RAWA

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

2.45-3.15pm session break

Gaiety Hall	Matariki Centre 3
3.15-4pm The South Island novels of Laurence Fearnley Laurence Fearnley in conversation with Jane Stafford	**3.15-4pm Driving New Zealand's Organic Movement - the life of Bob Crowder** Matt Morris in conversation with Robyn Peers

Gaiety Hall
4.15-5pm This Writing Life Joe Bennett

5.15-6pm RAWA's CRIME BOOK CLUBS

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

7pm - Festival dinner at The Gaiety Hall

Dinner Speaker: Steve Braunias! (bookings essential)

Sunday 8 March

Gaiety Hall
8.30-9.15am - Winning The Booker Prize Shehan Karunatilaka in conversation with Jane Stafford
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 (Matariki 2) **1-2.45pm Generating Sharp Fictional Prose** Josiah Morgan (Coronation Library) **1-2.45pm The Story is Wiser Than Us** Tina Makereti (Matariki 1)
2-2.45pm Southern Tales Owen Marshall and Daniel Smith in conversation with Steve Braunias	**2-2.45pm Te Araroa from South to North** Naomi Arnold in conversation with Liana Ashenden	

2.45-3.15pm session break

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