

AUSTRALIA'S GAME: STORIES, ESSAYS, VERSE AND DRAMA **ROSS FITZGERALD & KEN SPILLANE EDS** Slattery Media Group, **\$34.95**

Australia's Game is a revised and updated edition of observations and musings on our indigenous game, first published in 1988. Pieces by new recruits,

such as John Harms, Peter Helliar, Paul Daffey, Paul Kelly and Peter Schwab, rub shoulders with offerings by grizzled veterans such as David Williamson, Manning Clark, Frank Hardy and Gerald Murnane.

The fresh voices add a contemporary slant on a game that is evolving constantly.

Excerpts from classics such as Barry Oakley's *A Salute to the Great McCarthy* and Alan Hopgood's *And The Big Men Fly* sit comfortably alongside Schwab's *Inside the Bubble*, an account of his ill-fated coaching stint at Hawthorn from 2000-2004.

The pieces encapsulate the essence of the game and of life itself. There's passion, humour, insight, agony, hope, redemption, longing and triumph in a fabulous collection of reflections.

VERDICT: ENTHRALLING

John Robotham

