

Melbourne Writers Festival

Thursday 2 July 2020

LITERARY GIANT KATE GRENVILLE, AUTHOR OF 'HOOD FEMINISM' MIKKI KENDALL AND 'WIND OF CHANGE' PODCASTER PATRICK RADDEN KEEFE JOIN MWF

Melbourne Writers Festival today unveiled its first local and international guests, announcing highlights of the program that will run online from 7-16 August.

Beloved Australian author and Orange Prize-winner **Kate Grenville**, whose 2005 novel *The Secret River* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, will be a keynote speaker at MWF Digital. Grenville has just launched her first novel in nearly a decade, *A Room Made of Leaves*.

Tapping into one of the world's most important conversations, MWF Digital will also feature bestselling US author **Mikki Kendall**. Kendall's latest book *Hood Feminism*, a series of essays on women left behind by mainstream feminism, is recommended reading for anyone interested in the Black Lives Matter movement, and the fight for gender, social and racial equality. Her clear-eyed call out of white feminism, and her demand that mainstream feminists put access to food, medical care and housing at the heart of the movement, is compelling as COVID-19 sweeps the United States.

Award-winning journalist and staff writer at the *New Yorker* **Patrick Radden Keefe** will be a familiar voice to many through his hit podcast, which investigates whether the CIA wrote the power ballad *Wind of Change* to influence global politics. Radden Keefe is also the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Say Nothing*, a true story of murder and memory in Northern Ireland and winner of the 2019 Orwell Prize for Political Writing.

MWF also announced it would introduce a Pay What You Can ticketing model for 2020 to remove barriers to access for anyone experiencing financial hardship, while also allowing supporters to buy a ticket if they can afford to do so. Traditionally, a quarter of Melbourne Writers Festival's program is free each year.

The festival's head of programming, Associate Director Gene Smith, was delighted to share the first details of a very different festival.

"We are grateful to the writers, publishers and partners that have made it possible for MWF to adapt to a drastically changed environment. We look forward to inviting audiences from Melbourne and the world to engage with the cultural life of the city through online sessions, conversations and new writing," said Smith.

The full MWF Digital program will be launched on 22 July. Visit mwf.com.au to join the mailing list.

Media contact: Michelle Edmunds m.edmunds@cprcomm.com.au | 0413 120 342
Lysandra Godley l.godley@cprcomm.com.au | 0414 803 181

