

Conference Programme

Stimulating • Informative • Contemporary • Fun

Celebrate
READING
National Conference

Friday 26 to Saturday 27 October 2018

Insights into Quality Australian
Literature for Young Adults

Day 1 - Friday 26 October

8:00 Gates Open | Registration | Arrival Tea and Coffee

9:00 Welcome and Official Conference Opening

9:20 **Keynote: A Drop of Pixelated Ink: Are We Didacts or Exemplars?** by James Roy

As a society, we face a tsunami of young people increasingly aware of two things: that the world we are leaving for them is spoiled and broken; and that they have a voice loud enough to be heard. From climate change to sexual identity rights to gun control and everything in between, they are a generation demanding to be heard. Is it time for us as gatekeepers and creators to stop presenting literature that tells young readers what to think, but rather with more literature that shows them how much power a well told story dealing with hard truths has to change the world?

10:05 **The Toughest Thing I've Ever Had to Write: A Keynote Response with ALL Presenters**

All presenters will take to the stage to engage in a conversation about censorship and writing difficult stories. They will discuss how they explore controversial topics with the understanding that teenage readers crave realistic, honest reflections of their world.

10:50 Morning Tea

11:20 **I Make Stuff Up** by Claire Zorn

Claire looks back at how she ended up becoming a writer, starting with experiences she had at school and the way she didn't even consider a career in writing because of her misconceptions of the sort of person a writer is. She will also focus on the importance of fostering creativity in students and young writers and give a little insight into her creative process.

11:55 **Growing up with Absent Novels** with Will Kostakis and Jared Thomas

Will and Jared write gay and Indigenous stories for their younger selves and for the gay and Indigenous kids who do not see their world reflected back at them. They want them to know that they and their experiences have value. A positive side effect is that others who don't identify as same-sex attracted or Indigenous can see other people's experiences, and understand their gay and Indigenous peers a little better.

12:35 **The Emotional and Physical Landscape of Books** by Cath Crowley

Join Cath as she discusses the process of writing *Words in Deep Blue* and *Graffiti Moon*, and explores the importance of landscapes in her writing – how the physical always comes first, how the connections between the inner and outer are created and linked, and why painted walls and the pages of books feel like the perfect settings to her for the exploration of grief and belonging.

1:10 Lunch | Book Signings

1:45 **Cloudwish and Writing the Other** by Fiona Wood

Vân Ước Phan was established as a minor character in *Wildlife* and steps forward as the protagonist of *Cloudwish*. In this session Fiona discusses creating a character from a minority cultural background that is not her own. Can any writer take on diverse representation, or should it be the sole province of Own Voices writers? A look at the discussion around cultural appropriation.

2:20 **Voices, Characters and Verisimilitude** with Brendan Ritchie, Jaclyn Moriarty and James Roy

Many writers are fascinated by character and voice, believing it to be the key to engaging their readership. Brendan, Jaclyn and James discuss how they find the voice that brings each character to life, enabling them to sustain their narratives and make them believable.

3:00 **Essential Science Fiction** by Jay Kristoff

Jay examines the evolution of the science fiction genre, and the need for it in an ever-changing and dangerous world. He discusses the origins of the genre, its development as a medium through which to explore the zeitgeist, the prophetic nature of seminal works of sci-fi, and the need for society to view itself through the lens of futurism.

3:30 Afternoon Tea | Book Signings

4:00 **Carefully Crafted Characters Reveal Deeply Embedded Issues** by Jared Thomas

In a contemporary Australia, Aboriginal Australians are experiencing success in many fields but still remain as a group amongst the most disadvantaged people in Australia. Jared discusses the development of characters that feature in his works *Calypso Summer*, *Songs that Sound like Blood*, the *Game Day* series, and work in development *My Spare Heart*. Through these carefully crafted characters, Jared is able to discuss issues of drug and alcohol abuse, sexuality, and racism as experienced by Aboriginal people.

4:35 **Publishing Secrets** with ALL Presenters

This session has become a Celebrate Reading National Conference tradition. Publishing Secrets is a chance for delegates to hear about the stories of the publishing world. Witty, enthralling and secretive, this session will have you on the edge of your seat.

5:15 Sundowner | Book Signings

6:00 Gates Close

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Day 2 - Saturday 27 October

8:00 Gates Open | Arrival Tea and Coffee

8:30 Conference Marquee Opens

9:00 Reflection

9:10 **Let's Talk About Sex with ALL Presenters**

Do the emergent sexual feelings of the teenage years need to be acknowledged when writing teenaged characters? Is it a failure of integrity not to represent sex and sexuality in YA fiction, or can we employ an ellipsis and avoid it altogether? What, if any, are the moral responsibilities in writing about sex for a teenage readership? Can realistic/human representations of sex in fiction provide some counterbalance to the unrealistic – and frequently misogynistic – representations of pornography to which we know the vast majority of teenagers are exposed?

9:50 **Young Adult Fiction and Writing as Rebellion by Jaclyn Moriarty**

Fiction writing is rife with regulation. There are rules about how to lead a creative life, how to approach your plot and structure, how to get published, and how to promote your work. There are also expectations, particularly in YA fiction, about language, sex, diversity, acceptable themes, and acceptable outcomes. Who sets these rules and regulations? How do they affect, enhance or hamper YA writing? Jaclyn Moriarty discusses the tensions that arise between the various rigid frameworks of YA fiction, the unlikely freedoms within the genre, and the fact that the best literature is often that which breaks rules and defies expectations.

10:30 **Stuck in a Shopping Centre: The Benefits of Extreme Creative Restrictions by Brendan Ritchie**

Brendan gives an insight into what it was like to set an entire novel inside a suburban shopping centre. During this discussion Brendan takes a look at the wider literary practice of imposing creative restrictions on a developing work, revealing how this has informed both his writing, and his work as a lecturer.

11:00 Morning Tea | Book Signings

11:30 **Exploring Themes of Grief with Will Kostakis, Claire Zorn, Fiona Wood and Cath Crowley**

A conversation about the ways writers explore darker subject matter without writing doom and gloom books. Do we owe it to our teenage readers to empower them to live vicariously through the lives of characters created by our finest writers?

12:20 **The Story of One Book with Jay Kristoff, Jaclyn Moriarty, Jared Thomas and James Roy**

How do books emerge? Do they start with an idea, a character, a setting or a plot line? Are they planned meticulously or do they result from 'pantsing'? Jay, Jaclyn, Jared and James will discuss this in relation to one of their books.

1:05 Lunch | Book Signings

1:45 **Crafting Voices by Will Kostakis**

Will thinks a believable voice is key to a believable story. His novel, *The Sidekicks* has three very different narrators. In 'Crafting Voices', Will explores how he made them distinct from each other, and the boys he'd written in the past and how writers can create memorable voices of their own in their work.

2:15 **Blurred Lines: Writing for Teenagers, 'New' Adults and Adults with Claire Zorn, Brendan Ritchie and Jay Kristoff**

Claire, Brendan and Jay have all written books as deeply satisfying to adults as to young adults. In this conversation they will discuss whether they are conscious of this when writing and whether writing for a teen audience is different to writing for an adult audience and is there such a thing as 'new adult'?

3:00 **Writing Alone Versus Writing Collaboratively with Cath Crowley and Fiona Wood**

Fiona and Cath discuss their collaboration with Simone Howell on *Take Three Girls*. How it changed their process or cemented them in their old ways and what it was like to be inside two other writers' process.

3:30 Afternoon Tea | Book Signings

4:00 2019 Conference Announcement

4:10 **Living and Writing on the Road with ALL Presenters**

As long as the Celebrate Reading National Conference has existed, it has ended with Living and Writing on the Road. Delegates will have one more chance to listen to all presenters as they divulge the humorous, ridiculous and fascinating stories of what it is really like to be living and writing on the road.

4:50 Official Conference Close and Major Prize Draws

5:00 Sundowner | Book Signings

6:00 Gates Close

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