



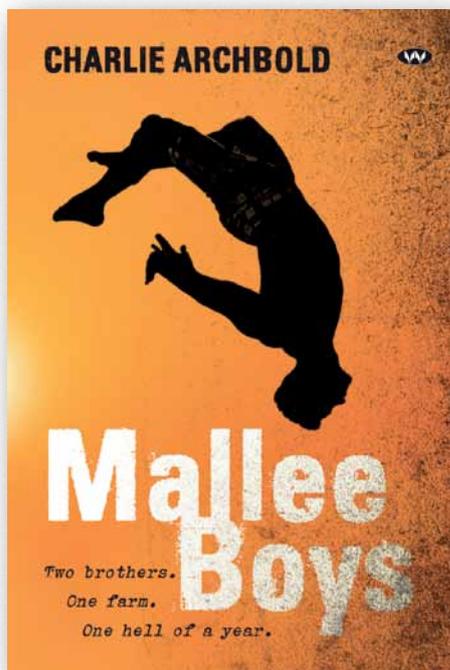
# Wakefield Press MEDIA RELEASE

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WINNER OF THE 2016 ADELAIDE FESTIVAL UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT AWARD

## Mallee Boys

By Charlie Archbold



September 2017

Young Adult

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*Sometimes I feel like I'm neither one thing nor another. I live in the Mallee but I don't like the desert. I live on a farm but I get hay fever and I'm scared of goats. I like school but my best mates don't. I'm stuck between stuff. It's like I'm not meant to be here but I am.*

*Mallee Boys* is a tender look at love, loss and family in the Australian Mallee. The book follows fifteen-year-old Sandy Douglas and his eighteen-year-old brother Red over the course of a year following the death of their mum. Their dad, Tom, also plays a large role in the story; he does his best to make up for the gap left in their lives, but – really – he doesn't have a clue.

As Sandy and Red deal with girls, dirt biking, footy and friendship, both boys have to work out who they want to be, without their mum around. The Mallee, where they live, may seem like the middle of nowhere, but it turns out this is going to be one hell of a year.

On writing *Mallee Boys*, London-born Charlie Archbold says, 'The setting and feel of the book came from my experience living and teaching in the Mallee. The strong sense of place is based on my own response to the landscape and, of course, the huge expansive sky which never fails to amaze me. The relative isolation of small communities and the consequential strong sense of community was new to me and must have resonated. Coming from London it was something I'd never experienced before. But I suppose that's what happens when you go backpacking and fall for a Mallee sheep shearer who you meet picking grapes! Why an urban English woman would end up writing a book about the Mallee still surprises me. Maybe when you're a complete stranger to a place it seeps into you and for me my Mallee experiences became this book.'

**Charlie Archbold** was born in London. She completed a degree in drama before training as a teacher and has worked as an educator for twenty-five years. She recently completed a Master of Education in Studies of Asia. After travelling extensively she settled in Australia and lives with her family in Adelaide. *Mallee Boys* is her first novel.

