

# Lose yourself in a book!

Celebrate Books Alive 2004, 31 July – 15 August

**B**ooks Alive is the biggest promotion of books and reading to be staged in Australia. The second Books Alive campaign will build on the huge successes of 2003. While the central 'hook' to attract new readers consists of titles for sale at book retailers, Books Alive can play a major role in libraries across the country as well.

The 2003 campaign established the Books Alive brand firmly in the minds of consumers and the industry. It placed (at least) a book or two in the hands of many Australians who would not usually buy books. Authors Bryce Courtenay, Geraldine Brooks, Matthew Reilly, Sally Morgan, Morris Gleitzman and Anna Fienberg toured extensively to bookstores, libraries and other locations and attracted national media coverage.

The 2003 campaign produced impressive results, including the domination of the bestseller lists by all six Books Alive titles during the campaign. 250 000 Books Alive titles were sold, boosting sales by 24.9 per cent on the previous year. More than ninety per cent of book retailers participated, including independent outlets.

The Books Alive authors and titles for 2004 were announced at Sydney's Kinokuniya Bookshop in February by the Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rodney Kemp. Senator Kemp and Sandra Yates, AO, chair of Books Alive also introduced some new features of the 2004 campaign, including:

- Two special offers making a total of seven books for 2004;
- Fifty cents from every Books Alive title sold will go to literacy schemes run by The Smith Family; and
- Production of a special booklet titled 'The 50 books you must own' (with an additional twenty titles in a 'children's extra' liftout) to be distributed widely during the



left to right: Robert Drewe, Belinda Alexander, Gabrielle Lloyd, Senator Rodney Kemp and Duncan Ball at the Books Alive announcement.

campaign.

The seven great books by gifted Australian authors selected for 2004 tell stories with universal appeal. Six of the books will be available through regular book retailers for \$5.00 and sold on condition of purchase of any other book. These are:

- *Shiver* by Nikki Gemmill, Random House — fiction
- *White gardenia* by Belinda Alexandra, Harper Collins — fiction
- *Selby the wonder dog* — *Selby splits & Selby surfs* by Duncan Ball, Harper Collins — children's fiction
- *The shark net* by Robert Drewe, Penguin — biography/memoir
- *Blacktown* by Shane Weaver Random House — biography/memoir
- *Au revoir* by Mary Moody, Pan Macmillan — biography/travelogue

A brand-new seventh title has been selected for K-Mart and Target in a special '2-for-1' offer: It is *Spiking the girl* by Gabrielle Lord, HodderHeadline — crime fiction (packaged with the second in the Gemma Lincoln series, *Baby did a bad bad thing*).

The 2004 Books Alive campaign will again be backed by television and print advertising spreading the campaign message 'Lose yourself in a book — find yourself in a bookstore'.

An exciting development for 2004 is a partnership with South Australia's *Big Book Club*. This will give Books Alive increased attention in South Australia where all seven Books Alive authors will tour for one full day, starting at the SA *Big Book Club Breakfast* and moving on individually to libraries in nine regional areas.

Books Alive project publicist Andy Palmer is preparing impressive schedules for all the Books Alive authors who will also be hosted at libraries in New South Wales, Western Australia, Victoria, the Northern Territory, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. 'The call to host events stated a preference for booksellers who could tie-in with libraries and schools. This year shows a four-fold increase in events for the Books Alive authors, and includes almost twenty libraries as well as



The seven Books Alive titles in their full glory!

schools, bookstores, museums, pubs and galleries' said Mr Palmer.

There are many ways in which libraries not hosting a Books Alive event can connect with the campaign. For example, the embargoed list of 'The 50 books you must own' provides promotional opportunities for titles held in library collections and will be distributed through *New Idea* magazine, via bookshops, and will be available from the Books Alive website from 2 August 2004. The booklet's message to 'read on' well beyond the campaign is supported by contributions from much-admired author Mem Fox and medical expert and writer Dr Karl Kruszelnicki.

The Books Alive website [<http://www.booksalive.com.au>] provides information on the selected books and authors. Cover artwork and author photos can be downloaded at the website. The site will include the author touring schedule and a book store locator. Christine Page from *Pages and Pages* in Mosman, NSW, provides an article on forming reading groups. Further information for libraries will be posted in the lead up to the 2004 campaign.

Books Alive aims to challenge competing leisure options, to loudly promote the appeal of books and reading to all Australians and to re-acquaint occasional and lapsed readers with the pleasure of reading books. So... 'Lose yourself in a book and find yourself in a library' in 2004 with Books Alive.

**Books Alive is part of the Australian Government's Book Industry Assistance Plan (BIAP). The model for Books Alive was developed by a reference group of industry stakeholders who conducted extensive research into reading and book buying habits in Australia and closely investigated successful overseas book promotion models. Books Alive is administered by the Australia Council for the Arts.**