

RWA CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Melbourne 2019

FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 2019			
07:30am – 10:00am	Registration Open (top of atrium stairs on Level 1)		
09:00am – 09:15am	Welcome by Conference MC, Melanie Coles (Grand Ballroom 5-6)		
	ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1-2	ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5-6	ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3
09:15am – 10:30am	Natasha Lester <i>Plotting Masterclass</i> Natasha will be demonstrating that plot is so much more than just story arcs and plot points highlighting that it should be driven by character, and should help to create an emotional connection between the reader and the story. If you've ever been told you need to go deeper with your story, that it lacks emotional resonance, that you're skimming the surface and you need to push further and you haven't understood what that means and what you're supposed to do, then Natasha's tips for why and how to strengthen your plot may be just what you're looking for. This plotting masterclass is hands-on and practical, based on techniques Natasha uses in her bestselling novels and includes lots of handouts.	Melissa Storm <i>The Big Book Launch Bootcamp</i> Melissa will be showing delegates that there is more than one way to launch a book. Exploring winning book launch strategies, ranging from the techniques that will cost you nothing but time, all the way to the big daddy of book launches—the list run. This workshop will cover all things newsletters, branding, websites, social media, ads, video media, and more – everything that helps contribute to a successful launch. Handouts will be provided with step-by-step action items to put into effect for your next big launch. Bring your questions. This is going to be a very full day of learning!	Rachel Bailey <i>Deep Dive</i> If you're an emerging or established writer, have a COMPLETED manuscript - not a half done one, or even a first-draft done one, but a fully completed, done-done manuscript. You may have even suffered a rejection or two for your done-done manuscript. If you're looking for a session that will really allow you to get your hands dirty and make improvements to your MS then this session is aimed at you!
10:30am – 11:00am	Morning Tea (Grand Ballroom Lobby)		
11:00am – 12:30pm	Natasha Lester <i>Plotting Masterclass</i>	Melissa Storm <i>The Big Book Launch Bootcamp</i>	Rachel Bailey <i>Deep Dive</i>
12:30pm – 01:15pm	Lunch (Grand Ballroom Lobby)		
01:15pm – 03:00pm	Natasha Lester <i>Plotting Masterclass</i>	Melissa Storm <i>The Big Book Launch Bootcamp</i>	Rachel Bailey <i>Deep Dive</i>
03:00pm – 03:30pm	Afternoon Tea (Grand Ballroom Lobby)		
03:30pm – 05:00pm	Natasha Lester <i>Plotting Masterclass</i>	Melissa Storm <i>The Big Book Launch Bootcamp</i>	Rachel Bailey <i>Deep Dive</i>
05:00pm – 06:00pm	Established Authors Forum (Grand Ballroom 4) for established traditional and indie published author members		
06.45pm – 07.30pm	RWA Newbies Gathering (Atrium Bar & Lounge) For first time conference attendees		
07:30 pm – 10:00pm	Draft2Digital & Findaway Voices Twisted Fairy Tales Cocktail Party (Grand Ballroom Lobby) Includes presentation of first sale ribbons (Registration desk will be open 6.30pm-7.30pm for late arrivals)		

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07:30am – 05:00pm	Registration Open					
08:00am – 08:30am	Welcome by Anne Gracie and Opening of the 2019 conference by RWA President (Grand Ballroom 5-6) Launch of Little Gems & Spicy Bites					
08:30am – 9:30am	Keynote/Plenary Writing Series with Nalini Singh (Grand Ballroom 5-6)					
9:30am – 10:15am	Keynote/Plenary Harlequin - The New Harlequin: Exciting developments for Harlequin and its imprints (Grand Ballroom 5-6) Sue Brockhoff, Publishing Director; Jo Mackay, Head of Local Fiction, HQ, Mira and Escape; Kita Kemp, Publisher Mills and Boon (ANZ), Nicola Caws, Editor Global Acquisition Mills and Boon (UK)					
10:15am – 10:45am	Morning Tea (Grand Ballroom Lobby)					
10:45am – 12:15pm	Beginner Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1 Natasha Lester <i>How to actually show not tell</i> Writers are so often told to “show, not tell.” But what does this really mean, how do you do it and why is it important? Natasha will explain the concepts of showing and telling in a way that’s easily understandable allowing participants to identify the difference between the two in their own writing. Natasha will explain when to show and when to tell, why you actually need to do both and how striking the right balance is one of the surest ways of keeping a reader immersed in the world of your story.	Business/Indie ROOM: Grand Ballroom 2 Kathryn (Kit) Carstairs & Jenny Mosher <i>Writing. Editing. Publishing.</i> Kit Carstairs of Manuscript Appraisal Agency and Jenny Mosher of IndieMosh Self Publishing will take participants through the things they need to consider when embarking on a self-publishing journey. Rather than a how-to guide, this is a what-to and why presentation with time for Q&A so that participants will gain a better understanding of the self publishing process, and the things they need to consider about what’s important to them. They will also come away with an understanding of editing and what they need to consider for their manuscript - and all the bits and pieces to take into consideration before embarking on their editorial journey.	Research ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3 John Harrison <i>A story of people and medicine: Her-story & His-story</i> We delve into the world of apothecary and the nitty gritty details of herbs, medicines, potions and poisons. Dr John Harrison will share his insights into the fascinating subject of medicine from the 1800s, otherwise known as apothecary. Discussing cures for medical conditions and disorders using concoctions made from plants and herbs such as coughs and colds, dropsy, rheumatics, ‘women’s problems’, treatment of wounds and injuries (as well as repelling witches), Dr Harrison will share the secrets of an apothecary and will perhaps reveal the formula for an everlasting love potion!	Career ROOM: Grand Ballroom 4 Olivia Lanchester <i>Is that your best offer? Maximising and protecting your intellectual property</i> As any romance writer knows, proposals must be treated with utmost discernment. Never more so than when they’re from a publisher. Understanding copyright is crucial in negotiating any publishing contract. Olivia Lanchester will talk through the basics of copyright: what it protects, how long it lasts and how to optimise revenue streams. Exactly what rights should you grant to publishers? What's a good offer and what should be disposed of as quickly as a bad boyfriend? If you're self-publishing, what are the contractual red flags? And is your intellectual property actually ... property? Can you, and should you, draft it into your will? Join Olivia for a decidedly unromantic but hopefully enlightening stroll through copyright, contracts and maximising your IP.	Advanced Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5-6 Nalini Singh <i>Polish and shine beyond the first draft</i> This workshop will cover what comes after the first draft. How do you refine that initial draft to make it the best it can be? We'll be talking detail-oriented editing tips and strategies, as well as big picture things such as point of view and how best to utilize secondary characters. The workshop is most suited to writers who've completed a project of at least 40,000 words and have enough distance from their work to look at it with a critical eye.	Life ROOM: M8 Sue-Ellen Pashley <i>How to stay sane as an author: creating balance</i> Creating good mental health and a balanced life as an author can be interesting. Trying to stay sane with the demands presented to us both in work and life, and living with the ups and downs of writing can be hard. This workshop will explore strategies for creating a balanced life and good mental health as an author. Participants will gain a greater understanding and knowledge of how to create balance and good mental health, as well as practical strategies to incorporate into their lives after the conference.
	12:15pm – 01:00pm	Lunch (Grand Ballroom Lobby)				

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01:00pm – 01:45pm	<p>Business/Indie ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1 Draft 2 Digital <i>Indie Publishing Success</i></p> <p>No matter if you are just starting your writing career or a seasoned author, there has never been a better time to make a living with your words. Join Dan Wood to hear about all the exciting opportunities going on in Indie publishing and how Draft2Digital makes it easy to thrive in the digital age.</p>	<p>Life ROOM: Grand Ballroom 2 Jane Muirhead <i>The Mindful Author</i></p> <p>Being a writer requires us to be deeply emotionally engaged in our craft. It can also be a lonely business and at times the highs (of our creative ideas, that can carry us away for hours sometimes to the detriment of other life roles) and lows (often of rejections slips, and self-denigration), can be difficult to handle. Mindfulness (the ability to be non-judgementally present in the here and now with our experiences) can help us to work with this emotional roller-coaster and remain balanced, clear and focussed in our writing and the broader context of our life. This workshop will explain mindfulness meditation and teach several short, powerful and easy to adopt mindfulness exercises that can aid in our journey as writers and in our overall health and wellbeing. An absolute win-win!</p>	<p>Research ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3 AJ Blythe <i>Face-off: Understanding Biometric Technology</i></p> <p>Is your fingerprint the key to your phone? Did you know your face is now your passport?</p> <p>Biometrics is changing the shape of our world. This workshop aims to demystify biometrics and give participants a solid understanding of its fundamentals. Perfect for anyone with a character working in business or security, anyone writing thriller/crime novels or anyone just wanting to understand biometrics.</p>	<p>Career ROOM: Grand Ballroom 4 Sarah Williams <i>Getting heard! Podcasting 101</i></p> <p>Considering starting a Podcast or YouTube channel? Don't know what's involved? How much time and money it will take? How to get started?</p> <p>Sarah has become an expert in the field, hosting the hugely successful show, Write with Love. She will show you how to set up your own program with minimal cost and equipment. Then, once you've got the technical stuff sorted, she will show you how and where to promote it to get people listening and watching.</p>	<p>Beginner Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5 Michelle Somers <i>Characterisation through Narration</i></p> <p>This practical workshop takes the art of characterisation one step further and outlines how participants can incorporate their characters seamlessly into their story. Participants will be exposed to Michelle's character charting strategy, which will allow them to build a three-dimensional character, which they will then use to reveal all facets of characterisation through their narrative.</p>	<p>Advanced Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 6 Paula Roe & Shannon Curtis <i>Alpha Hole to Alpha Hero – PART A</i></p> <p>Are you writing strong, take-charge men who deserve to fall in love with a special someone... or just a guy who's an arrogant ass? Join authors and critique partners Paula Roe and Shannon Curtis as they discuss the true heart of the alpha male and use AV examples to categorise alpha male roles into four unique classifications. Shannon and Paula will also provide hands-on exercises with participants to get their alpha back into hero territory.</p>

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Beginner Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1	Business/Indie ROOM: Grand Ballroom 2	Life ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3	Career ROOM: Grand Ballroom 4	Research ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5	Advanced Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 6	
<p>01:45pm – 02:30pm</p> <p>Fiona Lowe <i>Happy Talk: Dialogue that doesn't drag a reader down</i></p> <p>Stilted, soggy or unrealistic dialogue that doesn't suit the characters or propel the plot, slows a novel and risks the reader putting the book down. This workshop is aimed at beginner and intermediate writers and will explore the connection between characters and their dialogue. By looking at the impact of gender, socio-economic factors, education, ethnicity, age and their characters' beliefs, participants will learn strategies to create appropriate and interesting dialogue that propels their plot. Participants will have some time to write a short piece of dialogue and will leave the session with tools they can implement in their novel.</p>	<p>Findaway Voices <i>Succeeding in an increasingly listener-focused world</i></p> <p>The audiobook landscape has changed significantly in the last several years as new content sellers, business models, and promotions have opened up to authors. In this session, we'll share the ins and outs of the audiobook market and the new opportunities blossoming for authors. Learn about the keys to creating a great audiobook—and how Findaway Voices' platform can help you do so—and the strategies to help you succeed in marketing and selling your audiobook(s) through our more than 30 partners around the world.</p>	<p>Carla Ford <i>Five ways to wellbeing</i></p> <p>'And they all lived happily ever after' is the ending we want for our protagonist, but what about for ourselves? Whilst we may not have a fairy godmother to wave her magic wand, there are evidence-based ways to improve our happiness and wellbeing. This workshop explores the Five Ways to Wellbeing – Connect, Take Notice, Be Active, Keep Learning and Give - five simple and effective ways to improve mental and emotional health. Participants will be introduced to the evidence-based Five Ways to Wellbeing and learn practical strategies to improve their own psychological wellbeing.</p>	<p>Tracy Travis <i>Tips for engaging an audience during a presentation</i></p> <p>Do you wish you stepped onto the stage with confidence and grabbed the audience's attention and kept it? Do you want the audience to focus on you and understand your message in a presentation? Do you want practical tips on how you can improve your stage presence, therefore boosting your confidence and in increasing the quality of your overall presentation? If the answer is yes to any or all of these then consider attending this workshop and find out how to improve presentation, public speaking confidence and presence on stage no matter how small the stage is.</p>	<p>Linda Mercury <i>Arousal to Zipper: Writing the best sex of your life</i></p> <p>A lot of people get weirded out by writing sex, as though their work will be seen as less intellectual or less important. The sex scene, like every scene in a book, has to move the character's journey forward. US author Linda Mercury's session will cover not just the physicality of writing sex, but also the yearning, the hope, the joy, and the vulnerability that sex brings so that readers aren't just skipping over the sex to get back to your plot.</p>	<p>Paula Roe & Shannon Curtis <i>Alpha Hole to Alpha Hero – PART B</i></p> <p>A continuation of how to take your Alpha A-hole to Alpha hero, participants will finish up being able to a) define what makes a hero; b) identify their male characters using the Alpha Male TRAP chart; c) build appropriate scenes to exhibit these traits; and d) take away and apply these tools to their own writing</p>	
02:30pm – 03:00pm Afternoon Tea (Grand Ballroom Lobby)						
03:00pm – 04:00pm Panel - Behind the uniform - Ask me anything! (Grand Ballroom 5-6)						
<p>Ever wanted to know how a Taser feels when deployed or what police really carry on that belt? Paul York knows! Shane McCluskey can answer all of your burning questions. Literally! Like, what exactly is backburning and how do you do it? With twenty-five years of experience, Darren Hodge knows his way around the back of an ambulance. And, Megan Colville our clinical nurse midwife will answer questions about tricky births, what can go wrong and whether a water birth is any less painful? Four speakers, all professionals in their field make up the "Behind the Uniform - Ask me anything" panel. Due to time restrictions the panellists are only answering pre submitted questions. Please submit your question to events@romanceaustralia.com, with the subject line Behind the Uniform. Our professionals will choose at random and answer the questions you've always wanted to know. <i>NB: Content may include graphic descriptions of violence, injuries or death. Members are advised to exercise discretion in choosing this panel as it may cause distress or trigger unwanted emotional responses.</i> Moderated by Melanie Coles.</p>						
04:00pm – 05:00pm Panel - Alternative Income Streams: Maximising your skills (Grand Ballroom 5-6)						
<p>Writing a book is of course a rewarding experience but the period of time between writing a book, publishing it and seeing any kind of financial return can be hard to gauge. Many authors have taken their skillset and created alternate opportunities to supplement their income in addition to pursuing their writing career. From writing retreats to editing services, graphic designing covers, marketing and craft Masterclasses, Lisa Ireland, Sarah Williams and Lana Percherczyk have each looked outside of the square and built businesses around their love for writing. Moderated by Delwyn Jenkins.</p>						
07:00pm – 10:00pm Gala Awards Dinner (Grand Ballroom 1-4)						
10:00 pm – 12:00 am Escape After party (Grand Ballroom 1-4)						

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SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2019						
08:00am – 09:00am	Registration Open					
08:30am – 08:45am	Welcome by Keri Arthur (Grand Ballroom 5-6)					
08:45am – 09:45am	<p style="text-align: center;">Diversity Debate - Renee Dahlia, Dr Amy Matthews, MV Ellis & Nicole Hurley-Moore (Grand Ballroom 5-6)</p> <p>In this highly political climate, in the era of #MeToo, Time's Up, Black Lives Matter and #BelieveHer, diversity and inclusion are hot topics. It would be remiss of us not to tackle this extremely relevant topic with a panel-led discussion entitled The Diversity Debate. Romance has been put under the microscope, criticised for being predominantly white, cis, het, able-bodied, middle-to-upper class, and often blind to its own privilege. The industry is beginning to recognise the invisibility and exclusion of non-white, non-cis, non-het, non-able-bodied characters and authors but if love really is love, we need to break open our genre to greater diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>So how do romance authors write a diverse world that reflects the real world? How do we write 'outside our lanes'? How can we get to a point where diversity is an integral part of the mainstream, and we no longer even need to have this conversation? This panel will discuss the historical lack of diversity in romance, the concept of windows and mirrors in fiction, and how to recognise stereotypes and step beyond them to create books that reflect the diverse and inclusive reality of modern society (and how this applies to historical romance).</p>					
09:45am – 10:15am	Keynote - Melissa Storm (Grand Ballroom 5-6)					
10:15am – 10:45am	Morning Tea (Grand Ballroom Lobby)					
10:45am – 12:15pm	<p>Beginner Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1 Nalini Singh <i>Writing novellas</i></p> <p>Novellas are extremely versatile - they can be used to introduce a new series, tell the stories of secondary characters from established series, give your readers a bite-sized read between longer releases...and more. This workshop will talk about how to write a full story within the novella format. Because a good novella isn't simply a long short story, or a squished down and heavily edited novel. A novella is its own form. Suitable for writers at all stages of their career.</p>	<p>Business/Indie ROOM: Grand Ballroom 2 Melissa Storm <i>Winning ad strategies</i></p> <p>What's working to sell books in 2019? From Facebook ads to AMS, BookBub, and more, Melissa will take participants through the top strategies for selling both front list and back-list.</p> <p>Melissa will also share her workflow shortcuts that will save you tons of time, how to avoid the most common mistakes authors make when setting up ads, and how to tell whether your ads are returning a profit.</p>	<p>Life ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3 Sara Hood <i>How to save your soul when a Twitter storm hits</i></p> <p>What do you do if you are suddenly in the middle of a Twitter storm? Or folks are piling into your Facebook page to hurl abuse? How can you avoid being a troll target? And, far more importantly, how can you save your soul when the world tweets against you? These are the questions this workshop will answer. It will be an interactive session. Participants will leave with their own personalised online survival guide, which will include what to do when (if) the proverbial hits the fan. Spoiler alert: a lot of it comes down to being prepared, prepared and prepared - emotionally as well as operationally. So suit up! We're going in!</p>	<p>Research ROOM: Grand Ballroom 4 Aiki Flinthart <i>Fight Like a Girl – PART A</i></p> <p>With more and more 'strong' female protagonists appearing in genre fiction, it's essential authors know how to write authentic fight scenes for them – be it arguments or fisticuffs. Writing what you see in movies won't cut it because a real fight isn't like what's on screen. Use this workshop to learn not only how to write scene that feels, sounds, tastes and smells real to the reader, but to understand the differences between how men and women fight. And how they react, physiologically and psychologically, before, during and after the event.</p>	<p>Career ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5 Nick Coveney <i>How to grow your sales with KOBO</i></p> <p>In this session, Nick Coveney will help authors learn more about Kobo Writing Life, Rakuten Kobo's self-publishing platform that enables authors to publish in 190+ countries in 4 easy steps. They will get the latest updates on our service and explore some case studies and success strategies for growing their global Kobo sales.</p>	<p>Advanced Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 6 Anne Gracie <i>Plot, story & theme</i></p> <p>Plot, story and theme— what's the difference? Plot is what happens in a book, story is why we care, and theme is why it matters. Many writers spend endless hours working out the details of their plot, but often spare less time planning how to make their readers care and even less considering their theme. But think about the books you read far into the night. Compare them with those you put down, never to pick up again. It's all about how much you care and how you continue thinking about a book, long after you've finished.</p>
12:15pm – 01:00pm	Lunch (Grand Ballroom Lobby)					

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SUNDAY 11 AUGUST 2019							
01:00pm – 2:00pm	<p>Beginner Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 1 Harlequin <i>The professional author</i></p> <p>What is it that makes an author a true professional? How do you sustain a career for the long term? What is the best way to work with a publishing house?</p> <p>A panel of experts from all realms of the industry will bring you their insights on how to succeed as an author.</p>	<p>Business/Indie ROOM: Grand Ballroom 2 Emily Roach <i>Standing Out on Social Media</i></p> <p>Do you have the writing part under control, but the promotion of your book is causing you grief? After all, when you set out to be a romance writer, you probably didn't expect that you'd also have to be your own marketing strategist, graphic designer, and social media manager! Whether it's promoting your self-published works or establishing your personal brand, Emily Roach will teach you how to stand out on social media with scroll-stopping designs (even if you have NO design experience!) that get noticed, get more clicks, and ultimately sell more books.</p>	<p>Life ROOM: Grand Ballroom 3 Valerie Parv & Linda Tate <i>Getting back the joy of writing</i></p> <p>Join two top professionals for a workshop that will empower your writing life despite the pressure to write more and faster as well as dealing with social media and other traps. Valerie and Linda will take you through a number of strategies that will help you enjoy your writing more, stress less and be more productive while living in the real world. They'll look at your support team, manager-time vs maker-time, and how not to multi-task while making the process joyful again.</p>	<p>Research ROOM: Grand Ballroom 4 Aiki Flinthart <i>Fight Like a Girl – PART B</i></p> <p>This workshop picks up from where Part A left off – and participants should emerge with a good understanding of what will work in writing a fight scene for women that is immersive for the reader, authentic and with appropriate pace, tension and descriptive levels.</p>	<p>Career ROOM: Grand Ballroom 5 Marisa Corvisiero <i>Demystifying publishing deals</i></p> <p>Comprehensive and hands on discussion about how work gets published. Covering everything from working with an agent to pitch the work to publishers, to the offer and contract negotiations, and everything in between. Will review specific examples of possible outcomes and provide solid advice. Important terms will be explained and compared to industry standards to help authors set expectations, and help them choose the best deals and negotiate the most favourable terms that lead to success in publishing.</p>	<p>Advanced Craft ROOM: Grand Ballroom 6 Sandi Wallace <i>Take on the world crime-writing workshop</i></p> <p>You have a burning desire to write a romantic suspense novel, cosy murder mystery, thriller or police procedural with romantic elements, or a different type of story within the popular and diverse crime genre. Will that story be from the point of view of the protagonist? The victim? The offender? Or all these players? And who will be your investigator? A police detective, investigative journalist, lawyer, scientist, social worker...or an everyday person caught up in the crime? Writing crime fiction is a way to take on the world and help you gain the building blocks to develop skills for great crime writing.</p>	
02:00pm – 2:30pm	Afternoon Tea (<i>Grand Ballroom Lobby</i>)						
02:30pm – 3:00pm	Publishing Industry Professionals: What are you looking for post #metoo (<i>Grand Ballroom 5-6</i>) Nicola Caws (Mills and Boon UK), Jo Mackay (HQ, Mira & Escape), Michelle Klayman (Boroughs Publishing). Moderated by Melanie Coles.						
03:00pm – 03:45pm	AGM / Raffle Draw (<i>Grand Ballroom 5-6</i>)						
03:45pm – 04:00pm	RWA Conference 2020: Fremantle Launch (<i>Grand Ballroom 5-6</i>)						
04:00pm – 04:45pm	Closing Keynote Amy Andrews (<i>Grand Ballroom 5-6</i>)						
04:45pm – 05:00pm	Close and farewell RWA President (<i>Grand Ballroom 5-6</i>)						

*Please note the program is subject to minor change.