

SheKilda3: One-day Crime Spree
The 25th anniversary of Sisters in Crime
St Kilda Town Hall
19 November 2016

by Vivienne Colmer, President, Sisters in Crime Australia

9.30 Welcome

Good morning and welcome to SheKilda3, a one day crime spree here in the heart of St Kilda. My name is Vivienne Colmer and I am the President of Sisters in Crime Australia.

At the outset, on behalf of Sisters in Crime Australia, we respectfully acknowledge the Yalukit Wilam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respects to their elders, both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their traditional relationship to this land.

A special welcome today to all of our authors, producers and other panellists, to the publishers and other industry representatives who are here. Welcome to Sisters in Crime convenors past and present and especially to Janelle Colquhoun, our Queensland convenor who has come all the way down from Brisbane for the event today. Most importantly, welcome to all of you all: readers, writers, fans and lovers of crime writing in all its forms. And a particular shout out to Rose Stone, a founding member who turns 95 in March and until recently rarely missed an event. Clearly having a criminally good time keeps the ageing process at bay.

We are here today to celebrate 25 years of Sisters in Crime. In a moment, I will introduce you to Professor Sue Turnbull and hand over to her to present the keynote address that will reflect on some of the achievements and changes we have seen over those 25 years. But I want to take a moment to highlight just a few a few things that we are celebrating.

Over its 25-year history, Sisters in Crime has held hundreds of events feature virtually all Australian women crime writers as well as most of the overseas ones who have come to the country. We are well known by writers and publishers alike for giving writers a warm welcome and an intelligent and insightful discussion of their work.

We have launched many writing careers, through the Scarlet Stiletto Awards which have provided encouragement and recognition for developing writers, and through the exchange of ideas provided though our events

We have inaugurated the Davitt Awards for published women crime writers. Back in 2001 only 7 books were in contention, although the awards did not then apply to non-fiction. In 2015, by contrast, 96 books were in the running. While we don't take 100% of the credit for the exponential growth of published women crime writers, we certainly take a lot of credit: 95%?

And we ran the first ever women's crime writing convention here at St Kilda Town Hall in 2001 with the first SheKilda, celebrating our 10th year. We then ran SheKilda2 in 2011 to mark our 20th anniversary. And here we are again in 2016 celebrating 25 years. All these things well worth celebrating.

It takes a lot of work to organise events like SheKilda and Carmel Shute, a veteran of all of them, has ask us to shoot her if she even thinks about running another one. Now I know quite a few crime writers who have learned to shoot as part of their research process including Tara Moss, Tania Chandler for Dead in the Water, and I'm told LA Larkin had a bunch of AK47s in a game reserve in

South Africa. So we can probably assemble a whole firing squad of crime writers if needs be. But hopefully Carmel will change her mind, we won't need to shoot her and we might find ourselves celebrating again in 5 or 10 years' time.

For now though, we are here to enjoy SheKilda3 and I would like again to welcome you all and declare the crime spree is off and running. To start off I would now like to introduce Professor Sue Turnbull who will give our keynote address. For most of you Sue needs no introduction. She has been part of the fabric of Sisters in Crime for most of its 25 years, serving as a convenor from 1994 to 2016. She is currently Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Wollongong University, a frequent media commentator on TV and radio and she reviews crime for the Age and Sydney Morning Herald. Thank you for coming Sue, and over to you.

[9.35 Sue Turnbull's keynote address]

9.50 Thank you Sue

Now before we start the rest of the day's events I would like to make an announcement and presentation. Normally we give our speakers a little show bag, but today Sue is in for a special award.

Sisters in Crime is very pleased to present you Sue with a Life Membership Award. This is very select award given to people who have shown significant service to Sisters in Crime as convenors for at least 10 years.

When we looked at how long Sue has been a convenor, she certainly made the grade. She has been a convenor from 1994 to 2016: 22 years. We have given her time off for good behaviour, particularly recognising that since she deserted Melbourne to live in Wollongong, it is hard for her to attend meetings and events here in Melbourne.

Now I won't say much as we are all keen to get on with our criminal activities, but anyone who has been to Sisters in Crime events over the past 25 years is bound to have encountered Sue. She has been one of our foremost interrogators of writers at our events – be they famous overseas writers with whom Sue has struck up strong friendships, like Val McDermid, or up-and-coming Australian writers publishing their first books.

Whenever we need a veneer of academic respectability through media commentary, Sue is happy to oblige. She even got up at 4 in the morning last week, without complaining (much) to talk to ABC Radio Overnight about TV crime, and many of you would have heard her this week on Radio National with Melina Marchetta.

Sue has set new standards in style for our convenors – I know when I first became a convenor, I was terrified of her, with that clipped English accent, the razor-sharp mind, the incredibly stylish clothes, the profession, the child – she seemed to have it all. And that was before she tattooed her whole back with her a Native American totem from the north-west coast. Talk about style! But I got over my fear when she gave me the licence to enjoy popular culture without being apologetic about it to high-brow friends. I was very happy to discover that TV shows like Buffy the Vampire Slayer were OK to watch because Sue wrote lectures and conference papers about them.

Sue, for your sterling service above and beyond the call of duty, over the past 22 years, on behalf of Sisters in Crime can I present you with your Life Membership Award.

And before I let you go, can I also announce that we decided we couldn't let you off the hook completely, so we want to recognise your ongoing role with Sisters in Crime by appointing you as our first ever Ambassador. So here, Sue is your Ambassador badge. We hope we can continue to use you (hopefully not always at 4 in the morning) as our ambassador. We know you will serve us incredibly well in this new capacity, as you have done in your 22 years as a convenor.

So thank you Sue
(opportunity for Sue to say something quick)

9.55: Housekeeping

Now just some quick housekeeping matters before we get to our next session at 10 o'clock.

First, I would like to thank our **sponsors**, without whom we wouldn't have been able to put this day together. They are listed in the program and I believe on the slide behind me. So thanks to:

Criminal Accomplices

- Bonnier Publishing
- Harper Collins Australia

Criminal Associates

- Text Publishing

Criminal Line-Up

- Blarney Books & Art

Criminal reputation

- Clan Destine Press
- Dennis Jones & Associates
- Sun Bookshop

Also, sincere thanks to our sixteen **criminal consorts**. These are individuals who have kindly made donations to help with the cost of the event today. We were surprised and very happy to raise more than two and a half thousand dollars through the generosity of these individuals. I won't name them all but you can see the slide and they are listed in your program.

Maggie Baron, Suzanne Bozorth-Baines, Tony Berry, Ann Byrne, Mirna Cicioni, Aoife Clifford, Vivienne Colmer, Ayala Deasey, Caroline de Costa, Annie Hauxwell, Claire Hill, Anne Holmes, Editors Victoria, Vicki Skidmore, Jaz Stutley and Ann Turner.

During the course of the day there will be a **stack of raffles**. We have more than a dozen bags of books to be won. We will draw prizes throughout the day with the first draw at morning tea, so look out for raffle ticket sellers or buy tickets from the merchandise desk.

We are also privileged to have filmmaker **Pippa Wischer** and her colleague Nick here today. Pippa is interviewing authors for a film project: **A Murder of Crime Writers**. These interviews will be in the breaks in the Ngargee Room. Nick will be roaming the halls throughout the day doing **Vox Pops** about Sisters in Crime. Of course, participation in this is voluntary, but we would love you to talk to Nick if he approaches you.

Don't forget the **Murder in the Town Hall** competition. There will be a prize (bag of books and Pantera Press goodies) for the best opening paragraph a story inspired by the body in the foyer who apparently goes by the name of **Manny Quinn**. There's an entry form in your convention bag and more at the registration desk

If anyone is here from NSW, Rae Cairns is interested in setting up a **Sydney chapter**. She will be at the Sisters in Crime merchandise desk, in the food area at the back, near the t-shirts at morning tea if you want talk about it and you can sign up to be involved in a Sydney Chapter.

Finally thank you to the **She Kilda committee** who have worked incredibly hard to put today together. So thank you Carmel Shute, Michaela Lobb, Lindy Cameron. Caz Brown, Sandra Nicholson and Robyn Byrne, and thank you to all the **volunteers** as well. They will be at sessions in in the main areas wearing distinctive and stylish t-shirts.

So all that's left for me to do now is wish you an excellent day and send you to your next sessions. These are:

Session 1 here in the main hall

Accidental Heroes: how female protagonists are stretching and subverting the boundaries of the genre

Compere: Leigh Redhead

Panel: L.A. Larkin, Emily Maguire & Anna Snoekstra

Session 2 in the Council chamber

Mystery with History: why the past is perfect for exploring matters criminal... even when the cold cases are 3000 years cold!

Compere: Janice Simpson

Panel: Sulari Gentill, L.J.M. Owen, Lucy Sussex