

# 16 Days in WA - Recommended reading list

Curated by the State Library of Western Australia

16  
Days  
in WA

Stop Violence Against Women

## Fiction texts



### **Blackrock** by Nick Enright

It's Toby Ackland's birthday party down near the surf club – and that should mean heaps of grog, drugs and good clean fun. But by the morning a young girl is dead – raped by three boys and bashed with a rock.

Who is responsible? The boy? The girl? Or the whole town.

Blackrock is an intimate and strongly shaped human drama which examines the social forces behind the impulse to violence in individual lives.



### **The Testaments** by Margaret Atwood

In this electrifying sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood answers the question that has tantalised readers for decades: What happened to Offred?

The Republic of Gilead is beginning to rot from within. At this crucial moment, two girls with radically different experiences of the regime come face to face with the legendary, ruthless Aunt Lydia. But how far will each go for what she believes?



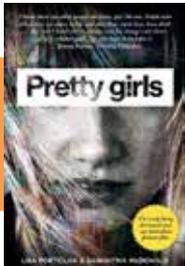
### **The Orchardist's Daughter** by Karen Viggers

A story of freedom, forgiveness and finding the strength to break free. International bestselling writer Karen Viggers returns to remote Tasmania, the setting of her most popular novel *The Lightkeeper's Wife*.

Sixteen-year-old Mikaela has grown up isolated and home schooled on an apple orchard in south eastern Tasmania, until an unexpected event shatters her family. Eighteen months later, she and her older brother Kurt are running a small business in a timber town. Miki longs to make connections and spend more time in her beloved forest, but she is kept a virtual prisoner by Kurt, who leads a secret life of his own.

When Miki meets Leon, another outsider, things slowly begin to change. But the power to stand up for yourself must come from within and Miki has to fight to uncover the truth of her past and discover her strength and spirit.

Set in the old-growth eucalypt forests and vast rugged mountains of southern Tasmania, *The Orchardist's Daughter* is an uplifting story about friendship, resilience and finding the courage to break free.



**Pretty Girls**  
by Lisa Portolan and  
Samantha McDonald

Pretty Girls is a visceral narrative of violence, personal tragedy and female resilience set against the backdrop of one of Australia's most politically charged communities, Redfern, where sinister racial tensions underpin everything.

Evie is a woman in her mid-30s who returns to her hometown to meet with her dying father. In coming back to the place where she grew up, she has to revisit her history of violence, the death of her mother, the suicide of her brother and the domestic violence that occurred in her home. Her father only has a short time to live, she expects to find him a changed man. But he's not. He's unrepentant and unapologetic for his actions.

Evie has to reclaim her story, she's not just a pretty girl; she won't just sit down, be quiet and stay still but getting there is more than tough, more than an ordeal, it's a mammoth display of tenacity and strength. Pretty Girls is ultimately a story of triumph. Evie rises from the ashes of a hellish past and re-writes her story. There is a part of Evie in every woman and Pretty Girls seeks to start a movement, #iamevie.



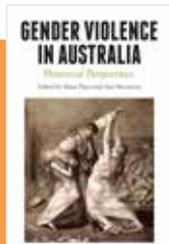
**Boy Swallows Universe**  
by Trent Dalton

Brisbane, 1983: A lost father, a mute brother, a mum in jail, a heroin dealer for a stepfather and a notorious criminal for a babysitter. It's not as if Eli's life isn't complicated enough already. He's just trying to follow his heart, learning what it takes to be a good man, but life just keeps throwing obstacles in the way – not least of which is Tytus Broz, a legendary Brisbane drug dealer.

But Eli's life is about to get a whole lot more serious. He's about to fall in love. And he has to break into Boggo Road Gaol on Christmas Day to save his mum.

A story of brotherhood, true love and the most unlikely of friendships, Boy Swallows Universe will be the most heartbreaking, joyous and exhilarating novel you will read all year.

## Non-fiction texts



### **Gender violence in Australia: historical perspectives** Edited by Alana Piper and Ana Stevenson

In 2015, the Australian federal government proclaimed that violence against women had become a national crisis. Despite widespread social and economic advances in the status of women since the 1970s, including growing awareness and action around gender violence, its prevalence remains alarming.

The histories presented in this collection indicate exactly where some violent behaviours come from and how they have been rationalised over time, offering an important resource for addressing what amounts to a widespread, persistent and urgent social problem.



### **Misogyny re-loaded** by Abigail Bray

Today hardcore misogyny has become the cool slapstick LOL of mainstream culture. Exposing a chilling connection between the rise of cosmetic surgery, Big Pharma, porn, self-help and beauty industries, and the shock and awe doctrines of a new culture of extreme misogyny. While race-motivated violence is recognised as an historical and cultural problem, misogynist-motivated violence is often understood as an individual problem. Instead, misogyny

is normalised as sexy, rebellious and cool, or as biological, evolutionary and natural. Added to this are neoliberal ideologies about choice and responsibility, which have contributed to a victim-blaming culture that vilifies and silences women and girls who have been damaged by misogyny.

This book offers an unflinching account of the billions made from breaking and remaking the minds and bodies of women and girls.



### **#MeToo: stories from the Australian movement** Edited by Natalie Kon-yu, Christie Nieman, Maggie Scott and Miriam Sved

In October 2017, the hashtag MeToo went viral. Since then we've watched controversy erupt around Geoffrey Rush, Germaine Greer and Junot Diaz. We've talked about tracking the movement back via Helen Garner, Rosie Batty and Hannah Gadsby. We've discussed #NotAllMen, toxic masculinity and trolls. We've seen the #MeToo movement evolve and start to accuse itself – has it gone too far? Is it enough? What does it mean in this country? And still, women are not safe from daily, casual sexual harassment and violence.

In this collection, 35 contributors share their own #MeToo stories, analysis and commentary to survey the movement in an Australian context. This collection resists victimhood. It resists silence. It insists on change.

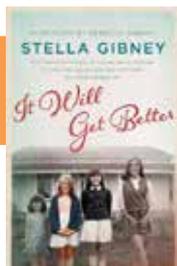


**A mother's story  
by Rosie Batty**

Rosie Batty knows pain no woman should have to suffer. Her son was killed by his father in a violent incident in February 2014, a horrendous event that shocked not only the nation, but the world.

Greg Anderson murdered his 11-year-old son Luke and was then shot by police at the Tyabb cricket oval.

Rosie had suffered years of family violence and had had intervention and custody orders in place in an effort to protect herself and her son. She believes the killing was Greg's final act of control over her. Inspiring, heartfelt and profoundly moving, this is Rosie's story.



**It will get better  
by Stella Gibney**

This is an inspirational true story of one woman's courage to overcome abuse, loss and heartache to create a better life. Stella Gibney grew up in 1960s New Zealand. She was the fifth child in a family of six. But unlike her brothers and sisters, Stella suffered a number of abusive incidents during her formative years. But Stella was determined not to let years of horrific

abusive situations and domestic violence determine her life. She found solace in writing her thoughts down in a series of journals. Through writing she began to understand her feelings and how to gain control of her life. Over the course of 16 journals, Stella relived every moment of her life and managed to deal with the memories and move on with her life in a positive way. Now Stella has completely turned her life around and become the happy, confident person she had always wanted to be.

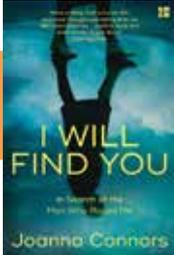


**Lani's story: not a  
victim, a survivor  
by Lani Brennan with  
Hazel Flynn**

Lani's Story is a moving and intimate portrait of a young Aboriginal woman's journey from victim to victor, moving from a broken and violent relationship to discovering the redemptive power of love.

Lani's Story also explores the impact of inter-generational violence within a family and community and how the courage of one person can transform the lives of others.

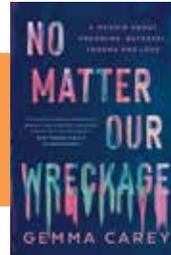
Lani Brennan, a young woman of Aboriginal and Maori descent, was raised in an urban Aboriginal community in Sydney. Her childhood home was filled with love, but also alcoholism and violence.



## **I will find you by Joanna Connors**

The powerful, unflinching and deeply humane story of a journalist's quest to uncover the life of the man who raped her 21 years before, Joanna Connors was 30 years old when she was raped at knifepoint by a stranger. After this horrifying trauma, she became afraid of everything – flying, driving, travelling in a car while someone else drove. She had children, but hovered over them constantly, terrified about what might happen to them as well.

When her daughter was 16, Joanna began to confront the fear that had ruled her life ever since that day. In an act of breathtaking humanity and pioneering journalistic courage, she went in search of the story of her own rapist, determined to find out who he was, where he came from, what his life was like – and what leads a person to do something as destructive as what he did to her. The result of her investigation is *I Will Find You*, a shocking, moving memoir and a brave, timely consideration of poverty, race, class, education – and how life shapes who we become.



## **No Matter Our Wreckage by Gemma Carey**

When Gemma Carey was 12 years old, a man twice her age would sneak into her bedroom on a weekly basis and sexually assault her. When Gemma was 17, she took the perpetrator to court without anyone else knowing and had him placed on the child sex offenders register. When she was 33, her mother died of cancer. For 20 years, her mother had known about this man. But why had she not acted to protect her daughter? Could the genesis of this betrayal be found in her own family history?

*No Matter Our Wreckage* is the story of past and present colliding. It seeks to capture the complexity of forces which lead to abuse; to understand the intertwined narratives of mothers and daughters and how trauma becomes encoded in our DNA through generations. It explores grooming and the intricacies of consent, and how as a society we have not yet figured out how to deal with these types of crimes or the people who commit them.