



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 29 July

Aussie icons Jelena Dokic, Bob Brown, Melissa Leong and Trent Dalton lead The Wheeler Centre's latest program of events



From Omar El Akkad's exclusive Melbourne appearance unpacking the global fractures behind his viral Gaza commentary, to Jane Harper's return with a gripping new outback noir, and Melissa Leong's candid memoir about identity and resilience, The Wheeler Centre's latest program offering spans politics, literature, sport and beyond. Highlights include an AFL Grand Final preview, the epic conclusion of Jay Kristoff's vampire saga, Bob Brown's reflections on a life of environmental defiance, and a live recording of Jan Fran and Antoinette Lattouf's razor-sharp new podcast, *We Used to Be Journos*.

QUOTE ATTRIBUTABLE TO ERIN VINCENT, CEO, THE WHEELER CENTRE: 'As we head into Spring, The Wheeler Centre's September and October program reflects the remarkable breadth of our work – from politics and literature to sport and storytelling. We are uniquely placed to deliver meaningful conversations that respond to what's unfolding in the world right now. Curiosity, empathy and robust public discussion are more important than ever and we're proud to provide audiences with the opportunity to hear from such a range of influential speakers.'

Sparked by his viral tweet during the bombardment of Gaza – viewed over 10 million times – **Omar El Akkad's** *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This* lays bare the fractures he has seen in the West's empty promises of freedom and justice. Appearing in Australia for the first time, the Egyptian-Canadian novelist and journalist speaks with **Tasneem Chopra** about how global upheavals – from Black Lives Matter to climate crisis and Middle East violence – have come to reshape his view of migration, power and inequality.



In this special live recording of the **Australian Story**, presented in partnership with the ABC, tennis champion **Jelena Dokic** speaks with **Leigh Sales** about her extraordinary journey from refugee to sports star, and the personal struggles that defined her life off the court. From surviving abuse and battling mental health challenges to rebuilding her life after sport, Dokic reflects with honesty and strength on how she transformed pain into purpose, found her voice and forged a new path to happiness.

Gold Logie-nominated TV personality and former *MasterChef Australia* judge **Melissa Leong** takes the stage at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins to reflect on her darkly funny, unflinchingly honest new memoir, *Guts*. Sharing stories of identity, racism, resilience and reinvention, Leong unpacks the experiences, people and meals that have shaped her – from the challenges of the hospitality industry to life in the public eye. Speaking with *Sunday Life*'s **Melissa Singer**, she'll discuss self-belief, vulnerability and the importance of doing things on your own terms.

The queen of outback noir, **Jane Harper**, returns with *One More Shot*, a gripping new novel about loss, secrets and what remains after a disappearance. With events at The Wheeler Centre in Melbourne and at the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre as a part of The Wheeler Centre's regional programming, the international bestselling author shares reflections from her remarkable career to date, her motivations behind writing this standalone novel and much more, in this unmissable event for crime enthusiasts and Harper fans alike.

As Donald Trump returns to power, his influence is already seeping into Australia – swaying public debate, emboldening local political and religious extremists, disrupting Australia's economy and complicating international relations. In this eye-opening edition of **The Fifth Estate**, former White House staffer **Kim Hoggard** and US political commentator **Bruce Wolpe** join **Sally Warhaft** to consider how Australian leaders have responded to Trump's leadership and offer expert analysis on how our elected officials should chart a path forward with this country's most important ally.

As Melbourne comes alive with footy fever in September, join an all-star panel of football experts to reflect on the year and preview the 2025 AFL Grand Final. Former Western Bulldogs champion **Bob Murphy**, award-winning journalist and broadcaster **Caroline Wilson**, and host **Barrie Cassidy** unpack the players, strategies and storylines set to define this year's season.

Tracee Hutchison hosts Stella Prize-winning author **Heather Rose** for an intimate evening at Montalto as she discusses her sweeping new novel, *A Great Act of Love*. Set in 1839 colonial Tasmania, the book follows a woman fleeing with a child and a devastating secret as she builds a life among exiles and opportunists. Over a two-course dinner, Rose will share the inspiration behind this rich tale of love, legacy and reinvention.

Beloved novelist and writer **Trent Dalton** appears in conversation with **Michael Williams** as he discusses his gritty, darkly funny and unexpected forthcoming release, *Gravity Let Me Go*. Centered on Noah Cork – a true-crime writer whose life begins to unravel just as he lands the scoop of a lifetime – this electrifying story explores ambition, truth and the redemptive power of love, all set against the backdrop of an approaching Brisbane storm.

Sunday Times-bestselling author **Jay Kristoff** returns with *Empire of the Dawn*, the gripping final instalment in his Empire of the Vampire trilogy. As Gabriel de León, stripped of family, faith and hope, embarks on one last quest for vengeance, Kristoff delves into the art of worldbuilding, the appeal of morally complex characters and the bloody thrill of making vampires evil once more.



Gamilaroi author and **Next Chapter** fellowship recipient **Luke Patterson** launches his electrifying debut poetry collection, *A Savage Turn* at The Moat in September. Patterson will discuss history, inheritance and drawing on a kaleidoscope of influences in the development of this powerful work.

To mark the release of his new book *Defiance*, former Greens leader **Bob Brown** shares powerful stories from a life spent on the environmental frontlines. Reflecting on the people, places and moments that have shaped his activism, he explores the challenges of resisting corporate influence, media spin and consumerism – and reveals how determination, community and hope can drive meaningful change. Hosted by **Jeff Sparrow**.

In the wake of a crushing 2025 federal election defeat, key Liberal figures gather for a frank discussion about the party's future. Alongside host **Patricia Karvelas**, former Member for Menzies **Keith Wolahan** and Bradfield candidate **Gisele Kapterian** will reflect on the challenges ahead, the significance of electing Sussan Ley as the party's first female leader, and what must change for the Liberals to remain relevant.

In this live recording of their sizzling new weekly podcast, *We Used to be Journos*, hosts **Antoinette Lattouf** and **Jan Fran** sit down to reveal the way the media works, from questionable editorial decisions that shape the news to the stories that masquerade as unbiased reporting. With a low tolerance for spin, they'll expose the hidden forces shaping the headlines to show how the media sausage gets made – and what audiences are really being fed. Presented in partnership with Ette Media.

Jan Fran will also join audiences for the next iteration of The Wheeler Centre's new **Bookish Club** in an afternoon of drinks, light fare and insightful literary conversation. Discussing *Erasure*, Percival Everett's witty, bold and merciless novel that raises questions about racial politics, identity, authorship, representation and the weight of cultural expectations.

At a special edition of *The Next Big Thing*, writers awarded a **2025 Hot Desk Fellowship** will share exclusive excerpts from their works-in-progress. Grab a drink and settle in at The Moat as host Pranati Narayan Visweswaran introduces **Jamil Badi, Libbie Chellew, Emma Clancey, Elliott McMahon, Katie Paine, Graham Panther, Bek Schilling** and **Rebecca Zhong**, for an evening of captivating storytelling – from dark satirical comedies to heartfelt coming-of-age narratives – along with insights into their creative practice.

Budding young writers are invited to unleash their imaginations in two hands-on storytelling workshops with acclaimed author **Nova Weetman**, presented in partnership with Warrnambool Library. Tailored for ages 8–10 and 11–14, these fun and practical sessions will explore how to create compelling characters, find great story ideas, choose the right point of view and overcome writer's block. Through interactive activities and expert tips, Weetman will guide participants on how to bring their stories to life and kickstart their own writing journey.

The **Australian Political Book of the Year Award** honours books that deepen our understanding of Australian politics and public policy. Last year's winner **Chris Masters** will join Walkley Award-winning journalist **Michael Bachelard** to discuss *Flawed Hero* and recent developments in the Ben Roberts-Smith case, before the 2025 shortlist is unveiled. Be among the first to discover the four outstanding titles in contention, as the pair explore the bold, timely and rigorously researched works that reflect the importance of strong political storytelling.

– ENDS –



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Media centre: Images available [here](#)

The full list of events and dates are listed below. For more information, please visit
wheelercentre.com/events

The Liberal Party: Where to from Here?

Keith Wolahan, Gisele Kapterian, Patricia Karvelas
6.30pm, Thursday 4 September
The Wheeler Centre

Luke Patterson: A Savage Turn

Luke Patterson
2.00pm, Saturday 6 September
The Moat

Australian Political Book of the Year Award: 2025 Shortlist Announcement

Chris Masters, Michael Bachelard
6.30pm, Monday 8 September
The Wheeler Centre

What Trump's Second Term Means for Australia

Kim Hoggard, Bruce Wolpe, Sally Warhaft
6.30pm, Wednesday 10 September
The Wheeler Centre

Australian Story: Leigh Sales with Jelena Dokic

Jelena Dokic, Leigh Sales
7.00pm, Thursday 18 September
Fed Square

We Used to Be Jounos: Live

Antoinette Lattouf, Jan Fran
6.00pm, Saturday 20 September
The Wheeler Centre

Bookish Club with Jan Fran

Jan Fran
2.30pm, Saturday 20 September
The Moat



Nova Weetman: Kids' Writing Workshop (Ages 8–10)

Nova Weetman

2.30pm, Monday 22 September

Warrnambool Library

The Next Big Thing: Hot Desk 2025 Edition #2

Jamil Badi, Libbie Chellew, Emma Clancey, Elliott McMahon, Katie Paine, Graham Panther, Bek Schilling, Rebecca Zhong

6.30pm, Monday 22 September

The Moat

Nova Weetman: Kids' Writing Workshop (Ages 11–14)

Nova Weetman

10.30am, Tuesday 23 September

Warrnambool Library

AFL Grand Final: Winner Takes All

Bob Murphy, Caroline Wilson, Barrie Cassidy

6.30pm, Wednesday 24 September

The Wheeler Centre

Melissa Leong: Guts

Melissa Leong, Melissa Singer

7.00pm, Tuesday 30 September

Arthur Streeton Auditorium, Sofitel Melbourne on Collins

Bob Brown: Defiance

Bob Brown, Jeff Sparrow

7.00pm, Tuesday 7 October

The Capitol

Jane Harper: Last One Out

Jane Harper, Sarah L'Estrange

6.30pm, Wednesday 15 October

The Wheeler Centre

Heather Rose at Montalto

Heather Rose, Tracee Hutchison

6.30pm, Friday 17 October

Montalto

One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This

Omar El Akkad, Tasneem Chopra

6.30pm, Wednesday 22 October

The Wheeler Centre



Jay Kristoff: Empire of the Dawn

Jay Kristoff

6.30pm, Wednesday 29 October

The Wheeler Centre

Jane Harper: Last One Out [Geelong]

Jane Harper, Charlotte Guest

6.00pm, Wednesday 29 October

Geelong Library & Heritage Centre

Trent Dalton: Gravity Let Me Go

Trent Dalton, Michael Williams

6.15pm, Thursday 13 November

Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne

Presented in partnership with Readings and University of Melbourne Arts and Culture

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



The Wheeler Centre
Books Writing Ideas

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