

b

'26

# Byron Writers Festival

Sanctuary

14—16 August

Byron Bay

[byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

# Your home, Your life, Your story.

Proud to be the founding sponsor of the Byron Writers Festival, we are committed to celebrating creativity and storytelling in all its forms.

For over 30 years, we've supported the arts, theatre, and youth programs that enrich our vibrant community. Our dedicated team share a passion for building a place where culture thrives.

It's our privilege to continue investing in the stories that shape our region.

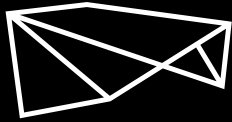
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A podcast exploring the unique community of the Northern Rivers

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**LISMORE  
REGIONAL  
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August program:

**Lauren Brincat** / In sequence

**Sarah Ujmaia** / Marmoreum (28°48'34.4"S  
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**Babette Robertson** / And her hallway moves like  
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Wednesday to Sunday 10 am – 4 pm

Thursdays until 6 pm

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Reading & writing in the region for more than 25 years.  
Upstairs in the Byron Arcade, 13 Lawson St, Byron Bay NSW 2481

**"THERE'S  
NO PLACE  
LIKE  
MULLUM"**



**DELICIOUS MAGAZINE'S  
No1 FARMERS MARKET**



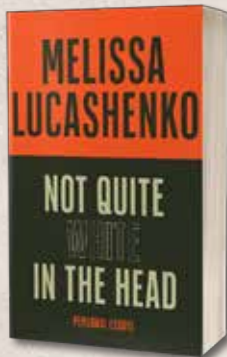
**EVERY FRIDAY 7-11AM  
MULLUM SHOWGROUNDS**



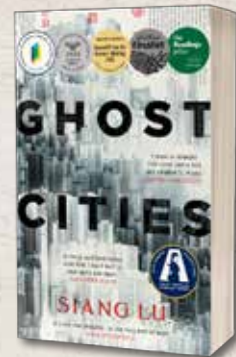
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## Byron Writers Festival '26

This year, Byron Writers Festival returns to Byron Bay on the land and waterways of the Bundjalung nation. With a new precinct in the heart of town, the 2026 festival is both a reinvention and homecoming — an offer of sanctuary in a tumultuous world.

Over three days, we will gather with many of the finest Australian and international writers whose insight and originality will illuminate the possibilities and purpose of literature. From new ways of understanding the past, present and future, to exploring expectations of form and language, the writers of Byron Writers Festival '26 bring wisdom, joy, irreverence, and indefatigable curiosity to the most easterly point of mainland Australia.

We present this festival at a moment of great global change, in times that are increasingly chaotic, dark and absurd, as algorithmic tools offer a cheap illusion of creativity and understanding. From the festival stage to the bookstore and the cafes, take sanctuary here alongside those nourished by the doing of writing, reading and thinking.

Dreamers made Byron Bay. They were artists, surfers and activists who imagined something different. Byron Writers Festival was born of this place. With our new precinct and more free programming than ever before, we are bringing culture into the community and creating new rituals of shared connection.

Discover the best in literature from around the country, with international guests from Aotearoa, Chile, India, Singapore and the USA, and engage in uplifting conversations on literary craft, philosophy, politics, climate, love, and family. You will engage with ideas that we need in order to strengthen democracy, and make a material difference to the lives of all in a society.

In uncertain times, these conversations offer the antidote to despair. Here, we are free to think and demand the impossible.

**Jessica Alice**  
Artistic Director / CEO



We respectfully acknowledge that Byron Writers Festival takes place on the traditional lands of the Arakwal Bumberbin peoples of the Bundjalung Nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge them as the original storytellers of the lands and waterways of this Country.

Please hold on to your copy of this program and help us reduce waste. A limited number of printed programs will be available at the festival.

To keep in the loop, sign up for our newsletter at [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

Share moments [#byronwf2026](https://twitter.com/byronwf2026)

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## The Guardian's Are You Game Show

Friday 14 August  
6:30pm – 7:30pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Byron Theatre,  
69 Jonson St  
\$15  
Bar available

Play along with the return of the festival's wild and wonderful game show!

Hosted by The Guardian's culture editor Steph Harmon and team captains Lucy Clark and Nour Haydar, two teams of writers put their knowledge to the test.

Don't miss this extremely enjoyable and deeply chaotic battle of the brains with special guest contestants Luke Bateman, Siang Lu, Louise Milligan and Michael Winkler.

Presented by The Guardian



## Women Who Win: Antoinette Lattouf

Friday 14 August  
7:15pm – 8:15pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Jonson St Stage,  
90-96 Jonson St  
\$45 / \$40 Festival Friends  
Bar available

Join acclaimed journalist and human rights activist Antoinette Lattouf and Louise Adler, former publisher and festival director, for an evening celebrating the courage and conviction of women who defied expectations and shattered barriers.

The story of Lattouf's own landmark victory sparked a global conversation on power, prejudice and the price of integrity in the press.

Don't miss this celebration of grit, guts and glorious defiance.

Supported by The Vasudhara Fund



## Viking Lives: Ghost Stories Richard Fidler and Kári Gíslason

Friday 14 August  
8:15pm – 9:30pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Byron Theatre,  
69 Jonson St  
\$45 / \$40 Festival Friends  
Bar available

Join Richard Fidler and Kári Gíslason, authors of the best-selling *Saga Land*, for a very special, spectral evening of Viking Lives: Ghost Stories.

In this live recording of their new podcast, Richard and Kári bring to life (or not) the most haunting tales from the sagas, regale audiences with their own encounters with the supernatural, and consider why Icelanders have so many words for 'ghost.' This unmissable event will haunt you in the best possible way.

Presented by Viking Lives



# Feature Events



## Heresies: Richard Flanagan

Saturday 15 August  
6:00pm – 7:00pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Byron Theatre,  
69 Jonson St  
\$45 / \$40 Festival Friends  
Bar available

Join the only author ever to have won both the Booker Prize and the Baillie Gifford Prize, Richard Flanagan in conversation with ABC Radio National's Sarah Kanowski, to discuss his latest brilliant collection of writing, essays, articles and speeches and the role of the writer to embrace heresy.

From the destruction of our natural world to the growing corrosion of democracy, from Salman Rushdie to the Segal Report, family and love, Flanagan's non-fiction writings carry the author's trademark elegance, subversive wit, and humanity.

Presented by ABC Conversations  
Supported by The Book Room



## Gravity Let Me Go: Trent Dalton

Saturday 15 August  
6:30pm – 7:30pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Jonson St Stage,  
90-96 Jonson St  
\$45 / \$40 Festival Friends  
Bar available

Join Australia's #1 bestselling author Trent Dalton in conversation with Richard Glover for an unforgettable exploration of love, ambition, family and truth-telling.

From *Boy Swallows Universe* to the deeply personal *Gravity Let Me Go*, Dalton reveals the stories we want to tell the world and those we shouldn't, and how the stories we keep locked away are so often what come to define us.

Supported by  
Tasmanian Walking Company



## Beyond The Lines

Saturday 15 August  
7:30pm – 9:00pm

[BOOK NOW](#)

Byron Theatre,  
69 Jonson St  
\$35 / \$30 Festival Friends  
Bar available

Get ready for a night of rhythm and rhyme in an exhilarating live event!

Featuring the award-winning Evelyn Araluen, Chilean musician and poet Julio Carrasco, Australian Poetry Slam champ Arantza Garcia Ferrand with acclaimed festival guests Ender Başkan, Fiona Wright, Damien Becker and more.

Hosted by Luke Patterson, expect big energy, bold voices and a celebration of language that sings and stings. One stage. Many stars. Don't miss it.

Presented with Red Room Poetry  
as part of Poetry Month 2026.

Supported by Kassa-Miller Giving

# Program Sessions



	Jonson St Stage The Vasudhara Fund	Haven Gallery	Byron Theatre The Guardian
<p><b>Special Events</b></p> <p><b>7:45am - 8:30am (S)</b> Opening: Calling to Country with Delta Kay <b>FREE</b> Meet at Bay St Stage</p> <p><b>1:30pm - 3:00pm (27)</b> How to Be An Arts Advocate <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b> The Shack, Beach Hotel Richard Denniss, Alice Grundy, Leanne Minshull <b>Presented by</b> <b>The Australia Institute</b></p> <p><b>5:45pm - 6:45pm (F)</b> Rhoda Roberts Oration <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b> Bay St Stage Wesley Enoch Hosted by Naomi Moran <b>Supported by Koori Mail</b></p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (1)</b> Rebirth: A Love Story from the Depths of War Antoun Issa in conversation with Mark Isaacs</p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (2)</b> Confessions of a Minor Poet Phil Brown in conversation with Hilarie Dunn</p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (3)</b> Earthquake: The Election that Shook Australia Niki Savva in conversation with Richard Fidler <b>Presented by</b> <b>ABC Conversations</b></p>
	<p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (8)</b> Bring Back Yesterday Bob Carr in conversation with Mick O'Regan <b>Supported by Tasmanian Walking Company</b></p>	<p><b>10.30am - 11.30am (9)</b> Poetry, Art, Activism Julio Carrasco in conversation with Karena Wynn-Moylan</p>	<p><b>10.30am - 11.30am (10)</b> Tomb of Sand Geetanjali Shree in conversation with Susan Wyndham <b>Supported by</b> <b>The Vasudhara Fund</b></p>
	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (15)</b> Mungo Panel: Journalism Now Sean Kelly, Antoinette Lattouf, Niki Savva <b>Chair Nour Haydar</b> <b>Supported by</b> <b>The Byron Shire Echo</b></p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (16)</b> Who Owns the Story? Rafael Frumkin in conversation with Chris Harrigan <b>Supported by Fireside Agency</b></p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (17)</b> Not Quite White in the Head Melissa Lucashenko in conversation with Daniel Browning <b>Supported by</b> <b>The Vasudhara Fund</b></p>
	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (21)</b> In Trump's Wake Bob Carr, George Megalogenis, Julianne Schultz <b>Chair Amy Remeikis</b></p>	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (22)</b> 58 Facets: On Law, Violence and Revolution Marika Sosnowski in conversation with Debbie Whitmont</p>	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (23)</b> Griefdogg Michael Winkler in conversation with Kate Evans <b>Supported by The Book Room</b></p>
	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (28)</b> Beyond Colonial Literature Siang Lu, Melissa Lucashenko, Geetanjali Shree <b>Chair Merinda Dutton</b></p>	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (29)</b> All Her Lives Ingrid Horrocks in conversation with Ashley Hay</p>	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (30)</b> Learning from Ancestral Wisdom Victor Steffensen in conversation with Kylie Day</p>
	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (33)</b> What Does Labor Stand For? Sean Kelly in conversation with Julianne Schultz</p>	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (34)</b> The Woman in the Watchtower Susan Wyndham in conversation with Kate Evans</p>	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (35)</b> Benevolence and Compassion Julie Janson in conversation with Grace Lucas-Pennington <b>Supported by Copyright Agency Cultural Fund</b></p>



# Friday 14 August

Wategos Room Southern Cross University	Surf Club Tasmanian Walking Company	Bay St Stage Southern Cross University	Beach Hotel
<b>8:45am - 9:45am (4)</b> <b>Writing Workshop: Believing You Can</b> With Anna Featherstone <b>Supported by Bold Authors</b>	<b>8:30am - 10:00am (5)</b> <b>ABC North Coast Live Broadcast</b> Nicholas Timms, Amy Remeikis, Tasma Walton, Richard Denniss, Jay McKenzie, Julio Carrasco with Bridie Tanner	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (6)</b> <b>Language &amp; Country</b> <b>FREE</b> Ella Noah Bancroft, Marie Elena Ellis, Maria van Neerven <b>Chair Daniel Browning</b> <b>Supported by The Vasudhara Fund</b>	
<b>10:15am - 11:15am (11)</b> <b>The Future of Self Publishing</b> Paige Allen, Ben Hughes, Chris Munnery <b>Chair Anna Featherstone</b> <b>Supported by Ingram Spark</b>	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (12)</b> <b>A Time For Bravery</b> Richard Denniss, Amy Remeikis <b>Chair Leanne Minshull</b> <b>Supported by The Australia Institute</b>	<b>10.30am - 11.30am (13)</b> <b>Where We Swim</b> <b>FREE</b> Ingrid Horrocks, Amanda Reichelt-Brushett <b>Chair Sarah Ndiaye</b>	<b>10:00am - 11:00am (14)</b> <b>Whale Stories</b> Luke Patterson, Dakota Feirer, Tasma Walton <b>Chair Grace Lucas-Pennington</b> <b>Supported by Southern Cross University</b>
<b>11:45am - 12:45pm (18)</b> <b>Self Publishing Nuts &amp; Bolts</b> Paige Allen, Madeline Bush, Ben Hughes <b>Chair Chris Munnery</b> <b>Supported by Ingram Spark</b>	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (19)</b> <b>In a Common Hour</b> Sita Walker in conversation with Carody Culver	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (20)</b> <b>Woodside Vs The Planet</b> <b>FREE</b> Marian Wilkinson in conversation with Royce Kurmelovs <b>Supported by Quarterly Essay</b>	<b>Feature Events</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b> <b>6:30pm - 7:30pm (F)</b> <b>The Guardian's Are You Game Show</b> Byron Theatre Steph Harmon, Lucy Clark, Nour Haydar, Luke Bateman, Siang Lu, Louise Milligan, Michael Winkler <b>Presented by The Guardian</b> <b>7:15pm - 8:15pm (F)</b> <b>Women Who Win</b> Jonson St Stage Antoinette Lattouf in conversation with Louise Adler <b>Supported by The Vasudhara Fund</b> <b>8:15pm - 9:30pm (F)</b> <b>Viking Lives: Ghost Stories</b> Byron Theatre Richard Fidler and Kári Gíslason <b>Presented by Viking Lives</b>
<b>1:15pm - 2:15pm (24)</b> <b>Fractured Motherhood</b> Maggie Walters in conversation with Anna Featherstone <b>Supported by Bold Authors</b>	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (25)</b> <b>Joy, Humour &amp; the Blak Everyday</b> Marie Elena Ellis, Tom Forrest (Outback Tom), Luke Patterson <b>Chair Bebe Oliver</b>	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (26)</b> <b>The Lineup</b> <b>FREE</b> Nicholas Timms in conversation with Mark Isaacs	
<b>2:45pm - 3:45pm (7)</b> <b>Circle of Wonders</b> Kathryn Heyman in conversation with Marele Day	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (31)</b> <b>Shellybanks</b> Louise Milligan in conversation with Angela Cattersn	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (32)</b> <b>Better Things Are Possible</b> <b>FREE</b> Jack Toohey in conversation with Nour Haydar <b>Supported by The Guardian</b>	
	<b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (36)</b> <b>Gone Bush</b> Tom Forrest (Outback Tom) in conversation with Mindy Woods <b>Supported by Southern Cross University</b>	<b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (37)</b> <b>Poetry of Chile</b> <b>FREE</b> Faumelisa Manquepillan Calfuleo, Julio Carrasco <b>Chair Javier Encalada</b> <b>Supported by The Vasudhara Fund</b>	

# Program Sessions



	Jonson St Stage The Vasudhara Fund	Haven Gallery	Byron Theatre The Guardian
<p><b>Special Events</b></p> <p><b>7:00am - 7:30am (38)</b> Saltwater Cleanse <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b></p> <p>Meet at the Byron Bay Surf Club With Delta Kay &amp; Mandy Nolan</p> <p><b>8:00am - 8:45am (39)</b> Coffee &amp; News Beach Hotel Sean Kelly &amp; Royce Kurlmelovs</p> <p><b>10:00am - 11:30am</b> Walgun Tour with Delta Kay <b>BOOK NOW</b></p> <p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (52)</b> Poetry Walk Meet at Bay St Stage Ender Başkan, Marie Elena Ellis, Luke Patterson Hosted by Damien Becker <b>Supported by Australian Poetry and Tasmanian Walking Company</b></p> <p><b>1:00pm - 2:30pm (F)</b> Literary Lunch with Bob Carr <b>BOOK NOW</b></p> <p>Bang Bang Byron Bay With Damian Kassabgi</p> <p><b>1:30pm - 3:30pm (W)</b> Masterclass: Harnessing Wonder with Kathryn Heyman <b>BOOK NOW</b></p> <p>Wategos Room</p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (40)</b> Political Animals Bob Carr, Niki Savva, Debbie Whitmont <b>Chair Misha Ketchell</b> <b>Supported by The Conversation</b></p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (41)</b> After Authoritarianism Julio Carrasco, Julianne Schultz, Marika Sosnowski <b>Chair David Heilpern</b></p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (42)</b> The Power of Place Julie Janson, Siang Lu, Sita Walker <b>Chair Mick O'Regan</b> <b>Supported by Tasmanian Walking Company</b></p>
	<p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (46)</b> I Am Nannertgarrook Tasma Walton in conversation with Merinda Dutton <b>Supported by The Vasudhara Fund</b></p>	<p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (47)</b> Privilege and Power Alice Grundy, Micaela Sahhar, Fiona Wright <b>Chair Carody Culver</b> <b>Supported by Griffith Review</b></p>	<p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (48)</b> In The Good Books Luke Bateman in conversation with Bridie Tanner</p>
	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (53)</b> Thea Astley Address: Lessons From History Kerry O'Brien Hosted by Richard Flanagan</p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 2:00pm (54)</b> Poets Out Loud Youth Slam <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b> Featuring 2025 Australian Poetry Slam Champion Arantza Garcia Ferrand Hosted by Sarah Temporal</p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (55)</b> Sophie, Standing There Meg Mason in conversation with Ashley Hay</p>
	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (58)</b> ABC Radio National Top 100 Australian Books Trent Dalton, Steve MinOn, Claire Thomas <b>Chairs Kate Evans &amp; Cassie McCullagh</b></p>	<p>Witness the next generation of poets as they speak up through slam! <b>Presented by Poets Out Loud</b></p>	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (59)</b> Love &amp; Family Kris Kneen, Andrew Pippas, Thammika Songkaeo, Steve Toltz <b>Chair Steph Harmon</b></p>
	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (62)</b> The Manosphere Luke Bateman, Paul Callaghan, Louise Milligan <b>Chair Jane Caro</b> <b>Supported by Northern Rivers Community Foundation</b></p>	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (63)</b> Screen Dreams Debra Oswald, Tasma Walton <b>Chair Nell Schofield</b> <b>Supported by Basq House</b></p>	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (64)</b> First Nations Knowledges Delta Kay, Tom Forrest (Outback Tom), Victor Steffenson <b>Chair Bebe Oliver</b> <b>Supported by Blak &amp; Bright</b></p>
	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (67)</b> Solving the Housing Crisis Richard Denniss, Melissa Lucashenko, Jack Toohey <b>Chair Alice Grundy</b> <b>Supported by The Australia Institute</b></p>	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (68)</b> Radical Reading Ender Başkan, Micaela Sahhar, Michael Winkler <b>Chair Kris Kneen</b> <b>Supported by Copyright Agency Cultural Fund</b></p>	<p><b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (69)</b> Art &amp; AI Evelyn Araluen, Kirra Pendergast, Steve Toltz <b>Chair ABC's Natasha Mitchell</b> <b>Supported by Copyright Agency Cultural Fund</b></p>



# Saturday 15 August

Around Town	Surf Club Tasmanian Walking Company	Bay St Stage Southern Cross University	Beach Hotel
	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (43)</b> <b>Surfing for Everyone</b> Pauline Menczer, Turia Pitt, Joel Taylor <b>Chair Nell Schofield</b> <b>Supported by</b> <b>Byron Shire Council</b>	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (44)</b> <b>Myth &amp; Legend</b> <b>FREE</b> Richard Fidler, Zoe Terakes, Lucianne Tonti <b>Chair Kate Evans</b>	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (45)</b> <b>The Transformations</b> Andrew Pippos in conversation with Chris Hanley <b>Supported by</b> <b>First National Byron</b>
<b>11:00am - 11:45am (M)</b> <b>Bees &amp; Biodiversity</b> <b>FREE</b> Market Stage Cedar Anderson, Stuart Anderson, Anneliese Austin <b>Chair Leila McKinnon</b>	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (49)</b> <b>Being a Good Ancestor</b> Paul Callaghan, Jane Caro, Roman Krznaric <b>Chair Louise Adler</b> <b>Supported by</b> <b>Southern Cross University</b>	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (50)</b> <b>Three Shocks</b> <b>FREE</b> George Megalogenis in conversation with Angela Mackay <b>Supported by The Book Room</b>	<b>10:15am - 11:15am (51)</b> <b>Fighting Fossil Fuels</b> Richard Denniss, Ben Roche, Marian Wilkinson <b>Chair Isabelle Reinecke</b>
<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (M)</b> <b>The Family Home</b> <b>FREE</b> Market Stage Courtney Adamo in conversation with Zoë Tuckwell	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (56)</b> <b>Ghost Cities</b> Siang Lu in conversation with Cassie McCullagh	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (57)</b> <b>Queer Stories</b> <b>FREE</b> Antoun Issa, Pauline Menczer, Zoe Terakes <b>Chair Daniel Browning</b>	<h2>Feature Events</h2> <p><b>BOOK NOW</b></p> <p><b>6:00pm - 7:00pm (F)</b>  <b>Heresies</b>            Byron Theatre            Richard Flanagan in            conversation with            Sarah Kanowski  <b>Presented by</b>  <b>ABC Conversations</b>  <b>Supported by The Book Room</b></p> <p><b>6:30pm - 7:30pm (F)</b>  <b>Gravity Let Me Go</b>            Jonson St Stage            Trent Dalton in conversation            with Richard Glover  <b>Supported by Tasmanian            Walking Company</b></p> <p><b>7:30pm - 9:00pm (F)</b>  <b>Beyond The Lines</b>            Byron Theatre            Evelyn Araluen, Damien            Becker, Ender Başkan,            Julio Carrasco, Arantza            Garcia Ferrand,            Fiona Wright  <b>Hosted by Luke Patterson</b>  <b>Supported by</b>  <b>Red Room Poetry</b>  <b>&amp; Kassa-Miller Giving</b></p>
<b>1:15pm - 2:15pm (M)</b> <b>Byron Writers Spotlight</b> <b>FREE</b> Market Stage Jay McKenzie, Nicholas Timms, Sonya Voumard <b>Chair Naima Brown</b>	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (60)</b> <b>The Politics of Civility</b> Evelyn Araluen, Dakota Feirer, Amy Remeikis <b>Chair Carody Culver</b>	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (61)</b> <b>Antidote to Despair</b> <b>FREE</b> Ella Noah Bancroft, Osher Günsberg, Jack Toohey <b>Chair Mandy Nolan</b> <b>Supported by</b> <b>Southern Cross University</b>	
<b>3:00pm - 5:00pm (73)</b> <b>Australian Poetry Slam - Byron Heat</b> <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b> Byron Bay Library <b>Presented by Word Travels</b>	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (65)</b> <b>Cultural Touchstones</b> Rafael Frumkin, Kári Gíslason, Julie Janson <b>Chair Suzy Freeman Greene</b> <b>Supported by</b> <b>The Conversation</b>	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (66)</b> <b>Good Witch</b> <b>FREE</b> Lucianne Tonti in conversation with Courtney Miller <b>Supported by Organic India</b>	
<b>4:00pm - 5:00pm (70)</b> <b>Writing Climate</b> Wategos Room Romy Ash, Dakota Feirer, Mark Smith <b>Chair David Heilpern</b>	<b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (71)</b> <b>So What? Now What?</b> Osher Günsberg in conversation with Leila McKinnon	<b>4:30pm - 5:30pm (72)</b> <b>Musicland: Book Launch</b> <b>FREE</b> Murray Burns, Shane Howard, Mark Pope <b>Chair Tricia Shantz</b> <b>Supported by Jilly Wine Co</b>	

# Program Sessions



	Jonson St Stage The Vasudhara Fund	Haven Gallery	Byron Theatre The Guardian	
<b>Special Events</b>  <b>7:30am - 8:30am (S)</b> Yoga <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b>  Meet at Bay St Stage	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (75)</b> <b>The Case Against John Howard</b> Amy Remeikis in conversation with Sean Kelly	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (76)</b> <b>Great Minds</b> Osher Günsberg, Fiona Wright <b>Chair ABC Radio National's Natasha Mitchell</b>	<b>9:00am - 10:00am (77)</b> <b>Planet Fungi</b> Stephen Axford & Catherine Marciniak <b>Chair Kris Kneen</b> <b>Supported by Tasmanian Walking Company</b>	
	<b>8:00am - 8:45am (74)</b> <b>Coffee &amp; News</b> Beach Hotel Antoun Issa & Royce Kurmelovs	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (81)</b> <b>The Battle for Public Education</b> Jane Caro in conversation with Mick O'Regan <b>Supported by The Australia Institute</b>	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (82)</b> <b>The Rot</b> Evelyn Araluen in conversation with Grace Lucas-Pennington	<b>10:30am - 11:30am (83)</b> <b>Find Me at the Jaffa Gate</b> Micaela Sahhar in conversation with Sarah Kanowski <b>Supported by ABC Radio National</b>
<b>Festival Finale</b>  <b>1:00pm - 2:00pm (M)</b> Sustainable Fashion <b>FREE</b>  Market Stage Kylie Caldwell, Lucianne Tonti <b>Chair Courtney Gibson</b>	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (87)</b> <b>History for Tomorrow</b> Roman Krznaric in conversation with ABC Radio National's Natasha Mitchell	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (88)</b> <b>Kill Your Boomers</b> Fiona Wright in conversation with Mandy Nolan <b>Supported by The Guardian</b>	<b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (89)</b> <b>A Rising of the Lights</b> Steve Toltz in conversation with Michael Winkler <b>Supported by The Guardian</b>	
	<b>4:30pm - 5:15pm (104)</b> <b>Big Voice Choir</b> <b>FREE</b>  Bay St Stage With Shane Howard & Benja Roberts Choir leader Janet Swain	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (93)</b> <b>First Times</b> Romy Ash, Trent Dalton, Antoun Issa <b>Chair David Sly</b> <b>Supported by MUD Literary Club</b>	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (94)</b> <b>First Name Second Name</b> Steve MinOn in conversation with Suzy Freeman-Greene	<b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (95)</b> <b>Motherhood, Marriage &amp; Selfhood</b> Thammika Songkaeo in conversation with Ashley Hay
		<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (99)</b> <b>Songwriters on the Run</b> Robert Forster in conversation with Mel Bampton	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (100)</b> <b>Australia's First Political Assassination</b> Debbie Whitmont in conversation with Matthew Condon	<b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (101)</b> <b>Rite of Spring</b> Kris Kneen in conversation with Nell Schofield <b>Supported by The Guardian</b>



# Sunday 16 August

Wategos Room Southern Cross University	Surf Club Tasmanian Walking Company	Bay St Stage Southern Cross University	Beach Hotel
<p>Inside Publishing is a full day, separately ticketed event.</p> <p><b>BOOK NOW</b></p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (78)</b>  <b>Making Women Visible</b>            Julie Janson, Debra Oswald, Geetanjali Shree  <b>Chair Ashley Hay</b>  <b>Supported by Tasmanian Walking Company</b></p>	<p><b>9:00am - 11:30am (79)</b>  <b>Kids Program</b>  <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b>            Host Tristan Bancks  <b>9:00am</b>            Tristan Bancks  <b>9:30am</b>            Sam Thaiday  <b>10:00am</b>            Sarah Armstrong</p>	<p><b>9:00am - 10:00am (80)</b>  <b>Migration Stories</b>            Ender Başkan, Steve MinOn, Thammika Songkaeo, Sita Walker  <b>Chair Kári Gíslason</b></p>
<p><b>10:00am - 11:30am (84)</b>  <b>Inside Publishing: The Acquisition Meeting</b>            Lex Hirst, Anna O'Grady, Peri Wilson  <b>Chair: Marele Day</b></p>	<p><b>10:30am - 11:30am (85)</b>  <b>On Not Climbing Mountains</b>            Claire Thomas in conversation with Chris Hanley  <b>Supported by First National Byron</b></p>	<p><b>10:30am</b>            Student Writing Prizes  <b>10:45am</b>            Poppy Galactic  <b>11:15am</b>            Meet the authors &amp; book signing  <b>Supported by First National Byron</b></p>	<p><b>10:15am - 11:15am (86)</b>  <b>Crime Fiction</b>            Louise Milligan, Mark Smith, Lisa Walker  <b>Chair Matthew Condon</b>  <b>Supported by Ink Gin</b></p>
<p><b>12:30pm - 1:30pm (90)</b>  <b>Inside Publishing: Perfect Pitch</b>            Alex Adsett, Lex Hirst</p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (91)</b>  <b>One Hundred Years of Betty</b>            Debra Oswald in conversation with Angela Catters  <b>Supported by Honey Bee Homes</b></p>	<p><b>12:00pm - 1:00pm (92)</b>  <b>White Mountain</b>  <b>FREE</b>            Ruby Jean Cottle in conversation with Luke Bateman</p>	<p><b>Kids Program</b></p> <p><b>9:00am - 11:30am (79)</b>            Bay St Stage  <b>FREE</b> <b>BOOK NOW</b>            Host Tristan Bancks</p> <p><b>9:00am</b>            Quizzes, prizes and surprises with Tristan Bancks</p> <p><b>9:30am</b>            Storytime with Broncos legend Sam Thaiday</p> <p><b>10:00am</b>            Craft an adventure scene with Sarah Armstrong</p> <p><b>10:30am</b>            Student Writing Prizes</p> <p><b>10:45am</b>            Get up and dance with Poppy Galactic</p> <p><b>11:15am</b>            Meet the authors &amp; book signing  <b>Supported by First National Byron</b></p>
<p><b>2:00pm - 3:30pm (96)</b>  <b>Inside Publishing: Practice Pitching</b>            Marele Day, Brendan Fredericks</p>	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (97)</b>  <b>Eros: Queer Myths for Lovers</b>            Zoe Terakes in conversation with Naima Brown  <b>Supported by Hotel Marvell</b></p>	<p><b>1:30pm - 2:30pm (98)</b>  <b>Saltwater Stories: Ocean, Climate &amp; Country</b>  <b>FREE</b>            Ella Noah Bancroft, Delta Kay, Dakota Ferier  <b>Chair Naomi Moran</b></p>	
<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (102)</b>  <b>Selfish</b>            Turia Pitt in conversation with Leila McKinnon  <b>Supported by The Sunseeker</b></p>	<p><b>3:00pm - 4:00pm (103)</b>  <b>The Reading Crisis</b>  <b>FREE</b>            Tristan Bancks, Ruby Jean Cottle  <b>Chair Sarah Armstrong</b></p>		

## Sunday 16 August

9:00am – 11:30am (79)

Bay St Stage

**FREE** **BOOK NOW**

Host Tristan Bancks

Inspire the writers of the future with a free morning of fun for kids at the Bay St Stage!

Let imaginations run wild with wonderful storytellers Tristan Bancks, Sarah Armstrong and Sam Thaiday, then get ready to sing, dance and blast off with Poppy Galactic!

Register at [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

Supported by First National Byron



### 9:00am Tristan Bancks

Tristan Bancks brings his much-loved kids books to life in a fun, fast-paced session full of quizzes, prizes and surprises.

### 9:30am Sam Thaiday

Sam Thaiday, Broncos legend, brings to vivid life a powerful teaching story from the Torres Strait - *How The Fish Got Their Bones*.

### 10:00am Sarah Armstrong

Sarah Armstrong introduces kids to her thrilling survival stories *Run* and *The Wave* and helps them craft their own suspenseful scene.

### 10:30am Student Writing Prizes presented by Southern Cross University

Celebrate with young writers as they share their award-winning stories.

### 10:45am Poppy Galactic

Get up and dance with joyful extraterrestrials Poppy Galactic and celebrate the magic of Planet Earth.

### 11:15am Meet the Authors

Meet the authors and get your books signed!



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## Self Publishing Day

Full day program

Friday 14 August | 8:45am - 2:15pm

Wategos Room,

Byron Community Centre

Entry with Friday Pass or 3-Day Pass

Find out everything you need to know about self publishing in a series of seminars, workshops and Q&A sessions with self-publishing powerhouses Ingram Spark and Bold Authors.

### Writing Workshop: Believing You Can

8:45am - 9:45am (4)

Do you want to write, publish or do more with your book? This practical, one-hour workshop will leave you with a clearer head, a fuller heart, and the permission to create.

With Anna Featherstone

Supported by Bold Authors

### The Future of Self Publishing

10:15am - 11:15am (11)

Paige Allen, Ben Hughes, Chris Munnery

Learn more about how to make it as an independent author, from print-on-demand to distribution services.

Chair Anna Featherstone

Supported by Ingram Spark

### Self Publishing Nuts & Bolts

11:45am - 12:45pm (18)

Paige Allen, Madeline Bush, Ben Hughes

Learn how to publish your own books and ask all the questions from experts in the field.

Chair Chris Munnery

Supported by Ingram Spark

### Fractured Motherhood

1:15pm - 2:15pm (24)

Maggie Walters in conversation with Anna Featherstone

Self-published author Maggie Walters shares her incredible story and her self-publishing journey.

Supported by Bold Authors

## Meet The Agent: Alex Adsett

Friday 14 & Sunday 16 August (W)

Basq House Meeting Room

15 minute consultations, various times

\$180 General / \$140 Festival Friends

[BOOK NOW](#)

So you think you're ready to submit your manuscript to agents and publishers? Get one-on-one feedback on your manuscript from acclaimed literary agent Alex Adsett who represents over 40 artists and has helped thousands of authors get published.

## Masterclass: Harnessing Wonder

Saturday 15 August | 1:30pm - 3:30pm (W)

Wategos Room,

Byron Community Centre

\$140 General / \$110 Festival Friends

[BOOK NOW](#)

Join award-winning author Kathryn Heyman (*Circle of Wonders*, *Fury*, and more) for an inspiring masterclass exploring how wonder brings writing alive. The masterclass combines deep writing, craft and strategy guidance.

## Inside Publishing Day

Full day program

Sunday 16 August | 10:00am - 3:30pm

Wategos Room,

Byron Community Centre

\$260 General / \$220 Festival Friends

[BOOK NOW](#)

Spend a day with the Australian publishing industry for a rare look inside how book deals are made and how you can best position yourself as an author.

Featuring Lex Hirst (Pantera Press), literary agent Alex Adsett, Anna O'Grady (Simon & Schuster), Peri Wilson (Allen & Unwin), Brendan Fredericks (BFredericksPR). Hosted by Marele Day.




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# Rhoda Roberts Oration



## Special Event Friday 14 August

5:45pm – 6:45pm (F)  
Bay St Stage

**FREE** **BOOK NOW**

Join us to honour Rhoda Roberts AO with the inaugural Rhoda Roberts Oration. A proud Widjabul Wiyabal woman of the Bundjalung nation, Aunty Rhoda was a visionary cultural leader and masterful storyteller, whose wisdom, wit, intellect and generosity in sharing culture was a gift to all.

Hosted by Naomi Moran, the inaugural Rhoda Roberts Oration will be delivered by Wesley Enoch.

Naomi Moran is a Dunghutti and Nyangbal/Arakwal woman of the Bundjalung nation. She is a NSW Treaty Commissioner.

Wesley Enoch AM is a Quandamooka writer, director and cultural leader from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). For more than three decades, he has been one of the most influential voices in Australian theatre, creating work that has transformed the nation's understanding of First Nations stories and contemporary culture.

Wesley has led some of Australia's most significant cultural institutions, including Queensland Theatre and Sydney Festival, and currently serves as Chair of Creative Australia and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Australians) at Queensland University of Technology.

The Rhoda Roberts Oration is a free event. Register at [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

Supported by Koori Mail

## Stories that Shape Our Future

What does a better tomorrow look like? For three decades, Southern Cross University has partnered with Byron Writers Festival to explore this question – bringing bold ideas and important conversations to the stage.

As the festival has grown into a leading regional event, its connection to community has remained at its core, bringing people together to explore the issues shaping our future. Together, we've created space for researchers, writers and thinkers to challenge perspectives, spark curiosity and explore solutions to the complex issues influencing our world.

Championing disruptive ideas, creative solutions and local action with global impact is why Southern Cross University remains proud to be a founding partner. We're excited to return in 2026, continuing to support the festival and invest in the next generation of storytellers through the Student Writing Prize and Future Writers Festival.

Congratulations to the Byron Writers Festival team on 30 remarkable years, and here's to the stories that are yet to be told.

*Southern Cross University is a major partner of Byron Writers Festival 2026.*





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**Jordyn Jones**

Senior Associate

[Jordyn@byronfamilylaw.com.au](mailto:Jordyn@byronfamilylaw.com.au)



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# Free Program

## Bay St Stage

All events on the Bay St Stage on the Main Beach foreshore are free throughout each day of the festival program. For some events you will still need to register at [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com).

Hear from award-winning writers and experts about everything from climate change to swimming to poetry and fiction with book launches, music and fun for kids on Sunday morning.

At the close of the festival, raise your voice in song with the Big Voice Choir and special guests Shane Howard and Benja Roberts.

## Main Beach

Take the plunge at the inaugural Saltwater Cleanse. A revitalising new moon ocean swim on Saturday morning, presented in support of our charity partner, Byron Bay Surf Club. On Sunday morning, greet the day with a guided yoga class.

## Market Stage

You can also catch great writers and musicians appearing on the Market Stage at the Festival Hub on Jonson St while browsing the Festival Marketplace – a vibrant space offering artisanal goods from local makers.

Explore the full program  
[byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

# Community Events

A series of community events in Byron Bay presented in association with Byron Writers Festival.

## How to Be an Arts Advocate

Friday 14 August  
1:30pm – 3:00pm (27)  
The Shack, Beach Hotel

**FREE** **BOOK NOW**

Richard Denniss, Alice Grundy and Leanne Minshull

Presented by  
The Australia Institute

## Poets Out Loud Youth Slam

Saturday 15 August  
12:00pm – 2:00pm (54)  
Haven Gallery

**FREE** **BOOK NOW**

With Arantza Garcia Ferrand  
Hosted by Sarah Temporal

Presented by Poets Out Loud



## Australian Poetry Slam - Byron Heat

Saturday 15 August  
3:00pm – 5:00pm (73)  
Byron Bay Library

**FREE** **BOOK NOW**

With Arantza Garcia Ferrand  
Hosted by Miles Merrill

Presented by Word Travels

## John West Youth Poetry Cup & Writers at the Rails

Sunday 16 August  
The Railway Friendly Bar,  
Byron Bay

Hosted by David Hallett

12:00pm - 2:00pm (S)

John West Youth Poetry Cup  
\* Registrations open 12:00pm


2:00pm - 4:30pm (S)

Writers at The Rails  
Features & Open mic

**FREE**

\*Under 18s must be accompanied  
by an adult

w: [tamarasmith.org.au](http://tamarasmith.org.au)




**THE GREENS**

*"Home, she'd realised wasn't a place or time or a person... home was a feeling, a sense of being complete."*

— Kate Morton, *Homecoming*

**HAPPY 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY TO THE BYRON WRITERS FESTIVAL, AND ON THIS YEAR'S THEME OF HOMECOMING.**



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MEMBER FOR BALLINA

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# THE ROLYS

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## Courtney Adamo

**M**

Courtney Adamo is a mother of five who writes about family life and motherhood, and is author of *The Family Home* and *At Home In Every Season*.



## Louise Adler

**F 49**

Louise Adler was Director of Adelaide Writers Week from 2023 to 2026. She spent over 30 wonderful years in publishing with Hachette and MUP.



## Alex Adsett

**W 90**

Alex Adsett is a literary agent with Alex Adsett Literary. She represents over 40 artists and has helped thousands of authors negotiate deals.



## Cedar Anderson

**M**

Cedar Anderson is co-inventor of the Flow Hive. He has been a beekeeper since the age of six, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.



## Stuart Anderson

**M**

Stuart Anderson is a life-long beekeeper. Before inventing the Flow Hive with his son, he was director of a nonprofit community organisation.



## Evelyn Araluen

**F 60 69 82**

Evelyn Araluen is a Goorie and Koori poet, educator and editor. She is the author of *Dropbear* and *The Rot*.



## Sarah Armstrong

**79 103**

Sarah Armstrong is a former ABC journalist, now novelist. Her latest book for younger readers, *Run*, is a thriller set in the Australian bush.



## Romy Ash

**70 93**

Romy Ash is the author of novels *Mantle*, and *Floundering*, shortlisted for the Miles Franklin and Prime Minister's literary awards.



## Anneliese Austin

**M**

Dr Anneliese Austin is a postdoctoral researcher at the Bee Research and Extension Lab at Southern Cross University.



## Stephen Axford

**77**

Stephen Axford is a world-renowned fungi photographer and time-lapse pioneer, co-author of *Planet Fungi* and co-creator of *Follow the Rain*.



## Mel Bampton

**99**

Mel Bampton is a sought-after speaker, broadcaster, and storyteller with a career spanning nearly three decades in media and music.



## Tristan Bancks

**79 103**

Tristan Bancks writes bestselling thrillers for kids and teens including *Two Wolves*, *The Fall*, *Detention*, *Scar Town* and *Raised By Wolves*.



## Ella Noah Bancroft

**6 61 98**

Ella Noah Bancroft is a Bundjalung writer, poet, keynote speaker and CEO of The Returning Indigenous Corporation.



## Ender Başkan

**F 52 68 80**

Ender Başkan is a Naarm/Melbourne-based poet. His debut collection *Two Hundred Million Musketeers* was published by Giramondo in 2025.



## Luke Bateman

**F 48 62 92**

Luke Bateman is an Australian writer, podcaster and cultural commentator exploring identity, literature and modern masculinity.



## Damien Becker

**F 52**

Damien Becker lives in the Northern Rivers. His debut poetry collection *Thin Reed Throat* won the 2024 Flying Islands Manuscript Prize.



# Writers



## Naima Brown

**M 97**

Naima Brown writes novels about madwomen, including *The Shot*, *Mother Tongue* and *The Cruise* (October, 2026)



## Phil Brown

**2**

Phil Brown is a Brisbane journalist and poet. His most recent book is *Confessions of a Minor Poet* published by Transit Lounge.



## Daniel Browning

**6 17 57**

Daniel Browning is an award-winning Bundjalung and Kullilli writer, journalist and radio broadcaster. He is the author of *Close to the Subject*.



## Murray Burns

**72**

Murray Burns is a keyboardist, songwriter, and founding member of the new wave rock band Mi-Sex.



## Kylie Caldwell

**M**

Kylie Caldwell is Bundjalung artist, weaver and fashion designer revitalising cultural weaving via contemporary art and wearable design.



## Faumelisa Manquepillan Calfuleo

**37**

Faumelisa Manquepillan Calfuleo is a Mapuche poet and singer-songwriter from Puquiñe in southern Chile.



## Paul Callaghan

**49 62**

Paul Callaghan is an award-winning Worimi academic and author. His latest book is *Leading from the Dreaming*.



## Jane Caro

**49 62 81**

Jane Caro AM is a Walkley Award-winning writer and author of 14 books. Her latest book is *Rich Kid, Poor Kid: The battle for public education*.



## Bob Carr

**F 8 21 40**

The Hon Bob Carr is a former premier of New South Wales. He is the author of five books. His latest is *Bring Back Yesterday*.



## Julio Carrasco

**F 5 9 37 41**

Julio Carrasco is the author of several books of prose and poetry, member of the art collective Casagrande, and vocalist of the band Los Muebles.



## Angela Catterns

**31 91**

Angela Catterns is an Australian media personality and radio presenter. She has presented on Triple J, ABC Local and ABC Sydney among others.



## Lucy Clark

**F**

Lucy Clark is Global Editor of Guardian Australia. She is the author of *Beautiful Failures: How the quest for success is harming our kids*.



## Matthew Condon

**86 100**

Matthew Condon is an award-winning journalist and author of more than 18 works of fiction and non-fiction. He lives in the Byron Shire.



## Ruby Jean Cottle

**92 103**

Ruby Jean Cottle's debut duology, *Black River* and *White Mountain*, is a fresh take on the vampire genre, blending romance, fantasy and sci-fi.



## Carody Culver

**19 47 60**

Carody Culver is the editor of Griffith Review. She's also a writer and a literary interviewer.



## Trent Dalton

**F 58 93**

Trent Dalton is the international bestselling author of *Boy Swallows Universe*. His latest novel is *Gravity Let Me Go*.



## Kylie Day

30

Dr Kylie Day is an Aboriginal scholar, Senior Lecturer and Deputy Chair at Gnibi College of Australian Indigenous Peoples, Southern Cross University.



## Marele Day

7 84 96

Marele Day's *Claudia Valentine* series won her a Ned Kelly Lifetime Achievement Award for crime writing. Her most recent book is *Reckless*.



## Richard Denniss

5 12 27 51 67

Dr Richard Denniss is the co-CEO at The Australia Institute and a prominent Australian economist, author and public policy commentator.



## Hilarie Dunn

2

Hilarie Dunn has had a career in journalism and communications. She lives in the Northern Rivers, gets her hands dirty and reads a lot.



## Merinda Dutton

28 46

Merinda Dutton is a Barkandji and Gumbaynggirr woman, poet, mother, lawyer, and co-founder of Blackfulla Bookclub on Instagram.



## Marie Elena Ellis

6 25 52

Marie Ellis is an Arrernte Warlpiri woman from Amoonguna remote community. A multi-linguist, cultural advisor and poet, Marie is author of *I Am The Desert*.



## Wesley Enoch

F

Wesley Enoch AM is a Quandamooka writer and director from Minjerribah, Chair of Creative Australia and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Australians) at QUT.



## Javier Encalada

37

Javier Encalada is a Chilean-born journalist and writer who moved to Australia in 2000 and worked for Byron Shire News and The Northern Star.



## Kate Evans

23 34 44 58

Kate Evans is the co-host of ABC Radio National's The Bookshelf.



## Anna Featherstone

4 11 24

Anna Featherstone is a publishing consultant and mentor helping writers at every stage from first idea to publication, marketing and beyond.



## Dakota Feirer

14 60 70 98

Dakota Feirer is a Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr storyteller. His poetry collection *Arsenic Flower* is published by Hachette.



## Richard Fidler

F 3 44

Richard Fidler is an author, broadcaster and podcaster. He presents Conversations on ABC Radio, and the podcast Viking Lives.



## Richard Flanagan

F 53

Richard Flanagan won the Man Booker Prize for *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and the Baillie Gifford for *Question 7*. His latest book is *Heresies*.



## Tom Forrest

25 36 64

Tom Forrest, AKA Outback Tom, is a proud Yorta Yorta man, broadcaster, journalist and storyteller. His book is *Gone Bush*.



## Robert Forster

99

Robert Forster is a musician and writer who co-founded the internationally acclaimed rock band The Go-Betweens. His latest book is *Songwriters on The Run*.



## Suzy Freeman-Greene

65 94

Suzy Freeman-Greene is The Conversation's Books & Ideas editor. She is published in Griffith Review, Meanjin and Good Weekend, among others.



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**Saturday 15 August**  
**1:00pm - 2:30pm**  
**Bang Bang Byron Bay**



**Byron Writers Festival '26**

# MARKED EARTH

*I was here.*

'A ceramic object is, perhaps, one of the simplest ways a human being can say: *I was here.*'

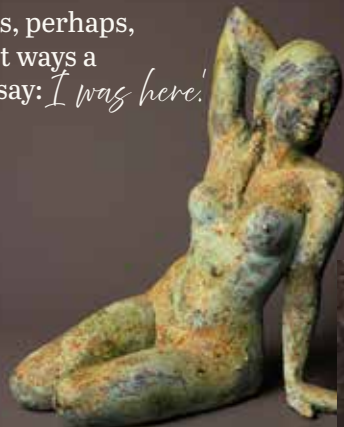
BLACK FIG GALLERY



Like a well-loved book that you feel something new from with each read. Art is much the same; every time you look a little closer, you discover something new.



*Suzana McDonald*



*Ruth Park*



*Sue Fraser*

**Exhibition Runs: August 20 - 30 2026**  
**Opening Event: Thursday 20 | 5 - 7.30pm**

In partnership with the Mud Trail, Black Fig Gallery has a first in Gallery exhibition - 'MARKED EARTH'. Clay has long carried the marks of people, place and time. From ancient vessels to contemporary sculpture, ceramic objects become records of the moment in which they were made. Political tensions, environmental concerns, humour, ritual, identity and process all leave their remains within the surface. These works act as contemporary artefacts - traces of the present moment embedded within fired earth.

Visit us at Shop 7, Alstonville Plaza, on beautiful Bundjalung Country | [@blackfiggallery](https://www.instagram.com/blackfiggallery) | [hello@blackfiggallery.com.au](mailto:hello@blackfiggallery.com.au) | 0480 676 957 (text welcome)





## Rafael Frumkin

16 65

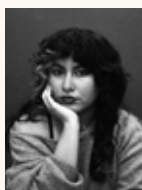
Rafael Frumkin is a novelist, essayist, and critic. Her latest books are the novel *Confidence* and a short story collection *Busy and Other Stories*.



## Poppy Galactic

79

Poppy Galactic is a fun children's music act created to celebrate the magic of Planet Earth. Cosmic dance music for kids!



## Arantza Garcia Ferrand

F 54 73

Arantza Garcia Ferrand is a Peruvian writer, living and performing on Kaurua Country. She is the 2025 Australian Poetry Slam Champion.



## Courtney Gibson

M

Courtney Gibson has held CEO roles at Screen NSW, SA Film Corp and Screen QLD. She is currently Acting Director of Lismore Regional Gallery.



## Kári Gíslason

F 65 80

Kári Gíslason is a writer and academic. His most recent book, *Running with Pirates*, is a memoir about fatherhood and raising boys.



## Richard Glover

F

Richard Glover is author of the bestsellers *The Land Before Avocado* and *Flesh Wounds*. His latest, *How to Ruin a Child*, will be published in October.



## Alice Grundy

27 47 67

Alice Grundy is Managing Editor of Australia Institute Press.



## Osher Günsberg

61 71 76

Osher Günsberg is a bestselling author and broadcaster. His new book *So What? Now What?* is a practical mental health toolkit.



## Chris Hanley

45 85

Chris Hanley OAM is the founder of Byron Writers Festival and was Chair for 20 years until 2016. He is the CEO of First National Byron.



## Steph Harmon

F 59

Steph Harmon is culture editor of Guardian Australia. She was previously founding editor of Junkee, and editor of The Brag.



## Chris Harrigan

16

Chris Harrigan is the editor of The Story, a magazine about writers and readers, and Chief Editor at Fireside, a story-led communications agency.



## Ashley Hay

29 55 78 95

Ashley Hay is a novelist and essayist based in Brisbane. She is the establishing editor for Meanjin at QUT.



## Nour Haydar

F 15 32

Nour Haydar is a journalist and co-host of Guardian Australia's flagship daily news podcast Full Story.



## David Heilpern

41 70

Professor David Heilpern is Dean of Law at Southern Cross University, author of five books, and a Board Member of Byron Writers Festival.



## Kathryn Heyman

W 7

Dr Kathryn Heyman is the award-winning author of nine works of fiction, memoir and poetry. *Circle of Wonders* is her latest novel.



## Ingrid Horrocks

13 29

Ingrid Horrocks is author of *All Her Lives: Nine Stories* (winner of the 2026 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards for fiction), and *Where We Swim*.



# Writers



## Shane Howard

**72 104**

Shane Howard is a respected poet, musician, writer, singer, producer and mentor. He was the mainstay of folk rock group Goanna.



## Mark Isaacs

**1 26**

Mark Isaacs is an author, writer, researcher, photographer and a community worker with a deep commitment to human rights.



## Antoun Issa

**1 57 74 93**

Antoun Issa is a Lebanese-Australian journalist and co-founder of Deepcut News. His book is *Rebirth: A Love Story from the Depths of War*.



## Julie Janson

**35 42 65 78**

Julie Janson is a Burruberongal Darug Nation Indigenous woman. Her books include *Benevolence*, *Compassion* and the poetry collection *My Kaathi Sister*.



## Sarah Kanowski

**F 83**

Sarah Kanowski presents Conversations on ABC Radio and podcast. She is currently writing a book about Zen (which her children find ironic).



## Damian Kassabgi

**F**

Damian Kassabgi has worked in politics and tech over 20 years, both in Asia and the US. He is Chair of NORPA and loves a hit of B-grade tennis.



## Delta Kay

**F S S 38 64 98**

Delta Kay is an Arakwal Bumberbin Bundjalung woman, proud mother and grandmother passionate about sharing culture and protecting Country.



## Sean Kelly

**15 33 39 75**

Sean Kelly is a weekly columnist for The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald. He is author of *The Good Fight: What Does Labor Stand For?*



## Misha Ketchell

**40**

Misha Ketchell is editor-in-chief of The Conversation. He has been a journalist and editor for 25 years.



## Kris Kneen

**59 68 77 101**

Kris Kneen is an award-winning author of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. Their latest book *Rite of Spring* is published by Transit Lounge.



## Roman Krznaric

**49 87**

Roman Krznaric is an acclaimed social philosopher and founder of the world's first Empathy Museum. His latest book is *History for Tomorrow*.



## Royce Kurlmelovs

**20 39 74**

Royce Kurlmelovs is author of *Slick: Australia's Toxic Relationship with Big Oil*. His writes for Rolling Stone, The Guardian, and others.



## Antoinette Lattouf

**F 15**

Antoinette Lattouf is an award-winning journalist and human rights advocate. She is the author of *Women Who Win*.



## Siang Lu

**F 28 42 56**

Siang Lu is the Miles Franklin-winning author of *Ghost Cities* and ABIA-winning author of *The Whitewash*.



## Grace Lucas-Pennington

**14 35 82**

Grace Lucas-Pennington is a Bundjalung/European editor, mentor and writer.



## Melissa Lucashenko

**17 28 67**

Melissa Lucashenko is a multi-award-winning Goorie novelist and writer. Her latest book is the collection *Not Quite White In The Head*.



## Angela Mackay

50

Former Financial Times journalist and now Chief Commercial Officer, Financial Times Group.



## Catherine Marciniak

77

Catherine Marciniak is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and journalist, and lead co-author of *Planet Fungi: A Photographer's Foray*.



## Meg Mason

55

Meg Mason is the author of *You Be Mother* and the international bestselling *Sorrow and Bliss*. Her latest novel is *Sophie, Standing There*.



## Cassie McCullagh

56 58

Cassie McCullagh is co-host of The Bookshelf on ABC Radio National.



## Jay McKenzie

M 5

Jay McKenzie is an itchy-footed, prize-winning short fiction writer and the author of *How to Lose the Lottery*.



## Leila McKinnon

M 71 102

Leila McKinnon is a journalist, broadcaster and speaker, and a Northern Rivers local.



## George Megalogenis

21 50

George Megalogenis is the author of six books and four Quarterly Essays. His latest book is *Three Shocks: Who We Are Becoming in the 21st Century*.



## Pauline Menczer

43 57

Pauline Menczer is a world champion surfer and outspoken advocate of women in sport. She is author of *Surf Like a Woman*.



## Courtney Miller

66

Courtney Miller has a varied career across politics, art and fashion. She is the Chair of Byron Writers Festival.



## Louise Milligan

F 31 62 86

Louise Milligan is a multi-award-winning investigative journalist for ABC TV's Four Corners. *Shellybanks* is her second novel.



## Steve MinOn

58 80 94

Steve MinOn's debut novel *First Name Second Name* was longlisted for the 2026 Miles Franklin, and shortlisted for the MUD Literary Prize.



## Leanne Minshull

12 27

Leanne Minshull is the Co-CEO at the Australia Institute and a board member of the Graeme Wood Foundation.



## Natasha Mitchell

69 76 87

Natasha Mitchell is host of ABC Radio National's Big Ideas program and podcast. She founded the popular ABC program All in the Mind.



## Naomi Moran

F 98

Naomi Moran is a Dunghutti and Nyangbal/Arakwal woman of the Bundjalung nation. She is a NSW Treaty Commissioner.



## Sarah Ndiaye

13

Sarah Ndiaye is the Mayor of Byron Shire Council. She believes the ocean teaches you everything worth knowing about patience, power and perspective.



## Mandy Nolan

38 61 88

Mandy Nolan is the accidental cult leader for angry, funny women. She is a writer, journalist, stand-up comedian and mother of five.

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All the local current events and goings on, plus goodies such as:

- Weekly gig guide • Market guide
- Restaurant guide • Gallery listings
- What's on event page • And more!



## Kerry O'Brien

53

Kerry O'Brien is one of Australia's most respected journalists with six Walkley Awards. Kerry co-wrote *The Voice to Parliament Handbook*.



## Mick O'Regan

8 42 81

Mick O'Regan is a journalist and broadcaster with more than two decades experience with the ABC and Seven Network.



## Bebe Oliver

25 64

Bebe Oliver is a Bardi Jawi award-winning author, poet and illustrator and Artistic Director of Blak & Bright. His latest book is *if this is the end*.



## Debra Oswald

63 78 91

Debra Oswald is a two-time winner of the NSW Premier's Literary Award and created the TV series *Offspring*. Her new novel is *100 Years of Betty*.



## Luke Patterson

F 14 25 52

Luke Patterson is a Gamilaroi poet, educator and musician. His debut poetry collection, *A Savage Turn*, is published by Magabala Books



## Kirra Pendergast

69

Kirra Pendergast is a globally-recognised online safety expert and co-author of *Digital Freedom* with Maggie Dent.



## Andrew Pippos

45 59

Andrew Pippos is the author of the novels *The Transformations* (2025) and *Lucky's* (2020), which were both published by Picador.



## Turia Pitt

43 102

Turia Pitt is the best-selling author of three books. Her latest book is *Selfish: How to Unlearn the Rules that are Breaking You*.



## Mark Pope

72

Mark Pope is an Australian music industry legend with a career spanning artist management, touring, A&R, ARIAs and iconic live events.



## Amanda Reichelt-Brushett

13

Amanda Reichelt-Brushett is a professor at Southern Cross University and a lover of clean waters and healthy ecosystems.



## Isabelle Reinecke

51

Isabelle Reinecke is an expert in how law, politics and power shape our climate, society and democracy. She is ED/Founder of Grata Fund.



## Amy Remeikis

5 12 21 60 75

Amy Remeikis is the author of *Screw Nice* and *Where It All Went Wrong*. She is the Chief Political Analyst for the Australia Institute.



## Ben Roche

51

Ben Roche is Pro Vice-Chancellor of Southern Cross University and leads the University's strategic impact agenda in research and education.



## Micaela Sahhar

47 68 83

Micaela Sahhar's first book, *Find Me at the Jaffa Gate*, won the 2026 Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Non-Fiction.



## Niki Savva

3 15 40

Niki Savva is a columnist with The Age and SMH and appears on ABC's *Insiders*. She is the author of *Earthquake: The Election that Shook Australia*.



## Nell Schofield

43 63 101

Nell Schofield is a well-known public figure in Australia for her work as a performer, writer, broadcaster, activist and producer.



# Writers



## Julianne Schultz

21 33 41

Dr Julianne Schultz is author of *The Idea of Australia* and executive producer of the SBS series. She was founding editor of Griffith Review.



## Tricia Shantz

72

Tricia Shantz co-publishes and edits *Rusty's Byron Guide*. Her recent book is *Musicland: When the Music Came to Byron 1970-1995*.



## Geetanjali Shree

10 28 78

Geetanjali Shree is the International Booker Prize winning author of *Tomb of Sand*. She has written five award-winning novels and five collections of short stories.



## David Sly

93

David Sly has published six books, and is a judge of the annual MUD Literary Prize, for best debut Australian literary novel.



## Mark Smith

70 86

Mark Smith is the author of six novels and an award-winning writer of short fiction and non fiction. His latest novel is *Where Truth Ends*.



## Thammika Songkhaeo

59 80 95

Thammika Songkhaeo is the author of *Stamford Hospital*, a debut novel selected as a must-read for International Women's Day.



## Marika Sosnowski

22 41

Marika Sosnowski is a legal anthropologist and the granddaughter of Polish and Dutch Holocaust survivors. She is author of *58 Facets*.



## Victor Steffensen

30 64

Victor Steffensen is a traditional knowledge practitioner. Co-founder of Firesticks Alliance, his books include *Fire Country* and *The Knowledge*.



## Bridie Tanner

5 48

Bridie Tanner is an op-shop enthusiast, Bulldogs tragic, and is the Breakfast presenter of ABC North Coast.



## Joel Taylor

43

Joel Taylor is a two-time World Champion paraplegic surfer born and bred at Lennox Head on the Far North Coast of New South Wales.



## Zoe Terakes

44 57 97

Zoe Terakes is an acclaimed actor and writer. They are a vocal advocate for trans rights within the industry. Their first book is *Eros: Queer Myths for Lovers*.



## Sam Thaiday

79

Sam Thaiday is a hugely popular NRL legend of Torres Strait Islander descent. His book for children is *How The Fish Got Their Bones*.



## Claire Thomas

58 85

Claire Thomas is the Naarm-based author of *On Not Climbing Mountains* and *The Performance*.



## Nicholas Timms

M 5 26

Nicholas Timms is author of *The Lineup* and a lifelong surfer. Raised in Byron, he lives in Sydney and works at a major ad agency.



## Steve Toltz

59 69 89

Steve Toltz is the author of four novels, *A Fraction of the Whole*, *Quicksand*, *Here Goes Nothing* and his latest, *A Rising of the Lights*.



## Lucianne Tonti

M 44 66

Lucianne Tonti is The Saturday Paper's fashion editor, Elle's sustainability editor and columnist for The Guardian. Her new book is *Good Witch*.



## Jack Toohey

32 61 67

Jack Toohey is a Sydney-based writer focused on social inequality and climate justice. He is author of *Better Things Are Possible*.



## Zoë Tuckwell

M

Zoë Tuckwell is an author and engagement specialist at Energy Leadership Australia, working towards stronger climate policy and clean energy.



## Maria van Neerven

6

Maria van Neerven is a Mununjali poet from the Yugambah nation and was the 2023 winner of the David Unaipon Award. Her latest book is *Two Tongues*.



## Sonya Voumard

M

Sonya Voumard is an award-winning nonfiction author and a former political journalist with *The Age*. Her latest book is a memoir; *Tremor*.



## Lisa Walker

86

Lisa Walker is author of eight novels. *The Pact*, her first psychological thriller, was inspired by walking the Camino pilgrimage in Spain.



## Sita Walker

19 42 80

Sita Walker is a high school English teacher, freelance writer and award-winning memoirist. *In a Common Hour* is her debut novel.



## Maggie Walters

24

Maggie Walters is the award-winning author of *Split: A Life Shared: Living with Multiple Personality Disorder* and *Fractured Motherhood*.



## Tasma Walton

5 14 46 63

Tasma Walton is a proud Boonwurrung woman and award-winning actor, screen writer and novelist. Her latest book is *I Am Nannertgarrook*.



## Debbie Whitmont

22 40 100

Debbie Whitmont is a former lawyer and an award-winning journalist. She is author of *The Man Who Couldn't Wait*.



## Marian Wilkinson

20 51

Marian Wilkinson is a multi-award winning journalist. Her latest book is *The Carbon Club*. Her Quarterly Essay is *Woodside vs The Planet*.



## Michael Winkler

F 23 68 89

Michael Winkler's latest novel is *Griefdogg*. His previous novel, *Grimmish*, was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award.



## Mindy Woods

36

Mindy Woods is a proud Bundjalung Native food chef, cultural ambassador and winner of World 50 Best Restaurant Awards Champion of Change 2025.



## Fiona Wright

F 47 76 88

Fiona Wright is the author of the novel *Kill Your Boomers*, two essay collections and two books of poetry.



## Susan Wyndham

10 34

Susan Wyndham is a writer and journalist. Her biography *Elizabeth Harrower: The Woman in the Watch Tower* was published in 2025.



## Karena Wynn-Moylan

9

Karena Wynn-Moylan is a multi disciplinary artist and founder of the award-winning multi-platform program *The Narratives Library*.

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# Festival Key Information



## Food and Drinks

Food and drinks will be available from an array of popular Byron Bay eateries in the Festival Precinct and the Festival Marketplace.

## Coffee

Byron Bay is known for its early mornings and exceptional coffee culture. Explore the many local cafés and coffee spots located throughout the Festival Precinct.

## Bars

Byron Bay is renowned for its vibrant hospitality scene, with a diverse range of bars, pubs and restaurants located throughout the Festival Precinct.

## Festival Hub

Pick up your festival passes, exchange your tickets for wristbands, buy merchandise and access general information at the Box Office located at the Festival Hub at Railway Park, Jonson St, Byron Bay.

For enquiries, assistance, and updates throughout the festival, please visit the Information Booth. Opens 8am daily.

## Marketplace

Located in the Festival Hub, our bespoke marketplace showcases local artisan makers, alongside a delicious range of food and drink. Open daily from 11am.

## Market Stage

Catch great writers and musicians on the Market Stage at the Festival Hub.

For full schedule go to [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

## Festival Bookshop

The Book Room is the festival's official bookseller with two locations in town. Visit the Festival Bookshop, located in the Byron Visitor Centre in the Festival Hub, or stop by The Book Room on Fletcher St. Open from 9am daily.

## Book Signings

Buy books, meet the authors and have your books signed at two signing locations, at the Festival Bookshop in the Festival Hub on Jonson St and on the foreshore next to the Bay St Stage.

## Accessibility

Check our website for selected Auslan interpreted sessions. Patrons may also bring their own interpreters on a free carer's pass.

Dedicated accessible seating, toilets and parking areas are available in the Festival Precinct. Check the website for more information.

Byron Writers Festival is a participant in the National Companion Card scheme, offering patrons with a disability a second ticket for their accompanying companion at no charge.

## Amenities

The Festival Precinct includes a range of amenities across multiple locations.

For full details and to plan your visit, please refer to the website.

## Shuttle Bus

A free shuttle bus will operate between the Cavanbah Centre (Ewingsdale Rd) and the festival precinct daily from 7:30am to late, Friday 14 - Sunday 16 August. Paid car parking is available at the Cavanbah Centre for shuttle bus ticket holders.



# Map and Directory

## Stages

### Jonson St Stage

presented by The Vasudhara Fund

### Byron Theatre

presented by The Guardian

### Wategos Room

presented by Southern Cross University

### Haven Gallery

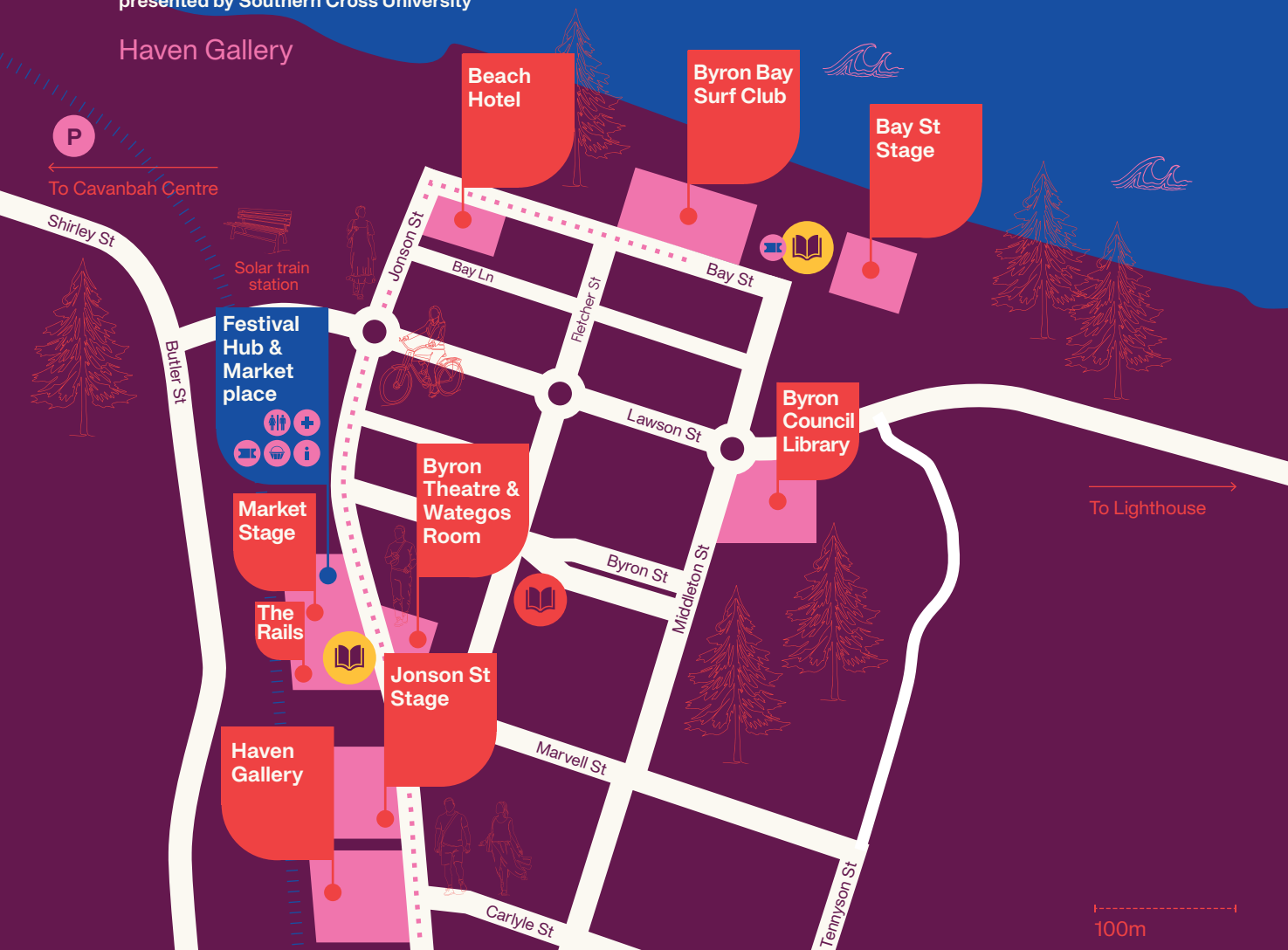
### Bay St Stage

presented by Southern Cross University

### Byron Bay Surf Club

presented by Tasmanian Walking Company

### Beach Hotel



## Festival Hub

- Box Office & Ticket Desk
- Toilets
- Info Booth
- First Aid
- Marketplace
- Foot Traffic

## Festival Bookshop

- Book Sales & Signing
- The Book Room

## 3-Day Pass

(Friday, Saturday & Sunday)

Includes access to all festival sessions.  
Excludes separately ticketed events.

\$330 General / \$275 Festival Friends  
Concession & Youth N/A

## 1-Day Pass

(Friday, Saturday or Sunday)

Includes access to all festival sessions.  
Excludes separately ticketed events.

\$145 General / \$120 Festival Friends  
\$130 Concession  
\$80 Youth (25 years or under)

BOOK NOW

FREE

For all tickets and to register for free events, visit [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

### Box Office

Our Box Office is located at the Festival Hub in Railway Park on Jonson Street. **All pass holders must exchange tickets for a wrist band** from the Festival Hub or the Bay St Stage ticket desk.

We offer Mobtix for 3-Day, 1-Day and Feature Event passes. Please contact us via [tickets@byronwritersfestival.com](mailto:tickets@byronwritersfestival.com) to book.

## Getting to the Festival

The festival precinct is located on multiple sites in the township of Byron Bay. We encourage you to hop on our free shuttle bus or carpool with friends and family.

### Shuttle Bus

A free shuttle bus will operate between the Cavanbah Centre (Ewingsdale Rd) and the festival precinct daily from 7:45am to late, Friday 14 - Sunday 16 August. Paid car parking is available at the Cavanbah Centre for shuttle bus ticket holders.

Bus timetable available at [byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)

### Notes and Conditions

- Tickets will be exchanged for a non-transferable wristband at the Festival Hub Box Office or from the Bay St Stage ticket desk
- Box Office opens at 8:00am daily
- Bay St Stage ticket desk opens at 7:45am
- All tickets are subject to availability and booking fees
- Day passes are not-transferable
- Byron Writers Festival is an all-weather event

For full terms and conditions, visit [byronwritersfestival.com/terms-conditions](http://byronwritersfestival.com/terms-conditions)

### Parking

Car parking is available at the Cavanbah Centre for \$10 per day. We recommend pre-purchasing your parking pass at the time of booking your festival pass. Car parking opens from 7:30am each day. Please follow directions from parking attendants upon arrival.

Accessible parking is available. Visitors are required to display a valid disability parking permit.

Please note that car parking within the festival precinct is limited. For additional options, refer to the Byron Shire Council car parking map available on our website.





# Our Patrons

## Major Benefactors

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Mell Coppin  
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Tom & Sibylle Vidal  
Will & Janice Liley

## With Thanks

Steve Connelly  
Anika Ebner  
Delta Kay  
Brian Warrick

## Join Our Patron Circle

Patrons make everything we do possible. For more details visit [byronwritersfestival.com/get-involved](http://byronwritersfestival.com/get-involved)

# Our Team

## Board

**Chair**  
Courtney Miller

**Treasurer**  
Cheryl Bourne

**Secretary**  
Hilarie Dunn

**Public Officer**  
Lynda Dean OAM

**Members**  
Sarah Armstrong  
Marele Day  
Lynda Hawryluk  
Grace Lucas-Pennington  
David Heilpern  
Lesley-Anne Houghton

## Team

**Artistic Director**  
Jessica Alice

**General Manager**  
Molly Ward

**Development Manager**  
Aarna Hudson

**Program Manager**  
Clare McGregor

**Creative Producer**  
Rob Waters

**Storyboard Coordinator**  
Sarah Temporal

**Marketing Manager**  
Alexis Zahner

**Finance Manager**  
Simone Evans

**Development, Marketing and Administration Assistant**  
Jasmine Anoushian

**Production and Operations Manager**  
Sophie Kirov

**Publicist**  
Leigh McGrane

**Volunteers Coordinator**  
Lauren Mills

**Creative Design**  
Cream Creative Design & Alexis Zahner

**and our fabulous team of volunteers**

# Partners



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## Festival Precinct Partners

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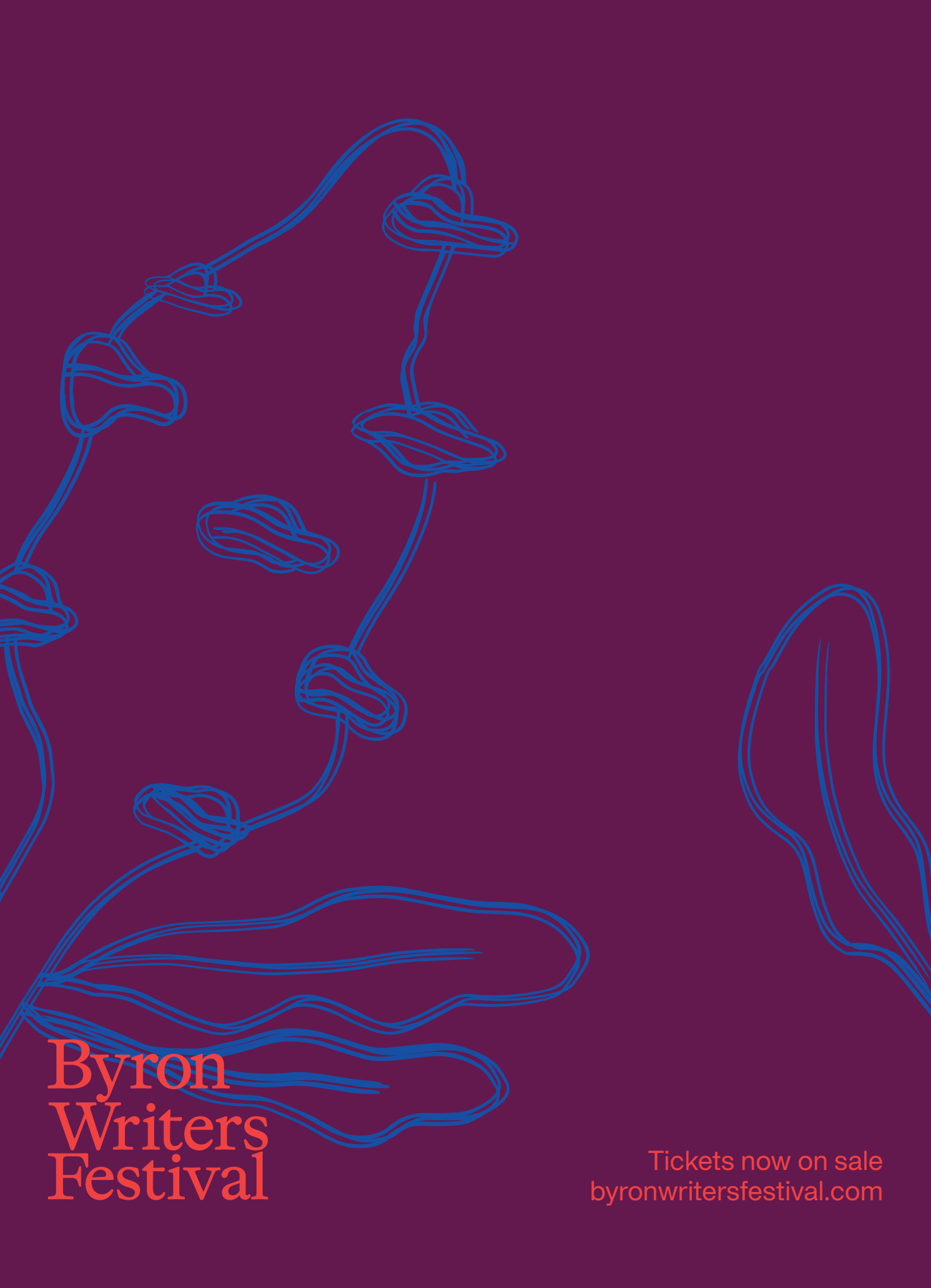


## Hospitality Partners



## Charity Partner





# Byron Writers Festival

Tickets now on sale  
[byronwritersfestival.com](http://byronwritersfestival.com)