



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# AUSTRALIAN CENTRE SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION



## Kate Challis RAKA Award 2014 Judges Report

The Kate Challis RAKA Award is a \$20,000 (approx.) prize for Indigenous creative artists. The Award has been made available through the generosity of the late Professor Emeritus Bernard Smith, eminent art and cultural historian. It is offered in a five-year cycle with a different area of the arts – creative prose, drama, the visual arts, scriptwriting and poetry – recognized each year. In 2014, the award is for scriptwriting for film and television. Each script will have been produced and screened between 2010-2014.

The judges congratulate all the writers who participated in this year's award. The entries offered stories from urban and rural Australia, past and present. The included a range of genres from drama to epic and featured dialogue driven and visual modes of story-telling.

The 2014 Award recognises the strength and complexity of Indigenous scriptwriting that

confronts important issues in contemporary Australian society.

### **Winner** **Ivan Sen for Toomelah**

This challenging, raw and insightful drama is deeply invested in both the history and the present of the Gamilaroi people in the Toomelah community in northwest New South Wales. The young Gamilaroi boy Kiren is at the heart of the screenplay, and as he makes his way through the community he enables us to think about where it has been and where it might be heading. The screenplay works steadily and surely towards a stark but finely-executed dramatic climax, and an aftermath that is both deeply affecting and redemptive.

### **Commended** **Jon Bell for Sweet Spot**

This episode from the Redfern Now television series is an excellent example of crisp, taut script-writing and the accumulation of narrative

energy. Indigo is an Aboriginal man who has just come out of jail, returning to his wife and children in the 'fern. The screenplay beautifully conveys his struggle to adjust to daily life and his growing awareness of the dignity and strength of his family.

### **Judges**

Ken Gelder (Chair), Denise Varney, Philip Morrissey, Jane Harrison, Kate Challis, Andrew Hollo.

For more information about the Kate Challis RAKA Award please contact the Australian Centre 03 90355280 or visit our website.

Image: Jane Harrison, Jon Bell, Ivan Sen, Philip Morrissey

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