their full potential.

The Western Sydney region continues to grow and evolve, so do the opportunities for our students. The University is focused on preparing graduates who are adaptable, innovative, and ready to make an impact. These awards help ensure our students have the recognition, motivation, and confidence to take on the challenges ahead.

To our award recipients – congratulations! We are proud of all that you have achieved and can't wait to see where your journey takes you next.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CBurden'.

Christian Burden
Executive Director, Advancement
Western Sydney University

Antigone Kefala Memorial Prize



Donor

The Antigone Kefala Memorial has been established by the family and friends of Antigone Kefala

Antigone Kefala (28 May 1931 – 3 December 2022) was an Australian poet and prose-writer of Greek-Romanian heritage. Born in Braila, Romania, the family were forced to flee in 1947 when communist Russia took over the country. They lived for four years in a Greek refugee centre until New Zealand finally accepted them.

Antigone studied at the Victoria University in Wellington and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1958 followed by a Master’s degree in French Literature. In 1959 Antigone left for Sydney so that she could make a fresh start. In the mid-1970s she became the first Multicultural Arts Officer for the Australia Council, responsible for encouraging migrants across Australia to apply for grants in all the creative arts: literature, music, theatre and the visual arts. Antigone established many lasting friendships there.

Although fluent in Romanian and French, Antigone chose to write in English as she believed one has to write in the language in which one is living. It took some time for the strength and fearlessness of Antigone’s voice to be recognised. Antigone wrote about everyday life, her voice by turns lyrical and trenchant. It wasn’t until her first book of poems *The Alien* was published in 1973 that her work finally began to attract serious attention. She went on to become one of the few non-Anglo women of her generation to achieve a literary career. During her lifetime she published six volumes of poetry, four works of fiction, and three collections of journals.

A teacher, arts administrator and acclaimed author, Antigone won the Judith Wright Calanthe Award in 2017 and the Patrick White Award in 2022 in recognition of her achievements as a poet and writer. As a woman and a refugee, Antigone Kefala overcame many obstacles to achieve a university education and a literary career. She was also an inspiring and generous mentor to students and young writers.

The Antigone Kefala Memorial prize has been established to encourage emerging writers at Western Sydney University from refugee, asylum-seeker, migrant or First Nations backgrounds where English may not be their first language.

Prize

Antigone Kefala Memorial Prize

Criteria

Awarded to an outstanding student in creative writing.

Recipient

Carielyn Tunion

Australia Japan Society (NSW) Prize for Proficiency in Japanese Language



Donor	<p>Australia Japan Society of NSW</p> <p>Australia Japan Society NSW was established in 1968 to promote mutual understanding between the people of Australia and Japan. Our patrons are the Premier of NSW and the Consul General of Japan in Sydney. AJS NSW co-operates closely with the Consul General's office in Sydney as well as like organisations such as the Japan Society of Sydney, Japan Chamber of Commerce Sydney and the Japan Foundation Sydney in order to achieve its objectives as stated in its Constitution. We are strong supporters of Universities' language programs. 2018 was the 50th year of the Society, with Sydney hosting the National Conference of Australia Japan Societies in October 2018.</p> <p>ajsnsw.org.au</p>
Prize	<p>Australia Japan Society (NSW) Prize for Proficiency in Japanese Language</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to a final year student who has demonstrated excellence in Japanese language studies as well as potential to contribute to future Australia-Japan relations.</p>
Recipient	<p>Emily Nelson</p>

Dean’s Thesis Prize



Humanities and
Communication Arts

Donor	<p>School of Humanities and Communication Arts</p> <p>The School of Humanities and Communication Arts is a multi-disciplinary School focused on the Arts, Communication and Creative Industries, Design, Languages, Interpreting and Translation, TESOL, Music and Music Therapy. Our innovative research focuses on contemporary debates, perspectives, methods and technologies.</p> <p>The School is highly engaged with industry and our programs offer work integrated learning opportunities to produce job-ready graduates, who are creative thinkers able to adapt to evolving work needs.</p> <p>westernsydney.edu.au/schools/sohca</p>
Prize	Dean’s Thesis Prize for Best Practice-Based PhD/DCA
Criteria	Awarded to the student who has shown excellence and originality of the creative work, calibre of the writing, structure and methodology of the exegesis and a significant contribution to the field in their PhD/DCA.
Recipient	Ceridwen Dovey
Prize	Dean’s Award for Best Master of Research Thesis
Criteria	Awarded to the student who achieves best mark in the thesis.
Recipient	Suzanne Hauser

Durham Family Prize in Communication



Donor	<p>Associate Professor Marsha Durham</p> <p>Associate Professor Marsha Durham (retired) was the first in her family to attend university. It opened her eyes to greater possibilities in terms of life and career. This prize commemorates, in part, her parents' support as she furthered her education. Marsha first studied in the USA, majoring in literature, and later completed a PhD in linguistics at Macquarie University. Her teaching career spanned across high school, TAFE, and universities in Australia and overseas. Her research interests focused on crosscultural values, professional writing issues, and usability elements in document design. Marsha was a founding academic in the new School of Humanities and Social Sciences at what was then the Nepean College of Advanced Education, which later became UWS Nepean. Western Sydney University suited her because the institution was student-focused, and welcomed diversity and innovation. At the university level, her roles included Chair of the University Senate, Dean of Students, and Assistant Vice-Chancellor. Post-retirement, Marsha is associated with Varuna National Writers' House in Katoomba. Her current research project considers the continued popularity of 19th-century American philosopher, Henry David Thoreau.</p>
Prize	<p>Durham Family Prize in Communication</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the most outstanding graduate in the Bachelor of Communication.</p>
Recipient	<p>Mary Chung</p>

Lawrie Brooks Memorial Award for Music

Donor	<p>Lawrie Brooks Memorial</p> <p>Mr Lawrie Brooks was born in California in 1907. At the age of 23, he first saw Al Jolson and decided to pursue a career in music. His musical talent led him to win two vocal scholarships, one with a founder of the San Francisco Opera, and the other with the Zoliner Conservatorium. Yet his real love was for popular music, especially jazz. By the mid-1930s Mr Brooks was singing with the big bands of Johnny Noble, Harry Owens, Hal Grayson, Jimmie Grier and Jay Whidden and was considered a big-band singer in Hollywood and Hawaii. While in Hollywood, he worked with Eddie Cantor, Burns and Allen, and the Downey Sisters. On arrival to Australia on tour with the Jay Whidden Band in 1938, he decided to stay.</p> <p>In 1939 he joined the Jim Davidson ABC Orchestra. When war broke out, he and other members of the band joined the Australian Army Entertainment Unit and sang for the troops in the Middle East and New Guinea. After the war, he joined the Colgate-Palmolive Radio Unit, where he met and married the unit publicist, Gloria van Boss. At the age of 54 he transformed himself into a proofreader for a daily newspaper but always carried his passion for music.</p> <p>During his career, he made more than 60 recordings and composed several songs, one of which, Where's that Old Cobber of Mine?, is still earning Lawrie's family royalties. Mr Brooks was very proud of his involvement in the Australian Musicians Union. He passed away in 1994. His daughters, Geraldine Brooks, novelist, and Darleen Bungey, biographer, continue to support this award in memory of their father and on behalf of their mother, Gloria Brooks.</p>
Prize	Lawrie Brooks Memorial Award for Music
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding first year Bachelor of Music student in Performance.
Recipient	Flynn Silvia

Li Jin-Guang Award for Excellence in Chinese Language (Native and Heritage Chinese Speakers)

Donor	Mr Jinguang (Sam) Li Mr Jinguang (Sam) Li is the Director of Gao Xun Ba Ling Telecom Pty Ltd. Gao Xun Ba Ling is a comprehensive, privately owned enterprise that integrates all aspects of Telecom products, including design, research and development, and manufacturing. Mr Li has established two prizes within the School of Humanities and Communication Arts to encourage academic excellence in the Chinese language. Mr Li has also contributed to the strengthening of research into Chinese medicine at the National Institute for Complementary Medicine (NICM), which is hosted by the University.
Prize	Li Jin-Guang Award for Excellence in Chinese Language (Native and Heritage Chinese Speakers)
Criteria	Awarded to the top performing native/heritage Chinese speaking student in the Bachelor of Arts course with a major in Chinese.
Recipient	Mengqi Chen
Prize	Li Jin-Guang Award for Excellence in Chinese Language (Non-Native Chinese Speakers)
Criteria	Awarded to the top performing non-native Chinese speaking student in the Bachelor of Arts course with a major in Chinese.
Recipient	Not Awarded

The Nufail Ali Prize in History of Religion

Donor	<p>The Nufail Ali Prize</p> <p>This prize is named for Nufail Ali, who was born in Yatiyanthota, Sri Lanka in 1945. Graduating from the University of Peradeniya in 1958 with a Bachelor of Politics, Philosophy, and Economics, Nufail has always taken a keen interest in the Humanities and the Arts. Nufail moved to Australia in 1985 and has lived in Western Sydney for more than 30 years.</p> <p>From 2004-2008, Nufail served as the president of the Austra-Lanka Muslim Association (ALMA).</p>
Prize	<p>The Nufail Ali Prize in History of Religion</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to the student with an outstanding essay in the subject HUMN1061 Islam Past Present and Future.</p>
Recipient	<p>Brittany Deleon</p>

Penrith Symphony Orchestra-Western Sydney University Composition Prize



Donor	<p>Established in 1988 as a community orchestra, Penrith Symphony Orchestra (PSO) comprises dedicated amateur and professionally trained musicians.</p> <p>As orchestra-in-residence at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, the PSO collaborates with distinguished conductors and soloists, and is recognised as one of Australia’s leading “pro-am” community orchestras.</p> <p>As the orchestra of Western Sydney, it plays a major role in providing audiences in Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas with accessible and affordable live performances of major orchestral, operatic and oratorio repertoire. Partnering with Western Sydney University in helping train and develop the next generation of composers is an extension of the important role the PSO plays in the region.</p> <p>psso.org.au</p>
Prize	Penrith Symphony Orchestra-Western Sydney University Composition Prize
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an undergraduate or postgraduate student commissioned by Penrith Symphony Orchestra and Western Sydney University to develop a musical composition under the mentorship of experienced composers including the PSO Conductor and WSU staff.</p>
Recipient	Christian Laki

Phyllis O’Brien and Jacobus Van Boss Memorial Award

Donor	<p>Gloria Brooks</p> <p>The Phyllis O'Brien & Jacobus Van Boss Memorial Award was donated by Gloria Brooks. Gloria's mother Phyllis was born to Irish immigrants and her father Jacobus, a Dutch migrant, at the age of 19, worked as a fruit picker until he mastered English and trained as a physical therapist. Gloria became a radio presenter at 2CA Canberra and publicity director for the famed Colgate-Palmolive Radio Unit, where she met and married singer, Lawrie Brooks. In later life her humorous and evocative articles were regularly published in Sydney newspapers.</p>
Prize	<p>Phyllis O'Brien and Jacobus Van Boss Memorial Award</p>
Criteria	<p>Best first year student, looking at their overall performance in the two core English units Approaches to Text and Introduction to Literary Studies.</p>
Recipient	<p>Coby Sanders</p>

Ruth Cracknell AM Memorial Prize

Donor	<p>In Memory of Ruth Cracknell AM</p> <p>Ruth Cracknell AM was one of Australia's favourite actresses with a career in radio, theatre, television and film spanning more than 55 years. Her role as Maggie Beare in ABC television's Mother and Son made her a household name. Ruth received many awards and was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1980 in recognition of service to the performing arts. She received several honorary doctorates including one from Western Sydney University in December 2000. In 2001, Ruth received the James Cassius Award for outstanding contributions to the performing arts and was the first female individual inducted into the Logie Hall of Fame that same year.</p> <p>Although most well known to us for her acting and as a patron of the theatre at the University's Penrith campus, it is for her talent as a writer that the Ruth Cracknell Memorial Prizes serve to encourage and reward excellence amongst our students. Her autobiography, A Biased Memoir, and her account of the illness and death of her husband in A Journey from Venice now form an enduring record of her life as well as her writing talent. Ruth passed away in May 2002 after a long illness.</p>
Prize	Ruth Cracknell AM Memorial Prize in Children's Literature
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding student in the LANG 3018 Children's Literature unit.
Recipient	Not Awarded
Prize	Ruth Cracknell AM Memorial Prize in English
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding student graduating with an English Major.
Recipient	Matthew Wildig
Prize	Ruth Cracknell AM Memorial Prize in First Year English
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding first year student in the English Major.
Recipient	Theano Houdalakis

SMSA Award in Humanities



Donor	<p>Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts (SMSA)</p> <p>In 1833, Henry Carmichael founded the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts as an educational and recreational organisation for working people at the request of artisans and tradesmen, some of whom had studied with him aboard the Stirling Castle on their voyage to Sydney. Carmichael drew on the burgeoning Mechanics, Institutes and Schools of Arts movement, and his efforts resulted in the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts being formed on 22nd March 1833 at a public meeting attended by around 200 people.</p> <p>The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts hosts a lending library, presents public lectures and holds classes in subjects as diverse as art, architecture, mathematics, anatomy and simple surgery.</p> <p>smsa.org.au</p>
Prize	SMSA Award in Humanities
Criteria	Awarded to the most outstanding student in the Bachelor of Arts degrees.
Recipients	Sally Nugent
Prize	SMSA Award in Professional Writing
Criteria	Awarded to the student with the highest mark in COMM 2032 Professional Writing and Editing.
Recipient	Nicholas Agiasotis
Prize	SMSA Award in Theoretical Studies
Criteria	Awarded to the student who achieves the highest marks overall in their first year of a Masters of Research in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts.
Recipients	Elyse Barratt-Fitzgerald Dinusha Soo

Turramurra Music Technology Award



Donor	<p>Turramurra Music with special thanks to TAG (Technical Audio Group)</p> <p>Turramurra Music has been servicing the Music industry since 1976, and is a privately owned Australian company. Turramurra Music has one of the most comprehensive ranges of stock in Australia with a great selection of guitars, amplifiers, PAs, drums, brass and woodwind, as well as a large range of accessories.</p> <p>The Hi-Tech division of Turramurra Music is recognised as one of the most professional in the country. As specialists in the music industry they cater for all levels of studio and computer equipment and offer well trained staff that specialise in technical support, installations, repairs and computer support. Now with their new studio and keyboard building located at 1263 Pacific Highway, Turramurra now has one of the best facilities in Australia. Turramurra Music also offer specialised services to schools and tertiary institutions.</p> <p>turramusic.com.au</p>
Prize	<p>Turramurra Music Technology Award</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an outstanding Bachelor of Music student completing PERF2029 Music and Multimedia.</p>
Recipient	<p>Regan Shafer</p>

Varuna, The National Writers' House Prize for Creative Writing



Donor	<p>Varuna, The National Writers' House</p> <p>Varuna is Australia's national residential writers' house in the former home of writers Eleanor and Dr Eric Dark. In 1989 their son Mick Dark gifted their home to the Australian public through The Eleanor Dark Foundation.</p> <p>Since 1989 Varuna has inspired the creation of new Australian writing and provided support for a thriving writing community and growing Alumni. Today the founding objectives of The Eleanor Dark Foundation are realised through a number of programs and initiatives, such as the Varuna Residential Program which supports intensive work, conversation and community for writers at all levels of experience and across a wide range of writing practice.</p> <p>The program runs continuously throughout the year with up to five writers, each with an identified project, invited to be in residence at Varuna at any one time. Varuna seeks to share the transformative power of the written word through our community programs and strategic initiatives, and is proud to be able to achieve this in partnership with organisations such as Western Sydney University.</p> <p>varuna.com.au</p>
Prize	<p>Varuna, The National Writers' House Prize for Creative Writing</p>
Criteria	<p>Awarded to an outstanding second year student studying a major in Creative Writing.</p>
Recipient	<p>Thomas Watts</p>



GIVING TO WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Western Sydney University changes lives and shapes the social, economic, environmental and educational development of the region in which we live, and the world.

You are part of this journey.

The gift of knowledge empowers our students to embrace opportunity, growth and change. Your support of Western Sydney University students through awards, scholarships and research encourages them to strive for excellence and reach their potential.

For information on how you can support Western Sydney University and our students, please contact the Office of Advancement.

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