



## Media Release

### **Young novelist Majok Tulba announced as winner of 2014 Kathleen Mitchell Award**

***Sudanese-Australian writer goes back to his roots to deliver a dark and moving story***

**17 September 2014**

Majok Tulba has been announced as the 2014 winner of the \$20,000 Kathleen Mitchell Award for young novelists.

Sudanese-Australian writer Mr Tulba was presented with the award for his debut novel, *Beneath the Darkening Sky*, by The Trust Company, part of Perpetual, as trustee of the award.

Mr Tulba grew up in South Sudan and in this compelling novel, depicts the fate of children recruited as unwilling conscripts in a civil war. Set in South Sudan, he tells the story of Obinna, a young boy kidnapped to serve as a soldier in the rebel army.

Uncompromising, vivid and raw, *Beneath the Darkening Sky* is an astonishing portrait of a mind trying to make sense of a senseless world.

Perpetual's General Manager of Philanthropy, Andrew Thomas, said: "On behalf of Perpetual, I congratulate Majok on winning this award for his extraordinary novel.

"As a philanthropist, Kathleen Adele Mitchell established the award to support young authors, such as Majok, and to invest in the future of Australian literature. Literature is an important way to share experiences from Australia and around the world, and I'm proud of the role Perpetual is playing in helping writers like Majok tell their stories."

Established in 1996, the Kathleen Mitchell Award is aimed at encouraging the "advancement, improvement and standing of Australian literature". The Award provides young Australian authors under 30 (at the time of publication of the nominated book) with funding "to improve their literary efforts".

"The international success and film adaptation of the winning book of 2006, *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak, is testament to the relevance and power of the Kathleen Mitchell Award," Mr Thomas said.

This year's judging panel included: Dr Camilla Nelson, Senior Lecturer - School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Notre Dame; Dr Rachel Franks, Project Officer, Scholarly Engagement at the State Library of NSW; and Marilla North, Principal, The Creative Writing Workshop and freelance lecturer in Australian cultural and literary history.

The judges collectively said of Mr Tulba's work: "*Beneath the Darkening Sky* is a powerful novel, beautifully constructed. The issue of child soldiers in South Sudan is one that cannot be ignored. It demands our compassionate – and urgent – attention".

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#### **Note to editors**

##### **About the Kathleen Mitchell Award**

The Kathleen Mitchell Award is a biennial Award dedicated to encouraging young Australian authors to achieve their dreams. It was established in 1996 by the will of the late Kathleen Adele Mitchell. Her aim was to encourage "the advancement, improvement and betterment of Australian literature, to improve the educational style of the authors, and to provide them with additional amounts and thus enable them to improve their literary efforts". Applicants must be aged 29 years or less at the time of your book's first publication and be a resident of Australia for the 12 months preceding the close of entries date and be either Australian or British born or a naturalised Australian. The value of the award is \$20,000.

##### **About the winner**

Majok Tulba lives in Western Sydney with his wife and children. He is CEO of the charity SudanCare, has had a film as a finalist at Tropfest, and has won a NSW Premier's/CAL Literary Centre Fellowship.

##### **About Perpetual Philanthropic Services:**

Perpetual is one of Australia's largest managers and distributors of philanthropic funds with \$2.1 billion in funds under advice (as at 30 June 2014). Perpetual is trustee for more than 960 [charitable trusts and endowments](#) and provides individuals and families with advice on establishing charitable foundations and structured giving programs. Perpetual also assists charities and not-for-profit organisations with [investment advice and management](#).

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