

MEDIA RELEASE

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HELPING NEW POETS INTO PRINT

Exciting, imaginative poetry is flourishing in the West.

The Perth-based literary journal *Westerly* has published the first of what it hopes may become a series of first poetry collections by emerging Western Australian poets.

Fremantle writer Megan McKinlay's first collection of poems, *Cleanskin*, will go out to all *Westerly* subscribers with issue 52 of the journal this month.

Cleanskin, which comes with an audio CD of the author and discussing a selection of her poems, is also available separately at \$9.95 (plus postage) from the *Westerly* website (<http://www.westerlycentre.uwa.edu.au/home>)

Publication has been made possible by a grant from the Western Australian Department of Culture and the Arts under its "A Few New Words" initiative which encourages the publication of new and emerging poets.

The twenty-four poems range widely in subject and tone: from the wittily ironic ("Spoken Word Blues") and the quirky and strange ("Walter") to the intensely personal ("Travels without My Daughter").

"Travels without My Daughter" – Megan's first poem – was written in the departure lounge at Perth International Airport as she was about to board a flight to Japan in 1999.

"A lot of the poems are autobiographical in some form, but generally in a very associative way", says Megan. "That is, they're generally a kind of agglomeration of disparate experiences, thoughts, fragments, whose currents pull together at some point to form the beginnings of a poem."

As well as poetry, Megan writes fiction. Her first children's novel, *Annabel Again*, was published by Walker Books Australia in June.

Westerly co-editor Professor Dennis Haskell said: "*Westerly*'s call for poetry manuscripts yielded fifty-three submissions, most of very good quality. As many as eleven of the manuscripts seemed to us to be publishable.

"Megan McKinlay's manuscript was chosen for its imaginative intelligence.

"It was stimulating to discover how much fine poetry was available", Dennis added, "and we thank all the poets who participated."

ENDS

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NOTE TO EDITORS

In 2008 *Westerly* planned to move to publishing two issues a year: one in June/July, which will include critical essays and reviews, and a second in November/December, which will be devoted to creative writing. This decision was prompted by the dearth of publishing outlets in Australia for creative writing as well as the *Westerly* editors' desire to publish more of the large amount of high-quality creative writing it receives each year.

However, *Westerly* will now not be able to do this; in fact its future is in grave doubt as the Editors have recently been advised by the Department of Culture and the Arts (ArtsWA) that the annual application to the Arts Development panel of ArtsWA, to which *Westerly* applies each year for the grant which is essential to support its publication, has been refused. This is an issue which should concern the whole writing and reading community and which needs any publicity you can give it. *Westerly* editors would be happy to supply you with material for copy.