

BMI Christmas Market

Sunday 7 December

10am - 2pm, Minerva Space

Free entry

**BOOK
SALE**

Sun & Sat 6 & 7 December | 10am-2pm

Lending Library | Free entry

News|etter

DEC / 2025

From the Chair

Hello everybody, it is hard to believe we are writing the December edition of the BMI newsletter, but while the year seems to have dashed by, a lot has been achieved at the BMI, for you the Members and for the wider community.

Much of this activity has been internal, with Finance and HR audits almost complete led by the Finance Committee and the Board respectively. More inside>



**BALLAARAT
MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE**

Message from the Chair

Message from the Chair continued...

Cyber security and IT upgrades have been generously led by volunteer **Travis Charlton**, website overview and on-going upgrades supported (pro-bono) by Travis Charlton, **Ava Valpied**, **Leigh Erickson**, BMI's Cultural Development and Services Manager **Mark Potter** and **Brandon Aranyosi from Smalldog**. A general year long tidy up has been undertaken by all staff and various working b's have seen a fresher looking BMI both inside and out, with some carpets having recently been cleaned as part of a recent grant. **Venue Manager Liam Mudge** has championed process and procedure developments in the Venue Hire and OH&S areas and developed new relationships increasing our venue hire rates, revenue and more importantly our visibility in the sector.

New product development is underway including new tour offerings to schools and other interest groups taking shape thanks to **Arts & Events Officer Katrina Hill**. Our work on the National Child Safety Standard compliance area will see us be able to offer experiences to children and families going forward from early 2026.

New external relationships within the **NGLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums)** sector have been formed and real and ongoing partnerships have yielded positive results and opportunities thanks to **Ellen Becker** our Heritage Collection Curator.

The long term audit of the Heritage collection is almost complete, thanks to the **Collections Volunteers**; this project has been running for over 15 years and has resulted in the beautifully presented collection we see in the Heritage Reading Room. This room continues to thrill and intrigue visitors of all ages.

Thanks to our **Librarian Rosemary** for all her work this year on the very successful **Author Talks** and now the **Membership Drive**. We have over 30 new Memberships due to our latest radio and print campaign, thanks also to **Radio 3BA and Power FM** for their support of our radio advertisement. Rosemary also continues to be our "front of house" and I know that you as Members

appreciate the true customer service she provides as does any member of the public that wander in for a look!

We thank **Marilyn Furness** (volunteer co-ordinator) and all her volunteers for their continued commitment to our events, book sales, the library and other areas this year. The BMI simply would not exist in its current form without our volunteer work force. We have almost completed our National Volunteering Standards review with the BMI

And of course there would be no BMI without you, the Members. You are the backbone of the Institute, as has always been the case, and as the **Chair of the Board** I thank you on behalf of the Board, for the privilege to lead this fine organisation, now over 166 years old.

As a token of our appreciation I would encourage you to attend our little Christmas celebration on the 8th December supported by **The Little Ballarat Brass Band** and **The Ballarat Singers**. Thanks to these two groups who continue to support us (not only at Christmas) every year with their talents and time. We also have our annual **Christmas Raffle** underway again, with over 30 prizes this year, ticket details in the newsletter.

events.humanitix.com/bmi-end-of-year-party-2025

ballaratmi.org.au/product/bmi-christmas-affle/

I hope many of you were also able to enjoy the **Open Garden** fundraiser at *Errard Hall* in November's, thanks again to Board Member and **Chair of the Fundraising Committee Malcolm Roberts** for opening his gorgeous garden for this event.

Thanks to all the Board and committee members for what has been a very busy year necessitating a substantial time commitment from everyone to enable improvements and forward momentum with very limited resources.

Message from the Chair

As the year draws to a close, we have a very exciting announcement to make regarding the appointment of the new **Executive Manager** effective November 17th. **Neville Ivey** brings a wealth of experience to the role, with over two decades of executive and senior leadership experience across community, cultural, and sporting organisations.

He is passionate about fostering connection, inclusivity, and lifelong learning, and believes that heritage and culture are vital to enriching modern life and will continue to champion the BMI in its role as a vibrant cultural hub for Ballarat. We warmly welcome him to the role and encourage you to say hello next time you are in.

On that note I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please note our closure dates listed below and on our website and have a safe and restful holiday season.

Paula Nicholson

Other News

Venue Manager Update - Liam Mudge

The BMI has received funding to launch *Stage Ready* — a new non-formal technical-theatre training program for regional creatives. The Ballarat Mechanics' Institute (BMI) is pleased to announce it has secured \$22,946 to deliver *Stage Ready*, a new non-formal technical-theatre training program designed to support emerging production talent and strengthen regional creative capability.

Launching in 2026, *Stage Ready* delivers practical, real-world experience in lighting, sound, stagecraft, and venue operations. The program is non-formal by design, helping participants develop entry-level technical skills through guided mentorship and

active involvement across BMI and partner venues. This approach strengthens the region's creative and event workforce.

A key strength of *Stage Ready* is its collaborative model. The program will work with multiple event and arts venues, creatives, and regional organisations, building a shared technical workforce that benefits the wider cultural sector. Partners include community theatres, independent artists, creative collectives, festivals, and production companies who contribute mentorship, equipment expertise, and real-world learning opportunities.

Find out more:

ballaratmi.org.au/update-liam-mudge-stage-ready/

Stage Ready is a **Regional Arts Victoria** initiative.



Minerva's Secrets Night Tours

Friday 12 December

7pm - 8pm & 9pm - 10pm

Final opportunity this year to take part in this tour. If you haven't been on one of these tours, don't miss out on this unique presentation. If you have been on the tour and you enjoyed it please tell your friends, what better way to appreciate this grand old beauty.

Get tickets: **events.humanitix.com/minerva-secrets-after-dark/tickets**

Tickets also for purchase at the Library Box Office

Rosemary Recommends

Author of the Month

Tricia Stringer

Tricia lives in the Copper Coast region of South Australia with her husband and their assorted animals. Tricia enjoys a variety of crafts and sipping the odd glass of wine when she is not tangling with computers, reading a book or walking on the beach.



Book of the Month

The Under World
by Sofie Laguna.

Martha Mullins is a misfit. Her mother is glamorous, aloof and judgemental. Her father, mostly absent. Academic and shy, Martha finds herself fascinated by the underworld, a place she learns about in Roman mythology classes at school. To Martha, the underworld and its divine inhabitants provide a place of refuge, escape, imagination and desire.

But Martha also finds joy in friendship, Connection. Intimacy. It's Martha's band of friends who show her the value in spontaneity, fun, laughter. Until it goes wrong.

Recommended Reads

The Sunbaker
by P.A. Thomas.

When overworked forensic pathologist Nicola Fox arrives for a long overdue break at her

holiday house in Brunswick Heads, on the NSW north coast, she's shocked to discover someone sunbaking on one of the sun lounges in her backyard. And that the sunbaker has been dead for some time.

Rumours soon emerge that the sunbaker took more than a few dark secrets to his grave, secrets many people-and especially the police were keen to bury. When the arse-covering and finger-pointing begin in earnest, Nicola finds herself a suspect.

New to town, she only knows one person who might be able to save her: Jack Harris, a journalist at the local newspaper, The Beacon. When he begins investigating, the police organised crime unit arrives, and soon they are threatening both him and Nicola, leaving Jack to wonder if it was the police themselves who had committed the crime.

Can Jack uncover who really killed the sunbaker, and why the body was left in the backyard of a forensic pathologist, before the escalating threats to his own well being become more than just threats?

The American Boys by Olivia Spooner.

Wellington 1942, While Lorna's brothers are overseas fighting for their lives, war rages in the Pacific. As the threat of a Japanese attack on New Zealand seems increasingly real 20,000 US Marines arrive to keep the country safe. The Americans find their new post strange and unwelcoming, but even as cultures clash, romance blooms. After Lorna is persuaded to go on a double date, she befriends Stan a Marine from Chicago.

Handsome and kind, Stan is the golden boy of his



New releases

family. When he is posted to Guadalcanal, his wayward younger brother, Alfie, joins the forces stationed in Wellington.

At first, Lorna finds Alfie infuriating – the opposite of Stan – but as he receives his orders to join the fight, she suddenly can't stand the thought of losing him.

The Road Trip by Tricia Stringer.

Two lots of caravanners heading across the country and what is meant to be the trip of a lifetime, especially as it is Sharon's 60th Birthday. But emotions are shown early when Sharon is not in fact happy about this trip and more so when she finds out who is on this trip ...

New Releases

Mystery

<i>Nash Falls</i>	David Baldacci
<i>A Murder in Paris</i>	Matthew Blake
<i>Cry Havoc</i>	Jack Carr
<i>Gone Before Goodbye</i>	Harlan Coben/Reese Witherspoon
<i>The Proving Ground</i>	Michael Connelly
<i>The Widow</i>	John Grisham
<i>Silent Bones</i>	Val McDermid
<i>Knock Knock</i>	Chris Merritt
<i>You Are Fatally Invited</i>	Ande Pliego
<i>Murder on Line One</i>	Jeremy Vine

Australian Mystery

<i>A Disappearing Act</i>	Jo Dixon
<i>The Sunbaker</i>	P.A. Thomas
<i>The Long Night</i>	Christian White



Australian Novel

<i>Last One Out</i>	Jane Harper
<i>The Opposite of Lonely</i>	Hilde Hinton
<i>The Lucky Sisters</i>	Rachael Johns
<i>The Under World</i>	Sofie Laguna
<i>Price to Pay</i>	J Mary Masters
<i>The Missing</i>	Fleur McDonald
<i>To Sing of War</i>	Catherine McKinnon
<i>The Funeral Crashers</i>	Joanna Nell
<i>Pilbara</i>	Judy Nunn
<i>The Road Trip</i>	Tricia Stringer

Novel

<i>Twice</i>	Mitch Albom
<i>The Shroud of Hades</i>	Andy McDermott
<i>Remain</i>	Nicholas Sparks and M. Night Shyamalan

Historical

<i>Twist</i>	Colum McCann
<i>The American Boys</i>	Olivia Spooner

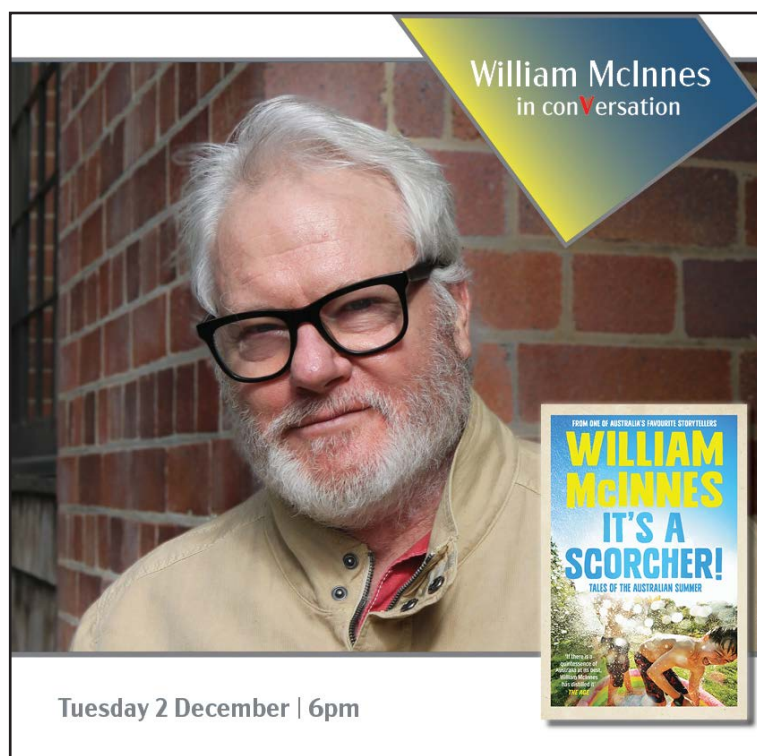
Non Fiction

<i>Terra Nova</i>	Harrison Christian
<i>Darwin on the Beagle</i>	Harrison Christian
<i>A Joyful Life</i>	Rosemary Kariuki
<i>Winston and the Windsors</i>	Andrew Morton
<i>Trails of Freedom</i>	Simon Tancred





Christmas
Comedy Gala
Saturday 13 December, 8pm

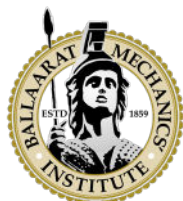


Library: Mon, Wed & Fri, 10am-4pm
Tue & Thu, 10am-3pm
Sat 9.30am-12noon
Sun Closed

Christmas - Library closed
22 Dec - 5 Jan reopen 6 Jan.
 Christmas Day - Thu 25 Dec
 Boxing Day - Fri 26 Dec
 New Year's Day - Thu 1 Jan
 Aust. Day - Mon 26 Jan
 Labour Day - Mon 9 Mar
 Good Friday - 3 Apr
 Easter Monday - 6 Apr

20 Dec -	26 Jan 2026
3 Apr -	19 Apr 2026
27 Jun -	12 Jul 2026
19 Sep -	4 Oct 2026
19 Dec -	27 Jan 2027

BMI Book Sale	6 & 7 Dec
Christmas Market	7 Dec
Minerva's Secrets	12 Dec
Christmas Comedy Gala	13 Dec
Ballarat Begonia Fest	7-9 Mar
Australian Heritage Fest	18 Apr -18 May
Ballarat Heritage Fest	21 - 24 May



	Tue 2 Dec 10am-3pm Library 2pm-3pm BMI Tours 6pm-7.30pm In conversation with William McInnes	Wed 3 Dec 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 4 Dec 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 5 Dec 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 6 Dec 9.30am-12noon Library 10am-2pm Christmas Market, Book Sale. 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sun 7 Dec Closed Library 9am-2pm Christmas Market 10am-2pm Christmas Market, Book Sale.
Mon 8 Dec 10am-4pm Library 4.30pm-6pm Volunteers & Members End of Year Celebration	Tue 9 Dec 10am-3pm Library 2pm-3pm BMI Tours	Wed 10 Dec 10am-4pm Library 7pm-8pm Kadampa Meditation Series	Thu 11 Dec 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables 7.30pm-9pm Ballarat Film Society: <i>Little Richard: I am Everything</i>	Fri 12 Dec 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Coll. 7pm-8pm Minerva's Secrets: Night Tours 9pm-10pm Minerva's Secrets: Night Tours	Sat 13 Dec 9.30am-2pm Library 8pm-9.30pm Christmas Comedy Gala	Sun 14 Dec Closed Library
Mon 15 Dec Library closed	Tue 16 Dec 10am-3pm Library 2pm-3pm BMI Tours	Wed 17 Dec 10am-4pm Library	Thu 18 Dec 10am-3pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Fri 19 Dec 10am-4pm Library 11am-3pm Vintage & Collectables	Sat 20 Dec 9.30am-12noon Library	Sun 21 Dec Closed Library
Mon 22 Dec Library closed	Tue 23 Dec Library closed	Wed 24 Dec Library closed	Thu 25 Dec Library closed	Fri 26 Dec Library closed	Sat 27 Dec Library closed	Sun 28 Dec Closed Library
Mon 29 Dec Library closed	Tue 30 Dec Library closed	Wed 31 Dec Library closed	Thu 1 Jan Library closed	Fri 2 Jan Library closed	Sat 3 Jan Library closed	Sun 4 Jan Closed Library

In conversation with William McInnes

It's A Scorcher: Tales of the Australian Summer

Tuesday 2 December, 6pm

Join actor and bestselling author William McInnes in conversation to talk all about his new book *It's a Scorcher: Tales of the Australian Summer* – a collection of hilarious and heartwarming stories about those magical, roastingly hot summer months.

There is something about long, hot summer days that stirs our emotions. It's all about holidays, festivals, family and Christmas; a time for swimming, a hit of backyard cricket or firing up the barbie. It's the deafening sound of cicadas, the ticking of a backyard sprinkler, the pain of a wayward bindi or the sting of sunburnt shoulders.

In this collection of nostalgic stories that will make you laugh and make you cry, William McInnes recalls moments in time and memories of summers past. He takes us back to the energy-sapping heat of Redcliffe in the 1960s and 70s, ruminates on budgie smugglers, remembers holiday road trips that went on forever and epic Boxing Day Tests that stopped fans in their tracks. This is a book about the Australia we are and the Australia we were – and the magic of those boiling-hot days when you wake up and know . . . it's going to be a scorcher!

Cost: \$11.00 plus bkg. fee | Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/william-mcinnnes-bmi
Tickets also for purchase at the Library Box Office.

Christmas Book Sale

Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 December, 10am - 2pm
Don't miss our book sale this weekend.

Admission and parking are free (one hour on Saturday, all day Sunday). There are hundreds of books – some of which are in gently used condition and some in mint condition – and many start at \$5. And it's not just books – there are DVDs, photo prints from our image collection and more!

Also open will be members of our little shopping precinct - The Ballarat Imaginarium - Homeground Cafe - open Saturday and Sunday and Hughes Gallery & Women of the Well on Saturday only.

FREE entry - All proceeds are help to support our Library programs.

Christmas Market

Sunday 7 December 9am - 2pm

We have an amazing line-up of stallholders to find out who's there go to:

ballaratmi.org.au/christmas-market-7-december-25/

We will have face painting, Zlatko's magical music machine and more.

Your one stop shop this Christmas all under cover.

FREE entry

Volunteers & Members End of Year Celebration

Monday 8 December 4.30pm - 6pm

To celebrate our marvelous volunteers who have contributed enormously to a very busy year of events, Twilight Talks and fundraisers, library services, building tours and so much more, we welcome all members and staff to celebrate them.

We will have some very special entertainment and cheer. We hope to see you there...

FREE: Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/bmi-end-of-year-party-2025
Tickets also available at the Library Box Office.

Ballaarat Film Society *Little Richard: I am Everything* Musical Doco

Thursday 11 December, 7.30

The south is the home of all things queer, says scholar Zandria Robinson as we witness the exhilarating jam-packed story of Little Richard's complex life and musical career, ending only in 2020.

Born in 1932 as Richard Wayne Penniman, by 1955 Little Richard was declared a world rock 'n' roll star with his hit "Tutti Frutti."

Raised on gospel music, experimenting with drag, and drenched with musical talent, he went on to win award after award and reach global stardom.

Interestingly enough, on an Australian tour in 1957, when his plane from Melbourne to Sydney experienced difficulty, he saw a bright red fireball, coinciding with the launch of the Russian satellite Sputnik. He cancelled his last two concerts, renounced rock'n'roll, and declared he was returning to the US to repent and be baptized!

An enlightening film which will fill in the 'gaps' about his turbulent life and his undisputable influence. Amalgamated.

USA, 2023, 98mins.
Dir: Lisa Cortés and starring Little Richard.

ballaratmi.org.au/film/

Minerva's Secrets Night Tours

Friday 12 December
Tour 1, 7pm - 8pm & Tour 2, 9pm - 10pm

Explore tales of the weird and supernatural – the Ballaarat Mechanics' Institute at night. Looking for a unique way to explore Ballarat's rich history and culture? Look no further than the Ballaarat Mechanics Institute's Night Tours!

Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/minerva-s-secrets-after-dark

Christmas Comedy Gala at BMI

Saturday 13 December 8pm

Get ready to sleigh this festive season with three of Australia's sharpest comedic minds in one unmissable night of stand-up mayhem!

Brett Blake
Brett Blake brings his trademark mullet-powered chaos and high-octane storytelling that'll have you laughing so hard you'll spill your eggnog.

Kirsty Webeck
Kirsty Webeck – The reigning champion of cheerful comedy, delivers joyful punchlines and feel-good hilarity that'll warm your heart faster than a Christmas pudding in July.

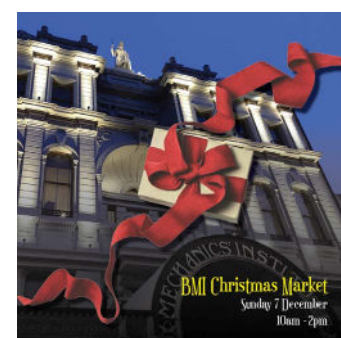
Simon Taylor
Simon Taylor – The smooth operator with razor-sharp wit, rounds out the trio with clever charm and tales that'll make even the Grinch crack a smile.

Whether you've been naughty or nice, this show is your ticket to a night of festive fun, absurd anecdotes, and belly laughs that'll echo into the New Year. So grab your mates, don your ugliest Christmas jumper, and come celebrate the season with the comedy dream team.

One night only. All cheer, no chill. Let's make spirits bright – with laughter!

Cost: \$45.00 plus bkg. fee
Black Friday special offer however will give you 30% off tickets until 5pm 1 December

Tickets:
events.humanitix.com/christmas-comedy-gala-bmi
Tickets also for purchase at the Library Box Office.



Rosemary's

Book of the month

Library Operating hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10am - 4pm

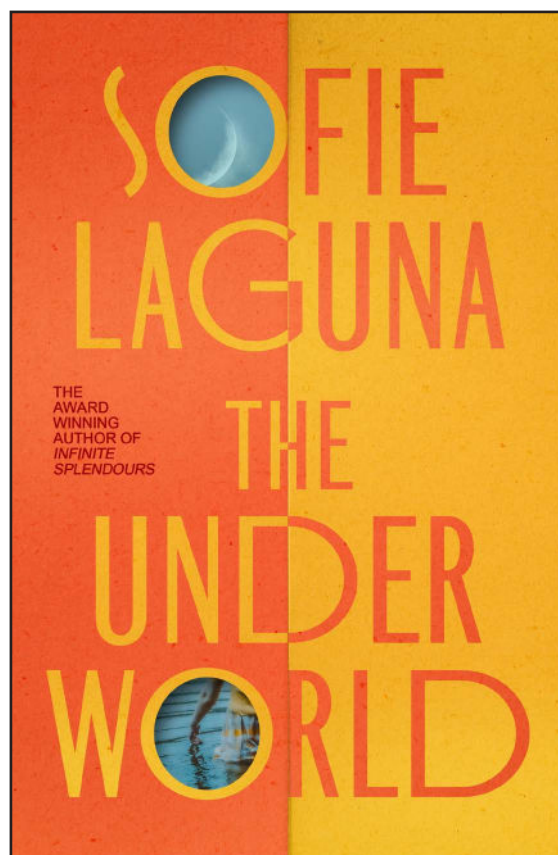
Tuesday & Thursday: 10am - 3pm

Saturday: 9.30am - 12 noon

The Library closed for the holiday period

From Monday 22 December

Re-opening on Monday 6 January 2026



We acknowledge the support of our valued Supporters & Partners

Supporters & Partners

City of Ballarat | Victorian State Government | Australian Government | Community Bank Buninyong

Rotary Club Ballarat South | Hugh D. Williamson Trust | Commonwealth Bank | ED Black Trust

The Copland Foundation

Corporate & Community Partners

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Colliers International | Jellis Craig | Ballarat Grammar | Baird & McGregor | Specialist Centre Ballarat

Collins Booksellers, Ballarat on Lydiard | Haymes Paints | Nicholson Construction | Goldacres

G Gay & Co Mitre 10 | Federation University | IMD Tech | Tony De Jong Drafting | The Cleaners Room

Ballarat Connected Communities

Ballarat Cemeteries | Royal South Street Society | Ballarat National Theatre | BallaRat Pack

Find out how you can become involved | ballaratmi.org.au/about-us/supporters-partners

Ballarat Mechanics' Institute
117 – 119 Sturt Street,
Ballarat VIC 3350
ballaratmi.org.au
library@ballaratmi.org.au
(03) 5331 3042



Library Hours
Mon, Wed & Fri 10am – 4pm
Tue & Thu 10am-3pm
Saturday 9.30am – Noon
Venue Hire Enquiries
venue@ballaratmi.org.au
0419 677 713