

# ROSE SCOTT WOMEN WRITERS FESTIVAL 2025


Established in 2013 as  
an annual flagship event  
for The Women's Club

**Friday 27 and Saturday 28 June 2025**

PRINCIPAL PARTNER

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Share your experience

#RSWWF2025



@TheWomensClubSyd

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**Welcome to the Rose Scott Women Writers Festival 2025 - a dynamic forum where women's voices drive powerful conversations and challenge established thinking.**

Our exceptional speakers collectively highlight themes that define our purpose: resilience, perseverance, and fearlessness - our club's motto that embodies hope as an active force rather than passive sentiment. This year holds special significance as we mark the centenary of our namesake's death. Rose Scott, the formidable social reformer, suffragist, and intellectual force who passed away on April 20, 1925, left an indelible legacy that continues to inspire our work. Her unwavering advocacy for women's rights, her razor-sharp intellect, and her courage to challenge the status quo embody the very spirit this festival seeks to honor and advance.

We also celebrate another momentous literary anniversary, the 250th commemoration of Jane Austen's birth. Austen's pioneering work continues to resonate through generations, her astute social commentary and complex female characters challenging the constraints of her time while speaking powerfully to ours. Her enduring influence on literature and feminist thought forms a fitting complement to Rose Scott's legacy of advocacy and reform.

You will find writing that is both bold and nuanced; work that confronts uncomfortable truths while revealing authentic vulnerability, that provokes and examines in equal measure. We are a writers festival for women, however we are also proud to position ourselves as an ideas festival, one that focuses on women's narratives and extends into broader intellectual territory. While celebrating literary achievements, we simultaneously tackle substantial issues: deconstructing gender frameworks, sexuality, history, exposing social dynamics and political realities, and addressing rapidly evolving risks to creativity, climate and humanity.

This festival stands as a testament to the dedication of our committee, whose vision and commitment deserve our sincere gratitude. Special thanks to our Rose Scott patron, Rowena Danziger AM, for her steadfast support of women's voices, and to Community Bank Darling Square Bendigo Bank, whose partnership makes this intellectual venture possible. I extend heartfelt appreciation to all our donors whose generosity has been transformative. Your support has enabled us to elevate this festival to a national platform, expanding our reach and impact. With great pride, we also unveil our new logo, a visual representation of our evolution and ambitious vision for the future.

Above all, my deepest gratitude goes to our writers, whose courage, insight, and artistry form the heart of this festival, and to our loyal audience members and readers who return year after year, engaging thoughtfully with challenging ideas and complex narratives. Your continued presence and participation transform this event from a program into a living, evolving community of thought. This festival exists because of your commitment to women's voices and stories.

I invite you to engage deeply with the ideas presented here; to question, to learn, and to carry these conversations forward as catalysts for change.

**Danielle Asciak**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**The Women's Club**

**WELCOME**

# PROGRAM SCHEDULE WRITING WORKSHOPS

Access the ticketing details by  
[clicking here](#)  
or  
scanning the QR code below:



DATE	TIME	WRITER(S)	BRIEF SYNOPSIS

## WORKSHOP 1: Writing Historical Fiction: Finding the Story, Finding Your Voice

25 June	10am to 12pm	Cindy Davies	This interactive workshop explores the craft and publication journey of historical fiction. Bring your works-in-progress and questions as we navigate research methods and the diverse paths from manuscript to published novel.
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## WORKSHOP 2: From Archive to Memoir: Crafting Life Stories

26 June	4pm to 6pm	Tess Scholfield-Peters	Perfect for writers of all levels interested in exploring the intersection of personal history and archival discovery.
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## WORKSHOP 3: Sounding Out Poetry

27 June	9:30am to 11:30am	Paris Rosemont, Ally Burnham	Whether you are new to poetry, or wish to develop your craft, this workshop is for you.
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# PROGRAM SCHEDULE FRIDAY

Access the ticketing details by  
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TIME	WRITER(S)	BRIEF SYNOPSIS

## SESSION 1: Opening Lunch: Suzanne Chick in conversation with Gina Chick

12pm to 2:30pm	Suzanne Chick, Gina Chick	Begin the Rose Scott Women Writers Festival with this powerful celebration of women's stories and the complex, beautiful connections that inspire them across generations.
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## SESSION 2: Pride, Prejudice, & Hormone Therapy: Austen for Our Times

3:30pm to 4:15pm	Sophie Gee, Amanda Hooton	This session examines how Austen's nuanced portrayal of non-conforming characters resonates with contemporary discussions of gender, sexuality, and identity.
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## SESSION 3: Reboot the Narrative: AI, Authorship, and the Future of Literature

5pm to 5:45pm	Tracey Spicer AM, Paula Bray, Lucy Hayward and Ally Burnham	How do we protect the rights of creatives in this new frontier? What happens when machines become storytellers?
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## SESSION 4: Hannah Kent in conversation with Nicole Abadee

6:30pm to 7:30pm	Hannah Kent, Nicole Abadee	In this intimate literary memoir, bestselling novelist Hannah Kent chronicles her transformative relationship with Iceland, beginning with her bewildering arrival as a seventeen-year-old exchange student.
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# PROGRAM SCHEDULE SATURDAY

Access the ticketing details by  
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TIME	WRITER(S)	BRIEF SYNOPSIS
<b>SESSION 5: Jane Caro in conversation with Kate McClymont</b>		
10am to 10:50am	Jane Caro AM, Kate McClymont AM	Two of Australia's most formidable voices unite as longtime friends to discuss Caro's thrilling new novel <i>Lyrebird</i> .
<b>SESSION 6: Authoring Change: Women Who Dare to Disrupt</b>		
11:45am to 12:45pm	Antoinette Lattouf, Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts and Sara Saleh	An unflinching conversation with women who refused to remain silent—and the complex legacies they continue to forge.
<b>SESSION 7: Recipe for a Nation: How Australian Food Culture Was Made</b>		
2pm to 3pm	Dr Lauren Samuelsson, Jennifer Wong and Felicity Lewis	An entertaining, nostalgic, and insightful exploration of Australia's culinary heritage.
<b>SESSION 8: Charlotte McConaghy in conversation with Melissa Lee Speyer</b>		
3:45pm to 4:30pm	Charlotte McConaghy, Melissa Lee Speyer	Internationally bestselling author Charlotte McConaghy will discuss her stunning new climate fiction novel, <i>Wild Dark Shore</i> .



TIME	WRITER(S)	BRIEF SYNOPSIS

### SESSION 9: Tasma Walton in conversation with Bronte Charles

5pm to 6:30pm	Tasma Walton, Bronte Charles	Tasma Walton will discuss her heart-wrenching new novel <i>I Am Nannertgarrook</i> , based on the true story of her Boonwurrung ancestor who was kidnapped by sealers and enslaved far from her homeland.
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### SESSION 10: Closing Soiree - Sounding Out Loud

7pm onwards	Paris Rosemont, Ally Burnham	Join us for a fun and relaxed soiree of spoken word poetry at The Women's Club.
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# WRITERS & SPEAKERS



PARIS ROSEMONT

Paris Rosemont is an award-winning Asian-Australian poet. Her poetry has found eclectic homes from international literary journals and anthologies, through to quirky underground zines. Her niche is theatrical performance poetry. She has appeared at the Sydney Fringe Festival, world premiere of Slam Messiah 2022, Ubud Writers & Readers Festival 2023, and Short+Sweet Festival Illawarra 2023 where she was awarded Best Script. Her debut collection, *Banana Girl*, was shortlisted for the Dame Mary Gilmore Award 2024, and the Society of Women Writers NSW Poetry Book Award 2024. Her second poetry collection, *Barefoot Poetess*, published by WestWords Books, reclaims the word "Poetess", and a woman's fierce allegiance to her body, sexuality, her selfhood.



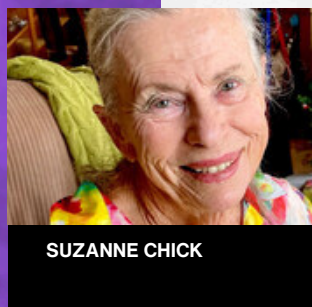
TESS SCHOLFIELD-PETERS

Tess Scholfield-Peters is a writer and academic at UTS, teaching across the Creative Writing and Communications programs. Tess has won an international prize for her academic research as well as a National Library of Australia summer scholarship for her research project: *From Berlin to the Bush: Jewish Youth in Rural Australia 1939*. Her PhD titled *For Those Who Cannot Speak: new and ethical expressions of Holocaust remembrance by the third generation* would become her first book, a work of narrative nonfiction titled *Dear Mutzi: a story of love, escape and finding the forgotten* which was published by NLA Publishing in June 2024. Tess lives and works in Sydney-Eora and is working on her second book.



CINDY DAVIES

Born in the UK, Cindy has lived, worked and travelled in Turkey and speaks some Turkish. She emigrated to Australia with her family in 1975 and is a graduate of Sydney University. She's been a teacher, freelance writer and tour guide in Sydney and Turkey. Cindy also visited Iran while writing her first two novels, set in Iran, the USA and Australia. She's won several awards for her books and short stories. In 2023 during a writer's residency in the UK, she revisited Turkey and the former sultan's palace to fine-tune her research for her third novel *The Favourite of the Harem*. Set in the Topkapı Palace harem of sixteenth-century Istanbul, it was published in November 2023. She is currently working on a fourth novel.



SUZANNE CHICK

Suzanne Chick was born in Sydney in 1942 and grew up in Mosman, the same suburb where Charmian Clift and George Johnston settled on their return from Greece in 1964. An adopted child with utterly different talents from those of her new family, Suzanne exhibited an unstoppable creative urge from the earliest age. Educated at North Sydney Girls' High School, she progressed to the National Art School and Sydney Teachers' College. After a long career teaching art and bringing up three daughters, she now makes a living as a painter, with occasional forays into the world of words. Suzanne Chick, who, after finally discovering her mother's identity at 48, wrote her own book, *Searching For Charmian*, which was shortlisted for the NBC Banjo Award.



GINA CHICK

Gina Chick is a rewilding facilitator, adventurer, writer and speaker. Gina was one of ten participants of the first series of *Alone Australia*, made by iTV and screened on SBS in 2023. After 67 days of unforgettable moments of searing vulnerability, Gina was the last person standing, and the second woman to win an Alone solo challenge. Her determination, passion and love of the natural world endeared her to more than 5.5 million people around Australia. Gina's articles have been published in *The Guardian*, *news.com.au*, *Mamamia* and SBS online. Her first book, *We Are the Stars*, published by Summit Books at Simon & Schuster, is a bestselling memoir of love, connection and the glorious power of letting go.



TRACEY SPICER AM

Tracey Spicer AM is a multiple Walkley Award winning journalist, author and broadcaster who spent more than 30 years anchoring national programs for ABC TV and radio, and Network Ten. The inaugural national convenor of Women in Media, Tracey is one of the most sought-after keynote speakers and emcees in the Asia-Pacific on the topics of artificial intelligence, social justice and equity. Her book about AI, *Man-Made: How the bias of the past is being built into the future*, was longlisted for a prestigious Walkley Award. It won the Social Responsibility category, and was a finalist in the Technology category, in the Australian Business Book Awards. In 2019, Tracey was named the NSW Premier's Woman of the Year, accepted the global Sydney Peace Prize with Tarana Burke for the #MeToo movement, and won the national award for Excellence in Women's Leadership through Women & Leadership Australia.





**PAULA BRAY**

Paula Bray has over 20 years' experience working in cultural heritage institutions, including the State Library of NSW, Powerhouse Museum, Art Gallery of NSW, and the Australian National Maritime Museum. She is currently the Chief Digital Officer at State Library Victoria, leading the library's digital future through compelling digital experiences that place the visitor at the heart. Paula set up Australia's first dedicated innovation lab in a cultural heritage organisation, the DX Lab at the State Library of NSW. She developed an award-winning team that experimented with technology to build new ways to get access to the collection and its data, both online and onsite. She co-published *Open A GLAM Lab* with 16 peers from the International GLAM, (Galleries, Libraries, Archives & Museums) Labs community, highlighting the benefits of working in an experimental practice.



**LUCY HAYWARD**

Lucy Hayward is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Society of Authors. She is a passionate advocate for writers and illustrators with over 6 years' professional experience in the book industry. Prior to the ASA, Lucy cut her teeth in communications at a marketing technology company before her move to bookselling, taking up the role of Marketing Manager for Sydney's *Better Read Than Dead* bookshop. She has a Masters in Creative Writing from UTS and has been a volunteer reader for *Overland*. Lucy currently sits on the board of Authors Legal, the Australian Copyright Council, and the International Authors Forum.



**AMANDA HOOTON**

Amanda Hooton is a senior writer with *Good Weekend Magazine*, with *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. She is a Walkley and Kennedy Award winner, as well as a British Press Award winner, and a Scottish Press Award winner. She has written for *The London Daily Telegraph*, the *Times*, and *The New York Times*. Her Jane Austen dating guidebook, *Finding Mr Darcy*, was published in 2012.



**HANNAH KENT**

Hannah Kent's first novel, the multi award-winning international bestseller, *Burial Rites*, was translated into over 30 languages and is being adapted for film. Her second novel, *The Good People*, was translated into 10 languages, nominated for numerous awards and is also being adapted for film. *Devotion*, her third novel, published in 2021, won Booktopia's Favourite Australian Book and was shortlisted for multiple industry awards. Her original feature film, *Run Rabbit Run*, was directed by Daina Reid and starred Sarah Snook. Kent is also the co-founder of *Kill Your Darlings*, and has written for *The New York Times*, *The Saturday Paper*, *The Guardian*, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Meanjin*, *Qantas Magazine* and *LitHub*. She lives and works on Permang and Kaurana Country.



**JANE CARO AM**

Jane Caro AM is a Walkley award winning Australian columnist, author, novelist, feminist, public education activist and social commentator. She was also awarded the B&T Women in Media Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023. Once upon a time, she was a multi-award-winning advertising copywriter and an academic. These days, when not tweeting up a storm to her 190,000+ followers, she is a full-time writer, novelist, speaker, MC and TV, radio and media pundit. She has published thirteen books, including the bestselling novel *The Mother*. *Lyrebird* is her second novel for adults.





**VANESSA TURNBULL-ROBERTS**

Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts is a proud Bundjalung Widubul-Wiabul woman, who has degrees in both law and social work, and was recognised with an Australian Human Rights Medal in 2019. She is a human rights lawyer and Fulbright scholar whose current research is focused on unveiling the intersections of human rights, child removal and the implications of forcible removal, ensuring that First Nations child survivors and those impacted are heard, while providing solutions towards ending child removal. In 2024, Vanessa was appointed the inaugural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner for the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Her first book *Long Yarn Short* was published by UQP in 2024.



**ANTOINETTE LATTOUF**

Antoinette Lattouf is a fearless journalist, celebrated author, and passionate human rights advocate known for her bold storytelling and commitment to championing diverse perspectives. With a collection of prestigious media and human rights awards to her name, she's rightfully earned her spot as one of AFR's 100 Women of Influence. As a TEDx speaker, mental health ambassador, and co-founder of Media Diversity Australia, she's dedicated to creating lasting change in the media landscape and beyond. As the host of *The Weekend Briefing* podcast, Antoinette engages some of Australia's most influential voices on the biggest issues of the day with curiosity, insight, and a genuine passion for meaningful dialogue. Antoinette is currently writing her second book. Her first book *How to Lose Friends and Influence White People* was published by Penguin Random House in 2022.



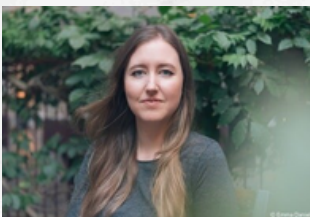
**DR LAUREN SAMUELSSON**

Dr Lauren Samuelsson holds a PhD in history from the University of Wollongong, Australia, where she is an Associate Lecturer. Lauren's research interests include cultural history, the history of food and drink, the history of popular culture and gender history. Her first book, *A Matter of Taste: The Australian Women's Weekly and its Influence on Australian Food Culture* was published with Monash University Publishing in 2024. Alongside her award-winning academic work, she has also published in *The Conversation* and is a regular guest on Australian radio, where she shares her love of food history with people nationwide.



**JENNIFER WONG**

Jennifer Wong is a writer and comedian. She is the co-author of *Chopsticks or Fork?: Recipes and Stories from Australia's Regional Chinese Restaurants* (Hardie Grant), and a contributor to *Admissions: Voices within Mental Health* (Upswell). Her humorous writing about food, culture, and mental health has appeared in *The Guardian*, *SBS Food*, *ABC Everyday*, *Monocle*, and *The Big Issue*. Jennifer is the presenter of *Chopsticks or Fork?* (ABC iView), and creator and host of *FEAST*: live community storytelling events for food and story enthusiasts. As a comedian, she has sold out shows around Australia, most recently *Jennifer Wong Has No Peripheral Vision* (2023) and *The Sweet and Sour Hour of Power* (2024).



**CHARLOTTE MCCONAGHY**

Charlotte McConaghy is the author of the New York Times Bestseller *Once There Were Wolves*, winner of the Indie Book Award for Fiction 2022, which is currently being developed for television; and the international bestseller *Migrations*, a TIME Magazine Best Book of the Year and the Amazon.com Best Fiction Book of the Year for 2020, which is translated into more than twenty languages and is being adapted for film. She has both a Graduate Degree in Screenwriting and a Masters Degree in Screen Arts, and lives in Sydney with her partner and two children.



**TASMA WALTON**

Tasma Walton is a proud Boonwurrung woman from the saltwater country of Melbourne and surrounding coastlines. Her work across both film and television has seen her nominated for multiple AACTA Awards. Tasma's first novel, *Heartless*, was nominated for an ABIA Award for General Fiction, and the first book in her children's series *Nerra: Deep Time Traveller* was longlisted for the DANZ Children's Book Award.



# MODERATORS



ALLY BURNHAM

Alexandria (Ally) Burnham is an AWGIE (Australian Writers Guild) award-winning screenwriter, novelist and writer of comics. She is best known for her feature film *Unsound* (Apple, 2020), which was nominated for best original feature at the 2020 AWGIE awards. A romantic-drama, the film won best Australian feature at the 2020 Melbourne Queer Film Festival and best fiction feature film at the 2020 ATOM Awards. Ally is the lead writer for *Metropius* (2021), a multi-media story world told across animation, comic books and board games produced by 18 Degrees. Her screenplay won Most Outstanding Animation at the 2022 AWGIE Awards. The first and second issues of her comic book, *Forgotten Rose*, are out now. Her debut novel, *Swallow*, is slated for release November 2025.



SOPHIE GEE

Sophie Gee is Vice Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Sydney, where she's engaged in the public value of the humanities. She's also Professor of English at Princeton University. She's the author of scholarly monographs about the rise of the novel and the history of waste in the eighteenth century, as well as a historical novel, *The Scandal of the Season*, rewriting Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" as a comedy of manners, which was widely translated and named as a best book of the year in the *Washington Post* and the *Economist*. She's written regularly for many publications including *The New York Times*, the *TLS*, the *Washington Post* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. She's held fellowships at Yale and UCLA and her new work is on the value and importance of public humanities. Sophie is a co-creator of *The Secret Life of Books* podcast.



NICOLE ABADEE

Nicole Abadee has worked in the book industry for many years after her previous career as a barrister. She writes about books for *Good Weekend*, and is also a regular contributor to their much loved "Two of Us" column. She appears regularly as a facilitator at writers' festivals and literary events. She also has a popular podcast, *Books, Books, Books* in which she interviews top Australian and international writers about their latest books. Nicole is also a director of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation, 2024 winner of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.



KATE MCCLYMONT AM

Kate McClymont AM is an investigative journalist with *The Sydney Morning Herald* and one of Australia's most decorated reporters. A ten-time Walkley Award winner (including the Gold Walkley), she has exposed major corruption scandals involving the Health Services Union and former NSW Labor politicians. Her acclaimed books include *He Who Must Be Obeid* and *Dead Man Walking*. In 2017, she was inducted into the Media Hall of Fame, made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2020, and received the Walkley Award for Outstanding Contribution to Journalism in 2023. Her fearless reporting has earned her numerous accolades including eight Kennedy Awards.



SARA M SALEH

Sara M Saleh is an award-winning writer, poet and human rights lawyer of Palestinian, Egyptian, and Lebanese heritage. Sara's work has been published in English and Arabic across dozens of literary platforms and shared on stages from Brooklyn to Bangalore, and she has led workshops in countless classrooms, community spaces, and festivals around the world. Sara's debut novel, *Songs for the Dead and the Living* (Affirm, 2023), and her poetry collection, *The Flirtation of Girls* (UQP, 2023), have received multiple local and international prizes and short-listings between them, and she has been awarded various honours over the years. Sara made history in Australia as the first poet to win both the prestigious Peter Porter and the Judith Wright Poetry Prizes (2020-21).



FELICITY LEWIS

Felicity Lewis has been in journalism since the mid-1990s, including a couple of years in London, working in various roles as a reporter and producer and winning several team awards, including a Walkley, as multimedia editor at *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. She has been the national explainer editor since "explainers" were launched in those newspapers at the end of 2018.



**MELISSA LEE SPEYER**

Melissa Lee Speyer is an award-winning playwright, screenwriter and screen executive. She has worked in script development for Screen Australia and for several independent production companies across a slate of Australian films, television shows and online series for local and global audiences. A graduate of both NIDA's playwriting degree and the AFTRS Masters of Screen Arts, she is passionate about writing for performance and about Australian scripted storytelling.



**BRONTE CHARLES**

Bronte Charles is a proud Bundjalung and Mununjali woman. She is a digital producer and journalist at NITV and has been in the industry for five years and reported on the referendum on the Voice to Parliament. She grew up all over—on Country in Beaudesert, Alice Springs, Canberra and for most of her adolescence, in Waterloo/Redfern.



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