

# Media Release



The  
Wheeler  
Centre  
Books  
Writing  
Ideas

Embargoed until 28 January 2011

## The Wheeler Centre dives into its second year

Today, the Wheeler Centre launches a bumper second year with provocative events, responsive new series and international literary lights

Kicking off with **A Gala Night of Storytelling: Voices from Elsewhere** on **11 February**, the first programme runs through until the end of **April**.

The Wheeler Centre's new programme tackles democracy, Wikileaks, Australian identity and breaking news, as well as Australia's late, great writers and the treasured Book Club. The programme also breaks new ground with events for children and teenagers; the inaugural **Children's Book Festival** and **Texts in the City**, weekly discussions with key writers, that lift VCE texts off the page and bring the books to life.

There are also conversations with the always controversial **Jeffrey Archer**, much-loved satirist and science fiction writer **Terry Pratchett**, Scottish novelist **Andrew O'Hagan**, Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Annie Proulx**, award-winning biographer **Hazel Rowley**, *Tales of the City* writer **Armistead Maupin** and a tribute to **David Foster Wallace**.

**Wheeler Centre Director, Chrissy Sharp** said *"The launch of our second year is an exciting time. We've reached the stage where we get to embrace the successes of our first year and build on them. Last year, we were thrilled to find that Melburnians and visitors to the city were hungry for a busy programme of events around books, writing and ideas. This year, the programme expands into new areas, and hopefully surprises, possibly provokes and might even cause a stir."*

With as many as **eight events a week** and the majority still **free**, there are **new series**:

- **Talking Point** – Events that quickly respond to the news of the day and expand the discussion with leading experts.
- **The Book Club** – In partnership with the CAE Book Clubs, the largest network of organised clubs in the country, this is the Wheeler Centre's own occasional book club with the ABC's **Alan Brough**.
- **The Late Great** - We pay tribute to Australia's literary heritage, remembering past masters and celebrating their craft, starting with **Patrick White** and **Thea Astley**.
- **Two Sides of the Story** – In partnership with the Victorian Writers' Centre, two writers discuss the points of difference and the common experiences of their creative life.
- **On the Road** – Highlight events from the first programme visit Victoria's regional towns and cities. First up, there's **Andrew O'Hagan** in Mildura.

wheelercentre.com



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## Exciting feature events:

- ***Is Australian Democracy Broken?*** – Former Prime Minister **Malcolm Fraser**, **Lindsay Tanner**, **Malcolm Turnbull** and chair **Fran Kelly** (ABC Radio National) discuss political leadership and the party machines, candidate preselection and campaign fundraising as well as the need for a bipartisan approach on fundamental and moral issues.
- ***So Who the Bloody Hell Are We?*** - National identity is built on the stories we tell ourselves. From the battler to mateship, larrikin spirit to the cry of ‘she’ll be right’, is there any truth to the way we see ourselves. Speakers include **Anne Summers**, **Stuart McIntyre**, **Craig Reucassel** and **David Manne**.
- ***Big Gay Week*** – A week examining the politics and the writing, the romance and the taboos, the agonies and the ecstasies of being queer, featuring **Armistead Maupin**, **Fiona McGregor**, **Sophie Cunningham** and **William Yang**.
- ***Texts in the City*** – A weekly series offering savvy VCE students an exploration of the text that connects them with the authors and the joys of reading.
- ***Children’s Book Festival 2011*** – A grand celebration of children’s books, including puppet shows, readings, music, magic and featuring **Terry Denton**, **Bob Graham**, **Leigh Hobbs**, **Judy Horacek**, **Elise Hirst**, **Sally Rippin**, **Chris Morphew** and more
- ***Humourists Read Humourists*** - At the first ever Melbourne International Comedy Festival, a collection of writers, performers and others came together to celebrate their favourite humourists. That was twenty-five years ago and now in partnership with the Comedy Festival, this crowd-favourite returns, curated by the next generation, **Lorin Clark**.

## And some favourites from last year:

- ***Lunchbox/Soapbox*** – This weekly piece of polemic for lunching folk to chew on returns with first cab off the rank **Jon Faine** (ABC 774).
- ***Debut Mondays*** – Each month, on a Monday, four first-time authors read from their work.
- ***Intelligence Squared*** - In partnership with St James Ethics Centre, the Wheeler Centre once again presents the Melbourne Intelligence Squared debates. Up first, “Both Major Parties are Failing the Australian People”.
- ***Literary Speed Dating*** – Back by popular demand, this year the match-making sensation offers those same-sex inclined book lovers the chance to find that kindred spirit.

All tickets and bookings through [wheelercentre.com](http://wheelercentre.com)

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Media kit listing full programme available upon request.

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