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(Jason & Jacqueline are available for interview)

Australian Girl™ Releases First Adventure Novel Based on Doll Characters

As the man behind Australia's longest running comic strip, Ginger Meggs, cartoonist and stand-up comedian Jason Chatfield spends most of his time depicting the spirited activities of an iconic Australian boy.

So when he was given the opportunity to create the illustrations for some equally spirited but somewhat new girls on the block, he jumped at the chance.

“Working with the five Australian Girl characters was a great opportunity. They were brand new Aussie icons, each with distinct personalities and physical looks and I liked the idea of giving Australian girls something of their own to aspire to.”

Singer and songwriter Jacqueline Larsen was equally inspired by Emily, Amy, Matilda, Belle and Jasmine and, with illustrations provided by Chatfield, has brought the Australian Girl doll characters to life in a new chapter book, *The Rainbow Necklace*.

Based on the five characters of the Australian Girl dolls created by Helen Schofield in 2008, the book is an exciting, fast paced adventure that sees the girls travel back in time and discover things they never knew about Australian history and significant women from Australia's past as they work together to solve mysteries and overcome problems with a significant outcome.

Brought together by circumstance in the middle of the dry, dusty outback, the last thing the girls expected was the start of a lifetime of adventures.

Jacqueline says, “Girls of today are growing up in a media saturated society and whether we like it or not, everything that they see and hear around them helps inform their sense of selves. I believe it is important therefore that young Australian girls get to see Australian girls reflecting back at them.”

“This book gives young Australians a chance to read an exciting adventure set in their own country and featuring girls just like them. The characters of the Australian Girl dolls belong to contemporary Australian society and like to do things that real Australian girls like to do today.”

One 9 year old reader commented, “I really liked that the girls were Aussies like me. I loved the adventure they had and all the excitement they had together.”

The Rainbow Necklace, published by Wombat Books and aimed at 7-10 year olds, was released on Friday 8 April at a huge party for girls and their Australian Girl dolls (photos available). It can be bought from any bookstore or online from the publisher or Australian Girl.