

MEDIA RELEASE

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Literary Luminaries To Shine In Whanganui

Whanganui Literary Festival Trust is preparing another treat for the Festival in September this year. The Trust announces a stellar line-up of writers who promise to entertain, inform and even challenge the reading community.

Whanganui Literary Festival Trust Chairperson Gillian Tasker says, "We bring internationally-renowned authors to share their work and experience with our community, and they enjoy our unique boutique festival".

Keynote speaker Nicky Hager will give an update on dirty and not so dirty politics, on freedom of speech, investigative journalism and the role authorship plays in his life.

Shining a light on another aspect of New Zealand's underbelly, sociologist, Jarrod Gilbert is back with observations from his research into murder and gang culture. Jarrod presented a well-attended literary taster event last year in Whanganui and has been nominated, along with Steve Braunias (a speaker at a previous Whanganui Literary Festival) for the Canon Media best blog award, to be announced 22 May.

The line-up of literary luminaries includes crime-writer Paul Thomas, popular author of the Ihaka detective series who is on the list for another Ngaio Marsh Best Crime Novel Award, which he won in 2013; Charlotte Grimshaw and Rachael King, award-winning novelists and daughters of C K Stead and Michael King respectively; Quinn Berentson, documentary maker, script-writer and award-winning author of *Moa* The life and death of New Zealand's legendary bird; Tim Wilson, journalist, television and radio presenter and author of two books; Whanganui's own Sarah Neil will fly in from Auckland for a lively high-tea about gardening, writing and other matters.

Witi Ihimaera has called the Whanganui Literary Festival the best regional festival in the country. "Continuing a fantastic tradition started by our patron, Joan Rosier-Jones, we present Whanganui as a centre of excellence in the literary arts" says Gillian.

The Whanganui Literary Festival is an iconic event, supported by funding from Creative New Zealand, Wanganui District Council and local businesses as well as a growing fan base from within and outside of Whanganui. The Festival is held 12-20 September, and begins by showcasing local talent during the Fringe Festival.

This year Wanganui Repertory Theatre will stage gripping and evocative World War 1 plays written by locals. Poetry readings, a book fair and children's events promise to appeal to every literary taste and age group. The week culminates in a weekend of entertaining and informative sessions held by well-known authors from around New Zealand.

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