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## Children's author to add her own magic to Mary Poppins Festival

Author and illustrator of the Ruby Red Shoes series Kate Knapp will bring her own brand of magic to the Mary Poppins Festival this June-July school holidays in Maryborough.

Fraser Coast Tourism & Events marketing and communications manager Bradley Nardi said the Brisbane-based writer and artist was a perfect fit for the festivities.

"Kate creates all of her artwork by hand using pencils, ink, watercolour and a little magic and of course we all know how enchanting the world's most famous fictional nanny is," he said.

"During the festival, Kate will be exhibiting her work and doing readings."

Ms Knapp said the main similarity she saw between herself and Mary Poppins author P.L. Travers, who was born in Maryborough, was the desire to tell stories for children.

"Both Mary Poppins and the Ruby Red Shoes books have characters that children relate to and offer them some kind of companionship and teachings," she said.

"Much of my inspiration comes from my childhood. It was simple and filled with interesting characters. There was plenty of time and space to develop my imagination.

"Plenty of quiet contemplative space, in my experience, is perfect for hatching creative ideas.

"Nature, friends and family, as well as children are a source of many ideas and subject material."

Ms Knapp said it was a wonderful idea to have a celebration of storytelling in one of Queensland's historic cities and she was excited to be attending.

"It makes me feel like a child again," she said.

"Ruby Red Shoes loves scones with strawberry jam and cream and has her fingers crossed that there will be someone serving them in Maryborough for the festival!"

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Ms Knapp has visited Maryborough many times as a good friend of hers lives in the Heritage City.

“It’s a wonderful town and particularly appeals to my love of historical buildings as well as the unique charm of the wide streets, the Mary River, quaint cottages and measured pace of life.”

Mr Nardi said workers renovating the former bank building where P.L. Travers was born had encountered significant unforeseen restoration work while converting it to an interpretive centre.

He said in order to allow repairs to continue and ensure the heritage-listed building is safe and secure for future generations to enjoy, the planned sneak peek at the Story Bank had been removed from the Mary Poppins Festival schedule.

“But visitors will be able to learn about the extensive building restoration works and the plans for the interpretive centre,” he said.

The stately building was purchased by Fraser Coast Regional Council in 2015 and is undergoing a \$2.2 million refurbishment with grant funds from the Australian Government’s Community Development Grants Program, the Queensland Government’s Building Our Regions Funding and the council.

Mr Nardi said there would still be plenty of other high jinks for festival goers to enjoy from June 29 until July 8 including a creative writing workshop hosted by visiting author of the Extreme Adventure series Justin D’Ath and Kids’ Party Confidential with comedian and author Sean Murphy.

During the festival’s major celebration, A Day in the Park on July 7, everyone can join in the fun of the grand parade, nanny race and chimney sweep challenge.

And that’s just the beginning of the charming fun! Visit [marypoppinsfestival.com.au](http://marypoppinsfestival.com.au) for more details.

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