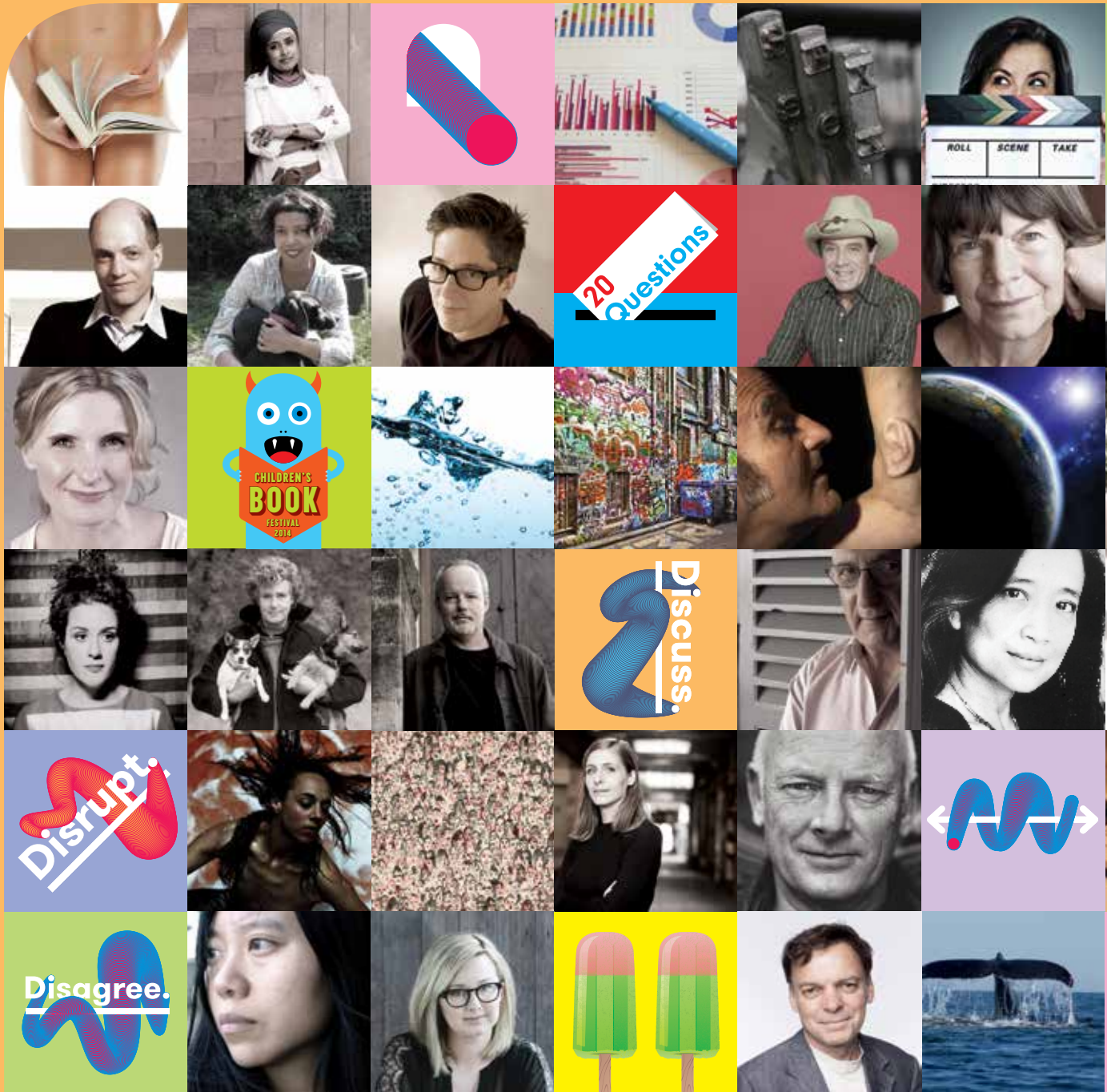




The Wheeler Centre
Books Writing Ideas

Annual Report 2014



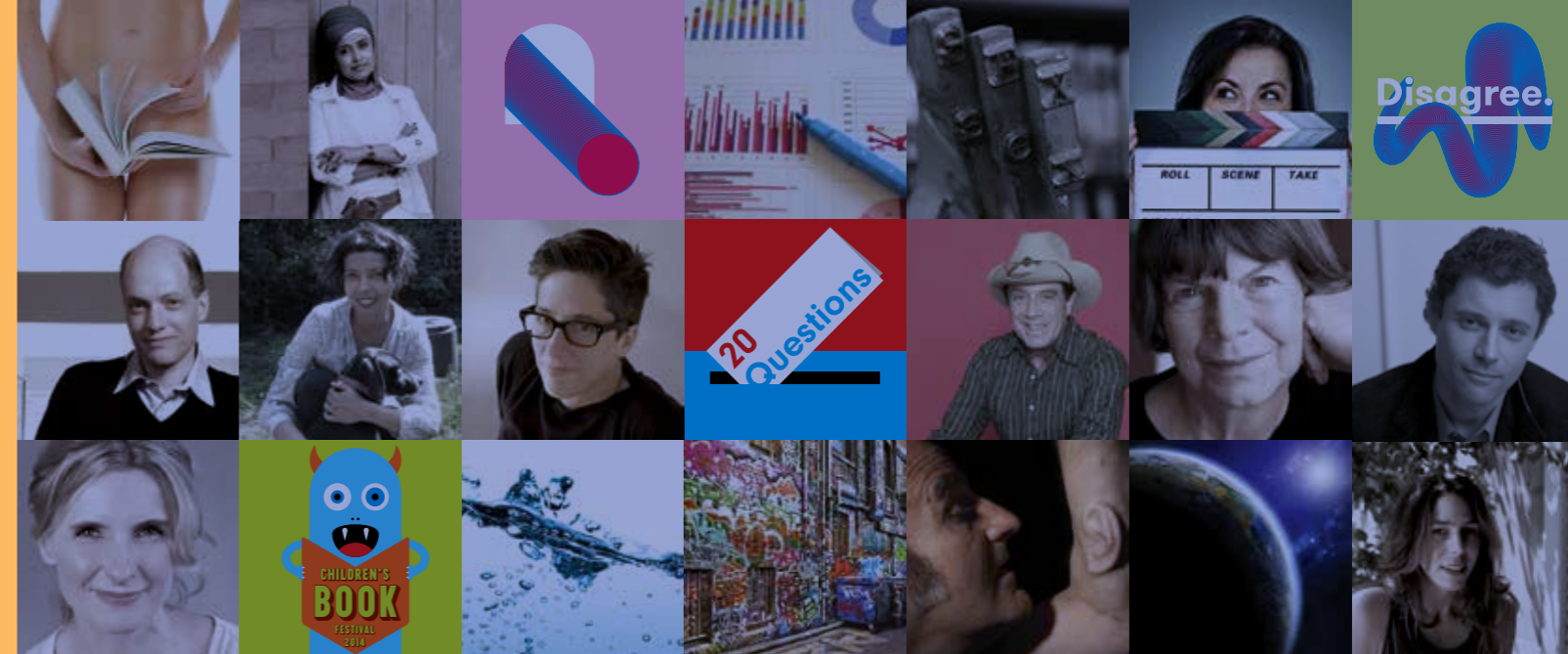


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Message from our director



Looking back over the Wheeler Centre's 2014, what's most evident is the sense of play. Our fifth full year of programming saw us interrogate and build upon the relationships we've built with our cultural peers and partners, with the writers and thinkers of Melbourne and with our audiences. From a gala that took the form of a public referendum on society's false binaries (in which more than 4,000 people cast their vote) to a dinner centred around trying to start an argument on the nature of civic responsibility, 2014 was a year of

taking advantage of our trusting, smart and always engaged audience; a year of beginning to experiment with how to live more fully up to our promise of 'conversation' and ensure that the participation and voices of our community are as central to what we offer as the speakers on the stage.

Having so quickly established itself as a leader and innovator in the cultural and intellectual life of the city and the state, the Wheeler Centre took that role seriously in 2014, exploring how to make sure that the experts we presented and the ideas we explored were genuinely in dialogue with our audience, both at the events and also online in video and audio form afterwards. Our #discuss campaign brought to life the ways in which we're constantly striving to turn ephemeral conversation into a tangible, solid feature at the heart of our civic life and identity. And our old favourites – from the Children's Book Festival to our hot desks for emerging writers, to

literally hundreds of events in between – continued to delight, inform and entertain audiences. Through it all, the incredibly hard-working Wheeler Centre team did us proud again; a team that extends not just across the staff, but includes the board, our sponsors and supporters, our partners, government through Creative Victoria, and the books, writing and ideas community at large, who have been unstinting in their support.

It's exciting to look back over the year that was and see that the ambitious spirit, energy for reinvention and passion for discovery that's defined us so far and will continue to define us for years to come.

Michael Williams
Director

Message from our chair



In a world sinking under the weight of online opinion, news, pontification, gossip and trivia, is there still a place for going out to listen to people ... talk ... intelligently? There is, and it's called the Wheeler Centre.

Now into our sixth year, we at the Wheeler Centre feel we're part of a golden age of conversation. Hundreds of times each year, the Wheeler Centre holds events where thoughtful people talk about diverse issues and hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people turn up to listen, discuss and debate those issues. It's almost counterintuitive evidence that, despite the glut of information elsewhere, Melbourne audiences have an insatiable appetite for compelling conversations about books, writing and especially ideas.

The success of the Wheeler Centre is the result of many individual contributions. To Maureen and Tony Wheeler, thank you for your magnanimity and passion. To our director, Michael Williams, and his utterly professional team, thank you for your dedication and determination. To my fellow board members, thank you for your cool stewardship. And to the Victorian Government, in particular Premier Daniel Andrews and Creative Industries minister Martin Foley, thank you for your staunch support of an inspired vision.

We have big, ambitious plans for the future of the Wheeler Centre, all built around a single precept: the power of ideas.

Eric Beecher
Chairman



About the Wheeler Centre

OUR MISSION

The Wheeler Centre exists to drive the development and celebration of literature in Melbourne and beyond, and, to foster broad public engagement in books, writing and ideas. We aspire to be nationally and internationally renowned as a leading institution for the art of conversation, and a champion of the transformative power of informed public discussion and debate.

OUR VALUES

Questioning

We foster creativity and distinctiveness. We're prepared to challenge the status quo – to keep asking 'why?', rather than parroting accepted wisdom. We are more interested in getting to the heart of the matter than in presenting neat answers. Asking questions is often the important part.

Collaborative

Conversations require interaction, participation and open-mindedness. We encourage and invite people to do their thinking and deliberating together, to immerse themselves in the tangle of discussion and join us in following the threads that emerge.

Intelligent

Conversation plants the seeds for learning, creative practice and innovation. We expand (and sometimes alter) people's perceptions by hosting original and meaningful conversations in a variety of forms. We're always learning and evolving, and so is our audience.

Inclusive

We treat our audience, partners, peers and each other with consideration and respect. We embrace diversity, engaging in conversation with audiences of different backgrounds, interests and identities – and aiming to connect them with each other. We passionately believe that we must be open and connected.

Transformative

We have the courage to lead our audience into the unknown, to challenge assumptions, to keep asking questions and remain open to new answers. We see the world in the context of a journey we'll always be half-way through – because there will always be new knowledge and ideas to consider.



OUR STRATEGIC GOAL AREAS

The Wheeler Centre was created in 2010 as a direct result of Melbourne's recognition as a UNESCO City of Literature. The centre was envisaged as an embodiment of the rich and diverse literary activity of this city, and has gone on to make a significant contribution to Australian literature and public conversation.

In five years, we have established a reputation for ambition, variety and quality. We are a cultural institution, dedicated to our dual purpose of being both a vibrant hub for the writing and literary sector and producing a diverse programme of public conversations and events. We believe that through this public programming, we are in a unique position to embed the discussion and appreciation of Australian literature into the everyday lives of audiences.

Our five strategic goal areas outline how our core activity plays an integral role in serving the sector:

Supporting Artists & the Literary Sector

We aim to make it easier to live and work as a professional writer in this country, to celebrate the contribution Australian authors make to our cultural and intellectual life and to highlight the ways these contributions permeate our society. All writers we engage are paid at professional rates. Our programme provides a platform from which writers and artists can develop their art and form lasting connections with audiences.

Our annual programme offers a rare, year-round opportunity for those in the sector to come together (readers and writers, booksellers and publishers, librarians and community groups) to explore different models of engagement. We take seriously our leadership role within the sector and all forms of literary activity are celebrated and showcased: novelists, essayists, short-story writers, non-fiction writers, memoirists, poets, writers for young people, digital writers, writers for screen and stage, established and emerging writers.

Community Leadership & Engagement

We are dedicated to supporting and strengthening conversations throughout our community. We are key facilitators to the conversations that matter for engaged citizens. Above all, we are interested in enriching lives, building social cohesion and identity by understanding others, changing mindsets and deepening the conversations of all Australians.

Inclusivity & Accessibility

We are dedicated to the principle of universal accessibility. We strive to reach the broadest communities possible and are committed to embracing linguistic and cultural diversity in our programming. We programme eclectic and inclusive subject matters and literary styles that appeal to as broad an audience as possible.

Including Children & Young People

Young people want to feel engaged and valued. They are not just another demographic. We are dedicated to supporting, promoting and raising the profile of writing, ideas and literary work by, for and with children and young people.

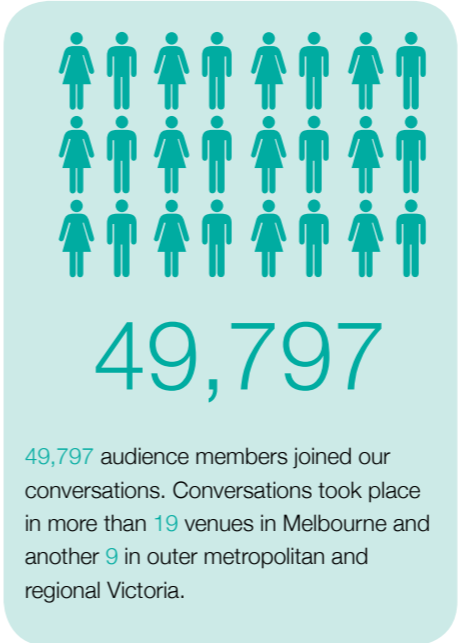
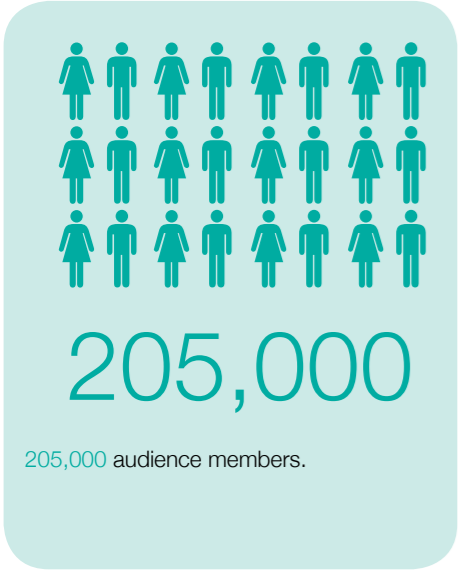
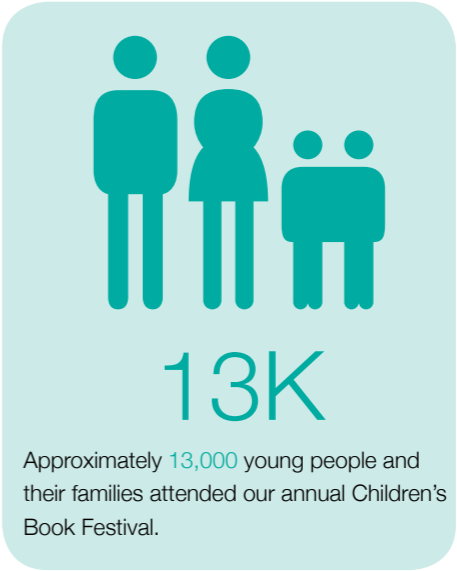
Working in Partnership

Our programming includes energetic and imaginative partnerships with other arts and ideas organisations, festivals and events. This enables us to enhance one another's offerings, engaging more broadly with diverse audiences.



Since 2010

2014 in a snapshot





2014: Disagree. Discuss. Disrupt.

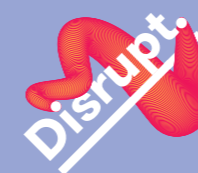
In 2014 our three programmes followed a trajectory: Disagree, Discuss, Disrupt. For us the progression was important – the notion that disagreement should be our starting point; that discussion sits at the centre of what we do; that books, writing and ideas are all about elegant disruption.



We don't all like the same books, or embrace the same ideas, believe in the same ideologies or imagine the same futures. The world of books, writing and ideas is a world where those points of difference make things interesting.



“Opinion, commentary, disagreement, argument, rhetoric: all have a role to play in public debate. But they shouldn't be seen as an end in and of themselves. They're a starting point. It's the bit that comes next that's important. It's the discussion that ensues that makes us a community. It's the discussion that matters.



To disrupt is at the heart of public discourse. Forget bland reassurances and confirmation of the status quo. We don't read books just to escape. We read to be challenged and have our sense of the world turned on its head. We believe there's nothing more disruptive than an idea: an unexpected, surprising perspective, an additional piece of information that can change minds.



2014 speakers and guests

At the Wheeler Centre, we could not be more proud of our ability to name-drop the extraordinary guests who have featured in our conversations this year. It's a list of names that speaks of our audience's – and the city's – appetite for the world of books, writing and ideas.

In 2014, our guests included:

Richard Flanagan George Megalogenis Alison Bechdel Malcolm Fraser Julia Gillard David Malouf Hannah Kent Margaret Drabble Peter Carey Tim Costello Casey Bennetto Nick Earls Eleanor Catton Sally Warhaft Michael Leunig Alain de Botton Maxine Beneba Clarke Jennifer Saunders Alexander McCall Smith Elizabeth Gilbert Lloyd Jones Robert Drewe Irvine Welsh Arnold Zable Lionel Shriver Gideon Haigh Tasneem Chopra Hugh Bradlow Patricia Edgar Mark Carnegie Rachel Kushner Jung Chang Paul Capsis Maxine McKew John Clarke Patricia Cornelius Vikram Chandra Bob Carr David Vann Denise Scott

Oslo Davis Shane Maloney Mohammed L. Barry Dee Madigan Yotam Ottolenghi Mark Latham Kate Richards Michael Robotham Corinne Grant Sean Gorman Louise Swinn Michael Cathcart Rosie Scott Carrie Tiffany Ross Garnaut Kate Belle Clementine Ford Laura Bates Jennifer Granger Katie Noonan Ben Birchall Randa Abdel-Fattah Robert Drewe Annabel Crabb Patrick McCaughey Sally Goldner Sally Rippin Graeme Simsion Alex Miller Die Roten Punkte Damon Young Evie Wyld Indira Nadoo Elliott Perlman Gary Shteyngart Michael Kirby John Edwards Clare Wright Janette Turner Hospital Jeffrey Shandler A.M. Homes Kate Langbroek Tommy Murphy John Marsden Madeleine Morris Favel Parrett Robert Dessaix Andy Griffiths Xiaolu Guo Molly Meldrum Mirko Bonné Ceridwen Dovey Oisín McGann Jas Kapela Sammy J David Walsh Karen Joy Fowler Emily Bitto Thomas Keneally Michelle de Kretser Jackie French Don Watson Tony Birch Nahji Chu Sarah Blasko Wayne Swan Sam Bramham Tim Wilson Christos Tsiolkas Bob Brown Francesca Rendle-Short Sian Prior Anne Manne Anne Summers Gary Foley Matthew Reilly Meredith Burgmann Rupert Myer Louise Walsh Lior Omar Musa Leslie Cannold.



2014 Highlights

THE DI GRIBBLE ARGUMENT

The late Di Gribble was a force in Australian cultural and intellectual life. Publisher, editor, and businesswoman – her impact on the world of books, writing and ideas in Australia cannot be overstated. Di was tireless in her contributions: founder of McPhee Gribble, Text Media, Text Publishing and Private Media, with stints as the deputy chair of the ABC, and board member for Lonely Planet, CARE Australia, the Australia Council for the Arts, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Melbourne Major Events Company and Circus Oz.

In 2014, the Di Gribble Argument was launched as a new initiative for the Wheeler Centre. The idea of the event is a public occasion to remember Di and her legacy and – in her name – to put a bit of stick about.

Over dinner in the Great Hall of NGV International, we curated a good old-fashioned argument with a provocative proposition, considered responses, and a good-natured free-for-all between over 300 attendees. Our inaugural arguer was outspoken venture capitalist Mark Carnegie, reminding us all of our civic responsibilities (or current lack thereof) by calling for the introduction of compulsory (non-military) national service in Australia. Responders Van Badham, Jim Minifie, and Marian Rakosi took Mark's argument to task, responding with a range of economic, political, and social perspectives about the pitfalls of his proposal.

The inaugural Di Gribble Argument garnered more than 200 pieces of media coverage and was featured in more than 180 publications/outlets in every Australian state and territory.

This coverage included interviews on the highest-rating breakfast/morning radio shows in both Sydney and Melbourne (Alan Jones, Linda Mottram, Jon Faine and Neil Mitchell) as well as appearances on ABC TV (*Lateline* and *Q&A*), Network Ten (*The Project*) and the Seven Network (*Weekend Sunrise*).

Supported by: NGV International, Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove and Temple Brewing Company

Strategic Goal Areas:



WEATHER STATIONS

The Wheeler Centre is one of five partners in a new global project, which places literature and storytelling at the heart of conversations around climate change. 2014 and continuing into 2015, the Weather Stations project harnesses the transformative power of words to imagine, in the context of a threatened environment, how we might live our lives differently.

Over 18 months, Weather Stations has brought together five cultural institutions from around the world: the Wheeler Centre, Free Word in London, internationales literaturfestival Berlin, Krytyka Polityczna in Warsaw and Tallaght Community Arts in Dublin.

Each Weather Station appointed a writer in residence. The Wheeler Centre appointed Tony Birch.

In April 2014, the project officially commenced with all five writers (Oisín McGann, Mirko Bonné, Xiaolu Guo, Jaś Kapela and Tony Birch) undertaking a residency together in Australia and commenced their blogging and writing. During this time, we hosted several events featuring the writers, and introduced them to scientists, natural landscapes and ideas from around Australia.

In 2015, the Weather Stations project will focus on a dynamic arts and education programme so as to discover with young people how our own knowledge, motivation and imaginations can lead us in adapting to the challenges and opportunities that climate change presents. We are excited to partner with Footscray City College for this aspect of the project.

globalweatherstations.com

Strategic Goal Areas:





20 QUESTIONS

The Wheeler Centre is constantly developing new event formats to deepen our engagement with audiences and expand the possibilities of public conversation. To begin 2014, we explored the notion of participatory democracy in our year-opening gala event, 20 Questions. On Saturday 8 February, Melburnians were invited to vote on a series of binary choices with the questions themselves designed to take a snapshot of our community across a broad range of matters, both serious and silly: If you had to choose, would you prefer non-fiction or fiction? Happy endings or sad ones? Are you a summer person or a winter person? Do you believe in individuality or community? Gratification or anticipation? Would you rather outlive your partner or be outlived? Which is worse: war or famine? Drowning at sea or indefinite detention?

In total, 4,269 votes were cast – either online or in person at one of four voting booths located in the Melbourne CBD. The booths were open for polling for the entire day. After polling closed, statisticians from Deakin University collated the data to support analysis at our election night party held at Melbourne Town Hall with a panel of experts: George Negus, Sophie Black, Ray Martin, Bernard Salt and host Sally Warhaft. During a broad-ranging discussion of the questions posted, panellists and audiences reflected not only on the questions themselves, but the very nature of limited binary choices in the face of the complexities of contemporary politics and society.

Following the Melbourne election, 20 Questions toured to Brisbane Writers Festival in September.

Supported by: Deakin University, Brisbane Writers Festival

Strategic Goal Areas:



QUESTION TIME

'Question time' brings to mind images of rowdy, combative politicians. However in 2014, the Wheeler Centre decided to put some dignity back into proceedings, with a generous quantity of time included. The new series, Question Time, was a full hour of pure Q&A between our audience, moderator Madeleine Morris and a panel of experts on a chosen field of enquiry.

In the lead-up to the Victorian state election, key topics were tackled: renewable energy, jobs of the future and the always fraught issue of transport.

Strategic Goal Areas:



POINTS OF VIEW

Timeless works of art can make us see the world differently. By experiencing famous paintings or sculptures, we can form an idea of what life was like when those works were created. But how much can iconic art teach us about the world today?

In this new series for 2014, we examined four historical works as starting points: John Brack's *Collins St., 5p.m.* (1955); Tom Roberts' *Shearing the Rams* (1890); Ron Mueck's sculpture *Two Women* (2005) and Emily Kam Ngwararray's painting *Anwerlarr anganenty* (Big Yam Dreaming) (1995).

A curator from the NGV International placed the works in context and three thought leaders explored the diversity of the modern world through the prism of these classics.

Strategic Goal Areas:



ON THE ROAD

Since 2010 we have visited more than 30 Victorian rural and regional communities. The idea of On the Road is to expand our connection with communities beyond Melbourne and to deepen those communities' involvement in the world of books, writing and ideas.

Good Conversation, Great Wine

In 2014, we proudly launched a new series at Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove on the Mornington Peninsula: Good Conversation, Great Wine. The series enabled us to transport a taste of the best Australian writing from the city to the coast. Each month, audiences enjoyed the elements of the very best dinner party: wonderful guests, good conversation and great food and wine.

Featured authors were Shane Maloney, Alexis Wright, Hannah Kent, Alex Miller, Fiona McFarlane, Carrie Tiffany, Favel Parrett, Michelle de Kretser and Elliot Perlman.

With such a successful entrée to the Mornington Peninsula, we are pleased that the series will continue to grow in 2015.

Supported by: Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove

Strategic Goal Areas:



Outer Metropolitan Partnerships

The Wheeler Centre strives to be accessible to everybody, including those in outer metropolitan areas. This year, we conducted over 18 events in suburban areas thanks to our relationships with local arts centres and cultural partners.

With thanks to Copyright Agency Limited and the Frankston Arts Centre, we were able to present Thomas Keneally in conversation with writer Robyn Annear in Frankston.

Thomas Keneally celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his first novel, *The Place at Whitton*, in 2014. Keneally was the first Australian to win a Booker Prize (for *Schindler's Ark*, adapted as Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning *Schindler's List*). He also won the Miles Franklin Award twice.

Supported by: Copyright Agency Limited, Frankston Arts Centre

Strategic Goal Areas:



Connecting to Rural and Regional Communities through Digital Engagement

With thanks to The Ledger Charitable Trust and Rowe Family Foundation managed by Perpetual, in September 2014 the Wheeler Centre commenced a year-long project to trial and design a digital engagement strategy for those living in outer-metropolitan Melbourne, regional Victoria and nationally. The aim of this project is to ensure we create meaningful online packages of events, re-purposed existing digital content, opportunities for live-streaming, digital audience interaction within live events and the creation of podcasts for regular series with the view of reaching those who cannot physically attend our events.

Supported by: Perpetual

Strategic Goal Areas:





VICTORIAN PREMIER’S LITERARY AWARDS

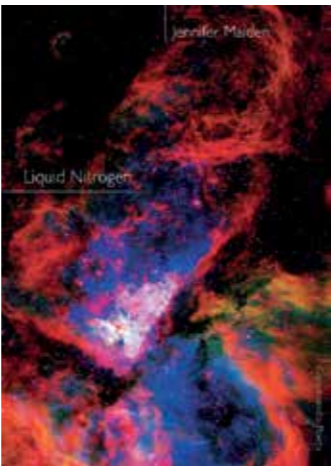
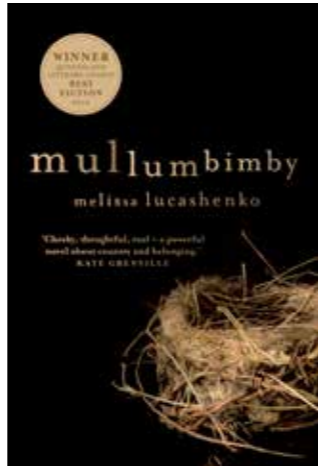
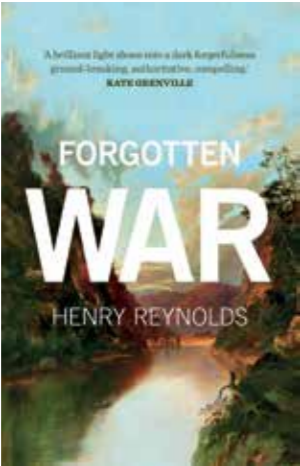
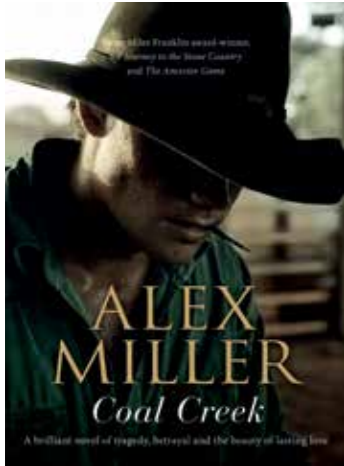
Awards play a vital role in building the profiles of Australian writers. On behalf of Creative Victoria, the Wheeler Centre administers the annual Victorian Premier’s Literary Awards.

There are eight award categories: Fiction, Non-Fiction, Writing for Young Adults, Drama, Poetry, Unpublished Manuscript, Indigenous Writing, and the overall Prize for Literature, which is the single richest prize for writing in Australia. This year’s winners were:

- Fiction:** *Coal Creek* by Alex Miller (Allen & Unwin)
- Non-fiction:** *Forgotten War* by Henry Reynolds (NewSouth Publishing)
- Young Adult:** *My Life as an Alphabet* by Barry Jonsberg (Allen & Unwin)
- Drama:** *Savages* by Patricia Cornelius (fortyfivedownstairs)
- Poetry:** *Liquid Nitrogen* by Jennifer Maiden (Giramondo Publishing)

- Unpublished Manuscript:** *Fever of Animals* By Miles Allinson (scheduled for publication in early 2016 by Scribe)
- Indigenous Writing:** *Mullumbimby* by Melissa Lucashenko (University of Queensland Press)
- The Victorian Prize for Literature:** *Liquid Nitrogen* by Jennifer Maiden (Giramondo Publishing)
- People’s Choice Award:** *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent (Hachette)

Strategic Goal Areas:



TEXTS IN THE CITY GOES DIGITAL

From 2011 to 2013, with the significant support of the Ian Potter Foundation, the Wheeler Centre brought together a series of programmed events, Texts in the City, for English and English Literature VCE students. The aim of Texts in the City was to bring the prescribed texts within core English subjects alive for young people.

Texts in the City was a weekly 45-minute event conducted during terms one and two of the school year. Resident hosts Lili Wilkinson and Tony Birch, along with a guest expert, focused on a prescribed text – dissecting and unearthing hidden gems of information, thought and creativity for young people to consider in their studies. In total, 40 events were conducted (with some texts covered more than once with different guests), and were captured digitally so that they could be made available in full on the Wheeler Centre website.

In 2014, thanks to the Collier Charitable Fund, the Wheeler Centre was able to repurpose our original recordings of these events, digitally re-edit the footage and create specific resources for six key prescribed texts. In consultation with the Curriculum Corporation and the Victorian Association for the Teaching of English, the books were chosen on the basis of the 2014 and 2015 curricula. The chosen texts were:

- Stasiland*, Anna Funder
- Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*, Raymond Carver
- Brooklyn*, Colm Tóibín
- Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, Ray Lawler
- Gwen Harwood: Selected Poems*, Gwen Harwood
- Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë

In this new form, Texts in the City represents an ongoing opportunity for students to access the opinions of writers and experts on the assigned texts. It’s an ideal research tool for essay writing, as well as a way to watch the works come alive on screen through a curated selection of highlights from the series.

Supported by: The Ian Potter Foundation (2011-2013) The Collier Charitable Fund (2014)

Strategic Goal Areas:





HOT DESK FELLOWSHIPS

In 2012, with significant support from the Readings Foundation, the Wheeler Centre established the Hot Desk Fellowships, as a way of creating opportunities for talented writers. To date, 60 writers have had the chance to focus on their writing for ten weeks as hot desk fellows within the creative hub of the Wheeler Centre.

Each year, 20 fellowships are available by application for writers focusing on the genres of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama and young adult. The fellowships enable writers to pursue their writing at a dedicated desk for ten weeks, supported by a modest stipend provided by the Readings Foundation.

The 2014 fellows were:

- Susie Anderson
- Ender Baskan
- Meaghan Bell
- Daniel Bledwich
- Louis Bravos
- André Dao
- Jennifer Down
- Elin-Maria Evangelista
- Sebastian Fowler
- Eli Glasman
- Aurelia Guo
- Bernadette Hince
- Rebecca Harkins-Cross
- Christa Jonathon
- Chad Parkhill
- Rajith Savanadasa
- Kieran Stevenson
- Emily Stewart
- Claire Wilson
- Laura Woollett

‘Thank you so much for the fellowship and support over the last ten weeks, it’s been such a wonderful experience.’

ELIN-MARIA EVANGELISTA

‘Thank you very much for the opportunity. The time has been very productive and there’s been a bit of interest since the reading, so I’m happy to report that all possible boxes have been ticked.’

RAJITH SAVANADASA

‘I just wanted to say a huge thanks for having me! It has been a privilege to have a workspace at the Wheeler Centre, and I’ve been more productive than I could have imagined during the fellowship. It was great being a Hot Desker throughout the process of finding a publisher for my book. I was very conscious of the built-in community that was as excited as I was, but also with plenty of advice and support.’

JENNIFER DOWN

‘Thanks for everything, you guys are great and the fellowship was an amazing opportunity that helped enormously.’

KIERAN STEVENSON

Strategic Goal Areas:



CHILDREN’S BOOK FESTIVAL

The Wheeler Centre’s annual Children’s Book Festival, in partnership with State Library Victoria, has been running since 2011. The festival has established itself as the major children’s book event on the national calendar, allowing children and families an opportunity to celebrate the joy, enjoyment and power of books and reading.

In 2014, more than 13,000 young people and their families enjoyed various outdoor and indoor activities, including finding their way through the Sticky Maze, helping us to complete a Giant Book, interacting with characters from famous books, playing giant word games, participating in illustration workshops and having the opportunity to publish their own books in the pop-up publishing house.

Numerous popular writers and illustrators joined the festivities: John Marsden talked about how to make words do what you want them to do, Jackie French taught us everything there is to know about digging out secrets, and Sally Rippin spilled the beans on her famous characters. Andy Griffith and Terry Denton were received, once again, with great enthusiasm by the crowd.

Strategic Goal Areas:



#DISCUSS

At the Wheeler Centre, we’re all about public conversations. #discuss was a real-time, social media-driven campaign that was part *New Yorker*-style caption contest and part guerilla street-art project, which aimed to bring our city’s digital discussions to life.

Over a two-week period, Melburnians shared their observations, ideas and suggested topics of discussion using Twitter and the #discuss hashtag.

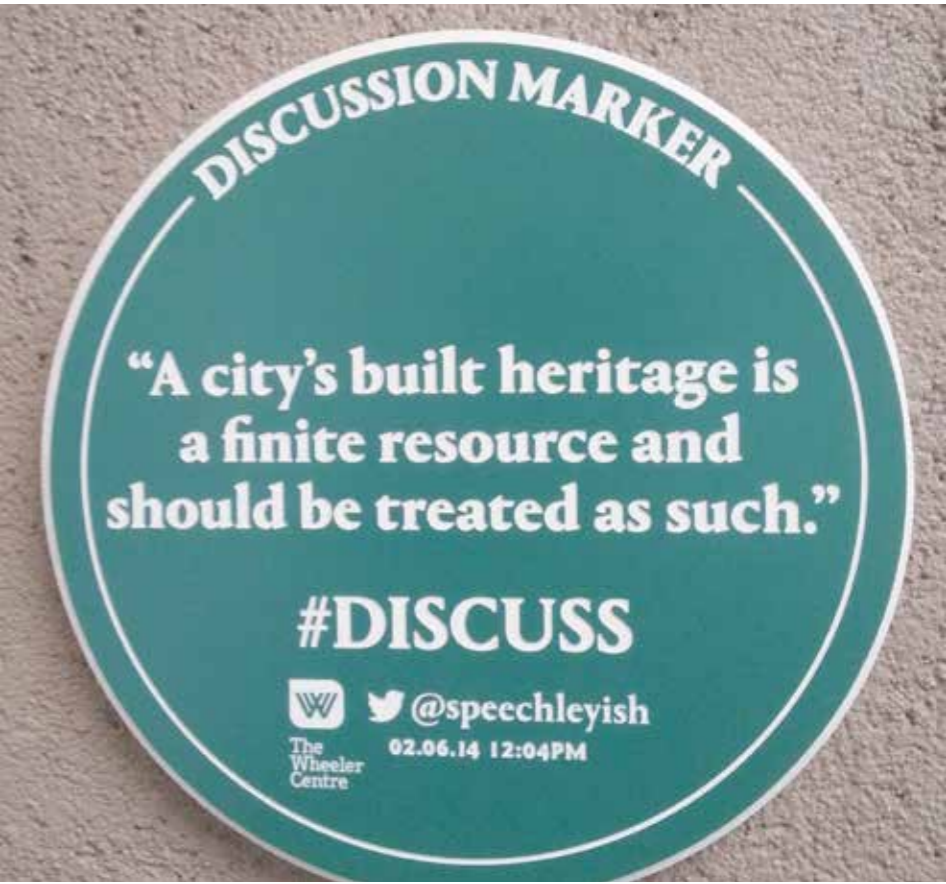
We asked them to tell us, straight up: What is missing from public discussion? What are you uncertain of? What topics or questions are your unresolvables, your impossibles? What do you care about, but don’t entirely get? What do we urgently need to #discuss?

This inspired more than 17,000 opinionated Melburnians to take to Twitter and tell the world what they thought was worth discussing. One hundred of these tweets were turned into historical Wheeler Centre plaques that were dotted around the City of Melbourne and suburbs.

Some of the most popular topics of conversation related uniquely to Melbourne: pho in Richmond, North vs South-side, hook turns and local music.

Supporter/Partner: Clemenger BBDO

Strategic Goal Areas:





THE SHOW OF THE YEAR

In 2014, planes disappeared and plummeted from the sky. Australia became the first country in the world to repeal a carbon tax. Adam Goodes was Australian of the Year, and Peter Cosgrove became Governor General. We lost Robin Williams, Lauren Bacall and Philip Seymour Hoffman. Japan's Antarctic whaling program was ruled unscientific. Olive Palmer teamed up with Al Gore. Delta's bad dancing went viral, and Justin Bieber and Orlando Bloom had a punch-up. Ian Thorpe came out. Perennial bachelor George Clooney married international human rights lawyer Amal Alamuddin.

We marked 100 years since the start of World War I and US-Russia relations reached a post-Cold War low. Two hundred and seventy six girls and women were abducted from a school in Nigeria. The Ebola virus erupted in west Africa, and the Heartbleed bug threatened internet security. Germany won the World Cup, and Brazil was resoundingly trashed. And it was the UN International Year of Farming and Crystallography.

In a now much-loved annual tradition, a stellar line-up of writers, comedians and musicians held a mirror to the highlights, lowlights, shocks and surprises of 2014 in a night of storytelling and song. Our performers included Casey Bennetto, Josh Earl, Hannah Kent, Helen Razer, Bernard Keane, Gillian Cosgriff, Karl Krusznicki, Zahra Newman, Zoe Daniel, Die Roten Punkte, Lior, Omar Musa and Monica Weightman.

Strategic Goal Areas:



THE NEXT BIG THING

The Wheeler Centre's first ever event was a Debut Monday, showcasing exciting new authors. The Next Big Thing is the evolution of that event and series, broadening our horizons to present not only first-time authors, but also those mid-list authors with several books to their name, but who perhaps do not yet enjoy a significant public profile.

In the intimate setting of the Wheeler Centre's Moat Café, the Next Big Thing series showcased the work of 47 writers in 2014.

Guests included:

Jane Jervis-Read, who was the winner of the inaugural Viva La Novella competition.

Emily Bitto, who has since won the 2015 Stella Prize.

Liam Pieper, who has already followed up his 2014 book, *The Feel-good Hit of the Year* with a 2015 essay collection, *Mistakes Were Made*.

Brooke Davis, whose debut novel, *Lost and Found*, proved to be the buzz book of the 2014 London Book Fair. Translation rights have since been sold into 25 countries, with major publishing deals in the United States and Great Britain.

Nic Low, who will be a guest at the 2015 Auckland Writers Festival.

Clare Atkins, whose debut novel, *Nona & Me*, was highly commended by the judges of the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards for Writing for Young Adults: 'Clare Atkins's first novel is a fresh exploration of communication and complication between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people'.

Strategic Goal Areas:





Partnerships

RESIDENT ORGANISATIONS

Melbourne's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature recognises the invaluable contribution made by the following organisations, all of whom reside in the Wheeler Centre:



THE CITY OF LITERATURE

In 2014, the newly created City of Literature Office – an initiative of Creative Victoria and the City of Melbourne Council – joined the existing resident organisations in the building. The office is responsible for celebrating and promoting Melbourne's UNESCO designation and everything literary Melbourne has to offer.

Alongside these organisations, a range of volunteer-led entities work within the Wheeler Centre, through small-scale Hot Desk residencies: The Stella Prize, PEN Melbourne and Freeplay Independent Games Festival. Small, volunteer-run organisations are a vital component of the ecology of our literary and publishing sector. The Wheeler Centre is proud to support their activities and operations.

CULTURAL COLLABORATIONS

Energetic and imaginative collaborations with partners enable us to enhance our offerings to the community. Working with partner organisations also allows us to engage more broadly with diverse audiences.

774 ABC Melbourne
ABC Big Ideas
Aphids
Archer Magazine
Arts House
Asialink
Australian Poetry
Bendigo Planetarium
Brisbane Writers' Festival
Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne
Clunes Booktown
Deakin Worldly
Emerging Writers' Festival
Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria
Express Media
Give It Up For Margaret
Goethe Institut
Griffith Review
Hares & Hyenas

Human Rights Law Centre
Indigenous Literary Foundation
Intelligence Squared
Liberty Victoria
Melbourne Fashion Festival
Melbourne Festival
Melbourne Food and Wine Festival
Melbourne International Comedy Festival
Melbourne International Film Festival
Melbourne International Jazz Festival
Melbourne Planetarium
Melbourne Rare Book Week
Melbourne Writers Festival
Monash University Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation
National Gallery of Victoria
Next Wave
nonfictionLab RMIT
Opera Australia

PEN Melbourne
Polyglot Theatre
Quarterly Essay
Readings
Royal Australian Institute of Architects
Science and Technology Australia
Scienceworks
Small Press Network
St James Ethics Centre
St Martins Youth Arts Centre
State Library Victoria
Sydney Opera House
Sydney Writers' Festival
The Age
The Age Good Food Month
The Stella Prize
Vic Health
Victorian College of the Arts
White Night Melbourne



VENUE PARTNERS

Aireys Pub, Aireys Inlet
Athenaeum Theatre
Bendigo Planetarium
Dallas Brooks Centre
Deakin Edge, Federation Square
Frankston Arts Centre
Geelong Performing Arts Centre
Geelong Regional Library Corporation
Her Majesty’s Ballarat

Melba Spiegeltent
Melbourne City Conference Centre
Melbourne Town Hall
Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove
Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka (M.A.D.E), Ballarat
Myer Mural Hall
NGV International Queenscliff Town Hall, Queenscliff
Regent Theatre

RMIT Capitol Theatre
Scienceworks
State Library Victoria
The MOAT
The Sofitel on Collins, Melbourne
The Substation
Theatre Royal, Hobart
Wesley Bluestone, Clunes

PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS

The Wheeler Centre regularly collaborates with Australia’s diverse publishing industry. Publishers are central to the role of bringing writers and ideas to readers. In 2014, we worked with every major – and several independent – publishers from across Australia, including:

Affirm Press
Allen & Unwin
Australian Scholarly Publishing
Black Inc.
Brandl & Schlesinger
The Five Mile Press
Five Islands Press
Giramondo Publishing
Hachette
HarperCollins Publishers

Hardie Grant Books
Hardie Grant Egmont
Hunter Publishers
Hybrid Publishers
Magabala Books
Melbourne University Publishing
NewSouth Publishing
Pan Macmillan
Penguin
Puncher & Wattmann

Random House
Scribe Publications
Simon & Schuster
Sleepers
Spinifex Press
Text Publishing
Transit Lounge
University of Queensland Press
Wakefield Press
Wild Dingo Press

The Wheeler Centre encourages our audience members to support local bookshops, and it is our pleasure to partner with these companies to make books available for purchase (and author signings) at a range of events. We thank all of our bookseller partners:

Antipodes Bookshop Sorrento
Avenue Bookstore
Book City Ballarat
Books for Cooks
Books in Print
Brunswick Bound
Brunswick Street Bookstore

Collins Booksellers in Ballarat
Dymocks Collins Street Melbourne
Embiggen Books
Fullers Bookshop
Hares & Hyenas
Hill of Content Bookshop
Robinsons Bookshop: Melbourne and Frankston

The Paperback Bookshop
Readings
Paton Books
The New International Bookshop
The Sun Bookshop
Torquay Books

Thank You

As a cultural institution the outstanding contribution of individuals both large and small ensures that we are the best, most ambitious organisation that we can be. Our friends below have supported us in 2014 and for that we take this opportunity to say thank you.

GOVERNMENT



PATRONS

Maureen and Tony Wheeler

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

The Readings Foundation
Copyright Agency
Collier Charitable Fund
The Ledger Charitable Trust and Rowe Family Foundation managed by Perpetual.

CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Ministry of Ideas

The Wheeler Centre established its very own corporate network, the Ministry of Ideas in 2014. Born from a long-standing partnership with Minter Ellison, our founding partner of the network, the Ministry of Ideas is where we bring together organisations and businesses who want to be part of a community beyond their own corporate activities – to create a network of influential do-ers, innovators, thinkers and dreamers.



Major Sponsors





DONORS

Conversation Starters

In 2014 the Wheeler Centre introduced its inaugural major donor programme – the Conversation Starters. The aim is to find fifty very special friends of the Wheeler Centre who donate \$5,000 or more. Our Conversation Starters help us to shape our vision and goals by playing a vital role in supporting our ongoing work and nourishing the conversations that matter and happen at the Centre.

A very special thank you to our Conversation Starters who see our mission and passionately help us in remaining the home of conversations that challenge, delight, questions and entertain.

‘We are happy to accept your invitation to be one of the first conversation starters. Not only has the Wheeler Centre been able to provide a focal point for literature to thrive in the centre of the city (and beyond) but it’s also been able to get an amazingly successful kids’ celebration of literature day going.

So thanks for your efforts in creating a truly special institution that – in effect – offers an ongoing, (mostly) free education in books and ideas for those open and willing to receive it.’

ANDY & JILL GRIFFITHS

Financial performance

The Wheeler Centre has a strong focus on fiscal responsibility. Management ensures financial performance is linked to delivery of our strategic aims, with a focus on generating new revenue streams and managing our cost base responsibly. The board and its finance sub-committee monitor performance against budget for all activities and oversee the long-term security of the company. With an annual turnover of \$2.5 – \$3.9M each year, the Wheeler Centre’s annual financial statements are independently audited. The following breakdown provides a snapshot of our 2014 financial operations. It is not intended to replace or modify the content of the centre’s audited financial statements.

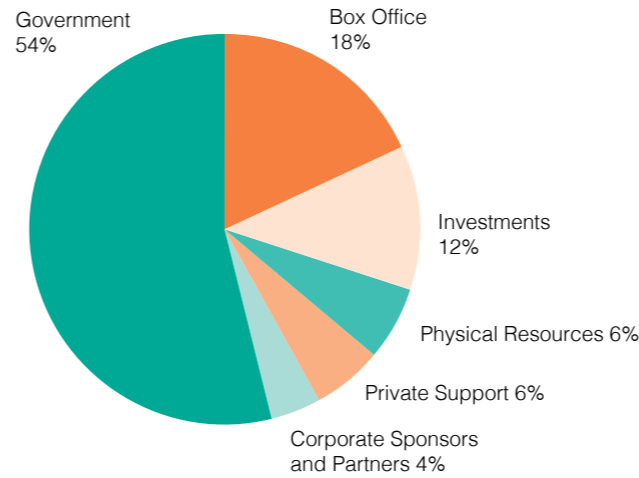
Friends of the Wheeler Centre

- Meagan Allen
- Catherine Atkinson
- Celeste Baer
- Russell Basser
- Tessa Benson
- Warren Bonett
- Emily Brennan
- Liz Chappell
- Steve Connors
- Tim Corcoran
- Beverly Cooper
- Jason Craig
- Sue Cranmer
- Greg Curtin
- Leela Darvall
- Maria Claudia de Quadros
- Leonie Dean
- Chris Drago
- Petria Eaves
- Abby Foster
- Brenda Geddes

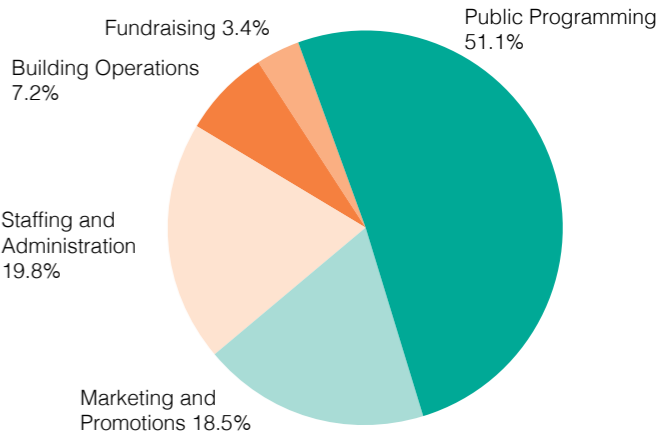
- Angela Gibbs
- Erin Gook
- Danielle Grehan
- Lesley Hale
- Neela Haryani
- Joan Hassett
- Stephen & Pam Hawke
- Christine Howell
- Pamela Jonas
- Neil Kavanagh
- Mandy Kwok
- Cornelia Langelaan
- Peter Manasantivongs
- Leni May
- Sarah Masters
- Monique Message
- Kenneth Millsteed
- Victoria Myers
- Merilyn Newnham
- Rosemary O’Donnell
- Glenn Osboldstone

- Michelle O’Sullivan
- Alan Pattison
- Lyn Phillips
- Nicola Puls
- Siobhan Reddel
- Debra Robertson
- Frances Rowland
- Annie Russell
- Lauren Sanders
- Courtney Sellwood
- Rob Sheehan
- Lucy Shorrocks
- Tricia Sievers
- Jane Smith
- Murray Smith
- Amanda Stewart
- Sandra van Niel
- Marilyn Kerry Willis
- Ian Wilson
- David Zerman

INCOME



EXPENDITURE





Our people

OUR BOARD

Chair

Eric Beecher,
publisher of Crikey
and SmartCompany

Directors

Peter Biggs CNZM,
managing director
of Clemenger BBDO
in Melbourne

Joanna Murray-Smith,
Melbourne-based
playwright, screenwriter
and novelist

Gabrielle Coyne,
chief executive officer
of Penguin Random
House Asia Pacific

Mark Rubbo OAM,
managing director of
Readings

Tony Hudson
(company secretary),
general counsel and
company secretary for
ConnectEast Group

Dianne Rule,
publisher

Anita Ziemer, executive
director of Slade Group,
founding director of
Nexthire and chairman
of Melbourne Girls
Grammar School

OUR STAFF

Director: Michael Williams
General Manager: Jaclyn Booton
Head of Programming:
 Simon Abrahams (to September);
 Emily Sexton (from October)
**Head of Marketing and
 Communications:** Pauline O'Brien
Head of Sponsorship and Development:
 Kendra Overall

Executive Assistant: Katherine Lynch
Programming Coordinator:
 Helen Withycombe
Series Producer: Gemma Rayner
Project Coordinator: Lucy de Kretser
Online Manager: Jon Tjhia
Marketing Manager: Shannon Hick
Marketing Assistant: Ben Packer

Senior Writer/Editor: Jo Case
Publicist: Tamara Zimet
Operations Manager: Sebastian Prowse
Technical Coordinator: Oren Gerassi
Accounts: Sam Ryan
Receptionists: Ania Anderst
 (from February) Kathryn Renowden
 (to February) and Fiona Williams

Our extraordinary front and back of house team who ensure our events runs seamlessly night after night:

Joel Allan
 Flavia Baird-Watson
 Anne Bravos
 Jennifer Broadhurst
 Chris Cody
 Jeff Cregan
 Katherine Greville
 David Gros
 Jessica Hutchison
 Kobi Jack

Kylie King
 Kylie Maslen
 Rose McCormick
 Sally McPhee
 Kevin O'Faircheallaigh
 Jessica Ogan
 Leticia Parish
 Ritchie Plunkett
 Luke Pocock
 Autumn Royal

Gabrielle Ryan
 Priscilla Schmacker-Beck
 Jessica Smith
 Georgina Titheridge
 Katherine Tonkin
 Nikita Vanderbyl
 Fraser Walker
 Tessa Wallis
 Andrew Walmsley
 Timothy White
 Laura Woollett



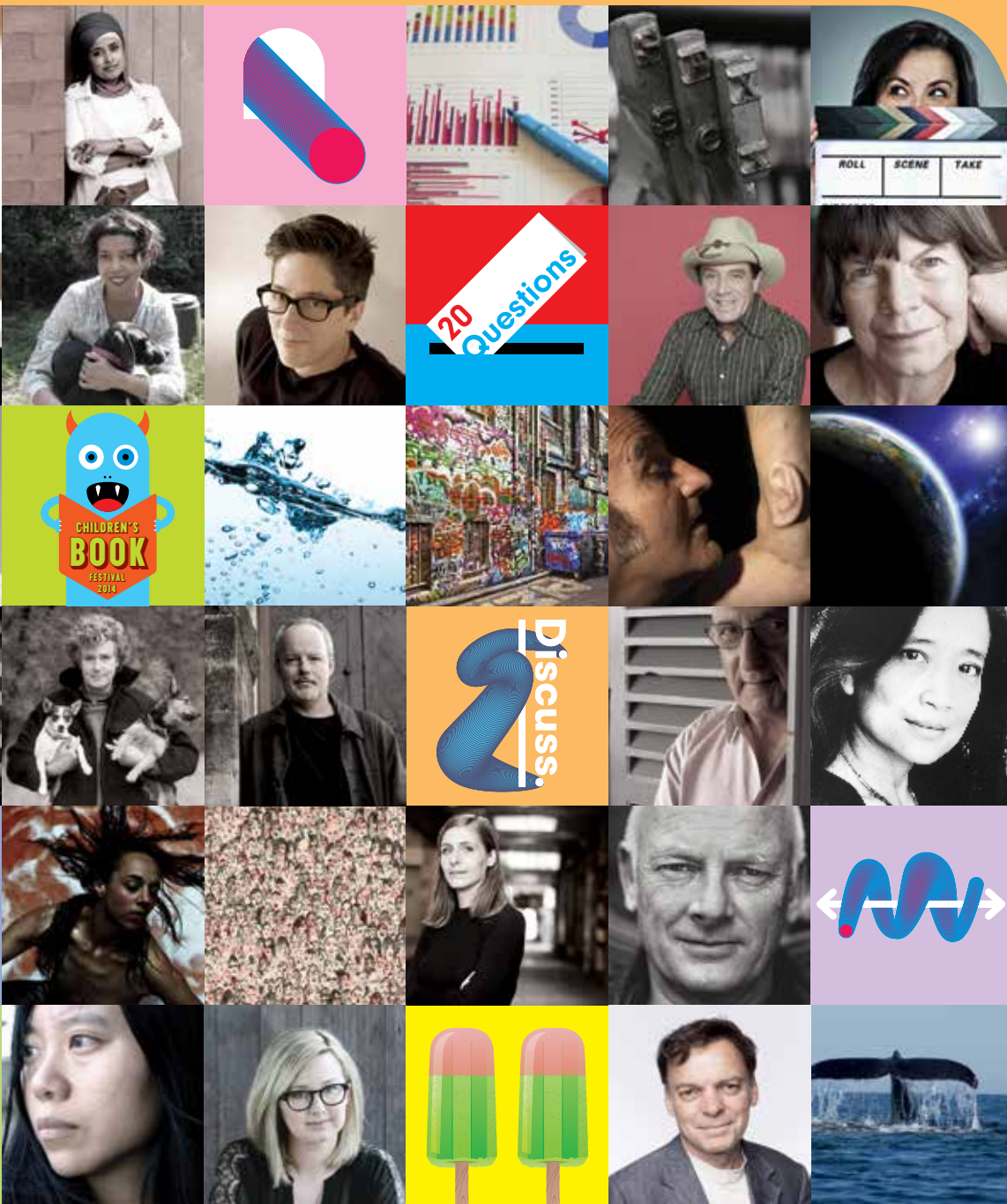
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Trading as Centre for Books, Writing
and Ideas ABN 97 134 682 189

wheelercentre.com



**CREATIVE
VICTORIA**



**The
Wheeler
Centre**
Books
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Ideas