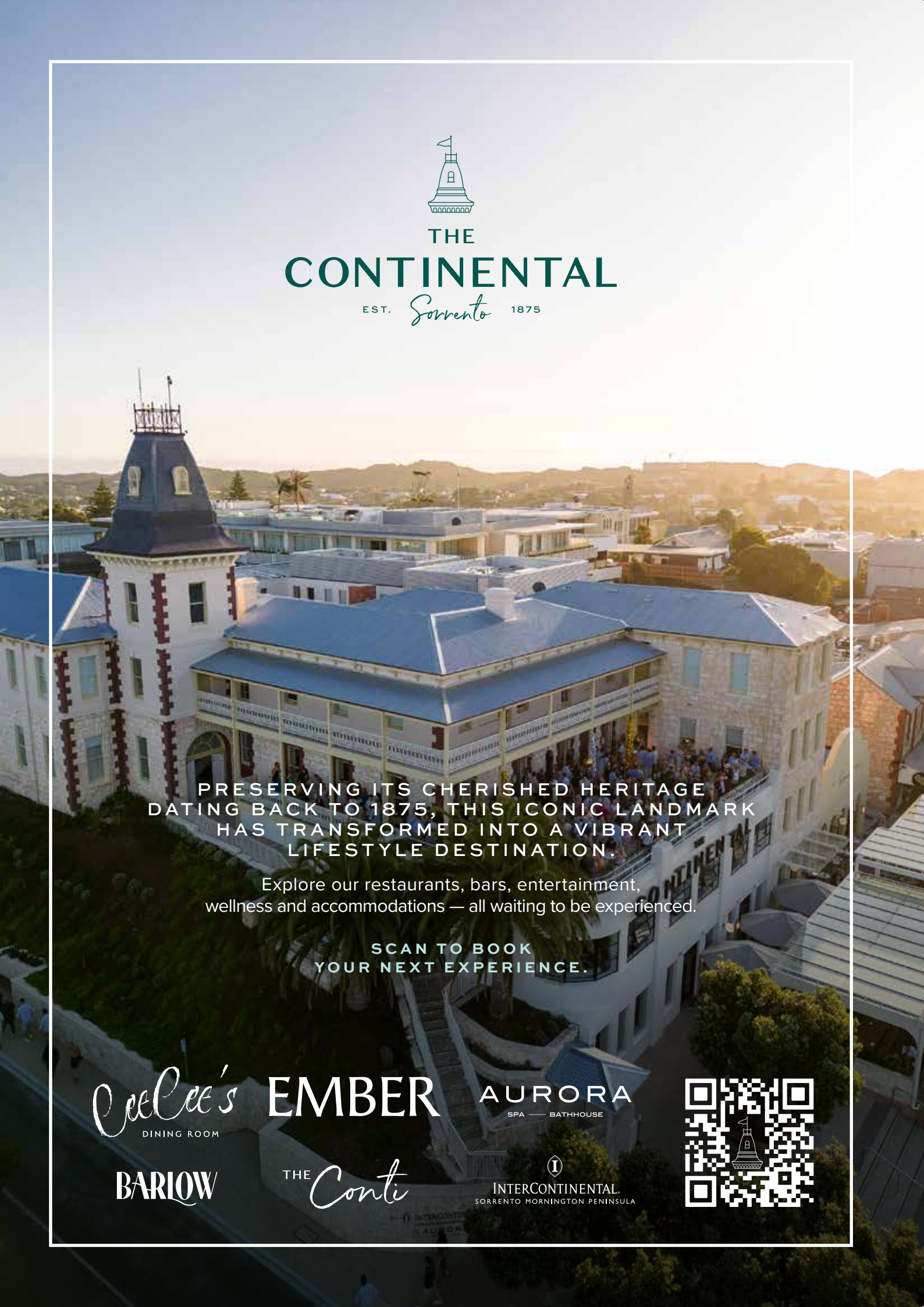
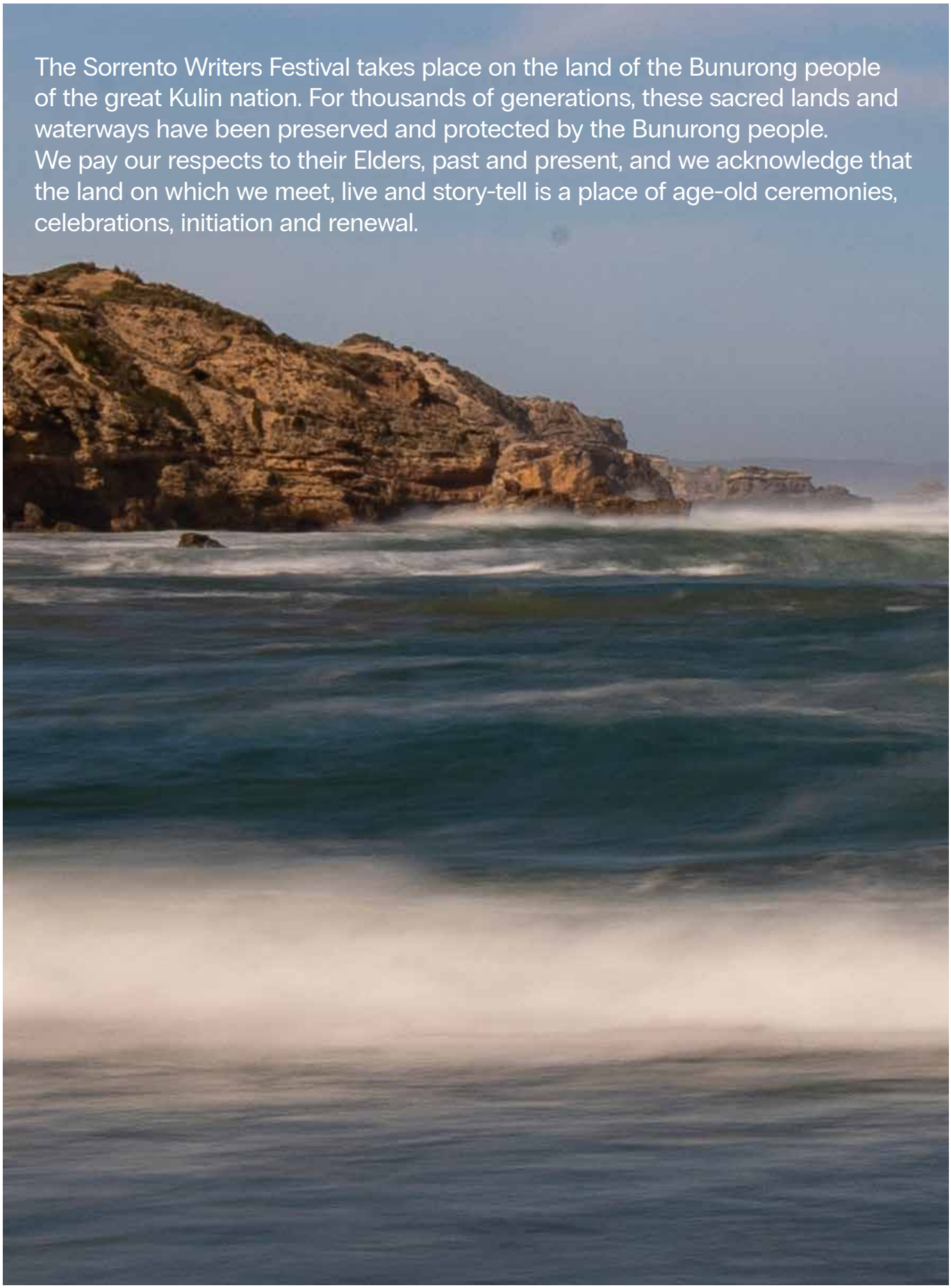
Sorrento *Writers* Festival

April 23 — 26 2026


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Acknowledgment of Country



The Sorrento Writers Festival takes place on the land of the Bunurong people of the great Kulin nation. For thousands of generations, these sacred lands and waterways have been preserved and protected by the Bunurong people.
We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and we acknowledge that the land on which we meet, live and story-tell is a place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal.

President's Welcome



Welcome to the fourth Sorrento Writers Festival.

Our annual celebration of writers and writing, ideas and inspiring conversations, continues to grow in impact.

Here we are again, with another full April offering. This year, we have 155 events featuring 190 participants. Some of Australia's finest minds, our greatest writers and journalists, talented artists and most exceptional community leaders will be with us for four days of amazing conversations – and we hope you'll join us.

Festival Director Corrie Perkin has devised a program of extraordinary experiences and diverse topics. From talks about global tensions, the US, Australia's search for 'big picture' thinking, to the role of humanities in our lives, how to save the planet, gardening, cooking and food, the visual arts, children's literature – these will all be part of Sorrento Writers Festival 2026.

This year, the Festival offers more free events and more children's events. We also have a thriving year-round series called Sorrento On Tour, which brings writers and readers together across the Mornington Peninsula and Melbourne. Our Children's Literacy Fund is up and running, and work continues on enhancing reading and writing among local Mornington Peninsula children and teenagers.

Thank you to Corrie, our hard-working and talented staff, our 150+ amazing volunteers – and a special thank you to my Festival Committee colleagues who oversee our not-for-profit oganisation with great wisdom and commitment.

We hope you are excited by this program. We certainly are! And we look forward to seeing you in Sorrento from April 23 to 26.

Peter Inge OAM
President
Sorrento Writers Festival

Minister's Message



On behalf of the Victorian Government, welcome to the 2026 Sorrento Writers Festival – one of the state's premier celebrations of literature, ideas and storytelling, set against the stunning coastal backdrop of the Mornington Peninsula.

We're proud to support this extraordinary four-day festival through our Regional Events Fund, because it brings together some of Australia's most talented authors, journalists and creatives for inspiring conversations, thought-provoking panel discussions and fantastic community events.

This festival not only celebrates the power of words and storytelling but also plays an important role in supporting the visitor economy, filling galleries, hotels and hospitality venues throughout Sorrento and the wider Mornington Peninsula.

While you're here, I'd encourage you to explore the region's beautiful coastal scenery, vibrant cultural scene and exceptional food and wine offerings, which make this part of Victoria so distinctive.

Congratulations to the organisers, authors, volunteers and supporters who bring this festival to life. I hope you are inspired by the ideas shared here and enjoy your time at the festival.

Steve Dimopoulos
Member for Oakleigh
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Welcome to the 2026 Sorrento Writers Festival

Sorrento Writers Festival's mission is to bring writers and readers together.

We want to create meaningful, life-changing conversations in ways that are mutually respectful and stimulating – all in a welcoming environment.

In April 2026, our annual gathering kicks off again. We will introduce some of Australia's finest thinkers, leaders and creators to an eager and open-minded beachside community. We will create curiosity. We'll watch audiences bear witness to some extraordinary stories, and we will provide opportunities for you to meet your favourite authors.

In recent months, we have seen writers' festivals around the world grapple with controversy and upheaval. This uneven terrain has caused significant anguish among our industry colleagues, writers and audiences. For the first time, many Australians are asking: 'What exactly are writers' festivals and why do they matter?'

Day one of our four-day event – Thursday April 23 – is World Book Day. This serendipitous moment affords a chance to reflect on the capacity of books, writers, libraries and literary festivals to make the world a better place. My feeling is, we need this session right now, just as we need the Friday discussion that argues for the restoration and re-affirmation of humanities – in school and university curricula, in our daily discussions, in our lives.

Sorrento Writers Festival remains focused on doing what we do best – putting on a world-class festival in a small and beautiful beachside town. We are committed to upholding small-l liberal values, human rights and courtesy. We treasure our nation's diversity and we encourage civilised and respectful discussions.

This does not mean we lack courage. Over four days at Sorrento, our speakers will tackle many big issues. They'll discuss good leadership and how to nurture it, the future of two-party politics in Australia, the rise of divisive behaviour and public hate-speak, geo-political conflicts and land grabs, a changing climate, racism, social activism, our deepening relationship with AI, science doubters and fact deniers, the importance of truth telling, journalism's role in a changed media landscape – and so much more.

We are confident audiences will seek out these conversations. Ticket sales from previous years confirm our visitors are prepared to delve into the weeds of murky politics, power elites, big money and bad behaviour.

But they also love the less-weighty topics – and we have plenty of sessions on offer to calm, amuse and engage. From art to gardening, music, sport, interior design and sustainable architecture, we will cover a joyful arena of beautiful books and meaningful stories.

And then there is our fiction offering. From the genres of romance to crime novels, fantasy, families in crisis, comedies and human drama, award winners and bestsellers, we present with pride the storytellers of our time.

Local children will have a plethora of opportunities to meet their author and illustrator heroes, while our secondary school students will be visiting various sessions as our guests on Thursday April 23.

We hope you enjoy our program and we look forward to seeing you in Sorrento.

Corrie Perkin
Founder, Director and CEO
Sorrento Writers Festival



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2026 Special Events

In addition to our daily Festival sessions, Sorrento Writers Festival offers an exciting Special Events series.

From international guest speakers talking about the craft of writing, to The Barry Jones Oration, the inaugural Michael Gordon Forum dedicated to Australian journalism, Breakfast with the Gardeners, Writers On Hope, and Talking Footy, we have some outstanding Special Events across our four days.

Don't Shoot The Messenger: Live Podcast

Wednesday April 22
5pm-6.30pm
Sorrento-Portsea RSL

Corrie Perkin and Caroline Wilson with special guests

Tickets: $45

Celebrating Stephanie Alexander and 30 years of A Cook's Companion

Thursday April 23
12 noon-1pm
Halcyon Hall, The Continental Sorrento

Stephanie Alexander
Moderator: Virginia Trioli

Tickets: $55

Writing Workshop with John Boyne

Thursday April 23
12 noon-2pm
Sorrento Community Centre

Tickets: $45

The Barry Jones Oration, the presentation of the Sorrento Creative Writing Prize and Opening Night Drinks

Thursday April 23
4.30pm-5.30pm
Halcyon Hall, The Continental Sorrento

Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty will present the Oration. Dr Helen Sykes, of Future Leaders, will then announce the winner of the $5000 creative writing prize.

Tickets: $55



Talking Footy

Thursday April 23
6.30pm-7.30pm
Halcyon Hall, The Continental Sorrento

Dwayne Russell, Kelvin Templeton and Caroline Wilson
Moderator: Emma Race

Tickets: $55

Drinks With The Crime Writers

Thursday April 23
4.30pm-5.30pm
The Cooper Room, Hotel Sorrento

Tim Ayliffe, Paul Daley, Chris Hammer and Laura McCluskey
Moderator: Jock Serong

Tickets: $35

The American Breakfast

Friday April 24, 7.45am-8.45am
The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento

Emma Shortis, Bruce Wolpe and Don Watson
Moderator: Heather Ewart

Tickets: $45

The Village Square: Music, Fables and your own Imagination

Friday April 24, 4.30pm-6pm
Sorrento Bowls Club

with Zoe Knighton, Robbie Melville and Richard Piper

Tickets: $45

2026 Special Events





The Michael Gordon Forum

Friday April 24
6pm-7.30pm
Halcyon Hall, The Continental Sorrento

In honour of one of Australia's finest political journalists, Annabel Crabb, Tom McIlroy and Jim Middleton discuss the state of the nation in the spirit of their friend and colleague, Michael Gordon.

Tickets: $60

Cocktails By The Pool

Friday April 24
6pm-7.30pm
The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento

A screening of The Pool followed by a Q&A with the director, Ian Darling

Moderator: Laura Macdonald

Tickets: $45

Drinks With The Journos

Saturday April 25
4pm-5pm
Halcyon Hall, The Continental Sorrento

Geraldine Brooks, Jennifer Byrne, Annabel Crabb and Marian Wilkinson

Moderator: Tom Wright

Tickets: $45

Seas, Rivers And Oceans: A Love Letter

Saturday April 25
4pm-5pm
The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento

Lola Broomhall, Chris Hammer, Sarah Hamylton and Jock Serong

Moderator: Fiona Gruber

Tickets: $45

Story Slam With Jane Hone Tales of the Ocean

Saturday April 25
7pm-8.30pm
Sorrento Bowls Club

Tickets: $45

Breakfast With The Gardeners

Sunday April 26
7.45am-8.45am
The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento

Tim Pilgrim and Jac Semmler

Moderator: Kate Seddon

Tickets: $45

In Conversation: Ben Crowe

Sunday April 26
3pm-4pm
Sorrento Community Centre

Moderator: Libbi Gorr

Tickets: $45

Young Readers

The Sorrento Writers Festival's mission to improve literacy and enrich learning through books and storytelling continues in 2026. This year, we are delighted to once again present a dedicated program for local primary and secondary schools, alongside our Family Afternoon on Saturday April 25.

In 2025, more than 400 local students participated in Festival education sessions – a number we are proud to grow again in 2026.

Across two days, students from St Joseph's and Sorrento Primary Schools will welcome a dynamic line-up of Australia's leading children's authors, illustrators and storytellers, including Stuart Wilson, Sally Rippin, Jane Godwin, Andrew McDonald, Ben Wood, Thomas Mayo, Corey Tutt, Andrew Daddo and many more. Through interactive sessions, students will engage directly with the creators behind the books they love – sparking imaginations, curiosity and a lifelong love of reading.

Secondary students in Years 8-12 from Rosebud and Dromana Secondary Colleges will visit the Festival to participate in our 'Shakespeare Unpacked' events, exploring three Shakespearean works currently studied in their curriculum. These sessions bring classic texts to life, deepening understanding while connecting classroom learning with live conversation and performance.

Senior Literature and English students are also invited to attend selected Festival sessions free of charge, thanks to the generosity of donors who have specifically contributed to support youth access and participation.

We warmly invite young families from across the region to join us for our Family Afternoon on Saturday April 25, following the Anzac Day commemorations in Sorrento's main street. Full program details are available on our website.

We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of Rosemary Geer in making our Children's Program possible. We also recognise the Sorrento Writers Festival Literacy Fund, which enables us to deliver a vibrant and inclusive program for young readers across the Mornington Peninsula.

If you would like to learn more about our literacy initiatives, or contribute to this important work, please contact us at *hello@sorrentowritersfestival.com.au.*



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Mornington Peninsula Shire

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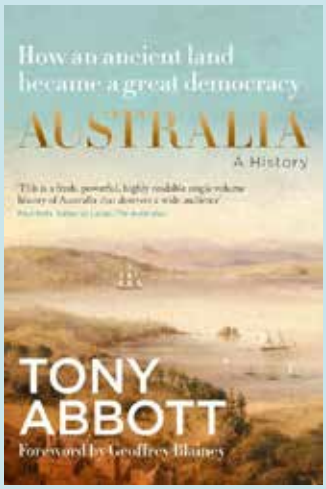


Mornington Peninsula Shire

Info about Shire Grants & Sponsorship Programs

mornpen.vic.gov.au/grants

Thursday Highlights



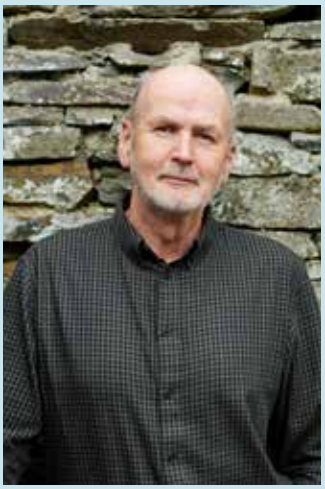


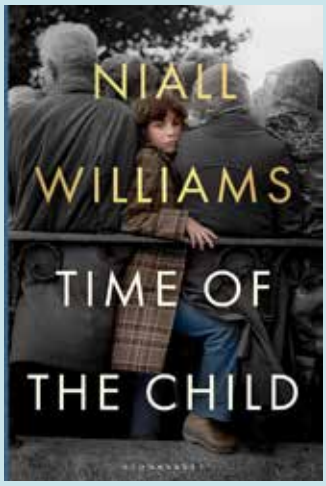
Australian History's Great Divide: How writers view our past

Tony Abbott and Mark McKenna
Moderator: Sally Warhaft

Sorrento Community Centre, 9am-10am

Books about Australia's past continue to engage readers and dominate non-fiction bestseller lists. Tony Abbott, Rhodes Scholar, history buff, former parliamentarian and Australia's 28th Prime Minister, and Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna, of the University of Sydney, will discuss their new books with anthropologist and broadcaster Sally Warhaft.





In Conversation: Niall Williams

Moderator: Michael Williams

Sorrento Community Centre, 3pm-4pm

Sorrento Writers Festival is delighted to welcome award-winning Irish writer Niall Williams, author of *Four Letters of Love*, *This Is Happiness* and *Time of the Child*, to our beachside town. Michael Williams, editor of *The Monthly*, will be in conversation with Niall, for this sure-to-be memorable discussion.



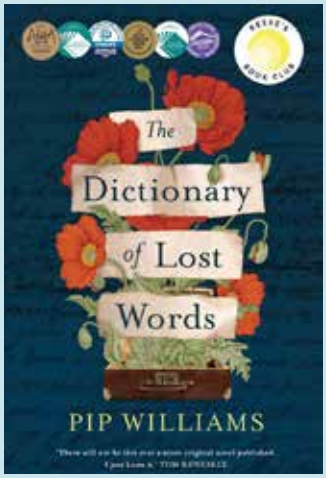
Be Still My Heart: The engine of human expression, unpacked

Jane Montgomery Griffiths, Norman Swan, Clara Tuite and Steph Vizard
Moderator: Fiona Gruber

Sorrento Bowls Club, 3pm-4pm

Join our esteemed panel as they discuss the heart's role in literature and poetry, in medicine and anatomy, and why matters of the heart continue to inspire.





In Conversation: Pip Williams

Moderator: Tim Byrne

Sorrento Community Centre, 4.30pm-5.30pm

In March 2020, just as COVID-19 swept the world and prompted a national lockdown, Australian writer Pip Williams' first novel, *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, arrived in bookstores. Powerful word-of-mouth praise via Zoom, online and social media created an international buzz around this outstanding book that went on to win many prestigious awards.



How Do Royal Commissions Work? And How Do We Assess Their Impact?

Betty King, Jack Rush and Kate Wild
Moderator: Jon Faine

Portsea Surf Life Saving Club, 9am-10am

Essential to our justice and government systems or a waste of taxpayer money? As Australia watches the outcome of the Federal Government's Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, we explore the purpose of these independent public inquiries and the impact of their findings and recommendations.





In Conversation: Heather Rose

Moderator: Celia Hirsh

Sorrento Bowls Club, 10.30am-11.30am

Award-winning Tasmanian writer Heather Rose makes her Sorrento Festival debut in 2026. The author of the 2017 Stella Prize winner will discuss the inspiration behind her new historical novel *A Great Act of Love*.

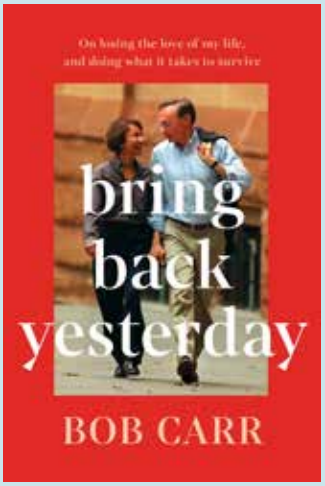


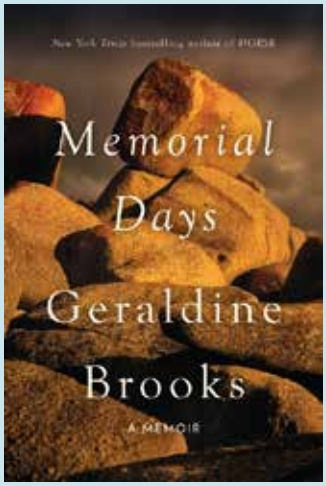
The Mushroom Murders: Covering the decade's biggest court case

Gil Marsden and Erin Pearson
Moderator: John Silvester

Portsea Surf Life Saving Club, 10.30am-11.30am

The first of two sessions covering the 2025 Erin Patterson murder trial. Documentary maker Gil Marsden and *The Age* reporter Erin Pearson reflect upon this extraordinary court case with award-winning crime journalist John "Sly" Silvester.





On Grief and Loss: Transforming trauma into words

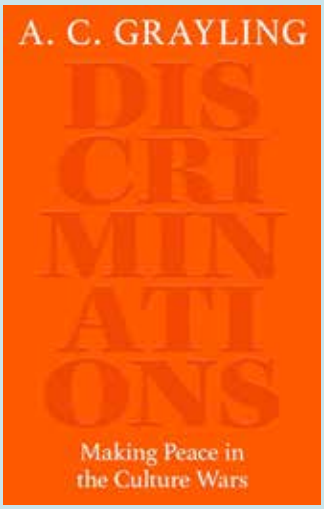
Geraldine Brooks and Bob Carr
Moderator: Madeleine Grummet

Sorrento Community Centre, 3pm-4pm

We are honoured to have Pulitzer Prize-winning author Geraldine Brooks and Former NSW Premier and Federal Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr join us in an important discussion about grief, love, loss and moving forward without your life's love by your side.

Saturday Highlights





In Conversation: A.C. Grayling

Sorrento Community Centre, 1pm-2pm

One of the world's most influential thinkers, London-based academic, philosopher and author A.C. Grayling, will be in Sorrento as part of his Australian book tour. Join him in conversation with journalist Katrina Strickland.

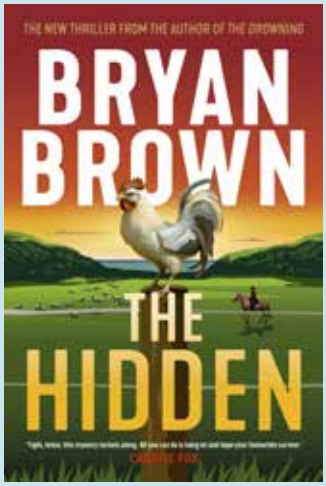


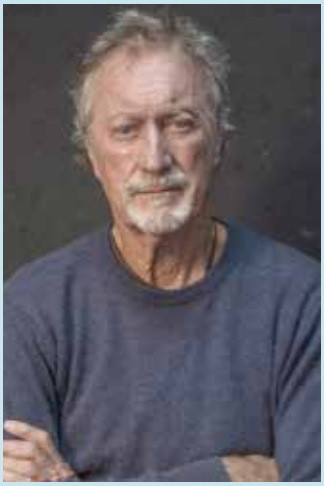
My Ireland: One small country, one vast literary history

John Boyne, Cathy Kelly and Niall Williams
Moderator: Brendan Donohoe

Sorrento Community Centre, 2.30pm-3.30pm

The Festival's three Irish guests discuss with Brendan Donohoe the impact of Ireland on their writing, their experiences, their characters and their own lives. Our panel will also examine the immense impact of Irish writers on the world's literary canon.





In Conversation: Bryan Brown

Sorrento Community Centre, 4pm-5pm

Actor, writer, producer and passionate Australian cinema advocate and mentor Bryan Brown AM will discuss his life, his work and his latest bestselling crime novel *The Hidden* with Newcastle Writers Festival director Rosemarie Milsom.

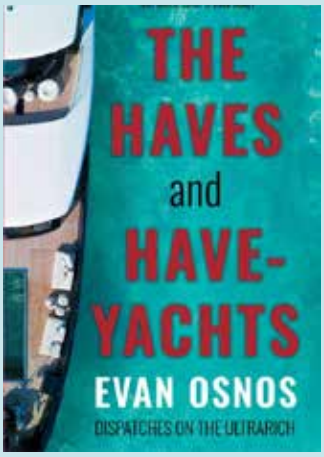


Inside the Rehearsal Room

Ellen Grant Hall, 5.30pm-6.30pm

Watch a read-through and workshopping of playwright Emily Sheehan's new work and see how a new play and its characters evolve. Emily will be joined by actors from Red Stitch Theatre Company with Michael Cathcart as host. This play reading workshop is supported by the Malcolm Robertson Trust and staged in memory of respected Melbourne actor and director Malcom Robertson who died in 2016.





In Conversation: Evan Osnos

Moderator: Cameron Stewart

The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento, 9am-10am

New Yorker staff writer and podcaster Evan Osnos is one of America's most astute Washington and world affairs observers. He is also the author of a new bestseller, *The Haves and Have-Yachts: Dispatches on the Ultrarich*, a fascinating portrait of America's oligarchs. We are delighted to have Evan join us via Zoom for an important discussion about power, money and political influence.



Let's Sing! Why Choirs Matter

Ellen Grant Hall, 9am-10am

Join us for an hour of connectedness and joy with musician and composer Monique diMattina as our guide – no matter whether you think you can sing or not. This very special session is about the fun of putting words to music and feeling the energy a choir can create.





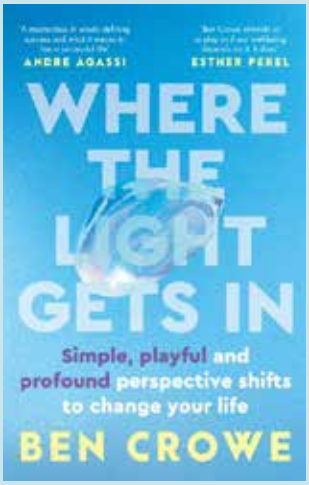


From Little Things Big Things Grow

Terry Bracks, Andrew Denton and Rana Hussain
Moderator: Madeleine Grummet

The Ballroom, The Continental Sorrento 12 noon-1pm

We celebrate the extraordinary Australians who make the world a better place by their imagination, dedication and focus. Our three speakers each saw something missing in our community, they developed an idea into a business model, and are now heading up successful organisations that bring people together for the greater good.





In Conversation: Ben Crowe

Moderator: Libbi Gorr

Sorrento Community Centre, 3pm-4pm

In conversation with Libbi Gorr, globally sought-after mindset coach Ben Crowe reflects on a career spent working alongside elite athletes, global organisations and high performers at the very top of their fields. From his early days at Nike to founding Mojo, his philosophy of putting the human-being before the human-doing, and his bestselling new book, *Where the Light Gets In.*

Anzac Day In Sorrento

Each year, the Sorrento Writers Festival is held across the last weekend in April. In some years (such as this year), that includes Anzac Day. Our Festival acknowledges the solemnity of Anzac Day and we share the nation's pride in the contribution of past and present servicemen and women. This is why, once again, we will pause our program on Saturday April 25 until 1pm to reflect on the Anzac spirit.

On behalf of the Sorrento-Portsea RSL, we invite festival-goers to join the 6am Dawn Service at the Sorrento Foreshore Cenotaph, followed by a community breakfast at the RSL (1-3 Hurley Street, Sorrento).

At noon, the Anzac Day March will take place on Sorrento's main street, Ocean Beach Road, and will make its way down to the Cenotaph for a wreath-laying ceremony. At 1pm, the Sorrento Writers Festival program will continue.





Special Event

Free Event

Wednesday April 22

	Sorrento Portsea RSL
12 noon - 1pm	**Meet The Food Writers** Julia Busuttil Nishimura and Virginia Trioli Moderator: Corrie Perkin
1:30pm – 2:30pm	**Meet The Memoir Writers** Guy Grossi and Kate Reid Moderator: Laura Macdonald
3pm – 4pm	**Meet The Crime Writers** Adrian Hyland and Laura McCluskey Moderator: Seth Robinson
5pm - 6:30pm	**Don't Shoot The Messenger Live Podcast** With special Festival Guests 4:30 arrival

PLEASE NOTE: program changes are not uncommon and we thank our audiences for their understanding.

Please check ***sorrentowritersfestival.com.au*** each day for any changes to the program.



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Thursday April 23 Morning

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre	Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room
8am – 8:45am	**The Morning Feed** Brendan Donohoe and Paul Kelly Moderator: Tom Wright *This session is supported by Pitcher Partners*			**The Morning Meditation** Lola Broomhall and Maggie Carr
9am – 10am	**World Book Day: Why Books, Bookshops, Libraries and Writers Festivals Matter** John Boyne, Barry Jones and Sally Rippin Moderator: Inala Cooper	**In Conversation: Nadia Wheatley** Moderator: Jane Sullivan	**Australian History's Great Divide: How writers view our past** Tony Abbott and Mark McKenna Moderator: Sally Warhaft	**The Power of the (Morn) Pen and Its impact on my writing** Victoria Brownlee, Garry Disher and Anne Olle Moderator: Francesca Carter *This session is supported by MP Magazine*
10:30am – 11:30am	**In Conversation: John Lyons** Via Zoom Moderator: Corrie Perkin		**When Did Climate Change Politics Become Unsexy?** Bob Brown, Tom McIlroy and Marian Wilkinson Moderator: Jo Dyer	**In Conversation: Wesley Enoch** Moderator: Santilla Chingaipe
12 noon – 1pm	**Celebrating Stephanie Alexander and 30 years of *A Cook's Companion*** Stephanie Alexander Moderator: Virginia Trioli	**The Assault On Science: Are we in a post-truth world?** Peter Doherty, Elizabeth Finkel and Corey Tutt Moderator: Libbi Gorr *This session is supported by DeadlyScience*	**36 Things I Know About Writing** **12 noon - 2pm** A writing workshop with John Boyne	**Two To Tango: Can a detective exist without a dependable side-kick?** Sarah Bailey, Michael Brissenden and Garry Disher Moderator: Charlotte Guest

For all Festival book purchases and author signings, please visit **Avenue Bookstore** at Sorrento Writers Festival Level One, The Continental Sorrento / avenuebookstore.com.au

Special Event

Free Event

Hotel Sorrento Salt Bar	Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club	The Baths Sorrento
	Schools Event: **10am-11am** Shakespeare Unpacked Act 1 with Jane Montgomery Griffiths and Richard Piper	**From Footy to Fiction: How did you make that handball?** Dwayne Russell and Kelvin Templeton Moderator: Steve Perkin	
Speaking For Myself: The art of first-person writing Chris Hammer, Lee Kofman and Kate Holden Moderator: Hannie Rayson		**Write a Bestseller, Quit My Job? How authors find the courage to write full-time** Sarah Bailey, Kate Mildenhall and Heather Rose Moderator: Jaclyn Crupi	
	Schools Event: **11.30am-12.30pm** Shakespeare Unpacked Act 2 with Jane Montgomery Griffiths and Richard Piper	**Frankenstein And Heathcliff Crushes: Gothic films are reviving the classics** Deirdre Coleman and Clara Tuite Moderator: Seth Robinson	**The Political Lunch** **12 noon - 2:30pm** Paul Kelly, Tom McIlroy and Niki Savva Moderator: Barrie Cassidy

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Thursday April 23 Afternoon

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre
1:30pm – 2:30pm	**Me, Stripped Bare (i): Why writers need to tell their story** Kate Holden and Jayne Tuttle Moderator: Peter Wilmoth	**Melbourne's Hidden Interiors** Stephen Crafti and Kristine Slawinski Moderator: Jaclyn Crupi *This session is supported by The Natural Flooring Company*	
3pm – 4pm	**100 Days After Bondi: Where to from here?** Linda Dessau, Lee Kofman and Paul Kelly Moderator: Corrie Perkin		**In Conversation: Niall Williams** Moderator: Michael Williams
4:30pm – 5:30pm	**Barry Jones Oration and Presentation of Sorrento Creative Writing Prize** Professor Peter Doherty to present the Oration. Dr Helen Sykes to present the Prize		**In Conversation: Pip Williams** Moderator: Tim Byrne
5:30pm – 6:30pm		**Opening Night Drinks** (a ticketed event)	
6:30pm – 8pm	**Talking Footy:** Dwayne Russell, Kelvin Templeton and Caroline Wilson Moderator: Emma Race *This session is supported by Kay & Burton*		

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Special Event

Free Event

Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room	Hotel Sorrento Salt Bar	Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club
Elizabeth, We Hardly Knew You: In Appreciation of Elizabeth Harrower Helen Trinca and Susan Wyndham Moderator: Laura Macdonald	**Between Us:** Katherine Hattam and Drusilla Modjeska Moderator: Jacinta Parsons	**From News to Narrative: How three journalists became novelists** Michael Brissenden, Paul Daley and Rebecca Armitage Moderator: Tim Ayliffe	**Writers on Writing:** Brigid Delaney, Chris Hammer, Luke Johnson and Steph Vizard Moderator: Hilary Harper
Plate To Print: How to make food writing sizzle Stephanie Alexander, Victoria Brownlee and Kate Reid Moderator: Celia Hirsh *This session is supported by Hotel Sorrento*		**Beware The Authoritarians: Once in, how to get them out?** Will Partlett and Michael Pembroke Moderator: Tom Wright	**Be Still My Heart: The engine of human expression, unpacked** Jane Montgomery Griffiths, Norman Swan, Clara Tuite and Steph Vizard Moderator: Fiona Gruber
Drinks With The Crime Writers Tim Ayliffe, Paul Daley, Chris Hammer and Laura McCluskey Moderator: Jock Serong		**Barnacle Theatre Production of Are We Dead Yet?** Liz Hicklin and Alan Pentland	

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Friday April 24 Morning

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre	Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room
8am - 8:45am	**The Morning Feed** Barrie Cassidy and Charlotte Grieve Moderator: Tom Wright *This session is supported by Pitcher Partners*	**The American Breakfast: Where to for this crumbling empire?** Emma Shortis, Bruce Wolpe and Don Watson Moderator: Heather Ewart		**The Art of Being Calm** Brigid Delaney Moderator: Hilary Harper
9am – 10am	**My Story: How it became THE story** Charlotte Grieve and Cheng Lei Moderator: Natasha Mitchell	**The Attention War: Can books lure kids off their screens?** Scott Gordon, Sally Rippin and Norman Swan Moderator: Francesca Carter *This session is supported by Coote Family Lawyers*	**In Conversation: Sarah Wilson** Moderator: Charlotte Guest	**Other People's Houses: Inside the art of the coffee table book** Adelaide Bragg and Robyn Lea Moderator: Celia Hirsh *This session is supported by Kay & Burton*
10:30am – 11:30am	**The Power of Choice A Year of Photographing Australians Who Chose Assisted Dying** Andrew Denton and Julian Kingma Moderator: Sally Warhaft	**Social Media: Force for Good or Engine of Division?** Richard King, Ruby Kraner-Tucci, Clare Stephens and Thomas Mayo Moderator: Laura Macdonald	**The Party's Over: Has Australia's two-party system cracked?** Steve Bracks, Annabel Crabb and Zoe Daniel Moderator: Julia Banks	**How To Dress For Old Age: And other perplexing issues** David Carlin, Rosalie Ham, Peta Murray Moderator: Corrie Perkin *This session is supported by Village Glen*
12 noon - 1pm	**What Makes Putin Tick?** Elizabeth Buchanan and Will Partlett Moderator: Natasha Mitchell	**Australian History: Reframing the past, realising the future** Rachel Perkins and Henry Reynolds Moderator: Santilla Chingaipe	**In Conversation: Bob Brown** Moderator: Virginia Trioli	**The Women 20th Century Art Forgot** Drusilla Modjeska Moderator: Fiona Gruber

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Special Event

Free Event

Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club	Portsea SLSC	Portsea Village
Meet The Debutants: Our new novelists share their first foray Davin Ardlie, Emily Lighezzolo and Cameron Sullivan Moderator: Jo Dyer	**The Silk Road And Its Impact On 21st Century China** Michael Pembroke Moderator: Michael Shmith	**How Do Royal Commissions Work? And How Do We Assess Their Impact?** Betty King, Jack Rush and Kate Wild Moderator: Jon Faine	**Humanities Need A Hug: Critical thinking in an AI-dominated world** Elizabeth Finkel, Jane Montgomery Griffiths, and Sean Scalmer Moderator: Inala Cooper
The Family Dynamic: Literature's gift that keeps on giving Tim Ayliffe, Toni Jordan and Anna Snoekstra Moderator: Jaclyn Crupi	**In Conversation: Heather Rose** Moderator: Celia Hirsh	**The Mushroom Murders: Covering the decade's biggest court case** Gil Marsden and Erin Pearson Moderator: John Silvester	**War Secrets: Three authors discuss their WW2 discoveries** Diana Thorp, Tom Trumble and Nadia Wheatley Moderator: Michael Cathcart
Edge of My Seat...Creating suspense and surprise in modern fiction Laura McCluskey, Jock Serong and Anna Snoekstra Moderator: Charlotte Guest	**Psychiatrists On Fiction: Can fiction tell us how to live?** Pia Brous, Nick Ingram and Rick Yeatman Moderator: Nicky Bisogni	**AI And Us: A noxious, invasive weed or trusted friend?** Richard King and Toby Walsh Moderator: Seth Robinson	**Finding Hope In A Fractured World** Brigid Delaney, Ruby Kraner-Tucci and Sarah Wilson Moderator: Rana Hussain

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Friday April 24 Afternoon

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre	Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room
1:30pm – 2:30pm	**Epstein, Epstein, Epstein... We need to talk** John Silvester, Julianne Schultz, Bruce Wolpe Moderator: Peter Inge	**China And America At Sea: What's next for us and the Pacific?** Clinton Fernandes, Michael Pembroke and Emma Shortis Moderator: Zoe Daniel	**In Conversation: John Boyne** Moderator: Caroline Wilson	**Writers On Writing:** Maxine Beneba Clarke, Andrew Daddo and Cathy Kelly Moderator: Tim Ayliffe
3pm – 4pm		**The Art of the Bio: Sparking appetites for political gravitas** Troy Bramston, Patrick Mullins and Amy Remeikis Moderator: Brendan Donohoe	**On Grief and Loss: Transforming trauma into words** Geraldine Brooks and Bob Carr Moderator: Madeleine Grummet	**In Conversation: Don Watson** Moderator: Paul Daley
4:30pm – 5:30pm	**On Business and Leadership** Ben Crowe *This session is supported by Slade Group*	**Drinks with the Prize Winners** Erik Jensen, Sofie Laguna, Bri Lee, Patrick Mullins and Pip Williams Moderator: Hannie Rayson	**My Book Became a Movie** Candice Fox, Rosalie Ham and Niall Williams Moderator: Kate Mildenhall	**Urgency Of The Here And Now: How the modern world inspires our writing** Evelyn Araluen, Clare Stephens and Sarah Walker Moderator: Katrina Strickland
6pm – 7:30pm	**The Michael Gordon Forum** Annabel Crabb, Tom McIlroy and Jim Middleton discuss the state of the nation to honour their friend and colleague, the late Michael Gordon.	**Cocktails by *The Pool*** A screening of *The Pool* followed by Q & A with the Director Ian Darling Moderator: Laura Macdonald	**Anzac Eve Special: Remembering our WW2 Heroes** Peter FitzSimons and Tom Trumble Moderator: Paul Daley	**Love, Friendship, Devotion: Queer fiction comes of age** Madeleine Gray, Sofie Laguna and Cameron Sullivan Moderator: Charlee Brooks

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Special Event

Free Event

Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club	Portsea SLSC	Portsea Village
Murderers, I've Known A Few: Our crime writers discuss their grizzly process Candice Fox and Adrian Hyland Moderator: Peter Wilmoth	**My Tassie: Writer reflections on the Apple Isle** Rebecca Armitage, Erin Hortle and Heather Rose Moderator: Jock Serong	**In Conversation: Lisa Wilkinson** Moderator: Jo Dyer	**Don't Mention The "R" Word: How close is Australia to becoming a republic?** Dennis Altman, Esther Anatolitis and Mark McKenna Moderator: Inala Cooper
Podcasting Mania: Has it reshaped the media landscape? Monica Attard, Mark Kenny and Clare Stephens Moderator: Libbi Gorr	**In Praise of Australian Women Writers** Helen Trinca, Nadia Wheatley, Geordie Williamson and Susan Wyndham Moderator: Jason Steger	**Is 70 The New 50? Baby Boomers and their refusal to grow old** Karen Inge, Lucinda Holdforth, Bernard Salt and Scott Williams Moderator: Norman Swan *This session is supported by Village Glen*	**Thrown In Jail for Doing Your Job** Shokoofeh Azar, Kylie Moore-Gilbert and Cheng Lei Moderator: Jon Faine
Coming of Age Novels Madeleine Gray, Erin Hortle and Toni Jordan Moderator: Charlee Brooks	**The Village Square: Music, Fables and your own Imagination** **5pm-6:30pm** Zoe Knighton, Robbie Melville and Richard Piper		

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Saturday April 25 Afternoon

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre	Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room
1pm – 2pm	**Into Our Own Hands: Assisted dying and its place in society** Andrew Denton, Lucinda Holdforth and Betty King Moderator: Norman Swan	**Dear Prime Minister: Where are all the BIG ideas?** Paul Kelly, Amy Remeikis and Niki Savva Moderator: Natasha Mitchell *This session is supported by Sorrento Chamber of Commerce*	**In Conversation: A.C. Grayling** Moderator: Libbi Gorr	**How My Past Inspired My Fiction** Shokoofeh Azar and Heather Rose Moderator: Santilla Chingaipe
2:30 – 3:30pm	**In Conversation: Bob Carr** Moderator: Steve Bracks	**Authoritarian Leaderships v People Power: The World On Standby** Elizabeth Buchanan, Clinton Fernandes and Will Partlett Moderator: Tom Wright	**My Ireland: One small country, one vast literary history** John Boyne, Cathy Kelly and Niall Williams Moderator: Brendan Donohoe	**In Conversation: Louise Milligan** Moderator: Jo Dyer
4pm – 5pm	**Drinks With The Journos / The Evening Feed** Geraldine Brooks, Jennifer Byrne, Annabel Crabb and Marian Wilkinson Moderator: Tom Wright *This session is supported by Pitcher Partners*	**Seas, Rivers and Oceans: A Love Letter** Lola Broomhall, Chris Hammer, Sarah Hamylton and Jock Serong Moderator: Fiona Gruber	**In Conversation: Bryan Brown** Moderator: Rosemarie Milsom	**Iran At The Crossroads** Shokoofeh Azar, Kylie Moore-Gilbert and Clinton Fernandes Moderator: Michael Brissenden
5:30pm – 7pm	**On Hope: Our artists discuss, reveal, recite, read** Evelyn Araluen, Maxine Beneba Clarke, Erik Jensen, Richard King, Thomas Mayo and Richard Piper Moderator: Jane Montgomery Griffiths *This session is supported by i-Nex*	**Drinks With The Reviewers** Madeleine Gray, Sarah Krasnostein, Michael Shmith and Geordie Williamson Moderator: Jason Steger		
7:00pm – 8:30pm				

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Special Event

Free Event

Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club	Portsea SLSC	Portsea Village 1	Portsea Village 2
Anxiety and the Modern Workplace: How IT, AI, WFH and DEI are impacting life in the office Sean Scalmer, Sarah Wilson and Toby Walsh Moderator: Stephen Lunn	**Under the Skin: How biographers cope with living someone else's life** Peter FitzSimons, Jock Serong and Helen Trinca Moderator: Michael Cathcart	**Smashed Avos: And other challenges for the first-time home owner** Chris Kohler and Bernard Salt Moderator: Katrina Strickland	**Writers on Writing (about artists)** Drusilla Modjeska, Tom McIlroy and Susan Wyndham Moderator: Fiona Gruber	**When The Cover-Up Is Worse Than The Crime: Journalism 101** John Silvester, Kate Wild and Marian Wilkinson Moderator: Madeleine Grummet
Messy Characters = Great Fiction Bri Lee, Kate Mildenhall and J.P. Pomare Moderator: Hannie Rayson	**Democracy's Frontline: Tales from investigative journos who hold power to account** Monica Attard, Charlotte Grieve and Kate Wild Moderator: Mark Kenny	**Spit It Out: How To Write a Great Speech** Troy Bramston, Lucinda Holdforth and Don Watson Moderator: Libbi Gorr	**Climatenomics: Engaging business, government and schools in the battle for survival** Sarah Hamylton, Richard King and Kylie Soanes Moderator: Dan Ziffer	
How Biographers Work Patrick Mullins, Paul Strangio and Lisa Wilkinson Moderator: Peter Wilmoth	**It's A Girl Thing: Clever and courageous voices in fiction** Sofie Laguna, Toni Jordan and Pip Williams Moderator: Laura Macdonald	**Is Australia Unravelling?** Virginia Haussegger, Rana Hussain and Ruby Kraner-Tucci Moderator: Virginia Trioli	**Middle-Tier Power: When small nations take on the big guys** Mark Kenny Julianne Schultz and Greg Sheridan Moderator: Dan Ziffer	
Inside the Rehearsal Room: A read-through of playwright Emily Sheehan's new work, with actors from Red Stitch Theatre Host: Michael Cathcart *This session is supported by Malcolm Robertson Trust*		**Words & Music: Act 1 The Beach House Years by Brian Nankervis** *This session is supported by Kay & Burton*		
	Story Slam with Jane Hone Theme is: Tales of the Ocean	**Words & Music: Act 2 The Aussie Beach House Sound by Rebecca Barnard**		

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Sunday April 26

	The Continental Halcyon Hall	The Continental The Ballroom	Sorrento Community Centre
8am – 8:45am	**The Morning Feed** Steve Bracks and Elizabeth Buchanan Moderator: Tom Wright *This session is supported by Pitcher Partners*	**Breakfast With The Gardeners** Tim Pilgrim and Jac Semmler Moderator: Kate Seddon	
9am – 10am	**In Conversation: Evan Osnos (via Zoom)** Moderator: Cameron Stewart	**To Mark Carney, You Had Me At Hello: What does good leadership look like?** Troy Bramston, Annabel Crabb and Paul Strangio Moderator: Natasha Mitchell *This session is supported by Thomson Geer*	**Streamers or Steamrollers: Do platforms help the local film industry stay vital?** Bryan Brown, Ian Darling and Michael Hirsh Moderator: Virginia Trioli
10:30am – 11:30am	**Between Us: A.C. Grayling and Sarah Wilson** Moderator: Sally Warhaft	**International Land Grabs: When is enough, enough?** Elizabeth Buchanan, Bob Carr and Toby Walsh Moderator: Steve Bracks	**The Mushroom Tapes** Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper and Sarah Krasnostein Moderator: Celia Hirsh *This session is supported by Coote Family Lawyers*
12 noon - 1pm	**Big Business, Dodgy Dealings** Chris Kohler and Marian Wilkinson Moderator: Dan Ziffer	**From Little Things Big Things Grow** Terry Bracks, Andrew Denton and Rana Hussain Moderator: Madeleine Grummet *This session is supported by Sorrento Chamber of Commerce*	**Between Us: Niall Williams and Christine Breen** Moderator: Rosemarie Milsom
1:30pm – 2:30pm	**From Menzies to Pauline, Turnbull to Taylor: What is an Australian conservative?** Sean Kelly, Amy Remeikis and Don Watson Moderator: Brendan Donohoe	**Fault Lines: Journalism's Role in a Fractured World** Monica Attard, Jon Faine and Louise Milligan Moderator: Ranald Macdonald	**Trump And Us: What is #47's impact on Australia's politics and our future?** Geraldine Brooks and Bruce Wolpe Moderator: Cameron Stewart
3pm – 4pm	**Advance Australia Fair: How to reset, re-unite and become our best selves?** Barry Jones and Julianne Schultz Moderator: Heather Ewart *This session is supported by Thomson Geer*	**Basket Case Or World's Most Liveable? Five years after lockdown, how is Melbourne?** Kylie Soanes, The Paris End Editors and Nicholas Reece Moderator: Stephen Lunn	**In Conversation: Ben Crowe** Moderator: Libbi Gorr *This session is supported by Hotel Sorrento*

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Special Event

Free Event

Hotel Sorrento Cooper Room	Ellen Grant Hall	Sorrento Bowls Club
Art of Being Calm 2 Maggie Carr and Tara Moss Moderator: Jane Hone		
The Character Lab: Discovering the people who tell my story Miranda Darling, Tara Moss and J.P. Pomare Moderator: Rosemarie Milsom	**In Conversation: Greg Sheridan** Moderator: Michael Shmith	**The Revolution Continues: Still fighting for rights in Australia** Dennis Altman, Virginia Haussegger and Thomas Mayo Moderator: Julianne Schultz
How Did I Come Up With That?: Three fiction writers reveal their ideas Miranda Darling, Bri Lee and Murray Middleton Moderator: Mel Fulton		**Is Sport Truly a Level Playing Field?** Rana Hussain, Konrad Marshall and Caroline Wilson Moderator: Emma Race
In Conversation: Samah Sabawi Moderator: Corrie Perkin	**Can Grassroots Activism Change the Planet?** Sarah Hamylton, Simon Holmes à Court and Tim Pilgrim Moderator: Liz Porter	**The Game/Race/Tournament via Me: A discussion about sportswriting** Konrad Marshall and Martin McKenzie-Murray Moderator: Rose Donohoe
Me, Stripped Bare (ii): Why writers need to tell their story Sarah Arachchi, Kate Halfpenny and Tara Moss with Jane Motgomery-Griffiths	**Words & Music Let's Sing! Why choirs matter** Join our impromptu community choir with Monique diMattina	**Writers on Writing** Shokoofeh Azar, Evelyn Araluen and Murray Middleton Moderator: Mel Fulton
The Art of Telling True Stories How creative non-fiction lifts our hearts and minds Sean Kelly, Sarah Krasnostein and Martin McKenzie-Murray Moderator: Liz Porter	**Three Books I Always Recommend – And Why** Jennifer Byrne, Bri Lee and J.P. Pomare Moderator: Jason Steger	

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" In life we make progress by conflict and in mental life by argument and disputation. If you care about the points of agreement and civility, then, you had better be well equipped with points of argument and combativity, because if you are not then the "centre" will be occupied and defined without your having helped to decide it. "

– **Christopher Hitchens, *"Letters to a Young Contrarian"***
Published by Basic Books, Hachette Book Group (2005)

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Speakers and Moderators

Tony Abbott

Tony Abbott AC served as the 28th Prime Minister of Australia. He has degrees in economics and law from Sydney University and in politics and philosophy from Oxford, which he attended as a Rhodes Scholar. He is the author of four books: *The Minimal Monarchy, How to Win the Constitutional War, Battlelines* and most recently *Australia: A History.*

Stephanie Alexander

Stephanie Alexander's career in food has spanned five decades. She was the owner-chef of award-winning Stephanie's Restaurant and is the author of 18 books, including *The Cook's Companion* – the bible for Australian cooks originally published in 1996 and now reissued in a 30th anniversary edition. In 2004, she launched the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program, now operating in more than 1000 schools and early learning centres around Australia.

Dennis Altman

Dennis Altman, the son of Jewish refugees, first came to attention with the publication of his book *Homosexual: Oppression & Liberation* in 1972. Recent books are *Death in the Sauna* and *Righting My World*. Dennis is Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at LaTrobe University in Melbourne. He was president of the AIDS Society of Asia and the Pacific (2001-05) and was listed by *The Bulletin* as one of the 100 most influential Australians ever.

Esther Anatolitis

Esther Anatolitis is the author of *When Australia Became a Republic* and *Place, Practice, Politics*, editor of *Essays that Changed Australia*, and former editor of *Meanjin* (2022-25). One of Australia's most influential advocates for the arts and creative civic engagement, Esther has led arts and media organisations across all artforms and practice modes, served many arts and government boards, and is co-chair of the Australian Republic Movement.

Sarah Arachchi

Sarah Arachchi is a paediatrician who works in both public and private practice. She is an active member of the Women in Medicine Committee at AMA Victoria, where she helps organise events and discussions relevant to women in medicine. Her memoir, *Brown. Female. Doctor.*, is an insightful heart-warming story of a young woman's experience through immigration, education and medical training.

Evelyn Araluen

Evelyn Araluen is a Goorie and Koori poet, editor and researcher. Her debut poetry collection, *Dropbear*, won the 2022 Stella Prize and the Australian Book Industry Award's 2022 Small Publisher's adult book of the year, and was shortlisted for the Premier's Awards of NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Her work has also received the Nakata Brophy Prize for young Indigenous writers, the Judith Wright Poetry Prize and a Melbourne Prize professional development award. Her latest collection is *The Rot*.

Davin Ardlie

Davin Ardlie is an Australian author. *The Morton Smuggler*, his debut fiction novel, has taken him over 15 years and thousands of hours to create. He hopes this passion flows through the storyline and that the readers can feel the exotic locations and the varied characters – and ultimately the story hiding within *The Morton Smuggler*.

Rebecca Armitage

Rebecca Armitage has reported extensively on the royals and became fascinated by Harry and Meghan when they chose to step away from the royal family. She is the digital editor for the ABC's International Desk. She was previously a multiplatform producer with the ABC's specialist reporting team and a producer at 7.30. Her debut novel, *The Heir Apparent*, was released in 2025 and was Reese's Book Club Pick for December 2025.

Monica Attard

Professor Monica Attard OAM spent 30 years at the ABC, working across radio and television. Monica holds a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Law, Order of Australia for services to journalism and is the winner of five Walkley Awards for excellence in journalism.

Tim Ayliffe

Tim Ayliffe's thriller novels have been informed by his 25-year career as a journalist. He has been managing editor of TV and video for *ABC News* and executive producer of *News Breakfast*. He is the author of the John Bailey series: *The Greater Good, State of Fear, The Enemy Within, Killer Traitor Spy* and *The Wrong Man.* Tim's latest book, *Dark Desert Road*, was released earlier this year.

Shokoofeh Azar

Shokoofeh Azar, born in Iran in 1972, is a writer and journalist. Arrested for her work, she fled to Australia in 2010 as a

political refugee. Her acclaimed novel, *The Enlightenment of the Greengage Tree*, was shortlisted for the Stella Prize, PEN and National Awards, and the International Booker Prize, making her the first Iranian nominee. Her new novel is *The Gowkaran Tree in the Middle of our Kitchen.*

Sarah Bailey

Sarah Bailey is the managing director of the Melbourne and Sydney offices of advertising agency VMLY&R. Her award-winning Gemma Woodstock series includes *The Dark Lake*, published in 2017 and winner of the Ned Kelly Award for best first fiction and the Davitt Award for best debut, followed by *Into the Night* in 2018, and *Where the Dead Go* in 2019. *Body of Lies* is the fourth book in the series. Sarah also published the bestselling *The Housemate* and Audible original *Final Act* in 2021.

Julia Banks

Julia Banks brings unique leadership experience across law, corporate business and Australian federal politics. A Monash University arts and law graduate and Australian Institute of Company Directors member, she spent more than 20 years in senior executive and general counsel roles at global companies. Elected to Parliament in 2016, she later served as an independent MP. Julia now works as a principal consultant and public speaker on governance, workplace culture and women in leadership.

Maxine Beneba Clarke

Maxine Beneba Clarke is the author of the short fiction collection *Foreign Soil*, the memoir *The Hate Race*, and several books for children and young folks. Her poetry collections include *Beautiful Changelings*, *How Decent Folk Behave*, *It's The Sound of the Thing* and *Stuff I'm (Not) Sorry For*.

Nicky Bisogni

Nicky Bisogni is social work trained, with more than 35 years' experience working in mental health program management and in the design and delivery of mental health training and education. Nicky brings significant expertise to the Mental Health Professionals' Network.

John Boyne

John Boyne is the author of many novels for both adults and younger readers, including *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *The Heart's Invisible Furies*, *A Ladder to the Sky* and, most recently, *The Elements*. He has won four Irish books awards, the 2025 Prix Femina Étranger in France, and many other international literary prizes. His work is published in 60 languages.

Steve Bracks

Steve Bracks AC served as Victoria's 44th Premier from 1999 to 2007, winning three consecutive elections and championing education, infrastructure and economic reform. Since leaving politics, he has held leadership and advisory roles across government, business and philanthropy, including Chancellor of Victoria University and Australia's Special Representative to Timor-Leste. He remains a passionate advocate for multiculturalism, Aboriginal reconciliation and international collaboration.

Terry Bracks

Terry Bracks AM founded Western Chances, a scholarship program supporting young people in Melbourne's west, and has championed women, youth and arts initiatives throughout her career. She has served on boards including Breast Cancer Network Australia and the Australian Children's Television Foundation, and as patron of Big Brother Big Sisters and the Williamstown Literary Festival. Recognised with a Centenary Medal and an Honorary Doctorate from Victoria University, Terry's leadership has had a lasting community impact.

Adelaide Bragg

Adelaide Bragg is a leading Australian interior designer whose work balances precision, warmth and timeless style. For more than 30 years, Adelaide Bragg Interiors has created homes throughout Australia that reflect the people who inhabit them. Adelaide's book, *City, Coast & Country: Australian Interiors*, was published in late 2025.

Troy Bramston

Troy Bramston is a senior journalist with *The Australian*, writing on politics, policy and popular culture. He is an award-winning and bestselling author or editor of 12 books, including *Gough Whitlam: The Vista of the New*, *Bob Hawke: Demons and Destiny*, *Robert Menzies: The Art of Politics*, and *Paul Keating: The Big Picture Leader*. Troy is a member of the Library Council of the State Library of NSW and the National Archives of Australia Advisory Council. He was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001.

Michael Brissenden

Michael Brissenden is an author and a journalist. He has written both non-fiction and fiction. He has published four crime thrillers: *The List*, *Dead Letters*, *Smoke* and the most recent *Dust*. Before becoming a full-time writer Michael was a political journalist and foreign correspondent with the ABC for 35 years.

Charlee Brooks

Charlee Brooks (he/him) is an Australian content creator, writer and curator living on Wadawurrung land. He runs Grandpa's Book Club, a digital community of 140,000-plus followers that curates and celebrates literature from the margins. His work explores how we can re-engage with a ritualised, meaningful life in the digital age.

Speakers and Moderators

Geraldine Brooks

Geraldine Brooks AO is a journalist and author who worked for *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Wall Street Journal*. In 2006, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for her novel *March*. Novels *Caleb's Crossing*, *People of the Book* and *The Secret Chord* were *New York Times* bestsellers, while *Year of Wonders* was an international bestseller. She is also the author of non-fiction works Nine Parts of Desire and Foreign Correspondence. Her novel, *Horse*, won multiple awards. Her latest book, *Memorial Days*, was published in 2025.

Lola Broomhall

Lola Broomhall is a Mornington Peninsula-based physiotherapist with more than 14 years' experience. She has a Bachelor of Arts and certifications in Yoga, Pilates and the BradCliff Breathing Method. An advanced freediver and PADI Mermaid Instructor, she blends science and holistic wellbeing in workshops, retreats and teaching. Passionate about making health accessible, Lola draws on her clinical expertise, love of movement and connection to the ocean to inspire balance, mindfulness and vitality.

Pia Brous

Dr Pia Brous is a semi-retired psychiatrist living and working in Melbourne. She has worked with children, high-risk youth and their families, adults, indigenous communities and in hybrid teams in the fields of the arts, mental health and the human rights of the mentally ill. She now has time for a reading life.

Bob Brown

Bob Brown is an environmental and social justice campaigner and former senator. A founding member of the Wilderness Society, he led the successful campaign against the construction of the Franklin Dam. He served in Tasmania's state parliament for a decade, was leader of the Australian Greens and, in 1996, was elected to the federal Senate. His books include *Memo for a Saner World* and *Optimism*. After retiring from the Senate in 2012, he established the Bob Brown Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation supporting environmental causes.

Bryan Brown

Bryan Brown AM is an actor who has appeared in more than 100 film and television productions. He has worked in 20 countries, including his home country of Australia, and the US. *Sweet Jimmy, seven short stories on crime*, was released in 2021. *The Drowning* was his first novel, released in 2023. *The Hidden* is his latest thriller.

Victoria Brownlee

Victoria Brownlee is an international food writer and editor, currently based on the Mornington Peninsula. She started writing about food over a decade ago, first as a blogger and then as the food and drink editor at *Time Out Shanghai*. Her novels include *Fromage à Trois*, *Brioche in the Oven* and her 2025 release, *Eat Your Heart Out*.

Elizabeth Buchanan

Elizabeth Buchanan PhD is a senior fellow with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. She co-founded the polar warfare program at West Point and was head of research for the Royal Australian Navy. Her previous books are *Russian Energy Strategy in the Asia-Pacific* and *Red Arctic: Russian Arctic Strategy under Putin*. Her latest book, *So You Want to Own Greenland?*, was released in September 2025.

Julia Busuttil Nishimura

Julia Busuttil Nishimura is the bestselling author of four cookbooks. She writes for *Good Weekend* and *Gourmet Traveller*. Julia's work celebrates the joy of family meals, drawing inspiration from her Maltese heritage, time spent living in Italy and Japanese family. In 2025, she released *Sundays Under the Lemon Tree*, her debut children's book.

Jennifer Byrne

Jennifer Byrne is a journalist and writer. She is the author of *Fake It, The Intrepid Parent's Field Guide to the Baby Kingdom* and *The Lazy Girl's Guide to Life*. Her writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Rumpus*, *The Hairpin*, *The Second City Network, National Lampoon* and more.

Tim Byrne

Tim Byrne is a bookseller at Avenue Bookstore and a freelance arts critic and journalist. His writing regularly appears in *The Guardian*, *The Age* and *Australian Book Review*. He has conducted hundreds of author interviews, from Tim Winton to Magda Szubanski and Jimmy Barnes.

David Carlin

David Carlin is an award-winning writer and creative artist. His books include *The Abyssinian Contortionist*, *Our Father Who Wasn't There* and *Performing Digital*. David wrote and co-produced the radiophonic feature *Making Up*, which won four gold and silver awards at the 2016 New York Festivals International Radio Awards. He is vice-president of the international NonfictioNOW Conference, and Associate Professor of Creative Writing, co-founder of the non/fictionLab research group, and co-director of the WrICE program at RMIT University.

Bob Carr

Retired politician Bob Carr is Australia's longest continuously-serving Premier of NSW and a former federal senator and foreign minister. Since leaving politics, he has built a distinguished career as an author and academic and is director of the Australia-China Relations Institute at UTS. He has published several books, including *Thoughtlines*, *My Reading*

Life, *Diary of a Foreign Minister* and his memoirs, *Run for Your Life*, and, in 2026, *Bring Back Yesterday*.

Barrie Cassidy

Former ABC television journalist, presenter and author Barrie Cassidy was awarded a Melbourne Press Club lifetime achievement award in 2018. In 1986, he became Prime Minister Bob Hawke's press secretary, leaving when Paul Keating took over the leadership in 1991. In 2013, he co-authored *An Ocean of Cricket* with son Adam.

Michael Cathcart

Michael Cathcart has worked as a teacher, university lecturer and theatre director and presented ABC radio and television programs. He has written several books, including *Defending the National Tuckshop* and *The Water Dreamers*.

Santilla Chingaipe

Santilla Chingaipe is a filmmaker, historian and writer, whose work explores settler colonialism, slavery and post-colonial migration in Australia. Her first book of non-fiction, *Black Convicts: How Slavery Shaped Australia*, has received many accolades including being shortlisted for the Stella Prize and longlisted for the Cundill History Prize. Santilla is a regular contributor to *The Saturday Paper* and a columnist for *The Monthly.*

Deirdre Coleman

Deirdre Coleman is a Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor and co-director of the Faculty of Arts research unit, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Contemporary Culture, at the University of Melbourne. She completed a doctor of philosophy at Oxford, focusing on Victorian literature and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and has taught in Wollongong, Adelaide and Sydney. Her research spans 18th- and 19th-century literature, cultural history, abolitionism and colonialism.

Inala Cooper

Inala Cooper is a Yawuru woman with German and Irish heritage, from Rubibi/Broome in Western Australia. She has a masters degree in human rights law and has long been an advocate for Indigenous rights, access to education and social justice. She is a regular contributor on *ABC News Breakfast* and *The Drum*.

Annabel Crabb

Annabel Crabb is a Walkley award-winning political commentator, author, and creator and host of ABC programs including *Kitchen Cabinet*, *The House with Annabel Crabb* and the upcoming *Ms Represented*. She has written bestselling books including *The Wife Drought* and two cookbooks with Wendy Sharpe. Annabel also co-hosts the popular podcast *Chat 10 Looks 3* and is known for her sharp, witty insights on politics and culture. She recently authored a children's book on democracy, *There's a Prawn in Parliament House*.

Stephen Crafti

Stephen Crafti has been writing on architecture and design for more than 30 years and is the author of 45 books. A regular columnist for *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, he also contributes to *Wallpaper* (London) and *Belle* (Australia). Stephen approaches architecture holistically, considering everything from landscape to interior details. Most recently he authored *The Architect's House*.

Ben Crowe

Ben Crowe is a globally sought-after leadership and mindset coach who has guided elite athletes, including Ash Barty, Dylan Alcott and Stephanie Gilmore, as well as professional sports teams and corporate leaders. He founded Mojo during the pandemic to help people gain perspective and purpose. Ben's work focuses on connection, high performance and helping individuals separate what they do from who they are. In 2026, he released *Where The Light Gets In*.

Jaclyn Crupi

Jaclyn Crupi is a book editor, author, event moderator and bookseller. She has written numerous books for children and adults. *Garden Like a Nonno* was shortlisted for an Indie Book Award and longlisted for an ABIA. Her most recent children's book, *The ABC Kids Guide to Loving the Planet*, won the Wilderness Society's environment award for children's literature. Her latest book is *Planting for Native Birds, Bees and Butterflies*.

Andrew Daddo

Andrew Daddo has been in and around the Australian media landscape for 30 odd years. He has written 30 books for children, young adults and adults. From *Goodnight Me* to *Poo Face* and *Fart Face* to *Bitza*, his new favourite series for middle schoolers, he's covered pretty much all ages. Having grown up on the Mornington Peninsula, Andrew is very excited to be back. His latest book is *Grandpa's Guide to Happiness*.

Paul Daley

Paul Daley is an author and journalist whose books have been finalists in major Australian literary awards. A former foreign correspondent and political writer, since 1987 he has written for *The Sunday Age*, *The Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Bulletin* and *The Guardian* about Australian national identity. His numerous journalism prizes include Walkley Awards for Indigenous and investigative journalism. His nine books include critically praised novel, *The Leap*.

Ian Darling

Ian Darling is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. He is executive director of Shark Island Institute. His films include *The Final Quarter*, *Paul Kelly – Stories of*

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Me and *The Oasis*. He is currently directing *Confessions of a War Photographer*. He received the AACTA Byron Kennedy Award in 2018, has won Best Direction in a Documentary at the AACTAs, won two Film Critics Awards and has twice been a Walkley Awards finalist.

Miranda Darling

Miranda Darling is a writer, poet and co-founder of Vanishing Pictures. She read English and Modern Languages at Oxford then took a Masters in Strategic Studies and Defence from the ANU (GSSD). She became an adjunct scholar at a public policy think tank, specialising in non-traditional security threats. Her novels are *Thunderhead* and *Fireweather*.

Brigid Delaney

Brigid Delaney is a journalist, lawyer, travel writer, screenwriter and former speechwriter for federal cabinet ministers. She co-created and is associate producer of the Netflix hit *Wellmania* and wrote the long-running *Guardian Australia* column, Brigid Delaney's Diary. Her books include *This Restless Life*, *Wild Things*, *Wellmania* and *Reasons Not to Worry*. She also writes the Substack, *The Chaos Era*, with Brigid Delaney. Her recent book, *The Seeker and the Sage*, was published in 2025.

Andrew Denton

Andrew Denton is one of the best interviewers in the country. He began his career on ABC TV in 1988 with *Blah, Blah, Blah* and went on to host several highly regarded programs including *The Money* or *The Gun, Live and Sweaty*, *In the Deep End* (with Ian Thorpe) and *Olympics Exposed*. He was executive producer for The Election Chaser and CNNNN. He has also appeared on radio, including most recently *The Best of Denton* on Austereo nationally.

Linda Dessau

Linda Dessau AC CVO served as the 29th Governor of Victoria, the first woman in the role, from 2015 to 2023. A distinguished lawyer and judge, she worked across the Family Court, Children's Court and Coroner's Court, and served as Senior Crown Counsel in Hong Kong. Recognised for her service to law, community and the arts, she has been appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia and Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

Monique diMattina

Monique diMattina is the composer, lyricist and book writer behind *STELLA: The Musical* – the Miles Franklin story – debuting at the Alexander Theatre, Monash PACA in June 2026. Her eight albums span folk/roots/New Orleans jazz and neo-classical piano works, and her music has attracted Fulbright and Queens Trust awards, been short listed for the Australian Music Prize and is found on the VCE Music Curriculum. Monique's performances typically combine music and storytelling.

Garry Disher

Garry Disher is a prolific Australian author known for his award-winning crime fiction. He has published more than 60 books, including children's books, history texts and handbooks. Garry has received multiple Ned Kelly and German Crime Fiction awards, as well as a fellowship from Stanford University. His latest book, *Mischance Creek*, was published in 2025.

Professor Peter Doherty

Peter Doherty shared the 1996 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the nature of the cellular immune defence. Based at the University of Melbourne, he continues to be involved in research directed at understanding and preventing the severe consequences of influenza virus infection. He has published six books for general readers, including the bestselling *The Beginner's Guide to Winning the Nobel Prize*.

Brendan Donohoe

Award-winning journalist Brendan Donohoe was Channel 7 Melbourne's state political editor for 30 years. He is also a former Victorian Government deputy director of communications.

Rose Donohoe

Rose Donohoe has worked in journalism, advertising and publishing in Australia and Europe. She is head of strategic communications for Australia's largest architecture firm, Architectus, and is a board member of Brainwave and the Sorrento Writers Festival.

Jo Dyer

Jo Dyer is a writer, literary curator and producer of theatre and film. A former director of Adelaide Writers' Week, Jo has held leadership roles at the Sydney Writers' Festival, Sydney Theatre Company and Bangarra Dance Theatre. Her freelance productions have been staged at such venues as the Sydney Opera House and the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas. Her films have been screened worldwide, notably at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Heather Ewart

Heather Ewart is an award-winning journalist and was the popular host of ABC TV's *Back Roads*. During her four decades as an ABC journalist, Heather worked as a foreign correspondent in London, Washington and Brussels as well as in other senior reporting roles.

Jon Faine

Jon Faine is a Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne, affiliated with Melbourne Law School. A former ABC Radio Melbourne morning host for more than 20 years, he is a lawyer, broadcaster, author and sought-after keynote speaker.

His book, *Apollo & Thelma*, blends memoir and history. Jon specialises in public policy, law and culture, and has led major media, conference and government projects, including Victoria's acclaimed Covid Safe campaign.

Clinton Fernandes

Clinton Fernandes is Professor of International and Political Studies at the University of NSW. He has published on the relationship between science, diplomacy and international law, intelligence operations in foreign policy, the political and regulatory implications of new technology and Australia's external relations more generally. His research in the Future Operations Research Group at UNSW analyses the operational environment, and the threats, risks and opportunities military forces will face in the 2030-50 timeframe.

Elizabeth Finkel

Elizabeth Finkel holds a PhD in biochemistry and spent 10 years as a research scientist before becoming an award-winning journalist and author of *The Genome Generation*, among other books. She is a founding editor of *Cosmos Magazine* and a regular contributor to the US magazine *Science*, *Radio National's Science Show* and *The Monthly*. She received a Queensland Premier's Literary Award for *Stem Cells: Controversy at the Frontiers of Science*.

Peter FitzSimons

Peter FitzSimons AM is Australia's bestselling non-fiction writer and, for the past 35 years, a journalist and columnist with *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Sun-Herald*. He is the author of acclaimed titles *Breaker Morant*, *Burke and Wills*, *Monash's Masterpiece*, *Kokoda*, *Ned Kelly* and *Gallipoli* as well as biographies of such notable Australians as Sir Douglas Mawson, Nancy Wake and Nick Farr-Jones.

Candice Fox

Candice Fox is the author of 11 crime novels and a three-time Ned Kelly Award winner. She has co-written seven *New York Times* bestsellers with James Patterson, and her novels *Crimson Lake* and *Redemption Point* were adapted into the ABC TV series *Troppo*. Known for her immersive research, Candice has interviewed a serial killer, visited prisons and explored crime scenes worldwide. Her latest novel with James Patterson is *2 Sisters Murder Investigations*.

Mel Fulton

Mel Fulton is a writer, editor, broadcaster and educator. She is the deputy editor and books editor of *The Big Issue Australia*, and the host of *Literati Glitterati* on Triple R.

Helen Garner

Helen Garner writes novels, stories, screenplays and works of non-fiction. She is the winner of the Melbourne Prize for Literature and the Windham-Campbell Prize for Non-fiction, and received the Australia Council Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature and the Australian Society of Authors Medal. Her books include *Monkey Grip*, *The Children's Bach*, *The First Stone*, *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, *The Spare Room*, *This House of Grief*, *The Season* and *How to End a Story: Collected Diaries*. She co-authored *The Mushroom Tapes* with Chloe Hooper and Sarah Krasnostein.

Jane Godwin

Jane Godwin is an award-winning author of books for young people and her work is published throughout the world. She was the children's publisher at Penguin Books for many years, and in 2024 won the Pixie O'Harris Award for her contribution to the children's book industry. Jane works with young people all over Australia, fostering their creativity and sharing stories.

Scott Gordon

Scott Gordon's fiction has appeared in the *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, *Modern Times Magazine*, *Pennsylvania Literary Journal*, *The Satirist* and *Mobius Magazine*. He has written and directed films and television series, including *A History of Black Achievement in America* and *Great American Authors*. Scott spent years working as a youth advocate for juvenile offenders with mental illness. His book *Head Fake* is inspired by the strength and courage of the kids he worked with.

Libbi Gorr

Television personality, radio broadcaster and actor Libbi Gorr has authored two books, *The A-Z of Mummy Manners: An Etiquette Guide for Managing Other Children's Mothers* and *The Bedtime Poem for Edible Children*.

Madeleine Gray

Madeleine Gray is a writer and critic from Sydney. Her debut novel, *Green Dot*, has been published in 14 territories, and won Madeleine the Matt Richell Award for New Writer of the Year at the 2024 ABIAs and the 2025 Russell Prize for Humour Writing. *Green Dot* was also shortlisted for Debut of the Year at the British Book Awards. *Chosen Family* is her second novel.

A.C. Grayling

A.C. Grayling is the founder and principal of the New College of the Humanities at Northeastern University, London, and its Professor of Philosophy. Among his many books are *Who Owns the Moon?, Discriminations, For the People* and his latest, *The Challenge of the Future*. He has been a regular contributor to *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *Economist*, and *New Statesman*.

Speakers and Moderators

Charlotte Grieve

Charlotte Grieve is a multi-award-winning investigative journalist with *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. She has producer credits for five documentaries with *60 Minutes*, on topics ranging from international fraudsters to the conservative infiltration of the Victorian Liberals. *Duty to Warn* (2026) is her first book.

Fiona Gruber

Writer and broadcaster Fiona Gruber writes on the arts for *The Australian* and reviews books, theatre and film for *The Times* Literary Supplement in the UK. She has been a regular contributor to ABC Radio National and is a sought-after moderator and events host.

Madeleine Grummet

Madeleine is a journalist, author and presenter who has worked across the ABC, ABC Radio National, *Crikey*, *The Australian*, *News Corp*, *Women's Agenda* and other major media covering current affairs, technology and politics. She is the Co-Host of Human Cogs podcast, the author of *You Are Not Your Face* and is currently deep in the writing of *The Letterings of Loss* (to be published in 2026). She was awarded the highest achievement in Monash University's Master of Journalism in 2023.

Charlotte Guest

Charlotte Guest is a books industry professional with more than 10 years' experience across bookselling and publishing. Her poetry, essays and short fiction have been published in national literary journals and in 2023 she was awarded a PhD in creative writing from Deakin University.

Kate Halfpenny

Award-winning journalist Kate Halfpenny spent four decades telling other people's stories before writing about her own in *Boogie Wonderland*. Her plot twists include three kids, two husbands and one mission to talk honestly about midlife via her weekly column in *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. A former synchronised trampolinist who's trying to break up with cooking, Kate loves weightlifting, bikinis and AFL.

Rosalie Ham

Rosalie Ham is the author of *The Dressmaker*, *Summer at Mount Hope* and *There Should be More Dancing*. Her novels are described as having fresh, unusual and entertaining ideas and have sold more than 500,000 copies combined. She holds a Master of Arts in Creative Writing and teaches literature.

Chris Hammer

Chris Hammer is an award-winning author of bestselling crime fiction. Before turning to fiction, Chris was a journalist for more than 30 years, dividing his career between covering federal politics and international affairs. Chris has also written two non-fiction books. His latest book is *Legacy*.

Sarah Hamylton

Sarah Hamylton is an Associate Professor at the University of Wollongong. She has been sailing to, diving around and walking along shorelines to map coastal and marine environments for more than 20 years in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Fiji, the Seychelles and the Red Sea. Her maps have helped protect marine life and manage beaches. Sarah is a nature writer who has published more than 120 scientific research papers and several books on coastlines and mapping.

Hilary Harper

Hilary Harper is a massive book and radio nerd. She has spent 30 years on air, 20 at the ABC, and as far as she knows, is the only person to do a traffic report in haiku. She presented Life Matters for six years, and now hosts weekdays on ABC Radio National, as well as writing, reviewing and interviewing about books. She's also writing a book of love stories.

Katherine Hattam

Katherine Hattam is a visual artist with works in the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Australian Galleries of NSW and South Australia. She has exhibited regularly since her first show at George Paton Gallery at the University of Melbourne, alongside US artist Helen Frankenthaler. Her work, *Our List*, was included in NGV's Melbourne Now 2023 and her portraits of Helen Garner and Drusilla Modjeska were Archibald Prize finalists.

Viriginia Haussegger

Virginia Haussegger AM is an award-winning journalist and gender equity advocate. With a four-decade media career across public and commercial broadcasting, she anchored ABC TV News Canberra for 15 years and reported globally for Channel 7 and Channel 9. She writes for major Australian outlets. Her latest book, *Unfinished Revolution: The Feminist Fightback*, is described as a "clarion call" and "contemporary history at its best".

Celia Hirsh

Celia Hirsh is a journalist, broadcaster and podcaster who also contributes questions to the weekly TV show *Have You Been Paying Attention?* Celia is a keen cook, food and cookbook lover.

Michael Hirsh

Michael Hirsh is a founding partner of Working Dog with Rob Sitch, Tom Gleisner, Santo Cilauro and Jane Kennedy. For over 30 years, he's been a multi-award winning Executive Producer of such television comedies as *Frontline*, *The Panel*, *Utopia*, *Have You Been Paying Attention?*, *The Cheap Seats*, *Thank God You're Here*, and iconic feature films *The Castle* & *The Dish*. Michael & his Working

Lander — Se

(Being of the land)

Red Hill

Artist-run initiative



Upcoming Exhibitions

APRIL 25 — MAY 31
Autumn Duo
Ksenia Shinkarenko + Natalie Cootes

JUNE 6 — AUG 30
Artist In Residence
Hannah Nowlan

SEPTEMBER 5 — OCTOBER 25
Spring Trio
Charlotte Swiden + curated artists

NOVEMBER 1 — DECEMBER 21
Summer Group Exhibition
Local curated artists

Presenting a contemporary, spiritual portrait of Australian landscape, *Lander—Se* is a rural, artist-run initiative based in Red Hill, at the heart of the Mornington Peninsula.

Formed within a vernacular barn on 2.5 acres, the gallery fuses art and land in a grounded, elemental setting. Through its collaborative platform, *Lander—Se* fosters the longevity of artistic careers and environmental stewardship.

Exhibitions unfold in dialogue with place — exploring landscape as memory, spirit and material, where landscape becomes narrative.

Explore our 2026 program: landerse.au

Gallery Open Weekends 11 — 4

Free Entry

585 Dunns Creek Rd, Red Hill

Art Gallery | Exhibitions | Creative Workshops | Art Supplies | Nunchi Oils

Speakers and Moderators

Dog colleagues were awarded the Longford Lyell Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2025 AACTA Awards Ceremony for their substantial contribution to the industry.

Kate Holden

Kate Holden is the author of *In My Skin: A memoir* and *The Romantic: Italian Nights and Days*, published by Text. For six years, she wrote a column for *The Age* and has published essays, short stories and reviews in *Griffith Review*, *Meanjin*, *The Weekend Australian*, *The Monthly* and *The Saturday Paper*, among others. Her latest book is *The Ruin of Magic*.

Lucinda Holdforth

Lucinda Holdforth is a speechwriter, speechwriting coach and author. She worked for the Hawke-Keating Labor Governments until 1996 and was speech writer to Deputy Prime Minister Kim Beazley. She has written five books. Her latest is *21st Century Virtues, How They Are Failing Our Democracy*.

Simon Holmes à Court

Simon Holmes à Court is an Australian businessman, energy analyst, clean tech investor, climate philanthropist, director of the Smart Energy Council and the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network. He is the founder and convenor of Climate 200.

Jane Hone

Jane is a freelance writer who has written for publications such as *The Guardian* and *Dumbo Feather.* She wrote her Creative Writing Honours thesis on the intersection of age, power and feminism in the work of Helen Garner. Jane also hosts live story slam events and teaches yoga across the Mornington Peninsula.

Chloe Hooper

Chloe Hooper is acclaimed for her compelling narratives in both fiction and non-fiction. She is the author of *A Child's Book of True Crime*, shortlisted for the Orange Prize for Literature; the multi-award-winning *The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island*; *The Arsonist: A Mind on Fire* and *Bedtime Story*. She has won three Walkley Awards. She co-authored *The Mushroom Tapes* with Helen Garner and Sarah Krasnostein.

Erin Hortle

Erin Hortle is the author of *The Octopus and I* and *A Catalogue of Love*. Her fiction and essays explore new ways of imagining the more-than-human world, with a distinctly feminist bent. Topics she writes about include surfing and surf culture, pelagic birds, octopuses, ambergris and kelp.

Rana Hussain

Rana Hussain, a pioneer in the realms of inclusion and belonging, has charted an extraordinary journey through the landscape of sports administration, community engagement, Social Work and the media. With a career marked by a relentless pursuit of positive change and a deep commitment to fostering inclusivity, Rana stands as a powerful advocate for social integration and reduction of discrimination.

Adrian Hyland

Adrian Hyland is the award-winning author of *Diamond Dove, Gunshot Road* and *Kinglake-350*, which was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Award for non-fiction in 2012. He lives in St Andrews, north-east of Melbourne, and teaches at La Trobe University.

Karen Inge

A leading dietician, Karen Inge is also an award-winning author of books on eating for health, fitness, sport and wellbeing. She contributes regularly on radio and television.

Nick Ingram

Dr Nick Ingram is a practising Melbourne psychiatrist with more than 40 years' experience. His particular clinical interests include anxiety disorders and medico-legal psychiatry. Nick is a prolific reader and is a member of two book clubs.

Erik Jensen

Erik Jensen is an award-winning journalist, biographer, screenwriter and poet. He is the founding editor of *The Saturday Paper* and editor-in-chief of Schwartz Media. His latest book is *A Lick of Fireweed*.

Luke Johnson

Luke Johnson is a writer from the Bellarine Peninsula and winner of the Sorrento Creative Writing Prize in 2024. A physiotherapist by trade, he is a lover of strong Australia-facing narratives and overtones. His debut, *King Tide*, was released in August 2025.

Barry Jones

Teacher, lawyer, academic, former state and federal MP, polymath and author, Barry Jones was Australia's longest-serving minister for science from 1983 to 1990. Now 93, he is an official 'national living treasure'. The Sorrento Writers Festival's annual oration is named in his honour.

Toni Jordan

Toni Jordan is the author of the international bestseller *Addition*, which was longlisted for the Miles Franklin Award and adapted into a feature film of the same name, in cinemas in 2026. Her novel, *Nine Days*, was awarded best fiction at the 2012 Indie Awards and *Our Tiny, Useless Hearts* was longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award. Toni holds a Bachelor of Science and a PhD in creative arts and lives in Melbourne. Her latest novel is *Tenderfoot*.

Cathy Kelly

Cathy Kelly is a bestselling Irish author known for her stories about real women's lives – the messy relationships, the love, the loss and everything in between. She has

written 22 novels, selling millions of copies globally. She is also a UNICEF ambassador and lives and writes from her home in Bray in Ireland.

Paul Kelly

Paul Kelly is an Australian political journalist and author, celebrated for his analysis of politics, economics and foreign policy. He began his career at *The Australian* and later held senior roles at *The National Times* and *Sydney Morning Herald.* Paul served as editor-in-chief of *The Australian* and is now editor-at-large, writing on national affairs and international relations. He has written numerous books and has been inducted into the Australian Media Hall of Fame.

Sean Kelly

Sean Kelly is the author of *The Game: A Portrait of Scott Morrison*, for which he was a Walkley Award finalist in 2022. In 2024, he was a finalist for the Walkley Foundation's freelance journalist of the year. In 2023, he was awarded the Keith Dunstan Quill for Commentary. He is a weekly columnist for *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* and a contributor to *The Monthly*.

Mark Kenny

Professor Mark Kenny is a political journalist, commentator and academic, formerly chief political correspondent and national affairs editor for *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *The Canberra Times*. A regular on ABC's Insiders and Sky News, he has reported from locations including Kandahar, Beijing and the Vatican, covering global summits such as G20 and APEC. Now at ANU, his research focuses on national politics, democracy and the rise of populism.

Betty King

Justice Betty King QC is chairperson of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board. She was a prosecutor for the Queen for the State of Victoria from 1986 until her appointment as the first prosecutor for the Queen for the Commonwealth in 1989. In 1992, she was appointed Queen's Counsel. She became a judge of the County Court of Victoria in 2000 and a judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria in 2005. She retired in 2015.

Richard King

Richard King is an author and critic based in Fremantle/Walyalup, WA, whose work has appeared in *The Monthly*, *Griffith Review*, the *Sydney Review of Books* and *Australian Book Review*. He is a contributing editor to *Arena Quarterly* and the author of three books, including *Here Be Monsters: Is Technology Reducing Our Humanity?*, which was shortlisted for the 2024 NSW Premier's Literary Awards, and *Brave New Wild: Can Technology Really Save the Planet?* (2025).

Julian Kingma

Julian Kingma is an award-winning Australian photographer whose work has appeared in *Gourmet Traveller*, *Condé Nast Traveller*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Rolling Stone*. He won Quill Awards for best portrait and best picture story and was Australian Nikon Photographer of the Year. His work is held in the National Portrait Gallery's permanent collection. Acclaimed books include *Igni, The Hot Chicken Project* and *The Power of Choice*.

Lee Kofman

Lee Kofman is the author of nine books, including *Imperfect* (2019), which was shortlisted for the Nib Literary Award, *Split* (2019) which was longlisted for ABIA Awards and a writing book, *The Writer Laid Bare* (2022). Her short works have been widely published in Australia, UK, Scotland, Israel, Canada and US. Her blog was a finalist for Best Australian Blogs 2014. Her latest book is *Ruptured* (2025). She also teaches and mentors writers.

Chris Kohler

Chris Kohler is a finance journalist and editor. He covers economics, housing and business issues and engages with large audiences through broadcast television and social media.

Ruby Kraner-Tucci

Ruby Kraner-Tucci is the national health reporter for News Corp Australia. She began her career in community news, working as deputy editor of *The Jewish Independent* and reporting on the charity sector for Pro Bono News. Ruby's writing has appeared in *The Age/Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, *Broadsheet* and *Time Out*, among others, and her personal essay was published in the anthology, *Ruptured*. Ruby is passionate about writing stories relating to mental health, neurodivergence, wellbeing, multiculturalism and relationships.

Sarah Krasnostein

Sarah Krasnostein is the bestselling author of *The Trauma Cleaner* and *The Believer*. Her prizes include the Victorian Prize for Literature and Walkley Awards for both long form feature writing and arts criticism. She holds a doctorate in criminal law and is admitted to practise law in New York and Victoria. She co-authored *The Mushroom Tapes* with Helen Garner and Chloe Hooper.

Sofie Laguna

Sofie Laguna has written four novels for adults, including *The Choke* and *Infinite Splendours*, which have won numerous literary awards including the Miles Franklin and Colin Roderick Awards. She has also written, to critical acclaim, more than 20 books for children. In 2025, Sofie released a new picture book, *The Last Egg*, and her fifth novel for adults, *The Underworld.*

Speakers and Moderators

Robyn Lea

Acclaimed international photographer, director and bestselling author Robyn Lea began her career as a photographer's assistant in Milan in 1990. Her work has been featured in esteemed global titles including the *New York Times*, *Vogue*, *Elle Décor*, *Architectural Digest* and *Interview Magazine*. Robyn has written and/or photographed 19 books, and has exhibited her work around the world, including at the prestigious Vittoriano Museum in Rome for the World Expo 2015.

Bri Lee

Bri Lee is the multi-award-winning bestselling author of acclaimed non-fiction books *Eggshell Skull, Beauty* and *Who Gets to Be Smart*. Her journalism, essays and short stories have been published widely, and she is the creator and editor of News & Reviews. Bri's bestselling first novel, *The Work*, was published in April 2024 and was longlisted for the 2025 Indie Award for debut fiction. Her latest book, *Seed*, was released in 2025.

Cheng Lei

Cheng Lei is a Chinese Australian journalist who has covered China for more than 20 years. In 2020, when Australia-China relations hit bottom, she was incarcerated by the Chinese government on espionage charges. Diplomatic efforts led to her release in 2023. She received the Press Freedom Award from the Australian Press Council in 2024 and was The Australian newspaper's Australian of the Year in 2023. *Lei's Memoir of Freedom* was published in June 2025.

Emily Lighezzolo

Emily Lighezzolo has worked in Australian publishing for nearly a decade. *Life Drawing* won the Glendower Award for an Emerging Queensland Writer at the Queensland Literary Awards and is her first book. She lives in Meanjin/Brisbane.

Stephen Lunn

Stephen Lunn is *The Australian's* social affairs editor, covering issues including health, wellbeing, ageing, disability and the care economy. A journalist for more than two decades, he has also worked in public policy advocacy in the private sector, and practised as a lawyer in Australia and the UK. Stephen has a Masters degree in law from the London School of Economics.

John Lyons

Currently global affairs editor at the ABC, senior journalist and former foreign correspondent John Lyons has won three Walkley Awards. He was the 1999 Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year.

Laura Macdonald

Laura is a filmmaker, writer and editor. She worked at William Dalrymple's Jaipur Literature Festival, then programmed the Dungog and Cockatoo Island Film Festivals. She edited her father Ranald's book, is completing a documentary about the media and launching a podcast Through The Snakevine.

Ranald Macdonald

Media commentator, former newspaper chief executive and journalism academic Ranald Macdonald AO is passionate about press freedom and public interest reporting. He founded the Australian Press Council and has written a book about his life experiences to be released in 2026.

Konrad Marshall

Konrad Marshall is an acclaimed longform journalist specialising in sport, art and science, and is deputy editor of *Good Weekend* Magazine. He is the author of *Yellow & Black: A Season with Richmond* (2017) and has collaborated on memoirs with a wide range of people including tennis icon Ash Barty and AFL transgender advocate Danielle Laidley. He is the only two-time winner of the Harry Gordon Australian Sports Journalist of the Year. His latest book is *Run For Your Life*.

Gil Marsden

Gil Marsden is an Emmy-nominated documentary director, producer and showrunner. Living and working equally between the US and Australia, his work spans sports, politics, crime and music. Recent highlights include *the United States of Scandal* with Jake Tapper and true crime event series *Death Cap Murders* for Stan, produced in collaboration with parent studio Dreamchaser Entertainment and global content powerhouse Fifth Season.

Thomas Mayo

Writer and First Nations campaigner Thomas Mayo is well known for his passionate and articulate advocacy for constitutional recognition of The Voice. With veteran journalist Kerry O'Brien, he wrote *The Voice to Parliament Handbook*. He is the author of *Finding the Heart of the Nation, Dear Son* and the bestselling children's books *Finding our Heart* and *Freedom Day*.

Laura McCluskey

Laura McCluskey is a writer, editor and actor. She is a co-founder of Sibylline Films and Three Fates Theatre Company, and has performed across theatre, film and television. *The Wolf Tree*, her first novel in a crime series featuring Scottish detectives George Lennox and Richie Stewart, was published in 2025, her second book is *The Cursed Road*.

Andrew McDonald

Andrew McDonald is the author of two beloved series for young readers: the bestselling *Real Pigeons* and the *Hello Twigs* graphic novels (published as *Twig Friends* in the US). He loves writing stories that make kids laugh, wonder and leap into the air with surprise, and regularly presents at schools and runs creative

writing workshops. His books have been shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Awards, the Readings Children's Book Prize, and the Australian Book Industry Awards. He lives in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.

Tom McIlroy

Tom McIlroy is the political editor for *Guardian Australia*. He has reported for a range of newspapers in Australia and overseas, including *The Australian Financial Review*, and his first book, *Blue Poles: Jackson Pollock, Gough Whitlam and The Painting that Changed a Nation*, was released in March, 2025.

Mark McKenna

Mark McKenna is a leading historian based at the University of Sydney. He is the author of several prize-winning books, including *From the Edge: Australia's Lost Histories*, *Looking for Blackfellas' Point* and *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark*, which won the Prime Minister's Literary Award for non-fiction and the Victorian, NSW, Queensland and South Australian Premiers' Awards.

Martin McKenzie-Murray

Martin McKenzie-Murray was *The Saturday Paper*'s chief correspondent and a Walkley Award and Quill finalist. Before that, he worked as a teacher, speechwriter, *Age* columnist and adviser to the chief commissioner of Victoria Police. His writing has appeared in *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Monthly*, *Guardian Australia*, *Meanjin* and *Best Australian Essays*. His first book, *A Murder Without Motive: The killing of Rebecca Ryle*, was shortlisted for a Ned Kelly Award for crime writing.

Joel McKerrow

Joel McKerrow is an award-winning writer, performance poet, children's author, keynote speaker and creativity specialist. He is director of the School for Creative Development, co-founder of The Deep Place Podcast and Artist Ambassador for TEARFUND Australia. A regular at major literary festivals, Joel aims to inspire students worldwide to unleash their creativity through story and poetry.

Jim Middleton

Jim Middleton has been reporting national and international affairs since 1970, first for the ABC and now as a correspondent for Sky News. For two decades, he was ABC political editor in Canberra, covering Prime Ministers Hawke, Keating and Howard. He was ABC North America correspondent from 1980 to `86 and has reported from every country in north, south and south-east Asia – except North Korea. From 2008 to 2014, he presented *Newsline* and *The World*; from 2008 until 2015, he was a member of the board of the Australia-Thailand Institute for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Murray Middleton

Murray Middleton's first collection of stories, *When There's Nowhere Else to Run*, won The Australian/Vogel Literary Award. His second book, *No Church in the Wild*, was shortlisted for the Readings New Australian Fiction Prize. He is a winner of *The Age* Short Story Award. In 2016, Murray was named *Sydney Morning Herald's* best young Australian novelist.

Kate Mildenhall

Kate Mildenhall is the author of four novels: *Skylarking*, *The Mother Fault*, *The Hummingbird Effect* and *The Hiding Place*. *The Hummingbird Effect* was longlisted for the 2024 Stella Prize and shortlisted for the 2024 ABIA Literary Fiction Book of the Year. In 2024, she released her first children's book, *To Stir With Love*, illustrated by Jess Racklyeft, which was shortlisted for the 2025 Indie Book Awards and the 2025 ABIA Children's Book of the Year.

Louise Milligan

Louise Milligan is a multi-award-winning investigative journalist for ABC TV's Four Corners. She is the bestselling author of *Cardinal* and *Witness*, both honoured with major awards including the Walkley Book Award and Davitt Award. Her journalism has driven national inquiries and law reform. Louise's latest book is the novel *Shellybanks*.

Rosemarie Milsom

Rosemarie Milsom is the founding director of Newcastle Writers Festival, which celebrates its 15th anniversary in 2027.

Natasha Mitchell

Natasha Mitchell is the host of the ABC's popular *Big Ideas* program and podcast. She is an award-winning journalist, radio presenter, podcaster and documentary maker.

Drusilla Modjeska

Drusilla Modjeska's books include the award-winning *Poppy* and the bestselling *The Orchard* and *Stravinsky's Lunch*, which won the NSW Premier's Literary Award for non-fiction. Her novel *The Mountain* was shortlisted for a number of awards and in 2015 she published her memoir, *Second Half First*, which was also shortlisted for several prizes. Her latest book is *A Woman's Eye, Her Art*.

Jane Montgomery Griffiths

Jane Montgomery Griffiths has combined a career as an actor, playwright and academic. She has performed with companies including Bell Shakespeare, MTC, Malthouse and Belvoir, and had her writing produced by Malthouse, ABC Radio, Belvoir and Victorian Opera. She was the Judith E Wilson and Leventis Fellow in Greek Drama at Cambridge and Professor of Theatre Practice at Monash University. Awards include

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best actor (White Rose, Manchester Evening News, Green Room Awards) and 2022 Green Room Award for best new Australian opera (Libretto) for *Echo and Narcissus*.

Kylie Moore-Gilbert

Kylie Moore-Gilbert is a scholar of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. She speaks several Middle Eastern languages and has spent significant periods travelling and conducting academic research in the region. She was falsely charged with espionage and imprisoned in Iran from September 2018 to November 2020 before being released in a prisoner exchange deal negotiated by the Australian government. She wrote about her experience in her memoir *The Unchanged Sky.*

Tara Moss

Tara Moss is a bestselling author, human rights advocate and holistic practitioner. She has published 15 books in more than a dozen languages, including her No.1 bestselling memoir *The Fictional Woman* and the Billie Walker historical crime series. A UNICEF ambassador and Edna Ryan Award winner, Tara is known for immersive research and investigative expertise, hosting documentaries and speaking at festivals and schools worldwide. Her latest book is *The Italian Secret*.

Patrick Mullins

Patrick Mullins is a Canberra-based writer. He is the author of five books, including *Tiberius with a Telephone* and *The Trials of Portnoy*, and a winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award for non-fiction and the National Biography Award. He has a PhD from the University of Canberra and his writing has appeared widely in magazines, journals, and periodicals.

Peta Murray

Peta Murray is lecturer in creative writing at RMIT University. Her research focus is the role of language and arts-based practices as modes of inquiry and forms of cultural activism. Publications include plays such as *Salt*, fiction including *Indigestion*, collaborative, queer and multi-modal works of live art such as *vigil/wake*.

Brian Nankervis

Poet, performer and broadcaster Brian Nankervis is co-host of *The Friday Revue* on ABC Radio Melbourne and *RocKwiz* on SBS television. He is also the creator of the much-loved tortured street-poet character Raymond J. Bartholomeuz.

Anne Olle

Anne Olle is an Australian author known for her young adult novels, particularly *Two Quid Kid*, a story about a neglected boy in 1960s-70s Melbourne, and *Where the Light Shines*, a dystopian tale. She lives on the Mornington Peninsula where she is involved in local theatre and writing circles.

Penny O'Loughlin

Penny O'Loughlin is the author of *Winding Down*, *Cartwheeling Sally*, *Jumping Jack Jim* and *Bud and Buzz*. Her background in architecture and landscape design informs her intricate world-building and visual imagination. Her stories blend humour and heart and are always road tested aloud by her sons. Her YA fantasy manuscript, *The Woven Runes*, was recently longlisted in the Sketch and Scribe First Pages Writing Competition.

Evan Osnos

Evan Osnos is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, where he has worked since 2008. A former China correspondent based in Beijing, he later moved to Washington D.C. Evan has received numerous honours, including the Osborn Elliott Prize and the Livingston Award, and contributed to Pulitzer Prize–winning reporting at the *Chicago Tribune*. His book, *Age of Ambition*, won the 2014 National Book Award for non-fiction. His latest book is *The Haves and Have-Yachts*.

Will Partlett

Will Partlett is an Associate Professor at Melbourne Law School and Fellow at the Centre for Public Integrity. He writes and teaches in the field of public law. Professor Partlett's research takes a historical and comparative approach to questions of public law. He is the author of the book, *Why the Russian Constitution Matters: The Constitutional Dark Arts* (2024) and *The People's Guide to the Australian Constitution*, co-authored with Rosalind Dixon, which was released in March 2026.

Jacinta Parsons

Jacinta Parsons is a broadcaster, radio maker, writer and public speaker. She currently co-hosts *The Friday Revue* with Brian Nankervis on ABC Melbourne. She has written three books: *Unseen*, *A Question of Age* and *A Wisdom of Age*.

Erin Pearson

Erin Pearson is a Walkley Award-winning crime and justice reporter, currently focusing her efforts on the court system in Victoria for *The Age*. Her portfolio includes covering the mushroom murder trial, Tony Mokbel, the Bourke Street massacre and the investigation into High Country killer Gregory Lynn. She is also the co-host of podcasts *The Mushroom Trial: Say Grace*, and *The Missing Campers Trial*.

Michael Pembroke

Michael Pembroke's first book was *Trees of History & Romance*; his second, *Arthur Phillip: Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy* was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards; his third book *Korea: Where the American Century Began* was shortlisted for the Queensland Literary Awards and the NSW Premier's History Awards. *Play By the Rules*, was published in the US as *America in Retreat* and *Silk Silver Opium: The Trade with China that Changed History*, was published in 2025.

Corrie Perkin

Award-winning journalist Corrie Perkin is also an editor, writer, MC, podcaster and Founder and Director of the Sorrento Writers Festival.

Steve Perkin

A journalist for 50 years, Steve Perkin covered sport and general news and wrote daily columns for *The Age* and the *Herald Sun*. A former *Sunday Age* sports editor, he was also an executive producer of Channel 9's *The Footy Show* for three years. Steve has written three novels, as yet unpublished.

Rachel Perkins

Rachel Perkins is a proud Arrente and Kalkadoon woman with German and Irish heritage, and one of Australia's most significant storytellers. An award-winning writer, director and producer, her work includes *First Australians*, *The Australian Wars*, *Total Control*, *Radiance*, *Bran Nue Dae* and *Redfern Now*. Founder of Blackfella Films, Rachel has spent more than 30 years leading truth-telling on screen and mentoring generations of First Nations creatives.

Tim Pilgrim

Based in central Victoria, Tim Pilgrim is known for his naturalistic, cottage-style gardens that blend traditional and contemporary design, edible and ornamental planting. With more than 15 years' experience and formal horticultural training, he has worked in renowned gardens including St Erth, Sefton and Paul Bangay's Stonefields. His work is widely published and his first book, *Wild by Design*, was released in 2025.

Richard Piper

Richard Piper has had a distinguished acting career in England and Australia, appearing in more than 80 productions, including 40 for the Melbourne Theatre Company. After training at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London, he appeared in West End productions *Grease* and *Elvis*. In the 1980s, he travelled to Australia as part of the band The Bouncing Czecks, before moving to Melbourne permanently.

J.P. Pomare

J.P. Pomare is an award-winning author whose debut novel, *Call Me Evie*, won the Ngaio Marsh Award for best first novel. *In The Clearing* was made into a Disney+ original series, while *Tell Me Lies* was a No.1 Audible bestseller. *17 Years Later* is his seventh novel.

Liz Porter

Liz Porter is an Australian writer best known for her prize-winning books about "the real CSI" – the way forensic science is used to solve crime. She is also the author of *Written on the Skin: an Australian forensic casebook*, joint winner of the 2007 Ned Kelly award for the best true crime book, and *Cold Case Files*, winner of Australian Sisters in Crime's 2012 Davitt award for best true crime book.

Lucinda Froomes Price

Lucinda Price is a writer, broadcaster and comedian. Her debut book, *All I Ever Wanted Was To Be Hot*, was an instant bestseller, winning an ABIA for Small Publishers' adult book of the year and earning multiple major nominations. As CEO of FROOMESWORLD, she runs an international one-woman creative business and was nominated for an AACTA Award for best digital creator.

Lucy Race

After a professional life spanning communications, publishing and small business, Lucy's passion for football led her to co-founding the award-winning *Outer Sanctum* radio show and podcast. She is a co-host of *Outer Sanctum*, can be heard on ABC local radio reporting on sport and has co-hosted trade radio for the Hawthorn Football Club.

Hannie Rayson

Award-winning playwright, screenwriter, presenter and author, Hannie Rayson's works include *Hotel Sorrento*, *Inheritance* and *Life After George*. The latter was the first play to be nominated for the Miles Franklin Literary Award.

Nicholas Reece

Nicholas Reece was sworn in as Lord Mayor of Melbourne in July 2024 and re-elected in November 2024. He was first elected as a councillor at the City of Melbourne in 2016 and was elected as Deputy Lord Mayor in 2020. With a long history of public service and experience in business, law and journalism, he brings a deep understanding of Melbourne life to the role of Lord Mayor. Nicholas is one of the original 'Mo Bros' and former chairman of global men's health charity Movember. For more than 10 years, he was a director for the street newspaper *The Big Issue*.

Kate Reid

Kate Reid is the founder of Lune Croissanterie, a renowned bakery established in Melbourne. Initially pursuing aerospace engineering at RMIT University before following her lifelong passion for Formula 1 racing, she then turned her technical know-how and love of precision to pastries. In 2022, Kate published *Lune: Croissants All Day, All Night* and her second book, *Destination Moon*, is an open-hearted memoir about passion and finding purpose.

Amy Remeikis

Amy Remeikis is the chief political analyst at The Australia Institute and a contributing editor for *The New Daily*. Amy is renowned for her incisive political commentary and extensive experience as a journalist, author and former political reporter for *Guardian Australia*. She is celebrated for her powerful writing on gender, politics and social justice. She is the author of *On Reckoning*. *Where It All Went Wrong* is her second book.

Speakers and Moderators

Henry Reynolds

Henry Reynolds taught history and politics at James Cook University for more than 30 years. He was a pioneer of the history of relations between First Nations people and the Colonists. His best-known book, *The Other Side of the Frontier*, was published in 1981. More than 20 books have followed – many of them prize-winners. His most recent book, *Looking From the North*, draws on his long experience living and working in northern Australia.

Sally Rippin

Sally Rippin is a best-selling and beloved author for children, and the eighth Australian Children's Laureate. Her most popular series include *Billie B Brown*, *Hey Jack!* and *School of Monsters*. Sally has also published *Wild Things: How We Learn to Read and What Can Happen If We Don't* for adults and is the co-author of *The World We Can Build*, with Eliza Hull, illustrated by Daniel Gray-Barnett

Seth Robinson

Seth Robinson is a writer, producer and academic. He is the author of *Welcome to Bellevue*, the first full-length novel in Grattan Street Press' original fiction collection. His work has featured in *Kill Your Darlings*, *The Saturday Paper*, *Everything*, *All at Once* (the Ultimo Prize Anthology), *Resilience* (the Mascara Literary Review 15th anniversary collection) and *Aurealis Magazine*.

Heather Rose

Heather Rose is an award-winning Australian author whose novels have won the Stella Prize, Christina Stead Prize, Margaret Scott Prize and ABIA General Fiction Book of the Year. Published internationally, her work spans literary fiction, crime, magical realism, memoir, children's fantasy and historical fiction. Writing also as Angelica Banks, Heather lives in Tasmania. Her latest novel, *A Great Act of Love*, was published in 2025.

Jack Rush

John 'Jack' Rush AO was admitted to the Victorian Bar in 1978 and appointed as a Queen's Counsel in 1992. In 2013, he was appointed Senior Counsel assisting the Royal Commission established to investigate the consequences of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires in which 173 people died. In November 2013, Jack Rush was appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, an appointment he held until his resignation from the bench in February 2016. In 2021 he was appointed Judge Advocate General of the Australian Defence Force.

Dwayne Russell

Dwayne Russell is one of Australia's most respected sports commentators. He rose to prominence with the ABC in 1997, later joining Channel 9's AFL commentary team and Fox Sports in 2007. His career spans the AFL, Olympic and Commonwealth Games, Australian Open tennis and the NBL. Dwayne hosts SEN's national talkback show Dwayne's World and is a regular sports columnist.

Samah Sabawi

Dr Samah Sabawi is an award-winning author, playwright and poet. Her memoir *Cactus Pear* for *My Beloved* has been shortlisted for the 2025 Stella Prize, *The Age Book* of the Year and the NSW Literary Awards Douglas Stewart Prize, the book was also highly commended by the Victoria Premier's Literary Awards. Sabawi's theatre credits include the award-winning plays Tales of a City by the Sea and THEM. In 2020 Samah received the prestigious Green Room Award for Best Writing in the independent theatre category, and was shortlisted for both the NSW and the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.

Bernard Salt

Bernard Salt is a leading social commentator, columnist, author and futurist who uses demographic and social data to interpret how society and business are changing. Bernard has popularised demographics through his books, columns and media appearances over 20-plus years. He is a regular guest on radio and television programs.

Niki Savva

Niki Savva is an award-winning journalist, author and political commentator. She has worked for The Australian, the Herald Sun and *The Age* as a correspondent and bureau chief, is a regular columnist with *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* and appears on ABC's Insiders. She has written five books. Her latest, *Earthquake, the election that shook Australia*, includes a selection of her columns and a detailed analysis of the 2025 election.

Sean Scalmer

Sean Scalmer is the prize-winning author of seven books of history, on topics ranging from Gandhian non-violence to electioneering in Australia, the UK and the US. He is a Professor of History at the University of Melbourne. His latest book is *A Fair Day's Work: The Quest to Win Back Time*.

Julianne Schultz

Julianne Schultz AM FAHA is the chair of The Conversation. She was the publisher and founding editor of *Griffith Review* and is professor emeritus of media and culture at the Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research, and a member of the board of the Sydney Writers Festival. She is an acclaimed author of several books, including *Reviving the Fourth Estate* and *Steel City Blues*. She has served on the board of directors of the ABC, Grattan Institute and Copyright Agency.

Kate Seddon

Kate Seddon is an experienced Melbourne landscape designer whose practice focuses on sustainable garden design. Kate Seddon

Landscape Design's commissioned projects include gardens throughout suburban Melbourne and country and coastal Victoria.

Jac Semmler

Jac Semmler is an innovative horticulturist, plant practitioner, author and director of Super Bloom plant practice, bringing living beauty and diversity to spaces through planting design, high-skill horticulture and plant advocacy. Her mission is 'plants for the people' in a changing climate. Public works include Laak Boorndap, the urban garden of the Melbourne Arts Precinct. She is the author of *Super Bloom*, *The Super Bloom Handbook* and *Flower Power*.

Jock Serong

Jock Serong is the author of seven novels and the winner of several awards, including the ARA Historical Novel Prize, the Ned Kelly Award for first fiction and Britain's Staunch Prize, which is for thrillers where no women are victims of violence. He is a former solicitor.

Greg Sheridan

Greg Sheridan is foreign editor of The Australian and a hugely respected journalist. He is a man of deep Christian faith and is fascinated by the intellectual, spiritual and human aspects of Christianity. His most recent book is the last in a trilogy – *How Christians Can Succeed Today: Reclaiming the Genius of the Early Church*. Previous books include *God is Good For You* and *When We Were Young and Foolish*.

Michael Shmith

Michael Shmith is a former *Age* arts editor and opera critic and a former communications director of the Australian Ballet. Michael is also an author, editor and writer.

Emma Shortis

Dr Emma Shortis is director of The Australia Institute's International and Security Affairs Program. She is a historian and writer, focused on the history and politics of the US and its role in the world.

John Silvester

John Silvester is Australia's longest-serving crime reporter, having covered the beat since 1978. He has won four Walkley Awards, the Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year Award, nine Melbourne Press Club Quills, nine Victorian Law Foundation Awards, a Ned Kelly Award for true crime writing, a Ned Kelly lifetime achievement award, an ASEAN Fellowship to study crime and corruption in South-East Asia, and has been elevated to the Australian Media Hall of Fame.

Kristine Slawinski

Kristine Slawinski is an interior designer and heritage consultant and a strong advocate for the protection of Melbourne's heritage interiors, which led her to undertake her Masters in Urban and Cultural Heritage at the University of Melbourne. She is an affiliate member of the Australian Institute of Architects (Vic.) and a member of the Design Institute of Australia She currently works as a senior heritage consultant at GML Heritage.

Anna Snoekstra

Anna Snoekstra is a bestselling author. Her novels have been published in more than 20 countries and 16 languages. She has written for many literary magazines and newspapers and is a profile writer for *The Saturday Paper*. Her new novel is *The Ones We Love*.

Kylie Soanes

Dr Kylie Soanes is an Australian scientist on a mission to save nature in our cities and towns. Her research spans urban ecology and biodiversity conservation, asking how cities can better support wildlife. She works with councils, communities, engineers and architects, and is a prolific science communicator known for warmth, wit, and accessible storytelling across multiple public platforms.

Jason Steger

British-born Australian journalist Jason Steger was a long-serving literary editor for *The Age* and an ABC TV *First Tuesday Book Club* panel member.

Clare Stephens

Clare Stephens is a Sydney-based author, screenwriter and podcaster. Her bestselling debut novel, *The Worst Thing I've Ever Done*, was published in 2025. Her writing appears in *Good Weekend*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Sunday Life* and *The Age*. She hosts *The Pile-On* podcast and is a writer and producer on the Logie-nominated Binge series *Strife*. Clare was formerly the editor-in-chief at Mamamia.

Cameron Stewart

Cameron Stewart is the chief international correspondent at *The Australian*, combining investigative reporting on foreign affairs, defence and national security with feature writing for *The Weekend Australian* Magazine. He is a former winner of the Graham Perkin Award for Australian Journalist of the Year.

Paul Strangio

Paul Strangio is an emeritus professor in politics at Monash University. A political historian who specialises in political leadership, he is the author and editor of more than a dozen books on Australian politics. These include *Keeper of the Faith*, an acclaimed biography of Jim Cairns, award-winning titles on the Victorian Labor Party and the history of the Australian prime ministership.

Speakers and Moderators

Katrina Strickland

Katrina Strickland has been writing about the arts for 15 years. A former editor of the *Australian Financial Review* Magazine, she was appointed editor of *Good Weekend* in 2017 and is now a senior writer with *Good Weekend*. Prior to that she worked at *The Australian* for 11 years. She is a former World Press Institute fellow and, in 2013, her book *Affairs of the Art: Love, loss and power in the art world* was published.

Cameron Sullivan

Cameron Sullivan was born in Perth and studied classics and creative writing at the University of Western Australia. After several years working and studying in Italy and the UK, he returned to Australia and settled in Melbourne. He will easily lose a weekend to a good book, new recipe or games of any kind. His latest book is *The Red Winter*, a historic fantasy.

Jane Sullivan

English-born Jane Sullivan worked for *The Age* as a reporter, feature writer and section editor and won the inaugural Australian Human Rights Award for journalism. She now writes a Saturday column, *Turning Pages*, and features about books for *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*. Her first novel was *The White Star*. Her second, *Little People*, was shortlisted in the CAL Scribe Fiction Prize. She lives in Melbourne.

Norman Swan

Trained in paediatrics, Dr Norman Swan was one of Australia's first medically qualified journalists, with a broadcast career spanning 30 years. He hosts Radio National's The Health Report while also reporting for *7.30* and *Four Corners*, and appearing on *The Drum*. He sits on the board of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and is the bestselling author of *So You Think You Know What's Good for You?* and *So You Want to Live Younger Longer?*

Kelvin Templeton

After a football career in which he won a Brownlow Medal, two Coleman Medals and was admitted to the AFL's Hall of Fame, Kelvin Templeton pursued new challenges in business and through post-graduate studies in Australia and at the University of Pennsylvania in the US. He lived and worked overseas in the Middle East for 15 years and now lives in Melbourne. He has been an avid reader of fiction all his life and *Collision* is his first novel.

The Paris End Editors

The Paris End is Melbourne's finest weekly newsletter, edited by Cameron Hurst, Sally Olds and Oscar Schwartz. On Substack, TPE publishes long-form literary journalism about life in the city to thousands of subscribers every week. In 2025, an anthology of some of the publication's best essays, *EXCLUSIVE! Dispatches from The Paris End*, was published by Giramondo.

Diana Thorp

Diana Thorp is a journalist and teacher who has written for *The Australian*, its weekend magazine, and *The Times* in London. She has taught journalism at university and now teaches English and history. Her honours thesis explored lost memories of women in ancient Egyptian literature. In writing *Code of Silence*, Diana drew on her journalist's instinct for a compelling story and her passion for history's hidden voices.

Helen Trinca

Helen Trinca is a journalist and author of two biographies – *Madeleine: A Life of Madeleine St John*, and *Looking for Elizabeth: The Life of Elizabeth Harrower*. She is co-author of two non-fiction books – *Waterfront: The Battle that Changed Australia*, and *Better than Sex: How a Whole Generation Got Hooked on Work*. She is an associate editor at *The Australian* where she has held senior editing and writing roles.

Virginia Trioli

Virginia Trioli is a three-time Walkley Award-winning journalist and the author of two books – her 2024 food memoir *A Bit on the Side* and the feminist investigation *Generation F*. She is the host of ABC TV's *Creative Types*.

Tom Trumble

Tom Trumble has worked in journalism, communications and book retailing. He graduated with honours in history, and has also studied music and journalism. He is the author of *Unholy Pilgrims*, *Rescue at 2100 Hours*, *Tomorrow We Escape* and *Survival in Singapore*.

Clara Tuite

Clara Tuite is Professor of English in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. She teaches and researches the literary and cultural history of Romanticism, with a particular interest in the works of Jane Austen and Lord Byron. She is the author of *Romantic Austen: Sexual Politics and the Literary Canon* and co-author with Claudia L. Johnson of *30 Great Myths About Jane Austen*.

Corey Tutt

Corey Tutt OAM is a Kamilaroi man from Nowra, NSW, and the founder of DeadlyScience, a not-for-profit providing STEM resources and mentorship to remote Indigenous schools. Inspired by his love of STEM and the lack of opportunities for Aboriginal students, Corey has worked to make science accessible to First Nations youth. Recognised nationally and internationally, he is a former NSW Young Australian of the Year and received the Eureka STEM Inclusion Prize.

Jayne Tuttle

Jayne Tuttle is a writer, performer and bookseller. Trained in theatre at the École Jacques Lecoq in Paris, she has worked as an actor, director

and translator, and written for *The Guardian*, *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. In 2026 she is a laureate of the City of Paris, and she has received awards and fellowships from La Napoule Arts Foundation, Bundanon, Le Centre les Récollets and the Varuna National Writers House. Jayne co-owns The Bookshop at Queenscliff.

Steph Vizard

Steph Vizard is an Australian writer and lawyer. After studying literature at Oxford University, she worked in publishing in London. Her debut romantic comedy, *The Love Contract*, won the 2022 HarperCollins Banjo Prize. *A Smart Girl's Guide to Second Chances* is her second novel.

Sarah Walker

Sarah Walker is a Naarm/Melbourne-based writer and artist whose work explores anxiety, intimacy and the body's unpredictable nature. Her debut essay collection, *The First Time I Thought I Was Dying*, won the 2021 Quentin Bryce Award, and she received the 2025 Kill Your Darlings creative non-fiction essay prize. An award-winning photographer and artist, Sarah's work has been commissioned internationally, spanning fiction, non-fiction and visual arts.

Toby Walsh

Toby Walsh is a world-leading researcher in AI (artificial intelligence). He is a professor of AI at the University of New South Wales and leads a research group at Data61, Australia's Centre of Excellence for ICT Research. He has been elected a fellow of the Association for the Advancement of AI and has won the prestigious Humboldt research award. He has held research positions in England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland and Sweden.

Sally Warhaft

Sally Warhaft is a Melbourne broadcaster, anthropologist and writer. She is the host of *The Fifth Estate*, the Wheeler Centre's live series focusing on journalism, politics, media and international relations, and *The Leap Year*, a Wheeler Centre podcast about Australians' lives in the fog of the Covid pandemic. She is a former editor of *The Monthly* and the editor of the best-selling book *Well May We Say: The Speeches that Made Australia*.

Don Watson

Don Watson is the author of many critically acclaimed books, including *Caledonia Australis*, *Recollections of a Bleeding Heart*, *American Journeys*, *The Bush* and *The Passion of Private White*. He has twice won *The Age* Book of the Year, in addition to the National Biography Award, the Alfred Deakin Essay Prize, the Australian Literary Studies Association Book of the Year, a Walkley Award, the NSW Premier's Award, the Queensland Literary Award and the Independent Booksellers Book of the Year, twice.

Nadia Wheatley

Nadia Wheatley has published a number of award-winning works of history and biography, but her latest book, *Strange New World: Belsen's First Year of Freedom*, represents a new direction. It was inspired by a visit to the site of the displaced persons camp in Germany where survivors of Bergen-Belsen made their home, and where the author's father was the hospital superintendent.

Kate Wild

Kate Wild is an investigative journalist whose work with distinguished teams at the ABC has been recognised with three Walkley Awards and a Logie. Her reports from Darwin, where she lived from 2010 to 2016, laid the groundwork for a Four Corners story on juvenile detention that prompted the calling of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. Her first book, *Waiting for Elijah*, was published in 2018 and her recent book, *The Red House*, was released in 2025.

Lisa Wilkinson

Lisa Wilkinson AM began a groundbreaking publishing career as the youngest-ever editor of *Dolly* at 21, then spent 10 years leading the iconic *Cleo* magazine. After more than a decade co-hosting the Nine Network's *Today Show*, she joined the Ten Network in 2017 as host of the prime-time, award-winning *The Project*. Her new book, *The Titanic Story of Evelyn*, the untold story of the only Australian-born Titanic survivor, is to be released in April 2026.

Marian Wilkinson

Marian Wilkinson is a multi-award-winning journalist with a career that has spanned radio, television, online and print. She has covered politics, national security, refugee issues and climate change as well as serving as a foreign correspondent in Washington D.C. for *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. She was executive producer and senior reporter of the ABC's *Four Corners* program. She is the author of several books. Her latest work is the *Quarterly Essay*, *Woodside Vs. the Planet*, analysing Australia's gas industry and its battles with the climate movement.

Niall Williams

Niall Williams was born in Dublin and lives in County Clare. He has written three plays, ten novels and, with wife Christine Breen, has co-authored five books of non-fiction about their life in Clare. The latest is *In Kiltumper*, a *Year in an Irish Garden*. Niall's novels have been nominated for numerous awards, including the Man Booker Prize, The Irish Times Literature Prize, and The Dublin Impac Award. Most recently, *Time of the Child* was awarded the Kerry Group novel of the year. His novel, *Four Letters of Love*, was an international bestseller and was made into a major feature film.

Speakers and Moderators

Pip Williams

Pip Williams, the author of essays, memoir, poetry and companion novels, is best known for *The Dictionary of Lost Words* and *The Bookbinder of Jericho*. *The Dictionary of Lost Words* won multiple Australian awards, was longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award, shortlisted for the Walter Scott Prize, selected for the Reese Witherspoon Book Club, and became a *New York Times* bestseller.

Scott Williams

Exercise physiologist and strength and conditioning coach Dr. Scott Williams is the founder of Ocean Fitness in Sorrento. Scott also consults to the PGA of Australia, Australian Institute of Sport, and Golf Australia and is the author of the golf fitness book *Get a Grip*.

Geordie Williamson

Geordie Williamson has been chief literary critic of *The Australian* since 2008. He is publisher of the Picador imprint at Pan Macmillan, a former editor of *Island Magazine* and *Best Australian Essays*, and author of *The Burning Library*, a collection of essays on neglected figures from Australian literature.

Peter Wilmoth

Peter Wilmoth is a Melbourne-based journalist, writer and publisher. He has co-written several autobiographies, including those of former AFL footballer James Hird, actor Bud Tingwell, businessman Harold Mitchell and cyclist Cadel Evans. He has written a social history, *Glad All Over: The Countdown Years 1974-1987*. A collection of his newspaper profiles, *Up Close: 28 Lives of Extraordinary Australians*, was published by Pan Macmillan. Peter runs Narrative Publishing, a Melbourne-based publishing house helping people and businesses publish their personal/corporate stories.

Caroline Wilson

Caroline Wilson is a Walkley Award-winning sports journalist, broadcaster and co-presenter of the *Don't Shoot the Messenger* podcast. Caroline's numerous awards include a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Australian Sports Commission (2010), the Graham Perkin Australian Journalist of the Year Award (2013) and the Melbourne Press Club's Lifetime Achievement Award (2021).

Sarah Wilson

Sarah Wilson is a multi-*New York Times* and Amazon bestselling author, social philosopher, international keynote speaker and philanthropist. She founded the global *I Quit Sugar* movement, edited *Cosmopolitan Australia* and hosted *MasterChef Australia*. Her books include *First, We Make the Beast Beautiful* and the US Gold Nautilus Prize-winning *This One Wild and Precious Life*. Her next book, *I Eat the Stars: How to Live Fully and Beautifully in a Collapsing World* will be released in May.

Stuart Wilson

Stuart Wilson is the author of *The 113th Assistant Librarian* (and its sequel, *Lost in a Book*) and the *Prometheus High* series. An omnivore when it comes to devouring stories, he lives in Naarm/Melbourne with his wife and son.

Bruce Wolpe

Bruce Wolpe is a Senior Fellow (non-resident) at the US Studies Centre. He is a regular contributor on US politics across media in Australia. Bruce worked with the Democrats in Congress during President Barack Obama's first term and was Prime Minister Julia Gillard's chief of staff.

Ben Wood

Ben Wood has illustrated many bestselling books for children, including the best-selling *Real Pigeons* series and the *Hello Twigs* graphic novel (published as *Twig Friends* in the US). Ben is drawn to stories that are funny and heartfelt, and his lively illustrations reflect his love for graphic novels and animation. When not in the studio, Ben speaks in schools and runs workshops about illustration. He lives in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.

Tom Wright

Actor, director and writer Tom Wright is a former associate director of the Sydney Theatre Company. Productions of his work have been staged in Pakistan, Belgium, Canada, the US, the UK, China and New Zealand, as well as throughout Australia.

Susan Wyndham

Susan Wyndham is a journalist, author and former literary editor of *Sydney Morning Herald*. Her latest book is *Elizabeth Harrower: The Woman in the Watch Tower*, and she is co-editor with Brigitta Olubas of *Hazzard and Harrower: The Letters*.

Rick Yeatman

Dr Rick Yeatman has worked in the mental health field since 1986, for the majority of time as a psychiatrist working with people who attend public health services in Victoria.He is a dedicated reader of fiction and non-fiction. He says he never has, and never will, attempt to write a book. He believes there are already too many great ones out there.

Daniel Ziffer

Daniel Ziffer has worked at the intersection of journalism and public debate for more than two decades. From Melbourne, he covers business and finance for ABC News. Daniel has worked on air and in production at Macquarie Radio, as a freelance foreign correspondent based in New York City, a journalist at *The Age* and a magazine editor.



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Our Beautiful Sorrento

The Mornington Peninsula can be particularly beautiful in the autumn, when the mornings are fresh, the days mild and the Bay still pleasantly warm for swimming.

Sorrento is unique in that it's located on the skinny end of the peninsula, where it's walking distance between the calm, pristine beaches of Port Phillip Bay and the wild, rugged Bass Strait. Our slice of the peninsula is home to lush parks, awe-inspiring walks and magical places to take a dip.

As well as offering plenty of ways to immerse yourself in the natural world, our pretty town features several spots to dust off the cobwebs or find a sense of serenity. Those looking to boost wellbeing can do it here in Sorrento.



Sorrento Foreshore and Jetty

If time is of the essence, explore Sorrento's foreshore and jetty – the backdrop in several scenes of Hannie Rayson's classic play, Hotel Sorrento. It's also the site of what was once Erlandsen's Sea Baths, which featured diving boards and saltwater baths heated by briquettes, plus an adjoining tearoom. Festival venue The Baths now stands in its place.



Sorrento-Portsea Artists' Trail

What could be better than blending exercise, jaw-dropping vistas and art? This trail takes in 14 of our most stunning locations through the eyes of such artists as Sir Arthur Streeton, Arthur Boyd and John Perceval. Journey between each reproduced painting by car or foot, starting at Websters Corner Beach (local tip: grab a coffee from nearby St Paul's General Store before embarking) and then wind your way via Sorrento Park through part of the Millionaire's Walk in Portsea, as well as London Bridge. Your last stop is the eternally charming Diamond Bay.



Sorrento Historic Park

Adjacent to local institution Hotel Sorrento, Sorrento Park has manicured lawns, flower gardens and large trees, as well as picnic tables and a wooden playground. The park has been popular since the 1800s, when it was used for lawn games and dances. It fell into disrepair after World War II, but was eventually restored to its former glory and is now beloved for its grassed areas, shady trees and bay views.











Tuckey Track

Starting at the historic Sullivan Bay (a lovely spot for a dip), this track takes you past Sorrento Sailing Couta Boat Club through residential streets and the Tuckey Reserve, then down to Diamond Bay and the Mount St Paul Lookout, which has 360-degree views.

Sorrento Back Beach and Rock Pool

Survey the wild beauty of Bass Strait from the back beach and, at low tide, explore a phenomenal rock pool. From the beach, you can take the five-minute stair climb to Coppin's Lookout and enjoy the view, walk along the track to Sphinx Rock, Portsea Village or London Bridge (4km) or head the other way towards Koonya Back Beach (3.6km).

Aurora Spa

If you're in need of rest and respite, step inside this luxurious subterranean bath house and spa in the Continental Hotel. The all-weather bath house offers an 11-step journey through such rituals as warm and cold pools, an aromatherapy steam room, salt therapy room, traditional sauna, 'Glacial Mist Room' and more. Float rooms and spa treatments are also available at this wellness mecca

Marlo Spa

A long-time Sorrento treasure that is now housed in the iconic Hotel Sorrento, Marlo Spa is the place to go for such beauty treatments as pedicures and sumptuous spa treatments – many of them inspired by ancient Ayurvedic (Indian medicine) rituals. You can also book a range of delicious 'Steam Lounge Rituals' in Marlo's steam room.

Ocean Beach Yoga

Ocean Beach is our resident yoga studio – and it's a gem. Located just behind the dunes of Sorrento Back Beach, the studio is wonderfully lightfilled and overlooks a canopy of tea-tree and other coastal natives. Maggie and her team are on-site every day and offer a variety of yoga classes – from restorative practices such as Yin and Gentle yoga to the more vigorous Sculpt and Vinyasa Flow.

Recovery Deck at Recreation Sorrento

As well as a fully equipped gym and fitness studio, Recreation Sorrento has added a 'Recovery Deck' for those adventurous enough to experiment with contrast (hot and cold) therapy. Spend 20 or 50 minutes moving between an infrared sauna and ice bath, taking deep breaths along the way. It's the perfect place to focus on your body and experience autumn invigoration.

Jane Hone, local author

Festival Bookshop



Sorrento Writers Festival is delighted to welcome back Avenue Bookstore as our official Festival bookshop partner. Owner Chris Redfern and his bookselling team will be in residence throughout the four days of the Festival, with the main bookshop hub in its usual spot – the Coppin Lounge on level one of The Continental Sorrento.

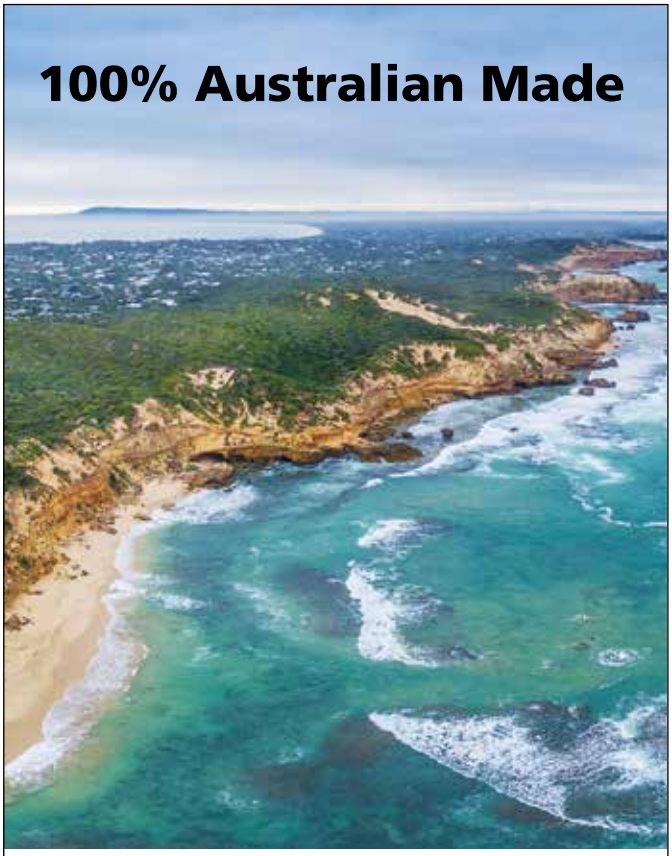
We invite all festival-goers to enjoy the beautiful book-browsing surroundings of this well-stocked pop-up. The bookshop is also the place to meet your favourite authors and have your books signed. Just ask bookselling staff or our volunteers for details of who will be appearing and when.

Avenue Bookstore will also run satellite pop-ups at Hotel Sorrento, the Sorrento Community Centre, Sorrento Bowls Club and Ellen Grant Hall.

From new fiction to children's books, thrillers, political biographies, art and interiors hardcovers, Avenue Bookstore has a terrific selection for all age groups and interests.

Sorrento Village also has its own independent bookstore, Antipodes Gallery and Bookshop, at 138 Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento. We encourage visitors to wander down the main street and call in for a browse.

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Our Venues

The Sorrento Writers Festival is fortunate to have access to some of the town's most beautiful spaces. We have rooms with views, rooms with character and buildings that date back to the late 1800s. We thank our friends from those community organisations that support our Festival with a 'come and use our space' welcome. From the bowls club to the RSL, the spirit of Sorrento is alive and well.



The Continental Sorrento and InterContinental Sorrento

Our Festival Hub is The Continental Sorrento, one of the Mornington Peninsula's architectural gems. Built in 1875 by Melbourne theatre impresario George Coppin, The Continental's two main Festival spaces are the Halcyon Hall and the Grand Ballroom.

Our Festival bookshop, run by Avenue Bookstore, will be located in the Coppin Lounge on level one of The Continental Sorrento. You will find the Festival Box Office on the ground floor just near the stairs in front of the Barlow Room. With the InterContinental Sorrento next door and a selection of bars, restaurants and coffee spots, The Continental Sorrento will be buzzing with activity over the Festival weekend.

The Continental Sorrento
1-21 Ocean Beach Road, Sorrento

The InterContinental Sorrento
23 Constitution Hill Road, Sorrento

Sorrento-Portsea RSL

Founded in 1919, the Sorrento-Portsea RSL brings together a strong community to honour the spirit of service and mateship. The building, tucked down below George Street, has a long tradition as a local hub for celebrations, commemorations and community support. It is home to the generations-old Tom Katz Live Music and Entertainment venue as well as the fabulous Sorrento Thai Restaurant, Jack's Bar and Lounge and The Terrace. Sorrento-Portsea RSL is a proud community-based volunteer-run and not-for-profit organisation.

3 Hurley Street, Sorrento

Ellen Grant Hall and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church

The limestone St Andrew's Church was built in 1888 (it is one of only three intact limestone churches left on the Peninsula) and is one of Sorrento's finest buildings. Next door, the timber Ellen Grant Hall – a popular Festival venue – was built in 1937. Both buildings are a three-minute walk from The Continental Sorrento Festival Hub.

43 Kerferd Road, Sorrento

Hotel Sorrento

Built in 1872, Hotel Sorrento is one of the Mornington Peninsula's most-loved watering holes. Owned by the Pitt family, we are delighted to be including their newly built conference centre as a Festival venue this year with several sessions also to be held in their Salt Bar.

Hotel Sorrento also offers many options for eating and drinking as well as Marlo Spa, a restful retreat away from the excitement of Festival events.

5-15 Hotham Rd, Sorrento

The Baths, Sorrento

The Baths restaurant is located on the Sorrento foreshore with breathtaking views across Port Phillip Bay. The fully licensed restaurant offers casual relaxed dining every day for lunch, dinner, snacks, weddings and corporate events. Each year, The Baths is the venue for our Political Lunch. It's just a five-minute walk down the hill from The Continental Sorrento and a great place for a coffee or meal.

3278 Point Nepean Road, Sorrento

Our Venues







Sorrento Museum

The Nepean Historical Society established its museum in the Mechanics' Institute, a National Trust-classified building built of local limestone, in 1876-77. The museum is home to the Heritage Gallery, multimedia and lecture facilities, an extensive photo collection and documentary archive. Research and copying services are available on request, and visitors can search some open indexes and material online.

827 Melbourne Road, Sorrento

Sorrento Community Centre

Sorrento Community Centre aims to create a healthy, connected and vibrant community. Through consultation and collaboration, the centre delivers community-driven programs, which include social, educational, recreational and support activities. With seating for up to 350 people, it is the Festival's largest venue. You will find the centre at the bottom of the supermarket carpark – a brisk 5-7 minute walk from The Continental Sorrento.

860-868 Melbourne Road, Sorrento

Portsea Surf Life Saving Club

Perched above the dramatic back beach, Portsea Surf Life Saving Club offers sweeping coastal views and a uniquely peninsula atmosphere. A cornerstone of the local community since 1949, the club is dedicated to keeping beachgoers safe while fostering a strong spirit of volunteerism and connection. PSLSC is a 7 minute drive from Sorrento's main street.

Back Beach Road, Portsea

Sorrento Bowls Club

Sorrento Bowls Club is an iconic destination on the Mornington Peninsula and offers barefoot bowls sessions year round, plus competitive pennant and social bowls from September to July. It is the oldest bowls club on the Mornington Peninsula and has been welcoming locals and tourists alike since 1934. Festival events are held in the clubhouse, which can be accessed via Hotham Street or the football oval, the David Macfarlan Reserve, where our Rotary friends will operate carparking over the Festival weekend. The Sorrento Bowls Club is a 7-10 minute walk from the main street.

35 Hotham Road, Sorrento

Portsea Village Resort

Portsea Village is a light-filled community precinct in the heart of Portsea, surrounded by local shops and just minutes from the foreshore and iconic Portsea Pier. Modern and welcoming, the Village offers an intimate setting for Festival conversations. Portsea Village is a 9 minute drive from Sorrento's main street.

3765 Point Nepean Road, Portsea

Shuttle buses between venues

We will have shuttle buses running loops of the Festival venues over the four days. Please check our website for further information.





Where ideas come to stay.

As autumn settles over the Peninsula, InterContinental Sorrento becomes a sanctuary for slow mornings, warm light, and quiet reflection. Between festival sessions, retreat to coastal views, seasonal dining, and the restorative calm of Aurora Spa & Bathhouse - all within our historic limestone walls.

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Festival Team

The Sorrento Writers Festival Incorporated is a registered not-for-profit charity. The entity is overseen by a Committee of Management with the assistance of financial advisory firm the Kearney Group. The Festival's founding Director Corrie Perkin is also the CEO, and she is supported by a small and talented team of part-time and volunteer staff.

The Sorrento Writers Festival is fiscally responsible, believes in good governance, regular reporting back to stakeholders and, although we plan within our means, we dream big.

The Festival is committed to giving back to the community it serves. Our Literacy Fund is now up and running, and financially supports literacy and reading projects across the Mornington Peninsula. The Festival is a four-day beacon that shines bright, attracts supporters and donors from all places, and provides new and exciting opportunities for people to connect with books, reading, words, education and ideas.



The Sorrento Writers Festival Team

Committee of Management

President: Peter Inge OAM

Festival Director: Corrie Perkin

Treasurer: Narelle Cormack

Rose Donohue

Nicholas Martin

Mandy Rethus

Simon Traynor

Sub-Committees

Communications: Rose Donohue, Olivia Fleetwood, Jacqui McKendrick, Corrie Perkin, Simon Traynor

Finance: Narelle Cormack (Chair), Peter Inge, Nicholas Martin, Corrie Perkin

Fundraising: Peter Inge (Chair), Francesca Carter, Olivia Fleetwood, Nicholas Martin, Corrie Perkin

Operations: Mandy Rethus (Chair), Olivia Fleetwood, Abbie Gatherum, Corrie Perkin, Isabel Pinkster

Program: Corrie Perkin (Chair), Francesca Carter, Rose Donohue, Olivia Fleetwood, Isabel Pinkster, Mandy Rethus, Simon Traynor

Operations Team

Festival Founder, Director & CEO: Corrie Perkin

Operations Manager: Isabel Pinkster

Marketing & Engagement Manager: Olivia Fleetwood

Philanthropy Manager: Francesca Carter

Schools Program Manager: Olivia Fleetwood

Volunteers Coordinator: Abbie Gatherum

Customer Relations Coordinator: Esme Harrington

IT, data, website & box office: I-Nex

Bookkeeper: Happy Books Sorrento

Publicity: Zilla & Brook

Graphic design: Sonnet Studios, Melissa Fullerton

Printed program: Melissa Fullerton, Janelle Ward, Pia Di Mattina

Legal advice: Peter Inge, Richard Janko

Program printed by: FolioFox

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Julie Ligeti
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Karin McNab
Marilyn Maher
Terry Murphy KC and Margaret Lodge
Ralph and Ruth Renard
Susan Renouf
Jack and Sandy Rush
Helen Sykes
The Swann Family
Will Wilson
Anonymous (3)

To the many Festival Friends who have contributed up to $1,000 over the past 12 months, thank you for your belief in what we do.

We are also incredibly grateful to our 2025 speakers and writers, particularly those who donated their speaker fees back to the Festival.

These gifts, large and small, make all the difference. We are profoundly grateful for your support.

Our Volunteers / 2026 Creative Writing Prize

Like many community organisations around the country, the success of the Sorrento Writers Festival depends on its volunteer supporters. This year, we have more than 150 blue T-shirt volunteers and we thank them for their extraordinary efforts.

Led by Abbie Gatherum, Head of Volunteers, and Festival Operations Manager, Isabel Pinkster, our vast team of helpers will be working hard across the four days to ensure our visitors have a happy, safe and well-organised time.

The task list required to execute 160-plus events is vast. Selling tickets and running the box office, giving directions, distributing marketing material, sweeping and tidying venues, driving speakers to their sessions, helping to bump in and out of the hub bookshop, ushering and managing audiences, introducing panel sessions, overseeing the Green Room, erecting banners and marketing paraphernalia – and the jobs continue long after the Festival concludes on Sunday April 26.

Thank you to all our helpers, to Abbie and Isabel, and everyone connected with our extensive volunteer program.







The 2026 Creative Writing Prize and Young Writers' Program

The annual $5000 Sorrento Creative Writing Prize will be announced at the Barry Jones Oration on Thursday April 23. Each year, Dr Helen Sykes, of Future Leaders, provides $5000 for the winner. Once again, Dr Sykes will announce the winner and present the award after the oration, which this year will be delivered by Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty.

The Sorrento Creative Writing Prize is open to Australian citizens and residents aged 18 and over, who have not had their work published by a commercial publisher. Entries must be between 2500 and 3000 words and will be judged by an independent committee.

Entry to the prize is free with a limit of one entry per person. Learn more at *writing.org.au*

Future Leaders

Hidden off the Main Street, opposite the Information Centre, you will find @HONEYANDSOLCAFE

3 George Street SORRENTO 3943 Visit our sister cafe: Shop 8 / 2185 Point Nepean Road RYE 3941







HONEY & SOL
Café

At Honey & Sol, we've always believed that the best things in life take time. Whether it's the slow rise of an award-winning sourdough or the decades of history held in the patina of a vintage sideboard, there is a beauty in things that are made to last. It's a philosophy we've lived by for three and a half years in Rye, and it's the heartbeat of our new, larger home in Sorrento.

Our expansion wasn't just about more square footage; it was about family. As we prepared to grow our own family, we wanted to build a business that grew with us, a true family run space where our son has his own corner in the back, and our customers feel like they're walking into our living room. We've created a layout that lets you drift. You can pop in for a quick morning coffee, or wander deeper into our collection of vintage treasures, antiques, modern gifts and homewares. It's a place where you can lose yourself in a rare find.

Whether you're tucking into a quiet corner of our courtyard to write, or sharing a conversation with us at the counter, Honey & Sol is about winding down.

We can't wait to welcome you.

FINDING STILLNESS IN SORRENTO



Thank You

Sorrento Writers Festival is supported by a remarkable community of individuals and organisations who believe in our mission to bring writers and readers together.

From the southern Mornington Peninsula region of Sorrento, Portsea, Blairgowrie, Rye and Rosebud, our supporters extend across Red Hill and Main Ridge to Flinders, Shoreham, Merricks and around Western Port Bay. To all the Mornington Peninsula gang, we thank you for embracing what seemed at first a crazy writers festival idea. In just four years, you've made it your own.

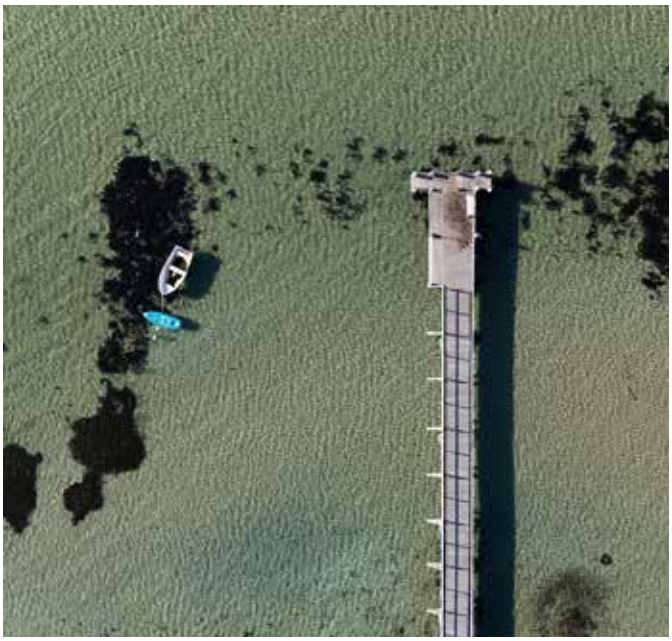
Box office postcode stats show Festival visitors also come from Melbourne, the Bellarine Peninsula, regional Victoria and interstate. We thank everyone who makes the journey by car, ferry, train, bus and boat to be with us across the Anzac weekend.

With joy, we extend our circle to include the nation's writers. Your stories keep our imaginations fuelled and our culture rich. To all of you – and to Australia's publishers, editors and booksellers – we thank you for your contribution to our nation's heritage.

Each year, we present with pride many outstanding leaders, academics, journalists, artists and performers, thinkers, scientists and researchers. Their involvement in our four-day Festival means a great deal to our community. We also welcome and thank more than 30 gifted moderators and interviewers whose professionalism and curiosity bring important conversations to life.

The Hon. Barry Jones is a treasured friend. The Festival's annual Oration bears his name and will always reflect those things Barry holds dear and for which he has advocated all his life: education, inquiry, justice, democracy, the arts, science and the environment. Thank you, Barry, for your immense contribution to our Festival, and to Australian life.

We also thank Dr Helen Sykes, the powerhouse behind Future Leaders which, each year, donates $5000 for the Sorrento Creative Writing Prize. Once again, the winner will be announced after the Barry Jones Oration and this year, Helen will also outline plans for a new young writers' award.



The Sorrento village community deserves all our applause. We are grateful to our local traders, the Sorrento Chamber of Commerce and community groups such as the Sorrento Community Centre, Sorrento-Portsea RSL, Sorrento Bowls Club, the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church parish, Portsea Surf Life Saving Club, Sorrento Rotary and the Sorrento Museum for the warm welcome you offer our visitors and the many ways you make our annual event zing.

Special thanks to the owners and staff of The Continental Sorrento and InterContinental Hotel, Hotel Sorrento and Portsea Village for the outstanding function facilities and beautiful accommodation you make available.

This year, the Festival is delighted to welcome more than 150 volunteers to assist with our four-day production. I say it often – without our volunteers, there would be no Festival. It is as simple and as truthful as that. Our blue T-shirt volunteers represent all that is welcoming and friendly about our village, and their hard work is greatly appreciated.

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Thank You

Sorrento Writers Festival is a not-for-profit organisation which requires funding beyond our ticket revenue to execute its mission, to survive and to thrive. We thank Visit Victoria and the team at the Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism Board, as well as the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, its staff and councillors, for their important financial contributions. Your help secures the Festival's future and its place as Victoria's biggest literary event.

We also acknowledge our generous and community-minded corporate partners and private donors. Your belief in the Festival's capacity to change people's lives is powerful and we thank you for being our great advocates and financial supporters.

Thank you to Festival President Peter Inge OAM for his outstanding leadership, and thank you to our wise and hardworking committee – Narelle Cormack, Rose Donohoe, Nicholas Martin, Mandy Rethus and Simon Traynor – whose company around the boardroom table I cherish. With your sub-committee colleagues, and the Sorrento Writers Festival Literacy Fund Committee, our organisation is in good hands.

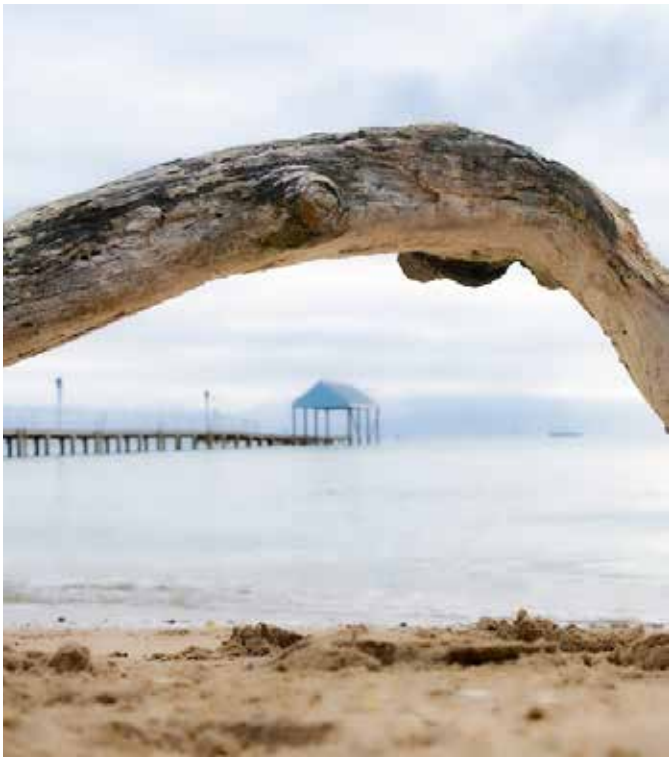
Thank you to the finance team at Happy Books, and thank you to our website and IT partner I-Nex, our Festival photographers, graphic designers, publicists and contractors for all you do in promoting our Festival and presenting our fine community to the wider world.

And finally, I thank the Festival's talented and dedicated staff Isabel Pinkster, Olivia Fleetwood and Francesca Carter. We are ably supported by Abbie Gatherum, Esme Harrington and Martine Bolton plus our volunteer office staff who come on board each April. We are a small but mighty team and each day I am inspired by your enthusiasm, your capacity for hard work and your creativity.

The fourth Sorrento Writers Festival represents the sum total of a remarkable village and I am blessed to be part of it. We live in a beautiful place surrounded by seas and oceans and we share a deep sense of community.

Corrie Perkin
Festival Director
Sorrento Writers Festival







Notes

sorrentowritersfestival.com.au

Share your moments with us #sorrentowritersfestival2026

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We would love to hear about your Sorrento Writers Festival experience, please feel free to send any feedback to *hello@sorrentowritersfestival.com.au*

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Kay & Burton is proud to again support the Sorrento Writers Festival in 2026.

A festival that began with a belief in literacy, community and access to ideas has grown into one of the Peninsula's most meaningful cultural events. We're delighted to be part of its continued story.

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