



MEDIA RELEASE: EMBARGO EXPIRES 7PM, NOVEMBER 30, 2007

**THE STATES AND TERRITORIES OF AUSTRALIAN POETRY ALL
PRESENT IN THIS YEAR'S NEWCASTLE POETRY PRIZE**

For the first time in its 26 year history, the 2007 Judges' Shortlist of the Newcastle Poetry Prize features work from poets in every State and Territory, confirming the Award as Australia's most prestigious poetry competition with a truly national focus and audience.

Mark Tredinnick, of Bowral NSW, has won First Prize in the Open Section for his poem, 'Eclogues'. Praised by the Judges as "enormously skilful", Tredinnick's poem begins as a deceptively simple description of an individual's writing life, which develops into a thoughtful and moving testimony of the tenuous existence of humans, the environment, and poetry itself. The Judges further declared this poem "works elegantly and intimately over a huge terrain [and is] buoyant and immaculately orchestrated".

The many physical and internal landscapes traversed in life also feature in the two Highly Commended poems, 'Desert Calligraphies' by Melbourne poet Barry Hill, and 'The Bell and the Roar' by Newcastle's Andrew Slattery, which also took out the Local Award as the highest placed poem submitted from the Hunter Region.

The New Media section has been awarded to father and son team Rob and Matt Walker of Adelaide, for 'Moon Anti-Poem', an interactive Flash™ work for computer using various audio-visual devices in addition to its textual elements to enhance the reader's poetic experience. Spinning disco balls, sighing nipples and disappearing watermelon slices embellish this playful work, which was commended by the New Media Judge for "animations [that] display wit and poetic imagination".

The Newcastle Poetry Prize is one of the Australia's longest running poetry awards and one of the most lucrative with an Open Section totalling \$11,000, a New Media Prize of \$2,000, and a Local Award of \$500, thanks to generous sponsorship from the University of Newcastle and Newcastle City Council.

Open Section Judges Martin Harrison, Jan Owen and John Jenkins considered almost 600 entries, identified only by a number. The anonymity of the entrants and the production of an annual anthology are considered the particular merits of the Prize as they allow younger poets an opportunity to break through the ranks and achieve publication. This year is no different with a number of writers in their twenties amongst the anthology contributors.

In their report the Judges remarked on the significant new and extended poems being submitted by the country's established and emerging poets: "A poetry which risks primary sensitivities to the richness of the local environment and which resonates in the heart of a contemporary mindfulness, remains one of the core achievements of Australian literature. Many of the poems in this anthology share in and renew this achievement."

The official announcement of the winners and the launch of the anthology, by University of Newcastle Vice-Chancellor Professor Nicholas Saunders, and Lord Mayor of Newcastle Councillor John Tate, will take place at Newcastle Region Art Gallery on Friday November 30 at 6:30pm.

For further information and interviews contact Micky Pinkerton, Newcastle Poetry Prize Coordinator, on hwcadmin@optusnet.net.au or Tel. 02 4926 3485 / Mob. 0409 037 048.

