

16 Days in WA recommended reading list 2025

Curated by the State Library of WA



Fiction



A Woman in Sardinia Valeria Usala

Based on a true story, a tale of generations of Sardinian women searching for independence in the face of prejudice and

superstition, for fans of Elena Ferrante. A story of three generations of women, their courage and search for independence in the face of superstition and prejudice, in the spirit of Natalia Ginzburg and Elena Ferrante. In this striking debut, based on a true story, Valeria Usala bears witness to an age-old story of violence against women and takes us into the heart of rural Sardinia, where superstitions and cruelty coexist with the joys and companionship of a tight-knit community.



Bird Courtney Collins

You walk and the harvest moon casts the clearest of shadows. You are nervous. With a moon like that, it is not a night for

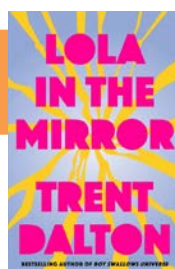
escaping. It is a night made better for hunting runaway girls. 'Himalayas: Unknown Year' Ten thousand strands of trouble,' is what Bird's father says, watching as Bird's sister braids her hair. On the eve of her fourteenth year, that trouble finds Bird. Fleeing her home to escape an arranged marriage, she attempts to vanish into a crowd of pilgrims – not knowing that violence is circling, and that it already has its eyes on her. In search of her own life and her own truth, she could never imagine how long and how far it would take her. Darwin: Present Day. Waking in a hospital bed, Bird tries to remember what brought her here. A man whose gaze she knew to fear, a stolen car, a plastic gun, and a real bullet in her shoulder. Kindness is being offered here, so why is her instinct always to run? Strand by strand, she begins to remember...



Kataraina Becky Manawatu

The much-awaited follow-up to the award-winning international bestseller Auē. In Auē, eight-year-old Ārama was taken by

his brother, Taukiri, to live with Kat and Stu at the farm in Kaikōura, setting in motion the ensuing tragedy, which resulted in Stu's death. Auntie Kat was at the centre of events, but, silenced by abuse, her voice was absent from the story. In Kataraina, Kat and her whānau take over the telling. As one, the family recounts her childhood and the time when she first began to feel the greenness of the swamp in her veins – the swamp that holds her tears and the tears of generations of tīpuna; the swamp on the land owned by Stu that has been growing since the day he was killed. Unflinching in its portrayal of intergenerational trauma and violence, tender in its harnessing of the hope that future generations represent, Katarainais a stunning novel that confirms Becky Manawatu as one of the most talented and powerful writers working in Aotearoa/New Zealand today.

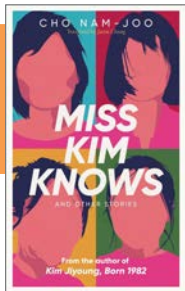


Lola in the Mirror Trent Dalton

Mirror mirror, on the grass, what's my future? What's my past? A girl and her mother have been on the run for sixteen years,

from police and the monster they left in their kitchen with a knife in his throat. They've found themselves a home inside a van with four flat tyres parked in a scrapyard by the edge of the Brisbane River. The girl has no name because names are dangerous when you're on the run. But the girl has a dream. A vision of a life as an artist of international acclaim. A life outside the grip of the Brisbane underworld drug queen 'Lady' Flora Box. A life of love with the boy who's waiting for her on

the bridge that stretches across a flooding, deadly river. A life beyond the bullet that has her name on it. And now that the storm clouds are rising, there's only one person who can help make her dreams come true. That person is Lola and she carries all the answers. But to find Lola, the girl with no name must first do one of the hardest things we can ever do. She must look in the mirror.



Miss Kim knows: and other stories

Cho Nam-Joo

A woman is born. A woman is filmed in public without consent. A woman suffers domestic violence. A woman is gas lit. A woman is discriminated against at work. A woman grows old. A woman becomes famous. A woman is hated, and loved, and then hated again. Written in Cho Nam-Joo's masterful, razor-sharp prose, *Miss Kim Knows* brings together the lives of eight Korean women, aged 10 to 80. Contained in each of these biographies is a microcosm of contemporary Korea, and the challenges and injustices that women face from childhood to old age. As with Kim Jiyoung, *Born 1982*, the fates of these eight women are the fates of women the world over. And under Cho Nam-Joo's precise, unveiled gaze, nothing and nobody escapes scrutiny – not even herself.



Roseghetto

Kirsty Jagger

Shayla is on a newspaper assignment when she returns to the public housing estate where she grew up and finds it demolished. The locals have been evicted, their homes erased, their stories too. Standing among the rubble of Rosemeadow, Shayla is assailed by her memories of living there. The bad secret Daddy asked her to keep. Mummy rekindling a dangerous romance. Making friends with 'the gutter kids'. Surrounded by poverty, confronted by domestic violence, Shayla found her escape in reading. Now it's time to tell the stories of Rosemeadow, including her own. *Roseghetto* is an unforgettable and moving coming-of-age story, an account of breaking the cycle of violence and poverty.

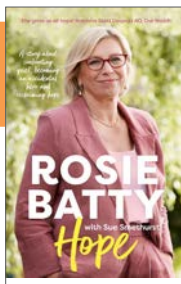


The Broken Hummingbird

Ann Marie Jackson

In the midst of a marital crisis, Jane hatches an unusual plan to avoid a custody battle, the thing she most fears: she convinces husband Kevin to walk away from the pressures of New York -- in particular, her demanding job and an affair she almost had -- in the hope that moving to their favourite city abroad will fix their family. In San Miguel de Allende, Jane and her young sons delight in new adventures, but Kevin still seethes. Jane befriends a circle of intriguing women and helps two girls who remind her of the brother she abandoned when her own parents divorced. After witnessing violence involving the girls' father, Jane's vivid dreams, possibly guided by a hummingbird messenger from the hereafter, grow ever darker. When tragedy strikes San Miguel, the community fractures and then rises, and Jane must make a dangerous choice. *The Broken Hummingbird* balances the raw undoing of a marriage with the joys of discovery that lie in building a new life.

Non-fiction

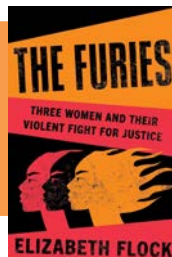


Hope

Rosie Batty with Sue Smethurst

Hope : a story about confronting grief, becoming an accidental hero and reclaiming hope

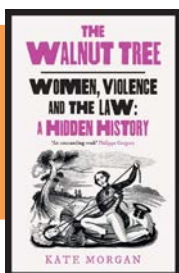
On a warm summer's evening in February 2014, 11-year-old Luke Batty was killed by his father at cricket practice. It was a horrific act of family violence that shocked Australia. The next morning, his mother Rosie bravely stood before the media. Her powerful and gut-wrenching words about family violence galvanised the nation and catapulted her into the spotlight. From that day on, Rosie Batty campaigned tirelessly to protect women and children, winning hearts and minds with her courage and compassion, singlehandedly changing the conversation around domestic violence in this country. Rosie's remarkable efforts were recognised when she became the 2015 Australian of the Year and a year later she was named one of the World's Greatest Leaders by Fortune magazine. However, behind Rosie's steely public resolve and seemingly unbreakable spirit, she was a mum grieving the loss of her adored son. Following on from her runaway best-seller *A Mother's Story*, which detailed the lead up to her son's murder, *Hope* shares what happened to Rosie the day after the worst day of her life and how she reclaimed hope when all hope was lost. She shares her struggles with anxiety, PTSD, self-doubt and self-loathing and how she finally confronted her grief. She shares the stories of those who have inspired her to keep going and given her hope when she needed it most. In this heartfelt, and at times heartbreaking memoir, Rosie tells how she found the light on her darkest days and how she found hope to carry on.



The Furies: Three Women and Their Violent Fight for Justice

Elizabeth Flock

A stunning narrative investigation into three real-life women who used violence to fight back against their oppressors. *The Furies* tells the stories of three unforgettable women who chose to use lethal force to gain power, safety, and freedom when the institutions meant to protect them - government, police, courts - utterly failed to do so. Brittany Smith, a young woman from Stevenson, Alabama, killed a man she said raped her in her own home, but was denied the protection of a self-defence argument; Angoori Dahariya led a gang in Uttar Pradesh, India, dedicated to avenging victims of domestic abuse; and Cicek Mustafa Zibo fought in a thousands-strong all-female militia that battled ISIS in Syria. Each woman has been criticised for their actions by those who believe that violence is never the answer; yet each has transmuted a story of disempowerment into a story of resistance. In luminous prose, award-winning journalist Elizabeth Flock asks searching questions about cultures in which violence seems like the only means of survival, when deeply ingrained ideas about masculinity and women have helped breed the violence that women face. The novelistic accounts of these three women offer profound insights into the quest for understanding what a society in which women have real power might look like.



The Walnut Tree: Women, Violence and the Law - A Hidden History

Kate Morgan

A devastating work of non-fiction that reveals a hidden history

of women, violence and the law. Exploring the 19th and early 20th century legal history that influenced the modern-day stances on issues such as domestic abuse, sexual violence and divorce, *The Walnut Tree* lifts the lid on the shocking history of women under British law – and what it means for women today. These are seen through the untold stories of women whose cases became cornerstones of our modern legal system and shine a light on the historical inequalities of the law.



All These Liberations : Women Artists in the Eileen Harris Norton Collection

edited by Taylor Renee Aldridge

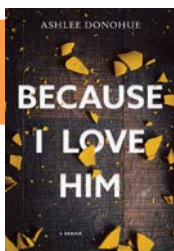
A celebration of the work of women artists of colour, “*All These Liberations*” explores the ways in which struggles for freedom and equality are deeply intertwined with shared feminist practices, art techniques and movements, and the notion of diaspora through the extraordinary collection of social activist and patron Eileen Harris Norton. For nearly five decades, Harris Norton has championed both artists and curators of colour, helping to reshape museum practice and the surrounding art market. Essays in this volume by art historians and curators address vital political, social, and personal issues, as well as topics such as spirituality, domestic life, memory and historical trauma, the body, intimacy, power dynamics, and violence toward women. Featuring work by Sonia Boyce, Maya Lin, Julie Mehretu, Shirin Neshat, Adrian Piper, Faith Ringgold, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, and many others, the book draws out the intimate connections among artist, collector, and the social worlds that surround them.



Personal Politics: Sexuality, Gender and the Remaking of Citizenship in Australia

Leigh Boucher, Barbara Baird, Michelle Arrow, Robert Reynolds

The achievement of marriage equality in Australia in 2017 was hailed by many as the crowning event of a fifty-year story of hard work by activists, which began with campaigns to decriminalise sex between men in the early 1970s. In that same five decades, feminist activism, including campaigns for abortion rights, the reform of family law and forms of welfare to support survivors of domestic violence, has similarly remade the rights and entitlements of Australian women. But has that story been one of continual progress and success? And who has been excluded from the privileges of Australian citizenship in the process? *Personal Politics* brings together the voices and campaigns of a diverse set of activists who employed ideas about gender and sexuality to remake modern Australia. Beginning in the pivotal decade of the ‘70s in which the ‘personal became political’, this book critically examines the wins and losses of these new ways of imagining citizenship and provides a revised political history of the past fifty years. This is a story populated and propelled by outraged feminists, radical homosexuals, angry fathers, maligned stay-at-home mothers, distressed trans kids, happy lesbian and gay couples, and even a few from the local Men’s Shed. These are the issues and identities that now dominate our public life: how and why did they emerge and what kind of political life have they produced?



Because I Love Him

Ashlee Donohue

Because I Love Him by Ashlee Donohue is a memoir of privileged insight into strong family ties, the intricacies of

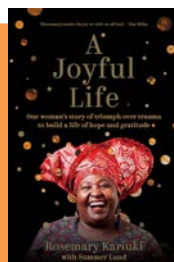
relationships and the unspoken expectations within urban Aboriginal communities. This is a very personal account of love, loss, addiction, motherhood and domestic violence. Ashlee chronicles the profound impact of life on the margins on herself, her family and her community. A proud Dunghutti woman, born and raised in Kempsey NSW, Ashlee was determined to keep her family together, despite the unforgivable acts and inevitable fallout, to gift her children what she never had – the presence of their father.



Shades of Me: My Many Lives Through Many Dreamings

Mel Brown

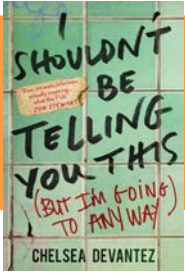
Mel Brown is an Australian Aboriginal Ngunawal woman. This is her story. Growing up white, Mel always felt that there was another shade to her soul. Despite an early life marred by moments of sheer despair and the agony of domestic violence, somehow Mel found the strength to survive. Then, as a young mother, she unlocked her ancestry's secrets without realising the challenges that came with identifying as Aboriginal in Australia. Shades of Me follows Mel's journey as she redefines who she is and how she sees her place in the world. As Aboriginal families are being torn apart, this is a story of one woman's fight to keep them together – one family at a time. And in helping others, finds her true path in life. Mel's memoir is not just one of black or white or even a single shade in between: as she has discovered in her work for the community, everyone's story is different; hers is simply Shades of Me.



A Joyful Life: One Woman's Story of Triumph Over Trauma to Build a Life of Hope and Gratitude

Rosemary Kariuki and Summer Land

A Joyful Life is the astonishing memoir of Rosemary Kariuki, one of Australia's most beloved Local Heroes. Long before she was advocating for refugee and migrant women just like herself, Rosemary was a survivor like no other. As a child, she survived the first of many predators in her home. As a teen, she survived the first of three infant losses. In her twenties, she survived years of domestic violence. In her thirties, she survived political unrest and tribal clashes that brought a hammer crashing down on her head. But what makes Rosemary's journey so remarkable is not just how she survived, but also how she came to find joy: an infectious joy that she has gone on to share with countless others. From her tough childhood in Kenya, taking care of her fifteen siblings, to becoming the 2021 Australian of the Year - Local Hero through her work as a multicultural community liaison officer for the police in western Sydney, Rosemary's story is a memoir that will inspire all Australians. Raw, direct and filled with Rosemary's warmth and humour, A Joyful Life shows how in the face of incredible hardship, kindness to ourselves and to others can allow us to regain our internal strength and ultimately become the writer of our own life story.

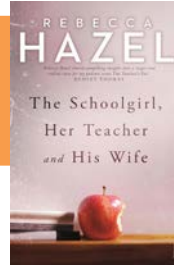


I Shouldn't Be Telling You This (But I'm Going to Anyway)

Chelsea Devantez

There are things Chelsea Devantez probably shouldn't be

telling you. Many of them are in this book: Some are embarrassing (like when she tried to break her three-year spell of celibacy using a guide of seduction tips). Some are confessional (getting sentenced to the 'hell hill' at Mormon church camp). Some are TMI (a series of outrageous doctor visits that ended with one doctor misdiagnosing her as pregnant - whoopsies!). Then there are things Chelsea really shouldn't be telling you: like the time her biggest family secret was publicly outed, or about the drive-by shootings and the precipitating domestic violence she survived. Yet through it all, the women in Chelsea's life have kept her going - from the lowest points of her childhood when she and her mum had only a hundred dollars left to their names, all the way to her career highs as the Emmy Award-nominated head writer for *The Problem with Jon Stewart* and the sensational podcaster deemed 'the celebrity memoir whisperer' by her fans. In *I Shouldn't Be Telling You This*, Chelsea centers each story around a different woman who shaped her life, taking us on a tour of friends and strangers, fictional characters and celebrities, heroes and villains who will destroy any Netflix algorithm for a 'strong female lead'.

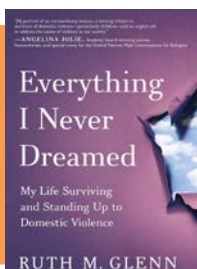


The Schoolgirl, Her Teacher and his Wife

Rebecca Hazel

The Teacher's Pet podcast was a phenomenon with more than 80 million downloads across the

world. Teacher and former rugby league player Chris Dawson appeared to have it all -- a loving family and a beautiful home in Sydney's Northern Beaches. But in the summer of 1982 his wife Lynette disappeared and not long afterwards Dawson married a much younger woman a former student. Less than a decade later this young woman escaped the marriage and went to the police to record her suspicions that Dawson had been involved in Lynette's disappearance. A homicide investigation followed but got nowhere until 1998, when Detective Sergeant Damian Loone was handed Lynette's file. For nearly two decades he made it his business to honour Lynette and to find out what had happened to her. His work led to two coronial investigations, but no charges. Around this time Rebecca Hazel was working in a women's refuge on the Northern Beaches when a colleague shared her story of enduring coercive control at the hands of Dawson, when she was his student, and then wife and she shared her suspicions about the fate of his first wife Lynette. These revelations affected Rebecca, and eventually she decided to investigate. Over years, coroners, police and journalists all shared with Rebecca their knowledge of the case, and disappointments that it remained unsolved.



Everything I Never Dreamed: My Life Surviving and Standing Up to Domestic Violence

Ruth M. Glenn

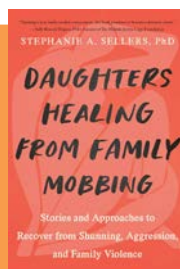
Ruth M. Glenn wasn't surprised the first time her husband beat her. She was hurt and disappointed but after a childhood in a broken and violent home, she was not surprised. After all, this was just the way things were, right? It was only after she lay bleeding in a carwash parking lot, after being shot three times by him, that Glenn resolved – if she managed to survive – to spend the rest of her life standing up to domestic violence. Now, she brings her full story to the forefront with this survivor's tale crossed with a rousing call to action. She reveals her difficult but ultimately rewarding journey from that parking lot to sacrificing everything to obtain her GED. With her evocative and thoughtful voice, Glenn explores the reasons why men beat and kill women, why women and children are seen as lesser in our society, how to stop victim blaming and how to demystify domestic violence to stop it once and for all.



A report on giving effect to the recommendations arising from the Investigation into family and domestic violence and suicide

Ombudsman Western Australia

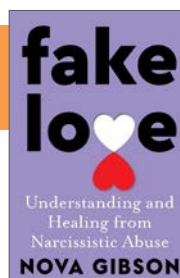
The WA Ombudsman undertook a major own motion investigation, Investigation into family and domestic violence and suicide (the Investigation) tabled in Parliament on 20 October 2022. The investigation into this profoundly serious issue included an extensive literature review, stakeholder engagement and the collection and analysis of a comprehensive set of state-wide data relating to those who died by suicide in circumstances where family and domestic violence had previously been identified by one or more State government departments or authorities.



Daughters Healing from Family Mobbing: Stories and Approaches to Recover from Shunning, Aggression, and Family Violence

Stephanie A. Sellers

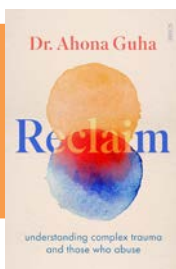
A galvanizing call to end family-based anti-female violence, shaming, and shunning -- stories and practices for healing from family mobbing. Sellers offers stories, definitions, and solutions to help women, girls, and people of all genders who have been mobbed by their families. She remembers and honours vast, ancient traditions that recognise female sanctity and personhood as paths forward to healing, with a focus on the practices and worldviews of Mother-first cultures that can illuminate the path toward honouring, valuing, and respecting daughters.



Fake love

Nova Gibson

Clear, concise and empowering self-help about navigating and healing from narcissistic abuse by Australia's go-to specialist counsellor. The love of a narcissist is fake. It's a soul-destroying realisation for every victim of narcissistic abuse, but even more damaging is finding yourself trapped and abused by the person who claims they love you. Nova Gibson has helped thousands of people in their struggle to understand, extricate themselves and heal from toxic relationships and narcissistic abuse. Drawing on the expertise gained from a decade of working with clients and her global online community, Nova offers comfort, knowledge and powerful strategies to help you identify, navigate and survive this extremely covert, confusing – and dangerous – form of abuse. In this life-changing book, Nova brings unparalleled insight into the lived experience of victims and helps identify the behaviours of narcissistic abusers, such as coercive control and gaslighting, pathological lying, the love bomb-devalue-discard cycle, hoovering, smear campaigns and many, many more.



Reclaim: Understanding Complex Trauma and Those Who Abuse

Rebecca Hazel

A groundbreaking book that will broaden and expand your thinking, whether you are a trauma survivor, a clinician, someone who loves a survivor, or someone seeking to understand abuse. The relationship between trauma and mental health is becoming better recognised, but survivors and professionals alike remain confused about how best to understand and treat it. In *Reclaim*, through a series of case studies and expert analysis, Dr Ahona Guha explores complex traumas, how survivors can recover and heal, and the nature of those who abuse. She shines a light on the 'difficult' trauma victims that society often ignores, and tackles vital questions such as, 'Why are psychological abuse and coercive control so difficult to spot?', 'What kinds of behaviours should we see as red flags?', and 'Why do some people harm others, and how do we protect ourselves from them?' As a clinical and forensic psychologist, Dr Guha has had extensive experience in working with those who perpetrate harm, including stalkers, sex offenders, violent offenders, and those who threaten, bully, and harass - and she has a deep understanding of the psychological and social factors that cause people to abuse others. In turn, her clinical work in the trauma treatment field has led her to recognise the enormous impacts of complex trauma, and the failures of systems when working with those who have been victimised.



Women of a certain courage

edited by Bron Bateman

Women of a Certain Courage is an uplifting read that follows the long tradition of women supporting and guiding other women. These 18 stories of courage will have you weeping, laughing and celebrating moments of bravery. With tales of activism, of finding a voice, escaping domestic violence, and much more, *Women of a Certain Courage* will inspire awe with the myriad ways women prevail and demonstrate courage.