

MELBOURNE
WRITERS
FESTIVAL
SCHOOLS
5—9 MAY
2025

[**Melbourne
Writers Festival**]

We respectfully acknowledge that Melbourne Writers Festival takes place on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation, in particular the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung people. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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Current as at February 2025

WELCOME TO MWF SCHOOLS

[MWF]

Join us for the 2025 MWF Schools program – a day bursting with creativity, inspiration and imagination!

This year, students will be captivated by an extraordinary lineup of authors, poets and storytellers.

Delve into topics such as the art of storytelling, embracing individuality, the mysteries of numbers and navigating the complexities of growing up. Students will leave with practical tools, fresh perspectives and unlocked inspiration for every curious mind to explore.

Students can meet their favourite authors for book signings and browse a selection of titles available for purchase (card payments only) at the Readings pop-up bookstore.

We've heard the overwhelming feedback from teachers and schools that you want to see even more MWF Schools events! That's why we're excited to announce that in 2025, MWF Schools is growing to include an additional day of primary schools programming. On Friday 9 May, we're presenting two standalone sessions with one of Australia's most loved authors, Jessica Townsend.

We can't wait to welcome your students to MWF Schools for an unforgettable celebration of stories.

Dates and location

MWF Schools will be held at State Library Victoria

Primary Schools program

- Monday 5 May
- Tuesday 6 May
- Friday 9 May

Secondary Schools program

- Wednesday 7 May
- Thursday 8 May

Booking

Book tickets online at mwf.com.au/schools using a bank card or request to pay via invoice. If you have any enquiries or would like to discuss payment options, please email ticketing@mwf.com.au.

Teacher resources

Dedicated teacher resources are available to inform your lessons in the lead-up to MWF Schools. From independent writing tasks to team research assignments, each activity is clearly linked to the school curriculum. Access the teacher resources at mwf.com.au/schools.

More information

Visit our website for frequently asked questions and more information at mwf.com.au/schools or email our ticketing team at ticketing@mwf.com.au.

Disclaimer: Details in this brochure are correct at time of printing. Melbourne Writers Festival reserves the right to add, withdraw, or substitute artists, and to vary the program should the need arise.

5 – 8 MAY SCHEDULE

SESSION 1 10.00–10.45am

SESSION 2 10.45–11.30am

BREAK + BOOK SIGNINGS 11.30am–12.30pm

SESSION 3 12.30–1.15pm

SESSION 4 1.15–2.00pm

BOOK SIGNINGS 2.00–2.30pm

Please note, tickets purchased for Monday 5 – Thursday 8 May grant entrance to the full day (all four sessions) and the book signings.

5 – 8 MAY TICKETS

\$35

per student

\$35

per (additional) teacher*

*Teachers receive one complimentary ticket per 20 student tickets.
All tickets are exempt from GST.

9 MAY SCHEDULE

[MWF]

SESSION 1 10.00–11.00am

BOOK SIGNINGS 11.00–11.30am

SESSION 2 12.30–1.30pm

BOOK SIGNINGS 1.30–2.00pm

Please note, tickets purchased for Friday 9 May grant entrance to **one** session and book signing with Jessica Townsend. Select the morning or afternoon session when making your booking.

9 MAY TICKETS

\$20

per student

\$20

per (additional) teacher*

*Teachers receive one complimentary ticket per 20 student tickets.
All tickets are exempt from GST.



Nat Amoores: The Secrets of Shower Land

Could your shower be home to more than just a lumpy bar of soap and the stinging shampoo that ALWAYS gets in your eyes? What if your shower were a portal to another world?

There might be dragons... there might be a giant yeti on a mountain-top... there might be a pirate ship in the middle of the ocean!

The hilarious Nat Amoores loves to imagine the secrets hidden in ordinary places. In this highly interactive presentation, she'll help students create their own imaginary world – no matter how silly, spooky or surprising!

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, geography

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, literacy



Reece Carter: Being Haunted by a Ghost Changed My Life!

It was late at night when Reece Carter was visited by a ghost – *or was he?* Step into Reece's world as he recounts the bone-chilling experience that inspired the character of Corpse from his bestselling *Elston-Fright Tales* series.

In this engaging session, Reece shares the seven questions every writer should ask when developing a character. He'll show students how to draw from their own real-life experiences – plus a hefty dose of imagination – to create great heroes and villains of their own.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, literacy



Jess Sanders: Embrace Your Uniqueness

Your body is not too small, or too big. It is not too short, or too tall. Your body is amazing. Just as it is.

Jess Sanders writes stories for her younger self: heartfelt reminders of the power of vulnerability, listening to your body and embracing your uniqueness.

Join Jess as she shares the lessons she has learnt from writing nine books – from getting into creative flow and finding focus, to working with an illustrator to truly express her vision. With practical, inspirational tips, Jess empowers students to craft their own one-of-a-kind stories that celebrate their individuality.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, health and physical education, visual arts

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, ethical, personal and social



Nabeel Khan: Magic Counting

How can numbers help us understand music, history, nature and outer space?

Artist and author of *Magic Counting*, Nabeel Khan, believes we all have an innate connection to numbers – they hold pure, unchanging principles and are the basis of everything, from music to astronomy. In this session, Nabeel demonstrates how to draw connections between numbers, patterns, shapes and everything else around us, using his intuition, playfulness and curiosity. In this highly visual session, students are empowered to see their world in a new light, changing their perspective on numbers for life.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, mathematics, science, visual arts

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, ethical, numeracy



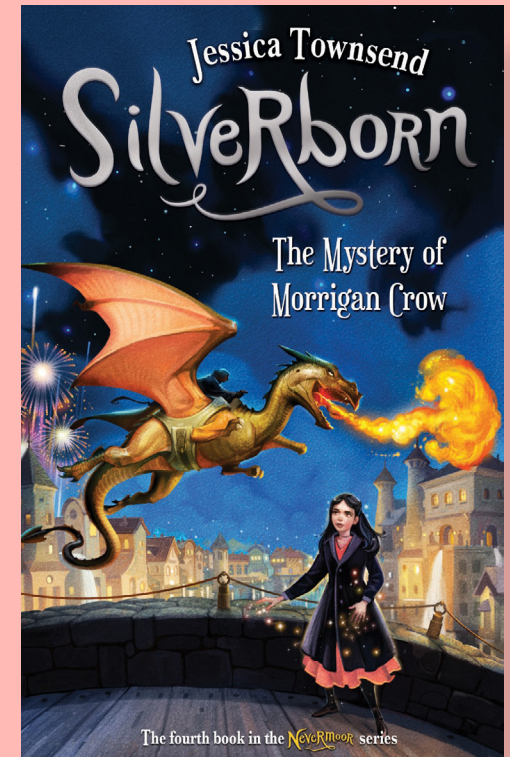
Jessica Townsend: Silverborn

Experience one of Australia's most loved authors, Jessica Townsend, as she delves into the highly anticipated fourth book in the *New York Times*-bestselling *Nevermoor* series: *Silverborn*.

At two very special Melbourne-exclusive Schools events, Jessica will take students on a journey through the Wondrous world of *Nevermoor*, where Morrigan Crow faces thrilling new adventures, uncovers hidden corners of her magical world and unravels mysteries of her past.

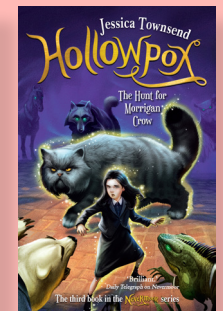
Drawing on Morrigan's fantastical new adventures, Jessica will share behind-the-scenes details about her writing process and the storytelling magic that brings her stories to life.

Jessica Townsend will be in conversation with Amelia Mellor.



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English
Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, literacy





Robyn Dennison: Blind Spot

Relationships, sexuality and consent are tough to navigate in real life. How do fiction writers do justice to their complexity on the page?

YA author Robyn Dennison explores these themes with warmth and empathy in her debut novel *Blind Spot*, which was named a 2024 CBCA Notable Book for Older Readers and shortlisted for the Readings Young Adult Prize and the Text Prize.

In this honest session, Robyn shares how she approaches writing relationships and queerness, her journey to publication, and tips for writing authentic stories. Students will also have the chance to ask their own questions in an interactive Ask Me Anything session.

Robyn Dennison will be in conversation with Karys McEwen.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, health and physical education, media arts

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, personal and social, ethical, literacy



Solli Raphael: Identity x Poetry

Figuring out your own identity can feel mystifying. Growing up is, at times, a tireless cycle of self-discovery and rediscovery, a contradiction between longing to be understood yet hoping to be left alone.

Award-winning poet, author and advocate Solli Raphael knows the feeling, and he has the antidote – poetry. Solli is the author of four books, including *Limelight* and *Spotlight*. In his new book, *Starlight*, he draws on topics from philosophy to social media, as well as his own experiences of self-discovery and belonging. In this interactive session, Solli illuminates the power of poetry to help us better understand our identity.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, drama, health and physical education

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, intercultural, personal and social, literacy



Gary Lonesborough: I'm Not Really Here

It's hard to fit in when you feel like you were born to stand out. 17-year-old Jonah has moved to a country town that feels like a foreign place. It could be a fresh start from his unresolved past, and he finally feels like he's moving closer to something good. But even though he knows what he wants, it doesn't mean he's ready.

Internationally acclaimed Yuin author Gary Lonesborough discusses his third YA novel, *I'm Not Really Here*: an emotionally compelling, honest and warm story about navigating new friendships, grief, body image, queer love, and the big emotions that define coming-of-age.

Gary Lonesborough will be in conversation with Bebe Oliver.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, design and technologies, health and physical education

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, personal and social, ethical, intercultural, literacy

Cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures



Neal Shusterman: All Better Now

Live at MWF Schools, *New York Times*-bestselling author Neal Shusterman (USA) discusses his new YA novel *All Better Now* – a thriller about a world where happiness is contagious, but the risks of catching it may be just as dangerous as the cure.

In this session, Neal delves into the questions about truth, power and capitalism that shape *All Better Now*. He'll also share why he's drawn to writing science fiction stories and dystopian worlds across a career spanning more than fifty award-winning books.

Neal Shusterman will be in conversation with Amie Kaufman.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, civics and citizenship, media arts

Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, ethical, literacy

Cross-curriculum priorities: Sustainability

PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Nat Amooore

Nat Amooore is a Sydney-based author whose debut *Secrets of a Schoolyard Millionaire* was Australia's #1 bestselling debut children's fiction book in 2019. Her books include the award-winning *The Power of Positive Pranking* and CBCA Notables *The Right Way to Rock* and *We Run Tomorrow*. The first three books in a brand new junior fiction series, *Shower Land*, were released in 2024, with Nat's first picture book hitting stores in 2025.

Reece Carter

Reece Carter is the best-selling author of *A Girl Called Corpse* – the first in his *Elston-Fright Tales* series. His love for magic-filled stories began as a child on his family farm in Tammin, Western Australia, and at high school, he started writing his own stories too. Reece currently lives in Sydney and, when not reading or writing, can usually be found talking to his dog, Hagrid, and hoping that one day Hagrid might talk back.

Nabeel Khan

Nabeel is a visual artist and professional photographer with over 14 years of experience. Born with a spiritual and philosophical nature, he was drawn to the universal geometry connecting art across religions and native traditions. This passion inspires his work and teaching, as he continues exploring these timeless principles and sharing his discoveries with the world, as a teacher as well as an artist.

Jess Sanders

Jess Sanders is a Hobart-based social worker and a bestselling, award-winning author whose impactful books can be found in over 30 countries. Jess has worked with young people in a variety of contexts including the education system, youth justice, and family violence services. She feels strongly that positive change starts with education and that unnecessary harm can be prevented through the sharing of stories, knowledge, and skills.

Jessica Townsend

Jessica Townsend lives on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, where her fascinations with secret societies, ancient cities, and Halloween inspired her award-winning debut, *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*. The record-breaking series, Australia's biggest-selling children's debut ever, continues with *Wundersmith*, *Hollowpox*, and now *Silverborn*, which will be published in April. Jessica's work has won multiple accolades, including the ABIA Book of the Year and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Robyn Dennison

Robyn Dennison's debut novel *Blind Spot* was shortlisted for the 2021 Text Prize and the 2024 Readings Prize and named a 2024 CBCA Notable Book for Older Readers. Robyn holds a PhD from Melbourne University, where she explored the history of queer girls in Australian realist young-adult fiction.

Gary Lonesborough

Gary Lonesborough is a Yuin man who grew up on the far South Coast of NSW as part of a large and proud Aboriginal family. His debut YA novel, *The Boy from the Mish*, won multiple awards and was shortlisted for many more. His second novel, *We Didn't Think It Through*, was published in 2023. It won the Marion ACT Book of the Year, was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and the Readings Young Adult Prize and was a CBCA Notable Book.

Solli Raphael

Solli Raphael is an award-winning author, poet, and advocate, and acclaimed keynote speaker. Passionate about sparking change, he mentors young people and leads thought-provoking conversations on critical issues. His books engage children and teens educationally. He is the author of *Limelight*, *Spotlight*, and his new book, *Starlight*, was published in February. Solli has spoken at schools, universities, and events worldwide, reaching a global audience of two billion through media appearances and publications.

Neal Shusterman

Neal Shusterman is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of more than thirty award-winning books for children, teens and adults. These include the acclaimed *Arc of a Scythe* series (*Scythe*, *Thunderhead* and *The Toll*), *Dry* and *Roxy*, as well as the *Unwind* dystology and *Challenger Deep*, which won a National Book Award. He also writes screenplays for film and television. Neal lives in Florida and has four children, all of whom are talented writers and artists themselves. His latest YA novel, *All Better Now*, was published in February.

Karys McEwen

Karys McEwen is a school librarian, bookseller, vice president of the Victorian branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia, and education advisor for the MWF Schools. She is passionate about the role libraries play in the wellbeing of young people, and has written two middle grade novels: *All the Little Tricky Things* (2022) and *The Paperbark Tree Committee* (2025).