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AIATSIS announces 2004 Stanner Award for scholarly writing

A book chronicling the nature of Aboriginal Australia at the time of British colonisation and another portraying the oppressive surveillance and paternalism experienced by Aboriginal people in south Western Australia about a century later have been named joint winners of the 2004 Stanner Award.

The Stanner Award is awarded annually by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in honour of one of its founders, the late anthropologist Emeritus Professor W.E.H. (Bill) Stanner.

AIATSIS Chairman, Professor Mick Dodson, announced in Canberra last night that *Aboriginal Economy and Society: Australia at the threshold of colonisation* by Ian Keen and *Shadow Lines* by Mirriwoong man Stephen Kinnane would share the 2004 award.

The AIATSIS Council gives the award to what it regards as the best scholarly published contribution to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Studies that reflects the dynamic nature of Professor Stanner's life and work.

Expert readers for the Award predicted that Ian Keen's book will become "the standard scholarly reference for anyone seeking to understand the nature of variation in Aboriginal Australia at the time of the British invasion and an inevitable baseline for the assessment of change since then".

The readers described Stephen Kinnane's book *Shadow Lines*, portraying the lives of Kinnane's Aboriginal grandmother and her English husband living in southern Western Australia from the 1920s, as a "fine book for its readability, audience appeal and ability to evoke character and situation in powerful fashion".

"It is one thing to do the time-consuming and often painful research necessary to underpin and contextualise such a narrative, but to bring it vividly to life takes a strong literary and imaginary bent, and this Kinnane certainly possesses," they said.

Professor Dodson said that 17 books and 20 different authors had been judged worthy of the Stanner Award since 1986.

"Whether they have chronicled important historic events, presented the artistic and cultural traditions or beliefs of particular language groups, explored government and societal

attitudes, exposed myths or courageously shared personal stories, all past Stanner Awardees have contributed to the Indigenous knowledge estate and grown the field of Australian Indigenous studies," he said.

Professor Dodson also congratulated the authors of the two other short-listed books, Euahlari woman Professor Larissa Behrendt for *Achieving Social Justice: Indigenous Rights and Australia's future* and Christine Watson for *Piercing the ground: Balgo women's image making and relationship to country*.

"The four shortlisted books are very different to each other but all of them serve to chisel Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people deeper into the Australian historical landscape," Professor Dodson said.

"Like the shell middens of Indigenous Australia, they tell stories that will inform and stimulate the minds of generations to come."

Aboriginal Economy and Society: Australia at the threshold of colonisation is published by Oxford University Press; *Shadow Lines* is published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press; *Achieving Social Justice: Indigenous Rights and Australia's future* is published by Federation Press; and *Balgo women's image making and relationship to country* is published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

Further information:

Kirstie Parker on tel (02) 6261 4225 or mobile (0412) 646 926