



Melanie Joosten | Melanie Joosten writes novels and essays about things she cares about. She is the author of *Gravity Well*, *A Long Time Coming*, and *Berlin Syndrome*.

Helen Bayes | Helen is a Quaker Granny with 15 grandchildren. She knits, grows veggies and is a 3rd-generation vegetarian. She has worked for peace, truth and the human rights of children, in Australia, Papua New Guinea and at the UN. Now 73, she tweets daily about nonviolent resistance to war and militarism.



Terry Barnes | Terry has worked in and around politics for a long time, and advised and wrote speeches for federal and state ministers. He now writes about politics and policy, and regularly pops up on radio and TV.

Barry Nguyen | Barry is a technology entrepreneur and moonlights as a physiotherapist and digital health advisor to the Australian Physiotherapy Association. He is a long term thinker and is passionate about bringing to market emerging technologies which has the potential to positively impact millions of lives.

DANCERS

Lorna Hannan | Lorna is an 83 year old resident of North Melbourne who is kept active by a family of four daughters, twelve grandchildren and her contacts in the local community. She believes that trust in each other is our chief hope for the future and that the arts are important signposts along the way.

Tama Tatau | Tama Tatau are men linked through their Traditional tribal tattoos with their passion for Pacific and contemporary dance. They will captivate any type of audience through their dance movements and high energy.

Jungle City Studios | Melbourne's home of Dancehall and street dance music and culture, Jungle City Studios is a welcoming and supportive creative community for everyone. Their absolute love and passion for dancehall culture is truly inclusive and magnetic.

Orlando and Juno | Orlando is ten years old and likes to skate surf snowboard and play the drums. He like making jokes, doing accents and his nickname is Georgina. Juno is 7 years old and talented at surfing skiing and dancing. The things Juno likes to do is dance, draw, get wet and eat food.

Wade Sera-Matiara aka 'Flyboi' | Flyboi started Krumping in 2008 just for the love of it which has turned into a successful opportunity to travel and perform all over Australia, Papua New Guinea, photo shoot for Adidas etc. He teaches workshops and performs countless gigs.

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Melbourne Fringe is a celebration of cultural democracy and art for everyone. By embracing diversity and a spirit of independence, we create a unique space for artistic self-expression linked to the life of our great city. That's why Melbourne Fringe is the most adventurous, inclusive, all-encompassing multi-artform festival in Australia. Every year we feature thousands of artists from every discipline you can name (and a few others besides) performing 400+ events in over 160 venues to an audience in excess of 350,000 people.



The City of Darebin values opportunities for participation and social connection through the arts. They support a diversity of artists and creative organisations across all career stages and practices, through the provision of dedicated arts and cultural spaces and by creating diverse programs.

Thank you Simon Abrahams, Dan Koop, Paul Bilsby, Beau McCafferty, Samantha Butterworth, Meat Market, Bryan Andy, Cat Pwiti, Carla Gottgens, Gregory Lorenzutti, This Is A Stuck Up, Jacinda Richards, Betty Huyh and Deirdre O'Brien.

Production Manager Emily O'Brien | **Stage Manager** Rory Cadman | **Audio Description** Will McRostie, Description Victoria
Auslan Interpretation Erin Gook and Paul Heutson



We respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet, those of the Kulin Nations. We pay respect to Elders past, present and future and in doing so, extend our gratitude to all First Nations people.

CONGRESS

An assembly. A curatorial match making project across words, intention and representation. A series of 'first speeches' from voices often unheard.

CREATED BY All The Queens Men | PRESENTED BY Melbourne Fringe and Darebin Arts

The word Congress comes from the Latin, CON meaning together, and GRADI meaning, to walk, which when joined becomes 'to meet.' A congress is an act of coming together. We live in a world of cacophony, the loud, the harsh and the violent dominate our airwaves. They drown out the stories of the people and communities all around us - that are profound, tender, courageous.

Today, we are coming together to listen.

Collaborating with a cross-section of our diverse community, *Congress* is a citizens' assembly and a platform for people to have their say and be heard.

Congress connects the personal with the political by match making citizens with professional wordsmiths. Ten professional writers and ten community members have been invited to meet to work together to write and deliver the citizen's own first speech.

These writers and speakers have been curated by *All The Queens Men*, guided by principles of gender, cultural, geographic diversity, pan-demographics and inclusivity. Together, these couples have created first speeches for those often unheard; public declarations that address personal visions for our collective future.

All The Queens Men All create spectacular theatrical and participatory community arts experiences. Established by Tristan Meecham and Bec Reid, they connect communities, artists and audiences together in events that transcend the everyday. They are passionate about the transformative power of participative performance; engaging diverse people in the making and performing of their inclusive works and celebrating these 'everyday experts' in exciting and technically proficient art contexts. allthequeensmen.net

Nick Roux (Composer, Lighting and Sound Design) Nick Roux is an artist working in sound and video. He has never given a maiden speech.



Suzie Miller | Suzie is a passionate writer of theatre, screen and poetry. She is also driven to fight for human rights and is currently fully engaged in fighting for equality before the law for all same sex relationships. For the time being she finds herself babysitting a few wayward felines in the neighbourhood who are patiently listening to her rant!

Keira Leike | Keira Leike is a marking in marble, a ripple on the surface, a dance of energy, a leaf of basil, a person of colour, a smell of burnt almonds, a trans woman. She seeks both knowing and not knowing with similar passion.



Benjamin Law | Benjamin is a TV screenwriter, journalist, columnist and author – despite the fact he still only types with two fingers. Not sure what the moral of this is, except that maybe touch-typing is overrated. benjamin-law.com

Vidya Rajan | Vidya is a writer and performance maker working across a few forms. She grew up around the globe but now mostly divides her time between Melbourne and Perth. She is passionate about inclusion, the internet, ethical debates, laughter, and winning at scrabble. She has never given a maiden speech, but given many acceptance speeches in her bathroom mirror.



Alia Gabres | Alia Gabres is a Melbourne based Creative Producer, Cultural Broker and Storyteller. Her favourite stories are easy, casual and magical all at once

Buster Murphy | Buster is in his final year of high school, and has many plans for his life after school. Buster is looking forward to pursuing his loves of dance, music and performance.



Solomon Salew | Solomon Salew is a creative artist proactive in theatre and musical circles in Melbourne. Solomon's drive and individuality spurs his craft into many platforms of expressive experimentation.

Ezeldin Deng | Ez Eldin Deng is a South Sudanese/Australian film and music video director, producer, actor and writer. He has directed and produced numerous music videos, shorts films that have reached millions of views in total on *YouTube*.



Carly Findlay | Carly Findlay is a writer, speaker and appearance activist – challenging people to think differently about appearance diversity and disability. She loves Melbourne, travel, live music, shopping and all of the cheese.

Hannah Morphy-Walsh | Hannah isn't an adventurer. She wants to know who you are instead.



Cynthia Troup | Cynthia is so delighted to have entered into conversation with Geraldine Cook as part of contributing to Congress. The ideas that language is a generative action – that our speech can be a source of transformation – are key to Cynthia's creative work.

Geraldine Cook-Dafner | Geraldine has reached an age when she wants to sit back and let things happen around her (thank you Noel Coward). She has written and delivered many speeches but has never had one written for her until today.



Roger Monk | Roger Monk won all Australian best script film awards for *Walking On Water* in 2002 plus the Teddy Award at Berlin Film Festival. He survived living in New York when the Aids crisis hit in the 80's and writing for TV. He now divides his time between the Byron hinterland and a Melbourne lane.

Davey Thompson | Davey is a hardcore gaymer, enthusiastic shower dancer and an unapologetic warrior for First Nations rights in Australia. Growing up in Barcaldine, Queensland, Davey now proudly calls Naarm home.



Richard Watts | Richard is an arts advocate, broadcaster and writer whose regular media outlets include community radio station 3RRR FM and arts industry website ArtsHub.com.au. He is especially fond of independent theatre, circus, and the TV program Doctor Who.

Ethan Pham | Ethan is a boy, small in size but a big heart. He grew, and still is growing, in Australia. This boy likes to do karate and hip-hop.