



Outspoken ... Organisers of Wanaka's six-week Outspoken Festival Liz Breslin (left) and Julia Le test their vocal cords on the Lake Wanaka waterfront last week.

PHOTO: CRIS JOHNSTON

Festival to star top wordsmiths

CRIS JOHNSTON
@thenews.co.nz

Some people say it with flowers, others with song but a group of Wanaka wordsmiths believe when it comes to communication — the spoken word is the way to go.

Hawea resident poet Liz Breslin is the driving force behind the inaugural Outspoken Festival, which is taking place in Wanaka over six weeks from January 12.

The event will feature a series of performances by some of New Zealand's best wordsmiths, including the country's most celebrated bard, Sam Hunt, 2012 New Zealand Poetry Slam champion Ali Jacs and fellow Slam champ rapper Tourettes, whose main influences, so the bio goes, are books, films, sandwiches and love songs.

The festival would feature performances by local poets and writers in the "Wanaka Showcase", which would highlight rising talent in the area, Ms Breslin said.

"The spoken word is the ultimate form of self expression — we want to debunk the myth performances like this are boring.

"In the programme we have tried to make it appealing and with a breadth of styles from humour to nostalgia," Ms Breslin, the founder of former Wanaka-based poetry group Poetic Justice, said.

"There are so many inspiring people in our area ... They should be nurtured."

A variety of venues, including restaurants, cinemas and the Lake Wanaka Centre, would be used over the six weeks.

Hunt would perform a collection of his poems, under the title "Songs for the Tone Deaf", on January 12, 13 and 14, while Ali Jacs and Tourettes would take the floor on February 18.

The Wanaka Showcase would be held on February 4, Ms Breslin said.

Other artists appearing during the festival include the South Auckland Poets Collective, Mark Raffills and John Carr and the Lyttelton Poets.