**For immediate release – 18 February 2022**

**Love & Virtue wins 2022 MUD Literary Prize**

The Committee of the MUD Literary Club is pleased to announce that the winner of the fifth annual MUD Literary Prize is ***Love & Virtue***, by **Diana Reid**.

The MUD Literary Prize is a $5000 award for the best debut literary novel by an Australian writer, offered by Adelaide philanthropic group MUD Literary Club as part of Adelaide Writers’ Week.

*Love & Virtue* was chosen from an outstanding shortlist – which includes *Before You Knew My Name* by Jacqueline Bublitz, *We Were Not Men* by Campbell Mattinson*,* and *When Things Are Alive They Hum* by Hannah Bent – that all show deft writing skill and maturity far beyond what is expected of new novelists.

*Love & Virtue* (Ultimo Press) received special praise from the judges for being a brave and daring examination of sexual assault, misogyny, power struggles and the rights of individuals, told through a bright young woman’s turbulent first year on university campus. Diana Reid’s sharply drawn portrait directly tackles important contemporary issues.

**Diana Reid will be presented with the 2022 MUD Literary Prize during a special award and interview session at Adelaide Writers’ Week, in the Pioneer Women’s Memorial Garden, Adelaide, at 5pm on Monday, March 7.**

The MUD Literary Prize judging panel – comprising Adelaide Writers’ Week Director Jo Dyer, Australian author Sean Williams, Writers SA Director Jessica Alice and MUD Literary Club committee members Andrew Saies and David Sly – was delighted by the response to the 2022 MUD Literary Prize, which attracted a record number of 41 submissions.

“Our top four books were separated by such small margins, with each book generating passionate support from individual judges, meaning that they truly deserve their place on the shortlist,” says Jo Dyer. “Readers will find fantastic variety and quality across these four novels, underlining that 2022 was a stellar year for debut offerings of Australian literary fiction.”

The judges offered these comments on the three other shortlisted books:

• *Before You Knew My Name* by Jacqueline Bublitz (Allen & Unwin): An ingenious and intimate character examination steers crime fiction into a deeper exploration of identity. A murdered girl found in New York City appears to not have a history, but her ghost compels the lonely young woman who found her to piece together the fabric of her life.

*• We Were Not Men* by Campbell Mattinson (Fourth Estate): Tragedy befalls twin brothers at an early age, losing both parents in a horrific car accident and magnifying their dependence on each other. However, it also fuels their rivalry, their passions and their relationships with others – especially a grandmother who struggles to care for them. Powerfully drawn characters, stained by grief and confusion as they reach to find love and resolution.

• *When Things Are Alive They Hum* by Hannah Bent (Ultimo Press): Capturing the voice of a young woman with Down Syndrome, along with her protective older sister, this clever book presents a compelling examination of difficult choices made in the face of looming tragedy. Musical prose speaks vividly and truthfully about addressing grief, love and adversity.

MUD Literary Club chairman Tony Parkinson says the enthusiastic response to the MUD Literary Prize shows there is a necessary place for this type of award in Australia’s literary landscape. “It serves to encourage and promote the quality of new literary novels that are emerging in this country,” says Parkinson.

MUD Literary Club is a unique philanthropic organisation, being the only private group providing funds specifically for literature in Australia. Since 2012, the group has provided more than $200,000 in funds for both Adelaide Writers’ Week and Ubud Writers and Readers Festival in Bali, supporting Australian writers appearing at these events. Funds are accumulated through MUD Literary Club memberships and events.

The annual prize underlines MUD Literary Club’s ongoing commitment to nurture Australia’s emerging literary talent. “The prize acknowledges that while literary fiction plays a vital role in Australia’s cultural life, it rarely offers writers a wage,” says Parkinson. “The MUD Literary Prize offers valuable support. We are confident that it will serve to generate significant attention for new Australian literary talent.”

Diana Reid joins a prestigious list of previous MUD Literary Prize winners: Sarah Schmidt in 2018 for *See What I Have Done*, Trent Dalton in 2019 for *Boy Swallows Universe*, Sienna Brown in 2020 for *Master of My Fate* and Pip Williams in 2021 for *The Dictionary of Lost Words.*

The MUD Literary Prize is open to all Australian writers who have published their first literary novel in the calendar year preceding Adelaide Writers’ Week. The novel does not have to be the writer’s first book. The prize is not open to genre and commercial fiction.

**• MEDIA CONTACT: For further information and comments, or to arrange interviews with the 2022 MUD Literary Prize winner Diana Reid, please contact Adelaide Writers’ Week Publicist Anthea Hagar on 0403 651 665.**

**• Details about MUD Literary Club can be obtained through chairman Tony Parkinson on 0408 805 518.**