

Subject: Newsletter The Beacon #42

Date: Friday, 9 February 2024 at 6:34:02 pm Australian Eastern Standard Time

From: The Lighthouse Toowoomba

To: Emma Mactaggart

You don't often get email from hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

2024 - The year already is
getting better by the
moment...



Welcome to Week 4 for 2024 at The Lighthouse Toowoomba

Here we are into our fourth week, fully immersed into all the creativity and fun of everything that is Term One!

Our first exhibition for 2024 is underway and it is wonderful to see The Write Gallery abuzz again with art and audiences.

Matt Ottley's incredible *The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness* exhibition opened in Toowoomba to a full house on Thursday 1 February, where his film adaptation, of the book by the same name, was screened at

The Strand Cinema, prior to the opening night of his exhibition at The Write Gallery.

The response to Matt's work has been both immense, one attendee at the opening night commented, *"It was a profound and moving experience and offered beautiful insight into complex mental health and Matt's creativity. His incredible works and message are so important towards breaking down attitudes around mental illness in the community."*

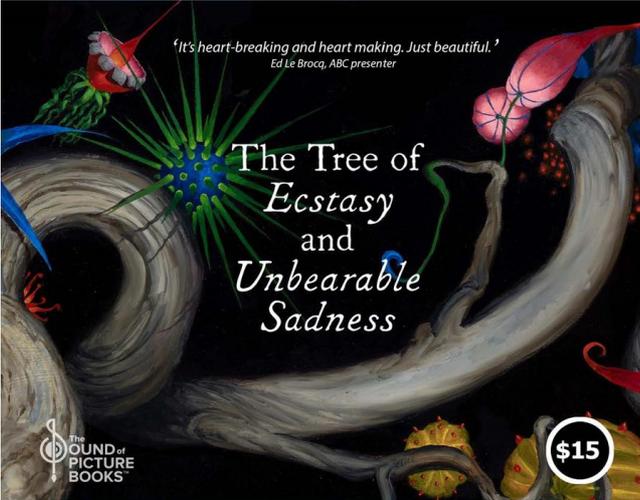
Fellow synaesthete, and local artist, Sandy Pottinger has written a beautifully articulate review of Matt's exhibition - we have shared below. We encourage you to take the time to read her words, which are on par with the exquisiteness of Matt's work.

Every secondary school in the region has been invited to bring their senior students to the gallery for this important insight into mental illness, and the art processes Matt uses to start the conversation. Thank you to Flexi School, Oakey State High, and Toowoomba Anglican School for joining us in the coming weeks. If you are reading on behalf of a school, [there is still time to book a time that suits](#)

And our other workshops are filling up quickly and despite being underway we still have some spots available. If you, or your children have creativity juices that need an outlet why not reach out to us
hello@thelighthousetoowoomba.org.au

and get involved, or swing by our website and book now for HELLO Club (Literacy for Kids program on Mondays, Illustration and Art Classes on Tuesdays, and Sorcery + Science Club on Thursdays.

SPECIAL EVENT
WEDNESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2024, 5:30PM



'It's heart-breaking and heart making. Just beautiful.'
Ed Le Brocq, ABC presenter

The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness

The SOUND of PICTURE BOOKS

\$15

FILM SCREENING | EXHIBITION VIEWING AND Q&A WITH MATT OTTLEY

The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness is a groundbreaking, large-scale multi-modal project weaving together the worlds of literature, music and visual art in the poignant story of one boy's journey into mental illness. A lifetime in the making and five years in the creating, this astonishing work by award-winning artist/author/composer Matt Ottley is a magnum opus in every conceivable way.

THE STRAND CINEMA, 163 MARGARET ST, TOOWOOMBA

BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL WWW.THELIGHOUSETOOWOOMBA.ORG/THE-WRITE-GALLERY

This project was made possible by the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, provided through Regional Arts Australia, administered in Queensland by Flying Arts Alliance.



Following the success of the first screening we are so excited to announce that on **THURSDAY 28th FEBRUARY** at 5:30pm there will be a second screening of the film at The Strand Cinema, followed by a short performance and Q&A at The Write Gallery.

Don't miss the opportunity to see Matt's incredible work on the big screen. **[BOOK NOW!](#)**

The exhibition is open Tuesday -
Saturday 10am to 3pm, or by
appointment, until the 29th February.

If you are curious to discover more:

- [ABC Podcast](#) All in the Mind 30min
podcast – “What Psychosis feels
like: The Tree of Ecstasy and
Unbearable Sadness”
- And the [Film trailer](#)

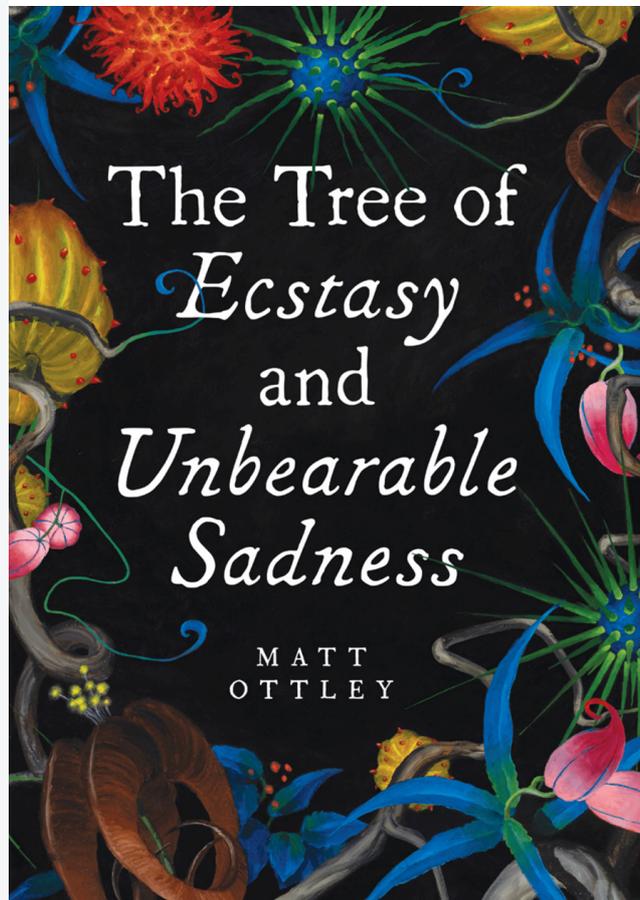
**The exhibition is open to the public
until 3pm on Thursday 29 February.**

*This project was made possible by the Australian
Government’s Regional Arts Fund,
provided through Regional Arts Australia,
administered in Queensland by Flying Arts Alliance.*

FLYING ARTS
ALLIANCE INC



**REGIONAL
arts
AUSTRALIA**



The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness - Matt Ottley

A review by Sandy Pottinger

The Lighthouse complex, which includes the Write Gallery, is a safe place. It is a sanctuary which celebrates difference through inclusion, acceptance and understanding. It offers the opportunity for open discussion, it is a catalyst for growth and awareness, as well as the exchange of information. It also encourages and promotes children's literacy by offering writing workshops, book readings, and storytelling, and holds exhibitions that are odes to the art of book illustration.

The current exhibition, "The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbelievable Sadness", is an inter-modal experience of profound emotion. It presents the illustrations that shape the eponymous book against a background of specially written music. Time should be invested to read the detailed didactic panels as these reflect the artist's voice that defines the narrative and shares the creative process in the weaving of the story. The protagonist, a young boy tormented by an internal, and growing despair, adopts the persona of a bird and flies over the landscapes of the world seeking beauty. What he finds, in coming to terms with his demons, is a message of hope that is universal. It is a seamless link to Emily Dickinson's little poem that begins:

“Hope is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul-

And sings the tune without the words-

And never stops - at all -...”¹.

“The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness” is a multi-winged opus that has been created, nurtured, developed, and finally set free by artist, writer, musician, and film maker, Matt Ottley. This gentle, humble, yet fragile human being is surely a national treasure.

Throughout his life Ottley has experienced the crippling isolation of mental illness. Undiagnosed for many years the little boy, then adolescent, and now man has fought his battle in a private, fearful, and often lonely juggling act of survival. Today he has a name for his illness: bipolar disorder. It is now mostly managed, and he has strategies in place to balance the mood swings, although he has to occasionally contend with psychotic episodes.

Writing and illustration have been an essential part of Ottley’s safety net. These he has now combined with music, gloriously orchestrated to circle the visualisation of his words with warm, sometimes strident colour interposed with jagged shard-like forms of noise in harmony.

“The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbelievable Sadness” tells the story of a boy consumed by the growth of a seed

deep within him.

The seed becomes a tree whose flowers offer ecstasy but whose fruit garners sadness. Graphic, painful, yet curiously reassuring, the story of discovery gradually unfolds in an epic fairy story that is both fierce and comforting. The boy, transformed into a bird, discovers a curious city. He visits an ornate cathedral-like palace ruled by a despotic sovereign, an embodiment of corrupt power and merciless control. The sovereign, whose intestines are inflated with the fetid effluence of negativity, has an outside toilet attached to the palace walls and supported by thin chicken leg stilts in true Baba Yaga style. She banishes the boy-bird, sentencing him to fly far and wide seeking beauty.

Ottley's illustrations capture the magic of flight, the wonder of the world. Light and shade and elongated shadows form patterns of experience and celebrate the majesty of nature. The boy in the story mirrors this sense of awe but also feels the haunting, yet fleeting quality of beauty. There is war and capitulation, endings and beginnings. The boy acknowledges that the tree that lives within him is part of his human condition, partly ecstasy and partly sadness. Its branches and roots may torment and embrace, yet they also bear flowers and fruit.

Ottley's music takes the viewer-participant to new levels of consciousness. The Brno Philharmonic Orchestra combined with the Czech

Philharmonic Choir of Brno give vitality to Ottley's colourful score which carries the narrative through soaring rhapsodies and heart-breaking choral crescendos that evoke flight, spatial geometries, and a sense of resilience and hope that echo in the words of Albert Camus:

"In the midst of winter, I at last discovered that, there is in me, an invincible summer"².

Copies of the book "The Tree of Ecstasy and Unbearable Sadness" come with a CD of the music and are available at the Gallery, as are other publications by Matt Ottley. Read the book and listen to the music and be transported to a world of hope and love and belief in a future of possibilities.

Sandy Pottinger is a Toowoomba based artist and writer. She is a retired lecturer in Visual Arts from the University of Southern Queensland and was the art critic for the Toowoomba Chronicle, writing the Around the Galleries column for twenty-five years.

¹ "Hope is The Thing with Feathers" from The Complete Works of Emily Dickinson, Thomas A Johnson, Ed., Harvard University Press, 1999

² "The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays", Camus, A., Translated by Justin O'Brien, Vintage Books, New York, 1991, p 121.



ART THERAPY

Shadow Play



Join us for a free 2 hour session at
The Lighthouse in the Write Gallery
10am-12pm on Friday 16th of February.
Please register your interest via email
wendy@momentummentalhealth.com.au

Using shadows shading and light, participants will develop environments and characters to build a bridge between their inner and outer reality with Shadow Play.

We'll create non-verbal and verbal spaces for stories to unfold visually through active engagement, play and creative expression using mixed media.

Join us for the FREE two hour class.

Please register your attendance: wendy@momentummentalhealth.com.au





Talking with kids in Tanzania

Emma met Lameck Bagumya through International Read to Me Day! way back in 2016 when Lameck was still a student himself at Tabora's Boys School, and he organised an event to celebrate IRTMD.

He is now the Founder of the Bright Hope Reading Initiative and has published the work of two of the students. They shared their stories with Emma, and then asked questions about the process of writing.

The
LIGHTHOUSE
GUIDING CREATIVITY

\$162,060



Value of books
we have rehomed

Number of events in
The Write Gallery

37



576



Number of
workshops we
delivered,
worth \$201,600



Number of people we have
worked with to 905,
and the number
of children

4,699

Volunteer gifted hours

4293.6

64%

At least one student
from 53 schools out of
83 in the region have
visited



Value of volunteer hours

\$323,771

As at Wednesday 23 November 2023



Beyond Illustration and Art Basics

Are you aged 8-12 and interested in
illustrations we still have availability
at term pro rata rates! If you are
interested in joining please email
[hello@thelighthousewoomba.org](mailto:hello@thelighthousewoomba.org.au)
.au

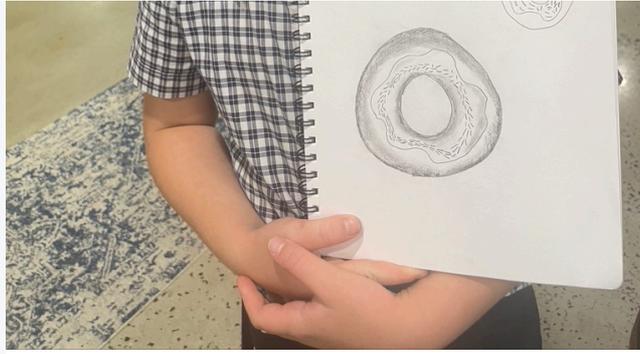
This workshop develops art skills with the use of colour, design and perspective. Illustrating characters, designing background and settings, using a variety of art media will assist in developing individual style in illustration, drawing and painting for many applications.

Are you keen to improve your drawing skills, create characters with personality and appeal, or simply increase your confidence in your art abilities? Step inside the world of an illustrator and receive step-by-step guidance in drawing and illustration techniques in a fun and supportive environment.

Term Fees: \$175 and includes 7 full comprehensive 1.5hr workshops and ALL materials. To book simply click this [LINK](#)

The workshops only started on Tuesday 6 February 2024 3:45-5:15pm (and run for 7 weeks until Tuesday 19 March 2024) so it is not too late to join in!





UPCOMING EVENTS FEBRUARY 2024



1-29

The Write Gallery
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

THE TREE OF ECSTASY AND UNBEARABLE SADNESS

The exhibition, featuring more than 70 artworks, is a masterful allegorical tale that weaves together literature, music, and visual art, presenting a poignant story centred around mental health and self-discovery.
Open Tues - Sat 10am to 3pm or by appointment

MONDAYS

FREE starting Monday 5th
3:30PM TO 5:00PM

HELLO CLUB

For children aged between 7 and 15. Supervised and supported sessions using tablets to access the award-winning Literacy for Kids! Program.

FRIDAYS

For little book lovers
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

TWINKLES...

Volunteer readers each week share stories with toddlers in our One-Way Library. Share a book, take books home - creating a love of reading.

INFORMATION ABOUT MORE FREE WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

www.thelighthouse.toowoomba.org
126 Margaret Street, Toowoomba CBD



GET YOUR STORY STARTED
KEEP YOUR STORY GOING

*It was a ~~dark and~~
the first time ~~that~~
they'd have ever
~~gone enrolled~~
attended a writing
~~group~~ workshop.
The room was empty
except for ~~light~~*

CREATIVE WRITING SESSIONS
FOR ADULTS
With Tanya Vessey
REGISTER TO SECURE YOUR SPOT
4X SESSIONS FOR \$100
****Limited Places****

We do genuinely support adult writers as well! Not only do we host Write Mondays - an initiative of the Queensland Writers Centre, we have workshops designed to inspire and ignite your inner writer. Often for adults it is about discovering you do indeed have the courage to share your story.

Get Your Story Started | Keep Your Story Going

With the astute facilitation by Tanya Vessey, participants will learn:

- To tap into their creativity with writing activities.
- Transform thoughts into action with story-telling elements across four sessions.
- Identify the foundation of the creative process including strengths and areas for development.
- Address how to navigate writing challenges with a positive mindset and self-knowledge.

Click the image above for the booking link!



HELLO CLUB!

Homework | Education | Literacy |
Learning | Outcomes

*Free access to LITERACY FOR KIDS
here at The Lighthouse.*

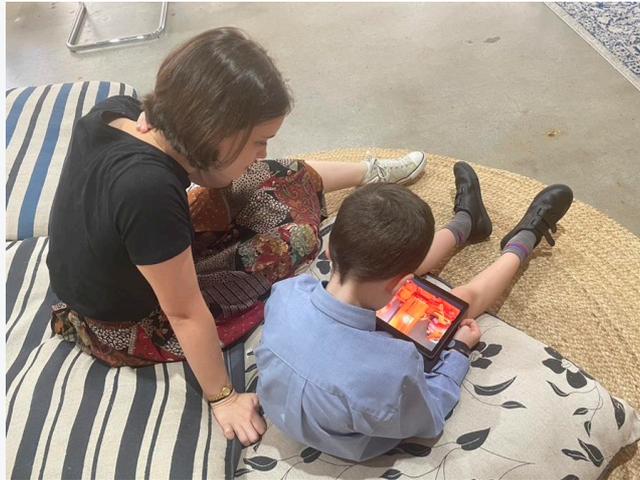
Attendees will be able to work through
the program from Levels 3 to 15 at
their own pace, with the guidance and
support from our fabulous volunteers.

**We have 10 subscriptions to 10
tablets, and for 8 weeks, 10 children
aged between 7 and 15 can come to
The Lighthouse Toowoomba on
Monday afternoons to work through
the program.**

Literacy For Kids is an online
interactive program making it fun for
kids to learn to read and write. LFK
aligns with the Australian curriculum
and provides every teacher with
powerful analytics to support students
on their learning journey.

With more than 1400 activities featuring video, music and imagery, LFK is the ideal classroom program that captures interest and supports student learning.

[Bookings open now](#)



SCIENCE & SORCERY CLUB

WORLD BUILDING INSPIRING ASPIRING WRITERS

THURSDAYS TERM 1 2024 5PM-6:30
\$120 PER TERM INCLUDING ACCESS TO MENTORING SESSIONS

Create unique characters and wildly imaginative settings to make your story ideas come alive, particularly for those interested in science fiction and fantasy.

www.thelighthouseotoowoomba.org



Science + Sorcery Club

Tim Hunter is a qualified editor, has published his first novel AND spent all of last year facilitating the World Building workshops. Now, for 2024 he

has devised a really clever version of workshops whereby the Science + Sorcery Club is open to all for only \$120 per term and as the young aspiring writers develop their manuscripts, they can option mentoring sessions for FREE. This is a generous and thoughtful format, and is best suited to secondary school students.

Students will be guided in creating unique characters and wildly imaginative settings to make story ideas come alive, particularly for those interested in science fiction and fantasy. These genres give us a chance to imagine stories, alternatives, speculate on the impossible, or simply ask: what if? Untangle the ideas to create great backdrops for stories, homes for heroes and villains, or exciting settings for role playing games, like Dungeons & Dragons.

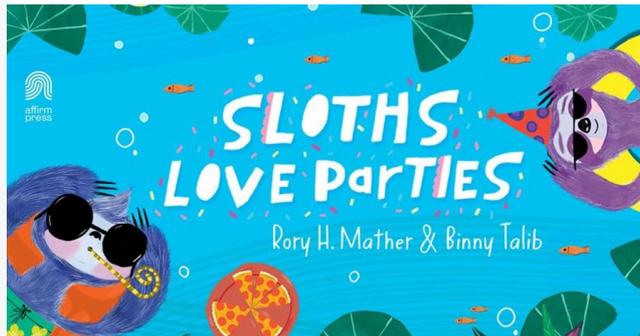
All members of the Sorcery + Science' Writers Club are welcome to access Tim's mentoring sessions FREE. These sessions are held on the same day as Club, 3:30pm to 4:30pm. Students are welcome to use a hot desk to write more after the mentoring session and then attend Club 5:00pm to 6:30pm.

Interested? [Book directly to secure your spot!](#)

'Science + Sorcery' Writers Club starts on Thursday 1st February, 5:00 to 6:30pm, for 8 weeks (until Thursday 21st March) with mentoring available 3:30pm to 4:30pm on the same day as Club!

The cost is \$120 per person per term
and includes access to the FREE
mentoring sessions.

Book launches, events, and more



Rory H Mather is quickly becoming a true superstar in the children's book world, and we are so excited to celebrate his 10th book launch with an event at The Lighthouse Toowoomba as he introduces 'Sloths Love Parties'.

**Saturday 10th February 10:00 to
11:00am**

There will be:

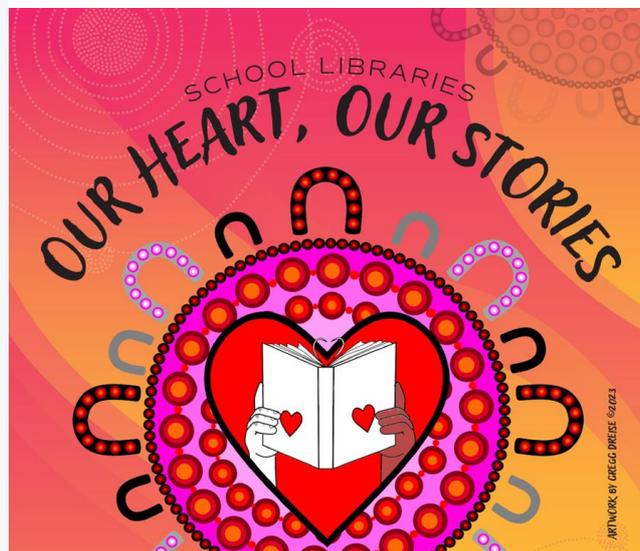
- Storytime
- Craft
- Author Q&A
- and CAKE!!!!

Click the image to roll straight to
Facebook events for more information.



FREE WORKSHOP FOR ONE LUCKY CLASS...

Author Suzanne Leal is here in Toowoomba and at The Lighthouse for an author talk for one very lucky school group on Monday 18th March. If a teacher is reading this and 'bags' the FREE session, please contact us asap hello@thelighthouse.toowoomba.org. Note, pop 'Suzanne Leal' in the subject!



 QUEENSLAND SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

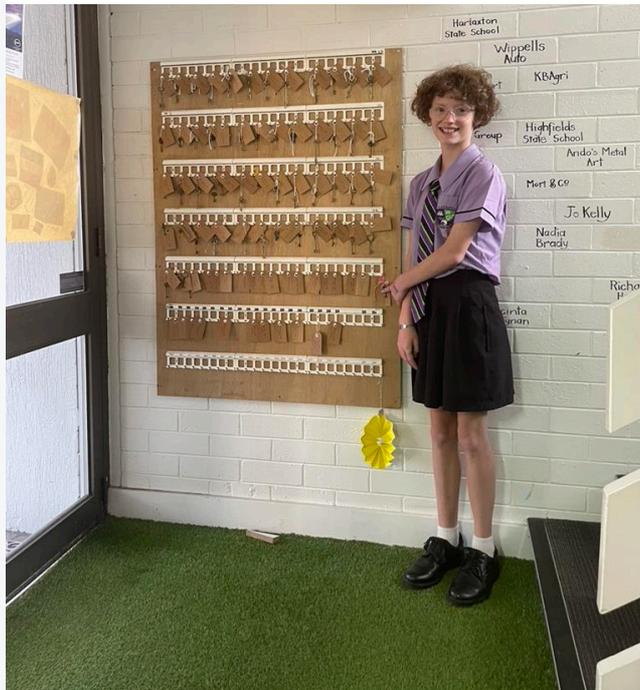
Queensland School Library Week
February 12-16, 2024





The Key to Literacy... The Key to The Lighthouse...

One thing we are super proud of is our key board, and this week, we met the first students to attend a workshop from Maridahdi and from Wilstonton High School. Our goal is that at least one child from every school in the Toowoomba area attends a workshop in our first three years of being open. If you zoom in, you will see the tags without keys. We are certainly getting there, because that's now 55 schools out of the 83...



HIGHFIELDS LIBRARY

Romancing the Page

Are romance novels your favourite sort of book?

Meet three authors who will share why they love writing romance novels and what they have to offer the modern reader. Romance novels are the highest selling fiction genre, so come along to celebrate all things romance writing.



**Romance
Writers of**
AUSTRALIA

**Friday 16 February
9am - 11:30am
Highfields Library
32 O'Brien Rd,
Highfields QLD 4352**



Very happy to pop this under your noses! Emma constantly raves about Words Out West, and next year's program looks fabulous:

Books & Bubbles

With Wendy Harmer

Friday 8 March

Dalby Events Centre

6.30–10pm

From \$90, packages available

Hear Wendy's frank, fearless and funny reflection on her unlikely and enduring success story.

[Find out more...](#)

Festival Day

Saturday 9 March

Dalby Events Centre

9am–6pm

From \$115, packages available

Featuring kingpin true crime novelist Michael Robotham, Everyone In My Family Has Killed Someone's Benjamin Stevenson, and more, this is one Words Out West event you don't want to miss.

[Find out more...](#)



Coming To The Gallery In March

Visual Conversations is a photography exhibition highlighting the courage, strength, and determination of women in our local community, with the goal of sharing stories of resilience and inspiring other women to find their inner voice.

Everyone has a story to tell, and it is the tapestry of these stories that make up our communities. Our stories have the power to transform our thinking and bring people of all walks of life together.

The portraits are each supported with the artist's reflection - an insight into the emotional and mental processes experienced when photographing such

raw and profound emotion.

Kat Lynn's EMPOWERING WOMEN
will be at The Write Gallery in March.
It's not to be missed!



EMPOWERING WOMEN
VISUAL CONVERSATIONS

ART PORTRAITS

SUNDAY 10TH AND 17TH OF MARCH

You become the masterpiece.
ONLY 14 exclusive sessions available
Immersed in the exhibition to fuel your creativity.

Your session includes
makeup artist,
bubbles,
20x30inch fine art print.

\$499



SETTING HEALTHY PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Register to attend this free 45min session



Setting Healthy
Personal Boundaries

Register your interest now at:

admin@momentummentalhealth.com.au

Thursday 14th of March from 11am

**The Lighthouse ~ The Write Gallery
126 Margaret Street**

*Healthy personal boundaries are the limits you place around your time,
emotions, body, and mental health to stay resilient, solid, and content with
who you are.*



Join us on Saturday March 9 for a Dream Board Workshop, run by Terri Adams-Munn from Ten Thousand Dreams.

Why make a Dream Board? It is well documented that writing out your goals and dreams increases the likelihood of achieving them, but being able to also SEE your goals and dreams multiplies that effect.

The process I lead you through while you create your Dream Board helps you engage more fully in the journey from fantasy to reality.

The more engaged you are, the easier it becomes to stay focused through the process of turning those dreams into reality.

After all, we think in pictures. When someone says 'yellow car', an image pops into your head rather than just the words (unless you see the word Spotto!). A Dream Board takes

advantage of that process and puts your dreams in front of you on a board so you can bring them into reality and actually live them.

Gosh... there's even a cheeky peek at something very wonderful for September... Shiny Happy Ideas Show... Curious?



Thank you...



A huge, heartfelt thank you to one of our regular wonderful volunteers Liz Newberry and her daughter Lucy White for the amazingly generous donation of beautiful, brand children's books. Lucy is a children's book reviewer (talk about a dream job) and she kindly passed on a boat load of the fantastic titles she

has had the privilege to read. Thank you Liz and Lucy we are so grateful and have grand plans for these beauties in the community.



NATIONAL CENTRE for
**AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE Inc**

Celebrating 50 years 11 - 15 March 2024

Another significant birthday!

We are immensely proud to have contributed to this extraordinary archive of children's literature. Dr Belle Alderman is quite simply the most magnificent person to deal with and she has let us know that 316 of the books in the Child Writes Collection out of the 385 have been catalogued.





One very last thing...

Did you know the The Child Writes Fund supports The Lighthouse! As a registered charity, and being included on the Register of Cultural Organisations, a tax deductible receipt for donations can be issued, and the focus then can be doing all we can to ensure 'every child in Australia reads, writes, and creates with confidence'.



Autumn

Seasonal Art Market - Artists Wanted

The Write Gallery - The Lighthouse Toowoomba
126 Margaret Street, Toowoomba CBD

3 - 23 May 2024

exhibitions : workshops : functions : exhibitions : workshops : functions : exhibitions : workshops : functions



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@thelighthousetoowoomba.org

[Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

