

Queer Blak + Deadly

Guest Host

STEVEN OLIVER



First Nations & Queer Performers

SAT 6TH OF JUNE

We will start the night with a public Welcome and Smoking ceremony at 530pm.

Performances by

- + Mx Kitty
- + MoCo
- + Cultural Dancers

GALA NIGHT +AFTER PARTY

Get Tickets for Gala Shows + After Party, or Buy Single Tickets. After Party Doors Open 8pm to Late
+ DJ Stone Cold Mother
+ Special Bourlesque Performance

www.qblak.org

BALLARAT MECHANICS



GALA DOORS OPEN @ 6PM

From the Chair

To view the Message from the Chair go to the link below:

Ballaratmi.org.au/from-the-chair-jun-2026/

NEWSletter

JUN / 2026



BALLARAT
MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE

Rosemary Recommends

Authors of the Month

Anthea Hodgson.



Anthea is a country girl from the WA Wheatbelt. She worked as a radio producer in WA, NSW and Queensland before returning to WA, where she lives with her husband and two children. She is the author of *The Drifter*, *The Cowgirl* and the highly acclaimed 2023 historical novel based on the Bangka Island Massacre, *The War Nurses*. She is co-host of the Rachael Johns Book Club on Facebook and the podcast Reading Between Deadlines..

Mark Smith.



Mark lives on the West Coast of Victoria, where he writes and runs outdoor education programs for young adults. In addition to writing, he is an experienced speaker & facilitator at schools, literary festivals and book launches across the country.

Book of the Month

Three Reasons For Revenge
by Dervla McTiernan.

Alexis Turner walks into the police station to report an assault. By the end of the day, she is nowhere to be found.

Soon after she disappears, three identical packages arrive at three very different doors: a respected psychologist's home, a socialite's mansion, and a struggling single father's run-down apartment. Inside, each gift is perfectly tailored to its recipient- and each will tear apart the life of its intended victim.

Detective Sergeant Judith Lee is smart and experienced, but this is no ordinary case. Someone with intimate knowledge of their targets is orchestrating those attacks. Someone who knows exactly how to hurt each victim where they're most vulnerable. And she's convinced that, somehow, it connects back to Alexis Turner. As she races to uncover the connection between three seemingly unrelated people, Judith discovers she's no longer just investigating the game-she's being forced to play.

Recommended Reads

Sisters Under Fire by Colin Burgess.

Nursing Sisters Margaret Anderson and Vera Torney of the 2/13 Australian General Hospital felt far from heroic as they evacuated Singapore on the converted cargo ship *Empire Star* in 1942. After Japanese occupation, every nurse without exception had requested to stay and tend to their wounded patients, but instead were ordered to evacuate as part of a hastily contrived and ultimately perilous escape plan.

She last saw its owner, reclusive artist Dorothea Roe, sixteen years ago, during a tragic summer that changed her life for ever. Now, with partner Josh in tow, it's a chance for a fresh start. But after discovering an old box with her name on it in Dorothea's abandoned study, Imogen starts to believe the woman was trying to send her a secret message. And when rumours begin to swirl that Dorothea was murdered, she starts to suspect that this gift might not be the lifeline she thought it was...

The Storyteller's Secret
by Sophie Austin.

From the stage of the Penny Farthing Theatre, Ava Adams uses hypnotism to draw long-buried memories from the lost and the lonely. Taught by her late mother, Ava once believed in her gift -until heartbreak shattered her confidence.

New releases

Damien Carter is running from disaster when he sees Ava's face on a faded poster. It feels like he's been waiting for her all his life. But as dark forces conspire to break them, can they reach beyond the prison of their memories to find redemption together?

The Parisian Chapter by Janet Skeslien Charles.

It's been five years since Lily Jacobsen and her best friend Mary Louise arrived in Paris from their small town in Montana. Determined to establish themselves as artists, they shared a tiny apartment. But when Mary Louise moves out, Lily feels alone in the city of light and needs a new way to support herself. She lands a job as a programs manager at the American Library in Paris following in the footsteps of Odile, her beloved French neighbour in Montana who told her stories of heroic World War 11 librarians when Lilly was growing up.

At work, Lily meets an extraordinary cast of characters. In the library's attic, Lily discovers a box of archives that may be a link to Odile's own Parisian chapter.

New Releases Mystery

<i>The First Time I Saw Him</i>	Laura Dave
<i>Their Last Cry</i>	Wendy Dranfield
<i>The Girl in the Loch</i>	Andrew James Greig
<i>The Rest is Death</i>	James Oswald
<i>Holy Island</i>	LJ Ross
<i>Watch Them Fall</i>	Marion Todd

Aust. Mystery

<i>Dark Sanctuary</i>	Sarah Barrie
<i>The Bookshop of Buried Paths</i>	Sarah Clutton
<i>Redbelly Crossing</i>	Candice Fox
<i>The Model Murder</i>	Amanda Hampson
<i>Murder in Paris</i>	Kirsty Manning

<i>The Couples Retreat</i>	Mercedes Mercer
<i>Three Reasons for Revenge</i>	Dervla McTiernan

Aust. Novel/Hist.

<i>The Palace of Lost Virtue</i>	Anthea Hodgson
<i>When Lemons Give You Life</i>	Anna Johnston
<i>Every Wild Soul</i>	Katherine Johnson
<i>After The Noise</i>	Kerri Rogan

Historical

<i>The Storyteller's Secret</i>	Sophie Austin
<i>The Parisian Chapter</i>	Janet Skeslien Charles

Psychological

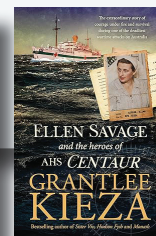
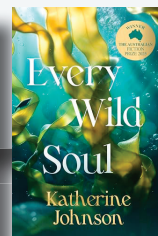
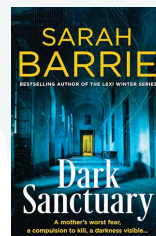
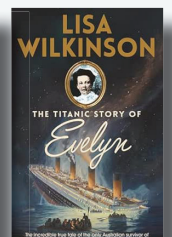
<i>The Missing Mother</i>	Mali Cornish
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Scandinavian

<i>Can't Run, Can't Hide</i>	Yrsa Sigurðardóttir
<i>Hidden in Lies</i>	Viveca Sten

Non Fiction

<i>Sisters Under Fire</i>	Colin Burgess
<i>Look After Your Feet</i>	Rosalie Ham
<i>Ellen Savage and the Heroes of AHS Centaur</i>	Grantlee Kieza
<i>The Titanic Story of Evelyn</i>	Lisa Wilkinson



Other News

Stage Ready Industry Mentors

Liam Mudge, Venue Manager

Ballarat Mechanics' Institute recently delivered the first practical workshop for *Stage Ready*, our new live production and events training initiative focused on creating practical pathways into the industry for regional participants.

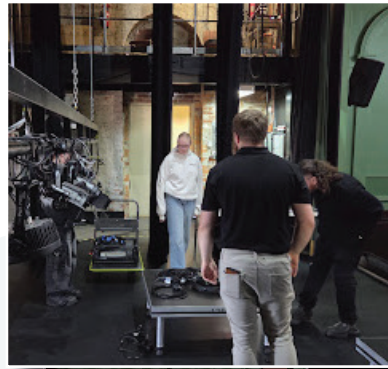
Held in the Minerva Ballroom, the workshop introduced participants to staging, lighting, audio, venue operations and live production workflows within a working venue environment. Industry mentors and BMI staff led practical demonstrations and discussions drawn from their own experience working across live events, technical production and venue operations.

I'd like to thank:

- Workshop Coordinator, Annie Sienesi (BMI)
- Industry Mentors:
Brayden Bonell-Huy (Theatre Technician from Her Majesty's Theatre).
Kyle Begbie (Event Technician from Sound & Light Concepts).

Stage Ready will continue throughout 2026 with additional workshops, mentor sessions, networking opportunities and industry engagement activities as the program develops.

Stage Ready is supported by the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, provided through Regional Arts Australia and administered in Victoria by Regional Arts Victoria



Author Talks

Nev Ivey, BMI Executive Manager

Most of you know Rosemary as calmly going about her business, recommending good reads, understanding your reading habits knowing what you've read and what you like, accommodate you when you want a series by a certain writer. The truth is like an effortlessly gliding duck, her legs are going like the clappers, not only making sure subs are paid, chasing up overdue books, sourcing new reads, welcoming visitors but also speaking with publishers and authors, working calendars, re-working calendars, and yet again until agreements are met and kept, then, she can deliver her Talks.

These Author Talks are well supported and they've help sustain relationships with not only our members and the wider community but also our supporters, book suppliers **Collins Booksellers on Lydiard, Ballarat Libraries** who support our Book Clubs and the marketing of our talks. **Ballarat Writers** support us regularly in their newsletter and they nearly have representation attending our events.

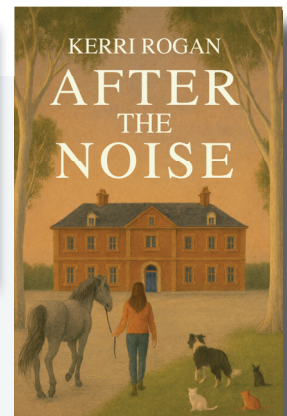
We have also forged wonderful relationships with local authors, radio producers and presenters, actors, journalists and identities who give their valuable time to act as hosts. On behalf of Rosemary I'd like to take this opportunity to thank: **Judy Peters, Prue Bentley, Paula Gleeson, Rozzi Bazzani, Mary Card, Dellaram Vreeland, Gavin McGrath, AJ Lyndon, Kate Atkinson, Jane Nield and Gregory Flood** for giving up their valuable time to help make these events such a success.



Rosemary with Victorian writers, Margaret Hickey & Gabriel Bergmoser

Below, images from a recent talk with local author, Kerri Rogan talking about her new book, *After the Noise*. Kerri is also a member of Ballarat Writers.

Author, Kerri Rogan with host & sister Siobhan Rogan | Photos: Naomi Ziebell



Ballarat Writers

Pamela Mill AnnuPal Flash Fiction Prize 2026

Ballarat Writers are delighted to announce that, once again, the Pamela Miller Prize will be taking place this year:

What is the Pamela Miller Prize? It's an annual Flash Fiction competition launched in 2015 in memory of the late Pamela Miller, who was a prolific supporter (and winner!) of the flash fiction contest as well as of BWI in general. It's for BWI members only.

Ballarat Writers are also running the Martha Richardson Memorial Poetry Prize, to be judged by acclaimed Australian poet Melissa Watts.

Find out more or better still, join Ballarat Writers.

ballaratwriters.com/

Ballarat Writers Book Review – *The Second Wife* by Ali Lowe. Reviewed by Marian Chivers, Ballarat Writers Inc. book review group. We hope to have Ali at the BMI early next year. Go to Ballarat Writers website to see Marian's review.



Queer Blak + Deadly with Steven Oliver

Saturday 6 June | 5.30pm

Join us for a Cabaret-style evening of celebration, connection, and performance, featuring some of the most talented Queer First Nations artists on stage.

5.30pm - Public Welcome & Smoking Ceremony at The Titanic Memorial Bandstand.

Enjoy a night of drinks and show as we showcase emerging and established Blak queer excellence, bringing together powerful voices and unforgettable performances in one space.

Hosted by legendary guest host **Steven Oliver**, the evening shines a spotlight on some of Melbourne's most exciting up-and-coming First Nations queer FAboriginal performers.

Cost: \$60-\$100

More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-theatre/

Tix: events.humanitix.com/queer-blak-deadly-gala
Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

MoCo: 5 Senses of Drag Workshop

Sunday 7 June | 12pm

Interested in drag but not sure where or how to start? Or maybe you've already been performing and want a space to develop new ideas?

Curious about drag or looking to deepen your creative practice?

The 5 Senses of Drag is a 3-hour workshop exploring how to build a drag persona from the inside out. Through guided exercises, you'll use sound, smell, taste, touch and sight to develop character, aesthetic and performance ideas.

Cost: Free Workshop

More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-theatre/

Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

Ballarat Film Society Monster

Japanese Coming of Age Psychological Thriller

Thursday 11 June 7.30pm show-time

This psychological mystery/exploration of growing up from one of Japan's major filmmakers offers superb acting and an intriguing storyline that seems darker than it ends up being.

A young boy's mother feels that there is something wrong with him; that he is acting weirdly. Suspecting that a teacher is responsible, she storms into the school demanding to know what's going on. But as the story unfolds through the eyes of mother, teacher, headmistress and child, the truth gradually emerges...

Japan, 2024, 122min. Directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda.

More: ballaratmi.org.au/film/

Why not become a member of the Ballarat Film Society ballaratfilmsociety.weebly.com/

Minerva's Secrets Night Tours

Friday 12 June | 2 Tours, 7pm & 9pm

Explore tales of the weird and supernatural – the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute at night. Looking for a unique way to explore Ballarat's rich history and culture? Look no further than the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute's Night Tours!

Cost: \$27.50

More: ballaratmi.org.au/tours/

Tix: events.humanitix.com/minerva-secrets-after-dark

Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

In Conversation with Anthea Hodgson

The Palace of Lost Virtue

Host, author AJ Lyndon

Wednesday 17 June, 6pm - 7.30pm

At its core, *The Palace of Lost Virtue* is a story of female friendship and resilience.

Marigold is a devout Christian working with her mother to save the local women from a life dedicated to sex work. Pansy is one of those sex workers and the owner of Pansy Arlington's Palace of Pleasure. When the women's paths cross, what ensues is an extraordinary friendship, a shocking murder trial and a history that gives voice to the lives of the remarkable women who lived and died in the goldfields.

Set in Kalgoorlie between 1898 and 1926, this intimate story of female friendship is drawn from Western Australia's dark past and real history. Inspired by the real-life murders of policemen Alexander Pitman and John Walsh, this novel threads a brutal act of violence through its narrative. As the investigation unfolds, questions of guilt, justice and truth become increasingly blurred.

Cost: \$11

More: ballaratmi.org.au/library/

Tix: events.humanitix.com/anthea-hodgson-bmi

Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

Royal South Street Society

Pianoforte Schedule: Celebrating Chopin

Sunday 21 June | 2.30pm - 6pm

Experience the power, poetry, and passion of Chopin like never before at Celebrating Chopin—a national competition bringing together the finest young pianists from across Australia. Each performer presents a carefully crafted Chopin program, showcasing brilliance, individuality, and deep musical interpretation, all in pursuit of the \$5,000 top prize.

Vocal Championship Challenge

Saturday 27 June | 6.30pm - 7.30pm

The Vocal Championship Challenge is a dynamic showcase of Australia's most promising emerging singers, each stepping onto the stage to prove their versatility and artistry. Performers present two contrasting works—one classical and one from stage and screen—demonstrating the range, adaptability, and storytelling power essential for today's professional performers.

The Herald Sun Aria Semi-Final

Monday 29 June | 7.30pm - 9pm

The Herald Sun Aria Semi-Final brings together 12 of the finest emerging operatic voices in Australia, each competing for a coveted place in the top six and a spot in the Grand Final at the Melbourne Recital Centre this October. This is opera at its most exhilarating—raw talent, world-class training, and high-stakes performance unfolding in real time.

Cost: \$10. Tickets available at the door

Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

More at: royalsouthstreet.com.au/

In Conversation with Mark Smith

Where Truth Ends

Host, Gavin McGrath

Tuesday 23 June, 6pm - 7.30pm

What if everything you believed in was a lie? Truth and betrayal collide in the new Mark Smith thriller, perfect for fans of Christian White and Lisa Jewell.

Meg Maher thought she was doing the right thing. Now she's on the run.

When a peaceful climate protest ends with a violent explosion in the city centre, every anonymous member of the group becomes a suspect.

But the authorities aren't the only ones hunting Meg.

Scared and alone, Meg seeks refuge with her father, Luke, knowing that every word she says puts him in danger too. But as the terrorism investigation closes in, Meg is forced to question her friends, her cause, even herself. Was the non-violent activist group infiltrated from the start? Or has someone twisted their mission beyond recognition?

What happens when the truth is the first thing to burn?

Cost: \$11 - More: ballaratmi.org.au/library/

Tix: events.humanitix.com/mark-smith-bmi-2

Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

In Conversation with Sherryl Clark

For All The Dead Girls

Host, Tracey Rolf

Wednesday 1 July, 6pm - 7.30pm

Tough and gutsy PI Lou Alcott returns with a terrifyingly gritty new case that takes her deep into the dark web.

While juggling a missing person case with unexpected ties close to home and saving an innocent woman and her child from a dangerous domestic situation, Lou ends up in the line of fire of a mysterious dark-web hate group, known only as SYB.

As Melbourne simmers through a relentless heatwave, the murders of more women are connected to SYB and Lou becomes the number one target of their vicious campaign of incited violence...

Cost: \$11 - More: ballaratmi.org.au/library/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/sherryl-clark-bmi
Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

Joscho Stephan Trio: Gypsy Jazz Virtuosos

Friday 3 July, 8pm - 9.15pm

Joscho Stephan is the future of Gypsy Jazz guitar. He has absorbed the music of Django Reinhardt and interpreted it on his own terms." — Acoustic Guitar Magazine.

Hailed as one of the most exciting ensembles in the acoustic guitar scene today, the Joscho Stephan Trio is breathing fresh life into the classic gypsy swing tradition pioneered by Django Reinhardt. Led by the masterful playing of Joscho Stephan and joined by Sven Jungbeck (guitar) and Volker Kamp (double bass), their live performances reveal a mesmerizing synergy and technical brilliance that captivate audiences worldwide.

Cost: \$49 early bird (100 tickets) \$59 thereafter.
More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-music/
Tix: concertsaustralia.com/joscho/
Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

Whistle and Trick: Writing Original Music for Kids

Saturday 4 July, 10am - 11.00am

Aria-nominated musical duo, Whistle & Trick are always ready to sing, dance, and cause a bit of mischief.

Writing original music for kids and their big people, a Whistle & Trick show is bound to get the whole family up and moving.

Signed with ABC Music, *Whistle & Trick* have two albums and an EP under their belt, and you can catch their original music video clips on ABC Kids TV and iView. As big kids themselves, they love to explore all the wonderful, wacky things in life, through a variety of musical styles and live instrumentation. Whistle and Trick bring a sense of play and imagination into

every performance and are sure to bring the party to the stage for a whole heap of musical fun!

Cost: \$35, \$130 family.
More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-music/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/whistle-and-trick-ballarat
Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

Alexandr Misko - International Guitar Sensation Live at BMI

Sunday 5 July, 7.30pm - 9pm

Hailed as "the future of guitar" (Total Guitar), Misko is a globally renowned virtuoso known for his jaw-dropping technique, emotional depth, and genre-defying style. Fusing classical precision with elements of jazz, rock, and modern fingerstyle, his performances are both technically astonishing and deeply moving.

Misko's self-taught, boundary-pushing approach has captivated millions online, earning him a massive global following and praise from some of the world's top music publications. With lightning-fast fingerpicking, percussive tapping, and masterful arrangements, he transforms a single acoustic guitar into an entire musical universe — live and without loops.

Cost: \$25 - \$50.
More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-music/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/alexandr-misko-the-international-guitar-sensation-live-at-ballarat-mechanics-institute/tickets
Tickets not available from the Library Box Office.

21 HEARTS: Vivian Bullwinkel and the nurses of the Vyner Brooke

A THEATRE 180 production

Saturday 11 July, 7pm - 8.50pm

Written by Jenny Davis. A compelling true story from WWII, honouring the bravery strength, love and hope of Australian Army Nurses in the face of adversity.

Directed by Stuart Halusz Featuring Caitlin Beresford-Ord, Rebecca Davis, Michelle Fornasier, Alex Jones, Tegan Mulvany and Helen Searle.

This will be the final performance of this production, introduced as Friday and Saturday performances 'sold out' here in Ballarat.

Vivian Bullwinkel was one of 65 Australian nurses who boarded the *Vyner Brooke* in an attempt to flee the Japanese invasion of Singapore in February, 1942. Bombed by Japanese fighter planes and after spending days at sea, she and some other survivors found their way to Radji Beach on Banka Island where they surrendered.

The only survivor and witness, Vivian spent the rest of the war in a prison camp before liberation, and her remaining years fighting for recognition of the bravery of her friends and colleagues; their strength and courage in the face of death sustaining her for the rest of her illustrious life.

Cost: \$77 - \$38.50.
More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-theatre/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/21-hearts-bmi
Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

Grigoryan Brothers: A Boy Called Sailboat

Tuesday 14 July, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Film Screening with the soundtrack performed live by the Grigoryan Brothers, followed by a Q & A with the film's writer/director Cameron Nugent.

Acclaimed guitarists Slava & Leonard Grigoryan have expanded their creative output by crafting and recording the soundtrack to the award-winning movie *A Boy Called Sailboat*.

This heart-warming movie, written and developed by Melbourne-based creative team Cameron Nugent and Andrew Curry was filmed in New Mexico and stars Academy Award® winning actor J.K Simmons, Noel G, Elizabeth De Razzo, Jake Busey, Lew Temple and Julian Atocani Sanchez in the title role.

Sailboat brings love and hope to a family who have forged a simple but proud life in the drought-ridden Deep South...

The Latin-themed soundtrack is a key element to the movie and provides an opportunity for audiences to hear the Grigoryan Brothers like never before.

Cost: \$35, \$130 family.
More: ballaratmi.org.au/live-music/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/grigoryan-brothers-a-boy-called-sailboat
Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.

In Conversation with Benita Bensch

Seen Again: A Light on Matrescence

Host, Dellaram Vreeland

Wednesday 15 July, 6pm - 7.30pm

S*een Again* is a modern companion through matrescence, the profound transition of becoming a mother.

Matrescence is a biological, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual transformation that can leave mothers without the language or support to make sense of who they are. Many feel disconnected or invisible, wondering: Who am I now? Is it normal to feel this way?

Blending intimate memoir, eighteen real-life stories and years of coaching into a compassionate framework, Benita Bensch explores the inner landscape and seismic shift of matrescence with unflinching honesty. If you have ever felt lost, remember: you are not broken, you are evolving. This is an invitation to reimagine your next season of life, free of shoulds.

Cost: \$11
More: ballaratmi.org.au/library/
Tix: events.humanitix.com/benita-bensch-bmi
Tickets also available from the Library Box Office.



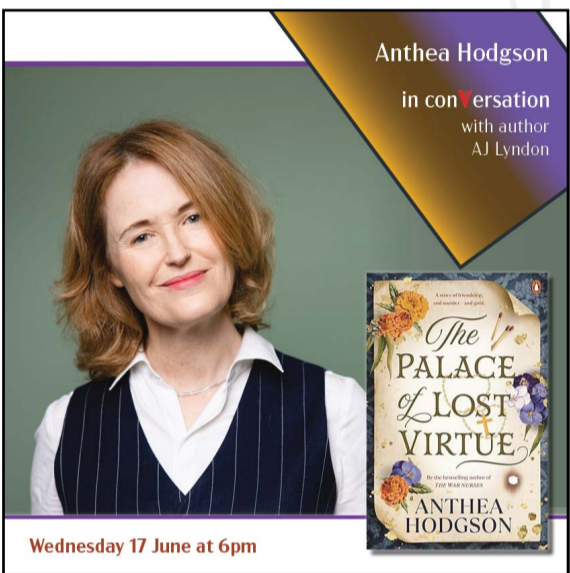
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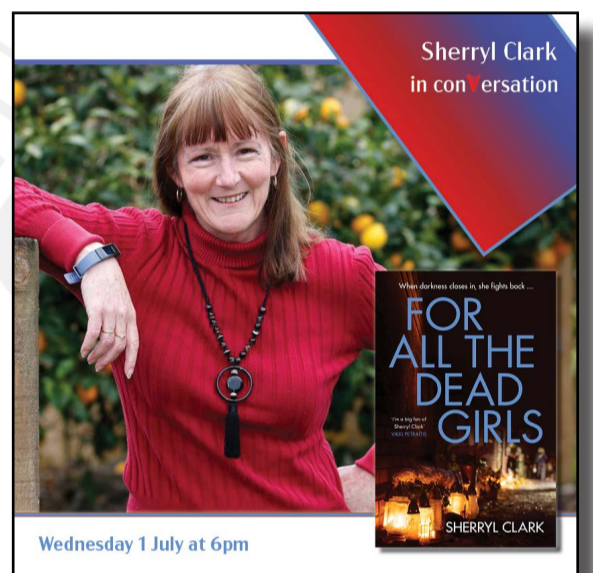
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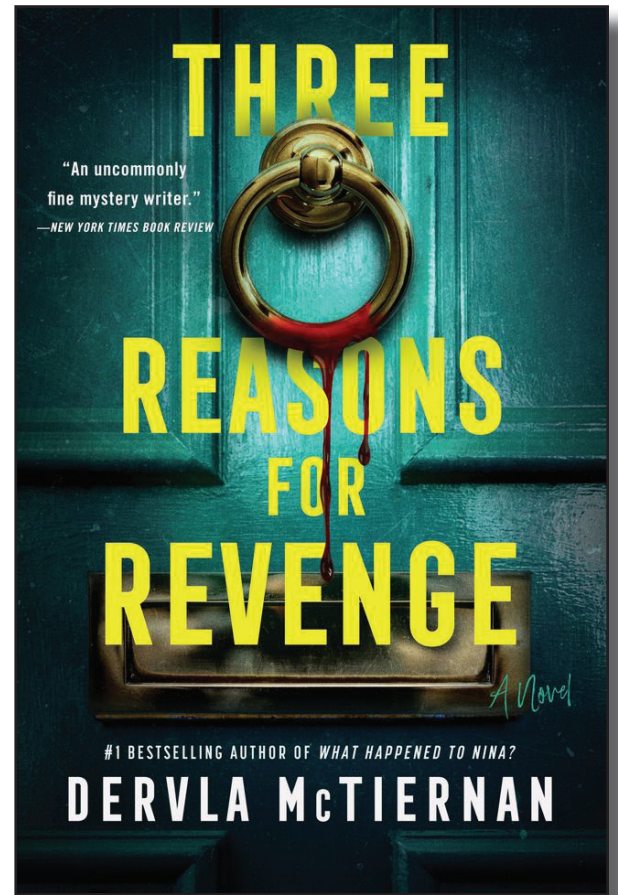
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Rosemary's Book of the Month

in conversation



We acknowledge the support of our valued Supporters & Partners

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Find out how you can become involved | ballaratmi.org.au/about-us/supporters-partners

Ballarat Mechanics' Institute
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 (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
 0419 677 713