

**2018 GI Grant:
'Gender inequality in the publishing, teaching and reading of Literature in
Australia'
Report on Outcomes**

Julieanne Lamond

Grant Details

This application was for seed funding to assist in the development of an ARC Linkage grant to investigate solutions to gender inequality in the publishing, reception and teaching of literature in Australia. Its aims were to pilot methodologies that would be used in the application, hold a project planning meeting and build the skills and capacity of three ANU students involved in the project as interns.

The project achieved these aims, except that instead of an ARC Linkage this project has been submitted, in the first instance, to the new ARC Special Research Initiative scheme which was announced in late 2019. If it is not successful in this round, it will be resubmitted as a Linkage in 2021.



L to R: Louisa Kirk, Dr Julieanne Lamond, and Kathryn Hind

Project/Event Details

The Gender Institute Stella Count Internships – 26 – 28 March 2019

We received total 20 applications from ANU students - a fourfold increase since we last ran a similar internship with GI support in 2015. These applications indicate the commitment to feminist aims and outcomes, specifically in the literary sphere, from ANU students across their careers (from first year undergrads to later year HDR students), and across a range of disciplines (linguistics, English, law, creative writing, and anthropology). We were heartened by the range and strength of these

applications. We selected three excellent HDR students, all working on projects concerning gender and literature: Kathryn Hind, a creative writing student and award-winning author who is working on passivity and agency in women's fiction, Louisa Kirk, whose PhD focuses on women's friendship in contemporary literature, and Airlie Lawson, whose interdisciplinary PhD looked at how Australian fiction travels in the international licensing market, with a focus on gender.

These students and I travelled to Melbourne from 26-28 March, 2019 and spent three days working with the Stella Prize organisation and media monitoring company ISENTIA, learning skills and contributing to the data collection for the 2018 Stella Count. They also met the Stella Prize Executive Director and Program manager.

Kathryn, Louisa and Airlie were the subject of a CASS media release regarding their work on the project, and all reported that they benefited from the experience, and that it has been useful for them in terms of job and fellowship applications since. Kathryn and Louisa continue to work on their theses. Airlie has since graduated; her thesis findings were published in a three-part series in trade publication *Bookseller & Publisher*.

If we were to run such a program again, all participants reported that a longer period working on the Count would contribute more both to the project and to their own skills and knowledge. Because flights were more expensive than budgeted, their stay was shortened from four to three nights.

Grant application, *Counting the Costs of Gender Bias for Australian Literature*.

A planning meeting was held with my Monash colleague Melinda Harvey, and the Stella Prize executive director, which has since resulted in a collaborative ARC application to the SRI Scheme in April 2020. The project summary is below:

"This project aims to investigate how literary reviews, industry prizes and tertiary curricula reproduce gender inequality across Australia's literary industries. The project expects to generate new knowledge about the connections between scholarly and industry practices in the literary field and to pioneer an innovative quantitative approach for assessing gendered access across key pathways to literary success. Expected outcomes include better knowledge of the barriers to success for women writers. This should provide significant benefits, including improvements to industry practices that will enable Australia's literary culture to better reflect the diversity of our society."

Impact

Participants:

As noted above, this project involved three ANU HDR students and one Level B (now C) staff member.

Impact:

As noted above, this project had an impact on the three interns and their skills, careers and understanding of gender bias in the literary field. It also gave them some media profile: <https://cass.anu.edu.au/news/feminist-powered-2018-stella-count>

The 2018 Stella Count itself had a significant impact in the public sphere. It received 19 media mentions with a total audience reach of 182,000. The public impact of this project is evident, for example, in the prominent place it held in the public address by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard on the awarding of the Stella Prize in April 2020. Ms Gillard said: “The statistics gathered by the Stella Count suggests that the act of counting influences the gender balance of literary journalism in Australia, and in turn, that goes on to influence which books become known, bought and read.” The announcement of the Stella Prize took place in an online format this year due to COVID 19: ANU was listed prominently as a partner organisation in the video released: <https://thestellaprize.com.au/prize/2020-prize/>.

Outcomes

The Stella Count:

<https://thestellaprize.com.au/the-count/2018-stella-count/>

Media Coverage:

CASS website: <https://cass.anu.edu.au/news/feminist-powered-2018-stella-count>

Stephani Convery in the *Guardian*:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/sep/19/nearly-half-of-all-book-reviews-in-australia-in-2018-were-of-works-by-female-authors>

Linda Morris in the SMH: <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/books/closing-the-gender-gap-book-reviews-women-can-count-on-20190917-p52s6x.html>

The Australian: <http://tinyurl.com/y85zw4tx>

Jenna Price in *The Age*: <http://tinyurl.com/yclq9qdl>

Canberra Times: <http://tinyurl.com/yabecx89>

Books and Publishing:

<https://www.booksandpublishing.com.au/articles/2019/09/19/139630/stella-count-2018-sustained-and-significant-advances-in-the-representation-of-women-authors/>

West Australian: <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/the-west-australian-praised-for-reaching-gender-parity-in-book-reviews-ng-b881328625z>

Women's Agenda: <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/the-2018-stella-count-finds-gender-split-on-book-reviews-almost-at-50-50/>

Daily Times: <https://dailytimes.com.pk/470695/stella-count-shows-gender-bias-in-book-reviews-is-changing/>