

# IN THE COMPANY OF SMALL STORIES

Afternoon writing workshop

**Buda Historic Home and Garden, Castlemaine**  
**Wednesday 29 July 2026**  
**12 noon – 3:30pm**

Supported by friends of VATE, [Writers Victoria](#), this professional learning afternoon invites English teachers of all experience levels to step inside the creative process – not just as facilitators of student writing, but as writers themselves. Set within the beautiful heritage rooms and gardens of Buda Historic Home and Garden, join award-winning Victorian author Cate Kennedy and VATE Education Officer Emma Jenkins for an afternoon of creative writing. Together they will guide participants through the craft of miniature storytelling: the planning, the precision, the element of unexpected surprise using the historic setting as inspiration for tiny tales. Participants will leave with their own tiny tale and some ideas for supporting the young writers in their classrooms to enter VATE’s writing competition, A Story in Miniature.

12 noon	Arrival, registration and tea/coffee
12:30 – 2pm	<b>Step inside short stories: Cate Kennedy</b> A short story is a doorway you open and then, tantalisingly, close quickly, inviting your reader to step into the space you have created. Inspiration is found everywhere – in memory, in moments, in objects waiting to be endowed with their own meaningful histories. In this workshop we will be creating the beginnings of some individually crafted stories, using our surroundings as inspiration and some time-honoured elements of precision, imagery and story structure, guided by Cate Kennedy. It’s a session designed to allow you to take some time to be a practitioner, and an artful noticer of small resonant detail, as well as a teacher. Out of the classroom, let’s put aside outcome, and work towards surprise.
2 – 2:30pm	Afternoon tea and wander in the grounds
2:30 – 3:30pm	<b>Insights from a thousand stories in miniature: Emma Jenkins</b> Drawing on more than 1200 entries for VATE’s A Story in Miniature writing competition, this workshop will explore the patterns, strengths and unexpected quirks in student writing. Participants will examine some of the competition’s standout pieces and consider what makes a miniature story truly shine. We’ll look at some past entries to uncover the creative and playful choices students make and discuss how these can be used in the classroom as mentor texts to support experimentation, strengthen writing stamina and build confidence.
3:30 – 4pm	Wander in the grounds at your leisure (Buda House closes at 4pm)

Registration includes general admission to Buda Historic Home and Garden and afternoon tea.

**About Cate Kennedy**

Cate Kennedy is the author of three poetry collections, a novel, a travel memoir and two short story collections, *Dark Roots* and *Like a House on Fire* – both of which were on the VCAA English/EAL and Literature text lists. Her work continues to be studied in many schools. She loves working across forms but also remains enthused (some would say enraptured) about the short story form, the Swiss army knife of narrative prose! She lives and works in Castlemaine, collecting books, stories and many houseplants.



**Registration cost \$175** - Prices are per staff member and inc. GST.

If financial barriers impact your attendance, email [Kate Gillespie](#) to discuss options.