



Wangaratta author gains national recognition at awards

By Clarisa Collis

CRITICALLY acclaimed Wangaratta writer, John Charalambous, was recently short-listed for best first novel in the prestigious Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the South East Asia and South Pacific Region.

Mr Charalambous received the literary accolade after authoring his first book titled, "Furies", which was released in August last year and told the story of two free-spirited women confronted with the

culture shock of dwelling in a small country town with an urban outlook.

Although Larissa Behrendt ultimately took the prize for best first book with her novel Home, Mr Charalambous was honored with a commendation, along with six other authors this month.

"It was a thrill, but I didn't know anything about it until I'd been short-listed and the winner was announced," Mr Charalambous said.

He said the value of the awards is that it increases an author's profile and publishers

are inclined to take his work more seriously.

"The awards certainly help with future publications, after having come close with a prize," he said.

"It's also about encouraging first time authors and extending that pat on the back that makes you keep writing."

Mr Charalambous is currently writing a second novel he describes as an 'anti-romance', which will tell the story of an Australian WWI deserter who seeks refuge with a French woman as the Germans are breaking through

enemy lines.

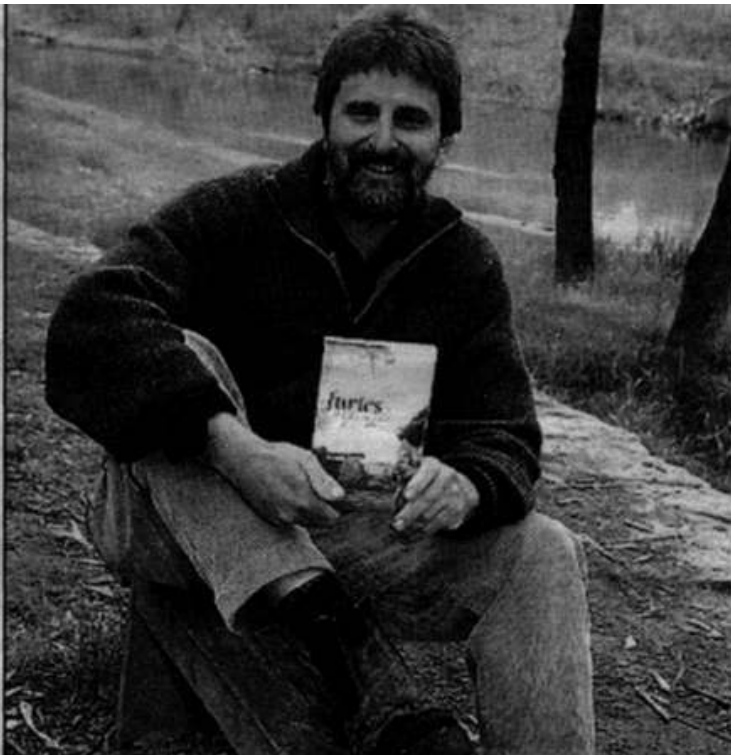
'Furies' remains locally available at Edgars Newsagency and Collins Booksellers and ABC Centre for \$22.95.

"Furies sold very well in the first six months, totalling 1500

sales. These days first Australian novels typically sell about 800 copies in that period,

which is woeful in terms of sales," Mr Charalambous said.

The Wangaratta author's second novel is expected to be available within the next 12 months.



THE WRITE STUFF: Esteemed local author John Charalambous was recently commended for the 2005 Commonwealth Writers' Prize.