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**HEADLINE:** **Writer follows old fears along creative path**

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**BODY:**

Three years in Bali sets scene for latest novel

Freshwater author **Fiona Higgins** feels she now understands the concept of protecting the muse, as viewed in its original sense.

"When 'the muse' was a sacred- source of creativity," she said. "I believe creativity is gift." Her gift has seen her write four books, three of them fictitious,- including her latest novel **Fearless**.

The mother of three and wife to an international agriculturalist said the family moved back to Freshwater last year but for the three years prior to that lived in Bali, where **Fearless** is set.

"The novel explores the lives of six Westerners who travel to the central part of Bali to face their legitimate anxieties," Higgins said.

"One has a fear of flying, another of snakes, yet another- of public speaking, and so on." Higgins said these were among the most common phobias and would resonate with readers.

She said that, before writing the book, she beat her fear of flying-. "Sure it's a novel but there are elements of me in there, as with my other books," she said.

Her other works are The Mothers' Group, Wife On The Run, and Love In The Age Of Drought.

Higgins said the genuine reality of the anxieties experienced by the characters in her book were juxtaposed with the very different fears of locals.

"Things like catching preventable diseases like cholera and polio, or of poverty and homelessness," she said.

But a life-threatening situation delivers a genuine fear-inducing scenario for the travellers.

The narrative then looks at how each responds- and the dynamics of the group.

Inspiration **Fearless** is a novel by Freshwater's **Fiona Higgins** The story came to her one night in Bali when she was battling a 41C temperature While hallucinating, she said, the main six characters entered her room and spoke

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