

[Melbourne Writers Festival]

visions &
~~re~~visions
~~RE~~visions
~~Re~~visions

7–10 May

[**40**] years in the making
1986–2026

mwf.com.au

We respectfully acknowledge that Melbourne Writers Festival takes place on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation, in particular the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung peoples.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and to the more than 65,000 years of storytelling that has taken place on the lands and waterways of this Country. Sovereignty was never ceded.

How to book

Online

mwf.com.au

By phone

(03) 9094 7871

Scan to Book



A booking fee applies to most transactions, please visit **mwf.com.au/faqs** for more information.

Venues

To learn more about our venues, including public transport options, accessibility and parking options, please visit **mwf.com.au/venues**

Concession Prices

Concession prices are available at many MWF events for: children under 16, full-time students, Concession or Pension Card holders, and Seniors Card holders. See each event listing for details.

Community Tickets for First Nations Peoples

MWF has an allocation of tickets available for free for First Nations peoples. To access these community tickets, email **ticketing@mwf.com.au** or call **(03) 9094 7871**.

Access

Visit **mwf.com.au/access** for information about how MWF can assist with access requirements and to learn more about accessibility at the Festival.

Access symbols in guide:

- Auslan interpretation
- Accessible venue

Please contact our ticketing team at **ticketing@mwf.com.au** or on **(03) 9094 7871** to:

- book accessible seats
- request an Auslan interpreter
- book a seat with the best eyeline of an Auslan interpreter
- book a seat with access to the hearing loop at The Capitol
- book a complimentary ticket as a Companion Card holder
- discuss any other access enquiries.

Melbourne Writers Festival accepts calls via the National Relay Service. Registration is required for this service. Call **133 677** or visit **relayservice.gov.au** for more information.

TTY users can phone 133 677 and ask for (03) 9094 7871.

Speak and Listen users can phone 1300 555 727 and ask for (03) 9094 7871.

Auslan Interpretation

Auslan interpretation is available to request at any event in the Festival program. If you'd like to request an Auslan interpreter at a Festival event, please contact our ticketing team at the time of booking. We require at least two weeks notice prior to the event to confirm an interpreter.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION



#MWF26
@melbwritersfest

Subscribe to our eNews for the latest festival news and exclusive offers at **mwf.com.au**

40 YEARS IN THE MAKING



In 2026, we celebrate the 40th anniversary edition of your Melbourne Writers Festival.

This year's theme, **Visions & Revisions**, celebrates the visionary capability of writers and honours the process of continual remaking that is integral to literature, humanity - and to festivals. No story appears fully formed on the page at its inception. Rather, writers and storytellers bravely acknowledge mistakes, embrace imperfection, and revise. They make it new, and make new meaning.

Since 1986, MWF has been shaped and sustained by countless visions. Whether contributing as artists, audiences, volunteers or supporters - many hands, hearts, pens and minds have forged the festival's legacy.

At a time when freedom of expression is under pressure and writers face increasing attempts to constrain their voices, we are proud to welcome a bold and insightful lineup to MWF this May.

You will hear from bestsellers, prize winners and electric new voices in fiction, poetry and memoir; from our most trusted journalists and political commentators; and from local writers who have been inspired by our City of Literature. You'll be transported around the world;



A MESSAGE FROM FESTIVAL DIRECTOR VERONICA SULLIVAN

from the jungles of Borneo, to a housing commission in Hungary... and to the very depths of Hell.

Opening Night kicks off with creative reflections on this year's MWF theme from a roster of extraordinary festival guests, including **Omar Musa**, **Don Watson**, **Ariana Reines** and **Sophia Brous**.

On Friday night, we take over Melbourne Town Hall for conversations with two remarkable women. Memoirist, mother and former Aotearoa New Zealand Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern** will share what it means to model a different kind of power, and bestselling fantasy novelist **R. F. Kuang** will discuss her mind-bending latest novel *Katabasis*.

This year's First Nations Guest Curators - **Evelyn Araluen**, **Anita Heiss** and **Daniel James** - have each crafted unmissable events that illuminate culture, politics and the craft of storytelling in new and essential ways, including a unique collaboration between Araluen and nēhiyaw novelist **Jessica Johns**.

We welcome the winner of the 2025 Booker Prize, **David Szalay**, along with shortlistee **Susan Choi** and longlistee **Maria Reva**, to discuss their expansive novels. The 2002 Booker Prize winner, **Yann Martel**, also returns to Australia for the first time in a decade with a transporting new work of fiction.

This year, we'll celebrate works in translation with a focus on Japanese writers, including bestselling novelists **Genki Kawamura** and **Mieko Kawakami**. Our phenomenally popular Translation Slam event returns, with a featured ghost story by cultural historian **Hiroko Yoda**.

Big issues come to the fore in chewy discussions about politics, independent media, democracy, disability and environmentalism. Feminist programming covers topics ranging from sex, love, rage and poetry; from honouring matriarchies, to women's experiences in wartime. Fiction-focused conversations explore mythical retellings, the animal parts of ourselves, the decline

of the Great Australian Dream of home ownership, and the inexorable rise of dark academia.

Professor **Toby Walsh** delivers the 2026 John Button Oration, asking whether AI is leading us towards a boom of potential, or to our doom. **Stephanie Alexander** sits down for a Mother's Day fireside chat marking the thirtieth anniversary of her home-cooking bible, *The Cook's Companion*.

Fancy immersing yourself in something a little different? Take a projected tour of the universe at the Planetarium, explore a walking tour through Melbourne's cultural past, test your wits at a cryptic crossword workshop or luxuriate in the world premiere of a song cycle based on the transcendent poetry of the late **Dorothy Porter**.

Part interactive art installation, part bicycle-powered publishing house, **The Book Factory** invites audiences of all ages to take part in the writing, printing, pressing and binding of original books on the State Library Victoria forecourt! Visit between festival sessions to contribute your own writing

or artwork, jump on a bike and power the printing press, or just watch the magic unfold.

Young readers and families will be delighted by free storytime and craft events. In the suburbs, we're partnering with local libraries and councils to bring some of the most exciting MWF authors into local communities.

At our Closing Night event one of Melbourne's most beloved authors, **Tony Birch**, will deliver an impassioned address encouraging us all - writers and readers alike - to nurture an ethical imagination.

In his poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', T. S. Eliot wrote:

*There will be time,
there will be time...
...time for all the works
and days of hands
That lift and drop a question
on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred
indecisions,
And for a hundred visions
and revisions*

Allow us to drop a question on your plate, as we embrace the curiosity, possibility and humanity of the creative process - and the eternal seeking that propels it.

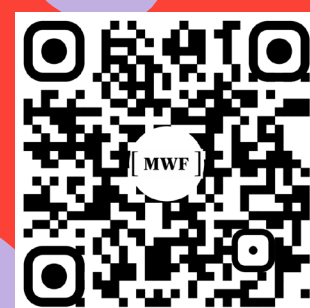
We hope you'll join us at MWF as together we explore many visions, and infinite revisions.

[MWF40]

This year marks 40 years of MWF and we invite you to join the celebration. We're gathering memories from the incredible community who has helped to build, shape and sustain MWF.

Share your favourite memory from attending MWF and go into the draw for a chance to win a double pass to our 2026 Festival opening night event, *Visions & Revisions*, on Thursday 7 May.

Submit your memory



GIVE TODAY, INSPIRE TOMORROW

MWF relies on the generosity of our donors to help us inspire curiosity and connection in our UNESCO City of Literature.

Donate today and help us secure the future of the Festival for generations to come.

Donate now



WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL

Opening Night: Visions & Revisions

Thu 7 May, 6.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Join us to open the 2026 Festival and celebrate 40 years of MWF. Hear original readings and performances responding to this year's theme by **Omar Musa**, **Don Watson**, **Ariana Reines** and **Sophia Brous**, and MWF First Nations curators **Anita Heiss**, **Daniel James**, **Evelyn Araluen** and **Jessica Johns**. Plus, the announcement of *The Age Book of the Year Awards*.

Supported by ARA | \$35 full / \$30 conc ③ ④



Jacinda Ardern: A Different Kind of Power

Fri 8 May, 8.30pm | Melbourne Town Hall

Hear the trailblazing leader and former Prime Minister of Aotearoa New Zealand reflect on her political career, navigating motherhood in the public eye, and her advice for the next generation of leaders. Don't miss this candid discussion on women, politics and power. With **Virginia Trioli**.

In partnership with The Wheeler Centre
Supported by City of Melbourne

\$45 full / \$40 conc. / \$40 Under 30 ③ ④



R. F. Kuang: Katabasis

Fri 8 May, 6pm | Melbourne Town Hall

Literary sensation **R.F. Kuang** (*Babel*, *Yellowface*) will take the stage for a riveting conversation about her latest spellbinding novel, *Katabasis*. Hear Kuang discuss her genre-defying novels, the perils and power structures of academia, and her deeply researched approach to writing. With **Shelley Parker-Chan**.

Supported by City of Melbourne

\$45 full / \$40 conc. / \$40 Under 30 ③ ④



Yann Martel: Son of Nobody

Sat 9 May, 12.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Join **Yann Martel**, the Man Booker Prize-winning author of *Life of Pi*, as he shares his new novel of love, grief and classical mythology. Appearing in Australia for the first time in a decade, Martel sits down with ABC Radio National's **Sarah L'Estrange**.

Supported by the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Stephanie Alexander: 30 Years of The Cook's Companion

Sun 10 May, 10.30am | Athenaeum Theatre

Join **Stephanie Alexander** to celebrate the 30th anniversary of her home cooking bible *The Cook's Companion*. Spend Mother's Day morning with the culinary pioneer as she offers inspiration for finding joy in the kitchen and at the table. With **Alice Zaslavsky**.

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Maria Reva: Endling

Sun 10 May, 10.30am | The Capitol

Canadian-Ukrainian author **Maria Reva** discusses her daringly inventive Booker Prize-longlisted novel. *Endling* is at once a war novel about modern-day Ukraine, a hilarious satire of the mail-order bride industry and an examination of the ethics of writing on conflict and violence. With **Maria Tumarkin**.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Genki Kawamura: One Hundred Flowers

Sat 9 May, 4.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Bestselling author **Genki Kawamura** (*If Cats Disappeared from the World*) reflects on his work across fiction and film, and his poignant new novel, *One Hundred Flowers*. With **Omar Musa**.

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



David Szalay: Flesh

Sun 10 May, 4.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

2025 Booker Prize winner **David Szalay** discusses *Flesh*: his propulsive and hypnotic novel about a man unravelled by a series of events beyond his grasp. Szalay sits down to explore the book that everyone's talking about with host **Michael Williams**.

Supported by ARA

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Dervla McTiernan and Benjamin Stevenson: Blood on the Page

Sat 9 May, 10.30am | The Capitol

Two of the country's most thrilling crime writers, **Dervla McTiernan** and **Benjamin Stevenson**, discuss their latest books and what makes Australian crime writing so electric. With **Kate Mildenhall**.

Supported by ARA \$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Antoinette Lattouf and Grace Tame: Women Who Win

Sat 9 May, 6.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Journalist and human rights advocate **Antoinette Lattouf** joins activist and former Australian of the Year **Grace Tame** to discuss their experiences as women who have shattered barriers. With **Tasneem Chopra**. \$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Mythical Retellings

Sun 10 May, 4.30pm | The Capitol

Writers **Nikita Gill** (*Hekate*), **Yann Martel** (*Son of Nobody*) and **Zoe Terakes** (*Eros*) consider what draws them to archetypal tales of gods, goddesses, heroes and monsters – and how their work breathes new, often subversive life into old stories. With **Carody Culver**.

Supported by ARA

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Secret Histories: Tales of Dark Academia

Sat 9 May, 2.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Join **Tigist Girma** (*Immortal Dark*, *Eternal Ruin*), **R.F. Kuang** (*Babel*, *Katabasis*) and **Lili Wilkinson** (*Unhallowed Halls*) as they discuss writing novels steeped in murder, magic and deeply buried secrets, and why dark academia is uniquely suited to teasing out nuances of class, race and gender. With **Amie Kaufman**.

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Toby Walsh: AI – Boom or Doom?

Sat 9 May, 2.30pm | The Capitol

For the annual John Button Oration, **Professor Toby Walsh** (*The Shortest History of AI*) delivers an illuminating address exploring the current and future impact of AI on our society. Walsh explores the opportunities, challenges and unexpected consequences posed by emerging technologies.

Supported by the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Mieko Kawakami: Sisters in Yellow

Sun 10 May, 12.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

International Booker Prize-shortlisted author **Mieko Kawakami** (*Breasts and Eggs*, *Heaven*) presents her latest novel, *Sisters in Yellow*. Join Kawakami for this lively conversation exploring sexuality, feminism and the complexity of humanity. With **Jessie Kindig**.

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Susan Choi: Flashlight

Sun 10 May, 2.30pm | Athenaeum Theatre

Susan Choi sheds light on her 2025 Booker Prize-shortlisted novel *Flashlight* and the themes that animate it – from the immigrant experience and the complex bonds between parents and children, to questions of memory, language and identity. With **Beejay Silcox**.

Supported by ARA

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Ariana Reines in Conversation

Sun 10 May, 2.30pm | The Capitol

Poet, playwright, performing artist and translator **Ariana Reines** sits down to discuss her latest collections, *The Rose* and *Wave of Blood*. Hear Reines reflect on her creative practice and a life devoted to seeking meaning through art. With **Rebecca Harkins-Cross**.

In partnership with Monash University Museum of Art

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③

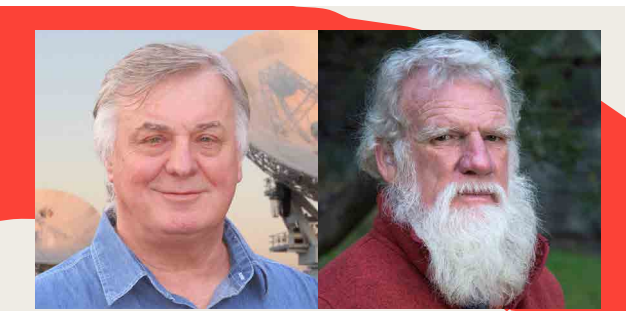


Political Year in Review

Sat 9 May, 10.30am | Athenaeum Theatre

One year on from the Federal Election, it's time to take stock. Respected political experts **Sean Kelly**, **Amy Remeikis**, **Don Watson** and host **Barrie Cassidy** come together for a frank conversation on how the political decisions of the past have led us to this current moment.

\$40 full / \$35 conc. ③



Ray Norris and Bruce Pascoe: Big Sky

Ray Norris and **Bruce Pascoe** bring their jointly authored new book, *Big Sky: When Emu Left the Earth*, to MWF for two special events.

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Melbourne Planetarium at Scienceworks

Enjoy an evening of celestial wonder at Scienceworks as the pair discuss their new book with ABC Radio National's **Natasha Mitchell**. Afterwards, **Dr Tanya Hill** will lead a spellbinding virtual tour of the night sky inside the Planetarium theatre.

In partnership with Scienceworks and Bunjilaka
Aboriginal Cultural Centre

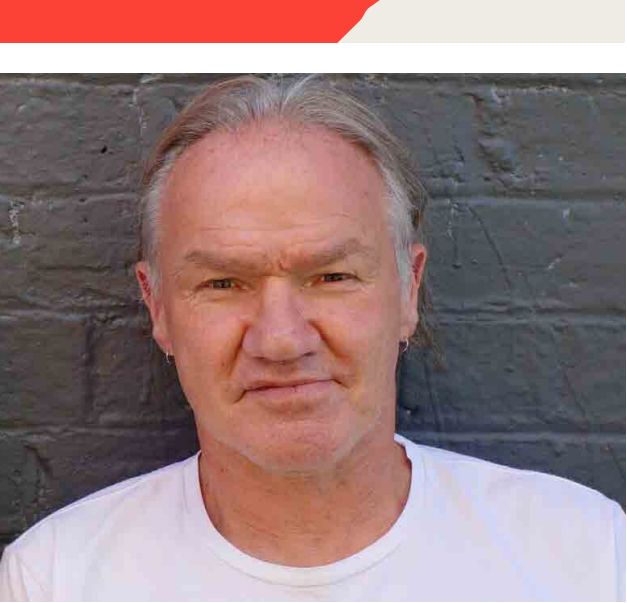
\$45 full / \$40 conc. ③

Sat 9 May, 4.30pm
The Capitol

Experience an exquisite exchange of sky knowledge between the award-winning writer and the astrophysicist that will reframe astronomy as both a science and a philosophy.

Supported by ARA

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Closing Night Address: Tony Birch on The Ethical Imagination

Sun 10 May, 6.30pm | The Capitol

In the MWF 2026 Closing Night Address, activist, historian and author **Tony Birch** considers the ethics of being a reader, and of being a writer. How can we read and write with courage? How can we all develop an ethical imagination?

Birch will consider these questions through the lens of stories and poetry by First Nations and other writers whose creative work enlarges our collective and individual imaginations. Following his address, Birch will be in conversation with **Michael Williams**.

Supported by the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③

FIRST NATIONS CURATORS



Anita Heiss



Daniel James



Evelyn Araluen



Jessica Johns



Mother Tongue: Writing Matriarchies

Fri 8 May, 6pm | The Wheeler Centre

Three celebrated and acclaimed First Nations writers explore the power of telling women's stories and honouring matriarchies through fiction. Join **Judi Morison**, **Tasma Walton** and **Anita Heiss** for a powerful conversation with **Inala Cooper**. Curated by **Anita Heiss**.

Pay What You Wish



Centring First Nations Knowledge

Sun 10 May, 1.30pm

State Library Theatre

Historian **Julie Andrews**, Indigenous justice advocate **Eddie Cubillo** and writer and mathematician **JM Field** come together with host **Tony Birch** to reflect on Indigenous knowledge systems. Curated by **Anita Heiss**.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Making the Victorian Treaty

Sat 9 May, 12pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Key figures involved in the creation of the Victorian Treaty discuss this landmark event in our nation's history. Hosted and curated by **Daniel James**, with guests including 2023–26 Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly **Ngarra Murray**.

Pay What You Wish ③



Festival of Indigenous Stories

Sat 9 May, 10.30am, 2.30pm & 6.30pm
The Wheeler Centre

This unique creative exchange brings together Indigenous writers from Canada and Australia in a collaboration co-curated by Goorie and Koori poet **Evelyn Araluen** and nēhiyaw novelist **Jessica Johns**. Over three events, experience discussions ranging across global Indigeneity, relationship to land and waterways, and the multiplicity of First Nations storytelling forms and genres in both countries.

Extraordinary local writers including **Jasmin McGaughey**, **Bebe Oliver** and **Mykaela Saunders** will be in conversation with writers from Canada **Alicia Elliott**, **Chelsea Vowel** and **Jesse Wenthe**.

In partnership with *Toronto International Festival of Authors* and *Blak & Bright*

Supported by the *Canada Council for the Arts* and the *Consulate General of Canada, Sydney*

Pay What You Wish

Queerstories

Fri 8 May, 7.30pm
The Wheeler Centre

The beloved LGBTQIA+ storytelling series returns to MWF for one night only. Curator and host **Maeve Marsden** is joined by writers **Tareq Baconi**, **Bob Brown**, **Nikita Gill**, **Zoe Terakes** and **Chris Tse**. Plus, a very special musical performance by **Brendan Maclean**.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③ ④



Bob Brown: Defiance

Sat 9 May, 10.30am
Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

In this special live recording of the *Good Weekend Talks* podcast, environmentalist and social justice campaigner **Bob Brown** discusses his bold new book, *Defiance: Stories from Nature and Its Defenders*. Brown reflects on the irreplaceable value of nature and a lifetime of activism. With **Konrad Marshall**.

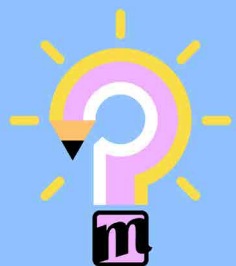
In partnership with *Good Weekend*
\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③

Wilder Shores: Writing the Changing Planet

Sat 9 May, 10.30am
State Library Theatre

Three writers explore climate, grief and the links between people and their environments. Australian novelists **Romy Ash** (*Mantle*) and **Bri Lee** (*Seed*) join Slovenian poet and researcher **Ana Svetel** to discuss writing landscapes in the face of an uncertain future. With **Nadia Bailey**.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Minute Cryptic Crossword Workshop

Sat 9 May, 10.30am
The Moat

Discover the secrets to unlocking cryptic crosswords in this free workshop led by **Liam Runnalls** and **Angas Tiernan**, founders of the hugely popular online puzzle platform Minute Cryptic.

Pay What You Wish

Lost and Found: Griffith Review

Sat 9 May, 12pm
State Library Theatre

'Loss,' wrote Marcus Aurelius, 'is nothing else but change.' **Madison Griffiths**, **Ahona Guha** and **Georgia Malu** reflect on the many contours of loss – from growing up between cultures, to being confronted with our past selves. With **Carody Culver**.

In partnership with *Griffith Review*

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Tareq Baconi: Fire in Every Direction

Sat 9 May, 12.30pm
The Wheeler Centre

Renowned Palestinian scholar **Tareq Baconi** joins **Antoun Issa** to discuss his beautifully honest memoir *Fire in Every Direction*. Telling the story of three generations of displacement, this extraordinary book is a political awakening, a love story and a tale of queer self-discovery.

In partnership with *PEN Melbourne*
\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Genki Kawamura: From Japan to the World

Sat 9 May, 12.30pm | The Capitol

Japanese stories have never been more popular with English-speaking audiences. Acclaimed author and filmmaker **Genki Kawamura** discusses his extraordinary body of work across literature and film, and the increasing resonance of Japanese culture with readers and cinema-goers worldwide. With **Matt Alt**.

This conversation will take place in Japanese, with live-translated open captions for English speaking audience members.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③

Robert Forster: Songwriters on the Run

Sat 9 May, 1pm
Fringe Common Rooms

Renowned singer-songwriter and founding member of The Go-Betweens **Robert Forster** reflects on music, life on the road and writing his high-octane fiction debut, *Songwriters on the Run*. Hosted by **Brian Nankervis**.

In partnership with *Fringe Common Rooms*

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Book Club: The Children's Bach with Bri Lee and Jaclyn Crupi

Sat 9 May, 1pm | The Moat

Spend the afternoon with **Bri Lee** and **Jaclyn Crupi** as Lee's hit Substack *News & Reviews* goes IRL with an intimate book club event, discussing Helen Garner's 1984 novella *The Children's Bach*. Explore the beloved classic's lasting impact and share book recommendations. Tickets include lunch and a glass of sparkling on arrival. Supported by *Foxeys Hangout*

\$70 ③

SPECIAL EVENTS

Events that bring words to life through performance, poetry and powerful storytelling.



WORLD PREMIERE

Life Lines: A Song Cycle of Dorothy Porter

Fri 8 May, 6.30pm | Conversation Quarter, SLV

Experience a song cycle performance inspired by the work of the late Australian poet Dorothy Porter. Created and performed by artist **Sophia Brous**, with composer and pianist **Paul Grabowsky**. With an introduction by Porter's partner, novelist **Andrea Goldsmith**.

In partnership with *State Library Victoria*

\$60 full / \$55 conc.



Exit 8: Screening and Q&A with Genki Kawamura

Fri 8 May, 6.15pm | Cinema Nova

MWF and Cinema Nova present a special screening of Japanese psychological thriller *Exit 8*, with a post-screening Q&A between director **Genki Kawamura** and **Stephen A Russell**. Tickets include a glass of sparkling on arrival.

In partnership with *Cinema Nova*

Supported by *Foxeys Hangout* \$45 full / \$40 conc.



Acoustic Mirrors: An Afternoon of Poetry and Music

Sat 9 May, 3pm | Fringe Common Rooms

Tune into a deep listening experience with performances by local and international poets and musicians, including **Ender Başkan**, **Genevieve Fry**, **Nū**, **Ana Svetel**, **Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes** and more. Co-curated by poet **Panda Wong** and musician and writer **Hannah Wu**, aka *Lotus Threads*.

In partnership with *Australian Poetry and Fringe Common Rooms*

\$25 full / \$20 conc.



The Guardian's Are You Game Show

Sat 9 May, 4.30pm | Conversation Quarter, SLV

Test your knowledge and play along with *The Guardian's* wild and wonderful live game show where two teams of writers put their common, and not-so-common, knowledge to the test. Team captains **Stephanie Convery** and **Jo Tovey** are joined by special guest contestants including **Robert Forster**, **Lally Katz** and **Niraj Lal**. Hosted by culture editor **Steph Harmon**.

In partnership with *The Guardian* \$25 full / \$20 conc.



Human Love Quest: Talk Wordy To Me

Sat 9 May, 6.30pm | Conversation Quarter, SLV

Calling all lovelorn literati! Are you tired of searching for a lover who's also a booklover? Looking for someone who's on the same page when it comes to romance? In this live dating gameshow, three hopefuls vie for the attention of one solo contestant hidden behind a partition.

Apply to be a contestant at mwf.com.au

\$25 full / \$20 conc.



Melbourne Memoryscapes: Walking Tours with Robyn Annear

Sun 10 May, 10.30am or 2pm | Melbourne CBD

Lose yourself in Melbourne's past as **Robyn Annear**, troubadour historian and author of *Shutter City*, leads a fascinating walking tour through the city's lost buildings and forgotten stories.

\$60 ③

QUEEN VICTORIA WOMEN'S CENTRE EVENTS

Presented by Verve Super

In partnership with Queen Victoria Women's Centre



Raging Disgracefully

Sat 9 May, 11.30am | Queen Victoria Women's Centre

When it comes to the experience of modern womanhood there's a lot to talk about. **Lally Katz** (*My Cursed Vagina*), **Ariana Reines** (*The Rose*) and **Em Rusciano** (*Blood, Sweat and Glitter*) share a joyful and subversive discussion on navigating life, societal expectations and finding meaning despite it all. With **Marieke Hardy**.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Evelyn Araluen and Maxine Beneba Clarke: Girl, Woman, Poem

Sat 9 May, 1.30pm | Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Two of Australia's most acclaimed contemporary poets **Evelyn Araluen** (*The Rot*) and **Maxine Beneba Clarke** (*beautiful changelings*) come together to discuss their incisive new collections of poetry, and their shared themes of girlhood, rage and resistance. With **Maeve Marsden**.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Sex, Love and Other Catastrophes

Sat 9 May, 3.30pm | Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Spend an afternoon with writer **Madison Griffiths** (*Sweet Nothings*), sex worker and digital creator **Kayla Jade** (*Call Girl Confidential*) and broadcaster **Dee Salmín** (*It's Not Love, Actually*). Hear deeply personal stories of love, relationships, pleasure and the unvarnished realities of gender and power. With **Jacinta Parsons**.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③

Crip Stories: Nothing About Us Without Us

Sat 9 May, 1.30pm
State Library Theatre

Crip Stories contributing writers Akii Ngo, Ann Nguyễn and Arty Owens join anthology co-editors Laura Pettenuzzo and BS Windon to explore what it means to write disability and the importance of amplifying first-person narrative voices with lived experience.

In partnership with Emerging Writers' Festival

Supported by Creative Australia and Mascara Literary Review

Pay What You Wish ③ ④



Nikita Gill: Hekate

Sat 9 May, 1.30pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Discover a lyrical and fiercely feminist reimagining of an enigmatic goddess in acclaimed poet and writer Nikita Gill's new verse novel, *Hekate: The Witch*. Gill discusses her epic tale of love, loss, betrayal and forgiveness. With Jessie Kindig.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③

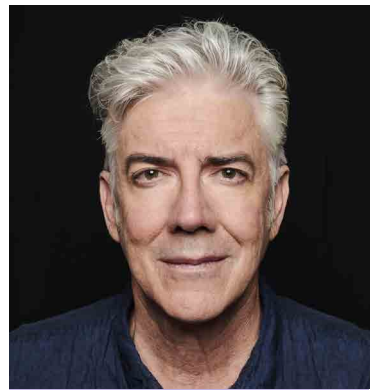


Michael Pedersen: Muckle Flugga

Sat 9 May, 3pm
State Library Theatre

Discover an astonishingly original story of memory, nature and the beauty of human connection as acclaimed Scottish poet and writer Michael Pedersen discusses his debut novel *Muckle Flugga* with his close friend Grace Tame.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Shaun Micallef: De'Ath Takes a Holiday

Sat 9 May, 3pm
Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

National treasure and bon vivant Shaun Micallef turns his sharp eye and quick wit to classic horror with his new novel *De'Ath Takes A Holiday*. Hear Micallef discuss his bloodcurdling satire of the vampire genre in a hilarious chat about life, death, the living and the undead. With Michael Williams.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③

The Next Big Thing

Sat 9 May, 3.30pm
The Moat

From menstrual monsters to graphic storytelling, discover new and cutting-edge writing from debut writers including Raya Goldtwig, Emma Hardy, Antoun Issa, Soolagna Majumdar and Olivia Wood. Hosted by Pranati Narayan Visweswaran.

In partnership with The Wheeler Centre

Pay What You Wish

Queer View Mirror: Kill Your Boomers

Sat 9 May, 4.30pm
The Wheeler Centre

Whatever happened to the great Australian dream of home ownership? Comedian Aurelia St Clair, author Fiona Wright, and the hosts of *Queer View Mirror*, Jonathan Butler and Sam Elkin, come together for a frank and funny conversation about the housing crisis and Wright's sharply satirical novel, *Kill Your Boomers*.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Hiroko Yoda: Eight Million Ways to Happiness

Sun 10 May, 10.30am
State Library Theatre

Japanese cultural historian Hiroko Yoda offers an illuminating guide for those searching for meaning in her latest book *Eight Million Ways to Happiness*. Discover how ancient Japanese spirituality can lead you on your own path to happiness. With ABC Radio National's Natasha Mitchell.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Omar Musa and Ellena Savage: Past Imperfect

Sun 10 May, 12pm
State Library Theatre

Hear Omar Musa (*Fierceland*) and Ellena Savage (*The Ruiners*) discuss their new novels' shared themes of inheritance, (in)justice, redemption and the ways in which the past haunts the present. These two brilliant authors speak with Steph Harmon.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Toni Jordan and Michael Winkler: Animal Instincts

Sat 9 May, 4.30pm
State Library Theatre

Beloved novelists Toni Jordan (*Tenderfoot*) and Michael Winkler (*Griefdog*) discuss their new books exploring the real and metaphysical relationships between dogs and humans, and consider how animals illuminate the most human parts of ourselves. Hosted by Beejay Silcox.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③

Breaking News: The Rise of Independent Media

Sun 10 May, 12.30pm | The Capitol

Journalists Antoun Issa (*Deepcut News*), Antoinette Lattouf (*Ette Media*), Amy Remeikis (*The Australia Institute*) and host Osman Faruqi (*Lamestream*) discuss the rise of independent media and the hope it offers in an era of media consolidation and declining public trust.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



Sunday Afternoon Book Club

Sun 10 May, 12pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Join literary taste-makers Marieke Hardy, Jason Steger and Booker Prize-winner Yann Martel for a very special book club. Expect no-holds-barred book chat, spicy disagreement and plenty of recommendations. Hosted by Michael Williams.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Whose Poet Laureate Is It, Anyway? The Peter Steele Poetry Conversation

Sun 10 May, 1.30pm
Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

What's the true definition of a poet laureate? Ahead of the appointment of the inaugural Australian Poet Laureate, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Michael Pedersen and Chris Tse discuss the purpose of a poet laureate through the lens of their own experiences and consider what poet laureates offer the communities they serve. Hosted by Andy Jackson.

Supported by the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Looking at Women, Looking at War: Book Club

Sun 10 May, 3pm
State Library Theatre

In this special book club event, writer and cultural consultant Kate Larsen, Booker Prize-longlisted novelist Maria Reva (*Endling*) and host Madison Griffiths (*Sweet Nothings*), delve into Victoria Amelina's posthumously published work *Looking at Women, Looking at War*.

In partnership with Victorian Women's Trust

\$25 full / \$20 conc. ③



David Moscrop: Too Dumb for Democracy?

Sun 10 May, 3pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

In this timely event, Canadian writer, podcaster and political commentator David Moscrop explains what's going wrong in today's political landscape – and how individuals, societies, and institutions can work together to set things right. Hosted by Sally Warhaft as part of The Fifth Estate series.

In partnership with The Wheeler Centre

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



Translation Slam with Hiroko Yoda

Sun 10 May, 4.30pm | Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

The MWF Translation Slam returns – and this year it's all about Japanese translation. Enjoy a battle of wits as Matt Alt and Haydn Trowell translate a satirical ghost story by Japanese cultural historian and folklorist Hiroko Yoda, live onstage.

Hosted by Laura Hasegawa.

In partnership with AALITRA

Supported by the Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne

\$35 full / \$30 conc. ③



The Book Factory

Fri 8 May, 5–9pm
Sat 9 May, 12–3pm, 5–9pm
Sun 10 May, 12–3pm
State Library Victoria Forecourt

The Book Factory is a low-fi, high-energy, pop-up publishing house where you make the book from start to finish. Take part in writing, printing, pressing and binding original books – entirely powered by bicycle.

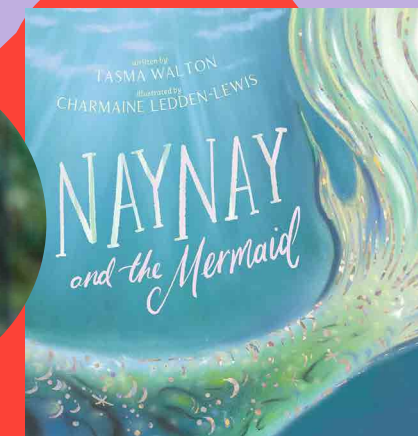
In partnership with State Library Victoria

Supported by the International Presenters Fund, Creative New Zealand

Free, no bookings

FOR YOUNGER READERS

Discover storytime and craft events for the littlest readers at MWF!

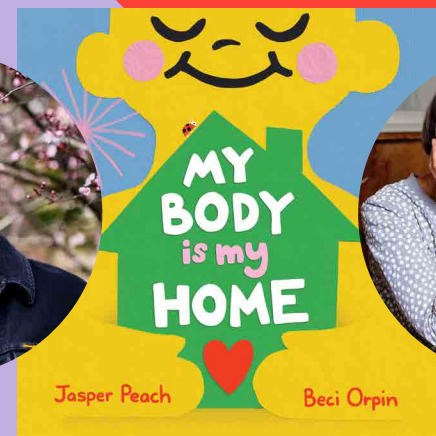


Naynay and the Mermaid with Tasma Walton

Sat 9 May, 10.30am | Create Quarter, State Library Victoria

Author Tasma Walton reads from *Naynay and the Mermaid*, a magical underwater adventure tale inspired by Boonwurrung/Bunurong stories from coastal Melbourne. Then, Tasma will lead a craft activity where little ones can make their own shell necklace to wear like a tiny treasure from the deep!

Rec. ages 3–7. Free, bookings required ③



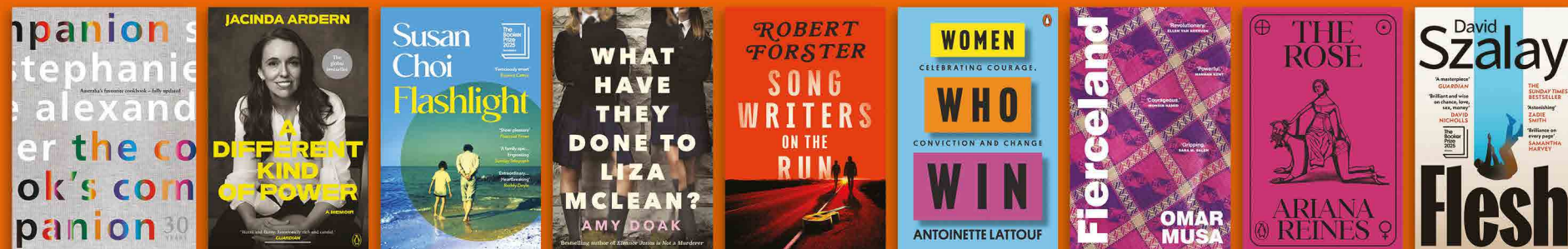
My Body is My Home with Jasper Peach and Beci Orpin

Sun 10 May, 10.30am | Create Quarter, State Library Victoria

In this storytime session, author Jasper Peach and artist and illustrator Beci Orpin share their new picture book. Discover a joyful celebration of bodies of all shapes and kinds, with a gently inclusive message about being at home in your own skin.

Free, bookings required ③

Take the festival home with Penguin Books



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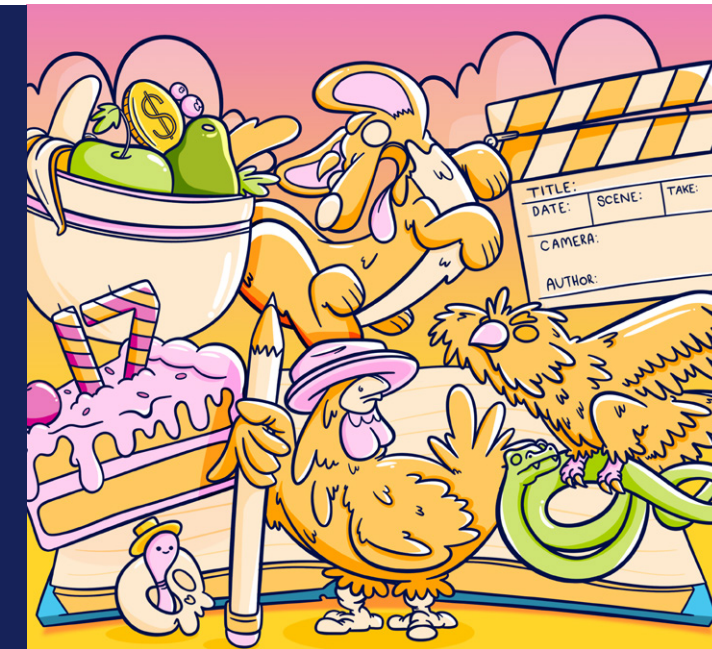
Unfolded

Each month, discover a short story from one of Australia's favourite writers, then join Seth Robinson and Tony Birch for a deep dive interview with the authors, to go inside their inspirations, influences, and creative process.

These are stories: Unpacked. Understood. Unfolded.

Revisit season one now, and subscribe for new releases. Listen on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

WORKSHOPS

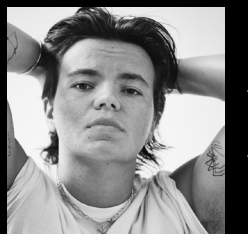
Deepen your creative process and elevate your writing in these expert-led workshops.
The Wheeler Centre | \$140 full / \$120 conc.



Lally Katz:
Writing Your Life
Tue 5 May, 6pm – 8.30pm



Jonathan Butler: Family History as Creative Inspiration
Wed 6 May, 6pm – 8.30pm



Zoe Terakes: Making Art in the Margins
Fri 8 May, 10am – 12.30pm



Beejay Silcox: Literary Criticism
Fri 8 May, 2.30pm – 5pm



Maria Reva: Character Networks
Sat 9 May, 10am – 12.30pm



Chris Tse: Collaborative Poetry
Sat 9 May, 2.30 – 5pm
Supported by the International Presenters Fund, Creative New Zealand

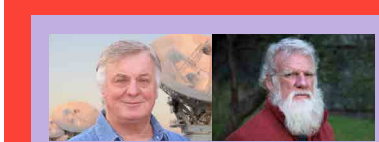


Yirga Gelaw Woldeyes: Decolonial Writing
Sun 10 May, 10am – 12.30pm

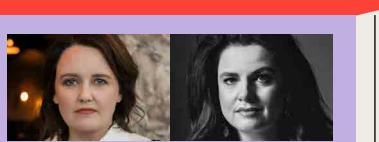


Shut Up and Write!
Sun 10 May, 10am – 12pm / 1pm – 3pm
Free, bookings required
In partnership with The Wheeler Centre

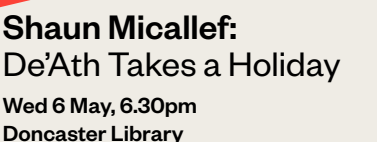
IN THE SUBURBS



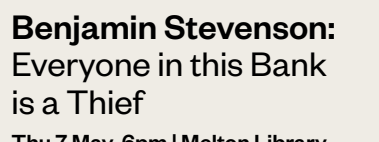
Ray Norris and Bruce Pascoe: Big Sky
Thu 7 May, 7pm | Kew Courthouse
In an exquisite exchange of sky knowledge, an astrophysicist and an award-winning writer reframe astronomy as both a science and a philosophy.
\$15 or 2 for \$20



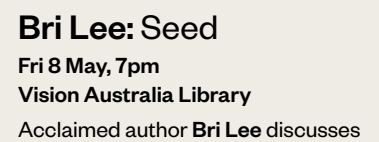
Dervla McTiernan and Louise Milligan in Conversation
Sat 9 May, 5pm | Hawthorn Arts Centre
Two of Australia's most acclaimed and insightful crime writers discuss their thrilling new novels, *Three Reasons for Revenge* and *Shellybanks*. With Jaelyn Crupi.
\$20 full / \$14 conc.



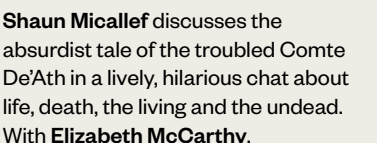
Shaun Micallef: De'Ath Takes a Holiday
Wed 6 May, 6.30pm
Doncaster Library
Shaun Micallef discusses the absurdist tale of the troubled Comte De'Ath in a lively, hilarious chat about life, death, the living and the undead. With Elizabeth McCarthy.
In partnership with Whitehorse Manningham Libraries
Free, bookings required



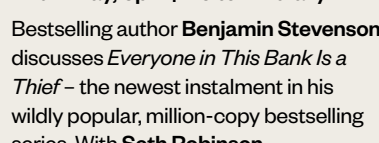
Benjamin Stevenson: Everyone in this Bank is a Thief
Thu 7 May, 6pm | Melton Library
Bestselling author Benjamin Stevenson discusses *Everyone in This Bank Is a Thief* – the newest instalment in his wildly popular, million-copy bestselling series. With Seth Robinson.
In partnership with Melton City Libraries
Free, bookings required



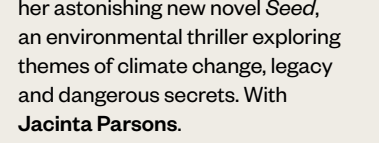
Bri Lee: Seed
Fri 8 May, 7pm
Vision Australia Library
Acclaimed author Bri Lee discusses her astonishing new novel *Seed*, an environmental thriller exploring themes of climate change, legacy and dangerous secrets. With Jacinta Parsons.
In partnership with Vision Australia Library
Supported by the City of Stonnington
Free, bookings required



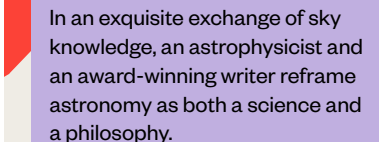
Anita Heiss: The Paradise Pact
Wed 6 May, 7pm
Vision Australia Library
Bestselling author Anita Heiss discusses her latest novel, *The Paradise Pact*, with Hana Assafiri. Light catering by Moroccan Soup Bar provided.
In partnership with Vision Australia Library
Supported by the City of Stonnington
Free, bookings required



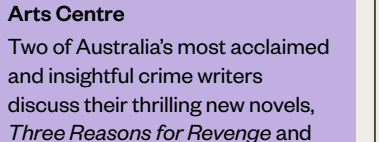
Dervla McTiernan: Three Reasons for Revenge
Fri 8 May, 6.30pm | The Clocktower
International bestselling author Dervla McTiernan discusses her gripping new novel *Three Reasons for Revenge*. With Angela Savage.
In partnership with Moonee Valley Libraries
Free, bookings required



Bob Brown: Defiance
Sat 9 May, 3.30pm
Vision Australia Library
Environmentalist and social justice campaigner Bob Brown reflects on the irreplaceable value of nature and a lifetime of activism. With Kate Mildenhall.
In partnership with Vision Australia Library
Supported by the City of Stonnington
Free, bookings required



Robert Forster: Songwriters on the Run
Fri 8 May, 7pm | Kew Courthouse
Renowned singer-songwriter and founding member of The Go-Betweens Robert Forster reflects on writing his high-octane fiction debut. With Jaelyn Crupi.
\$15 or 2 for \$20



Slow Read
6 May to 25 Jul | Town Hall Gallery, Hawthorn Arts Centre
In an era of constant scrolling and visual saturation, this exhibition turns our attention back to the printed page and to quiet, deliberate acts of looking and reading.
Free, no bookings

In partnership with the Boroondara City Council

Slow Read

TOWN HALL GALLERY
6 MAY TO 25 JULY 2026

FEATURING

Zoë Croggon, Gracia and Louise, Nadia Hernández, Deborah Kelly and others.



Presented in partnership with Melbourne Writers Festival.

Image: Zoë Croggon, 'Spine', 2024, collage of found images and glue on paper, Perspex frame, 47.6 x 36.7 x 7 cm (framed). Courtesy of the artist and Daine Singer.



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