



Press Release July 3, 2023
**Aotea to host 'Finding our Voice'
book festival**

Small Island Big Ideas has announced its next event – a festival of storytelling to be held on the island from October 6th to 8th.

Some of Aotearoa's best-loved authors writing on themes dear to the heart of Islanders have been invited.



Annette Lees will talk about her new book *After Dark: Walking into the Nights of Aotearoa* and *Swim*, her journal of a year of wild swimming.

Kennedy Warne founded *New Zealand Geographic* magazine and has written several books about the natural world. His latest is *Soundings: Diving for Stories in the Beckoning Sea*, described as a love affair with the underwater world.

Novelist, short story writer, essayist and creative writing teacher Paula Morris will talk about her award-winning novel *Rangatira* based on the adventurous life of her ancestor Paratini Te Manu who was born on Aotea and was the last resident on Hauturu, Little Barrier Island.

Lizzie Harwood grew up in a family that ran the Mulberry Grove shop, post office and telephone exchange and has turned her childhood memories into short stories, a memoir, and the main character of the prize-winning novel *Polaroid Nights*.

The festival will also feature local writers.



Jenni Ogden's first novel *A Drop in the Ocean* sold 80,000 copies and garnered several awards and two further women's popular fiction novels have followed.

Don E McGregor has written six novels, his latest *Invasion New Zealand 1942* an alternative history of World War 2 in which Great Barrier Island plays a pivotal part in turning back Japanese forces.

Tim Higham's nature writing memoir *Island Notes: Finding my Place on Aotea Great Barrier Island* won favourable reviews and was an independent bookshop bestseller last year.

Wendy Dodds' recent comedy drama *A Pattern of Shades* and Mike Scott's thriller *Bait* have drawn on island characters, incidents, and settings.

Photographer and book producer Chris Morton will talk about his much-admired coffee table book *Aotea: Land and People*.

As well as in-depth conversations about inspiration and writing craft the festival will feature an opening gala night with stand-up island inspired storytelling at the Claris Club.

The festival will also have an international flavour with a video link-up with writers from Galiano Island in British Columbia, Canada, which like Aotea has drawn a community of artists, writers, and spirited thinkers. Small Island Big Ideas convener Tim Higham said the island has been an important refuge and muse for writers over many years, with the local libraries a much-loved part of community life.

"It's time to celebrate the talent, colourful characters, dramatic settings and creative spaces that this island nurtures."

\$35 Early Bird Weekend Festival Passes now on sale on our website

For more information contact Small Island Big Ideas convener Tim Higham,
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