

WORD CHRISTCHURCH FESTIVAL '25

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AT VENUES ACROSS
ŌTAUHI CHRISTCHURCH

SHARE
THE JOY OF
WORDS



WORD
CHRISTCHURCH
FESTIVAL & EVENTS

27-31 AUG 2025

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WELCOME TO WORD 2025

Hoki mai anō, e hoa mā.

Friends, welcome back.

What an honour it is to present the WORD Christchurch 2025 programme to you.

A recurring motif kept popping up while developing this programme: joy. Joy is essential for social connection. And social connection is the unique thing festivals provide: the joy of coming together for kōrero, the collective joy of discovery, the joy of storytelling, the joy of sharing kai, the joy of music, and the joy of celebrating books and the people behind them. The comfort of joy.

There is much joy to discover among these pages. From **Tom Sainsbury's** *Reading Enthusiast's Soirée* and New Zealand Poet Laureate **Chris Tse's** *Love at First Line: A Poetry Dating Show*, to our powerhouse Indigi-Joy panel, our ever-popular storytelling session *Risky Women*, the revelry of a jolly good quiz and the elation of our Rangatahi Boogie.

We are thrilled to have acclaimed Booker Prize shortlisted author **Charlotte Wood** joining us. We welcome Australian Indigenous poet and artist **Dominic Guerrero** (Ngarrindjeri, Kaurua), as well as **Catherine Chidgey, Becky Manawatu** (Ngāi Tahu), 2025 Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction winner **Damien Wilkins**, and powerful memoirists **Ali Mau, Diana Wichtel** and **Susie Ferguson**. We have true crime with **Steve Braunias**, celebrate **Dame Anne Salmond** and examine the state of the nation's media with industry heavyweights.

We give Aotearoa New Zealand's political landscape a health check with *The Spinoff's Gone By Lunchtime* podcast live on stage. And fashion lovers, do not miss the rare opportunity to see exquisite high-end fashion garments from the **Eden Hore** Central Otago Collection in real life!

As ever, we are proud to continue our strong relationship with our friends at Ngāi Tahu, and we offer inspiring sessions for young people. We have made 22% of the programme free to all and selected sessions are pay-what-you-can.

The bracings of WORD are the writers, thinkers, artists and performers who share their brilliant mahi with us. We are proud to present them. We are grateful to our sponsors, patrons and volunteers who make us mighty. And we do this for you, our wonderful audience. If you are a long-time WORD fan, nau mai hoki mai, welcome back. If you're new to WORD, nau mai, haere mai, welcome!

I invite you to dive in and explore the rich array of offerings that are about to set the heart of Ōtautahi Christchurch abuzz with vibrancy. You might even walk away with some new favourites among your already beloved gems. Let's come together to celebrate the joy of words, books and storytelling. We look forward to warmly welcoming you to the festival.

Ngā manaakitanga

Kiran Dass

Programme Director

A GUIDE TO THIS PROGRAMME

This booklet is a day-by-day session guide. We've used the following colours as a key to different types of event:

- Non-fiction ● Fiction
- Korero/conversation ● Performance
- Community ● Schools
- Workshops (📺) Livestreams

Keen To See It All? Buy A Multipass!

We know it's hard to choose just one event to go to, so we have a wonderful bundle deal for you. Book for any five sessions and receive a 20% discount on your tickets. Bargain!

Livestreams

As much as we would love everyone to attend our sessions in person, we know that isn't always possible. We are streaming several of our events in The Piano with all at-home tickets just \$10 (plus booking fee). Look for the livestream symbol next to events throughout the programme. If you miss the live event, these will all be available on-demand until Sunday 27 September.

Keep in touch

Stay in the know by subscribing to the WORD Christchurch e-news on our website.

FESTIVAL TEAM

Festival Team

Steph Walker
Executive Director

Kiran Dass
Programme Director

Lydia Thomas
Administrator

Cat Angus
Production Manager

Hannah Wheeler
Artist Liaison & Schools Coordinator

M Grace-Stent
Ticketing Coordinator

Penny Hartill
Publicist

The WORD Christchurch Trust

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Pauline Scanlan, *Deputy Chair*

Sela Faletolu-Fasi

Marianne Hargreaves

Erin Harrington

Donna Robertson

Michelle Shirtcliffe

Kent Yeoman

With thanks to our Festival crew and the dozens of WORD volunteers.

ARE YOU A WORD LOVER?

WORD Christchurch Trust is a small charitable organisation with big ambitions for Ōtautahi. Join us as a Patron, Supporter or Friend on our website: wordchristchurch.co.nz/supporters.



BOOKS COME ALIVE!

SATURDAY 9 AUGUST, 10.30AM–2.30PM
TE ARA ĀTEA, ROLLESTON, FREE

You and your whānau will be buzzing as some of our nation's best writers and illustrators hit Te Ara Ātea for a day of special storytimes, fun activities and a few surprises. Featuring **Rachel Clare, Kiri Lightfoot, David Riley, Rachael King** and **Juliette MacIver**. This is your chance to meet some of the finalists of the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young people before the awards are announced on 13 August. Tau kē! Awesome!

With support from Selwyn District Council and the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young People.



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WORD
CHRISTCHURCH

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UBS is one of New Zealand's largest independent bookstores.

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University Drive, Ilam. Mon – Fri 8.30am–5pm, Sat 10am–3pm

LOST THE PLOT! THE WORD QUIZ NIGHT

WEDNESDAY 27 AUGUST, 5.30–7.45PM
Tūranga, Tautoru TSB Space, \$15

Have you got what it takes to be the WORD Lost the Plot champion of 2025? Join your effervescent host **Claudia Jardine** for a fun quiz like no other. Gather your team together for an evening of joyous competition and WORDy shenanigans. Who doesn't love a quiz? Register your team of 4-6 people or come along on the night – the choice is yours.



WORD - THE FRONT LINE HIGH SCHOOLS GRAND SLAM

WEDNESDAY 27 AUGUST, 7–8.30PM
THE PIANO, \$15

Hear the next generation of truth talkers share their stories in an explosion of youth expression as they battle it out to be Grand Slam Champions. **Word - The Front Line** is the Ōtautahi Christchurch inter-High School Poetry Slam. More than a poetry slam, Word - The Front Line is a celebration of the future artists, leaders, and legends of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In partnership with Action Education





HOT MESS: NAVIGATING MIDLIFE AND MENOPAUSE

THURSDAY 28 AUGUST, 6–7PM
THE PIANO, \$49*

Renowned television personality and award-winning podcaster **Petra Bagust** and acclaimed journalist and menopause advocate **Niki Bezzant** are two of the country's most inspiring voices. They join us at WORD to shine a light on the challenges 'women of a certain age' face. From laugh-out-loud 'hot mess' moments to practical insights on reclaiming confidence and power, Petra and Niki will offer a transformative evening of wisdom and humour.

With support from Publica

LIVING BOOKS: THE VOICES OF HIP-HOP

THURSDAY 28 AUGUST, 6.30–7.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, FREE

Sit down and kōrero with emerging and established Hip-hop artists from Aotearoa New Zealand. Discover how Māori and Pasifika have embraced Hip-hop culture as a powerful form of expression, identity and resistance, echoing the artform's global roots in struggle and storytelling.

In partnership with Christchurch City Libraries and YCD



TOM SAINSBURY'S READING ENTHUSIAST'S SOIRÉE

THURSDAY 28 AUGUST, 8–9PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

Comedian **Tom Sainsbury** chats with guest authors **Kate de Goldi**, **Rachel Paris** and **Josiah Morgan** (Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Maniapoto) about all things literary — from their first favourite book to their reading habits, the sauciest passage they can't forget, and the author they're most jealous of. A cheeky, thoughtful deep-dive into the wonderfully weird world of words.

MICHAEL BELGRAVE: BECOMING AOTEAROA

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 10.30–11.30AM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORŪ TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

In the first major history of Aotearoa New Zealand to be published for 20 years, Professor **Michael Belgrave** puts forward the idea that Aotearoa's two peoples — tangata whenua and later migrants — have worked together to shape an open, liberal society built on a series of social agreements. He invites us to take a deeper, thoughtful look at our shared history. He joins **Michael Stevens** (Ngāi Tahu) for a kōrero.



STATE OF THE NATION'S MEDIA

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 12–1PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

Our media landscape is changing as quickly as it can to keep up with technology and trends. Where is it heading next? Industry leaders *The Spinoff's* **Toby Manhire**, Radio New Zealand's Chief Executive **Paul Thompson**, *The Press's* **Kamala Hayman** and former Head of Premium for *New Zealand Herald* **Miriyana Alexander** come together to check in on the industry, and look at where our media's at right now and why it still matters for a robust democracy. Chaired by **Conan Young**.



STORIES FROM THE MANAPOURI HYDRO PROJECT

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 12.30–1.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

You've heard of Manapōuri as the backdrop of Aotearoa's biggest, most iconic environmental protest — but there's another side to the story. **Rosemary Baird's** *The Middle of Nowhere: Stories from the Manapōuri Hydro Project* uncovers the powerful history of those who lived through extreme and punishing conditions to help build it. Hear about those human stories, in conversation with **Liz Grant**.

With support from University of Canterbury
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha

DIANA WICHTEL: UNREEL

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 2-3PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

Diana Wichtel grew up in the glow of the 'Golden Age of television'. One of New Zealand's wittiest writers and acclaimed television critics, she joins **Steve Braunias** for a conversation about her brilliantly funny and nostalgic memoir, *Unreel: A Life in Review*. Hear how the small screen chronicled her life and formed her career as she weaves personal stories of family, love and loss with the evolving world of the telly.



BRANNAVAN GNANALINGAM: POLITICAL SATIRE IN THE CAPITAL

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 2.30-3.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

With his novel *The Life and Opinions of Kartik Popat*, writer and lawyer **Brannavan Gnanalingam** has created a sharp satire of Wellington's political scene and who's actually pulling the strings. He joins **Nic Low** (Ngāi Tahu) for a wide-reaching conversation about political power, the changing nature of a city, thwarted artists, identity politics and democratic principles.

With support from the Christchurch UK Sister City Committee





DAME ANNE SALMOND: KNOWLEDGE IS A BLESSING (••)

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 4–5PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

For 50 years, celebrated social scientist and leading environmentalist **Dame Anne Salmond** has navigated te ao hurihuri - a changing world. Her travels, mahi and experience in Aotearoa New Zealand has focused on connecting cultures. This career-spanning kōrero with **Nicola Legat** will take us from the 1970s through to the meaning of Te Tiriti o Waitangi today.

With support from the Royal Society Te Apārangi

RACHEL PARIS: SEE HOW THEY FALL

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 4.30–5.30PM
TURANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

When the patriarch of a luxury goods empire dies, his family gathers and tensions ignite with murderous twists. A pulse-pounding, intricately plotted whodunnit thriller, bestseller *See How They Fall* by former lawyer **Rachel Paris** is a page-turner for fans of Liane Moriarty. A Hollywood production company has already optioned the screen rights. She joins **Morrin Rout** for a conversation about her instant acclaim.

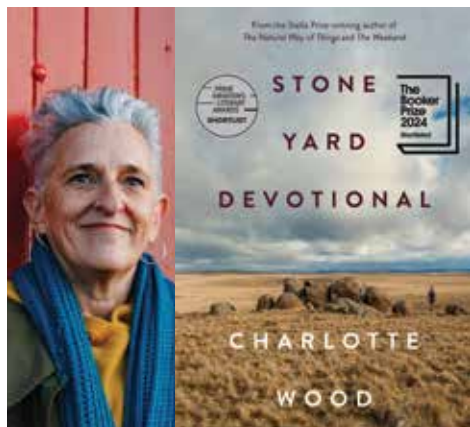


CHARLOTTE WOOD: STONE YARD DEVOTIONAL ((►))

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 6–7PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

Don't miss this celebrated author who counts Anne Enright and Tim Winton among her fans, as she joins **Emily Perkins** in conversation. In **Charlotte Wood's** (AUS) Booker-shortlisted novel *Stone Yard Devotional*, a disillusioned and atheist environmentalist retreats to a remote religious community. In this profound exploration of human connection and forgiveness, she finds solace amidst unexpected visitations, including a biblical mouse plague. "Exquisite." – *New York Times*.

With support from University of Canterbury
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha



DREAM DINNER PARTY

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 6.30–7.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORŪ TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

Who would you invite to your ultimate dream dinner party? Whether it's pop culture legends, historical figures, fictional characters, or friends and family, the possibilities are endless! Food lovers **Nici Wickes, Brannavan Gnanalingam** and **Jessica Hutchings** (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Huirapa, Gujarati) join **Alex Casey** to set the scene by imagining their dream guest list, and tell us what food and drink would be on their dream menu. A joyful celebration of kai.





CABINET OF CURIOSITIES: TINY LECTURES ON THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

**FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 7–8PM
LITTLE ANDROMEDA, \$35***

Snap up your tickets to our ever-popular and often riotous tiny lectures session. Six writers share their weird and wonderful deep obsessions. What previously hidden truths will we discover about **Catherine Chidgey**, **Chris Tse**, **Kate Camp**, **Ariana Tikao** (Kāi Tahu), **Una Cruickshank** and **Duncan Sarkies**? All will be revealed on the night! Hosted by **Erin Harrington**.

RISKY WOMEN (♫)

**FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 8–9.15PM
THE PIANO, \$41 / \$35***

Our most loved storytelling session is back and it's set to be as inspiring and revealing as ever. Brilliant wāhine talk about when they took a risk – in love, life or career – and what happened next. Hear real and raw stories from investigative journalist and #MeToo champion **Ali Mau**, celebrity cook and cookbook author **Nici Wickes**, beloved broadcaster **Susie Ferguson** and podcaster and chaplain **Petra Bagust**. Hosted by **Stacey Morrison** (Ngāi Tahu, Te Arawa).



RAY SHIPLEY'S LATE NIGHT POETRY HOUR

FRIDAY 29 AUGUST, 9–11PM
LITTLE ANDROMEDA, \$15*

Ōtautahi Christchurch's favourite nocturnal salon brings together cool visitors and hot locals for a memorable night of poetry, good feelings and staying up a bit too late. The one and only **Ray Shipley** hosts **Dominic Guerrera** (Kaurua, Ngarrindjeri), **Erik Kennedy**, **Kate Camp** and **Gabrielle Huria** (Ngāi Tahu). And if you're keen to have a go, step up for an open mic slot!

ŌTAUTAHĪ ZINEFEST

SATURDAY 30 AND SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 10AM–4PM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ
FREE

Come along to the fest within a fest!

Ōtautahi Zinefest is a whānau friendly day celebrating zine culture, small press and self-publishing. Pick up some local zines, stickers and lovingly handcrafted ephemera in the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū foyer during the weekend.



EPIC ADVENTURES: NAOMI ARNOLD AND KATE EVANS

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 10.30–11.30AM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

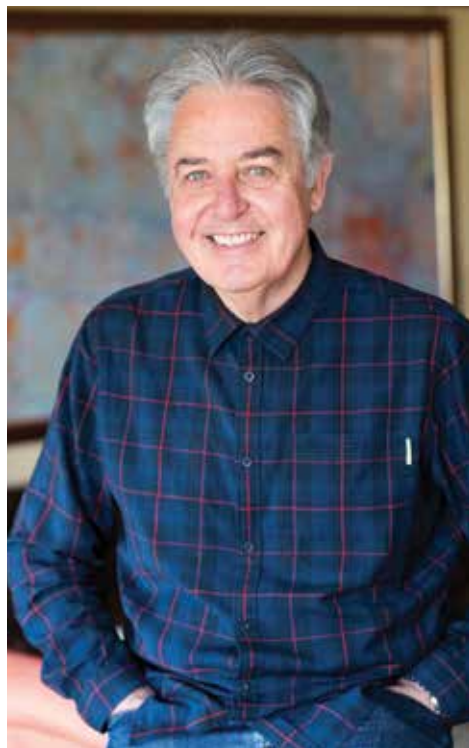
Award-winning journalists **Kate Evans** and **Naomi Arnold** share how one big passion can unlock a world of adventure. Evans delves into the global history and cultural meaning of the love-it-or-hate-it feijoa in her hit book *Feijoa*. Arnold details her epic nine-month journey of self-discovery walking Aotearoa's Te Araroa trail in *Northbound*. Hear how intense focus leads to profound connections, in this conversation between the two friends who are now working together on a travel book.



GAVIN BISHOP: LEGEND OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 10.30–11.30AM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ,
\$25/20*

He's a multi-award winning household name for generations of Kiwi families — and we are thrilled to celebrate beloved Ōtautahi Christchurch author and illustrator **Gavin Bishop** (Tainui, Ngāti Awa) at WORD. With a long and dazzling career of bringing history and imagination to life on the page, Bishop joins **Morrin Rout** for a conversation about his life and work.





STORYWALK

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 11AM–12PM
MARGARET MAHY FAMILY PLAYGROUND, FREE
REGISTRATIONS REQUIRED

Celebrate our rich heritage of children's books and join Tūranga's children's librarians for a special storywalk through Margaret Mahy Family Playground. A wonderful opportunity to walk through the park, listen to a story and take part in some craft. Exercise your body while exercising your mind!

QUEENS OF ATMOSPHERE: CHARLOTTE WOOD, CATHERINE CHIDGEY AND MICHELLE DUFF

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 12–1PM
THE PIANO, \$25/20*

Literary powerhouses **Charlotte Wood**, **Catherine Chidgey** and **Michelle Duff** are celebrated for their mastery of unease, evocative atmosphere, creating a strong sense of place and unforgettable characters. Discover how they build nail-biting tension, create immersive worlds and bring the complex human experience to life on the page. They join **Kerry Sunderland** in conversation.



INDIGI-JOY

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 12.30–1.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

Joy is a force more vital than ever. It can be a powerful act of resistance and a wellspring of hope when the world feels overwhelming. Join leading Indigenous writers and artists **Dominic Guerrera** (Kaurua, Ngarrindjeri), **Ariana Tikao** (Kāi Tahu), **Juanita Hepi** (Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngātiwai, Ngāpuhi) and **Tina Makereti** (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangatahi-Matakore, Pākehā) for a kōrero about how they cultivate and communicate joy through their creative practices.



THIS BAND COULD BE YOUR LIFE

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 12.30–1.30PM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ, \$25/20*

Writers share a love letter to the music that moves them. Join 2025 Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction winner and member of the band the Close Readers **Damien Wilkins, Brannavan Gnanalingam, Pohlen Newbery** (Ngai Tūhoe, Ngāti Manunui), and **Claudia Jardine** as they each share a band or musician that has had an indelible impact on their lives. Be introduced to new musical gems or gain fresh perspectives on old favourites. Hosted by **Kiran Dass**.

With support from Main Divide



SATURDAY 30 AUGUST

THE SPINOFF'S GONE BY LUNCHTIME: LIVE!

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 2-3PM
THE PIANO, \$25 / \$20*

The coalition government has completed a restless, sometimes controversial first act. With election year now just a few months away, politics podcast *Gone By Lunchtime* returns to WORD to assess the state of play with their customary mix of insight and humour. Join *The Spinoff's* **Toby Manhire, Annabelle Lee-Mather** (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Māmoë) (executive producer of *Mata*) and **Ben Thomas** (former press secretary in the Key government) with a special mystery guest for an entertaining hour of analysis and irreverence.

In partnership with The Spinoff



RANGATAHI BOOGIE

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 2-3PM
BY THE EDMONDS BAND ROTUNDA, FREE

Tamariki ma! Hey kids! Grab your parents, siblings and mates, and head to the Edmonds Band Rotunda by the Ōtākaro Avon River for stories, songs and a boogie on a Saturday afternoon! Show us your cool moves to awesome waiata from our favourite singing storytellers **Loopy Tunes**.



DAMIEN WILKINS & LAURENCE FEARNLEY: IN PRAISE OF GENTLE FICTION

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 2.30–3.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/20*

There is something to be celebrated about thoughtful novels that aren't shouty but pack a powerful punch. **Damien Wilkins** and **Laurence Fearnley**'s beautifully written novels *Delirious* (which won the 2025 Jann Medicott Acorn Prize for Fiction) and *At The Grand Glacier Hotel* (shortlisted for the same prize) both draw from major personal life events and show how subtle approaches can resonate deeply with readers. In conversation with **Morrin Rout**.



TOI TE MANA: AN INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF MĀORI ART

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 2.30–3.30PM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ,
\$25/20*

Toi Te Mana: An Indigenous History of Māori Art is the first comprehensive account of creative work by Māori ever published. It is also the first wide-ranging art history written entirely by Māori scholars, traversing whatu (weaving), moko (tattoo), whakairo (carving), whare (architecture), painting, photography and sculpture over 800 years. No wonder it won the Illustrated Non-Fiction category at the 2025 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards. Authors **Deidre Brown** (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) and **Ngarino Ellis** (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou) join **Chloe Cull** (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāi te Ruahikihiki) in conversation.

With support from the Royal Society Te Apārangi





STRONG MINDED: ALI MAU & SUSIE FERGUSON ((••))

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 4–5PM
THE PIANO, \$25/\$20*

In her memoir *Bloody Minded*, RNZ broadcaster **Susie Ferguson** shares her experiences of being a war correspondent while battling undiagnosed endometriosis. In *No Words for This*, investigative journalist **Ali Mau** reveals how an unexpected call from her sister changed her life forever. They share their stories of resilience and courage with **Michelle Duff**.

I'D LOVE TO HAVE A BEER WITH DUNCAN

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 4.30–5.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$29/\$25*

Join **Duncan Sarkies** for a beer and a yarn, as he reads sections from his comic alpaca allegory, *Star Gazers*. You get to request what he reads from a giant menu of bitter, sweet, spicy and salty selections from a novel that is a wild and tender leap into the heart of alpaca breeding, and a snapshot of a world at a crossroads. Get a can of beer on arrival from our mates at Three Boys Brewery (if you're of legal drinking age) and enjoy one of our best storytellers.

With support from Three Boys Brewery



ITI NOA ANA HE PITO MATA - FROM THE WITHERED TREE, A FLOWER BLOOMS

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 5.30PM ONWARDS
VENUE TBA—CHECK WORDCHCH.CO.NZ, FREE

A powerful debut **Brown Town** exhibition and zine launch centring Māori and Pacific artists reclaiming space through creativity and storytelling. This event honours expression, resilience, and joy - a love letter to our people and the worlds we are building. Held in a vibrant city pop-up. Limited copies of the zine available.

With support from Boosted X Moana donors, the Creative New Zealand Creative Communities Scheme and Studio Māia



SATURDAY 30 AUGUST

EDEN HORE: CENTRAL OTAGO COUTURE ((•))

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 6–7PM
THE PIANO, \$65*

Fashion and social history lovers, don't miss this fabulous peek into the glamorous and extraordinary **Eden Hore** Central Otago Collection. In the 1970s, farmer Eden Hore turned a tractor shed into a couture museum, showcasing over 220 dazzling garments. Authors **Jane Malthus** and **Claire Regnault** join **Kate de Goldi** to share Eden's story - plus, enjoy a rare look at pieces from the collection! Tickets include a glass of wine and a light bite before this very special session, so arrive early.

With support from Central Otago District Council, Te Papa Press and Canterbury Museum



LOVE AT FIRST LINE A POETRY DATING SHOW

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 6.30–7.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

Love is in the air... but is everyone here for the right reasons? For one night only, we ditch the dating apps and ask three mystery poets to woo with just their words, live on stage. Hopeless romantic **Chris Tse** plays matchmaker to help one lucky contestant find the poet of their dreams.



CONFLUENCE

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 8–9.30PM
THE PIANO, PWYC - PAY WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD

Confluence is back! Get ready to vibe with a brand-new line-up of Indigenous musicians and writers celebrating the cultural, musical and ancestral connections across Te Moana-nui-a-kiwa, the Pacific Ocean. With **Dietrich Soakai** hosting and the **Judah Band** heating up the stage with their soulful grooves, tune in for the spoken stylings of **Dominic Guerrera** (Kaurua, Ngarrindjeri), **Becky Manawatu** (Ngāi Tahu) and more. Come and feel the mana!

In partnership with Cross-Polynate



TE TIRITI FOR BEGINNERS

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 10–11AM
THE PIANO, PWYC - PAY WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD

Want to learn more about Te Tiriti o Waitangi? Join **Roimata Smail** (Ngāti Maniapoto, Tainui, England, Scotland, Ireland) for a welcoming talk designed to unpack the history, meaning, and ongoing impact of Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document. Her bestselling pocketbook *Understanding Te Tiriti* is perfect for beginners or those wanting a refresher on Aotearoa New Zealand's foundational document.

With support from National Library of New Zealand
Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

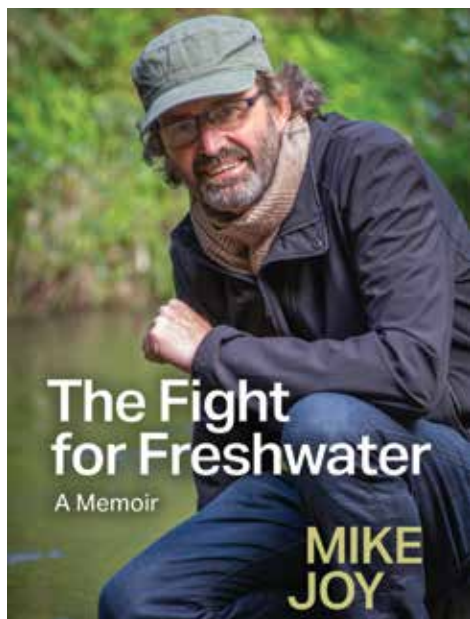
THE POWER OF RESILIENCE

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 10.30–11.30AM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

Dr Lucy Hone, Jake Bailey and **Dr Maysoon Salama** know about navigating life's toughest challenges. As head boy at Christchurch Boys' High in 2015, Bailey delivered his end-of-year speech from a wheelchair, only a week after being diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer. Salama lost her son in the 2019 Al Noor mosque attack in Christchurch, and Hone, having lost her daughter in a road accident, wrote *Resilient Grieving*, to help herself and others cope with devastating loss. They come together for a generous conversation.

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST





THE FIGHT FOR FRESHWATER

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 10.30–11.30AM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ,
\$25/\$20*

Protecting our freshwater is a fight we can't afford to lose. Leading freshwater ecologist and author of *The Fight for Freshwater* **Mike Joy** and Chief Executive of Te Kura Taka Pini **Gabrielle Huria** (Ngāi Tahu) join **Ross Calman** (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Tahu) for a conversation which looks at critical issues facing New Zealand's waterways, from pollution to policy, and the science, activism and Māori perspectives on water management in Aotearoa New Zealand.

With support from the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre



STEVE BRAUNIAS: INSIDE THE TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 12–1PM
THE PIANO, \$25/\$20*

Discover the truth behind the headlines. The Polkinghorne case was the most high-profile murder investigation in modern Aotearoa New Zealand history. With unparalleled access to the key players, journalist **Steve Braunias** reported extensively on the sensational trial and joins **Lianne Dalziel** in a conversation that offers his unique insight into the investigation, the trial and the astonishing revelations that kept New Zealand transfixed.

With support from Stuff



GHOST STORIES: A GHOST ON EVERY CORNER WALKING TOUR

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 12PM- 1.30PM
MEET AT VICTORIA SQUARE, CORNER OF
ARMAGH AND VICTORIA STREETS, \$36/\$31*

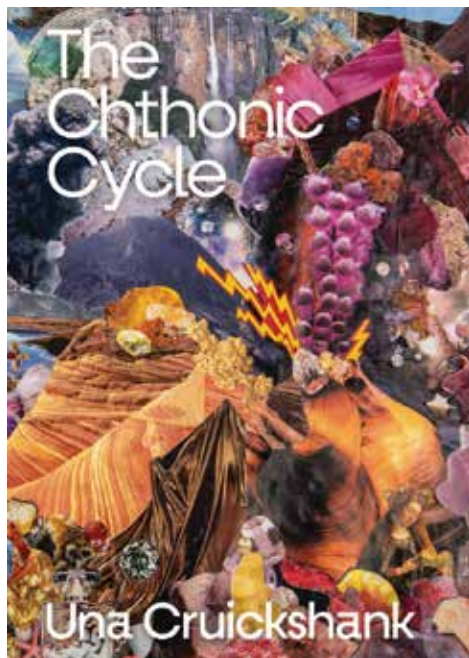
Join artist **Ghostcat**, author **Reuben Woods** and photographer **Dave Richards** on a guided walking tour of the locations that inspired *Ghosts on Every Corner* - a celebration of lost places that shaped Ōtautahi Christchurch. From Wizards Arcade to Java Café, this walking tour presents a reflective exploration of place, process, creativity and community.



THE PRECIPICE OF POSSIBILITY: THE ART OF THE ESSAY

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 12.30-1.30PM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
\$25/\$20*

The essay is one of the most flexible and adventurous forms of writing, riding a long wave of popularity for readers and writers alike. Join essayists 2025 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards winner for her collection *The Chthonic Cycle* **Una Cruickshank**, **Tina Makereti** (Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Rangatahi-Matakore, Pākehā) and **Kate Camp** as they explore the thrilling possibilities of essay writing. In conversation with **Kate de Goldi**.





KATARAINA: BECKY MANAWATU

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 12.30–1.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

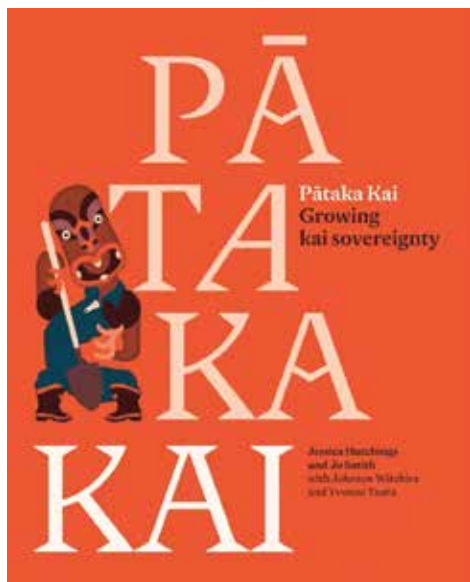
Hear from one of our most significant contemporary voices. *Kataraina* is **Becky Manawatu's** (Ngāi Tahu) highly-anticipated follow-up to her Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction winning bestseller *Auē*. An evocative novel written with attentive delicacy and steeped in the natural world, Manawatu's writing is as intensely beautiful as it is diamond hard as she revisits unforgettable characters from *Auē*. She joins **Nic Low** (Ngāi Tahu) in conversation.

CATHERINE CHIDGEY: THE BOOK OF GUILT ((•))

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 2–3PM
THE PIANO, \$25/\$20*

Unquestionably the author of the moment on an international scale. **Catherine Chidgey's** *The Book of Guilt* sparked an international bidding war, with the winning publisher praising the book as one of the most memorable and haunting experiences of his reading life. Set in a chilling, alternative 1979 England it's an unforgettable page turner. She joins **Kate Camp** for an unmissable conversation.





PĀTAKA KAI: GROWING KAI SOVEREIGNTY

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 2.30–3.30PM
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ
\$25/\$20*

It's time to take charge of how we grow our kai. Compiled with Indigenous researchers, verified hua parakore farmers and food activists, food sovereignty leader **Jessica Hutchings** (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Huirapa, Gujarati) *Pātaka Kai: Growing Kai Sovereignty* celebrates and encourages a return to Indigenous values and practices to help protect the planet and fight climate change. She joins **Jackie Burrows** (Ngā Puhī) Chief Executive of He Waka Tapu in conversation.

With support from the Ngāi Tahu Research Centre



THE ROMANCE OF FANTASY: ANDREA EAMES & RACHAEL CRAW

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 2.30–3.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

Two spellbinding storytellers **Andrea Eames** (USA) and **Rachael Crow** share insights into their captivating fantastical worlds. Crow's *The Lost Saint* is a heart-pounding time travel romantic fantasy, and Eames' cosy fantasy *A Harvest of Hearts* was an instant UK *Sunday Times* bestseller. Discover the magic behind their stories as they join **Rachael King** in conversation.

GILBERT ENOKA: BECOME UNSTOPPABLE

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 4-5PM
THE PIANO, \$25/\$20*

Unlock your winning mindset with **Gilbert Enoka**, the visionary psychological coach behind the All Blacks' unparalleled success. Enoka will share his insights into the All Blacks' blueprint for high performance with essential lessons for building unshakeable resilience, fostering a winning team culture and honing leadership skills. Discover his game-changing strategies to gain a competitive advantage in all aspects of life and work. In conversation with **Phillip Borell** (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Tūwharetoa).

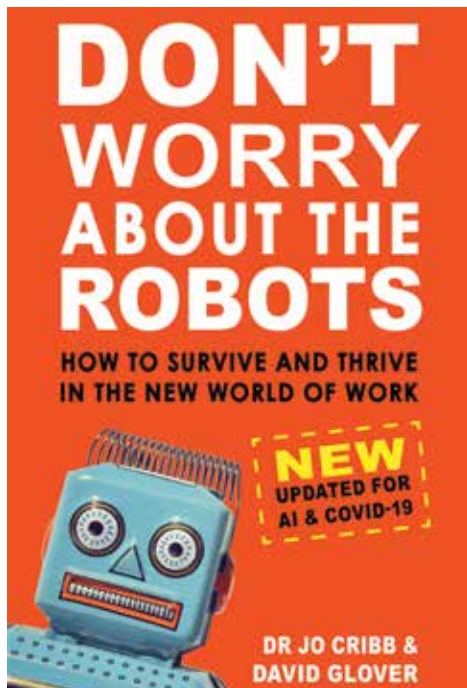


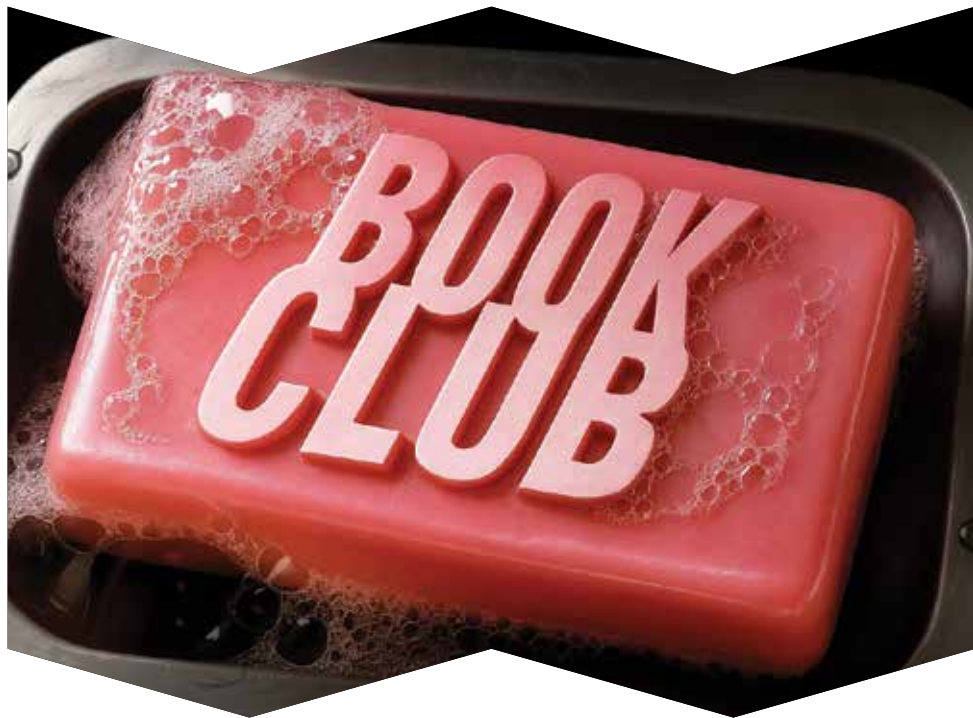
JO CRIBB: DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE ROBOTS

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 4.30-5.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

Love it or loathe it, Artificial Intelligence isn't going away anytime soon. In her book *Don't Worry About the Robots*, business consultant, and former Chief Executive for the Ministry of Women, **Jo Cribb** explores how AI is transforming jobs and entire industries. How do we manage through such disruption? Cribb provides essential insights and strategies for adapting to the future of work and navigating technological shifts. In conversation with **Susie Ferguson**.

With support from Empire9





ATHOLL ANDERSON THE WELCOME OF STRANGERS (◀▶)

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 6–7PM
THE PIANO, PWYC - PAY WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD

The dynamics of an evolving southern world are mapped by distinguished archaeologist **Atholl Anderson** (Ngāi Tahu) in a new edition of his groundbreaking 1988 book *The Welcome of Strangers: A History of Southern Māori*. Anderson is joined by fellow Ngāi Tahu historians **Michael Stevens** (Ngāi Tahu), **Te Maire Tau** (Ngāi Tahu), and **Helen Brown** (Ngāi Tahu) in this session which introduces the book to a new generation of readers. Chaired by **Ross Calman** (Ngāti Toa, Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Tahu).

BOOK (FIGHT) CLUB

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 7PM– 8.30PM
CLOISTERS STUDIO, THE ARTS CENTRE
TE MATATIKI TOI ORA, \$35 / \$15*

It's a book club.

It's a fight club.

It's a book fight club.

Eight books are welcomed into the literati ThunderDome to fight to the death for our entertainment. But first, we need to discuss them like the civilised consumers of culture that we are.

"...a rip roaring show of immense proportions!" *Theatreview*

"I laughed so hard at one point I nearly threw up." *Libel Music*

SCHOOLS

BOOK YOUR STUDENTS TO THESE SESSIONS BY EMAILING SCHOOLS@WORDCHRISTCHURCH.CO.NZ

BOOKS ALIVE! FOR PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS

FRIDAY 8 AUGUST, 10–11AM & 12–1PM
TE ARATAI COLLEGE, FREE

Join us to celebrate with finalists of the New Zealand Children and Young Adult Book Awards for a fun-filled celebration of reading, writing and creativity. Our special guests include **Rachel Clare, Jane Arthur, Kiri Lightfoot, David Riley, Rachael King** and **Juliette MacIver**. Come along and meet them all!

In partnership with the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults

INSPIRING MINDS: SECONDARY SCHOOLS DAY

THURSDAY 28 AUGUST, 10AM–2PM
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
TE WHARE WANANGA O WAITAHA, FREE

WORD is engaging and inspiring the future of Ōtautahi Christchurch with our free session for secondary school students across the motu. Our incredible line up includes poet **Dominic Guerrera** (Kaurna, Ngarrindjeri), New Zealand Poet Laureate **Chris Tse**, former All Blacks mental skills coach **Gilbert Enoka**, legendary writer and illustrator **Gavin Bishop** (Tainui, Ngāti Awa), Te Awhi Rito Reading Ambassador for Aotearoa New Zealand **Kate de Goldi**, animator and illustrator **Antony Elworthy**, fantasy novelist **Rachael Crow**, journalist **Conan Young**, with more to be announced.



"The story is irresistible,
and the photos are fabulous."

Steve Braunias, *ReadingRoom*



DUNCAN SARKIES: WRITERS AS EXPLORERS

MASTERCLASS

**SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 10.30AM–12PM
TŪRANGA, AUAHA HINI SPARK PLACE, \$55/\$50***

Developing a project can feel like being lost in the middle of the ocean. Not knowing where or how to start can sink projects before they begin. But beyond this uncertainty lies the joy of discovery, as you learn to build a map from your own mind and heart, and prepare to take your audiences on a journey. Award-winning writer **Duncan Sarkies** has navigated this process countless times, both individually and as a collaborator. He has also helped others through the stormy seas of this initial phase. Whether you come with a project in mind or seek a whole new direction, Duncan will help you demystify the process, offering tools for navigating the unknown, embracing uncertainty and discovering exciting, untapped stories.



BOOK BINDING WORKSHOP

**SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 10.30–1PM AND 2–4.30PM
TŪRANGA, FACILITATION SPACE, AUAHATANGA, \$5***

Join us for a hands-on workshop where you'll learn the art of bookbinding. Guided by knowledgeable Christchurch City Libraries staff, this session will take you through each step of the process. By the end, you'll have crafted your very own notebook to take home and enjoy. Bookings required.

CAXTON PRESS: SELF-PUBLISHING WORKSHOP

**SAUTRDAY 30 AUGUST, 1–2PM
TŪRANGA, AUAHA HINI SPARK PLACE, FREE
BOOKINGS REQUIRED**

Do you have a book project you'd like to self-publish? This workshop with Printabook book consultant **Jo Rusbridge** will guide you on your self-publishing journey. Looking at cost-effective and convenient ways to transform your writing into bookshop-quality books, you'll learn about setting up your manuscript, options for layout and design, and finally, the printing and binding process.



BRANNAVAN GNANALINGAM: HOW TO WRITE YOUR BOOK WHEN (THE REST OF) YOUR LIFE GETS IN THE WAY

MASTERCLASS

SATURDAY 30 AUGUST, 3–4.30PM
TŪRANGA, AUAHA HĪHI SPARK PLACE, \$55/\$50*

Is your life getting in the way of your writing? This masterclass will run through how to balance planning, research, drafting, and editing around your day-to-day life.

Brannavan Gnanalingam, the author of eight novels, and full-time lawyer will share practical tips on how to balance everything.

DAMIEN WILKINS: WRITING GRIEF

MASTERCLASS

SUNDAY 31 AUGUST, 10.30–12PM
TŪRANGA, AUAHA HĪHI SPARK PLACE, \$55/\$50*

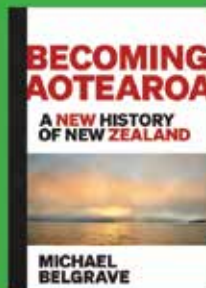
How can fiction approach grief? Sample writers such as Anne Enright, Raymond Carver, Patricia Grace and Anton Chekhov, and explore various ways fiction can dramatise moments of extreme personal loss. How can we give this universal experience a feeling of newness? How can we shape our fictional scenes to give grief emotional force on the page? Find out in this masterclass with 2025 Ockham New Zealand Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction winner **Damien Wilkins**.



THE NGAIO MARSH AWARDS & THE MURDEROUS MYSTERY

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER, 6–7.30PM
TŪRANGA, TAUTORU TSB SPACE, \$25/\$20*

As night falls at the 15th annual Ngaio Marsh Awards, something is afoot (and someone is dead). Help the Court Theatre's quick-witted **Court Jesters** solve this thrilling murder case, then we'll solve the mystery of which writers win the 2025 Ngaio Marsh Awards for Best Novel, Best First Novel, and Best Non-Fiction awards for Aotearoa New Zealand crime, mystery, and thriller writing.



Proud to be at
WORD 2025.

Super proud of
these books.



The Court Theatre's production of



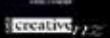
THE KING'S SPEECH

By David Seidler



20 Sept - 25 Oct 2025

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TOI TE MANA

AN INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF MĀORI ART

Deidre Brown and Ngarino Ellis, with Jonathan Mane-Wheoki



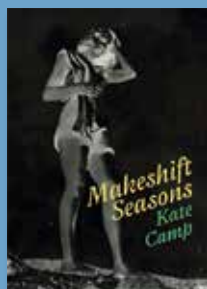
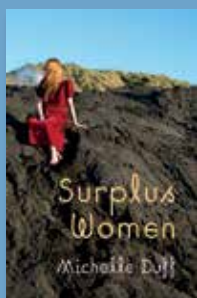
Winner — Ockham New Zealand Book Awards 2025

BookHub Award for Best Illustrated Non-Fiction

Photograph by LK Creative



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TE HERENGA WAKA
UNIVERSITY PRESS

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

HOW TO BOOK AND KEY INFORMATION

Booking: Tickets to all events are available via our website www.wordchristchurch.co.nz. We manage the ticketing for all events, excluding Book (Fight) Club, which is available to book through www.artscentre.org.nz. All tickets purchased are subject to booking and service fees. Please see our website for further details.

Keen to see as much of WORD as possible? We suggest buying a Multipass. Buy five tickets to any sessions you wish and receive 20% off.

As part of our commitment to inclusion and accessibility, **WORD is trialling Pay What You Can Afford pricing.** For selected events in our programme, you can choose to pay the amount you'd like. The minimum ticket price will show on the ticketing web page. Any amount you choose to pay above our usual ticket pricing helps us ensure other people are able to attend WORD events where cost can be a barrier.

Concession tickets are only available for students with ID, Hāpai Card holders, Gold Card holders and Community Services Card holders. Service fees are the same for all tickets.

If you are a **Hāpai Access Card holder** with a +1 symbol we are pleased to provide your companion a free ticket for festival events (excluding catered events).

If you require any assistance with seating requirements or need to make a wheelchair and/or companion booking please call the WORD Box Office directly on 020 410 29927 or email ticketing@wordchristchurch.co.nz. Calling hours are Monday - Friday 9am - 5.30pm.

Please consider giving a **donation to WORD** at the ticket checkout. You'll be helping us keep the festival going for years to come.

Several of our events in The Piano will be livestreamed and be available on-demand until Sunday 27 September. Look out for the ((📺)) symbol on events that have livestream tickets available.

Door Sales will be available at each venue for all sessions not already sold out from one hour before the start time. Door sales may be strictly limited - we advise booking in advance of the festival to avoid disappointment. Door sales will be at the advertised ticket price plus service fees.

Free events have limited capacity, we advise arriving early to secure your seat.

The ticketing small print: Ticket prices are GST inclusive and subject to availability. General Admission events do not have allocated seating. Tickets are non-transferable between events. There are no refunds or exchanges on lost or stolen tickets. There are no exchanges or refunds on ticket price or service fees except as required by law. We reserve the right to not admit latecomers until a suitable point in the session.

Keep well. If you are unwell or have any COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home. We are a mask friendly festival. You are welcome to wear a mask to help you and those around you stay safe and confident to come to WORD events.

Things happen. WORD Christchurch reserves the right to change and update the schedule, speakers, or replace sessions. If this happens, changes will be advertised on the WORD website and on our social media channels. Where possible we will contact ticket holders directly - please make sure we have your correct email and phone number. In the event of a cancellation the ticket price will be refunded. There will be no postponements. Transaction/service fees are non-refundable.

Book signings by our writers will be at their discretion and will take place immediately after each event. You may bring your own copy, or buy one from UBS, our festival bookshop.

For all photo credits and for more information about each session and the artists involved please visit wordchristchurch.co.nz

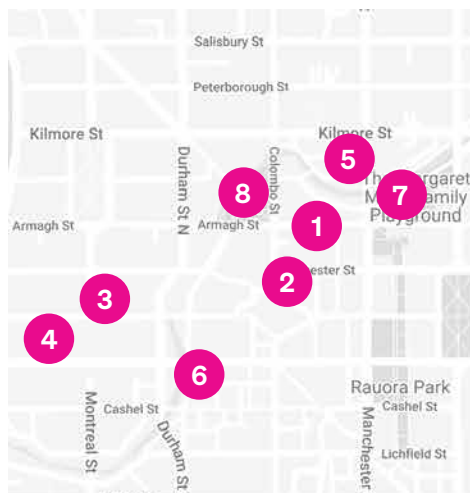
Keep in touch: Stay in the know by subscribing to the WORD Christchurch e-news on our website.

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TikTok @wordchch
X @wordchch

#wordchch



9 South of Central Christchurch

EVENT LOCATIONS

1. **The Piano**, 156 Armagh Street
Philip Carter Family Concert Hall, The Chamber
2. **Tūranga**, 60 Cathedral Square
Auaha Hihi Spark Place, Facilitation Space
Auahatanga, Tautoru TSB Space
3. **Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū**
Cnr Worcester Boulevard and Montreal Street
Philip Carter Family Auditorium, Foyer
4. **The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora**
Worcester Boulevard
5. **Edmonds Band Rotunda**, 230 Cambridge Terrace
6. **Little Andromeda**, Level 1, 134 Oxford Terrace
7. **Margaret Mahy Family Playground**
Cnr of Manchester and Armagh Streets
8. **Victoria Square**, Cnr of Colombo and Armagh Streets
9. **Te Ara Ātea**, 56 Tennyson Street, Rolleston

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FESTIVAL CALENDAR

The Piano Turanga Little Andromeda Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū Margaret Mahy Family Playground
Edmonds Band Rotunda The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora Victoria Square Te Ara Ātea

Saturday 9 August	
10.30AM - 2.30PM	Books Come Alive! P.5
Wednesday 27 August	
5PM	Lost the Plot! WORD Quiz Night P.6
6PM	
7PM	Word The Front Line High Schools Grand Slam P.6
Thursday 28 August	
6PM	Hot Mess: Navigating Midlife and Menopause P.7
7PM	Living Books - The Voices of Hip Hop P.7
8PM	Tom Sainsbury's Reading Enthusiasts Soirée P.8
Friday 29 August	
10AM	Michael Belgrave: Becoming Aotearoa P.8
11AM	
12PM	State of the Nation's Media P.9
1PM	Stories from the Manapōuri Hydro Project P.9
2PM	Diana Wichtel: Unreel P.10
3PM	Political Satire in the Capital P.10
4PM	Rachel Paris: See How They Fall P.11
5PM	
6PM	Charlotte Wood: Stone Yard Devotional P.12
7PM	Dream Dinner Party P.12
8PM	Cabinet of Curiosities P.13
9PM	Risky Woman P.13
	Ray Shipley's Late Night Poetry Hour P.14

Saturday 30 August						
10AM	Ōtautahi Zinefest P:14	Epic Adventures P:15	Gavin Bishop P:15	Duncan Sarkies: Writers as Explorers Masterclass P:32	Bookbinding Workshop P:32	
11AM						
12PM		Queens of Atmosphere P:16				P:16 StoryWalk
			Indigi-Joy P:17	This Band Could Be Your Life P:17		
1PM					Caxton Press: Self-Publishing Workshop P:32	
2PM		The Spinoff's Gone by Lunchtime P:18	Rangatahi Boogie P:18	Bookbinding Workshop P:32	In Praise of Gentle Fiction P:19	Toi Te Mana P:19
3PM		How to Write your Book...Workshop P:33				
4PM			Strong Minded: Ali Mau and Susie Ferguson P:20	I'd Love to have a Beer with Duncan P:20		
5PM						
6PM	Central Otago Couture P:21	Love at First Line P:22			Iti Noa Ana He Pito Mata - From The Withered Tree, A Flower Blooms P:21, Venue TBA	
7PM						
8PM		Confluence P:22				
Sunday 31 August						
10AM	Ōtautahi Zinefest P:14	Te Tiriti for Beginners P:23	The Power of Resilience P:23	Damian Wilkins: Writing Grief Masterclass P:33	The Fight for Freshwater P:24	
11AM						
12PM		A Ghost on Every Corner Walking Tour P:25	The Precipice of Possibility P:25	Kataraina: Becky Manawatu P:26		Inside the Trial of the Century P:24
1PM						
2PM					Catherine Chidgey: The Book of Guilt P:26	Pataka Kai: Growing Kai Sovereignty P:27
3PM			The Romance of Fantasy P:27			
4PM				Gilbert Enoka: Become Unstoppable P:28	Don't Worry about the Robots P:28	
5PM						
6PM					Atholl Anderson P:29	
7PM						Book (Fight) Club P:29

STUDY WRITING OR CREATIVE WRITING

UC is planning to introduce into the Bachelor of Arts an exciting new Major in Writing, alongside Minors in Writing and Creative Writing*. Whether you're passionate about crafting compelling stories, mastering communication, or exploring your creative voice, these subjects will equip you with the skills to bring your ideas to life. Learn more by visiting the Faculty of Arts page at canterbury.ac.nz.



*The new Major and Minors are subject to Te Pūkai Tara | Universities New Zealand CUAP approval, expected November 2025.