

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE

Australia's largest gathering of emerging writers returns again to State Library Victoria. A perfect mix of emerging and established speakers, this two-day conference covers craft, industry insights and networking for writers of all genres and forms.

DATE Saturday 23 June and Sunday 24 June

VENUE State Library Victoria Conference Centre 

PRICE Weekend pass \$95 full/\$80 concession

Day pass \$60 full/\$50 concession

EFW AMBASSADORS

Each year, EFW invites five ambassadors to participate in the National Writers' Conference and share their experience, insight and knowledge with the next generation of writers.

This year's ambassadors represent an extraordinary range of talents and expertise. They are **Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Isobelle Carmody, Stuart Grant, Melissa Lucashenko** and **Ellen van Neerven**.

Get up close and personal with this year's ambassadors in our unique Ask Me Anything sessions – they bring the experience, you bring the questions.

The ambassador program is supported by Monash University Faculty of the Arts

FAIL BETTER

DATE Saturday 23 June 5pm

Entry with weekend passes only

As Beckett said, "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter." Writer, editor and EFW alumni Elizabeth Flux shares insight about learning from failure and building resilience, followed by drinks and nibbles where you can meet your new mates.

Supported by The Story Wines

With **Elizabeth Flux**

PITCH IT!

Book publishers: Saturday 3.45pm

Magazine editors: Sunday 3.45pm

Put what you've learned into practice and sign up to deliver a five-minute pitch one-on-one with an industry professional. These publishers, editors and literary agents are always on the lookout for new and exciting voices, so here's your chance to pitch them yours. Pitching slots are limited, and will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

See website for more information

SWEATSHOP SHOWCASE

DATE Sunday 24 June 5pm

Free for all to attend

Sweatshop is a literacy movement based in Western Sydney which is devoted to empowering groups and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds through training and employment in creative and critical writing narratives. Stick around after the conference ends and hear the latest works in development from six members of the collective.

With **Evelyn Araluen, Maryam Azam, Winnie Dunn, Shirley Le, Stephen Pham** and **Peter Polites**.

Hosted by **Michael Mohammed Ahmad**

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE – SPECIAL EVENTS

Some events are too good not to share. A full conference pass gets you to every session, but if you can't make the whole weekend then you can purchase tickets to these events individually.

5x5 RULES OF WRITING

DATE Saturday 23 June, 10 – 11am

PRICE \$19 full/\$17 concession. Free with a Weekend or Saturday conference pass

Accessibility: 

Kicking off the conference, our five festival ambassadors share their five rules for writing. Whether you're emerging, emerged or somewhere in between, these gems of advice are bound to get you inspired.

With **Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Isobelle Carmody, Stuart Grant, Melissa Lucashenko** and **Ellen van Neerven**. Hosted by **Izzy Roberts-Orr**

POETICS AND POWER

DATE Sunday 24 June, 1.30 – 2.30pm

PRICE \$19 full/\$17 concession. Free with a Weekend or Sunday conference pass

How can poetics be a mode to resist, subvert and remake authoritative narratives? How can the ambiguities of poetic language offer a counter-narrative to dominant ways of knowing and being in the world? A discussion on the relationship between poetry, storytelling, activism and resistance.

With **Evelyn Araluen, Natalie Harkin, Ellen O'Brien** and **Ellen van Neerven**

REWRITING COUNTRY

DATE Saturday 23 June, 1.30 – 2.30pm

PRICE \$19 full/\$17 concession. Free with a Weekend or Saturday conference pass

How do we ensure we don't continue to colonise country through writing? A discussion about writing against the colonial lens, considering land and place from First Nations perspectives, providing powerful insight into the relationship between history, country and culture.

With **Hannah Donnelly, Jeanine Leane** and **Melissa Lucashenko**

NATIONAL WRITERS'
CONFERENCE –
SATURDAY

Buzzing with energy and ideas, hear from industry insiders in the Village Roadshow Theatre.

The Hive

SHOW ME THE MONEY

TIME 11am – 12pm

Whether you're talking stacks of cash, or even just a grant to get your work out there, how do you sustainably fund your practice? Staff from **Australia Council, Creative Victoria, Copyright Agency** and **Creative Partnerships Australia** explore what makes for a successful grant application, as well as what the future of arts funding might look like.

**FABER WRITING ACADEMY
CASE STUDY**

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

The pathway to publication can be a bumpy road indeed. Get some gems of advice on starting out and how to stay motivated from Faber Writing Academy tutor **Paddy O'Reilly** in conversation with **Rob McDonald**, a graduate of the program who was highly commended for the 2017 VPLA Unpublished Manuscript Award.

Presented in partnership with Faber Writing Academy

**WHAT PUBLISHERS WISH
YOU KNEW**

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

You've done the hard yards and finished a manuscript – but how do you approach a publisher? Get insight about what publishers are looking for, how best to present your manuscript and how to structure the perfect pitch.

With **Cate Blake, Cosima McGrath, Arwen Summers**, and **Robert Watkins**

A WRITING LIFE

TIME 3.45 – 4.30pm

What defines the existence of a writer? What is the value and worth of literary creation in today's day and age, and what does it mean to pursue writing as a vocation? **Tony Birch** and **Roanna Gonsalves** discuss where the writer sits within our national and cultural landscape, and why literature matters.

A CREATIVE CAREER

TIME 4.30 – 5pm

The nuts and bolts of carving out a space for yourself in the creative industries is one thing, but how do you ensure that you're nourishing yourself and your craft? **Rajith Savanadasa** explores the pleasures and pitfalls of sustaining a rewarding creative practice.

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE – SATURDAY

Head upstairs and nestle in for detailed discussion about the art of crafting beautiful narratives.

The Nest

CREATING A WORLD

TIME 11am – 12pm

Crafting other worlds takes work – and research. From picturing parallel universes, to rewriting history and imagining the future, learn how to construct authentic imagined worlds and believable characters to inhabit them.

With **Isobelle Carmody, C.S. Pacat** and **Marlee Jane Ward**

TWO WIT

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

More than just a good belly laugh, satire can often be a tool or a weapon that cuts straight to the heart of contemporary issues. Ironic, sarcastic, ridiculous and always critically engaged, hear from two emerging satirical writers about the craft of popular parody.

With **Shirley Le** and **Nikki Tran**

WRITING THE PERSONAL

TIME 1.30 – 2.30pm

What are the lines between fiction and non-fiction? What is your responsibility to your reader and your subject when you're toying with truth? From the personal essay to fictional memoir and 'true' fiction, this is your guide to writing about (un)real life right.

With **Eda Gunaydin, Stephen Pham** and **Khalid Warsame**

LITERATURE AS RECLAMATION

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

In the words of bell hooks, “moving from silence into speech is a revolutionary gesture”. How can storytelling be a tool of resistance, affirmation and reclamation for individuals and communities? What is the relationship between literature and activism? Four rapid-fire presentations on ethics, representation and responsibility in storytelling.

With **Maryam Azam, Winnie Dunn, Rafeif Ismail** and **Saf Ovacik**

NATIONAL WRITERS'
CONFERENCE –
SATURDAY

Get cosy and build your skills in this intimate ideas incubator.

The Cocoon

WORKSHOP: WRITING FOR ONLINE AUDIENCES

TIME 11am – 12pm

Is there some kind of special magic to online writing, or are the same principles still applicable? Gain practical insight with **Tim Fisher** (Broadsheet, ABC RN) on how to approach lifestyle and commercial feature writing for digital outlets, plus some quick and dirty tips about how to write well for an online audience.

ON MENTORSHIP

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

Mentorships can be rewarding and illuminating for both the mentee and the mentor, but how do you go about structuring this relationship? Former writer-in-residence at Overland, **Laniyuk Garcon**, and her mentor **Ellen van Neerven** reflect on their dynamic mentor/mentee relationship and the evolution of their writing practice.

Presented by Overland

ASK ME ANYTHING: ISOBELLE CARMODY

TIME 1.30 – 2.30pm

Isobelle Carmody is one of Australia's most highly acclaimed authors of fantasy. At fourteen, she began *Obernewtyn*, the first book in her much-loved *Obernewtyn Chronicles*, and has since written many works in this genre. She has also written several picture books as well as collections of short stories for children, young adults and adults.

ASK ME ANYTHING: MELISSA LUCASHENKO

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

Melissa Lucashenko is a Bundjalung novelist, essayist and poet who lives between Brisbane and Ocean Shores. Her most recent novel, *Mullumbimby*, won the QLD Literary Prize, the Victorian Premier's Award for Indigenous Writing, and was longlisted for the Miles Franklin and Stella Awards.

WORKSHOP: FINDING YOUR VOICE

TIME 3.45 – 5pm

Say it in a shout, or say it in a whisper – this workshop will have you performance-ready and vocalising like a true virtuoso in no time. Performer, poet and broadcaster **Sister Zai Zanda** shares her hot tips for reading your work to an audience.

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE – SUNDAY

Buzzing with energy, conversation and ideas, hear from industry insiders in the Village Roadshow Theatre.

The Hive

FEEDBACK LOOPS

TIME 10 – 11am

Critical engagement with your work, and the work of others, is a vital aspect of a sustainable writing practice and robust creative ecology. Learn how to give and get constructive feedback on your writing, and how to handle criticism.

With **Michael Mohammed Ahmad**, **Peter Polites**, **Omar Sakr** and **Khalid Warsame**

#WINNING

TIME 11am – 12pm

What can writing competitions do for your career? What publishing opportunities might winning or placing in a competition lead to? Get some hints and tips for submitting to writing competitions from those who've written, judged and published award winning writing.

With **Lur Alghurabi**, **Jane Pearson**, **Robert Watkins** and **Christian White**

WRITING AND RESEARCH

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

Whether you prefer the library's hush or the busy din of a cafe to work in, research is a vital part of good writing. Learn where to begin using the tried and tested research methods of State Library Creative Fellows **Kelly Gardiner** and **Lili Wilkinson**.

Presented in partnership with State Library Victoria

WHAT EDITORS WANT

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

Get the inside scoop on what to do and what not to do when pitching to your favourite lit mags. Find out about upcoming submission rounds, what these editors are looking for, and how to structure your pitch.

With **Annabel Brady-Brown**, **Amaryllis Gacioppo**, **Anupama Pilbrow**, **Alan Vaarwerk** and **Jacinda Woodhead**

HACHETTE CASE STUDY

TIME 3.45 – 4.30pm

Find out about the ins and outs of getting your work published and into the world, and hear firsthand from author of *The Lebs*, **Michael Mohammed Ahmad** and his publisher **Robert Watkins**.

LITERARY SELFIES

TIME 4.30 – 5pm

"Literature as selfie manifests the ideas of 'presencing', of agency and of the literary retweet," **Roanna Gonsalves** writes in her essay for *Overland*. Hear her discuss the 'literary selfie' as a way of reading, writing and foregrounding self-representation in literature.

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE – SUNDAY

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The Nest

TALKIES

TIME 10 – 11am

Everyone seems to be making a podcast! From criticism to long-form journalism, audio storytelling can be a great way to get your message across. Get the inside scoop on everything audio from three podcasting aficionadas.

With **Bethany Atkinson-Quinton, Leona Hameed** and **Areej Nur**

DEBUT WORKS

TIME 11am – 12pm

Delivering your first book into the world requires you to walk into unmapped terrain, and the journey can feel treacherous as well as joyous. These debut writers share the challenges, highlights and learning curves involved in writing and publishing their first books.

With **Melanie Cheng, Annaleese Jochems, Odette Kelada** and **Jamie Marina Lau**

BEYOND TEXT: PERFORMANCE WRITING

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

Theatre draws from some of our most ancient modes of storytelling, and yet we continue to remake and rewrite traditional theatrical forms. **Stuart Grant** and **Fleur Kilpatrick** explore experimental modes and approaches to performance making.

SUBVERTING GENRE

TIME 1.30 – 2.30pm

Romance. Gothic Literature. Queer YA. Literary Thrillers. Dip your toes into four 15-minute talks about subverting genre tropes and creating new archetypes in fiction.

With **Alison Evans, Calvin Fung, Alli Sinclair** and **Rhydian Thomas**

ART, MONEY, LABOUR

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

If you're thinking about a career in the creative industries, there are many things to consider. Do you need to work for free to get a foot in the door? How do you negotiate for fair pay? A discussion about the pitfalls of 'doing what you love', and how we might better advocate for the value of creative labour.

With **Timmah Ball, Creatrix Tiara, Samantha Forge** and **Sarah Gory**

NATIONAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE – SUNDAY

Get cosy and build your skills in this intimate ideas incubator.

The Cocoon

ASK ME ANYTHING: MICHAEL MOHAMMED AHMAD

TIME 11am – 12pm

Michael Mohammed Ahmad is the founder and director of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement. His debut novel *The Tribe* received the 2015 Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Novelists of the Year Award. His latest novel is *The Lebs*, published by Hachette in early 2018.

SELF-PUBLISHING PATHWAYS

TIME 12 – 12.45pm

You have a great idea, you may have commenced writing and you may even be nearing completion. But not everyone manages to score that elusive contract – so what are your options? In this session **Debbie Lee** and **Louise Merrington** will explore the world of self-publishing and discuss how print-on-demand technology and global distribution have democratised the publishing market.

Presented by IngramSpark

ASK ME ANYTHING: STUART GRANT

TIME 1.30 – 2.30pm

Stuart Grant is a lecturer in Performance Studies at Monash University. He has published extensively on performance philosophy, phenomenology and site-specific performance. Stuart is also lead singer, guitarist, and main composer with punk/noise-hop band the Primitive Calculators.

ASK ME ANYTHING: ELLEN VAN NEERVEN

TIME 2.30 – 3.30pm

Ellen van Neerven is Mununjali from the Yugambeh language group of South East Queensland, and the award-winning author of *Comfort Food* and *Heat and Light*. Ellen was named as a Sydney Morning Herald's Best Young Australian Novelist in 2015.

WORKSHOP: SHORT STORY WRITING

TIME 3.45 – 5pm

Short and sweet, or as salty as they come, learn how to craft short fiction that hits the spot. Get an insight into story construction, editing, and tips and tricks to beat writer's block in this practical workshop with **Laura Elizabeth Woollett**.