

## Monthly general meeting

### Bringing history to life: taking licence with the truth

Wednesday 1 April 2015, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm

The Gabba Ward Office, Cnr Annerley Rd & Crown St, Woolloongabba

Hello, editors!

Our guest speaker for April is playwright, writer and editor Katherine Lyall-Watson.

Katherine has a long history in theatre, having worked as an actor, director and theatre reviewer before starting playwriting, an activity recently earning her a PhD. Her third play, *Motherland*, won the 2013 Matilda Award for the best independent theatre production in Queensland, the 2013 Groundling (people's choice award) for best production, and was shortlisted for the 2013 Patrick White Playwrights' Award; her second play, *Rosie Little's Cautionary Tales for Girls* (an adaptation of the novel by Danielle Wood), was selected for the graduate program in the National Script Workshop and read at the National Play Festival in 2010; and her first play, *Tinder*, was a finalist in the 2008/09 Queensland Premier's Drama Award. In addition to her playwriting – she is currently working on three new plays – Katherine is a co-producer of the theatre production company [Ellen Belloo](#), is the current chair of the theatre publishing house [Playlab](#), is a regular panellist at writers' festivals, and presents book reviews for ABC Radio National and 612ABC. In her 'other life', Katherine is a web editor and content creator for Brisbane City Council.

*Motherland*, a play that will be touring nationally in 2016, is semibiographical: it 'tells the stories of three real women, their loves, careers and heartbreaks'. During her research, Katherine was able to interview the one woman still alive, Russian museum curator Alyona, but Katherine 'had to dig through archives and scour old letters to find glimpses of the other two: Nell Tritton, the Clayfield socialite who left Brisbane for Europe in the 1920s and ended up marrying the exiled Russian prime minister Alexander Kerensky ... and Nell's friend, Russian author Nina Berberova'.

For many authors, playwrights and screenwriters, the idea of creating a semibiographical work appears dangerous. Dilemmas abound. Is it okay to take licence with the truth? Is there such a thing as a fixed truth? Who owns the rights to stories and ideas? And, what are the ethics of writing about other people's lives when they can't give permission?

During the writing and staging of *Motherland*, Katherine grappled with these dilemmas, and, in the process, created an outstanding play – one that links two countries, Australia and Russia, through little known historical details about both. Katherine found the process both exacting and enlightening, and we will have the privilege of hearing her talk about it. So, please join your fellow editors on 1 April to listen to Katherine share some of the stories she uncovered and also the dilemmas she faced with *Motherland*, in '**Bringing history to life: taking licence with the truth**'.

Remember, **entry is via the rear door** in the parking area.

Ample parking is available in the carpark and on the street.

**Cover charge — members \$10, non-members \$15** — includes drinks and nibbles on arrival. Meeting ends at 8 pm. But why not **kick on and join us for dinner** afterwards. Just let us know if you're intending to come to dinner when you RSVP.

**For catering purposes, please RESPOND to Speaker Secretary Michael Lefcourt at [meetings@editorsqld.com](mailto:meetings@editorsqld.com) or on 0417 869 953 by Monday 30 March 2015.**