

FIRST SATURDAY BOOK CLUB

Move over Jennifer Byrne: here comes the Naked Man.

Port Fairy is accustomed to punching above its weight in many areas. Now our literary credentials are on the line. Can we compete with the ABC Book Show and the Melbourne Writers Festival?

A feature of the 2010 Ex Libris Book Fair is The Big Port Fairy Book Club. A panel of local authors and literature lovers together with invited guests will discuss Craig Silvey's award-winning Australian novel *Jasper Jones* and the classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

West Australian author Craig Silvey was born in the cutely-named town of Dwellingup. He will be compared to Tim Winton for his depiction of adolescence in regional areas. Silvey is also singer/songwriter for indie/pop/rock band The Nancy Sikes.

Jasper Jones was published in Australia in 2009. It won Indie Book of the Year 2009, and was shortlisted for 2009 WA Premier's Literary Award, the Miles Franklin Award 2010 and the 2010 NSW Premier's Literary Award. It has been picked up by publishers in the US, UK, Spain, Italy and France. Film rights to the novel have already been sold.

Silvey says of his literary influences: "I've always been attracted to Southern Gothic fiction. There's something very warm and generous about those regional American writers like Twain and Lee and Capote, and it seemed to be a literary ilk that would lend itself well to the Australian condition."

The Big Port Fairy Book Club will be chaired by crime author Robert Gott, whose dinner address was such a hit at the 2009 Ex Libris event. Gott is also the creator of the *Naked Man* cartoons which appear each week in *The Age* newspaper. Other panellists are Mary Pendergast, Lynne Strahan, Michele Gierck and Jock Serong.

Copies of the novel will be available for sale at the Book Club event or, for those wishing to read it beforehand, can be purchased at Ironbird Books in Port Fairy and other good bookshops.

Audience participation will be a feature of the Big Book Club and fund-raising activities during the evening will go towards the Indigenous Literacy Project.

Drinks and canapes will add a touch of class to Port Fairy's Big Book Club to be held on Saturday 4 September at the Port Fairy Yacht Club at 5.30 p.m.

