



# *Celebrate* **READING** *National Conference*

**1 November - 2 November 2019**

*The Inside Story on Quality Australian Literature for Children*

Presenters: **Shaun Tan (VIC)**, **Stephen Michael King (NSW)**,  
**Glenda Millard (VIC)**, **Lisa Shanahan (NSW)**, **Felice Arena (VIC)**,  
**Ronojoy Ghosh (NSW)**, **Leila Rudge (NSW)**, **Dianne Wolfer (WA)**

## **Programme**

### **DAY 1 | Friday 1 November**

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

**9:00**    **Welcome and Official Conference Opening**

**9:15**    **Keynote: Truth In Fiction by Shaun Tan**

All stories, paintings and other fictions try to get at some kind of truth, ironically by presenting things that don't actually exist. In worlds of fantasy and surrealism, which are so often a staple of children's literature, we notice this displacement even more. But is a flight of fancy really a flight, an escapist departure? Or is it a way of getting closer to another underlying reality? For every crazy or dreamlike tale there must always be some reference to ordinary day-to-day experience, and arguably this is what makes for good stories, for child and adult readers alike. Shaun will discuss his journey as a writer, painter and illustrator, from *The Rabbits* to *Tales from the Inner City*, with particular attention the dilemma of finding truth in absurdist fiction, and address the question that all artists must routinely ask themselves, 'why on earth am I doing this?'

**10:05**    **Panel: All The Truth In My Fiction - A Keynote Response – with ALL Presenters**

Truth is surprisingly difficult to define yet we rely on it every single day to live our lives. How do our presenters deal with the nature of truth? Do they discover truth along the way or do they set out to reflect on this elusive idea? How much of their own personal truth is in the work they create? In this session ALL of the authors will discuss the role of truth in their own work.

**10:45**    **Morning Tea | Keynote Presenter Book Signing**

**11.20**    **Anthropomorphism In Children's Literature by Dianne Wolfer**

Animal characters have fascinated Dianne since she first met Eeyore, Reepicheep and The Elephant's Child. Her PhD research into anthropomorphism involved writing two novels and compiling a listing of Australian children's titles from 1841-2015, examining ways animal characters are used as bridges for young readers to tackle challenging themes. Channel your inner Bottersnike as Dianne shares her findings and the anthropomorphic writing journey behind *The Shark Caller*, a fantasy quest novel linked to the ancient practice of shark calling and *The Dog with Seven Names* set in Australia's north-west during WWII.

**11:55 Panel: The True Story Of How We Proved That Green Covered Books Are NOT Unlucky  
with Glenda Millard and Stephen Michael King**

Stephen and Glenda will joyfully reminisce about many things, including how they disproved a well-known publishing superstition, how their working partnership began by happy coincidence and continued in much the same way, how they are not very good at being organised and how they mostly work in seclusion in their different home states yet they sometimes work happily together in the same room. They will also share how and why they danced in front of a large captive audience at Parliament house in Canberra.

**12:30 The Story Or The Sketch? by Leila Rudge**

Which comes first; the story or the sketch? During Leila's session she will share some of the ways she develops story ideas from sketchbook scribbles and how she finds characters in the most unlikely places... Leila will discuss the magical madness of making picture books from storyboard to final art and all the tricky bits in-between, focusing on the journey of her favourite pigeon and picture book, *Gary*.

**1:05 Lunch | Book Signings**

**1:45 Movie Stars And Drawstring Library Bags by Felice Arena**

Sharing stories from his colourful life, much-loved children's author Felice shows us our connection to books and storytelling: how we first make stories and how they accompany us through the chapters of our own lives. He also will reveal how that thread (no matter how frayed it was at times) led him all the way to encouraging children to find their own personal connections to books.

**2:20 Panel: Representing The Modern Family – with Lisa Shanahan, Leila Rudge,  
Stephen Michael King and Glenda Millard**

They say you can't live with or without them, but what is it exactly that makes someone family? We all know a family when we see one and yet to explain what makes a family can be complex. In this session, Lisa, Stephen, Leila and Glenda will explore the representation of family in children's literature, and the ways in which children can find themselves in books, as well as appreciate the beauty in the diversity of different family structures.

**3:05 Artist In Action by Shaun Tan**

**3:20 Afternoon Tea | Book Signings**

**3:45 THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE! by Ronojoy Ghosh**

Getting into publishing seemed like an impossible idea for Ronojoy. Getting his second book deal seemed crazier. Creating a book with Mem Fox? No way. Ronojoy never thought reading stories to his son at night would one day bring him to Perth to talk about his very own picture books. Sit back and enjoy his incredible journey!

**4:20 Artist In Action by Stephen Michael King**

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

This session has become a Celebrate Reading National Conference tradition. It's a unique 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**

## DAY 2 | Saturday 2 November

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

**8:30** Conference Marquee Opens

**9:00** Panel: Everything I Know, I Learnt Through Picture Books – *with ALL Presenters*

Life lessons are called that for a reason. You need to experience life in order to learn the lesson. But what about the world of Picture Books? Doesn't the picture book world teach us everything we need to know to function in the real world? For this lively, entertaining and thought provoking discussion, ALL 8 presenters will explain what they learnt through picture books.

**9:50** Drawing Quietly *by Stephen Michael King*

Stephen's hearing loss began when he was in Year 4 at school. He didn't receive hearing aids until he was in Year 8. To navigate this silent time of his life, Stephen used visual language as his main form of communication. His books are renowned for their colour and movement, but his favourite moments are the quiet ones: sometimes wordless, often small, the little moments that ring true.

*Truth can be mute*

*Quiet has a voice*

*Silence is a word*

*Stillness is not void*

**10:30** Panel: The Joys And Challenges Of Realistic Fiction *with Dianne Wolfer, Lisa Shanahan and Felice Arena*

Weaving imaginary characters and plotlines into a realistic setting is a balancing act. Lisa, Felice and Dianne will share behind the scenes anecdotes from their writing journeys; the challenges, flashes of joy and moments of weird synchronicity.

**11:00** Morning Tea

**11:30** A Reading *by Jenny Botje, Senior Education Officer*

**11:40** Truth And Lies And The Other Things That Make Good Fiction *by Glenda Millard*

Using her published works and current writing project, Glenda will give specific examples of components which combine to make good fiction. She will discuss research and how that may be extended to the imagined world, themes which consistently but subconsciously appear in her works and how she uses the visual world to shape her imagined world.

**12:15** Panel: A Lesson In Visual Literacy *with Shaun Tan, Ronojoy Ghosh, Stephen Michael King and Leila Rudge*

Visual Literacy is defined as the way meaning is made in still and moving image texts, however, we know visual literacy is much more than this. It is about the deliberate choices illustrators make to establish a shared meaning with their audience. It's a complex craft that often needs careful, precise and informed explanation. Shaun, Leila, Ronojoy and Stephen will think aloud as they deconstruct one of their significant illustrations.

**12:55** Artist In Action *by Leila Rudge*

**1:10** Lunch | Book Signings

**1:50 Learning To See In The Dark by Lisa Shanahan**

The books Lisa loved most as a child were the ones that wrestled with an honest tenderness about the reality of what it meant to be human; the wild oscillations of hilarity and sorrow and beauty and chaos, all jumbled together. This has irrevocably shaped her life as a writer, and in particular how Lisa goes about gathering inspiration, for novels like *The Grand, Genius Summer of Henry Hoobler* and for picture books like *Hark, It's Me, Ruby Lee!* Lisa will explore her life as a writer; the explosive power of tiny ordinary moments, the way stories are glorious invitations to feel and adventures in learning how to see.

**2:30 Panel: A Search For Place with Felice Arena, Shaun Tan, Ronojoy Ghosh and Dianne Wolfer**

The search for home, for a place to settle, is a theme found in literature throughout the ages. What drives the compulsion for finding a place? How much does place influence who we are, and what we do? In this session, Shaun, Ronojoy, Felice and Dianne will look at the significance of place in their creative process, and how literature can help those who are still searching.

**3:10 Artist In Action by Ronojoy Ghosh**

**3:25 Afternoon Tea | Book Signings**

**3:50 Cicada by Shaun Tan**

Shaun will discuss the origins and development of *Cicada*, with a particular focus on the reductive nature of picture book story-telling, how many ideas always need to be compressed into a minimal structure – and how this tough restriction can greatly improve a narrative. Shaun will also focus on the creation of imagery using sculptural elements, digital collage and traditional oil paint, and some of the inspiration behind *Cicada* and this character's dismal corporate life-cycle.

**4:25 Panel: Living And Writing On The Road with ALL Presenters**

Every year we wrap up the Celebrate Reading National Conference with this super entertaining panel discussion - 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.

**5:05 Conference Close & 2020 Conference Announcement**

**5:15 Sundowner | Book Signings**

**6:00 Gates Close**