



Writing a Memoir



Doctors & Nurses WWI

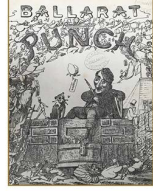
**2024 Twilight Talks**  
 Community Bank  
 Buninyong  
 Bendigo Bank  
 Season 1  
 28 Feb – 27 Mar 2024



BMI Stories



Women in Sport



Ballarat Punch

# 2024 Twilight Talks



[ballartami.org.au/twilight-talks/](http://ballartami.org.au/twilight-talks/)

## 1 | *Writing a Memoir* | 28 February

Speakers:  
Dr Frank Hurley OAM & Pastor Bill Sutcliffe



## 2 | *Doctors & Nurses WWI* | 6 March

Speakers:  
Dr Jean Douglas & Garry Snowden



## 3 | *BMI Stories* | 13 March

Speakers:  
Rex Bridges & Neil Leckie



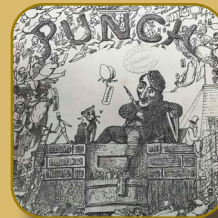
## 4 | *Women in Sport: A Changing World* | 20 March

Speakers:  
Issy Bacon & Sara Kennedy



## 5 | *Ballarat Punch* | 27 March

Speakers:  
Dr Annie Thomas, Prof Keir Reeves  
& Prof Richard Scully



# NEWSletter

MAR / 2024



**BALLARAT  
MECHANICS'  
INSTITUTE**

# Around the BMI



## From the Chair Paula Nicholson

Hello again everyone, I don't know about you, but here at the BMI we are very pleased that 2024 is a leap year, there is lots happening and the extra day is coming in very handy!

Firstly, an update on the **Significance Assessment of our Heritage Collection** which is being funded by a National Library of Australia, Community Heritage Grant. Dr Megan Cardamone, Principal Consultant at Circa Museum Service has visited the BMI twice already and is completing her research through investigation via our database, the collection items and most importantly, lots of conversations with those who know the collection inside out, our volunteers, staff and members. We anticipate this project to be completed by the end of April which will equip us to further refine our care and preservation of this precious resource.

You will see from this newsletter the events calendar is filling up! This includes our part in the upcoming *Ballarat Heritage Festival* (17th - 26th May), we are hosting a number of fabulous events including the reincarnation of the Vegas Cinema for one night only! *The Vegas 70* was once the most popular cinema in Ballarat and was located in what we now know as the Minerva Room. The Ballarat Mechanics' Institute and Showbiz Cinemas have collaborated to bring back the Vegas for the *Ballarat Heritage Festival*, get your tickets soon!

More at: [Vegas70.com.au/](https://Vegas70.com.au/)



We are also participating in the *National Heritage Festival* (mid April to mid May), more details to come. We are also very fortunate to be working with some talented artists who have applied to use our building and spaces as a canvas for *White Night Ballarat*. If successful, we will see the facade of the BMI somewhat transformed on the night of June 1, and an equally unusual occupation of the Williamson foyer for that festival.

We are currently putting the finishing touches on our application to continue our **Strategic Partnership** with the **City of Ballarat**. This funding is crucial to the renewal and growth of our services to our members and to the wider community.

Thank you so much to everyone who has donated so far to our *165th Birthday Appeal*! We are well on the way to reaching our initial target of \$25,000, but have a way to go.

To donate: [Givenow.com.au/bmiappeal2024](https://Givenow.com.au/bmiappeal2024)

Of course the Board and staff are also constantly looking for ways to assist the organisation financially like the recent *Golf Day* in partnership with Haymes Paint, and on April 13 we will be holding a fundraising event in the form of a *Shindig*, featuring three fabulous, well known and generous bands: *The Hideaways*, *The Harmonies* and *Surf Shadows*. The night will feature retro rock and surf sounds, music from the 60's and 70's predominantly and there will be dancing, dinner provided by Malcolm Roberts and grooviness all round! Tables of 10 available, don't miss out and don't forget a groovy outfit if you feel that way inclined! For more details go to:

[Events.humanitix.com/bmi-shindig](https://Events.humanitix.com/bmi-shindig)



With Season one of *Twilight Talks* getting underway this week with the support of **Community Bank Buninyong** and Rosemary's program of *Author Talks* gaining momentum and popularity, there is lots to put in the diary. We love to share the joy here at the BMI, so please feel free to share the newsletter with your friends and family and help us deliver this wonderful programming to a wider audience. Thank you for your support through membership and attendance!

## From the Curator Ellen Becker

# Around the BMI



Old friends William 'Bill' Messer and Francis 'Frank' Opie first opened their tailors on Bridge Street in 1935. The two had first known each other through the Ballarat Harriers Athletic Club before the war.

In 1915, they enlisted four days apart, both aged 18. At the time, Messer was working as a draper and Opie as a draper's assistant. Both men served in France and earned military medals for bravery. Messer added a bar to his medal for bravery in an incident which resulted in severe injuries to his thigh.

In the years after the war, they were both working up the street at Morsheads department store, when they entertained the prospect of going in to business together over lunch one day. The conversation was overheard and relayed to W.R. Morshead, after which they were both fired.

Messer and Opie put their words into action and opened up shop in 1935, weathering the recovery years following the great depression – during which they were known for generously extending long term loans for struggling families. In the late 1940's Messer's son, Bill Jr., joined the family business. In July 1956, the store was looted, with thieves making off with £5,000 of stock, including "120 suits, 14 Harris tweed sports coats, about 270 shirts, a quantity of ties, socks and football guernseys, and a number of travelling rugs and kitbags."

In later years, Messer & Opie became known for providing school uniforms and clothing alterations. In 2013, after 78 years of ownership by the Messer and Opie families, the business was sold to Edward Harry. Expert tailor Bernie Franklin continued to work at the store after it changed hands, notching up an incredible 50 years at the store in 2019. Messer & Opie continue to operate amidst the havoc of works to restore Bridge Street Mall to a thoroughfare, returning the street to a semblance of what it was when Messer & Opie first opened almost 90 years ago.

If you would like to view the wonderful memories and comments from people who have reacted to the social media post go to:

[ballaratmi.org.au/messer-and-opie/](http://ballaratmi.org.au/messer-and-opie/)



MH1593 | Messer & Opie Decorated

Twilight  
Talks

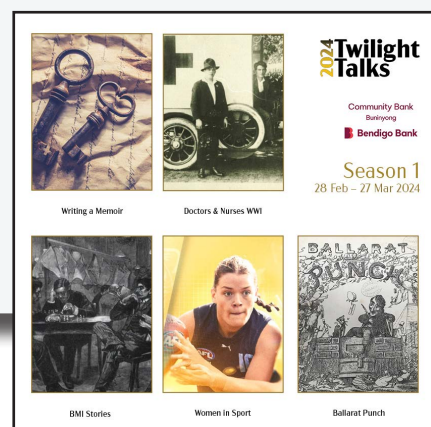
2024  
Twilight  
Talks

Wednesdays 28 Feb - 27 March at 5.30pm

BMI Patron Dr Phil Roberts OAM has curated a fantastic line-up of talks for this our first season of Twilight Talks for 2024.

This season has a great variety of topics so there is something for everyone. For more information on the series go to: [ballaratmi.org.au/twilight-talks/](http://ballaratmi.org.au/twilight-talks/)

To book tickets:  
[events.humanitix.com/twilight-talks-1-2024](http://events.humanitix.com/twilight-talks-1-2024)



# Rosemary recommends

## Author of the Month

Imbi Neeme

Imbi Neeme is a recovering blogger, ardent novelist and spreadsheet enthusiast. Her manuscript *The Spill* was awarded the 2019 Penguin Literary Prize. She blogged for many years at *Not Drowning, Mothering*, which won the 2010 Bloggies Award for best ANZ Weblog. She lives in Footscray on the right side of the Maribyrnong.



## Book of the Month

*Kind of Sort of Maybe...but probably not*  
by Imbi Neeme

Librarian Phoebe Cotton lives with misophonia. The sound of other people crunching an apple, slurping their tea or snapping chewing gum fills her with a rage that she buries deep within.

Mortified by her 'Not Quite Right' brain she hides away inside 6 Salmon Street, the family home that her formidable grand-mother Dorothy has abandoned for a more convivial life at the Western Retreat Retirement Village. But when Phoebe begins receiving mysterious postcards in the mail, she slowly, but surely, finds herself being pulled back out into the world and towards Monty, the sweet postal clerk.

Across town, Suze a university student with a high

distinction in study avoidance, is clinging to the hope that the neglectful J might actually be her boyfriend. When J's attention turns to Ky, it sets Suze on a path that leads her to 6 Salmon Street and Phoebe Cotton.

Together with Suze and Monty, Phoebe goes on a mission to solve the mystery of the postcards but ends up finding much, much more, including acceptance, strength and love.

## Recommended reads

*No Comfort on a Chilly Night* by Noel Braun.

Felix Schmidt is backpacking on the *Camino de Santiago* when he meets the love of his life, the beautiful French Pascaline. He brings her back to Australia where he joins a new firm of management consultants. Deeply engrossed in the company's growth, he neglects Pascaline. She believes his addiction has reduced him as a person, wearies of his obsessive workaholicism and returns to France.

Felix pines for his lost love, but as the company expands, he advances into management and is totally immersed. Disillusioned the ambition has seduced him to climb a ladder that leads to nowhere, that forces him to inflict pain and make decisions he abhors, he loathes the character he has become. Eventually, he quits his work. Once free of responsibility, he aims to win back Pascaline, but first he must work on himself to restore his former undistorted self. With trepidation he returns to France, anxious about the person he will find in Pascaline.

*Issi Mac* by Whitford Roche.

Isabella McMillan is young, beautiful, and smart. A much loved daughter with her future mapped out and secure. She knows what is expected of her – Melbourne in 1956 has a box just the right shape for a Chinese-Australian lawyer-to-be. And yet...

Reserve your copy >

# New releases

When she meets a university lecturer names Alexander, he seems to offer her freedom from the claustrophobic privilege of her life and convinces her to come away with him. Only in Oxford, England, is the real man revealed. As Issie grapples with her fading dreams and impetuous choices, she is hurled into a future she could not have imagined and does not wish her parents to glean. And so, to London. There at a run down boarding house, she finds unexpected things: warmth, friendship, the means to support herself – and the strength to not only face her past, but to start again.

*The Bonnie Dead* by Andrew Raymond

Five years ago, DCI John Lomond led the search for notorious Glasgow child-killer 'The Sandman' until personal tragedy forced him off the case. In Lomond's absence, the killer was never found. Now with nothing but work left in his life, Lomond remains obsessed with the case- despite the nightmares it brings. When a child is abducted in similar Sandman fashion from an affluent Glasgow suburb, Lomond is brought in to find them before it's too late. But the only forensic evidence belongs to a little girl who was abducted and murdered twenty years ago.

## Mystery

<i>Before the Dawn</i>	D.S. Butler
<i>Behind the Wire</i>	Jack Gatland
<i>A Dinner to Die For</i>	Jack Gatland
<i>The Dark Hours</i>	David J. Gatward
<i>Fair Game</i>	David J. Gatward
<i>The Spy Coast</i>	Tess Gerritsen
<i>Alibi</i>	Lynda La Plante
<i>The Bonnie Dead</i>	Andrew Raymond
<i>Beneath Dark Waters</i>	Karen Rose
<i>Random in Death</i>	J D Robb

## Fantasy

The Sinister Booksellers of Bath

Garth Nix

## Novel

<i>Mrs Winterbottom</i>	Eva Glyn
<i>Takes a Gap Year</i>	
<i>Before the Swallows</i>	
<i>Come Back</i>	Fiona Curnow

## Historical

<i>Wartime Wishes at Bletchley Park</i>	Molly Green
<i>The Chocolate Factory</i>	Mary-Lou Stephens

## Australian

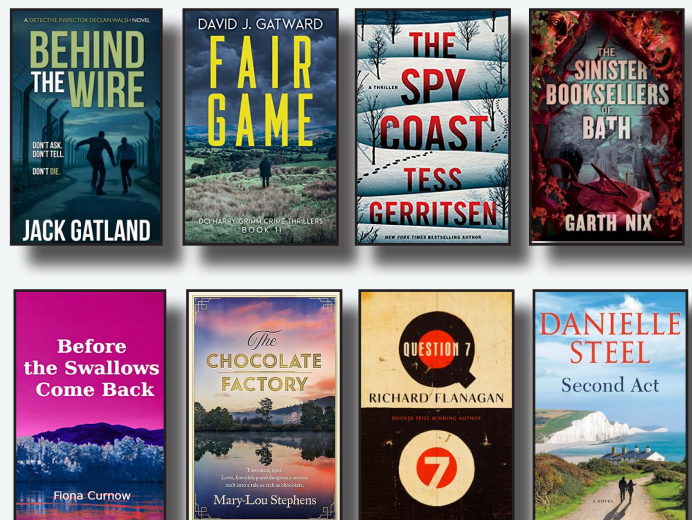
<i>No Comfort on a Chilly Night</i>	Noel Braun
<i>The Drowning</i>	Bryan Brown
<i>Question 7</i>	Richard Flanagan
<i>Kill Your Husbands</i>	Jack Heath
<i>Kind of Sort of Maybe</i>	Imbi Neeme
<i>Issie Mac</i>	Heather Whitford Roche

## Romance

<i>Second Act</i>	Danielle Steel
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## Literature

<i>The Roadmap of Loss</i>	Liam Murphy
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# BALLARAT MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

## WHAT'S ON March



Writing a Memoir

Doctors & Nurses WWI

**2024 Twilight Talks**

Community Bank Buninyong Bendigo Bank

**Season 1**  
28 Feb - 27 Mar 2024

BMI Stories

Women In Sport

Ballarat Punch

Can an old flame be rekindled?  
**NO COMFORT ON A CHILLY NIGHT**  
NOEL BRAUN

Thursday 21 March | 6pm

### Noel Braun in conversation

A Story of love, unchecked ambition, regret and recovery...

A beautifully written work of love...

**The BMI Library**  
Home of literature and education

### OPENING HOURS

**Library:** Mon, Wed & Fri, 10am-4pm  
Tue & Thu, 10am-3pm  
Sat 9.30am-12noon  
Sun Closed

### Holiday closures

Labour Day 11 March  
Good Fri 29 March  
Easter Sat 30 March  
Easter Mon 1 April  
ANZAC Day 25 April

### School holidays

29 Mar - 14 Apr 2024  
29 Jun - 14 Jul 2024  
21 Sep - 6 Oct 2024  
21 Dec - 28 Jan 2025

### Important Dates

Begonia Festival 9-11 Mar  
Australian Heritage Festival 18 Apr-18 May  
Ballarat Heritage Festival 17-26 May  
White Night 1 Jun  
Victorian Seniors Festival 1 - 31 Oct



	Tue 5 Mar	Wed 6 Mar	Thu 7 Mar	Fri 8 Mar	Sat 9 Mar	Sun 10 Mar
	10am-3pm   Library <b>6pm-8pm   In-conversation with Imbi Neeme</b> 2pm- 3pm   BMI Tours	10am-4pm   Library <b>5.30pm   Twilight Talks Season 1 - Session 2</b> 7pm-8.30pm   Kadampa Meditation   Get Your Confidence Back	10am-3pm   Library 6.30pm   Ballarat Chess Club	10am-4pm   Library	10.00am-2pm   Library	Closed   Library
<b>Mon 11 Mar</b>	<b>Tue 12 Mar</b>	<b>Wed 13 Mar</b>	<b>Thu 14 Mar</b>	<b>Fri 15 Mar</b>	<b>Sat 16 Mar</b>	<b>Sun 17 Mar</b>
Closed Labour Day	10am-3pm   Library 2pm- 3pm   BMI Tours	10am-4pm   Library <b>5.30pm   Twilight Talks Season 1 - Session 3</b> 7pm-8.30pm   Kadampa Meditation   Get Your Confidence Back	10am-3pm   Library 6.30pm   Ballarat Chess Club <b>7.30pm-9pm   Ballarat Film Society   Le Bleu Caftan</b>	10am-4pm   Library	9.30am-12noon   Library	Closed   Library <b>2pm-5.30pm   Minerva Social Sunday   Scottish Country Dancing</b>
<b>Mon 18 Mar</b>	<b>Tue 19 Mar</b>	<b>Wed 20 Mar</b>	<b>Thu 21 Mar</b>	<b>Fri 22 Mar</b>	<b>Sat 23 Feb</b>	<b>Sun 24 Mar</b>
10am-4pm   Library	10am-3pm   Library 2pm- 3pm   BMI Tours	10am-4pm   Library <b>5.30pm   Twilight Talks Season 1 - Session 4</b> 7pm-8.30pm   Kadampa Meditation   Get Your Confidence Back	10am-3pm   Library 6.30pm   Ballarat Chess Club <b>6pm-8pm   In-conversation with Noel Braun</b>	10am-4pm   Library	9.30am-12noon   Library	Closed   Library
<b>Mon 25 Mar</b>	<b>Tue 26 Mar</b>	<b>Wed 27 Mar</b>	<b>Thu 28 Mar</b>	<b>Fri 29 Mar</b>	<b>Sat 30 Mar</b>	<b>Sun 31 Mar</b>
10am-4pm   Library	10am-3pm   Library <b>10.30am-12noon   The Reading Room</b> 2pm- 3pm   BMI Tours	10am-4pm   Library <b>5.30pm   Twilight Talks Season 1 - Session 5</b> 7pm-8.30pm   Kadampa Meditation   Get Your Confidence Back	10am-3pm   Library 6.30pm   Ballarat Chess Club	Closed Easter	Closed Easter	Closed   Library
<b>Mon 1 Apr</b>	<b>Tue 2 Apr</b>	<b>Wed 3 Apr</b>	<b>Thu 4 Apr</b>	<b>Fri 5 Apr</b>	<b>Sat 6 Apr</b>	<b>Sun 7 Apr</b>
Closed Easter	10am-3pm   Library 2pm- 3pm   BMI Tours	10am-4pm   Library 7pm-8.30pm   Kadampa Meditation   Dealing with Difficult People	10am-3pm   Library 6.30pm   Ballarat Chess Club	10am-4pm   Library	9.30am-12noon   Library	Closed   Library <b>7pm-8pm   Heath Franklin's Chopper Not Here to F*ck Spiders</b>

**Imbi Neeme**  
in conversation

Tuesday 5 March | 6pm - 8pm  
Lending Library

A charming, nostalgic, quirky, uplifting novel of people young and old finding their tribe, gaining courage to be themselves and perhaps falling in love, too.

*Kind of Sort of Maybe... but probably not*

Imbi Neeme is a recovering blogger, ardent novelist and spreadsheet enthusiast. Her manuscript *The Spill* was awarded the 2019 Penguin Literary Prize and published by Penguin Random House Australia in 2020. She blogged for many years at *Not Drowning, Mothering*, which won the 2010 Bloggies Award for best ANZ Weblog. She lives in Footscray, Melbourne, on the right side of the Maribyrnong.

Cost: \$10 per person | [ballaratmi.org.au/events](http://ballaratmi.org.au/events)

A master tailor who owns a caftan shop in Morocco's oldest medina, falls for his young male apprentice in this nuanced portrait of unconditional love at its most radical.



Morocco, 2022, 123 min.

Dir: Maryam Touzani.

Stars Saleh Bakri, Lubna Azabla and Ayoub Missioui.

A love triangle forms between husband, wife and apprentice which is dramatic yet slowly shifts towards acceptance, compassion and mutual love.

Touzani worked as a screenwriter and documentarian prior to moving into features, and has a keen eye for stories about unconventional relationships. The International Federation of Film Critics awarded this film the *Un Certain Regard* award at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival. **Potential Films.**

Become a member: [ballaratmi.org.au/events](http://ballaratmi.org.au/events)

**Minerva Social Sunday**  
Scottish Country Dancing

Sunday 17 March 2pm - 5.30pm

St. Patrick's Day Social



Get there early to hear the welcome from our piper in the Edwardian bandstand across the street.

Free all-day parking!

Dancing is for experienced dancers only at this event.

RSVP: By 4 March, cost \$25 and includes a fabulous afternoon tea. **Observers are welcome.**

Bookings are necessary for catering purposes.  
[ballaratmi.org.au/events](http://ballaratmi.org.au/events)

**Noel Braun**  
in conversation

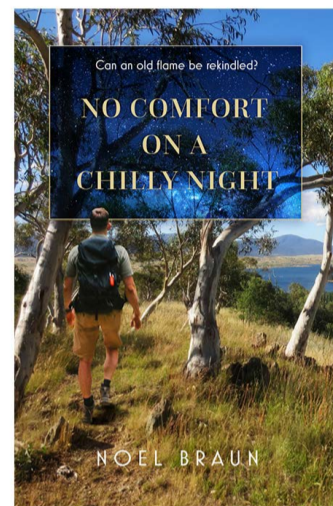
Thursday 21 March | 6pm - 8pm

Felix Schmidt is backpacking on the *Camino de Santiago* when he meets the love of his life, the beautiful French Pascaline. He brings her back to Australia where he joins a new firm of management consultants. Deeply engrossed in the company's growth, he neglects Pascaline. She believes his addiction has reduced him as a person, wearies of his obsessive workaholicism and returns to France.

*No Comfort on a Chilly Night* is a story of love, unchecked ambition, regret and recovery. Noel Braun shows us how corporate demands can corrupt the balance between worldly ambition and personal fulfillment. A timely reminder for those of us suffering from the stress and anxiety of modern

life – Kenneth Price, author.

Cost: \$10 per person | [ballaratmi.org.au/events](http://ballaratmi.org.au/events)



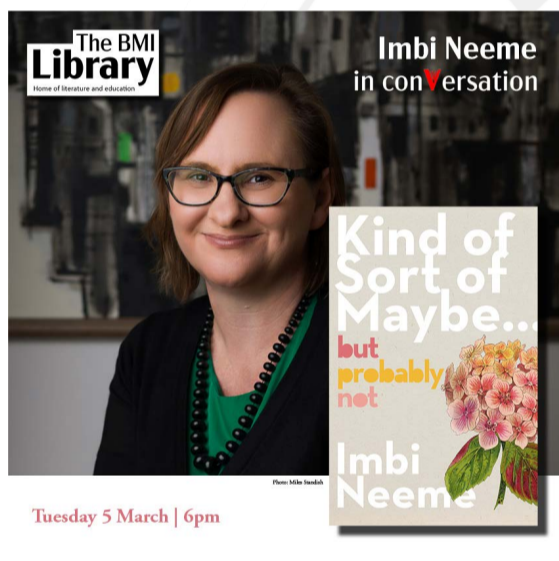
Thursday 21 March | 6pm

**Noel Braun**  
in conversation

A Story of love, unchecked ambition, regret and recovery...



A beautifully written work of love...



**Twilight Talks**  
2024 | Season 1

Wednesdays 28 February - 27 March  
5.30pm - 6.30pm

Proudly supported by  
Community Bank Buninyong

- Session 2 | *Doctors & Nurses WWI*
- Session 3 | *BMI Stories*
- Session 4 | *Women in Sport: A Changing World*
- Session 5 | *Ballarat Punch*

Cost: Free, Bookings essential  
[events.humanitix.com/twilight-talks-1-2024](http://events.humanitix.com/twilight-talks-1-2024)

**Ballarat Film Society**  
Le bleu due caftan

Thursday 14 March | 7.30pm - 9pm  
Minerva Space

Luscious Moroccan Drama

In 2021, BFS screened the well-received film, *Adam*. This is Touzani's second feature film, described by *Sight and Sound* as a 'tender, dignified drama'.

**Heath Franklin's Chopper**  
Not Here To F\*ck Spiders

Sunday 7 April | 7pm - 8pm  
Lending Library

Australia's most wanted comedian is back

After three years off... and he's not here to f\*ck spiders!

That's right. Not even if they're dressed in a sexy spider nurse outfit. He just hasn't got the time. And neither do you.

Because life happens whether you like it or not. You can tiptoe around it, have a whinge or pretend it's not there. But like a man wearing bacon pants at a dog park, you're gonna get bitten on the arse eventually.

Book now and join Chopper for the best night out in yonks.

Comics Choice Award – Melbourne International Comedy Festival, 2018

Cost: \$36-40 per person  
[ballaratmi.org.au/events](http://ballaratmi.org.au/events)



**Why not finding out more about**  
hiring our event spaces?

Minerva Space | Humffray Room  
Hugh Williamson Foyer

[ballaratmi.org.au/venue-hire](http://ballaratmi.org.au/venue-hire)

# Rosemary's

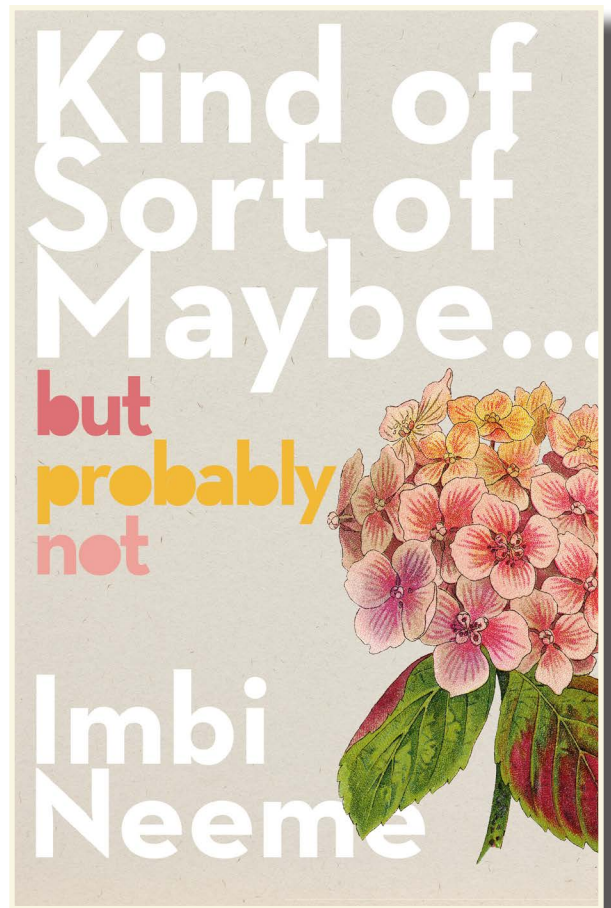
Books of the week

## Library Operating hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday:  
10am - 4pm

Tuesday & Thursday:  
10am - 3pm

Saturday:  
9.30am - 12 noon



We acknowledge the support of our valued Supporters & Partners

## Supporters & Partners

City of Ballarat | Victorian State Government | Community Bank Buninyong  
Rotary Club Ballarat South | Hugh D. Williamson Trust | Commonwealth Bank

## Corporate Members

Garden State Insurance Brokers | Neveit Ford Lawyers | Ballarat Medical Centre  
Colliers International | Jellis Craig | Ballarat Grammar | Baird & McGregor | Specialist Centre Ballarat  
Collins Booksellers, Ballarat on Lydiard | Haymes Paints | Nicholson Construction | Goldacres  
G Gay & Co Mitre 10 | Federation University

Find out how you can become involved.  
[ballaratmi.org.au/about-us/supporters-partners](http://ballaratmi.org.au/about-us/supporters-partners)

**Ballarat Mechanics' Institute**  
117 – 119 Sturt Street, Ballarat VIC 3350  
[ballaratmi.org.au](http://ballaratmi.org.au)  
[library@ballaratmi.org.au](mailto:library@ballaratmi.org.au)  
(03) 5331 3042



**Library Hours**  
Mon, Wed & Fri 10am – 4pm  
Tue & Thu 10am-3pm  
Saturday 9.30am – Noon  
**Venue Hire Enquiries**  
[venue@ballaratmi.org.au](mailto:venue@ballaratmi.org.au)  
0419 677 713