The first edition of Bookshops of Victoria* was published in 1988, and many of us have been hanging out for the new one, as we grappled with the frustration of finding that shops had closed, moved, changed their phone numbers, expanded their coverage, etc., etc.

The new edition is similar in structure to the first, with the descriptions of individual shops preceded by a series of essays on various types of bookshop. The entries for the shops are alphabetically arranged, with subject and locality indexes at the end.

It's a nicer-looking book than the previous edition, and the cover reproduction of June Stephenson's Girl reading is especially pleasing. As before, the entries provide address, phone number, hours of opening, details of specialisation, the shop's own description of its services, reader comment and details of special services, such as phone or mail order, credit cards accepted and accessibility by wheelchair.

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While your own opinion may differ from that of the anonymous "reader" the comments are generally useful and agreeably idiosyncratic. It's nice, too, to see an increase in the number of country shops covered. As always, prohibitions on advertising sex-shops have meant that you will consult the index in vain for any of the profusion of "adult" bookstores of Melbourne, so the researcher in this area must continue to rely on the Yellow Pages.

The only other thing missing is some maps. This is a wonderful book to give to visiting friends and relatives with a couple of days free in Melbourne and it would be even better if it had a few sketch maps showing where the shops are.

That said, however, it's an extremely useful and enjoyable book, well worth the $19.95 and this reader has found only one bookshop which has had the temerity to change its address since the guide was published!