



## *Clunes*

### *Australia's only International Booktown*

#### **Background**

Clunes is a small town in western Victoria, about an hour and a half out of Melbourne. Clunes' history connects it to the gold rush and generations of agriculture, but today Clunes is a rural tree-change community with a difference. Clunes is Australia's only recognised International Booktown, home of the Clunes Booktown Festival, and a place where we are committed to developing an exciting culture of engaging with books and ideas.

Creative Clunes is not for profit community organisation formed in 2007 to promote and establish Clunes, a small rural town in central Victoria, as a destination for cultural tourism through the appreciation of literature. Since 2007 it has hosted the annual Clunes Booktown Festival, an event that has seen attendances grow from 6000 to 18,000 visitors and is now recognised as a major event in rural Victoria.

In 2012 Clunes was accepted into membership of the International Organisation of Booktowns (IOB) and is the only accredited Booktown in Australia. The IOB ([www.booktown.net](http://www.booktown.net)) was founded in 2001 in Redu, Belgium with the purpose of raising awareness of Booktowns and the role they can play in strengthening rural economies. Presently there are 22 members of the IOB (representing 18 countries).

Every second year the International Organisation of Booktowns holds a General Assembly in the host Booktown:

- 1998 Bredevoort, Netherlands
- 2000 Muhlbeck, Germany
- 2002 Sysma, Finland
- 2004 Wigtown, Scotland
- 2006 Fjaerland, Norway
- 2008 Montereggio, Italy
- 2010 Wunsdorf, Germany
- 2012 Langkawi, Malaysia
- 2014 Tvedestrand, Norway
- 2016 St Pierre-de-Clages, Switzerland

Clunes has been selected to host the 2018 General Assembly and this will be held in conjunction with the annual Clunes Booktown Festival on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 May 2018.

## **Fighting For Peace – an exhibition of 100 years of ANZAC spirit – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April-Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2018**

*Fighting for Peace* is an exhibition and associated publication which will be running prior to and alongside the other 2018 events, from Anzac Day (25th April) through to after the festival finishes on May 6th.

In partnership with the ANZAC Centenary Fund and Federation University, Creative Clunes are curating an exhibition which will examine the legacy, across the last 100 years since the end of WWI, of the Anzac – Australian and New Zealand soldiers, who have a particularly special place within the overall discussion of Australian identity.

The engagement of soldiers in what was largely a European conflict means that the birth of this significant element of Australian identity happened overseas, so the interconnectedness of Australian identity with European sites, events and experiences should not be under-estimated. As a result, we hope that this can be a creative conversation which many other International Booktowns can contribute to.

At the very least, this will be a fascinating part of any visitors' engagement with the history, literature and experience of Clunes during the International Booktown Festival.  
(See separate paper for more detail.)

## **Regional Creative Symposium & IOB General Assembly – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2018**

Formed in 2001, the International Organisation of Booktowns is now a network of small, community-driven towns each of whom offer an exemplary model of sustainable rural development and tourism. To both acknowledge and develop the skill and knowledge presented by the gathering of delegates for the General Assembly, Clunes will be hosting a ***Regional Creative Symposium*** on the Thursday 3 May.

The IOB General Assembly & Regional Creative Symposium will run alongside and form a part of the 2018 Clunes Booktown Festival.

Delegates and their partners from the following countries have expressed an interest in attending the 2018 Conference:

- Belgium
- Germany
- Iceland
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Portugal
- Sweden
- Switzerland

Delegates and partners will be provided with a snapshot of regional Victoria, with accommodation provided in homestay or farmstay and side trips planned to other regional attractions. Our twin focuses will be on ensuring that we make the most of the opportunity presented by bringing this group together, and on ensuring that everyone who comes has a rewarding and enjoyable trip. Creating lifelong memories, lasting friendships and exciting partnerships is perhaps a good shorthand for our aims in planning the 2018 event.

The overall aim of the Regional Creative Symposium is to have conversations grounded in our reality and focused on building momentum, energy and collaborative partnerships that can develop beyond the single day event. We want to come out of the weekend with seeds that can germinate over the following two year IOB cycle.

Outline of sessions:

- (1) Welcome
- (2) What is a Booktown? - Identifying the challenges and opportunities Booktowns face
- (3) What is the future of books and book-selling? - challenges and opportunities in the next 5 years
- (4) What is the future of Creative and Cultural Tourism? - challenges and opportunities in the next 5 years
- (5) Community development and volunteerism – What are the skills and processes organizations need to work effectively in and with small, rural communities, including working with volunteers and other partners? How do we put big ideas into practice in our communities, with others across the road with ones around the world?

## **International Booktown Festival**

**- Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May & Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2018**

The tagline for our festival is "For the Love of Books". Of course, this is about the books themselves and the people who write and read them. But it's also about our love of books' power to influence and create change: how they change readers, writers, cultures and communities.

The Festival attracts high profile authors, about 60 different booksellers and about 18,000 guests each year and still delivers, over the course of a weekend, an experience of life outside the bustle of the city and in a rural, small town, strong and connected community.

Previous guests have included prize winners and other high-profile public intellectuals, such as Clementine Ford, Hannah Kent, Melissa Keil, AS Patric, Tim Fischer, Jane Harper, Claire Wright, Kate Grenville and Hannie Rayson, among many others.

Among the 60 booksellers and exhibitors are State Library Victoria, Readings Bookstore and several of Australia's best antiquarian booksellers.

## **Want to be involved – here's how?**

All Booktowns and prospective Booktowns have been invited to send a delegation to the 2018 Festival and to contribute to the program of events.

Of course, we mostly want you to come. However, as host Booktown, Clunes has been developing a program of events which gives visiting countries three ways to make high-profile contributions. We would, of course, be delighted if delegates/guests were willing and able to contribute in more than one way.

1. By bringing an author who has been published in both the home country and Australia to present at the festival. During the festival, our guest authors may speak in solo events, panel sessions, share small-group “literary lunches” and lead workshops, or a combination of these. The calibre of authors we have attracted in the past include Malcolm Fraser, Kate Grenville, Anna Bligh, Henry Reynolds and Peter Fitzsimons.
2. By bringing an expert to lead sessions at the IOB Conference. We anticipate that the similarities and differences of the various Booktowns will ensure that the conference is of an exceptional standard, and would welcome suitably qualified presenters and facilitators to support the development of ideas and plans for future collaborative projects.
3. By providing people who can speak about or artefacts relating to the notion of “Fighting for Peace”. 2018 marks 100 years since the final year of WW1. Creative Clunes has secured funding from the ANZAC Centenary Fund to curate an exhibition and create a publication which examines how the notions of “fighting for peace” and of “ANZAC spirit” have been defined, and redefined, over the past 100 years. Naturally, the exhibition and publication will have a particular focus on the way ANZAC soldiers have fought for peace in various fields of combat over the past 100 years, but this story is international and we are looking for contributions from different countries who can share different aspects of the story.

## **We would love to see you there!**

If you have any questions for us, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Richard, Lily or Tim via our website: [clunesbooktown.com.au](http://clunesbooktown.com.au)

With best wishes and looking forward to seeing you in town,

Tim Nolan  
Current Chair of Creative Clunes and IOB President