

WORD STORM

NT WRITERS' FESTIVAL DARWIN

24-27 MAY 2018

Browns Mart

Exploring outside the margins

PROGRAM



NORTHERN TERRITORY Writers' Centre

ntwriters.com.au



The NT Writers' Centre brings you
NT Writers' Festival

**WORD
STORM**

in Darwin and in Alice Springs
on alternate years.

We also offer year-round workshops,
support and opportunities for writers.

Membership is \$55/\$45 conc. per year

Darwin: 08 8941 2651

Alice Springs: 08 8952 3810

Our patrons: Tessa Pauling and Ted Egan

Our life members: Sandra Thibodeaux, Mary Anne Butler,
Marian Devitt, Steve Holliday, Helen Pavlin (dec),
Dr Allan Skertchly (dec), Andrew McMillan (dec).



THE BOOKSHOP

DARWIN

GET LOST IN OUR WORLD OF BOOKS

Official Festival Book Seller

1/30 Smith Street Mall and
weekend pop-up at Browns Mart
during the festival.

www.bookshopdarwin.com.au

TICKETS

Book online via www.ntwriters.com.au

Tickets will also be available from the
festival box office during the days of the
festival, located at Browns Mart.

The special Weekend Pass offer is
\$100/\$80 NTWC members, is only
available by online purchase while stocks
last, and allows you to see all 12 panel
discussions and book talks at Browns
Mart Theatre, but does not include the
special feature events.

WORDSTORM PROGRAM

24-27 MAY 2018



Welcome from Lauren Moss

As the Northern Territory's Minister for
Tourism and Culture, it's my pleasure
to welcome you to Wordstorm: the NT
Writers' Festival 2018.

The NT Writers' Centre has been
supporting writers and aspiring writers
for nearly 20 years, and has a reputation
of presenting literary festivals with a focus
on Northern Territory and Indigenous
Australian voices, as well featuring
writers from around Australia and our
neighbours in South East Asia.
This year the festival will gather
storytellers in the tropical beauty of
Darwin.

It's an opportunity for Darwin audiences
to appreciate a showcase of literary
talent which the Northern Territory
Government is proud to support.

Contents

Tickets	2
Welcome	3
Special Events	5
Thursday	8
Friday	9
Saturday	10
Program Planner	14
Sunday	18
Workshop Program	20
Author Bios	22

Welcome from Sally Bothroyd

The NT Writers' Centre began as a community writing program, and this year marks 20 years as a registered organisation.

Its mission is to support writers from all walks of life across the Northern Territory, and to promote our unique and rich history of literature and storytelling for the benefit of readers across Australia. We attempt to achieve our mission through a variety of programs, but a large part of our activity is showcased in the annual NT Writers' Festival.

The theme of this year's festival is: Exploring outside the margins. It's our hope to inspire people to use reading and writing as a method of exploring life. As Territorians, we often feel we're living outside the margins. Australia, however, loves stories about outsiders and their experiences, so in this respect, our stories are not marginalised.

The NT Writers' Centre could not operate without the continued support of the NT Government, and the Australia Council, and we thank all our funders and sponsors for their commitment to the Territory's literary culture.

We also value our membership, and hope our many Top End members are able to come and enjoy this year's festival. Thanks also to the NT Writers' Centre board, led by Professor Martin Jarvis, Alice Springs program manager Fiona Dorrell, and festival co-ordinator Oanh Nguyen.



Sally Bothroyd
Executive Director
NT Writers' Centre

The Wordstorm Festival team

Festival director: Sally Bothroyd

Assistant creative producer:
Fiona Dorrell

Festival co-ordinator: Oanh Nguyen

Production Team: Robbie Hoad,
Kristy Schubert

School program co-ordinators:
Clare Atkins, Oanh Nguyen,
Fiona Dorrell

School program authors:
Sandra Kendell, Megan Jacobson,
Phillip Hall

Poster Design: Taz McDonald, Tina Tilhard

Artwork from *Kingwood Country* by
Pennyrose Wiggins

Program Design: Tina Tilhard

Bookkeeper: Hamish McDonald

Special events

At the margins of Delhi with literary blogger and author Mayank Austen Soofi

Come and walk the hidden streets of Delhi with an expert raconteur, while enjoying pizza under Darwin's dry season skies. The bar will also be open.

Since 2007, Mayank Austen Soofi has been collecting hundreds of stories taking place in Delhi, through writing and photography, for his acclaimed blog *The Delhi Walla*. Every day, Mayank walks around the city with his camera and notebook to track down the part of extraordinary that exists in the seemingly mundane aspects of urban lives. By exploring and documenting the streets, buildings, houses, cuisines, traditions and people of Delhi, his work is also an attempt to give the megalopolis an intimate voice, and to capture the passing of time in this otherwise restlessly changing city.

Mayank is a special international guest at Wordstorm, thanks to a grant from the Federal Government's Catalyst fund.

Thursday, May 24, 8pm
The Browns Mart Courtyard
Price \$30/\$25 NTWC members
(includes pizza by Alfonsino's)

Night event

Toplines: Songs and how they were written, with Stevie Jean and Tom E. Lewis

The connection between poetry and song is interconnected, but is the writing process the same?

This event pairs young Darwin songwriter and Triple J Unearthed talent Stevie Jean with veteran performer Tom E. Lewis

Led by MC Sam Carmody (also a songwriter as well as award-winning novelist), they'll trade songs and the stories behind them in this special evening of musical discovery.

Friday, May 25, 7.30pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$25/\$20 NTWC members

Night event



Literary brunch with Michelle de Kretser

Join award-winning novelist Michelle de Kretser for a Top End literary brunch. 'I so much admire Michelle de Kretser's formidable technique – her characters feel alive, and she can create a sweeping narrative which encompasses years, and yet still retain the sharp, almost hallucinatory detail.' Hilary Mantel
More details page 16.

Sunday, May 27, 10am
Wharf One, 3/19 Kitchener Dr,
Darwin Waterfront
Price \$70/\$60 NTWC members

Exploring poetry beyond the page

This evening of poetry, images and soundscapes is inspired by the landscape of the Northern Territory.

Alice Springs poet Leni Shilton's *Walking with Camels – The Story of Bertha Strehlow* is set in the Central Desert in the 1930s.

Phillip Hall's book *Fume* was inspired and written during his years living in Borroloola.

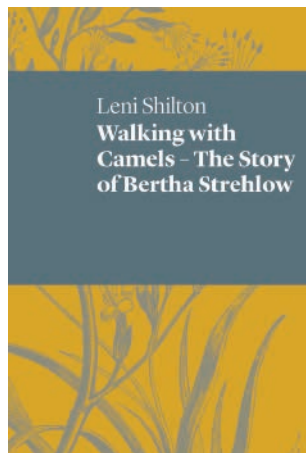
Both these books have been published by UWA as part of a groundbreaking poetry series.

Together with visuals and soundscapes by Darwin-based filmmaker Caro Macdonald and other special guests, this will be an unforgettable evening.

Thanks also to support from Strehlow Research Centre.

Saturday, May 26, 8pm
Brown's Mart Theatre
Price \$25/\$20 NTWC members

Night event



Kim's Cubby - readings and workshops for children

Kim Caraher was a Darwin author who wrote many books for children.

The NTWC, together with Kim's family and her fellow author Diane Lucas, present Kim's Cubby whenever Wordstorm is held in Darwin in honour of Kim's legacy.

It's a chance for story lovers young and old to meet the Northern Territory writers who are inspiring kids with their books and, we hope, promote a lifelong love of reading.

Supported by the Caraher family, and the Darwin International Airport.

Saturday 9am-12noon

Darwin City Library
9am: Sam Caraher
10am: Sandra Kendell
11am: Paul Seden

Sunday 10.30am-4pm

Darwin Civic Park
10.30am: Derek Pugh
11.30am: Leonie Norrington
1pm: Diane Lucas
2pm: Marita Albers
3pm: Diane Lucas

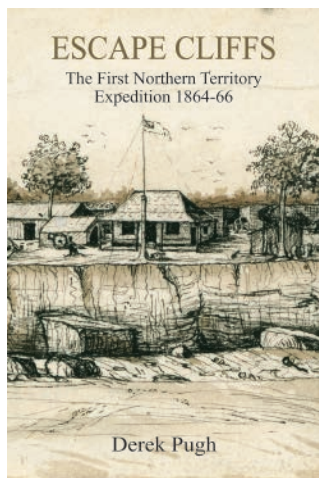


THURSDAY 24 May

Book launch: Derek Pugh: *Escape Cliffs: The First Northern Territory Expedition 1864-66*

This is a true story of greed, courage, exploration, murder, wasted efforts, life and death struggles, insubordination, incredible seamanship, and extraordinary bushmanship, amid government bungling and Aboriginal resistance, during South Australia's first attempt at colonising their Northern Territory in 1864.

5pm
Browns Mart courtyard
Free



Festival's opening ceremony

Come and help launch the 2018 NT Writers' Festival: Wordstorm.

Meet some of the guest writers, as well as some local literary talent.

The evening will include a taste of some of the writers whose work will feature during the festival.

We'll also be asking a special guest to reveal the short list of the biennial Territory Read Book Awards for published NT authors!

6pm-7.30pm
Browns Mart courtyard
Free

At the margins of Delhi with literary blogger and author Mayank Austen Soofi

See Special events, page 5

8pm
The Browns Mart Courtyard
Price \$30/\$25 NTWC members
(includes pizza by Alfonsino's)

Night event

FRIDAY 25 MAY

Lunchtime author talk: Alice Pung

Alice Pung is a writer, editor, teacher and lawyer based in Melbourne. Born a month after her Chinese parents fled from Cambodia to Australia as asylum seekers from Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge Regime, Alice has used her shared family's experiences to write stories that captivate all readers. She has won numerous awards including the 2007 Newcomer of the Year Award in the Australia Book Industry Awards for her first book *Unpolished Gem*. Her next book *Her Father's Daughter* won the Western Australia Premier's Book Award for Non Fiction. *Laurinda*, Alice's first novel, was published in 2014 and was one of Readings' Top 100 bestselling books for the year.

12noon-1pm
Darwin City Library
Free

Book launch: Leni Shilton *Walking with camels - the story of Bertha Strehlow (UWAP poetry series)*

Award-winning playwright Mary Anne Butler will help Alice Springs poet Leni Shilton launch her extraordinary verse novel about Bertha Strehlow, the young woman who followed her new husband Ted Strehlow into the desert of Central Australia in 1936. Drawn from Bertha's diaries and years of research, Leni

Shilton has woven Bertha's tale in poetry of stark beauty, threaded through with a deep love of the unforgiving desert.

Northern Territory Library
5pm-6pm
Free

Toplines: Songs and how they were written, with Stevie Jean and Tom E. Lewis

See Special events, page 5

7.30pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$25/\$20 NTWC members

Night event

Wild Words

The NT Writers' Centre's monthly spoken word 'open mic' event has been moved from the last Sunday to the last Friday for this special festival month. Everyone's welcome to try out a new (or old) poem, rant or rave in front of a friendly live audience.

9pm
Happy Yess
Price \$5 (box office only, no online sales),
Performers free

Night event

SATURDAY 26 May

Beyond the margins of the newspaper

Panel discussion

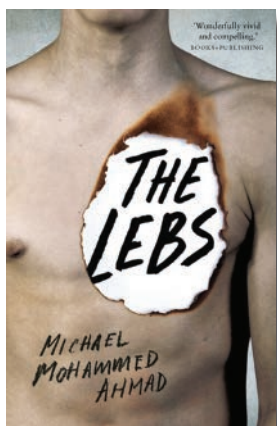
With newspapers struggling to maintain relevancy amid the rise of social media, meet the writers trying to communicate news stories in new ways.

Featuring: Darwin journalist and author Christopher Walsh (*Crocs in the Cabinet*); BuzzFeed correspondent, commentator and podcaster Amy McQuire; Indian journalist, author, instagrammer and blogger extraordinaire Mayank Austen Soofi; and Indonesian writer and lecturer in media studies at Macquarie University Intan Paramaditha.

10am-10.45am

Browns Mart Theatre

Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members



Writing men in Australia Author talk with Michael Mohammed Ahmad and Sam Carmody

Michael Mohammed Ahmad is at the forefront of the vibrant literary scene that grew in the multicultural melting pot of Sydney's western suburbs. He founded Sweatshop, a literary movement devoted to empowering culturally and linguistically diverse communities throughout Australia through reading, writing and critical thinking. His new novel *The Lebs* has been hailed as "confronting and compelling". He'll talk with Darwin author Sam Carmody, whose debut novel *The Windy Season* won the Readings Prize for New Australia Fiction in 2017, about the issues they've faced in writing about young men growing up in Australia, "toxic masculinity", violence and racism.

11am-11.45am

Browns Mart Theatre

Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

YA Literature: helping young readers explore the world

Panel discussion

Alice Pung's literary career began with her memoir *Unpolished Gem*, and she later took on the YA genre with *Laurinda*.

Megan Jacobson grew up in Darwin dreaming of being a writer. Her first YA novel *Yellow* was published after a stint writing for TV and she still works as a journalist. Her second novel is *The Build-up* is set in the Northern Territory.

Barry Jonsberg is one of Darwin's most successful authors, with eighteen published novels and numerous awards to his name. His most recent novel is *Game Theory*.

12noon-12.45pm

Browns Mart Theatre

Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

Podcasting: Storytelling's shifting landscape

Feature panel with Amy McQuire
Podcasting as a form of telling stories has risen to huge popularity, borne on the new technology of smart phones. Amy McQuire is a podcaster and BuzzFeed correspondent based in Rockhampton. Her podcast *Curtain* explores the justice system and issues around Aboriginal incarceration, while also detailing the case of Kevin 'Curtain' Henry. Henry has been in prison for 25 years for murder, but has always maintained his innocence. The podcast has uncovered what it believes to be serious flaws in the police investigation and at trial, in a town well known for its racial divisions

1pm-1.45pm

Browns Mart Theatre

Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

Colour lines and culture wars: Literature's new frontier

Panel discussion

It's a hot-button issue that caused controversy at the Brisbane Writers' Festival in 2016: Can an author from a dominant cultural background write stories that involve characters from other walks of life? What's the line between writing fiction and cultural appropriation?

To discuss this issue, Claire G. Coleman, an indigenous author whose debut sci-fi novel *Terra Nullius* imagines a new dawn in Australia; Marie Munkara, whose memoir *Of Ashes and Rivers that Run to the Sea* recounts her first-hand experience of Australia's past assimilation policies; Michael Giacometti, whose short story collection puts a spotlight on the borderlands of black and white, and Leonie Norrington, whose writing reflects her early life, raised in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

2pm-2.45pm

Browns Mart Theatre

Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

SATURDAY 26 May

Exploring short story collections and small press publishing

Book talk: Intan Paramaditha and Michael Giacometti

Mainstream publishers have long steered away from publishing short stories, but with the rise of the small publishing companies, more collections are being published in Australia.

Intan Paramaditha is an Indonesian writer currently based in Sydney. She is the author of the two short story collections, *Sihir Perempuan* (2005) and *Kumpulan Budak Setan* (2010, with Eka Kurniawan and Ugoran Prasad). Her new collection *Apple and Knife* has been translated into English, and published in Australia by Brow Books. Michael Giacometti wrote his short story collection *My Life and other Fictions* during his years in Alice Springs, and it's been published by Spineless Wonders. The stories investigate the frontiers of dream and reality, identity and history, and traverse karmic centuries of desire and fate, suffering and transcendence.

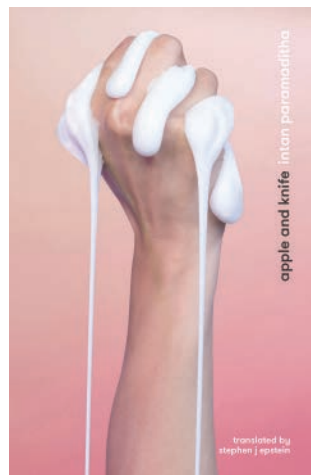
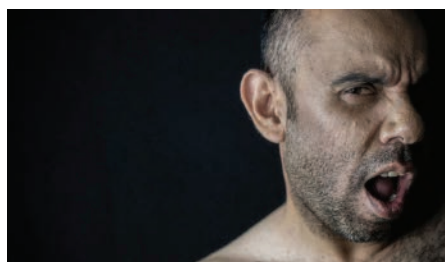
3pm-3.45pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

In conversation with Steven Oliver

Steven Oliver is known for his flamboyant character in *Black Comedy*, the ABC's hit sketch comedy. But he's also a slam poet, dancer, singer and playwright.

Steven Oliver will talk to award-winning Darwin playwright Mary Anne Butler about his varied writing and performing career, and the part he's played in putting more indigenous characters on Australia's TV screens.

4pm-5pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members



Book launch: Michael Giacometti, *My Life & Other Fictions* (Spineless Wonders, 2017)

Inspired and written in Alice Springs, this collection of stories casts a spotlight on the borderlands of black and white, desire and fate, life and death.

Michael Giacometti has been a computer programmer, a trekking guide, an arts worker, a bus driver. In 2008 he pulled a cart weighing twice his own body weight across the Simpson Desert, becoming the first (and only) person to complete an east-west crossing, solo and unassisted. His work has appeared in many literary journals and anthologies, and he also won the NT Literary Award for Poetry in 2012 and 2017.

5.30pm-6pm
Browns Mart Courtyard
Free



Exploring poetry beyond the page

See Special events, page 5

6.30pm-7.30pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$25/\$20 NTWC members

Australian Poetry's Big Read Gala

Seven poets read for seven minutes each. Hear from some of our visiting poets, as well as some home-grown talent. Steven Oliver, Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Ellen van Neerven, Leni Shilton, Phillip Hall, Kaye Aldenhoven and Daniel Townsend.

Hosted by Sandra Thibodeaux and supported by Australian Poetry.

8pm-9pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$20/\$15 NTWC members

Night
event

SUNDAY 27 May

Literary brunch: In conversation with Michelle de Kretser

We're delighted to welcome Michelle de Kretser to Wordstorm for the first time to discuss her fifth novel. *This Life to Come* is a series of interwoven stories that cast a critical eye on Australian society while also taking readers to Paris and Sri Lanka, described by British author Marcel Theroux as "narratives about love, betrayal and motherhood in a novel that explores the violence storytelling does to truth".

Michelle de Kretser will be 'in conversation' with local writer Varunika Ruwanpura. Michelle de Kretser is a writer, editor and critic. Her novels include *The Rose Grower*, *The Hamilton Case*, and *The Lost Dog*, which won the NSW Premier's Book of the Year Award and the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, and the 2008 ALS Gold Medal. *The Lost Dog* was also longlisted for both the Man Booker and the Orange Prize. Her next novel, *Questions of Travel*, received 14 honours, including winning the 2013 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

10am-12noon
Wharf One, 3/19
Kitchener Dr, Darwin Waterfront
Price \$70/\$60 NTWC members

Presentation by CBCA NT Judge Di Elson

Presented in conjunction with the NT branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia, the NT judge of the CBCA Awards Di Elson will talk about her role as judge, the judging process and the joys and agonies of choosing the six best books for her category.

This talk is perfect for teachers of all grades, parents, librarians and all those interested in children's books for all ages.

11am-12noon
Happy Yess
Free



Book launch *The Last Time* by Sharon Haste

Tragedy destroyed her family's future. A trip through time may be the only way to get it back.

Charli Richter took her bright future for granted. But when the teen survived the car crash that killed her mother and brother, her life changed forever. After the police discover the tragedy was no accident, Charli becomes the only plausible suspect. *The Last Time* is an edge-of-your-seat young adult mystery. Sharon Haste is a Darwin author. She is a nurse and a midwife and has Master degrees in writing and midwifery.

12.15pm-12.45pm
Browns Mart Courtyard
Free



Gathering Sticks: Lighting up small fires By Margaret Heffernan

A life in transition from traditional culture to a very different world. This new release from IAD Press in Alice Springs is a memoir that looks forward, as well as back.

Gathering Sticks was constructed as part of narrative therapy with Gerard Waterford and Frances Coughlan.

Margaret Heffernan is responsible for developing the written form of Arrernte, in collaboration with linguist Gavan Breen. Margaret developed the Arrernte orthology at Batchelor where she received her diploma in linguistics, then went on to teach at IAD.

1pm-2pm
Browns Mart Theatre
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members



SUNDAY 27 May

Exploring the 'emerging writer' scene

Booktalk: Claire G. Coleman and Harriet McKnight

In the near future Australia is about to experience colonisation once more. What have we learned from our past? A daring debut novel from the winner of the 2016 black&write! writing fellowship. *Terra Nullius* (Hachette) was also shortlisted for the Stella Prize.

Darwin-based author Harriett McKnight's debut novel *Rainbirds* (Black Inc) is a powerful and lyrical novel about love, grief and loss, one that examines personal tragedy as set against global and environmental responsibilities, and how we negotiate our often-conflicting ideals.

2pm-2.45pm
Browns Mart
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members



Listening between the lines

Panel discussion

Can oral history preserve the knowledge people previously held in stories, songs, songlines and art?

Some Northern Territory elders are concerned that their knowledge can no longer be transferred by traditional means, and are using collaborative writing processes to preserve their culture for the future.

Senior Arrernte woman Margaret Heffernan has written her memoir *Gathering sticks: Lighting up small fires* (IAD Press) in collaboration with Gerard Waterford and Frances Coughlan. James Gaykamangu is a Yolgnu man from Mililingimbi, East Arnhemland. He is an artist, as well as a speaker on cultural knowledge. His book *Striving To Bridge the Chasm: My cultural learning journey*, was written with collaboration from Penny Taylor.

Meanwhile writers from the Western tradition also face difficulties in writing Northern Territory history. Charlie Ward wrote *A Handful of Sand: The Gurindji Struggle after the Walk-off* using a variety of sources including one hundred interviews.

3pm-3.45pm
Browns Mart
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

Double book launch

Toni Tapp Coutts' best-selling memoirs have been adapted for young readers with *My Outback Childhood* (Hachette).

Graham Wilson is a Sydney writer who grew up in the Northern Territory. He's launching a print version of his ebook memoir *Arnhem's Kaleidoscope Children*.

4pm-4.30pm
Browns Mart Courtyard
Free

Territory tales: getting noticed by the mainstream

Panel discussion

Publishers are mostly based in Sydney and Melbourne, so how do Territory writers get noticed? Are there benefits to being an artist on 'the margins'?

To discuss this issue are: novelist Courtney Collins (*The Burial*); best-selling memoirist Toni Tapp Coutts (*A Sunburnt Childhood* and *My Outback Life*) award-winning playwright Mary Anne Butler (*Broken*); and emerging children's author and illustrator Paul Seden (*Crabbing with Dad*).

5pm-5.45pm
Browns Mart
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

Comedy Debate Critics: Excrement or Guardian Angels?

Ernest Hemingway once said: Critics are men who watch a battle from a high place, then come down and shoot the survivors. Aristotle said: There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing. Artist Ai Weiwei believes that: Criticism is, in the Chinese context, a positive, creative act, and Malcolm X famously said: If you have no critics you'll likely have no success.

If writers work outside the margins, then critics are those scuttling in the blind space which lies even further beyond. Do critics paralyse and annihilate us, or do they urge us on to do better, ultimately making our work stronger in the long term?

Darwin comedian Amy Hetherington will be the MC for Wordstorm's traditional closing event: The Comedy Debate. So strap yourself in for wordsmithery at its finest, as two teams of authors test their lexicons to the limit to prove a point – and garner as many laughs as possible.

6.30pm-8pm
Browns Mart
Price \$15/\$10 NTWC members

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Workshops will only go ahead with sufficient numbers. Please book early: www.ntwriters.com.au

Kickstart your memoir with Toni Tapp Coutts

How to get started, or get back to the memoir you started years ago. This is a fun interactive workshop that will help get words on the page.

Toni Tapp Coutts is a Katherine-based writer who has written two best-selling memoirs: *A Sunburnt Childhood* and *My Outback Life*. The first has also been adapted for young readers *My Outback Childhood*.

Saturday, 26 May, 9.30-11.30am
Frog Hollow Centre for the Arts,
Conference Room
Cost \$50/\$40 NTWC members

Editing your own work with Ellen van Neerven

Editing is an important part of the writing process, but a good editor is hard to find. The truth is that your work's first editor needs to be YOU. This workshop aims to guide you on methods of turning a critical eye to your own writing as you go through the drafting process.

Ellen van Neerven is just as active an editor as she is a writer. She was a previously Senior Editor at the black&write! Indigenous Writing and Editing project at the State Library of Queensland, and she continues to work with emerging Indigenous writers and editors. She edited the 2014 digital collection of Indigenous writing, *Writing Black*. She is the award-winning author of *Heat and Light* (UQP, 2014) and *Comfort Food* (UQP, 2016).

Saturday, 26 May, 9am-12noon
Happy Yess
Cost \$80/\$70 NTWC members



Introduction to Eco-poetics with Phillip Hall

Ecopoetry is nature and place literate. It informs, provokes and inspires. But is it solely an activist poetry?

Learn about the features of eco-poetics and its place within nature poetry more generally.

'Wilderness' is Post-Romanticism's *terra nullius*. How do we tune eco-poetics to the priorities of postcolonialism? Phillip Hall is a poet and educator, now based in Melbourne. His published works include *Sweetened in Coals* (Gininderra Press), and *Fume* (UWAP).

Sunday, 27 May, 9am-12noon
Frog Hollow Conference Room
Cost \$80/\$70 NTWC members

'Good writer' masterclass with Michael Mohammed Ahmad

In 2016, award-winning author and director of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement, Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmad wrote a highly controversial and widely acclaimed essay for the Sydney Review of Books called 'Bad Writer', which examined some unhealthy attitudes towards creative writing within the Australian literary industry. The essay also detailed some of the practices and skills developed in the Sweatshop Writers Collective, which Ahmad has been running for the past decade. In this workshop, Ahmad now offers a Sweatshop-style masterclass, which will give participants a first-hand experience of the kind of full-intensity creative writing model involved in being a 'good writer'. The workshop will include a series of creative writing and reading exercises and live critical discussions.

Sunday, 27 May, 2-5pm
Happy Yess
Cost \$80/\$70 NTWC members



2018 FESTIVAL AUTHOR BIOS

Alice Pung is an award-winning writer, editor, teacher and lawyer based in Melbourne. She is the bestselling author of *Unpolished Gem* and *Her Father's Daughter* and the editor of the anthologies *Growing Up Asian in Australia* and *My First Lesson*. Her first novel, *Laurinda*, won the Ethel Turner Prize at the 2016 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Amy McQuire is BuzzFeed's Indigenous Affairs reporter and has worked as a researcher on John Pilger's film *Utopia*. She is the co-host and writer of the podcast *Curtain*.

Barry Jonsberg lives in Darwin. His YA novels, *The Whole Business with Kiffo and the Pitbull* and *It's Not All About YOU, Calma!* were shortlisted for the CBCA awards. *It's Not All About YOU, Calma!* also won the Adelaide Festival Award for Children's Literature and *Dreamrider* was shortlisted in the NSW Premier's Awards. *Being Here* won the QLD Premier's YA Book Award and was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Award. *My Life as an Alphabet* won the Gold Inky, the Children's Peace Literature Award, the Territory Read, Children's Literature/YA Award and the Victorian Premier's Literary Award and was shortlisted in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards, the CBCA awards, the WA Premier's Book Awards and the Adelaide Festival Awards. His latest book is *Game Theory* (Allen & Unwin).

Charlie Ward is a writer and historian, based in Darwin. He worked in the Gurindji communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu between 2004 and 2006 and then as a researcher with the Stolen Generations' Linked-up program in Alice Springs. Now an oral history interviewer with the National Library of Australia, Charlie's work has

appeared in journals including *Griffith Review*, *Meanjin* and *Southerly*. *A Handful of Sand* is his first book.

Christopher Walsh is an investigative journalist and author based in Darwin. His first book, *Under the Electric Sky: The Legacy of the Bill Lynch Shows* was shortlisted for best literary non-fiction at the Atlantic Canada Book Awards in 2011. He is also the co-author of *Crocs in the Cabinet: An Instruction Manual on How Not to Run a Government*. He is the former senior political reporter for the NT News, and has won numerous NT Media Awards for his coverage of Northern Territory politics. He is currently the Investigations Producer/Journalist with ABC Radio Darwin.

Claire G. Coleman is a writer from Western Australia. She identifies with the South Coast Noongar people. Her family are associated with the area around Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. Claire grew up in a Forestry's settlement in the middle of a tree plantation, where her dad worked, not far out of Perth. She wrote her black&write! fellowship-winning manuscript *Terra Nullius* while travelling around Australia in a caravan.

Courtney Collins is a novelist and screenwriter, based in Ngukurr and Katherine. Her debut novel, *The Burial*, is being adapted as a feature film with the support of Screen Australia. Her second novel *The Walkman Mix* will be released soon.

Daniel J Townsend was born on a tiny island on the edge of the world, the descendant of a convict girl and her employer. Poet, folk musician and dilettante historian, he has been singing stories ever since. Daniel now lives and creates in Darwin, drawing inspiration from the relentless weather, unhurried locals and ancient stories.

Derek Pugh grew up in the Australian Capital Territory, but moved to the Northern Territory in 1982, so he claims to have been

a 'Territorian' all his life. He has had a long career in education and in a number of contexts: from large urban senior schools, to tiny remote homeland centre schools in Central Arnhem Land, and several International schools. He now teaches part time and writes, and has published five books. One of these, *Tambora*, took out the Territory Read Best Non-fiction Award for 2016. Current projects include a young adult novel, *Schoolies*, and the history of the Second Northern Territory Expedition.

Diane Lucas came to live in Kakadu in 1983. Her connections with Indigenous people and country, and having children, has greatly influenced and inspired her life and writing. She has published five children's books, and a CD of songs and is a contributing author to, *A Natural History and Field Guide to Australia's Top End*. Diane's books take you for a walk into places. Her website is www.dianelucas.com.au

Ellen van Neerven is a Mununjali person from the Yugambeh language group of South East Queensland. *Heat and Light* (UQP, 2014), a collection of interlinked short stories, won several awards including the NSW Premiers Literary Award for Indigenous Writing. *Comfort Food* (UQP, 2016), a collection of poems, is her most recent release. She is currently working on two plays.

Frances Coughlan is a social worker and counsellor with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. Together with Gerard Waterford, she's worked with Frank Byrne to author *Living In Hope* (Ptilotus Press), and with Margaret Heffernan to author *Gathering Sticks: Lighting up small fires* (IAD Press).

Fred van't Sand is a Darwin-based poet who's been active in spoken word and slam poetry for many years. In 2015 he represented the Top End at the poetry Slam Championships in Sydney.

Gerard Waterford is a social worker and counsellor with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress in their Social & Emotional Wellbeing Program. He co-authored *Alone on the Soaks: The Life and Times of Alex Kruger* (IAD Press, 2006), and helped Margaret Heffernan with her memoir *Gathering Sticks: Lighting up small fires*.

Graham Wilson is a Sydney-based writer who largely publishes online. In his non writing life Graham is a veterinarian who work in wildlife conservation and for rural landholders. He lived a large part of his life in the Northern Territory and his books reflect this experience.

Harriet McKnight's work has been shortlisted for several prizes, including the Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize. She lives in Darwin and works in several of the NT's remote Indigenous communities. *Rain Birds* is her debut novel.

Intan Paramaditha is an Indonesian writer now based in Sydney. She is the acclaimed author of the two short story collections, *Sihir Perempuan* (2005) and *Kumpulan Budak Setan* (2010, with Eka Kurniawan and Ugoran Prasad), from which the stories of *Apple and Knife* are drawn, as well as the novel *Gentayangan* (2017). She is a lecturer in film and media studies at Macquarie University.

James Gaykamangu is a Yolgnu man from Milingimbi, East Arnhemland. He is an artist, as well as a speaker on cultural knowledge. His book *Striving To Bridge the Chasm*, was written with collaboration from Penny Taylor.

Jo Dutton is the author of three novels: *On the Edge of Red*, *Out of Place*, and *From Alice with Love*.

Kathy Mills is a Darwin poet, songwriter and campaigner for Indigenous rights. She is also the keeper of knowledge and stories passed down to her from her parents Jack and Polly McGinniss, and other members her family and community.

Kaye Aldenhoven is passionate about country, NT plants, NT birds, NT history, her family. Kaye has read her work in India, Thailand, Wollongong, Ubud, Tasmania, Newcastle, and Shoalhaven. She has published three collections – *Skin*, *Botanica Erotica* and *In my Husband's Country*. Kaye has twice won the NT Literary Award for Poetry.

Leni Shilton is a poet, teacher and researcher. She grew up in Papua New Guinea and Melbourne and has lived in Alice Springs for over thirty years. She has a PhD in creative writing. She has twice been awarded the poetry prize in the NT Library Awards, and in 2015 was shortlisted in the University of Canberra Poetry Prize. Her writing is published in journals and anthologies in Australia and internationally. Leni is a founding member of the Ptilotus Press, a small publishing initiative which promotes Central Australian writing. Her first book of poetry *Walking with Camels – the story of Bertha Strehlow* was released by UWAP in February 2018.

Leonie Norrington is a multi-award winning north Australian author. She writes for children and adults in both fiction and non-fiction. At the moment she is a PhD candidate at Charles Darwin University working on a historical novel set in Arnhem Land during the 1600s when Aboriginal people traded with people from Makassar on a regular basis. Leonie was born in Darwin, and grew up at Barunga community in southern Arnhemland. Being brought up within a mixed culture environment, Leonie is interested in the places where cultures and languages meet, especially how people use language and story to bridge cultural differences or to make statements about their separateness. She writes in a mix of English, Kriol and Indigenous language.

Margaret Heffernan is responsible for developing the written form of Arrernte, in collaboration with linguist Gavan

Breen. Margaret developed the Arrernte orthography at Batchelor where she received her diploma in linguistics, then went on to teach at IAD. Her memoir *Gathering Sticks: Lighting up small fires* is the result of many years of work.

Marie Munkara spent her early years on Bathurst Island, and now lives in Darwin. Her first novel *Every Secret Thing* won the David Unaipon Award in 2008 and the NT Book of the Year in 2010. She has published two children's books *Rusty Brown* and *Rusty and Jojo* and her second novel *A Most Peculiar Act*. Her memoir *From Ashes and Rivers That Run to the Sea* was published in 2016.

Marita Albers is a Darwin-based visual artist. She exhibits and teaches, and also illustrated the children's book *Mermaid in Humpty Doo*, written by Sarah Body.

Mary Anne Butler is a Darwin-based playwright whose plays have been described as 'poetic, evocative and muscular'. Credits include *Half Way There*, *Highway of Lost Hearts*, *Broken*, *The Sound of Waiting*, *Alice in Wonderland* [adaptation] and *Cusp*. Awards include the Victorian Prize for Literature, Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Drama and NT Book of the Year. Nominations include the Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting [for both *Broken* and *The Sound of Waiting*], Stage AWGIE and Griffin Theatre Award. Mary Anne is a four-time winner of the NT Literary Awards for Best Script, a 2016 Sidney Myer Creative Fellow, 2016 Asialink recipient, 2014 Churchill Fellow and 2015 Regional Arts Fellow. She holds an MPhil in Creative Writing and an MEd in Arts Education, and is a co-artistic director of Knock-em-Down Theatre.

Mayank Austen Soofi is a Delhi-based Indian writer, blogger and photojournalist, who writes popular columns for *Hindustan Times* and *Mint* on culture, food and literary landscapes of Delhi. In 2011, he published four alternative guidebooks to the city of

Delhi: *The Delhi Walla - Portraits, Delhi Food, Delhi Hangouts and Delhi Monuments*. His latest book *Nobody Can Love You More*, published in 2012 by Penguin Books, deals with the life of a 'kotha', Hindi for brothel, in Delhi's largest red-light district, G. B. Road, which is home to 5000 sex workers.

Megan Jacobson grew up in Darwin and the far north coast of New South Wales, but now lives in Sydney, where she works in TV news production at the ABC. She has a degree in journalism and has worked as a question writer for TV game shows, and as an in-house script storyliner and script editor for several Australian television dramas. Her short stories have been published in the Sydney Morning Herald, aired on ABC radio, appeared in the UTS writers' anthology *I can see my house from here* and in the Review of Australian Fiction. Her first novel *Yellow* was shortlisted in the Older Readers category of the 2017 CBCA Book of the Year Awards and her second novel *The Build-Up Season* was shortlisted for the 2018 Ethel Turner Prize for Young People.

Michael Giacometti is the author of the short story collection *My life & other fictions* (Spineless Wonders 2017), and *Portraits of country: haiku for central Australia* (LongShort Press 2017). He has twice won the Northern Territory Literary Award for Poetry. Formerly of Alice Springs, he now lives in Launceston.

Michael Mohammed Ahmad is an Arab-Australian writer, editor, teacher and community arts worker. He is the founder and director of Sweatshop, a literacy movement in Western Sydney devoted to empowering culturally and linguistically diverse artists through creative writing. Mohammed's essays and short stories have appeared in the Sydney Review of Books, The Guardian, Heat, Seizure, The Lifted Brow, The Australian and Coming of

Age: Australian Muslim Stories. His debut novel, *The Tribe*, received a 2015 Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Australian Novelists of the Year Award. Mohammed received his Doctorate of Creative Arts at Western Sydney University in 2017. His latest book is *The Lebs*.

Michelle de Kretser was born in Sri Lanka and emigrated to Australia when she was 14. Educated in Melbourne and Paris, Michelle has worked as a university tutor, an editor and a book reviewer. She is the author of *The Rose Grower*, *The Hamilton Case*, which won the Commonwealth Prize (SE Asia and Pacific region) and the UK Encore Prize, and *The Lost Dog*, which was widely praised by writers such as AS Byatt, Hilary Mantel and William Boyd and won a swag of awards, including: the 2008 NSW Premier's Book of the Year Award and the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction, and the 2008 ALS Gold Medal. *The Lost Dog* was also shortlisted for the Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction, the Western Australian Premier's Australia-Asia Literary Award, the Commonwealth Writers' Prize (Asia-Pacific Region) and Orange Prize's Shadow Youth Panel. It was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction. Her last novel, *Questions of Travel*, received 14 honours, including winning the 2013 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

Paul Seden is descended from the Wuthathi and Muralag people of North Queensland. He grew up in Darwin, loves to draw and tell stories and has a passion for sport and the outdoors. His books include *Kick with My Left Foot* and *Crabbing with Dad*.

Peta Smith is a Darwin-based textile artist and printmaker, with 37 years experience as a practising artist and educator in the Northern Territory. Her hand-made, illustrated book is a true story set in Far North Queensland about two young kids who find themselves sharing their house with a wild Children's Python.

Phillip Hall worked for many years as a teacher of outdoor education and spent throughout regional New South Wales, Northern Queensland and the Northern Territory. He now resides in Melbourne's Sunshine where he is a passionate member of the Western Bulldogs Football Club. His publications include *Sweetened in Coals*, *Borrooloola Class*, and (as editor) *Divurruwurruru: Poetry from the Gulf of Carpentaria*. His latest book is *Fume* (UWAP).

Rob Smith is a broadcaster, best known for the ABC radio show 'Tales from the Tinny'. He's also the author of the Tales from the Tinny book *Get a Mullet Up Ya!* (Harper Collins).

Sam Carmody is a writer and award-winning musician. His first novel *The Windy Season*, was shortlisted for the 2014 Australian/Vogel's literary Award, and won the Readings Prize for new Australia fiction in 2017. He is currently living in Darwin and lecturing in creative writing at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Higher Education.

Sandra Kendell is a Darwin author and illustrator of children's picture books. She creates stories that celebrate some of our most fascinating native animals. Sandra is the author of five published children's books.

Sandra Thibodeaux is a poet and playwright. She has published four collections of poetry and in 2011 was Australian Poetry's Poet-in-Residence. She has written over a dozen plays that have been staged as part of festivals across Australia and Indonesia and broadcast on Radio National.

Sharon Haste is a Northern Territory author based in Darwin. She is a nurse and a midwife and has Master degrees in writing and midwifery. She has spent a good deal of time surrounded by young people at work and home and loves their energy and ideas. *The Last Time* is Sharon's first novel and she has published two other books in e-form.

Steven Oliver is a descendant of the Kukuyalanji, Waanyi, Ganggalidda, Woppaburra, Bundjalung and Biripi peoples. He studied at the Aboriginal Music Theatre Training Program and then at WAAPA. Steven is the former Assistant Artistic Director at Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts and has worked with Yirra Yaakin, Kooemba Jdarra Theatre, La Boite Theatre, Jute Theatre, Kite Theatre and the Queensland Arts Council. He is also known for his spoken word work with millions of views online and is a published poet and playwright. Steven is a creative force behind ABC's hit comedy sketch show, *Black Comedy*.

Stevie Jean was born and raised in the Northern Territory. She is both a solo artist and front woman for band GAIA with whom she has opened for bands such as The Cat Empire, The Angels, Grinspoon and Icehouse. She has also been nominated for the NLMA 2017 for the NT Best Live Voice.

Tom E. Lewis is a veteran of the Australian stage and screen with a career spanning four decades in film, television, theatre, music and cultural development. He is Artistic Director of the Walking With Spirits Festival and founding Director of Djilpin Arts Aboriginal Corporation. Tom has played didjeridu all over the world for acclaimed jazz duo Lewis & Young (1990 to 2001). His debut CD *Sunshine After Rain* won Music Release of the Year at the 2006 NT Music Awards. He produced *Muyngarnbi*, which had six nominations in the 2008 Music Awards, taking out "Best Traditional". His 2014 CD release *Beneath the Sun* has met with critical acclaim across the country.

Toni Tapp Coutts, the eldest of ten children, grew up on Killarney Station south-west of Katherine. Her memoirs recount her unique childhood growing up with larger than life figures like her father Bill and mother June. A well-known Territorian,

Toni has recently published the bestselling memoir, *A Sunburnt Childhood – Growing Up in the Territory* which recounts the many characters and events that shaped her early life. Her follow-up memoir *My Outback Life* tells the stories of living in the wild NT Gulf Country in the 1980s–90s. May 2018 will see the release of *My Outback Childhood*, an adaptation of the first memoir for young readers.

Varunika Ruwanpura is a journalist and writer. She has worked in print, magazine and online journalism in Australia and Sri Lanka. She has written three children's books, and a travel memoir on her migration from Sri Lanka to South Australia. She is currently undertaking a Master of Philosophy researching Australian journalists' nonfiction writing through the University of Adelaide.

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