

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 14th May 2018

WILLIAMSTOWN LITERARY FESTIVAL UNVEILS PROGRAM THAT EXPLORES “FROM LITTLE THINGS...”

Andy Griffiths, Jacqueline Harvey, Leigh Hobbs, Stereo Stories, John Marsden, Alice Pung and more.

The biggest literary event in Melbourne’s West celebrates its 15th year, with the **Williamstown Literary Festival (WLF)** today unveiling its line-up for 2018.

Program Director **Loraine Callow** said this year’s program has a line-up of 80 local and interstate writers and performers that will explore the theme, ‘From little things...’ with the humour, creativity and adventurous nature that Williamstown is known for.

“The Willy Lit Fest will examine the power of chance encounters, an encouraging mentor, a kind word or gesture, small steps taken, a connection made. We’ll play with little ideas that take hold, germinate, sprout and bloom. We’ll learn to make a start, take a risk, to overcome creative block and to thrive.”, Ms Callow said.

2018 is also chance to celebrate **Willy Lit Fest** itself and the small group of friends who had a little idea that’s grown into a big-hearted festival that brings the local and wider Melbourne community together. *“We could not have done it without the support of our major partner, Hobsons Bay City Council, long-time supporter, Victoria University and all our community sponsors who help nurture the festival year after year.”*

The festival will celebrate the writers and performers who’ve grown along with the WLF and present new and upcoming authors with a free pre-event that explores the leap it takes to push outside the comfort zone as a writer.

Local resident, award winning author and WLF supporter, **Andy Griffiths**, will officially launch the festival on the 14th of May while the announcement of the prestigious Ada Cambridge Prizes for Biographical Prose and Poetry and the Young Adas Short Story Prize will take place at the festival opening on **Saturday 16th June**.

We will welcome Sydney based, best-selling author **Jacqueline Harvey** for the first time who will talk all things AliceMiranda and Clementine Rose in an interactive session which will have the audience laughing out loud.

Adults wanting to develop their picture book ideas will be treated to a workshop with one of Australia’s most celebrated children’s authors, **Leigh Hobbs**, where he will share decades of experience and practical advice in a hands-on session. BYO pencils!

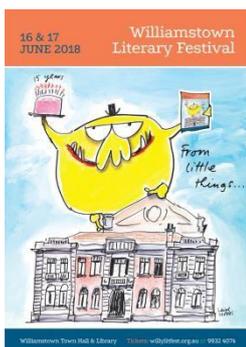
Sofie Laguna, 2015 Miles Franklin Literary Award winner, will chat with **Ailsa Piper** about her latest book, *The Choke*, and the indomitable nature of the human spirit. While **Alice Pung** and **John Marsden** talk to **Bruno Lettieri** and shed new light on the craft of writing.

WLF will proudly welcome back **Stereo Stories in Concert** at Williamstown Town Hall. The concert promises a feast of music and memoir, that will feature guest writers including **Danny Katz** and **Brian Nankervis**. From The Eagles to Died Pretty, Madonna to One Direction, David Cassidy and Bob Dylan, Stereo Stories is an evening like no other.

For families, the festival presents, ***Kamishibai - Stories for Kids***. A show for all ages that explores the ‘paper theatre’ Japanese way of telling stories using picture cards. While **Working Mums: Managing children, work and life** is a panel of fabulous women on the beauty and challenges of combining motherhood and work that will have working families feeling a lot less alone.

Other 2018 program highlights include:

- **Josephine Wilson**, 2017 Miles Franklin winner, discusses *Extinctions* with **Sherryl Clark** in a lively conversation about novel writing, family, mortality, and redemption.
- **Ailsa Piper**, author of *Sinning Across Spain*, brings to life her 1300km walk, the cast of characters she encountered on the way, and the poetry that sustained her. She also honours her husband Peter, her “true north”, and reveals how the Camino supported her when she lost him.
- **Stan ‘Yarra’ Yarramunua**, Yorta Yorta man, Melbourne artist, musician, businessman and charity worker – on *A Man Called Yarra*, an inspiring memoir of overcoming hardship and striving for a better life. In conversation with **Robert Hillman**.
- **Gabrielle Baldwin** explores what she has learnt about life – and death – from her South Gippsland bush garden and her book *Things My Garden Taught Me* with garden writing expert **Anne Latreille**, author of *Garden Voices*.
- **Demet Divaroren** talks with **Enza Gandolfo** about her profoundly moving new novel, *The Bridge*. The story of 22-year-old Italian migrant, Antonello, who worked as a rigger on the West Gate Bridge, when it collapsed killing 35 of his workmates in the 1970’s.
- **Sarah Bailey** and **James Phelan** in a thrilling session on the top selling genre of Crime Fiction. A Rotunda in the West event with **Sherryl Clark**.
- **John Spooner** and **Mark Knight** usually let their pictures do the talking and, drawing on over 70 years of combined experience, and have captured the highs and lows of Australian life. Get inside the minds of two of Australia’s finest cartoonists.
- **Michelle Scott Tucker** shines a light on an often-overlooked aspect of Australia’s history in this fascinating story of a remarkable woman as she chats with **Georgina Arnott** in *Elizabeth Macarthur – A Life at the End of the World*.
- **Andy Griffiths** presents a tour of the treehouse for children. All questions will be answered, (even the silly ones). Bookings essential!
- **Amy Bodossian**, Melbourne spoken word award winner and Green Room Award nominee, Berlin Festival poetry slam winner **Emilie Zoey Baker**, and passionate, eloquent activist **Soreti Kadir** perform poetry and discuss their art.
- **Dennis Glover** masterfully discusses his exploration of the creation of Orwell’s classic work in *The Last Man in Europe: A Novel*. In conversation with **Chris Ringrose**.
- **Sherryl Clark** looks at the role of scary fairy tales, their psychology, why fairy tales can help children with resilience and courage, and the issues with Disney-fication and helicopter parenting.
- **Hung Le**, comedian and writer, closes the festival with a stand up comedy session and a chat with **Stella Kinsella** about his book, *The Crappiest Refugee*.



The full program and tickets on sale will be available from **9am Monday 14th May** at willylitfest.org.au. “We invite you to celebrate the 15th year of the Willy List Fest on the **16th and 17th June** and experience the warmth, humour and adventurous spirit that the festival is known for.” Ms Callow said.

Note: Program artwork created by artist and author, Leigh Hobbs.

<https://www.facebook.com/willylitfest/>

<https://twitter.com/willylitfest>

<https://www.instagram.com/willylitfest/>