

‘If I was to review this collection for a literary magazine,
I’d say all played well.’

–Martin Flanagan, *The Saturday Age*

‘From the Outer is a timely reminder of what keeps us
coming back to the oval.’ –*Books+Publishing*

About Carly Reggars

Carly Reggars is an experienced teacher and tutor of all things language and literature. When she’s not talking to young people about books and words, you can usually find her reading, staring at art or discussing her new-found passion for the sociology of Australian football culture.

From the Outer: Footy Like You've Never Heard It
Edited by Alicia Sometimes and Nicole Hayes

Introduction to the Text

“These stories are, for the most part, love letters to footy. But as with many love affairs, the sting of disappointment and betrayal can be more potent, more poignant, than the heady rush of love. For some, it was enough to drive them away. But for others, it’s more complicated. So we have tried to capture the moment or memory that has stayed with us, the spark that resonated most, from the perspective of those who love the game even when the game hasn’t always loved them.” (Taken from the introduction)

“A celebration of our great game, *From the Outer* brings together 30 personal stories about Australian Rules from unexpected voices: those who are female, Indigenous or gay; those with a disability, a foreign accent or even – perhaps most dubious of all – literary leanings.” (Taken from blurb)

From The Outer is a unique and exciting text for secondary students. Rich with metaphor and memory, humour and hard truths, poetry and imagination, it is a deeply engaging and thought-provoking collection that acts as both a mirror and a window into Australian culture. As a classroom text, there are manifold possibilities for a range of abilities, year levels and curriculum outcomes.

Summaries

HR – Highly recommended for teaching

BR – Background reading/Front-loading of concepts required

D – Difficult to access for some students

Alicia Sometimes & Nicole Hayes

Introduction (HR)

“Always, though, it's [...] about the game itself. Bigger than any team, or any individual. A story so all encompassing, it seems never to grow old. A story that is slowly changing.”

The editors outline their motivations and intentions behind the project.

Chelsea Roffey

An Open Letter to Doubting Thomas (HR)

“Women are, quite literally, girls. Everyone knows the top two things that don’t belong on the footy field are girls and wusses (interchangeable, really).”

Biting, satirical imaginary letter to all the men who have questioned the role of a female umpire in football. Actively questions and challenges assumptions about women's roles in a male-dominated space.

Themes: Gender, Sexism, Football Culture, Overcoming Adversity, Belonging/Acceptance, Female Perspectives, Opportunity

Miriam Sved

Rookie (HR)

"Any overlap in the Venn diagram of us and football seemed wishful and somehow self-abasing."

A woman recalls her journey as a newcomer to Victoria and how she came to love football. A wry exploration of the tension of being a gay football fanatic.

Themes: Same-Sex Discrimination/Homophobia, Football Culture, Belonging/Acceptance, LGBTI Perspectives, Female Perspectives

Tony Birch

'Your Heart Will Quicken': The Death and Birth of a Fan (HR)

"The ground is a place where I reclaim my past and occasionally puzzle over who I am now."

An emotional and evocative story from an insider's perspective of the loss of their team, subsequent years in the wilderness and learning to love a new team.

Themes: Nostalgia/Memory, Place & Identity, Football Culture, Loss

Leila Gurruwiwi

***Marngrook*, the Women of *Marngrook* and the 'R' Word (HR)**

"I have been subjected to and witnessed racism – both blatantly and subtly – in the wider community and within the AFL scene, and until you have been somewhere where you are seen as different because of the colour of your skin, you can't truly understand how it feels."

A reflection of the role football has played in the life of the author, racism and Indigenous women's roles in the AFL.

Themes: Racism, Gender, Identity/Belonging, Indigenous Perspectives, Female Perspectives, Community, Opportunity, Football Culture

Jason Tuazon-McCheyne as told to Jacqueline Tomlins
The Purple Bomber (HR)

“Even then, at that early age, I knew that liking boys and liking footy didn’t go together.”

A recollection of growing up a gay football fan, and of the changing culture of homophobia/same-sex discrimination in the AFL.

Themes: LGBTI Perspectives, Same-Sex Discrimination/Homophobia, Football Culture, Identity/Belonging

Alice Pung & Nick Cadle
Footy Dreams in Struggletown (D)

“But understanding football is not just like mastering another language. It is like mastering a different type of language.”

An exploration of the changing face of football and the influences and limitations of class, race and capitalism. Employs the metaphor of language to examine a kind of sporting/cultural fluency.

Themes: Football Culture, Class, Immigrant Perspectives, Indigenous Perspectives, Opportunity

The Fans
The Warm Up (HR)

A visual phone text exchange between football fans in anticipation of the game.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Football Culture

Maxine Beneba Clarke
Marngarook (HR, BR)

“20 years after winmar lifted
up his shirt & pointed
at his skin
in the indigenous round
dedicated to him/ goodes
hears a voice echo/ in the wind”

A free-verse poem exploring Indigenous heritage, racism and dispossession.

Themes: Indigenous Perspectives, Racism, Football Culture, History

Christos Tsiolkas
Love & Footy (HR)

“[...] change creeps up on us slowly, taking years to announce itself.”

A gay, second-generation Australian reflects on his changing relationship to football; when it has identified him both as an insider and as an outsider.

Themes: LGBTI Perspectives, Football Culture, Identity/Belonging, Immigrant Perspectives, Homophobia, Racism

Honey Brown
The Calm Supporter (HR)

“We exist.”

A story exploring the inner life and outward expressions of the “calm supporter”.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Football Culture, Identity/Belonging

Stan Grant
I Can Tell You How Adam Goodes Feels. Every Indigenous Person Has Felt It (HR, BR)

“To Adam’s ears, the ears of so many Indigenous people, these boos are a howl of humiliation. A howl that echoes across two centuries of invasion, dispossession and suffering.”

An Indigenous perspective on the Adam Goodes booing phenomenon.

Themes: Indigenous Perspectives, Racism, Football Culture, History

Anna Spargo-Ryan
How to Love Football (HR)

“He was, more than anything, a patient man. And it was because of this that I learned to love football.”

A poignant recollection of the role football played in deepening the connection between a granddaughter and her grandfather, and in turn, how that connection fostered her love for the game.

Themes: Nostalgia/Memory, Female Perspectives, Football Culture, Loss, Identity/Belonging

Angela Pippas

Melbourne: The Year 2195 (HR)

“I park the jet pack and make my way to the most sacred building in Australia, The MCG [...].”

A speculative literature short story imagining a Melbourne ruled by football.

Themes: Football Culture, Female Perspectives, Sexism

Sam Pang & Brendan Murray

Doull's Gold (HR)

“I think Bruce Doull and I could be friends.”

A football fan spots a retired legend of the game in the stands and imagines they could be friends.

Themes: Nostalgia/Memory, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture

Demet Divaroren

The Year of the Dogs (HR)

“I became a Bulldog, tenacious and loyal. My one eye bulged out of my forehead and my tongue spoke mainstream.”

A Turkish woman recalls the role football played in her sense of belonging in a new country.

Themes: Football Culture, Identity/Belonging, Immigrant Perspectives, Class, Nostalgia/Memory, Racism, Opportunity

Erin Riley

Sleepless in September (HR)

“I looked on the game with fresh eyes and was sometimes disappointed by what I saw. It was a game that wasn't always kind to people who weren't what it expected.”

One woman's journey from love to disillusionment with, and then eventual return to, the game she loves.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture

Peter Rose
Operamanes (D)

“We are all of us clamant in the gods,
avid, hyperventilating,
worshipping with stinging hands.”

A free-verse poem to the poet's father. Uses the extended metaphor of opera to explore the drama and history of the game and the mythical qualities of games past.

Themes: Football Culture, Identity/Belonging, Nostalgia/Memory

Bev O'Connor
It's a Long Way to the Top if You Want to Kick a Goal (HR)

“[...] we finally have a generation who believe their time has come. They are kicking goals literally and figuratively, and comfortably standing on the big stage with the men, knowing they belong.”

A female insider's optimistic discussion of the changing space for women within the AFL.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture

Rebecca Lim
Play the Ball, Not the Man (HR) (BR)

“There's nothing like seeing people who look like you, and share aspects of your cultural background and experiences, reflected and represented in your national sport. It speaks to whether your humanity is valued.”

An Asian-Australian perspective on racism in Australia, the AFL and cultural white dominance.

Themes: Football Culture, Identity/Belonging, Immigrant Perspectives, Racism, History

Nicole Hayes
The Arc (HR)

“I just tucked that disappointment away deep inside, writing it off as another thing girls weren't allowed to do – part of a long list trumped only by the litany of things women weren't allowed to do.”

A woman reflects on how her gender determined her changing relationship to AFL as a child.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture, Nostalgia/Memory

Catherine Deveny

There Was a Choice? (HR)

“The only thing more suffocating than growing up marinated in something you are repelled by is having to strap on a fake smile and pretend you like it.”

A woman who hates football describes living in a football-saturated environment.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture, Nostalgia/Memory

Sophie Cunningham

Beating the Jinx (D)

“Football does this: captures something about the absurdity of life, the tricky combination of hard work and luck, which reduces barrackers to a kind of superstitious fatalism.”

A woman gives a detailed memoir of the ups and downs of loving her team, Geelong.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture, Nostalgia/Memory, History

Alicia Sometimes

1991 (HR)

“Back when you raised your arms in the air ripping your coat because Dermie had kicked four.”

The author recalls a time when her relationship to football was simpler.

Themes: Nostalgia/Memory, Female Perspectives, Football Culture, Loss, Identity/Belonging

The Fans

The Game (HR)

A visual phone text exchange between football fans during the game.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Football Culture

Van Badham
The Blazer (HR)

“It’s this camaraderie that I think Mum realised she needed when she took those first tentative red and white steps out of the house after Dad died, and she’s kept taking them ever since.”

The author details her mother's relationship to AFL and the various roles it has played in her mother's life.

Themes: Nostalgia/Memory, Female Perspectives, Football Culture, Loss, Identity/Belonging

Ellen Van Neerven
Invisible Spears (HR) (BR)

“we can’t score goals
on this sacred land”

A free-verse poem exploring hypocrisy, racism and whitewashing in the AFL.

Themes: Indigenous Perspectives, Racism, Football Culture

Stephanie Holt
Family Ties (HR)

“But, as it so often does, footy offered a small opening for deeper connections.”

The author recalls her journey toward finding her “football family”.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Identity/Belonging, Football Culture, Nostalgia/Memory

Kirby Bentley
Play Like A Girl (HR)

“Most of all, I look forward to a time when women are recognised as ‘footballers’ and not ‘female footballers’.”

A reflection on the changing face of the game from an Indigenous, female football player.

Themes: Racism, Identity/Belonging, Indigenous Perspectives, Female Perspectives, Sexism, Opportunity/Overcoming Adversity, Football Culture

Alan Duffy
Stellar Hawks (HR)

"[...]my first impression of footy watching the West Coast Eagles at Subiaco Oval was that this sport was mad."

The author describes learning to love the game after migrating to Australia and provides a scientist's perspective on the game.

Themes: Football Culture, Identity/Belonging, Immigrant Perspectives

Jacqui James
As Long as It Isn't Essendon (HR)

"I've always known it doesn't matter how much or how little your physical capabilities are. I often say how my brain is always willing, but my body lets me down."

A woman with cerebral palsy and chronic pain describes both her relationship to AFL and a variation called Balloon Football for people with a range of physical abilities.

Themes: Football Culture, Nostalgia/Memory, Opportunity/Overcoming Adversity, Identity/Belonging, Female Perspectives, Loss

Peta Searle
Q & A (HR)

"People wanted to see if this chick knew what she was talking about."

The author answers questions about her experiences as the first female football coach in the AFL.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Sexism, Football Culture, Opportunity, Identity/Belonging

The Fans
Losing (HR)

A visual phone text exchange between football fans following the game.

Themes: Female Perspectives, Football Culture

Introductory Activities

1. Personal Connections

Show the class a range of images of AFL experiences to stimulate ideas: on-field action, the MCG, kids playing Auskick, supporters dressed up, an Adam Goodes newspaper cover, a picture of someone ignoring football on the TV or at the game, a family BBQ, etc.

Ask students to write a reflection on what football means to them. Ask them to include:

- Their first recollection of the game
- Their favourite/least favourite things about the game
- Sensory memories (eg. taste of pies at the MCG, the sound of their favourite band as they listen to headphones and ignore the game, the taste of blood in their mouth if they were injured on the field.)
- Who they associate football with
- How their life would be different if football didn't exist
- What they would change about football and football culture
- What more they would like to know about football

Some students will not have meaningful connections to the game. Encourage them to write a piece about the absence of, or their resistance to, football.

These reflections can be revisited at the conclusion of the text unit.

2. Exploring Stereotypes

Ask students, in pairs or small groups, to draw/describe/find pictures of both a typical football player and a typical football fan. These discussions and pictures can be made into A3 posters. Students can add words or phrases they associate with these stereotypes.

Ask groups to quickly present to the class their findings. Build a class picture/word bank of who is on the “inside” of football culture. Introduce the title of the book, *From the Outer*, and ask students to unpack the title – the literal vs. metaphorical meanings. Build a list of who students guess might be included in the metaphorical “outer”: whose voices might they expect to hear in an anthology of outsiders' stories?

Suggested Activities

Australian Curriculum – Creating Literature

'Create literary texts, including hybrid texts, that innovate on aspects of other texts, for example by using parody, allusion and appropriation (ACELT1773)'

Activity: Select a piece from *From the Outer*. Identify the main themes, messages and issues raised by your choice. Use these insights to inform the creation of a new text in a new genre, for example by turning a poem into a short reflection or a short story into a persuasive editorial.

Genres may include:

- Poems
- Diary Entry
- Letter to the Editor
- Speech
- Comic
- Story Board
- First-Person Narrative
- Sci-Fi/Futurism
- Scene from a Play
- Dialogue/Interview

For example:

Anna Spargo Ryan's 'How To Love Football' inspires a poem about the memories of lost loved ones.

Or

Rebecca Lim's 'Play The Ball, Not The Man' inspires an editorial-style persuasive piece about racial representation on television.

Australian Curriculum – Examining Literature

'Analyse texts from familiar and unfamiliar contexts, and discuss and evaluate their content and the appeal of an individual author's literary style (ACELT1636)'

Activity: Choose two pieces from *From the Outer*. Compare and contrast the literary styles, content, themes and devices (such as metaphor, imagery, tone) employed by the authors. Prepare a short class presentation that provides a discussion of these findings and the intended effect on the reader, and offer an evaluation of the success of each piece. Be sure to draw on appropriate metalanguage and examples from the text to support your analysis.

Australian Curriculum – Language for Interaction

‘Investigate how evaluation can be expressed directly and indirectly using devices, for example allusion, evocative vocabulary and metaphor (ACELA1552)’

Activity: Choose one piece or a pair of pieces and identify how the authors create evaluative statements and meaning. For example, identify, examine and contrast the use of evaluative language in a poem and in a short story. Work in groups to annotate a text and prepare a short report of your findings to present to the class.

Teaching Suggestions – YEAR 10

Introductory Activities

Print out the provided quotes from the text. Stick them around the room and have students wander around to read them and stand under the one that resonates the most. Use this kinaesthetic activity to engage and stimulate a discussion around the variability of experiences of and feelings towards football.

Suggested quotes:

- “But, as it so often does, footy offered a small opening for deeper connections.”
- “The only thing more suffocating than growing up marinated in something you are repelled by is having to strap on a fake smile and pretend you like it.”
- “I just tucked that disappointment away deep inside, writing it off as another thing girls weren't allowed to do – part of a long list trumped only by the litany of things women weren't allowed to do.”
- “There’s nothing like seeing people who look like you, and share aspects of your cultural background and experiences, reflected and represented in your national sport.”
- “It was a game that wasn’t always kind to people who weren’t what it expected.”
- “But understanding football is not just like mastering another language. It is like mastering a different type of language.”
- “I knew that liking boys and liking footy didn’t go together.”
- “Women are, quite literally, girls. Everyone knows the top two things that don’t belong on the footy field are girls and wusses (interchangeable, really).”
- “[...]my first impression of footy [...]was that this sport was mad.”
- “I’ve always known it doesn’t matter how much or how little your physical capabilities are. I often say how my brain is always willing, but my body lets me down.”
- “I’d never had a motive related to football in my life.”
- “I decided from that day to commit to the club, totally. I go to most home games and

- watch the interstate trips on TV.”
- “Footy kind of runs in my blood.”
 - “I know for a fact there still is racism in this country, and there’s still a lot of work that needs to be done.”

Alternative: Rather than discussion, have students write a reflection or a poem using the quote as a starting point.

Extension Activity: In groups, have students prepare a short skit or dialogue inspired by the quote.

Suggested Activities

Australian Curriculum – Creating Texts

‘Create sustained texts, including texts that combine specific digital or media content, for imaginative, informative, or persuasive purposes that reflect upon challenging and complex issues (ACELY1756)’

Activity: Choose a piece from the book and make a short film. You may wish to use the narrative provided or draw on the themes of the piece to create an original piece. Your piece should address some of the social issues raised by the author/s of the piece.

For example:

Angela Pippas’s ‘Melbourne: The Year 2195’ may inform a dystopian, futuristic short film that explores another aspect of modern-day culture such as social media.

Or

Maxine Beneba Clarke’s ‘Mangarook’ may inform a documentary short film exploring the history of Indigenous participation and racism in the AFL.

Australian Curriculum – Creating Literature

‘Create imaginative texts that make relevant thematic and intertextual connections with other texts (ACELT1644)’

Activity: Choose a piece from *From the Outer*. Use the title of the piece as a starting point for writing your own piece. You must retain the title and address some themes of the original piece however all other decisions regarding narrative viewpoint, style, tone and techniques are yours to make. Accompany your piece with a short reflection explaining your choices and what you hoped to achieve.

Australian Curriculum – Responding to Literature

'Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts (ACELT1812)'

Activity: In groups, use the perspectives and evidence presented in *From the Outer* to debate relevant topics.

Or

Write an analytical, persuasive or expository essay exploring a relevant topic from the novel.

Suggested Essay & Debate Topics:

- Football is doing enough to respond to diversity.
- We can learn a lot about ourselves through football.
- Football is a sport, nothing more.
- Football is a mirror to our society.
- The best and/or worst of Australia is seen in football.
- AFL should be a humanities subject taught in secondary school.
- Football is a sexist sport.
- Football culture is Australian culture.

Recommended Supplementary Texts

Non-Fiction

- *Night Games*, Anna Krien
- *Kickers and Knockers: Poems for Lovers and Haters of Football*, Ed. Phil Ilton & Garth Marsden
- 'Maroon and Blue', Marieke Hardy, from *You'll be Sorry When I'm Dead*
- *Rose Boys*, Peter Rose
- *Saturday Afternoon Fever*, Matthew Hardy

Fiction

- *Eleven Seasons*, Paul D Carter
- *The Whole of My World*, Nicole Hayes
- *Deadly Unna?*, Phillip Gwynne

Poetry

- 'Life Cycle (for Big Jim Phelan)', by Bruce Dawe
- 'The Absolute Grand Final', Michael Leunig
- 'Four Quarters', Tom Petsinis

Songs

- 'Shut Up, Footy's On The Radio', TISM
- 'The Swans Return', Weddings, Parties, Anything
- 'The Colour of Your Jumper', Archie Roach
- 'Leaps and Bounds', Paul Kelly

Articles

- 'Letter to the First Openly Gay AFL Player', Ryan Daniels, published on *The Roar*, 11 June 2013, available from <http://www.theroar.com.au/2013/06/11/a-letter-to-the-first-openly-gay-afl-player/>
- 'I didn't know any footballers who were gay', Jill Stark, *The Age*, 9 September 2012
- 'Footy, Feminism, and Criticising What You Love', Kylie Maslen, *Kill Your Darlings*, 3RD APR, 2015, available from <http://www.killyourdarlingsjournal.com/2015/04/footy-feminism-and-criticising-what-you-love/>

Film

- *Blinder*, 2013
- *The Club*, 1980
- *A Silent Shout, The Nicky Winmar Story*, Tim O'Brien
- *Jason's Journey With Homophobia*, available from <http://www.afl.com.au/video/2014-03-13/jasons-journey>

Television

- 'The Adam Goodes War Dance', *Offsiders*, available from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-31/offsiders-full-episode/6510062>



NICOLE HAYES is a young adult author. Her debut release, *The Whole of My World* (2013), is the first “footy novel” to feature a teenage girl. It was longlisted for the 2014 Gold Inky and shortlisted for the 2014 YABBAs. Her second novel, *One True Thing* (2015), was awarded the 2015 Children’s Peace Literature Award. She bleeds Brown and Gold.



ALICIA SOMETIMES is a writer, poet, broadcaster and musician. She is one of 3RRR’s *Breakfasters* team, is a regular guest on ABC Radio National and was editor of the national literary journal *Going Down Swinging*. She is the writer and director of the science-poetry planetarium show *Elemental*. Alicia is a mad Hawks supporter.

A celebration of our great game, *From the Outer* brings together 30 personal stories about Aussie Rules from unexpected voices: those who are female, Indigenous or gay; those with a disability, a foreign accent or even – perhaps most dubious of all – literary leanings.

Some are actively involved in the game, such as Leila Gurruwiwi, panellist on Australia's first all-Indigenous footy show; Angela Pippas, one of Australia's first female sports commentators; and Jason Tuazon-McCheyne, founder of the LGBTI supporter group the Purple Bombers. Others, like Christos Tsiolkas, Sophie Cunningham, Tony Birch and Alice Pung, share their poignant, passionate experiences as spectators and supporters.

Engaging and surprising, *From the Outer* shows how footy can both thrill and devastate, exclude and unite, by shining a light on the diversity and splendour of the game.

Recommended for middle and senior secondary

Subject: Non-Fiction, Memoir, Anthology, Sport

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