

PRESS RELEASE

16 May 2022

***'Waste of a nation: garbage and growth in India'* wins the prestigious Reid Prize**

A BOOK offering unparalleled insight into waste management in India has been awarded the inaugural [Reid Prize](#) for a work by an Australian or New Zealand based author that has made an exemplary contribution to the understanding of Asia.

Waste of a Nation: Garbage and Growth in India (Harvard University Press, 2018), by Professor Assa Doron (ANU) and Emeritus Professor Robin Jeffrey (La Trobe University/ANU) presents a comprehensive and panoramic account of waste of all kinds (sewerage, chemical and electrical waste, domestic waste, plastic, human hair) in fascinating detail, and provides a lens through which to view the whole of Indian society and beyond.

As one reviewer, Dagna Rams noted: “the book is as much about waste in the twenty-first century as it is about India”.

The jurors for the 2022 Reid prize, [Professor Krishna Sen](#), [Emeritus Professor Purnendra Jain](#) and [Professor Anne McLaren](#) were particularly impressed the authors’ ability to reveal deeper truths about the nations’ struggle with issues around the environment, public health and historical prejudice through their investigation of waste.

“Readers who view rubbish, trash, and sewerage as simply a prosaic feature of everyday life will be amazed at the complexity of the Indian waste system,” the jurors note in [their citation](#) accompanying the award.

“The outstanding feature of the work is the way that waste of all kinds and the humans who dispose of it provide a lens through which to view the whole of Indian society, from the high-waste consumers of the middle-class, to the humble gatherers of human hair in temples, the entrepreneurs who seek to create wealth from recycled waste, and the well-meaning bureaucrats and sanitation engineers who seek to [...] eliminate outside defecation.”

Since publication in 2018, the work has been acclaimed internationally in leading academic and public journals and newspapers and is now included in courses at leading universities in the US, UK, Israel, India and Australia.

The authors have engaged with leading Indian corporate bodies involved in waste management and inspired a start-up company; in a [2018 article in the Guardian](#), an extract from the book revealed how whole communities subsist by processing waste created by the world’s love affair with electronic goods.

The authors of this outstanding book will present the Reid lecture at the [upcoming ASAA 2022 conference](#), to be held at Monash University from 5-8 July, 2022.

The impact of this book has already been far-reaching and promises to remain the compulsory work on this subject for many years to come.

The ASAA Council thanks [Emeritus Professor Tony Reid and Helen Reid](#) for their generous endowment and The Australian National University as mutual partner in administering the ASAA Reid Prize.

END PRESS RELEASE

Please contact ASAA President Kate McGregor for comment: k.mcgregor@unimelb.edu.au