

New book: Warrnambool – This is home



Me – Carol Altmann – with my self-published tribute to my hometown of Warrnambool that will be launched on August 19.

[box] “Warrnambool – This is home” is limited to 500 signed and numbered copies: \$30 plus \$8 flat postage anywhere in Australia. You can [order a book direct from the author by direct deposit or Paypal](#). Books are also available from [Warrnambool Books](#), Fairy St. [/box]

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] W [/dropcap]hen I first returned to live in my hometown of Warrnambool in early 2013 after being away for more than 20 years, I had a new appreciation for the ties that bind people from this seaside city.

Despite Warrnambool now being a place of 32,000 people, we all feel like we know each other and, if we don't, we spend a few minutes playing what one friend described to me as “the game”.

This is where you ask each other what school you went to, or the names of your parents/brothers/sisters, or if you knew such-and-such and – usually – within no more than four or five moves, “bingo!” you have made a connection.

But it is also more than that.

It is the environment that also connects us: the wild ocean, the bent trees, the Norfolk pines, the whales, the restless wind...

And it is even more than that.

It is the iconic people and places that are so familiar to us and that we remember so fondly, even nostalgically, as we all age and they start to slip away. Names like Swintons, Kermonds, Macks Snacks, Ryan’s Removals, The Savoy, Rauert’s shoe store, Politis fish and chips, the Matera Brothers and on it goes.

I chose 30 of these icons to photograph and write briefly (snapshots) about – I could have chosen many more – as a small collection of some of the places and faces that connect us as being “from Warrnambool”, even if we live many miles away.



Warrnambool identities: John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis in front of their Kepler St family home. The book is dedicated to Maroulla, who passed away earlier this year.

[dropcap style="color: #a5cecd;"] A [/dropcap]s the book unfolded, I felt an increasing sense of urgency to capture these special places and faces before it was too late, because there is no doubt Warrnambool is facing unprecedented challenges that are seeing many businesses close and not replaced by others.

In the 16 months since I started this book, the Savoy has closed, the Criterion Hotel building has been pulled down and Lucas Bros butchers was sold out of the family. Just this week it was announced that Capricorn Records would come to an end next month after 35 years.

Warrnambool is changing and, as with any change, there is both an anticipation about what might come and a sadness about what has been lost.

This book is my attempt to preserve some of our shared and precious past.

As I say in the introduction: "Whether you live in Warrnambool, or you simply carry it in your heart, this is a tribute to the place by the sea that no matter how widely we travel, we will always call home".

* * *

***Warrnambool – This is home* features the following:** Swinton's Supermarket (Val Grundy/Dot Grauer); Lucas Bros Butchers (Ken Lucas); Materia Bros (Mario, Paul and Mark Materia); the Sycopoulis family home (John, Maroulla and Peter Sycopoulis); Kermond's Snack Bar (Rob and Bill Kermond); Mack's Snacks (Graeme, Keith and Paul McLeod); Savoy Restaurant (Alan Tampion); Rauert's Shoe Store (Ron and Peter Rauert); The Bowl (Lucas Reid and Andrea Occhipinti); Politis Seafood (Helen, George and Chris Politis); Robert Ulmann whale mural (Justy Ulmann); Warrnambool Surf Lifesaving Club (Lisa Logan (Cole), Ben Logan, Ron Cole); The Warrnambool Standard (Peter Collins and Peter Fletcher); The Warrnambool Woollen Mill site (Mary Jackson); Chittick's Bakery (Ian Robb and John Chittick); Capitol Cinema (Ivan Berndt); Fletcher Jones Gardens (Lex Caldwell); The Quarry/ art collectives (Claire Drylie) Ryan's Removals (Frank and Graeme Ryan); 3YB radio (Steve Welsh and Lyndsay Hill); W'bool Grand Annual Steeplechase (Brian McIver); W'bool Aquarium (Donna Krebs (Livingston)); Timor St Newsagency (Brian Mills); Bojangles Pizza (Simon Mugavin); Isles General Store (Ken Isles); McNeil's BP Service Station (Noel McNeil); the War Memorial Angel; T&G clocktower (Peter Hogg); The Criterion Hotel.

[box type="bio"] ***Warrnambool – This is home* will be limited to 500 numbered and signed editions. If you would like to order a copy (\$30 plus \$8 flat postage if required) from Bluestone Magazine, [you can do so here](#). Books are also on sale at [Warrnambool Books](#).** [/box]

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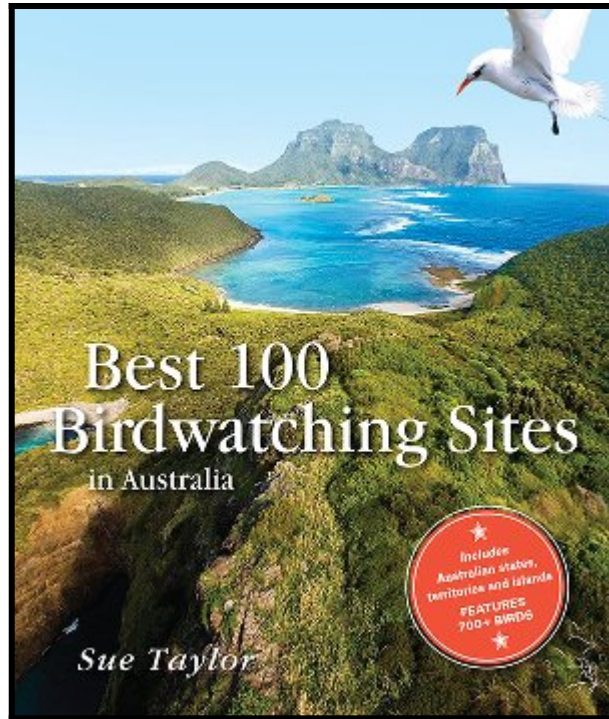
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Bird lovers can scratch that twitch



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] I
[/dropcap]f you are a regular reader of *Bluestone*, you will know that we love birds.

We are not alone, as one of most popular stories that we ran via our Facebook page was about our quest to save a hooded plover's nest on the banks of the Hopkins River from being trampled. Our followers were glued to the progress reports on "Pip" and her two eggs. (You can [catch up on that story here.](#))

This week's Bookmarks selection from **Warrnambool Books** is sure to have bird lovers running for the binoculars as it selects 100 of the best birdwatching sites in Australia and, best of all, some of them are right here in South-West Victoria. Of course!

It also answers that nagging question that we know has kept people awake at night: where can you spot the Bar-tailed Godwit?

Michaelie Clark, from Warrnambool Books, explains more:

Best 100 Birdwatching Sites in Australia, by Sue Taylor, is the ultimate guide for avid twitchers.

Fully illustrated and featuring more than 700 birds, the book will direct you to the best locations for observing nesting Noddies, spotting Siberia-bound Bar-tailed Godwits, and hearing the high-pitched whistle of the male Musk Duck.

The chapters are divided by locations in Australia's states, territories and islands, so birdwatchers can easily find the section relevant to the area they live in or are visiting. The guide features more than 20 locations throughout Victoria, including Port Fairy and Koroit.'

[box] You can keep up with new releases and classics from Warrnambool Books via their [Facebook page](#).[/box]



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New book on the faces of Warrnambool



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]his is **Brian Mills** and he works nights, or very early mornings, depending on how you measure 4am starts.

Brian is one of a team of people at the **Timor St Newsagency** in Warrnambool who ensure that the morning newspapers are delivered each day to the doorsteps and businesses of Warrnambool for people who still enjoy reading a physical copy of a newspaper.

It is a job Brian has been doing for more than 25 years and this is why he – as a newspaper delivery man – has been chosen to appear in a photographic book **due to be published in the first half of next year** that will feature 30 of the iconic

people and places of the Warrnambool community.

It is not a history book, nor does it include every well-known Warrnambool identity, but rather it is a personal selection of people and places that meant something to me – Carol – when I was growing up in Warrnambool in the 1970s and which are still a part of the community today, even if only a shadow of their former selves.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]here is a deep nostalgia and an inter-connectedness that binds the people of Warrnambool, perhaps more so than most other regional cities, or maybe that is just because other regional cities don't have a Kermonds, or a Politis fish and chip shop, or a Fletcher Jones gardens, or a Chitticks...you get the picture.

These are the names that have become a part of Warrnambool's cultural identity and trigger such strong stories and memories – especially if you are sharing them in a bar with another Warrnamboolian you have bumped into somewhere across the world.

There is also a growing awareness, however, that such icons do not last forever (the demolition of the Criterion Hotel, in Kepler St, was a stark reminder of this truth) and this is what inspired me to race around with my camera and do the best job I could to capture the faces – and some of the places – while we still have the chance.

The book is yet to be titled, but it will be limited to just 500 copies, so we will keep you up to date on when it is due to hit the shelves.

In the meantime, if you are a nostalgic Warrnambool person or ex-pat, you can join more than 2500 people just like you at the [Lost Warrnambool Facebook page](#) and share memories and some terrific old images. Be sure to let them know Bluestone Magazine sent you!

[box] Our regular Bookmarks by [Warrnambool Books](#) will return for our final edition of the year next week, with a list of great Christmas books that add a sparkle to the festive season.[/box]

Classic story still dressing bookshelves



Rosalie Ham's debut novel is still a solid seller after 13 years. (Image courtesy of www.rosalieham.com)

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] T
[/dropcap]here is a great story behind this week's choice for Bookmarks, *The Dressmaker*.

It was published 13 years ago as the first novel for Melbourne author **Rosalie Ham**, who has managed to carve out a wonderful career, despite not being a 'big name' in writing or having a huge marketing machine behind her.

The novel was published by a tiny publishing house that no longer exists, but gave Ham the springboard she needed.

It is now listed on VCE reading lists and is about to be made into a movie, starring Kate Winslet and Judy Davis.

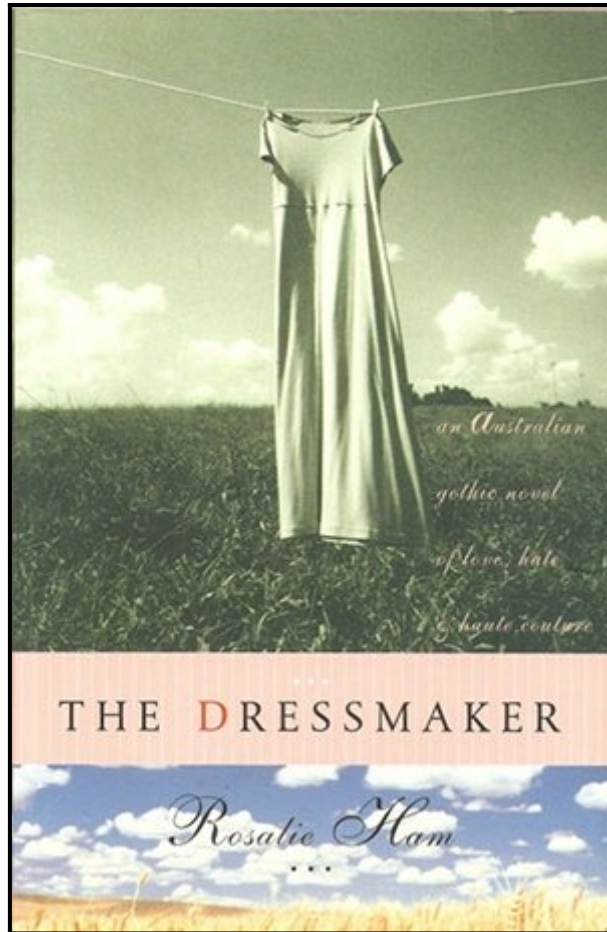
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] T
[/dropcap]his is what **Michaelie Clark** from **Warrnambool Books** has to say about her choice:

“Rosalie Ham’s first book, *The Dressmaker*, has been steadily gaining momentum for over a decade. Far from being a seasonal sensation, the award-winning novel has been quietly adorning more and more bookshelves with a classic style that will never lose its lustre – and now it’s about to grace the big screen.

Set in rural Victoria in the 1950s, the book tells the story of Myrtle ‘Tilly’ Dunnage, the disgraced daughter of a madwoman, who returns to her hometown after fashioning a life abroad that the residents of Dungatar can barely imagine.

Escaping the secrets and tragedy of her most recent past by confronting the traumatic events of her childhood, Tilly struggles to remain aloof as she faces the seething malice of the townspeople, her mother’s deranged outbursts – and the romantic advances of her neighbour.

This is a decadent, unusual gothic novel that sticks with the reader, making them question some of the more poisonous threads that can hold a small community together.”



[box] Keep up to date with new releases from Warrnambool Books on their [Facebook](#) page. You can also find out more about Rosalie Ham on her [website](#). [/box]



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Preserving Indigenous stories



Fiona Clarke and a collaborative work, Strata, produced with NZ sculptor [Chris Booth](#). Image: Chris Booth.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DDCE8D;"] L
[/dropcap]ocal Indigenous artist **Fiona Clarke**, of the Kirrae Whurrong people, is well-known and widely respected for her work in tapestry and painting, but her talents as a storyteller are also gaining attention.

Michaelie Clark, from **Warrnambool Books**, has chosen Fiona's first children's book as her choice for this week's Bookmarks; it tells the story of Minkgill (the Kirrae Whurrong word for 'star') and features a dozen of Fiona's illustrations.

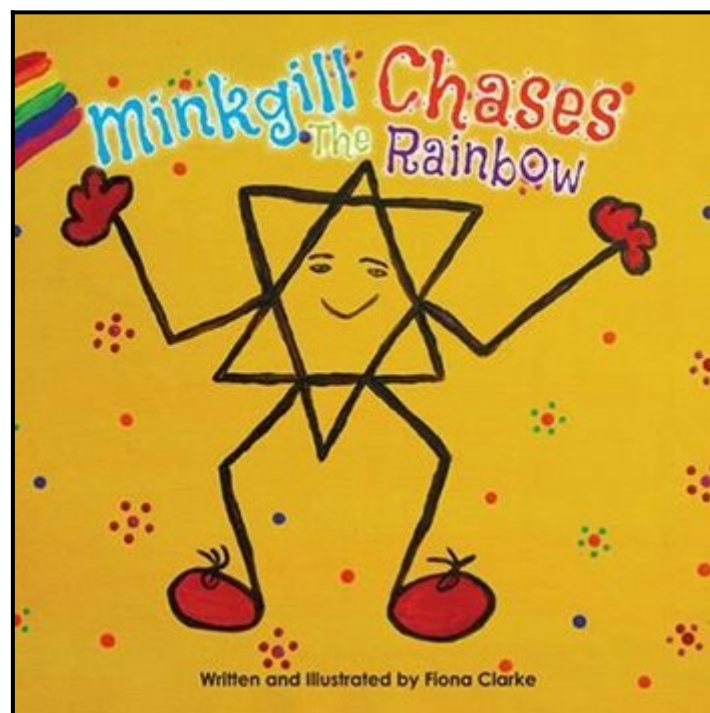
Importantly, it also introduces Indigenous culture to non-Indigenous children and helps preserve the Kirrae Whurrong

language.

Over to Michaelie:

Minkgill Chases the Rainbow is a beautiful, poignant picture book inspired by elements of the Dreamtime, Australia's history and the experiences of our Indigenous people, and the desire for a positive future for all children. It's a simple yet powerful tale of hope, belonging, and of finding your way back up when you fall.

With vibrant images that tell the story as much as the text, we follow Minkgill, a star who tumbled from the sky and walked the earth, searching for his true place in the world. Feeling lost and lonely and sad, Minkgill wanders until he finds a rainbow, which leads him up to meet the Rainbow Serpent, who helps him make his way back home.



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