

Melbourne Writers Festival

MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR 2021

Embargoed until 11.00am 17 July 2020

Melbourne Writers Festival is delighted to announce respected literary programmer Michaela McGuire as the festival's new Artistic Director. McGuire is an innovative and exciting programmer with a proven track record delivering diverse, rousing and relevant conversations for book-loving audiences.

Previously Artistic Director of Sydney Writers Festival, McGuire delivered four years of world-class literary programming. Prior to that role, she was Director and Co-CEO of Melbourne's Emerging Writers' Festival and co-founded the popular event series Women of Letters.

MWF Board Chair John J Myers said that Australia's only UNESCO City of Literature is proud to be welcoming McGuire back home to Melbourne.

"Michaela was selected from an exceptional field. We're tremendously excited to see the bold artistic programming Michaela dreams up for 2021 and beyond. Melbourne is in for a real treat," said Myers.

"Over the years, each Artistic Director has brought their own unique vision and voice to Melbourne Writers Festival. Michaela's tenure marks the next inspiring phase in our programming. I look forward to seeing her - along with the rest of our brilliant artistic team - inspire, challenge, and delight audiences for many years to come."

The Melbourne Writers Festival was founded in 1986 and in the 21st century has emerged as a major international event, providing a forum for political and cultural discussion. The event attracts audiences in excess of 45,000 annually, and in 2019 was host to more than 440 authors from Australia and the world. McGuire is ambitious to build on this success.

"I've spent three-and-a-half years in an absolute dream role at Sydney Writers Festival, where I've been able to program consistently challenging, provocative and timely conversations with the most exciting new and established writers in the world," McGuire said.

"Now feels like the right time for me to bring all of this experience and ambition, as well as my great affection for literary programming, home to Melbourne."

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With a hard-won reputation for prescient programming and delivering exceptional author care, McGuire is perfectly placed to lead MWF into its next chapter.

Melbourne Writers Festival 2020 will be delivered online, ahead of McGuire's arrival as Artistic Director. The digital festival will run from 7 – 16 August 2020, with over fifty exciting events featuring authors including Australian literary giant Kate Grenville, author of *Hood Feminism* Mikki Kendall and *Wind of Change* podcaster Patrick Radden Keefe.

MWF Digital will introduce a 'Pay What You Can' ticketing model for 2020 to ensure audience members experiencing financial hardship are not prevented from accessing writers' stories and ideas. This model also allows audiences to buy a ticket where they can afford to do so and support the festival's important work into the future.

The full program for MWF Digital 2020 will be announced at 5pm, Wednesday 22 July, when tickets will also go on sale.

Michaela McGuire will join Melbourne Writers Festival as Artistic Director after the 2020 digital program is complete.

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