

## MEET OUR PRESENTERS:

**Allison Greenland** is the founder of Leap into Literacy: Reading, Writing, and Creativity. She is currently completing her final year of a PhD in Curriculum and Teaching and holds a master's degree in Education. Her research has focused specifically on reading comprehension strategies and successful learning techniques for students of all abilities. Allison has eleven years' experience as a primary school teacher and most recently as a Gifted and Talented educator for both primary and secondary students. She also teaches creative writing to adults.

**Amin Malekpour** is in his final year as a Ph.D. student in the Computer Science and Engineering department of the University of New South Wales, majoring in cybersecurity. He has tutored university students for UNSW and was employed as head teacher for Code Camp, extending children in coding programs. Amin joined the G.A.T.E.WAYS team in 2017 and enjoys sharing his great passion for cybersecurity, mathematics, science and technology with gifted and talented learners. He enjoys offering fun and exciting sessions that extend his students' innate love of learning.

**Amanda O'Neil** holds a Master of Education (Gifted and Talented) and has been generating and delivering gifted programs, nationally and internationally, for more than twenty years. She loves working with gifted learners to ignite creativity and cultivate critical thinking so that they can pursue their interests with vigour and make important contributions. Her own sense of fun, interest in the world and love of learning engages students in deep and rich learning experiences.

**Anna Jahjah** has a master's degree in British and American Literature and Civilisation and a Bachelor in Arabic Literature and Civilisation from Aix-en-Provence University, in France. She has been teaching storytelling and creative writing techniques to French and Australian children for over ten years. She also owns her own theatre company which gives a voice to characters and stories that are rarely heard in Australia. Her creativity and her eye for the interesting contribute to her lively and stimulating workshops.

**Anna Kamaralli** is the editor of the Arden Shakespeare Performance Editions *Much Ado About Nothing*, author of *Shakespeare and the Shrew*, founder of ShakespeareTwentyScore.org and Director of *Margaret of Anjou*, a new play based on Shakespeare's characterisation of Margaret in his history plays. She is a director, dramaturg, theatre critic and lecturer.

**Benjamin Starr** has over 20 years broadcasting experience as an announcer, presenter, producer and radio programmer. He has a Diploma of Screen and Media, and a Graduate Certificate in Radio Programming from the Australian Film Television and Radio School. Benjamin has worked for some of Australia's biggest radio networks and has produced a television documentary with the inventor of radio's only surviving daughter, Princess Elettra Marconi. He taught at TAFE for seventeen years in the Screen and Media department and created Sydney TAFE Radio, an interactive 24-hour radio and production facility for students studying radio broadcasting. Benjamin owns and operates the Marconi Radio Rover, a bespoke educational classroom and outside radio facility used by commercial radio stations for outside broadcasts. Students will learn in the Marconi Radio Rover in their Festival workshop.

**Brian Newington** (with Benjamin Starr) is one of Australia's award-winning TV and radio production engineers with thousands of TV and Radio commercials under his belt and many prestigious Hollywood awards for his talent. He has been in Broadcasting for more than forty years, worked with Graham Kennedy and was a board member and part owner of MMM radio when it launched in Sydney in the 1980s. Brian and Benjamin have worked together for more than twenty years in industry and education, as they have inspired students to follow their broadcasting dreams.

**Connie Salmon** is a highly experienced and versatile teacher who has taught nationally and internationally in classes from K-12. She has a deep passion for mathematics and thoroughly enjoys bringing the magic of maths to learners of all ages. Her own knack for problem solving and ninja stealth will expose our gifted mathematicians to some puzzling predicaments and spectacular solutions.

**Debbie McKenna** has a Bachelor of Science degree, majoring in Chemistry and Applied Chemistry, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education. She is passionate about instilling a love of science in children and strives to do this through fun, hands-on activities that allow children to develop an understanding of scientific principles. Besides high school teaching, she has worked in various industries and loves to incorporate what she has learned from this experience into her workshops.

**Diana Thanos** is a highly experienced primary school teacher with her masters of Gifted and Talented Education from UNSW. Her fast paced, fun and engaging approach has led her to the G.A.T.E.WAYS team, where she focuses on teaching like-minded individuals in an exciting, hands on environment. Diana is passionate about creativity and has a love of learning that is both contagious and inspiring!

**Emily Taylor** is an actor with over fifteen years' experience who has appeared in a number of television programs including *Get Krack!n*, *Home and Away*, *The Dr Blake Mysteries*, *It's A Date* and *Underbelly*. She has worked extensively in comedy, sketch and improvisation with troupes such as *Spontaneous Broadway*, *Random Musical*, *Impro Melbourne* and *Melbourne Playback*. Recently

returned from a national tour of the comedy revue *Senior Moments*, Emily has received much critical acclaim for her solo multi character shows, winning multiple awards for *Cannonball* (Melbourne Fringe Tour Ready Award and Best Solo Show NZ Fringe) and a Green Room Award for her cabaret *Hello You*. Emily has worked as a writer, director and facilitator across Australia and New Zealand and is a regular teaching artist with Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Drama Victoria and Arena Theatre Company.

**Emma Rose Smith** is a writer, editor, educator, performer and arts organiser. She directs the *Unspoken Words* storytelling festival, co-organises the monthly poetry gig *Word in Hand*, and manages the *Poetry Object* competition for young people at Red Room Poetry. By weekend, she gardens haphazardly.

**Kate Parker** is a writer, science communicator and perpetual learning enthusiast with a passion for great storytelling and interesting facts. A qualified ethical education facilitator and literature lover, Kate loves the opportunity to explore great ideas and to watch the cogs of children's mind turn as they explore the recesses of their unbound intellects.

**Katrina Sims** has a master's degree in gifted education and has taught mathematics to students from Years 3-10 in both mainstream and specialised enrichment classes for mathematically gifted students. She is a member of the Australian Mathematics Trust Challenge Problem Solving committee. She has presented workshops on gifted education and mathematics within Australia and overseas to teachers, parents and students. As a teacher and committee member of the ACT Gifted and Talented Association, Katrina was involved in the development of a Gifted and Talented Policy with the ACT Department of Education. She has received a Bernard Neumann Award for contributions to Mathematics Enrichment for Australian Students. Her passion for problem solving in mathematics and her creative flair ensure that her workshops are deeply enriching and engaging for gifted students.

**Laura Jade Hindes** is an artist with a background in biology. Her work fuses the multidisciplinary fields of art, biology, lighting, neuroscience and BCI (brain-computer interface) technology to explore new ways of perceiving and interacting with our inner biological processes. She loves creating interactive experiences and educational workshops for events, festivals, schools and museums that revolve around creative science communication and experiential education.

**Raema Martyres** has worked as a primary school teacher for five years. During this time, she was responsible for delivering various enrichment programs for gifted students. Prior to teaching, she trained and worked as a Registered Psychologist, having completed her honours degree in Psychology at Macquarie University. She has a passion for teaching science and mathematics to gifted and talented students and has obtained her Certificate of Gifted Education from the University of New South Wales. She is an experienced G.A.T.E.WAYS Eureka presenter and Brainwaves Club Leader.

**Rengen Parlano** is studying the Bachelor of Science (Advanced)/Doctor of Medicine at the University of Sydney. He is passionate about both disciplines and how they inform us about our world. Rengen has taught many young learners, through individual tutoring and workshop groups, for the past four years and loves sharing the inspirational world of science with them.

**Sam McNair** is a caricaturist, illustrator, teacher and apiarist. On weekends Sam works at events drawing caricatures on the spot, and during the week as an educator and mentor for young artists. Sam is currently working on a picture book appropriating works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. He relishes the opportunity to guide young artists in a student-centred fashion to elicit their social and political viewpoints in the format of the social or political cartoon.

**Steve Murphy** (with Benjamin Starr) is a radio presenter and voice-over artist who has worked on Sydney radio for more than thirty years. He started in Melbourne radio and worked his way up to Sydney radio on 2SM, 2GB and 2CH as an announcer, producer and host of top rating shows. Steve has recorded many commercials and voice-overs and works with Benjamin and Brian in teaching, programming, voice-overs, social media and bespoke feature programming. Steve is the ultimate trainer in teaching students the art of making your voice the signature of your soul.

**Tracy Forbes** is a passionate educator and experienced G.A.T.E.WAYS presenter who thoroughly enjoys creating and presenting programmes for the enthusiastic children who attend gifted and talented programs. She loves science and is looking forward to lots of mind-stretching and mind-boggling activities during the Sydney end of year Festival.

**Vanessa Ryan-Rendall** has over ten years teaching experience in the primary classroom and has completed her Master of Gifted Education. She has a passion for learning about the world around her through spending time exploring outdoors, reading adventure books, linking numeracy to gardening and new ideas. Her workshops are as imaginative as they are thought-provoking and challenging!

**Zuzi Fort** studied at the University of Western Sydney – Nepean (Theatre) and at the University of Technology – Sydney (Communication – directing and scriptwriting). She has worked as an actor, director, scriptwriter, drama coach, radio/TV host as well as a stunt performer. Highlights include performing Moliere at the Belvoir, acting with David Ritchie in *Place with the Pigs*, playing *Tiger Lily* at Capitol Theatre, performing stunts on the Superman movie and working for the Universal Studios. For over ten years Zuzi has worked with children and young adults encouraging their creativity, developing confidence and essential life skills.