

# The Voice of the Bush

## Hope's Road

### MARGARETA OSBORN

From the author of the bestselling *Bella's Run* comes another captivating rural romance set in the rugged, beautiful high country of East Gippsland.

Montmorency Downs has been in Tammy McCauley's family for five generations. The land, and all it has to offer, flows through her veins, and she couldn't imagine any other life. When her abusive husband walks out, he strikes where it hurts most, and Tammy is forced to do something she never imagined she could do.

Joe McCauley has long been estranged from his family. Sixty years ago he walked out on his parents and brother, and never looked back. He now lives alone on McCauleys Hill, widowed, with no friends or family to rely on. When he falls and breaks his hip, he is forced to rely on his neighbours and great-niece - who he has never spoken to - to avoid being placed in a home.

Travis Hunter is struggling to adapt to the role of single father. A dog trapper who hasn't spoken to his brother in years, he is attempting to suppress growing feelings for Tammy and trying to be a father - but doesn't know how to. Still heartbroken from his wife walking out on him, he finds it hard to let anyone in, especially his ten year old son, Billy.

When a massive flood threatens their land and lives, they must come together under the most difficult of circumstances to save each other.

*Hope's Road* brings these characters together in a tale of love, faith, heritage, and loss. When pitted against adversity - whether in the form of abusive, unfaithful husbands, absent mothers, deep feelings of betrayal and anger, lack of self belief, the perils of the land or the temperament of Mother Nature, Tammy, Joe and Travis will unite to show that no matter what life throws at you, there is always hope.

Margaretta Osborn is a fifth-generation farmer who has lived and worked on the land all her life. She also writes about it in the *Gippsland Country Life* magazine. Home is the beautiful Macalister Valley of East Gippsland, where with her husband and three children, she spends many hours in the mountains in which her stories are set. *Hope's Road* is her second novel, following the bestselling *Bella's Run* and e-novella, *A Bush Christmas*.



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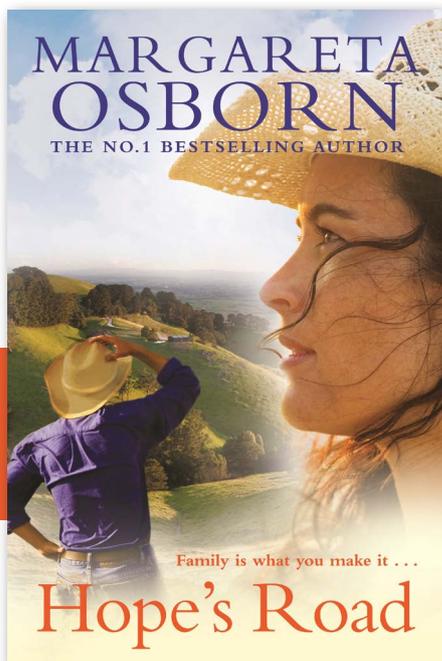
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MARGARETA WILL BE TOURING NSW, VIC AND SA IN MARCH & APRIL 2013



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## A Q&A with Margareta Osborn

**Hope's Road centres heavily around family, the land, and family property - tell us about your family, and life on the land.**

My Great Great Grandfather, Meshech, and his family arrived here in the Macalister Valley, 150 years ago. My family still own and farm half of this original property.

When your own people have birthed, lived and died on a place for generation after generation, land becomes like family, a part of your heart. A property with history like this gives you roots, a space to call home, a place to feel you belong no matter whether you live there or not. The very essence of having such a heritage helps shape who you are, your life and you can never imagine not having this as part of your world.

**A major flood plays a central role in bringing together Tammy, Joe and Travis - have you had much experience with floods?**

We live on a flood plain so floods are a recurrent part of our lives. It's unfortunate but, at the same time, without floods, our dirt wouldn't be as rich as it is. All my life we've experienced small floods, big ones and then the one-in-100 year monsters, of which I've seen two! (I'm not sure how that works.) Whilst I've used a generous amount of literary licence in *Hope's Road* to suit the story, the general experience of being flooded is pretty much the same. I can drop fences, have filled hundreds of sandbags and been at the pointy end of a sticky vehicle situation or two. Not fun, I can assure you.

**Billy, Travis's 10 year old son, is found to have a hearing impairment in the book. This is something a little close to home for you - can you tell us about it?**

Having been diagnosed with a hearing impairment myself, at the age of seven, I wanted to convey to readers that this type of anomaly isn't the end of the world. With an exceptionally supportive family behind me (especially my late mum), my moderate to severe hearing loss has never been known to hold me back.

**What do you hope to convey in your books?**

A deep love of the bush, of rural life in general and also respect and admiration for its amazing, resilient people. I love portraying different characters - their idiosyncrasies and lives - of which, in *Hope's Road* old Joe McCauley, is no exception. I adored writing about this old bushie who is struggling with something that faces us all, as we grow older - aging with dignity, that impending loss of independence and the right to make choices.

Writing also allows me to research and document in small ways, experiences, which readers might not otherwise be familiar with. In *Hope's Road*, Travis Hunter is a dog trapper and formerly a boundary rider on the dog fence in western NSW. This allowed me to research two jobs which I have had a keen interest in. My family and I travelled into outback NSW to speak to the boundary riders and run part of the fence. And I spent hours traversing around the mountains behind dog trappers to observe their job and learn from these skilled bushmen.

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