

PROFESSOR ALEXIS WRIGHT FAHA

Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*

Alexis Wright is a Waanyi woman of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria and an internationally recognised, multi-award-winning writer of fiction and non-fiction. Her second novel, *Carpentaria*, won the Miles Franklin Award (2007), the Australian Literary Association Gold Medal (2017), the Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction (2007), the Queensland Premier's Award for Fiction (2007) and the Australian Book Industry Award for Fiction (2007). Her third novel, *The Swan Book*, is an imaginative retelling of Australia's past, present and future; it won the Kate Challis RAKA award (2016), the Australian Literary Association Gold Medal (2014), and was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary Award, the Stella Prize, Victorian and NSW Premier's Awards (2014). *Tracker*, an innovative memoir/biography containing a collection of stories from and about the late Aboriginal economic visionary, Tracker Tilmouth, won the Stella Prize (2018), the University of Queensland Non-Fiction Book Award and was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards (2019). A fourth novel, *Praiseworthy*, a major 736-page literary odyssey, was published in 2023 and, in August 2024, led to Professor Wright becoming the first author to win the Stella Prize and Miles Franklin Award in the same year. Her important works of non-fiction include *Take Power*, an oral history of the Central Land Council (1998), and *Grog War*, a study of alcohol abuse in the Northern Territory (Magabala Books, 1997). Her books have been translated and read in China, India, Japan, the US, the UK, Italy, France and Poland. In 2021, *Carpentaria* was chosen by the French education jury as a compulsory book to be studied on the *agrégation* curriculum. This is the first Australian book to be included on the study list since *Voss* (1957) by Nobel Prize Winning author Patrick White.

Professor Wright has contributed significantly to research in the fields of World Literature and Australian Indigenous Storytelling. Conversations and collaborative story-telling between Wright and Gangalidda storyman and political leader Clarence Walden led to two feature documentaries, *Nothing but the Truth* (2019) and *Straight from the Heart* (2019). Further highlights include major opinion pieces in *Meanjin*, *The Guardian* and the *New York Times*, the Boisbouvier Oration at the Melbourne Writers Festival and hosting *Signposts: Stories for our Times*, a series of 'lockdown' conversations with leading Australian writers. Her continuing relationships with secondary students in Australia and overseas pass on a rich legacy of storytelling to young people.

Over a lifetime of writing, activism and public service, Alexis Wright has established a distinguished record of achievement in Australia and internationally. She maintains a substantial program of public speaking engagements, podcasts, policy work and advocacy for Indigenous land and human rights and, in recent years, action on climate change. She has served as a member of the Carpentaria Land Council and the Waanyi Native Title Representative Body amongst other literary and Indigenous committees and panels, including in Alice Springs. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. From 2018 to 2022, she held the Boisbouvier Chair in Australian Literature in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne.

Alexis Wright is an Australian writer for our times and our place, whose innovative storytelling awakens readers to apocalyptic themes in a wholly unique style. Her writing combines fantastical world-building, inexhaustible linguistic inventiveness and relentlessly laconic humour while being deeply rooted in the experience of colonialism and the ongoing project of reclaiming Aboriginal cultural sovereignty.