

GATEWAYS FESTIVALS

MEET OUR PRESENTERS

Alison Brennan is originally from the UK. She has an honours' degree in Biology and is a qualified secondary science teacher with many years teaching experience. Alison has had many leading teacher roles and has been a Year 11 Assistant Head and a Co-Ordinator for Gifted and Talented Science programs. Alison is passionate about science education and is excited to share her love of learning through G.A.T.E.WAYS. Alison has four children of her own, from Kinder to Year 8.

Allen Dickson is an educator with a passion for ensuring learning is innovative, practical and enjoyable. For nearly 20 years he has specialised in the fields of Drama, English and Maths, and uses his diverse range of unique skills to initiate change in classroom practice. Allen runs his own educational consultancy, RethinkPD.

Andrew Dobbyn has over 20 years primary and secondary teaching experience in Australia and abroad covering a wide range of subjects. Andrew is well placed to support teachers in using technology to add value to teaching and learning. Andrew has a Graduate Diploma in Computer Education, a Bachelor of Education and a Master's in Education majoring in leadership. He has worked as a teaching and learning advisor for a national and international company that specialises in educational software and hardware and for the last 5 years has re-joined the teaching profession as an eLearning coach and consultant.

Ang Hewasiribaddana is a qualified mainstream and Montessori teacher and has worked in education for the last decade in many unusual capacities – from being an immersion English teacher to gifted preschool students in Asia, to governing on a sheep station in outback Australia, to exploring alternative education environments in suburbia – and now working with G.A.T.E.WAYS. She is currently studying for her Master of Education (Gifted Education).

Annette Subhani is an educator, a parent and a person of varied life experience with a passion and desire to contribute to the character development of children from an early age. She has been presenting with G.A.T.E.WAYS for over five years and she thrives on working collaboratively with children. Annette encourages students to question the world around them and to transfer their learning to real-life. She has a love of history, reading and literature, maths, story-telling, the arts and living life.

Bobbie O'Brien completed her undergraduate Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Science degrees at the University of Melbourne in 2006. In 2007, she completed an honours' degree in the Developmental Epigenetics Laboratory at Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and went on to attain a Master of Philosophy degree. Bobbie is also a qualified primary school teacher, having completed her Diploma of Education. She is passionate about science and education and enjoys combining these passions with G.A.T.E.WAYS.

Cameron Semmens is an award-winning poet, entertainer and poetry educator with 21 books to his name and 27 years' experience of sharing on the stage and the page. He makes his living through words: running workshops, designing books and performing live. He lives in the foggy, ferny forests of the Dandenong Ranges with his two young kids, Spencer and Mieka.

Jackie Moss has been involved in the visual arts industry for over 25 years with experience in graphic design, illustration and textile design. She has been commissioned as a mosaic artist and has written and illustrated a children's book. She recently completed a Diploma of Visual Art majoring in oil painting. Jackie loves to see young minds inspired creatively, acquiring new skills and away from their screens!

Joanne Davis developed a fascination for science at a young age, getting her first microscope at 6 years old! As a research scientist with a PhD in Immunology and over 16 years' experience in the lab, Joanne is devoted to looking for a cure for cancer, and teaching. Joanne taught in the CSIRO Scientist in Schools program, and has conducted a range of G.A.T.E.WAYS Programs, including Science Eureka's, Festivals and Journeys – usually about science with a twist. She has a passion for experimenting daily, whether it's in the lab, or in the backyard creating potions.

Kim Edwards teaches English literature and creative writing to university and high school students, and drama and theatre skills to both adults and kids all over Melbourne. She has run book clubs and cabarets, performed Shakespeare and written sonnets, dabbled in Dickens and is best buddies with the Brontës, and while she loves a ripping good yarn, she is still convinced everything we get to read and write in our lives is always a thrilling new adventure!

Leannda Read has a Bachelor of Science and a PhD in psychology. In addition to having been director of a national assessment services company, a consultant with a not-for-profit, and a researcher, Leannda is a parent. While she has taught psychology and statistics to university students, she loves nothing more than working out ways to translate challenging information into engaging and accessible content for curious young learners. Leannda loves to learn about the world around us and share her curiosity and passion for learning with like-minded young people.

Mark Maxwell is an artist, technician, builder and workshop presenter who has a giant studio to work his ideas. His practice encompasses sculptural marques, woodwork, animation, set design and lighting. When creating miniature models, he explores

engineering principles and tries to design projects that promote open ended creativity. His creative process involves constructing working models from scratch and using technology to program basic functions.

Maureen Frith has many years of teaching experience in both primary and secondary schools and a passion for science. She has performed the role of Coordinator in Science and Technology, presenting enrichment and extension programs for students and professional development for teachers. She has helped to develop curricula, including VELS Science and Thinking Skills documents. She is an active member of the Victorian Science Teachers Association and the Science Talent Search Committee. Maureen has post graduate qualifications in gifted and talented education and a strong commitment to gifted learning. She has been a G.A.T.E.WAYS presenter for many years.

Megan Dredge is a passionate and inspiring presenter, who has spent two decades teaching in both the public and private education sectors. Megan is committed to helping students aim higher, reach further, and learn stronger. She has authored four books, developed numerous resources for teachers, and most recently developed the education resources for the ABC's sustainability series, Project Planet. She has spoken extensively in Australia, Asia and Europe and is currently the Global Leadership Coach for Propel Women, actively training over 4000 leaders in 44 nations around the world.

Meg Pini has significant experience within the education sector. Having spent many years working with children of all ages, Meg has developed a resume that illustrates her fervour for teaching. She is ardently striving for opportunities to discover, learn and create. Meg has a BAppSc(AppPhys), GDipEd and is currently completing her MEd. An experienced teacher of senior mathematics and physics, Meg has a passion for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Meg Petrie has taught for thirteen years in areas such as film, animation, podcasts, theatre, Italian, English and storytelling. When she isn't teaching, Meg writes short stories and performs her stories across various Melbourne stages. She has lived on an Italian mountain to film a documentary about goats (who like to eat cameras) and humans who love goats. She has never been to Mars. Meg is passionate to inspire students to create their best stories and have a great time along the journey.

Nova Weetman wrote her first book at twelve. A dystopian story about jelly people, it's predictably unpublished. From there, she honed her story writing skills in the world of film and TV, working on H2O, Backyard Science and Pixel Pinkie, before returning to the thing she loves most - writing for kids. Now she writes young adult novels, middle fiction, and junior fiction. Her books include the award-winning *The Secrets We Keep* for readers aged nine plus, and her new junior series *Zooniverse* for anyone who loves a great adventure.

Rebecca Fraser is an Australian author with a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, and a Certificate of Publishing (Copy Editing & Proofreading). She copywrites in a freelance capacity and copy edits for a publisher of children's and speculative fiction ... however her true passion lies in storytelling. Rebecca's fiction has appeared in numerous anthologies, magazines, and journals since 2007. Her junior teen fantasy adventure novel *Curtis Creed and the Lore of the Ocean* was released in 2018. Rebecca is passionate about sharing her skills and knowledge with aspiring young authors and budding writers.

Ruth Evans is an experienced and passionate primary school teacher with a master's degree in gifted and special education. She has taught lots of G.A.T.E.WAYS programs and loves to challenge and inspire kids. Ruth has recently completed a course in Writing for Children and hopes to write an amazing novel. She enjoys travelling and playing board games with her twin daughters. Ruth can usually be found in the children's section of the nearest bookshop.

Sanjin Dedic is a teacher and a robotics engineer with a background in product development. His main passion in life is presenting abstract maths, robotics and programming with minimal academic jargon and in a way that can be embraced and understood by everyone, especially primary school students. In doing so, he hopes that many younger, more creative minds, can join in the creation of the hi-tech world that is developing around us.

Stephanie Axon has been a secondary school teacher for many years and has a passion for education. Her dynamic, hands-on workshops provide many opportunities to encourage and foster the enquiring minds of children. She loves all things Science and relishes the opportunity to share her enthusiasm and love of learning with children.

Suzie Thomas has worked in the professional theatre world for over twenty years. She trained as an actor at the Atlantic Theatre School in New York and founded her own theatre company in Melbourne in 2001. After many years heading the Education and Families program at Melbourne Theatre Company, she is now a freelance theatre director and teaching artist and loves sharing the wonders of all things dramatic with young people.

Tim Byrne enjoys all areas of science. Science is a way of looking at the world and trying to figure out what's going on, so every day brings another challenge to look further, deeper or differently. He likes to share his passion for science with anyone who will take the time.