



BERRY WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2026

The Berry Writers' Festival acknowledges the
Dharawal and Dhurga language-speaking groups
who are traditional owners of this area.
We acknowledge their customs and culture, which
have nourished, and continue to nourish, this land.
And we extend our respects to Elders, past,
present, and future.

Because Words Matter

BERRYWRITERSFESTIVAL.COM.AU

FRIDAY 7 NOVEMBER

WORKSHOPS

	STUDIO 34	THE ARBOUR
10-12.30AM	Wonder for Writers With Kathryn Heyman <i>Combines Deep Writing, Craft & Strategy Guidance.</i>	Writing Nature With Inga Simpson <i>Explores Techniques for Bringing Landscapes, Flora and Fauna to Life.</i>
1.30-4.30PM	The First Page With Toni Jordan <i>Suitable for Fiction Writers at All Levels.</i>	Memoir & Creative Non-Fiction Workshop with Natasha Sholl <i>A Deep Dive into the Art of Writing Memoir.</i>

	SPECIAL EVENT
2-3PM	Inga Simpson - A Tree Lover's Guide to Australia <i>Featuring Inga Simpson & Kate Mildenhall</i> WHERE: The Arbour WHEN: 6 NOV 2pm-3pm

OPENING NIGHT




OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION

FEATURING
JENNIFER ROBINSON
IN CONVERSATION WITH
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, TORI HASCHKA

'WHY WORDS MATTER'

BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS
 FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER 6.30-9.30PM

WorkLife BERRY LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AND DRINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Light refreshments and drinks will be available for purchase.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Words are how we make sense of the world, and of each other. They are how we grieve, how we celebrate, how we argue, show love, teach each other what is important and tell the truth. In the books and stories we return they are how we ask each other 'this is how the world seems to me. Is it this way for you too?'

Our festival's recurrent theme; **Because Words Matter**, has shaped the choices we made bringing this year's Berry Writers' Festival to life.

We live in a moment when words can be swiftly flattened into soundbites, manipulated by machines and treated as disposable by insatiable algorithms. And yet words are still what mobilise communities, preserve disappearing languages, hold power to account and reflect who we really are – ugly bits and all.

For this festival we have gathered from across Australia 70 of our most talented authors, poets, journalists and researchers who understand the urgency of protecting storytelling and value of writing as a cornerstone

of human craft and creation. Across more than 35 sessions, this year's program tackles ideas that delight and challenge us, issues that vex us and showcases authors at the peak of their abilities. Independent writers festivals like ours are more important than ever, as places where we can ask difficult questions and make new connections.

Since 2022, Berry Writers' Festival has been a magical time when our small town opens its doors to big ideas. This year is no different. It's thanks to an army of volunteers that believe in the impact of what we do that this weekend is possible. Whether you join a panel that challenges you, hear poetry that unspools you, join a session on why building a lifetime of reading is sacred, witness a conversation that makes you reach for a pen to take notes, or hear a diatribe that makes you laugh until you cry, I hope this weekend leaves you with a renewed sense of hope and appreciation for what words can do when handled with care, courage and conviction.



**TORI
HASCHKA**
Festival
Director
2026

SAT 7 NOVEMBER

BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS		STUDIO 34	BERRY SHOW PAVILION	
9-10AM	Advance Australia Where <i>Exceptionalism, Collectivism & a Looming Lurch to the Right</i> FEATURING: Amanda Tattersall & Paul Kelly MODERATED BY: Kate Dezarnaulds	Fraught Friendships FEATURING: Holly Wainwright, Kate Mildenhall & Frances Whiting MODERATED BY: Meredith Jaffe	The Joy of Reading <i>& Why Children Deserve It</i> FEATURING: Sally Rippin <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Nathan Luff	FREE EVENT
10AM - 11.30AM	Midlife, Money (& Muffins) FEATURING: Melissa Browne & Sally Hepworth MODERATED BY: Jessy Wu	SPECIAL EVENT <i>At the Berry Show Pavilion</i>		BROUGHT TO YOU BY 
10.30-11.30AM	Festivals, Free Speech & the Future of Publishing FEATURING: Jennifer Robinson, Lex Hirst & Rosemarie Milsom MODERATED BY: Mark Tredinnick	Miles High / People, Place & Perspective <i>Two Authors at the Peak of Their Craft</i> FEATURING: Siang Lu & Toni Jordan MODERATED BY: Kate Mildenhall	THE SHED, BERRY GENERAL STORE The Art of Suspense <i>A Special Session for our Younger Readers and Their Families</i> FEATURING: A.L TAIT <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Nathan Luff	FREE EVENT
12-1PM	How to Ruin a Child FEATURING: Richard Glover <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Holly Wainwright	Leading From the Dreaming FEATURING: Paul Callaghan & Evelyn Araluen MODERATED BY: Amy Thunig-McGregor	BERRY SHOW PAVILION Voices of the South Coast FEATURING: Helena Fox & Lauren Keegan MODERATED BY: Meredith Jaffe	FREE EVENT 

LUNCH

BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS		STUDIO 34	BERRY SHOW PAVILION	
2-3PM	Conversations that Count <i>Stuff the British Stole, Blackbirding & the Things We Don't Talk About</i> FEATURING: Marc Fennell & Ryan Butta	The Case for a Good Life FEATURING: Osher Günsberg, Jackie Bailey, Bradley Dryburgh MODERATED BY: Anthony Levin	Voices of the South Coast <i>Paths to Publications</i> MODERATED BY: ALLISON TAIT  FREE EVENT PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOUTH COAST WRITERS' CENTRE.	
3-4.30PM	SPARKLING CRIME FEATURING: Melissa Browne & Sally Hepworth MODERATED BY: Jessy Wu	SPECIAL EVENT <i>At Le Bar, Berry</i>		HOSTED BY 
3.30-4.30PM	Conscious Angertainment <i>The Algorithm, the Ugliness & the Antidote</i> FEATURING: Amanda Tattersall & Ed Coper MODERATED BY: Matt Jones	The Burning Blue <i>Stories from the Australian Navy's Warriors in the Skies</i> FEATURING: Mike Carlton <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Richard Glover	Poetry as Witness & Resistance FEATURING: Mark Tredinnick, Julie Janson & Evelyn Araluen MODERATED BY: Rachel Kent	FREE EVENT
5-6PM	Women Who Win FEATURING: Antoinette Lattouf & Jennifer Robinson MODERATED BY: Nicole Abadee	Theatrical Nature <i>Pages, Stages & the Craft of Both</i> FEATURING: George Kemp & Toby Schmitz MODERATED BY: Christine Dunstan	Truth Telling <i>Excavating the Past to Find a Path Forward</i> FEATURING: Paul Daley, Julie Janson & Lenora Thaker MODERATED BY: Jackie Bailey	

STORY CLUB
THE LEGENDARY COMEDY STORYTELLING SHOW



HOSTED BY
OSHER GÜNSBERG

TOBY SCHMITZ

AMY THUNIG-MCGREGOR

MARC FENNEL

JESSICA DETTMANN

ED COPER

KATHRYN HEYMAN

MADELEINE GRAY

AT THE BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS
WorkLife
bar

Guests will be able to purchase delicious light dinner options from Blue Nami and a range of drinks at the WorkLife bar

SUN 8 NOVEMBER

BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS		STUDIO 34	SPECIAL EVENTS	
9-10AM	Bring Back Yesterday FEATURING: Bob Carr <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Jacqueline Maley	Living Out Loud <i>Visibility, Wonder & the Art of Being Seen</i> FEATURING: Meredith Jaffe, Paula McLean & Kathryn Heyman MODERATED BY: Louise Walsh	MORNING TEA 10-11.30AM AT THE BERRY SHOW PAVILION, BERRY SHOWGROUNDS Tea, Hope and Sustainability FEATURING: Hannah Moloney, Vanessa Fuchs, Fiona Weir-Walmsley & Natalie Kyriacou INCLUDES A TEA & A TREAT FROM THE BERRY TEA SHOP FINE TEA MERCHANTS est. 2010	
10.30-11.30AM	The Dark & Twisty FEATURING: Dervla McTiernan, Fleur McDonald & Sally Hepworth MODERATED BY: Anna Downes	Masculinity & the Manosphere FEATURING: Marc Fennell, Ed Coper, & George Kemp MODERATED BY: Osher Günsberg		
12-1PM	Old Truths, New Worlds <i>Political Ideas for an Uncertain Time</i> FEATURING: Bob Carr, Antoinette Lattouf & Gregory Melleuish MODERATED BY: Ryan Butta	Work / Life Strife FEATURING: Jessy Wu & Madeleine Gray MODERATED BY: Amelia Lester		

LUNCH

BERRY SCHOOL OF ARTS		STUDIO 34	SPECIAL EVENTS	
2-3PM	The Titanic Story of Evelyn FEATURING: Lisa Wilkinson MODERATED BY: Lisa Davies	Cities, Countries, Climate & Change FEATURING: George Kemp, Siang Lu & Inga Simpson MODERATED BY: Kaya Wilson	AFTERNOON SPRITZ 2-3.30PM AT THE BERRY SHOW PAVILION, BERRY SHOWGROUNDS Why We Garden Afternoon Spritz FEATURING: Hannah Moloney & Holly Wainwright INCLUDES A TEA & A TREAT FROM OUR SPONSORS	
3.30-4.30PM	The Race to the Top of the World FEATURING: Peter FitzSimons <i>IN CONVERSATION WITH</i> Richard Glover	Past Perspective <i>Bringing History to Life</i> FEATURING: Emma Pei Yin, Lenora Thaker & Kate Forsyth MODERATED BY: Suzanne Burdon		

Program Changes
Please note: While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this program, sometimes unforeseen changes beyond our control can occur. Please rest assured any updates will be promptly posted on our website.

Book Signings
Following each session there will be a book signing at the Berry School of Arts.



Berry Writers Festival is proud to be supported by:



PLATINUM SPONSORS

The Arbour **Berry**

 **le bar**


Shorebreak
Finance

SARA  DINING

LINNAEUS
COLLECTION

webDesign
SOLUTIONS NSW

GOLD SPONSORS

Raine & Horne.
Berry

 **RayWhite.**
BERRY

BondLifestyle
PROPERTIES 

PRINCIPAL DONOR


NEILSON
FOUNDATION

FESTIVAL PARTNERS

Bangalay
SHOALHAVEN HEADS

 **The Bookshop**
Bowral & Kiama

CUPITTS

shady fig
FLORAL + BOTANICAL STYLING

SILOS

ESTATE


SOUTH COAST
COOPERATIVE
LIBRARIES

(SCW) SOUTH COAST
WRITERS CENTRE

South Coast **PROPERTY**
STYLING

TRAVEL
FOCUS
GERRINGONG

WorkLife
BERRY

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports, volunteers & helps the Festival in any way, big or small - it couldn't happen without you.

 **BERRY**
WRITERS'
FESTIVAL