

STATEMENT FROM READERS AND WRITERS AGAINST THE GENOCIDE

On Wednesday 13 August 2025, authors who were going to the 2025 Bendigo Writers Festival as part of the La Trobe Presents program received a Code of Conduct for Bendigo Writers Festival speakers. The conduct demands compliance with La Trobe University's antisemitism definition, which is not even the internationally disputed IHRA definition but the much-contested Universities Australia (UA) version. The UA definition *does* conflate criticism of Israel and Zionism with antisemitism and a number of universities have not adopted it. The UA definition equates to anti-Palestinian racism, and it's untenable for Palestinian authors and their allies to accept its terms in good conscience.

The UA antisemitism definition aside, the code seems like a blueprint for self-censorship and silencing dissent. In particular, the code asks authors to 'avoid language or *topics* that could be considered inflammatory, divisive, or disrespectful' (our emphasis). The code does not appear to be an invitation to engage in respectful if potentially uncomfortable discussion and debate. It reads like an expectation that authors will behave themselves. This is the thin edge of the wedge of both artistic expression and academic freedom and sets a dangerous precedent. The purpose of a writers' festival is to debate ideas and challenge accepted thinking.

Solidarity is all we have right now as our governments and media crawl towards recognising the horrors of the ongoing genocide. A number of authors have already withdrawn from the festival – including Clare Wright, Randa Abdel-Fattah, Evelyn Araluen, Jeanine Leane, Paul Daley, Claire G Coleman, Kate Mildenhall, Jess Hill, Sonia Orchard, Thomas Mayo, Daniel James, Fiona Stanley, Kirstin Ferguson, Michelle Scott Tucker, Kylie Mirmohamadi, Jock Serong, Melanie Cheng, Kate Larsen, Cher Tan, Madison Griffith, Kelly Gardiner, Rachel Ang, Sarah Firth, Bernard Caleo, Ita Mehrotra, Jonathan Butler, Jaclyn Crupi, Tara Calaby, Grace Yee, Fiona Hardy, Jacinta Le Plastrier, Amanda Collins, David Munro, Liz Conor and Sita Sargeant – in disgust at the Code of Conduct. We recognise that in doing so they are foregoing income, book sales and the opportunity to discuss their work. We, the undersigned, stand in solidarity with each and every one of them – and with all readers and writers against genocide.

Add your name to the list of signatories using the online form [here](#).

Aviva Tuffield	Christine McKenzie	Teja Kodali
Fiona Robertson	Grace Dulawan	Janine Gallagher
Dr Yves Rees	Sheryl Gwyther	Michelle de Krester
Sam Elkin	Dr Emerald L King	Cilla Haywood
Natalia Figueroa Barroso	M Scally	Rachel Bowen
Clementine Ford	Amanda O'Callaghan	Dr. Waduge Dhanushi Fernando
Micaela Sahhar	Kristina Olsson	Aimee Dow
Paddy O'Reilly	Kelly Gardiner	Jessi Sullivan
Chloe Mills	Katherine Downey	Emily Foley
Alison Young	Artelle Lenthall	Chloe Wilson
Yen-Rong Wong	Robyn Williams	Azlina Abu Baker
Debra Adelaide	Tim Baker	Stephen Brookes
Thomas Mayo	Michael Karadjis	Lennie Davies
Alison Palmer	Tenille McDermott	Karys McEwen

Andrew Sutherland	Mike Roberts	Jo Gli
Sharlene Allsopp	Jaclyn Crupi	Kate Hall
Dr Jordana Silverstein	Matt Davis	Sophia Whettingsteel
Jo Langdon	Sarah Firth	Ender Baskan
Evelyn Araluen	Melissa Lane	Lexie Eatock
Angela O'Keeffe	Kate Kruimink	Maureen Krasnoff
Jess Hill	Rachel Ang	Sarah Maddison
Veronica Sullivan	Lisa Byleveld	Deborah Crabtree
Eli Sutherland	Panos Karanikolas	Roxanne Shahtahmasebi
Karen Ginnane	Sue Hatton	Jennifer Wong
Maria Speyer	Genevieve Callaghan	Caitlin Parker
Luke Horton	Ryan Butta	Kathryn Ticehurst
Jasper Peach	Michael Mohammed Ahmad	David Stavanger
Jayne Tuttle	Helena Fox	Bonita Ryan
Julia Dehm	Ben Etherington	Andrea Durbach
Jumana Bayeh	Winnie Dunn	Beth Atkinson-Quinton
Samantha Byres	Laura Elizabeth Woollett	Katerina Cosgrove
Kirsty Wilson	Nat Latter	Jon Tjhia
Paula Cooper	Nayuka Gorrie	Angelita Biscotti
Tim Loveday	Clare Millar	Jodi McAlister
Liz Chapman	Aline-Mwezi Niyonsenga	Cecile Yazbek
Amanda Wise	Will Cox	Dr Daniella Trimboli
Dr Zain Swaleh	Cher Tan	Maeve Marsden
Dr Sara Dehm	Larissa Payne	Sylvie Leber
Penny Tangey	Scott Ludlam	Jessica Horton
Jess Scully	Jennifer Down	Miki Mitayn
Lucy Nelson	Caroline Lajoie	Michael Edwards
Sarah Bailey	Lauren Mitchell	Ben Eltham
Crystal McKinnon	Poppy Gee	Louise Wakeling
Mek Yimam	Sati Ozbek	Miriam Webster
André Dao	Mel Fulton	Pablo Brait
Ashleigh Hastings	Anita Heiss	Louise Omer
Kate Raseta	Janice Caulfield	Dr Anna Nording
Katherine Brabon	Fatima Measham	Shakira Hussein
Lana Tatour	Brigid Mullane	Nova Weetman
Maria Papas	Bec Kavanagh	Cigi
Maxine Beneba Clarke	Andrew Brooks	Harry Saddler
Shannyn Palmer	Elizabeth Pulsford	Miriam Sved
Ch'aska Cuba de Reed	Alex McInnis	Karen Welsh
Cassy Polimeni	Wajeehah Aayeshah	Nathan Zhao
Jennifer Macy	Beth Marsden	Vanessa Giron
Elizabeth Coleman	Dr Ann El Khoury	Dr Belinda Lee
Sally Hetherington OAM	Dr Anny Mokotow	Michelle Prak
Dan Brueschke	Janet Pelly	Miroslav Sandev

Clare Forster	Jess Racklyeft	Belinda Murphy
Trish Bolton	Glen Hunting	Megan mahon
Dr Naama Carlin	Anna Kate Blair	Shazia Quadri
Laura J Carroll	Claire Sullivan	Elise Hassett
Justine Jennings	Janine Watson	Claire Thomas
Ben Silverstein	Romy Ash	Ashley Haywood
Sara Haddad	Padraic Gibson	Charlotte Guest
Jacinta Dimase	Kylie Mirmohamadi	Lucie Dess
Zana Fraillon	Deena Ragless	Sandy Rodgers
Nadia Rhook	Dr Clem Bastow	Alayna Patterson
Andrew Pople	Jess Steele	Sharon H
Zewlan Moor	Valentina Baú	Sophie Hay
Kelly Hussey-Smith	Kris Kneen	Vanessa Barolsky
Zeynab Gamieldeen	Katherine Lyall-Watson	Dr Sana Pathan
Emily Maguire	Caroline Lenette	Randa Abdel-Fattah
Marion Taffe	Fiona Wood	Judith White
Shelley Burr	Claire G. Coleman	Sivan B
Noam Peleg	Jorgelina Mastruleri	Alice Grundy
Dianne Bray	Amanda Kelly	Emily Rodríguez
Julien Ortiz	Margie Cremasco	Grace Yee
Jake Maison	Caroline Wallace	Scout H
Kate Larsen	Robyn Davidson OAM	Stephanie Holt
Bernadette Brennan	Sarah Valle	Ginger Gorman
Maree Kimberley	Zarina Cirkic	Ben Moroni
Janet Hutchinson	Lefa Singleton Norton	Jessie Webb
Sally Dhu	Alicia Gardiner	Kaylene Worme
Glenn Osboldstone	Amani Haydar - author	Claire Akhbari
K.A Ren Wyld	Abdul Ibrahimi	Jessica Murdoch
Eleven Greenstones	Karen Pickering	Caroline Gardam
Portia Dilena	Carmen	Irene Lai
Amy Butcher	Jock Serong	Katherine Blackadder
Samuel Jaksic	Ali Jane Smith	Bronwen Algate
Kathryn Bird	Liz Conor	Michelle McDonald
Mark Smith	Clare Atkins	Sharon walkace
Monique Coorey	Rochelle	Martin Bannard
Stephen Pascoe	Siena Johnstone	Roxanna Ryan
Jess Galatola	Panda Wong	Stephen Wright
Nadia Mahjouri	Meyrnah Khodr	Jan Taylor
Kama Knudsen	Kylie Elder	Meg Dunley
Jessica Whyte	Cat yen	Averil Robertson
Sarah McKenzie	Frank Strik	Naima Brown
Rita Manassis	Natasha Theoharous	Anwen Crawford
Briana Wall	Erin Riley	Sarah Masood
Natalie Harkin	Leonie Brialey	Christine Burrows

Roj Amedi	Eunice Andrada	Piers Gooding
Anna Featherstone	Amy Lovat	Alison Stewart
Alice Richardson	Kay Kerr	Ashley Kalagian Blunt
Bec Yule	Eileen Chong	Georgia McCluskey
Mark Mupotsa-Russell	Jonathan Butler	Nic Barbs
Danielle Binks	George Criddle	Tamarah Scott
Gulcin Buyukyazici	Alex Creece	Lilli
Sherine Shallah	Michelle Wright	Alison Wong
Joanna Cruickshank	Nathan Curnow	Nien Schwarz
Steve Celica	Jo Skinner	Fozia Yaqoob
Chaya Kasif	Madeleine Rebbechi	Madeline Williams
Anna Martin	Matilda Dixon-Smith	Kamya O'Keeffe
Roanna Gonsalves	Emma Caskey	Rebecca McHale
Annabelle Lukin	Monique Wallace	Mel Turnbull
Alison Stella Topaz	Lisa Gronich	Nick Rose
Kirsten Ealand	Marian Abboud	Leighann
Astrid Lorange	Nikita Vanderbyl	Tina Helm
Lilian Oh	Izzy Roberts-Orr	Ariane Ryan
Louise Redmond	Isabella G Mead	Kristy Diffey
Katie Lolas	Jessa Rogers	Narelle
CB Mako	Jacki Dimond	Marianne Kearney
Mel Campbell	Millie Rooney	Susanne Lutherborrow
Dylin Hardcastle	Caitlin McGregor	Trace balla
Maureen Mulquiney	Julia Reid	Kate ch
Toni Jordan	Jenna Condie	Adara Enthaler
Diane Finlay	Westerly Isbaih	Christopher Bonney
Tanja Dreher	Ruthi Hambling	Yasmine Burrows
Chris Hammer	Matte Rochford	Sue Dodd
Robyn A Anderson	Alex Kelly	Emily Gale
Fran Berry	Dr Penni Russon	Sarah Schmidt
Michael Brissenden	Maryam Azam	Shastra Deo
Paul Daley	Charlotte North-Coombes	Kirsty Balla
Sian Taylor	Megan Wilson	Sharon Connolly
Jean Smith	Daniel Car	Nisha O'Leary
Alexandra Hollis	Kate Douglas	Lisa Dempster
Laura Elvery	Adriane Howell	Lawrence Abou Khater
Jess Lilley	Alyah Seif	Saja c
Helen King	Dr Jennifer Tobin	Hayley Scrivenor
Indianna Saunders-Shaw	Leyla	Vidya Madabushi
Alli Parker	Fiona Taylor	Erin McKeegan
Wendy Bird	Isabella Gullifer-Laurie	Rachel Shulkes
Kylie Ladd	Souheir Edelbi	Terri Ann Quan Sing
Tom Tonkin	Katherine	Sam Wren Quan Sing

Amal Awad	Anna Moulton	Finegan Kruckemeyer
Anne Sherman	Anne	Sarah Easson
Kate Gordon	Scarlett Harris	Luciella Scarlett
Mark Anning	Steve Peters	Mary Debrett
Rebekah Fry	sharon clues	Dr Marty Hirst
Kylie Elder	Briony Kidd	Katrina Kell
Tim Davidson	Andrew Whelan	Deborah Nicholls
El Gibbs	Andrew Stafford	Megan Krolik
Maya Ghattas	Frances Butler	Kell Woods
Sher Rill Ng	Julia Harvey	Emma Duncan
Dominic Kelly	Sela Ahosivi-Atiola	Steven Campbell
Steve Lewis	Taylor Prigg	Annie Toller
Lisa Johns	Nadine Levy	Din Cirkic
Tessa Lynch	Max Dark	Dr Stuart Richards
Ed Butler	Dr Joe Collins	Kirsten Alexander
Nicole Smeade	Garth Turner	Tia Keeley
Yiran F	Dr Philip Patterson	Izzy Bizzotto
Rebecca Weber	Anna-Karina Hermkens	Jack Remiel Cottrell
Rachel Power	Autumn Royal	Dr Ozlem Susler
Lou Bray	Sameerah Nawaz	Megan Rogers
Dinuka McKenzie	Rachel mcfadden	Paul Dalgarno
Sophie Waincymer	John Bartlett	