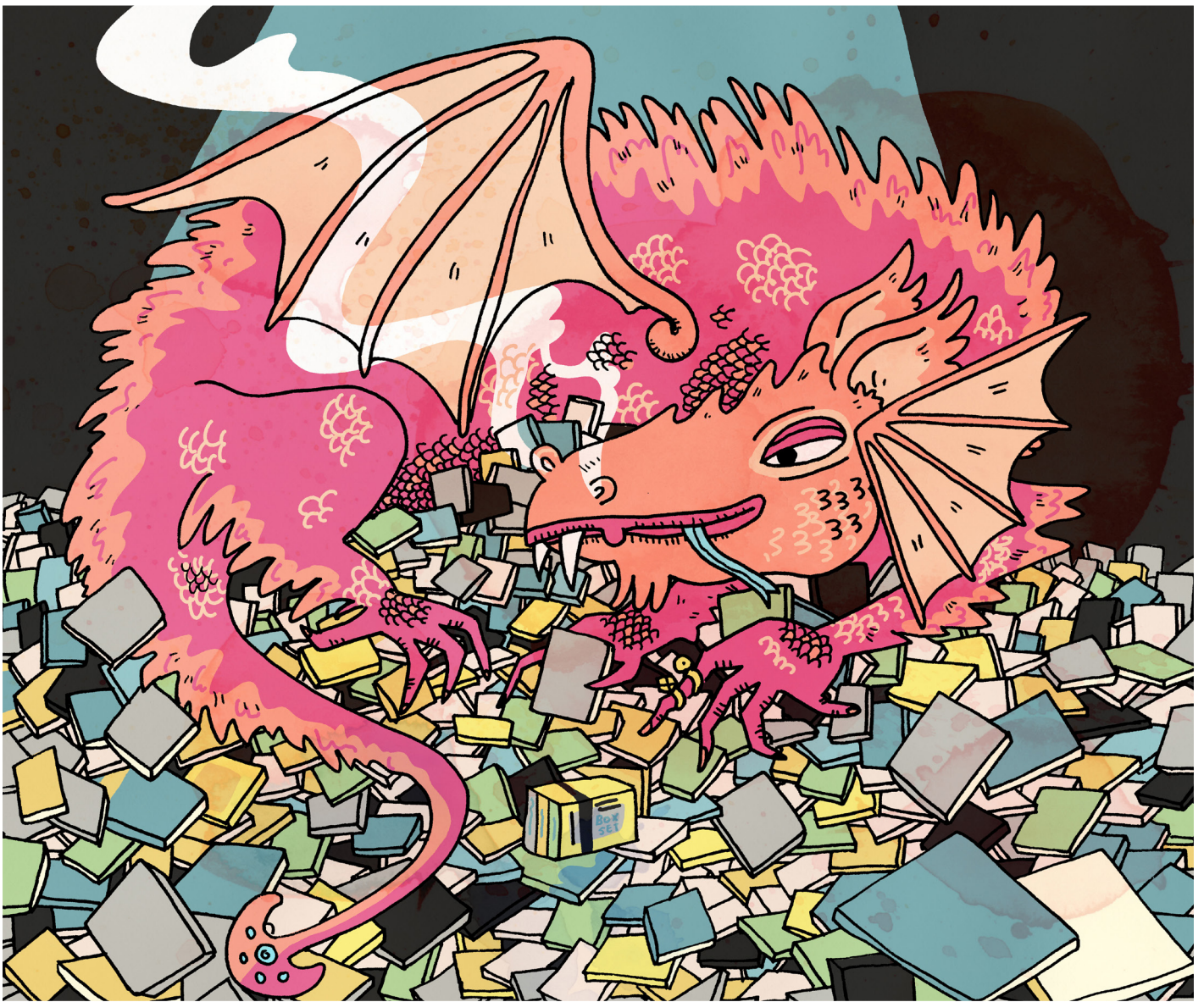




Canberra
Writers
Festival

2025 SCHOOLS DAY

FIND YOUR STORYTELLER



Thursday 23 October
National Library of Australia

Thank You

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Thanks to our
sponsors, teacher
advisory group and
student contributor,
Matilda Davies, who
helped bring this
program together.



Acknowledgement of Country: Canberra Writers Festival acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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CWF Schools Day 2025: Find Your Storyteller!

Welcome to the inaugural **Canberra Writers Festival Schools Day**. We are proud to present our theme for 2025: **'Find Your Storyteller!'**

In this first year, our program is aimed at **Year 9-12** students across the ACT region.

Our aim is to foster a love of storytelling and creativity, in all its forms, among Canberra's students. Featuring a fantastic line-up of interstate and local authors, join us for a captivating day celebrating great writing and the power of stories.

From crime to world-building, embracing individuality to understanding your place in history – we've pulled together a stellar line-up to inspire, entertain and encourage students in their creative pursuits.

Designed to engage students and develop practical skills

Featuring four incredible authors, the day-long program is held at the National Library of Australia, a treasured institution for learning, research, creativity, and intellectual exploration.

Every session is crafted to inspire and ignite young people's creative spark.

Expect lively conversations, big questions, and exciting insights.

Students will leave with practical writing tools, fresh ideas, and more confidence to grow as readers and storytellers.

Event Overview

- **Date:** Thursday, 23 October 2025
- **Location:** National Library of Australia
- **Audience:** Students in Years 9–12
- **Duration:**
 - 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM:
Four 45-minute sessions (including Q&A)
 - 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM: Optional extension creative writing workshop
 - All-Day: Book sales at the NLA Bookshop



Schedule

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Arrive library and settle in

9:50 AM – 10:00 AM

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

How I Discovered My Inner Storyteller

10:50 AM – 11:35 AM

Looking Back, Looking Forward

11:35 AM – 12:35 PM

Lunch and book signings

12:35 PM – 1:20 PM

The Power of Fantasy: Exploring Other Worlds

1:25 PM – 2:05 PM

Help! How to Face the Blank Page...
and Other Writing Hurdles

2:05 PM - 2:20 PM

Close + Book signings

2:30 PM

Depart back to school



Extension workshop (limited places)

3:00 PM – 4:30PM

Your Story Starts Here:
A Creative Writing
Workshop

Pricing

Full Day Program

\$20

per student

\$20

*per (additional) teacher**

Extension Workshop

\$15

per person

Event capped at 30 attendees

All Tickets are exempt from GST. *One free teacher ticket is included per 25 paying students.

Session Details

1. How I Discovered My Inner Storyteller

Featuring: Jack Heath

Bestselling Canberra author Jack Heath has a belly full of stories and a legion of dedicated fans. But how did he get started with storytelling, and end up writing over 40 novels, translated into ten languages? For budding writers, creatives, and all who want to express ideas more confidently, Jack's session will inspire you to unearth your own stories for the page, stage, podcast, screen and beyond.



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, Drama and Media Arts, Cross-curriculum links to Identity, Choice & Belonging

Capabilities: Literacy, Critical and Creative thinking, Ethical Understanding, Personal and Social Capability

2. Looking Back, Looking Forward

Featuring: Tegan Bennett Daylight

Was the 'retro' world better before the internet and bubble tea? Acclaimed author, teacher and critic Tegan Bennett Daylight delights in transporting her characters to the past in *How to Survive 1985*. What would you do if you found yourself in the 1980s? Would you look for your parents or go exploring on your own? Tegan shares ideas about how the past forms our future selves, what we can learn from intergenerational stories, and how the writing life helps to make sense of it all.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, History, Humanities and Social Sciences, Media Arts

Capabilities: Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Research Skills, Ethical Understanding, Personal and Social Capability

Session Details

3. The Power of Fantasy: Exploring Other Worlds

Featuring: Lili Wilkinson with moderator Lisa Fuller

Fantasy fiction transports us to different worlds and across the realms of space and time. Award-winning author Lili Wilkinson explores the profound power of fantasy to reimagine our world, and challenge how we think about ourselves. Go behind-the-scenes of her latest novel, *Unhallowed Halls*, a dark academia fantasy which invigorates and reinvents the genre. In this exciting session you will learn tips for world building you can bring to your own writing and other creative endeavours. In conversation with local literary legend Lisa Fuller, whose fantasy adventure *Washpool* pulls readers into the mysterious place of 'Muse'.



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, Media Arts/Creative Arts, History, Cross-curriculum integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, Sustainability, Global Studies

Capabilities: Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Intercultural Understanding

4. Help! How to Face the Blank Page... and Other Writing Hurdles

Featuring: Jack Heath, Lili Wilkinson, and Lisa Fuller with participant moderator Tegan Bennett Daylight

We all struggle with writer's block, fixing bad sentences, and other hurdles. Can you relate? Each featured writer shares how they respond to the possibilities and challenges of their craft. Hear frank insights, hear diverse approaches and leave with a toolkit of techniques to help with your own writing and assignments.



KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

Learning areas: English, Literature

Capabilities: Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability

Extension workshop

(capped at 30 students total)

Your Story Starts Here: A Creative Writing Workshop with Lili Wilkinson

A 90-minute workshop focusing on story and structure. The workshop will take students through the process of coming up with an initial idea for a story, and then use that idea to generate characters, plot and structure.

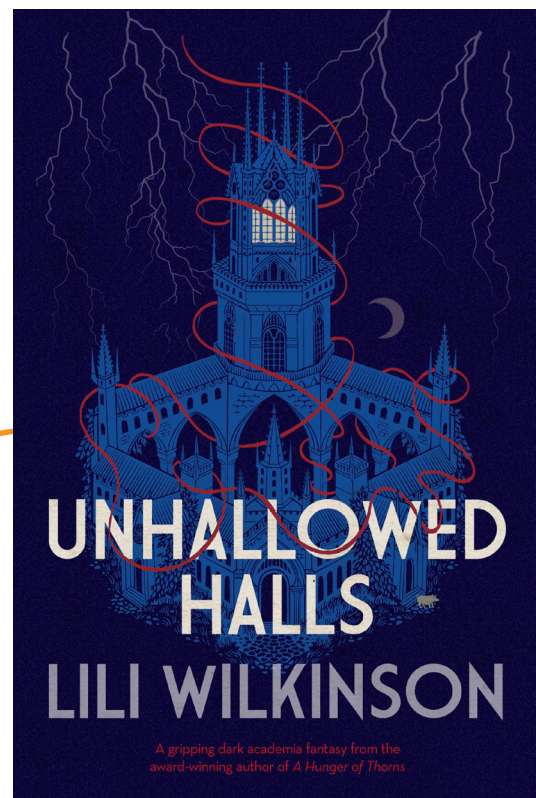
By the end of the session, participants will have the outline of a story, including a well-rounded protagonist, an antagonist, a three-act structure and a great ending.

Participants can either go away and write the story they have plotted out in the session and/or use the framework to generate new ideas and stories.

This session is designed to support those who have a strong passion for creative writing and want to extend their skills. Limited session - only 30 places available.

Topics:

- Structuring a story
- Characters with wants and needs
- Turning points
- Concise, engaging writing style



Author biographies



Jack Heath was born in Sydney and grew up in Wollongong, Melbourne, and Canberra. He began writing his first novel at 13 while at Lyneham High School and submitted it to Pan Macmillan at 17. It was published as *The Lab* in 2006, becoming a bestseller in Australia, later released in North America and optioned for film. In 2009, he signed with Curtis Brown Australia and went on to publish numerous books. After the success of *300 Minutes of Danger*, he became a full-time writer. Jack lives on Ngunnawal/Ngambri land with his wife, five chickens, three possums, two cats, and a pair of human children.



Tegan Bennett Daylight is a writer and teacher who has published three novels and several books for young people, as well as a collection of short stories, *Six Bedrooms*, and a book of essays, *The Details (On Love, Death and Reading)*. She lives on Darug/Gundungurra land in the Blue Mountains. Tegan's latest books are the YA novel *Royals* which finds six teenagers (and a baby) trapped in a shopping mall, and *How to Survive 1985*: the same characters find themselves 40 years in the past, loving the music, hating the hair, and noticing what's different about the allegedly fabulous 80s.



Lili Wilkinson is the award-winning author of more than twenty books for young people, including *A Hunger for Thorns*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award, and was a CBCA Honour Book. Lili has a PhD from the University of Melbourne, and is a passionate advocate for YA and the young people who read it. Her latest books are *Unhallowed Halls* and the *Bravepaw* series.



Lisa Fuller is a Wuilli Wuilli woman from Queensland, also descended from Wakka Wakka and Gooreng Gooreng peoples. She's lived on Ngunnawal and Ngambri lands (Canberra) since 2006, where she is a lecturer at the University of Canberra. Lisa is an award-winning writer, editor and literary agent. She loves to play and finds herself working and publishing in varied spaces. Her work often grows from love, for her daughter, nibblings, Country and community.