



**Welcome to the 69th edition of The Beacon**

### **Cloudy with a Chance of Chapters**

Well, here we are—already into March and bracing for a bit of wild weather with Cyclone Alfred on the horizon! If there was ever a perfect excuse to stay inside with a good book, this is it. While the wind howls outside, we hope you can find a little calm, adventure, and inspiration within the pages of a great story. The Lighthouse is always here to shine a light on literacy, creativity, and community—rain, hail, or shine.

We are releasing our newsletter a day early so you can curl up indoors and catch up on what's been happening, what's coming up, and all the ways you can get involved!

**A sneak peek into this edition:**

- **All things International Read to Me Day –**  
Mark it in your calendars for March 19th! It's an easy and meaningful way to engage with literacy.
- **Launching The Festival of Small Schools –**  
Celebrating the creativity and talent of small school communities.
- **John Collee's Screenwriters & Novelists Masterclasses –** Book now for this unmissable event with the acclaimed writer.
- **Celebrating a new published author! –** Huge congratulations to Jane Palmer from our Write Monday's Group on her book *The Great Animal Rescue - Operation Noah*.
- **Wrapping up Tarn McLean's *Seeing Painting* –** A stunning exhibition that invited students to rediscover the essence of painting and creativity.

Finally, a huge thank you for all the birthday wishes! It means the world to us to hear your kind words. We've shared some of your lovely messages below!



**International Read to Me Day  
March 19!**

On March 19, *The Lighthouse Toowoomba* is proud to join a global movement celebrating **International Read to Me Day**, advocating for daily reading aloud to children. This year, ten talented illustrators have generously contributed their artwork to help spread awareness and inspire participation.

International Read to Me Day is about making reading aloud a habit—one that strengthens literacy, deepens connections, and sparks imagination. Whether you're reading with your child at bedtime, sharing a story in a classroom, or gathering with a group of young listeners, every moment spent reading aloud makes a difference.

*How to get involved:*

- Read aloud to a child on March 19 (and beyond!)
- Encourage kids to ask someone to read to them
- Share your reading moments on social media using **#ReadToMeDay**
- Visit [www.readtomeday.com](http://www.readtomeday.com) for more information and resources

From Toowoomba to Tanzania, West Virginia to the world, people everywhere will be celebrating the power of storytelling. Join us in making a difference—one story at a time.



## 'Seeing Painting' is open!

**Artist - Tarn McLean**

Art Teachers don't miss this opportunity to bring your senior art students to this exhibition!

[BOOK HERE](#) for your private Artist Q&A.

You are invited to step into a world where the act of painting itself becomes both subject and inquiry. In an era dominated by digital imagery and fleeting visual content, this series asks: What does it mean to paint today? What truths can be explored through the slow, deliberate process of making art when digital culture prioritises immediacy and manipulation?

Designed to engage young artists and art enthusiasts, this exhibition challenges viewers to reconsider how they perceive and create.

This is more than an exhibition—it's an invitation to think differently about art's place and purpose in the 21st century.





Peer into the Publishing  
World!

One of our wonderful Write Monday's attendees Jane Palmer is a published author! Jane recently launched her much-awaited book *"The Great Animal Rescue - Operation Noah"* to an attentive audience amongst a beautiful setting in the local Darling Downs area of Ramsay. (How lovely is the range in the background!)

*The Great Animal Rescue - Operation Noah* is intended for all ages, appealing to young people interested in wildlife, Zimbabweans who recall the iconic story, and anyone curious about the conservation of animals.

The story is about saving wildlife in the Zambezi Valley, Africa when a great concrete dam was built causing extensive flooding. It tells of a team of men, who united over a passion to save animals.

Imagine a herd of elephants finding they can no longer travel their ancient path because a huge body of water has appeared blocking their way? But it is not just elephants, no animal is excluded from the rescue, from the tiny bush baby to the majestic sable, and, rarely seen, aardvark; from Frank's specialty—the snake—to the angry buffalo.

*The Great Animal Rescue - Operation Noah* The book is available for purchase at the website <https://www.amaipalmer61.com/>

Well done Jane on your first release. We anticipate there are more stories to come!

## Thank you for the Love

Just a little snippet (literally with the snip tool 😊) of the delightful messages we received upon turning 3! Thank you for all the kind well wishes and sentiments about what The Lighthouse is to you. It means the world!



## Painting Workshop with Dylan Cooper

### *Expressions of Interest*

#### **Senior Art Students - this is for YOU!**

Australian artist Dylan Cooper will be hosting a painting workshop for senior art students looking to level up their skills!

Through this hands-on experience, students will create two landscape paintings, focusing on light, shadow, and colour in an impressionistic style. Dylan will guide you through composition sketching, structural mapping, colour blocking, and final refinements—helping you develop a strong, finished piece.

#### **Term 2**



**Date:** Friday 2 May - 20 June 2025

**Location:** The Write Gallery @ The Lighthouse  
Toowoomba

**Time:** 3.30 - 5.30pm

**Cost:** \$250 (8 week art workshop)

**Fill in this form** to secure your spot!



*Maverick, and Melanie and Me*

## Out in The Wild

As you may recall we were thrilled to launch *Maverick*, a collaborative children's book dedicated to promoting sun-safety last November.

*Maverick* follows a group of childhood friends navigating the adventurous Invitational Melanoma Awareness Championship—a thrilling putt-putt golf course that teaches sun safety as they brave the Australian sun. The book was beautifully written by the Year 6 students of St Saviour's Primary School Toowoomba, under the guidance of Emma Mactaggart.

Ruth Logan (the powerhouse who started the project) snapped some kids enjoying *Maverick*



(and its sister title Melanie and Me, a sun-safety classic, re-released) out in nature!



## KIKI & MOO WORKSHOPS!

We are excited to be hosting Kiki&Moo in the gallery for the April holidays!

Kiki&Moo design and create the MOST beautiful leather goods, from clutches to earrings, tassels and keyrings and there is a workshop for literally EVERYONE.

Pick your preferred workshop below and follow the booking link!

Adult

workshop: <https://www.trybooking.com/CZNFN>

Mum's and bubs

workshop: <https://www.trybooking.com/CZRBC>

Teen

workshop: <https://www.trybooking.com/CZQHB>

Kids

workshop: <https://www.trybooking.com/CZRHP>



## Your name in Lights with Di Bates

Is there a budding author in your household? Author extraordinaire Di Bates is inviting Toowoomba kids (and beyond) to be involved in her latest writing project. With over 130 books published, this is a super opportunity. See her letter of invitation below!

*Hi there, friend!*

*Would you like to take part in a writing project? It's for a book called Winner! Winner! Winner! How to Be a Super Success. What I hope is that you (and your friends) will answer these questions below, and then to send them back to me [dibates@outlook.com](mailto:dibates@outlook.com).*

*What I intend to do with your answers is post them in my book with your first name and the initial of your last name. The answers don't have to be very long. And you will need to get your parents' permission to take part in this publishing project. So, here are the questions:*

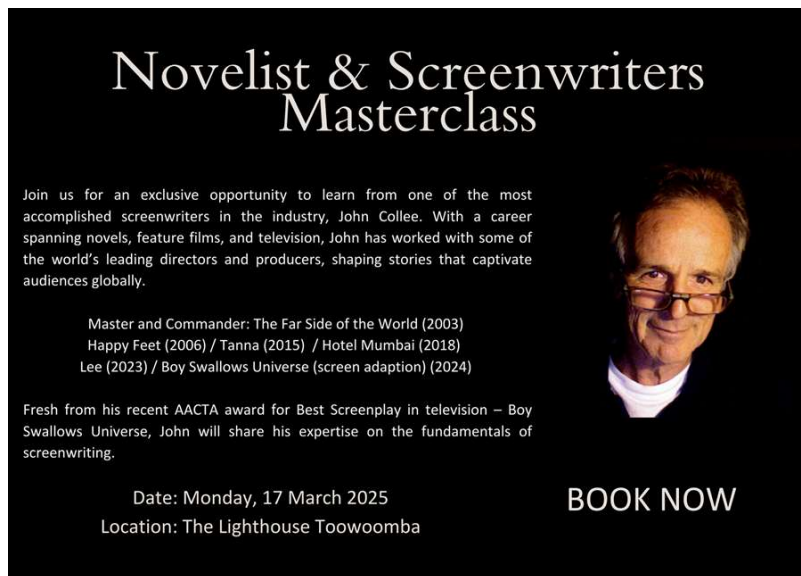
- 1. What's the best way to get on with people?*
- 2. What do you do when things go wrong?*
- 3. What do you do when your parents annoy you?*

4. *What are some achievements in your life so far?*

*Thank you so much for helping me! (I will reply when you send me your email)*

*PS: Here's some information about me:*

Di is a children's author who has written about 150 books, mostly for children (some for adults) and has been writing for about 30 years. If you would like to learn more about Di click [here](#)



**Novelist & Screenwriters Masterclass**

Join us for an exclusive opportunity to learn from one of the most accomplished screenwriters in the industry, John Collee. With a career spanning novels, feature films, and television, John has worked with some of the world's leading directors and producers, shaping stories that captivate audiences globally.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (2003)  
Happy Feet (2006) / Tanna (2015) / Hotel Mumbai (2018)  
Lee (2023) / Boy Swallows Universe (screen adaption) (2024)

Fresh from his recent AACTA award for Best Screenplay in television – Boy Swallows Universe, John will share his expertise on the fundamentals of screenwriting.

Date: Monday, 17 March 2025  
Location: The Lighthouse Toowoomba

**BOOK NOW**

Something very special for budding screenwriters and authors!

**Monday, 17 March 2025 | The Write Gallery**

We still have **spots available** for our exclusive opportunity to learn from one of the most accomplished screenwriters in the industry, John Collee. With a career spanning novels, feature films, and television, John has worked with some of the world's leading directors and producers, shaping stories that captivate audiences globally.

**Session 1:** Adults | 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM | \$20

**Session 2:** Senior School Students | 11:00am - 12:00PM | Gold coin

\*Schools and carers may nominate students who would benefit most from this masterclass - please pass this on to your teachers!

For more information about John Colle click [here](#)

### Why Attend?

- Gain insider knowledge from an award-winning screenwriter
- Learn practical techniques to enhance your storytelling
- Understand how to craft compelling scripts for the film and television industry
- Ask questions and receive insights from a master of the craft

This is a rare chance to learn from one of the best in the business. Spaces are limited, so secure your spot today!

1. [Adult Session Booking link](#)
2. [Student Session Booking link](#)



## Science + Sorcery Club

Calling all young writers aged 13-17! If you love sci-fi, fantasy, and creating incredible worlds, the



**Science + Sorcery Club** is for you.

**Thursdays| Term 1 (until 27th March) | 5:00 –  
6:30pm | Free**

**Book Here**



## **Friends in High Places!**

We know not one, not TWO of the fabulously talented creatives and friends of The Lighthouse who have made the short list for **CBCA Book of the Year 2025**.

The most sincere congratulations to the **marvellous Matt Ottley** and the **luminous Lucia Masciullo** for this achievement. We are sitting in the stalls as very proud pals watching your success, and loving that you remind us always to support ALL authors, irrespective of being on the list or not!



**Oh the power of possibilities when you call  
on your community!**

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School in Toowoomba reaped what they sowed when they asked families to donate any unwanted books to give to us! A literal tower of possibilities was wheeled into us and we are so grateful. **Thank you to Our Lady of Lourdes** and all the wonderful families who donated.

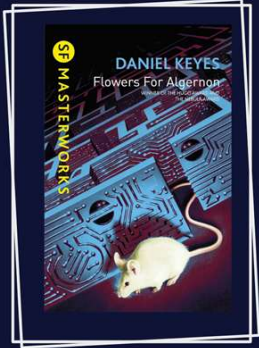



Another enormous shout-out to **Trevor and Nadia O'Neil**, who spent their weekend at the *Lifeline Bookfest* collecting hundreds of books for The Lighthouse! Their generosity and effort mean that more children will have access to stories that inspire and educate. We are so grateful for your support—thank you for thinking of us!

## Toowoomba's Biggest Book Club

Hosted by local prize-winning author Thomas Alan

Have you ever been curious about book clubs?  
This is your chance to see one in action, and get involved!



Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes  
The Lighthouse Toowoomba, 126 Margaret Street  
Sunday 30th March 3:00pm to 5:00pm

- What to do? Read the book, and come along...
- Bring: a gold coin!
- Expect: to be grouped with other curious readers, and the conversation will be facilitated by Thomas.
- Why: to be part of a book club, and perhaps find other book lovers who would happily be involved again!

[BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL](#)

If you love reading but haven't yet ventured into the sci-fi genre, this is the perfect opportunity! The best book club reads are the ones that spark conversation, and ***Flowers for Algernon*** is a thought-provoking classic that does just that.

Originally a short story by Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon* was later expanded into a novel and published in 1966, winning the **Nebula Award for Best Novel**. The story follows Charlie Gordon, a man with an intellectual disability who undergoes an experimental procedure to enhance his intelligence—an operation first tested on a laboratory mouse named Algernon. Told through Charlie's progress reports, the novel explores themes of intelligence, human dignity, and the ethical dilemmas of scientific advancement.

Despite being a widely studied literary work, *Flowers for Algernon* has also faced controversy, with attempts to ban it from schools and libraries. Nevertheless, it remains a powerful and moving



novel that has been adapted for film, television, and theatre—most notably as the **Academy Award-winning film *Charly***.

The book is a quick read, so don't let the timeline hold you back. Pick up a copy and join the discussion!

**[Interested? Book today!](#)**

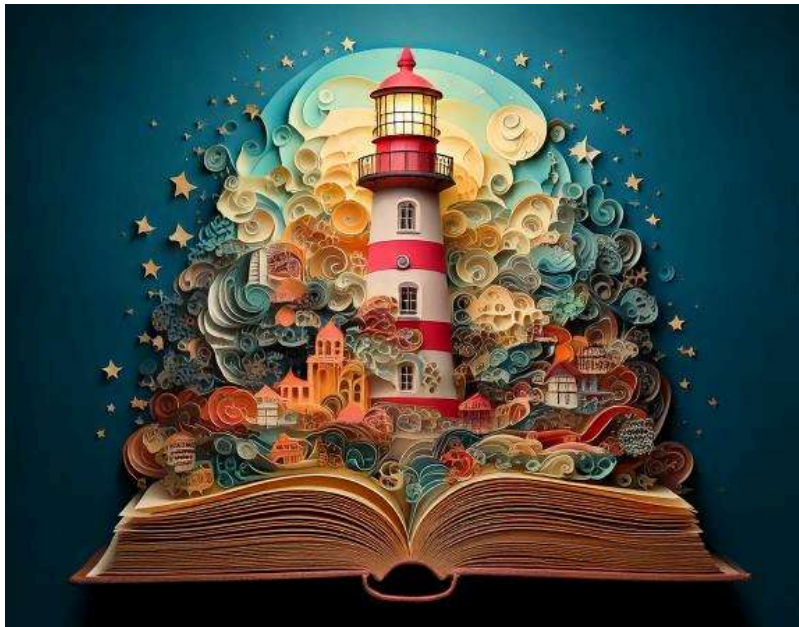


## **Join the Twinkles Reading Program**

**Volunteers Wanted! Needed! Appreciated!**

Love books? Help inspire a love of reading in young children by volunteering with our **Twinkles Reading Program**. Give just an hour a week to make a lifelong impact.





## DATE CLAIMERS (got your diary handy?)

March 17 - Screenwriters & Novelists  
Masterclasses for [Students](#) and [Adults](#)

March 19 - [International Read to Me Day](#)

March 19 - The launch of [The Festival of Small Schools](#)

March 30 - [Toowoomba's Biggest Book Club](#)

April (School Holidays) – [Kiki & Moo Leathercraft Workshops](#)

Term 2 – [Dylan Cooper Painting Workshop](#) (EOI for senior art students)

May 14 - [Book Links Narelle Oliver Lecture](#),  
Brisbane

May 22-24 - Sydney Writers Festival 'Live and Local' at The Empire



## Our Mission Stays the Same

We're still shouting it from the rooftops—every child in Australia should have the confidence to read, write, and create! This belief is at the heart of everything we do.

The Lighthouse is supported by *The Child Writes Fund Ltd*, a registered charity. Donations over \$2 are **tax deductible!** [Donate Here](#)





The Lighthouse Toowoomba  
126 Margaret Street, Toowoomba, 4350

We acknowledge the First Nations storytellers of the land on which we work and tell our stories. We respect the ongoing relationships with water, land, and story by the people of this place, their elders, their ancestors, and their emerging leaders. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

If you wish to unsubscribe from our newsletter please use the button below or email us at [hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org](mailto:hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org)

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