

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Monday 9 April 2018

## EMERGING WRITERS' FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2018 AMBASSADORS FULL PROGRAM RELEASED TUESDAY 15 MAY



**Five celebrated Australian writers will headline the National Writers' Conference on June 23-24 as part of the 2018 Emerging Writers' Festival.**

The ambassadors include **Melissa Lucashenko** (*Mullumbimby*, *Steam Pigs*, *Killing Darcy*, forthcoming *Too Much Lip*); **Isobelle Carmody** (*The Red Queen*, *Obernewtyn Chronicles*, *The Ice Maze*); **Ellen Van Neervan** (*Heat and Light*, *Comfort Food*); **Michael Mohammed Ahmad** (*The Lebs*, *The Tribe*); and **Stuart Grant** (Monash University Lecturer for Theatre and Performance).

This year's festival ambassadors are known for their experimental works, transcending boundaries of form and defying easy categorisation.

"Our ambassadors are captivating storytellers, noted for challenging dominant narratives, bringing light to untold stories and forging new pathways for the next generation of Australian voices. We're delighted to have them part of this year's festival." says Emerging Writers' Festival (EWF) Artistic Director Izzy Roberts-Orr.

The five ambassadors will join over 70 other artists across two days of panels, discussions, workshops and networking at the largest gathering of emerging writers in Australia. Each ambassador will spend an hour answering questions and offering advice in EWF's unique **Ask Me Anything** sessions.

The conference has expanded further this year with additional professional development opportunities, a focus on industry insight and more networking space for writers.

EWF is a writers' festival with a difference. The festival programs bold new voices to introduce the leading storytellers of tomorrow.

The full program will be launched at the Wheeler Centre and online on **Tuesday 15 May, 2018**.

The National Writers' Conference is held at the State Library of Victoria from **Saturday 23 – Sunday 24 June**. Early-bird tickets are on sale now at [emergingwritersfestival.org.au](http://emergingwritersfestival.org.au).

**Media notes:**

- EWF ambassadors and Izzy Roberts-Orr (EWF Artistic Director) available for interview
- Michael Mohammed Ahmad's *The Lebs* out now
- Melissa Lucashenko's *Too Much Lip* released July 2018

**National Writers' Conference Tickets:** [tix.emergingwritersfestival.org.au/Events/National-Writers-Conference-2018](http://tix.emergingwritersfestival.org.au/Events/National-Writers-Conference-2018)

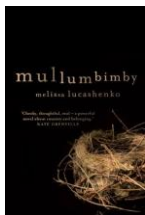
**Golden Tickets (all-access pass to the festival):** [tix.emergingwritersfestival.org.au/Passes/Golden-Ticket](http://tix.emergingwritersfestival.org.au/Passes/Golden-Ticket)

**Emerging Writers' Festival runs 19-29 June. Details:** [www.emergingwritersfestival.org.au](http://www.emergingwritersfestival.org.au)

For further information or interviews please contact

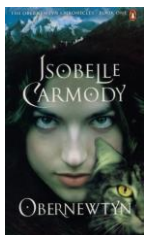
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**Ambassador Bios**



**MELISSA LUCASHENKO**

Melissa Lucashenko is a Goorie novelist whose work celebrates Aboriginal people and others living around the margins of the First World. Her novel Mullumbimby longlisted for the 2014 Miles Franklin Literary Award and Stella Prize, shortlisted for the Kibble Prize, and won the 2013 Queensland Literary Award for Fiction and the 2014 Victorian Premier’s Award for Indigenous Writing. Melissa is also a Walkley Award winner for her non-fiction, and is a founding member of Sisters Inside, a groundbreaking organization which supports criminalised women in Queensland.



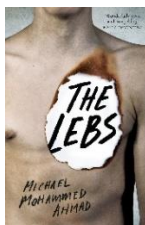
**ISOBELLE CARMODY**

Isobelle Carmody is one of Australia's most highly acclaimed authors of fantasy. At fourteen, she began Obernewtyn, the first book in her much-loved Obernewtyn Chronicles, and has since written many works in this genre. Her novel The Gathering was joint winner of the 1993 Children’s Literature Peace Prize and the 1994 CBCA Book of the Year Award, and Greylands was joint winner of the 1997 Aurealis Award for Excellence in Speculative Fiction (Young Adult category), and was named a White Raven at the 1998 Bologna Children’s Book Fair. Isobelle's work for younger readers includes her two series, The Legend of Little Fur, and The Kingdom of the Lost, the first book of which, The Red Wind, won the CBCA Book of the Year Award for Younger Readers in 2011. She has also written several picture books as well as collections of short stories for children, young adults and adults.



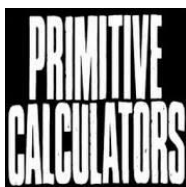
**ELLEN VAN NEERVEN**

Ellen van Neerven is Mununjali from the Yugambah language group of South East Queensland on her mother’s side. Her first book, Heat and Light (UQP, 2014), was the recipient of the David Unaipon Award, the Dobbie Literary Award and the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards Indigenous Writers Prize. Heat and Light was also shortlisted for The Stella Prize, the Queensland Literary Award for State Significance, and the Readings Prize. Ellen was named as a Sydney Morning Herald’s Best Young Australian Novelist in 2015. Ellen’s second book, a collection of poetry, Comfort Food (UQP, 2016) was shortlisted for the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards Kenneth Slessor Prize and Highly Commended for the 2016 Wesley Michel Wright Prize.



**MICHAEL MOHAMMED AHMAD**

Michael Mohammed Ahmad is the founder and director of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement. In 2012, he received the Australia Council Kirk Robson Award for his work in community cultural development. Mohammed’s essays and short stories have appeared in the Sydney Review of Books, The Guardian, The Australian, Heat, Seizure, The Lifted Brow, Meanjin and Best Australian Essays. His debut novel, The Tribe (Giramondo, 2014), received the 2015 Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Novelists of the Year Award. He also adapted The Tribe for the stage with Urban Theatre Projects in 2015. Mohammed received his Doctorate of Creative Arts from Western Sydney University in 2017. His latest novel is The Lebs (Hachette, 2018).



**STUART GRANT**

Stuart Grant is a lecturer in Performance Studies at Monash University. He has published extensively on performance philosophy and phenomenology, site-specific performance, comedy, and other genres of performance. He is editor on the forthcoming collection, Performance Phenomenology: The Thing Itself, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. He is a core convenor of the Performance Philosophy organisation. He is director of the performance group, the Environmental Performance Authority (EPA), a Butoh-based ecological performance group. Stuart is also lead singer, guitarist, and main composer with punk/noise-hop band the Primitive Calculators.