

11, 12, 13 September

Writers Assemble! 2026

**Lainie Anderson
Janeen Brian
Danielle Clode
Alex Cothren
Clare Connelly
Lauren Fuge
Alison Goodman
Natalie Harkin
Josh Hortinela
Amie Kaufman
Sharon Kernot
Patrick Marlborough
Amy Matthews
Margot McGovern
Andrew Roff
Lili Wilkinson**

Supported by



WRITERS ASSEMBLE!

Writers Assemble! is a South Australian festival dedicated to the craft of writing. Across three days and seven events, this FREE festival brings together some of Australia's best writers for fun discussions on the writing life.

The panels deliberately jumble writers from different genres and age groups—spicy romance flirting with sci-fi, horror side-questing with YA fantasy—to uncover the universal themes and techniques that power all stories. Each session will spotlight a different emotion—Joy, Fear, Desire, Anger, and Awe—and explore how writers bring these emotions to life in the books you love.

The festival opens with a star-studded conversation on the popular genres of science fiction, fantasy and horror. We hope you can join our guests and celebrate the best in



LAINIE ANDERSON

Lainie Anderson OAM has worked with Adelaide's Sunday Mail, Melbourne's Herald Sun and London's The Times. After being awarded a Churchill Fellowship, Lainie published her debut novel *Long Flight Home* in 2019. In 2024, Lainie completed a PhD on Kate Cocks – the inspiration behind her *Petticoat Police Mysteries*.

Lainie was SA's 2023 Emerging Historian of the Year and in 2026 was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to community history. The *Secrets of Montgomery Manor*, the third novel in the *Petticoat Police Mystery* series, will be released in early 2027. It follows *Murder on North Terrace* and *The Death of Dora Black*, which was longlisted for the 2025 Indie Book Awards for Debut Fiction and the 2025 Margaret and Colin Roderick



JANEEN BRIAN

Janeen Brian is an internationally published, award-winning children's author and poet with over 110 books published. She enjoys writing picture books, junior fiction, poetry, novels and non-fiction. More than 200 stories, poems, plays and articles have been published in children's magazines or anthologies.

Janeen received a May Gibbs' Children's Literature Trust Fellowship in 2009, was the recipient of the 2012 Adelaide Festival of Literature Carclew Fellowship in 2012 and is an Ambassador for Raising Literacy Australia.



DANIELLE CLODE

Danielle Clode is a nature and science writer whose work is inspired by her passion for Australian wildlife and landscapes. Her books have won the Victorian Premier's Literary and Federation of Australian Writers awards for non-fiction and Whitley Awards for popular zoology and ecology, as well as being shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia, Adelaide Festival and National Biography awards. With a PhD in biology, she has been a full-time freelance editor, writer and writing teacher for 30 years. She shares her bush block with a very industrious but rarely seen echidna, who inspired her latest publication, *The Enigmatic Echidna*.



ALEX COTHREN

Alex Cothren is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at Flinders University. His satirical story collection, *Playing Nice Was Getting Me Nowhere*, is out now via Pink Shorts Press.



CLARE CONNELLY

Clare Connelly is the bestselling author of more than one hundred and fifty angsty, passionate romance novels. Having self-published her first book in 2014, by the end of that year, she was an Amazon All-Star in the US and UK and has since sold millions of copies of her books. She continues to self-publish and also writes her trademark romances for Harlequin, Tule and Boldwood Books.



LAUREN FUGE

Lauren Fuge is a writer who lives and works on Kurna Country. She's currently completing a PhD exploring storytelling and the climate crisis, as well as organising with grassroots community and climate groups. Her book, *Voyagers: Our Journey into the Anthropocene*, was published by Text in 2024.



ALISON GOODMAN

Alison Goodman is a Melbourne based writer of crime, fantasy and historical fiction. She is the author of nine novels including *The Ladies Road Guide to Utter Ruin*, the second book in the *Ill-Mannered Ladies* series which was released in May 2025. The first book in the series, *The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies*, won the 2024 Readers' Choice Davitt Award and was a Washington Post and an Amazon Best Mystery Book of 2023. Her novels also include the award-winning *Lady Helen* trilogy, and *EON* and *EONA*, a New York Times bestselling fantasy duology. Alison holds a PhD focusing on creative writing, historical research and the Regency era and is currently working on the third novel in the *Ill-Mannered Ladies* series. She is fuelled by strong coffee and air-fried chips, and will travel a long way for a



NATALIE HARKIN

Associate Professor Natalie Harkin (Narungga) is a poet and Research Fellow with the Critical Indigenous Studies team at Flinders University. Her research centres on Aboriginal women's domestic service and labour history and Indigenous Living-Legacy / Memory Story archiving innovations for our time. She is committed to archival justice and is a member of the inaugural State Records/State Library of South Australia's Aboriginal Reference Group, the national Indigenous Archives Collective, and the national First Nations Working Party of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, ANU. Her words have been installed and projected in mixed-media exhibitions, including a decade long creative-arts research collaboration with the Unbound Collective. She is widely published, and her manuscripts include *Dirty Words* (Cordite Books, 2015), *Archival-poetics* (Vagabond Press, 2019), and *APRON-SORROW / SOVEREIGN-TEA* (Wakefield Press, 2025).



JOSH HORTINELA

Joshua Hortinela is a writer and bookseller who also works in social media marketing. A passionate reader, he has worked in the book industry for nearly ten years. He also works as a freelance writer, photographer and moderator for events.

When he's not adding a ridiculous number of books to his staff holds at work, he can be found reading romance novels, rewatching 13 Going On 30 for the millionth time, or drinking a cosmopolitan. He lives in Sydney and can tell you where to find the best coffee or cocktail in town.



AMIE KAUFMAN

Amie Kaufman is a New York Times, USA Today and internationally bestselling author of science fiction and fantasy. Her multi-award winning work has sold well over a million copies, been translated into nearly thirty languages, and is in development for film and TV. Raised in Australia and occasionally Ireland, Amie lives by the sea in Melbourne with her family, and an extremely large personal library. Her latest books are One Knight Stand, the sequel to Lady's Knight, and Red Star Rebels. You can keep up with what she's working on, enter giveaways, join her mail club and track her events by signing up for her newsletter at amiekaufman.com.



SHARON KERNOT

Sharon Kernot is an award-winning poet, short story writer and novelist. She has an MA and PhD in Creative Writing and is the author of four novels including three verse novels. Her work has been nominated for many awards including the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, the CBCA, the Gold Inkys, the South Australian Literary Awards and NSW Literary Awards. Her latest novel, Night Swimming, is a psychological thriller in verse.



PATRICK MARLBOROUGH

Patrick Marlborough is a writer, comedian, musician and self-described drongo based in Walyalup (Fremantle), WA. A contributor to publications including The Guardian, Rolling Stone, Crikey, Meanjin and VICE, he is also the founder and editor of The Yeah Nah Review. His debut novel, Nock Loose, earned shortlistings for the 2026 WA Premier's Book Awards and the ABIA Award for Best Independent Book. He is also known for comedy projects including On Fringe, Killing Rove and Bad Boy Buckley.



AMY MATTHEWS

AMY MATTHEWS is the critically acclaimed author of THE TREASURE HOUSE (released September 2026) and the beloved bestseller SOMEONE ELSE'S BUCKET LIST. She writes books about complicated people and love, set in places you can escape to. She also writes under the name AMY BARRY and her books are available in print, audio, ebook and translation in more than thirty countries. Amy is Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Flinders University, co-host of the AMY & BOOK CLUB podcast, and an unrepentant book addict.



MARGOT MCGOVERN

Margot McGovern is an award-winning author of Young Adult literature.

Her love letter to '90s horror, *This Stays Between Us*, won the inaugural John Marsden Prize for Writing for Young Adults in the Victorian Premier's Awards and was a shortlisted book for Older Readers in the CBCA Awards and the ABIA Awards. Her work has also been shortlisted in the Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature, the Text Prize, the Aurealis Awards, the ITW Thriller Awards and the Australasian Shadows Awards.



ANDREW ROFF

Andrew Roff is a writer living on the unceded country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains. His short fiction has appeared widely, and he is a former winner of the Peter Carey Short Story Award, the Griffith Review Emerging Voices Competition and the Margaret River Press Short Story Competition. His debut story collection, *The Teeth of a Slow Machine*, was published in 2022. *Here Are My Demands*, released in 2025 through Wakefield Press, is his first novel. When not writing, he is a child-wrangler and



LILI WILKINSON

Lili Wilkinson is the award-winning author of more than twenty books for young people, including *A Hunger for Thorns*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award, and was a CBCA Honour Book. Lili has a PhD from the University of Melbourne, and is a passionate advocate for YA and the young people who read it. Her latest books are the *Bravepaw* series and *Unhallowed Halls*.



SHAKESPEARE'S BOOKSHOP

Shakespeare's Bookshop is a friendly bookshop situated in the wonderful community of Blackwood, SA.

The owner, Becky Lucas, was awarded the ABA Hardie Grant Children's Bookseller of the Year Award 2022 and runs her own booking agency, representing over 50 children's authors and illustrators for school visits. Mike Lucas is an author of picture books and YA novels, published by Penguin, Hardie Grant and Hachette.

WRITERS ASSEMBLE! 2026

SESSIONS

SESSION 1: WRITING JOY

Writers: Janeen Brian, Amie Kaufman and Amy Matthews.

Working in genres as diverse as romance, fantasy, and children's fiction, these celebrated authors know how to leave readers smiling. Join them for a conversation about crafting stories that spark delight, optimism and a sense of wonder.

SESSION 2: WRITING FEAR

Writers: Sharon Kernot, Margot McGovern and Lili Wilkinson.

Fear is one of fiction's most powerful tools. Whether exploring psychological unease, supernatural horror or real-world anxieties, these celebrated authors discuss how they transform our darkest fears into irresistible stories.

SESSION 3: WRITING DESIRE

Writers: Alison Goodman, Josh Hortinela and Lainie Anderson.

Whether it's forbidden love, impossible dreams or dangerous ambition, desire lies at the heart of great storytelling. Join three celebrated authors as they discuss writing characters whose deepest wants propel every page.

SESSION 4: WRITING ANGER

Writers: Natalie Harkin, Patrick Malborough and Alex Cothren.

Anger can expose injustice, challenge power and inspire change. Through speculative fiction, biting satire and powerful poetry, these acclaimed writers explore how storytelling can transform outrage into works that

SESSION 5: WRITING AWE

Writers: Danielle Clode, Lauren Fuge and Andrew Roff.

From the mysteries of the natural world to the limitless possibilities of speculative fiction, these acclaimed writers explore the power of awe. Discover how curiosity, wonder and the unknown can inspire stories that change the way we see ourselves and the world around us.

SESSION 6: PUBLISHING SECRETS FROM BESTSELLING POWERHOUSES CLARE CONNELLY & AMY MATTHEWS

Grab exclusive insights from Amazon bestseller Clare Connelly, who has sold over 5 million copies of her books, and Amy Matthews, an award-winning author and Associate Professor in Creative Writing at Flinders University, as they share their expert strategies for building a blockbuster writing career.

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SPRING
WRITES

Writers Assemble! Opening Gala:

*Characters We Love,
Stories We Remember*

This year, Writers Assemble! is beginning its three-day celebration of emotion in fiction with a special gala session, featuring three internationally bestselling Australian writers.

Expect insight, warmth and star power as three exceptional authors open WA!2026 with a conversation about the emotional force of fiction and the enduring appeal of stories that make us fall in love, hold our breath and see the world differently. This is a must-attend event for writers, readers, students, teachers and lovers of story.



With Amie Kaufman, Alison Goodman
& Lili Wilkinson