



The Wheeler Centre
Books Writing Ideas

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Media Release

Thursday 3 October

The Wheeler Centre appoints Gene Smith as Head of Programming

The Wheeler Centre is delighted to announce the appointment of Gene Smith as the organisation's incoming Head of Programming. The news was shared by The Wheeler Centre's CEO Erin Vincent at the opening night of their Spring Fling event series yesterday evening.

Gene was named Head of Programming following an extensive search and will return to Melbourne to take up the position, following a number of years spent working overseas.

Erin Vincent, CEO, The Wheeler Centre, shared her delight at Gene's appointment:

'Gene brings almost a decade of programming experience working with world-renowned artists, across a range of respected literary organisations. We are so excited to be welcoming Gene and can't wait for him to deliver his bold programming vision to our audiences.'

Gene joins Melbourne's Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas with a wealth of curatorial and programming experience both locally and abroad. His recent stint in Dubai saw Gene dually serve as the Head of Programming of the Emirates Literature Foundation and Associate Director of the foundation's Festival of Literature, where he hosted the likes of Bernardine Evaristo, Ben Okri, Curtis Sittenfield and Paul Lynch at this year's event.

Prior to his time in the UAE, Gene was the International Programme Consultant at the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival in Bali on the occasion of their 20th anniversary edition. Before departing overseas, Gene was Associate Director at the Melbourne Writers Festival from 2019-2022.

Ahead of his return to Melbourne, Gene Smith said: 'After some years abroad, I am thrilled to be returning to Melbourne – a city I love – to be the new Head of Programming at The Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas.'

'From packed-out shows featuring the world's most high-profile writers, thinkers, and storytellers to its public-spirited events and initiatives, The Wheeler Centre has always been a place to which people journey when in search of fresh insights, new connections, and captivating experiences.'

"I look forward to building on this tremendous legacy with Erin and the team by curating bold and imaginative programmes that resonate with existing audiences and invite new people into The Wheeler Centre's fold. Australia is a nation of stories, many of which go back tens of thousands of years, and it will be a privilege to help bring some of them to life in surprising and unforgettable ways."

wheelercentre.com

Trading as Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas
ABN 97 134 682 189



Melbourne
City of
Literature





Gene will assume the role of Head of Programming on Monday 11 November where he will join the current programming team in planning The Wheeler Centre's activity for 2025 and beyond.

The Wheeler Centre's month-long Spring Fling event series commenced this week, with an exciting roster of writers, musicians, actors, poets, creatives and comics – many appearing exclusively with The Wheeler Centre – bringing their wit, wisdom and words to audiences in Melbourne and statewide. Spring Fling runs through to 31 October.

– ENDS –

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Media centre

Images available [here](#)

Bio

Gene Smith is a cultural leader and producer with almost a decade of experience curating and delivering major international literary and ideas events.

Most recently, he has led the programming department at Emirates Literature Foundation in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he also assumed the role of lead curator and producer for Emirates Airline Festival of Literature, the Middle East's flagship celebration of books and ideas.

Previously, Gene was at Ubud Writers & Readers Festival in Bali, Indonesia to consult on the international programme for their 20th anniversary edition. And from 2019–2022, he was Associate Director at Melbourne Writers Festival.

He has produced over 1,000 events over the course of his career, helping countless writers and thinkers connect with audiences around the world in both live settings and across digital platforms, and has sat on peer assessment panels for grants and prizes, including for Creative Victoria and the prestigious Victorian Premier's Literary Awards.

The Wheeler Centre is Melbourne's home for smart, passionate and entertaining public talks, and exists to support writers, readers and thinkers. Through live and digital conversations, debates, readings, performances and discussions, it deepens public engagement with the most pressing topics of the day. It is dedicated to creative collaboration, community engagement, diversity, and innovation.