MELBOURNE WRITERS FESTIVAL

I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A WHILE

We respectfully acknowledge that Melbourne Writers Festival takes place on the traditional lands of the peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We are honoured to contribute to the more than 65,000 years of storytelling that has taken place on the lands and waterways of this Country, of which sovereignty was never ceded.

FESTIVAL INFORMATION

HOW TO BOOK

Online: mwf.com.au By phone: (03) 9999 1199

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

To speak to our Ticketing team, TTY users can phone 133 677 and ask for (03) 9999 1199. Speak and Listen users can phone 1300 555 727 and ask for (03) 9999 1199.

COMMUNITY TICKETS FOR FIRST NATIONS **PEOPLES**

MWF has an allocation of tickets available for free for First Nations peoples. To access these community tickets, email ticketing@mwf.com.au or call (03) 9999 1199.

COVID AND YOUR TICKETS

If you have symptoms of COVID, we encourage you to stay at home. So that you can book Festival tickets with confidence, our ticketing and refund policy has additional flexibility. For more information, please visit mwf.com.au/COVID-safety

ACCESS & INCLUSION

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

Access symbols in guide:

- (3) Accessible venue
- Auslan interpretation
- (?) Hearing loop

Please contact our Ticketing team at ticketing@mwf.com.au or on (03) 9999 1199 to:

- book accessible seats
- book a seat with the best eyeline of an Auslan
- access the hearing loop at The Capitol and Melbourne Town Hall
- book a complimentary ticket as a Companion
- discuss any other access enquiries.

VENUES

MWF takes place in venues across Melbourne. Visit mwf.com.au/venues for more information on each, including accessible entrances and parking.

TO THE BOOKSHOP!

Visit Readings, the MWF Official Bookseller, for all your favourite Festival reads. Located at State Library Victoria and with pop-ups at Festival venues in the city. Check out your booklist at readings.com.au

TO THE LIBRARY!

MWF is proud to partner with State Library Victoria, where our literary community gathers each year for curious, thrilling and fascinating conversations. Become a member of the Library and discover a world of benefits at slv.vic.gov.au/culture-lovers

YOUR DISCOUNT **AWAITS**

Buy your MWF tickets before 11.59pm, Thursday 6 April to receive a 20% early-bird discount.*

*Some exclusions apply. Full prices are listed in the printed guide. Visit our website to see discounted prices applied.

SCAN TO BOOK



BE PART OF THE STORY





#MWF23 @MelbWritersFest

For the latest Festival news, offers and recommendations, subscribe to our eNewsletter at mwf.com.au

Melbourne Writers Festival makes every effort to ensure that all details are correct at time of printing. Any major unforeseen program changes will be listed on our website and ticketholders will be notified via email.

WELCOME TO THE FESTIVAL

MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR MICHAELA MCGUIRE



Throughout the last few discomfiting years, many of us have felt far away from who we once were. Our circumstances, behaviours, even our personalities, have changed, possibly forever. For a while, physical travel was impossible, and we relied solely on reading (and, ok, on streaming services) as a way of being transported to other worlds, perspectives and states of mind. Reading is inherently connected with daydreaming and imagination. We 'get lost' in books, the rest of the world falling away until someone interrupts to ask 'where we went'.

"Our circumstances, behaviours, even our personalities, have changed, possibly forever."

This year's theme, I've Been Away for a While, is an invitation to find our way back to each other, to ourselves, and to the very world we all inhabit. But as who we are now. Perhaps changed, perhaps the same, perhaps still unknowable and unsure.

We welcome you to return to Melbourne Writers Festival, to beloved books and writers, to what's familiar and what's new.

This year, we're welcoming pop culture icons from food, music and film, Booker Prize winners and shortlistees, local writers of sparkling debut and sophisticated sophomore novels, leading public intellectuals, beloved broadcasters and Twitter's most erudite and witty language guru.

It's been a while since Melbourne Writers Festival has staged events at Melbourne Town Hall, and this year we're delighted to present a phenomenal line-up of artists across two nights in this iconic venue. An all-star line-up of local and international writers reflect on the festival theme for our Opening Night: Benjamin Dreyer, Bill Hayes, Sarah Krasnostein and Jazz Money. Alison Roman has been a mainstay of Melbourne home kitchens since the publications of Dining In and Nothing Fancy, and this May, we're welcoming her to Australia for the first time to celebrate the launch of Sweet Enough. Treasured singer-songwriter Paul Kelly celebrates other people's words with Alice Keath. Winner of the 2022 Booker Prize Shehan Karunatilaka discusses his dazzling magic-realist novel The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida that casts light on politics, history, religion and mythology.

Joining us on the weekend of King Charles' coronation, **Stan Grant** discusses his timely new book *The Queen is Dead* and considers how, in the wake of her passing, we might more fully reckon with our colonial past and redefine our future.

Professor Marcia Langton and Professor Aaron Corn, co-authors of Law: The Way of the Ancestors, discuss how Indigenous law, cultivated over millennia, is inspiring new paths forward amidst global crises.

Claire Keegan has earned a reputation as one of Ireland's most canonical writers for a body of short fiction that has drawn comparison to the likes of Alice Munro and Anton Chekhov. She joins us in person to discuss her most recent novella, *Small Things Like These*, which was shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize.

The authors of two of the buzziest novels of the year, Emma Straub (*This Time Tomorrow*) and Gabrielle Zevin (*Tomorrow*, and *Tomorrow*) discuss their wildly popular new books.

This year's program has been enlivened by the work of acclaimed writers and First Nations Curators Tony Birch and Ellen van Neerven. Birch invites Paul Daley and Fiona McFarlane to consider frontier fictions, and interviews van Neerven about Personal Score, their groundbreaking examination of sport from a First Nations and queer perspective. van Neerven has curated what promises to be a comic and competitive MWF Big Debate: Sports Versus Literature. They also invite Charmaine Papertalk Green, Dianne Jones, Jeanine Leane and Yhonnie Scarce to discuss how the interplay of art and writing by First Nations creatives can reshape how we see ourselves as a nation, and ask Tony Birch, Bill Hayes and Chelsea Watego to reflect on the relationship between the body, mind and

Beloved actor **Sam Neill** takes to the stage to discuss his unexpected and wicked memoir *Did I Ever Tell You This?*, which was written in a creative burst of just a few months last year.

In 2019, **Bernardine Evaristo** won the Booker Prize for her novel *Girl, Woman, Other*, becoming the first Black woman to do so and achieving what she jokes was an 'overnight success' some four decades in the making. In the final event of the Festival, she discusses her new memoir *Manifesto*: On Never Giving Up.

We hope you'll join us for this singular moment in Melbourne; where readers and writers gather after being away for a while. What has changed? What remains the same? And while we were away, what stories did we carry with us?

We can't wait to welcome you in May.

UNFORGETTABLE NIGHTS

Globally renowned. Wildly talented. Locally beloved. If you're passionate about literature and culture, consider these your essential events of the Festival (perfectly timed for you to enjoy a tipple and bite to eat in between).

And thanks to the Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund, these events will also be live-streamed to the State Library Victoria forecourt, so you can listen for free!

THURSDAY 4 MAY



Opening Night: I've Been Away for a While

6-7.15pm | Melbourne Town Hall

Start your Festival with four of the most celebrated writers in the world. Benjamin Dreyer, Bill Hayes, Sarah Krasnostein and Jazz Money come together to share their musings on this year's festival theme.

The Age Book of the Year will also be announced.

\$40 general / \$35 conc. 3 (3)



FRIDAY 5 MAY

Sri Lankan author Shehan Karunatilaka discusses his 2022 Booker Prize-winning novel, *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*, a magic-realist satire set during his homeland's long civil war, with ABC RN's Kate Evans.

Proudly supported by ARA Group In partnership with ABC RN

\$40 general / \$35 conc. (3) (9)



Paul Kelly: Other People's Words 8.30-9.30pm | Melbourne Town Hall

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Paul Kelly sings and recites poems that have brought him joy and inspiration throughout his life in this exclusive show for Melbourne Writers Festival. *Proudly supported by ARA Group*

\$60 premium / \$45 general / \$40 conc.

(3) (9)



Alison Roman: The Roman Empire 8.30-9.30pm | Melbourne Town Hall

In her first ever visit to Australia, New York Times—bestselling author and millennial food icon Alison Roman sits down with Benjamin Law to discuss her career, internet-breaking recipes and latest cookbook, Sweet Enough.

\$60 premium / \$45 general / \$40 conc.

(3) (69 (7)

These events are supported through the Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund – a \$200 million partnership of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.





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Like There's No Tomorrow

Sat 6 May, 10.30-11.30am | The Capitol

Two of the year's most talked about novelists, Emma Straub (This Time Tomorrow) and Gabrielle Zevin (Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow), discuss their wildly popular new books, with Brodie Lancaster.

Proudly supported by United States Consulate Melbourne

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3

Richard Fidler: The Book of Roads and Kingdoms Sat 6 May, 10.30-11.30am

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Richard Fidler discusses his latest masterwork of historical nonfiction, The Book of Roads and Kingdoms, which charts Islam's fabled Golden Age, with editor of The Monthly Michael Williams.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

Claire Keegan: Small Things Like These

Sat 6 May, 12-1pm

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

One of Ireland's most canonical writers. Claire Keegan, reflects on her acclaimed works of short fiction, including her Booker Prize-shortlisted novella Small Things Like These, on



Stan Grant: The Queen is Dead

Sat 6 May, 12-1pm | The Capitol

Stan Grant introduces his timely new book, The Queen is Dead, reflecting on the path to becoming a republic and the necessity of a just settlement with First Nations peoples, in conversation with Anne-Pattel Gray.

Proudly supported by Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3



Queering the Canon Sat 6 May, 4.30-5.30pm The Capitol

Queer writers Benjamin Dreyer, Bill Hayes, Kris Kneen, Kirli Saunders and Amy Thunig share the seminal queer texts that shaped them, with host Maeve Marsden (Queerstories). \$35 full / \$30 conc. (3) (4)



Sam Neill: Did I Ever Tell You This?

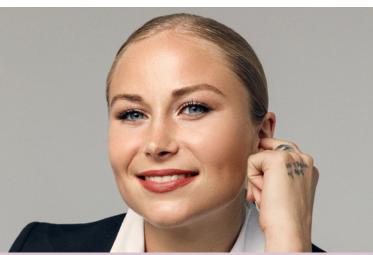
Sat 6 May, 1.30-2.30pm | The Capitol

Celebrated actor Sam Neill shares the unexpected turns of fortune in his storied life, as told in his recent memoir, Did I Ever Tell You This?, with comedy legend Jane Kennedy.

Proudly supported by ARA Group

This event is supported through the Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund - a \$200 million partnership of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. (3) (4)



My Name is Grace Tame

Sat 6 May, 3-4pm | The Capitol

Former Australian of the Year Grace Tame talks about The Ninth Life of a Diamond Miner, her deeply felt and inspiring memoir that tells her story on her own terms, in conversation with Abigail Ulman.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. (3)



Sun 7 May, 12-1pm

The Capitol

What purpose and pleasure does travel bring to our lives? Avid writers and wanderers Richard Fidler, Kris Kneen and Vicky Shukuroglou talk all things travel.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3

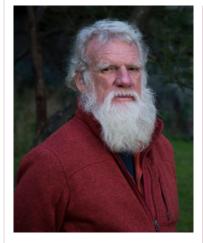


Law: The Way of the Ancestors

Sun 7 May, 4.30-5.30pm The Capitol

Professor Marcia Langton and Professor Aaron Corn, co-authors of Law: The Way of the Ancestors. discuss how Indigenous law, cultivated over millennia, is inspiring new paths through global crises, with Dr Eddie Cubillo.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3



Plants: Past, Present and Future

Sun 7 May, 1.30-2.30pm The Capitol

Zena Cumpston, Michael-Shawn Fletcher, Lesley Head and Bruce Pascoe illuminate the ingenuity of First Nations practices with plants and how this knowledge could hold the key to our world's future, with Sally Warhaft.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3



Bernardine Evaristo: On Never Giving Up

Sun 7 May, 6.30-7.30pm | The Capitol

Presented in partnership with the Wheeler Centre, Booker Prize-winning author of Girl, Woman, Other, Bernardine Evaristo talks about her new memoir, Manifesto, an inspiring guide for how to be unstoppable in your craft, work and life, with broadcaster and journalist Jan Fran.

Proudly supported by ARA Group, with additional support from the

This event is supported through the Melbourne City Revitalisation Fund – a \$200 million partnership of the Victorian Government and the City of Melbourne.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. 3

FIRST NATIONS CURATORS

Be enthralled by some of the most exciting writers and artists working today in these events brought together by First Nations Curators Tony Birch and Ellen van Neerven. Be transported to the frontiers of fiction and plunged into the depths of this colony's past with events that probe and play with art, myth, sport and more.

A seminal voice in Australian letters, celebrated author **Tony Birch** (*Dark as Last Night*, *The White Girl*) casts fresh light on Australia's colonial past to tell stories that upend the usual depictions in history books.

Award-winning writer of Mununjali (Yugambeh language group) and Dutch heritage, **Ellen van Neerven** unravels the relationships between art and stories, the pavement and the page, and puts two of this country's great loves to the test: sport and literature.



Art and Stories Sat 6 May, 10.30-11.30am Village Roadshow Theatrette, State Library Victoria

Charmaine Papertalk Green, Dianne Jones and Yhonnie Scarce discuss the rich cultural relationship between First Nations storytelling and visual art, with Jeanine Leane.

In partnership with Australian Poetry via the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)



Ellen van Neerven: Personal Score

Sat 6 May, 1.30-2.30pm Village Roadshow Theatrette, State Library Victoria

Prize-winning writer Ellen van Neerven sheds light on *Personal Score*, their groundbreaking look at sport from a First Nations and queer perspective, with Tony Birch.

Proudly supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)



The MWF Big Debate: Sport Versus Literature Sat 6 May, 6.30-7.30pm

The Capitol

Do books matter more than sport?
Sporting fanatics Osman Faruqi,
George Megalogenis and Chelsea
Watego battle it out with literature
lovers John Harvey, Shelley Ware and
Toni Jordan in the MWF Big Debate.
With adjudicator Nayuka Gorrie and
host Tarneen Onus Browne.

\$35 full / \$30 conc. (3)



Running Writing
Sun 7 May, 10.30-11.30am

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Ailsa Piper speaks with Tony Birch, Bill Hayes and Chelsea Watego about the relationship between the body, mind and creativity, and how their own workout routines help them work out words.

Proudly supported by the Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 3



Frontier Fictions
Sun 7 May, 1.30-2.30pm

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Award-winning journalist Paul Daley (Jesustown) and acclaimed author Fiona McFarlane (The Sun Walks Down) talk about penning novels that explore the myths and realities of our colonial past, with Tony Birch.

Proudly supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

Peter Steele Conversation: Poetry in Motion Sat 6 May, 12-1pm

Village Roadshow Theatrette, State Library Victoria Poets Kirli Saunders, Pi.O. and Sarah Holland-Batt speak with Maxine Beneba Clarke about their celebrated

the 2023 Peter Steele Memorial event.

Proudly supported by the Faculty of

Arts, The University of Melbourne

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

work and the state of poetry today for

Pip Williams: The Bookbinder of Jericho

Sat 6 May, 1.30-2.30pm Conversation Quarter,

State Library Victoria
Australian author Pip Williams
introduces her richly rendered new

ntroduces her richly rendered new novel *The Bookbinder of Jericho*, the follow-up to the internationally bestselling *The Dictionary of Lost Words*, with Ailsa Piper.

Proudly supported by ARA Group \$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

The New Politics Sat 6 May, 3-4pm Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Leading pundits and *Quarterly Essay* authors Katharine Murphy, George Megalogenis and Margaret Simons review the year in Australian politics and what possibilities lie ahead, with *The Monthly* editor Michael Williams. *In partnership with Quarterly Essay* \$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

The Stella Prize: Meet the Winner

Sat 6 May, 3-4pm

Village Roadshow Theatrette, State Library Victoria

Be among the first to hear from the winner of the 2023 Stella Prize as they sit down with the award's Chair of Judges, Alice Pung, to discuss their work.

In partnership with The Stella Prize \$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

The John Button Oration: The Great American Lie

Sat 6 May, 4.30–5.30pm Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

American literature and culture expert Sarah Churchwell (*The Wrath* to Come: Gone with the Wind and the Lies America Tells) delivers this year's John Button Oration, exploring the

Proudly supported by the John Button Fund, Melbourne School of Government and the Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne

histories of American mythmaking.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)



Labours of Love
Sun 7 May, 10.30–11.30am
Village Roadshow Theatrette,
State Library Victoria

Tracey Lien (*All That's Left Unsaid*) and Nina Wan (*The Albatross*) discuss their gripping debut novels about family, love, duty and identity, with ABC RN's Sarah L'Estrange.

In partnership with ABC RN

Proudly supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3) (7)



The Line of Descent Sun 7 May, 12-1pm Conversation Quarter,

Conversation Quarter State Library Victoria

Prize-winning authors Kate Legge (Infidelity & Other Affairs) and Heather Rose (Nothing Bad Ever Happens Here) discuss their captivating new works of memoir that touch on family, betrayal and the search for meaning, with Sophie Black.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (3)

Brigitta Olubas on Shirley Hazzard Sun 7 May, 12-1pm

Village Roadshow Theatrette, State Library Victoria

Author of Shirley Hazzard: A Writing Life Professor Brigitta Olubas illuminates the remarkable story of the Australian novelist widely regarded as one of the great writers in the English language, with Beejay Silcox.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 3 🔊

Living Memory
Sun 7 May, 1.30–2.30pm
Village Roadshow Theatrette,
State Library Victoria

André Dao (*Anam*), Nam Le (*The Boat*) and Maria Tumarkin (*Axiomatic* and *Traumascapes*) come together for an illuminating conversation about the craft of writing place, the common themes of their work and the stories

Proudly supported by the Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 🅳 🏈



Heather Mitchell: Everything and Nothing Sun 7 May, 3-4pm

Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Esteemed Australian stage and screen actor Heather Mitchell shares insight into *Everything and Nothing*, her intimately candid memoir that explores the light and shade within love, family and the arts, with Fran Kelly.

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 🕉

On Second Thought
Sun 7 May, 3-4pm
Village Roadshow Theatrette,
State Library Victoria

Acclaimed authors Diana Reid (Seeing Other People) and Ronnie Scott (Shirley) discuss their second novels that confirm their place among Australia's most exciting literary talents, with Elizabeth McCarthy.

Proudly supported by the Copyright Agency's Cultural Fund

\$25 full / \$20 conc. (*)

Writers on Writers: Readers of Australian Literature

The 2023 Boisbouvier Conversation

Sun 7 May, 4.30–5.30pm Conversation Quarter, State Library Victoria

Boisbouvier Chair in Australian Literature Tony Birch, Black Inc publisher Chris Feik, award-winning author Nam Le (*On David Malouf*) and ABC RN's Kate Evans discuss the Writers on Writers series and illuminating literary treasures from Australia's past.

Proudly supported by the Faculty of Arts, The University of Melbourne

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 3

Conversations with Richard Fidler

Sun 7 May, 4.30-5.30pm Village Roadshow Theatrette,

State Library Victoria

Richard Fidler speaks with Benjamin Dreyer, Penguin Random House US copy chief, language guru and bestselling author of *Dreyer's English*, for a special live recording of ABC RN's *Conversations*.

In partnership with ABC RN

\$25 full / \$20 conc. 🚳 🏈

IN THE SUBURBS



Pip Williams: The Bookbinder of Jericho

Fri 5 May, 6.30-7.30pm | Geelong Library & Heritage Centre

Australian author Pip Williams introduces her richly rendered new novel The Bookbinder of Jericho, the follow-up to the internationally bestselling The Dictionary of Lost Words, speaking with Rhett Davis.

In partnership with Geelong Regional Libraries

\$20 full / \$15 conc. (to secure your seat, please visit mwf.com.au)



Richard Fidler: The Book of Roads and Kingdoms

Fri 5 May, 6.30-7.30pm | Vision Australia Library

Richard Fidler discusses his latest masterwork of historical nonfiction, The Book of Roads and Kingdoms, which charts Islam's fabled Golden Age, on stage with Astrid Edwards. In partnership with Vision Australia Library

Free (to secure your seat, please visit visionaustralia.org/library)



Jane Harper: Exiles

Sat 6 May, 6.30-7.30pm | Bunjil Place Theatre

Globally bestselling Australian crime writer Jane Harper sheds light on Exiles, the beautifully observed final instalment of her Aaron Falk series, with ABC RN's Sarah L'Estrange.

In partnership with Bunjil Place and Casey Cardinia Libraries \$25 full / \$20 conc. (to secure your seat, please visit bunjilplace.com.au)



Little Lunch Workshop

Sun 7 May, 10.30-11.30am

Children's Quarter, State Library Victoria

Writer Danny Katz and illustrator Mitch Vane take young readers behind the scenes of their popular 'Little Lunch' series with readings, drawings and lots of laughs.

Rec. 5+ (3) (7)

Featured illustrations are by Mitch Vane and part of the 'Little Lunch' series

FAMILIES



Bring the whole family along for a fun-packed time at the Pauline Gandel Children's Quarter, State Library Victoria.

> Both events are free, no bookings required. Entry is subject to capacity.



Let's Talk Pictures!

Sun 7 May, 12-1pm Children's Quarter, State Library Victoria

It's time to get otter-ly ridiculous! Bestselling author and illustrator Renée Treml teaches tiny bookworms how to tell a simple story using illustrations - and make a fun character of their very own!

Rec. 5+ (3) (3)

WORKSHOPS

From memoir to magic, autofiction to moral questions, let these award-winning writers help you transform your idea into a compelling creative work and become the writer you wish to be. The Wheeler Centre | \$140 full / \$120 conc. 3

MWF Workshops are presented in partnership with Writers Victoria



Lev Grossman: The Craft of Writing Magic

Fri 5 May, 10am-12.30pm | Workshop Space

Bestselling author of the acclaimed Magicians trilogy Lev Grossman teaches you how to write convincingly about magic. Learn how to craft fantastical items, creatures, systems, maps, mythologies and more with confidence.



Diana Reid: Writing Morality

Sat 6 May, 2.30-5pm | Boardroom

Prize-winning, bestselling author Diana Reid (Love & Virtue and Seeing Other People) teaches you how to convincingly write moral dilemmas in your fiction. Leave emboldened to craft engrossing ethical quandaries that will hook your readers.



André Dao: Autofiction Techniques

Sat 6 May, 10am-12.30pm | Boardroom

Acclaimed author André Dao (Anam) explores the challenges and rewards of drawing from your lived experience when writing novels or short stories. Level up your writing with Dao's techniques.



Amy Thunig: Memoir

Sun 7 May, 10am-12.30pm | Workshop Space

Amy Thunig, Gomeroi/Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi author of the remarkable memoir Tell Me Again, shares how to translate your own life tale into a compelling memoir. Leave with a clear understanding of the building blocks of life writing and how to start your own.

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