



READERS AND WRITERS AKAROA

6-8 March 2026 Programme

Friday 6 March

Matariki Center, Akaroa School

10am - 5pm Storytelling for Film - A Bootcamp
with Michael Bennett

Akaroa Area School

10am - 3pm Inspiring Young Readers and Writers
with Gavin Bishop and Ross Calman

The Madeira Hotel, Akaroa

8pm Open Mic Poetry Night - All Welcome
hosted by Ray Shipley

Saturday 7th March

Gaiety Hall

8.30-9am - Registration

**9-10.30am Mihi whakatau and Welcome
Festival Opening - Story-telling by Word, Image and Song**
Ariana Tikao, Michael Bennett, Ross Calman and Nic Low

10.30-11am morning tea

11-12pm Fiction and the Lives of Others
Damien Wilkins in conversation with Kate de Goldi

12-1pm Lunch break

Gaiety Hall	Matariki Centre 3	Parallel Workshops
<p>1-2.45pm Poetry makes nothing happen – should it? Ariana Tikao, Isla Huia, Ray Shipley and Nic Low, chaired by Joanna Preston</p>	<p>1-1.45pm Stories of the Peninsula Ant Bentley, John Curry and Marie Connolly in conversation with Morrin Rout</p> <p>2-2.45pm Meeting the Ancestor on the Road: personal, cultural and historical essays Tina Makereti with Jane Stafford</p>	<p>1-2.45pm The Memoir with Joe Bennett</p> <p>1-2.45pm Short Fiction to Die For with Vanda Symon</p> <p>1-2.45pm The Craft of Fiction with Damien Wilkins</p>

2.45-3.15pm afternoon tea

Gaiety Hall	Matariki Centre 3
<p>3.15-4pm The South Island novels of Laurence Fearnley Laurence Fearnley in conversation with Jane Stafford</p>	<p>3.15-4pm Driving New Zealand's Organic Movement - the life of Bob Crowder Matt Morris in conversation with Robyn Peers</p>
Gaiety Hall	
<p>4.15-5pm This Writing Life Joe Bennett</p>	

5.15-6pm RAWA's CRIME BOOK CLUBS

Matariki 1	Matariki 2	Matariki 3
<p>Michael Bennett, <i>Carved in Blood</i> facilitated by Steph Walker</p>	<p>Vanda Symon, <i>Prey</i> facilitated by Fee Jay</p>	<p>Liam McIlvanney, <i>The Good Father</i> facilitated by Marie Connolly</p>

7pm - Festival dinner at The Gaiety Hall

Dinner Speaker: [Steve Braunias!](#)

Sunday 8 March

Gaiety Hall

9.30-10.30am Keynote

Awe: the miraculous and mysterious in writing - Tina Makereti

10.30-11am morning tea

11-12pm Lives of Crime

Vanda Symon and Liam McIlvanney in conversation with Kate de Goldi

12-1pm Lunch break

Gaiety Hall	Matariki Centre 3	Parallel workshops
1-1.45pm Mountain Writing: The Pleasure of Researching and Editing an Anthology Laurence Fearnley, chaired by Morrin Rout	1-1.45pm New Novels, New Conversations Coleen Clare, Wendy Parkins and Heather McQuillan in conversation with Robyn Peers	1-2.45pm Sonnets will not Bite You Joanna Preston
2-2.45pm Te Araroa from South to North Naomi Arnold in conversation with Liana Ashenden	2-2.45pm Southern Tales Owen Marshall and Daniel Smith in conversation with Jane Stafford	1-2.45pm Generating Sharp Fictional Prose Josiah Morgan

2.45-3.15pm afternoon tea

Gaiety Hall	Matariki Centre 3
3.15-4pm Mountain Ranging Andy Buchanan and Nic Low in conversation with Morrin Rout	3.15-4pm Submitting work for publication Isla Huia and Josiah Morgan
Gaiety Hall	
4.15-4.45pm RAWA 2026 Awards , introduced by Melanie Dixon and presented by Owen Marshall	
4.45-5.15pm Closing Address: Readers and Writers in Aotearoa - Are we in good heart? Kate de Goldi	