

# New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

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**Newsletter**  
**May-July 2009**

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## NEWS

New events are currently being negotiated. When these are finalised all details will be on our website, in the final flyer for the year at the Library and Dymocks, as well as in our newsletters.

Any members who did not have email at the time of joining but now do, please give us the address, so you receive news between newsletters.

There has been a change of date for the next workshop, **Write to Live**, from May 16 to Saturday, June 6.

**Miles Merrill** will be coming to Armidale in August to run a heat at Armidale Dumaesq Library for the State Library's **SLAM 09** poetry competition. The date at this stage is Saturday, August 15. But check with the library closer to the time, to ensure the date hasn't changed, and to get details for entry into the competition.

We will have poets from Newcastle visiting in November to read their work, in exchange with Armidale poets visiting Newcastle. More details on this later.

A new event was added to the first half of the year program after the last newsletter and flyer were released:

## Ways to Publication

a talk by Peter Bishop, at Armidale Library

Creative Director for Varuna – The Writer's House – **Peter Bishop**, will give a talk at Armidale Library in June. Peter has guided more writers and books to publication in Australia than perhaps anyone else. He knows a great deal about the publishing world, as well as developing writing to the point where it is ready for publication.

For the past three years, Peter has been travelling around Australia and around NSW in search of new voices in Australian writing. Publishers have become interested in this search, and Varuna has established partnerships with almost all Australian publishers to create programs which will bring many of these new voices to publication. Varuna's focus is on developing the writer's voice to the

point where it is ready to enter and sustain a conversation with the reader.

Peter will be in Armidale for the LitLink Manuscript Consultation program at New England Writers Centre, June 10-12.

During the talk at the Library, Peter will introduce some new Varuna programs which could be of the highest importance and interest to New England writers, and he will be available to answer questions about this or anything else to do with writing.

**Entry:** \$4 – pay at door, no need to book.

**Venue:** Upstairs at Armidale Library.

**Date:** Friday, June 12, 3.30pm to 5pm.

## EVENTS COMING UP



*Pippa Masson, literary agent, will be here in October to run a one-day workshop called The Agent. See details on website or in next newsletter.*

Our program got underway with the ever popular **Getting Started – Making Stories** workshop. Events coming up June to August:

## WRITE TO LIVE

### - freelance journalism workshop

Learn how to turn your interests/knowledge into profitable writing for newspapers and general and specialist magazines. Learn interview/research/writing skills, how to analyse publications/readership, write in style suitable for general and specialist publications, pitch stories, syndicate your work, and run a profitable freelance writing business.

Workshop tutor, **Lesley Sly** has worked as an editor

(newspapers/magazines), reporter for print and radio, senior sub editor for the Sydney Morning Herald, Financial Review, columnist for Rolling Stone, travel writer for BBC Radio and various UK newspapers. As a freelance her work has appeared in The Bulletin, Good Weekend, HQ, Limelight, and many other national and overseas magazines. She also wrote a 400-page book, The Power & The Passion, a guide to the Australian music industry, based on 150 interviews.

DATE: June 6 (Saturday). 10am to 4pm.

VENUE: NEWC.

COST: \$65 non-members/\$50 members.

## The Creative Journal

This workshop is geared towards self-exploration and personal growth through journal work. Tutor, **Karla Muir** says: I will introduce several techniques which are designed to find out more about yourself, and to help you resolve current or longstanding issues in your life. You will find that the techniques stimulate your creativity, and allow you to tackle things from a new angle.

The format for each technique will be the same: An explanation of its particular purpose, some extra background information, exact instructions for the exercise, then the writing exercise itself, and afterwards a brief discussion with an opportunity to share or ask questions. Handouts will be provided for future reference.

In nearly 40 years of journaling, I have learnt, adapted and developed the techniques I'm going to share with you. Self help books, my studies of linguistics and psychology and my NLP training have provided many ideas and inspirations. Journaling is a great tool, and anyone can do it – you don't need any literary talents for it.

What to bring: your journal or an exercise book, writing pen, some coloured pens or pencils (optional), lunch (we only have ½ hour lunchbreak, so not much time to organise lunch in town); tea, coffee and biscuits for morning/afternoon tea breaks will be provided.

DATE: Saturday, June 13. 9.30am to 4pm.

VENUE: NEWC

COST: \$60/\$50 members

## Writ Large: promote your writing

You need to promote your writing, if you want people to read it. Even authors published by major companies have to contribute to promoting their own work (and often they do all the publicity and pay for it) unless they are in the bestseller or flavour of the month categories. Books that don't sell x amount in x amount of time in Australia are pulped. It takes too long for word-of-mouth to sell books to avoid death by pulping. If you self-publish your poetry, novel, or non-fiction, you will need to know even more about promotion.

This half-day workshop with **Rosemary Mort** will give you some hints about how to approach the media and publicise your work for publication and for events such as readings.

DATE: Saturday July 4. 2pm-5pm.

VENUE: NEWC

COST: \$40/\$30 members

## Voice Skills For Writers with Chris and Judith Ross-Smith

Writers are required to promote their books in-person these days, giving readings and talks at writers festivals, literary lunches, and other events. For many this is a terrifying ordeal. For audiences it can be very dull if the writer reads the work in a monotone rush to get to the end as soon as possible. What's the point of promoting your work in this way if it puts people off buying it! Like everything, public-speaking requires training. You expect to do a lot of hard work to write a good novel or poem, and so you should expect to work on acquiring the skills to "perform" that work. Even in the privacy of your writing room, learning how to use your voice to read out loud in an interesting way, can help with your writing, with improving dialogue and other technical aspects.

skills this workshop will help you improve:

awareness of your own voice

confidence interpreting written words with your voice

understand how body, breath, vocal sound and

articulation interact to create an interesting voice and

begin to use them effectively in reading aloud.

make a text come alive through the voice by bringing out its interest and meaning.

DATE: Saturday, June 27. 2pm to 5pm.

VENUE: NEWC

COST: \$40/\$30 members

## LitLink Manuscript Assessments

Manuscript assessment consultations with **Peter Bishop**, director of Varuna – The Writers House. Peter has guided countless manuscripts (by major authors) to publication. This wonderful opportunity to get professional advice about your manuscript and your ambitions for it is offered only to our members. (People who are not members can join if they wish to book for this, membership is \$28.50 to June, increasing to \$29.50 from July 1).

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO: Send (to Peter Bishop, c/- NEWC, PO Box 1219, Armidale NSW 2350) about 20 pages (double-spaced) of material that you want to discuss, plus a brief description of yourself as a writer, what you hope for and fear!

Consultations June 10-12.

Cost \$35.

**The deadline for work you need to send and your payment for the consultation is June 1.**

\* For events for second half of year, see our website: [www.northnet.com.au/~newc](http://www.northnet.com.au/~newc). **Or next newsletter, early August.**

## SELF-PUBLISHING A BOOK



*Teresa van der Kraan with her self-published novel.*

I completed my novel *Never Forever* at the end of 2006, and, after several of my friends and acquaintances expressed a desire to read it, I decided that I also owed it to myself to have it properly printed, after all the time and hard work that I had invested. My mother really helped me out here; she spent a lot of time editing the novel, and making sure I fixed it up as much as possible.

It was certainly difficult to find a printer willing to undertake the task of producing copies of a full-length novel (most of them focused on making brochures and pamphlets), but we eventually found someone.

Although it is possible to print books under one's own name, we decided to establish a publisher prior to beginning any serious consultations with the printers.

We first had to purchase an ISBN (International Standard Book Number) from the ISBN Agency, run by Thorpe-Bowker. We chose the name 'Mellomeer' for our publisher, and devised a little logo to go along with it. We received a block of 10 ISBN numbers for the fee we paid—the other nine being reserved for future publications under Mellomeer.

The process of editing the novel took a long time, and we were already well into 2008 when Mother and I began to pay regular visits to the

printer. This was an extremely difficult time, as the printer used a different program than the one on my computer, meaning that, once my manuscript was transferred, the fonts, paragraphs, italics, dashes and indents of my novel all altered from their original formats.

I received several printed versions of my novel in loose pages; here, I had to sort through it all with my red pen and underline every single word or sentence that I wanted to be italicised in the final copy. Needless to say, that process alone very nearly had me at my wit's end. People must have thought I was possessed due to the number of times I was rolling my eyes in vexation.

Afterwards, Mother and I went over several additional printouts in order to fix more of the punctuation. On the printers' advice, I changed the font from Bookman Old Style (my preferred writing font) to the standard Times New Roman, as the latter is more compact and therefore decreases the overall size of a book.

My novel, measuring 560 pages on my computer, was thus reduced to a more modest 480 pages in its completed form.

I also wrote the blurb for the back and designed the cover for the front. I made a number of drawings, and submitted my favourite of them to the printers; they uploaded them onto their computer, and were then able to add the title of my book—in the font and colour of my choice—across the top of the image.

Of course, all of this didn't come cheap, but ultimately it was certainly worth it, simply for the satisfaction, if nothing else, of seeing my story bound, printed and looking—by most accounts—quite professional.

Once we had received the completed books (55 in all), Mother saw to it that we sent copies to the Australian National Library in Canberra, the State Library of NSW, NSW Parliamentary Library, and the University of Sydney Library (this is a legal deposit requirement—this information can be found at the National Library of Australia website). *Never Forever* is now available to borrow from those places, as I can report with some pride. I also sold a number of copies to my friends and acquaintances, and the proceeds will be used for the publication of my next book, *Dreams and Demons, Never Forever, Book the Second*.

It was by no means easy or profitable to publish this book. But I certainly do not regret doing it, and I look forward to printing my other stories in the future. Hopefully, things will go more smoothly next time because, at the very least, we are now familiar with how this interesting, albeit flawed system works.

**- Teresa van der Kraan**

**Thanks to Armidale Dumaresq  
Council War Memorial Library for  
sponsoring events**



## **Q & A: SOPHIE MASSON**



Sophie Masson is a highly successful and prolific writer. Her website lists her books and reveals an extraordinary life.

*In your biog you say 'We were brought up in the midst of melodramatic family conflicts and passionate disputes, and I learnt early on to keep my counsel, and to observe'. Was your imagination a way of escaping from the powerful emotions which swirled around you?*

It sure was! But it was certainly not just that.

*Your parents seemed to have spent much time with you and your siblings as you grew up, steeping you in the history, legends and folk lore of many countries. Is this what you draw on for your inspiration?*

Yes, being brought up in that way not only enriches you but because we lived in a closed circle too in a way, my imagination made of all those things

something bigger and richer still. It furnished my mind with all kinds of things to draw on.

*You have studied languages and history, read extensively and have a Masters in both French and English literature. How have you found time to write more than 20 books?*

Actually it is much more than that now, closer to 50 I'm afraid! I am a compulsive writer, writing is as natural to me as breathing - I think very fast and go right to the heart of a story quite easily. I don't know how it happens - it just does.

*You speak of dreams; is this where your books start?*

Not usually, only occasionally (the most obvious being the Thomas Trew series which came straight out of a dream.) But I do have very vivid dreams and their images often find their way into my books.

*In the beginning, did you find it difficult to get published?*

I certainly did! I wrote three novels before I had one accepted, and sent them off countless times. You can't get discouraged if you are trying to break into writing, and you can't take rejections too personally.

*What are you doing now and what of the future?*

Right now I'm writing a children's novel about Ned Kelly, called *The Captain* (working title). It'll be out next year. I've got a book called *The Madman of Venice* coming out in June (it's a YA mystery set in 17th century Venice and inspired by *The Merchant of Venice* and *Romeo and Juliet*), a novel called *The Understudy* with my publisher at the moment (set in Dickens' London but based on *Hamlet*) and a spy novel set at the beginning of MI5, in 1910, called *Jack of Spades*, on the drawing board!

*Sophie Masson was shortlisted for the Aurealis Awards 2008 - children's long fiction.*

**- Pam Summers**

## **WORKSPACE**

The following is a contribution we received in response to our request for submissions for the newsletter:

### **A REMARKABLE CHARACTER**

**- TANTE JACQUE**

I dropped the phone into its cradle. The two-toned clunk of the recharger sounded like, 'It's over'.

She died: my wonderful great-aunt, Tante Jacque, had died. She'd been that person my father spoke of – a hazy mental image – till I met her on my first trip to Holland in 1972. She'd greeted me at the door of her large, red-brick home: a small, white-haired, white-skinned, stocky woman with prominent, high cheekbones, narrow chin and round, tinted glasses shading deep-set, dark brown eyes. "So. You're Theo's daughter," she said, and drew me inside.

She was 75 but age seemed to have passed her by. Her skilled hands were rarely still. They sewed, embroidered, wove and quilted, or tilled and harvested the substantial vegetable garden and flower beds around the house. She'd walked me around, pointing to this and that. In the shed she fed tiny porcupettes with a doll's bottle – she'd rescued them when their mother had been hit by a car.

She loved to travel, she told me. What she saw on her bicycle or from train windows was woven into the artwork hung and draped around her home, and into her intricate and slowly-told memories. She liked company, but not for the sake of it. She'd come through too much in life to need companionship: she'd survived a youth dogged by illness to be plunged into years of war; she'd lost three children before their first birthday but gave the surviving seven the love, learning and example that made each one of them cherish her dearly.

Apart from self-assurance, the hard years had left another mark on Tante Jacque: she was thrifty and she was careful. She snipped ends of thread from the sewing machine, rolling them carefully onto a special spool. She used these ends, sometimes as short as 10 centimetres, to sew up hems or darn socks or other worn items of clothing. "Thrift and wisdom builds houses from castles," was one of her favourite sayings. She saved everything that might be useful, but only if it could be useful and was useful.

She was philosophical about both life and death. Death was simply an event that overtook everyone. Life was to be endured or enjoyed, depending on circumstance. Such a perspective left little time for grudges. While the majority of the Dutch around her were still harbouring hate for the Germans for atrocities committed during the War, Tante Jacque was in Germany enjoying what the Germans do well: singing and making pastry. "It was a madness that possessed everyone," she explained. "Millions of Germans did not want the war and suffered as we did."

I enjoyed her company but she lived far away. Its years since I've spoken to her. And now I won't again.

- **Miriam Verbeek**

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

**ABC funding:** Over the next few weeks the Federal government will decide the ABC's budget for the next three years.

The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance are running a campaign to pressure the ALP to keep its pre-election promises of adequate funding for the ABC and to amend the ABC charter so that the ABC is required to broadcast as much local drama content as the commercial television stations. The M.E.A.A. has suggestions on how to lobby the ministers responsible on both these key issues. Visit [www.alliance.org.au](http://www.alliance.org.au) for contact details.

**Google library settlement:** CAL has released a package explaining how Australian authors and publishers with books published before January 5, 2009 may be affected by the recent settlement between Google, the Association of American Publishers and The Authors Guild (US). Under the Google Library Project, Google digitised entire collections of participating libraries without the consent of the relevant rightsholders. Under the terms of the settlement, Google is offering authors and publishers a one-off payment. Visit [www.copyright.com.au](http://www.copyright.com.au) to view CAL's overview or <http://www.googlebooksettlement.com> for Google's FAQ sheet.



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## COMPETITIONS

The following is an amended version of how short-lists are drawn up from the organisers of the Tom Howard competitions:

What is a Short List? The judges, after carefully

reading all the entries, prepare what is usually called a tertiary short list. This comprises all the entries that in their opinion have sufficient merit to warrant a second reading. In a prestigious contest, around 25% of submissions enter this category.

The aim of the second reading is to evaluate those entries that stand an excellent chance of winning a prize. This becomes the secondary short list and usually comprises around 10% to 12% of the total submissions.

Now the judges encounter the really hard part as the aim is to determine which entries are so highly appealing, it seems absolutely essential to reward the author and promote his or her work far and wide. Usually about 50 to 70 entries make this final short list.

Obviously, even to make the Tertiary Short List is quite an achievement. Authors who figure on this list are obviously doing all things right. In a small contest, such gifted and talented authors would undoubtedly win a prize, or at least a High Commendation.

**May 29:** The Katharine Susannah Prichard Speculative Fiction Awards - two sections: open and young writers awards (20 years and under). Prizes: open 1st \$200, 2nd \$50. Young writers awards: 1st \$75, 2nd \$25. Highly Commended and Commended Certificates will also be awarded. Contact: Margot Lowe, coordinator, KSP Speculative Fiction Awards, 11 Old York Road, Greenmount, WA 6056 or [kspf@inet.net.au](mailto:kspf@inet.net.au) or go to <http://kspf.inet.net.au>

**May 29:** Shoalhaven literary award - 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$1000 plus a two week artist's residency at the Arthur Boyd Centre at Bundanon (near Nowra). Entry form: [http://www.fawnsnswshoalhaven.org.au/Our\\_Compitions.htm](http://www.fawnsnswshoalhaven.org.au/Our_Compitions.htm).

**May 31:** FAW Tasmania Shakespearean Sonnet Award, open to all Australian writers. To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the publication of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* FAW Tas is holding a competition for the writing of an original sonnet in the Shakespearean form (14 lines including a final couplet). 1st prize \$200; 2nd \$100; 3rd \$50. Contact: Peter McIntosh, editor, *Tascribe*. Entries to FAW Tas Inc, PO Box 234, North Hobart, TAS 7002.

**May 31:** SD Harvey inaugural Ned Kelly award for crime writing. Winning entry will be published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The inaugural word will be 'farewell'. Contact: Peter Lawrance 0410

651 184 or (03) 95105678 or Lindsay Simpson: 0408278417 or (07) 4781 5485 or go to: [http://www.nedkellyawards.com/SDHarvey\\_guide.html](http://www.nedkellyawards.com/SDHarvey_guide.html)

**June 12:** Blake Poetry Prize co-hosted by The NSW Writers' Centre and the Blake Society. Theme: *Exploring the religious and spiritual through poetry*. Prize: \$5,000. Go to: [www.nswwriterscentre.org.au](http://www.nswwriterscentre.org.au)

**June 12:** National 2009 Gold Coast (Qld) Writers' Association adults writing competition. Theme: 'Magic'; categories short story; writing for children, and poetry. Prizes: 1<sup>st</sup> prize \$400; 2nd \$200; 3rd \$100. Contact: Donna Mroz Turcic Publicity Volunteer, Gold Coast Writers' Association, 0431 443 385 or [donnagoldcoast@ozemail.com.au](mailto:donnagoldcoast@ozemail.com.au) or go to: [www.goldcoastwriters.org.au](http://www.goldcoastwriters.org.au)

**July 10:** The Nib CAL Waverley Library Award for literature 2009; prize \$20 000 for excellence in research in the creation of a literary work, first published between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009. All shortlisted authors will receive the Alex Buzo shortlist prize. Guidelines: [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/library/award](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/library/award) or (02) 9386 7709.

**September 18:** Rolf Boldrewood literary awards prose and poetry with an Australian theme. Contact: The Convenor, Rolf Boldrewood Literary Awards, PO Box 1042, Dubbo, NSW 2830 or go to [www.mrl.nsw.gov.au](http://www.mrl.nsw.gov.au)

## PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

International opportunity for poets: APC international poetry circuit takes off in October. They are seeking two leading Australian poets to represent Australian poetry on an international reading circuit of leading festivals and venues in the UK and Ireland for a one-month tour. Provided: return airfares to the UK and transfers to reading venues; \$5000 (plus living allowance for one month), accommodation in the UK and Ireland; reading spots at leading festivals and venues. Contact: Australian Poetry Centre, PO Box 284, Balaclava, Vic, 3183 or go to [http://www.australianpoetrycentre.org.au/?page\\_id=564](http://www.australianpoetrycentre.org.au/?page_id=564).

**Closing May 29**

A new online women's magazine Brandlady.com, is calling for submissions. described as a 'magazine is for women, by women' it covers many topics.

Writers are required on a regular and casual basis for all categories. Each category is a main topic and will attract many sub-topics as the magazine grows. The contributions would be voluntary at this stage, but with possible remuneration for articles when the magazine is established. Contact: Linda Lycett, [www.brandlady.com](http://www.brandlady.com) to apply direct to the magazine with the online application form.

The City Nights project is calling for text, audio, video and stills contributions which reflect an experience of the city, at night. Contributions to be broadcast on ABC Radio National. Contributions can come in any genre - fiction, memoir, documentary, current affairs, soundscape, oral history, vox pops - or any other expression that best suits your ideas. For more information or to upload your work go to [pool.org.au/citynights](http://pool.org.au/citynights) or [miller.gretchen@abc.net.au](mailto:miller.gretchen@abc.net.au) for details.

**Closing: June 15**

Festive Fear Short Story Anthology: Tasmanian small press company Tasmaniac Publications (publishers of quality horror novellas) seeks contributions from Australian authors for a new anthology called *Festive Fear*. Go to: <http://www.tasmaniacpublications.com/Ffear.htm> for details.

**Closing: June**

Dog Horn Publishing is a small press looking for novellas and short story collections in the genres of magic realism, literary, alternative, history, steampunk and more. They are also open to graphic novels. Contact: [editor@doghornpublishing.com](mailto:editor@doghornpublishing.com) or go to [www.doghornpublishing.com](http://www.doghornpublishing.com).

Dotlit is looking for 'best new and innovative fiction' as well as poetry and creative non-fiction. Submit up to 4000 words of prose and no more than two poems. Contact: [dotlit submissions@qut.edu.au](mailto:dotlit submissions@qut.edu.au) or visit [www.dotlit.qut.edu.au](http://www.dotlit.qut.edu.au) for details.

Arts NSW: The NSW Writer's Fellowship (\$20,000) is offered annually by the Government to assist the writing of a new literary work by a writer living in New South Wales. Applicants are required to demonstrate that their proposal is likely to result in a work of significant quality; will be of demonstrable benefit to their development as a writer; will contribute to the advancement of Australian literature. Guidelines and application forms can be downloaded from [www.arts.nsw.gov.au](http://www.arts.nsw.gov.au) or contact Arts NSW, (02) 9228 5533, Fax (02) 9228 4722 Freecall: 1800 358 594 (NSW), or [mail@arts.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@arts.nsw.gov.au)

**Closing: June 17**

Nominations are now open for the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards. \$225,000 in prize money for Australian authors. Fourteen categories to recognise emerging and renowned authors nationally. Guidelines available online. Go to [www.literaryawards.qld.gov.au](http://www.literaryawards.qld.gov.au) or phone (07) 3405 5215.

National Play Festival 2010: The National Play Festival is described as 'a unique opportunity to develop and present your work, in performance, to a national and international audience of theatre companies and producers.' Applications are invited from any Australian playwright with a new, unproduced work ready for performance. You may be working independently or in a creative team with a director or dramaturg. An application information pack is available online from PlayWriting Australia <http://www.pwa.org.au/Skills/NationalPlayFestival/>

**Closing: July 31**

## CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS FESTIVALS

Fourth Biennial Watermark literary muster, Kendall, near Port Macquarie NSW June 19 – 22. The Muster theme is *Wood* - forests, trees, artisans and artifacts, philosophies, opinions, conflicts - and the literature and stories that embrace it. One day (\$55), two days (\$100) and 4-day passes (\$180) available. Contact: Lyndal Coote (02) 6559 9953 or go to [www.watermarkliterarymuster.asn.au](http://www.watermarkliterarymuster.asn.au) Watermark Literary Society, PO Box 284 Laurieton NSW Australia 2443, [www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au](http://www.watermarkliterarysociety.asn.au)

Playwriting Masterclasses: A series of intensive workshops with leading playwrights at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta: Katherine Thomson - June 20: Timothy Daly - August 29. Further information go to [www.riversideparramatta.com.au/performance.asp](http://www.riversideparramatta.com.au/performance.asp)

Byron Bay Writers Festival August 3–11, opening address by Geoffrey Robertson, QC, of *Hypotheticals* fame. Savings on early bird three day passes available prior to June 5. Go to [www.byronbaywritersfestival.com](http://www.byronbaywritersfestival.com) or booking hotline (02) 6685 6262

Short, Taut and Fraught playwriting workshop, conducted by Stephen Carlton, playwright. Saturday, June 20, 11 00 am – 3 00 pm. Venue: Noosa Arts Theatre, Weyba Road, Noosaville, Cost: \$50. Bookings: [www.noosalongweekend.com](http://www.noosalongweekend.com)