



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



MELBOURNE

CITY OF  
LITERATURE

Member of the  
UNESCO Creative Cities  
Network since 2008

# 10 Things to know about

## **MELBOURNE**

### UNESCO City of Literature

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## **Cultural Capital**

Melbourne is the capital of the state of Victoria and is Australia's second-largest city with a population of 3.6million. It is widely viewed as being Australia's cultural capital.

## **Publishing**

Melbourne's literary publishing sector is by far the largest in Australia.

## **More Bookshops**

The city boasts more bookshops per head of population than anywhere else in the country.

## **More Readers**

More people borrow more books from local libraries in Melbourne than anywhere else in Australia. Reading groups are extremely popular and include Melbourne's Ivanhoe Reading Circle, which is Australia's oldest book group, and has met continuously since the 1920s.

## **State Library of Victoria**

It is the state's oldest publicly funded cultural institution and the oldest free public library in Australia. It currently houses some 3.5 million items and is visited by around 1.1 million people each year.

## **Famous Authors**

The internationally renowned novelist and twice Booker prize-winning author Peter Carey was born in Melbourne. Poet, essayist and novelist Chris Wallace-Crabbe and poet Dorothy Porter have been widely translated, and there are numerous crime fiction and children's fiction authors who have been widely published. Australia's two foremost 19th-century novelists were Rolf Boldrewood (Thomas Browne) and Marcus Clarke, who both lived and at times wrote in Melbourne. The most famous of Melbourne's early poets is C.J. Dennis. Awarding-winning contemporary authors writing books set in Melbourne include Elliot Perlman, Helen Garner and Nam Li.

## **Literary Festivals**

Melbourne is home to a range of literary festivals: Melbourne Writers' Festival, the Overload Poetry Festival, the Alfred Deakin Innovation Lectures and the Emerging Writers' Festival.

## **Centre for Youth Literature**

The State Library of Victoria contains Melbourne's Centre for Youth Literature.

## **Literary Prizes**

Melbourne is home to one of Australia's most valuable literary awards, the Melbourne Prize for Literature.

## **Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas**

As part of its bid to be a City of Literature, the Victorian Government is creating a Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas. This new building will be a 'hub' for writing and literature-based activities and organisations.