

MOSTLY BOOKS

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Law and Literature Lounge 2026

Mitcham Shopping Centre
119 Belair Road, Torrens Park

5 February 2026 7.15 pm	<i>The Mushroom Tapes</i> by Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper and Sarah Krasnostein	Nonfiction: In July 2023, in the quiet Gippsland town of Leongatha, Erin Patterson invited her husband's devoutly Christian family to lunch. Within days, three of her guests were dead and the fourth was in a coma. They had all been poisoned by death cap mushrooms. Two years later, Patterson stood trial, accused of three counts of murder and one count of attempted murder. The court case gripped the nation and fascinated people all over the world. Three renowned writers - Helen Garner, Chloe Hooper and Sarah Krasnostein - joined the daily media scrum at the Latrobe Valley Law Courts and spent long days immersed in the case's sinister and complex themes - love, hate, jealousy, revenge, marriage, money, mycology and murder.
5 March 2026 7.15 pm	<i>Mad Mabel</i> by Sally Hepworth	Fiction: In 1959, at just fifteen years of age, Mabel Waller became the youngest Australian in history to be convicted of murder. In 2025, on a quiet Melbourne lane, an elderly man is found dead by his neighbour, 81-year-old Elsie Fitzpatrick. No one suspects any foul play. Until they discover Elsie's past. In the 1950s, her name was not Elsie. It was Mabel. She is known around the world as Mad Mabel. But is she mad? More importantly, is she guilty?
2 April 2026 7.15 pm	<i>A Case of Life and Limb</i> by Sally Smith	Historical crime fiction: In 1901, Gabriel Ward KC is hard at work on a thorny libel case involving London's most famous music hall star and its most notorious tabloid newspaper. The Inner Temple remains as quiet and calm as ever ... until a mummified hand arrives in the post. As more parcels arrive, one with fatal consequences, and Gabriel realises that the Temple itself is the target. It is up to Gabriel, and Constable Wright of the City of London Police, to find out who holds a grudge before the body count gets any higher.
May		No meeting in May – Rachel will be overseas! We have two months to read the book for June 😊

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4 June 7.15 pm	<i>Crime and Punishment</i> by Fyodor Dostoyevski	Classic fiction: said to be one of the most important novels of the nineteenth century. It is the story of a murder committed on principle, of a killer who wishes to set himself outside and above society. It is marked by Dostoevsky's own harrowing experience in penal servitude, and yet contains moments of wild humour.
2 July 7.15 pm	<i>My Life in Crime</i> by John McKechnie	Nonfiction: In a career spanning five decades, barrister, prosecutor, judge and corruption commissioner John McKechnie AO KC has seen up close how the law touches the lives of us all, for both good and bad. In this engaging and entertaining memoir, McKechnie takes readers on a tour of his distinguished career, and explores the criminal cases, big and small, that have stayed with him. McKechnie also includes his compilation of bite-sized 'quirky cases', historical excursions into moments of legal and personal interest-all written with humour and, above all, great humanity.
6 August 7.15 pm	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll	Classic fiction: References to the law are a recurring motif in this classic tale about Alice's adventures. By considering what is wrong with the law in Wonderland, readers can also consider how the law should function in the 'real world'. What is required for rules to make sense? What creates an incentive to pay attention to rules? What does due process mean?
3 September 7.15 pm	<i>Smother</i> by Eve Thompson (Adelaide author)	Fiction: Bruce College, a private school in a leafy Melbourne suburb, is a place for winners. When its girls' football team pushes for glory, sixteen-year-old Grace Dooley is left with a catastrophic brain injury, and her parents want someone held accountable. The school points the finger at the coach, Brick Hannaford, a former professional player. Lawyer Romola Cross takes on Brick's case. She soon finds herself caught up in the complex and disturbing fallout of school sport turned toxic. <i>Smother</i> is a novel about chasing dreams, and how the quest for victory can risk losses far beyond those on the scoreboard. It's a story about the forces of love, ambition and fear, and finding the right balance before it all comes undone.

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<p>1 October 7.15 pm</p>	<p><i>East West Street</i> by Philippe Sands</p>	<p>Nonfiction: When he receives an invitation to deliver a lecture in the Ukrainian city of Lviv, international lawyer Philippe Sands begins a journey on the trail of his family's secret history. In doing so, he uncovers an astonishing series of coincidences that lead him halfway across the world, to the origins of international law at the Nuremberg trial. Interweaving the stories of the two Nuremberg prosecutors who invented the crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity, the Nazi governor responsible for the murder of thousands in and around Lviv, and incredible acts of wartime bravery, EAST WEST STREET is an unforgettable blend of memoir and historical detective story, and a powerful meditation on the way memory, crime and guilt leave scars across generations.</p>
<p>5 November 7.15 pm</p>	<p><i>Two Islands</i> by Ian Kemish</p>	<p>Fiction: When a desperate young man arrives on an isolated Scottish isle, the locals view him with suspicion. But Niko is there for a reason - he's running for his life, pursued by those who want him silenced for what he has seen in the Balkan War. His neighbour is a recluse known to the villagers as 'Slow Fergus'. As the two men circle each other, Australian war crimes investigator Anita Costello races against sinister forces to locate her key witness. Against this rugged landscape, where the tightknit island community holds painful memories close, Niko must weigh his loyalties to his family, his country and himself. Written with compassion and insight, <i>Two Islands</i> explores how the ripples of distant conflicts can wash up on the most remote shores.</p>

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