



Office of Honourable Maggie Barry ONZM

MP for North Shore

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

Minister of Conservation

Minister for Seniors

J Kennefick

Email: fyi-request-5334-e604ba98@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear J Kennefick

I refer to your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) dated 7 February 2017 for my speech at the Prime Minister's Awards for Literary Achievement event at Unity Books Wellington.

I did not attend an event at Unity Books for the Awards, but did speak at the presentation ceremony at Premier House on October 12, 2016.

Please find enclosed the information you requested in the following documents:

- Speech notes provided for my use at the ceremony.

Please note that the speech notes were provided for my guidance only and may not be as delivered. My office does not possess a recording of the speech as given.

You may seek an investigation and review of this decision by way of complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Maggie Barry ONZM
Minister of Conservation

HON MAGGIE BARRY ONZM

2016 PRIME MINISTER'S AWARDS FOR

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENT

PREMIER HOUSE, WELLINGTON

WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2016

Mihi

Kia ora

He mihi nui tēnei

Mō tēnei kaupapa nui

Tēnā koutou katoa

Greetings, I would like to acknowledge this important event, welcome everybody.

Acknowledgements

- The Right Honourable John Key
- Dr Dick Grant, Arts Council Chair
- Ladies and gentlemen

In his review of the 1998 *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, Stuart Murray of Trinity College cites the introduction of a New Zealand poetry anthology published in 1906. It advises readers not to expect too much from the poets within its pages, and adds:

'There is a time that may be looked for, when New Zealand will be assigned a place among the nations not only on account of its exports of wool and gold... but also by reason of its contributors to art and science....That time has not yet arrived'.

More than a century later I am glad to say our time has certainly arrived. Introducing any New Zealand anthology in such a way would be unthinkable. The high quality of our writers is widely recognised, both here and internationally.

Over the last century, writers have shaped our cultural landscape, and many of our finest writers are household names – Mansfield, Gee, Shadbolt, Catton or Ihimaera.

In the past year alone we've seen some great successes and fresh developments in the literary sector.

Eleanor Catton's outstanding first novel *The Rehearsal* was given new life as a feature film adapted by Emily Perkins, reaching new audiences around the world, most recently at the New York Film Festival.

A young Wellington poet, Hera Lindsay Bird, found success as her debut volume of poetry flew off the shelves, the first print run selling out on the same day it was released. It's now in its fourth run and has been acclaimed at home and abroad.

Writers of non-fiction continue to explore the fabric of our society through fascinating portraits of individual New Zealanders and examinations of formative historical events.

I recently launched Dr Ian McGibbon's magisterial history of New Zealand's Western Front campaign – one of many superb books examining our national World War I experience.

Ever greater numbers are flocking to the vibrant Auckland Writers Festival, with over 63,000 attendees this year.

And Christchurch has a wonderful new venue, The Piano, providing a headquarters for the increasingly popular WORD Christchurch Writers and Readers Festival.

Our stories, at the fingertips of skilled writers and storytellers, help us to make sense of who we are as a nation, as well as bringing us joy and new insights.

We are here tonight to recognise three outstanding writers who have made a

significant contribution in the genres of non-fiction, poetry and fiction.

Before we ask this year's recipients to the stage I would like to invite our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John Key, to say a few words.