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Finding Australia's Disabled Authors

Online Symposium

25th to 27th September 2024

Presented by UniSA Creative at the University of South Australia and the

Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL).

From short-statured Rocca in Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Haxby's Circus* to autistic Don Tillman in Graeme Simsion's *Rosie series*, Australian literature frequently relies on representations of disabled people for narrative intrigue. Yet, regardless of how nuanced such representations may be, they cannot substitute for the experiences of Australian disabled authors who, in contrast, are often marginalised or erased. Through poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, these authors continue to demonstrate the complex reality of impairment and of being disabled in Australia.

This free, online symposium aims to highlight these complexities in eight sessions across three days. With a focus on intersectionality, presenters will discuss the writing processes and publishing experiences of current and previous Australian disabled authors. This event will be captioned and Auslan-interpreted. If you have any questions about this event please email Dr Amanda Tink amanda.tink@unisa.edu.au

Contents

Brief Program

This schedule uses Australian Central Standard Time (South Australia). Please remember to convert to your time zone.

Wednesday 25 September

5:30 to 7:00 PM ASAL Patron's Lecture

- welcome from ASAL
- welcome from UniSA Creative
- Dr Andy Jackson - Fostering Solidarity rather than Separateness: Intersectionality, Collaboration and Australia's Disabled Writers

Thursday 26 September

10:00 to 11:30 AM Opening and Keynote

- Dr Jessica White - welcome, intro to ARC project and this symposium
- Dr Scott Avery - Hangin' with the One-legged Mungo Man: A Place for Disability in Indigenous Story-telling

11:30 AM to 12:30 PM lunch

12:30 to 1:30 PM Session 1: Reflected Selves

- Professor Craig M. Rustici - Mirrors, Mirroring, and Multiple Selves in Donna Williams's *Nobody Nowhere*
- Dr Patricia Clarke - Falling off Cliffs: The Effect of Disabling Events on my Career as an Author

1:30 to 1:45 PM break

1:45 to 3:00 PM Session 2: Neurology and Writing Process

- Kate Swaffer - Regaining my Voice as an Author with Dementia
- Dr Aidan Coleman - First Words and Second Thoughts: Writing and Rewriting the Stroke
- Dr Kate Forsyth - Suppressed Speech: Stuttering, Selective Mutism and Me

Friday 27 September

10:00 to 11:00 AM Session 3: Getting Published

- Dr Amanda Tink - “I still Doubt Whether Your Article is Worth it”: How Alan Marshall Managed Publisher Prejudice
- Dr Annmaree Watharow - Punishing Publishing Journeys

11:00 to 11:15 AM break

11:15 AM to 12:15 PM Session 4: Writing Against Erasure

- Lauren Poole - Self/Experimentation: Experimental Design in Disability Writing
- Dr Linda Steele - Kim Walker’s *Forgotten and Found*: Truth-Telling and Social Repair

12:15 to 1:15 PM lunch

1:15 to 2:15 PM Session 5: Cartography of Other Worlds: An Anthology on Disability and Neurodivergence

Chairperson: Michelle Cahill

- Laura Pettenuzzo
- Beau Windon
- Dr Katie Hansord
- Misbah Wolf

2:15 to 2:30 PM break

2:30 to 4:00 PM Session 6: Writing Lineages

- Dr Katerina Bryant - A Gambit: Writing Neural Processes and Mental Illness Through Chess
- Dr Jessica White - A Lineage of Deaf Australian Women Writers
- Dr Amanda Tink - Symposium reflection and Close

Full Program

This schedule uses Australian Central Standard Time (South Australia). Please remember to convert to your time zone.

Wednesday 25 September

5:30 PM to 7:00 PM ASAL Patron's Lecture

- **Welcome from ASAL**
- **Welcome from UniSA Creative**
- **Dr Andy Jackson - Fostering Solidarity Rather than Separateness: Intersectionality, Collaboration and Australia's Disabled Writers**

How are disabled authors found? How do they carve out a place within the literary and wider world? In what ways do intersectional factors require particular attention in order to make this inclusion happen?

In recent years, a significant number of disabled authors have been published in Australia for the first time. Disability, chronic illness, mental health, neurodiversity and D/deafness are beginning to emerge from the cultural margins into a space of vigorous aesthetic and socio-political impact. This shift – from being written about to being writers – is the achievement not only of individuals but of a community. But how does this diverse community work together? And how might our differences foster solidarity rather than separateness?

This lecture will trace the outlines of this emergent achievement, through an examination of a unique collaborative writing project. In 2022, Andy Jackson coordinated a group of twenty-three disabled poets and essayists to diagnose the present and imagine therapeutic futures. This diverse cohort – with their distinct differences of age, gender, class, cultural background, Indigeneity and bodily experience – confronted the peculiar challenges, limitations and rewards of listening and writing together.

This will lead into a discussion of the complexity of collaboration as mode of being-together, and to a suggestion that finding disabled authors is only one part of the puzzle. Non-disabled publishers, readers and writers alike need to find their own relationship to disability, perhaps even their own disability.

Thursday 26 September

10:00 to 11:30 AM Opening and Keynote

- **Dr Jessica White - welcome, intro to ARC project and this symposium**
- **Dr Scott Avery – Hangin’ with the One-legged Mungo Man: A Place for Disability in Indigenous Story-telling**

  At Lake Mungo in New South Wales, there are footprints impressed in the clay dating back 20,000 years. Amongst the footprints is a single line of footprint, left by a one-legged man on a hunt with his community. These footprints survive as a reminder of the ancient value of inclusion and belonging of all people.

The story of a one-legged Mungo Man on a hint with community has become an emblematic narrative on the culture of disability inclusion that exists with Indigenous communities. A story that has survived millennia, its contemporary reanimation as a metaphor for inclusion highlights the power of Indigenous story-telling in not just articulating social history, but in drawing a connection between people and place.

‘Hangin with the one legged Mungo-Man’ draws from the presenter’s own personal reflection of being deaf and Aboriginal in a world where popular culture is dominated by neither of those

qualities. Beyond the personal, it looks to how the Indigenous methods of storytelling by Indigenous people with disability fosters their self-worth and wellbeing, by centring them and their community in their unique place and purpose in the world.

11:30 AM to 12:30 PM lunch

12:30 to 1:30 PM Session 1: Reflected Selves

- **Professor Craig M. Rustici - Mirrors, Mirroring, and Multiple Selves in Donna Williams's *Nobody Nowhere***

In 1992 Australian Donna Williams wrote and published *Nobody Nowhere,* one of the first "autie-biographies," that is, memoirs by autists (Couser, *Signifying Bodies*). Within Williams's first five years and her memoir's first twenty pages, mirrors, mirroring and the multiplying of the author's selves ("characters" or "faces to the world") converge importantly. In an incident that, she reports, "was to change my life," Williams encounters Carol, a (possibly imaginary) girl who becomes the "girl in the mirror" and one of the two principal "characters" that she inhabits in childhood. Williams first mirrors the actions of the neurotypical Carol, who "was everything that people liked," and then begins to see Carol, looking just like Donna, in the mirror in Donna's bedroom. She imagines that mirror is a room between her world and Carol's and attempts to enter Carol's world through the mirror. Following Eric Laurent and Jean-Claude Maleval, Lacanian psychoanalysts have analyzed and categorized the function of mirrors in Williams's memoirs.

This paper proposes to analyze that episode through other lenses, namely, the concept of "crip double consciousness," developed by Michael Davidson (*Concerto for the Left Hand*) and other disability scholars, and Williams's own discussion of the developmental and therapeutic function of mirrors in her textbook *Exposure Anxiety* (2008). There she reports that mirrors helped her develop "tolerance to the audience of oneself" as well as a social instinct. She wonders, then, if the way she relied "on a mirrored external 'me'" was "akin" to the way people with sensory disabilities rely upon a guide dog or sign language.

- **Dr Patricia Clarke - Falling off Cliffs: The Effect of Disabling Events on my Career as an Author**

This paper discusses the effects of two disabling events, which happened some two decades apart, on my career as an author.

The first was loss of mobility requiring use of a mobility walker. This had an extremely limiting effect on my ability to research the way I had always done and on my choice of subject and consequently on publishing offers. It came at a time when I had established a reputation as a writer of biographies principally of 19th century women writers. I researched my subjects far and wide from outback stations in the Australian bush to the centres of civilisation in Britain and Europe. Loss of independent mobility changed this way of research and choice of subject with the consequences that ensued.

The second disabling event, the increasing loss of vision through macular degeneration has resulted in research and writing proceeding only with great difficulty and at snail's pace.

It is possible to claw one's way some way up the cliff face but it takes time and new skills.

1:30 to 1:45 PM break

1:45 to 3:00 PM Session 2: Neurology and Writing Process

- **Kate Swaffer - Regaining my Voice as an Author with Dementia**

There are about 60 million people diagnosed with dementia, a condition causing multiple disabilities. I am one of them, having been diagnosed with a rare young onset dementia at the age of 49. This presentation will provide an overview of the highs and lows of refusing the well-meaning advice to go home and wait to die after my diagnosis. Negative attitudes and misperceptions about people with dementia, the pervasive discrimination and stigma, and ignorance, are profound, and can be further disabling and debilitating. Becoming a published author was unexpected, as a publisher contacted me to write my first and second books. I then had to reconsider how to "write" with significant disabilities, such as impaired memory recall, word finding and comprehension disabilities. I was studying as a mature age student when diagnosed, and for example, was constantly needing to look up the meaning of psychology, whilst completing a Bachelor of Psychology. Even spelling simple words like "that" became difficult. I started a daily habit of blogging in part, to record my daily life and memories, but also to record what it was like being diagnosed with dementia. This quickly acquired a large global following and provided me with the highs and lows of public opinion, something I soon realised is needed as a published author. After diagnosis, it quickly became clear I'd be denied autonomy and even a voice; writing has given me back my voice.

- **Dr Aidan Coleman - First Words and Second Thoughts: Writing and Rewriting the Stroke**

This paper considers my second book, *Asymmetry*, which concerns a stroke that I suffered 17 years ago. At the time the poems seemed to insist on a form: spare, direct and imagistic, and they were fitted into a narrative that, perhaps, too easily suggested healing and progression, while leaning on writing as catharsis. Looking at some examples of aphasia poetry from the 21st century, I consider how aphasia might suggest certain formal features, including disjunction, agrammatism and a telegraphic style, as I consider how I might edit, reframe and augment the material in *Asymmetry* to better reflect my ongoing experience of the stroke.

- **Dr Kate Forsyth - Suppressed Speech: Stuttering, Selective Mutism and Me**

I have struggled all my life to speak.

A catastrophic brain injury when I was a child left me with profound speech impairments, including selective mutism, the most silencing of all. Years of speech therapy helped me acquire the semblance of fluency. Yet every conversation I share, every speech I make, every story I tell, is an exhausting act of conscious concealment. I have a thousand tricks to hide my dysfluency from others.

Yet I make my living from words. I write books of all kinds, I'm an oral storyteller who performs on festival stages around the world, I teach creative writing and run literary tours, I'm a frequent guest on radio, podcasts, and other spoken word events.

But why? people ask. Why speak and tell stories for a living when talking is so difficult?

Spoken language is essential to our idea of what it is to be human. Being unable to speak is dehumanising. That is the source of the shame felt by people who are dysfluent. Their humiliation is intensified by the societal perception that stuttering is not really a disability, despite the

psychological cost of the disorder and the consequent marginalisation within society. It takes courage to speak up when the act of articulating causes you pain and when you know it will lead to others mocking and mimicking you.

Yet not to speak is to be silenced. And, after a lifetime of struggling to recover speech, I refuse to be silenced anymore.

Friday 27 September

10:00 to 11:00 AM Session 3: Getting Published

- **Dr Amanda Tink - “I still Doubt Whether Your Article is Worth It”: How Alan Marshall Managed Publisher Prejudice**

As a child sitting at the feet of disabled writer Frank Radcliffe, Alan Marshall knew that he would be a writer too. He did not know then that writing was easy but style was complex, that publisher prejudice against “cripples” was constant, and that it would take four decades to find his way from writing the truth to writing his truth. This paper explores some of the key moments in that journey that are as relevant to disabled writers and those who publish them now as they were last century.

- **Dr Annmaree Watharow - Punishing Publishing Journeys**

A disabled author faces many barriers in crafting creative works. We might think that pressing the send button on the completed manuscript is the end of hurdling obstacles. For many of us, the publishing journey is punishing in its array of inaccessible systems and ill-informed personnel. We detail here four such journeys in which our intrepid deafblind author will meet three publishing houses of ill-repute, and one in which there is a welcome and accessible embrace. There are lessons to be learned and a roadmap for publishing houses to meet their human rights and legal obligation to be inclusive of everyone. There has to be robust investment in support of authors with disability (and their own staff with disability). We suggest publishers and editorial staff:

1. Be person centred. This means ASK (acquire specific knowledge) about their authors’ needs. Listen to the lived experience.
2. Be trained. All staff in the practical realities of supporting their authors.
3. Understand that a word-document is gold standard for some of us who use assistive technology.
4. Negotiate realistic timeframes with their authors.
5. Renegotiate when complexities of disabled authors lives may include unexpected healthcare or support crises.
6. Consider the use of a development editor, particularly for those with communication disability.

We disabled authors are very capable, we have a lot to say, but we might need extra assistance to get our creations and experiences out into the world.

11:00 to 11:15 AM break

11:15 AM to 12:15 PM Session 4: Writing Against Erasure

- **Lauren Poole - Self/Experimentation: Experimental Design in Disability Writing**

Self-experimentation is a founding stone for the medical sciences and for practically living in a disabled body-mind. Yet the information self-experimentation yields for disabled people, and the resources they construct to share that information, seem to slip through the cracks; too academic for the casual reader but too personal for peer review. This presentation treats these informal resources – blogs, Google Docs, Facebook group guidelines – as literary texts in a shared genre by disabled authors and for disabled audiences. Generally self-published, ever-updating, and collaborative, this genre bridges the gap between formal knowledge and lived experience, using one to illuminate the other and vice versa. It's no coincidence many of the disabilities examined in these texts are commonly underdiagnosed, stigmatised, or outright dismissed (ME/CFS, EDS, dysautonomia). In the absence of educated clinicians and/or institutionally-endorsed resources, disabled authors have undertaken their own experiments and written up their findings. Their clearly stated intention that other disabled people use and take seriously these resources raises an obvious question: why haven't we taken them seriously as literary texts too? By examining Australian examples, this presentation then asks what do the texts in this genre tell us about the modes and outcomes of self-experimentation? How is scientific method, experimental design, and academic rigour incorporated into, used by, and reimagined in texts which exist outside of academia? And how and why are Australian disabled writers choosing to present their lives, their experiments, and their writing in such unconventional, accessible formats?

- **Dr Linda Steele - Kim Walker's *Forgotten and Found*: Truth-Telling and Social Repair**

In her memoir *Forgotten and Found* (2015), Kim Walker documents her journey from a childhood of disability institutionalisation and sheltered workshops to living and working in the community to becoming a leading Australian disability self-advocate. In opening her book, Walker states: "I am writing this story about my life now because I want everyone to know what life has been like for people like me. I want people to remember what happened to us, how we were shut away and forgotten, and I want people never to forget this. I want people to understand what it is like for the people with a disability in this country who are still living in institutions. And I want to make sure that what happened to me will never happen to anyone again" (p 1). In my presentation written from a disability rights and disability justice perspective, I explore three important roles Walker's book plays. First, Walker's book has an epistemic function in contributing to Australian history the lived experiences of people with intellectual disability – of institutionalisation and activism – in a context where disability social history has been largely erased and people with intellectual disability's voices and experiences are silenced. Second, in the aftermath of the Australian Disability Royal Commission Walker's book has a truth-telling function, in providing opportunities for politicians, policymakers, parents of people with intellectual disability, and members of the community to listen to and reckon with her experiences so as not to repeat them. Third, Walker's book serves a reparative function, by providing resources for communities still shaped by disability segregation, institutionalisation and labour exploitation to work towards abolishing local structures of oppression and to collectively imagine, build and practice different, hopeful futures.

12:15 to 1:15 PM lunch

1:15 to 2:15 PM Session 5: **Cartography of Other Worlds: An Anthology on Disability and Neurodivergence**

Chairperson: Michelle Cahill

- Laura Pettenuzzo
- Beau Windon
- Dr Katie Hansord
- Misbah Wolf

Mascara proposes a panel with editors, Beau Windon, Misbah Wolf, Laura Pettenuzzo, Katie Hansord, and Michelle Cahill. We are working on an anthology of creative writing focussing on disability and neurodivergence from the perspectives and voices of First Nations and CaLD disabled writers.

BIPOC cohorts suffer from the impacts of structural discrimination within the publishing industry and in academia, leading to exclusion and marginalisation with significant impacts on their wellbeing. This anthology seeks to challenge dominant power structures by platforming nonfiction and/or nonfiction poetry writers and amplifying intersectional voices whose stories are so often unfairly spoken for. The ongoing pandemic has revealed deep inequalities and barriers faced by First Nations disabled people and disabled people of colour. We recognise that the term “neurodivergent” encompasses a wide range of experiences that diverge from neuronormativity, beyond Autistic and ADHD (including PTSD and CPTSD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Bipolar). We also recognise the social model of disability as a model for understanding the numerous ways in which disability can be culturally constructed by exclusionary design, neuronormativity, and the normalisation of an inaccessible society.

The neurodiversity paradigm significantly shifts neurodivergence beyond the pathology paradigm, which is historically linked with deeply harmful institutionalisation, sterilisation, eugenics, and discrimination. In line with the neurodiversity paradigm our anthology will revalue diversity and difference through the lens of health.

Through the vivid nonfiction writings of disabled and neurodivergent First Nations and CaLD writers, this anthology offers community building and a deeper understanding towards systemic change and disability justice.

Michelle will provide an overview of the book project and its rationale, Beau will talk about the intersection of disability and Aboriginality, creating safe spaces, and mad studies, especially focussing on the new tools we need to avoid repeating hierarchies that oppress Aboriginal, black and brown people through storytelling.

Misbah will focus on specific needs for BIPOC's with ADHD and relevant theories, such as Deleuze and Guattari on rhizomic thinking and ‘botoxed’ ordered bodies.

Laura will both share some creative writing and speak on disability justice and her work on ableism and disability pride with Writers Vic and the Victorian Disability Council, as well as with Mascara, as a commissioning editor. Katie will speak to the vital subject of allyship in this space, exploring how white neurodivergent people and white disability advocates have mostly been at the forefront of these discussions even though they are not able to speak for BIPOC people. Katie will explore how the formation of networks and partnerships in the disability space might amplify disability advocacy, particularly where structural discrimination impacts intersectional voices and storytelling.

2:15 to 2:30 PM break

2:30 to 4:00 PM Session 6: Writing Lineages

- **Dr Jessica White - A Lineage of Deaf Australian Women Writers**

Virginia Woolf wrote in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) that "we think back through our mothers if we are women." In surveying her literary lineage, Woolf uncovers and draws attention to neglected female writers, arguing that literary precursors are necessary for women's capacity to write, and to sustain a writing career.

Woolf's approach can be applied to a range of other writing cultures, including those of deaf and disabled writers. It can be difficult for deaf and disabled writers to see themselves as part of a tradition when they are unaware of those who have come before them. In this paper, I examine how, by reaching into writing in the archives, and reading books by deaf authors, I uncovered a range of deaf, Australian women writers who gifted me an understanding of my own identity as a deaf woman writer.

I also explore how deafness shaped these authors' writing styles and choice of genre. The letters of Maud Praed, memoirs by Donna McDonald and Fiona Murphy, poetry by Judith Wright and fiction by Patricia Carlon are all influenced by moving through the world without sound. I demonstrate that, far from being an impairment that hampers creativity, deafness can generate a rich imaginative life that translates into original and compelling writing.

- **Dr Katerina Bryant - A Gambit: Writing Neural Processes and Mental Illness Through Chess**

The Tetris Effect is thought to be when the continuous playing of a game affects a person's world view. In Nabokov's novel *The Luzhin Defense,* this is shown through the protagonist's obsession with chess. Nabokov writes that Luzhin "sat leaning on his cane and thinking that with a Knight's move of this lime tree standing on a sunlit slope one could take that telegraph pole over there." Luzhin later experiences a break from reality which the book connects to his passion for chess. This love of chess is almost always connected with obsession, 'madness,' and loss of self in literature – as well as in narratives surrounding the lives of real-life chess players like Bobby Fischer and Akiba Rubinstein. These narratives create assumptions about what it means to play chess and experience mental illness, often leading to the conclusion that one requires the other. As a chess player and writer with lived experience of mental illness, I am keen to convey the beauty and challenges of minds and thought processes viewed outside the norm. This presentation will show the complexities in writing neural processes and mental illness with the aim to counter dominant assumptions around what mental illness is and can be – and pushing back against the stereotype that chess leads to "madness."

- **Dr Amanda Tink - Symposium reflection and Close**

Biographies

Dr Aidan Coleman

Dr Aidan Coleman has published three collections of poetry, which have been shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Kenneth Slessor Award, the SA John Bray Poetry Award and the WA Premier's Book Awards. He has published several scholarly articles and book chapters on Australian Modernism for the *Cambridge Companion to Australian Poetry* (CUP, 2024) and on the poetry of migratory birds for Routledge. *Thin Ice: A Life of John Forbes* (MUP) will be published next year. Aidan is a Senior Lecturer at Southern Cross University (Gold Coast), and the Coordinator for Creative Writing.

Dr Amanda Tink

Dr Amanda Tink is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at UniSA Creative, University of South Australia, on the project "Finding Australia's Disabled Authors: Connection, Creativity, Community." She is also Adjunct Research Fellow at Western Sydney University's Writing and Society Research Centre, after completing her PhD there in 2023. Her thesis "'Never Towing a Line': Les Murray, Autism, and Australian Literature" details how Murray's autism and his experiences of being disabled influenced his poetry. In 2022, with Dr Jessica White, she co-edited a special issue of Australian Literary Studies titled "Writing Disability in Australia".

Dr Andy Jackson

Andy Jackson is a poet, essayist, critic, creative writing teacher at the University of Melbourne, and a Patron of Writers Victoria. He was the inaugural Writing the Future of Health Fellow, has co-edited disability-themed issues of Southerly and Australian Poetry Journal, and is on the editorial team for disability poetry journal Sunder. He has featured at literary events and arts festivals across Australia, and on ABC's Radio National and the 7.30 Report. Andy's latest poetry collection is Human Looking, which won the ALS Gold Medal and the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Poetry. He writes and rests on Dja Dja Wurrung country.

Dr Annmaree Watharow

Dr. Annmaree Watharow is a clinician, writer, and lived experience research fellow at the Centre for Disability Research and Policy (CDRP) at the University of Sydney. She has completed a Master of Arts (Creative Writing). Her living experience with deafblindness works to inform her current research and creative works. Her creative non-fiction works include personal essays, verbatim testimonies in playform (Harm's Way), and short films on living with deafblindness (Lucy's Story, Uninformed Consent, SuperTeams, and (Natalie's Challenges). Her texts for health and social care university students are heavily lived experience imbued (Knowing What is Going On 2023, An Invisible Epidemic 2024).

Professor Craig Rustici

Craig Rustici is Dr. Mervin Livingston Schloss Distinguished Professor for the Study of Disabilities professor of English, and Director of Disability Studies at Hofstra University. Initially trained as a scholar of early modern British literature, he has published articles in *Modern Philology*, *Studies in Philology*, *Spenser Studies*, and *Renaissance and Reformation*. His book *The Afterlife of Pope Joan* analyzes representations of an apocryphal woman who reportedly cross-dressed her way to the papacy. His disability-studies scholarship appears or is forthcoming in the *Journal of Gender, Ethnic, and Cross-Cultural Studies; MOSF: Journal of Science Fiction*; *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*; and *Cusp: Late 19th-/Early 20th-Century Cultures*.

Dr Jessica White

Dr Jessica White is the author of the award-winning novels *A Curious Intimacy* and *Entitlement*, and a hybrid memoir about deafness, *Hearing Maud*, which won the 2020 Michael Crouch Award for a debut work of biography and was shortlisted for four national awards, including the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Nonfiction. Jessica has received funding from the Australia Research Council, the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts Queensland and Arts South Australia and has undertaken national and international residencies and fellowships. She is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of South Australia and Chief Investigator on the ARC Discovery Project "Finding Australia's Disabled Authors: Connection, Creativity, Community" (DP 240103154).

Dr Kate Forsyth

Dr Kate Forsyth is an award-winning author, poet and performance storyteller called one of "the finest writers of this generation". Her novels include *Psykhe*, a feminist reimagining of the myth of Eros and Psykhe; *The Crimson Thread*, set in Crete during World War II; and *Bitter Greens*, a retelling of Rapunzel which won the ALA for Best Historical Fiction. Non-fiction titles include *Searching for Charlotte: The Fascinating Story of Australia's First Children's Author,* longlisted for the 2021 Readings Non-Fiction Prize. Kate has a BA in literature & linguistics, a MA in creative writing & a Doctorate of Creative Arts.

Kate Swaffer

Kate Swaffer is living with acquired disabilities due to a brain malformation and a diagnosis of a rare young onset dementia. She is a highly published disabled author, an international keynote speaker, a Dementia Care Educator and Consultant, and a PhD Candidate at the University of South Australia, School of Justice and Society. Her current research investigates dementia as a disability, human rights and access to rehabilitation for people with dementia. Swaffer has a Master of Science in Dementia Care, Bachelor of Psychology, Bachelor of Arts in Creative and Professional Writing, a Graduate Diploma in Grief Counselling, and is a retired chef, and a retired nurse. She is an award-winning global disability and human rights campaigner, including winning the 2021 University of South Australia Alumni Award, the 2018 Global Leader, Australian 100 Women of Influence, and the 2017 Australian Of The Year in SA. She is also a co-founder of Dementia Alliance International, a charity providing peer to peer and social support and advocating for people with dementia globally.

Dr Katerina Bryant

Katerina Bryant is a writer and lecturer at UniSA Creative, University of South Australia. Her research spans memoir writing, speculative biography, disability, and archives. Her first book, *Hysteria: A Memoir of Illness, Strength and Women's Stories Throughout History* (NewSouth), was published in 2020. She is currently a SA Literary Fellow at the State Library of South Australia, working on a manuscript about women and chess.

Lauren Poole

Lauren Poole is a disabled writer from Sydney. Her writing has appeared in *Growing Up Disabled in Australia* (Black Inc. Books, 2021), *Meanjin, Westerly Magazine, Bramble, Science Write Now,* and *GLAM@Sydney.* She lives with an acquired brain injury.

Dr Linda Steele

Dr Linda Steele is an Associate Professor at University of Technology Sydney Law Faculty and Adjunct Associate Professor at University of South Australia. She is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University's François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights during Fall 2024. Her research focuses on redress and social repair of violence, institutionalisation and segregation perpetrated against disabled people. She is the author of *Disability, Criminal Justice and Law* (2020 Routledge), and co-editor of *Sites of Conscience: Place, Memory and the Project of Deinstitutionalization* (2024 UBC Press), *The Legacies of Institutionalisation: Disability, Law and Policy in the 'Deinstitutionalised' Community* (2020 Hart).

The Mascara team

The Mascara team comprises a multifaceted and distinguished group of writers and editors.

Laura Pettenuzzo, a disabled writer and bibliophile on Wurundjeri country, whose work explores impacts of ableism and disability pride. Her words have featured in The Big Issue, ABC Everyday, The Age, and SBS Voices.

Beau Windon, a neurodivergent author of Wiradjuri heritage based in Naarm, writes quirky stories and poetry, winning several awards including the Griffith Review's Emerging Voices 2023 competition.

Katie Hansord, a writer and researcher in Naarm, explores nineteenth-century women's poetry in her book Colonial Australian Women Poets.

Misbah Wolf, a neuro spicy witch with a Masters in Creative Writing, has published acclaimed books Rooftops in Karachi and Carapace from Vagabond Press, and has been published in a wide range of Australian journals.

Michelle Cahill is an award-winning novelist and poet of Indian heritage, the author of Letter to Pessoa and Daisy & Woolf. She is the artistic director of Mascara, and currently an honorary researcher at the University of Tasmania.

Dr Patricia Clarke OAM FAHA

Dr Patricia Clarke OAM FAHA is a writer, editor, historian and former journalist whose major focus is on the place of women writers in Australian history and on media history. Several of her 13 books are biographies of women writers and she has published numerous articles on related subjects. An authority on the history of the media, she was a consultant to the Media Hall of Fame and a contributor to the *Companion to the Australian Media*. She is a Fellow of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies and was funding honorary secretary of the Independent Scholars Association of Australia.

Dr Scott Avery

Dr Scott Avery is a professor of Indigenous disability, health and wellbeing in the School of Public Health, University of Technology Sydney. He is an Aboriginal man descendant from the Worimi people and is profoundly deaf.

Dr Scott (as he prefers to be known) is a recognised educator, researcher and policy adviser on Indigenous cultural approaches for the inclusion of people with disability. He has extensive experience in conducting community-based research and policy in Indigenous and disability organisations, and is the “Professor in Residence” at the First Peoples Disability Network, an Indigenous Disabled Peoples Organisation. His publication 'Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability' (2018) has influenced national policy across Closing the Gap, Australia’s Disability Strategy, and the Disability Royal Commission. He was appointed Ambassador for the International Day of People with Disability in 2023.