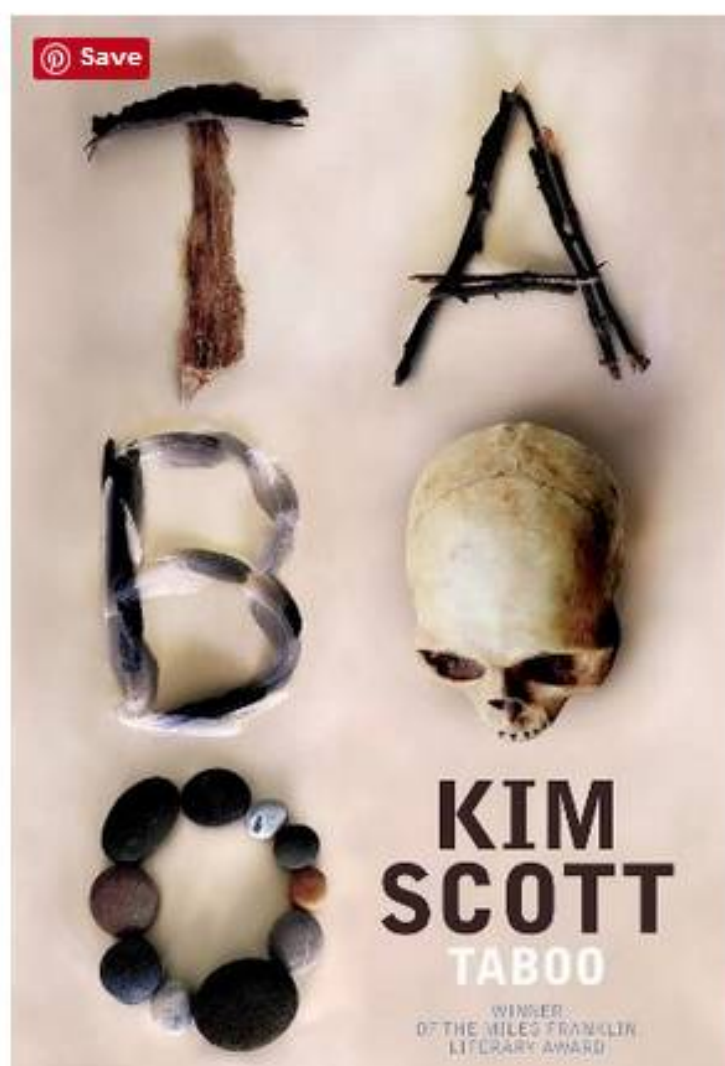


Gold Coast Book Lovers

It's all about good books...

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February 2018



The book of the month was *Taboo* by Kim Scott. Scott is a descendant of the Noongar people who first created human society along the south coast of Western Australia.

Based around the fictional town of Kokanarup where a “massacre” of Noongar people in the late nineteenth century took place, it is in this Noongar country that the book is set. White Australians in the area resist the term “massacre”. Whilst Kokanarup is a fictional town, Scott has drawn from the very real series of events around Cocanarup Station in 1880, where a Noongar man was arrested and charged with the crime of killing a European



Noongar man was arrested and charged with the crime of killing a European landowner on the Station. Reprisal killings

of Noongar people occurred after that.

The narrative is driven by two events. The opening of a Peace Park to commemorate the massacre, and a Noongar workshop on this ancestral “taboo” land. Taboo follows a little band of survivors, to journey back to the country to recreate the land and bring healing. They follow a retreating tide of history and return with language and story. The trip provides a catalyst for connection with a story of place deeper than colonization, and for the transformation and healing.

There is a third story, that of Tilly, the adolescent girl who travels with the group and who has recently discovered her heritage from an Aboriginal father. Tilly has been a victim of an unscrupulous white man, the son of the farmer who now owns the land where the massacre took place. She bears many scars of her internal turmoil.

Other taboos in the novel voice the fact that having been dispossessed from their ancestral land, had their language crushed and spirits violated, the first societies of this continent now struggle to find a place. They are plagued by alcohol and drugs, and many of the men die young and spend time in prison for violence.

Kim Scott has in a richly poetic novel reconstitutes Noongar spirit in the present day and brings it directly to bear on the traumatic past and violent present and bring healing to both. Healing is made possible by the recovery and return of the old Noongar language and connection to place.

The discussion by the group following the review of this book touched on the apathy and ignorance of modern white Australia not only of the history of our indigenous peoples, but how we as a Nation can do so much better in our recognition of the first people of this nation. All members of the group had read and finished the book and the general consensus was of admiration for Scott's beautiful writing and important message.

Kim Scott was the first indigenous writer to win the Miles Franklin award for his book *Benang*. He was appointed Professor of Writing in the School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts of Curtin University in December, 2011. He is a member of The Centre for Culture and Technology (CCAT), leading its Indigenous Culture and Digital Technologies research program. *Taboo* is Kim Scott's fifth novel.

Ratings: Claudia 4, Denise 4, Di 4, Glenda 3, Janet 4, Judith 4, Kim 4.5, Margie 3.5 and Nicola 3.5.

Next month we get together on the 12/03/18 at 6:30pm to discuss [The life to come](#) by [Michelle de Kretser](#), at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#).

Other Books We Read

February 2018

Our book of the month was [Taboo](#) by [Kim Scott](#), but we also read other books.

Maximum rating is 5.

Changing My Mind by Zadie Smith, 3

Swing Time by Zadie Smith, 3.5

The Mothers by Brit Bennett, 3

Wednesdays with Bob by Derek Rielly, 3.5

The Animators by Kayla Rae Whitaker, 4

Stay with me by Ayobami Adebayo, 3.5

The Red Coast by Di Morrissey, 2.5

Autumn by Ali Smith, 4

Clean Straw for Nothing by George Johnston, 3.5

Outlander by Diana Gabaldon, 3.5

A horse walks into a bar, David Grossman, 4

Based on a true story, Delphine De Vigan, 3

The German Girl , Armando Lucas Correa, 3

Before the Fall, Noah Hawley, 2.5
