



# **Literature to support the Australian Curriculum**

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## Introduction

Welcome to **Literature for the Australian Curriculum**.

This book contains annotated lists of novels which support the Australian curriculum and is sorted into Asian themes, Indigenous themes, Sustainability themes, Poetry books, Books suitable for class sets and Books suitable for reading aloud.

It is designed to help the busy teacher and teacher/librarian easily find books that are suitable for the Australian English curriculum under those themes.

The titles have been carefully selected by Fran Knight, children's literature specialist. They contain a range of books including many that are newly published as well as some that may already be available in the library.

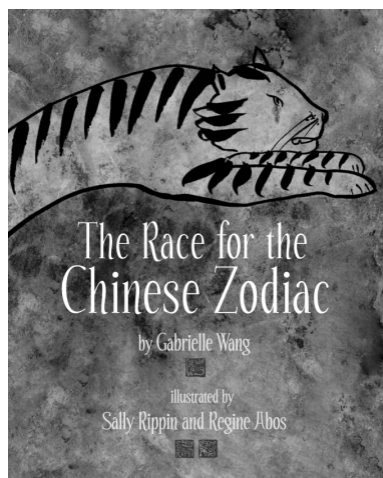
Each title is annotated, giving a taste of what the book is about. Approximate age levels are given and the lists are divided into the following age groups: Entry level to Year 3, Year 4 to Year 6, and Year 7 to Year 10. However what is suitable for one child or class of children may not be suitable for another child or class. Teachers and teacher/librarians will need to read the books and judge the suitability for their particular clientele and school situation.

For more guidance you could use ReadPlus, an online database of fiction organised under themes. As more titles are published, they will be entered into ReadPlus, so that your lists will always be up-to-date. Books can also be found under the Subject headings of Aboriginal authors and Aboriginal illustrators. Visit <http://www.readplus.com.au> for more information. For a trial of ReadPlus fill out the form at <http://www.readplus.com.au/trial.php>

Pat Pledger  
Editor.

## Asian Themes

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Published by black dog books, 2010.

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### Entry level – Year 3

#### **Across the dark sea**

*Wendy Orr, National Museum of Australia, 2006.*

This is one of a series *Making Tracks*, of early chapter books, which were written by authors after being inspired by an object in the museum. This story is inspired by one of the boats used by fleeing refugees from Vietnam following the Vietnam War. A leaky boat across the dark sea would terrify any of us.

#### **Fang Fang's Chinese New Year**

*Sally Rippin, Omnibus, 1996 (reprinted).*

Fang Fang was born in China but now she is Australian. She invites Lisa over to celebrate Chinese New Year, but will Lisa be bored? Several other books by Sally Rippin about Fang Fang are available: **Speak Chinese, Fang, Fang**, and **What a Mess, Fang Fang!**

#### **Just one wish**

*Sally Rippin, Penguin, 2009.*

The *Aussie Chomps* series has another very popular story, which tells of Little Pumpkin, who in coming to Australia with her family, finds settling in uncomfortable when her cousin refuses to translate for her in class. However her beautiful illustrations win her friends.

#### **Little Tang**

*Sally Grindley, Orchard, 1999.*

Little Tang is an orangutan who learns from his mother how to look after himself in the rainforests of Indonesia. A story brimful of information has no hint of it being didactic.

## **Asian themes: Entry level – Year 3**

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### **The magic brush : a story of love, family and Chinese characters**

*Kat Yeh and Huy Vooun Lee, Bloomsbury , 2011.*

Learning Chinese calligraphy with the grandpa, Jasmine journeys to a magical land to rescue a dragon, so learning the Chinese characters, how to paint them and the stories grandpa has to pass on. A charmingly illustrated story which espouses the values of family, love and sharing the Chinese characters.

### **Mang the wild orangutan**

*Joan van Loon, Hachette, 2007.*

Mang, the old Orangutan who lives in the zoo, remembers back to his happy days in the lush forests of Borneo before he was captured and simply put on show.

### **The most beautiful lantern**

*Sally Heinrich, Lothian 2007.*

The mid autumn festival is a chance to parade a lantern through the streets, but Mei-Ling cannot find the most beautiful one of all to take. Sally Rippin's beautiful illustrations make this a marvellous picture book to read and share.

### **Mustara**

*Rosanne Hawke, illustrated by Robert Ingpen, Lothian Books, 2006.*

Set in 1875, this is the story of Taj and his camel, Mustara, joining a group of explorers trekking the inland of South Australia. Taj and his family were part of a wider group of people who came to SA with their camels, and their name lives on with the north south train, The Ghan.

### **One grain of rice**

*Demi, Scholastic, 1997.*

Subtitled, **A mathematical folktale**, this story tells of Rani trying to get the rajah to help his suffering subjects by giving them one grain of rice a day, doubling the number for 30 days. The grains of rice increase mathematically, enough to feed everyone.

### **The peasant prince**

*Li Cunxin, illustrated by Anne Spudvilas, Penguin, 2007.*

This is a beautiful picture book version of **Mao's Last Dancer**, showing the rise of an impoverished peasant boy to become a world class ballet dancer who danced with the Australian Ballet.

### **The race for the Chinese zodiac**

*Gabrielle Wang, illustrated by Sally Rippin and Regine Abos, black dog books, 2010.*

In telling a story about how the Chinese Zodiac came to be, the author delineates each animal and their characteristics, before giving a list of the 12 animals and their years at the end of this beautifully illustrated book.

### **The river**

*Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Stanley Wong, Curriculum Corporation, 2001.*

Modern day Chinese girl, Hong becomes fascinated with the story of a young girl who long ago used a map to navigate her way down an unknown river to find her grandparents' house.

## Asian themes: Entry level – Year 3

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### **Samsara dog**

*Helen Manos and Julie Vivas, Working Title Press, 2006.*

Samsara is reborn through a cycle of life, each reincarnation being different from the last. In his final incarnation he loves his blind owner more than himself, so finding his way to Nirvana when he dies.

### **Sarindi and the lucky bird**

*Janine Fraser, HarperCollins, 2003.*

A young Indonesian boy visits sacred sites to pray for his mother's recovery from illness. The story underlines the family, showing love and faith in its different guise.

### **Sarindi and the lucky Buddha**

*Janine Fraser, HarperCollins, 2009.*

Sarindi's father has earned a lot of money, but no amount of money will keep his mother well. She believes in hard work and so Sarindi goes from one religious temple to another praying for her to become well. A third in the series, **Sarindi's dragon kite**, is also available.

### **Saving pandas**

*Dr Carla Litchfield, black dog books, 2009.*

A beautiful and informative picture book which tells the reader all they need to know about pandas from where they live to how they breed and give birth and the exciting news that they are headed for Australia. (Part of a non-fiction series about endangered species around the world)

### **Seams of gold**

*Christopher Cheng, National Museum of Australia, 2006.*

Based on an object found in the museum, Christopher weaves his story around an old Chinese basket found in the goldfields of Ballarat, evolving a story about young Chinese working the goldfields with their parents.

### **A tiger for breakfast**

*Narinder Dhani, Allen and Unwin, 2011.*

Terrified that the tiger will kill him and his family, Ram the farmer is at a loss as to what to do, but his wife, Reeta is not so worried, she is sure that she can outwit the animal. A traditional Indian tale.

### **The two bullies**

*Yunko Morimoto, Random House, 1997 (reprinted)*

Two large combatants, Ni-ou of Japan and Dokkoi of China, are set to fight. But Ni-ou, hearing Dokkoi coming, runs away. He is then caught by the anchor, but saved by magic. A funny tale that explains why those two words are used today when describing lifting heavy loads.

### **Tyger, tyger**

*Elizabeth Stanley, University of Western Australia Press, 2007.*

Based on a real life monastery in Thailand, orphaned tiger cubs are given sanctuary in the monastery, when they have nowhere else to go. The monks over generations have developed a special relationship with the tigers.

## **Asian themes: Entry level – Year 3**

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### **Wang Wang and Funi**

*Phil Cummings, illustrated by Shane Devries, Imagination Ventures, 2009.*

A stunning picture book that shows the preparations made for the new arrivals at the zoo. All the animals are eagerly waiting for the day when two Pandas from China will arrive at the Adelaide Zoo. A sweep of all the animals is shown by first time illustrator, Shane Devries.

### **The white crane**

*Yunko Morimoto, HarperCollins, 1983 (reprinted)*

A myth telling the story of the white crane, which leaves every year on its annual migration, is the basis of this story. After helping an injured crane, an old couple has a beautiful young girl stay with them. She weaves in secret, presenting them with exquisite silk, but they furtively look at what she is doing and so she leaves.

### **The willow pattern story**

*Allan Drummond, North South, 1995.*

This story explains what the motifs on a willow pattern dinner service are all about. The illustrations take the reader beyond the two dimensional pictures.

### **The wishing cupboard**

*Libby Hathorn, illustrated by Elizabeth Stanley, Lothian, 2002.*

While Tran's mother goes back to Vietnam, she tells him to look at the wishing cupboard, full of small drawers holding all sorts of objects reflecting their family history and so keeping Tran's memories alive while his mother is absent.

### **Yardil**

*Rosanne Hawke, illustrated by Elizabeth Stanley, Benchmark Publications, 2004.*

A sumptuous picture book set in the Rumbur Valley in north-west Pakistan, in the Himalayas, the homeland not only of the Kalasha people, but also of the snow leopard.

### **Zen shorts**

*Jon Muth, Scholastic, 2005.*

A giant panda called Stillwater found in their back yard gives Michael, Addy and Karl the opportunity to learn about Zen Buddhism.

## Indigenous Themes: Year 4 – Year 6

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Published by Allen & Unwin, 2009.

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### **Audrey's big secret**

*Christine Harris, Little Hare, 2009.*

This is the third in this engrossing series about Audrey and a young girl living on the edge of the outback with her family. Dad is often away, it is the 1930's and in this story Audrey finds a young Aboriginal girl hiding nearby from those who wish to take her from her family.

### **Barrumbi kids**

*Leonie Norrington, Scholastic, 2002.*

This is the first in a series of three novels dealing with a family living in a remote Aboriginal Community in the Northern Territory. The boys get up to a lot of mischief as they grow up in this beautiful landscape, overflowing with knowledge of and positive attitude towards the environment and working together. It is followed by **Spirit of Barrumbi** and **Leaving Barrumbi**.

### **The Binna Binna Man**

*Meme McDonald and Boori Pryor, Allen and Unwin, 1999.*

A companion story to **My Girragundji**, this boy must learn where he belongs, taking on the stories of his elders, and learning that all is not what it seems as he and his mob drive north for a funeral of a young girl. A story of community and coming together, laughter and sadness.

### **The burnt stick**

*Anthony Hill, illustrated by Mark Sofilas, Penguin, 1997.*

A powerful story of the plight of a young man removed from his mother as a child is brought to life in story and illustration. John, now educated by European standards, missed out on all that his family, and particularly his mother, would have taught him. His return to his home is marked with poignancy as he recalls his mother making his face darker with a burnt stick to stop him being taken away.

## Indigenous themes: Year 4 – Year 6

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### **Bush tucka, good tucka**

*Jan Brown, Indij Readers, 2007.*

One of a series of books presented for low literacy, high interest level readers, written by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal kids, but with a wider level of interest. Told with humour and packed full of information, this book is a treat.

### **Crow country**

*Kate Constable, Allen and Unwin, 2011.*

A time slip story following in the footsteps of **Playing Beatie Bow**, this adventure has Sadie moving to a country town, much against her wishes, and being dragged into an old mystery, a crime perpetrated years before.

### **Curly and the Fent**

*Sally Morgan, Random House, 2008.*

Adults cannot see the Fent, Curly's new friend that he found in a cupboard at home. The Fent causes chaos when it tickles Curly in the car, or makes him call out in the classroom and Curly is the one who lands in trouble, but when this involves the class bully who happens to live next door, then Curly must summon his resolve. A sequel, **Curly saves Grandma's House** is also available.

### **Desert dog**

*Pat Lowe and Jimmy Pike, Magabala Books, 1997.*

Told from the perspective of a camp dog, it accompanies a boy when he leaves the group to try working on a cattle station in the Great Sandy Desert.

### **Do not go around the edges**

*Daisy Utemorrah, Magabala, 1992.*

A book of poems and short stories, reflecting the author's life when she was growing up. Illustrated by Pat Torres, the book won several major awards and is often reprinted.

### **Dougy**

*James Moloney, UQP, 2010 (reprint).*

This is a classic tale of an Aboriginal boy growing up in a remote western town in Queensland. Dougy's sister is a good runner and resentment builds in the town when she wins a scholarship to a prestigious private school in Brisbane. Intertwined is the story of finding human remains on a site about to be excavated for a new building in the town. Two sequels, **Gracey** and **Angela**, also won awards and much acclaim and have been reprinted.

### **The drover's boy**

*Ted Eagan, illustrated by Robert Ingpen, Lothian, 1997.*

A picture book for older readers tells of the drover's boy, the euphemism for the Aboriginal girls taken as companions by the lonely drovers as they ply their dusty trade.

## Indigenous themes: Year 4 - 6

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### **Gracey**

*James Moloney, UQP, 2010 (reprint).*

Gracey's story is taken up as she moves to Brisbane, torn between her home where she knows everyone, and a school which will guarantee her future, but one which means leaving all she knows behind. This sequel to the award winning **Dougy** deals with similar issues of the problems associated with living between two communities.

### **Growing up at Uluru Australia**

*Stanley Breeden, Steve Parish, 2000.*

A sumptuously illustrated book describes the people who live around Uluru, the Anangu, the traditional caretakers, who protect its environment and their culture and traditions. Photographer Stan Breeden, shares their culture in this and another book, **Kakadu: sharing culture**.

### **Going bush**

*Nadia Wheatley, Allen and Unwin, 2007.*

A class trip through the remnant vegetation around Botany Bay is a wonderful learning experience for the kids about Indigenous culture and lifestyle before European intervention. This book is a landmark in showing what can be done with students and a plea for conservation of these remnant places.

### **Homelands and frontiers**

*Alan Tucker, Omnibus, 1999.*

Tucker has breathed life into some of the incidents in our past, which have seen the Aboriginal people decimated. His text alongside imaginative paintings makes the reader aware of incidents that have been overlooked in history books.

### **Leaving Barrumbi**

*Leonie Norrington, Scholastic (Omnibus) 2007.*

Dale and Tomias have left behind their beloved country and gone to boarding school, but here the friends are treated and seen very differently, one because he is white, the other black. The third in the series of Barrumbi stories, this is full of adventure and humour.

### **Maralinga, the Anangu story**

*Yalata and Oak Valley Communities, with Christobel Mattingley, Allen and Unwin, 2009.*

Being moved from their own land has not deterred the Anangu people from being proud and forthright as this book shows. They detail in their own words the plight of dispossession as the British and Australian governments made decisions about how the land west of Ceduna in South Australia was to be used. The political fallout from the nuclear bomb tests of the 1950's has not diminished as the people have begun to move back.

## Indigenous themes: Year 4 – Year 6

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### **My Girragundji**

*Meme McDonald and Boori Pryor, Allen and Unwin, 1998.*

Boori's story of the little frog that jumped onto his chest at night is retold in this charming tale of a boy learning to stand up for himself. Between two worlds, he learns that there are things worth standing up for, as the frog becomes his talisman.

### **On country, stories of Nyrlotte**

*Fiona Doyle, UQP, 2006.*

In this remote community in Cape York, a curious young girl sometimes gets into trouble poking her nose into business that does not concern her. Granny tells her stories to educate her about the seasons and the place where she lives.

### **The other side**

*Sally Morgan, National Museum of Australia, 2009.*

One in a series of short novels called *Making Tracks*, this story tells of Aboriginal protection of the environment in a story of today. Alex is embarrassed about his longhaired grandfather and his tree hugging activism until he finds out why.

### **The Papunya School book of country and history**

*Nadia Wheatley, Allen and Unwin, 2001.*

The story of the Papunya community west of Alice Springs is brought to life through their words and pictures. The community relates the story of how the settlement came to be, its history and school, through pages of beautiful art works, redolent of the rich culture and the amazing environment in which they live.

### **Side by side**

*Alan Tucker, Omnibus, 1998.*

Text alongside a painting tells the stories of many indigenous people who have become a footnote in our history. Tucker gives them new life with his imaginative paintings. (See also, **Homelands and frontiers** and **Too many Captain Cooks**)

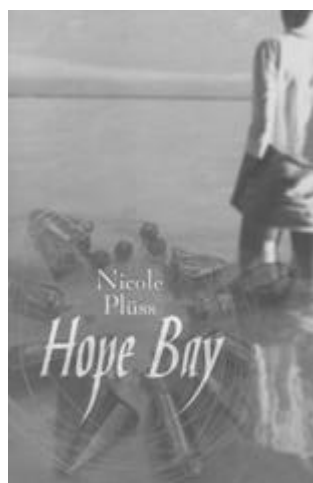
### **Spirit of Barrumbi**

*Leonie Norrington, Scholastic (Omnibus) 2003.*

Dale and Tomias, along with many other children from Long Hole community, go camping with the elders, to learn some of the customs of the community. But a white boy goes missing, making the friends, Dale and Tomias, put what they have learnt into action. A mix of adventure and humour along with the wonderful background of an Aboriginal community.

## Sustainability: Year 7 - 10

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Published by Penguin, 2005.

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### **A man called Possum**

*David Harris, Penguin, 1998.*

A simpler version of the story of the recluse, Possum, who lived in the Renmark area of South Australia for some fifty years, avoiding people, but knowing a lot about the Murray River and its problems. Farmers knew he had been in their area when fences were mended, stray sheep rounded up and stock watered.

### **Barrumbi kids**

*Leonie Norrington, Scholastic, 2002.*

This is the first in a series of three novels dealing with a family living in a remote Aboriginal Community in the Northern Territory. The boys get up to a lot of mischief as they grow up in this beautiful landscape, overflowing with knowledge of and positive attitude towards the environment and working together. It is followed by **Spirit of Barrumbi** and **Leaving Barrumbi**.

### **Black water**

*David Metzenthen, Penguin, 2007.*

The tale of a fishing family living along the south Victorian coast during and after WW1, is recreated with incredible detail and life, as we hear of the family waiting for their son's return from war, and the shipwreck which washes up a companion for Farren Fox. Not ostensibly about the environment, it is rich in details about the past lives of fishermen along the Victorian coast and by association, what has been lost.

## **Sustainability: Year 7 – Year 10**

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### **Bronco, Fi, Maddie and me**

*Pauline Luke, UQP, 2007.*

Bronco and his friends fight to save the delightful Hannah House, a wonderful old building, serving as a school for middle school students. A deal struck between the developer and the school board almost sees the place pulled down, but the children save the day. A funny and evocative story about what a few can do against the might of power and money.

### **Carrie's song**

*Bronwyn Blake, Lothian, 2004.*

The story of two girls, once friends, now estranged, who discover they are sisters, and so must repair the schism that exists, finding out what happened to their parents. Set in Central Australia and Flinders Island, the environment is a close companion to the story, and includes rare animals as one of its themes.

### **Crocodile tears**

*Anthony Horowitz, Walker Books, 2009.*

One in the magnificent series of stories about Alex Rider, this one has Alex in a remote area of Africa where he comes upon some environmental issues. GM crops, with their attendant issues of biodiversity and GM terrorism, form the basis of the adventure Alex finds himself in. An exciting read about a very up to date issue.

### **The declaration**

*Gemma Malley, Bloomsbury, 2008.*

In a future where people use longevity pills and plastic surgery to prolong their lives and look forever young, children are unnecessary. People are made to sign a declaration promising never to have children. If there are children born they are taken to a home where they are trained to be useful, as they are surpluses, surplus to the population. Into this world, one surplus takes action. Two sequels follow.

### **Find me a river**

*Bronwyn Blake, Lothian, 2001.*

Kes' family is devastated when their farm is destroyed by fire and they try to find a way to bring water to the property to save it in the future. A mix of stories about the family finding its feet and some of the members righting injustices in the past, the story is a wonderful mix of the cultural diversity that is Australia.

### **Flush**

*Carl Hiaasen, Random House, 2005.*

Someone is dumping sewage in the Florida waterways and Noah and Abbey have a fair idea about which developer it might be.

## **Sustainability: Year 7 – Year 10**

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### **Georgiana, woman of flowers**

*Libby Hathorn, Hachette, 2008.*

Fictional biography of Georgiana Molloy, who with her husband, settled in the new colony in Western Australia in 1829. An amazing story of struggle and survival of one of our first botanists, discovering for herself the variety and beauty of Australia's flora, but also interested in all that surrounded her.

### **Hoot**

*Carl Hiaasen, Random House, 2002.*

When Roy discovers through an odd bare footed boy that burrowing owls inhabit a bare block of land nearby, he is intrigued, but when that block of land is to be built on by a takeaway chicken outlet, he joins others to protest and try and save the owls.

### **Hope Bay**

*Nicole Pluss, Penguin, 2005.*

At her parent's bed and breakfast on Hope Bay, Possum makes friends with two eccentric sisters, recluses who shun company. When Possum finds one of them donning a wetsuit and feeding dolphins, she discovers a world she knew nothing about but in doing so must keep it secret from any prying eyes, despite the fact that it could mean money and tourism for the town.

### **Juno of Taris**

*Fleur Beale, Random House, 2009.*

In a very bleak future where climate change has swamped the islands of the Pacific Ocean, a small group has survived, building themselves a dome in the South Pacific where they live, sheltered from environmental change. But their future is bound by strict rules and regulations and the newer generation wants more freedom.

### **Keeper**

*Mal Peet, Walker Books, 2003.*

Set against the background of the South American rain forests, this story involves a young man training to be the world's best goal keeper.

### **The mighty Murray**

*John Nicholson, Allen and Unwin, 2002.*

A tribute to the magnificent river on which so many depend. It is entrenched in our history and economy, but is under serious threat. A nonfiction book to savour.

## Sustainability: Year 7 – Year 10

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### **Obernewtyn**

*Isobelle Carmody, Penguin, 1987.*

A classic tale often in print and with many sequels, this is the story of Elspeth surviving in a post holocaust future, but with powers she is only beginning to understand. A dystopian novel sure to engender discussion about what has happened to the world.

### **Once there were mermaids**

*Carol Ann Martin, Omnibus, 2005.*

Set in Tasmania, Miranda goes there to stay with her sister-in-law, Blossom, and there must take a stand against the developers trying to take hold of this remote, pristine piece of rural Tasmania.

### **Out of the dust**

*Karen Hesse, Frances Lincoln Children's, 2007 (c1997).*

Always in print, this is a classic tale, told in verse form, of the destruction of the Oklahoma Panhandle by farmers trying to scrape a living off the land but destroying it through ignorance of the area. When drought strikes, all is lost.

### **Peak**

*Roland Smith, Allen and Unwin, 2007.*

A risk taker, Peak is caught by the police scaling a high rise office tower in the city and his father takes him to Nepal to get him out of a custodial sentence. But dad has his own aim for the boy, grooming him to be the youngest climber to scale Everest. An involving story with an amazing amount of information about climbing, the risks taken, the environment of the Himalayas, and the encroachment on this area by the Chinese.

### **Rachael's forest**

*John Heffernan, Margaret Hamilton, 1998.*

A young country girl stands up to the big corporations in trying to save a small forest nearby.

### **Sea secrets**

*Gillian Wadds, Hachette, 2007.*

While on holiday, Zena and her friends tackle abalone poachers. This is a shorter novel but rich in adventure and friendship amongst the group of friends, and follows on from the successful book, **Chemicals leak**.

### **Snowy, the diary of Eva Fischer, Cabramurra 1958-1959**

*Siobhan McHugh, Scholastic 2003.*

One in the series, **My Story**, set in the Snowy Mountains, detailing in diary form the life of a young girl who lives at the place with her German father, an engineer working on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

## **Sustainability: Year 7 – Year 10**

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### **Sun on the stubble**

*Colin Thiele, Rigby, 1961.*

A gentle funny story of growing up in the Barossa Valley, where the German heritage is still obvious, the young boy recounts his idyllic days until he must move to Adelaide to further his education. A glowing tribute to the environment in which he lives.

### **Volcano**

*June Colbert, Hachette Livre, 2007.*

Set in Colombia, the children of the researchers at the Australian Division of the Disaster Assessment and Relief Organisation are bullied at the International School by the children of wealthy parents, but when the mountain starts to blow her top, they must work together to save the day.

### **Vulture's Gate**

*Kirsty Murray, Allen and Unwin, 2009.*

In a very bleak future, all women have been killed and men live in packs and steal children for their entertainment. Bo finds an escaped boy, Callum. Her grandfather, her protector, has died and so the two must now make their way to Vulture's Gate where they have heard there is safety.

### **What now, Tilda B?**

*Kathryn Lomer, UQP, 2010.*

Tilda is at a loss to know what to do with her life. Pulled between her boyfriend and her mother, she discovers a seal pup on the beach near her home, prompting her involvement in its protection and consequently opens a new outlook for the girl.

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