



27 Jul 2017

Echo - Bellarine Edition, Bellarine VIC

Author: BETHANY TYLER • Section: General News • Article type : News Item
Audience : 38,761 • Page: 27 • Printed Size: 151.00cm² • Market: VIC
Country: Australia • ASR: AUD 743 • Words: 252 • Item ID: 817187535

 isentia.mediaportal

Licensed by Copyright Agency. You may only copy or communicate this work with a licence.

Page 1 of 1

Festival hits out at attacks

BETHANY TYLER

APOLLO Bay Writers Festival's social media page has been targeted by disgruntled men over its decision to put outspoken feminist commentator Clementine Ford on the program.

Festival director Peter Mawhinney said a number of male "keyboard warriors" had left one-star reviews on the site over the *Fight Like a Girl* author's inclusion in this weekend's event.

"It's very disappointing. We're a local festival run by volunteers, and we feel these people have chosen to attack our festival and attempt to vandalise it because they don't like that we invited someone," Mr Mawhinney said.

"That's a fairly low act."

Some remaining comments on the festival Facebook page described Ford as a "disgusting hypocrite and poor excuse for a human".

Ford's social commentary on women's issues regularly attracts criticism from anti-feminist groups, who earlier this year used similar one-star review tactics to attack a Brisbane bookstore for stocking her work.

Mr Mawhinney said that as far as he was aware, it was the first time in the festival's his-

tory it had received such a "bite back".

"The irony is that these same people are the ones who complain about their right to have an opinion, so they feel like they're entitled to respect for their opinions, but if Clementine expresses hers they don't want to hear it," Mr Mawhinney said.

Ford will be presenting the weekend's keynote address. Michael Leunig, Isobelle Carmody, Les Twentymen and Desh Balasubramaniam are also on the program.

The weekend event coincides with the new after-dark arts festival WinterWild.