

Swimming in words



[Image: Amelia Schmidt]

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A99E90;"] P
[/dropcap]eople rarely need an excuse to go to Port Fairy, but if you love books, writing, or just words, this weekend is the perfect time to visit the quaint fishing town for the **Ex-Libris Festival of Words**.

The event runs from Friday to Sunday and this year's theme is *Dressed to Kill*, offering the tantalising combination of crime and fashion.

Once again festival co-ordinator Marg Sinnott and her team have pulled together an impressive line-up of authors and guest speakers, including the former editor-in-chief of Vogue Australia, Kirstie Clements, former detective Simon Illingsworth, prolific children's author Justin D'Ath and the Western District's own, much-loved ABC announcer Derek Guille.

In keeping with the community spirit of the festival, there is a vast array of events to suit all tastes and many are free.

For a full listing of guests and a downloadable copy of the program, please visit the Ex Libris [website](#).

In conjunction with the Ex Libris Festival of Words, quirky local bookshop **Blarney Books & Art** (James St) is holding its annual children's picture book illustration exhibition, which this year is called UNREAL.

Helen and Des Bunyon from Customs House Gallery are hosting the event, which is now – remarkably – in its 24th year.



The Arrival: Shaun Tan

Again, the line-up of work to be displayed is impressive and includes illustrations by the award-winning Shaun Tan, Leila Rudge, Judy Horacek, Felicity Marshall and Mark Wilson.

(And be sure to tuck an extra couple of dollars in your wallet, because it is almost impossible to walk out of Blarney Books without buying at least one secondhand gem tucked away on their shelves.)

For more about the illustration exhibition, visit their [website](#).

Blue tunes #1

Who doesn't need a little music in their life now and then?

Given our name is Bluestone, we figure it is only appropriate to choose some music that features the word 'blue' in its title or lyrics.

Once you start looking, it is incredible how many songs have something to do with blue.

Here is our first choice – relax and have a listen...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGkaMfloq9E>

Climbing the cape: Cape Bridgewater

After living in Tasmania for a time, the bar had been set very high for bushwalking. A visit to Cape Bridgewater, however, exceeded all expectations.



The view from the top of Cape Bridgewater back to the bay is simply spectacular.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] E
[/dropcap]xactly where the Great Ocean Road comes to an end in south-west Victoria is open to debate, but those who turn off too early – say, at Port Fairy – are missing one of the most spectacular beaches and cliff top walks in the state.

Cape Bridgewater is only 20km west of Portland and wraps itself around a long, crescent-shaped beach that is perfect in itself for a long walk, but the real joy lies in a two-hour return walk to the tip of the cape that takes in two seal colonies.

You can prime yourself for the walk ahead with a morning coffee at the charming [Pickled Pelican café](#) in Percy St, Portland – say that three times quickly – or breakfast at the funky [Bridgewater Bay Café](#) that has absolute waterfront views. (Unlike many beach cafes, this one is open all year round).

The walk starts with steps up from the carpark about 100m west of the café, although we still managed a wrong turn and ended up on a wheelchair ramp rather than the steps, which was slightly embarrassing.



The seal viewing platform gives a birds-eye view of the wildlife.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] F
[/dropcap]rom the carpark, the track meanders high along the farmland boundary before descending to the shoreline where [Seals by Sea Tours](#) run seasonal boat trips out to the seal colonies, cutting the travel time to a few minutes. For those who like to walk, however, the trek is just beginning.

The track rises up to the cape in a steady climb, but is still steep enough in parts to work up a sweat on a warm day and requires a reasonable level of fitness (be sure to carry a water bottle, and binoculars are also handy).

The views as you move up and along the cliff face become increasingly spectacular and are equal to those of the more famous parts of the Great Ocean Road around Port Campbell and Peterborough.

[quote type = "center"] Allow time for plenty of stops to take photos, as on a clear day, the views across the bay are vast and breathtaking.[/quote]

While the scenery alone is worth the walk, Cape Bridgewater is also home to the largest mainland colony of fur seals in Australia and there are two viewing platforms from which to watch them at rest and play.

The first platform overlooks a flat rock that is equivalent to a seal sun bed, while the second, at the end of the walk, looks down on a reef that the seals use for surfing (this is where the binoculars come in handy).

[quote type="center"] While wildlife is wonderfully unpredictable, we were lucky enough to see a dozen or more seals frolicking in the surf and catching waves like Kelly Slater.[/quote]

The geology of the area is also fascinating, with the tip of Cape Bridgewater actually part of a volcanic crater – such facts always make my head spin.

After a packed lunch, the return walk was less arduous, being mostly downhill, but equally as beautiful, with the mid-afternoon sun shimmering on the water.

This is a walk that is not too long, not too difficult, and very rewarding: perfect for a fine spring day.



If you enjoyed this story, you might also enjoy...

[River camping is a shoe-in: Fitzroy River.](#)

[Hey, hey Heywood](#)

[Cafe Bagdad pops up in Penshurst](#)

Love is a Vespa...with a silver tail

Flashback: one of our first stories...

Why I'm voting for Barling



Opinion – Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] I
[/dropcap]MAGINE living in a place where an election was held every three years and, no matter how many candidates ran, the same party kept winning? Would you call this a healthy democracy? Well, we live in a place just like that and it is called the federal seat of Wannon.

For the past ~~58~~ 61 years – that is 10 years longer than I have been alive – the Liberal Party has won Wannon.

In the past ~~58~~ 61 years, there have been ~~22~~ 23 federal elections – the ~~23rd~~ 24th will be held on Saturday – and, in that time, just **three** different Liberals have held the seat of Wannon: Malcolm Fraser, David Hawker and Dan Tehan.

It is not surprising that the Liberal Party has come to treat Wannon as a soft landing for its next generation of MPs. Dan Tehan, who seems like a nice enough guy, was parachuted into the seat of Wannon four years ago.

He had little connection to south-west Victoria, but bought a property near Hamilton to try and fast-track his status as a local. Is that all it takes for the Liberal Party to secure this seat? Judging by the 2010 election result, it appears so.

And while the Wannon electorate has fallen into line year after year, many of these same voters can be heard complaining – yes, complaining – that they are being taken for granted.

Of course this contempt for safe seats is not confined to the Liberal Party, they all do it, but this election Wannon voters have an opportunity to draw a line in the sand and demand a real contest.

With the help of the redrawn boundaries, Wannon is now defined as a ‘marginal’ seat, although it still requires an almost a 6 per cent swing to change hands.

And, for the first time in a long time, the ALP has a strong local candidate in Warrnambool secondary school teacher **Michael Barling** who has had time to build his profile and who has committed an enormous amount of energy toward winning the seat. He has done this despite the antics of federal Labor making it increasingly impossible for him to win: he has not

given up.



I am not normally a Labor voter, but I am going to vote for Barling because he represents to me what politics should be about.

It is about presenting voters with a real choice, not a fait accompli.

It is about supporting a candidate who knows and loves the electorate because he or she has spent most of their life here, not because they have been forced to relocate in the lead up to an election.

And it's about having a candidate with a strong moral compass who is prepared to challenge the party line on issues like asylum seekers and gay rights, rather than follow it blindly.

Above all, however, it's about electing an MP who will continually fight hard for the seat, whether in Government or in Opposition, knowing that they will be held fully accountable at each election.

This will happen if Wannon shifts even further into marginal territory after Saturday: that's the sort of democracy I want to see in action.