

BRISBANE WRITERS FESTIVAL

8-11 OCTOBER 2026



On sale 2 December 2026

Meanjin's 85-year back catalogue includes these poets, writers, thinkers and artists, among so many more.

Who will you read in the first edition since our return to Brisbane?

Scan for details and announcements



meanjin.com.au



**First Nations people are
Australia's first storytellers.**

Brisbane Writers Festival is held on the
lands of the Yuggera and Turrbul people,
on the banks of the Maiwar river.

We recognise the important and ongoing
contributions of Indigenous Australians to
art and literature and pay our respects to
Elders past, present and emerging.



bwf.org.au

Australia's fastest-growing online book club for women!

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to join



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B O O K C L U B

Hosted by

Jane Sullivan

Rebecca
Sparrow

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www.birdsofafeather.com.au



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Join the conversation

@briswritersfest



#BWF26

#HaveWeGotAStoryForYou



@qldliteraryawards

#qlas26



Message from The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Brisbane Councillor Adrian Schrinner

Welcome to this year's Brisbane Writers Festival.

There's something special about a good story. Stories help us understand one another, explore new ideas and see the world through someone else's eyes.

Each year the festival brings leading local, national and international writers to Brisbane, giving residents and visitors the chance to hear from remarkable authors, thinkers and storytellers.

Brisbane Writers Festival is a much-loved fixture on our city's cultural calendar.

It supports our creative community and adds to the experiences that make Brisbane Australia's lifestyle capital.

We're proud to support events that bring people together and create more to see and do across the city. Just as importantly, the festival sparks curiosity, conversation and stronger community connections across South East Queensland.

I encourage everyone to explore this year's program, settle in for a session or two and enjoy everything Brisbane Writers Festival has to offer.

Adrian Schrinner

Lord Mayor



Message from the Arts Minister

The 2026 Brisbane Writers Festival (BWF) promises four days of words, wisdom and wonderment in Queensland's capital.

Following the largest festival to date in 2025, BWF returns this October with a diverse program of panels, author talks and events, and a line-up of local, national and international talent sharing captivating stories that span genres, borders and lived experiences.

This year BWF will also present the Queensland Literary Awards as part of its opening celebration, showcasing exceptional writers and literary works from across Australia.

Aligned with our 10-year arts and culture strategy, Queensland's Time to Shine, the Crisafulli Government invests in BWF to grow opportunities for writers, share more Queensland stories and celebrate the achievements of our storytellers.

Leaping off the page with passion and purpose, BWF continues to reach new audiences, explore big ideas and connect the community through creativity.

The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek

Minister for Education and the Arts



Chair's Statement

Welcome to the 2026 Brisbane Writers Festival, our second time at Brisbane Powerhouse.

Gertrude Stein says, 'writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one where they live really.' This year, *Orchid Thief* Susan Orlean, three-time Booker nominee Andrew O'Hagan and *Heartstopper* Alice Oseman all belong in Brisbane.

The program features First Nations work curated by Bebe Oliver, Samantha Faulkner and Bruce Pascoe, all of whom are also major interstate guests. Others include Suzie Miller, Matt Bevan, Richard Flanagan, Adam Liaw and Shaun Micallef.

Closer to home, *Go-Between* Robert Forster, Miles Franklin winner Melissa Lucashenko and Canberra Raider/*Bachelor*/BookToker Luke Bateman will be part of the 2026 festival. And this year, for the first time, we'll be hosting the Queensland Literary Awards to celebrate award winners from across the country.

Sally Rippin, Jacqueline Harvey and Dr Matt Agnew are just some of the talented writers who will feature in our schools program.

Andrew O'Hagan says, 'Friendship is more important than almost anything.' Be a friend, bring a friend and make some friends at the 2026 Brisbane Writers Festival.

**The Honourable Justice
Thomas Bradley**

Chair of Board, Brisbane Writers Festival

Artistic Director's Statement



I'm not going to straight-up say, *look upon my works, ye mighty, and despair* ... but I've thought about it. That, and not saying, *mission accomplished*. But is it still hubris if the source of your pride is external? Because the artists appearing at Brisbane Writers Festival in 2026 are so remarkable, this program feels *unsinkable*!

Open it to any page: *everything the light touches is our kingdom*! Go deep with favourites in featured sessions, then see panels or salons for unrepeatable artistic alchemy while finding some new faves. BWF is basically a rock concert for readers – with the bonus option of meeting many of the artists while getting your books signed.

This year, it's our honour to manage and host the Queensland Literary Awards (QLAs). We're grateful for the category judges' thoughtfulness and expertise and excited by the quality and diversity of the results. The shortlists for the Published Book Awards appear herein (don't forget to vote for the people's choice!), and those for the Development Awards can be found at qlas.com.au. The big winners will be revealed live at the festival on 8 October – so get yourself some tickets for that, too!

You know what else I'm proud of? BWF staff. This entire program *and* the QLAs were put together with a full-time workforce equivalent to 3.5 people. So I'm sorry for the delay in replying to your email.

Endless thanks to our General Manager, Katie, who continually wrangles five-days-a-week's worth of administrative hellscape into one. To our elegantly persuasive Head of Marketing and Development, Sally, whose professionalism I would find intimidating if I were more professional. And to our Programs Managers, Emily and Kieren, for their mastery of spreadsheets and of quips. Big shoutout to the BWF Chair and Board for year-round support, lightning-fast replies and for knowing just who to talk to about whatever.

Thanks to Phoebe and Rachel for their gorgeous program covers, to Michael for the program design, to Carody for the elegant session blurbs and to Cinnamon for spreading the word that we exist. Thanks in advance to the BWF crew – especially Jaime, Georgia, Connor and Eloise – who'll inevitably save the day as we move into the production cycle, and to our volunteers for their generosity and good grace.

Thanks to everyone at Brisbane Powerhouse. It's a beautiful venue with a stunningly supportive team, and we love every minute of our time there. Big thanks, also, to our festival bookseller, Harry Hartog.

The heroes of this story are the artists, the readers and the curators, but it really does take a village. BWF's village people include government funders, major partners and sponsors alongside hospitality, event and cultural partners. None of this would be possible without them (especially Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council), so please don't flick past page 54 too quickly.

Special shoutout to departing Sydney Writers' Festival Artistic Director Ann Mossop, who's been a generous colleague throughout my BWF tenure, but who is abandoning us all for a more rational life. Well played ... I guess.

And thanks to you, the reading public, for studying this program and then deciding, *I'll have one of everything!* What's that saying? *All that glitters is truly gold?* It's true in this instance, anyway.

Welcome to the shiny, shimmering ray of bookish sunshine that is BWF2026. Don't let your literary wings get wet. Join us as we fly as close as (safely) possible to the sun!

Dr Jackie Ryan

Artistic Director, Brisbane Writers Festival

First Nations Cultural Curators

Supported by McCullough Robertson

In 2026, Brisbane Writers Festival has had the great fortune to work with First Nations Cultural Curators Bruce Pascoe, Bebe Oliver and Samantha Faulkner, who've put together sessions that complement and enhance the program. You'll find a curator credit next to each of the sessions they've crafted. BWF would like to extend a huge thank you to Bruce, Bebe and Samantha for their illuminating and exciting contributions.



Bruce Pascoe

Bruce Pascoe is an Aboriginal farmer and writer of literary fiction, non-fiction, poetry, essays and children's literature, and he's based on Yuin Country. His publications have won numerous awards, including the New South Wales Premier's Award for Literature, the Booksellers Association Prize and the CBCA Eve Pownall award. He is the author of the groundbreaking, bestselling book *Dark Emu*.



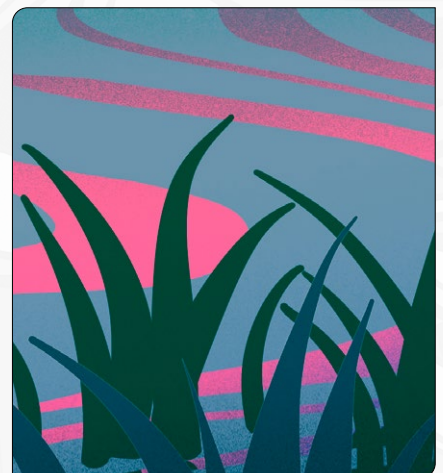
Bebe Oliver

Bebe Oliver is a Bardi Jawi award-winning author, poet and illustrator. Moving across Country, memory and the layered realities of Blak and queer life, his writing celebrates grief, love, identity and survival with a voice both vulnerable and strong. Bebe is the Artistic Director and CEO of Blak & Bright, a Director of Na Djinang Circus, a Director of National NAIDOC and the Deputy Chair of Magabala Books. He lives and works on the unceded lands of the Kulin peoples and approaches story as responsibility and accountability to the strength and presence of Blak voices across Country.



Samantha Faulkner

Samantha Faulkner is a Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal woman from Badu and Moa Islands in the Torres Strait and the Yadhaigana and Wuthathi peoples of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. Her poetry and short stories have been published nationally and internationally, and she is the proud author of *Life Blong Ali Drummond: A Life in the Torres Strait* (Aboriginal Studies Press, July 2007) and editor of *Pamle: Torres Strait Islanders in Canberra* (2018). She also is a member of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Network and MARION (ACT Writers) and is the treasurer of First Nations Australia Writers Network and Us Mob Writing Group.



Tickets

We want all our audiences to enjoy the fruits of the festival program without breaking the bank. That's why, with the support of our funders and sponsors, we haven't increased our ticket prices this year. In fact, in many cases, we've made them cheaper – plus we've made around 10% of the festival completely free to attend. You can also get discounted tickets to most of the schools, young adult and regular events as part of our ticket bundles. We hope this helps you make the most of your festival experience in 2026 and to see more for less!

Regular Festival

Regular session

From **\$29** full price / **\$25** concession

Four-Event Bundle

\$99 price / **\$90** concession

First Word

Free, bookings essential

Queensland Literary Awards

\$29 full price / **\$25** concession

Marion Taylor Reception

\$120 full price / **\$110** concession

Special Events at City Hall

\$49 full price / **\$44** concession

Schools Program

Student tickets

\$16 per person (+ booking fee)

Adult tickets

\$20 per person (+ booking fee)

School groups are eligible for one complimentary adult ticket for a teacher or supervisor for every 15 student tickets. Complimentary tickets can be claimed via the booking form.

Three-Event Schools Bundle

\$40 per person (+booking fee)

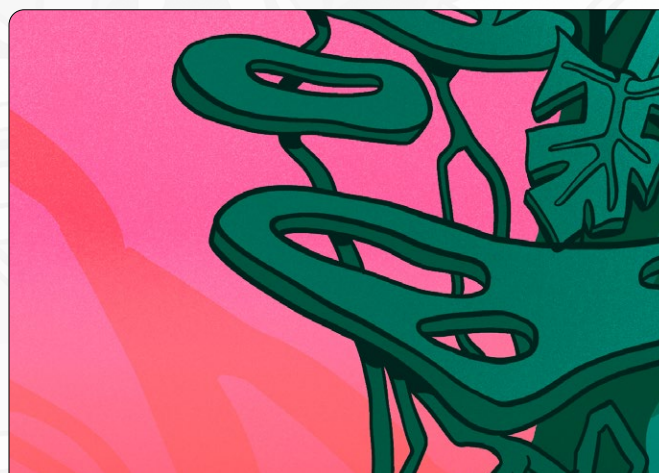
YA Program

\$20 per person (+ booking fee)

YA bundle (all three panel events)

\$50 per person (+booking fee)

10% of festival sessions are FREE, but bookings are essential: bwf.org.au



Information

Program Updates

Changes to the program in this printed brochure may happen to due to external circumstances.
Visit bwf.org.au for updates.



For ticket enquires, see below contact information for Brisbane Powerhouse Box Office.

For general enquiries about the festival, contact the BWF office on **07 3216 0694** or info@bwf.org.au

How to book

We strongly advise booking ahead of time via our website or by phone.

Online: bwf.org.au
or brisbanepowerhouse.org

Phone: **07 3358 8600**
(Brisbane Powerhouse Box Office)

Email:
boxoffice@brisbanepowerhouse.org

In person: The Brisbane Powerhouse Box Office is located inside, just below the Turbine Platform.

Please note the Box Office is cashless – purchases through EFTPOS only.

For events held at City Hall

Online: bwf.org.au

Phone: **07 3216 0694**

Email: info@bwf.org.au

Getting to the festival

Most BWF events take place at the Brisbane Powerhouse, 119 Lamington St, New Farm.

Public transport

Bus

196 – Merthyr, Valley, City, Sth Bris, Highgate Hill, Fairfield

Every 10–15 mins

Closest Stop – Brunswick St at Oxlade Dr
(480m walk to/from Brisbane Powerhouse, through New Farm Park)

City Cat

Towards University Qld (inbound) – City, South Bank, Milton, West End, St Lucia

Every 15–30 mins

Towards Northshore Hamilton (outbound) – Hawthorne, Bulimba, Teneriffe, Bretts Wharf

Every 15–30 mins

Closest Ferry Terminal –
New Farm Park, end Brunswick St
(440m walk to/from Brisbane Powerhouse, through New Farm Park)
Visit translink.com.au or call **13 12 30** for more information.

Parking

Parking is limited at Brisbane Powerhouse. We encourage you to consider transport alternatives such as public transport, taxi, rideshare, shuttle bus, cycling, scooter, walking or river vessel.

New Farm Park (enter from Brunswick Street)

200 parking spaces (free)

New Farm Park gates open Mon–Fri 8.30am–11pm, Sat + Sun 6am–11pm

Exit gate open until 12.30am

Brisbane Powerhouse Car Park (enter from Lamington Street)

148 parking spaces (paid parking)

Six accessible parking spaces for permit holders

Operates 24/7

For up-to-date venue information, please see bwf.org.au/planyourvisit

Accessibility

The BWF festival precinct is wheelchair accessible. Volunteer wayfinding assistance is available.

There is a drop-off area in the Brisbane Powerhouse car park with level access to the Stores Building and lift access to the main building. All levels of Brisbane Powerhouse are accessible by lift. The Turbine Platform can be accessed via

ramp. On entry to the theatre, an usher will direct you to your seats.

If you need any assistance, please approach one of our friendly staff.

Accessible seating options are available for wheelchair users and disabled patrons. Please notify Box Office of your requirements at the time of booking, a minimum of 24 hours in advance. Please note that balcony seating in the Powerhouse Theatre is not wheelchair accessible.

Companion cards are accepted for events at Brisbane Powerhouse unless otherwise stated. Please advise that you will be using a companion card at the time of booking. Companion cards must be presented when collecting the tickets.

Donate

If you are as passionate about celebrating books, writing and ideas as we are, we'd love you to consider making a donation.

This could help a child access our schools program or give an emerging Brisbane author the chance to present at the festival.

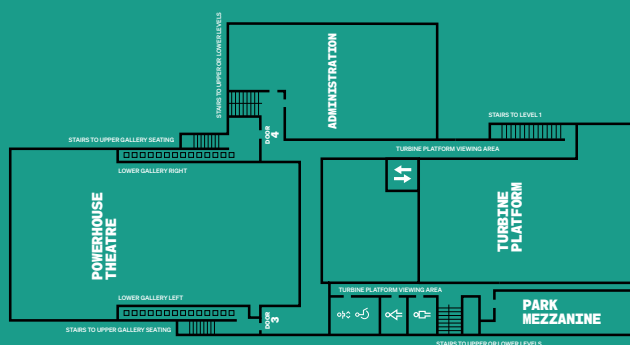
Any donation to BWF over \$2.00 is tax deductible. Visit bwf.org.au/donate

Terms & Conditions

Program details are correct at the time of printing. BWF reserves the right to alter the program and artists and to cancel sessions where necessary. No refunds or exchanges are possible once bookings are complete and payment received unless the festival has cancelled the session. Proof of concession may be required when booking your event and on entry to sessions. Special events are excluded from Multi-Event Bundles.

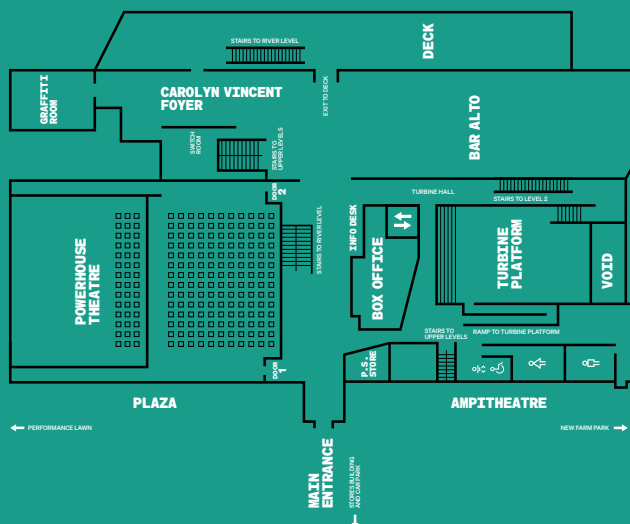
Full Terms & Conditions are available at bwf.org.au

MEZZANINE LEVEL



**BRISBANE
POWERHOUSE**

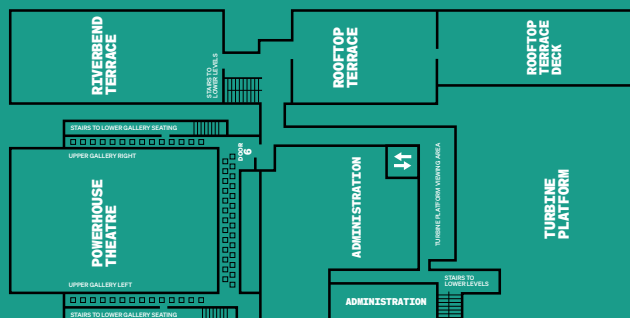
TURBINE LEVEL



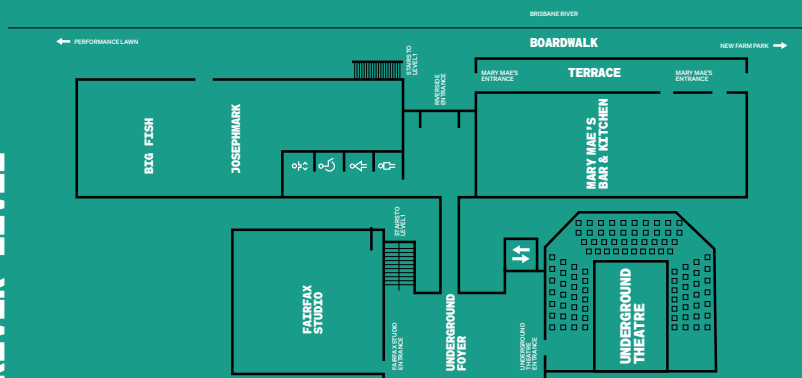
Parkside Marquee –
outside on the lawn

BWF Bookshop – Turbine Platform

ROOFTOP LEVEL



RIVER LEVEL



Powerhouse Theatre –
Turbine level

Fairfax Theatre – River level

Underground Studio – River level

Keynote Addresses



FREE EVENT

13. First Word Opening Address

Keynote by Debra Dank

**3–4pm, Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee**

BWF's 2026 opening speech will be delivered by one of Australia's most accomplished authors and educators: the Gudanji/Wakaja and Kalkadoon writer **Debra Dank**. Dank's luminous 2023 memoir, *We Come With This Place*, won an unprecedented four prizes at the 2024 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, plus the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal; her recent books, *Ankami* and *Terraglossia*, delve with lucidity and grace into the vicissitudes of language, loss and living.

At this very special event, you'll also hear from BWF's 2026 First Nations Cultural Curators, **Bruce Pascoe**, **Bebe Oliver** and **Samantha Faulkner**, from select event supporters and from BWF Artistic Director **Jackie Ryan**.

**Presented in partnership with
The University of Queensland**

55. Marion Taylor Address

Keynote by Andrew O'Hagan

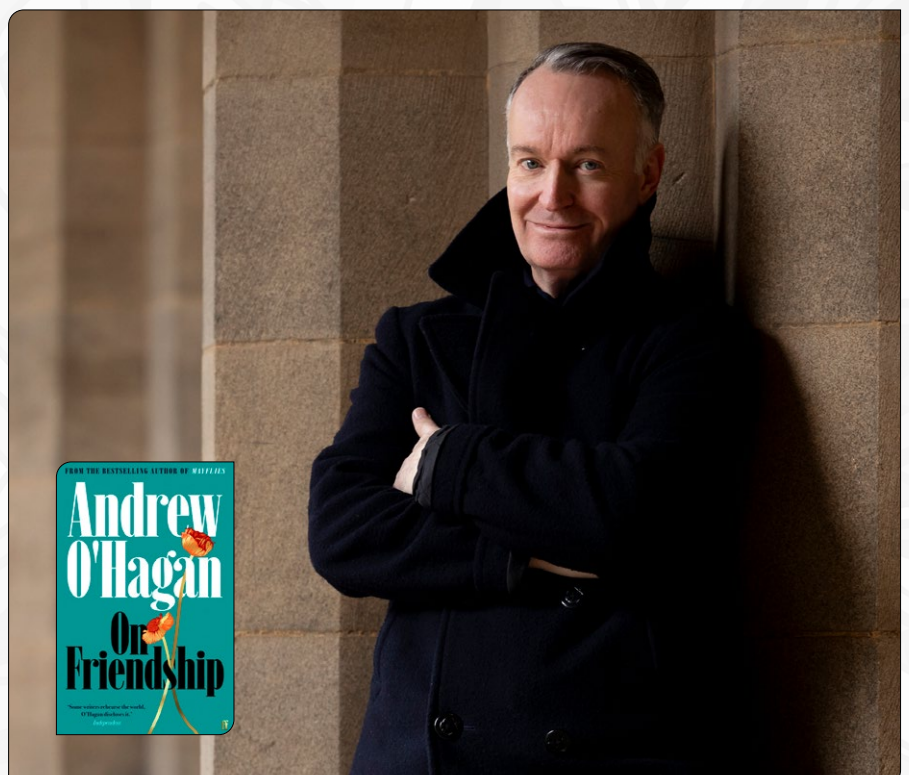
**7–9:30pm, Friday 9 October,
Riverside Terrace**

Join three-time Booker Prize nominee and *London Review of Books* Editor-at-Large Andrew O'Hagan for this year's very special Marion Taylor Keynote Address. In the wake of O'Hagan's luminous new book *On Friendship*, an eloquent testimony to the substance and significance of our emotional bonds, this legend of letters reflects on the valence of his own literary relationships and the way they've shaped his writing life.

Includes catering and refreshments.

Dress Code: Semi-formal

**This event is made possible through
the support of the Taylor family**



SPECIAL EVENT

24. The Queensland Literary Awards

Hosted by Richard Glover & Darby Jones

7:30–8:30pm, Thursday 8 October, Powerhouse Theatre

It's time to celebrate Queensland's literary night of nights! We'll be kicking off the 2026 Brisbane Writers Festival with a glorious and glittering ceremony to recognise the achievements of established and emerging local and national writers. Join us as we announce the winners across 12 award categories and a range of genres.

Supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland



Special Events at City Hall

SPECIAL EVENTS



118. Alice Oseman: *Heartstopper*

In conversation with Claire Christian

1–2pm, Sunday 11 October, Brisbane City Hall

In 2016, a young writer called Alice Oseman began publishing a webcomic about two teenage boys who meet and fall in love. Ten years on, Oseman is the third bestselling graphic novelist of all time, and that webcomic, *Heartstopper*, is a global publishing phenomenon (not to mention a wildly popular Netflix show) and a Gen Z icon lauded for its representation of queer joy. Join Oseman on her first visit to Brisbane as she discusses her tender and hopeful portrait of friendship and first love.



119. Luke Bateman: *For the Love of Reading*

In conversation with Lise & Sarah

3–4pm, Sunday 11 October, Brisbane City Hall

Brisbane, get ready to nerd out with #BookTok sensation Luke Bateman! In 2025, this former NRL player and *Bachelor* star from rural Queensland lit up social media with his infectious love of fantasy fiction, his advocacy for men's mental health and his mission to engage young readers. Join Bateman as he discusses his influential online platform and community, his passion for reading, and his forthcoming epic fantasy series with Atria Books.



[REDACTED]

Special Guest to be announced in late August!

In conversation with Trent Dalton
5–6pm, Sunday 11 October, Brisbane City Hall

In [REDACTED], [REDACTED] became the world's [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] when [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] years [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]. Through manifold [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] challenges, from the [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED], [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] a new [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]. In [REDACTED] story with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], reminding us of what's [REDACTED] from [REDACTED] of [REDACTED].



BRISBANE WRITERS FESTIVAL

Queensland Literary Awards

8 OCTOBER 2026

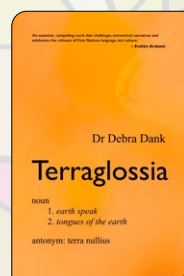
Brisbane Writers Festival is honoured to be entrusted with the Queensland Literary Awards, which are supported by the State Government of Queensland through Arts Queensland. We'd like to offer a hearty congratulations to all of this year's talented shortlisted artists, and a fulsome thank you to all of the hardworking judges.

The shortlists for the Published Book Award categories are below (keep an eye out for all these titles at the festival bookshop!); to find the shortlists for the Development Awards, head to qlas.com.au. All category winners will be announced at the QLAs ceremony as part of BWF on 8 October. May the best books win!

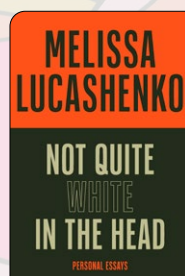
Published Book Award Shortlists

Queensland Premier's Award for Work of State Significance

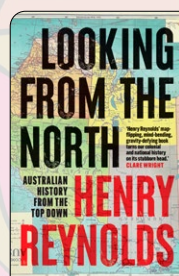
Supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland



Terraglossia
Debra Dank
Echo Publishing



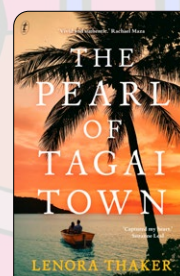
Not Quite White in the Head
Melissa Lucashenko
University of Queensland Press



Looking from the North: Australian History from the Top Down
Henry Reynolds
NewSouth Publishing



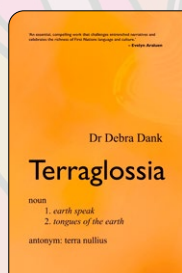
Quentin Bryce: The Authorised Biography
Juliet Rieden
Penguin Australia



The Pearl of Tagai Town
Lenora Thaker
Text Publishing

Non-Fiction Book Award

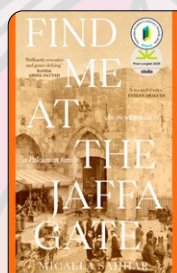
Supported by The University of Queensland



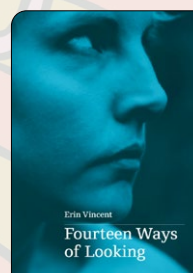
Terraglossia
Debra Dank
Echo Publishing



Brave New Wild
Richard King
Monash
University Publishing



**Find Me at the
Jaffa Gate**
Micaela Sahhar
NewSouth Publishing



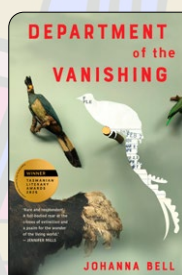
**Fourteen Ways
of Looking**
Erin Vincent
Upswell Publishing



The Red House
Kate Wild
Allen & Unwin

Fiction Book Award

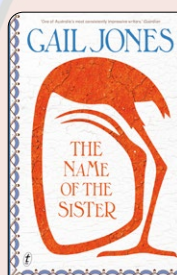
Supported by The University of Queensland



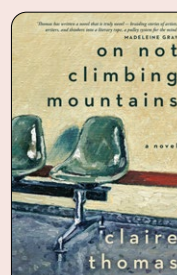
**Department of
the Vanishing**
Johanna Bell
Transit Lounge



Arborecence
Rhett Davis
Hachette Australia



The Name of the Sister
Gail Jones
Text Publishing



**On Not Climbing
Mountains**
Claire Thomas
Hachette Australia



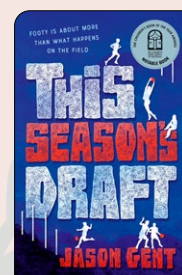
In a Common Hour
Sita Walker
Ultimo Press

Young Adult Book Award

Supported by The University of Queensland



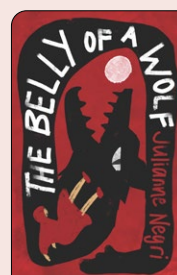
Once Upon Tomorrow
Karen Comer
Hachette Australia



This Season's Draft
Jason Gent
Allen & Unwin



Good Young Men
Gary Lonesborough
Allen & Unwin



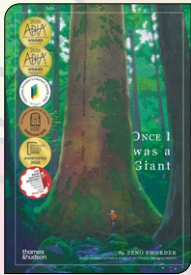
The Belly of a Wolf
Julianne Negri
UWA Publishing



Tearing Myself Together
Anna Whateley
Allen & Unwin



Children's Book Award



Once I Was a Giant
Zeno Swords
Thames & Hudson
Australia



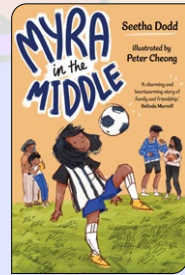
**One Koala,
One Hundred Trees**
**Leesa Allinson, Heather
Potter, Mark Jackson**
Wild Dog Books



Ruby's Web
Ellen van Neerven
Magabala Books



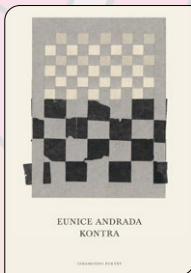
The Midlands
Kate Gordon
Riveted Press



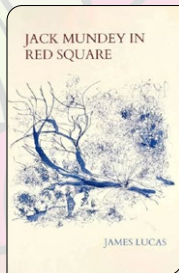
Myra in the Middle
**Seetha Dodd,
Peter Cheong**
University of
Queensland Press

Judith Wright Calanthe Award for a Poetry Collection

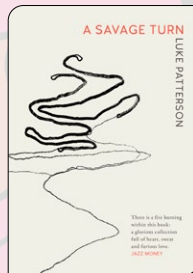
Supported by the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund



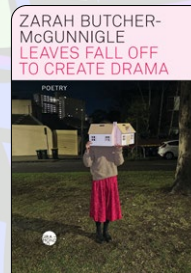
KONTRA
Eunice Andrada
Giramondo Publishing



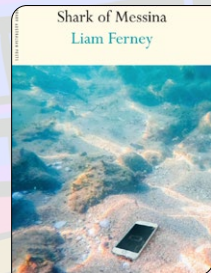
**Jack Munday
in Red Square**
James Lucas
Recent Work Press



A Savage Turn
Luke Patterson
Magabala Books

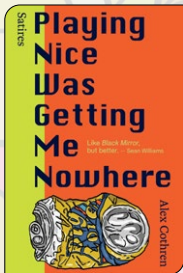


**Leaves Fall Off
to Create Drama**
**Zarah Butcher-
McGunnigle**
Giramondo Publishing

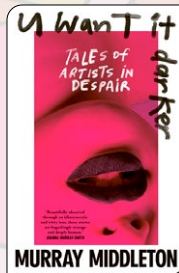


Shark of Messina
Liam Ferney
Hunter Publishing

Steele Rudd Award for a Short Story Collection (Biennial Award)



**Playing Nice Was
Getting Me Nowhere**
Alex Cothren
Pink Shorts Press



U Want It Darker
Murray Middleton
Picador Australia



Wait Here
Lucy Nelson
Simon & Schuster



Mother Salad
Helena Pantis
UWA Publishing

The Lord Mayor's People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year Award

Supported by Brisbane City Council

The Lord Mayor's People's Choice Queensland Book of the Year Award lets **you** decide the winner! The shortlist comprises two judges' picks each from the Fiction and Non-Fiction award categories, plus six more eligible titles based on Queensland sales and Brisbane City Council library borrows.

People's Choice voting closes 5pm AEST Thursday 10 September.



Rise and Shine
Kimberley Allsopp
HarperCollins



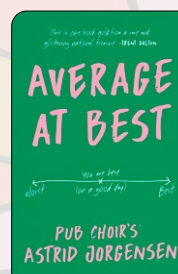
People Powered Radio
Heather Anderson
Springer Nature



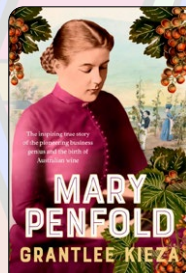
The Secret Year of Zara Holt
Kimberley Freeman
Hachette Australia



Honeyeater
Kathleen Jennings
Picador Australia



Average at Best
Astrid Jorgensen
Simon & Schuster



Mary Penfold
Grantlee Kieza
HarperCollins



Two Islands
Ian Kemish
University of Queensland Press



Melaleuca
Angie Faye Martin
HarperCollins



In a Common Hour
Sita Walker
Ultimo Press



The Nocturnals
Frances Whiting
HarperCollins

Vote for your favourite read from this year's shortlist using the QR code below, or go to qlas.com.au and follow the prompts.

**VOTE
NOW!**





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AUSTRALIA

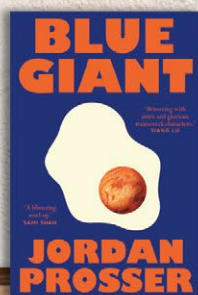
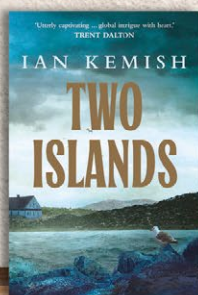
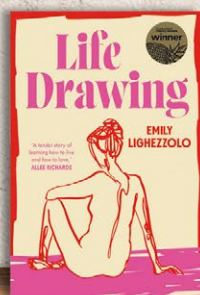
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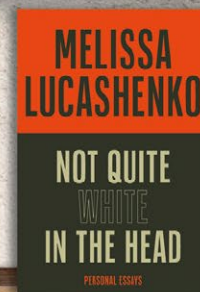
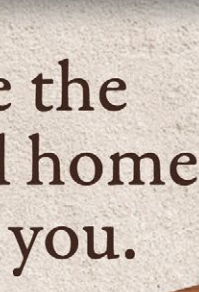
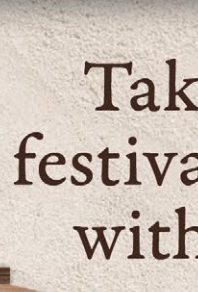
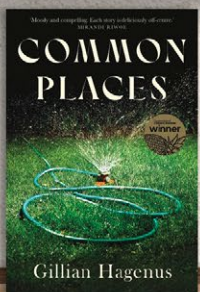
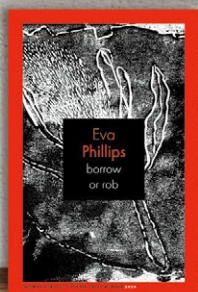
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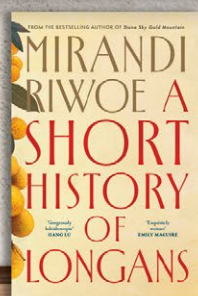
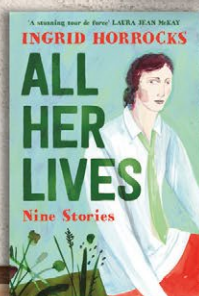
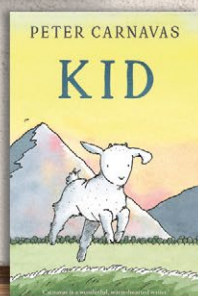
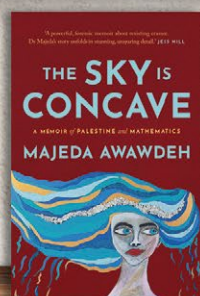
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UQP



Take the
festival home
with you.



The Internationals

This year, Brisbane Writers Festival is thrilled to be bringing you a stellar line-up of literary luminaries from across the globe. Whether you're a lover of literary fiction, a fan of fantasy and horror, an eager essay enthusiast, a graphic novel groupie or an all-round aficionado of exceptional writing, you'll find your perfect international match at the 2026 festival. Here are just a few of the sensational overseas scribes who'll be joining us in Brisbane:



Charlie Jane Anders

US speculative fiction star Charlie Jane Anders spins stories of sparkling imagination and intelligence – stories in which worlds like ours refract the complications and contradictions of our contemporary reality. Frequently compared to the legendary Ursula K Le Guin, Anders is the author of numerous standalone novels, series and short story collections and has won an array of major science fiction and fantasy awards, including the Hugo and the Nebula. Her latest book, *Lessons in Magic and Disaster*, is a tender and resonant exploration of heartbreak, family, and queer resilience.



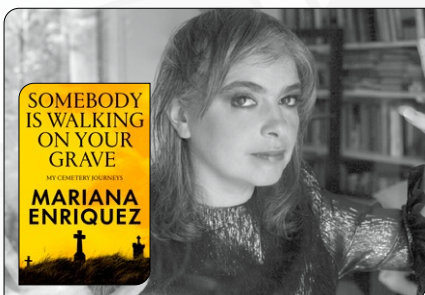
Elaine Castillo

A 2026 Whiting Award winner, a two-time San Francisco Public Library Laureate, a 2026 Women's Prize in Fiction longlist and, according to the *Financial Times*, one of '30 of the Planet's Most Exciting People': these are just a few of Filipino-American writer Elaine Castillo's many and deserved claims to fame. Her widely praised novels, 2018's *America Is Not the Heart* and 2025's *Moderation*, tell captivating stories of labour, power and belonging with barbed wit and piercing insight; her 2022 essay collection, *How to Read Now*, is a galvanising and bold take on the politics of reading.



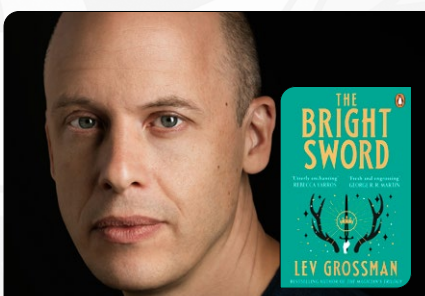
Catherine Chidgey

One of New Zealand's greatest living writers, Catherine Chidgey is the only person to have won her country's prestigious Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction twice; her numerous international accolades include the Commonwealth Writer's Prize and the Betty Trask Award. Her mesmerising novels and short stories traverse deliciously dark and discomfiting territory, from the chilling historical drama of 2020's *Remote Sympathy* to the fairytale gothic of 2022's *The Axeman's Carnival* to the dystopian spectacle of her prescient and visionary newest novel, *The Starving Bride*.



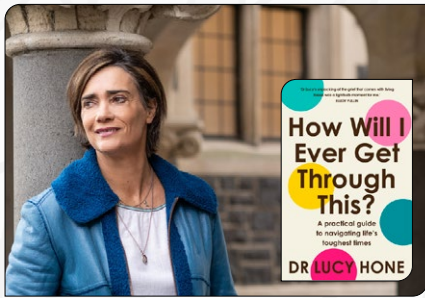
Mariana Enríquez

There's a reason Argentinian writer Mariana Enríquez has one of the most dedicated cult followings in contemporary literature. Her surreal and unsettling fiction, from the haunting novel *Our Share of Night* to the visceral short story collections *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* and *A Sunny Place for Shady People*, use body horror and supernatural mystery to lay bare the trauma and brutality of her country's military dictatorship and its aftermath. Her many literary distinctions include the 2021 Premio Herralde de Novela, a 2021 International Booker Prize shortlisting and the 2024 José Donoso Award.



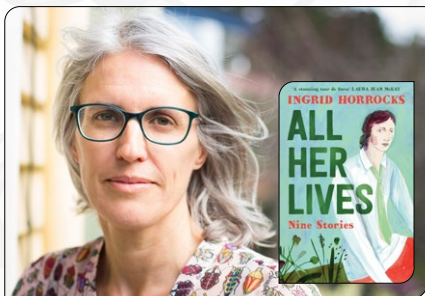
Lev Grossman

Award-winning US novelist and journalist Lev Grossman captivated readers the world over in 2009 with *The Magicians*, a darkly gripping fantasy novel that became a blockbuster trilogy and a popular TV series. Since then, Grossman – who's been hailed by *The New York Times* as a 'master storyteller' – has worked as a staff writer at *Time* magazine, penned stories for publications including *The Atlantic*, *Vanity Fair* and *The Believer*, published two novels for children and written an acclaimed screenplay. His latest book is *The Bright Sword*, a lyrical and profound reimagining of Arthurian legend.



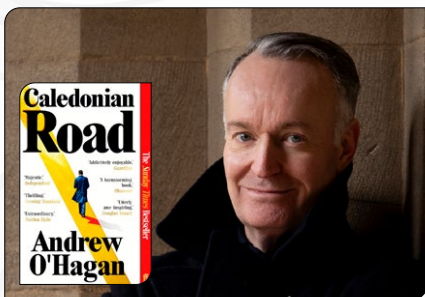
Dr Lucy Hone

Bestselling author and sought-after speaker Dr Lucy Hone knows all about hardship and resilience. After losing her daughter in a road accident in 2014, Dr Hone was confronted with the limitations of standard models for coping with grief. Ever since, the UK-born, New Zealand-based authority has been using her expertise and experience to develop practical, science-based tools for facing life's toughest times. Through her warm and relatable books, *Resilient Grieving* and *How Will I Ever Get Through This?*, and her viral 2020 TED Talk, Dr Hone has helped people the world over survive their darkest hour.



Ingrid Horrocks

There are few literary forms to which New Zealand's Ingrid Horrocks hasn't turned her talented hand. She's an accomplished scholar and a lauded memoirist, essayist and poet; she's been a Commonwealth Scholar in the UK and has a PhD from Princeton. In 2026, Horrocks released her debut work of fiction, *All Her Lives*, a stirring and striking collection of interlinked stories that celebrate women's search for freedom and love across the centuries. *All Her Lives* was also this year's deserving winner of New Zealand's top literary honour, the Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction.



Andrew O'Hagan

He's a triple Booker nominee, a Los Angeles Times Book Prize winner, the *London Review of Books* Editor-at-Large, and the author of seven novels and numerous remarkable essays (several of which, including his gimlet-eyed 2026 reflection on the misdemeanours of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, nearly broke the internet). For more than two decades, Scottish writer Andrew O'Hagan has been masterfully chronicling the vicissitudes of contemporary British life, elucidating themes of privilege, morality, memory and friendship with wit, dexterity and grace.



Susan Orlean

You may know legendary US journalist and author Susan Orlean from her renowned 1998 book *The Orchid Thief* (the subject of Spike Jonze's Oscar-winning 2002 film *Adaptation*). You may know her from her gripping 2018 bestseller *The Library Book*. You may know her from the immersive features she pens for *The New Yorker* – where she's been a staff writer since 1992 – on everything from umbrella inventors to the canine film star Rin Tin Tin. You may know her from her era-defining new memoir, *Joyride*, which captures her creativity, curiosity and career highs as one of the world's finest practitioners of narrative non-fiction.



Alice Oseman

She secured her first publishing deal at just 17 years old and is now the third bestselling graphic novelist since records began. She is, of course, Alice Oseman, the creative powerhouse behind the global phenomenon webcomic and graphic novel series *Heartstopper*, which was adapted into a hugely successful Netflix show. Praised for her realistic and sensitive portrayal of contemporary teenagehood – and especially for her joyful representations of LGBTQI+ life and her nuanced depiction of mental health issues – Oseman is a defining voice for Gen Z.



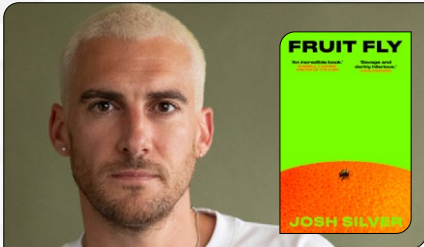
Lyla Sage

For Wild West wonder Lyla Sage, romance means small towns, blue skies, rugged ranch hands, and sassy single gals who are about to meet their match. A #1 *New York Times* bestseller and a TikTok queen, Sage writes sweet and spicy Westerns set in the breathtaking terrain of Wyoming's cowboy country, where the stakes are high, the feelings are big and the sunshine (and the characters) are hot – very hot. Saddle up for her *Rebel Blue Ranch* and *Sweetwater Peak* series and get ready to cross the frontier of love.



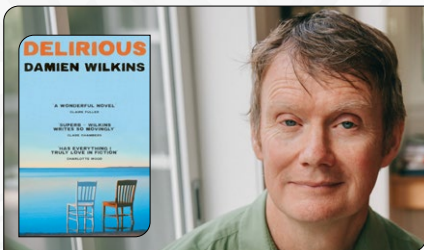
Josie Shapiro

One of New Zealand's most exciting new literary stars, Josie Shapiro crafts compelling contemporary stories of friendship, ambition and change – and of what it takes to achieve your dreams. In 2022, Shapiro won the inaugural Allen & Unwin Fiction Prize for her debut novel, *Everything Is Beautiful and Everything Hurts*, which flew off the shelves and was named one of 2023's best books by *The Spinoff*. Her second novel, 2025's *Good Things Come and Go*, is another bestseller, and her literary success so far has earned her a place as one of the Coalition for Books' 2025 New Voices of Aotearoa.



Josh Silver

It's been a blockbuster year for bestselling UK author and rising star Josh Silver: his wickedly funny and provocative adult fiction debut, *Fruit Fly*, has been captivating readers the world over with its satiric skewering of publishing and the politics of storytelling. Silver began his career in acting before turning his quick wit and keen eye to the art of writing: before *Fruit Fly*, he published three acclaimed young adult novels that put a gripping dystopian spin on our contemporary tendency to commodify pain and pursue happiness at any cost.



Damien Wilkins

Damien Wilkins is one of New Zealand's most decorated authors – and for good reason. Across 11 novels and two short story collections, he's brought wit, precision and subtlety to his character-driven stories of family, identity and relationships; he's also published a book of poetry and writes for television and theatre. His many literary accolades include the 2013 Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi Laureate Award and the 2025 Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction, which he won for his latest novel, *Delirious*, an intimate exploration of love and loss that's become a word-of-mouth sensation.

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GriffithReview94 Out of Office

Abbas El-Zein on the perils of professional judgement
Cameron Hurst on labour in Australian fiction
Jessy Wu on how AI is reshaping knowledge Jobs
Hannah Forsyth & Altin Gavranovic on how to quit
Eda Gunaydin on the tricks and traps of remote work



Thursday 8 October

13. First Word Opening Address

Keynote by Debra Dank
3–4pm, Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee

BWF's 2026 opening speech will be delivered by one of Australia's most accomplished authors and educators: the Gudanji/Wakaja and Kalkadoon writer Debra Dank. Dank's luminous 2023 memoir, *We Come With This Place*, won an unprecedented four prizes at the 2024 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, plus the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal; her recent books, *Ankami* and *Terraglossia*, delve with lucidity and grace into the vicissitudes of language, loss and living.

At this very special event, you'll also hear from BWF's 2026 First Nations Cultural Curators, Bruce Pascoe, Samantha Faulkner and Bebe Oliver, and from BWF Artistic Director Jackie Ryan.

Presented in partnership with
The University of Queensland

FREE
EVENT

15. Jock Serong: A Suitable Man

In conversation with Phil Brown
3:15–4:15pm, Thursday 8 October,
Powerhouse Theatre



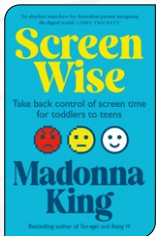
Jock Serong



Phil Brown

For more than 100 years, Fletcher Jones was a hallmark of Australian fashion – but the man behind the brand was cut from extraordinary cloth. An autodidact who left school at 13 and survived the horrors of World War I, David Fletcher Jones went on to open a factory in Warrnambool that would become a retail empire founded on profit-sharing and staff ownership. In this warm and inspiring biography, Jock Serong tells the riveting story of an entrepreneur whose vision revolutionised Australian menswear and whose life reflected the social progress of the twentieth century.

14. Madonna King: Screen Wise



In conversation with
Rebecca Levingston
3–4pm, Thursday
8 October,
Underground Theatre

Nearly a year after the government banned social media for kids

under 16, anxiety about children's screen time remains at code-red levels. In our intractably digital age, how can we help young people navigate life online? Journalist, speaker and bestselling parenting author Madonna King offers clear, actionable strategies in *Screen Wise*, which is being heralded as the Australian version of Jonathan Haidt's groundbreaking *The Anxious Generation*. King's book – based on her extensive research and interviews with parents, kids and experts – is an indispensable guide to today's trickiest digital dilemmas.

Supported by
The University of Queensland

17. Dr Norman Swan: The Brain Cliff



Dr Norman Swan

In conversation with
Liz Minchin
4:30–5:30pm,
Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee

Physician and journalist Dr Norman Swan has long

been a voice of scientific reason in an increasingly bewildering information landscape. These days, our brains are likely to feel more broken than ever – so thank goodness Dr Swan is here with his accessible and informative new book, which tells us all we need to know about the health and ageing process of our most important organ.

Supported by The Conversation



18. Louise Waterhouse: Driving Three Kings



In conversation
with Sean Jacobs
4:30–5:30pm,
Thursday 8 October,
Underground Theatre

Driving Three Kings is no ordinary political memoir. Since 1995, Louise

Waterhouse has proudly served Tonga – the only uncolonised Pacific nation – as Honorary Consul-General, a role held by her father, Bill, before her. Drawing on 50 years of her family's engagement with Tonga, Waterhouse charts the nation's rapid rise on the global stage, bringing rich personal insight and lively anecdotes – including Tonga's debut at the 2024 Winter Olympics and Waterhouse's claim to fame as the only person to have driven all three modern Tongan kings.

19. Faber Anthology Launch

4:30–5:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Fairfax Studio

Join Faber Writing Academy for the launch of the 2026 *Faber Writing Anthology*, hosted by Pip Smith and Emily O'Grady and featuring readings by submission-ready graduates of the selective Writing a Novel courses. Faber Writing Academy offers an annual program of online and in-person writing courses presented by Allen & Unwin and the prestigious UK publisher Faber & Faber.

20. Megan Hess: The World of Barbie



Megan Hess

In conversation
with Rachel Burke
5–6pm, Thursday
8 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

Ever since her 1959 debut at New York's International Toy

Fair, Barbie has effortlessly embodied the sartorial style of the moment: from swimsuits to spacesuits, she's worn it all on point (and often in pink). Acclaimed fashion illustrator Megan Hess has immortalised the most memorable threads of the world's favourite doll in not one but two books, both published in collaboration with Mattel: *Barbie: A Fashion Icon*, an impeccably crafted compendium of fabulous fits, and *The World of Barbie*, a gorgeous keepsake for kids and collectors alike.

21. Robert Forster: *Songwriters on the Run*



Robert Forster

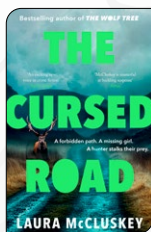
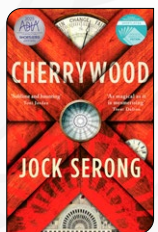
In conversation
with Andrew Stafford
6–7pm, Thursday
8 October,
Parkside Marquee

A criminal caper, a creative odyssey and a couple of blokes from Queensland: iconic solo artist and former Go-Betweens vocalist Robert Forster's madcap debut novel has got it all. In 1991, singer-songwriters Mick and Drew find themselves on the lam from the law – but when a Hollywood star takes a liking to their tunes, their fortunes are set to change. *Songwriters on the Run* is a wild, nostalgic and joyous rock 'n' roll roadtrip from a deadset music legend.

22. Reverberations

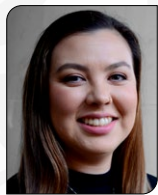
Katie Hoskins (*When the Party's Over*), Jock Serong (*Cherrywood*), Danny Ben-Moshe (*The Watchmaker's War*), Laura McCluskey (*The Cursed Road*). Chair: Ella Jeffery

6–7pm, Thursday 8 October,
Underground Theatre



From chilling small-town secrets and scandalous suburban drama to a tantalising puzzlebox mystery and a quest for revenge against Nazis in postwar Melbourne, these immersive and spellbinding novels chart the costs and consequences of our actions, asking how far we might go for what we believe and who we love.

23. Zenadth Kes: *My Island Home*



Ellen Armstrong

Lenora Thaker, Nancy Bamaga, Ellen Armstrong. Chair: Samantha Faulkner
6–7pm, Thursday 8 October, Fairfax Studio

This panel brings together three

women with diverse experiences in the creative sector: an emerging writer, an established writer and an arts advocate. They'll share their experiences in the creative sector as Torres Strait Islander women and will explore themes of

culture, identity and representation. You'll hear how they began their writing journeys and what advice they'd give to aspiring writers and advocates.

Curated by Samantha Faulkner

24. The Queensland Literary Awards

Hosted by Richard Glover
& Darby Jones

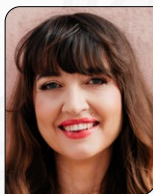
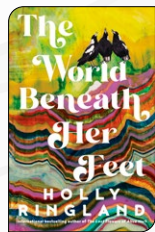
7:30–8:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

It's time to celebrate Queensland's literary night of nights! We'll be kicking off the 2026 Brisbane Writers Festival with a glorious and glittering ceremony to recognise the achievements of established and emerging local and national writers. Join us as we announce the winners across 12 award categories and a range of genres.

Supported by the Queensland
Government through Arts Queensland

SPECIAL
EVENT

25. Holly Ringland: *The World Beneath Her Feet*



Holly Ringland

In conversation with Katherine Feeney
7:30–8:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee

One of Australia's favourite storytellers is back with a luminous and deeply moving tale of time, place, love and belonging. In international bestseller Holly Ringland's gorgeous third novel, Maggie Byrd has the life in London she always wanted. But when she inherits rewilded land from her beloved yet estranged uncle in Australia – the place where she grew up, and that she vowed she'd never return to – Maggie must finally unearth her buried past.

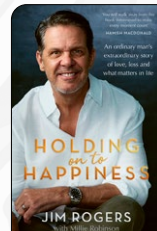
26. Thom Woodroffe: *Power, Prosperity & Planet*

In conversation with Ian Lowe
7:30–8:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Underground Theatre

Climate change affects all of us – but what about climate action? In this cogent and clear-eyed book, Thom Woodroffe, a Senior International Fellow with the Smart Energy Council, argues that Australia's energy transition offers us a vital opportunity to secure economic

prosperity. By focusing on middle Australia, our climate and energy policy can both enrich ordinary households across the country and allow us to become an international climate leader.

27. Jim Rogers and Millie Robinson: *Holding on to Happiness*



In conversation
with Sarah Klenbort
7:30–8:30pm,
Thursday 8 October,
Fairfax Studio

When Jim Rogers was just 55 years old, he received a devastating diagnosis of young-onset Alzheimer's. Since then, he's been on a mission to help others who are facing the uncertainty and fear of dementia: he's co-host of the incredibly successful podcast *Hold the Moment* with journalist Hamish McDonald, and he's connected with millions through his appearances on *The Imperfects* and ABC's *Australian Story*. *Holding on to Happiness*, co-written with his daughter Millie, is a moving and heartfelt memoir about an ordinary man's extraordinary life.



Friday 9 October

28. Stephanie Alexander:

The Cook's Companion 30th Anniversary Edition



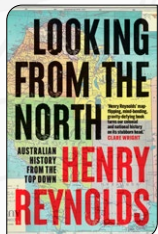
Stephanie Alexander

In conversation
with Jessica Rudd
9:30–10:30am,
Friday 9 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

For three decades, copies of Stephanie Alexander's indispensable *Cook's Companion* haven't just graced the shelves of Australian kitchens – they've been bookmarked, dog-eared, sauce-stained, annotated, sticky-noted, and passed down to the next generation. Join Australia's First Lady of Food as she discusses the thirtieth anniversary of this landmark volume and the incredible culinary career that's immortalised in its pages.

29. Henry Reynolds:

Looking from the North



In conversation
with Michael Ondaatje
9:30–10:30am,
Friday 9 October,
Parkside Marquee

Eminent historian
Henry Reynolds
has transformed

Australia's understanding of its past in his pioneering accounts of colonial violence and conflict. In *Looking from the North*, he takes a top-down view of the nation's history, flipping our southern-centric view on its head by telling the story of how the tropics were colonised and how this venture, beginning in 1861, differed markedly from the way events unfolded in the south. This masterful scholarly reappraisal offers valuable new perspectives for our present and future.



30. Thrillers

Ian Kemish (*Two Islands*), Danny Ben-Moshe (*The Watchmaker's War*), Dinuka McKenzie (*She Lied First*), Nick Croydon (*Nautilus*). Chair: Joanna Jenkins

9:30–10:30am, Friday 9 October,
Underground Theatre



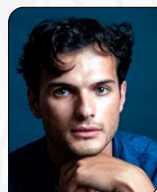
A witness to war crimes in search of refuge on a remote island. A Jewish survivor seeking revenge in the aftermath of the Holocaust. A custodian who must protect a powerful legacy from rogue interests. Two sisters who must each confront a devastating secret the other has been keeping. These pulse-racing, page-turning tales blend fact with fiction and history with mystery to craft forceful tales of tension and trauma.

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31. We Need to Talk About Literary Culture

Mindy Gill, Julian Meyrick,
Raeden Richardson, Darby
Jones. Chair: Carody Culver

9:30–10:30am, Friday 9 October,
Fairfax Studio



Raeden Richardson Juliana Meyrick

Australian literary journals are vital to a thriving intellectual culture. But at present, they're traversing an unusually thorny path. Alongside the evergreen problems of limited funding and resources, the publishing sector is experiencing the one-two punch of declining book sales and rising production costs; the cultural discourse is also increasingly volatile. Join this intrepid panel as they investigate these complexities and their implications for the future of literary journals.

Supported by
The University of Queensland

32. *She Is Me:*

The Journey from Prison to Self

FREE
EVENT



Trent Dalton

Trent Dalton with Tahlia
Isaac and
Rocket Bretherton

11am–12pm,
Friday 9 October,
Parkside Marquee

By the time Tahlia
Isaac was 29 years

old, she'd survived years cycling in and out of prison and a decade of addiction. Now, this remarkable criminologist and social justice advocate has gathered the stories of 20 women who are rebuilding their lives after prison. One of these incredible survivors, Rocket Bretherton, will be joining her on stage for this very special BWF event. *She Is Me* is not only a nuanced and empathetic portrait of the factors that shape women's trajectories into crime and incarceration – it's also a powerful and passionate rallying cry to reform our justice system and strengthen our social contract.

33. Mother Earth

FREE
EVENT



Melissa

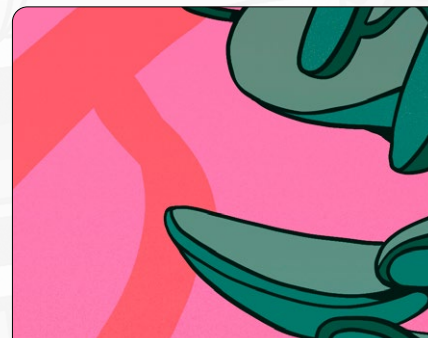
Lucashenko

Melissa
Lucashenko,
Judy Watson, Samuel
Watson. Chair: Bruce
Pascoe

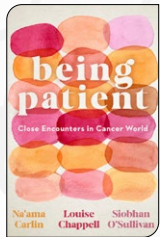
11am–12pm,
Friday 9 October,
Underground Theatre

Mother Earth is a sacred being – a source of life, knowledge and sustenance that we must care for and respect. Join these leading First Nations artists as they discuss making Mother Earth the centre of spirituality and protecting culture.

Curated by Bruce Pascoe



34. *Being Patient: Close Encounters in the Cancer World*



Na'ama Carlin & Louise Chappell in conversation with Edwina Shaw
11am–12pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

Cancer is a frighteningly common experience: two in five Australians will be diagnosed by the age of 85. Yet many of us, whether we've received a diagnosis ourselves or are close to someone who has, must then navigate a minefield of emotional and practical challenges. All three authors of *Being Patient* – which shares the stories of patients, caregivers and clinicians – have known what it's like to get that dreaded diagnosis and to negotiate what comes next. Join two of them as they explore the complexities of cancer and its care.

35. Richard Glover: *How to Ruin a Child*



Richard Glover

In conversation with Christine Jackman
11:15am–12:15pm, Friday 9 October, Powerhouse Theatre

Years before mummy bloggers and influencers made anyone raising a kid feel overjudged and underqualified, legions of advisors – from magazine columnists to government agencies – were telling Aussie parents what to do. If you didn't follow the ever-changing rules, the result was catastrophically simple: you'd ruin your child. But would you? Legendary journalist and rapier wit Richard Glover chronicles these decades of divergent guidance in his side-splittingly funny and deeply reassuring new book, a must-read for old and new parents alike.

36. *Style & Substance*

Jock Serong (*A Suitable Man*), Megan Hess (*The Gown*), Sophie Green (*The Frock Shop*), Stavroula Adameitis aka Frida Las Vegas (*Australianarama*). Chair: Alison Kubler
12:30–1:30pm, Friday 9 October, Parkside Marquee



Every outfit tells a story. From the travelling salesman who revolutionised Australian menswear to the history of fashion's most iconic gowns, from a sparkling celebration of second-hand frocks to a colourful compendium of Aussie kitsch and camp, these enthralling narratives take us behind the dressing room curtain to reveal the many wonders of our wardrobes.

37. *Control*

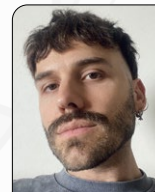
Kathryn Heyman (*Circle of Wonders*), Eleanor Limprecht (*Cul-de-Sac*), Katherine Johnson (*Every Wild Soul*), Dinuka McKenzie (*She Lied First*). Chair: Laura Elvery
12:30–1:30pm, Friday 9 October, Underground Theatre



A storm that heralds the arrival of a mysterious stranger. A sibling dynamic threatened by secrets. An end-of-life gathering that surfaces old tensions and teaches new lessons. A trip that turns into a fight for survival. These four engrossing novels capture the risks and rewards of our closest relationships and the lengths to which we'll go to protect what we love.

38. Winners & Grinners: 2026 Queensland Literary Awards Panel

FREE EVENT



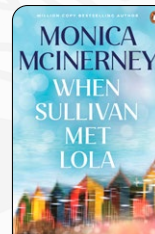
Darby Jones

Chair: Darby Jones
12:30–1:30pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

Celebrate the work of local and national writing talent with this special Queensland

Literary Awards panel! You'll hear from some of the 2026 QLAs winners as they discuss their nominated books, the craft of writing, the ups and downs of being a contemporary author, and that winning feeling.

39. Monica McInerney: *When Sullivan Met Lola*



In conversation with Frances Whiting
1–2pm, Friday 9 October, Powerhouse Theatre

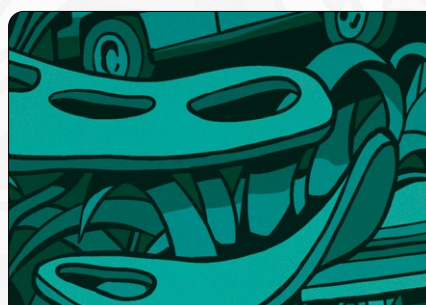
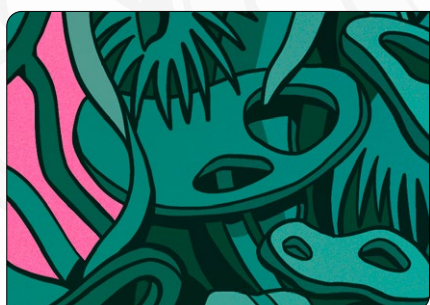
A new Monica McInerney novel is reason enough to

celebrate – but how about a new Monica McInerney novel that unites two of her most beloved characters? In this gorgeous standalone story, 12-year-old Melburnian Sullivan Farrington feels as though he's hit rock bottom – until he finds an unexpected friend in 86-year-old Lola Quinlan, who's come to the Victorian capital on a very specific and unusual mission. When the two join forces, they've got no idea the trouble they're about to cause – but thank goodness they've got each other ...

40. *The Library That Made Me*

Bruce Pascoe, Suzie Miller, Richard Glover. Chair: Phillipa McGuinness
2–3pm, Friday 9 October, Parkside Marquee

Libraries are special places: they offer refuge and escape, connection and solitude, inspiration and peace. Celebrate the magic of these storied institutions with a conversation featuring contributors from *The Library That Made Me*, an anthology of love letters to libraries everywhere.



41. Elizabeth Tynan: *Nuclear Archipelago*

In conversation with Ian Lowe
2–3pm, Friday 9 October,
Underground Theatre

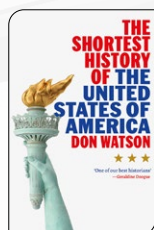
What lessons can we learn from our historical fascination with, and fear of, nuclear warfare? Since 2016, renowned author and academic Elizabeth Tynan has been chronicling the history of British nuclear testing in Australia, and *Nuclear Archipelago* is the final book in her landmark trilogy on the subject. In telling the little-known story of the Western Australian weapons tests conducted in the 1950s, Tynan reveals the environmental and political fallout that lingers long into the twenty-first century.

42. Damien Wilkins: *Delirious*

In conversation with Charlotte Wood
2–3pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

When Pete and Mary decide to move into a retirement village, they're ready for a new chapter. But old memories and unfinished business keep eddying around them, from the cop who offers fresh information in the cold case of their son's death to Pete's sudden, haunting memories of his late mother. Damien Wilkins' moving and perceptive novel explores the eternal dance between past and present, posing poignant questions about selfhood and second chances.

43. Don Watson: *The Shortest History of the United States of America*



Don Watson

In conversation with Michael Ondaatje
2:45–3:45pm, Friday 9 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

The United States has been in the news a lot lately – but tracing its past can bring fresh perspective to its tumultuous present. Lucky for us, acclaimed historian Don Watson – who's been enlightening readers for decades with his elegant and engaging commentary on US history, culture and politics – is on the case. His latest book is a pithy and perfect introduction to America's grit, glamour and grift, from the declaration of independence to the twenty-first century.

44. Good Grief

Josh Silver (*Traumaland*), Gary Lonesborough (*Good Young Men*), Megan Jacobson (*The Waiting Place*). Chair: Darby Jones

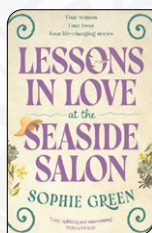
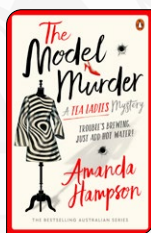
3:30–4:30pm, Friday 9 October,
Parkside Marquee

How do you handle loss – of yourself, of the life you thought you wanted, or of someone close to you? From the tensions of small-town Australia and a tightly controlled religious community to the chilling reality of a VR simulation that hides a dark secret, these unputdownable novels explore how we can find belonging and friendship in a world where all is not as it seems.

45. Cosy Reads

Amanda Hampson (*The Model Murder*), Sophie Green (*Lessons in Love at the Seaside Salon*), Christy Anne Jones (*Theodora's Tea Shop*), Victoria Hannan (*I Love the Whole World!*). Chair: Carla Salmon

3:30–4:30pm, Friday 9 October,
Underground Theatre



A tenacious troupe of tea ladies on the trail of a murderer. A seaside salon that welcomes four women as they learn to embrace love. An aspiring young witch who learns magic at a tea shop that hides all kinds of secrets. And a solo trip to the bright lights of Las Vegas that offers surprising lessons in selfhood and acceptance. These four delightful and heartfelt novels follow bold and brilliant women who are about to find more than what they bargained for.

46. Bearing Witness

Justine E Hausheer (*The Vanishing Wild*), Durkhanai Ayubi (*She Who Tastes, Knows*), Eva Phillips (*Borrow or Rob*), Edwina Shaw (*Dear Madman*). Chair: Simon Cleary

3:30–4:30pm, Friday 9 October,
Fairfax Studio

A crime that's haunted a family for generations. A fight against the extinction crisis. A homeland that's long been misunderstood and misrepresented. An intervention into the history of Australian art. These potent and probing narratives – which span fiction, poetry, science writing and memoir – capture the costs

YA

of emotional, physical and cultural incursions, revealing the weight of silence and the value of witnessing.

47. This Writing Life

Susan Orlean (*Joyride*), Richard Flanagan (*Question 7*), Charlotte Wood (*The Writer's Room*), Andrew Pippos (*The Transformations*). Chair: Carody Culver

4:30–5:30pm, Friday 9 October,
Powerhouse Theatre



Richard Flanagan

Charlotte Wood

Andrew Pippos

What does it mean to capture a life in words – and how do the stories we tell about ourselves shape the way we see the world? Susan Orlean's exuberant memoir of finding her creative calling, Richard Flanagan's exceptional blend of history and autofiction, Andrew Pippos' intimate novel of endings and beginnings, and Charlotte Wood's indispensable compilation of conversations with other authors all reveal, in striking and compelling ways, how we narrate and understand the writer's work.

48. Comedy Salon: So Bad It's Good

Elaine Castillo, Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Jordan Prosser, Charlie Jane Anders, Debra Oswald, Richard Glover. MC: Laura McCluskey

5–6pm, Friday 9 October,
Parkside Marquee



Michael Mohammed Ahmad

Jordan Prosser

Debra Oswald

Writing that's so bad it's good? So over the top it's funny? Harder than it may sound. These brave literary souls have accepted a peculiar mission: come up with an odd alter ego and then write a short story in the voice of that character. What could go wrong? You'll need a ticket to find out.

49. Bargains, Secrets & Enchantments

YA



Lynette Noni (*Shadow Reaper*), Bori Cser (*Mirrorwoven*). Chair: Jeann Campillo

5–6pm, Friday 9 October, Underground Theatre

These wildly inventive and engrossing books tell tales of magical secrets, political intrigue and enemies-to-lovers romance. With their playful spins on classic tropes, epic worldbuilding and intricately imagined magic systems, these novels are guaranteed to grip you to the very last line.

50. First Stories Collective

FREE EVENT

Melissa Lucashenko, Anita Heiss, Lenora Thaker. Chair: Bebe Oliver

5–6pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

What does the future of storytelling look like when First Nations voices lead the conversation? This panel explores cultural authority, publishing, readership, literary infrastructure and the power of stories within public memory and national identity. Bringing together leading First Nations writers, the discussion will examine the opportunities and tensions facing the sector, and what it'll take to build a thriving and self-determined literary future for generations to come.

Curated by Bebe Oliver

51. Suzie Miller: *Inter Alia*



In conversation with Frances Whiting
6:15–7:15pm, Friday 9 October, Powerhouse Theatre

Award-winning playwright Suzie Miller – author of the acclaimed

one-woman show and novel *Prima Facie* – is back with another penetrating exploration of justice and gender politics. *Inter Alia*, which premiered at London's National Theatre in 2025 starring Rosamund Pike, follows an accomplished Crown Court judge whose efforts to change the system from within collide with a devastating incident involving her son. Join Suzie as she discusses the process of writing stories for the stage and using fiction to lay bare the complexities and contradictions of the law.

Supported by
The University of Queensland

52. Luke Bateman & the Debutants

Shailee Thompson (*How to Kill a Guy in Ten Dates*), Jacob K Gallagher (*The Doubles*), Cameron Sullivan (*The Red Winter*), Emily Lighezzolo (*Life Drawing*). Chair: Luke Bateman

6:30–7:30pm, Friday 9 October, Parkside Marquee



Luke Bateman



Emily Lighezzolo

Ever since he burst onto BookTok in 2025, NRL-star-turned-fantasy-author Luke Bateman has been using his platform to champion the work of other writers. Now, ahead of his debut novel being released in 2027, he's doing it in person! Join Bateman as he chats with four of Australia's most exciting new novelists – whose work runs the gamut from literary to speculative fiction and from fantasy to slasher romcom – to explore the thrills and spills of being a first-time author.

53. Unbowed

Natasha Lester (*The Chateau on Sunset*), Ingrid Horrocks (*All Her Lives*), Katie Hoskins (*When the Party's Over*), Eleanor Limprecht (*Cul-de-Sac*). Chair: Mirandi Riwoe

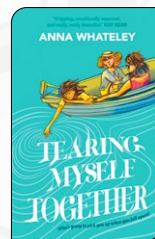
6:30–7:30pm, Friday 9 October, Underground Theatre



In these four breathtaking works of fiction, women must confront the past and face the future. From a gripping narrative of suburban scandal to a short story collection that celebrates revolution and change, from a tale of Hollywood glamour and mystery to a gripping drama about one woman's fight to save herself and her children, these books capture extraordinary moments and remarkable lives.

54. Better Together

YA



Allanah Hunt (*Forever & Ever*), Anna Whateley (*Tearing Myself Together*). Chair: Rhianna Patrick

6:30–7:30pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

Buried secrets. Messy friendships. Unhappy families. The pain and promise of first love. The challenge of forgiveness. In these two candid and heart-wrenching novels, characters wrestle with emotional and physical adversity as they come to terms with their past and learn how to reimagine their future.

55. Marion Taylor Address: Keynote by Andrew O'Hagan

SPECIAL EVENT



7–9:30pm, Friday 9 October, Riverside Terrace

Join three-time Booker Prize nominee and *London Review of Books* Editor-at-Large

Andrew O'Hagan for this year's very special Marion Taylor Keynote Address. In the wake of O'Hagan's luminous new book *On Friendship*, an eloquent testimony to the substance and significance of our emotional bonds, this legend of letters reflects on the valence of his own literary relationships and the way they've shaped his writing life. *Includes catering and refreshments. Dress code: Semi-formal*

Supported by the Taylor family

56. Chris Kohler: *How They Get You*

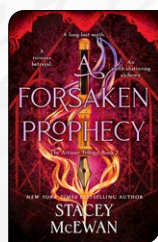


In conversation with Rachel Mealey
8–9pm, Friday 9 October, Powerhouse Theatre

If you've ever reached the end of a pay cycle and wondered where all your hard-earned cash just went (and how it managed to disappear so fast), finance journalist Chris Kohler is on the case. In this entertaining and savvy guide, he'll take you on a tour of the businesses and schemes that are fleecing you, from likely suspects (supermarkets, anyone?) to sneakier players (loyalty programs that reward nothing but your overspending). You and your wallet will be cashing in on Chris' sage advice for years to come.

Supported by
University of the Sunshine Coast

57. Romantasy



Freya Marske (*A Marvellous Light*), Lily Crozier (*Vow of Eternal Night*), Stacey McEwan (*A Forsaken Prophecy*). Chair: Kieren Scougall
8–9pm, Friday

9 October, Parkside Marquee

In 2026, romantasy is bigger than ever, bringing together heart-pounding action with pulse-racing intrigue and lavishly imagined fictional worlds. This panel brings together some of Australia's most popular romantasy writers for a deep dive into the tropes, twists and tricks of this steamy and subversive subgenre.

58. Societal Disconnect

Michael Mohammed Ahmad (*Bugger*), Katherine Johnson (*Every Wild Soul*), Brooke Davis (*No One's Looking*), Sally Piper (*People Like Us*). Chair: Ashley Hay
8–9pm, Friday 9 October, Underground Theatre



What's the cost of breaking the rules? And what's the legacy of abuse? These evocative, tense and captivating narratives expose the intricacies and intimacies of family dynamics and reveal how the choices we make can both rewrite the past and reimagine the future.

59. Poetry Salon

Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. MC: Ella Jeffery
8–9pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio



Mindy Gill



Liam Ferney

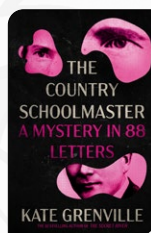
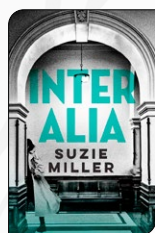
This show-stopping literary salon features poetry readings and performances from a dynamic line-up of local and national voices. Enjoy pure poetry in motion in the fine company of these award-winning wordsmiths.

FREE
EVENT

Saturday 10 October

60. Justice Is Severed

Suzie Miller (*Inter Alia*), Kate Grenville (*The Country Schoolmaster*), Michael Mohammed Ahmad (*Bugger*), Olivera Simic (*Madam War Criminal*). Chair: Jessica Rudd
9:30–10:30am, Saturday 10 October, Powerhouse Theatre



A schoolmaster accused of shocking violence. A boy who's learnt the power of silence. An unrepentant war criminal. A judge facing the collision of her personal and private lives. These engrossing fictional and real-life tales of resistance, retribution and reckoning ask us to consider the nature of justice and the limits of the law.

61. Troubles in Paradise

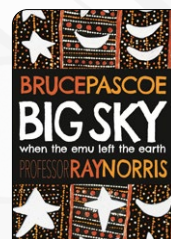
Anita Heiss (*The Paradise Pact*), Rebecca Armitage (*The Heir Apparent*), Victoria Hannan (*I Love the Whole World!*), Rachel Fox McLeod (*Disgraceful*). Chair: Sally Wilson
9:30–10:30am, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee



Leslie's been dumped for a woman with superior posture. Abbey's girls' trip has been derailed by a handsome stranger. Grace's marriage breakdown has inspired her to start embracing bad decisions. And Lexi has been forced back into contact with her family – her royal family. In these vivacious and big-hearted novels of reckoning and reclamation, the unexpected offers both chaos and opportunity.

62. Bruce Pascoe: Big Sky

FREE
EVENT



In conversation with Melissa Lucashenko
9:30–10:30am, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre

What happens when an Aboriginal farmer and an astrophysics professor look to the heavens and talk about what they see? *Big Sky* chronicles a powerful and perspective-shifting dialogue between award-winning *Dark Emu* author Bruce Pascoe and accomplished astrophysicist Ray Norris. It's both an illuminating meeting of minds and a vital union of science and philosophy, showing us what we can learn from millennia of First Nations sky knowledge and how it can help us navigate the ecological uncertainty of our future.

63. Griffith Review:

On the Money & Out of Office

Cameron Hurst, Fiona Wright, Jessie Wu. Chair: Carody Culver
9:30–10:30am, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio



Jessie Wu



Carody Culver

How we spend our working hours can have a profound influence on our self-worth, our social circles and our sense of identity (not to mention our bank balance). In the midst of rising inequality and a labour market that's being rapidly reshaped by AI, how should we be thinking about the past and future of work and money? Join three standout thinkers and writers as they discuss their recent contributions to the money- and work-themed editions of *Griffith Review*.

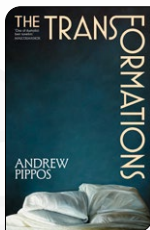
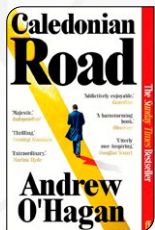
Supported by Griffith Review



64. Of Morals & Men

Andrew O'Hagan (*Caledonian Road*), Michael Winkler (*Grieffdogg*), Andrew Pippas (*The Transformations*), Malcolm Knox (*The First Friend*). Chair: Raeden Richardson

11am–12pm, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee

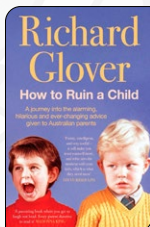
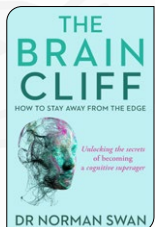


A slide down the social ladder in a changing city. A life-altering choice that bestows a complicated gift. A transformative encounter in the midst of institutional decline. A toxic friendship in the Machiavellian world of 1930s Soviet politics. In these four striking novels, men negotiate the many questions and quandaries of masculinity, morality and materiality.

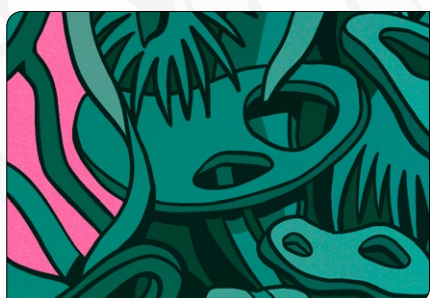
65. Be Prepared

Dr Norman Swan (*The Brain Cliff*), Dr Ahona Guha (*How We Relate*), Dr Lucy Hone (*How Will I Ever Get Through This?*), Richard Glover (*How to Ruin a Child*). Chair: Katherine Feeney

11am–12pm, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre



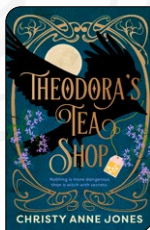
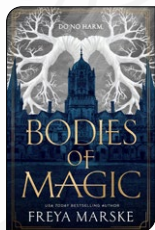
You never know when life's going to throw you a curveball – but it always pays to prepare for the unexpected. Whether you're worried about (or having to deal with) health challenges, seismic life changes, interpersonal problems or parenting issues, these four experts in medicine, psychology, grief ... and how not to raise a child have got you covered.



66. Otherworldly

Freya Marske (*Bodies of Magic*), Christy Anne Jones (*Theodora's Tea Shop*), Lily Crozier (*Vow of Eternal Night*), John Morrissey (*Bird Deity*). Chair: January Gilchrist

11am–12pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio



Don your witch's cape or intergalactic space suit and prepare yourself for a thrilling journey through lands magical, dangerous and strange. In these bewitching and propulsive novels, power and desire face off against cosmic horrors, mysterious syndicates, shadowy institutions and supernatural beings.

67. Adam Liaw:

Asian Home Cooking



In conversation with Rebecca Levingston

11:15am–12:15pm, Saturday 10 October, Powerhouse Theatre

One of the most common mistakes in cooking is trying to

learn a new cuisine from its restaurant food. In *Asian Home Cooking*, the new kitchen bible from one of Australia's most trusted and venerated cooks and food writers, Adam Liaw takes us through how real home cooks – not restaurant chefs – cook across 250 homestyle recipes from 27 Asian countries. This is the missing link that will help you truly master Asian cooking at home once and for all.

68. Rebecca Armitage:

The Heir Apparent



Rebecca Armitage

In conversation with Marie-Louise Theile

12:30–1:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee

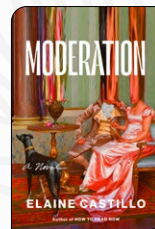
Rebecca Armitage's utterly unputdownable tale of royalty and romance is one of the biggest publishing

sensations of the year and a Reese's Book Club Pick. In *The Heir Apparent*, a young English doctor must confront her true identity as a member of the British monarchy after a tragic accident means she's suddenly first in line for the throne. As she navigates the mind games and power plays of the Palace, she must choose between following her heart or fulfilling her duty.

69. It's the End of the World & They Know It

Catherine Chidgey (*The Starving Bride*), Elaine Castillo (*Moderation*), Fiona Wright (*Kill Your Boomers*), Jessie Wu (*Good Intentions*). Chair: Emily O'Grady

12:30–1:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre



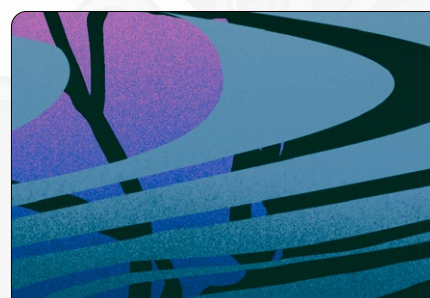
From voyeurism and virtual reality to murder plots and loneliness, these wickedly smart and witty novels skewer the absurdities, spectacles and ironies of our increasingly unstable world. Is this the end of life as we know it? Even if we've run out of trust, love and money, at least we'll go out with some great stories.

70. A Bit of Spice

Lyla Sage (*Done and Dusted*), Darcy Green (*After the Siren*), Sofia Shelley (*Dead Poets Sorority*), JA Stevens (*A Change of Pace*). Chair: Steve MinOn

12:30–1:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio

From raunchy ranch romance and queer footy flirtation to a time-slip affair and a Regency romp with a Sapphic twist, these sexy stories of forbidden flames and risky relationships feature plenty of spice and a generous side order of enemies-to-lovers satisfaction. Join these stars of romance and romantasy as they discuss the delights and dilemmas of capturing love on the page.



71. Kate Grenville: *The Country Schoolmaster: A Mystery in 88 Letters*



Kate Grenville

In conversation
with Matthew Condon
1–2pm, Saturday
10 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

A locked-room mystery. A colonial cold case. A family feud. And a cache of 88 letters that pose a series of tantalising questions. Celebrated writer Kate Grenville's new book is a mesmerising reconstruction of a hundred-year-old true story she discovered in the archives. Was New South Wales schoolteacher Joseph Connor an abusive villain or the victim of a small-town witch hunt? Grenville is at her masterful best here, piecing together the facts as she ruminates on the pleasures and pitfalls of storytelling.

72. Sacred Secular

Susan Orlean (*The Library Book*),
Adam Liaw (*Asian Home Cooking*),
Debra Dank (*Ankami*), Mariana
Enríquez (*Somebody Is Walking on
Your Grave*). Chair: Amber Gwynne
2–3pm, Saturday 10 October,
Parkside Marquee

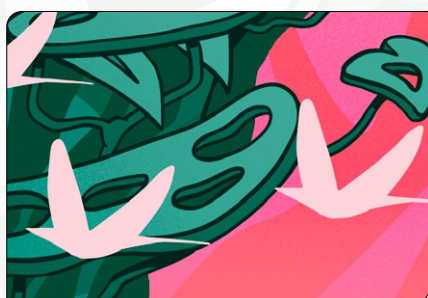


Susan Orlean



Adam Liaw

Archives, kitchens, libraries, cemeteries: these hallowed spaces of loss and discovery are where we excavate buried histories, build community, uncover new narratives and pay our respects to the dead. Join these four magnificent writers as they reveal the storied places that underpin their masterful new works of non-fiction.



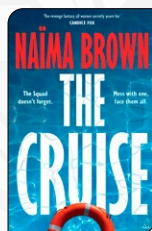
73. White-Knuckle Reads

Jacob K Gallagher (*The Doubles*),
Georgia Harper (*Dove*), Candice Fox
(*Redbelly Crossing*), Laura McCluskey
(*The Cursed Road*). Chair: Ian Kemish
2–3pm, Saturday 10 October,
Underground Theatre

In these propulsive crime and spec-fic thrillers, ancient feuds and buried truths threaten the fragile peace in rugged and remote communities. Simmering with psychological tension and freighted with complex gendered power dynamics and genre-bending sleights of hand, this line-up of nail-biting narratives will keep you guessing until the very end.

74. Chaos Merchants

Sita Walker (*In a Common Hour*), Emily
Lighezzolo (*Life Drawing*), Josie Shapiro
(*Good Things Come and Go*), Naima
Brown (*The Cruise*). Chair: Alex Philp
2–3pm, Saturday 10 October,
Fairfax Studio



Idealism and ambition face off in these four incisive and whipsmart novels, whose resourceful and compelling protagonists navigate numerous ethical and emotional minefields. How fragile is first love? Can we ever escape the pull of the past? What's the ultimate revenge fantasy? And what lies must we tell ourselves to sustain the lives we think we want?

75. Alice Oseman: *Art with Heart(stopper)*



In conversation
with Phoebe Paradise
2:45–3:45pm,
Saturday 10 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

Writer and illustrator Alice Oseman's hugely popular *Heartstopper* graphic novel series is defined not just by its joyful narrative but by its striking design and clean, minimalist lines. Discover the aesthetic artistry behind Nick and Charlie's relationship in this sparkling conversation between Alice and fellow artist and designer Phoebe Paradise.

76. The Art of the Essay

Richard Flanagan (*Heresies*),
Andrew O'Hagan (*On Friendship*),
Melissa Lucashenko (*Not Quite
White in the Head*), Cameron Hurst
(*EXCLUSIVE! Dispatches from The
Paris End*). Chair: Carody Culver
3:30–4:30pm, Saturday 10 October,
Parkside Marquee



Andrew O'Hagan



Cameron Hurst

Every few years, somebody on the internet will declare that the essay is dead ... which is usually a sign that it's thriving. Indeed, the essay may have as many lives as it has styles, and its endurance is testament to its creative dynamism and versatility. Join four luminaries of this endlessly malleable literary genre as they discuss the value and valence of the essay and their own storied approaches to the art of short-form non-fiction.

77. Courage & Reinvention

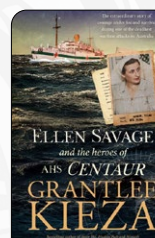


Robin Bailey

Robin Bailey
(*Flamingos Aren't Born
Pink*), Don Watson (*The
Shortest History of the
United States of
America*), Grantlee
Kieza (*Ellen Savage and
the Heroes of AHS
Centaur*), Majeda

Awawdeh (*The Sky Is Concave*). Chair:
Amanda Niehaus

3:30–4:30pm, Saturday 10 October,
Underground Theatre

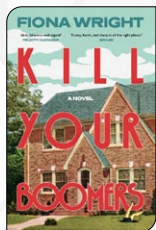


A family's journey through unimaginable loss. A wartime disaster that inspired exceptional heroism. An escape from oppression to the hard-won freedom of life in a new country. A

reappraisal of America's past that offers fresh insight into its present and future. These striking true stories of tragedy and transformation are testament to the power of the human spirit.

78. Millennial Dystopias

Fiona Wright (*Kill Your Boomers*), Max Easton (*Now, Autonomy*), Jess Ho (*People with Money*), Alex Cothren (*Playing Nice Was Getting Me Nowhere*). Chair: Maeve Marsden
3:30–4:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio



Modern life is a lot. Between the housing crisis, the intergenerational wealth crisis and the climate crisis, it sure feels like we're running out of options – but surely that means we should get creative instead of giving up? These nimble and quick-witted works of fiction capture different ways of pushing back against the follies of contemporary Australia, from class warfare to anarchist collectives, from radical plans to dystopian acts.

79. Pip Williams: *The German Ward*



Pip Williams

In conversation with Jessica Rudd
4:30–5:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Powerhouse Theatre

A forbidden love. A pioneering artist. A wartime secret.

In the breathtaking new novel from globally bestselling author Pip Williams, a doomed WWI romance between a German prisoner of war and an English nurse is captured in the drawings of an Australian artist. A century later, a researcher discovers the tantalising fragments of this lost narrative and sets out to piece them together. The author of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *The Bookbinder of Jericho* returns with this richly rendered tale of desire, knowledge and hope.

80. Charlie Jane Anders: *Lessons in Magic and Disaster*



In conversation with Luke Bateman
5–6pm, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee

Award-winning US writer Charlie Jane Anders is a spec-fic

superstar: for decades, she's been crafting mesmerisingly imaginative and resonant fiction that tackles themes of queer and trans identity, life's absurdity, and hope in the midst of crisis. Her captivating new novel, *Lessons in Magic and Disaster*, is a perfect potion of queer resilience and witchy power, following a trans PhD student named Jamie who's trying to help her mother overcome a devastating loss.

81. Bring It

Gabbie Stroud (*The Angry Wives Club*), Amanda Hampson (*The Deadly Dispute*), Brooke Davis (*No One's Looking*), Malcolm Knox (*The Second Child*). Chair: Sita Walker

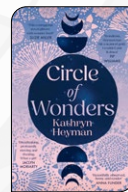
5–6pm, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre



Angry wives, sleuthing tea ladies, a revenge plot against supreme dictators, and two sisters facing up to rage and middle age: these dynamic and daring narratives trace the trials and tribulations of contemporary and historic womanhood, revealing what's possible when we follow our desires and resist conforming to society's rigid expectations.

82. Stop the Clocks: On Grief

Damien Wilkins (*Delirious*), Kathryn Heyman (*Circle of Wonders*), Michael Winkler (*Griefdoggy*), Josie Shapiro (*Good Things Come and Go*). Chair: Raeden Richardson
5–6pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio



These graceful and intimate novels pose trenchant questions about the nature of grief and regret, exposing the eternal collision of past and present. How do we face unthinkable loss? What do we do with someone else's pain? And how can we reconcile the promise of youth with the reality of ageing?

83. Messy & Magnificent

Frances Whiting (*The Nocturnals*), Debra Oswald (*One Hundred Years of Betty*), Anita Heiss (*The Paradise Pact*), Monica McInerney (*When Sullivan Met Lola*). Chair: Jane Sullivan

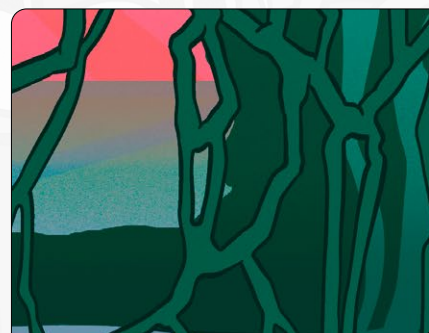
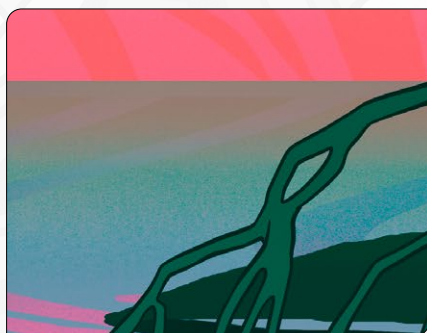
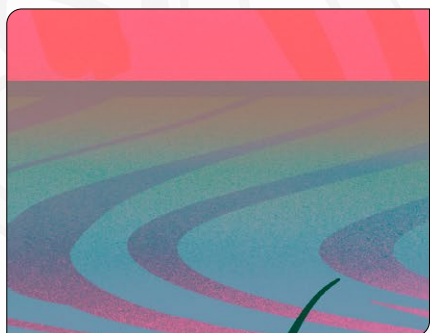
6:15–7:15pm, Saturday 10 October, Powerhouse Theatre



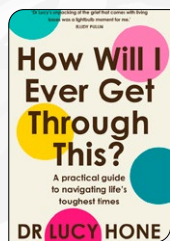
Frances Whiting

Anita Heiss

An unlikely alliance between a 12-year-old boy and an 86-year-old eccentric. A girls' trip that risks being derailed by a handsome stranger. A woman whose life and loves play out across a century of huge change. A group of friends who reunite under mysterious circumstances. These extraordinary stories of connection and curiosity evince the risks and rewards of the bonds we forge with one another.



84. Dr Lucy Hone: *How Will I Ever Get Through This?*



In conversation with Simon Cleary
6:30–7:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee

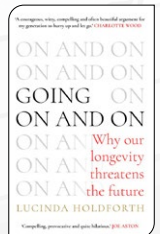
The grief we feel when we experience a living loss – estrangement, divorce, redundancy, illness or a similarly seismic life change – can leave us feeling overwhelmed, isolated and unseen. Enter Dr Lucy Hone, a bestselling author and 'pracademic' whose resilience TED talk has been viewed more than nine million times. Her latest book is an indispensable and compassionate guide for anyone navigating profound upheaval and looking to re-engage with the future.

85. Straining the Social Contract



George Megalogenis (*Three Shocks*), Lucinda Holdforth (*Going On and On*), Debra Dank (*Ankami*), Jessy Wu (*Good Intentions*). Chair: Ellen Fanning

George Megalogenis 6:30–7:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre



A political system that fails to meet the moment. A clash between idealism and reality. A cultural obsession with longevity. A persistent inability to reckon with our national past. In the

face of these seemingly intractable challenges, how do we chart a path forward? Join four exceptional minds as they explore the problems and potential panaceas of contemporary Australian life.

Supported by 612 ABC Radio Brisbane



86. Glitz & Glitch



Ash Williams

Ash Williams (*Almost Killing It in Hollywood*), Georgie Tunny (*Over to You*), Jordan Prosser (*Big Time*), Stavroula Adameitis aka Frida Las Vegas (*Australianarama*). Chair: Darby Jones

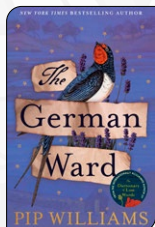
6:30–7:30pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio

Go big or go home – or drop some serious psychedelics. From Aussie kitsch to Hollywood mayhem, from the cut-throat competition of TV news to the deranged autocracy of a not-too-distant future, these bold and bracing novels and non-fiction narratives chart the highs, lows and woes of life in the twenty-first century and the risks we'll take to conquer or escape it.

87. Sagas

Pip Williams (*The German Ward*), Natasha Lester (*The Chateau on Sunset*), Lisa Wilkinson (*The Titanic Story of Evelyn*), Mirandi Riwoe (*A Short History of Longans*). Chair: Ashley Hay

8–9pm, Saturday 10 October, Powerhouse Theatre



Settle in for this sensational line-up of sweeping stories that cross cultures, seas and centuries to tell tales of courage, belonging and hope. Discover the true story of the Titanic's only Australian survivor; lose yourself in a tale of wartime love between would-be enemies; follow the fluctuating fortunes of an Irish-Chinese family across generations; and unlock the secrets and mysteries of mid-century Hollywood in the iconic halls of the Chateau Marmont Hotel.



88. Queerstories

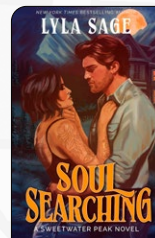


Jess Ho

Carody Culver, Darcy Green, Jess Ho, Josh Silver, Cameron Sullivan. Chair: Maeve Marsden
8–9pm, Saturday 10 October, Parkside Marquee

Vulnerable and fierce, hilarious and heartbreaking, Queerstories celebrates the culture and creativity of the LGBTQI+ community one true story at a time. Listen to unexpected stories from some of our greatest LGBTQI+ authors: tales of pride, prejudice, resilience and resistance.

89. Lyla Sage: The Sweetwater Peak Duology



In conversation with Alex Adsett
8–9pm, Saturday 10 October, Underground Theatre

Wild West romance sensation Lyla Sage is back with a delicious

new duology set in the rugged surrounds of Sweetwater Peak – a place besieged by ghosts and secrets. In *Soul Searching* and *Free Falling*, two sisters get swept up in the charm and chaos of their haunted hometown—complete with meddling spirits, handsome strangers, and childhood crushes. Join Sage as she discusses the spicy escapades of her latest characters and the tantalising narrative possibilities of supernatural small-town romance.

90. Writing in Solidarity

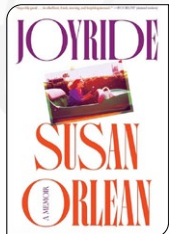
FREE EVENT

Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. MC: Pascalle Burton
8–9pm, Saturday 10 October, Fairfax Studio

In this genre-spanning anthology, artists and writers from across the globe use their art as a voice of solidarity with Gaza – a collective voice that asks for humanity, fairness and decency in the face of unimaginable destruction. Noor Hindi calls *For Gaza* 'a living record of feeling and refusal: language sharpened by love, devastation and the insistence that Gaza's people, culture and future cannot be erased.' Join some of the contributors to this urgent and necessary volume as they unite their voices in search of justice and a better world.

Sunday 11 October

91. Susan Orlean: *Joyride*



In conversation with
Sarah Kanowski
9:30–10:30am,
Sunday 11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

Renowned writer
Susan Orlean has
made a career in

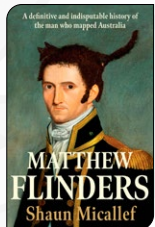
stories. From her incisive *New Yorker* articles to her acclaimed books, including *The Orchid Thief* and *The Library Book*, Orlean's narrative, Orlean's narrative non-fiction has taken readers everywhere from Mount Fuji to inside the mind of a 10-year-old American boy. Her outstanding new book, *Joyride*, isn't just a warm and candid memoir of creativity and curiosity – it's also an enchanting tribute to the golden age of journalism.

92. Shaun Micallef:

Matthew Flinders

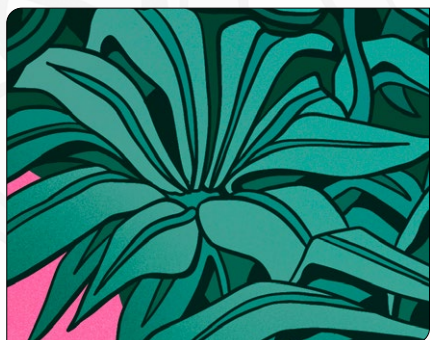
In conversation with Steve Austin

9:30–10:30am, Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee



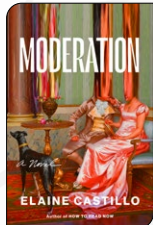
Shaun Micallef

A skull collection, a Robinson Crusoe obsession and a beloved pet cat: ladies and gentlemen, meet Matthew Flinders. Think you know the story of Australia's most famous pioneer? Think again. In his wildly witty and scrupulously researched new book, Shaun Micallef sheds new light on the curious and chaotic figure who led the first circumnavigation of Australia – and explores what Flinders' escapades can tell us about our national identity and our dark colonial past.



93. Elaine Castillo: *Moderation*

In conversation with Carody Culver
9:30–10:30pm, Sunday 11 October,
Underground Theatre



Elaine Castillo

Girlie Delmundo has a black belt in emotional repression. A social media content moderator and a first-generation eldest daughter, she deals efficiently with trauma every day, both online and in her extended Filipino-American family. But Girlie's life takes a turn when she's promoted to moderating virtual-reality theme parks – and when she finally meets someone she actually likes. Acclaimed US writer Elaine Castillo's second novel is a wickedly witty skewering of Big Tech, an astute portrait of invisible labour and an exhilarating Austen-style romance for the internet age.

94. Crossing Cultures

FREE
EVENT

Majeda Awawdeh (*The Sky Is Concave*), Sean Jacobs (*A Complicated Inheritance*), Tyree Barnette (*Stolen Man on Stolen Land*), Durkhanai Ayubi (*She Who Tastes, Knows*). Chair: Rhianna Patrick

9:30–10:30am, Sunday 11 October,
Fairfax Studio

In these riveting and enlightening narratives, four writers who have deep familial ties to another nation share their reflections on belonging, inheritance and identity and on the complex threads that connect us across countries and cultures.

95. Marc Fennell:

Stuff the British Stole



Marc Fennell

In conversation
with Rachel Mealey

11am–12pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee

When journalist Marc Fennell encountered a macabre music box in a museum, he set out to discover where it came from – and found himself on a

madcap global quest to expose centuries of lies and looting by the British Empire. Fascinating, funny and ferociously entertaining, *Stuff the British Stole* expands on Fennell's hit podcast and TV show of the same name, taking readers on an international adventure to reveal the hidden stories – and uncomfortable truths – behind some of the world's most celebrated museum artefacts.

96. Getting Mad & Even

Georgie Tunny (*Over to You*), Gabbie Stroud (*The Angry Wives Club*), Jess Ho (*People with Money*), Naïma Brown (*The Cruise*). Chair: Kimberley Allsopp

11am–12pm, Sunday 11 October,
Underground Theatre



Georgie Tunny



Gabbie Stroud

How far would you go to get what you want – and how do you separate what you desire from what you deserve? Class, privilege, ambition and rage bubble over in these deliciously gripping and incisive novels, in which underestimated characters boldly overstep the mark in search of love, success and revenge.

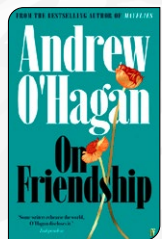
97. Short but Not Sweet

Mariana Enríquez (*A Sunny Place for Shady People*), Ingrid Horrocks (*All Her Lives*), Alex Cothren (*Playing Nice Was Getting Me Nowhere*), Gillian Hagenus (*Common Places*). Chair: Terri-Jane Dow

11am–12pm, Sunday 11 October,
Fairfax Studio

A haunted pokie machine. A vengeful dress. A neighbour who knows too much. A series of choices that reverberate across centuries. In these deliciously subversive and striking short story collections, desire, rebellion and anxiety illuminate the contours of our lives and remake reality in the most unexpected and narratively satisfying of ways.

98. Andrew O'Hagan: *On Friendship*



**In conversation
with Matthew Condon**
**11:15am–12:15pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre**

If there's any subject the great Andrew O'Hagan can't elucidate with his indelible wit and elegant prose, we've yet to find it. In his pithy and poignant new book, the Booker-shortlisted novelist and Editor-at-Large of the *London Review of Books* reflects on how our friendships – human or animal, fleeting or lasting – animate and enrich our lives. Through memory, music, poetry and history, *On Friendship* celebrates the connections that make us who we are.

Supported by the Taylor family

99. George Megalogenis: *Three Shocks*



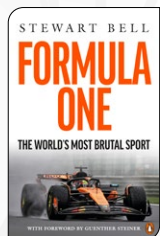
**In conversation with
Ellen Fanning**
**12:30–1:30pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee**

Who are we becoming in the twenty-first century? This pressing question fuels the vital and compelling new book by one of our greatest political journalists. In *Three Shocks*, George Megalogenis charts the seismic changes

that have reshaped modern Australia, from migration to the gendered shift in our workforce, and the ways in which our politicians have responded (or failed to). What does this mean for the future of Australia's civic identity and discourse?

Supported by 612 ABC Radio Brisbane

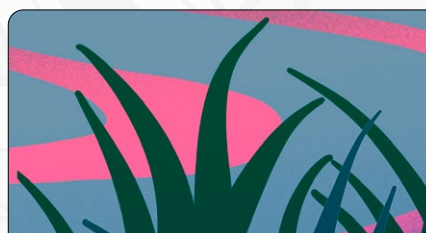
100. Stewart Bell: *Formula One*



**In conversation
with Steve Austin**
**12:30–1:30pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Underground Theatre**

Readers, start your engines: one of Formula One's most experienced media professionals is about to take you on a test drive of this thrilling, punishing and utterly addictive sport. Stewart Bell's propulsive book gets behind the wheel of the world's most brutal sporting practice, from the millions of dollars it takes to have a shot at success to the intense physical and mental training required to race. Hit the road for tickets!

Supported by 612 ABC Radio Brisbane



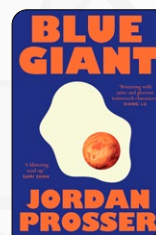
101. Once More with Feeling Failing



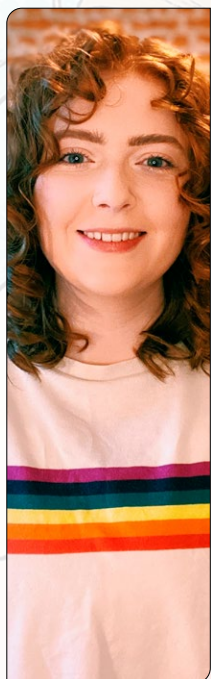
Josh Silver

**Elaine Castillo
(Moderation), Josh
Silver (Fruit Fly),
Jordan Prosser (Blue
Giant), Max Easton
(Now, Autonomy) Chair:
Carody Culver**

**12:30–1:30pm, Sunday
11 October, Fairfax Studio**



Failure, resentment, disappointment: the holy trinity of millennial experience, as rendered by four of the sharpest observers in the trade. These exceptional novels of love, longing and loserdom traverse the agonies and (limited) ecstasies of adulthood in the 2020s, where desire and ambition collide with digital anxiety and the cold, dead hand of late-stage capitalism.



118. Alice Oseman: *Heartstopper*

**In conversation with
Claire Christian**
**1–2pm, Sunday 11 October,
Brisbane City Hall**

In 2016, a young writer called Alice Oseman began publishing a webcomic about two teenage boys who meet and fall in love. Ten years on, Oseman is the third bestselling graphic novelist of all time, and that webcomic, *Heartstopper*, is a global publishing phenomenon (not to mention a wildly popular Netflix show) and a Gen Z icon lauded for its representation of queer joy. Join Oseman on her first visit to Brisbane as she discusses her tender and hopeful portrait of friendship and first love.

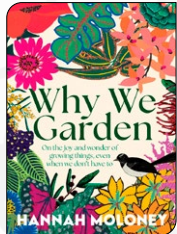


119. Luke Bateman: *For the Love of Reading*

**In conversation with
Lise & Sarah**
**3–4pm, Sunday 11 October,
Brisbane City Hall**

Brisbane, get ready to nerd out with #BookTok sensation Luke Bateman! In 2025, this former NRL player and *Bachelor* star from rural Queensland lit up social media with his infectious love of fantasy fiction, his advocacy for men's mental health and his mission to engage young readers. Join Bateman as he discusses his influential online platform and community, his passion for reading, and his forthcoming epic fantasy series with Atria Books.

102. Hannah Moloney: Why We Garden



In conversation with Bronwen Gray
1–2pm, Sunday 11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

Whether you're a green-fingered guru or the kind of person who can't keep a cactus alive, you'll love this joyful and philosophical conversation about why we grow things. In her inspiring and surprising new book, Hannah Moloney of *Gardening Australia* fame sets out to answer this question by talking to all kinds of people – from politicians and creatives to ordinary gardeners across the country – about the magic and mystery of cultivating life in the soil.

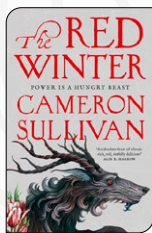
103. New Perspectives on Old Assumptions

Marc Fennell (*Stuff the British Stole*), Matt Bevan (*If You're Listening: Declassified*), Lucinda Holdforth (*Going On and On*), Tyree Barnette (*Stolen Man on Stolen Land*). Chair: Sean Jacobs
2–3pm, Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee

What's the social cost of our longing for longevity? How do our evolutionary quirks shape our perspective? What's missing from Australia's discussion of race relations? And how should we think about the ethics of cultural collection? Join four intrepid writers whose trenchant works of reportage and memoir ask us to think outside the box and challenge some of our unexamined views.

104. Myth & Magic

Lev Grossman (*The Bright Sword*), Charlie Jane Anders (*Lessons in Magic and Disaster*), John Morrissey (*Bird Deity*), Cameron Sullivan (*The Red Winter*). Chair: Kathleen Jennings
2–3pm, Sunday 11 October,
Underground Theatre

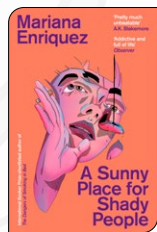


These four mesmerising masterworks of fantasy and speculative fiction traverse continents and cultures to weave powerful stories of identity, faith and

belonging. From the clash of paganism and Christianity in Arthurian England to the legendary man-eating beast of eighteenth-century France, from the cosmic horror of a colonised planet to the transformative magic of a young witch, these tales wield imagination and invention to unveil eternal truths about humanity.

105. Metamorphosis

Mariana Enríquez (*A Sunny Place for Shady People*), Catherine Chidgey (*The Starving Bride*), Shaun Micallef (*De'Ath Takes a Holiday*), Kris Kneen (*Rite of Spring*). Chair: Laura Jean McKay
2–3pm, Sunday 11 October,
Fairfax Studio



In these transformative fictional tales, bodies are not what they seem. They become tapestries, weapons, symbols, fantasies, portals; they represent beginnings and endings, reckonings and renewals. Join these four incredible writers as they discuss the surreal, the virtual and the corporeal in their vivid and enthralling works.

106. Richard Flanagan: Heresies



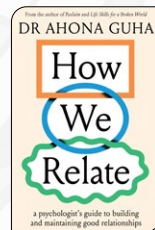
Richard Flanagan

In conversation with Michael Ondaatje
2:45–3:45pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

For 20 years, Richard Flanagan – the only author to have won both the prestigious Booker and Baillie Gifford prizes – has been capturing the vicissitudes of memory, morality, humanity and history across his acclaimed novels, essays, articles and speeches. *Heresies* collects two decades of his remarkable non-fiction on everything from MONA to Salman Rushdie, showcasing the steel-trap mind and subversive wit of a national literary treasure.

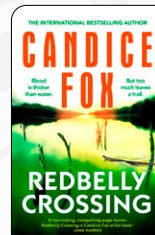
107. Reset & Reconnect

Dr Ahona Guha (*How We Relate*), David Gillespie (*The Attention Recovery Plan*), Dr Rebecca Ray (*How to Stop Spiralling*), Madonna King (*Screen Wise*). Chair: Christine Jackman
3:30–4:30pm, Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee



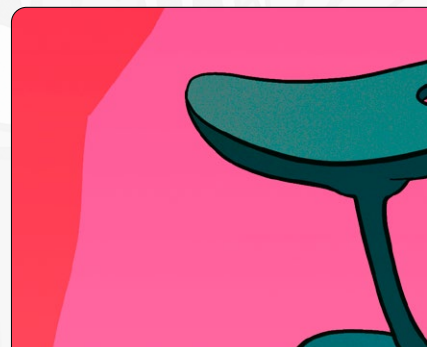
If you're navigating tricky family or workplace politics, trying to ditch the doomscrolling or feeling as though you're living life in survival mode, this panel is for you. Join four experts whose warm, practical and clear advice on relationships, parenting, trauma and digital dependence can help you steer your way through life's hairpin turns with both hands firmly on the wheel.

108. Candice Fox: Redbelly Crossing

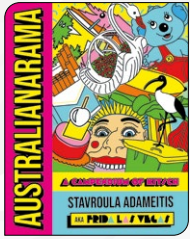


In conversation with Ron Serdiuk
3:30–4:30pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Underground Theatre

Crime queen Candice Fox is back with another nail-biting Australian noir that pairs page-turning plot twists with questions of morality, loyalty and psychological intrigue. Brothers Russell and Evan Powder are both cops, but they haven't spoken since a violent incident shattered their family five years ago. Now, they're on the same case – the murder of a young journalist in the tiny outback town of Redbelly Crossing – and while one of them wants to uncover the truth, the other is desperate to keep it hidden ...



109. Stavroula Adameitis aka Frida Las Vegas: *Australianarama*



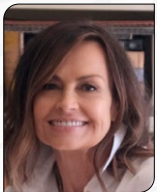
In conversation with
Phoebe Paradise
3:30–4:30pm,
Sunday 11 October,
Fairfax Studio

Queens of camp
and kings of kitsch,
get ready: the

ultimate encyclopedia of Australian pop culture is here. In *Australianarama*, artist, illustrator and famed fashionista Stavroula Adameitis (aka Frida Las Vegas) immortalises our icons of cringe, from the Big Pineapple to Stefan's Needle, from Rainbow Paddle Pops to loud knitwear. Bright, bold and bloody grouse, *Australianarama* is a nostalgic but nuanced appraisal of our garish national treasures. It's going straight to the pool room!

110. Lisa Wilkinson: *The Titanic Story of Evelyn*

In conversation with Susie O'Neill
4:30–5:30pm, Sunday 11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre



Lisa Wilkinson



Susie O'Neill

Did you know that the *Titanic* had just one Australian survivor? Renowned journalist and broadcaster Lisa Wilkinson's meticulously researched book brings to life an incredible but forgotten true story. In 1912, Evelyn Marsden, a young South Australian nurse who wanted to travel the world and fall in love, found herself caught up in one of the most infamous maritime disasters in history. *The Titanic Story of Evelyn* is a riveting account of one woman's courage and her survival against the odds.

111. Josh Silver: *Fruit Fly*

In conversation with Carody Culver
5–6pm, Sunday 11 October,
Parkside Marquee



Josh Silver

Mallory's got writer's block – and she's had it for seven years. All she wants is to resurrect her literary career, so she does what any sane person would do: she hits up Reddit. Armed with her new knowledge of how to write a bestseller, she meets Leo, a young sex worker and addict, and decides to tell his story ... without telling *him*. What could go wrong? Crackling with wit and insight, *Fruit Fly* is a razor-sharp yet compassionate take on the ethics of contemporary publishing.

112. Lev Grossman: *The Bright Sword*



In conversation
with Helen Marshall
5–6pm, Sunday
11 October,
Underground Theatre

Magic, romance,
intrigue, battle: there
are many reasons

Camelot and its storied Knights of the Round Table have been enchanting us for centuries. But *The Bright Sword* by fantasy sensation Lev Grossman – author of the blockbuster *Magicians* series – is one of the most bewitching and original reimaginings of Arthurian myth yet. It follows a ragtag group of misfit knights as they grapple with Britain's future in the wake of the king's mysterious death. Join Lev on this mystical journey through the dangers and delights of literature's most legendary court.

113. Yvette Henry Holt: *Fitzroy North 3068*



In conversation
with Debra Dank
5–6pm, Sunday
11 October,
Fairfax Studio

Multi-award-winning
First Nations poet
Yvette Henry Holt

is about to take you on an astonishing literary journey. Her spellbinding new collection blends psychogeography with psychoanalysis, wit with wisdom, metaphor with matrilineal memory. From Inala East to East London, from Melbourne to Memphis, *Fitzroy North 3068* reflects on faith, addiction, truth and the subconscious with psychedelic originality and flair.

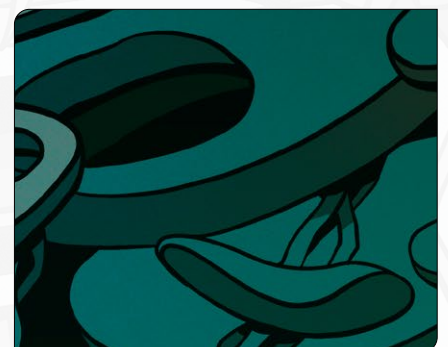
114. Matt Bevan: *If You're Listening (Declassified)*



In conversation
with Jessica Rudd
6–7pm, Sunday
11 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

In 2025, tickets to
Matt Bevan's live BWF
session of his ABC

news podcast *If You're Listening* got snapped up faster than Donald Trump changes his mind. Lucky for you (and us), Matt's back in 2026 with a book based on his wildly popular show. With wit, insight and infectious curiosity, *If You're Listening: Declassified* takes readers on a thrilling journey through seismic moments in history to reveal the myths, assumptions and quirks that colour our understanding of past and present.

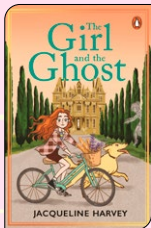


Schools Program

8 October, 10am–3pm, Brisbane Powerhouse | Proudly supported by The University of Queensland

Brisbane Writers Festival's schools program is a celebration of reading, writing and storytelling for students.

PRIMARY

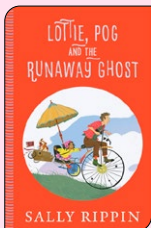


Jacqueline Harvey

1. Jacqueline Harvey: The Stories Behind the Stories

10–11am, Thursday 8 October,
Powerhouse Theatre

Bestselling author Jacqueline Harvey will introduce readers to the stories behind some of her most iconic book series, including *The Girl and the Ghost*, *Kensy and Max* and *Willa and Woof*. She'll reveal how she mines her own life experiences to create great narratives and show students how they can do the same.



Sally Rippin

5. Sally Rippin: *Lottie, Pog and the Runaway Ghost*

11:30am –12:30pm, Thursday
8 October, Parkside Marquee

What would you do if you discovered a ghost in your walls whose mission in life was to create trouble? Even worse, no one else could see or hear her except you! Come along to hear all about Lottie, Pog the dog and a runaway ghost called Martha who is plotting to get rid of Lottie's stepmother-to-be and bring her real mother home. If you love stories of unconventional families, smelly dogs or meddlesome ghosts, this one's for you!

PRIMARY



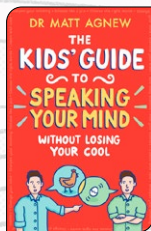
Peter Carnavas

11. Peter Carnavas: Small Goat, Big Adventure

1:30–2:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Underground Theatre

Discover the story of *Kid*, a charming novel about a small goat on a wild adventure to find his parents. This fun and inspiring session will feature weird goat facts and a goat quiz, plus Peter will share the process of creating this story – including live illustration!

PRIMARY & LOWER SECONDARY



Dr Matt Agnew

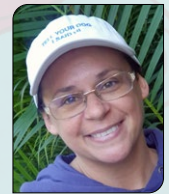
3 & 12. Dr Matt Agnew: AI, Algorithms and Arguing

1:30–2:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Fairfax Studio (Primary)

10–11am, Thursday 8 October,
Underground Theatre (Lower
Secondary)

How do we navigate a world in which AI quietly decides what we see and believe and technology drives deeper division and more arguments? This talk unpacks the tech and ethics of AI, how we form different views, how to spot misinformation and, above all, how to argue respectfully.

LOWER SECONDARY



Kate Foster

8. Kate Foster: Your Voice. Your Choice.

11:45am–12:45pm, Thursday
8 October, Powerhouse Theatre

Join award-winning author Kate Foster as she shares what navigating everyday life as an autistic person is like and how her childhood informed the creation of her new verse novel, *A River I Must Be*. Touching on both the struggles and the glimmers, Kate discusses how a single voice has the power to change many lives.

10. Jacqueline Harvey: Princes, Girls and Ghosts – Weaving History and Mystery to Create Compelling Tales

1:30–2:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee

Meeting a prince in a bookshop in Singapore gave Jacqueline Harvey one of her best ideas yet. From this chance encounter, *The Girl and the Ghost* was born. Students will discover how Jacqueline has taken real historical figures and woven them into contemporary stories full of mystery, humour and heart.

LOWER & UPPER SECONDARY



Gary Lonesborough

4 & 9. Gary Lonesborough: A Boy from Bega

10–11am, Thursday 8 October,
Fairfax Studio (Lower Secondary)

1:30–2:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
Powerhouse Theatre (Upper Secondary)

Gary will take you on a journey through his writing life, from when his love of books began to his becoming a published author. Gary will explore the life experiences, lessons and writing tips he's learned along the way and how they've informed the creation and publication of his award-winning books.

UPPER SECONDARY

2. Morris Gleitzman: What I Do, How I Do It, and Why I'm Not In Jail

10–11am, Thursday 8 October,
Parkside Marquee

The adventure of writing adventures. Including my real-life adventures with research: Premier League footballers in London, ruthless killers in North Queensland, tears in Europe, wild horses, grumpy camels, melted cars, too many skeletons to count, climbing the back fence at Buckingham Palace, embarrassment in Hollywood and lots more. Don't bring a pen – bring absorbent underwear.

UPPER SECONDARY



Carla Salmon

6. Carla Salmon: Stories You Can't Escape

11:30am – 12:30pm, Thursday
8 October, Underground Theatre

What makes a book impossible to put down? In this interactive presentation, Carla Salmon will share how she builds suspense and momentum in her gripping mysteries. Students will experiment with the what-if prompts that inspired Carla's CBCA-shortlisted debut, *We Saw What You Started*. They'll also go behind the scenes of *We Did It Anyway*, learning how to hook readers, raise stakes and write with confidence.



Bori Cser

7. Bori Cser: A Sceptic's Guide to Worldbuilding

11:30am–12:30pm, Thursday
8 October, Fairfax Studio

Join fantasy author and former worldbuilding sceptic Bori Cser for a primer on constructing the settings for your stories. Hear how Bori created the Renaissance-inspired world of her debut novel, *Mirrorwoven*, and learn just how rewarding and fun it can be to use history, the world around you, and your curiosity and imagination to build fantastical worlds of your own.

16. Microfiction Competition

Presented in partnership with
The University of Queensland.

Calling all young writers! BWF and UQ present the annual schools' microfiction competition, open to Queensland-based students. The 2026 prompt is the 2026 youth program artwork by Rachel Tribout.

You are invited to respond to the image in no more than 120 words, using any written format (verse/prose). Shortlisted entrants will be invited to present a reading of their microfiction at the awards ceremony during the festival. The winner will receive a book pack for their school and a cash prize: \$1,000 for the senior category and \$500 for the junior category.

To enter, visit bwf.org.au/microfiction

Microfiction Readings & Awards Ceremony

**FREE
EVENT**

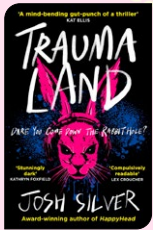
3:30–4pm, Thursday 8 October,
Fairfax Studio (Brisbane Powerhouse)

All are welcome for the awards ceremony, which features readings of shortlisted and winning entries and is presented by guest judge and YA author Carla Salmon.



Young Adult Program

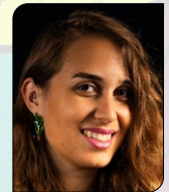
Sessions especially for fans of young adult fiction, including a special international author event with *Heartstopper* graphic novelist **Alice Oseman!**



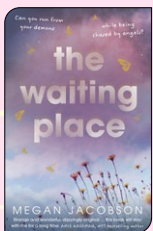
Josh Silver



Lynette Noni



Allannah Hunt



Megan Jacobson



Bori Cser



Anna Whateley

44. Good Grief

Josh Silver (*Traumaland*), Gary Lonesborough (*Good Young Men*), Megan Jacobson (*The Waiting Place*)

Chair: Darby Jones

3:30–4:30pm, Friday 9 October, Parkside Marquee

How do you handle loss – of yourself, of the life you thought you wanted, or of someone close to you? From the tensions of small-town Australia and a tightly controlled religious community to the chilling reality of a VR simulation that hides a dark secret, these unputdownable novels explore how we can find belonging and friendship in a world where all is not as it seems.

49. Bargains, Secrets & Enchantments

Lynette Noni (*Shadow Reaper*), Bori Cser (*Mirrorwoven*)

Chair: Jeann Campillo

5–6pm, Friday 9 October, Underground Theatre

These wildly inventive and captivating books tell tales of magical secrets, political intrigue and enemies-to-lovers romance. With their playful spins on classic tropes, epic worldbuilding and intricately imagined magic systems, these novels are guaranteed to grip you to the very last line.

54. Better Together

Allannah Hunt (*Forever & Ever*), Anna Whateley (*Tearing Myself Together*)

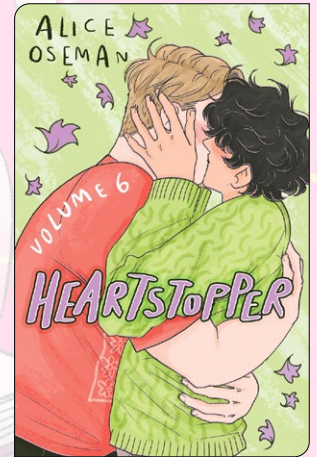
Chair: Rhianna Patrick

6:30–7:30pm, Friday 9 October, Fairfax Studio

Buried secrets. Messy friendships. Unhappy families. The pain and promise of first love. The challenge of forgiveness. In these two candid and heart-wrenching novels, characters wrestle with emotional and physical adversity as they come to terms with their past and learn how to reimagine their future.



YA Special Events



75. Alice Oseman: Art with Heart(stopper)

In conversation with Phoebe Paradise

2.45–3.45pm, Saturday 10 October, Brisbane Powerhouse

Writer and illustrator Alice Oseman's hugely popular *Heartstopper* graphic novel series is defined not just by its joyful narrative but by its striking design and clean, minimalist lines. Discover the aesthetic artistry behind Nick and Charlie's relationship in this sparkling conversation between Alice and fellow artist and designer Phoebe Paradise.

118. Alice Oseman: *Heartstopper*

In conversation with Claire Christian

1–2pm, Sunday 11 October, Brisbane City Hall

In 2016, a young writer called Alice Oseman began publishing a webcomic about two teenage boys who meet and fall in love. Ten years on, Oseman is the third bestselling graphic novelist of all time, and that webcomic, *Heartstopper*, is a global publishing phenomenon (not to mention a wildly popular Netflix show) and a Gen Z icon lauded for its representation of queer joy. Join Oseman on her first visit to Brisbane as she discusses her tender and hopeful portrait of friendship and first love.

General Information

How to book

Browse the program in print and online at bwf.org.au. We recommend school groups use the booking form to secure a place for your students. On the day, please have your tickets ready to present at the door, either printed or on a device.

Booking Form: available from 13 July

General Public On-Sale: 5 August

Brisbane Powerhouse

Box Office Contact:

boxoffice@brisbanepowerhouse.org

07 3358 8600

Pricing

Schools Program

Student individual tickets:

\$16 per person (+ booking fee)

Student bundle deal for three sessions:

\$40 per person (+ booking fee)

Adult tickets:

\$20 per person (+ booking fee)

School groups are eligible for one complimentary adult ticket for a teacher or supervisor for every 15 student tickets. Complimentary tickets can be claimed via the booking form.

YA Program

Individual tickets (panel events):

\$20 per person (+ booking fee)

Bundle deal for all three panels:

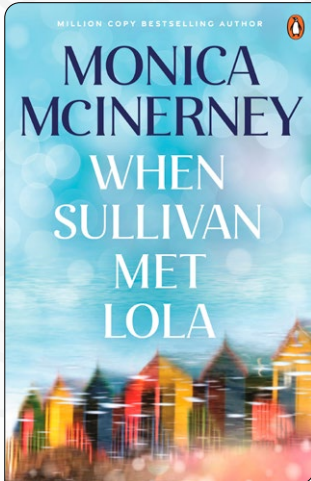
\$50 per person (+ booking fee)

Alice Oseman special event tickets full price: **\$49** per person (+ booking fee)

Alice Oseman special event tickets concession: **\$45** per person (+ booking fee)

Beyond Brisbane

With the support of City of Moreton Bay, Brisbane Writers Festival is thrilled to facilitate the following author talks beyond Brisbane. There will be signings and light refreshments at each of the below sessions. Bookings are free and are managed through the host libraries. Please see session details at the relevant booking link below.

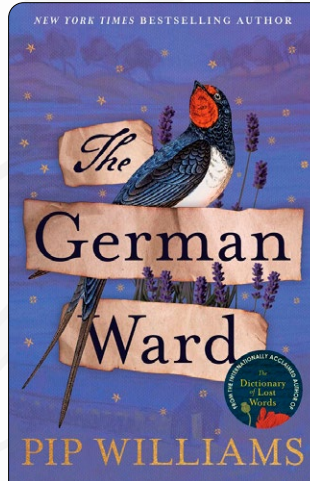


115. Monica McInerney: *When Sullivan Met Lola*

6:30–7:30pm, Thursday 8 October,
North Lakes Library
(07) 3480 9900

Tickets: mbrc.link/bwf26

A new Monica McInerney novel is reason enough to celebrate – but how about a new Monica McInerney novel that unites two of her most beloved characters? In this gorgeous standalone story, 12-year-old Melburnian Sullivan Farrington feels as though he's hit rock bottom – until he finds an unexpected friend in 86-year-old Lola Quinlan, who's come to the Victorian capital on a very specific and unusual mission. When the two join forces, they've got no idea the trouble they're about to cause – but thank goodness they've got each other ...

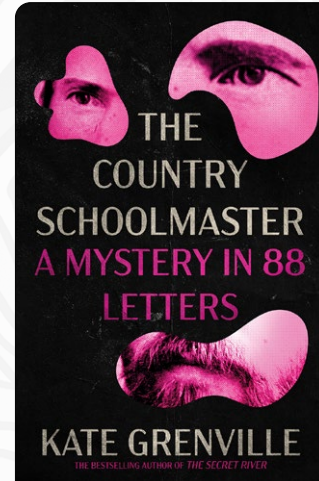


116. Pip Williams: *The German Ward*

10:45–11:45am, Sunday 11 October,
Redcliffe Library
(07) 3883 5745

Tickets: mbrc.link/bwf26

A forbidden love. A pioneering artist. A wartime secret. In the breathtaking new novel from globally bestselling author Pip Williams, a doomed WWI romance between a German prisoner of war and an English nurse is captured in the drawings of an Australian artist. A century later, a researcher discovers the tantalising fragments of this lost narrative and sets out to piece them together. The author of *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *The Bookbinder of Jericho* returns with this richly rendered tale of desire, knowledge and hope.

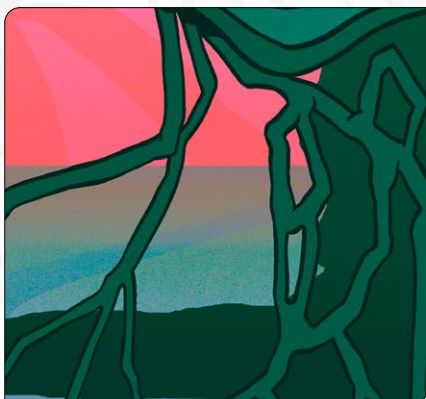


117. Kate Grenville: *The Country Schoolmaster: A Mystery in 88 Letters*

12:30–1:30pm, Sunday 11 October,
Redcliffe Library
(07) 3883 5745

Tickets: mbrc.link/bwf26

A locked-room mystery. A colonial cold case. A family feud. And a cache of 88 letters that pose a series of tantalising questions. Celebrated writer Kate Grenville's new book is a mesmerising reconstruction of a hundred-year-old true story she discovered in the archives. Was New South Wales schoolteacher Joseph Connor an abusive villain or the victim of a small-town witch hunt? Grenville is at her masterful best here, piecing together the facts as she ruminates on the pleasures and pitfalls of storytelling.



Thursday 8 October

TIME	Powerhouse Theatre	Parkside Marquee	Underground Theatre	Fairfax Studio
10:00am–10:15am	1. Primary Jacqueline Harvey The Stories Behind the Stories	2. Upper Secondary Morris Gleitzman What I Do, How I Do It, and Why I'm Not in Jail	3. Lower Secondary Dr Matt Agnew AI, Algorithms and Arguing	4. Lower Secondary Gary Lonesborough A Boy from Bega
10:15am–10:30am				
10:30am–10:45am				
10:45am–11:00am				
11:00am–11:15am	8. Lower Secondary Kate Foster Your Voice. Your Choice.	5. Primary Sally Rippin <i>Lottie, Pog and the Runaway Ghost</i>	6. Upper Secondary Carla Salmon Stories You Can't Escape	7. Upper Secondary Bori Cser A Sceptic's Guide to Worldbuilding
11:15am–11:30am				
11:30am–11:45am				
11:45am–12:00pm				
12:00pm–12:15pm	9. Upper Secondary Gary Lonesborough A Boy from Bega	10. Lower Secondary Jacqueline Harvey Princes, Girls and Ghosts – Weaving History and Mystery to Create Compelling Tales	11. Primary Peter Carnavas Small Goat, Big Adventure	12. Primary Dr Matt Agnew AI, Algorithms and Arguing
12:15pm–12:30pm				
12:30pm–12:45pm				
12:45pm–1:00pm				
1:00pm–1:15pm	15. Jock Serong: <i>A Suitable Man</i> . (c) Phil Brown	13. First Word Address: Debra Dank, Bruce Pascoe, Bebe Oliver, Samantha Faulkner [FREE]	14. Madonna King: <i>Screen Wise</i> . (c) Rebecca Levingston	16. Microfiction Readings & Announcement Ceremony with guest author judge Carla Salmon [FREE]
1:15pm–1:30pm				
1:30pm–1:45pm				
1:45pm–2:00pm				
2:00pm–2:15pm	20. Megan Hess: <i>The World of Barbie</i> . (c) Rachel Burke	17. Dr Norman Swan: <i>The Brain Cliff</i> . (c) Liz Minchin	18. Louise Waterhouse: <i>Driving Three Kings</i> . (c) Sean Jacobs	19. Faber Anthology Launch: Emily O'Grady, Pip Smith, Faber Students [FREE]
2:15pm–2:30pm				
2:30pm–2:45pm				
2:45pm–3:00pm				
3:00pm–3:15pm	24. The Queensland Literary Awards. (c) Richard Glover & Darby Jones	21. Robert Forster: <i>Songwriters on the Run</i> . (c) Andrew Stafford	22. Reverberations: Katie Hoskins, Jock Serong, Danny Ben-Moshe, Laura McCluskey. (c) Ella Jeffery	23. Zenadth Kes: <i>My Island Home</i> . Lenora Thaker, Nancy Bamaga, Ellen Armstrong. (c) Samantha Faulkner [FREE]
3:15pm–3:30pm				
3:30pm–3:45pm				
3:45pm–4:00pm				
4:00pm–4:15pm	25. Holly Ringland: <i>The World Beneath Her Feet</i> . (c) Katherine Feeney	26. Thom Woodroffe: <i>Power, Prosperity & Planet</i> . (c) Ian Lowe	27. Jim Rogers and Millie Robinson: <i>Holding on to Happiness</i> . (c) Sarah Klenbort	
4:15pm–4:30pm				
4:30pm–4:45pm				
4:45pm–5:00pm				
5:00pm–5:15pm	24. The Queensland Literary Awards. (c) Richard Glover & Darby Jones	25. Holly Ringland: <i>The World Beneath Her Feet</i> . (c) Katherine Feeney	26. Thom Woodroffe: <i>Power, Prosperity & Planet</i> . (c) Ian Lowe	
5:15pm–5:30pm				
5:30pm–5:45pm				
5:45pm–6:00pm				
6:00pm–6:15pm	24. The Queensland Literary Awards. (c) Richard Glover & Darby Jones	25. Holly Ringland: <i>The World Beneath Her Feet</i> . (c) Katherine Feeney	26. Thom Woodroffe: <i>Power, Prosperity & Planet</i> . (c) Ian Lowe	
6:15pm–6:30pm				
6:30pm–6:45pm				
6:45pm–7:00pm				
7:00pm–7:15pm	24. The Queensland Literary Awards. (c) Richard Glover & Darby Jones	25. Holly Ringland: <i>The World Beneath Her Feet</i> . (c) Katherine Feeney	26. Thom Woodroffe: <i>Power, Prosperity & Planet</i> . (c) Ian Lowe	
7:15pm–7:30pm				
7:30pm–7:45pm				
7:45pm–8:00pm				
8:00pm–8:15pm	24. The Queensland Literary Awards. (c) Richard Glover & Darby Jones	25. Holly Ringland: <i>The World Beneath Her Feet</i> . (c) Katherine Feeney	26. Thom Woodroffe: <i>Power, Prosperity & Planet</i> . (c) Ian Lowe	
8:15pm–8:30pm				

Friday 9 October

TIME	Powerhouse Theatre	Parkside Marquee	Underground Theatre	Fairfax Studio
9:30am–9:45am	28. Stephanie Alexander: <i>The Cook's Companion 30th Anniversary Edition.</i> (c) Jessica Rudd	29. Henry Reynolds: <i>Looking From the North.</i> (c) Michael Ondaatje	30. Thrillers: Ian Kemish, Danny Ben-Moshe, Dinuka McKenzie, Nick Croydon. (c) Joanna Jenkins	31. We Need to Talk About Literary Culture: Mindy Gill, Julian Meyrick, Raeden Richardson, Darby Jones. (c) Carody Culver
9:45am–10:00am				
10:00am–10:15am				
10:15am–10:30am				
10:30am–10:45am	35. Richard Glover: <i>How to Ruin a Child.</i> (c) Christine Jackman	32. <i>She Is Me: The Journey From Prison to Self.</i> Trent Dalton with Tahlia Isaac and Rocket Bretherton. [FREE]	33. Mother Earth: Melissa Lucashenko, Judy Watson, Samuel Watson. (c) Bruce Pascoe [FREE]	34. <i>Being Patient: Close Encounters in Cancer World.</i> Na'ama Carlin & Louise Chappell. (c) Edwina Shaw
10:45am–11:00am				
11:00am–11:15am				
11:15am–11:30am				
11:30am–11:45am	39. Monica McInerney: <i>When Sullivan Met Lola.</i> (c) Frances Whiting	40. <i>The Library That Made Me:</i> Bruce Pascoe, Suzie Miller, Richard Glover. (c) Phillipa McGuinness	41. Elizabeth Tynan: <i>Nuclear Archipelago.</i> (c) Ian Lowe	42. Damien Wilkins: <i>Delirious</i> (c) Charlotte Wood
11:45am–12:00pm				
12:00pm–12:15pm				
12:15pm–12:30pm				
12:30pm–12:45pm	43. Don Watson: <i>The Shortest History of the United States of America.</i> (c) Michael Ondaatje	44. YA Good Grief: Josh Silver, Gary Lonesborough, Megan Jacobson. (c) Darby Jones	45. Cosy Reads: Amanda Hampson, Sophie Green, Christy Anne Jones, Victoria Hannan. (c) Carla Salmon	46. Bearing Witness: Justine E Hausheer, Durkhanai Ayubi, Eva Phillips, Edwina Shaw. (c) Simon Cleary. [FREE]
12:45pm–1:00pm				
1:00pm–1:15pm				
1:15pm–1:30pm				
1:30pm–1:45pm	47. This Writing Life: Susan Orlean, Richard Flanagan, Charlotte Wood, Andrew Pippas. (c) Carody Culver	48. Comedy Salon: So Bad It's Good. Elaine Castillo, Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Jordan Prosser, Charlie Jane Anders, Debra Oswald, Richard Glover. (MC) Laura McCluskey.	49. YA Bargains, Secrets & Enchantments: Lynette Noni & Bori Cser. (c) Jeann Campillo	50. First Stories Collective: Melissa Lucashenko, Anita Heiss, Lenora Thaker. (c) Bebe Oliver [FREE]
1:45pm–2:00pm				
2:00pm–2:15pm				
2:15pm–2:30pm				
2:30pm–2:45pm	51. Suzie Miller: <i>Inter Alia.</i> (c) Frances Whiting	52. Luke Bateman & the Debutants: Shailee Thompson, Jacob K Gallagher, Cameron Sullivan, Emily Lighezzolo	53. Unbowed: Natasha Lester, Ingrid Horrocks, Katie Hoskins, Eleanor Limprecht. (c) Mirandi Riwoe	54. YA Better Together: Allanah Hunt & Anna Whateley. (c) Rhianna Patrick
2:45pm–3:00pm				
3:00pm–3:15pm				
3:15pm–3:30pm				
3:30pm–3:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
3:45pm–4:00pm				
4:00pm–4:15pm				
4:15pm–4:30pm				
4:30pm–4:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
4:45pm–5:00pm				
5:00pm–5:15pm				
5:15pm–5:30pm				
5:30pm–5:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
5:45pm–6:00pm				
6:00pm–6:15pm				
6:15pm–6:30pm				
6:30pm–6:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
6:45pm–7:00pm				
7:00pm–7:15pm				
7:15pm–7:30pm				
7:30pm–7:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
7:45pm–8:00pm				
8:00pm–8:15pm				
8:15pm–8:30pm				
8:30pm–8:45pm	56. Chris Kohler: <i>How They Get You.</i> (c) Rachel Mealey	57. Romantasy: Freya Marske, Lily Crozier, Stacey McEwan. (c) Kieren Scougall	58. Societal Disconnect: Katherine Johnson, Brooke Davis, Sally Piper, Michael Mohammed Ahmad. (c) Ashley Hay	59. Poetry Salon: Jane Frank, Maria van Neerven, Mindy Gill, Liam Ferney, Phil Brown, Eva Phillips, Cheryl Leavy. (MC) Ella Jeffery [FREE]
8:45pm–9:00pm				

Saturday 10 October

TIME	Powerhouse Theatre	Parkside Marquee	Underground Theatre	Fairfax Studio
9:30am–9:45am	60. Justice Is Severed: Suzie Miller, Kate Grenville, Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Olivera Simic. (c) Jessica Rudd	61. Troubles in Paradise: Anita Heiss, Rebecca Armitage, Victoria Hannan, Rachel Fox McLeod. (c) Sally Wilson	62. Bruce Pascoe: <i>Big Sky</i> . (c) Melissa Lucashenko [FREE]	63. Griffith Review: <i>On the Money & Out of Office</i> . Cameron Hurst, Fiona Wright, Jessy Wu. (c) Carody Culver
9:45am–10:00am				
10:00am–10:15am				
10:15am–10:30am				
10:30am–10:45am	67. Adam Liaw: <i>Asian Home Cooking</i> . (c) Rebecca Levingston	64. Of Morals & Men: Andrew O'Hagan, Michael Winkler, Andrew Pippas, Malcolm Knox. (c) Raeden Richardson	65. Be Prepared: Dr Norman Swan, Dr Ahona Guha, Dr Lucy Hone, Richard Glover. (c) Katherine Feeney	66. Otherworldly: Freya Marske, Christy Anne Jones, Lily Crozier, John Morrissey. (c) January Gilchrist
10:45am–11:00am				
11:00am–11:15am				
11:15am–11:30am				
11:30am–11:45am	71. Kate Grenville: <i>The Country Schoolmaster: A Mystery in 88 Letters</i> . (c) Matthew Condon	68. Rebecca Armitage: <i>The Heir Apparent</i> . (c) Marie-Louise Theile	69. It's the End of the World & They Know It: Catherine Chidgey, Elaine Castillo, Fiona Wright, Jessy Wu. (c) Emily O'Grady	70. A Bit of Spice: Lyla Sage, Darcy Green, Sofia Shelley, JA Stevens. (c) Steve MinOn
11:45am–12:00pm				
12:00pm–12:15pm				
12:15pm–12:30pm				
12:30pm–12:45pm	75. Alice Oseman: <i>Art with Heart(stopper)</i> . (c) Phoebe Paradise	72. Sacred Secular: Susan Orlean, Adam Liaw, Debra Dank, Mariana Enriquez. (c) Amber Gwynne	73. White-Knuckle Reads: Jacob K Gallagher, Georgia Harper, Candice Fox, Laura McCluskey. (c) Ian Kemish	74. Chaos Merchants: Sita Walker, Emily Lighezzolo, Josie Shapiro, Naïma Brown. (c) Alex Philp
12:45pm–1:00pm				
1:00pm–1:15pm				
1:15pm–1:30pm				
1:30pm–1:45pm	76. The Art of the Essay: Richard Flanagan, Andrew O'Hagan, Melissa Lucashenko, Cameron Hurst. (c) Carody Culver	77. Courage & Reinvention: Robin Bailey, Don Watson, Grantlee Kieza, Majeda Awawdeh. (c) Amanda Niehaus	78. Millennial Dystopias: Fiona Wright, Max Easton, Jess Ho, Alex Cothren. (c) Maeve Marsden	79. Pip Williams: <i>The German Ward</i> . (c) Jessica Rudd
1:45pm–2:00pm				
2:00pm–2:15pm				
2:15pm–2:30pm				
2:30pm–2:45pm	83. Messy & Magnificent: Frances Whiting, Debra Oswald, Anita Heiss, Monica McInerney. (c) Jane Sullivan	80. Charlie Jane Anders: <i>Lessons in Magic and Disaster</i> . (c) Luke Bateman	81. Bring It: Gabbie Stroud, Amanda Hampson, Brooke Davis, Malcolm Knox. (c) Sita Walker	82. Stop the Clocks: On Grief. Damien Wilkins, Kathryn Heyman, Michael Winkler, Josie Shapiro. (c) Raeden Richardson
2:45pm–3:00pm				
3:00pm–3:15pm				
3:15pm–3:30pm				
3:30pm–3:45pm	84. Dr Lucy Hone: <i>How Will I Ever Get Through This?</i> (c) Simon Cleary	85. Straining the Social Contract: George Megalogenis, Lucinda Holdforth, Debra Dank, Jessy Wu. (c) Ellen Fanning	86. Glitz & Glitch: Ash Williams, Georgie Tunny, Jordan Prosser, Stavroula Adameitis aka Frida Las Vegas. (c) Darby Jones	87. Sagas: Pip Williams, Natasha Lester, Lisa Wilkinson, Mirandi Riwoe. (c) Ashley Hay
3:45pm–4:00pm				
4:00pm–4:15pm				
4:15pm–4:30pm				
4:30pm–4:45pm	88. Queerstories: Carody Culver, Darcy Green, Jess Ho, Josh Silver, Cameron Sullivan. (c) Maeve Marsden	89. Lyla Sage: <i>The Sweetwater Peak Duology</i> . (c) Alex Adsett	90. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	91. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]
4:45pm–5:00pm				
5:00pm–5:15pm				
5:15pm–5:30pm				
5:30pm–5:45pm	92. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	93. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	94. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	95. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]
5:45pm–6:00pm				
6:00pm–6:15pm				
6:15pm–6:30pm				
6:30pm–6:45pm	96. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	97. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	98. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	99. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]
6:45pm–7:00pm				
7:00pm–7:15pm				
7:15pm–7:30pm				
7:30pm–7:45pm	100. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	101. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	102. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	103. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]
7:45pm–8:00pm				
8:00pm–8:15pm				
8:15pm–8:30pm				
8:30pm–8:45pm	104. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	105. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	106. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]	107. Writing in Solidarity: Shastra Deo, Nadine Chemali, Sean West, Sasha Jessop, Fred Leone, Wejdan Shamala. (MC) Pascale Burton [FREE]
8:45pm–9:00pm				

Sunday 11 October

TIME	Powerhouse Theatre	Parkside Marquee	Underground Theatre	Fairfax Studio
9:30am–9:45am	91. Susan Orlean: <i>Joyride</i> . (c) Sarah Kanowski	92. Shaun Micallef: <i>Matthew Flinders</i> . (c) Steve Austin	93. Elaine Castillo: <i>Moderation</i> . (c) Carody Culver	94. Crossing Cultures: Majeda Awawdeh, Sean Jacobs, Tyree Barnette, Durkhanai Ayubi. (c) Rhianna Patrick [FREE]
9:45am–10:00am				
10:00am–10:15am				
10:15am–10:30am				
10:30am–10:45am	98. Andrew O'Hagan: <i>On Friendship</i> . (c) Matthew Condon	95. Marc Fennell: <i>Stuff the British Stole</i> . (c) Rachel Mealey	96. Getting Mad & Even: Georgie Tunny, Gabbie Stroud, Jess Ho, Naima Brown. (c) Kimberley Allsopp	97. Short but Not Sweet: Mariana Enríquez, Ingrid Horrocks, Alex Cothren, Gillian Hagenus. (c) Terri-Jane Dow
10:45am–11:00am				
11:00am–11:15am				
11:15am–11:30am				
11:30am–11:45am	102. Hannah Moloney: <i>Why We Garden</i> . (c) Bronwen Gray	99. George Megalogenis: <i>Three Shocks</i> . (c) Ellen Fanning	100. Stewart Bell: <i>Formula One</i> . (c) Steve Austin	101. Once More with Feeling Failing: Elaine Castillo, Josh Silver, Jordan Prosser, Max Easton. (c) Carody Culver
11:45am–12:00pm				
12:00pm–12:15pm				
12:15pm–12:30pm				
12:30pm–12:45pm	106. Richard Flanagan: <i>Heresies</i> . (c) Michael Ondaatje	103. New Perspectives on Old Assumptions. Marc Fennell, Matt Bevan, Lucinda Holdforth, Tyree Barnette. (c) Sean Jacobs	104. Myth & Magic: Lev Grossman, Charlie Jane Anders, John Morrissey, Cameron Sullivan. (c) Kathleen Jennings	105. Metamorphosis: Mariana Enríquez, Catherine Chidgey, Shaun Micallef, Kris Kneen. (c) Laura Jean McKay
12:45pm–1:00pm				
1:00pm–1:15pm				
1:15pm–1:30pm				
1:30pm–1:45pm	110. Lisa Wilkinson: <i>The Titanic Story of Evelyn</i> . (c) Susie O'Neill	107. Reset & Reconnect: Dr Ahona Guha, David Gillespie, Dr Rebecca Ray, Madonna King. (c) Christine Jackman	108. Candice Fox: <i>Redbelly Crossing</i> . (c) Ron Serdiuk	109. Stavroula Adameitis (aka Frida Las Vegas): <i>Australiana</i> . (c) Phoebe Paradise
1:45pm–2:00pm				
2:00pm–2:15pm				
2:15pm–2:30pm				
2:30pm–2:45pm	111. Josh Silver: <i>Fruit Fly</i> . (c) Carody Culver	112. Lev Grossman: <i>The Bright Sword</i> . (c) Helen Marshall	113. Yvette Henry Holt: <i>Fitzroy North 3068</i> . (c) Debra Dank	
2:45pm–3:00pm				
3:00pm–3:15pm				
3:15pm–3:30pm				
3:30pm–3:45pm	114. Matt Bevan: <i>If You're Listening (Declassified)</i> . (c) Jessica Rudd			
3:45pm–4:00pm				
4:00pm–4:15pm				
4:15pm–4:30pm				
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6:15pm–6:30pm				
6:30pm–6:45pm				
6:45pm–7:00pm				

Phoebe Paradise

Cover Artist – Regular Program



Phoebe Paradise is a multi-disciplinary artist, musician and designer based in Brisbane, Australia, known for her illustrations, murals and public art installations. Paradise has captivated her broad audience over the course of a decade-long creative career with her popular fashion label and store, underground punk output and an illustration practice for which she is best known. www.phoebeparadise.com

Rachel Tribout

Cover Artist – Schools and YA Program



Rachel Tribout is a French-born illustrator and graphic designer currently based in Brisbane, Queensland. She spent over a decade immersed in the arts scene of Hobart, Tasmania, before relocating her studio to Brisbane. Her work bridges commercial branding, large-scale signage, illustrations for cultural projects, community conservation campaigns and children's books. www.racheltribout.com

Out-of-Season Events

Ben Crowe:

Where the Light Gets In

In conversation with Katherine Feeney

Tuesday 10 February, 2026



Kathy Lette:

The Sisterhood Rules

In conversation with Jessica Rudd

Tuesday 10 March, 2026

M Gessen:

Surviving Autocracy

In Conversation with Richard Fidler

10 March 2026



AC Grayling:

For the People: Fighting Authoritarianism, Saving Democracy

In conversation with Michael Ondaatje

Thursday 2 April, 2026

Frances Whiting:

The Nocturnals

In conversation with Trent Dalton

Thursday 2 April, 2026



Annastacia Palaszczuk:

The Politics of Being Me

In conversation with Frances Whiting

Monday 27 April, 2026



Sarah Wilson: *I Eat the Stars*
In conversation with Katherine Feeney
Tuesday 12 May, 2026

RF Kuang: *Katabasis*
In conversation with Rhianna Patrick
Tuesday 12 May, 2026



Yann Martel: *Son of Nobody*
In conversation with Carody Culver
Wednesday 13 May, 2026

Jimmy Wales: *The Seven Rules of Trust*
In conversation with Carody Culver
Tuesday 19 May, 2026



Mick Herron: *Clown Town*
In conversation with Matthew Condon
Tuesday 19 May, 2026

Lynette Noni: *Shadow Reaper*
In conversation with Stacey McEwan
Tuesday 9 June, 2026



What did you think of BWF26?

We'd love to hear your highlights, lowlights and more about your favourite events and books so we can continue to improve.

Complete our survey online or at the festival with one of our friendly volunteers.

One lucky respondent will receive a BWF26 book pack.



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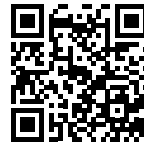
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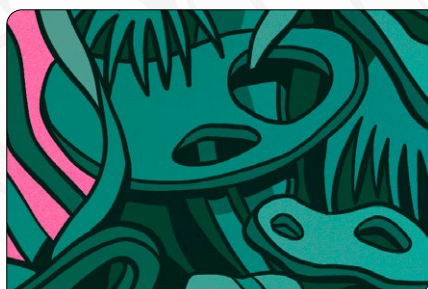


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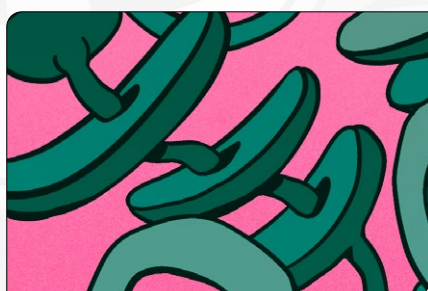
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Woodroffe, Thom	26
Wright, Fiona	63, 69, 78
Wu, Jessy	63, 69, 85



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Acknowledgements

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Festival Friends

Anonymous, Justice Thomas Bradley, Emily McNamara, Nicola Moloney, Courtney Talbot, Taylor family

We are a non-for-profit organisation and rely on the generosity of donors and partners to support our aim of bringing stories to life in Queensland communities. Brisbane Writers Festival is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.





presents **Liane Moriarty in conversation**

7pm, Friday 4 September | Concert Hall, Brisbane City Hall

STOP EVERYTHING: Liane Moriarty has a new book coming out. But wait, there's more!

This isn't just a new book: it's the follow-up to her international mega-hit *Big Little Lies*, which was made into a blockbuster HBO series starring Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman and Laura Dern.

Now, at last, it's time to return to picturesque Pirriwee, your favourite Northern Beaches hotbed of secrets and subterfuge.

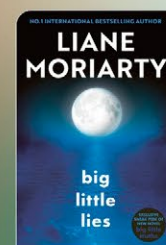
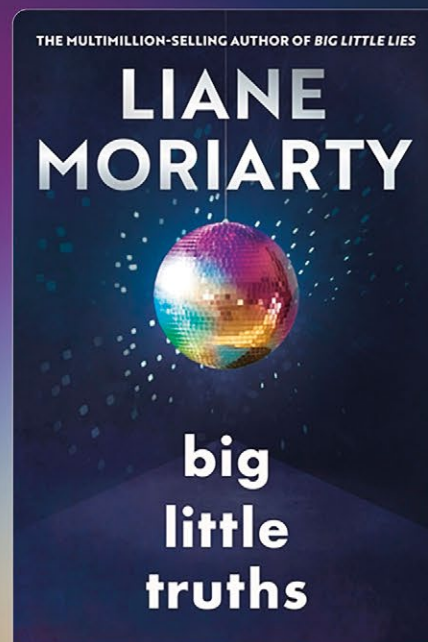
In *Big Little Truths*, best friends Madeline, Celeste and Jane are still haunted by the events of ten years ago.

They're just trying to get on with their lives – until a severed finger shows up and a strange man in a green Volvo starts hanging around the kids.

The truth will come out...and it's going to cause chaos.

Don't miss this maestro of intrigue, wit and warmth in conversation with powerhouse duo (and Disco Club founders) Lise and Sarah!

Includes audience Q&A (using Slido) and book signing opportunity afterwards.



**OCTOBER
8-11 2024**

