

Secret Worlds at the End of the Street: Building Stories with *Tales from Outer Suburbia*

This session introduces teachers to practical ways of using *Tales from Outer Suburbia* to enrich literacy learning through visual storytelling, world-building and critical interpretation. The Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF) supported series, *Tales from Outer Suburbia*, is a bold new animated series that brings Shaun Tan's stories to life through striking visual design and layered, imaginative worlds. The series provides rich opportunities for students to think deeply, notice closely and respond creatively to screen texts.

Tan's work encourages learners to question meaning, explore possibilities and recognise how ordinary streets can hold extraordinary worlds, a powerful entry point for comprehension, interpretation and creative expression.

In the workshop, teachers will watch an episode from the series and use the narrative as a springboard to explore practical, curriculum-aligned classroom strategies. Activities include comparing text and screen versions, unpacking visual metaphors, examining story worlds and creating imaginative written or visual responses. These approaches support English and Media Arts outcomes while building critical and creative thinking.

Participants will leave with classroom-ready tools, fresh ways to embed multimodal analysis and strategies to help students build their own suburbia stories. This session demonstrates how *Tales from Outer Suburbia* can deepen literacy learning while inspiring young people to wonder, question and craft stories shaped by the hidden possibilities of their own world.