MONKEY GRIP – Writer Helen Garner
I am an award winning Australian novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter and journalist. I wrote my first (and famous) book 'Monkey Grip' sitting under the Great Dome - the Reading Room at the State Library 328 Swanston Street before I went on to write many others. So many Australian writers have written books in that marvellous space - inspirational!
'It was early summer. And everything, as it always does, began to heave and change. I fell in love with our friend Javo, the bludger....'

LEESA LAMBERT - The Little Bookroom
In 2015 I was the co-owner of The Little Bookroom, the oldest children’s bookstore in Australia started by Albert Ullin in 1960. You can often find my parents helping me out there. I had worked in the store and we decided to buy it when it came up for sale. I love encouraging childlike imaginations and helping to create pint-sized bookworms. There’s so much joy in having parents come in, knowing a few books from their childhood and just getting the kids addicted too. Melbourne has fantastic children’s writers. Go see our store at 5 Degraves Street to find the best of them.

KIRSTY MURRAY – Writer
I am a Melbourne writer born in 1960 with over 18 books so far! I love my work as an Ambassador for the Victorian Premier's Reading Challenge. I have written many books for young people which have won many Australian awards. Many are based on history themes in Melbourne. For example my book Market Blues was set in the former cemetery at the Queen Victoria Market. Perhaps my best known are the Children of the Wind series. See my blog on www.magiccasements.blogspot.com.au/.

‘OBERNEWTYN CHRONICLES’ – Fantasy author Isobelle Carmody (1958- )
I am a Melbourne writer of science fiction, fantasy, children's literature and young adult literature. I began work on the highly successful Obernewtyn Chronicles at the age of fourteen! I continued to work on them while completing a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in literature and philosophy and worked in public relations and journalism. Book Six - The Sending – was completed in 2011. I was Guest of Honour at the Australian National Science Fiction Convention, Convergence 2, held in Melbourne in 2007.

‘PHRYNE FISHER INVESTIGATES’ - Author Kerry Greenwood
I was born in Footscray in 194, the daughter of a wharfie and have created twenty Phryne Fisher Mysteries so far. This jazz age investigator is my idealised woman: glamorous, wealthy, dressed to kill, has her own plane and always gets her man - one way or another. In recent years my Phryne has become a popular TV series. By career I am also a defence lawyer. I have also written mysteries, science-fiction, historical fiction, children's stories, and plays.
PS Free advice - don’t mess with Phryne – she is an excellent shot!
‘POSSUM MAGIC’ – Picture book author, literacy ambassador Mem Fox
I wrote my first draft in 1978 during a children’s literature course. Nine publishers rejected it! But Omnibus Books in Adelaide asked me to change my mice to possums and the rest is history. Possum Magic is now one of the most recognised picture books in Australia and has sold over 3 million copies worldwide. Since then I have contributed to over fifty books and campaigned world wide for literacy.

THE FEMALE EUNUCH - Germaine Greer, Author, commentator, critic
I was born in Melbourne and went to Melbourne University and associated with the bohemian ‘Drift’ group which often gathered at the Swanston Family Hotel, NE cnr Lt Bourke and Swanston Streets, such as Barry Humphries, Arthur Boyd, Leonard French, John Perceval, Clifton Pugh, Justus Jorgensen. My first book put me on the map. The Female Eunuch (1970) was an international best-seller. It urged women to define their own values, order their own priorities and decide their own fate. Many said it changed their lives. Some thought it was outrageous heresy. I tried to change the world. Perhaps I succeeded.

LEIGH REDHEAD - Detective novelist, member Sisters of Crime
I created the character Simone Kirsch as a tough private investigator solving crimes. I often attend the SheKilda Convention in Melbourne, the annual meeting of Sisters in Crime. They have brought together nearly every published woman crime writer in Australia. Every year more female crime novelists are getting on board. Read these great thriller writers: Honey Brown, Karen Foxlee, Jen Storer, Ellie Marney, Katherine Howell, Kathryn Fox, Angela Savage, Hannah Kent. Karen Slaughter and more. Do yourself a favour and read them. Especially read me!

SALLY PEACH – Metropolis Bookshop
In 2001 my husband Tim and I bought a bookstore we called Metropolis in Acland Street but when the rents went up we decided to move to an old building at 252 Swanston Street called Curtin House. Lots of amazing creative people joined us to create other business in the building. There is even a cinema on the roof! Why is Metropolis the bookshop that very Melburnian dreams of? Come to the third floor and find out!

KAY CRADDOCK AM - Antiquarian Bookshop
The book RARE by Stuart Kells tells the extraordinary story of Muriel and Kay Craddock, my mother and myself, owners of the Antiquarian Bookshop at 156 Collins Street. In 2015 we celebrated 50 years of ownership. In 1964 our first shop sold second and books and bric-a-brac. My mother celebrated her 103rd birthday. Today people from around the world like Barry Humphries drop into our shop to find rare and precious books. We once sold a 1472 Gutenberg Bible for $200,000! Read RARE for a fascinating insight into the history of the Melbourne book trade and the risks and skills involved!
THE GETTING OF WISDOM

Henry Handel Richardson (1870-1946),
I was born in Melbourne into a prosperous family that fell on hard times which was
the basis for my great classic novel The Fortunes of Richard Mahony. The Getting
of Wisdom was written after I attended a girls boarding school. Both are now
considered great Australian classics. I excelled in the arts and music and continued
my musical studies at Leipzig in Europe where I set my novel Maurice Guest. My
real name was Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson. I figured the male name gave
me anonymity. Men were getting published but my books sold more than theirs.

MERLYN MYER BIOGRAPHY AWARDS - Merlyn Myer (1900-1982)
I was a philanthropist and the wife of Sidney Myer founder of the Myers
store.. Our great store still stands in Bourke Street. My Merlyn Myer
Biography Stipend was established to assist Australian non-fiction literary
writing through the art of biography. We regularly support writers to produce
great works with $50,000 stipends each. Writers make a huge contribution to
Australia. I believed like my husband we must all give back to our country.
Biographies teach us what other have contributed, how to emulate their
successes, how to avoid their mistakes.

Menichetti
My friend Gianni says I - Vali Myers - was a legend in my own time. At 17, I was
the premier dancer of the Melbourne Modern Ballet. I spent ten years on the streets
of Paris, never ceasing to draw. I adored Salvador Dali (note my moustache). I
spent 40 years in a wild canyon in Italy making mystical and passionate drawings.
My last studio was in that bohemian home of artists, the great art deco Nicholas
Building at 37 Swanston Street in my native Melbourne. Visit the great poetry
bookshop Collected Works. Publisher Arcade Books has published 20 books on
Melbourne here. It was also the home of the Writers Centre.

I was only 18 when in 1956 I became Melbourne’s Golden Girl’ - first athlete
ever to win an Olympic Gold Medal at the Melbourne Games. Australia went
crazy when I also blitzed a world record in the Women’s’ Relay. I also won
medals at the next two Olympic Games. In fact I have the honour of being the
only athlete ever to have won Olympic gold medals in every running event: 100,
200 and 400 metres. My book tells my story and how the 1956 Olympic Games
gripped and transformed Melbourne.
GEORGIANA MCCRAE - early diarist, painter 1804 –1890
I was a writer and painter of early Melbourne. My diary ‘Georgiana's Journal’ by my grandson Hugh McCrae is still a popular book. My husband and I founded the town of McCrae, south of Melbourne. My fortunes varied but I believe you should always meet obstacles with wit, humour and most of all grace and culture. My biography shows many insights into the colonial frontier and life in early Melbourne.

THE MONSTER PETITION
Vida Goldstein, writer and campaigner 1869-1949
I was a Suffragette for the Womens’ movement and proud of it! In 1891 we went from door to door collecting signatures for the ‘Monster Petition’ demanding that women have the right to vote. We got 33,000 signatures. We ran the Peace Commune at RMIT’s Storey hall and were very unpopular but a person without principles is nothing! Stand up and be counted! I was the first woman to stand for parliament in the British Empire. A sculpture of my Monster Petition is in Spring Street. I also founded two newspapers to promote the Womens’ movement.

COLES BOOK ARCADE: Eliza Cole, Bookseller
At 29 years of age I answered an advertisement by Edward Cole for a wife in 1884. I agreed to marry him and we raised six children. We ran the Coles Book Arcade in Howey Place, the biggest book store in the world. We produced and sold the Coles Funny Childrens Book which was found in most Australian homes for the next 100 years. It is still in publication!

MARTHA BAXTER - The written word, hail or shine
Postmistress 1812 - 1906
Melbourne’s greatest literary facilitator was the post office delivering 3 million letters annually as early as 1854. I was the first postmistress of the GPO. St Kilda Road was once called Baxters Track because it led to our cattle run at St Kilda. My husband Benjamin and I had nine children and founded the town of Baxter on the Mornington Peninsula. After a lifetime of hard work I lived to the age of 94. Not bad achievements, eh?

ELIZA COBB - First Newspaper And Library
Pioneer 1800-1879
For 51 years I was the devoted partner of John Fawkner, founding settler of European Melbourne. Our home on the corner of Flinders Lane and Williams Street housed the first library and we soon ran the first newspaper called The Patriot. I was sentenced to 7 years transportation to Tasmania in 1818 for kidnapping a baby. Men rushed to my ship to choose a wife. My husband said he chose the plainest woman on board because someone stole his first choice. However when he finally died I became a wealthy woman, plain or not!
‘TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG’ - Author Peter Carey

Kate Kelly, public figure (1863–1898). I was the sister of bushranger Ned Kelly and a key player in the drama described in the True History of the Kelly Gang 2000 by Peter Carey. The book won him his second Booker Prize. They wrote many newspaper articles, books, bush-songs and ballads about me. In 1880 I campaigned in Melbourne to save my brother Ned Kelly but Judge Redmond Barry hung him anyway as a bushranger. That night I held open audience with the public at Apollo Hall in Bourke Street, charging them people a shilling. Why not?

ANIMALIA – Picture book author Graeme Base
I first published Animalia, my illustrated children’s alphabet book in 1986. Not everyone knows that I hid a picture of myself as a child in every picture. A television series was created, it won the Young Australian's Best Picture Book and has sold over three million copies. Did I expect that? No! I have produced many more books since but everyone still loves Animalia. What’s not to like? Check out the Little Bookroom at 5 Degraves Street, the oldest children bookstore in Australia.

THE NICHOLAS BUILDING – Collected Works Bookshop
In 2015 Kris Hemmensley had been the owner of Collected Works for 30 years. Visit on the first floor of 37 Swanston Street in the the great art deco Nicholas building - the bohemian home of Melbourne artists. Kris has published over 20 books of poetry. Poets from around the world visit the shop. Writers regularly launch their books and hold events here. Upstairs publisher Arcade Books has published many micro-books on Melbourne. It was also the home of the Writers Centre. A sign on Kris’s shop reads: “This shop is not a photo opportunity. In the old days people visited bookshops to buy books. You may like to emulate this ancient tradition.”

‘TRUE HISTORY OF THE KELLY GANG (2000)’ – Novelist Peter Carey
Yes, I Ned Kelly (1855–1880) bushranger, am the subject of the book by Peter Carey who fascinated by my famous Jerilderie Letter. in fact the book won him his second Booker Prize. I have been described as a horse thief, bushranger and rebel and was captured in my home-made armour at the siege of Glenrowan. I was sentenced to death by Judge Sir Redmond Barry for the murder of three policemen. As I said every man must come to judgement someday and today is as good a day as any …I will see you where I go!’ Barry died 12 days after my execution at Old Melbourne Gaol. His statue is at the State library.

‘POWER WITHOUT GLORY’ - Novelist Frank Hardy (1917- 1994)
My popular novel in 1950 was an absolute sensation, exposing corruption between cops, crooks and politicians. They even charged me with criminal libel but I was acquitted. I joined the Communist Party of Australia in 1939, based at Curtin House. My book was typeset at their Guardian printing office 16 Corrs Lane. In the 1960s I assisted the Gurindji people in the Gurindji strike and published ‘The Unlucky Australians’.
‘COLES FUNNY BOOK’ – Bookseller and author Edward Cole, (1832–1918): I created Marvellous Melbourne’s greatest attraction - the Cole’s Book Arcade in Howey Place with two million books, a Monkey House, Band, Aviary, Fernery, Indian Bazaar and a Chinese Teahouse I also wrote Australia’s most popular children’s book ‘Cole’s Funny Picture Book’ in 1879. It is still being published over 125 years later! My first bookstore was at the Eastern Market, 111 Bourke Street.

‘THE LOST THING’ - Shaun Tan picture book artist, writer, filmmaker. I won an Academy Award when my picture book The Lost Thing (2000) was adapted to an animated film in 2011. I have written or illustrated many other books including The Viewer, The Red Tree, The Arrival and The Rabbits with John Marsden. I actually studied science but decided to stick to being an artist despite rejection slips. Writing is a creative work and inspiration comes from many diverse fields and interests. You can find my book in the Little Bookroom at 5 Degrawes Street and many other stores.

‘THE MYSTERY OF THE HANSOM CAB’ 1886 - Novelist Fergus Hulme (1859 – 1932) My self-published novel The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1886) became the best selling mystery novel of the Victorian era. It was set amidst the outcasts of Little Bourke Street. I would have made an absolute fortune but foolishly sold my rights for only 50 pounds. Damn! My novel inspired Arthur Conan Doyle to create the character of Sherlock Holmes. My book, still in print today and is a great read especially the sinister back lanes of Chinatown. Maybe I exaggerated a little!

ALBERT ULLIN OAM - Bookseller In October 1960, I opened The Little Bookroom, Australia’s first bookstore dedicated to children’s books. I have an enduring passion for picture books with a long and storied history of supporting Australia’s most renowned illustrators – from Ron Brooks (The Bunyip of Berkeley’s Creek) to Shaun Tan and John Marsden (The Rabbits). The Australian Booksellers Association gave me a lifetime achievement award in 2009. Check out the Little Bookroom today at 5 Degrawes Street.

‘THE TOFF’ 1977 - Thriller writer John Creasey I created the Sherlock Holmes type character ‘The Toff’ now immortalised in the Toff Bar at Curtin House at 252 Swanston Street. I published almost 60 Toff adventures from 1938-1977. ‘The Toff’ is the Honourable Richard Rollison, an upper-class crime sleuth in a top hat and monocle. He has a trophy wall in his flat where he displays all his successful crimes solved. He looks like an upper class twit but he is a master of disguise and strategy. In fact he’s that homeless person just over there.
My name is Squizzy Taylor, a member of the Bourke Street Rats that terrorised Melbourne in the 1920s. I was proud of my skills in theft, blackmail, slygrog and murder until my terminator meeting with the Fitzroy Gang in 1927. Fire-fighter and author Robert Newton has immortalised my life in Runner, the story of 16 year old Charley Feehan who becomes a runner for my gang. It’s become one of the most popular teenage books in Victoria - more popular than me anyway.

THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE (1916) – Humorous Poet C. J. Dennis (1876 – 1938)
I was working as a banker's clerk when my first poem was published. The Sentimental Bloke was written in slang and set in places like the back streets of Melbourne's ‘Little Lon’. It sold 65,000 copies in its first year. I also collaborated with the great ballad poets Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson. Read my hero - Ginger Mick – interpret Romeo and Juliet in street ‘argot’ or slang. But when they deals it out wiv bricks an' boots - In Little Lon, they're low, degraded broots.

‘FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE’ (1874) - Marcus Clarke
Novelist, Poet, Journalist, Playwright, Bohemian (1846-1881)
I wrote that classic novel, a ripping yarn about convict Rufus Dawes. The Peripatetic Philosopher (1869) was a popular series of articles on the highs and lows of Marvellous Melbourne - poking fun at all sorts of people. I espoused the romantic Bohemian life: non-conformism, art, love, fellowship and wine. I founded the bohemian Yorick Club with a skull as our symbol. It was followed by the Buonarotti Club at the Princes Bridge Hotel. Go see Chloe upstairs! She was kicked out of the NGV 30 years ago and represents why artists have to push the boundaries.

‘HILL OF CONTENT’ - Melbourne's oldest bookstore.
My name is A. H. Spencer. I opened my famous Melbourne bookstore (today 86 Collins Street) in 1922 after being an errand boy for Angus and Robertson. Over the years I collected and sold many rare Australian books to the great collectors Dixon and Mitchell (now the Mitchell and Dixon library collections). I knew all the fantastic writers, poets and personalities who walked through my doors. Henry Lawson, Dame Nellie Melba, Prime Minster Billy Hughes. It is still here over 90 years later! I doubt if anyone has loved Melbourne books and authors better than me. Read about it all in my classic book ‘Hill of Content. Books Art Music People’ (1959).

VICTORIAN STATE LIBRARY – Redmond Barry (1813–1880).
I was the founder of one of the greatest reading libraries of the world, the Victorian State Library. See my statue on the lawn. Dozens of Melbourne authors have written and researched their books in the famous Reading Room. The library houses the Melbourne (Wheeler) Writers Centre which organises the Melbourne Writers Festival. I also founded Melbourne University. Unfortunately many books and films remember me only as the judge who hung that scoundrel Ned Kelly for murder of three policemen. Read our famous debate at the trial!
SIDNEY MYER CREATIVE FELLOWSHIPS - Philanthropist Simcha Baevski, (1878-1934)
I was born in Belarussia, youngest of eleven children. When I came to Melbourne I was just a street peddler with no English. I managed to build up a great store in Bendigo with 200 employees. In 1910 I came to Melbourne, changed my name to Sidney Myer and opened Myers - Melbourne’s greatest department store in Bourke Street. My creative fellowships have awarded over $8m so far to talented mid-career artists including writers. The Many Lives of Kenneth Myer is the biography of my son who was a cultural hero of Melbourne.

‘BUCKLEY’S HOPE’ - Novelist Craig Robertson, 2003
William Buckley – convict (1780-1856)
They nicknamed me ‘the wild white man’, after I escaped as a convict from Sorrento in 1803 and lived with the Aboriginals for 32 years before Melbourne was settled. Being six foot and seven inches tall I think I gave them a scare when I walked out of the bush to meet the new settlers in 1835. The literary slang: ‘you’ve got two chances – buckleys and nunn’ comes from the former Buckleys and Nunn department store in Bourke Street.

‘THE DIG TREE’ - Non-fiction writer Sarah Murgatroyd
Robert O’Hara Burke, Expedition Leader (1821-1861)
I was chosen in 1860 to lead the great Melbourne expedition to cross Australia from south to north. Pretty good I reckon for a guy with no experience and no sense of direction! Just in case, I took a bathtub, a Chinese gong and a boat with me. My disastrous expedition resulted in the death of seven men died including myself. Nice if odd of them to put my statute in the City Square. Many books have been written about me including Cooper’s Creek by Alan Moorehead (1963) and the The Dig Tree by Sarah Murgatroyd (2002). It’s a great read.

WILLIAM BARAK - Wurundjeri Leader and Artist
I was just a boy when I attended the signing of the Melbourne Treaty with John Batman in 1835. Later I became the leader of the Corranderrk Mission and led many protest marches to Melbourne to seek justice for my people. Many of my paintings are in the NGV. A giant image of me 32 storeys high is now on Barak Apartments in Swanston Street.
In 2014 Giordano Nanni and Andrea James published my story in Corranderk: We Will Show the Country. It was adapted to a very popular play in Melbourne.

‘HARD JACKA. THE STORY OF A GALLIPOLI LEGEND’ (2011) -
Biographer Michael Lawriwsky
Albert Jacka, Victoria Cross Winner (1893–1932)
I have been described as Australia’s greatest front-line soldier after I earned the first Victoria Cross at Gallipoli. However it was always the lives of my men who were my first concern. My battalion called themselves ‘Jacka’s Mob’. Later as Mayor of St Kilda I fought for the rights of the poor and the unemployed. 50,000 people lined Swanston Street from the Melbourne Town Hall for my funeral on the 17 January 1932. The greatest books on our military history can be found in Hylands bookstore at Heffernan Lane.
‘COACH: A SEASON WITH RON BARASSI’ (2005) - Biographer John Powers
Ron Barassi, Football player and coach.
The Age called this book ‘the bible of motivation.’ I began playing VFL football at the age of 17 for Melbourne Football Club. I’ve been involved in 17 premierships and won ten! I captained Carlton to a premiership in 1968 and coached North Melbourne to two premierships. A couple of years ago I tackled a guy on the street who hit a woman in St Kilda. Even if I’m over 70, I’ll give you some free advice: NEVER give up and NEVER say die!! If you love football, you must read John Power’s classic book.

In 1835 I chartered the Enterprize ship to settle at Melbourne near today’s Immigration Museum. I wrote Melbourne’s first diary in my house in Williams Street, re-discovered by C.P.Billot as ‘The Missing Chronicles’. About 180 years ago I created the first library in a room of my cottage and published Melbourne’s first newspaper called The Patriot from the corner of Market Street and Collins Street. Go read it in the State Library.

THE MELBOURNE TREATY - John Batman (1801-1839)
I led an expedition to sign a ‘treaty’ with Aboriginal ‘chiefs’ in 1835 to found the settlement of Melbourne and the colony of Victoria. I reckon this treaty is Melbourne’s first literary document. At Melbourne’s first land sale in 1837. I bought the Young and Jackson Hotel site opposite Flinders Street Station. See Chloe upstairs!

‘NEW PILGRIMS PROGRESS’ - Poet, writer, politician Alfred Deakin (1856–1919). I was a reporter for the Age newspaper in Melbourne. For years I fought to make Australia an independent nation, finally achieved in 1901. I was Prime Minister three times. A secret of my success was that my wife Patti and I always sought advice from the dead. It works - Julia Gillard should have tried it! My first book New Pilgrims Progress was completely dictated to me by the spirit world.
As Prime Minister I secretly wrote as a journalist for newspapers in Britain - reporting on my own government!

‘WHILE THE BILLY BOILS’ – ‘The People’s Poet’ Henry Lawson 1867-1922
I hardly went to school and was deaf for most of my life. I tried to write about ordinary life and struggles including many stories about the bush. I supported Australia being a Republic, spent time in gaol and struggled with alcoholism yet I can honestly say I think I was Australia’s most popular poet and writer, often seen in book stores. Read my books when you have time like ‘While the Billy Boils’!