

# Southern Write

writing historical fiction • opportunities • author-2-author • our quarterly program •  
just for starters • landscape • from the director • competitions • and more ...



2014  
**June**

**SA** Writers  
Centre Inc

# SA Writers Centre

fostering, developing and promoting  
South Australian writers and writing

*Southern Write*: quarterly magazine of the SA Writers Centre

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## SA WRITERS CENTRE

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## Opening Hours

10am-5pm Tuesday to Thursday

## ACCESS to SAWC

Wheelchair access to the SA Writers Centre is available at the 26 York Street rear entrance. Alternatively, come in from Rundle Street via Caffè Brunelli, proceed towards the toilets and take the door to your left at the end of the passage to reach the lift. SAWC events/workshops are free for a carer or companion.

## Disclaimer

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Thank you to  
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SAWC gratefully acknowledges the support of the South Australian Government through Arts SA, and the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts and funding advisory body.



Thanks also to our sponsors ...



Cover image: 'i can't see tomorrow', Type-C photograph, Lee Salomone. For more artwork by the artist, see his website [www.leesalomone.va.com.au](http://www.leesalomone.va.com.au) Lee will be exhibiting in 'Of Obscured Significance' at Murray Bridge Regional Gallery, Murray Bridge, South Australia from 29 August-12 October, 2014 and in 'The Beauty of Small Moments' at Gallerysmith Project Space, Melbourne, Victoria from 8-29 October, 2014.

# From the Director

Dear members,

This issue is our final hard copy magazine as we are bidding farewell to *Southern Write*.

*Southern Write* has long been an invaluable resource, providing Centre information, writing competitions and opportunities, useful articles and industry news to more than one generation of South Australian writers.

However, recent surveys, member feedback and discussions have revealed that most people now choose to connect with us online or in real life through our series of free seminars and networking events. What you have told us is that you want us to provide more professional opportunities around networking, connecting with industry representatives and meeting high quality writers.

Times change and to make sure we give our members and the writing community the services and opportunities you want, we are changing too.

Government funding will always be uncertain and we are making sure the SA Writers Centre is sustainable into the future so we can always provide services and support to you.

For those reasons, we're changing our focus to the areas that will have the biggest impact on emerging, developing and established writers in South Australia.

All the Centre and industry information, competitions and opportunities, event and workshop information, resources and articles about craft will continue to be available online on our updated and expanded website. And don't forget our fortnightly enews will deliver up-to-date information right to your inbox. During the next twelve months, we will embark on new ways to publish and promote SA writing, and to keep providing thought provoking articles on the craft and business of writing.

On behalf of both the Board and staff, I sincerely thank Malcolm Walker, who has been at the helm of *Southern Write* for five years, and to all the editors that came before him.

With this final edition of *Southern Write*, we also say farewell to Malcolm, who is leaving the Centre. He has been a crucial part of the life and spirit of the SA Writers Centre for many years, and will be sorely missed by the staff, members and the broader writing community in South Australia. Almost all of you will have been supported in your careers in one way or another by Malcolm – through publishing your work, updating your online profile, promoting your events or giving advice on everything from author rights to social media. I would like to thank him for all his professional support, his dedication and his friendship, and wish him well into the future.

Sarah

The logo for Dymocks, featuring the word "DYMCKS" in a white, serif font inside a black, stylized book shape.

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# Writing Historical Fiction

Alan Tucker looks at the joys and pitfalls of researching and writing historical fiction.

I began my writing career 20 years ago with a series of illustrated Australian history books. In the year 2000 my publisher, Omnibus Books, asked if I was interested in writing an historical fiction as part of a new series titled *My Australian Story*. I telephoned Scholastic Australia in Sydney and spoke to the series editor. She asked me to submit ideas for stories based on historic events from South Australia or the Northern Territory. I sent four possible scenarios and she commissioned me to write a story based on the bombing of Darwin.

## The Bombing of Darwin

The editor directed me to write in diary form from the point of view of a 14-year old character. I created a young male, Tom Taylor, and outlined first impressions of his fictional family and friends. The narration had to appeal to, and the language used be appropriate for, 10 to 14-year old readers.

I began with research. Other writers might start with characters. Ultimately a balance of the two needs to be achieved (i.e. believable characters *and* a reasonable smattering of history integrated into one plot).

I researched *big* and *small picture* history (i.e. local, national and international news and events). I also researched the social history of the time (i.e. contemporary technologies, clothing, products, gender and race relations, social conventions, the education system, popular entertainment, acceptable language for the 1940s era, colloquial language, etc.).

I did my research in many ways:

- reading books (I often found what I wanted in the library then bought a copy second-hand on the internet, e.g. [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com))
- looking at photographs, sketches, paintings, etc.
- visiting locations (this allowed me to see things beyond the boundaries of the photos)
- searching the internet
- examining maps
- talking to and interviewing people
- and reading oral histories

I recorded my various levels of research in a day-to-day diary format for a 10-12 month period. Eventually I deleted some of the information. Sometimes I realised things I found interesting as a 50-year old writer were less interesting to my 14-year old main character.

I researched who was living in Darwin in the months leading up to the bombing and decided that Dad could realistically be employed on the wharves (the government was advertising for wharfies). One of the few ways Mum would be allowed to stay in Darwin (most women and children were forced to evacuate south) was to give her employment in the Post Office, which was the centre of all overseas communication coming into Australia. Placing her there, however, meant that I had to kill her off during the bombing because all those rostered to work in the Post Office on the day of the bombing died.

After I placed both parents in essential occupations, I then had the reason Tom was permitted by the authorities to remain in Darwin. His friend, William, could also continue to live in town because most of the Chinese community did not evacuate – many of them did not have relatives in the south. Darwin was their home, for

better or for worse. Once I chose to include a Chinese character I had to research information about Chinese culture in general (e.g. the Chinese new year) and the Chinese community in Darwin in the 1940s.

Once all the facts and fictions were in place I imagined myself in the time and place (Darwin 1942). I imagined the *sense* of being there – the tastes, smells, sounds, sights and feelings and finally I imagined my character in that time, place and event.

I started writing the fictitious diary and when I'd finished the first draft it was 5,000 words over the required limit. I re-read my story and realised the easiest way to cut 5,000 words was to cut the first 5,000. I decided to start the story from November 5<sup>th</sup>, what in 1941 was known as Cracker Night. I could then use the explosion of fireworks and skyrocketing as forerunners of the later explosion of bombs.

## The process of researching and writing *Gallipoli* and *Kokoda*

Researching and writing each of my recent historic war fictions presented slightly different challenges. *Gallipoli* was written from the perspective of Victor, a young man who enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion in November 1914 and on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 1915, found himself wading ashore onto the Gallipoli peninsula. I was able to tell of his training and battle experiences based directly on his battalion's movements and daily activities as recorded in the 10<sup>th</sup>'s official war diaries.

Unfortunately for my story, the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion was withdrawn from the peninsula a few weeks before the official evacuation. I wanted my character to see the battle action through to the bitter end so I sent the 10<sup>th</sup> back to the peninsula and had Victor amongst the last to leave. Whenever I fictionalise history I report on the deviation in the book's Historic Notes.

The difficulty with writing the story of the battle for the Kokoda Track was that my fictional main character, Archie, was not a soldier. He was a schoolboy living in Townsville. His brother, Des, was serving in New Guinea and writing regular letters to his family until ordered into the frontline to oppose the Japanese. I decided the only way to tell the battle action from the first day the Australian troops encountered the Japanese troops was to record concurrent diaries: one documenting the military life on the Track and the other documenting civilian life in Townsville.

To get my facts right I read a number of books documenting the battle for the Kokoda Track, including oral histories giving voice to soldiers who served in New Guinea. I married that information with the war diaries for the 2/39<sup>th</sup> battalion (Des's battalion).

I conducted a general internet search and discovered that in 1992 the Townsville City Council published a book (written by Darryl McIntyre) titled *Townsville at War 1942: Life in a Garrison City*. The book was commissioned to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea and Townsville's role in the defence of Australia. It was just what I needed. I tracked down a second hand copy online, bought it and had it shipped in from the USA. It provided me with all sorts of local details about the way of life in Townsville in 1942, the year the city changed from a quiet seaside town to a major military base housing tens of thousands of American and Australian personnel. Lastly, I researched print and online maps to get a feel for the Townsville streetscape and researched photos of the city and surrounds during the war years.

By researching the facts (Australian civilian town and New Guinea battle zone) and the soldiers' experiences I was able to write the story with a sense of authority.

### **The writing process: Kokoda**

I began with the characters. I mapped the personal characteristics of my main character (Archie) and his family members. Once I was satisfied I knew enough about the young man who was writing the fictional diary entries, I settled down to write. I worked five to six hours a day in a library where I could not be distracted. I left family, friends and technology (laptop, ipad and phone) at home. I wrote (by hand) about ten pages a day for approximately three weeks.

I wrote Des' diary entries quite easily because I had read the war diary of the 2/39<sup>th</sup> battalion and therefore knew day by day everything the battalion did throughout the war. I looked at photos and newsreel footage taken along the Track during the fighting and watched the 2006 movie *Kokoda*. When I was confident of the historic facts, and understood the stresses and rewards men experienced while fighting on the Track, the entries flowed naturally from my pen.

The domestic day-to-day scenes in Townsville proved the hardest to write because I constantly had to decide what Archie, his friends and family would do on any given day. While reading the *Townsville at War 1942* book I compiled a list of events (small and large) that happened in and around the city that year. I selected the ones I thought would be most relevant to the story and elaborated upon them, showing how they affected the characters (for good or for bad). The skill was to make the daily happenings interesting to the character and the reader while still focused on events that were related to the war effort.

### **The editing process**

When the first draft was complete I copied the text and handed over the original to my typist, who emailed it back (all 40,000 words) two weeks later. I re-read the story in its typed version and simultaneously began the re-writing and editing process. I double-checked facts, added and deleted information and made the writing style and characters consistent across the twelve months of the story. During the rewrite I also fine-tuned Archie's character and fleshed out the minor characters (i.e. helped them to develop individual characteristics). I worked hard on each of the characters to give them personality and make them of interest to the reader.

I keyed in hundreds of changes, reprinted the story then began the process again. After five or six rewrites I forwarded the first full draft to my publisher. She read the story, inserted hundreds more changes and suggestions and emailed it back. I responded to her feedback, rewrote and edited then sent it back to her. We continued that to and fro process for several months before we were both confident the characters were sufficiently engaging and the story sufficiently polished to be published.

### **The diary format: pluses and minuses**

For a writer of historical fiction the diary format has several pluses over a straight factual narrative. It can present one person's intimate perspective on an historic event, provide personal responses to an event and other characters, and allows for the introduction of rumours and gossip as well as factual information. Such juicy tidbits are part of everyday life and add spice to the narrative.

The historic fiction diary format also has minuses. It only presents one person's perspective and, at times, it requires the fictional writer to record historic details that in a real diary they might not write down. The biggest dilemma for me, the writer, is that a diary would almost never record dialogue. I believe that to omit dialogue is to lose much of the local flavor of an era and a story – so I include it. I also have the difficulty of whether to include politically incorrect language and attitudes that were acceptable during the era in which the book is set but may not be acceptable at the time of publication.



**Alan Tucker** began writing for publication 20 years ago. For 18 of those 20 years he juggled (almost) full-time work with his writing career. He began writing illustrated history books (four in total) then swapped to writing historic fiction with an Australian focus. His most recent publication, *Kokoda*, is his 6<sup>th</sup> historic fiction. He retired from teaching two years ago and now writes full-time.

### **What I hope young readers will take away from my historic fictions**

My stories are categorised as historic fiction but their focus is less on history and more on relationships. The historic event provides the chronological framework that shapes the story and influences what happens to the main character, his family and friends. I attempt to show the growth of a young man (each of my main characters is male) as an individual and as a friend and a family member. Relationships are important in life and, I believe, young men need to develop both as an individual and as a community member. Dramatic events (e.g. war, a bombing, a cyclone, a mass outbreak of prisoners) in my various books compel characters to grow up quickly so that by story's end they are better all-round people. I would like readers to see how history can affect individuals and society but also how individuals can use factors beyond their control to grow in a positive way.

## **ENEWS**

### **NOT GETTING THROUGH?**

A number of members have told us they're not getting the fortnightly enews. Firstly, you must have subscribed ... so go to our home page and click on the link.

If you've already subscribed, and it's not arriving, there's a problem – because we're definitely sending it! So ... please make sure that you've put our email address –

**admin@sawriters.org.au**

– in your email address book to ensure bulletins aren't ending up in your junk mail.

# Fiction Clinic

The Writers Centre is excited to be offering a new **manuscript development opportunity for SA Writers Centre members only**.

The Fiction Clinic is a six-month series of workshops designed to take your manuscript from draft to completion. Guided by some of the best fiction writers in Australia, you'll learn the techniques that have seen them win publishing contracts, readers and awards.

The series covers an introduction to fiction, styles, forms and genre conventions, takes you step by step through voice, tone, point of view, setting and character, examines how to use dialogue, action and description to tell your story, how to pace and structure your narrative, and the skills you'll need to redraft and edit your work.

Whether you're starting a new manuscript, or trying to fix a broken one, this will be the best investment you'll ever make in your writing career.

You will receive:

- two day novel writing intensive with PD Martin (value \$240)
- one day fiction workshop with Kate Forsyth (value \$120)
- six high quality half day workshops
- dedicated online forum for participants to be supported by your peers
- FREE professional consultation with SAWC staff (value \$75)
- FREE ticket to any TWELVE, our quarterly writing "lock-ins" (value \$60)
- certificate of completion

## Featuring:

**July:**            ***Getting Started: Novel Writing Intensive*** with **PD Martin**

**August:**        ***Point of View*** with **Dr Amy T Matthews**

**September:**   ***Know Your Characters*** with **Anna Solding**  
***Writing Effective Dialogue*** with **Anne Clark**

**October:**        ***Setting*** with **Kerryn Goldsworthy**  
***Show Don't Tell*** with **David Chapple**

**November:**    ***Pacing and Structure*** with **Kate Forsyth**

**December:**    ***Editing and Drafting*** with **Kevin O'Brien**

**All this for just \$650. Bookings must be made by 30 June to guarantee your place.**

**This opportunity is for SA Writers Centre members only.**

**Workshops can be purchased on an individual basis, space permitting.**

## Find Your Genre

### True Crime: Writing Killer Words

with Derek Pedley

Saturday July 12

10am-1pm

This workshop will explore how to identify which true crime stories will work and how to capture their best angles. You will be taught easy research methods and how to effectively communicate with police, criminals and victims to create thrilling work that a publisher won't be able to ignore.

**Derek Pedley** is a News Editor at *The Advertiser* who has worked in Australian newspapers since 1988. His third book, *Dead by Friday* (Wakefield Press, 2013), was shortlisted for the Ned Kelly Awards and is a result of a five-year search for the truth about a deadly sexual predator. Pedley has also written two books on 'Postcard Bandit' Brenden Abbott: *No Fixed Address* (1999), which was adapted for the telemovie *Postcard Bandit* (2003), and the bestselling *Australian Outlaw* (2006), shortlisted for the Ned Kelly Awards True Crime category and republished worldwide.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## Know Your Business

### Introduction to Publishing with Tracy Marsh

Saturday 19 July

10am-4pm

The publishing industry is one of the most rapidly changing and growing industries. Whether you are looking for a career in the industry, or you are a writer looking at what your publication options are, this is the workshop for you.

Join Tracy Marsh, industry veteran who has published more than three million books and magazines worldwide, as she introduces you to types of publishing and the intricacies and opportunities the industry holds. You'll also develop knowledge of sales, marketing, distribution, exporting, international markets and legalities, as well as what makes publications successful in various formats.

**Tracy Marsh** has published over three million books and magazines in Australia, including adult and children's non-fiction and educational publications. Tracy has been a regular presenter on *Burke's Backyard*, has featured on *Sixty Minutes*, was the Winner of the New Achievers Award for Australia (1989) and a finalist in the Business Woman of the Year. Previously working out of Sydney and San Francisco, Tracy now operates her business Tracy Marsh Publications in Adelaide.

**Cost: \$95 Members • \$160 Non-members**

## Fiction Clinic

### Getting Started: Novel Writing Intensive

with PD Martin

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 July

10am-4pm

In this weekend intensive course, Phillipa (PD) Martin will introduce you to some of the major elements of writing a novel: genre, planning, research, character development, plot development, dialogue and the all-important writing process. The sessions will focus on writing craft (theory, practical tips and writing exercises/workshopping) to take your writing to the next level.

Day one will cover getting started (story ideas, research and genre) and Phillipa's 'Writing Rules to Live By.' She'll give you knowledge and tools to improve your writing. Day two will be all about character and plot, with lots of exercises and tools to help you create more engaging and fully rounded characters and a stronger plot for your novel.

Phillipa's goal is simple: to help you get published, sooner. Her past students have gone on to finish manuscripts they never thought they'd finish and have secured publishing deals.

**Phillipa (PD) Martin** is the author of five crime fiction novels featuring Aussie FBI profiler Sophie Anderson. This series – *Body Count*, *The Murderers' Club*, *Fan Mail*, *The Killing Hands* and *Kiss of Death* – has been published in 13 countries and met with international acclaim. In 2011 she moved into the ebook world with the titles *Coming Home*, *Hell's Fury* and two novels for younger readers: *The Wanderer* and *Grounded Spirits*. Phillipa is also an accomplished speaker and creative writing teacher. She's run highly sought-after and successful courses at TAFEs and writers centres around Australia.

*Suitable for beginner and early career writers.*

**Cost: \$240 Members • \$360 Non-members**



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

## Fiction Clinic

### Point of View: Who Should Tell Your Story?

with Dr Amy T Matthews

Saturday 16 August 2pm-5pm

Point of view is more than simply the choice of first/second/third person. Each choice leads to a dozen more choices, and every choice you make fundamentally changes your story. First person requires a choice of narrator: is your protagonist telling the story, or is your narrator a witness to the events? Are they fundamentally the same person, or have they changed since the events they're narrating? Second person is a slippery and challenging point of view and a third person narrative can be omniscient, limited, effaced, involve multiple narrators, or take the form of free indirect discourse.

In this workshop we will look at the array of choices point of view offers and discover what effects these choices have on your work.

**Amy T. Matthews** is a novelist and a lecturer in Creative Writing at Flinders University. Her novel *End of the Night Girl* won the 2010 Adelaide Festival Unpublished Manuscript Award, was shortlisted for the Nita B Kibble Dobbie Award and the Colin Roderick Award, and was longlisted for The Australian/Vogel Literary Award. It was published in 2011. She has published short stories in collections including *Best Australian Stories* and her latest book, *Navigating the Kingdom of Night*, was released in November 2013.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## Develop Your Craft

### Shaping Stories: Insights from Writing for Film

with Cameron Raynes

Saturday 30 August 10am-1pm

Struggling with structure and pacing in your writing? In this workshop, award-winning short story writer and screenwriter Cameron Raynes shares the lessons he has learned through the process of working across both page and screen. You'll learn to apply scriptwriting strategies, concepts and tools to make your short stories and novels sing. Learn the payoff, worthy antagonist, false victory and other concepts scriptwriters use to structure and pace their narratives.

Practical exercises will allow participants to apply these things to their own stories and to begin to explore how the discipline of writing for film can benefit their work.

**Cameron Raynes** teaches history at the University of South Australia and is the author of *The Last Protector* and *The Colour of Kerosene* (both with Wakefield Press). His short film, *The Colour of Kerosene*, was produced in Adelaide in 2012 and won 'Best Australian Film' at the Barossa Film Festival 2013. In 2008, Cameron won the Josephine Ulrick Literary Prize for his short story, 'Taxi'.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## Masterclass

### The Digital Writers' Room

with Christy Dena

Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 August

10am-4pm

Christy Dena comes to SA Writers Centre for the first time to present a two-day intensive designed to nurture the 21st century writer.

This masterclass is aimed at writers working in the digital space, especially those working with interactive stories, gaming, experimental narratives and other digital, collaborative writing projects, and those interested in participatory theatre and interacting with audiences.

Modelled on a TV writers' room, this special lab will give the lonely digital writer the rare opportunity to develop their work with peers, in a collaborative setting. Bring your current projects, or seedlings of new ideas, and develop them supported by feedback and creative writing exercises. You'll share techniques and technologies, passions and processes.

**Christy Dena** is a writer-designer-director who has worked on an extensive list of award-winning pervasive games, film, digital and theatre projects. Among her many achievements, Christy co-wrote *The Writers Guide to Making a Digital Living* for the Australian Literature Board. She is Professor Adjunct at Creative Industries, QUT; Game Design Lecturer at SAE Brisbane. Christy has a Post Graduate Diploma in Creative Writing (University of Melbourne), and a PhD on Transmedia Practice (University of Sydney).



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

**Cost: \$240 Members • \$360 Non-members**

## Know Your Genre

### Writing Memoir with Benjamin Law

**Sunday 7 September 10am-4pm**

If you've ever considered writing about your life – in columns, personal essays or as a memoir – but weren't sure where (or how) to start, then join this in-depth exploration of writing the most important story you'll ever tell: your own. Learn key techniques for writing about yourself and the people, places, and experiences of your life in a way that remains true to memory and excites readers. Refine your storytelling voice, identify the most interesting elements of your life and learn to stay on task and time manage the epic challenge of writing your life on the page. Benjamin will kick you up the butt to write at least 15,000 words in the first month of your memoir writing journey.

**Benjamin Law** is the author of two books: the black comedy memoir *The Family Law* and the travel adventure *Gaysia: Adventures in the Queer East*, both of which were nominated for Australian Book Industry Awards. He is currently developing *The Family Law* for television and working on his third book. He is columnist for *frankie* and *QWeekend*, and contributes long-form journalism to *The Monthly* and *Good Weekend*.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



**Cost: \$120 members • \$180 Non-members**

## Fiction Clinic

### Know Your Characters with Anna Solding

**Saturday 20 September 10am-1pm**

Improve all your characters! Investing in your characters is one of the most fundamental elements of writing. This workshop will inspire you and help you to find the heart of your characters, to understand them better and convey their motivations through action, speech, association and thought processes.

To write a novel, or even a short story, means spending time agonising over the right turn of phrase, the most logical plot twist and the perfect ending. But to make the reader come along for the ride, to really believe in your writing, and to be completely absorbed in your story, you need to find the deep heart of your characters.

**Anna Solding's** first novel *The Hum of Concrete* was nominated for People's Choice Award and longlisted for the Commonwealth Book Prize. After many years of studying for her PhD, editing magazines and collections, as well as publishing countless reviews and short stories, Anna now works full time as a writer and publisher. In 2012, Anna launched MidnightSun Publishing and as its Managing Director, Anna publishes thought-provoking and beautiful books. Running workshops and speaking at universities and book groups has become an important and enjoyable part of her life.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## Fiction Clinic

### Writing Effective Dialogue with Lucy Clark

**Saturday 20 September 2pm-5pm**

Do you want to know how to make your characters sound as real as possible? Do you want to inject substance, emotion and interest into the mouths of your creations? Learn how to be an effective puppet master by learning how to write effective dialogue.

Dialogue is in your stories to impart information to and about your characters. It's there to make your characters come to life and to bring a three-dimensional quality to your work so that your reader is able to become the character, to feel what they feel, to live vicariously through them, to have an adventure without leaving the comfort of their home.

**Lucy Clark** has recently achieved her Master of Arts (Writing & Literature) as well as completing her 60th novel for international publishing giant Harlequin Mills and Boon. Her books have sold in excess of two million copies; she's been a finalist for the coveted R\*BY Award, and been awarded both the Silver and Gold Award from Harlequin Mills & Boon. All of Lucy's books are set in Australia and many are based in South Australia.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## Immersion

### TWELVE

our quarterly writing 'lock-in'

**Saturday 27 September 7am-7pm**

Do you have trouble finding the time to write? Are there too many distractions around you? Do you often think to yourself, if only I just had a day to write I would get so much done? Then this experience is for you.

Join us for a life changing, twelve hour writing lock in! We will push you to new heights and you will unlock the writing beast from within you like never before, during this dawn til dusk writing marathon.

This is your 'no excuses, no limits, no distractions' opportunity to get your writing projects heated up to boiling point. No escape, no diversions, no wandering focus. Just twelve uninterrupted hours of unadulterated writing and inspiration.

At the last TWELVE event, participants completed over **60,000 words**, and transformed their works in progress. Be part of it this month and banish your winter writing blues.

**We provide space to write, motivation, advice - and snacks!**

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

# Program July - September

## Find Your Genre

### Introduction to Contemporary Poetry

with Mike Ladd

**Sunday 28 September 10am-1pm**

Mike Ladd's introduction to contemporary poetry will suit those who have begun writing poetry and are ready to ramp it up a notch. Take your scribbles on bits of scrap paper to eloquent, haunting poetry that will move readers. In the first half of the workshop Mike will give some examples of different contemporary styles and discuss what makes a poem work well, or what can bring it to grief. There will also be an overview of the current poetry scene in Australia and what opportunities exist for poets. The second half of the class will provide a hands-on, interactive approach to refining your words to create exquisite poetry. Participants can, if they wish, bring copies of a recent poem to share with Mike and the group for feedback and editing suggestions.

**Mike Ladd** has worked in radio for thirty years and currently produces *Poetica*, on ABC Radio National. Mike has published seven collections; the most recent is *Karrawirra Parri: Walking the Torrens from Source to Sea* from Wakefield Press. Since the 1980s, he's been experimenting with poetry on screen and as audio. He is a poetry mentor, a peer of the Literature Assessment Panel of the Australia Council, and occasionally he reviews poetry for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Australian Book Review*.

**Cost: \$60 Members • \$90 Non-members**

## How to Book

- online at [sawriters.org.au](http://sawriters.org.au) (members **must** log in to receive member prices)
- email: [admin@sawriters.org.au](mailto:admin@sawriters.org.au)
- phone: **08 8223 7662**
- in person: **Level 2, 187 Rundle St, Adelaide**
- our office is open **Tuesday to Thursday** from **10am-5pm**

**All program details** are correct at publication, but details can change. Please check our website and enews for updates.

Registered participants will be contacted directly if there are any course changes.

### Terms and conditions

There are no refunds on workshop fees. See our website for full terms and conditions.



## Teen Creative Writing Boot Camp

July School Holidays

**Week 1: From Idea to Story**

**Tuesday 8 July - Thursday 10 July 9.30am-4.30pm**

If you love creative writing and want to write books like all your favourite authors then our Creative Writing Boot Camp can help. Our team of professional, award winning writers will take you on a journey from developing an idea to producing the final draft of a great story people will want to read. By the end of the three days you will have all the skills you need to complete a work of fiction. You'll be in a group of like-minded people who want to learn just as much as you do and take the first leap towards becoming a great writer

**Cost: \$270**

**Week 2: From Draft to Book**

**Tuesday 15 July - Thursday 17 July 9.30am-4.30pm**

If you have done one of our boot camps before and are ready to publish your work, or you have a final draft of manuscript, this course is for you! It will teach you how to become a published author.

Have your draft ready to go before the course so you can send it in to receive professional feedback and publishing advice. You'll also get to learn about professional editing techniques, proofreading, book design and layout, and on the final day you'll make your own ebook and publish it.

This boot camp is suitable for those with a completed fiction manuscript (short story, novel or poetry) that they are ready to review and publish.

**Cost: \$270**

**Enrol for both Boot Camps at a special cost of \$490**

# Just for Starters: Point of View

*Just for Starters* is a series of craft and industry articles aimed at aspiring writers. **Malcolm Walker** follows up on point of view, this time looking at the third person.

As I said in my previous article, a fundamental question writers face is who will tell the story. In December we looked at first person point of view. This piece will consider the third person narrative viewpoint as this form often causes writers the most headaches. While there are multiple and subtle variations of what follows, it's useful to understand the three basic methods of delivery: third person omniscient, third person limited omniscient and third person objective. As with journalism or reportage, objectivity is assumed to lend authority and, as the third person is seen to be more objective than the first, the device aims to lend distance and perspective between the reader and the narrator. Here the tone is more authoritative, with the narrator endeavouring to efface her or himself, rather than the intimacy that comes with first person narratives.

Probably the least common usage today is that of the true third person omniscient, used extensively by 19<sup>th</sup> century authors such as Joseph Conrad and George Eliot. In this mode the voice is often that of an unknown narrator – the voice being akin to God's – and there's usually distance and anonymity to the descriptive voice. This mode allows the narration to switch from character to character and works well for long fictional forms with multiple characters and complex plots. If you're using the omniscient your narrator will know everything and will be free to tell the reader – this could be the most intimate thought in a minor character's head or what the protagonist had for breakfast – but it requires considerable skill to avoid confusion. Once a reader begins to doubt who's speaking or thinking you've drawn attention to the construct that is fiction. Apart from metafiction or experimental writing, most authors are aiming to sweep the reader along in the narrative flow, not have them pause and question 'who' or 'why'.

One of the best known examples of third person limited omniscient is Jane Austen's famous sentence from *Pride and Prejudice*: 'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.' Such an opening does not indicate an objective, unbiased narrator.

Third person limited omniscient is one of the most common forms used today as it gives the author a great deal of control, allowing them to pass comment on the significance of events or the motives behind a character's actions, and to jump between geographical and temporal locations. But how your all-seeing narrator is deployed depends on what you're trying to achieve.

While this method provides the broadest brush strokes, the most flexibility and a deal of complexity, be wary of 'head jumping' – switching quickly from one character's position to another's – and interrupting the reader's suspension of disbelief. Head jumping applies to both of the omniscient modes but particularly to the limited omniscient. A basic rule can be to only switch point of view between scenes. Difficulties that arise from this narrative viewpoint are that the author can get lost in multiple strands or viewpoints thereby diluting the story or losing narrative focus, and with too much information the narrator can also come between the reader and the story. As with first person this point of view can have a one, two or a dozen characters through which the reader witnesses events.

This brings us to the impartial observer – the third person dramatic or objective point of view – where the reader is left to interpret the characters' actions and motives. Of the various narrative voices this device establishes the most distance between the author and the reader. A little like a fly-on-the-wall documentary, it reports rather than reflects, introduces rather than interprets, but provides no explanation of events. The objective point of view works well with action oriented plots and heavily dialogic works but it requires a subtle hand when any psychological insight into a character's thinking is required as such elements can only be portrayed

through word and deed. A brilliant example of this in short story form – that is psychologically loaded dialogue with a heavy subtextual undercurrent – is Hemingway's 'Hills Like White Elephants'.

Dramatic irony, where the reader knows more than the protagonist, can be used to great effect with the third person, particularly where minor characters have thoughts or viewpoints that contradict those of the central character. This method is often used to create suspense. An example of this can be found in *Oliver Twist*, where Nancy hides from Bill Sikes the fact that she has Oliver's best interests at heart in returning him to Mr Brownlow.

While point of view is an important element in good fiction, believable, psychologically motivated characters are the main driver. Good characterisation depends on the difference between thinking about your character and thinking as your character, but in terms of creating a convincing, sustainable point of view you have to be able to step back to gain insight and perspective on your narrative. Reading good fiction and then analysing just how the author puts it together is one of the best tools at our disposal.

Choosing your point of view isn't an arbitrary decision. You'll need to think it through, perhaps experiment with different modes. Point of view is the doorway through which your reader will step and, like all aspects of the writing craft, needs to be honed and perfected.



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# Lie of the Land

Malcolm Walker looks at writing landscape and setting.

Where would writers be without landscape? We need a backdrop – or setting as it's often called nowadays – against which our characters can move convincingly. But these days it would be a brave writer who constructs descriptive passages as dense as those found in Dickens or Eliot.

Since the days of the first moving images and through the talkies to what constitutes the best of contemporary television (thinking *Breaking Bad* here) the role of landscape in fiction has lessened considerably. It simply doesn't hold the same relevance in our visually overstimulated world that it did to the generations who came before the camera and the cathode ray tube. These days, readers haven't the patience.

Done well, setting allows the reader to place his or herself in a world or amidst the action, which in turn brokers Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief.' And yet we only have to turn to the world of radio drama to understand that we can conjure complex imaginary worlds from something as seemingly insubstantial as dialogue, idiom, accent, emotion or sound effects. We have been telling stories orally since the beginning of language.

I've never been to North America, yet when reading a novel set in Louisiana or New York or Oregon I have no trouble conjuring place; the still or moving image has taken care of that, they've filled in the blanks. All it needs is a clever writer and I'm there. This is due to the ubiquity of visual imagery and culture. But (and I shall make a play on words here) what is 'seen' in the reader's mind's eye first has to be constructed as a 'scene' and, as any film buff will tell you, *mise en scène* – everything that appears in the cinematic frame – is of great importance, both literally and metaphorically.

This analogy of the frame is quite an interesting one. Take a news photograph for example: these days most westerners are fairly media-savvy and can or will ask the question, 'What is happening off camera – what hasn't been shown?' We've been trained to look for a bigger picture, other contexts outside the frame or border. And, because we are so visually literate, this works just as well with readers. What is left out as much as what is described in any given fictional scene immediately calls into question what is happening elsewhere, whether it's from the point of view of another character or an omniscient overarching narrator, and by inviting the reader's conjecture a writer only adds to the mystery and movement that all fiction requires to keep the reader turning the pages.

I find it sometimes helps to switch positions and to think of setting as character and vice versa. This may sound obtuse, especially with regards to characterisation. However, we all have a psychological landscape; a terrain that is worn with deep pathways and rutted tracks – this is what I mean by character as landscape. I don't so much go looking for motives when developing a character as walking down these well-worn pathways. I'll try to see a given character moving through a setting and observe them. These vignettes – if written down – rarely make it to the finished page, rather they provide backstory.

Conversely, well-written landscape or setting, can often have more than a semblance of character: Updike's mid-western middle-America that 'Rabbit' Angstrom inhabits leaves a tangible flavour in the mouth; Hannah Kent's Iceland haunts the imagination as much as the fate of her protagonist; while Kate Grenville's Hawkesbury inflicts itself upon William Thornhill, the central character of *The Secret River*, and reader alike in equal measure as arcadia and the alien and the threatening world of the Australian bush.

But given that we can no longer do a Dickens (publishers and readers no longer tolerate long flowery passages) what does a writer include and what can be safely left out? This is where we must learn to trust our readers, adding just enough description to allow them to build the world, be it a literary one or something genre-based, while not overloading the page and our reader. With setting, less is often more.

So where, as writers, should we draw the line with description? Here are some guidelines I try to use when writing fiction:

- work your description into the action; keep it relevant – don't go off on tangents just because they're of interest to you
- avoid info dumps, large blocks of description, whether it's about setting or characters
- use all the senses – your characters' eyes, ears and emotions – a lot of information can be accessed through point of view
- make sure what your character describes is contextually aligned to who they are, their experience, background, age, etc.
- reveal setting in a relevant fashion: characters or narrators will describe that which is of most importance to them at that moment
- description should match genre, mood and action (don't break a fast-paced action scene with a rambling description of the rusting fire escape the hero is about to plunge from)
- nouns and verbs, preferably those that precisely describe, are better than adjectives and adverbs
- metaphor or simile can often tell a reader a great deal more than a whole paragraph of description, but choose your metaphors with care – a clunky, ill-chosen metaphor that doesn't match the context breaks the flow
- try, if possible, to visit the places you're writing about
- If you can't visit, then research through non-fiction, the web and by talking to people
- keeping a journal can help with developing your powers of observation

Jim Grace told an amusing anecdote at Writers' Week one year. He complained gently that a number of his novels, all aligned to a particular theme, had been reviewed by experts in that field: a book about a lighthouse keeper had been reviewed by someone from Trinity House; a crime novel by a forensic pathologist. To the delight of the audience, he described how his collection of short pieces on the subject of food, *The Devil's Larder*, which had a group of rich gastronomes eating endangered species and then trekking into the jungle to eat unidentified bush food – the implication being that they were practising cannibalism – had been reviewed by a food critic who said the book would be best read with a glass of chilled chardonnay. Grace said that as a writer of fiction he simply 'made stuff up.'

That's what writers do: we make stuff up. But it's a thin line between making stuff up and making *stuff ups*. It's a balancing act and getting it right can mean the difference between a manuscript getting published and languishing in a bottom drawer. Setting is just one element you have to get right.

The land can only lie if you let it; mostly you want it to speak the truth – your particular brand of fictional truth. After all, as the novelist Anne Enright said, 'All description is an opinion about the world.'

# Author-2-Author

**Vikki Wakefield** talks about Jack London and his influence on her writing.

It's been thirty years since I first read *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, and nearly twenty since I revisited Jack London's novels. There has been no third reading. Jack London remains my single, most influential reading choice in terms of staying a reader and becoming a writer, but I'm wary of reading him again. These were beloved books. I read them purely as a reader and, after rediscovering other childhood favourites and finding I loved them less, I've chosen to leave these two alone.

London's writing life began in 1893 at the age of seventeen. He was prolific, publishing more than fifty books and hundreds of short stories during the last sixteen years of his life including *The People of the Abyss* (1903), a critique of capitalism, and *John Barleycorn* (1913) a memoir exploring his own battle with alcoholism. But it was *The Call of the Wild*, a story serialised in the *Saturday Evening Post* during the summer of 1903, which was subsequently published as a novel that brought him success.

*The Call of the Wild* follows Buck, a domesticated St Bernard cross, stolen and sold for a sled-dog during the Klondike Gold Rush. *White Fang* is three parts wolf, a wild creature tamed by his love for and allegiance to one man. If Buck is called back to his wild ancestors, *White Fang*'s journey is the opposite: domestication. These are companion novels, or literary bookends, and they remain the greatest adventure stories I've ever read. Beneath the brusque and bloody tales of death and survival in the Yukon, these are love stories; London's sentimentality isn't obvious but it's there, woven with themes of morality and redemption.

That's about as analytical as I'll get about London's work. He's been called a plagiarist, a socialist, a 'sham naturalist' and a 'nature-faker' (many believe his true genius lies in his short stories), but there are reasons a child will connect to a story and none of them have anything to do with a writer's morality or literary worth. I'd always been drawn to books about animals, horses in particular, working my way through Elyne Mitchell's *Silver Brumby* series and anything ever written by Christine Pullein-Thompson. *Black Beauty* was another favourite and, while animal cruelty was surely present on those pages, it lacked the savagery of London's novels. Nothing else I'd read at that time had evoked such a sense of place or provoked a physical reaction to words as London's novels. (To this day I have an unfounded phobia about falling through ice – a legacy from his short story, *To Build a Fire*.)

After Jack London my reading tastes were bolder. I took on just about anything. I suppose his novels were my reading coming-of-age, though I'd read many other adult books at around the same time, so this deduction isn't purely a signpost of lost innocence. By the time I hit high school, nothing the curriculum demanded fazed me. I didn't learn to love writers like Hardy or Ibsen but they didn't scare me either; with London I'd conquered my fear of fat books with small print and big ideas.

I often forget how ingrained my knowledge and habits gained from childhood reading are – until some obscure question is thrown up on *Hot Seat* and I yell at the television (a ptarmigan is a bird, a bird!). Or a foreign word makes perfect sense because I've seen it before, contained in a paragraph, and taken its context and attached it to a memory of a story I'll never forget. I've retained bizarre facts (or fallacies) about the nature and hierarchy of sled-dogs; I'm drawn to stories where the real menace is off-page; a book will only ever make me cry if the dog dies.

As I write this article and recall my early memories of London's stories, the images I have in my mind of Buck and *White Fang*



haven't changed (I still see Buck as a Rottweiler, though that's clearly wrong), but when I read through excerpts and quotes, something *is* different.

I rarely hear my own voice in my head when I read. My younger self had assigned a male narrator with a mellow, Southern cadence to London's novels (he sounded uncannily similar to Morgan Freeman's voiceover in *The Shawshank Redemption*, a movie released many years later), which made for a sublime reading experience. But, as I read now, there has been an inexplicable shift and my inner-narrator sounds like televangelist, Jimmy Swaggart.

Go ahead, try it both ways:

*'He was mastered by the sheer surging of life, the tidal wave of being, the perfect joy of each separate muscle, joint, and sinew in that it was everything that was not death, that it was aglow and rampant, expressing itself in movement, flying exultantly under the stars.'*

This might seem a rather back-handed tribute to a writer who had such a long-lasting effect on my own reading and writing, but I'm nowhere near twelve anymore. I suspect Jack London was as racist and sexist as his time and I don't think we'd get along.

The memories I have are beautiful, maybe flawed, always precious. I remember snow, blood on snow, the scrape of teeth, the crunch of bone and the cold. I picture a wolf pack circling two men, eight dogs and a dying fire; each time the men close their eyes, another sled dog is picked off and gutted, until only one man and one coffin remain. I still lose breath when I picture *White Fang* in the dog-fight ring, surrounded by jeering men, slowly bleeding out under the dogged grip of the bulldog, Cherokee. I still wave to Buck when he hears the wolves howl and answers his call to the wild.

That's how I remember it all. And it was glorious.

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**Vikki Wakefield** writes contemporary YA fiction for older readers. Her debut *All I Ever Wanted* won the inaugural 2012 Adelaide Festival Award for Young Adult Literature, her second novel *Friday Brown* was awarded a 2013 CBCA Honour and she's published in the US, UK and Germany. Vikki lives in Adelaide and writes in her dining room. She wants an office ... now.

## TICKETED EVENTS

### Writing Art Literary Dinner

with Lisa Slade and Nicholas Folland

Thursday 7 August 7pm-10pm

Writers and writing are crucial in supporting, challenging and enriching the experience of the arts: whether through arts criticism, exhibition catalogues or artist memoirs and biographies. Join Lisa Slade from the Art Gallery of South Australia and artist Nicholas Folland as they discuss the texts that support, justify and critique contemporary art in South Australia.

Celebrate South Australian Living Artists month in style, with a stellar cast of South Australia artists, writers, food and wine.

The Kings Hotel, 357 King William Road, Adelaide

**Cost: \$75 Members • \$95 Non-members • Includes entry and three courses**

### Emerging Writers Festival Roadshow

Friday 5-Sunday 7 September

The Emerging Writers Festival is coming to Adelaide! The EWF is where creativity and innovation are celebrated, new talent is nurtured and diverse voices from across Australia are represented. This festival is at the forefront of the industry for this broad subset of writers and focuses on bringing together a great range of voices who are all doing extraordinary things.

The EWF and SA Writers Centre collaborate to bring you a weekend of local and interstate readings, panel sessions, workshops, book launches, parties and more. Full program announced in August on our website and via our enews.

## Opportunities

### To find listings ...

*either visit the Opportunities page of our website for more details or type one of the entry headings below into your web browser.*

### The Monthly Catch

The General Publishing team at Penguin Group (Australia) is keen to read new work from Australian authors. Unsolicited manuscripts are accepted during the 1st to the 7th of every month. Submission guidelines can be found on their website. Penguin are not currently accepting unsolicited material for children.

### CHASS Australia Prize for a Book in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

The Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) invites applications for the newly endowed CHASS Australia Prize for a Book in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (\$3500). The Prize will be awarded to the author whose book, in the opinion of the judges, contributes most to Australian cultural and intellectual life. The Prize is being sponsored by Routledge, the world's leading academic publisher in the Humanities and Social Sciences. **Closes June 30.**

### Emerging Writers Sought for 'Writers' Web'

Do you want to be or discover the next big name Australian writer? [www.writersweb.com.au](http://www.writersweb.com.au) allows Australian writers to become authors by connecting them directly with readers rather than waiting to be traditionally published. Writers (a) establish a profile, (b) provide their manuscript or self-published book, (c) sell their hardcopy or ebooks non-exclusively online. Readers (a) sign up as reviewers, (b) receive books and (c) post reviews. There are no up-front fees for writers.

### Siskiyou Prize for New Environmental Literature

The contest is open to unpublished, full-length prose manuscripts, including novels, memoirs, short story collections, and essay collections. The winner will receive a cash award of \$1,000 and publication by Ashland Creek Press. The submission deadline is September 30, 2014.

### Bruce Dawe Poetry Prize

Applications open for international residencies soon. Specific criteria apply, so please visit their website. **Closes July 31.**

### Blake Poetry Prize

The 2014 Blake Poetry Prize is now open for entries. It was established to give Australian poets new possibilities to explore religion and spirituality in the twenty-first century. **Closes July 4.**

### Yarram Community Learning Centre Competition

Open theme. Short stories (1,500-3,000 words) and poetry (8-48 lines) rhyming or free verse. Short story first prize \$200, second prize \$100. Poetry first prize \$100, second prize \$50. Entry fee \$5 per story, \$3 per poem. Entry forms on website. **Closes July 21.**

### The Readings New Australian Writing Award

The Readings New Australian Writing Award, established in 2014, supports published Australian authors working in fiction, and recognises exciting and exceptional new contributions to local literature. The prize will be \$4,000. Eligible applicants will be invited to apply only. Details at the Readings website.

### Jaffa Books: Submissions

This Brisbane-based e-publisher is looking for novellas, graphic novels and novels. Payment by royalty.

### And There's More!

This page samples some of the major awards, prizes and competitions, along with other current publishing and industry updates from our website.

For the comprehensive list please visit [www.sawriters.org.au](http://www.sawriters.org.au)

## Member Monthly

### Dubnium Presents: Publishing on a Shoestring

Thursday 31 July

12.30pm-1.30pm

Meet Dubnium – our group of young editors and writers – as they share their tricks and tips on how to publish online on a shoestring. The group has invited writers selected for the project to share their experiences of being edited for inclusion in the 2014 Dubnium anthology.

### Writing in the Community

Thursday 28 August

12.30pm-1.30pm

Make the most of your skills as a writer and diversify your income by sharing your expertise with the community. Outside of education settings there are a range of institutions that offer paid work for professional writers such as prisons, hospitals, mental health organisations, drug/alcohol support agencies and local authorities who are delivering health and other community development programs. Meet David Chapple (SAWC Writing Development Manager) and Indigo Eli (Spoken Word SA) as they discuss the precarious line between therapist and practitioner.

### Children and Young Adult: Meet the May Gibbs Trust

Thursday 25 September

12.30pm-1.30pm

The May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust supports the creativity and careers of contemporary Australian children's authors and illustrators. Elizabeth Hutchins, the National Selection Committee Chair and much loved SA author, will discuss the opportunities the Trust can offer South Australian authors and illustrators and the challenges and opportunities writing/illustrating residencies can bring.

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## Quick and Dirty: New Work Readings

6:30pm @ *The Howling Owl*,  
13 Frome Street Adelaide

Thursday 26 June

**Not Just Bodice-busting Babes:**

romance roadshow round up.

Thursday 31 July

**The Flashers:**

short, sudden and flash fiction.

Thursday 28 August

**A Queer Situation:**

writing with LGBTIQ themes.

Thursday 25 September

**Young Guns:**

curated by Dubnium.

## VOICeworks LAUNCH

Thursday 3 July

*Voiceworks* is the quarterly magazine of Express Media, the national youth writing organisation, which is dedicated to publishing writers under 25. Join the editors and contributors for the launch of the July issue. A networking opportunity not to be missed.

## DUBNIUM LAUNCH

Thursday 10 July

Doors at 7pm for a 7:30pm start

The Dubnium editing group will be launching their short story anthology, sourced from 20 SA writers under the age of 26. Come and support this SAWC and Carclew project for emerging South Australian talent.

## THE GENERAL

### SALA 2014 Art Exhibition

Launch: Saturday 2 August

6.30pm-9.30pm

'The General has given orders to investigate the revolutionary speech, painting, sculpture and movies circulating in the degenerate sector! Two artists are under observation and this show is suspected of non-realistic tendencies. The General is in charge and your report is due in his office now!'

The General is an art exhibition by Sophie Corso and Andy Petrusevics.

Exhibition dates: Saturday 2 August - Saturday 23 August.

## Writers Lounge

Our new Writers Lounge brings together writers and special guest interviewers in a candid and casual 'on the couch' series. Showcasing a diverse range of bright and sparkling South Australian literary voices, this series will let you get up close with your favourite writers, and encourage you to discover new ones, as they discuss books, writing and the literary life.

The season begins with our current real life writer in residence, Rose Hartley, and her interviewee of choice – award-winning writer, reviewer, editor and our inaugural digital Writer in Residence, Jennifer Mills.

**Writers Lounge**

The Residents: Rose Hartley and Jennifer Mills

Thursday 24 July, 6pm-7 pm

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