

MEDIA RELEASE

April, 2018

Writers' Retreat for First Nations emerging writers & Writers' Workshops

Emerging First Nations writers from around the state are invited to join a weekend writers' retreat on 5th and 6th May in Narrung community on Ngarrindjeri country. Writers' workshops will be held in Port Pirie and Port Augusta for First Nations writers later that week on the 8th, 9th and 10th May and another workshop open to all will be held in Whyalla on Friday, 11th May.

Adelaide-based playwright Alexis West will join Tasmanian playwright Nathan Maynard to facilitate the two-day retreat, which will include a cultural tour of the nearby community of Raukkan, cultural food sharing and the opportunity to meet other emerging South Australian writers, alongside a series of free writing exercises and an overview of story structure and character development and discussions. Camping and catering will be provided for all participants and participation is free.

"Both Nathan and I want to provide a safe, creative, fun and healing space to help develop and nurture participants' stories. We look forward to be involved in the artistic words and imaginings that the storytellers bring or create during our 2 day workshop," said Alexis West.

Maynard is the writer of *The Season*, an award-winning, full scale production that premiered at the Sydney Opera House last year. Country Arts SA is honoured to be touring *The Season* to Adelaide, Mount Gambier, Renmark and Whyalla in August/September this year. This is a unique opportunity for budding writers to learn from him to develop and share their own stories.

About Nathan Maynard

Maynard is a descendant of the chief of the Trawlwoolway Clan and of the whole of the North East Tasmanian Indigenous peoples. *The Season* is a loving portrait of a Tasmanian Aboriginal family who return each year to Dog Island in the Bass Strait for Mutton Bird Season, a tradition that endures and thrives despite two centuries of colonisation. Nathan is eager to share his experience and knowledge from his 17 years' experience as a dancer, performer and writer. He was the recipient of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Artist of the Year Award in 2006 and 2013, and recently won the Green Room Award for Best New Writing for *The Season*, his first full-length play.

About Alexis West

Alexis West has worked as a dancer, choreographer, performer, writer, theatre-maker and filmmaker over the past 20 years. As a Birri Gubba, Wakka Wakka and Kanak woman, Alexis is passionate about First Nation people's voices as well as the stories of people with disability and people from diverse backgrounds. She has worked as an artistic director, writer, and facilitator for organisations including the Karrikarrinya Theatre Collective, SA Writers Centre, Spirit Festival, Our Mob, Art Gallery SA, and Adelaide Fringe. Alexis has devised and directed new works for No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability since 2008, and worked as AD, co-writer and performer for State Theatre Company SA. Alexis is an active member of the South Australian Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Storytellers and Writer's group as well as a proud working party member of FNAWN (First Nations Australia Writers Network) and reports for NITV "Around the Traps".

5-6th May - First Nations emerging writers retreat at Narrung

8th May - Port Pirie First Nations writers' workshop

9 & 10th May - Port Augusta First Nations writers' workshops

11th May - Whyalla writers' workshop open to all 11 May

Applications for First Nations writers' retreat close 30th April. Application forms available at www.countryarts.org.au/events/the-season/#writers-retreat. For questions, assistance with the application form or travel assistance, please contact Aboriginal Programs Producer Lilla Berry on 08 8444 0422 or email lilla.berry@countryarts.org.au.

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