

Writing a star-studded novel



Poet, author and teacher James Laidler at the 2010 Ex-Libris Festival, Port Fairy. (Image courtesy of Ex-Libris).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] B
[/dropcap]oy, we have some talented school teachers in South-West Victoria.

Not only do they have the exhausting and often unappreciated task of fronting up to a classroom each day to teach, but they are often also writers, poets, musicians and novelists in their "spare" time.

This week, **Michaelie Clark** from [Warrnambool Books](#) has chosen a book by Emmanuel College teacher, poet and novelist **James Laidler**, who is rapidly building the sort of CV that makes your eyes water, such is the spectrum of his talent. Here is Michaelie's summary of his latest work:

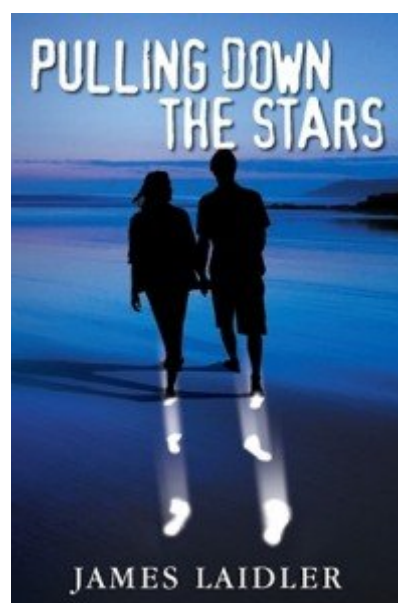
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Set in Warrnambool, and incorporating some of the city's most famous landmarks, *Pulling Down the Stars* is the second novel by award-winning local author, James Laidler.

Infused with vignettes and the evocative language that defines Laidler's style, the book bridges teen and adult themes and spans genres with its eclectic mix of humour, romance, drama and suspense.

The story revolves around Charlie, a young psychiatric nurse living with his widower father and stroke-affected grandfather. Burdened with the dysfunction and responsibilities of his family, as well as the guilt of wanting to be free to do as he pleases, shy, deep-thinking Charlie finds an outlet in his song-writing while he waits for life to look up.

Instead, his life is turned upside-down when he meets Maxine, a spiky, hot-blooded surfer-girl who works at the local abattoir in order to rebel against her well-to-do parents. Thrown together by unconventional circumstances, a trust and understanding slowly builds between Charlie and Maxine, but unbeknownst to either of them, there is a dangerous threat lurking in their midst...



Find out more about James via his [website](#).

And congratulations to Warrnambool Books for taking out the social media prize at the recent Warrnambool Small Business Awards!

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The lighter side of teaching



Author, teacher, speaker and all-round
motivator of kids, Matt Porter.
www.mattporter.com.au

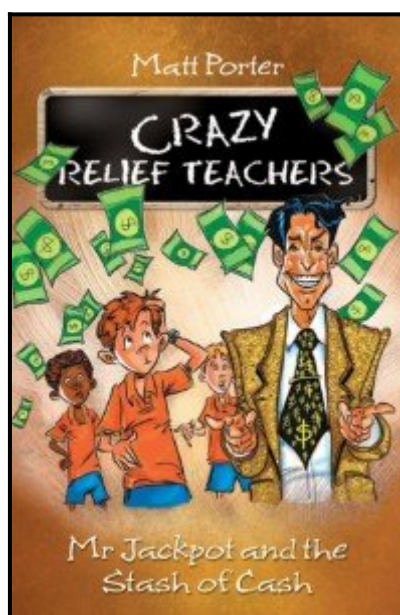
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] A
[/dropcap]nyone who has worked as a relief teacher in a primary school – or remembers their own relief teachers – will know that a sense of humour usually goes a long way in trying to control the classroom.

This week, **Michaelie Clark** from **Warrnambool Books** has selected a new book by a dynamic local teacher who has used the 'relief teacher' theme for this third successful book aimed at children...

“Local primary school teacher **Matt Porter** has put his skills and experience – and sense of humour – to extra good use: not only does he educate and inspire the kids in his Warrnambool classroom, he also encourages literacy and entertains children all around the country with his *Crazy Relief Teacher* series.

The recently released third book, *Mr Jackpot and the Stash of Cash*, continues the story of the first two books, *Mr Sergeant and the Dodgeballs of Doom* and *Ms Law and the Corn-fusing Case of the Broken Window*, where the students of Outback Creek Primary find themselves with yet another strange (and possibly deranged) relief teacher.

Funny and imaginative, the books truly connect with and engage junior readers – and may even impart a few well-disguised lessons along the way.”



You can find Matt’s website at www.mattporter.com.au

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