

Sydney Writers' Festival and
the NSW Education Standards
Authority present

Student Sessions

2019



SYDNEY
WRITERS
FESTIVAL

Student Sessions

Join the 2019 Festival's brightest minds for a thought-provoking program of talks, specially curated to deepen engagement with the school curriculum in ways that inform, challenge and inspire.

With sessions led by acclaimed writers, award-winning artists, respected social commentators and the world's keenest thought-leaders, our Student Sessions program is rich in opportunities for secondary school students to build on their classroom learning, extend their capacity for critical thinking and be stimulated by thoughtful discussion and meaningful debate in the Festival's signature format.

Featuring some of the Festival's standout speakers, this year's line-up includes award-winning UK hip-hop artist **Akala**, historical Australian myth-buster **Clare Wright**, digital 'rock star' revolutionary **Toby Walsh** and the author of the beloved *Looking for Alibrandi* **Melina Marchetta**. They are joined by staunch critic of systemic sexism in Australia's legal system **Bri Lee**, founding editor of *Feminartsy* **Zoya Patel**, Gomeroi poet and essayist **Alison Whittaker** and two-time Walkley Award winner, **Trent Dalton**.

Student Sessions is presented in collaboration with the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA).

Suitable for Years 9 to 12.

Date and Venue

Wednesday 1 May, 2019

Carriageworks, 245 Wilson Street, Eveleigh.

Sessions run from **10am–2.15pm**. Please arrive 30 minutes before your first session.

Booking

Tickets go on sale on Monday 4 February.

Bookings for Student Sessions are essential. Each talk runs for 45 minutes and you can create your own schedule of sessions with options to select one, two or three events per student from the full program. Discounts are available for the purchase of multiple sessions.

Ticket prices are as follows:

- \$30 per student for 3 events
- \$24 per student for 2 events
- \$15 per student for 1 event

One free teacher's ticket is allocated per event for every 20 paying students. Additional teachers can purchase tickets at student prices.

Payment terms and conditions are included in the booking form. You can find an online booking form at swf.org.au/studentsessions.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the Sydney Writers' Festival box office team: ticketing@swf.org.au | (02) 9256 4200

Please note: books by featured authors will be available for purchase on the day.

Sydney Writers' Festival | Level 3, 10 Hickson Road, NSW 2000 | swf.org.au

Disclaimer: Details in this brochure are correct at the time of publication. Sydney Writers' Festival reserves the right to add, withdraw, or substitute artists, and to vary the program should the need arise. Please note that a waiting list is kept for booked out Student Sessions.

The Program

Each talk runs for 45 minutes and all sessions are stand-alone. Create your own schedule of sessions.

10am

Akala: Hip-Hop & Shakespeare

Award-winning hip-hop artist and founder of the Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company, **Akala** is more recently known as the bestselling author of the searing polemic *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*. In this interactive session, which includes spoken word and a student 'call and response', Akala explores the social, cultural and linguistic parallels between the works of William Shakespeare and contemporary hip-hop. This session encourages students to develop an alternate view of the arts, and ultimately themselves, by showing how the culture and language of hip-hop and Shakespeare have the power to transgress race, class and iambic pentameter.

Curriculum links: English, Music, Drama, Society and Culture

10.45–11.15am **Book signing**

11.15am

The World AI Made

Could robots really become conscious? Could we ourselves one day become immortal machines, uploading our brains to the cloud? Professor **Toby Walsh** is a world leader in Artificial Intelligence and one of the 100 'rock stars' of Australia's digital revolution. In this mind-bending session, Toby takes on the big questions about technological life on earth that makes us humans feel very small. Join Toby as he considers the impact of AI on work, war, human life and, by extension, human death. In conversation with novelist and editor of *The Griffith Review*, **Ashley Hay**.

Curriculum links: Science, PDHPE, History, Economics

12–1pm **Book signing and lunch break**

1pm

Find Your Voice, Write Your Story

Join three of Australia's most exciting young writers for a conversation about finding the courage to speak up and tell your own story – even when it is uncomfortable. Memoirist **Bri Lee** talks about her journey as a woman through the Australian legal system, from judge's associate to complainant. Fiji-born feminist **Zoya Patel** offers her perspective on coming to terms with a migrant child's split subjectivity. And poet and Fulbright Scholar **Alison Whittaker** shares her experience on writing as a Gomeri woman and legal researcher. In conversation with **Maeve Marsden**, editor of *Queerstories*.

Curriculum links: English, Society and Culture, PDHPE

1.45–2.15pm **Book signing and finish**

10am

Herstory

Breaking open Australia's foundation myths, **Clare Wright's** research offers a timely corrective to exclusively male-told accounts of key historical moments. Author of the Stella Prize-winning *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* and *You Daughters of Freedom*, Clare has worked as an academic, political speechwriter, historical consultant, and radio and television broadcaster. In conversation with historian **Anna Clark**, Clare shares her passion for uncovering stories within historical silence, gives a fresh perspective on primary sources and explains how she goes about filling the gaps in the national narrative.

Curriculum links: History, English, Society and Culture

11.15am

Write What You Know

The writer of one of Australia's most beloved novels, *Looking for Alibrandi*, **Melina Marchetta** has time and again created characters and settings inspired by her life and home in Sydney's inner-west, including in her newest book, *The Place on Dalhousie*. In this session, she shares how placing fiction in intimately familiar locations can be a great starting point for any creative writing, and how her own Italian-Australian upbringing has been central to the lives she's imagined for her characters. In conversation with fellow author **Sarah Ayoub**.

Curriculum links: English, Society and Culture

1pm

Bringing History to Life

Join two-time Walkley Award winner **Trent Dalton** as he discusses the in-depth research that brought his latest book, *By Sea & Stars: The Story of the First Fleet*, to vivid life. In conversation with ABC's **Michaela Kowalski**, Trent shares the tools and techniques, combined with records, letters and journals, that uncovered the lives and experiences of the people who – willingly or unwillingly – took part in this epic journey across the world.

Curriculum links: English, Society and Culture, History



Akala is a BAFTA and MOBO award-winning hip-hop artist, writer and social entrepreneur, as well as the co-founder of The Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company. More recently known for his compelling lectures and journalism, he has been awarded an honorary degree from Oxford Brookes University and the University of Brighton. Akala is the bestselling author of *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*.

Bri Lee is a freelance writer and the author of *Eggshell Skull*, a memoir exposing systemic sexism in the Australian legal system. Her journalism has been published in *The Saturday Paper*, *Crikey*, *The Guardian*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, and she regularly appears on ABC's *The Drum*. Bri was the inaugural Kat Muscat Fellow in 2016, a 2017 Griffith Review Fellow, and won the Queensland Premier's Young Writer Award in 2018.



Dr Clare Wright is an award-winning historian and author who has worked as an academic, political speechwriter and radio and television broadcaster. Her book, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*, won the 2014 Stella Prize and the NIB Waverley Prize for Literature. Her latest book is *You Daughters of Freedom*, the second in her Democracy Trilogy. Clare is currently an Associate Professor in History at La Trobe University.

Zoya Patel is the author of *No Country Woman*, a memoir of race, religion and feminism. Zoya is also the founding editor of *Feminartsy* and the former editor-in-chief of *Lip Magazine*. Zoya was Highly Commended in the 2015 Scribe Publishing Non-Fiction Prize, was the 2014 recipient of the Anne Edgeworth Young Writers' Fellowship, and was named ACT Young Woman of the Year in 2015.



Toby Walsh is one of the world's leading researchers in Artificial Intelligence. He is Scientia Professor of Artificial Intelligence at the University of New South Wales, and has been an elected fellow of the Australian Academy of Science and the Association for the Advancement of AI. His latest book is *2062: The World that AI Made*.

Alison Whittaker is a Gomeroid poet, essayist and legal scholar. From 2017–2018, Alison was a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard Law School, where she was named Dean's Scholar in Race, Gender and Criminal Law. Her second book, *BLAKWORK*, is a collection of poetry, essays and short stories.



Melina Marchetta is a bestselling Australian author of nine novels, whose work has been published in more than 20 countries. She has also written award-winning screenplays and television scripts, including the film script for her first novel, *Looking for Alibrandi*. Her new novel is *The Place on Dalhousie*.

Trent Dalton is a staff writer at *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, a two-time Walkley Award winner and a four-time winner of the Kennedy Award for Excellence in NSW Journalism. Trent's debut novel was *Boy Swallows Universe* and his latest book is *By Sea & Stars: The Story of the First Fleet*.



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