The team at BRWF would like to thank our participating guests for their engaging and inspirational contribution.

To our audience and loyal fans we appreciate and thank you for your encouragement and support.

And to our partners, funding bodies and sponsors who provide the capital for this festival, thank you for sharing our vision. Your contribution will help grow the community in thinking and skills - from school children to established writers.

To us, the BRWF team, this is an opportunity to bring to the public something we see as evolutionary in a medium with a greater impact than the weather - the written word.

We look forward to an exciting future of possibilities and new stories. See you in 2015 and

‘Be part of the story’

The BRWF Team

Brian Purcell
Chairman

Libby Feez
Production & Events Co-ordinator

Jennifer Findley
Media Relations

Roby Aiken
Volunteers Co-ordinator

Annette Marfolding
Program Advisor

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Company Secretary & Treasury

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Schools Co-ordinator

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Web Page Development

Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival
PO Box 390, Bellingen NSW 2454  www.bellingenwritersfestival.com.au
2014 In Review

The Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival held in June 2014 proved another success in the celebrations of literary arts in the unique natural & cultural heritage of Bellingen on the Mid North Coast NSW.

2014 is the fourth Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival (BRWF) presented in Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, and Dorrigo on 6 – 9 June, 2014.

The BRWF has become an important community arts initiative for the Coffs Coast, built on the successes of three festivals since April 2011.

BRWF has retained the original vision to create an annual literary fiesta in an intimate setting, boasting an amazing mix of established and emerging writers, performers and featuring many local artists.

It is unique amongst Australian writers’ festivals in staging events using the region’s rich environment. The imaginative special events are what really augments the offering of BRWF. Set in the outdoors with beautiful Bellingen landscape as the stage, abounding with inspiration, heritage and nature lovers.

The 2014 festival operated at similar capacity to previous years. The duration of the weekend expanded to four days including activities on Friday and Monday long weekend. The number of guest participants was steady from previous years at 39, the number of festival events remained similar at 28 events; and the number of workshops grew to 9.

Overall ticket sales showed a small percentage decrease from previous years, which was explained by the heavy burden on volunteers’ time to engage in community relations.

However 70% of the events reached seating capacity, the shortfall coming from the event locations with larger capacity and single sale tickets.

The BRWF schools program included four authors who delivered 11 sessions to primary and secondary students at Bellingen venues, also making visits to the schools. The school program reached and engage with over 600 children within the Coffs Coast.

Feedback for 2014 from the participants and audience was full of praise at the offerings on the program and the sensational production.

The BRWF is a well loved and anticipated event for the Coffs coast residence. With nearly 2,000 newsletter subscribers and social media connections, BRWF has a strong public following.

The festival this year was co-ordinated completely by a hard working band of volunteers. Their generous contribution brings something very special to our community.

BRWF Committee

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BRWF PURPOSE

The Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival is a not-for-profit community arts initiative. The Festival’s vision is to provide an annual regional celebration of Australian writing on the mid-north coast of NSW, to engage the interest of participants of all ages and backgrounds and to promote regional cultural development and economic benefits.

The Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival goals are to provide:

✦ a program of events that engages and inspires the interest of the regional community in many forms of the written word
✦ a program that is unique among other literary festivals in paying homage to the local landscape and celebrating Australian authors
✦ a program that honours and utilises the region’s rich cultural heritage of the Gumbaynggirr people
✦ new opportunities for social and cultural interaction in a public arena for the promotion and presentation of local and regional writing
✦ encouragement to youth to actively participate in the creation of literature
✦ a flagship event that attracts the participation of emerging and established people in the writing industry
✦ develop a unique identity for the festival that nurtures innovation and reflects local and regional strengths and community interests
✦ generate increased tourism visitation and economic benefit to the region

“The weekend is about more than just the business of writing, it’s also for the love of the art of words and a chance to meet face to face in this digitised world. It’s new experiences and a celebration of all things literary.”

Jenni Findley - BRWF Media
The Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival was initiated in October 2009 with the support of Arts Mid North Coast and Bellingen Shire Council. The renowned summer arts school organisation Camp Creative continues to auspice the BRWF organisation and their support is integral to its success.

An important consideration in BRWF objectives is to make the festival affordable to all members of the community by keeping ticket prices at the same level for the past three years. Thanks to our partners we are able to put on a professional event which provides a return economic stimulus to the region.

**GRANTS**

**Bellingen Shire Council**

The council provide logistic support, promotional support via their digital memberships and funding. This year their grant money funded high-profile YA and Children’s novelists Nadia Wheatley (My Place) and Isobelle Carmody (Obernewtyn) to take part in our Schools Program.

In past years they have provided free use of the Library and Council Park, as well as subsidised venue hire.

**Australian Government**

The Literature Section of the Australia Council provided substantial funding for the travel, accommodation costs and fees for authors to attend the festival. This is the third consecutive year they have provided funding for the festival. Earlier the Regional Arts Fund (NSW) provided two year funding which was invaluable to establish the festival.

**BUSINESS SPONSORS**

**RedFez Digital Media Production**

Professional assistance in project management, festival event management, production consultation and brand management.

**Officeworks**

Provision of complimentary printing services including programs, tickets and posters. Plus providing cashes prizes for the Poetry Slam.

**The Book Warehouse**

Our official Festival bookseller setup shop in the Bellingen Youth Hub attaining copies of every authors.

**Kalang Nursery**

Supply of plants for stage sets.

**Raleigh Recyclers**

Supply of furniture for that quirky Bellingen feel.
2014 PROGRAM

The programming objective of BRWF is to provide topics of interest to a broad sector of the community. There is always a strong intention to include readers in the celebration as well as introducing new writers and giving opportunities to existing authors to showcase their work and network.

The 2014 program offered a variety of events, catering for different interests and activities. These included (with example sessions):

✦ Author panels, readings and presentations (Children’s Writing, Experimental Fiction, Nature Memoir)

Writers talk about their work and themselves, with readings from selected text. This is carried out as an interview or in a panel discussion.

✦ Book launches and author signings

The BRWF Book HUB (created by The Book Warehouse) provided copies of all authors’ books for sale. Book signings after sessions and as independent events were held over the weekend.

✦ Discussions and forums (Road to Publishing, Historical fFction, Shifting Landscape of Journalism)

These are topical conversations with experienced writers, researchers and philosophers.

✦ Writers’ workshops (Enlightened Editing, Getting Published, Secrets & Lies)

Intensive classroom groups providing training, education and stimulus in the endeavour of writing.

✦ Indigenous stories and heritage (Country Speak, Guunumba Legends, Gumbaynggir Language)

Experienced and emerging Aboriginal writers with contemporary story and culture sharing.

✦ Nature activities (Poet-led Canoe Safari, Dorrigo National Park Bushwalk, Heritage Treks)

These special events bring our natural heritage into the performance and story.
✦ **Competition** (Poetry Slam)
With a packed house of 500, this event is a sensational opportunity for word and performance artists to get on stage.

✦ **Entertainment** (Tastings, Literary Dinner, Provocative Poets)
Music, spoken word and visual story in amiable and homelike surroundings. Times that touch deep in our hearts and sometimes provide a guiding light.

**PARTICIPATING GUESTS**

**BRWF** endeavour to create a program of participating guests who come from the full range of occupations in writing, creating a melange of wordage.

Along with authors **BRWF** invite publishers & agents, editors, educators, journalists, mass media representatives and entertainers. This is a time when all can come together face-to-face, idea to experience and challenge to thinker.

Participants come from around Australia, but also feature many local and regional writers, writing groups and organisations.

Opportunities were also offered to local authors to contribute to the program through the creation of workshops and alternative events and the Book Market in front of the Bellingen library.

This year’s participating guests number 39. It included Australian literary luminaries such as Alex Miller, twice winner of Australia’s premier literary prize, The Miles Franklin Literary Award; Nadia Wheatley, author of ‘My Place’, Kristina Olsson, author of Boy Lost; Sulari Gentil, crime fiction writer; Dominic Knight, ABC radio & from the Chaser, Lian Tanner, young adult author, Adrian Newstead, author and expert in indigenous arts trade; Merrkiyawuy Ganambarr and Djawundil Maymuru, Yolngu authors from Arnhem land; Omar Musa, rising star in poetry & rap; Carl Cleves, singer songwriter and travel memoirist; and many more.
**FESTIVAL SCHOOLS PROGRAM**

The BRWF schools program has been an integral component to the festival since the festivals beginning. In 2014, BRWF reached over 600 students on the Coffs Coast in their schools and at Bellingen venues.

The schools program is part of the Festival’s commitment to promoting literacy and inspiring a passion for reading and literature among the youth of our region.

State, independent, Catholic and community schools were involved in the program including primary and secondary students.

In 2014 four authors delivered eleven sessions to students at Bellingen venues. Two of these authors visited schools in the Coffs Coast region. Bellingen Shire Council generously provided funds for the high-profile YA and Children’s novelists Nadia Wheatley and Isobelle Carmody to take part in our Schools Program.

The average size of the sessions was twenty-five students with some groups comprising up to eighty students. The length of sessions varied from 50 mins to 2.5 hours. A total of approximately 600 students attended filling 700 places at sessions.

The 2014 schools program ran over two days during the festival.

The goal of the program was to introduce students and young writers to current practitioners to learn about their methods and to make concrete the idea that real people write books.

The nature of the sessions varied considerably depending on the schools’ requirements, from workshops to readings combined with Q & A sessions and informal lectures.

Specific topics requested included structure, editing and discussion of inspirations and influences. Smaller sessions were recommended to schools to allow for greater individual interaction. Sessions by several authors were particularly aimed at English Extension 2 and Advanced English Year 12 students.

English Extension students create their own substantial work as part of the curriculum and several of the festival’s guest authors who do not usually speak at schools took up the opportunity of leading these sessions and passing on their experience as professional writers.

The response to these sessions from authors, teachers and students was very enthusiastic. Authors could engage with their readers; teachers learnt new techniques for their own education program and development; and students came a little bit closer to the story for their own understanding and creative thinking.
FESTIVAL VENUES

BELLINGEN MEMORIAL HALL
Located in the heart of the village this 1920 art deco theatre seats up to 600 people with flexible room design for more intimate events. The Bello Hall held the big events, lectures, conversations and performances.

BELLINGEN YOUTH HUB
A Bellingen community asset to foster youth engagement. A near new building and facilities with classrooms and kitchen. The Youth HUB had a constant program of events taking place. The BRWF Book HUB and Cafe also were located here.

BELLINGER RIVER
Being immersed in nature builds a strong association with the BRWF. The river, parks and town heritage provided a venue for several events at the 2014 festival.

ST ANDREWS CHURCH BELLINGEN
A 50m walk from the Bello Hall this venue is an excellent location for workshops in the light airy hall.

COFFS HARBOUR
This metropolis library is an excellent venue for visiting authors to share their work with the Coffs Coast region and beyond.

LODGE 241 GALLERY CAFE
One of Bellingen’s fine eateries this cafe propped on stilts overlooks the lush pastures and meandering river toward the Dorrigo Plateau. The Lodge served a tasty meal for the 2014 Literary Dinner featuring Alex Miller.

DORRIGO RAINFOREST CENTRE
Situated in the spectacular Dorrigo National Park the Rainforest Centre includes park heritage exhibitions, rainforest walking tracks, sky walk and cafe.
MEDIA SUPPORT

Media is grounded from the written word, with mass media outlets seeing the BRWF as symbiotic; hence they are generous in promotion of the festival.

PRINT NEWS
The region’s newspapers provided editorial coverage and features in the month leading up to the Festival. They provided sponsored advertising throughout the marketing campaign.

RADIO
Local and community radio stations embrace this festival playing interviews and music from our festival participant guest, community notice boards and what’s on.

TELEVISION
Television News channels attended the festival with coverage in local news reports in the week leading up to the festival and on the weekend.

ABC MID NORTH COAST
The ABC radio provided extensive marketing support through program editorial and interviews, online editorial, event promotion and consumer promotions. ABC Open also contributed with promotion and editorial.

COMMUNITY MAGAZINE & NEWSLETTERS
In the region there are many community magazines and newsletter. These publications are excellent grassroots gateways. BRWF are constantly building relationships with these groups to foster support and relationship.

MAGAZINES
National and state magazines in reading, writing and tourism provided editorial and free advertising and calendar listings in print magazines, online subscriber newsletters and on their websites leading up to the festival.

SOCIAL MEDIA
BRWF have a strong and growing footprint on social media sites.
Bellingen NSW

Bellingen valley is a wondrous landscape, the green shire, from the ranges to the sea. At its centre, the village is brimming with heritage while narrating its own character. Come and ‘be part of the story’.

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Subscribe to BRWF newsletter for info about upcoming events, interviews and more.