

Forbes Arts & Culture Working Group

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PRESS RELEASE

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SO YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A WRITER BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START ...?

The NSW Government's Country Arts support Program (CASP) has awarded Forbes Arts and Culture Working Group a grant for a series of intensive community workshops for aspiring writers.

The two full-day introductory workshops, *Fictions, non-fictions, memoirs and family histories: writing stories that people want to read*, will be held at the Forbes Youth and Community Centre on Sunday 24 June and Sunday 22 July 2007. They will be conducted by well-published local author and teacher Merrill Findlay. (See www.merrillfindlay.com.)

"The workshops are designed for all those people who want to write but feel they need a little support to get them started," Ms Findlay said. "I'll introduce participants to the basics of good writing and then work with them to complete their own small writing projects, such as a short fictional story, a personal memoir, an historical narrative about a family ancestor, or an article about something that really excites them."

In the first workshop participants will discuss the "who, where, when, how, what happened next and why" of their personal writing projects, and then work with Ms Findlay to develop a plot, characters, settings and a rough first draft. In the month between the two workshops they will be able to refine their drafts ready to discuss and develop further at the second workshop.

The request for the writing workshops came from a meeting of aspiring community writers sponsored by Forbes Arts and Culture Working Group at the Forbes Library in December 2006. These locals have since established the Forbes Writers Group to support one another in their writing endeavours before and after the workshops. The first meeting of the Forbes Writers Group will be at 6 pm on 1 May in the 'back room' at the Vandenberg Hotel, and all aspiring writers are welcome.

"I am hoping that the writing workshops, together with the new Forbes Writers Group, will ignite an explosion of local literary talent," Ms Findlay said. "Forbes Shire has so many fantastic and unique stories that a screaming to be put into print, but until now locals who want to write have had little support to tell their stories or to get them published."

Merrill Findlay began her professional writing career on the Forbes Advocate in the 1970s. She has since published three books, including a critically acclaimed novel, and many feature articles for magazines, newspapers and e-journals in Australia and overseas. She is now working on her fourth book in Forbes.

Leaflets about the writing workshops plus application forms will be available at Forbes Library, Forbes Shire Council and other venues around town, and on-line at www.geocities.com/forbesculturalplan. Bookings are essential for the workshop series and places are limited to ensure that each participant gets personal support with their own projects.

For more information please contact janebennie@yahoo.com.