

MEDIA RELEASE

TEDxSydney reveals 2014 speaker program

From using maths to find your perfect sex partner to making failure your best friend, 16 Australians share their remarkable ideas and stories

Sydney – Thursday, 6 March 2014: Annual ideas festival, TEDxSydney, has today unveiled the speaker lineup for the 2014 event, which will take place on **Saturday, 26 April** at the Sydney Opera House.

The program, which for the first time in Sydney, has been curated into themed sessions, features 16 Australians who aim to change the world with thought provoking ideas and inspiring personal stories.

Fitting into the themes: Passages, Blood, Enhance and Rethink, each speaker will surprise, challenge, entertain and delight the audience. Talks will range from cutting-edge research around schizophrenia treatment, to a remarkable story from an Australian man teaching children in Kabul how to skateboard. Plus, what influences the way we make decisions, the unlikely relationship between maths and sex, and a reconsideration of the way that we light built environments.

Editorial Director **Edwina Throsby** said: “TED audiences are notoriously engaged, so curating a whole day of talks that interests them is a particularly enjoyable challenge.

“This year we have brought together some of the best minds, thinkers and storytellers, all from different fields, but all at the very top of their game. Having these brilliant people on the same stage on the same day is pretty exciting, and we are looking forward to sharing new ideas with the TEDxSydney community.”

The 2014 speaker lineup and sessions are:

PASSAGES

- **ADAM ALTER**, *Author and Assistant Professor of marketing and psychology at NYU's Stern School of Business and psychology department*
TALK: Why do we do the things we do? Leading behavioural expert Adam Alter will use his years of research on the intersection of behavioural economics, marketing, along with the psychology of judgment and decision-making, to tell us why we make the every day decisions we make.
- **BARAT ALI BATOOR**, *photographer and Hasari Refugee*
TALK: Barat Ali Batoor will be debuting powerful photos of his journey as a refugee, travelling from Afghanistan to Australia.
- **MARKUS ZUSAK**, *author of The Book Thief*

TALK: Markus Zusak will tell us how failure can test your boundaries, and why it is good to mess things up every now and then.

- **STELLA YOUNG**, *disability activist*

TALK: Everything you thought about disability is wrong.

BLOOD

- **MARY JERRAM**, *recently retired state coroner (NSW)*

TALK: What's the difference between vengeance and justice?

- **CYNDI SHANNON WEICKERT**, *Director, Schizophrenia Research Laboratory, NeuRA*

TALK: Cyndi Shannon Weickert will be bringing a personal story to her discussion of brand new research around schizophrenia treatment.

- **TIM AND JUDY SHARP**, *Artist and his mother*

TALK: After being told her autistic son Tim could never express feelings and emotion, Judy Sharp spent years working with him to help him communicate through drawing. Tim is now an internationally acclaimed artist, and creator of cult character Laser Beak Man. Judy and Tim will talk through their extraordinary journey.

- **DAVID KILCULLEN**, *author, strategist, counterinsurgency expert and advisor to the US military*

TALK: David Kilcullen will talk from personal experience about security risks within growing cities in the 21st century and how mobile connectivity is changing security concerns in newly urbanised areas and slums.

ENHANCE

- **JIHAD DIB**, *Principal, Punchbowl Boys High School*

TALK: A personal talk from Jihad Dib about using strategic engagement to transform a school and community in one of Sydney's more disadvantaged suburbs.

- **OLIVER PERCOVICH**, *Founder of Skatestan*

TALK: An inspiring story about creating a charity in Kabul that teaches kids in urban areas to skateboard. Oliver Percovich will reveal the incredible effect the project has had in the local communities, particularly for girls.

- **NICOLE VINCENT**, *bio-ethicist*

TALK: If there is a pill that makes you better at your job, is it your responsibility to take it? Nicole Vincent will be debating cognitive enhancement and the responsibilities it brings.

- **post**, *a collaborative performance ensemble*

TALK: What's the western theatrical canon, and what's in it for me?

RETHINK

- **MARK MAJOR**, *lighting architect*

TALK: Mark Major will bring light to the idea that darkness in design can be good too.

- **CLIO CRESSWELL**, *Mathematician, University of Sydney*

TALK: Clio Cresswell will talk about the unlikely relationship between maths and sex and how complicated algorithms can help determine your perfect match, the happiness of your marriage and the likelihood of you splitting up.

- **RICHARD BANATI**, *scientist, ANSTO*
TALK: Is recycling actually good for the planet? After examining the feathers of sea birds, Richard Banati believes that our shift to using recycled plastic may have resulted in ocean pollution on a nano scale.
- **BARRY TRAILL**, *Terrestrial Ecologist*
TALK: Barry Trill wants us to completely re-consider the concept of wilderness in Australia and adopt land management techniques even in our most isolated areas.

As an additional speaker segment, a selection of speakers from the audience will be invited to the stage to pitch their idea in a minute or less.

TEDxSydney artistic performers will be announced next month.

The University of Sydney is proud to once again be the Principal Partner of TEDxSydney for 2014, as well as the exclusive education and research partner. The University and TEDxSydney share a vision for thought leadership, challenging ideas and intellectual engagement.

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About TEDxSydney: TEDxSydney is an independently organised event licensed from TED by longtime TEDster, Remo Giuffré (REMO General Store) and is organised by a network of fellow thinkers and other long time collaborators. For a full listing of 2014 organisers see TEDxSydney.com. TEDxSydney is made possible by the generous contribution of its partners, sponsors and volunteers. Please direct TEDxSydney 2014 **partnership enquiries** to Felicity Fellows or Kate Dezarnaulds via the contact page on our website.

About TEDx: In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organised events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TEDTalks video and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and connection in a small group. These local, self-organised events are branded TEDx, where x = independently organised TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organised.

About TED: TED is a non-profit organisation devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading. Started as a four-day conference in California 30 years ago, TED has grown to support those world-changing ideas with multiple initiatives. At TED, the world's leading thinkers and doers are asked to give the talk of their lives in 18 minutes. Talks are then made available, free, at TED.com. TED speakers have included Bill Gates, Jane Goodall, Elizabeth Gilbert, Sir Richard Branson, Benoit Mandelbrot, Philippe Starck, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Isabel Allende and former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown. Two major TED events are held each year: The TED Conference takes place every spring in North America (along with a parallel conference, TEDActive), and TEDGlobal is held each summer in another part of the world. 2014 will be held in Rio de Janeiro.

TED^x Sydney 2014

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