



FESTIVAL SUMMARY



THE Williamstown Literary Festival returned to the Williamstown Town Hall in 2022 for the first time in three years – Covid restrictions weren't going to stop us again!

The program was crafted by Program Director Jane Finemore around the theme *Days Like These*. As Jane wrote in the program, “the best lesson from the past two tumultuous years is to learn to embrace the chaos and cherish every opportunity to listen to each other and to nurture our precious community”.

Jane identified a range of authors she knew would appeal to festival patrons, and carefully paired them with incisive and entertaining interviewers. We were treated to a wide range of guests, from those of international renown, such as Nobel-laureate Professor Peter Doherty, to those with unique local flavour, such as Olympia Koziaris with her spirited stories of Greek migrants in the West, and the unique St Mary's Primary School poetry slam.

We opened the festival on Friday night with the very welcome return of Stereo Stories and its clever mix of music and memoir, which just whetted our appetites for the weekend to come.





The festival weekend was just the final act of what had proved to be a challenging year, given the pandemic restrictions that had plagued 2020 and 2021.

We were well supported by our major partner, the **CITY OF HOBSONS BAY**, and we are grateful for their ongoing financial commitment and the hard work of their Town Hall staff and ticketing officers. Likewise, local bookstore **BOOK AND PAPER**, that provided a wonderful service for our patrons.

Thanks also to sponsors:

- **AV JENNINGS**, through its Waterline Place project
- **CAPTAIN'S RETREAT**
- **DOCUMENTS ON CALL**
- **HOBSONS BAY LIBRARIES**
- **FEDERAL DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL SERVICES** and its volunteers grants program
- **JAS STEPHENS REAL ESTATE**
- **ROTARY CLUB of POINT GELLIBRAND**
- **ANDY AND JILL GRIFFITHS**
- **Dr MARY BURBIDGE** (estate of)
- **TIM WATTS MP**
- **MELISSA HORNE MP**
- **ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**
- **WILLIAMSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



2022 by the numbers:

- **39 sessions** across 3 days
- Almost **80 authors** and guest presenters
- More than **1880 tickets** sold
- **Almost 400** patrons for Stereo Stories
- **210+ entries** for our 4 writing awards
- **1500 visitors** to our website in the week before the festival
- Our weekly e-newsletter to **more than 2000** people – with a 50% opening rate
- **3000 followers** on Facebook, 1500 on Instagram
- **Social media reach >20,000** in festival week

*"Thank you for encouraging and acknowledging emerging writers."
– Suchita Smith (shortlisted for the JBBSA)*

"Willy Lit Fest is just what we need right now. Cosy spaces and warm, welcoming faces." – Nella Genuveva (patron)

"So excited to be part of this!" - Book & Paper

"Big shout out to everyone at Willy Lit Fest this morning: the amazing volunteers, the committee, bookseller Book & Paper and, of course, program director Jane Finemore. Thank you for a ripper festival and for looking after the artists so well" – Mark Smith (author)

"Resounding thankyou's again to all the passionate, generous, visionary people who work together with great dedication to manifest the writing prizes. Such initiatives are a significant source of context and encouragement for artists of all kinds." – Cynthia Troup (Ada Cambridge award winner)

"Brilliant" – Lorraine Callow (patron)

