



DANDENONG RANGES

Literary Festival

OCT 17/18, 2025

Belgrave

FESTIVAL DETAILS

WELCOME

A note from the chair of the committee



HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE FIRST DANDENONG RANGES LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Festival committee acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, and First Peoples across Victoria and Australia, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. A welcome to country will open the festival on Friday night.

With its mysteries and wonders, our local environment has always inspired artists of all kinds. We hope to add to our diverse cultural richness by initiating this festival of writing. For our inaugural Festival, we've chosen the theme, 'Sense Of Place'; place as home, place as a state of mind, place as inspiration or threat or query - the possibilities are wide open.

The writers who come together in Belgrave this year will each bring their own interpretations to this idea. In this program, you'll find sessions and workshops on historical fiction, crime, biography and memoir, young adult fiction, romance, self-publishing and many others.

Our Ranges are home to an engaged and creative community which embraces local events and people, ensuring a vibrant and inspiring literary festival for all ages. Enjoy it! You can book your tickets with the QR below.

Marian Matta



FESTIVAL PROGRAM

FRIDAY OCT 17
7PM - 9PM

Keynote Opening Night Cameo Cinema
Adults \$39 Concession \$33



HANNAH KENT

Hannah Kent's first novel, the multi-award-winning international bestseller, *Burial Rites*, was translated into over 30 languages and is being adapted for film. Her novels *The Good People* and *Devotion* have been translated into multiple languages, shortlisted for numerous awards and are being adapted for film. Her original feature film, *Run Rabbit Run*, was directed by Daina Reid and starred Sarah Snook.

Hannah is also the co-founder of *Kill Your Darlings*, and has written for *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Paper*, *The Guardian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Meanjin*, *Qantas Magazine* and *LitHub*. *Always Home, Always Homesick* - a memoir, is her first book of non-fiction.

She lives and works on Peramangk and Kaurna country.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM

SAT OCT 18
9AM - 11AM

Historical Fiction, Past echoes, present voices
The Belgrave Hub - Adults \$25 Concession \$22



MADELEINE CLEARY

Madeleine's debut novel of historical fiction, *The Butterfly Women*, was published in May 2025 with Affirm Press and was chosen as Dymocks Fiction Book of the Month.



ALLI PARKER

Alli Parker is a Japanese-Australian bestselling author and screenwriter. In 2023, her debut historical fiction novel, *At the Foot of the Cherry Tree*, was published by HarperCollins Australia.



DIANNE DEMPSEY

Dianne Dempsey's features and book reviews have appeared in *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail*, *Kill Your Darlings*, *Australian Book Review*. Her previous books include *Girls in Our Town* (2014) and *When He Came Home: The Impact of War on Partners and Children of Veterans* (2021)



TAMARA PROTASSOW ADAMS - MODERATOR

Tamara has edited 55+ books, both freelance for self-published authors, as well as for Hay House UK. A Hills native, she has lived in the Dandenong Ranges for most of her life, minus some stints living in inner Melbourne and in Paris.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
11AM - 1PM

A Sense of Place: How Landscape Shapes Our Stories
The Belgrave Hub - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



LIA HILLS

Lia Hills is an award-winning poet, novelist and translator, born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. Her work has been published, translated and performed around the world.



KERRY MAYNE

Kerry Mayne is an author, former wedding photographer and current police officer. When not at work attempting to solve crime, she is writing about it or preparing an endless stream of snacks for her children.



MARK MUPOTSA-RUSSELL

His debut noir thriller, *The Hitwomans Guide to Reducing Household debt*, won the 2023 Affirm Press Mentorship Award. Mark was previously shortlisted for the Text Prize, won a screen development grant from Screen Australia



KATE MILDENHALL - MODERATOR

Kate Mildenhall is the author of three novels - *SKYLARKING* (2016), *THE MOTHER FAULT* (2020) and *THE HUMMINGBIRD EFFECT* (2023). *THE HUMMINGBIRD EFFECT* was longlisted for the 2024 Stella Prize and shortlisted for the 2024 ABIA literary Fiction Book of the year.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
1PM - 3PM

Blurred lines: the art of life writing
The Belgrave Hub - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



HANNAH KENT

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CARLY FINDLAY

Carly Findlay OAM is an award-winning writer, speaker and appearance activist. Her first book, a memoir called *Say Hello*, was released in January 2019. Carly edited the anthology *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* with Black Inc Books.



CHRISTINE NEWELL

Christine's debut memoir, *Five Seasons in Seoul*, was longlisted for the 2024 Hawkeye Publishing Manuscript Development Prize (under a different title) and was published by Affirm Press in March 2025.



SUE SMETHURST - MODERATOR

Sue Smethurst is a bestselling author and journalist. She co-authored the bestselling series of books, *The Clothesline Diet*, *The Clothesline Diet Club*, *Why Can't I Lose Weight?* and *The Clothesline Diet USA*. She is currently a Senior Writer for *The Australian Women's Weekly* magazine.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
3PM - 5PM

People, Places, and the Making of Villains
The Belgrave Hub - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



MATT ROGERS

Matt Rogers is the internationally bestselling author of the Dante Jacoby series. He single-handedly wrote and marketed more than thirty-five thriller novels. His books have collectively sold over one million copies



CHRISTIAN WHITE

Christian White is an Australian author and screenwriter whose credits include feature film *Relic* and Netflix series *Clickbait*. His debut novel, *The Nowhere Child* (2018), was one of Australia's bestselling debut novels ever, with rights sold in 17 international territories and a major screen deal.



KYLIE ORR - MODERATOR

Kylie (she/her) is an author of dark and twisty contemporary fiction. Her debut novel, *Someone Else's Child* was longlisted in the Richell Prize and published by HarperCollins in 2022. Her second novel *The Eleventh* hit shelves in February 2024 and was chosen as an Apple Books "Must Read" and "Book of the Week."

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
9AM - 11AM

Engaging the toughest literary audience: kids
The Library - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



CAROLINE STILLS

Caroline Stills is the author of a number of acclaimed picture books for children. She won the 2024 Text Prize for *A Gift from the Birds*, her first novel for middle grade readers. Caroline lives in the Dandenong Ranges, east of Melbourne, with her family.



PAULINE HOSKING

Pauline has written three books for readers aged 9-12. Two featured Cinnamon Stevens, a twelve year old super sleuth. Her new book, out this year, is a fantasy/adventure *Ana and the Bones of Prophecy*. She is also a playwright.



ELLE MCFADZEAN

Elle McFadzean is an author, architecture graduate and fiction worldbuilder living in Melbourne/Naarm. She writes high-concept fiction that sparks the imagination.



ELIZABETH FENSHAM - MODERATOR

Elizabeth is the award-winning author of nine novels for children and young adults. Titles include: *Helicopter Man*, *The Invisible Hero*, *Matty Forever*

Children under 12 free with a paying adult

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
11AM - 1PM

More than fantasy: capturing the YA audience
The Library - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



PAUL KENNEDY

Paul Kennedy is a national television presenter for ABC News Breakfast. He has worked for three television networks and has written three books, including co-authoring *Hell on the Way to Heaven* (with Chrissie Foster), one of the triggers for Australia's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



MELANIE KANICKY

Melanie Kanicky is a Melbourne-based author. Born in the Yarra Valley. Melanie has a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Film & Television) from Deakin University, and a Master's Degree in Writing & Literature, specialising in creative writing and children's literature. Outside of her studies, Melanie currently manages a bookstore, where she delights in sharing her love of reading with others.



AMY DOAK

Eleanor Jones Is Not A Murderer won the 2024 Davitt Award for Best Crime Novel for YA Readers; was a CBCA 2024 notable; and was shortlisted for both the 2024 ABIA Award Book of the Year for Older Readers, and for the 2024 Davitt Awards Best Debut Crime Novel.



CHARISSE EDE - MODERATOR

Charisse has more than 30 years' experience as a journalist, communications and media strategist and university feature writing lecturer. She has a Masters in Writing and Literature, is co-writing a book about pain and adversity, and is working on her own work of fiction.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
1PM - 3PM

Writing the climate change existential crisis
The Library - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



AARON LAMB

Author Aaron Lamb's career spans almost two decades across 5 novels and 1 book for his children. His latest book, *Cults, Coffee and Close Encounters*, reached number 1 in Australia on Amazon. It is set in a fictional version of the Dandenong Ranges after an alien spaceship lands in the outback and civilisation loses its mind.



ROSE MICHAEL

Author of *The Asking Game* and *The Art of Navigation*, Rose Michael has also been a commissioning editor at a trade publisher and founded her own micropress, Arcade Publications. She has published speculative fiction in *Island*, *Griffith Review*, *Best Australian Stories* and speculative criticism in *The Conversation*, *TEXT* and *Sydney Review of Books*.



MICHAEL PREWER

Michael Prewer has been writing for as long as he can remember. *R.E. Generation*, released in June 2024, was his debut novel, but he already has a number of others in the works. Michael holds a Bachelor of Science (majoring in Anatomy) and a Masters of Speech Pathology.



MARIAN MATTA - MODERATOR

Marian writes short stories and historical fiction. Her collection, *'Life, Bound'*, was published by MidnightSun in 2020, and other stories have appeared in over a dozen anthologies. Her manuscript *'On Æther Hill'*, set in the Dandenong Ranges, won a Gold Medal at the 2024 Historical Novels Society Conference.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
3PM - 5PM

Everyday drama: making the ordinary extraordinary
The Library - Adults \$25, Concession \$22



KATE SOLLY

Kate Solly writes funny, feel-good fiction with an eye for the profound within the domestic. Her latest novel, *The Paradise Heights Craft Store Stitch-Up* is a deliciously warm and witty cosy crime adventure. Her first novel, *Tuesday Evenings with the Copeton Craft Resistance*, is a hilarious and heartwarming read about community, bigotry and the power of grassroots craftivism.



KELLY GARDINER

Kelly writes historical fiction, crime and fantasy for readers of all ages. She also teaches creative writing and runs writing retreats. Her new book, co-written with Sharmini Kumar, is *Miss Caroline Bingley: Private Detective*, published worldwide by HarperCollins in 2025.



ALISON GOODMAN

Alison is the author of nine novels. Her most recent release, *The Ladies Road Guide to Utter Ruin*, is the second book in the *Ill-Mannered Ladies* series. The first book, *The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies*, won the 2024 Readers' Choice Davitt Award and was long-listed in the 2023 ARA Historical Novel Award.



KIMBERLEY ALLSOPP - MODERATOR

Kimberley Allsopp's work has appeared in *Kidspot*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, and *WHIMN*. She co-hosts the rom-com podcast *Meet Cute* and her debut novel *Love & Other Puzzles* was published by HarperCollins in 2022. A publishing industry veteran since 2008, Kimberley lives in Brisbane with her partner and two daughters.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
9AM - 11AM

Workshop Self-Publishing
Belgrave Library Adults \$30 Concession \$25



KATHIE THOMAS

Her book "Worth More Than Rubies: The Value of a Work At Home Mom" achieved #23 in the Top 100 Hot New Releases for her genre on Amazon. She has since published "It Happened By Design: A Series of God-Incidence Stories" and a series of Children's books about birds and butterflies.

OCT 18
11AM - 2PM

Storytelling + Place setting in games
Belgrave Library Adults \$30 Concession \$25



GIDEON ADAMS

Gideon Adams is currently completing their Bachelor of Film & Television at Swinburne University. A filmmaking mentor for the Ranges Academy of Performing Arts from 2022-2024, Gideon began playing Dungeons & Dragons in 2023 and have taken on the role of Game Master in two campaigns. They are interested in the intersection of filmmaking, oral storytelling & worldbuilding that D'n'D hones.



JENNIFER-ROSE HOLLOWAY

Jennifer-Rose Holloway is studying a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Literature Studies at Deakin University. A transwoman from rural SA, she has an interest in the ontology of play and art. She recently qualified to the Magic: The Gathering Pro Tour and World Championship, so she spends a majority of her time reading, training, and running/playing in TTRPGs.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

OCT 18
10.30AM-11.30AM

Puffing Billy picture book reading -
Belgrave Library FREE



DEREK AND GINA BRAIDNER

Derek and Gina's collaboration weaves Derek's decades of lived experience with Gina's storytelling voice, creating books, animation, and classroom resources that not only delight children but also honour the spirit of the Dandenong Ranges. Project Billy is more than a story, it's the fulfilment of a dream, shared across generations, and a legacy for future ones.

OCT 18
11.30AM - 12.30PM

Aunty's House picture book reading -
Belgrave Library FREE



EMMY WEBBERS

Emmy Webbers is a Gunai/Kurnai person and currently lives on Wurundjeri country. Emmy is an active member of Willum Warrain Gathering Place within the community. Emmy holds a Bachelor in Indigenous studies and has a passion for culture and sharing it to create a safe space for understanding and learning for everyone. "Aunty's House" by author Emmy Webbers and illustrator Kelsie King is a gorgeous celebration of the special role of Aunties in a child's life.

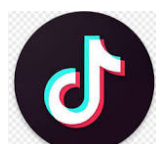
TICKETED EVENTS

	BELGRAVE HUB	BELGRAVE LIBRARY	LIBRARY WORKSHOP
9 AM	Historical fiction, past echoes, present voices	Engaging the toughest literary audience: kids	Self publishing
11 AM	A sense of place: how landscape shapes our stories	More than fantasy: capturing the YA audience	Storytelling + place setting in games
1 PM	Blurred lines: the art of life writing	Writing the climate change existential crisis	
3 PM	People, places, and the making of villains	Everyday drama: making the ordinary extraordinary	

FREE EVENTS

BELGRAVE LIBRARY

10.30 AM	Puffing Billy picture book reading
11 AM	Aunty's Place picture book reading
1 PM	Writing sprints - drop in
Anytime	Book swap through Belgrave Township



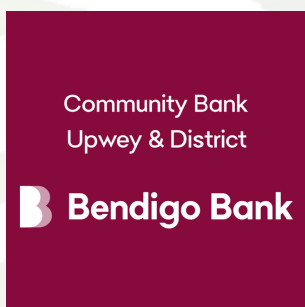
THANK YOU

MAJOR SPONSORS



YARRA RANGES COUNCIL

Yarra Ranges Council is our major sponsor through its Annual Community Grants Scheme. The Committee is very grateful for the ongoing backing and encouragement of Yarra Ranges Council, and the enthusiasm and guidance of its officers.



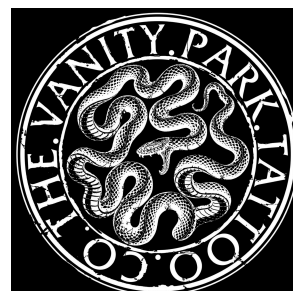
COMMUNITY BANK UPWEY & DISTRICT, PROUDLY PART OF BENDIGO BANK

We are very pleased to announce that the Community Bank Upwey & District (part of Bendigo Bank) has joined us as a sponsor of the inaugural Dandenong Ranges Literary Festival. Their generous support is all thanks to their customers as the Community Bank is based on a 'profit-with-purpose' model, meaning the profits are returned directly to the community that makes them possible. If you're thinking about a new loan or making sure the one you have is the right one for you, we highly recommend booking an appointment with Cheryl and her friendly team at Upwey! Drop by, call them on 9754 1200, or send an enquiry via email at upweymailbox@bendigoadelaide.com.au

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Tamara
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