

Australian stories for Australian kids



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] D
[/dropcap]o you remember growing up and reading a pile of adventure books that, as wonderful as they were, all featured characters from places other than Australia?

The Secret Seven, Mr Biggles, Treasure Island, Peter Rabbit, Alice in Wonderland, The Diary of Adrian Mole and even *Harry Potter*...all classics, but all British.

Today, however, there are so many terrific Australian young children's authors and the personalities, history and culture of Australia are front and centre of the storyline.

For this week's Bookmarks, **Michaelie Clark**, from **Warrnambool Books**, has chosen the latest in a series of hugely popular books aimed at young Australian girls:

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] '
[/dropcap]The ***Our Australian Girl*** books have been hugely popular in the South West over the last year, and the newest

collection is proving to be no exception.

With the fourth book in the 'Lina' set, *A Lesson for Lina*, recently released, the story of the young Italian-Australian girl who dreams of being a writer is now complete. As with the other *Our Australian Girl* books, Lina's story is a fictional tale set in a real place and time in Australia's history, with this collection centred around mid-1950s Melbourne.

(*A Lesson for Lina* is set in 1956 – any idea what event in Melbourne it might feature?)

Each of the collections (there are six so far) in the *Our Australian Girl* series is penned by a different author. The 'Lina' collection has been written by much-loved Melbourne author **Sally Rippin**, making it a stand-out in a stellar series."

Ps. The *Our Australian Girl* series will have an equivalent series aimed at boys – *Do you Dare?* – that will be released early next year.



Author Sally Rippin has written more than 50 children's books,

including the Lina
series. Image:
www.sallyrippin.com

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[The Dressmaker still winning fans](#)

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The many faces of Nikki Gemmell



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] F
[/dropcap]ormer ABC journalist and now successful author **Nikki Gemmell** can never be accused of being predictable.

It has been 16 years since Nikki made the leap from journalism into writing with her debut novel, ***Shiver***, and she has since written another four novels, two works of non-fiction and published a collection of her newspaper columns.

Michaelie Clark, from **Warrnambool Books**, has chosen Nikki's latest work as her book for the week and it marks another surprise turn for the author:

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] 'M
[/dropcap]any people will have first become familiar with Nikki Gemmell's work without knowing she had written what they were reading.

Her first, much-discussed best-seller was ***The Bride Stripped***

Bare, a work of literary erotica which takes a confronting look at the secret desire and anguish of a newly married woman. The novel was originally published anonymously, though she was soon outed as the author and her name later appeared on the cover.

Now the well-known journalist and provocative writer has taken a very different turn in her career – she's just released her first book for children.

The Kensington Reptilarium is written under the name 'N. J. Gemmell' and is a fun, feel-good tale that is full of adventure. It follows the story of the Caddy kids, four young Aussies from the bush who find themselves in London in the care of Uncle Basti, a man who loves his house full of snakes – and isn't a fan of kids.

This may be a new genre for Gemmell, but there's no doubt she's a talented writer with a knack for capturing attention and offering fresh perspectives – something that young readers are invariably attracted to."



Nikki Gemmell's latest work sees the author move into another genre. Image courtesy of www.nikkigemmell.com

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Buy a book for a child this Christmas



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] W
[/dropcap]e have something a bit different for our Bookmarks
this week that we hope will resonate with our readers who,
like us, love words.

Instead of profiling one book, Bluestone Magazine is supporting a campaign by Warrnambool Books to encourage people to buy a book that they think a child might enjoy for Christmas and then donate that book to a very good cause: [Bethany](#).

Michaelie Clark, from **Warrnambool Books**, explains how it will work:

“At Warrnambool Books we really love two things: Warrnambool, and books. We believe in contributing to our local community and we believe in the power of literature. That’s why we’re holding a book pledge this Christmas to benefit disadvantaged children in the Barwon South West region.

Our **Book Angels** campaign will run from ***Monday, 18 November*** until ***Monday, 16 December***. During this time, customers can buy any children’s book from the store at a discount of 25% to donate to our collection, which will be presented to Bethany in the week before Christmas.

Bethany is a long-standing organisation with a base in Warrnambool, which will arrange distribution of the books to children in need.

There’s no better gift to give a child than a book. Opening books can open minds and doors in the future, so we hope lots of Book Angels will open their hearts to a worthy cause this Christmas.”



[box] Find inspiration for book donations from Warrnambool Books on their [Facebook](#) page.[/box]



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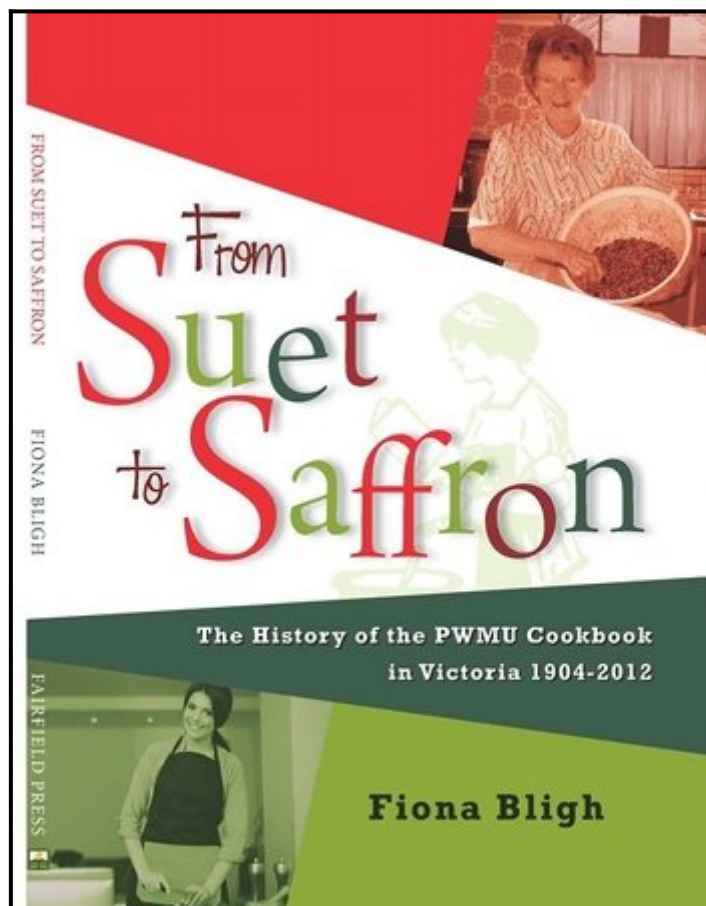
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A long way from suet pudding



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] 0
[/dropcap]ld-fashioned cooking techniques and recipes are making a comeback, although perhaps without the levels of salt, fat and sugar that were all considered normal before a life sitting in front of computers made it harder to work off such nasties.

This week, **Michaelie Clark**, from **Warrnambool Books**, has chosen a gem that explores the history of one such book that was a must for all housewives, and yes, most married women were called housewives.

Ahh, those were the days...not! Over to Michaelie...

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] 'T
[/dropcap]he name of the recently published history of the PWMU Cookbook could not be more appropriate. ***From Suet to Saffron*** by Melbourne author **Fiona Bligh** celebrates the evolution of the book since its first edition was produced by a group of Victorian women in 1904, when offal and raw animal fat were well-loved staples, to the current day, when the menu is infused with multi-cultural cuisine.

As well as giving a good overview of the origins of Australia's oldest, continuously in-print cookbook and the changes it has undergone to achieve that designation, *From Suet to Saffron* also provides a snapshot through the ages of our country's socio-cultural norms and prescribed gender roles.

Amidst advice for 'invalid cookery', priceless 'observations on soup', recipes for sheep's head broth and instructions for cleaning ivory are replications of the advertisements that appeared in the book over the last century.

These range from macaroni ads in 1904 which ask 'Do You Love Your Husband and Children? If so, feed them on Rinoldi' (with a side serve of house-wifely virtue) to flyers by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria declaring in 1943 that 'Electric Cooking is Now Every Woman's Right!'

Whether you're a long-time fan of the PWMU Cookbook or just want to take a look at Australia's past from an interesting perspective, *From Suet to Saffron* is definitely a book you can sink your teeth into."



Melbourne author and historian Fiona Bligh has explored our changing tastes...and gender roles.

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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.

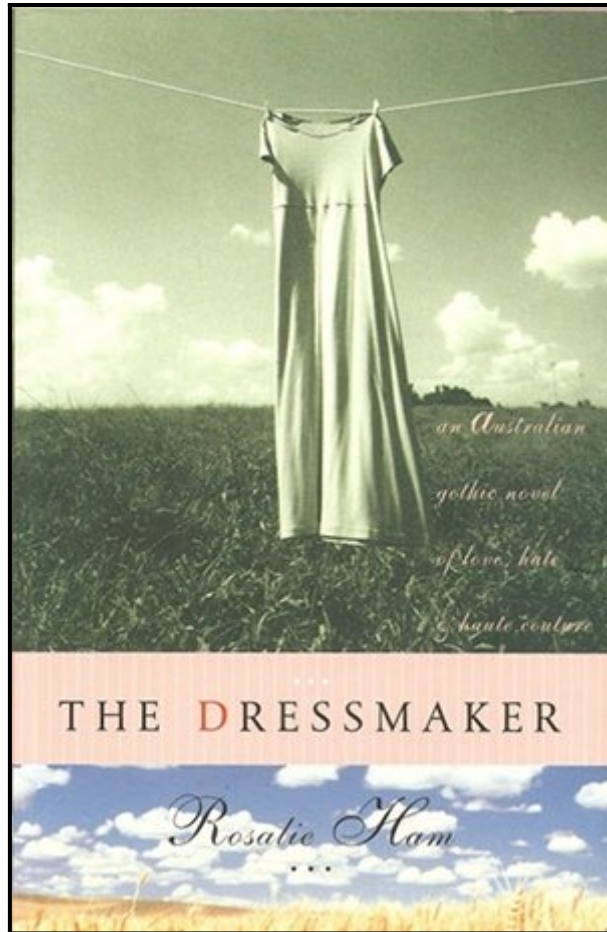
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #8F9F59;"] T
[/dropcap]his is what **Michaelie Clark** from **Warrnambool Books** has to say about her choice:

“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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