



The University of Melbourne

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Asialink Literature Touring Program**

It is with regret that Asialink announces that its Literature Touring Program, which has supported leading Australian writers to tour in Asia over the last nine years, will wind up in June. Unfortunately the key supporter of the program, the Australia Council, has decided not to continue its funding and the program is unviable without these core funds.

The program was initiated in 1998 and has enabled writers such as Peter Carey, Tim Winton, Kate Grenville, Thomas Kenneally, Geraldine Brooks, Alex Miller, Doris Pilkington Garimara and Melina Marchetta to engage with audiences in India, Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore and Korea and talk about their work and Australian writing. They have met colleagues throughout the region, as well as publishers with the aim of encouraging book and rights sales for Australian titles. Many of the authors have been key speakers at major book fairs and festivals and spoken to keen students and faculty from schools and universities, eager to learn more about Australian books.

Australian children's literature has also been a strong component of the program, with writers and illustrators talking to audiences, running workshops and having their original artwork on display in numerous countries.

Asialink has worked with publishers overseas to produce local editions of major Australian titles for sale and distribution in Asia, as well as linking Australian publishers and agents to counterparts in the region via representation at and funding for participation in major trade fairs such as Beijing International Book Fair and Taipei International Book Exhibition.

Final activities for 2007 have seen Australia take centre stage as Focus Country at the Kolkata Book Fair and a picture book and artwork exhibition travel to four venues in Taipei and Beijing.

The program has:

- initiated and managed 15 Australian writers tours to 6 countries
- toured 42 Australian touring authors
- represented over 50 Australian publishers
- displayed over 800 Australian books
- achieved hundreds of print and electronic media responses
- sold rights to 90 books
- drawn audiences of over 400,000

Please note: Asialink's Writer in Residency Program remains unaffected and information for 2008 places will be available from Asialink in July.

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