

## MEET OUR PRESENTERS

**Nathan Alison** has taught Digital Technologies, VCE Computing and Software Development in classrooms for 11 years. He now works as Professional Learning Coordinator for DLTV, Victoria's professional association for teachers of Digital Technologies. Nathan brings a background in Computer Systems Engineering and years of hobby coding. He is excited to be working with revolutionary classroom tech like the BBC micro:bit.

**Alison Brown** is a psychologist, an experienced teacher, parent and author. She was a committee member and Vice President of the Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented Children for over six years and has presented at a number of state, national and international conferences on gifted education. She returns to Australia this year, after 6 years in USA where she worked across school districts as a consultant in gifted education, and as Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Seton Hall University. Alison is currently completing a PhD through La Trobe University looking at the benefits of using narrative therapy with children.

**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.

**Andrew Plant** is a scientist, an illustrator and author of dozens of wildlife and education books, including the international best-selling *Could a Tyrannosaurus play Table Tennis?* and *Puggie*. He has travelled the world searching for wildlife and been personally bitten by several exotic and dangerous creepy crawlies. His next book – *Glitch* – features some most unusual bugs!

**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 governessing 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.

**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.

**Debi Cohen** is a highly motivated and creative arts and crafts teacher. She runs an art program called ICKY STICKY & GOO. Debi does not specialise in any one medium but allows her students to experience many different media and techniques to further their knowledge.

**Emma Carter** has Bachelors' Degrees in Science and Engineering, with majors in Physics and Electrical Engineering from the University of Melbourne. She has taught secondary school maths, science and physics and worked at Scienceworks. She has also worked as an outreach education officer for the Discovery Science and Technology Museum and enjoys presenting science and mathematics workshops with G.A.T.E.WAYS.

**Herwig Waldhuber** is very interested in astronomy as well as the natural world. "Young minds should be opened to the wonders of the universe", is his motto. Herwig has run many successful G.A.T.E.WAYS programs on astronomy, science, history, geology, volcanoes, on aliens, on atoms and much more.

**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!

**Jacob Pini** has completed a Bachelor of Aviation and is currently undertaking a Master's of Teaching at the University of Melbourne. He has a strong passion for mathematics and digital technologies and believes firmly in firing imagination and interest in STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with hands-on learning. Jacob considers himself an amateur yogi, an avid cyclist and a keen gamer and enjoys sharing his experiences and creating exciting new learning opportunities with children.

**Jenny Frewin** is an international teacher of English, a lover of history, an aspiring writer of fiction and intrepid traveller. After teaching in the UK, Brunei, Qatar and Singapore and surviving the Inca Trek and the Headhunters' Trail in Borneo, Jenny has settled in Melbourne. Jenny enjoys making silver jewellery, attempting to paint and playing with her new little rescue cat Minnie.

**Jenny Lee** has completed a Master of Teaching with Mathematics and Science methodologies and has taught Prep to Year 12 in a range of schools in Victoria and New South Wales. She has worked with students, parents and teachers from various backgrounds. Through these fun and valuable experiences, she has become skilled at delivering differentiated programs to highly able students. In her spare time, Jenny loves playing with numbers, breaking coded messages, and studying delightful magic tricks.

**Jo Baker** has been making and flying kites for the last 27 years. She has won the Australian Sports Kite Championships and was the 2005 World champion in the soft kite category. She has attended International Kite Festivals world-wide. She started Kites 4 Kids in 1995 and conducts fantastic kite-making workshops.

**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.

**Kate Mildenhall** is a writer and teacher. Her debut novel, *Skylarking*, was published in 2016 to critical acclaim. Kate has taught in schools, at RMIT University and State Library Victoria, and has volunteered with Teachers Across Borders delivering professional development to Khmer teachers in Cambodia.

**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!

**Lani Brayer** is an educator with a passion for learning about the past, especially about those who perished in the Holocaust. She has a B.A in secondary teaching and a Masters' Degree in Education. Lani is determined to change the way people think and to eradicate intolerance, racism and bigotry.

**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 taught for many years in both primary and secondary schools. She has held a leadership position in science and technology, helped develop curricula in science and thinking skills, provided extension and enrichment for students and presented professional development for teachers. She has a passion for Mathematics, Science and Technology and a strong commitment to gifted education. She assists students to be active enquirers, making use of higher order thinking skills to achieve wider and deeper learning, and encourages them to share their knowledge and appreciation of the universe in which we live.

**Rachel Holkner** has a ridiculous imagination and has lost many hours flying magic carpets among the clouds. With a background in the arts and professional writing she has produced short fiction and articles for many publications, reviews regularly for various websites and teaches history, creative thinking and writing with G.A.T.E.WAYS.

**Ruth Evans** is a caring, enthusiastic and experienced primary school teacher with a diploma in publishing and communications and a master's degree in Inclusive and Special Education, specialising in Gifted and Talented Education. Ruth enjoys cooking, knitting and reading stories with her twin daughters. She can't wait for the festivals – they are going to be so much fun!

**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.

**Sharon Leibowitz** is an experienced educator with enthusiasm for ensuring that learning is creative, practical and enjoyable. She has specialised in the area of gifted education for over 20 years in schools and has been running exciting journeys for G.A.T.E.WAYS over the last five years. One of her passions is mathematics and she particularly enjoys the task of designing mathematical curriculum using the 'thinking treasure' of children's literature, art and science.

**Simon Matheson** is a physicist by training and has been involved in education one way or another for most of his life; first as a student, then as a secondary school science and maths teacher, and most recently as a developer and presenter of science outreach programs with CSIRO Education. Simon's enthusiasm for science education is grounded in the belief that all citizens of the modern world need a firm grasp of the principles upon which science (and, by extension, the world around us) are built.

**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.

**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.