

**AUCKLAND
WRITERS
FESTIVAL**
**WAITUHI
O TĀMAKI**

2025

Schools Programme
Hōtaka Kura

writersfestival.co.nz

13-15 MAY | 13-15 MEI

SUPPORTED BY THE FREEMASONS FOUNDATION

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The 2025 Schools Programme | Hōtaka Kura is made possible through the generous support of:

Principal Partner



Platinum Partner



Gold Partners



Young Authors Challenge



Silver Partner



Schools Programme | Hōtaka Kura

The Information You Need

13-15 May | 13-15 Mei 2025

The Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki, with the generous support of the Freemasons Foundation, is delighted to deliver our 17th annual Schools Programme | Hōtaka Kura in May 2025.

Designed to inspire young readers and writers, our Schools Programme engages and entertains more than 6,000 Year 5-13 students each year. It's an exciting opportunity for our tamariki and rangatahi to both connect with the people behind the books they already know and love, and discover new voices.

This year's programme features inspirational writers from across Aotearoa New Zealand and the world in three jam-packed days of sessions and workshops tailored for primary, intermediate and secondary school students.

With the generous support of the Freemasons Foundation we are able to keep prices accessible, provide the *Read The World* publication for free to every student, offer book tokens to select schools and deliver our Pukapuka Adventures family weekend, which opens up the world of books to all.

CHOOSE YOUR DATE

This year we are offering four sessions a day for **Years 5-6 (13, 14 or 15 May), Years 7-8 (13 May)** and **Years 9-13 (14 or 15 May)**.

COST (No increased ticket price to 2025)

We believe books and ideas should be accessible to all, so we work closely with partners to keep ticket prices low. Day attendance (four sessions) is \$13 per student; workshop places (one hour) are \$16 per student. Teachers attend FREE of charge. Books are available for purchase at the Festival Bookshop and writers will be available to sign books in the breaks.

“It is invaluable and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this incredible learning opportunity that this event gives our writers and readers.”

Kerikeri High School

“An opportunity that our students would not normally get, a window into a different world.” James Cook High School

“Students that attended the workshops loved them! Good group size and opportunity to engage with the authors.”

Northcross Intermediate

“The author sparked enthusiasm for reading amongst our ‘unexcited’ kids. They saw someone they related to.” Matamata Intermediate

The Festival will follow all Government guidelines relating to any unforeseen events such as but not limited to, extreme weather conditions and pandemic outbreaks. If this situation occurs, schools will be notified and updated.

Our 2025 Featured Writers

Anton Clifford-Motopi (Australia)
Author, educator and researcher in Indigenous health

Scotty Cotter (Aotearoa NZ)
Acclaimed playwright, actor and director

Antony Elworthy (Aotearoa NZ)
Author, illustrator and animator for film and television

Saraid de Silva (Aotearoa NZ)
Author, podcast co-host and theatre maker

Stacy Gregg (Aotearoa NZ)
Winner of the 2024 Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award

Per Gustavsson (Sweden)
Award-winning illustrator and author

Ruby Macomber (Aotearoa NZ)
Poet and co-manager of Te Kāhui

Steph Matuku (Aotearoa NZ)
Author for children and young adults

Michel Mulipola (Sāmoa/Aotearoa NZ)
Comic book artist and story artist for Disney Animation

Lee Murray (Aotearoa NZ)
Multiple award-winning speculative fiction writer

Airana Ngarewa (Aotearoa NZ)
Bestselling novelist and educator

James Russell (Aotearoa NZ)
Bestselling children's author

Neal Shusterman (US)
Acclaimed author of young adult fiction

Lemn Sissay (UK)
BAFTA-nominated, international prize-winning poet and author

Anders Sparring (Sweden)
Author, comedian and screenwriter

Jessica Townsend (Australia)
New York Times bestselling author

Harriet Walter (UK)
Esteemed actress of the screen and stage

Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday 5 February | Wenerei 5 Pēpuere

Applications open to School Transport Fund for travel subsidy support.

Wednesday 12 February | Wenerei 12 Pēpuere

Bookings open. The programme sells out quickly, so we advise early booking to avoid disappointment.

Friday 7 March | Paraire 7 Maehe

Schools Transport Fund application deadline.

Wednesday 19 March | Wenerei 19 Maehe

Schools Transport Fund applicants notified of outcome.

Monday 5 May | Mane 5 Mei

Attendance details notified to all schools.

Tuesday 13 May | Turei 13 Mei

Schools Day One: Years 5-6, 7-8.
Barfoot & Thompson Young Authors Challenge opens.

Wednesday 14 May | Wenerei 14 Mei

Schools Day Two: Years 5-6, 9-13.

Thursday 15 May | Taite 15 Mei

Schools Day Three: Years 5-6, 9-13.

Friday 13 June | Paraire 13 Hune

Deadline to claim Transport Fund Grant.

Friday 1 August | Paraire 1 Akuhata

Entries close for Barfoot & Thompson Young Authors Challenge.

How to Book & Transport Fund Application

BOOKINGS AND TICKETING ENQUIRIES

TICKETMASTER 09 970 9745,
groups@ticketmaster.co.nz

TRANSPORT FUND ENQUIRIES

The Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki, schools@writersfestival.co.nz. Please note: the festival office does not process ticket bookings.

TICKETS

Bookings are only accepted from schools and home educators. We are unable to offer individual access to this programme.

Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis and must be booked by the school via Ticketmaster. **All** tickets are issued by Ticketmaster, not the Festival office.

We have kept prices the same as 2024.

Cost: **\$13** per day per student

Workshops: **\$16** per student per workshop

Teachers **FREE**

Other things to note about our 2025 workshops:

- Teachers may sit in on workshops as observers at the back of the room.
- Students must be signed in and out at the beginning and end of workshops.
- Please include students' years on the Booking Form and attach a list of names for workshop roll.
- Bookings are first come, first served.
- Limit of five students per school in the first instance. Further students will be waitlisted and added if there is availability after bookings close.

BOOKING PROCESS

When you make your booking with Ticketmaster, you will be sent an invoice which must either

be paid immediately if no transport assistance is required, or as soon as your Transport Fund Application has been approved, in order to confirm your booking. Schools Transport Fund Grants will be confirmed via email on **Wednesday 19 March**.

If you have not received a confirmation within three working days of submitting your booking form, please contact the Ticketmaster Schools Programme Booking Line on **09 970 9745**. Additional tickets may be ordered at a later date, subject to availability. Seats are non-refundable once paid.

To complete your booking, please fill in the attached Schools Booking Form or download it from the Festival website (**not** the Transport Fund online application form) and email to: groups@ticketmaster.co.nz.

TRANSPORT FUND APPLICATION

If you need financial support to transport your class to the Schools Programme, please apply to our Schools Transport Fund. To apply, **please complete the Schools Transport Fund Application Form via this link**. When you submit the form we ask that you attach a detailed written estimate or quote if you are hiring transport. If you encounter any issues with the form or have general questions about the fund, please email schools@writersfestival.co.nz. Transport Fund grants are allocated on a needs basis and we cannot always guarantee grants to the full level requested.

The closing date for the Schools Transport Fund is **5pm Friday 7 March 2025**. All applications will be notified of the success or otherwise of their application on **Wednesday 19 March**.

The Schools Transport Fund is kindly supported by the Potter Masonic Trust.

BARFOOT & THOMPSON
LICENSED REAA 2008

YOUNG 13 MAY - 01 AUG 2025 AUTHORS CHALLENGE

PRIZE POOL

Category winners will each receive a **\$500** cash prize and books valued at **\$250**

Their school will also receive a **\$1000** cash prize and books valued at **\$1000**

Calling all creative young writers!

Imagine stepping into a time machine – where would you go? Would you journey to the past to witness a historical event, meet a famous figure, or change a moment in time? Or would you fast-forward into the future to explore new worlds, inventions, or even meet your future self? What would your Time Machine enable you to do? Enter the 2025 Barfoot and Thompson Young Authors Challenge with the theme **"My Time Machine"** and tell your story in any way you like – whether it's a thrilling adventure, a heartfelt reflection, a futuristic sci-fi tale, or even a poem. Let your creativity take the lead and be in to win some amazing prizes for yourself and your school.

Submit your entry at <https://bit.ly/YAC2025-MyTimeMachine> or scan the QR code to enter.



For more information and T&Cs go to barfoot.co.nz/about-us/supporting-our-community/young-authors-challenge



Entries open Tuesday 13 May and close Friday 1 August 2025. Winners will be announced Friday 29 August 2025.

School competition categories

Primary: up to 250 words, Intermediate: up to 500 words, Secondary: up to 750 words

AUCKLAND
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—
WAIHUHI O TĀMAKI

Upper Primary Years 5-6 Here's the Plan

Tue 13, Wed 14, Thu 15 May | Turei 13, Wenerei 14, Taite 15 Mei

DAY 1 TUESDAY 13 MAY | TUREI 13 MEI

UPPER PRIMARY YEARS 5 & 6, 10.00AM-2.25PM

Note: Doors will open at 9.30am and students will be ushered into their venues; the first sessions start promptly at 10.00am.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Hunua Room	Jessica Townsend
10.55am	-	11.40am	Hunua Room	Steph Matuku
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Hunua Room	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson
1.25pm	-	1.55pm	Hunua Room	Antony Elworthy
1.55pm			Finish & Book Signing	

DAY 2 WEDNESDAY 14 MAY | WENEREI 14 MEI

UPPER PRIMARY YEARS 5 & 6, 10.00AM-2.25PM

Note: Doors will open at 9.30am and students will be ushered into their venues; the first sessions start promptly at 10.00am.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Hunua Room	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson
10.55am	-	11.40am	Hunua Room	Steph Matuku
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Hunua Room	Jessica Townsend
1.25pm	-	1.55pm	Hunua Room	Antony Elworthy
1.55pm			Finish & Book Signing	

DAY 3 THURSDAY 15 MAY | TAITE 15 MEI

UPPER PRIMARY YEARS 5 & 6, 10.00AM-2.25PM

Note: Doors will open at 9.30am and students will be ushered into their venues; the first sessions start promptly at 10.00am.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Hunua Room	Jessica Townsend
10.55am	-	11.40am	Hunua Room	Steph Matuku
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Hunua Room	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson
1.25pm	-	1.55pm	Hunua Room	Antony Elworthy
1.55pm			Finish & Book Signing	

TRANSPORT FUND ENQUIRIES

Schools are encouraged to apply for grants towards travel costs to increase accessibility to the Schools Programme. Please find more information about the Schools Transport Fund on page 7, including the [link to the Application Form](#).

The deadline for applications is **5pm Friday 7 March 2025**. Any questions should be sent to schools@writersfestival.co.nz

Upper Primary Sessions: Years 5-6

Tue 13, Wed 14, Thu 15 May | Turei 13, Wenerei 14, Taite 15 Mei



A Wondrous World JESSICA TOWNSEND

Immerse yourself in the mystical universe of *Nevermoor* and the adventures of Morrigan Crow with *New York Times* bestselling author **Jessica Townsend**. Readers around the world have been eagerly awaiting the fourth book in the series, *Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow*, and this is your chance to hear directly from the author about Morrigan's next adventure. Together you'll discover the secrets of Jessica's writing process, hear about when and why she wanted to become an author, and how she continues to grow the wondrous world of *Nevermoor*.



Mighty Magic STEPH MATUKU

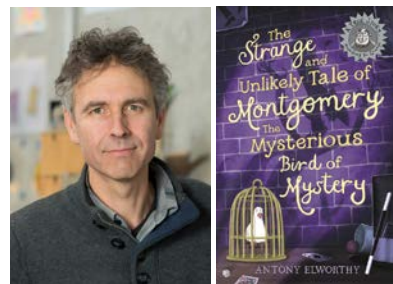
With secret trapdoors, a robot dog and a flock of frustrated sheep, *Whetū Toa and the Secret Spies* is fizzing with hilarity and intrigue. Author **Steph Matuku** (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga) is an award-winning author who creates stories that are brimming with fun and wacky adventures. In the latest book in Steph's *Whetū Toa* series, Whetū is living back at the farm with her mother, magical animals and the Mighty Mikaere, a magician whose magic tricks are being stolen – and it's up to Whetū to solve the mystery! Join Steph as she shares stellar stories from her series and advice on how to write a page-turning adventure with a whole lot of humour.



So Fun, It's Criminal! ANDERS SPARRING & PER GUSTAVSSON

The Pinchers are a proud family of villains, going back three generations. Son Theo loves his family, but he just doesn't fit in; he cannot lie or cheat to save his life! This witty, energetic series about one very law-abiding child born to a family of robbers combines adventure, silliness, and the familiar day-to-day of family life with hilarious results. In this laugh-out-loud session with live illustration, author **Anders Sparring** and illustrator **Per Gustavsson** join us from Sweden to discuss how they work together as an author/illustrator duo and how to craft a gripping heist story.

Supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers.



Tall Tales ANTONY ELWORTHY

Gramps can tell a tall tale, but this one might be the tallest yet. Let your imagination run wild with author, illustrator and animator **Antony Elworthy** as he introduces his wacky debut novel *The Strange and Unlikely Tale of Montgomery, The Mysterious Bird of Mystery: (A true story... according to Gramps)*. Gramps insists on regaling his grandson with bizarre stories from his younger days, but his most exciting, and discombobulating, career was when he was a magician. In this interactive session, draw along with Antony, find out what inspired him to write this quirky tale and learn how he tells stories through illustration.

Upper Primary Booking Form: Years 5-6

Tue 13, Wed 14, Thu 15 May | Turei 13, Wenerei 14, Taite 15 Mei

School	Address	
Class/Room	Year(s)	Equity Index
Booking Contact	Phone (Term Time)	
Email		
Trip Supervisor	Supervisor Mobile	
Email		

*Note: The Booking Contact is the person responsible for making the booking.
The Trip Supervisor is the person bringing the class whom we may contact regarding the visit.*

Tuesday 13 May

Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Hunua		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Hunua	01	Jessica Townsend			
10.55am-11.40am	Hunua	02	Steph Matuku			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Hunua	03	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson			
1.25pm-1.55pm	Hunua	04	Antony Elworthy			
1.55pm			Finish and Book Signing			
	*Hunua Room, Level 1, Aotea Centre			Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

Wednesday 14 May

Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Hunua		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Hunua	05	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson			
10.55am-11.40am	Hunua	06	Steph Matuku			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Hunua	07	Jessica Townsend			
1.25pm-1.55pm	Hunua	08	Antony Elworthy			
1.55pm			Finish and Book Signing			
	*Hunua Room, Level 1, Aotea Centre			Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

Thursday 15 May

Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Hunua		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Hunua	09	Jessica Townsend			
10.55am-11.40am	Hunua	10	Steph Matuku			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Hunua	11	Anders Sparring & Per Gustausson			
1.25pm-1.55pm	Hunua	12	Antony Elworthy			
1.55pm			Finish and Book Signing			
	*Hunua Room, Level 1, Aotea Centre			Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

Please complete all sections of the form ([download a single page PDF here](#)) and email to groups@ticketmaster.co.nz

For all booking enquiries please phone 09 970 9745

Bookings are dealt with in order of receipt. Please do not include payment with your Booking Form. You will receive a confirmation from Ticketmaster within three working days of your booking. You will be invoiced by Ticketmaster on receipt of your booking.

Total	
Ticketmaster Booking Fee	\$ 8.00
Grand Total	\$

Upper Primary Sessions: About the Authors

Jessica Townsend

Jessica Townsend lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Her pet fascinations include public transport, ancient cities, hotels, opera singers, Halloween, secret societies and gigantic cats – all of which have weaseled their way into *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*, her award-winning first novel released in 2017. This record-breaking and *New York Times* bestselling series continues with *Wundersmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow*, *Hollowpox: The Hunt for Morrigan Crow* and *Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow*.

Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow was the biggest-selling Australian children's debut since records began and has won countless book awards.

Steph Matuku

Steph Matuku (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga) is an award-winning author of stories for young people. As well as short stories, plays and articles, she has written eight books: *Flight of the Fantail*, *Falling Into Rarohenga* and *Migration* for young adults; the junior fiction series *Whetū Toa*, and picture books *The Eight Gifts of Te Wheke* and *The Dream Factory* – all published by Huia Publishers.

Two of her books have been translated into te reo Māori, two were finalists in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults, and six were Storylines Notable Books. She has mentored for the NZSA and Te Papa Tupu writing programme, and her screenwriting credits include *Mystic*, *Under The Vines* and *Shortland Street*.

Anders Sparring & Per Gustavsson

After trying out different professions in the 90s, **Anders Sparring** finally ended up writing scripts for children's television in 1999, and has been doing that since. While being on parental leave (with a baby that slept all the time), he started writing his first book for children. He made his debut in 2012 and a few years later he met Per Gustavsson during a book-day at Natur & Kultur. In 2017 Anders and Per launched the first book of their *Pinchers* series. During this time Anders also did some standup-comedy, which has influenced the *Pinchers*. Anders' main objective is to make books that are funny.

Since Anders' original trade is scriptwriting it was natural for him to start thinking of the *Pinchers* in terms of adaptation for film and television. The TV-show premiered in 2021 and the feature film premiered in November 2023.

Per Gustavsson has been active as an author and illustrator since 1995 when he debuted with the book *Stoppa bollen*. He has written and illustrated over 30 picture books and has collaborated as an illustrator on more than 100 books. He has received several prizes and awards such as the Heffaklumpen, Crime time award, the August Prize and the Elsa Beskow Plaque. He has also been nominated for Sweden's most famous literary prize, the August Prize. Since 2019, he has been a member of the jury for the ALMA Prize, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

Antony Elworthy

Antony Elworthy is an illustrator and animator, working on television and feature film productions in Aotearoa New Zealand and around the world. His many film credits include Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride*, *Coraline*, *Ma Vie de Courgette*, *Kubo and the Two Strings* and Wes Anderson's *Isle of Dogs*. Recent adventures include a spell in Portland, Oregon as Lead Animator on Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*, and some time spent in Switzerland where he was Animation Director on *Sauvages!*, a film by Claude Barras. Antony lives in Christchurch, with his wife and four sons, where he has been Animation Director on hit pre-school TV show *Kiri and Lou*. Currently he is co-directing a *Kiri and Lou* feature film, due for release in 2026.

Intermediate Years 7-8

Here's the Plan

Tuesday 13 May | Turei 13 Mei

DAY 1 TUESDAY 13 MAY | TUREI 13 MEI

INTERMEDIATE YEARS 7 & 8, 10.00AM-2.45PM

Note: Doors will open at 9.30am and students will be ushered into their venues; the first sessions start promptly at 10.00am.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Anton Clifford-Motopi
10.55am	-	11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Stacy Gregg
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Scotty Cotter
1.25pm	-	2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Jessica Townsend
2.10pm			Finish & Book Signing	

Workshops | Awheawhe

Workshops for Intermediate students run for one hour (numbers are 35 for each workshop; cost \$16 per student). These workshops provide students with a rare opportunity to learn from, and be inspired by, leading writers and illustrators. Please note that spaces fill quickly, and bookings are on a first-come, first-served basis. An initial limit of five students per school per workshop will apply. Additional students can be waitlisted, pending available space once bookings close.

Time	Workshop	Venue
9.40am-10.40am	James Russell	Waihorotiu Room
10.50am-11.50am	Michel Mulipola	Waihorotiu Room
1.25pm-2.25pm	Anton Clifford-Motopi	Waihorotiu Room

Workshop descriptions on page 15.

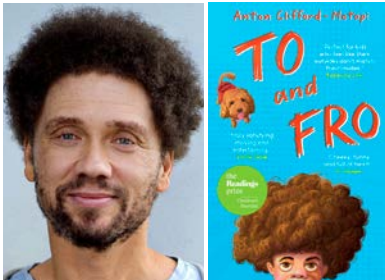
TRANSPORT FUND ENQUIRIES

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The deadline for applications is **5pm Friday 7 March 2025**. Any questions should be sent to schools@writersfestival.co.nz

Intermediate Sessions: Years 7-8

Tuesday 13 May | Turei 13 Mei



Finding Joy in the Journey ANTON CLIFFORD-MOTOPI

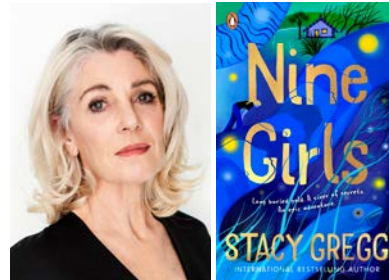
Sam thinks he's a weird-looking white kid with an afro. He lives with his white mum (annoying but not smelly) and brown dog Trevor (smelly but not annoying). He's never met his father; he just knows that he is black. That's until a surprise visit has Sam questioning who he really is. Author **Anton Clifford-Motopi** enjoys writing stories that make his readers laugh, and his cheeky book *To and Fro* draws from his own experiences growing up to explore themes of identity and belonging. Join Anton for a delightfully funny and thought-provoking session in which he delves into the challenges and joys of writing personal stories, and inspires students to write their own humorous tales.



Mauri Tau SCOTTY COTTER

As we draw closer to Matariki, we invite you on an innovative storytelling journey led by **Scotty Cotter** (Tainui, Ngāti Kahu, Fiji). A writer whose passion spans stage and screen, Scotty's work blends humour and heart, and often challenges conventions around Indigenous storytelling. In partnership with Silo Theatre, Scotty has created *Mauri Tau*, an immersive audio experience around Te Kāhui o Matariki (the star cluster of Matariki). In this interactive session, Scotty will introduce students to his playful and unique audio play that highlights the magic of theatre, and offers participants an opportunity to reflect on their whakapapa in relation to the stars and nature.

The complete audio recording of Mauri Tau will be available for purchase through Silo Theatre following the 2025 Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki. We will provide further information at a later date.



Follow the Mystery STACY GREGG

Join **Stacy Gregg** (Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Pukeko, Ngāti Maru Hauraki), one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most internationally successful and locally awarded writers, in a session that will have you on the edge of your seat. Woven with suspense, *Nine Girls* takes place in Stacy's own hometown of Ngāruawāhia in the turbulent early 1980s and follows a young heroine's search for gold, whakapapa and the history of the land on which she stands. Stacy shares insights into her writing career and what inspired her to write her rich and page-turning novel.



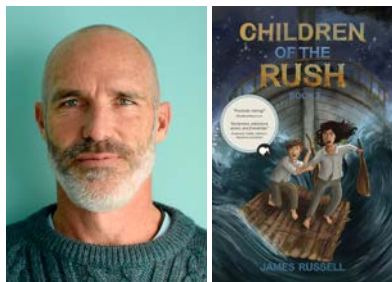
Creating Nevermoor JESSICA TOWNSEND

Readers across the world have been eagerly anticipating the fourth instalment of the highly acclaimed *Nevermoor* series. Hear from author **Jessica Townsend** as she discusses her new book *Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow* and what awaits her leading character. In this new adventure, we will travel to places in Nevermoor that we have never seen before and meet people from Morrigan's past who will be vital in helping untangle the mystery of Morrigan's identity. Jessica shares her writing journey from the original creation of *Nevermoor*, and reveals how she continues to build the world and its inhabitants to create an absorbing and bestselling series.

Intermediate Workshops: Years 7-8

Tuesday 13 May | Turei 13 Mei

Morning Workshops



Delight in the Detail

JAMES RUSSELL

9.40am-10.40am (max 35 students)

From imagining fantastical worlds where dragons need defending to local historical fiction, bestselling author **James Russell** knows how to write a captivating adventure story. For him, it's all in the detail. In this imaginative and interactive workshop, James will share his top writing tips and teach students how to flesh out the detail in their stories by using visual imagery and all five of their senses.



HOW TO CREATE A COMIC BOOK

MICHEL MULIPOLA

10.50am-11.50am (max 35 students)

Love comics and want to know the steps to create your own? Sāmoan comic book artist and pro wrestler **Michel Mulipola** will lead you through an engaging workshop that arms you with the tools to begin creating your own comic and tell a riveting story through illustrations and text. From working as a story artist on *Moana 2* and BOOM! Studios' line of *WWE* comics, Michel has all the experience to teach you how to hone your skills and craft a riveting comic book.

Afternoon Workshop



Humour is Power

ANTON CLIFFORD-MOTOPI

1.25pm-2.25pm (max 35 students)

Humour is a superpower that helps us talk about the hard things in life. This workshop, which explores the depth and power of humour, will provide practical tools to help you create your own comedic story. Author **Anton Clifford-Motopi** describes the different types of humour – slapstick, observational, wit and more – and shows you writing exercises to help you tackle serious topics with a light touch.

Intermediate Booking Form: Years 7-8

Tuesday 13 May | Turei 13 Mei

School	Address	
Class/Room	Year(s)	Equity Index
Booking Contact	Phone (Term Time)	
Email		
Trip Supervisor	Supervisor Mobile	
Email		

*Note: The Booking Contact is the person responsible for making the booking.
The Trip Supervisor is the person bringing the class whom we may contact regarding the visit.*

Tuesday 13 May		Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.				
Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Kiri Te Kanawa		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa	13	Anton Clifford-Motopi			
10.55am-11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa	14	Stacy Gregg			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	15	Scotty Cotter			
1.25pm-2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	16	Jessica Townsend			
2.10pm			Finish and Book Signing			
*Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Level 2, Aotea Centre				Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

Ticket prices: \$16 per workshop per student. Teachers: free.						
Time	Venue*	No.	Workshops	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.40am-10.40am	Waihorotiu	17	James Russell			
10.50am-11.50am	Waihorotiu	18	Michel Mulipola			
1.25pm-2.25pm	Waihorotiu	19	Anton Clifford-Motopi			
*Waihorotiu Room, Level 4, Aotea Centre				Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$16	\$

Please complete all sections of the form ([download a single page PDF here](#)) and email to groups@ticketmaster.co.nz

For all booking enquiries please phone 09 970 9745

Bookings are dealt with in order of receipt. Please do not include payment with your Booking Form. You will receive a confirmation from Ticketmaster within three working days of your booking. You will be invoiced by Ticketmaster on receipt of your booking.

Total	
Ticketmaster Booking Fee	\$8.00
Grand Total	\$

Intermediate Sessions: About the Authors

Anton Clifford-Motopi

Anton Clifford-Motopi writes funny stories for children that explore themes of identity, race, belonging, family relationships and friendship. He first became interested in writing for children while working as a high school teacher, but it would be many years before he put pencil to paper. Anton wrote three unpublished children's books while working as a university lecturer and raising four children. *To and Fro* was published in March 2024, the story, about a boy discovering his black identity, was shortlisted for The Readings Children's Book Prize. He divides his time between writing, delivering author talks and workshops, and working as a researcher in Indigenous health.

Jessica Townsend

Jessica Townsend lives on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. Her pet fascinations include public transport, ancient cities, hotels, opera singers, Halloween, secret societies and gigantic cats – all of which have weaseled their way into *Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow*, her award-winning first novel released in 2017. This record-breaking and *New York Times* bestselling series continues with *Wundersmith: The Calling of Morrigan Crow*, *Hollowpox: The Hunt for Morrigan Crow* and *Silverborn: The Mystery of Morrigan Crow*.

Nevermoor: The Trials of Morrigan Crow was the biggest-selling Australian children's debut since records began and has won countless book awards.

Stacy Gregg

Stacy Gregg (Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Pukeko, Ngāti Maru Hauraki) grew up in Ngāruawāhia. Her essay about her hometown, *The Māoris From The Town Side of the River*, won a Voyager Media Award in 2023; her middle-grade novel *Nine Girls*, exploring similar themes, won the Margaret Mahy Book of the Year Award at the NZ Book Awards for Children and Young Adults in 2024. The undisputed queen of pony fiction and author of 39 titles, she remains HarperCollins NZ's third bestselling children's author of all time (after David Walliams and Dr Seuss). Her *Pony Club Secrets* series (totalling 13 books) sold more than 1.5 million copies globally in English alone and later became the CBBC TV series *Mystic*, which ran for three seasons.

Scotty Cotter

Scotty Cotter is a storyteller whose passion spans stage and screen. With more than 20 years of experience as an actor, he has brought diverse characters to life in theatre and on television. In the past decade, Scotty expanded into directing and writing, with notable credits including the TV series *Dead Ahead* and *Rule of Mum*, the project *Mauri Tau*, and the theatrical production *Neke*. Scotty's creative journey is driven by a desire to celebrate whakapapa, embrace the messy beauty of life, and connect with audiences in an honest and authentic way.

James Russell

James Russell is a much-loved children's author. Commuting on the train during a particularly damp month, Russell decided to write down some of the stories he had been telling his two young boys. Inspired by the enthusiastic reaction of his sons, Russell developed his stories into the *Dragon Brothers Trilogy*, a series for 3–7 year olds; the three rhyming-verse stories became a bestselling trilogy. That series developed into his five-book series *The Dragon Defenders*, which has sold more than 130,000 copies and been translated into multiple languages. Russell's historical junior fiction trilogy *Children of the Rush* has won Storylines Notable Book Awards, and book one was a finalist in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults and The NZ Booklovers Awards.

Michel Mulipola

Michel Mulipola is a Sāmoan comic book artist, illustrator, pro wrestler, gamer, radio personality and activist based in Māngere, South Auckland. He worked as a story artist and cultural consultant on Disney's animated film *Moana 2*. Other featured clients include Ubisoft and the WWE. Michel co-created the first-ever Sāmoan language comic, *O Le Aiga Sāmoa*, with his Sāmoan language tutor, Nafanuatele Mafaufau Peters, in 2021. As a pro wrestler, he has been NZ Heavyweight Champion and multiple Aotearoa NZ Tag Team Champion. You can listen to him every Friday morning on ABC Pacific radio show *Nesia Daily*, as the pop-culture expert for *The Pop Off* segment. Michel also travels the country visiting schools in different regions as an advocate for reading and the arts.

Secondary Years 9-13 Here's the Plan

Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 May | Wenerei 14, Taite 15 Mei

DAY 2 WEDNESDAY 14 MAY | WENEREI 14 MEI

SECONDARY YEARS 9-13, 10.00AM-2.45PM

Doors will open at 9.30am for a prompt start at 10.00am. Please note: schools will be seated in order of arrival from the front of the auditorium, rather than in pre-nominated blocks, so early arrival is recommended.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Harriet Walter
10.55am	-	11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Lee Murray
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Neal Shusterman
1.25pm	-	2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Scotty Cotter
2.10pm			Finish & Book Signing	

DAY 3 THURSDAY 15 MAY | TAITE 15 MEI

SECONDARY YEARS 9-13, 10.00AM-2.45PM

Doors will open at 9.30am for a prompt start at 10.00am. Please note: schools will be seated in order of arrival from the front of the auditorium, rather than in pre-nominated blocks, so early arrival is recommended.

10.00am	-	10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Lemn Sissay
10.55am	-	11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Neal Shusterman
11.40am			Lunch & Book Signing	
12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Lee Murray
1.25pm	-	2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre	Scotty Cotter
2.10pm			Finish & Book Signing	

ALTERNATIVE 12.30PM SESSION – IN TE REO MĀORI ONLY

12.30pm	-	1.15pm	Limelight Room	Airana Ngarewa
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Workshops | Awheawhe

Hour-long writing workshops are offered each day for secondary students (maximum numbers are 35 for each workshop; cost \$16 per student). These workshops provide students with a rare opportunity to learn from, and be inspired by, leading writers. Please note that spaces fill quickly, and bookings are on a first-come, first-served basis. An initial limit of five students per school per workshop will apply. Additional students can be waitlisted, pending available space once bookings close.

Wednesday 14 May and Thursday 15 May

Time	Workshop	Venue
9.40am-10.40am	Ruby Macomber	Waihorotiu Room
10.50am-11.50am	Saraid de Silva	Waihorotiu Room
1.25pm-2.25pm	Steph Matuku	Waihorotiu Room

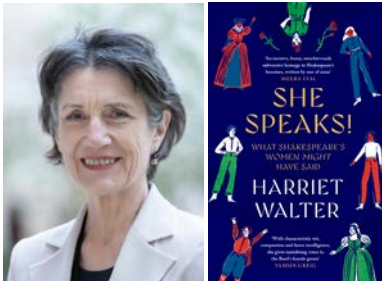
TRANSPORT FUND ENQUIRIES

Schools are encouraged to apply for grants towards travel costs to increase accessibility to the Schools Programme. Please find more information about the Schools Transport Fund on page 7, including the [link to the Application Form](#).

The deadline for applications is **5pm Friday 7 March 2025**. Any questions should be sent to schools@writersfestival.co.nz

Secondary Sessions: Years 9-13

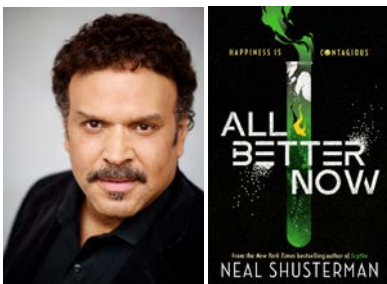
Wednesday 14 May | Wenerei 14 Mei



She Speaks!: What Shakespeare's Women Might Have Said

HARRIET WALTER

In an esteemed career spanning The Royal Shakespeare Company to Broadway to on-screen performances in sensations such as *Succession* and *Killing Eve*, actress and author **Harriet Walter** has played nearly every female role in Shakespeare's texts. In her new book, *She Speaks!: What Shakespeare's Women Might Have Said*, Walter has created new parts for 30 Shakespearean women written in 'Shakespearean' verse and prose, offering a fresh, sharp insight into The Bard's works. Join Harriet Walter in a playful and thoughtful session as she reflects on her connection to these characters, why she was driven to write this book and the process of creating new dialogue for these women.



Behind the Pages

NEAL SHUSTERMAN

Neal Shusterman, the *New York Times* bestselling author behind the popular Scythe series, is renowned for his compelling YA sci-fi thrillers that tackle complex social and philosophical issues. His stories pose difficult questions about life and society, presented in engaging and thought-provoking ways. In his latest novel, *All Better Now*, Shusterman delves into a world where happiness is contagious – yet the risks of catching it may be just as perilous as the cure itself. Discover the creative process behind this master storyteller's work, learn how he generates his many ideas, and explore the driving forces behind his success as an author.



On Spec: Re-imagining our Futures

LEE MURRAY

Sometimes called the 'what-if' books, speculative writing explores alternative realities and futures and spans fantasy, horror, sci-fi and more. Think *The Handmaid's Tale*, *It* and the *Shatter Me* series. It is a powerful form of writing, and there have been many examples of fiction becoming the reality of our world. Known for her suspenseful stories, *USA Today* bestselling author and five-time Bram Stoker Award® winner **Lee Murray** talks about the power of speculative narratives in envisioning the people we want to be, and the world in which we want to live.



Mauri Tau

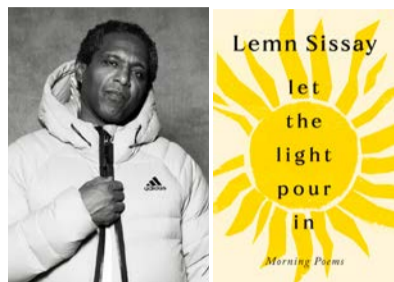
SCOTTY COTTER

As we draw closer to Matariki, we invite you on an innovative storytelling journey led by **Scotty Cotter** (Tainui, Ngāti Kahu, Fiji). A writer whose passion spans stage and screen, Scotty's work blends humour and heart, and often challenges conventions around Indigenous storytelling. In partnership with Silo Theatre, Scotty has created *Mauri Tau*, an immersive audio experience around Te Kāhui o Matariki (the star cluster of Matariki). In this interactive session, Scotty will introduce students to his playful and unique audio play that highlights the magic of theatre, and offers participants an opportunity to reflect on their whakapapa in relation to the stars and nature.

The complete audio recording of Mauri Tau will be available for purchase through Silo Theatre following the 2025 Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki. We will provide further information at a later date.

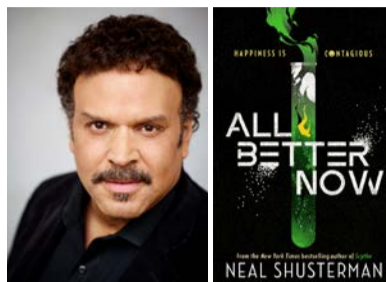
Secondary Sessions: Years 9-13

Thursday 15 May | Taite 15 Mei



Morning Musings LEMN SISSAY

Described by artist Kae Tempest as “a passionate and powerful voice whose performances are humbling and exhilarating”, poet, playwright and broadcaster **Lemn Sissay** takes the stage to perform and discuss his work. For the past decade, Lemn has composed a short poem as dawn breaks each morning and shared them with thousands of people on social media. Life-affirming, witty and full of wonder, these poems chronicle his own battle with the dark and are fuelled by resilience and defiant joy. In this compelling session Lemn will share his journey into poetry and give insight into his process and the stories behind the poems.



Behind the Pages NEAL SHUSTERMAN

Neal Shusterman, the *New York Times* bestselling author behind the popular *Scythe* series, is renowned for his compelling YA sci-fi thrillers that tackle complex social and philosophical issues. His stories pose difficult questions about life and society, presented in engaging and thought-provoking ways. In his latest novel, *All Better Now*, Shusterman delves into a world where happiness is contagious – yet the risks of catching it may be just as perilous as the cure itself. Discover the creative process behind this master storyteller's work, learn how he generates his many ideas, and explore the driving forces behind his success as an author.



On Spec: Re-imagining our Futures LEE MURRAY

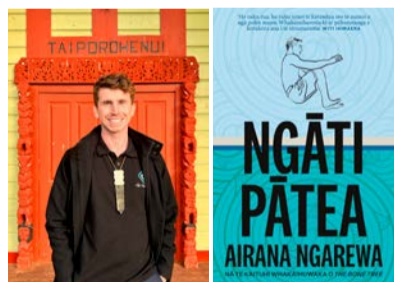
Sometimes called the ‘what-if’ books, speculative writing explores alternative realities and futures and spans fantasy, horror, sci-fi and more. Think *The Handmaid's Tale*, *It* and the *Shatter Me* series. It is a powerful form of writing, and there have been many examples of fiction becoming the reality of our world. Known for her suspenseful stories, *USA Today* bestselling author and five-time Bram Stoker Award® winner **Lee Murray** talks about the power of speculative narratives in envisioning the people we want to be, and the world in which we want to live.



Mauri Tau SCOTTY COTTER

As we draw closer to Matariki, we invite you on an innovative storytelling journey led by **Scotty Cotter** (Tainui, Ngāti Kahu, Fiji). A writer whose passion spans stage and screen, Scotty's work blends humour and heart, and often challenges conventions around Indigenous storytelling. In partnership with Silo Theatre, Scotty has created *Mauri Tau*, an immersive audio experience around Te Kāhui o Matariki (the star cluster of Matariki). In this interactive session, Scotty will introduce students to his playful and unique audio play that highlights the magic of theatre, and offers participants an opportunity to reflect on their whakapapa in relation to the stars and nature.

The complete audio recording of Mauri Tau will be available for purchase through Silo Theatre following the 2025 Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki. We will provide further information at a later date.



Ngāti Pātea AIRANA NGAREWA

Mō te wā tuatahi, ka whakatūria e te Waituhi o Tāmaki he kōrero Māori mā ngā taiohi. Whakarongo ki te kaituhi o *The Bone Tree* me *Ngāti Pātea*, ki a **Airana Ngarewa**. Whāia ana tapuwae i te panaia ōna i te kura ki tōna wheako hei ringa mekemeke me te whakarewanga o āna pukapuka. He kōrero hātakēhi, he kōrero whakaihiihi, he kōrero Māori. Mēnā he tauira koe nō ngā wharekura, nō ngā akomanga reo Māori rānei, he pai tēnei kaupapa ki a koe.

Please note this session is entirely in te reo Māori. It is for anyone who is conversationally fluent or at an intermediate level or above.

Secondary Workshops: Years 9-13

Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 May | Wenerei 14, Taite 15 Mei

Morning Workshops



People, Power & Poetry

RUBY MACOMBER

9.40am-10.40am (max 35 students)

Poetry is a tool to harness power and bring people together. This workshop will focus on the potential for poetry to raise the collective voices of rangatahi for social change, self-expression and solidarity. Through guided exercises, participants will be encouraged into creative community, and express the stories close to their chests. **Ruby Macomber** is an Indigenous poet, essayist and facilitator. She currently co-manages Te Kāhui, a rōpū that helps create equitable arts opportunities in Corrections facilities and communities.



Character Creation

SARAÏD DE SILVA

10.50am-11.50am (max 35 students)

In her debut novel *Amma*, **Saraïd de Silva** has created memorable and complex characters that are written from the heart and informed by her own life experiences. Drawing on her extensive background of writing in theatre and television, Saraïd will share her knowledge of different techniques to shape characters that not only serve the story but stay with the reader long after they finish the book.

Afternoon Workshop



New Realities

STEPH MATUKU

1.25pm-2.25pm (max 35 students)

Described by *The Sapling* as an “Aotearoa YA that rivals *The Hunger Games*”, **Steph Matuku**’s science-fiction adventure novel *Migration* is a distinctly Aotearoa New Zealand story that is embedded with tikanga Māori. This award-winning author has expertly designed a new civilisation 3,000 years into the future and at risk of being attacked by otherworldly forces. Steph will lead a workshop that will guide students on how to use written and stylistic conventions to create a new reality in their writing that is both believable and exhilarating.

Secondary Booking Form: Years 9-13

Wednesday 14 May | Wenerei 14 Mei

School	Address	
Class/Room	Year(s)	Equity Index
Booking Contact	Phone (Term Time)	
Email		
Trip Supervisor	Supervisor Mobile	
Email		

*Note: The Booking Contact is the person responsible for making the booking.
The Trip Supervisor is the person bringing the class whom we may contact regarding the visit.*

Wednesday 14 May

Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Kiri Te Kanawa		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa	20	Harriet Walter			
10.55am-11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa	21	Lee Murray			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	22	Neal Shusterman			
1.25pm-2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	23	Scotty Cotter			
2.10pm			Finish and Book Signing			
	*Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Level 2, Aotea Centre			Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

Ticket prices: \$16 per workshop per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Workshops	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.40am-10.40am	Waihorotiu	24	Ruby Macomber			
10.50am-11.50am	Waihorotiu	25	Saraid de Silva			
1.25pm-2.25pm	Waihorotiu	26	Steph Matuku			
	*Waihorotiu Room, Level 4, Aotea Centre			Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$16	\$

Please complete all sections of the form ([download a single page PDF here](#)) and email to groups@ticketmaster.co.nz

For all booking enquiries please phone 09 970 9745

Total	
Ticketmaster Booking Fee	\$8.00
Grand Total	\$

Bookings are dealt with in order of receipt. Please do not include payment with your Booking Form. You will receive a confirmation from Ticketmaster within three working days of your booking. You will be invoiced by Ticketmaster on receipt of your booking.

Secondary Booking Form: Years 9-13

Thursday 15 May | Taite 15 Mei

School	Address	
Class/Room	Year(s)	Equity Index
Booking Contact	Phone (Term Time)	
Email		
Trip Supervisor	Supervisor Mobile	
Email		

*Note: The Booking Contact is the person responsible for making the booking.
The Trip Supervisor Contact is the person bringing the class whom we may contact regarding the visit.*

Thursday 15 May

Ticket prices: \$13 per day per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Event Speakers	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.30am	Kiri Te Kanawa		Arrival and Seating			
10.00am-10.45am	Kiri Te Kanawa	27	Lemn Sissay			
10.55am-11.40am	Kiri Te Kanawa	28	Neal Shusterman			
11.40am-12.25pm			Lunch Break and Book Signing			
12.30pm-1.15pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	29	Lee Murray			
ALTERNATIVE 12.30PM SESSION – IN TE REO MĀORI ONLY						
12.30pm-1.15pm	Limelight Room	29A	Airana Ngarewa			
1.25pm-2.10pm	Kiri Te Kanawa	30	Scotty Cotter			
2.10pm			Finish and Book Signing	Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$13	\$

*Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Level 2. Limelight Room, Level 3, Aotea Centre

Ticket prices: \$16 per workshop per student. Teachers: free.

Time	Venue*	No.	Workshops	No. Teachers	No. Students	Year(s)
9.40am-10.40am	Waihorotiu	31	Ruby Macomber			
10.50am-11.50am	Waihorotiu	32	Saraid de Silva			
1.25pm-2.25pm	Waihorotiu	33	Steph Matuku			
				Total Teachers (Free)	Total Students @ \$16	\$

*Waihorotiu Room, Level 4, Aotea Centre

Please complete all sections of the form ([download a single page PDF here](#)) and email to groups@ticketmaster.co.nz

For all booking enquiries please phone 09 970 9745

Total	
Ticketmaster Booking Fee	\$ 8.00
Grand Total	\$

Bookings are dealt with in order of receipt. Please do not include payment with your Booking Form. You will receive a confirmation from Ticketmaster within three working days of your booking. You will be invoiced by Ticketmaster on receipt of your booking.

Secondary Sessions: About the Authors

Harriet Walter

Dame Harriet Walter DBE is a British actress. She has received a Laurence Olivier Award as well as numerous nominations, including a Tony Award, three Primetime Emmy Awards, and a Screen Actors Guild Award. In 2011, she was appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) for services to drama. In 2024 she received a BAFTA TV Award nomination for her role in the international hit series *Succession*, and has been seen regularly on our screens in *Killing Eve*, *Ted Lasso*, *Silo* and *This is Going to Hurt*, to name a few.

Lee Murray

Lee Murray is a writer, editor, poet and screenwriter, a Shirley Jackson Award winner and five-time Bram Stoker Award® winner. A *USA Today* bestselling author with more than 40 titles to her credit, she holds a New Zealand Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Fiction and is an Honorary Literary Fellow of the New Zealand Society of Authors. Her latest work, NZSA Laura Solomon Cuba Press Prize-winner *Fox Spirit on a Distant Cloud*, was released in 2024 from The Cuba Press.

Neal Shusterman

Neal Shusterman is the *New York Times* bestselling author of more than 50 award-winning books for children, teens, and adults, including *Challenger Deep*, which won the National Book Award, *Courage to Dream*, a Sydney Taylor Honor Book, *Scythe*, a Michael L. Printz Honor Book, the *Unwind Dystology*, which won more than 30 domestic and international awards, and the highly acclaimed novels, *Dry* and *Roxy* which he co-wrote with his son, Jarrod. For his body of work, Neal won the 2024 Margaret A. Edwards Award, and the ALAN Lifetime Achievement Award. He also writes screenplays for motion pictures and television. Neal is the father of four, all of whom are talented writers and artists themselves.

Scotty Cotter

Scotty Cotter is a storyteller whose passion spans stage and screen. With more than 20 years of experience as an actor, he has brought diverse characters to life in theatre and on television. In the past decade, Scotty expanded into directing and writing, with notable credits including the TV series *Dead Ahead* and *Rule of Mum*, the project *Mauri Tau*, and the theatrical production *Neke*. Scotty's creative journey is driven by a desire to celebrate whakapapa, embrace the messy beauty of life, and connect with audiences in an honest and authentic way.

Steph Matuku

Steph Matuku (Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Mutunga) is an award-winning author of stories for young people. As well as short stories, plays and articles, she has written eight books: *Flight of the Fantail*, *Falling Into Rarohenga* and *Migration* for young adults; the junior fiction series *Whetū Toa*; and picture books *The Eight Gifts of Te Wheke* and *The Dream Factory* – all published by Huia Publishers.

Two of her books have been translated into te reo Māori, two were finalists in the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults, and six were Storylines Notable Books. She has mentored for the NZSA and Te Papa Tupu writing programme, and her screenwriting credits include *Mystic*, *Under The Vines* and *Shortland Street*.

Saraid de Silva

Saraid de Silva is a Sri Lankan Pākehā writer and creative based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Her debut novel, *Amma*, was released in April 2024 in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia and the UK. She was the co-creator and co-host of Radio New Zealand's *Conversations With My Immigrant Parents*, a podcast and video series in which immigrant whānau across Aotearoa have frank conversations about love, ancestry, home, food, expectation and acceptance. Currently, Saraid writes for television and is working on her second novel.

Ruby Macomber

Ruby Rae Lupe Ah-Wai Macomber is uri of the shores of Itu'ti'u, the flowers of Taveuni and the mighty tentacles of Te Pū o Te Wheke. In 2024, Ruby was the guest curator of the New Zealand Young Writers' Festival in Ōtepoti and writer in residence the year prior. Her poem *Cry Sis* featured in *Mana Moana – Pasifika Voices*, and was shown at the 2023 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Her recent work features in *Landfall*, *The Pantograph Punch*, *The Spinoff*, *Metro*, *Awa Wāhine*, *Starling* and *Waka Kuaka – The Journal of the Polynesian Society*. Since 2020, Ruby has facilitated and now manages Te Kāhui, a creative kaupapa for incarcerated young people to amplify Indigenous narrative agency. *My Moana Girls* is her debut chapbook, published by ngā pukapuka pekapeka.

Secondary Sessions: About the Authors

Lemn Sissay

Google “**Lemn Sissay**” and all the return hits will be about him. There is only one person in the world named Lemn Sissay. Awarded the 2024 Hay Festival Medal for Poetry, Lemn Sissay OBE FRSL is also a playwright, memoirist, performer and broadcaster. His latest book, *Let The Light Pour In*, is a *Sunday Times* Bestseller, and his autobiography *My Name is Why* was a Number One *Sunday Times* Bestseller. His theatre adaptation of Benjamin Zephaniah's *Refugee Boy* is a text in England's national curriculum. In 2022 he was made a Fellow of The Royal Society of Literature. Lemn was named MBE for services to literature, awarded by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and then he was named OBE for services to literature and charity, awarded by King Charles at Windsor Castle in 2023.

Airana Ngarewa

He uri a **Airana** nō Ngāti Ruanui, nō Ngā Rauru, nō Ngāruahine anō hoki. Nāna a *The Bone Tree* me *Ngāti Pātea* i tuhi. Nōna e taiohi ana, kāore ia mō te pānui pukapuka; ka rata kē a Airana ki te ao o te mekemeke. Nā tōna ngākaunui ki tērā hākinakina i tū ai ia hei toa whawhai. Nāwai, nāwai, ka kitea te ruarua noa iho o ngā pukapuka Māori, ka huri ai tana tuarā i āna mahi mekemeke, me te aha, ka tuhia āna ake pukapuka reo Māori. Mei kore ake te reo e tū nei a Airana hei kaituhi whakaihūwaka.