

9.15am

Mayoral Welcome

9.30am-10.30am

Virginia Trioli

Joy in the Small Things

An exploration of perspective and the small, sustaining joys that reshape how we see ourselves, our work, and the world.

10.30-11am Break

11am-12pm

Rosalie Ham

Topic TBC

11am-12pm

Peter Greste

Truth Telling in a Dangerous World

Inside the 400-day imprisonment that sparked a global fight for press freedom, and an award-winning movie.

12pm-1pm Lunch Break

1pm-2pm

Michelle Prak

Crafting Tension with Precision

How sharp, punchy writing heightens suspense and keeps pages turning late into the night.

1pm-2pm

Regional Lifestyle Magazine

Topic TBC

1pm-2pm

Stella Quinn

Characters You Wish Lived Next Door

Exploring the craft behind quirky, big hearted characters who stay with you long after the last page.

2pm-2.30pm Break

2.30pm-3.30pm

All Stars Panel

Hosted by Claudine Tinellis

A fast-paced panel bringing together festival favourites for sharp insights, big laughs, and a trivia finale.

8.45am

Welcome Back Short Story Awards

9am-10am

Nicole Alexander

*Epic Stories Woven from
Australia's Past*

How Alexander blends family legend with meticulous historical research to create narratives that bring Australia's pastoral heritage to life.

9am-10am

Dr Cesar Puechmarin

*Reconnecting People to Nature
through Story*

Where science meets creative writing, and how to use storytelling to create meaning.

9am-11.30am

Petronella McGovern

*Workshop: Hooking the Reader
with Thrills & Suspence*

A practical workshop on crafting irresistible openings, sharp tension, and page-turning momentum.

10am-10.30am Break

10.30am-11.30am

Matthew Condon

*The Making of a Crime
Storyteller*

How a police-round reporting job and years of interviews with former commissioner Terry Lewis led Condon into a labyrinth of true crime and shaped his signature investigative style.

10.30am-11.30am

Siang Lu

Embracing Failure

How the 2025 Miles Franklin Award winner found creative power in rejection, persistence, and starting again.

11.30am-12pm Break

12pm-1pm

Heather Morris

The Story that Changed Her Life

How meeting Holocaust survivor Lale Sokolov led Morris to uncover - and share - one of the most extraordinary love stories of the 20th century.