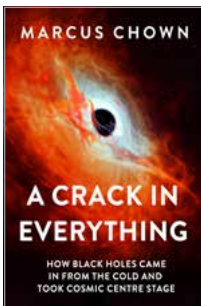


Fellows' reading and listening list 2024

Books

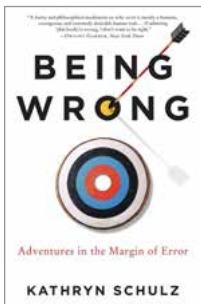


A Crack in Everything

Marcus Chown

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Robyn Williams AO FAA**

Did you know an Australian woman discovered the first real-life black hole in 1971? Or that Australians pioneered radio astronomy from Dover Heights and Hobart?

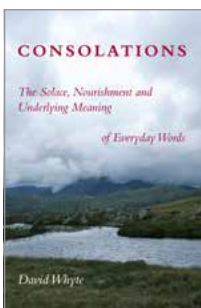


Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error

Kathryn Schulz

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Kylie Catchpole FAA FTSE**

This is a delightful exploration of being wrong (an essential skill for a scientist, but seldom taught). It is empowering to discover that most people have been wrong about many things throughout history; the corollary is that most people probably are still. I almost bought this book some 15 years ago—if I had, I would have enjoyed being wrong for much longer.



Consolations: The Solace, Nourishment, and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words

David Whyte

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Robert Williamson FAA**

Could a book that purports to be solely about the meaning of common words possibly grab, and hold, one's attention? Astoundingly, yes! David Whyte's book transcends the mere words he examines to offer profound insights into many notions (and words) which we take for granted; exactly what a poet should do—finding the marvellous in the mundane.

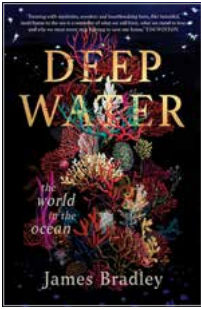


Dark Winter: An Insider's Guide to Pandemics and Biosecurity

Raina MacIntyre

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Ros Gleadow FAA**

Professor Raina MacIntyre describes historical biological attacks, lab accidents and epidemics, and the COVID-19 pandemic. She discusses the reluctance of scientists to consider unnatural origins for epidemics and the need for an open mind and the need to engage the community in the discussions. It's an easy read, although quite disturbing.

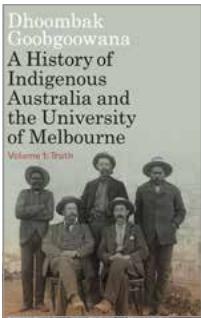


Deep Water: The World in the Ocean

James Bradley

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor David Lindenmayer AO FAA

A deeply intellectual foray into the many aspects of the world's ocean environments with a 'deep dive' into topics such as the impacts of shipping and its connections to slavery and European colonisation.

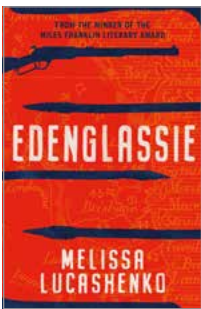


Dhoombak Goobgoowana: A History of Indigenous Australia and the University of Melbourne. Volume 1: Truth

Editors: Ross L Jones, James Waghorne and Marcia Langton

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA

This is a shocking book, but it must be read. Melbourne University was not alone in its emphasis on 'scientific racism' as a justification for White Australia, racial stereotyping, collecting Indigenous remains on an industrial scale, accepting 'the passing of the Aborigines', with some enthusiasm before 1939 for Hitler. The Eugenics Society survived until the 1970s.



Edenglassie

Melissa Lukashenko

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Liz Dennis AC FAA FTSE

The book is an imagined history of Meanjin/Brisbane mixing together the lives of contemporary and colonial-era characters. The book draws on oral history and presents First Nations language, rituals and understanding. It gives a new perspective on the founding of Brisbane and the reminder that it could have been different.



The First Knowledges series

Various Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal experts, edited by Margo Neale (the senior Indigenous curator at the National Museum of Australia)

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA FAHMS(Hon) FASSA

This series of books gathers the wisdom, science and understandings of our First Nations peoples and suggests ways that they can be used to tackle the problems of today's world. They include songlines, astronomy, country, botany, design, law, health and innovation. Others will be published next year. The fact that these knowledges have survived the pervasive genocide is extraordinary and it is urgent that we take notice of them to manage land, health, biodiversity, relationships, economies and more.

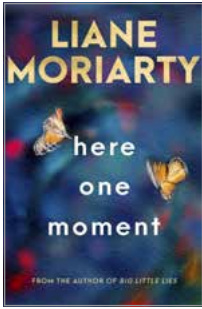


Good Nature: The New Science of How Nature Improves Our Health

Kathy Willis

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Simon Gandevia FAA FAHMS

This new book delves into a growing area (pun intended): how aspects of our natural environment influence our health. Many sensory modalities—such as smell, vision and hearing—are active as we interact with our surroundings and these interactions have deeper biological effects than we previously thought. The book is written by an accomplished researcher in an engaging, simple style with many up-to-date references.

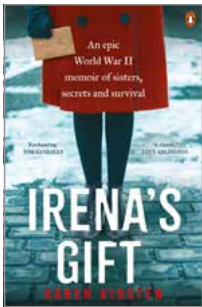


Here One Moment

Liane Moriarty

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Louise Ryan AO FAA**

Perfect beach reading! Beautiful storyline with elements of serendipity. Moriarty is a masterful storyteller!

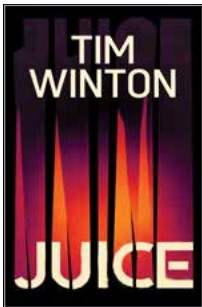


Irena's Gift

Karen Kirsten

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Philip Kuchel AM FAA**

Thomas Keneally is quoted as saying this book is 'enchanting'. It is certainly the most compelling expression of the day-to-day anguish of dodging and hiding from a national toxin that I have read (and I have read quite a lot about WWII). It is a true story set in 1942 Nazi-occupied Poland about a child smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto by her aunt who becomes her 'mother' (unbeknown to her for many years) and the psychological tangles this introduces, and which are subsequently understood, and the marvel of survival against the odds by some in the family circle.



Juice

Tim Winton

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor David Blair FAA**

Tim Winton's first sci-fi novel about climate change, set in the landscape of Ningaloo, Exmouth, Western Australia. If you saw his recent ABC documentary about Ningaloo, this book transports you to that amazing place. Not today, but the apocalyptic world of the 23rd century AD, a lament about the future, blamed on today's greedy oligarchs.

ALSO RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Michael Kearney FAA**

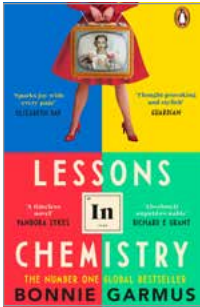
This 'cli-fi' saga is not a light read, but an important and engaging one. It was described by the author as: "A novel about a bloke in a hole telling stories while he still can." Winton has thought deeply about how the future could look if we fail to get our act together now and he has built a thoughtful thriller around this bleak scenario. I found myself reaching for the dictionary quite often with this one!

ALSO RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA FAHMS(Hon) FASSA**

This book by outstanding WA author Winton is essential reading for any of us concerned about climate change. Known for his environmental activism, this book is set vaguely near the Ningaloo coast; it describes a very scary future in a country destroyed by the fossil fuel companies. The social, environmental and climate circumstances described dictate how our 'hero' lives and tries to survive.

ALSO RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA**

'Juice' is a long (513 pages), complex, but beautifully written, dystopian novel, set in Western Australia perhaps two centuries hence, when climate has changed how people live, working outside is almost impossible and there is a significant return to Plato's cave. But it is not all depressive and Winton emphasises survival techniques, adaptability and finding values. 'Juice', by the way, is both oil and human energy.

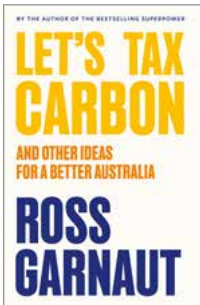


Lessons in Chemistry

Bonnie Garmus

RECOMMENDED BY: **Dr Cathy Foley AO FAA FTSE**

It has been out for a while but in a rather crazy, slightly unreal way explores issues that impacted women in science in the early days. In some ways, things have come a long way and in other ways, things have stayed the same.

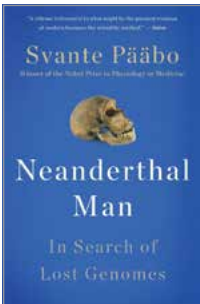


Let's Tax Carbon

Ross Garnaut

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA**

I launched this book at the ANU on 14 November. Garnaut is pre-eminent among economists in his grasp of the impact of climate change, and the repeated failure of Australia's political leaders to recognise that we could become an economic superpower by using natural resources which are delivered cost-free (sunlight and wind) instead of 'evaporating coal into the air', as A J Lotka wrote in the 1920s. The eucalypt is the most effective agent for photosynthesis, now challenged by chain saws and greed.



Neanderthal Man: In Search of Lost Genomes

Svante Pääbo

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Chennupati Jagadish AC PresAA FEng FTSE**

This book tells the story of geneticist Svante Pääbo's mission to answer this question: what can we learn from the genomes of our closest evolutionary relatives? His findings not only redrew our family tree, they also recast the fundamentals of human history.

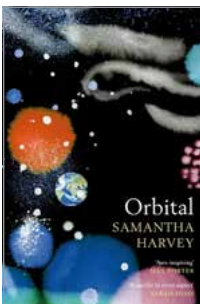


Nolan's Africa

Andrew Turley

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA**

Andrew Turley has devoted 12 years to working on the Sidney Nolan Archive at the National Library of Australia. The book is magnificent. Sidney and Cynthia Nolan were in Africa September–November 1962 and his paintings of humans, apes, gorillas and landscapes are among his most powerful works. He had long been obsessed with exploitation, cruelty and extinction, and there are many cross references to, and images of, Auschwitz, Eichmann and the poet Arthur Rimbaud with his links to the slave trade.

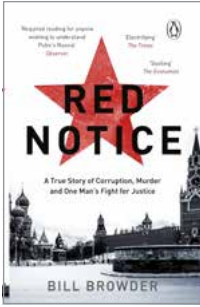


Orbital

Samantha Harvey

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Neville Nicholls FAA**

Fictionalised description of 24 hours on the International Space Station delving into the routines and thoughts of the six crew. Fabulous descriptions of Earth from space, and the reactions of the crew, and all the details of living and working on the ISS. Beautiful writing.

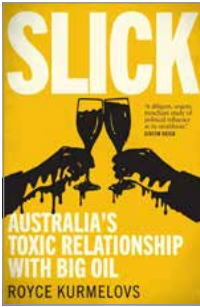


Red Notice: A True Story of Corruption, Murder and One Man's Fight for Justice

Bill Browder

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Bob Graham AO FAA FAHMS

A financial caper, a crime thriller and a political crusade, this book is the story of one man taking on overpowering odds to change the world, and also the story of how, without intending to, he found meaning in his life. A great read!!!!

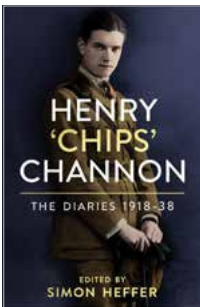


Slick: Australia's Toxic Relationship with Big Oil

Royce Kurlmelovs

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor David Lindenmayer AO FAA

An extraordinary book examining the basis for the expansion of the coal, oil and gas industries in Australia. 'Slick' discusses the ways in which lobbyists for the fossil fuel industries have employed potent and ultimately very powerful tactics and established 'think tanks' to reduce efforts by governments and international parties (e.g. COP) to tackle climate change.

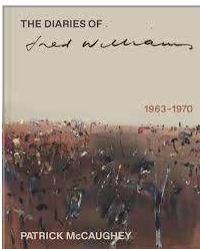


The Chips Channon Diaries (3 volumes)

Chips Channon

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Joss Bland-Hawthorn FAA

American 'Chips' Channon settled in England after the Great War, married into the Guinness family, and served as a Conservative MP. His career was unremarkable—his diaries are quite the opposite. They are the unfettered observations of a man who went everywhere and who knew everybody. Often scandalous, whether describing the antics of London society in the interwar years, or the growing debacle surrounding his close friends Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson during the abdication crisis, his sense of drama never lets up. I'm only halfway through the 3,000 pages!

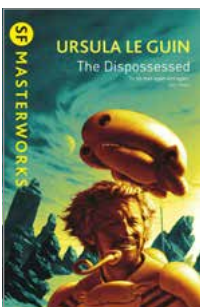


The Diaries of Fred Williams 1963–1970

Patrick McCaughey, with John Timlin

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA

Fred Williams (1927–1982) was one of Australia's greatest artists – painter, etcher, lithographer – who evolved a spare, almost calligraphic, style that evoked the strangeness and isolation of the Australian landscape. He kept detailed diaries from 1963 and this is the first tranche. The illustrations, text, commentaries and index are outstanding and the presentation is a triumph. It is not recommended for readers with frail wrists.

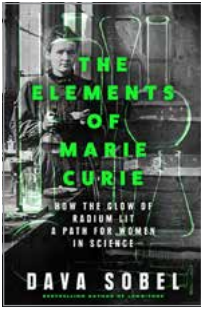


The Dispossessed

Ursula K. Le Guin

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Barbara Nowak FAA

While this book was published 50 years ago, it still remains highly relevant. It is not just an intriguing science fiction story about two worlds run by two different political systems, but also offers some insights about scientists and their engagements in activism. As a scientist who grew up in a communist system but for most of their life lived in Western democracy, I found this book particularly appealing and interesting.

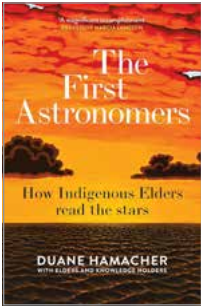


The Elements of Marie Curie

Dava Sobel

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Barbara Nowak FAA

Marie Curie has been inspiring a lot of girls and women to become scientists; I am one of them. This book follows the story of the life and discoveries of Marie Curie, focusing on women working with her and elements they were working on. It stands out among the books about the great scientist by incorporating the story of networking between scientists, in particular women, when their presence in science was still very rare.



The First Astronomers: How Indigenous Elders Read the Stars

Duane Hamacher

RECOMMENDED BY: Dr Beth Fulton FAA FTSE

This book describes how First Nations Elders use stars not only to navigate but understand the world more generally—from seasonal change, to when and what to garden, to what is happening in the general environment (like sharks breeding) and even predicting the weather. It is a wondrous reminder of how empirical observation can impart an enormous amount of information, but also a clear warning that for science to remain relevant and meaningful practically, it has to update as the world changes (as the stars have). Wonderful and inspiring book.

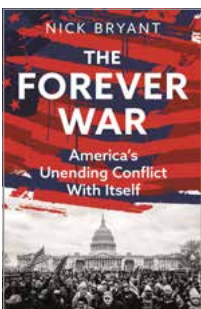


The First Friend

Malcolm Knox

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Michael Hynes FAA

Lavrentiy Beria, one of the 20th century's greatest monsters, was hilariously and frighteningly portrayed by Simon Russel Beale in the Armando Iannucci film, 'The Death of Stalin'. Here, he is the boss of Georgia in 1938 just before becoming the head of the NKVD in Moscow and his relationship with Vasil Murtov, his childhood friend and henchman, is portrayed. An incredible mixture of black humour and tension leads the reader to be thoroughly engaged in Murtov's fate and that of his young daughters.



The Forever War

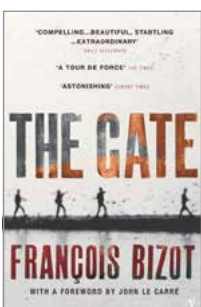
Nick Bryant

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Jeremy Mould FAA

The US constitution was a war document and intentionally anti-democratic. As we know, constitutions are very hard to change if an organised group opposes change.

ALSO RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Robyn Williams AO FAA

Astonishing and explains all.

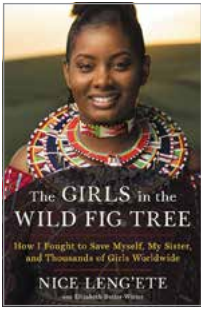


The Gate

Francois Bizot (with a foreword by John Le Carre)

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Cheryl Praeger AC FAA

In 1971, French ethnologist Francois Bizot was captured by the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian countryside and accused of being an agent of "American Imperialism". Released after three months of interrogation, he (four years later) became the official intermediary between the Khmer Rouge forces and terrified refugees in the French Embassy in Phnom Penh. I agree with descriptions of this memoir by Francois Bizot (written 30 years later) as "compelling, beautiful, startling, gentle and nerve-wracking".

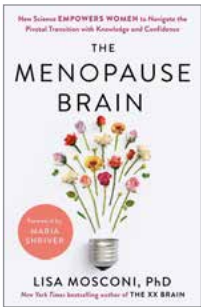


The Girls in the Wild Fig Tree: How I Fought to Save Myself, My Sister, and Thousands of Girls Worldwide

Nice Leng'ete

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Georgia Chenevix-Trench** FAA

Nice Leng'ete is a Maasai woman from Kenya who ran away to escape FGM, thereby avoiding child marriage and a life of domestic duties, in a community where women traditionally have no voice. She fought to complete her education, and subsequently has been instrumental in changing FGM practices in Kenya. This book makes it clear that cultural changes have to come from within communities, and addresses a critical issue—an estimated 230 million women in the world have undergone FGM. You can watch her [TED talk in Amsterdam](#) on YouTube, or listen to the book beautifully read on Audible by Elizabeth Butler-Witter.

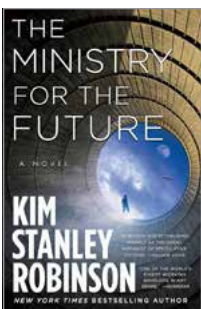


The Menopause Brain: New Science Empowers Women to Navigate the Pivotal Transition with Knowledge and Confidence

Lisa Mosconi

RECOMMENDED BY: **Dr Beth Fulton** FAA FTSE

This is a science based but still highly engaging description of the fundamental changes happening in the menopause brain. It also discusses the history of understanding (and how horribly recent that is!) and provides some practical guidance on how to navigate the transition but also bolster the brain in the process. Enthralling read for anyone trying to understand what is happening to them or a loved one.

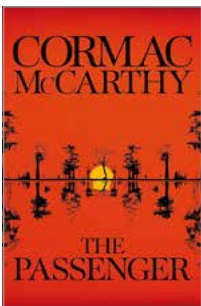


The Ministry for the Future

Kim Stanley Robinson

RECOMMENDED BY: **Dr Cathy Foley** AO FAA FTSE

It is a climate change science-fiction novel which looks at a body set up under the Paris Agreement. It gives an account of a world with future climate being the one we want to avoid.

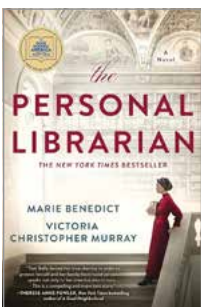


The Passenger

Cormac McCarthy

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Frances Separovic** AO FAA

Initially, 'The Passenger' appears to be a mystery novel that covers everything from the principles of quantum mechanics, the atomic bomb, and the Kennedy assassination. No matter the genre, McCarthy's saga, published when he was 89, was mesmerising, filled with stimulating discussions of morality and science, what is reality, human consciousness, madness and sin. I was left wondering, not only did the protagonist's sister suffer from schizophrenia, but so did he.

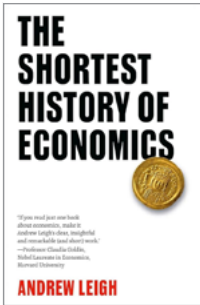


The Personal Librarian

Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Harry Poulos** AM FAA FTSE

This is a novel, but one based on historical facts. It sets out the story of a remarkable female, Bella da Costa Greene, who built up the remarkable library of the USA billionaire J Pierpont Morgan. It provides an illuminating picture of wealth in the golden age of the USA.



The Shortest History of Economics: The Powerful Story of Economic Forces That Shape Our World

Andrew Leigh

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA

The Shortest History of Music

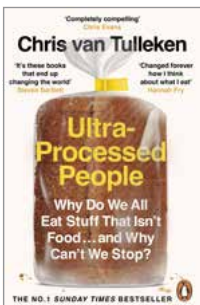
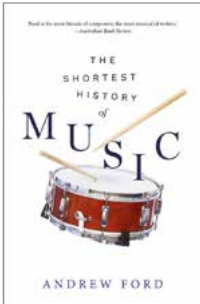
Andrew Ford

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA

Black Inc's 'The Shortest History'... series, each with about 250 small pages, is packed with information and astute judgment. Among the best are volumes on China, India, Greece, democracy.

Andrew Leigh is Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities, Treasury and Employment ('Assistant' because he is not a factional player), former Professor of Economics at ANU, worked in the US at Harvard, Michigan and the Kennedy Centre, collaborated closely with Thomas Piketty. He has profound strategic insights. *The Economist* listed it as one of its books of the year.

Andrew Ford is a composer, writer and presenter of ABC Radio National's 'The Music Show'. His book is an astonishing compression, packed with wisdom and fresh insights.



Ultra-Processed People

Chris Van Tulleken

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Hala Zreiqat AM FAA FTSE FAHMS

Through research and personal experimentation, Van Tulleken reveals the alarming consequences of ultra-processed diets on both physical health and emotional well-being, urging readers to rethink their food choices.



Who We Are and How We Got Here

David Reich

RECOMMENDED BY: Professor Chennupati Jagadish AC PresAA FEng FTSE

This book explains what genetics is telling us about present humans and our complex and often surprising ancestry. Reich's important wider message is that we should celebrate our rich diversity, and recognise that every one of us is the result of a long history of migration and intermixing of ancient peoples, which we carry as ghosts in our DNA.



Wifedom: Mrs Orwell's Invisible Life

Anna Funder

RECOMMENDED BY: Emeritus Professor Jennifer Martin AC FAA

Beautifully researched account of the all-too short life of Eileen O'Shaughnessy, the woman who married George Orwell (Eric Blair). Virtually absent from previously published Orwell biographies, Eileen is here given a voice and due credit for her contributions to Orwell's life and body of work. Five stars.

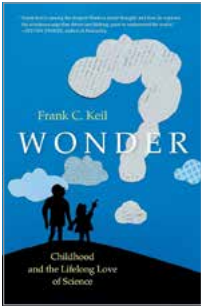


Wizards of Oz

Brett Mason

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Bruce McKellar AC FAA**

After seeing the movie 'Oppenheimer' it was worth re-reading Wizards of Oz, as a reminder of the role played by the British in the development of the atomic bomb, which was reduced to one sentence in the movie. It describes the roles of Oliphant and Florey in the war effort, including Oliphant badgering the US to work seriously on the bomb. It also, on the side, describes the part played by Oliphant and Florey in the creation of the ANU.



Wonder: Childhood and the Lifelong Love of Science

Frank C Keil

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Robert Williamson FAA**

Rather than yet another anxious book on how to enthuse children into science for nationalistic reasons, Frank Keil has made an elegant and eloquent case that it is we (old and professional) scientists who need to be reminded of the wisdom that children innately have—the sense of wonder which is at the root of the love of science. Keil connects the innate wonder of children to how we find meaning in our world. An inspiring book for all with an interest in science.



Working for the Brand: How Corporations are Destroying Free Speech

Josh Bornstein

RECOMMENDED BY: **Professor Barry Jones AC FAA FTSE FAHA FASSA**

Josh Bornstein is a creative and courageous Melbourne lawyer. Anna Funder describes it as 'A landmark work ... exhilarating, forensic, funny, shocking, and deeply humane'. I cannot improve on that.

Children's books



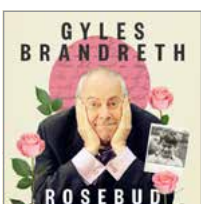
Marvellously Revolting Recipes

Roald Dahl

RECOMMENDED BY: **Dr Cathy Foley AO FAA FTSE**

This is a great set of mostly healthy recipes for kids inspired by Roald Dahl's fabulous children's books. I am using these recipes with my Joey Scouts.

Podcasts



Rosebud

Gyles Brandreth

RECOMMENDED BY: **Emeritus Professor Jennifer Martin AC FAA**

Gyles, and his very proper British accent, interviews "famous and fascinating" people about their life, starting with their very first memory. What do I love about 'Rosebud', aside from the name that is a nod to 'Citizen Kane'? Answer: the human stories—often hilarious, at times deeply moving, and always captivating.