



Canberra
Writers
Festival

2026 CANBERRA WRITERS FESTIVAL

Schools Program



16th, 19th, 20th October

canberrawritersfestival.com.au

Thank you.

FESTIVAL SPONSORS



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

SCHOOLS PROGRAM SPONSORS

The CWF Schools program is proudly supported by our Education and Community Partners, Kumon and Beyond Bank.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Canberra Writers Festival acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Canberra region, the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples, and other First Nations Peoples with connections to Canberra. We acknowledge and pay respects to the continuing cultures and the contributions of First Nations Peoples to the life of this city and region. And we proudly celebrate the storytelling traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the oldest continuing storytelling traditions in the world.

COVER ILLUSTRATION

By Studio Princess Zilla © Artist Aviva Kidd, used with permission.

Australians love reading. And this matters. A lot!

According to Australia Reads, reading is four times more influential on intellectual progress in teens than having a parent with a degree. Reading offers wildly exciting adventures, thrilling discoveries and a place to find yourself when nothing else feels like it quite fits. A good book and your imagination is a passport to anywhere you want to go and everywhere you've never been!

This year the Canberra Writers Festival is delighted to invite students from Years 4 to 10 to three days of fabulous, fantastic fun with some of Australia's most exciting and beloved writers, illustrators and storytellers.

There will be laughter, suspense, history, science, myths, comics, graphic novels and so much more. Do come, we'd love you to join our adventures in storytelling.

Ticket price covers the full day of author sessions.

Between sessions, students can meet the authors, have their books signed and browse a selection of titles available for purchase at the National Library Bookshop.

DATE	TIME	COHORT
Friday 16 October 2026	9:45am - 2:15pm	Secondary Schools - Years 9 and 10
Monday 19 October 2026	9:45am - 2:15pm	Primary Schools Day - Years 4 to 6
Tuesday 20 October 2026	9:45am - 2:15pm	Secondary Schools - Years 7 and 8

ALL TICKETS

\$22

Per student

\$22

Per additional Teacher*

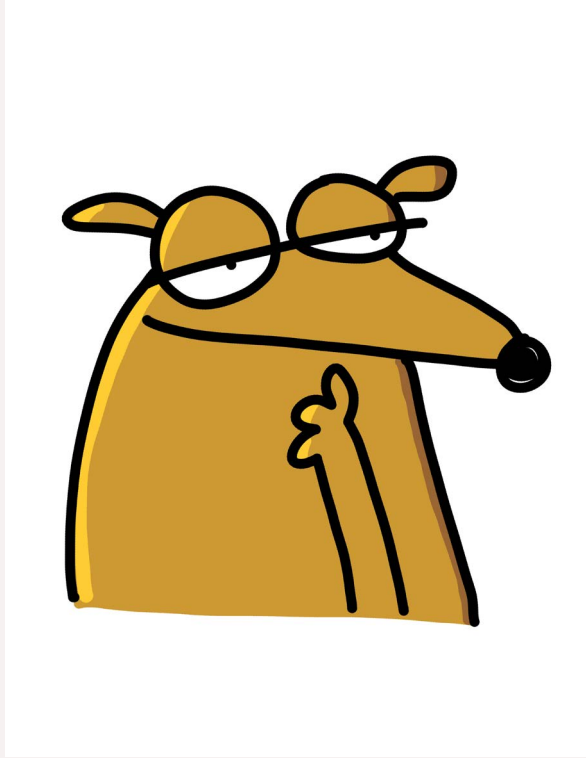
Teachers receive one complimentary ticket per 20 student tickets.

*When you purchase a ticket to attend CWF Schools, you are booking to attend the full day.
All tickets are exempt from GST.*

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER 2026

SECONDARY SCHOOLS YEARS 9 AND 10

National Library of Australia



SESSION 1

First Dog on the Moon: Revenge of the Toxic Space Potato

Join award-winning *Guardian* cartoonist First Dog on the Moon for this creative and delightfully chaotic session. Stripped of their powers and stranded on Mars, the Indefatigable EnviroTeens must stop the sinister Baron Kartuffelpoffen from siphoning all of Earth's water. Along the way, they'll navigate a galaxy of absurd villains, unexpected allies, and interstellar challenges. Come for the wacky intergalactic adventures, stay for the sharp environmental satire that will fire you up to protect our planet!



SESSION 2

Marly Wells and Linda Wells: Desert Tracks

Millie's extraordinary adventure begins when she borrows a history book because she sees herself and her life reflected on the cover - a rare experience for a young Black reader. *Desert Tracks* is a captivating time-travelling novel set in Central Australia that explores how the legacy of racist policies continues to shape the present. Authors Marly Wells and Linda Wells will discuss the power of stories to challenge and change perspectives and deepen understanding of our shared histories, along with why it is so important for young people to see themselves represented in books.



SESSION 3

Amie Kaufman: Everyday Magic

Amie Kaufman is a bestselling, award-winning author whose young adult science fiction and fantasy novels have found readers across the globe. In this session, Amie will share where her ideas come from, and the role storytelling plays in helping us understand ourselves and the world around us. Focusing on her novels *Red Star Rebels*, *The Isles of the Gods* and *Lady's Knight*, students will gain insights into the creative process and discover what it takes to build characters and worlds that readers care about. Bring your curiosity and imagination and leave inspired to tell your own stories.

MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2026

PRIMARY SCHOOL DAY YEARS 4 TO 6

National Library of Australia

TIME	WHAT'S ON
9.30am - 9.45am	Arrive at NLA
9.50am - 10am	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
10am - 11am	Sue Whiting
11.15am - 12.15pm	R.A. Spratt
1pm - 2pm	Andy Griffiths & Bill Hope



SESSION 1

Sue Whiting: The Adventures of Pearly and Pig

This session takes students on a wild story adventure trekking across Antarctica to discover the inspiration for Sue’s popular *Pearly and Pig* adventure series. Sue will share the story-puzzle pieces used to create each of the books and then challenge students to solve the puzzle and create their own adventure story.



SESSION 2

R.A. Spratt: How I Come Up With An Idea

R.A. talks about what it’s like to be an author and the process of writing a book. She will get the audience to vote for one of her books, then explain how she came up with the ideas, characters and plot. Demonstrating how ideas bubble up out of every aspect of day-to-day life. She’ll then read the chapter to show how it all came together, and finish by taking questions from the audience.



SESSION 3

Andy Griffiths & Bill Hope: You & Me And Adventures in Reading

Get ready for the serious business of writing silly stories and playing with words and pictures. Bring your adventure suits and your adventure helmets and Andy and Bill will take you on outrageously funny escapades where reading and writing are the coolest superpowers you can have! And where laughter and silliness is fully guaranteed!

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2026

SECONDARY SCHOOLS YEARS 7 AND 8

National Library of Australia

TIME	WHAT'S ON
9.30am - 9.45am	Arrive at NLA
9.50am - 10am	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country
10am - 11am	R.A. Spratt
11.15am - 12.15pm	Sue Whiting
1pm - 2pm	David Conley



SESSION 1

R.A. Spratt:
How I Come Up With An Idea

R.A. talks about what it's like to be an author and the process of writing a book. She will get the audience to vote for one of her books, then explain how she came up with the ideas, characters and plot. Demonstrating how ideas bubble up out of every aspect of day-to-day life. She'll then read the chapter to show how it all came together, and finish by taking questions from the audience.



SESSION 2

Sue Whiting:
Thrills, Spills and Spine-tingling Chills

Suspense. Surprise. Tension. Worry. What makes a truly thrilling novel? Using examples from *Portraits of Celina* and *Promises and Other Lies*, Sue will share her aspects of her creative process and explore the central elements required to create a suspenseful, gripping narrative.



SESSION 3

David Conley:
That drawing about what?

Think you can't draw. It doesn't matter. David will share how you can harness the power of the humble stick figure to make mythical and legendary mayhem and discover all kinds of weird and wonderful things along the way. Be prepared for moments of make believe and marvellously funny adventures featuring a cast of Gods, monsters, heroes and villains, all with added dinosaurs!

ARTISTS

DAVID CONLEY

A passionate primary school teacher and an award-winning writer and illustrator of chapter books for kids about mythology, science and the stuff in between. David's books are filled with illustrations designed to scaffold a beginning reader and engage a more experienced reader. David began telling and sketching stories on whiteboards to entertain his students during school breaks and he still works directly with his students as real-time critics to refine his concepts.

FIRST DOG ON THE MOON

Walkley award-winning editorial cartoonist for *The Guardian*, National Treasure and bestselling author First Dog on the Moon, has written and/or illustrated numerous books. First Dog's latest book is *Revenge of the Toxic Space Potato* – unless you count the one with Annabel Crabb about the democracy prawn. First Dog lives at the First Dog On The Moon Institute in Southern Tasmania among the pademelons and silver wattles.

ANDY GRIFFITHS & BILL HOPE

Andy is one of Australia's most popular and bestselling children's authors. He is also the 2026-2027 Australian Children's Laureate, a role dedicated to promoting the power of reading as an active adventure for families and children. Bill is an acclaimed artist, illustrator, and graphic novelist, known for his highly detailed and cinematic style. Bill and Andy have teamed up to make the You & Me series, which includes *The Land of Lost Things* and *The Peanut Butter Beast*, where you the reader take centre stage in the adventure, alongside your trusty narrator Andy, aided by Bill's amazing artistic talents.

AMIE KAUFMAN

Amie Kaufman is a New York Times, USA Today and internationally bestselling author of science fiction and fantasy. Her multi-award winning work has sold well over a million copies, been translated into nearly thirty languages, and is in development for film and TV. Raised in Australia and occasionally Ireland, Amie lives by the sea in Melbourne with her family, and an extremely large personal library. Her latest books are *One Knight Stand*, the sequel to *Lady's Knight*, and *Red Star Rebels*. You can keep up with what she's working on, enter giveaways, join her mail club and track her events by signing up for her newsletter at amiekaufman.com.

R.A. SPRATT

R.A. Spratt is the bestselling author of *Friday Barnes*, *Girl Detective series*, *The Adventures of Nanny Piggins series*, *The Peski Kids series*, *Romeo v Juliet*, *Epically Awesome Odyssey* and many more. Her podcast, Bedtime Stories with R.A. Spratt, has had over 9 million downloads and connects R.A. with story-lovers across the globe. She lives in Bowral NSW with her incredibly needy dog, three chickens, two goldfish, a very large number of tadpoles as well as two daughters and a husband.

MARLY WELLS

Marly is a proud woman of Warlpiri and white Australian descent who grew up in Alice Springs. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Melbourne majoring in Sociology and Indigenous Studies. After spending two years living in England, she returned to Alice Springs to work in children's services management. Marly has also worked as a freelance editor and researcher for Hardie Grant Publishing and written on significant social and Indigenous justice issues. *Desert Tracks* is Marly's first novel and is co-authored with her mother Linda Wells.

LINDA WELLS

Linda Wells is a teacher and writer of white settler descent. Linda has lived in Central Australia for many years and worked as a teacher on desert communities as well as in Alice Springs. For over ten years Linda also ran a small business, conducting guided walking tours of Alice Springs. She has a PhD in creative, post-colonial possibilities for writing Australian history and loves writing books. She is passionate about the power of storytelling. Linda is proud to be Marly's mother, and she is also proud to be a First Nations ally.

SUE WHITING

Sue Whiting is an award-winning children's and YA author. As the former senior commissioning editor and publishing manager for Walker Books Australia Sue knows books inside out and is a passionate advocate for reading for pleasure. Sue's books include the bestselling novels *Missing* and *The Book of Chance*, and the popular *Pearly and Pig* series. Her latest novel is the enthralling middle-grade historical adventure *Hill End Gold*. Sue loves enthusing kids about books and reading.



JOIN US FOR OUR 10TH ANNIVERSARY

with our rallying theme
For the Love of Books.

Sign up to our newsletter for program announcements for readers of all ages.

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