

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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### **ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?**

***Rollercoaster academic, ‘tiny house’ expert, animal activist, celebrated performer and more; the line-up of speakers for this year’s TEDxSouthBank is exciting, eclectic and just a little bit quirky***

‘Screw it – I’m going to change the world’.

These were the words that went through the head of TEDxSouthBank licensee Juanita Wheeler, four years ago, as she sat in the audience of a TEDx talk.

At the time, she was a director of global marketing for a multinational corporation. The money was great, but she couldn’t shake the feeling that she was meant to be doing something else; something more fulfilling. It was a feeling she’d had before, but had shaken off time and again. However, on this day, at this TEDx talk, something changed. ‘Screw it,’ she thought. ‘I’m going to change the world.’

From that day, life has been a whirlwind of change, which has led Juanita – in what Oprah Winfrey would describe as a ‘full circle moment’ – to her current role as licensee and curator of TEDxSouthBank 2016, taking place at The State Library of Queensland in Brisbane on February 27.

Fittingly for Juanita, this year’s theme is ‘Challenge Accepted’.

Speakers this year include Drisana Levitzke-Gray, advocate of the human rights of deaf people; Karyn Walsh, CEO of Micah Projects and Director of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness; Timothy McCallum who triumphantly created a forged music career after a diving accident left him a quadriplegic; Maya Newell, the Australian filmmaker and creator of ‘Growing Up Gayby’ and ‘Gayby Baby’; and Lee Crockford, CEO of Spur Projects, working in the area of men’s mental health and suicide prevention.

“We have a fantastic mix of people who have accepted a challenge,” Juanita said. “Some of these are people who, instead of saying ‘hey someone should do something about that’, have said ‘I’m going to do something about that’,” Juanita said.

“There are also speakers who are currently facing challenges, and then there are speakers who are going to lay down challenges for all of us in the audience.”

While the list of speakers is extensive, eclectic and extraordinary, for Juanita and the team at TEDxSouthbank, the people sitting in the audience are just as important as the people on stage.

“We curate our audience,” Juanita said. “Which not all TEDx events do, but we are lucky enough to be able to virtually hand-pick our audience, based on the questionnaire they complete online. It is so important to the success of the event to fill the room with that kind of energy.

“We also have audience advocates, so each member has an advocate from TEDxSouthBank who will help guide them through the event, make introductions, and help them get the most out of it. That too is a really important part of the process for us.”

For those who cannot attend the event in person, TEDxSouthBank offers Live Streaming.

“This was an initiative that was started last year and we are continuing this year,” Juanita said. “It’s really so easy and it means that anyone – schools, businesses or just some friends – can get together and watch the talks as they happen.”

TEDX SouthBank will once again take place at the State Library of Queensland, venue sponsors of the event.

“The State Library is just the perfect venue for us,” Juanita said. “I was there the other day and I just couldn’t help thinking ‘there’s no place like home’ and it really is home to us.”

Principal Partner Deloitte, who has supported TEDxSouthBank since our very first event in 2012, is: “Thrilled to continue our partnership with TEDxSouthBank,” said Deloitte Partner, Rachel Foley-Lewis. “Deloitte’s culture is one of innovation, inclusion and diversity of thinking, which is exactly what TEDxSouthBank celebrates.”

Juanita said she was also thrilled to continue the partnership with Deloitte.

“Having Deloitte as our major sponsor is really the perfect synergy for us – like us, Deloitte is committed to spreading innovative ideas. TEDxSouthBank #ChallengeAccepted would not have been possible without them.”

Other sponsors include UQ Business School Executive Education, Next Hotels, Flight Centre, Ruby PR, Merlo Coffee.

***TEDxSouthBank takes place on February 27, 2016 at The State Library in Queensland. To Live Stream any of the talks go to [tedxsouthbank.com.au](http://tedxsouthbank.com.au).***

**ENDS**

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## **TEDxSouthBank 2016 SPEAKER BIOS**

### **COREY ALLEN**

After a career in tactical units and high-volume arrest-oriented policing roles, Corey Allen redefined himself and his role by focusing on empathy, vulnerable persons and building his team's personal values.

His own journey from homelessness to Officer in Charge of one of Australia's largest police stations has been marked by innovation and creativity in policing and crime prevention. Showing sustained commitment to social justice and improving the situation of vulnerable people in his division, Corey saw results in the form of unheralded crime reductions.

A finalist in the “local hero” category of the Australian of the Year awards, recipient of four National Crime and Violence Prevention Awards, and Griffith University's Alumnus of the Year, Corey has led a weighty shift in police culture that has been welcomed by the community.

### **SAHARA BECK**

With no big name producers or over the top stylists, Sahara Beck is an independent artist in the truest sense of the word. Raised in the laid back surrounds of the Sunshine Coast, she has always had a decidedly single-minded focus. At 14 she wrote and recorded her debut album before moving to Brisbane on her own to finish school and immerse herself in the city's collaborative music community.

It is that energy that she has poured into the production of her new album, ‘Panacea’ – out May 2016. Built around a

week long session at the legendary 301 Byron Bay studios, the record may be full of experimentation, but it never strays from the simple formula of wonderful songs performed with genuine passion.

### **DR SCOTT BOLLAND**

Dr Scott Bolland is the co-founder of Wajarra Studios, a high-tech software company aiming to revolutionise education through the use of artificial intelligence. He has spent the last 20 years actively researching and teaching in the field of cognitive science – the scientific study of how the mind works – which spans disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, artificial intelligence and computer science. He holds a PhD in this field, as well as a university medal for outstanding academic scholarship.

Scott's main area of interest is in positive psychology – the scientific understanding of human flourishing and the necessary conditions for positive human development. He is a strong believer in artificial intelligence becoming a powerful tool for helping personalise education and unlocking human potential. When not working with Wajarra, Scott is also a sought after singer, public speaker, and father of three.

### **JULIET BOURKE**

Juliet Bourke leads the Australian Diversity and Inclusion practice – and co-leads the Australian Leadership practice – as a Human Capital partner at Deloitte. Her latest book is entitled 'Which two heads are better than one?: How diverse teams create breakthrough ideas and make smarter decisions'.

Juliet specialises in cultural change and developing leaders, with particular expertise in diversity and inclusion. She regularly works with global executive teams to design and deliver leadership programs, including Deloitte's own signature Inclusive leadership program. Juliet brings over 20 years' experience in human capital, psychology, management and law to her work. She is a member of the Australian firm's Diversity Council, and sits on a number of boards and award panels, such as the Telstra Business Awards. Juliet's own awards include 2007 Women Lawyers Association of NSW (Achievement Award), 2007 University of NSW (Alumni Award) and 2008 Centre for Leadership for Women (Leadership Achievement Silver Award).

### **AMANDA BRADLEY**

Amanda Bradley has worked in leadership roles in the not-for-profit and public health sectors for over ten years. She is continually motivated to find solutions that create success for all stakeholders and is always up for complex situations and addressing wicked problems.

We live in complicated times. Not-for-profits are being squeezed to deliver more for less. Amanda believes we have to be able to respond with innovative approaches that enable us to do this – it is essential to be able to describe the successes we have in ways that are meaningful. She says we need to collaborate and find methods of meeting the needs of consumers (clients) that is responsive, timely and accessible in a constantly changing environment.

Amanda prefers to spend time making sure all her ducks are in a row before she leaps off the cliff – with the parachute that she's triple checked.

### **MALCOLM BURT**

Malcolm Burt is a video producer and rollercoaster academic (yes, really). His Research Masters with the Queensland University of Technology resulted in the international documentary 'Signature Attraction', which asks "Why do rollercoasters exist?"

Malcolm has run his own advertising agency, during which time he produced two television series for ABC and SBS, multiple television commercials, corporate films and documentaries. He also lectures in video and audio production. Malcolm has recently been awarded an APA scholarship to undertake his PhD full-time. He'll be producing a documentary series about the future of theme parks.

He believes that even the loopiest career path is possible if you just can't not do it.

### **DR JACKIE CAMPBELL**

Dr Jackie Campbell is a veterinarian who will warm your heart. Passionate in equal measures about her patients and about the families who care for them, Jackie often becomes a lifeline for her clients during their most difficult of days. As the director of one of Queensland's first palliative care services for pets, she manages a team of veterinarians who are working to help families better navigate the challenges of end of life decision making.

Alongside this important work, Jackie is the Brisbane clinic co-ordinator for a charity that brings together volunteer vets and nurses, in order to provide free veterinary care for pets of people experiencing homelessness in our community. The Pets in the Park initiative recognises and supports the bond that homeless people have with their pets and works to improve the health and wellbeing of these vital companions.

### **LEE CROCKFORD**

Lee Crockford is passionate about mental health, social change, the arts, education and innovation. He is both the CEO of Spur Projects – a NFP working in the area of men's mental health and suicide prevention – and Assemblus – a NFP working to amplify sustainable social impact within organisations.

Lee is an alumnus of IYF's Global Laureate Fellowship, FYA's Young Social Pioneer and The Do School's Global Changemaker programs. He is the recipient of the Australasian Men's Health Forum's Youth Contribution Award and was recently named as one of The Cusp's young people on the cusp of greatness.

Lee is also the founder and co-founder of a number of side projects including Future Postbox, Best Day / Worst Day, The Plot and Get the Antidote.

### **J.M. DONELLAN**

J.M. Donellan is an author, musician, poet, radio DJ and teacher. He nearly died of a lung collapse in the Nepalese Himalayas, fended off a pack of rabid dogs with a guitar in the mountains of India, and was sexually harassed by a half-naked man whilst standing next to Oscar Wilde's grave in Paris.

He scripted and voiced the internationally popular Pocket Hipster iPhone app – despite not having an iPhone. Josh was a National Finalist in the 2015 Australian Poetry Slam and has performed at festivals all over Australia both solo and with his band Poetry is Dead. His most recent novel is ‘Killing Adonis’ and his new poetry collection, ‘Stendhal Syndrome’, will be released later this year.

### **DRISANA LEVITZKE-GRAY**

Drisana Levitzke-Gray is the recipient of the 2015 Young Australian of the Year Award in recognition of her passion and dedication in advocating for the human rights of deaf people, raising awareness about Auslan (Australian Sign Language), and the rights of deaf children in Australia to access Auslan from birth.

A motivational speaker and consultant, she works for Woolworths as a Workplace Advocate as well as a columnist for PrimoLIFE Magazine and a voluntary committee member for a number of organisations. Drisana is the embodiment of the concept of ‘deaf gain’ – not ‘hearing loss’ – by inspiring the deaf community and encouraging the wider community to accept diversity.

Drisana was the first deaf Auslan user to fulfil her civic duty as a juror, and consistently promotes a positive image of deafness, which states loudly and proudly: “It’s OK to be deaf”.

### **TIMOTHY MCCALLUM**

After twenty-five years of diverse performance experience, Timothy McCallum is one of Australia’s most exciting and loved performers. But it almost wasn’t to be...

At the age of 18, well on his way to commencing a successful career in the music and theatre industry, a diving accident changed Tim’s life forever, potentially shattering his dreams of treading the boards ever again. After breaking his neck, leaving him a quadriplegic, doctors and specialists told him that he would never sing again professionally.

Tim’s resilient character and extraordinary spirit have touched the hearts of Australians, as they have watched him defy the odds, rehabilitate and return to the stage to continue his performing career. Altering his singing technique to compensate for his new physical challenges, Tim now sings better than ever, soaring to the heights of the great tenor arias and musical theatre anthems he has become so well known for.

### **MAYA NEWELL**

Maya Newell is an Australian filmmaker with a focus on documentary storytelling. Her award-winning short ‘TWO’ won Best New Documentary Talent of Australia at AIDC 2011. Her subsequent films ‘Growing Up Gayby’ and ‘Gayby Baby’ – made in collaboration with Charlotte Mars – tell the story of same-sex families from the perspective of the kids.

‘Gayby Baby’ was selected for Good Pitch Australia 2014, premiered at Hot Docs, screened at Sydney and

Melbourne Film Festivals, was nominated for an ACCTA, AWGIE, and was the winner of Best Documentary at the 2015 ATOM awards. In the years of making 'Gayby Baby' and in the controversy following the banning of the PG film in NSW schools, Maya has regularly felt the need to speak out in defence of diverse families like hers.

### **LARA NOBEL**

Lara Nobel has always had a natural tendency to problem solve, so when she found herself at the bottom rung of one of the world's least affordable housing markets, she immediately started brainstorming alternatives. With an optimism that's grounded in tangible solutions, Lara has travelled the world studying urban design solutions in Berlin, micro-housing in Tokyo, and alternative housing in Portland. She's now developing a new type of compact housing in Australia – one that's driven by our needs rather than market expectations. Leading by example, she has co-founded a company to produce these affordable 'tiny houses'.

After completing a Masters in Architecture, Lara transitioned to an apprenticeship in carpentry to gain some hands-on experience that would aid her new venture. She is now near the end of this apprenticeship and last year won Apprentice of the Year.

### **KARYN WALSH**

Karyn Walsh began working with young people experiencing homelessness since she came to Brisbane in the 1980s. Now, as the CEO of Micah Projects, a local not-for-profit, she is committed to finding new ways to end and prevent homelessness. Her leadership is focused on implementing a housing first approach, which requires integrating healthcare with community services as a critical resource to enable people to improve their quality of life, sustain housing and reduce reliance on hospital care.

Karyn is a Director of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness. She was a Founding Member of the Australian Common Ground Alliance, President of the Queensland Council of Social Services and a Board Member of Australian Council of Social Services. Karyn's expertise has seen her speaking on homelessness at international conferences over the past decade.