

SYDNEY JEWISH WRITERS FESTIVAL

2022 PROGRAM

19-20 June



WELCOME

Welcome back to the Shalom Sydney Jewish Writers Festival. I'm thrilled to be writing this with the knowledge that very soon we will be reunited in person and immersed in that festival atmosphere we have longed for over the past two years. This year, our program includes some wonderful new works of Australian Jewish writing, and features journalists, novelists, memoirists, academics, and illustrators. My hope is that this Festival exposes you to new authors, genres, experiences and perspectives, and entertains and moves you.

I'm also delighted that we can offer two sessions for children, and hope that these exciting encounters with local authors and illustrators ignite their interest in books and the magic of storytelling.

To our audience, I thank you for your support over the past two years of online programming, and for joining us over Zoom time and time again. We look forward to being together and celebrating - in person - our community's authors, thinkers and ideas.

Thank you to our loyal, passionate and creative SJWF Programming Committee - Rita Nash, Michaela Kalowski and Adam van Rooijen. Every conversation with you is a delight. And of course, my gratitude to the wonderful Shalom team who make work a dream.

I look forward to seeing you on 19 & 20 June.

Warm regards

Anna Stern

Sydney Jewish Writers Festival Director

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday 19.June.2022

10.15AM



LITTLE PAGO WITH LAUREN BRIGGS
For ages 2-5. Limited spots available.
One parent/carer must accompany
each child.

10.30AM

**COFFEE & HEADLINES WITH
THE DAILY AUS CO-FOUNDER
SAM KOSLOWSKI**
INTERVIEWER: JENNA PRICE

11.30AM

**THE FREEDOM CIRCUS WITH
SUE SMETHURST**
INTERVIEWER: RITA NASH

12.30PM

**ABOMINATION: FRIENDSHIP, FAITH,
AND IDENTITY WITH
ASHLEY GOLDBERG**
INTERVIEWER: SCOTT WHITMONT

Book at www.shalom.edu.au

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday 19.June.2022

1.15PM



PRIME MINISTER FOR THE DAY WITH
BECK FEINER

For ages 5-8. Limited spots available.

1.30PM

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY
WITH DR RACHAEL KOHN

INTERVIEWER:

RABBI DR BENJAMIN ELTON

2.30PM

FOUND, WANTING WITH
NATASHA SHOL

INTERVIEWER: SUZANNE LEAL

3.30PM

RUNAWAYS WITH
SHELLEY DAVIDOW

4.30PM

THE (JEWISH) BOOKS THAT MADE US
Panel Discussion.

INTERVIEWER: SCOTT WHITMONT

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Monday 20.June.2022

6.30PM

FUGITIVE WITH SIMON TEDESCHI
INTERVIEWER: BERNARD ZUEL

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)



Sunday.19.June.2022

10.15am - 11.00am

Tech room, level 1



LITTLE PAGO WITH LAUREN BRIGGS

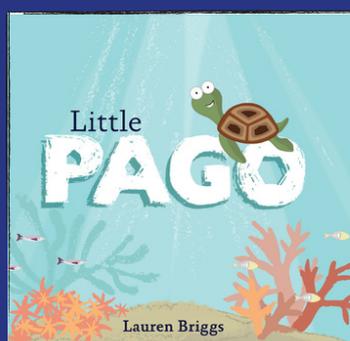
Little Pago is an energetic and playful baby sea turtle living on the Great Barrier Reef. Meet his creator, author and illustrator Lauren Briggs, as she leads us through a reading of 'Little Pago' followed by a fun craft activity.

For children ages 2-5. One parent/carer is must accompany each child. Limited to eight children's places.



Lauren Briggs

Lauren Briggs is a visual storyteller with a passion for children's picture books, literacy, the environment and Indigenous education. Holding a design degree in Visual Communications from UTS, Lauren specialises in design, illustration and photography. Lauren uses children's picture books as a vehicle to explore and share ideas about important social issues. Her two books: 'Stories for Simon' (written with Lisa Miranda Sarzin) and 'Little Pago' are both calls to action with the hope of inspiring our next generation. Lauren lives in Sydney with her husband and four children.



[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

Sunday.19.June.2022
10.30am - 11.10am
Main room



COFFEE AND HEADLINES WITH THE DAILY AUS

'The Daily Aus' has revolutionised how the news is shared with Gen-Z and Millennials. Every day, they broadcast headlines to thousands of young Australians through their podcasts and Instagram updates.

Start your morning with a coffee and chat with 'The Daily Aus' co-founder Sam Koslowski as he talks to journalist and media commentator Jenna Price about new versus traditional media, what Gen-Z thinks about current affairs, and his own media inspirations.

Sam Koswloski will be interviewed by Jenna Price.



Sam Koslowski

Sam Koslowski is one half of 'The Daily Aus', a news source for Millennials and Gen-Z founded by two twenty-somethings who decided they'd make a business out of explaining the news to their friends. 'The Daily Aus' posts clear and concise Instagram stories and posts and is designed to be read in under a minute as a part of weekday morning routines. Previously, Sam worked in corporate law.



Jenna Price

Jenna Price is an Australian journalist and academic. As of 2021, she is a visiting fellow at the Australian National University and The Sydney Morning Herald columnist. She is one of the founders of the online feminist movement, Destroy The Joint.

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

Sunday.19.June.2022

11.30pm - 12.15pm

Main room



THE FREEDOM CIRCUS WITH SUE SMETHURST

When award-winning journalist Sue Smethurst first attempted to record her grandmother-in-law's incredible Shoah survival, she was shooed away. 'Why do you want to know?' she'd ask. 'My story is nothing special.'

Eventually, following extensive research and hours of conversation, Smethurst penned 'The Freedom Circus', a mesmerising account of a Polish Jewish circus performer who survived the Shoah following a terrifying journey through the USSR and Middle East to Africa before finding refuge in Australia.

Sue Smethurst will be in conversation with Rita Nash.



Sue Smethurst

Sue Smethurst is an award-winning journalist and author of nine non-fiction books including 'The Freedom Circus', which has been translated into six languages, 'A Diamond in The Dust', 'Blood on the Rosary' and 'Behind Closed Doors'. Sue has spent more than twenty years in media and has written for some of Australia's biggest selling titles including 'The Australian Women's Weekly', 'Good Weekend' and 'The Weekend Australian'.



Rita Nash

Rita Nash managed an independent bookshop for 13 years after many years of teaching and librarianship in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Rita described the process of coming to terms with her Holocaust demons in her story *The Last Barrier*, published in *Children of the Shadows*, Australia's first collection of second-generation survivor stories. Rita guides at the Sydney Jewish Museum and volunteers at the Museum Library. She has recently been researching and writing the story of the Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust by fleeing to the Soviet Union. This is her 13th year on the SJWF Programming Committee.

www.shalom.edu.au

Sunday.19.June.2022

12.30pm - 1.15pm

Main room



ABOMINATION: FRIENDSHIP, FAITH, AND IDENTITY WITH ASHLEY GOLDBERG

The lives of two friends are changed forever when their ultra-Orthodox Jewish school is rocked by a scandal. Twenty years later, their unexpected reunion forces them to face the events of their past and present, causing devastating consequences.

In his beautifully observed debut novel 'Abomination', promising young writer, Ashley Goldberg, creates a compassionate and moving story of an enduring and evolving friendship, and the search for meaning, identity and belonging.

Ashley Goldberg will be interviewed by Scott Whitmont.



Ashley Goldberg

Ashley Goldberg is an Australian writer based in Melbourne. His fiction has appeared in 'New Australian Fiction 2021', 'Meanjin', 'Chiron Review', and 'Award Winning Australian Writing' among other publications. Ashley has an MA in Creative Writing from Bath Spa University and a Graduate Diploma of Professional Writing from Canberra University. His work has been longlisted for both the Galley Beggar Press Short Story Prize and the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. 'Abomination' was shortlisted for the 2020 Kill Your Darlings Unpublished Manuscript Award.



Scott Whitmont

Scott Whitmont, former long-term member of the SJWF Advisory Committee, is Business Development & Relationship Manager for Booktopia Publisher Services, Booktopia's wholesale and trade distribution arm. Prior to joining BPS, Scott proudly owned and operated the independent Lindfield Bookshop and Children's Bookshop for over 20 years. He is a Past President of the Australian Booksellers Association (NSW) and also served on its National Board. Passionate about books, particularly history and memoir, Scott regularly reviews for industry publications and moderates author 'in conversation' events.

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Sunday.19.June.2022

1.15pm - 2.15pm

Tech room, level 1



PRIME MINISTER FOR THE DAY WITH BECK FEINER

What would you do if you were Prime Minister for the day? What if the grown-ups weren't in charge and kids could run Australia?! We could have submarines to scoop garbage out of the sea ... or teach koalas how to do karate ... and hang giant rainbows in the sky to make everyone happy.

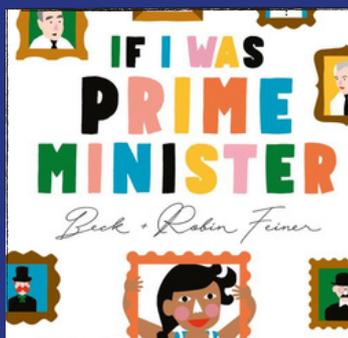
Join illustrator and author Beck Feiner for a fun, hands-on session. Beck will read her book 'If I were Prime Minister' (and some of her others!) and run an arts and craft activity.

For ages 5-8. Supervision will be provided. 12 places available.



Beck Feiner

Beck Feiner is an illustrator and author. Her illustrations and books shine a spotlight on social issues and tap into the mood of the time, promoting harmony and diversity. Beck's first book, 'Aussie Legends Alphabet', went on to receive nation-wide recognition and earned her an ongoing publishing deal. Beck has since published five more books which include: 'If I was Prime minister', 'My Folks Grew Up in the '80s', 'The Polar Bear in Sydney Harbour', 'Big Love' and 'My Favourite Teacher'. Beck hopes to have a long career creating books and illustrations that everyone loves.



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Sunday.19.June.2022

1.30pm - 2.15pm

Main room



THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

WITH DR RACHAEL KOHN

Dr Rachael Kohn has spent much of her professional life as a researcher and presenter on religion and spirituality at the ABC. Join Rachael as she discusses her latest book, 'The Other Side of the Story: Essays on Jews, Christians, Cults, Women, Atheists and Artists', a reflection on the breadth of topics in contemporary religion that she was immersed in throughout her career.

Rachael Kohn will be interviewed by Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton



Rachael Kohn

Rachael is best known as the producer and presenter of ABC's The Spirit of Things for 21 years. She has a PhD in religious studies and Jewish history, was a university lecturer in Canada, Britain and Australia, and has published four books and numerous articles. Dr Kohn was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by UNSW in 1985, the AO in 2019, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society NSW.



Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton

Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton is the Chief Minister of The Great Synagogue. He is a former President of the Council of Christians and Jews and advises the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. He has an MA and a PhD in history and has published on both British and Australian Jewish history. He is married to Hinda Young and they have two children, Lizzie and Salo.

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

Sunday.19.June.2022

2.30pm - 3.15pm

Main room



FOUND, WANTING WITH NATASHA SHOLL

On Valentine's Day, after a night of red wine and pasta and planning for their future, Natasha Sholl and her partner Rob went to bed. A few hours later, at the age of 27, his heart stopped.

15 years later, Natasha has written a passionate and honest memoir about her attempt to rebuild her life while navigating loss and facing cultural assumptions about the 'right way' to grieve. Join Natasha as she talks about her book 'Found, Wanting', falling in love in the aftermath of loss, and what it means to build a life in the space that death leaves.

Natasha Sholl will be interviewed by Suzanne Leal.



Natasha Sholl

Natasha Sholl is a Melbourne-based writer and lapsed lawyer. Her writing has appeared in 'The Age', 'Sydney Morning Herald', 'Good Weekend Magazine', 'SBS Voices', 'Mamamia' and elsewhere. She graduated from the University of Melbourne, majoring in Creative Writing. In 2020 she completed the KYD Mentors Program. 'Found, Wanting' is her debut book.



Suzanne Leal

Suzanne Leal is the author of *The Teacher's Secret*, *Border Street* and *The Deceptions*, for which she won the Nib People's Choice Prize and was shortlisted for the Davitt Awards and the Mark and Evette Moran Nib Literary Award. A member of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and facilitator at literary events, Suzanne is the online host of Thursday Book Club. Her new novel will be published in 2023.

[Book at www.shalom.edu.au](http://www.shalom.edu.au)

Sunday.19.June.2022

3.30pm - 4.15pm

Main room



RUNAWAYS

WITH SHELLEY DAVIDOW

Two women, born a decade apart on opposite ends of the African continent – Shaimaa, an Arab Muslim from Egypt and Shelley an Ashkenazi Jew from South Africa – retell their story of a friendship that has defied historical, geographic, and temporal boundaries, mapping the vast emotional and geographic territories they have travelled as women pushing against patriarchal confines over the past two decades.

In 'Runaways', a moving and expressive exchange of words and memories, Shaimaa and Shelley recall what shaped them, what broke them, and how they made themselves whole again through their interwoven stories.



Shelley Davidow

Shelley Davidow is an award-winning international author originally from South Africa. Writing across genres, her 47 books include the memoirs 'Runaways' (Ultimo, 2022), 'Shadow Sisters' (University of Queensland Press, 2018), 'Whisperings in the Blood' (University of Queensland Press, 2016), 'Playing with Words' (Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2016), 'Fail Brilliantly' (Familius, 2017) and 'Lights over Emerald Creek' (Hague, 2017). She is co-creator of a TV series currently in development and is a senior lecturer in Education at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She lives on a saltwater lake with her family and a tame kookaburra.

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Monday.20.June.2022

4.30pm - 5.15pm

Main room



THE (JEWISH) BOOKS THAT MADE US

The Jewish people are often referred to as 'the People of the Book'. Which authors and pieces of writing have inspired this year's SJWF authors? What are the books they return to? Hear from this year's guest authors and walk away with an inspiring reading list.

Panel Discussion with Scott Whitmont.



Scott Whitmont

Scott Whitmont, former long-term member of the SJWF Advisory Committee, is Business Development & Relationship Manager for Booktopia Publisher Services, Booktopia's wholesale and trade distribution arm. Prior to joining BPS, Scott proudly owned and operated the independent Lindfield Bookshop and Children's Bookshop for over 20 years. He is a Past President of the Australian Booksellers Association (NSW) and also served on its National Board. Passionate about books, particularly history and memoir, Scott regularly reviews for industry publications and moderates author 'in conversation' events.

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Monday.20.June.2022

6.30pm - 7.30pm

Main room



FUGITIVE WITH SIMON TEDESCHI

In 1917, a young composer writes a suite of twenty pieces for piano. They are short, violent and strange, the music of another world. In 1938, a young Jewish family flees Italy for Sydney, Australia. In 1942, a Polish family are nearly destroyed. Half a century later, a young man begins to understand the role these strange visions have played in everything that came before him and all that has come to be.

Join Simon Tedeschi for an intimate conversation about his debut work, 'Fugitive', a book that oscillates between poetry and prose, fiction and fact, trauma and testimony.



Simon Tedeschi

Known primarily as a concert pianist, Simon Tedeschi has written for publications across Australia. When neither writing nor practising, he reads books and drinks coffee. He and his wife, the visual artist Loribelle Spirovski, live in Sydney, Australia with their cat. 'Fugitive' is his first book.

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