

# THE HAGE AWARD FOR FIRST NATIONS WRITERS



In proud recognition of the 2024 NAIDOC Week celebrations, Sweatshop Literacy Movement is delighted to announce The Hage Award for First Nations Writers. Funded by internationally renowned anthropologist, Professor Ghassan Hage, the inaugural award will provide income, mentoring and residencies for two emerging writers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds to each develop their debut manuscripts.

In 2023, Sweatshop Literacy Movement was pleased to release the critically acclaimed work of nonfiction, *The Racial Politics of Australian Multiculturalism*. This timely and necessary collection brought together Professor Ghassan Hage's most iconic texts, including *White Nation* and *Against Paranoid Nationalism*. As part of the agreement, Professor Hage donated his fee of \$10,000, as well as his subsequent royalties, to establish an award which would support a new generation of First Nations authors.

Professor Hage said that the decision was guided by his vision to create a "reparative mode of existence" in Australia: "It should go without saying today that to dwell in a colonised space means that all of us non-Indigenous people are complicit in the reproduction of a structurally toxic relation that we are benefiting from. To exist ethically in such a space, one has to try to engage whenever and wherever one can, and from each according to their capacities, in reparative practices of de-toxification. That is what I am trying to do with this award. I'd rather not be thanked. As a beneficiary of that major stolen good that is Australia, every giving to Indigenous people is always a minor giving back."

In addition to receiving \$5,000 each, the successful applicants will be offered a 12-month mentorship with two of Australia's most distinguished and iconic writers. Multi-award-winning authors, Tony Birch and Melissa Lucashenko will bring their decades of wisdom, scholarship and storytelling expertise to the initiative; cultivating a promising future for the recipients. In a joint statement, Tony Birch and Melissa Lucashenko shared the following words: "We are excited to be involved in this wonderful initiative. We want to express our thanks to Ghassan Hage for his generosity and support. We also want to thank the crew at Sweatshop for their hard work, love and solidarity. To all the emerging writers in our community, we wish you the best with your creative pursuits and offer our support."

The Hage Award for First Nations Writers is proudly supported by Diversity Arts Australia and administered by an official steering committee, which includes Larissa Behrendt, Tony Birch, Jumana Bayeh, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Caroline Alcorso, Lena Nahlous and Winnie Dunn.

Founded by Michael Mohammed Ahmad in 2013, Sweatshop Literacy Movement is a nationally-renowned literary incubator, which is devoted to empowering diverse communities through reading, writing and critical thinking. Over the past year, the organisation has been primarily active in aiding the international solidarity struggles for First Nations people, including communities in Australia, Palestine and Sudan.

Applications for The Hage Award for First Nations Writers are now open until August 12th, 2024. All emerging writers from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds aged 18+ are warmly encouraged to apply. Please visit the Sweatshop website for further information: [www.sweatshop.ws](http://www.sweatshop.ws)

