



## MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

"Good writing," poet and critic Herbert Read once wrote, "exactly reproduces what we should call the contour of our thought."

The 2006 Victorian Premier's Literary Award has short listed 41 writers whose work does just that – reproducing the contours of our thought in rhythm and rhyme, image and allegory, fact and fiction.

This year marks the 22nd anniversary of the inception of the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards; and, they continue to develop in ways which recognise Australian writing in all its forms.

In the last four years the Awards have grown from five categories to twelve and from \$76, 000 in prize money offered in 2001 to the \$210,000 which will be awarded this year.

This year, the John Curtin Prize for Journalism will be awarded for an outstanding piece of writing about the Australian experience and will recognize the contribution that journalists, from both the print and electronic media, make in increasing our understanding of both Australian and world events.

At the same time as we celebrate great Australian writers, however, we need to encourage great Australian readers. With that in mind, we have provided renewed support for the Melbourne Writers' Festival which has just given us the opportunity to hear from so many wonderful Australian and visiting authors. Thousands of adults and children have attended the 250 events which have taken place over the last ten days.

The building of enhanced digital library services through the State Library of Victoria will also dramatically increase the opportunities for a broader audience, both in Australia and throughout the world, to access the Library's rich holdings in the area of Australian history and literature.

Similarly the reading choices of our children have been increased through the Premier's Reading Challenge. This program has grown year by year as thousands of our State's years 3 to 9 students have taken up the increased challenge to read 15 books in six months.

And, notably, novelist Carrie Tiffany's *Everyman's Rules for Scientific Living*, which was discovered after it won the unpublished manuscript category in 2003, is making a second appearance – being shortlisted for the Vince Palmer Prize for Fiction.

Congratulations and good luck to all the short listed authors.

Steve Bracks  
PREMIER OF VICTORIA