



MEDIA RELEASE
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First Feminist Book Week campaign launched by YWCA and The Stella Prize

A feminist call to arms has been issued by YWCA Australia and The Stella Prize, who have today launched the first Australian Feminist Book Week (19 – 23 October, 2020).

Stella's Executive Director Jaclyn Booton said that, "Feminist Book Week was an important opportunity to amplify a diversity of voices and encourage readers to add new titles to their To Be Read book lists."

The Stella Prize was created in 2012 to counter the gender bias rife in the Australian literary landscape. In partnering with 140-year-old feminist organisation YWCA Australia to launch Feminist Book Week, Stella is thrilled to engage with YWCA's members directly in order to build on 8 years-worth of Stella initiatives.

The annual Stella Prize also sits alongside a number of Stella events throughout the year including: [Stella Schools](#), which empowers young people to find their own creative voice, challenge stereotypes, and imagine a future not limited by their gender; as well as the annual [Stella Count](#), which assesses the extent of gender bias in the field of book reviewing in Australia.

"Prizes and reviews contribute to an author's readership, and Stella's work ultimately aims to ensure women and non-binary writers can make a living, and be read widely. Likewise, readers – both younger and older – should be encouraged to read comprehensively and be exposed to a multiplicity of perspectives," says Ms. Booton.

"YWCA is one of the most progressive feminist organisations in Australia, and their commitment to raising the profiles and voices of young women through their advocacy is well-aligned with our own purpose – to celebrate and promote the stories and perspectives of women and non-binary writers," says Ms Booton.

Activities planned for the YWCA x Stella Feminist Book Week include:

- An online in-conversation webinar between Jess Hill, winner of the 2020 Stella Prize, and Zoya Patel, author, founder of Feminartsy and Chair of the 2021 Stella Prize judging panel – free for all YWCA members (www.ywca.org.au/join). Membership to YWCA is free-of-charge.
- A #FeministBookWeek open competition with the Stella Longlist as the winning prize (www.ywca.org.au/news/feministbookweek)
- A social media campaign highlighting various Australian authors' favourite feminist books.

YWCA's Young Women's Engagement Manager Sarah Hill said that Feminist Book Week was an opportunity for all young intersectional feminists to engage with literary Australia.

"Too often, we see the same voices promoted – pale, male and stale voices. This doesn't accurately represent the Australia we live in today. Young women and non-binary people in all their diversity need to see themselves represented and have their stories told. says Ms. Hill.



Ms. Hill said that Feminist Book Week was a good reminder for people to engage with the issues that matter. It's an opportunity for people to critically look at their reading habits and challenge themselves to read a wider array of fiction and non-fiction books by Australian writers.

"We're particularly excited about the in-conversation webinar with Jess Hill and Zoya Patel. Jess's book *See What You Made Me Do* is an important study of power, control, and domestic and family violence – a field that YWCA works in which affects 1 in 3 women in Australia."

Stella and YWCA recommend that all young intersectional feminists engage with Feminist Book Week by:

1. Following Stella's Steps of Action: www.thestellaprizeweb.com.au/about/steps-of-action
2. Registering for the in-conversation webinar with Jess Hill and Zoya Patel
3. Participating in the #FeministBookWeek open competition
4. Signing up as a member of YWCA Australia: www.ywca.org.au/join

For more information about YWCA x Stella Feminist Book Week, visit www.ywca.org.au/news/feministbookweek (link active from 12 October 2020)

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About The Stella Prize

The Stella Prize is a major literary award celebrating Australian women's writing, and an organisation that champions cultural change. Stella was created in 2012 to counter the gender bias rife in the Australian literary landscape at the time. Through our programs and activities, Stella strives to champion diverse stories and perspectives.

As an organisation, Stella seeks to recognise and celebrate Australian women writers' contribution to literature, bring more readers to books by women and thus increase their sales, equip young readers with the skills to question gender disparities and challenge stereotypes, and help girls find their voice.

About YWCA Australia

YWCA Australia is an evolving intersectional feminist organisation focused on improving gender equality for women, young women and girls. For 140 years, we have challenged the systems, structures and policies that act as barriers to women, especially young women, achieving their full potential.

Our high-impact evidence-based programs and services are inclusive of women in all their diversity and offer support with housing, homelessness, safety, wellbeing and leadership. We aim to positively impact the lives of more than two million women, young women and girls by the end of 2023.

PHONE INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY

Jaclyn Booton, Executive Director, The Stella Prize

Sarah Hill, Young Women's Engagement Manager, YWCA Australia

To organise an interview, please contact Sarah Hill on 0411 829 372.