Recipes for a Nation
Cookbooks and Australian Culture to 1939

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University.
This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution, and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.
Cookbooks were ubiquitous texts found in almost every Australian home. They played an influential role that extended far beyond their original intended use in the kitchen. They codified culinary and domestic practices thereby also codifying wider cultural practices and were linked to transformations occurring in society at large. This thesis illuminates the many ways in which cookbooks reflected and influenced developments in Australian culture and society from the early colonial period until 1939. Whilst concentrating on culinary texts, this thesis does not primarily focus on food; instead it explores the many different ways that cookbooks can be read to further understand Australian culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Through cookbooks we can chart the attitudes and responses to many of the changes that were occurring in Australian life and society. During a period of dramatic social change cookbooks were a constant and reassuring presence in the home. It was within the home that the foundations of Australian culture were laid. Cookbooks provide a unique perspective on issues such as gender, class, race, education, technology, and most importantly they hold a mirror up to Australia and show us what we thought of ourselves.
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Introduction

Chicken in a Curry Mask

1 Chicken 1 Cup of Bread crumbs
½ Cup of Flour 1 Tablespoon of Cream
2 or 3 Eggs 1 Teaspoon of curry paste or powder
Salt Milk to thin it to a batter

Mode: The Chicken can either be boiled or baked. Carve it into neat joints; make batter with the bread crumbs, flour, eggs, cream, curry powder and milk. Dip each piece of chicken and coat it well with this mixture, then fry in plenty of boiling fat. Arrange on a dish, and garnish with hard-boiled egg. Can be eaten hot or cold.

The Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion (1895)

Chicken in a Curry Mask might not be to everyone’s taste yet there is much to savour in this recipe by Wilhelmina Rawson. The recipe, which can be found in her 1895 cookbook The Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion, is more than a simple set of instructions to prepare a dish; it is, in fact, an invaluable historical document. Analysed at face value, this recipe tells us what some people might have been cooking in rural Queensland at the end of the nineteenth century. The presence of chicken in this recipe, a relative luxury on Australian tables until the late 1950s, can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may be seen as an indication of the level of material prosperity in the presumed readership of this cookbook. On the other hand, it might hint at the entrepreneurial drive of some women who raised poultry for profit. Rawson was a strong advocate of this practice and published a book on the topic. The use of curry powder locates this recipe, and those preparing it, within the broader British Empire and links them to the colonial enterprise in India. It also reflects a continuation of British food habits in Australia. Curry, an imported ingredient like many others on the Australian table, is also evidence of Australia’s place in international trade systems.

Shifting focus from the recipe to the book from which it is derived also provides valuable historical insights. The very title of the book, with its use of the term
Antipodean, reflects a nascent sense of a distinct Australian cultural identity or, at the very least, a willingness by its publishers to clearly identify the book as suitable for the Australian market. Rawson’s inclusion of recipes for a wide range of native fauna and flora also hints at a certain sense of culinary nationalism. Indeed, Rawson wrote that ‘the bush teems with animal life, and are we not told that the Almighty has placed it there for the benefit and sustenance of man?’1 This culinary nationalism, which involved the use and adaptation of native produce for culinary purposes, is another indication of a distinct Australian cultural identity. In the book’s pages, Rawson’s concerns stretched beyond the gastronomic to include many other aspects of domestic experience. She devoted space to instructing her readers in the use of utensils and appliances in the kitchen and the laundry and showed a keen awareness of the new domestic technologies that were becoming available on the Australian market. The book was advertised for sale across all of the Australian colonies and is evidence of a lively colonial book trade as well as an indication of a growing demand for locally produced cookbooks.

In the introduction to the Antipodean Cookery Book Rawson wrote: ‘Once more I come before my sister housewives with a cheap and useful little work on cookery, adapted and written expressly to meet the wants and circumstances of those living in the far Bush, as well as those who dwell within reach of the amenities of civilized existence’.2 In nineteenth century colonial Australia, the private domestic sphere was populated primarily by women. Within this domestic realm, cooking was a gendered practice and considered almost exclusively ‘women’s work’. The above sentence also demonstrates an inclination towards thrift and practicality that would be reflected in many other cookbooks that followed. Thrift, in particular, was a moral imperative that transcended

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class barriers in Australia. Rawson was also clearly aware of the divisions that existed between urban and rural areas in the Australian colonies. Finally, her use of the word 'civilized' could be read as evidence of the still fraught situation that existed on the frontier, particularly in her home colony of Queensland. This short analysis barely scratches the surface. *The Antipodean Cookery Book*, like many other cookbooks used in Australian homes, is more than a mere compendium of recipes. It is a valuable cultural artefact representative of the society that created it and contains a wealth of information on a broad range of subjects.

This thesis examines the manner and extent in which cookbooks reflected and influenced developments in Australian culture and society from the early colonial period until the 1930s. At their most basic level, cookbooks suggest what meals were prepared for consumption, and if we are to believe Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's dictum that 'the destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they are fed' then an understanding of foodways is critical to an understanding of the nation.³ Cookbooks are the tangible link with the intangible and ephemeral substance that is food. This thesis does not primarily focus on food. Rather, it explores the many different ways that these texts can be read, often against the grain, to further understand Australian culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Through a close examination of these texts, the greater cultural trends of the society that produced them can be isolated and considered. This period is a fruitful one to study as it saw many transformations in Australian society. It encompassed the beginning of European settlement in Australia and the transition from a colonial society through to the process of Federation and its ensuing political and cultural impact. The first two decades of the twentieth century saw, amongst other things, the introduction of the Commonwealth Franchise Act granting

white women the right to vote and to stand for election for the Australian parliament, and the traumatic events of the First World War. With the 1920s came the arrival of broadcast radio, commercial air travel and the invention of Vegemite. The 1930s saw the full impact of the Great Depression on many sectors of Australian society and the looming prospect of another global conflict. Many of the changes occurring in Australian society, both large and small, were often reflected in the manner in which cookbooks were written and produced.

Cookbooks were a popular and widespread form of literature that found their way into many Australian homes. This study will illuminate how cookbooks played an influential role in the construction of Australian culture that extended far beyond their original intended use as gastronomic guides and manuals for domestic instruction and will contribute to a subtle and nuanced understanding of these developments. A focus on cookbooks also allows for an innovative approach to a rarely utilised primary resource and provides a new prism through which to view the changes occurring in Australian culture and society. This study will produce a richer picture of Australian social culture, both at the domestic and public level, and contribute to the field of Australian social and cultural history.

**Revealing artefacts**

The primary function of cookbooks was as instruction manuals for the production of foodstuffs and the management of the home. Yet, they embody more than just food and domestic culture, they mirror many aspects of the society that produced them; by codifying culinary and domestic practices of the period they also codified wider cultural and social practices. 4 A close focus on cookbooks allows for the consideration of a

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homogeneous series of texts that contain a coherent textual and stylistic format and yet, at the same time, allows for an analysis of the many inherent variations contained within those texts. The word recipe or receipt, another common variant used until the early nineteenth century, has its origins in the Latin *recipere* meaning to 'receive'. In order to receive there has to be, by implication, someone doing the giving. This reciprocal act of giving and receiving which is evident in cookbooks also makes them a useful vehicle through which to examine social relationships.

Historians have used cookbooks in a variety of different ways. Those interested in the history of food find value in what they have to say about the culinary tastes of different societies and how these tastes change. Those interested in women’s history can use these texts to chart many of the changes occurring in domestic practices and the impact of these changes on the lives of their users. Social and cultural historians can use them to explore the wide range of cultural identities that are manifested within their pages. Elizabeth Driver argues that the focused perspective provided by the use of cookbooks as a primary source ‘has the potential to reveal fascinating and sometimes extraordinary individual examples of how a country’s history was shaped’. In his seminal article on the role of cookbooks in the construction of Indian national identity entitled ‘How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India’, Arjun Appadurai neatly sums up the value of cookbooks in historical research when he writes that they are ‘revealing artefacts of culture in the making’.

In 1917, the Australian journalist, philanthropist and cookbook writer Zara Aronson wrote the following in her book entitled *The Mary Elizabeth Cook Book*:

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Of the making of cookery books there is no end. Probably there never will be, and, indeed there is no reason why they should not increase, each new compilation giving more ideas and assistance than its predecessor. Knowledge is ever growing and experience teaches; and, although we may be told that there is nothing new under the sun, yet who is there that can deny that many treasured facts may be gleaned from some new Cookery Books?\(^{7}\)

To this insightful comment by Aronson I would add that today many treasured facts may also be gleaned from old cookery books.

**A note on the sources**

The principal primary sources for this thesis are, of course, the myriad of cookbooks that found their way into Australian kitchens. Barry Higman warns that ‘the interpretation of trends in the quantity and content of cookbooks must be approached cautiously, bearing in mind the poor survival chances of this literature in libraries public and private’.\(^{8}\) Fortunately, Australian institutions have recently come to see the value of these humble texts and have begun to add them to their collections. In 2010, as I embarked on this project, the Mitchell Library was the recipient of a sizeable collection of almost five hundred early Australian cookbooks.

During the period covered by this thesis approximately twelve hundred Australian cookbooks were published, some in multiple editions. Added to these were the numerous British, American and New Zealand cookbooks that also appeared on the Australian market. Although these cookbooks are, at least on the surface, a homogeneous series of texts that contain a coherent textual and stylistic format, they are enormously varied in their breadth and scope. This thesis involves the close analysis of

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\(^{7}\) Zara Aronson, *The Mary Elizabeth Cook Book: Over 900 Recipes (many New) for All Homes* (Sydney: George B. Philip and Son, 1917), Preface.

approximately a hundred and fifty to two hundred cookbooks as well as the consultation of over a hundred more. Choosing which sources to include and which to omit is, as every historian knows, a fraught process. The bestsellers of the era, such as *The Presbyterian Women's Cookery Book* which amassed twenty three editions and boasted 440,000 copies in print between 1902 and 1943, were obvious choices. As well, works of well-known cookbook authors, such as Harriet Wicken and Amy Schauer, also feature prominently throughout my thesis. Some cookbooks, such as Edward Abbott’s *English and Australian Cookery Book* and *Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book and Household Hints*, are now regarded as seminal texts and which warrant their inclusion. Then there are those conspicuous for being the first in their field, for instance the *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* cookbook, published in 1907, the first such text anywhere in the world to focus exclusively on cooking on an electric stove. Yet, some works remain elusive. A first edition of Rawson’s *Cookery Book* remains to be found and no copies of *Theory of Cookery*, Amy Schauer’s cookery class text book, are available for examination. This highlights the ephemeral nature of many of these texts and the low value attached to them as historical documents by libraries and other cultural institutions.

**Approaches to writing a history of Australian cookbooks**

This dissertation draws upon a number of historiographical approaches to the study of cookbooks. Cultural history allows for an understanding of how culture historically creates and uses signs and symbolic forms, in this case food and its literary representation in cookbooks, to construct thoughts and actions. The approach functions as a method of understanding the context in which the past has been produced.

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10 Stephen Garton, ‘On the Defensive: Poststructuralism and Australian Cultural History’, in *Cultural*
Understanding this context involves an analysis of social practices in their many shapes and forms, like the production of cookbooks and preparation of food, that form the ideas, beliefs and habits of the individuals or period under scrutiny. Cultural history's embracing of other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, proves particularly fruitful in any investigation of food-related matters such as cookbooks. Sociologists and anthropologists have long shown an interest in the role that food plays as a cultural marker over and above its nutritional role. Brillat-Savarin's aphorism ‘tell me what kind of food you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man you are’, borders on the cliché, but it has become the basis for a whole range of studies into food habits and their larger meaning within cultures. The processes of food choice and consumption become imbued with deeply symbolic meanings that transcend the quotidian act of eating and allow for a thorough analysis of the culture of those involved. As Roland Barthes reminds us, food becomes a ‘system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, behaviour and situations’.

A number of historians have undertaken content analyses of cookbooks; the value of this particular approach is that it allows for a comparative analysis of the wide range of data contained within those texts, including such aspects as ingredients, techniques and recipes. Furthermore it highlights the way food practices, and the cultural and social concerns behind them, developed and changed over a determined period of time and locates them within an historical continuum. In his content analysis of twentieth century New Zealand cookbooks, Michael Symons notes that the titles of these texts

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History in Australia, ed. Richard White and Hsu-Ming Teo (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003), 56.
11 Ibid., 55.
encapsulate prevailing societal interests and expectations and respond to broader
cultural and social changes over the period under examination.\textsuperscript{16} Similar patterns of
information could be deduced from nineteenth and early twentieth century Australian
cookbook titles. Colin Bannerman has conducted a content analysis on a range of
Australian colonial cookbooks focusing primarily on the recipes, and examines aspects
such as the frequency of ingredients and cooking techniques.\textsuperscript{17} While this thesis does
not seek to engage in a content analysis of cookbooks, it utilises some aspects of this
methodological approach to focus on certain features contained within these texts in
order to extrapolate larger cultural and social concerns.

As this thesis encompasses the study of written texts it also draws upon aspects of the
history of the book. This is useful in understanding the place of cookbooks within the
broader publishing industry in Australia. It also incorporates what Martyn Lyons
describes as the history of reading which explores the manner in which texts are
received by their audience. These texts, argues Lyons, are not static and each new re-
iteration addresses a new audience whose 'participation and expectations are guided not
just by authors but by publishing strategies'.\textsuperscript{18} This process, which is particularly
evident in cookbooks, also points to the fluid and changing nature of the society which
receives them.

Lyons describes reading as a creative process through which readers re-work and re-
imagine what they read.\textsuperscript{19} Many of the cookbooks available for perusal in Australian
cultural institutions bear the marks of their previous existence in the domestic kitchen.

Broken spines allow some of these books to fall open on favourite recipes. Stains and

\textsuperscript{16} Michael Symons, 'From Modernity to Postmodernity: As Revealed in the Titles of New Zealand Recipe
\textsuperscript{17} Colin Bannerman, 'Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating C.
1850 to C. 1920: The Evidence from Newspapers, Periodical Journals and Cookery Literature.' (Ph.D.
\textsuperscript{18} Martyn Lyons, \textit{A History of Reading and Writing in the Western World} (New York: Palgrave
Macmillan, 2010), 3.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
splatters can also be interpreted to denote recipes for dishes that make regular appearances on the table. The marginalia that appears in many of these cookbooks, ranging from such terms as ‘delicious’ to ‘does not work’, act as a form of criticism and personalisation by their users.

On Cookbooks

‘An ‘Australian Cookery Book’! Who would have thought it?’ This sentiment greeted the publication of Australia's first cookbook in 1864. Edward Abbott's *The English and Australian Cookery Book* in many ways heralded the birth of a distinct Australian cookbook culture. The ensuing seven decades saw a wide selection of cookbooks available on the Australian market. Cookbooks like *The Housewife's Friend* from 1895 and *The Commonwealth Cookery Book*, published a decade later, were straightforward, containing recipe collections and household tips. The overwhelming majority of these early Australian cookbooks were written by women, some of whom were able to carve out a professional career in the food and cookbook publishing industry. Hannah Maclurcan, author of two popular cookbooks, would go on to become the owner and figurehead of the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney, one of the city's most fashionable establishments. Amateur cooks were also able to demonstrate their culinary ability by contributing to the large number of community and fund-raising cookbooks published by organisations such as the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union whose cookbook has been revised and republished for over a century. Cookbooks like Robert Walker's 1890 *Tasmanian Cookery Guide* published by a Tasmanian grocery business, and the 1898 *Kandy Koola Cookery Book*, issued by a tea-importing and retailing company, became vehicles for advertising a whole range of products and services and often were distributed at little or no cost. Some, like the *Thermo-electrical Cooking Made Easy*
cookbook, allowed readers to adapt to the new technologies becoming available in the
Australian home; others, like the 1912 *Invalid and Convalescent Cookery Book*, gave
recipes suitable for the care of the sick. Many other social concerns were touched upon
by cookbooks. Those published by the various state education departments addressed
the culinary education of young girls and even patriotic fervour was manifested in a
whole range of cookbooks published during the First World War. The breadth and scope
of Australian cookbooks published from the 1860s to the 1930s demonstrates the impact
they made, as cultural artefacts, on Australian society and makes them a rich medium
through which to study that changing society.

In the twenty-first century, the cookbooks that are found in the home kitchen take on
many different shapes and forms. Some are the grease-splattered and well-thumbed
tomes containing favourite family recipes handed down from a previous generation.
Evoking a sense of nostalgia for a long lost childhood and days gone by, these books
reflect the strong mnemonic power of food. Like Proust and his Madeleine many an
Australian taking a bite from a scone cooked from a Margaret Fulton recipe or a biscuit
from the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* is transported to the days of their childhood.
Other books, usually glossy and written by well known-chefs or coming from the latest
fashionable restaurant, are commonly referred to as gastro-pom and allow the reader to
live vicariously, to imagine themselves seated at the table of these gastronomic
luminaries. More often than not these books seldom leave the coffee table and enter the
kitchen, their recipes too complex to prepare at home and their ingredients too
expensive or difficult to obtain. A third kind of cookbook is closer to a travelogue,
taking its readers on an armchair ride to exotic locales or reminding them of meals once
tasted in far flung places. The primacy of cookbooks as a source of culinary instruction
in the twenty-first century is also being challenged by the proliferation of cooking
shows on television and the easy accessibility of recipes on the internet, on a range of easily used devices.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia, however, cookbooks were much more practical tomes. They were instructional manuals for daily use in the home containing a broad range of domestic advice on almost every imaginable topic. Books like Wilhelmina Rawson's 1876 *Cookery Book and Household Hints* and *The Australian Housewives' Manual* published in 1883, provided their readers with more than just recipes and cookery methods, they also gave advice on everything from marriage to furnishing a newlywed's home, removing mildew (essential in sub-tropical Queensland) and dealing with servants. Many of the household tips included in these books provided helpful advice on the minutiae of housekeeping in a time before convenient cleaning products were readily available on shop shelves. Unlike many of today's cookbooks, they lacked glossy images depicting the dishes they provide recipes for, and the few black and white illustrations that appeared in their pages were usually advertisements for ingredients or kitchen equipment.

Cookbooks fall within a category known as prescriptive literature, along with other works providing advice to their readers such as etiquette guides and gardening manuals. Their function is to provide detailed instructions and information on a given subject. In the case of cookbooks their prescriptive nature is most evident in the recipes which they contain. However, prescriptive literature often goes beyond mere practical instruction and seeks to provide advice on more abstract and elusive qualities. The study of this form of literature is complicated by the difficult nature of assessing how an individual user would read and interpret a text and the prescriptive messages it contained, as well as how the text was used in everyday practice. Some historians argue that a study of prescriptive texts offers only a fragmentary view of the society that produced them and
warn against the dangers of accepting these texts uncritically as evidence of the lives and experiences of their readers. Others contend such texts serve to emphasise societal norms rather than ways in which individuals might have responded to those norms. Historian Penny Russell acknowledges that, while prescriptive rules cannot tell us how people lived, they nevertheless do give meaning to social behaviour.

**Australian Food History**

Any study of Australian cookbooks must be undertaken with an understanding of the broader food culture in which they flourished. Michael Symons, though not an academic historian, has become one of the driving forces in the historiography of Australian foodways. He has published broadly in academic journals across a range of disciplines exploring various aspects of Australian and New Zealand food culture. His seminal popular history of Australian food habits, *One Continuous Picnic*, provides the most comprehensive and broad historical account of food practices in Australia, dating from the colonial period through to the last quarter of the twentieth century. Symons charts the development of Australian food culture from the arrival of European settlers, paying scant attention to the food habits of Indigenous Australians who inhabited what he deems to be an ‘uncultivated continent’. Recent scholarship, such as Bill Gammage’s *The Biggest Estate on Earth*, has shown the extent to which Indigenous Australians shaped their landscape and environment in the quest for sustainable food

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resources. Symons describes the unabashedly Anglo-centric nature of early colonial cuisine and continues through the growing urbanisation and industrialisation of Australian society, the impact of colonialism on agricultural production and the subsequent effect on food practices. Symons notes the rapid increases in post-World War Two migration from Europe as one of the reasons for major changes in Australian eating habits, what he calls the gourmet boom, but labels this as somewhat of a cliché and credits developments in the food industry, particularly restaurants, growing affluence and increased overseas travel as the most credible explanations for these changes. In the original edition of his book, published in 1982, Symons concludes that the unique conditions encountered in Australia, including social, cultural, geographic and environmental, led Australians to suffer the ‘world's worst cuisine’.27

This negative perception of Australian cuisine in the nineteenth century was partly derived from the French geographer and writer Edmond Marin La Meslée who published an account of his travels in Australia entitled *L'Australie Nouvelle* (The New Australia) in 1883.28 In his book, La Meslée noted the quality, surplus and cheapness of the ingredients available in the colonies, but pointed out that the cuisine produced from those ingredients was both elementary and detestable.29 La Meslée was not the only traveller to these shores to describe Australian cuisine in such a manner. Richard Twopenny devoted a whole chapter of his 1883 *Town Life in Australia* to the food of the colonies. Twopenny stated that food in Australia was cheaper and more plentiful, but poorer in quality than that available in Britain.30 As far as their food was concerned, according to Twopenny, the working classes in Australia lived ‘ten times better than

26 Symons, *The Shared Table*.
27 Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*, 257.
their fellows at home', but the middle and upper classes lived ten times worse.\footnote{Ibid., 71.} When comparing the cuisine of Australia with its English and European counterparts Twopenny argued that ‘the French eat, the English only feed [and] the Australians “grub”’.\footnote{Ibid.} In an article for the \textit{Contemporary Review}, David Christie Murray also bemoaned the quality of food in the colony claiming that ‘a gourmet would find a residence in Australia a purgatory’.\footnote{D. Christie Murray, ‘The Antipodeans I’, \textit{Contemporary Review}, 1891, 294.} Christie Murray wrote of his longing for Dover sole and the ‘delightful’ English strawberry during his sojourn in Australia and praised the qualities of British beef and mutton over those available in Australia. However, Christie Murray did acknowledge that local residents did not agree with his perceptions of Australian food and that many of them found his views downright foolish.\footnote{Ibid., 295.} Not all travellers to Australia were so disparaging about the quality of the local cuisine. In \textit{Another England: Life, Living, Homes and Homemakers in Victoria}, Edwin Booth praised the eating establishments in Melbourne. These restaurants, Booth claimed, furnished dinners at the bargain price of sixpence a head and added that ‘to the London clerk, accustomed to the spare gentility of a city “shilling dinner”, the generous providings of a Melbourne sixpenny dining-room would be an agreeable change.’\footnote{Edwin Carton Booth, \textit{Another England: Life, Living, Homes and Homemakers in Victoria} (London: Virtue & Co, 1869), 273.} Booth also highlighted the quality of the recipes, particularly those for puddings, which featured in the \textit{Australasian} newspaper.\footnote{Ibid., 301.}

Symons’ argument of an abominable cuisine is not borne out in the evidence available in many of the cookbooks of the period that contained a wide selection of recipes utilising every conceivable ingredient found in Australia.\footnote{For more on Symons’ Abominable cuisine thesis see Michael Symons, ‘An “Abominable” Cuisine’, \textit{Petits Propos Culinaires} 15 (1983): 34–40.} Here we can once again turn to Rawson's \textit{Antipodean Cookery Book} as an example, in it we can find recipes that are
far from monotonous and insipid, including ones for Prawn Curry, Home-Made Vermicelli and Chilli Sauce.\(^{38}\)

The main causes for this ‘abominable’ cuisine, according to Symons, were Australia’s lack of a peasant heritage and an ensuing ‘total history of industrialisation’.\(^{39}\) Symons argues that these conditions have led Australians to endure the world’s worst cuisine and to care less about food than ‘any other people in history’.\(^{40}\) The causal relationship between the perceived lack of a traditional agrarian economy and an inevitable industrial cuisine posited by Symons is problematic. Graham Pont has argued that Symons clings to a romantic and misguided vision of peasants and the role they have played in the creation of cuisines throughout history.\(^{41}\) Sociologist Jack Goody, in his book *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, noted that the development of an elaborate ‘cuisine’ is predicated on the existence of both sophisticated agricultural practices and high levels of literacy.\(^{42}\) A cuisine does not emanate from a peasantry alone but also requires the intervention of a literate class. Pont further contends that Symons’ prejudice in favour of the ‘peasant’ has distorted his perceptions of the history of Australian eating. This idealised version of peasant life also fails to take into account the preponderance of small holdings in rural Australia during the colonial era that relied not only on manufactured goods but also on their own home-grown produce for culinary sustenance. Symons’ romanticised view of peasants and their cuisine originated, by his own admission, during his stay in Tuscany where he wrote *One Continuous Picnic*.\(^ {43}\)

Another misconception in Symons’ thesis is that Australian society, and its foodways in particular, was under the thrall of industrialisation from the moment the First Fleet

\(^{38}\) Rawson, *The Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion*, 60,75, 94.

\(^{39}\) Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*, 12.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 12 & 254.


\(^{43}\) Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*, 9.
landed on the shores of Botany Bay. While much of Great Britain was undoubtedly experiencing the early impacts of the industrial revolution by the time of the first Australian settlement, these effects were less evident in the colony. The earliest days of the colonial venture in Australia, at least until 1820, can be described as pre-industrial and mercantilist and even by 1870 Sydney did not demonstrate the 'mature industrial capitalism' that was apparent in England. In her account of Sydney's early history entitled *The Colony*, Grace Karskens describes a pre-industrial town and not a 'modern industrialised settlement'.

Other critics have found fault in Symons' analysis of women's role in the development of an Australian cuisine. Felicity Newman and Danielle Gallegos describe it as a 'masculinist history' that diminishes the role of women and accords little value to the domestic traditions passed on from mother to daughter. A clear example of Symons' masculinist focus lies in the fact that he devotes less than three pages of his book to the dozens of cookbooks written by women in the latter half of the nineteenth century in comparison to ten pages on Edward Abbott's *English and Australian Cookery Book*. In the first fifty years of the local cookbook publishing industry there were only a very small number of male authors of any significance. In comparison, during the same period, there were over a dozen of prominent female authors many of whom were responsible for multiple publications. Symons also dismisses popular works such as the Country Women's Association cookbooks, continuously in print since the 1920s, as nothing more than 'plain texts' that produce bland and boring foods from processed

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44 Ibid., 21–23.
ingredients. Beverley Kingston argues that Symons unfairly criticises women for many of Australia's food habits; she believes these women deserve 'a more realistic historic assessment of what they did and what choices and opportunities they really had when it came to buying and preparing food'.

A significant result of this focus on Australia's supposedly abominable and monotonous food has been to marginalise the importance of cookbooks, particularly those written by women, in the development of an Australian culture. Despite these flaws, however, *One Continuous Picnic* remains one of the pre-eminent works in the field of Australian food history. It was the first work of its kind and laid the foundation for the serious academic study of Australian foodways.

One of the more prominent scholars in the growing field of Australian food history has been Barbara Santich. In *Looking for Flavour* Santich examines a wide range of topics relating to the consumption and appreciation of food in Australia including the proliferation of sweet biscuits in the popular culinary imagination and the rise and fall of a forgotten dish: the kangaroo steamer. In *Bold palates: Australia's Gastronomic Heritage* Santich continues her analysis of the evolution of Australian foodways and draws parallels between changing tastes and developments in broader aspects of Australian society. In other works she explores the role of class and political hierarchies in the development of an Australian cuisine, the xenophobic nature of early Australian foodways and the influence of Indigenous food in nineteenth century Australian food culture. Santich has also edited *In the Land of the Magic Pudding*, a comprehensive

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collection of Australian writings on the subject of gastronomy. Unlike Symons, Santich is less critical of the qualities of Australian foodways and recognises the important role played by women in the articulation of a food culture in written texts.

Other authors have also explored the history of Australian eating practices. Anne Golan's *The Tradition of Australian Cooking* provides a potted history of Australian food primarily through old recipes and with some attempts at historical contextualisation. Richard Beckett's *Convicted Tastes: Food in Australia* covers similar territory to Symons' work; but his style is light-hearted and includes numerous recipes for dishes which he describes in his book. Colin Bannerman's *Acquired Tastes: Celebrating Australia's Culinary History* covers the gamut of the nation's culinary history in a little over ninety pages and includes contributions from prominent food writers including Gay Bilson and Marion Halligan. Bannerman recognises that a study of Australian food culture is able to fill in some of the historical gaps created by a concentration on public affairs and an overly masculinist view of history. In *A Good Plain Cook: An Edible History of Queensland*, Susan Addison and Judith McKay narrow their focus to examine the development of foodways in one particular geographical area. An even more specific regional focus is evident in Angela Heuzenroeder’s PhD thesis *A Food Culture Transplanted: origins and development of the food of early German immigrants to the Barossa Region, South Australia (1839-1939)*. These tomes fall under the rubric of 'culinary history' focusing almost exclusively on the eating habits of Australians, the food they ate, how they prepared it.

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54 Ibid., vii.
56 Angela May Heuzenroeder, 'A food culture transplanted: origins and development of the food of early German immigrants to the Barossa Region, South Australia (1839-1939)' (PhD Thesis, University of Adelaide, 2006).
and the changes that occurred in these habits over time. Whilst these works are undoubtedly of an historical nature and attempt to locate culinary history within a broader historical context, for the most part they do not provide an analytical account of how the more subtle social and cultural factors, such as class, race and gender, might have dictated these food habits and choices.

Historians have investigated other themes related to the food habits of Australia. Barbara Santich has explored the impact of nutritional and health discourses on Australian food habits, particularly in her book *What the Doctors Ordered: 150 years of dietary advice in Australia*. Throughout her work Santich discusses how dietary trends, nutritional fads and, the at times idiosyncratic and eccentric, scientific theories evident in Australian food writing reflect not only changes in the scientific understanding of nutrition but also wider shifts in political, economic and socio-cultural values. Writing on the same theme, Jonathan Todd argues that the scientific discourse on nutrition and diet was crucial in ‘theorising a social and national economy from the bodily level up’. Issues of nutrition are also raised in *From Scarcity to Surfeit* by Robin Walker and Dave Roberts. Focusing exclusively on New South Wales, Walker and Roberts' work is a medico-historical examination of the physiological impact of changing dietary practices. They provide such things as a nutritional analysis of the foods consumed and the consequent health effects these might have had. This book takes its cue from the pioneering work by F.W. Clements and two other nutritionists entitled *The Hungry Years 1788-1892*. First published in 1947 in the journal *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*.
Studies, it was the first work of its kind to seriously examine the food practices of colonial Australia. Walker and Roberts also contributed a chapter examining colonial food habits in *Food Habits in Australia: Proceedings of the First Deakin/Sydney Universities Symposium on Australian Nutrition*. Here they criticize Symons and Beckett's work, labelling it as superficial, and encourage further investigation into the links between food habits and social and economic conditions. The role of technology in the development of colonial Australian foodways has been most thoroughly examined by K.T.H. Farrer in *A Settlement Amply Supplied: Food Technology in Nineteenth Century Australia*. Farrer discusses how the changes brought on by the development of new technologies in the preservation of foods impacted both domestic food consumption practices and the growth of export markets for Australian produce.

While the field of Australian food history has expanded considerably in the last three decades, there have been few scholarly examinations of cookbooks in Australia. In his book *A Friend in the Kitchen: Old Australian Cookery Books*, Colin Bannerman examines the changes in Australian culinary culture during what he terms the 'federation period', through recipes and changing culinary fashions. Bannerman is primarily interested in the culinary ideas contained within these cookbooks and, to a small degree, attempts to contextualise them within a larger social and cultural framework. In his PhD thesis *Print media and the development of an Australian culture of food and eating c. 1850 to c. 1920*, Bannerman aims to chart the development of distinctly Australian foodways. His focus is on how this developing culinary culture was specifically represented in the print media rather than in Australian culture as a whole. This

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research, as Bannerman suggests, provides an excellent base for further investigation, a suggestion taken up by my dissertation.65 Sarah Black's thesis, 'Tried and Tested': Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890-1980, takes a broader approach in its conception of 'culture' for its analysis of Australian cookbooks than Bannerman does, while limiting her study to one particular genre of cookbook. Black argues that community cookbooks were an important factor in the formation of civil society in Australia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In The British Housewife: Cookery-Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain Gilly Lehman focuses on the expanding audience for cookbooks in Britain and how they, at the same time, both mirrored and changed the eating habits of Britons. She also highlights that much more information can be gathered from this type of texts including larger cultural and social changes.66 Nicola Humble covers similar ground in Culinary Pleasures: Cookbooks and the Transformation of British Food. Here, Humble analyses changes in British foodways and links them to broader changes in British society.67 In The Invention of the Modern Cookbook Sandra Sherman explores the development of English cookbooks from the eighteenth through to the twenty-first century. Sherman's interests lie in the textual strategies used by authors and the manner in which these strategies define the genre. She also notes that cookbooks are useful in examining a broad range of topics including domesticity, class, health, urbanization, nationalism, changing food supplies, and the impact of colonialism on developing tastes.68 Mary DuSablon's America's Collectible Cookbooks: the History, the Politics, the Recipes charts the role of cookbooks as the shapers of American eating habits and of

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65 Bannerman, 'Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating C. 1850 to C. 1920', 350–351.
68 Sandra Sherman, Invention of the Modern Cookbook (Santa Barbara, Calif: Greenwood Press, 2010), xiii.
American culture. 69 DuSablon highlights the gendered nature of food practices and argues that American cuisine was ‘conceived, developed, penned, and conserved almost entirely by women’. 70 All these books demonstrate the value of cookbooks as historical sources and reveal within their pages a broad range of cultural and social concerns and developments. While these works focus on American and British conditions they provide a useful methodological approach to the study of cookbooks and form part of the theoretical basis for this thesis.

Studies of cookbooks have demonstrated the powerful role they play in the construction of national identity. As both sociologists and anthropologists have argued, food has an integral part in the formation of identities; cookbooks, for their part, are the concrete reminder of those food ways and habits. This type of text becomes the nexus between cultural and social constructions, symbolic significance and individual expression and becomes an important site for the assertion of identities. 71 In her study of cookbook usage in mid-twentieth century Australia, Sian Supski describes their use by women as a way of transmitting and gaining knowledge, as well as recording and recalling cultural traditions. 72 Barry Higman notes that cookbooks provide much to elucidate the development of national, regional and ethnic identities and the way these identities shift and are constructed in response to broader social and political changes. 73 Arjun Appadurai illustrates the role that contemporary Indian cookbooks have played in the construction of a 'national cuisine' in that country and the broader implications this might have in the construction of a national identity. 74 He suggests that production of culinary texts such as cookery books is part of a larger process of constructing complex

69 Mary Anna DuSablon, America’s Collectible Cookbooks: The History, the Politics, the Recipes (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994).
70 Ibid., 61.
73 Higman, ‘Cookbooks and Caribbean Cultural Identity’, 77.
public cultures that hint at a wide range of possible identities.\textsuperscript{75} In \textit{Danish cookbooks: Domesticity & National Identity, 1616-1901}, Carol Gold examines the role of cookbooks in the construction of national identity in Denmark. These texts, Gold contends, show how changes occurring in the private sphere parallel those occurring in the broader social and political world and that they reflect the evolution of a distinct Danish national identity.\textsuperscript{76} Through the description of new and old culinary practices cookery books can also project a desired and aspirational idea of identity to a still inchoate nation state.\textsuperscript{77} Nineteenth and early twentieth century Australian cookery books provide a series of clues as to the development of a distinct range of Australian cultural identities. It is important to note, however, that any attempt to ascribe a neat and tidy conception of an ‘Australian identity’ is fraught with difficulty. These conceptions, as Richard White has pointed out, are often artificially imposed on a wide range of ‘untidy social relationships, attitudes and emotions’.\textsuperscript{78} Nevertheless, for the most part Australian cookbooks describe foodways as a series of relatively homogeneous cultural and social practices that were part of a larger British and imperial context yet also demonstrate a distinct local character. These books were also social texts that reflected both wider and unique social and cultural concerns that existed in Australia, amongst them the question of what it meant to be an Australian.

The role of class in the determination of food practices is developed by Pierre Bourdieu in \textit{Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste}. Bourdieu argues that different classes have their own distinctive tastes, including food tastes and preferences that arise from their own distinct life experiences. He introduces the concept of 'cultural

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 22.
capital' as a principal factor which determines the differing consumption practices of the different social classes. Cultural capital, as opposed to economic capital, is manifested through the idea of taste and is not necessarily contingent on income or wealth.

Bourdieu argues that while forms of cultural capital can be gained through education and other forms of self-improvement, it is primarily gained through upbringing, what he terms as habitus. Habitus describes the embodiment of social structures, behaviours and interactions; it describes a range of individual dispositions that reflect, at the same time, external social structures and personalised worldviews. Beverley Kingston suggests that knowledge about food and cooking has always had a class dimension, on one hand being practical and necessary and on the other being more concerned with taste and fashion. An analysis of Australian cookbooks becomes a fruitful way to explore changing class divisions in Australian society as a whole.

Many Australian cookbooks brought with them the habitus of their authors. Edward Abbott, author of The English and Australian Cookbook, was a wealthy landowner, newspaper publisher and a member of the Tasmanian political elite. His education and class are reflected in the erudite, and often idiosyncratic, character of his cookbook. Wilhelmina Rawson, though from a genteel middle-class background, spent portions of her adult life living in abject poverty in remote rural areas. Her first-hand knowledge of the vicissitudes of rural life was clearly manifested in the forms of advice and recipes she gave in her cookbooks. The contributors to the many community cookbooks published in Australia would also have undoubtedly brought aspects of their class, religious and social background into these books.

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81 Kingston, ‘When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?’, 100.
Barry Higman's *Domestic Service in Australia* describes the functions of servants, including the role of cooks, within the domestic sphere. His analysis notes some of the class stratifications that existed within the master/servant relationship and the impact these had inside the homes of those who hired servants. The adequacy of hired cooks, their availability and their status within the domestic hierarchy were also of significant concern to many employers. One wag noted that the only good cook worthy of that name ever to have set foot in the colony was the 'great circumnavigator' aboard the Endeavour. Wilhelmina Rawson devoted a whole section of her first cookbook to the problematic nature of dealing with servants within the home. Twenty years later another prominent cookbook author, Zara Aronson, continued along the same vein providing her readers with an 'outline of how to manage domestics'. Australian cookbooks served as a guide to train servants in the kitchen and played an important role in the fraught class negotiations between mistresses and servants. This is one way in which these texts become a lens through which class distinctions in Australian society can be explored and examined.

Cookbooks were also important in the construction of more personal and intimate identities in the domestic realm. These texts have within them, as Janet Floyd and Laurel Foster suggest, the ability to 'evoke the elaborate scene of home', and by implication, the many domestic and familial relationships and tensions that exist within it. They also became sites where powerful ideologies of domesticity were constructed and gender roles rigidly defined. The primary role traditionally played by women in

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the preparation of meals in the private domestic sphere clearly identified them as the main consumers of these culinary texts. Cookbooks functioned as a link between the private, and mainly female, realm of the kitchen, where women were able to exercise their authority and experience and the more masculine public one where they were less visible. However, cookbooks not only helped to demarcate the boundaries of the feminine, they also allowed for an expansion of those boundaries into the public realm and to a wider reading public through the publication of texts written primarily by women.

The gendered nature of food preparation within the domestic realm in Australia is evident from the preponderance of female cookbook authors and the explicit way in which they addressed a female readership. While these cookbooks were undoubtedly intended to be used by women in the domestic realm there was an implicit understanding that these texts would also, at times, be used by men. It is important to note that outside the domestic sphere men were often the visible face of cooking. In pastoral stations across Australia the role of camp and homestead cook was typically taken up by men. Professional chefs working in restaurants and large hotels were often also men. The author of one of Australia's earliest cookbook *The Australian Cook* from 1876, Alfred Wilkinson, was himself the Chef de Cuisine at Melbourne's Athenaeum Club. The gendered nature of cooking work in domestic service was a little more nebulous. In some ways domestic service straddled both the private and public sphere as a form of public household labour carried out within the privacy of someone else's home. Barry Higman has noted that in early employment censuses the listed

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occupations of domestic servants were completely gendered and that only the role of cook appeared for both men and women.\textsuperscript{88}

The overwhelmingly gendered aspect of domestic food practices has been of concern to sociologists and is also central to any historical analysis of foodways and cookbooks and their impacts on broader society. In \textit{The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking} Luce Girard focuses on the primary role women play in the formation of food practices.\textsuperscript{89} Whilst recognising the centrality of women in the preparation of meals in the home, Girard argues that domestic duties like cooking are not the manifestation of a feminine essence but, rather, arise from specific social and cultural conditions.\textsuperscript{90} In their study entitled \textit{Food in the Division of Labour at Home} Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott and Anneke van Otterloo explore the assumptions that most societies consider cooking at home to be women's work. These assumptions are clearly manifested in a wide range of quarters, such as in domestic advice literature that was primarily targeted at women, in girls' toys and in certain aspects of domestic architecture.\textsuperscript{91} Historians have also taken an interest in how cooking and cookbooks have shaped gender roles and expectations. In \textit{Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote} Janet Theophano explores the role of cookbooks in women's lives, both as authors and users. Theophano argues that these texts allowed women to identify and define themselves within a broader, and overwhelmingly patriarchal, cultural setting.\textsuperscript{92} Laura Shapiro's \textit{Perfection Salad} and Jessamyn Neuhaus's \textit{Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking} also examine women and cooking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the manner in

\textsuperscript{88} Higman, \textit{Domestic Service in Australia}, 130.
\textsuperscript{89} Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, \textit{Living and Cooking} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 151.
\textsuperscript{91} Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott, and Anneke van Otterloo, 'Food in the Division of Labour at Home', \textit{Current Sociology} 40, no. 2 (1992): 95.
\textsuperscript{92} Theophano, \textit{Eat My Words}, 50.
which cookbooks projected gendered images. Whilst these books are set within an American context, they provide a theoretical foundation with which to examine similar developments in Australia. While not specifically focusing on cooking or cookbooks a number of Australian studies have examined the gendered expectations for women in the home. Raymond Evans and Kay Saunders explore the changes occurring in the domestic sphere in ‘No Place Like Home: The Evolution of the Australian Housewife’. In My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann Beverley Kingston considers the role of women as an intrinsic part of the Australian workforce both within and outside the home.

The evolution and dissemination of cookbooks has been linked with the rise in women’s literacy. As well, the book themselves were regarded as a vehicle for the improvement of literacy. Yet, by the end of the nineteenth century in Australia cookbooks would serve an even more specific didactic purpose as they played an important part in disseminating expert advice through the provision of domestic science classes. In The Disenchantment of the Home: Modernizing Australian Domestic Life Kereen Reiger discusses how the modernizing impulse in society altered the perception of the woman in the home. A woman went from being a born nurturer to someone who was in need of expert advice, such as that provided by the domestic economy movement, in order to carry out her household duties. Katie Holmes has also noted how the domestic science movement, with its focus on economic management and household efficiency, affected women’s daily lives. This impact, according to Holmes, was most clearly manifested

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93 Laura Shapiro, Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century (New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 1986); Neuhaus, Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking.
96 Theophano, Eat My Words, 157.
in the changing rhythms of domestic work, which became governed by the clock.\textsuperscript{99} Beverley Kingston examines the role of cookery education in ‘When did we teach our girls to cook?’. Here, Kingston argues that the impetus for cookery education in Australia was a utilitarian one fostered by the progressive women's movement at the end of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{100} Adele Wessell and Alison Wishart have examined the career of the prominent domestic science instructor Flora Pell in ‘Recipes for reading culinary heritage: Flora Pell and her cookery book’. They argue that domestic science was influential not only in cookery education but also in articulating ideas about national loyalties, citizenship and the role of women amongst others.\textsuperscript{101}

\textbf{Chapter Outline}

This thesis is structured in three sections taking a thematic rather than a chronological approach. The first section focuses on the period before the advent of locally produced cookbooks and the subsequent birth and rise of a domestic cookbook industry in Australia. The following section explores the role of cookbooks in the construction of national, class and gendered identities in Australia. The final section narrows the focus to examine the role, function and impact of cookbooks in Australia using two particular case studies, the use of cookbooks in domestic science education and in the promotion of new domestic technologies.

Chapter 1 explores the role of British cookbooks in the construction of colonial culture in Australia. It argues that the maintenance of British foodways, in which cookbooks were a crucial element, served as a mechanism to reaffirm a sense of Britishness for many settlers. While British cookbooks allowed for a replication of British food habits

\textsuperscript{99} Ibid., 170.
\textsuperscript{100} Kingston, ‘When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?’, 97.
this chapter also points to the tensions that were present in attempting to replicate these habits in an unfamiliar environment.

Chapter 2 provides a general survey of cookbook publishing in Australia. It charts the growth of locally produced cookbooks beginning with the appearance of Edward Abbott’s *English and Australian Cookery Book* in 1864. This chapter also assays the variety of genres that populated the Australian cookbook market and examines the relationships between the publishers and authors of these texts. The final section of this chapter provides an appraisal of the manner in which cookbooks were received by their intended audience.

Chapter 3 concerns itself with the intersections between cultural identities and cookbooks. Ideas of nation, race and class were present in culinary texts both in an overt manner and in subtle ways. Here, I use cookbooks to examine how these cultural identities shifted and were constructed in response to broader social and political changes between 1864 and 1939.

In Chapter 4, I consider the manner in which cookbooks reiterated the ideologies of domesticity that underpinned gendered norms and expectations in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia. However, as this chapter also points out, these ideologies of domesticity were contested and often did not mirror the reality of women’s lives.

Chapter 5 examines the rise of domestic science instruction in Australia, beginning in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and the prominent part cookbook authors played in this movement. Cookbooks were used as educational texts to provide a newly formulated rational and scientific approach to cookery. Their authors regarded themselves as social reformers with a mission to redefine the nature of domestic work so that it would lead to the improvement of the nation as a whole.
The final chapter draws attention to the manner in which cookbooks engaged with the introduction and dissemination of new domestic technologies in the Australian home. The manufacturers of domestic technologies, together with utility companies, found the need to actively advertise their products in an increasingly competitive market. Cookbooks became an ideal medium through which to promote these technologies directly to consumers and to instruct them in their use.

Summing up these six chapters I argue that cookbooks played an important role in the construction of many facets of Australian culture. Australian society saw significant changes during the period covered by this thesis: the beginning of European settlement, the process of Federation and the nation’s involvement in a global conflict, amongst others. As well Australians began to see themselves and the nation as a whole in a different light. Cookbooks reflected and influenced many of these changes. My aim throughout this thesis is to highlight the value of cookbooks as historical documents and to demonstrate the manner in which cookbooks can be used to provide an insight into developments in Australian culture and society, from the personal and intimate to the public and national.
Chapter 1
A singular mimicry: Australian colonial foodways and British cookbooks

An excellent mode for dressing beef
Hang three ribs three or four days; take out the bones from the whole length, sprinkle it with salt, roll the meat tight and roast it. Nothing can look nicer.  
*A New System of Domestic Cookery* (1808)

The excellence of beef left to hang for three days in the height of an Australian summer is more than questionable. Yet, these simple instructions appeared in the pages of one of the first cookbooks advertised for sale in the Australian colonies, Maria Eliza Rundell’s *A New System of Domestic Cookery*. Preparing the quintessentially British dish of roast beef in the manner Rundell suggested would have been highly unsuitable in the Australian colonies. Her book, nevertheless, would have served as a practical guide for preparing a wide selection of dishes in the colonial kitchen. Beyond its mere practicality, Rundell’s book also played a significant role outside kitchen. It allowed for the reproduction and maintenance of one of the most influential markers of culture, the way a society thinks about and consumes food.

This chapter examines the tenacity and longevity of British foodways in Australia. It will argue that the maintenance of these traditional foodways served to sustain a collective sense of Britishness, particularly in the domestic realm, for many settlers in the colony. It will also explore the impact of British cookbooks on Australian colonial culture and the colonial project as a whole. Food, and the cookbooks used to prepare it were central elements in the articulation of many colonial societies and become a lens...
through which to observe the operations of colonialism. Finally it will examine the earliest manifestations of a local cookbook culture in the form of the compiled manuscript cookbook. For almost a hundred years after the arrival of European settlement there were no cookbooks written by and for Australians. While this thesis primarily focuses on the manner in which locally produced cookbooks reflected and influenced the development of Australian culture and society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is important to examine the role British cookbooks played during the first ninety years of the colonial enterprise. These British cookbooks were not only the stylistic predecessors of those that would later emerge in Australia, but also were an important part of the ‘cultural baggage’ colonists brought from Britain to Australia.

**The meanings of food**

In *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* Sidney Mintz argues that food is never simply eaten but that its consumption is always conditioned by meaning. The daily aspects of food consumption are most profoundly impacted by what he terms ‘outside meanings’; which involve social, economic and political conditions that cause changes in the manner in which food is thought about and consumed. The history of Australian foodways is replete with these ‘outside meanings’ that have influenced the manner in which individuals, and society as a whole, regarded the consumption of food.

For many of those embarking on the First Fleet’s voyage to Australia the most significant outside meaning imposed upon them was what Alan Atkinson has called the

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3 Ibid., 20.
‘unfamiliar embrace, the eager conscience and the hard gaze of the state’.4 As the First
Fleet set sail on its voyage across the oceans it left with the expectation, forewarned by
James Cook, that the new territories would produce ‘hardly anything fit for Man to eat’.
5 Even with this admonition in mind, early planning documents for the establishment
of a colony in New South Wales provided only a sketchy outline for the victualling of
the new colony. They determined that the fleet should take on board provisions
sufficient for one year’s supply at full rations and a further two years at half rations
adding that, after this period, the colony should have to become self-sufficient.6 The
plan also noted that seeds and livestock should be collected in the various ports of call
during the voyage in order to be able to establish viable agricultural production upon
arrival. It is interesting to note that this Heads of a Plan devotes almost as much space
to the procurement of women in order to ‘preserve the settlement from gross
irregularities and disorders’ as it does for the provision and supply of foodstuffs.7 It is
apparent that the satisfaction of more carnal appetites was of equal concern to those
planning the establishment of the colony on the shore of Botany Bay.

While humans tend to mark their basic sense of belonging to a social group by eating
the same food, they also use different patterns of food consumption as an important
determinant of social status.8 The crew aboard the ships of the First Fleet received the
standard rations set by His Majesty’s Navy at the time; convicts, for their part, received
two thirds of this allotment.9 These rations were supplemented with fresh supplies of
meat, fruit and vegetables collected at the various stops en route to New South Wales.

4 Alan Atkinson, The Europeans in Australia: a History, vol. 1 (Melbourne: Oxford University Press,
1997), 116.
5 James Cook, The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery (Cambridge: Hakluyt
Society, 1955), 442.
6 Historical Records of New South Wales (Sydney: Government Printer, 1892), 17.
7 Ibid., 18.
8 Elaine M. Power, ‘An Introduction to Pierre Bourdieu’s Key Theoretical Concepts’, Journal for the
Study of Food and Society 3 (Spring 1999): 50.
9 F.W. Clements, L. Davey, and M. Macpherson, ‘The Hungry Years, 1788-1792’, Historical Studies:
Australia and New Zealand 17 (1947): 188.
During their stay in Rio de Janeiro, for example, the price of meat was so cheap that the daily ration was doubled. Aboard the Lady Penrhyn enterprising crewmen even managed to grow fresh salad greens on wet flannel to augment their meagre supply of vegetables.\textsuperscript{10} The officers, as was due their social and military status, were able to supplement their diet with fresh poultry and pork kept on board. The differing quantity and quality of rations available to convicts, crew and officers during the voyage became another marker of status within the rigid social hierarchy on board the ships of the First Fleet. Fleet rations mirrored the conditions in late eighteenth-century Britain where minorities were able to distinguish themselves from those they saw as their social inferiors by the quantity and quality of food they consumed.\textsuperscript{11} However, once on land and during the worst periods of food scarcity in the colony, Governor Phillip dictated that, due to necessity, both convicts and garrison should receive the same levels of rations. The fear of starvation and the preservation of life appear to have trumped the preservation of status.

The foodways during the earliest years of colonial settlement in Australia can be described as a form of institutionalised eating where the state bore the primary responsibility in the provision of foodstuffs. Both the convict and the free were fed by the hand of the state. Rations were constantly readjusted to account for scarcity and surfeit. Governor Phillip’s maritime background led him to reproduce shipboard regimes once they landed ashore, including rationing practices, in order to ensure the equitable and efficient distribution of food. The constant reassessment of rations to cater for the shifting food supplies also reflected the highly bureaucratic nature of early colonial administration; this is part of what Alan Atkinson terms the ‘aptitude with pen and paper’ that increased administrative skills and facilitated the movement of people

\textsuperscript{10} M. Barnard Eldershaw, \textit{Phillip of Australia: An Account of the Settlement at Sydney Cove, 1788-92} (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1972), 64.

\textsuperscript{11} Stephen Mennell, \textit{All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present} (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1985), 32.
across the globe by a growing maritime power.\textsuperscript{12} Both the free and convict population of the colony were entitled to and dependent on government stores. The authorities established an efficient victualling system that coordinated the procurement, production and distribution of food.\textsuperscript{13}

Food also took upon a significant role as a tradeable commodity in the economy of the early colony; an economy that was based primarily on barter.\textsuperscript{14} This subverted the state’s control over the distribution of food. Items of food, such as bread and salted pork, were often exchanged for other goods. John Turner, the baker to the purser aboard the \textit{Sirius}, traded his weekly earning of a loaf of bread for a pint of rum.\textsuperscript{15} It is important to note that in the earliest days of the settlement Governor Phillip placed severe restrictions on the trade of food and that Turner was charged for this particular transaction. In later years people were paid for their labours in kind with a variety of items, including food.\textsuperscript{16}

Another element that falls within the rubric of Mintz’s conception of ‘outside meaning’ is the physical environment. The earliest settlers viewed their new landscape with fear and anxiety. It was a perplexing land full of ‘tumult and confusion’.\textsuperscript{17} The Antipodes had long been mythologised as a land upside-down, a land where nature did not obey the conventional European norms. Initially, the strangeness of the native fauna and flora would have challenged the settlers' deeply ingrained notions of what was deemed fit and appropriate to eat. Sociologists and anthropologists have long understood that eating habits are embedded within a broader cultural framework. Human beings are subject to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Atkinson, \textit{The Europeans in Australia}, 1:29.
\item Atkinson, \textit{The Europeans in Australia}, 1:204.
\item Arthur Phillip, \textit{The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay} (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1970), 69.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
two contradictory sets of urges, known as the omnivores' paradox, when it comes to food consumption. These contradictions involve neophilia, which implies a curiosity regarding new foodstuffs and an aversion to monotony, and neophobia, which implies conservatism and an avoidance of the new and the strange. Yet, for the earliest settlers much of the culinary aversion towards the strange creatures bounding through the landscape was mitigated by hunger and the monotony of state provided rations. The need for culinary engagement with the local flora and fauna also required an engagement with the Indigenous inhabitants. The knowledge and skills the Eora peoples possessed regarding the local environment were to be crucial to the survival of the early colony.

Much of the early history of colonial foodways has highlighted the rejection of native foods by Europeans. Michael Symons, for example, noted in One Continuous Picnic that colonists 'failed to incorporate a single indigenous food' into their agricultural and food practices. While these conclusions are not totally unwarranted, they fail to take into account the many instances of culinary experimentation in colonial Australia.

Recent scholarship has attempted to re-examine the profound engagement that many eighteenth and nineteenth-century settlers had with native foodstuffs. Some food historians have argued that the apparent lack of sophistication, at least in European eyes, of Aboriginal foodways did little to attract the settlers to native cuisine and ingredients. Traditional Aboriginal cookery methods would have appeared alien and primitive to European settlers. Traditional Indigenous cooking utensils were, by

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20 Blake Singley, “‘Hardly Anything Fit for Man to Eat’: Food and Colonialism in Australia.’, History Australia 9, no. 3 (14 February 2012): 27–42; Barbara Santich, ‘Nineteenth-Century Experimentation and the Role of Indigenous Food in Australian Food Culture’, Australian Humanities Review 51 (2011): 65–78; Newling, ‘Dining with Strangeness’.
necessity, light and portable; cooking vessels were made from bark or tree gnarls and food wrappings were made from leaves or clay.\textsuperscript{22} These implements, as Laurel Dyson has argued, might appear outwardly simple but were ideal for meeting the challenges of cooking in a particular environment.\textsuperscript{23} While many colonists might not have embraced the consumption of native ingredients in spirit, much of the evidence suggests that they did so in practice.

The journals and letters of First Fleet officers contain numerous accounts of the consumption of local fauna. In his journal George Worgan wrote of a picnic he enjoyed consisting of Kangaroo pie, plum pudding and a bottle of wine.\textsuperscript{24} Watkin Tench also recounted eating kangaroo, though he found it coarse and lean and unlikely to hold much appeal were it not for the scarcity of fresh provisions.\textsuperscript{25} Tench spoke much more admiringly of the ‘excellent’ fish he called the light horseman (snapper) that had been pointed out as a delicacy by the Eora people.\textsuperscript{26} Indigenous foods and ingredients became an essential part of the colonial larder until introduced foods could be successfully produced and their supply could be relied upon.\textsuperscript{27} Furthermore, for most of the century preceding Federation, Australians continued to consume all manner of native ingredients, not only as a matter of necessity but also as a matter of choice. Australian cookbooks published in the last decades of the nineteenth century demonstrate the importance of native ingredients in colonial kitchens.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Watkin Tench, \textit{Sydney’s First Four Years: Being a Reprint of A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay and A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson} (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1961), 117.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 272.
\textsuperscript{27} Newling, ‘Dining with Strangeness’, 27.
\textsuperscript{28} For a full account of the consumption of native ingredients in colonial Australia see Singley, ‘“Hardly Anything Fit for Man to Eat”’. 39
Over the ensuing decades the ‘outside meanings’ impacting on colonial foodways changed and shifted. The beginning of the end of convict transportation on the eastern seaboard in the 1840s and the ever increasing number of free settlers saw a reduction of the state’s role as a significant player in the provision of foodstuffs. Agriculture prospered in the last decade of the eighteenth century and this saw a new material bounty that altered colonial foodways. Early failures had turned to successes, with bumper crops being produced and livestock thriving across the colony. The expansion of agriculture in Parramatta and the Hawkesbury region led to the increasing availability of produce in the Sydney marketplace. In his 1826 *An Account of the State of Agriculture and Grazing in New South Wales*, James Atkinson remarked that ‘esculent and culinary vegetables ...of Europe are all grown in great perfection’. Fruits, he noted, were also available in great abundance and included oranges, quinces, cherries, nectarines, apricots, olives, strawberries and pomegranates. Peaches were in such abundance that they were even fed to swine during the summer and autumn. Other accounts of this period mention vegetables such as asparagus, cauliflower, pumpkin and peas being grown in private gardens in Sydney.

**There is no taste like home**

The most significant and long lasting factors determining foodways and choices, however, are cultural. Food preparation and consumption provided a way through which individuals could express the more abstract significance of cultural values and social systems. As Sidney Mintz once again argues, those who found themselves far from

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30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
home, as many settlers in Australia did, felt cut off from familiar cultural representations and therefore objects that were capable of ‘carrying’ a displaced sense of culture, such as food, took on an additional significance. Food also becomes a crucial feature of collective belonging. Humans eat, as Claude Fischler observes, ‘within a culture’ and in colonial Australia that culture was overwhelmingly British.

By maintaining British food habits in what was deemed to be a strange and unfamiliar environment, new settlers were attempting to make it familiar and habitable. Instead of adjusting to their new environment, argues Richard Waterhouse, they tried to reshape it and remake it in English ways. Louisa Meredith's 1853 *My home in Tasmania*, for example, illustrates the attempts by many white settlers to shape and coax the colonial landscape into a likeness of England. She saw the Tasmanian landscape and its inhabitants as uncivilised and untamed as if nature 'had not completed her design'. Meredith, however, was quite willing to consume the local wildlife and had a predilection for kangaroo, particularly the roasted hind-quarter served with currant jelly. This was a dish, wrote Meredith, worthy of inclusion in any British cookbook. Yet, this culinary engagement with the local wildlife happened on Meredith’s own terms, it was always cooked in a traditional British manner. Claude Lévi-Strauss reminds us that cooking 'marks the transition from nature to culture', and for Louisa Meredith cooking and consuming the native wildlife she found around her was a way of transforming the wild into the civilized and, by implication, British.

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39 Ibid., 177.
In *There is No Taste like Home: The Food of Empire*, Adele Wessell argues that the maintenance of British food habits in Australia was a device to reaffirm ‘cultural and historical bonds and sustain a shared sense of British identity’. For example, Mrs Rosetta Stabler’s new eating house, which was established in 1803, promised its diners traditional British fare and a taste of home when it advertised ‘victuals dressed in the English way’. The boiled mutton and roasted joints served to reproduce dishes commonly found in British eating houses, undoubtedly appealing to the overwhelming culinary nostalgia that many settlers felt so far away from home. Even if the British nature of the meal was seasonably unsuitable for the local conditions, unpalatable and dull in the heat of an Australian summer, it served as a confirmation of Britishness both in a symbolic fashion and in substance.

![Figure 1: Advertisement for Rosetta Stabler's New Eating-House. One of the colony's earliest eating establishments. The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 26 June 1803.](image)

The tenacity of British foodways in Australia can also be explained by what Barbara Santich terms ‘culinary xenophobia’. This xenophobia was manifested by a rejection of foreign, in this case synonymous with non-British, foods and an adherence to British foodways. An example of this culinary

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42 *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 26 June 1803, 3.
xenophobia was the rejection of maize, an abundant crop in early colonial Australia. Maize was one of the first grain crops that could be relied upon in the new colony. While it was not traditionally consumed in Britain, it became an intrinsic part of the ration system until the 1830s. Maize not only proved to be of higher nutritive value than other staple grains, such as wheat, but also was immune to many of the common diseases that affected other grains. Despite the considerable advantages of maize its rejection can be seen in the light of a culinary xenophobia that demanded maintenance of British food habits even at the expense of convenience and nutrition. Historian Lucy Frost suggests that these entrenched eating habits, what she terms the ‘eating of England’, was an act of faith often devoid of sense or reason. Nancy Cushing argues that the disappearance of maize from colonial tables was not only linked to attempts to erase associations with convict era foodways but was a way of maintaining a connection with the ‘distant arbiters of British culture’. Yet, even convicts, who had little choice as to many of their foods also protested when they received grains, such as maize, which they considered of an inferior quality.

Even when they demonstrated a willingness to incorporate new and exotic ingredients in their diets, some settlers still maintained traces of this culinary xenophobia. Convict James Grove declared that the kangaroo meat he was obliged to eat was ‘equal in quality’ to most foreign meats but not, however, to English roast beef. There were two exceptions to this culinary xenophobia. One was a continuing predilection for French cuisine, particularly at high-class tables of the colony. The second predilection was for

curry, a dish that had by this time become a standard in the British culinary repertoire and a symbol of the breadth and reach of the Empire. The first recipe for curry appeared in a British cookbook in 1747 in Hannah Glasse’s *The Art of Cookery*. By the nineteenth century both French and Anglo-Indian cuisine were firmly entrenched in the British culinary cannon and were accepted and reproduced unquestioned in Australian colonial foodways.

Janet Floyd describes the process of British emigration to the colonies as a ‘transfer of the homeland in microcosm from centre to periphery, from heartland to wildernesses.’ This transfer was most palpable within the realm of the colonial kitchen where the ‘homeland’ was reproduced in recipes and domestic practices. Aspects of this were still evident almost eighty years after settlement in the re-creation of the traditional English Christmas dinner in the scorching December heat of Australia; what Marcus Clarke described as ‘A very merry Christmas, with the roast beef in a violent perspiration, and the thermometer one hundred and ten degrees in the shade!’ Yet, even within the confines of British traditions and celebrations, some exceptions were made to cater for the Australian environment. Amongst the delicacies Mrs Katherine Kirkland served up on New Year’s Day 1841 in country Victoria, which included a traditional plum pudding and a leg of mutton, was a dish of kangaroo soup, a stuffed bush turkey and a parrot pie.

The British character of Australian foodways persisted well into the twentieth century. In 1905, for example, a book promoting Queensland to British migrants entitled *Queensland at Home* informed readers that ‘as regards the preparation of food, English

customs and methods are followed...The entrees and puddings are prepared under the
instruction of Mrs Elizabeth (sic) Beeton’. Australia would have to wait until the
1930s for the first ‘foreign’ cookbook with the publication, simultaneously in English
and in Italian, of the *First Continental Cookery Book*. The anonymous author suggested
that the book’s ambition was to shine a light on the obscure recesses of traditional
British cookery. This, the author argued, did not imply that British cuisine had no
merits, but that it was only ‘half suited to Australian conditions’. Despite this book’s
publication, Australians continued their predilection for British cuisine and ingredients.
The hegemony of British foodways was maintained by the range of social and cultural
factors enumerated above but was also aided and abetted by the printed word in the
shape of British cookbooks.

**A Work of Great Utility**

For over a hundred years before the ready availability of Australian cookbooks in the
last decades of the nineteenth century, most colonial households were obliged to make
do with British publications. The use of British cookbooks in colonial kitchens became
an important way through which traditional foodways were reproduced and maintained.
Martyn Lyons argues that early British migrants to Australia faced with the ‘novel and
threatening experiences of their new life, refracted them through shared literary
analogies’; these literary analogies can be extended to include cookbooks. Moreover
cookbooks also reflected ‘shifts in the boundaries of edibility, the proprieties of culinary
process ...and the structures of domestic ideologies’. In this way these texts played an
important part in the embedded ideology of the colonising process. The elaboration of

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56 Ibid.
British domestic habits and values, as set out in prescriptive texts like cookbooks, served as evidence of a superior colonising culture.\(^5^9\) European and British norms regarding domesticity and domestic practices not only aided in the justification of the colonial project, they also defined citizenship in colonial settings and demarcated the boundaries between Europeans and their subjects.\(^6^0\) The power of imperialism, as Angela Woollacott argues, was not only negotiated through dramatic episodes but also through quotidian practices.\(^6^1\) The act of eating and preparing food, and the important role played by cookbooks in this process, is one of the most elemental of these quotidian practices.

There are no records of any cookbooks being present amongst the books that arrived on the First Fleet. Copies of the *Lady's Magazine* are known to have come across on the first voyage and these did contain a section on recipes. A magazine like this one would have undoubtedly provided a degree of entertainment and a modicum of home comfort to those women aboard the First Fleet with the literacy skills to read them and the status to access them. Yet one can scarcely imagine that such a publication would have provided recipes suitable for the two most common ingredients available at Port Jackson, two year old salt pork and weevil-infested flour or, for that matter, the native fauna that found its way into the cooking pots of the new settlers.

One manner of tracing the cookbooks available in colonial Australia is through an examination of those for sale through booksellers. Booksellers’ advertisements did not begin to appear in any significant number in Australian newspapers until 1821.\(^6^2\) And it

\(^{5^9}\) Deirdre David, ‘Imperial Chintz: Domesticity and Empire’, *Victorian Literature and Culture* 27, no. 2 (1 January 1999): 572.


\(^{6^1}\) Angela Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*, Gender and History (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), 81.

\(^{6^2}\) Wallace Kirsop, ‘Bookselling and Publishing in the Nineteenth Century’, in *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History*, Historical Bibliography Monograph 16 (Melbourne: 46}
was not until the late 1820s that advertisements for imported British and other
cookbooks began to be featured in their pages. Many of these advertisements were
rather vague and provided only abbreviated and generic titles for the cookbooks they
were selling. In 1827 the Hobart Town Circulating Library advertised copies of two
cookbooks for sale; these were *Domestic Cookery* and the *Family Receipt Book*.63 Two
cookbooks with the words *Family Receipt Book* in the title were published before 1827.
One was Mrs Westcott’s *The Family Receipt Book* published in 1818; the other was *The
Modern Family Receipt Book* published in 1825 and written by Mary Holland, a well-
known cookery writer of the period. Four different British cookbooks published before
1827 bore the title *Domestic Cookery*, including *Modern Domestic Cookery* by
Elizabeth Hammond and Maria Radcliffe’s *A Modern System of Domestic Cookery.*
However, the most likely contender is Maria Rundell’s *A New System of Domestic
Cookery*. Rundell’s book was a bestseller of the era, amassing sixty five editions in a
little over thirty years. While the Hobart Town Circulating Library advertised
cookbooks for sale, they did not appear to be part of the corpus available for loan to
those who had paid a membership fee to join the library.

Over the ensuing decades booksellers across Australia began regularly to feature
cookbooks in newspapers advertisements as well as in their catalogues. One such
catalogue was issued in 1838 by Sydney bookseller James Tegg. James Tegg and his
brother Samuel arrived in Sydney in 1834 and opened a wholesale and retail book shop
in January of the following year.64 Samuel would later set up his own bookselling
business in Hobart in 1837. James and Samuel were the sons of Thomas Tegg, one of
Britain’s leading publishers in the early nineteenth century. Thomas Tegg specialised in

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reprints and cheap editions and, by his own account, ‘published more books, and sold them at a cheaper rate, than any bookseller in Britain’. The Teggs’ venture in Australia benefited from the steady and cheap supply of imprints from the family firm in Britain and the brothers’ names often appeared alongside their father’s as publishers of the books, particularly those of interest to the Australian market.

The 1838 Tegg catalogue listed just over half a dozen cookery titles available to their customers. Amongst them were *Mrs Glasse Complete Cookery* and *Kitchiner's Cook's Oracle*. While the catalogue was somewhat imprecise in the titles of the books it listed, the Glasse volume appears to be a version of Hannah Glasse’s *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* first published in 1747. This cookbook was one of the mainstays of the British publishing industry and remained in print for more than eighty years. William Kitchiner’s *The Cook's Oracle* was another bestseller of its era. The catalogue also advertised Mrs Holland’s Domestic Cookery, most likely an edition of *The Complete Economical Cook, and Frugal Housewife: An Entirely New System of Domestic Cookery*. The 1837 edition of this work was produced by Tegg & Sons and bore the names of James and Samuel as publishers. Thomas Tegg had a long association with Mary Holland, being involved in the publication of her first book *The Complete British Cook* in 1800 as well as the 1825 *Family Receipt Book*. While the majority of books in the Tegg catalogue were of British origin the list did include one tome, *The Frugal Housewife* by Lydia Child, which was of American origin. However, it is likely the copies of *The Frugal Housewife* sold by Tegg were an 1835 English edition, which was

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66 Ibid., 57.
also published by the family firm in Britain, that contained ‘added hints’ specifically aimed at the British market.\(^70\)

One of the early publications of James Tegg and Co. was a local edition of Eliza Darling’s *Simple Rules for the Guidance of Persons in Humble Life: More Particularly for Young Girls Going Out to Service* published in 1837. Darling was the wife of the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Ralph Darling. During her time in the colony between 1825 and 1831 Darling was deeply involved in many charitable activities.\(^71\) *Simple Rules* did not feature straight-forward recipes in the manner of contemporary English cookery books, that is, listing ingredients and the manner of preparation for a particular dish but rather gave broad instructional guidelines for the cooking of meats, vegetables and puddings written in a question and answer format. Darling posed the question: ‘Can you give any rules as to the time and manner of dressing different meats’ before giving her reader just over one page of instructions on how to prepare a roasted joint of meat, cook a goose and wild game, and to fry fish amongst other items.\(^72\) These instructions do not give any indication as to whether any seasoning or other flavourings should be added to make the dishes appetising, and did not provide instructions for sauces or any other accompaniments with the implicit presumption that either the servant in question, or the mistress of the house, would have a modicum of culinary knowledge and ability to flavour the dishes appropriately. The Tegg family also produced *Tegg’s Handbook for Emigrants* in 1839, a book that was intended for ‘colonists ...dependent upon themselves for the conveniences and comforts of life’.\(^73\)

This very popular handbook with emigrants travelling to Australia provided advice on a


\(^71\) For more on Eliza Darling’s charitable activities see Chapter 5.


\(^73\) *Tegg’s Handbook for Emigrants* (Printed for Thomas Tegg, 1839), v.
wide range of subjects, including cookery. Despite the fact that the guide was partially aimed at emigrants to Australia, the author was a settler in Canada and the cookery section featured traditional British fare that made no concessions to Australian conditions.

By the early 1860s Australian booksellers had broadened the range of cookbooks available to their customers. This period corresponds with what Wallace Kirsop has dubbed the ‘third stage’ in the Australian book industry. The significant economic and demographic changes in New South Wales and Victoria initiated by the gold rushes saw almost a tripling in the value of book exports from Britain to the colonies. Kirsop notes that prominent booksellers in the colonies, such as the Walch brothers, who had taken over the Tegg’s business in Hobart, and George Robertson in Melbourne, had established their own agents in London. This, he argues, not only increased the number of books arriving in the colonies but also ensured that those that did arrive were ones that were in actual demand from the reading public. The July 1862 issue of Walch’s Literary Intelligencer, for example, featured the following wide selection of cookbooks under the title of ‘Cookery Books for Families’:

- Acton’s Modern Cookery
- Murray’s Modern Domestic Cookery
- The Wife’s Own Book of Cookery, by J. Bishop
- Soyer’s Modern Housewife
- The Cook’s Oracle, by Dr. W. Kitchiner
- The English Cookery Book … collected by a Committee of Ladies
- The English Housekeeper’s Book

76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., 12.
The English Bread Book, by Eliza Acton
The Italian Confectioner, by W.A. Jarrin
Everybody's Pudding Book
The Kitchiner, or Oracle of Cookery for the Million
Soyer's Cookery for the People
Mrs. Rundell's Domestic Cookery
Francatelli’s Cookery Book for the Working Classes
The Cook's Own Book
What shall we have for dinner, by Bills of Fare.\textsuperscript{78}

While many of the cookbooks available on the market, and to some extent in the home, can be traced through advertising, those in actual use in Australian kitchens are more difficult to assess. Journals, settlers' recollections and even novels provide further clues as to what cookbooks might have been found in Australian homes. A children's novel entitled Alfred Dudley, or, The Australian Settlers published in 1830 recounts the travails of a father and his sons attempting to establish themselves in Australia while his wife and daughters remain back in England. One of the many hardships the novel describes was the attempt to manage the domestic necessities of life without the guiding hand of a woman. For this purpose the men of the Dudley family had come armed with a trusty copy of Kitchiner's Oracle. The narrator made clear the need for such a guide:

my ... culinary preparations seldom turned out to be the thing I had intended to make. Certainly my forte does not lie (sic) that way; and I have no pretensions to be the perfect thing Dr. Kitchiner so eloquently describes as indispensable to the making of a good cook, in the preface to that book which my mother gave us, and whose directions we were implicitly to follow in all our gastronomic attempts.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{78} Walch's Literary Intelligencer and General Advertiser, vol. 39 (Wellington, Tas.: J. Walch & Sons, 1862).

\textsuperscript{79} Alfred Dudley, or, the Australian Settlers. (London: Harvey and Darton, 1830), 66.
The Dudleys also relied on William Cobbett’s *Cottage Economy*; a book, as young Alfred stated, that was ‘quite our manual for all ...domestic affairs’. 80 Less a cookbook than a manual for rural domestic practices, the book nevertheless provided recipes for bread and for brewing beer. Excerpts of Cobbett’s work appeared in Australian newspapers shortly after its initial publication in Britain, with the *Sydney Gazette* calling it a ‘work of great utility’ to settlers throughout the country. 81

While the authorship of *Alfred Dudley* is uncertain, one of the novel’s putative authors was a man by the name of William Howitt. Howitt was a prolific author penning more that 180 books who arrived in Australia in 1852 with his two sons to find fortune in the Victorian gold diggings. 82 If Howitt was the author of *Alfred Dudley*, it would mean that it was written more than two decades before he stepped foot on Australian soil. This was not an uncommon practice for author’s writing about Australia but his account of life in the colony needs to be taken with a grain of salt. However, Howitt did know a little about cookbooks: he was an amateur cook and gourmet, as well as a friend and correspondent of Eliza Acton, one of the leading cookbook authors of her generation. Acton’s books, particularly *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, were widely available in the colonies. Extracts from her cookbook began to appear in Australian newspapers only months after it first was published in Britain. 83 Although *Modern Cookery* did not provide any recipes directly catering for Australian conditions, its simple and straightforward approach to cookery made it an invaluable resource in the colonial kitchen. Such was the popularity and reputation of Acton’s work that, in his 1864 preface to *The English and Australian Cookery Book*, Edward Abbott stated that

80 Ibid., 38.
81 *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 9 October 1823, 2.
he hoped his cook book would possess ‘all the advantages of Mrs Acton’s work’.  

Abbott also quoted liberally from Kitchiner’s Oracle throughout his work.

In 1853 Howitt wrote a letter to Eliza Acton describing life, and particularly the foodways, in the gold diggings of Bendigo. In his letter Howitt tells Acton that her cookbook ‘goes everywhere with us, and has been most serviceable’. He goes on to describe the availability of ingredients at the diggings, which included the goats and chickens kept by many families. The preparation of these would have been improved, he informed Acton, ‘if only they had your book, which poor souls, they do not have’. Howitt also laments the culinary restrictions placed upon him by the limited ingredients and wonders what type of ‘Bush Cookery’ book Acton would be able to pen ‘showing us what to create out of almost nothing’.

Booksellers’ lists and catalogues provide some indication as to what cookbooks were available on the Australian market. However, many residents in the colonies would have had cookbooks in their possession that had been passed down from generation to generation. As well, recent arrivals in the colony brought cookbooks with them. In 1963 the Australian Women’s Weekly ran a competition amongst its readers to find the oldest cookbook in Australia. The winning volume was a copy of The Compleat Cook published in 1659. The owner of the book was Alice Mackaness who claimed it had been brought over from England by her grandmother Matilda Symons in the 1840s and had been in her family ever since. Alice was the wife of George Mackaness, a prominent Australian historian and one of the leading book collectors of his generation. The Compleat Cook had previously appeared as a chapter in another book entitled The

84 Edward Abbott, The English and Australian Cookery Book: Cookery for the Many, as Well as for the Upper Ten Thousand. (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1864), vi.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., 17.
*Queen's Closet Opened* in 1655, during the rule of Oliver Cromwell. It is hard to imagine the utility of a nearly two hundred year old British cookbook in an Australian kitchen and it appears more likely this was regarded as a family heirloom rather than a practical tome for everyday use. This fact was noted by one of the judges of the competition who observed that many of these cookbooks were treasures 'passed down from mother to daughter for generations'. Mrs H J Warren entered her 1796 edition of Glasse's *The Art of Cookery* into the competition. Her volume had arrived in Australia in 1836 in the hands of her great-great grandmother Mrs Charles Everard, the wife of the surgeon aboard the ship *Africaine*. The *Africaine* was part of the first contingent of ships to bring free settlers to South Australia. As mentioned previously *The Art of Cookery* was a best seller in its day and a likely candidate to be found amongst the possessions of a woman intending to set up a new home in the colonies.

Mrs T van Eupen’s 1811 copy of Maria Rundell’s *The New Family Receipt Book* was given to her mother as a young girl by prominent Melbourne socialite Georgiana McCrae. Another entry in the competition, a 1789 edition of *The London Art of Cookery*, bore a stamp from the public library at Port Arthur. The convicts at Port Arthur had a library put at their disposal in order to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. While there are no available records to indicate that cookbooks formed part of the corpus of the Port Arthur library, it was not unusual for this type of text to be available in the libraries of organisations seeking to improve the literacy and education of the poor. The owner of this book did not provide any information as to how it came into her possession. The cookbooks entered in this competition illustrate the many varied ways in which these texts arrived in Australia. Some of these cookbooks can also

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89 Ibid., 43.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 46.
93 For example The Useful Book Society of Sydney (see chapter on cookbooks and domestic science)
be regarded as a material example of what Janet Myers has termed the ‘portable
domesticity’ that was part of the migration process. Myers argues that many aspects of
British domesticity were transported to the colonies allowing for many migrants to
maintain the ‘ideals of home’ in Australia and to successfully replicate an ‘English
house in another country’.  

Katherine Kirkland, who had served kangaroo soup and parrot pie to her guests on New
Year’s Day, was one of the many British women obliged to adapt to the difficult
conditions of life in rural Australia. Kirkland arrived in Australia in 1838 and the
following year settled in Trawalla, a station located 190 kilometres from Melbourne. She wrote an account of her time in the colony entitled ‘Life in the Bush’, published in
*Chambers’s Miscellany* in 1845, under the pseudonym ‘A Lady’. In her account
Kirkland bemoaned the monotony of a bush diet that consisted almost exclusively of
mutton, tea and damper. ‘Every meal’, she told her readers, ‘was alike from one week
to another and from year’s end to year’s end. I was so sick of it, I could scarcely eat
anything’. Yet, despite these complaints, Kirkland also praised the many ‘good things’
to be found in the bush including the manna extruded from gum trees and the wild
mushrooms from which she made a ketchup.

In her own kitchen, and particularly to instruct her troublesome servant Mary in the
skills of cooking, Kirkland relied on a copy of Meg Dods’ *The Cook and Housewife’s
Manual*. While copies of Dods’ work were available for sale in the colony through
Teggs Booksellers, it is highly likely Kirkland brought her own copy out with her from
her birth place in Scotland. *The Cook and Housewife’s Manual* was first published in

\[97\] Ibid.
\[98\] Ibid., 23, 20,7.
Edinburgh in 1826 and written by Christian Isobel Johnstone under the pseudonym of Mistress Margaret Dods, the name of the landlady of the Cleikum Inn in Sir Walter Scott's novel *St Ronan's Well*. As well as a cookbook writer Johnstone was a novelist and co-editor of *Tait's Magazine*. It was in this publication that Johnstone wrote an article addressed at prospective, and preferably young, female migrants to Australia entitled ‘A Page for the Lasses’. ‘It is as respectable workers that they are wanted’, Johnstone told her readers, and in particular for their domestic skills and abilities. Johnstone continued by providing a list of essential items that these young women would require including one small knife and fork, a tin pannikin and a New Testament but not, it seems, a copy of Mrs Dods. Perhaps Johnstone realised that prospective mistresses in the colonies would already own a favourite cookbook from which they would expect servants to prepare dishes. As was noted earlier, many migrants to Australia already arrived with a cookbook in their possession.

The recipes in Mrs Dods’ book, according to Kirkland, provided a respite from the ‘everlasting mutton and damper’ usually available to her and allowed her to entertain her many guests and visitors in style. Kirkland admitted to not knowing much about cooking but, as she observed, ‘necessity makes one learn many things’. Meg Dods’ book would certainly have assisted her in this learning process.

While British cookbooks were able to satisfy the culinary needs of some settlers they did not always prove to be the most practical of sources to have in the more extreme conditions that could be encountered in Australia. Mrs Allan Macpherson recounted her fifteen month stay in Australia in *My Experiences in Australia: Being Recollections of a*...

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102 Ibid.
Visit to the Australian Colonies in 1856-7. Macpherson arrived in Australia with her husband and young daughter with the aim of settling in the Gwydir district of New South Wales. Macpherson stated in her preface that she wanted to describe ‘every-day life in the colonies, as it would appear from a lady’s point of view’. She also described, in some detail, the difficulties of setting up a home in the Australian bush. This, she concluded, was a ‘trial for any lady’ particularly one wishing to fulfil all ‘the domestic requirements of her station’. Her frustration at attempting to maintain British standards is almost palpable when she wrote that ‘I used to hold the doctrine that nothing could be easier than getting a cookery book, and following the recipes it contained’ but admitted that she had ‘overlooked the little fact, that neither Dr. Kitchener (sic) nor M. Soyer contemplated the very limited cooking apparatus of a bush-kitchen, or the very limited resources of a bush-larder’.

1861 saw the first appearance of Isabella Beeton’s iconic and immensely influential Book of Household Management published by S O Beeton, the firm founded by her husband Samuel Beeton. Beeton’s work covered every conceivable aspect of domestic management including recipes, health and legal advice. The book came to represent traditional domestic virtues and values and promised ‘authoritative counsel’ on all matters pertaining to the home. Advertisements for the book began to appear in Australian newspapers soon after its publication in Britain. Many Australian readers would have been familiar with Beeton’s work through her role as the food editor of The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine which was widely available throughout the colonies. The majority of the recipes contained in The Book of Household Management

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105 Ibid., 198.
106 Ibid., 197.
had previously appeared in that magazine in some form or another.\textsuperscript{108} Such was the initial impact of Beeton’s work that Australian culinary historian Barbara Santich convincingly argues that Edward Abbott plagiarised recipes from the book in his own \emph{English and Australian Cookery Book}.\textsuperscript{109} This form of plagiarism was not uncommon amongst cookbook writers and Beeton herself plagiarised recipes from Eliza Acton for her own.\textsuperscript{110}

The first edition of Beeton’s book catered exclusively for British conditions and Australian readers would have to wait for twenty seven years before the appearance of native and local ingredients in the pages of \emph{The Book of Household Management}. The 1888 edition of \emph{Household Management}, not actually edited by Isabella Beeton who had died twenty three years earlier, contained a section entitled Australian Cookery that was described as ‘to all intents and purposes, English’. The recipes in this section included ones for kangaroo tail soup, curried kangaroo and curried wallaby.\textsuperscript{111} However, the authenticity of these Australian recipes is debatable. The editor noted that only the tail and the tongue of the kangaroo were used yet the ‘Kangaroo Steamer’, a dish that appeared in a number of

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Isabella Beeton, \emph{The Book of Household Management}, 1888}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{108} Andrea Broomfield, ‘Rushing Dinner to the Table: The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine and Industrialization’s Effects on Middle-Class Food and Cooking, 1852–1860’, \emph{Victorian Periodicals Review} 41, no. 2 (2008): 104.
\textsuperscript{110} Broomfield, ‘Rushing Dinner to the Table’, 104.
Australian cookbooks, called for boneless pieces of kangaroo meat. Furthermore, there is no evidence, even in the works of the culinarily adventurous Wilhelmina Rawson, of kangaroo tongue appearing in any Australian cookbook.

Gillian Whitlock argues that colonial experience was a crucial component in the formation of Beeton’s book. While not specifically written to cater for individual colonial conditions, Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* envisioned Britain as the centre of the empire and acknowledged the importance of the imperial periphery. Beeton praised colonial initiative and she noted the efforts to introduce salmon, which she called ‘the king of fresh water fish’, into Australian colonies.

Beeton was also deeply concerned with the nature of food and eating as a marker of civilisation. ‘Dining is the privilege of civilization’, wrote Beeton, ‘the rank which a people occupy in the grand scale may be measured by their way of taking their meals, as well as by their way of treating their women’. To exemplify the uncivilised nature of those she deemed to belong to the inferior races, Beeton added: ‘It is not a dinner at which sits the aboriginal Australian, who gnaws his bone half bare and then flings it behind to his squaw’. Here, Beeton was mirroring the opinions of Aboriginal eating habits espoused by many travellers and settlers in Australia. ‘The cookery of the savages here would be a rather delicate matter for you’, William Howitt informed Eliza Acton in 1853; they cook their ingredients, he continued, by simply ‘throwing them upon the fire ...and tearing them up more than half raw’. The demonization of Aboriginal eating habits reflected more than mere distaste for a particular ingredient or cooking method, it also had profound social implications. As Sidney Mintz asserts in his

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114 Ibid.
study of the impacts of food and the colonial enterprise *Sweetness and Power*, those
'who eat strikingly different foods...are thought to be strikingly different, sometimes
even less human'.\(^{116}\) Beeton's work illustrates how English notions of domesticity were
transplanted to colonial spaces. The domestic and imperial ideologies contained in a
book like *Household Management* not only promoted an idealised construction of
Britishness but also fostered ideas of racial superiority in settler colonies.\(^{117}\)

One of the earliest cookery manuals specifically written for Australian conditions was
produced by emigration advocate and social reformer Caroline Chisholm. Chisholm had
promoted Australia as a land of plenty where even the poor could indulge in meat three
times a day!! In an 1853 speech promoting migration to Australia, Chisholm
recommended, occasioning much mirth in the audience, that young men should
undertake cookery lessons during their voyage as they would most likely have to do
their own cooking once they arrived in the colony.\(^{118}\) The manual appeared in the pages
of *The Emigrant's Guide to Australia* by Eneas Mackenzie which was published in 1853
by Clarke, Beeton & Co. The chapter entitled 'Bush Cookery', penned by Chisholm,
was a guide to cooking in the extreme conditions of rural Australia. In it, Chisholm
recognised the biggest difficulty in catering in these conditions was to overcome the
monotony of the staple ingredients and to get the most variety out of salt beef and
flour.\(^{119}\) She provided a weekly menu that included dishes such as 'station -jack', 'the
queen's nightcap', 'trout dumplings' and 'stewed goose' all of which consisted of some
sort of variation on the theme of salt beef and flour as the primary ingredients.\(^{120}\) The
only day of the week when Chisholm departs from this steady diet of salt beef is on a


\(^{117}\) Gillian Whitlock, 'The Intimate Empire', in *The Body in the Library*, ed. Leigh Dale and Simon Ryan,
Cross/cultures; 33 (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), 201.

\(^{118}\) 'Emigration', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 February 1853, 3.


\(^{120}\) Ibid., 112.
Friday, albeit only for her Catholic readers for whom she suggests fish. Meat, for most, was not only to be had three times a day but it also seems seven times a week.

Michael Symons argues that the relatively late appearance of Australia’s first cookbook in 1864 was due to a general lack of interest in cooking and to the fact that the ‘well to do’ were satisfied with the British cookbooks in their possession. The significant number and variety of cookbooks available on the Australian market belies Symons argument that there was a lack of interest in cooking and gastronomic matters in the colonies. Furthermore, Australian newspapers in this period show considerable interest in culinary matters, ranging from cookbook reviews to recipes and dissertations on the art of gastronomy.

Symons’ claim that cookbooks were the purview of the ‘well to do’ is not supported by the available evidence. By the time the First Fleet arrived in Australia, the cookbook had already commenced being democratised in Europe. The turn of the nineteenth century saw an ever-increasing number of cookbooks written by women, aimed at the urban respectable classes and focusing on domestic cooking; these began to outnumber those cookbooks that were more suitable for professional cooks or describing courtly cuisine. Hannah Glasse’s works were among the pre-eminent examples of this new form of cookbooks aimed at the rising middle classes.

Besides the works of Hannah Glasse, Australian booksellers carried a wide variety of cookbooks that were suitable for the middle classes. Eliza Acton’s Modern Cookery, for example, had this audience firmly in mind. The appeal of her work to the middle classes is highlighted by the fact that by 1863 Acton’s publisher, Longmans, had sold

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121 Symons, One Continuous Picnic, 42.
123 Lehmann, The British Housewife, 163–166.
over 63,000 copies of *Modern Cookery* throughout Britain and the empire.\(^\text{125}\) Two of Britain’s most prominent chefs in the mid-Victorian period were Alexis Soyer and Charles Francatelli, who was Chef de Cuisine to none other than Queen Victoria. Both men also were prolific cookbook authors and their initial efforts, which were widely available across all Australian colonies, were aimed at a respectable audience.

Those on more modest incomes also had a wide range of cookbooks available to them. Lydia Child’s *The Frugal Housewife*, one of the books available through James Tegg booksellers, was dedicated to ‘those who are not ashamed of economy’.\(^\text{126}\) The book, Child reminded her readers, was ‘written for the poor’ and made no attempt to concern itself with ‘rich cooking’.\(^\text{127}\) Both Soyer and Francatelli also wrote cookbooks for those with smaller budgets in mind. Francatelli’s *A Plain Cookery Book for the Working Classes* was published in 1852 and available on the Australian market soon after and Soyer’s *A Shilling Cookery Book for the People* appeared in 1855. This is only a small sample of the cookbooks available on the Australian market that catered for those with frugal tastes.

The late appearance of a distinct Australian cookery book can be more appropriately explained by the persistence of British social and culinary habits in the colonies. Only a few years after the publication of Abbott’s book, Sir Charles Dilke, an astute observer of Australian culture, noted that as unlike as the Australians were to the British, there was, nevertheless, ‘a singular mimicry of British forms’.\(^\text{128}\) This mimicry extended to ingrained food habits that had existed since the time of first settlement. Adele Wessell contends that British cookbooks played a significant part in the processes of


\(^{127}\) Ibid., 6.

maintaining British cultural practices through the passing down of certain ‘memories and histories’ linked to the table. It is this reproduction of cultural practices and values that ‘provide a community with a means of self-definition’. Moreover the cultural power of the metropole, as reflected in cookbooks for example, had a significant and long-lasting effect on the colonial periphery. A copy of Mrs Acton or Kitchiner’s Oracle in a colonial kitchen would have been sufficient to reproduce not only the longed-for tastes of home but also a little bit of England in the home.

In other British colonial settings locally written cookbooks were also a late arrival on kitchen shelves. In Canada, the anonymously written Frugal Housewife’s Manual did not appear until 1840. Unlike geographically-isolated Australia, the Canadian book market faced stiff competition from cheap imports and reprints from the neighbouring United States, making it difficult for the local publishing industry to produce Canadian books. The first locally written and published book catering specifically for Indian conditions was Dr Robert Riddell’s Indian Domestic Economy published in Bombay in 1849. The paucity of early Anglo-Indian cookbooks can be explained by the fact that, unlike their Australian counterparts, almost no-one in the Anglo-Indian community cooked; they usually left those tasks in the hands of servants.

The persistent presence of British cookbooks in Australian kitchens begs the question as to their usefulness. They provided recipes for British ingredients and catered for conditions back in the mother country. Many would have been happy to reproduce the tastes of home, even if that home was somewhat imagined as it was for second or third

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130 Anne Goldman in Janet Floyd, Writing: The Pioneer Woman (University of Missouri Press, 2002), 89.
132 Elizabeth Driver, Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825-1949 (University of Toronto Press, 2008), xxi.
generation Australians. This process was easier in the larger cities, such as Sydney and Melbourne, where there was access to a wider range of both local and imported ingredients. However, even when local ingredients were cheap and plentiful many still favoured imported ingredients. Louisa Meredith recounted the almost total absence of native fish at a Sydney dinner-table in the 1840s with a marked preference being shown for the more expensive and ‘fashionable’ preserved cod and salmon from England.\(^{135}\)

In more remote areas women adapted the recipes contained within these cookbooks to suit their own particular needs and conditions. They substituted the ingredients they had at hand to produce their own versions of British dishes. Katherine Kirkland, for example, substituted kangaroo for hare in making her New Year’s Day soup and put parrots, rather than the traditional pigeon, in her pies.\(^{136}\) In a review of Wilhelmina Rawson’s cookbook that first appeared in 1878, the writer commented on the ‘uselessness of most cookery books in the bush’.\(^{137}\) These books, the writer continued, only suggested the ‘bare imagination of a feast’.\(^{138}\) Seeing that only two Australian cookbooks had been published before the appearance of Rawson’s work, and both with limited numbers printed, the author was undoubtedly referring to the myriad of British cookbooks that women in Australia had relied upon until that time.

Many of the cookbooks available to settlers in Australia also doubled as general domestic management texts. These books provided practical advice on a wide range of household tasks that stretched beyond the kitchen. One particular feature that was of significant use was the medical advice some of these books included in their pages. The provision of recipes for home-made medicines to treat a variety of common ailments, and food recipes to cater for the ill and invalids was invaluable for those women living

\(^{135}\) Louisa Meredith, *Notes and Sketches of New South Wales: During a Residence in That Colony from 1839 to 1844* (J. Murray, 1844), 44.


\(^{137}\) ‘Mrs Lance Rawson’s Cookery Book’, *The Queenslander*, 9 November 1878, 170.

\(^{138}\) Ibid.
far beyond the reach of professional medical advice and services. Meg Dods’ *The Cooks and Housewife’s Manual*, for example, included several recipes under the heading ‘Preparations for the sick’. Mrs Beeton’s encyclopaedic *Book of Household Management* provided instruction for setting broken limbs, the treatment of snake bites and a cure for stammering amongst others.¹³⁹

For women like Kirkland and Macpherson, cookbooks provided the ability to maintain, at the very least, a facade of Britishness. As a form of prescriptive advice literature, these texts provided an ideal as to what a colonial lifestyle should resemble, and tied ideas of domesticity to a British identity.¹⁴⁰ British cookbooks and other domestic texts also allowed women to participate in the construction of the Empire. To domesticate means to tame, argues Deirdre David in *Imperial Chintz: Domesticity and Empire*, and by applying British domestic practices such as cookery women were ‘bringing under control the uncivilized wilderness of colonized territory’.¹⁴¹

**Home-grown recipes**

While many women relied on British cookbooks, there is one variant of the medium that, by its very nature, is eminently local: the hand-written and compiled manuscript cookbook. These cookbooks provide an insight into the daily material life of their authors. One such manuscript cookbook was compiled by Phillis Clark, who was born in Van Diemen’s Land in 1836. She was the daughter of Charles Seal, a pioneer of the whaling industry in that colony. In 1858 she married Charles George Clark, the eldest son of a well-known Tasmanian family. In 1861 the couple moved to Warwick in the

¹⁴¹ David, ‘Imperial Chintz’, 569.
Darling Downs region of Queensland. Here, Clark established himself as a prominent pastoralist and became a partner in the Ellinthorp Steam Flour Mills. He also represented Warwick in the Queensland Legislative Assembly between 1871 and 1873. Clark’s interest in food, her Tasmanian origins and class background raise the intriguing possibility that she might have come in contact with Edward Abbott.

It was at some time during this period that Clark began to compile her very own manuscript cookbook. The frontispiece of Clark’s manuscript is dated 1866 yet there is ample evidence to suggest she began work on this manuscript some years earlier. Clark was scrupulous in acknowledging the sources of her recipes, a habit common to many manuscript cookbook authors. She also initialled her own creations, firstly with P. S. for her maiden name Phillis Seal, and later P.S.C. for Phillis Clark, her married name. By 1866 Clark had been married for eight years so it can be assumed that she commenced her manuscript some time before her marriage in 1858. Furthermore, a number of the newspaper clippings found in her manuscript can be dated to before 1866 including one for 1861.

Whilst Clark’s manuscript is not reflective of the foodways of all classes across Queensland society it does provide some insight as to what was consumed at the table of a well-heeled rural household. As the wife of a prominent businessman and local dignitary, Phillis Clark would have also undoubtedly been called upon to play the role of hostess and to entertain her husband’s commercial and political acquaintances.

The sources from which Clark gathered some of the recipes in her manuscript indicate the variety of texts that were available to her. A number of newspaper clippings pasted


143 Ibid.

in the pages of her manuscript outline a range of both food recipes and domestic remedies. Amongst the food recipes there are to be found instructions in the making of cream cheese in the Irish manner, a recipe for stewed shoulder of mutton as well as two different methods for the preparation of kangaroo. The domestic receipts are general instructions for the manufacture of simple household products including such items as a ‘ready to use glue’ and a home-made tooth powder. Domestic remedies gathered in the form of newspaper clippings include a method for the treatment of diphtheria. While it is impossible to fully know which newspapers all these clippings have been taken from at least one of them came from the *Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser* and it is likely some of them might also have come from a number of the local Warwick papers (one of which was founded by her brother-in-law George Clark) in publication during Clark’s residence in the area.

More significant for the purpose of this thesis are the different cookbooks Clark utilised as sources for some of the recipes in her own manuscripts. The two most commonly acknowledged cookbooks are *Enquire Within Upon Everything* and Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery for Private Families*. *Enquire Within Upon Everything* was an immensely popular general household guide amassing eighty nine editions in a little over forty years. It contained information on a plethora of subjects (over three thousand individual entries) including such topics as etiquette, first aid, domestic hints and recipes. It first appeared on the British market in 1856, under the editorship of Robert Kemp Philp, and became available in Australia in the same year. Booksellers in the Darling Downs advertised copies of the book for the price of three shillings and six pence.

As was the case with many Australian women of her class and generation, Clark showed an interest in reproducing the predominant British food culture in her kitchen. The
majority of recipes contained in her manuscript are for traditional English dishes. But, like in many other rural kitchens, native ingredients also found a place. Her manuscript includes four recipes for the preparation of kangaroo and detailed instructions for the butchering of the animal. The distinct Australian flavour that began to appear in manuscript cookbooks like Clark’s would later be replicated in their printed counterparts.

Figure 3: Recipe index featuring traditional British puddings, Phillis Clark Manuscript Cookbook, 6132, Challinor Family Papers and Photographs, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

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Clark’s manuscript also included a number of recipes for German dishes, including one for the traditional German Christmas cake Lebkuchen as well as for various German puddings and biscuits. The Darling Downs region of Queensland, where Clark lived, had been a popular destination for German migrants since the 1850s. While the Germans who lived in this area did not leave a significant mark on the local culinary landscape, unlike their counterparts in the Barossa Valley in South Australia, the inclusion of German recipes in Clark’s manuscript indicates there was some willingness to go beyond traditional British fare.

In her study of women’s manuscript cookbooks in the United States, entitled *Eat My Words: Reading Women’s Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote*, Janet Theophano describes these texts as ‘the maps of the social and cultural life they inhabited.’ A recipe signifies an exchange and a connection between individuals. The sharing of recipes was a common activity for many women in nineteenth-century Australia. In her manuscript, Clark acknowledged a number of different individuals as the sources for recipes she included within its pages. This act of acknowledgement locates Clark within a social network of women, including recent German migrants, who not only shared recipes but also, one can imagine, many of the vicissitudes of domestic life in a remote rural setting.

The personal, almost biographical, nature of these texts also provides an insight into aspects of the authors’ daily lives. As mentioned, Clark’s manuscript includes a number of recipes for ‘domestic remedies’, another common trope in books of this kind. The inclusion of these domestic remedies and Clark’s obvious concern for her family’s

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health is particularly poignant as at the time of her death during childbirth in 1874 at age 38 Clark had already lost three of her ten children.

Many culinary historians argue that there exists a significant time lag between the initial appearance and consumption of a particular dish in a society and its subsequent appearance in the pages of a printed cookbook. This time lag can be between forty and 150 years long.\textsuperscript{148} However, manuscript cookbooks reflect the immediacy of eating practices. The very personal nature of manuscript cookbooks would suggest that the recipes included within their pages were ones that the author intended to use in her own kitchen. Moreover, the reciprocal nature of recipe sharing evident in this type of cookbooks, suggests that the recipes in Clark’s manuscript were ones that, at least in her own social milieu, were in common usage.

Conclusion

British foodways and habits had a remarkably long tenure in the Australian culinary landscape. A range of social and cultural factors ensured many of those living in Australia during the nineteenth and early twentieth century continued to replicate traditional domestic practices and to mirror metropolitan culinary culture. The unique conditions involved in the initial settlement of the colonies and the perceived strangeness of the environment and its edible inhabitants were significant factors in the formation of colonial foodways. Early settlers’ food choices were crucial in the maintenance of British cultural values. British cookbooks that found their way into Australian kitchens not only served to replicate familiar dishes they also played an important part in the construction of imperial and colonial ideology. These texts facilitated the recreation of British ways of life in an often adverse setting. These books

\textsuperscript{148} Mennell, \textit{All Manners of Food}, 44; Laura Mason, \textit{Food Culture In Great Britain} (Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 23.
were readily available on the Australian market and catered to a wide range of tastes and incomes. Furthermore, British cookbooks were part of the material that many immigrants brought with them to start a new life in the new colonies. Even when cookbooks were written for personal use in the home they continued to overwhelmingly mirror British practices. The influence of British foodways and cookbooks had a long-lasting legacy. It would be more than one hundred years after the initial arrival of European settlers in Australia before locally produced cookbooks gained a foothold in the kitchens of Australia. The cookbooks that would eventually emerge in Australia hint at the development of a distinct colonial culture that was still firmly rooted within the broader expanse of the British Empire.
Chapter 2
One on every kitchen shelf: The Australian cookbook industry

Kangaroo Steamer (Author’s Recipe)

This is a simple species of braise, and, as the name imports, the meat is steamed. Cut the meat in pieces of about a quarter inch square, and put into a pan with a well covered lid, with a spoonful of milk, an onion shredded into small pieces, and some pepper and salt to taste. When it has been on the fire a short time add about a tenth in quantity of salt pork, or bacon cut to the same size as the kangaroo, with a spoonful of ketchup. Serve hot, with jelly.

*The English and Australian Cookery Book* (1864)

In the middle of 1863 an article appeared in *The Cornwall Chronicle*, a Launceston newspaper, noting with eager anticipation the forthcoming publication of *The English and Australian Cookery Book*. ‘Such a work’, the author commented, ‘has long been required in this hemisphere’.¹ Australian readers had been waiting for more than seventy five years for the appearance of a cookbook that catered for local conditions. In the ensuing decades, the Australian cookbook industry would grow at a steady rate to become one of the mainstays of the publishing industry. ‘Of the making of cookery books there is no end’, wrote Lady Hackett editor of the 1916 *Australian Household Guide*, ‘they fall from the press thick as autumnal leaves’.

This chapter examines the rise and growth of the cookbook industry in Australia between 1864 and 1939. Firstly, it will look at some of the early cookbooks published by Australian authors and assess their overall importance in creating a distinct Australian cookbook culture. Secondly, it will analyse the various types of cookbook that were published in Australia between 1864 and 1939. Thirdly, it will explore the publishing industry’s role in the creation of a domestic cookbook market and its

¹ ‘Town Talk and Table Chat’, *The Cornwall Chronicle*, 20 June 1863, 4.
relationship with cookbook writers. Finally, it will examine the ways readers and users of cookbooks received these texts.

After the 1880s a wide variety of cookbooks appeared on the Australian market catering to every taste and income. Some, such as The Presbyterian Women's Cookery Book and The Green and Gold Cookery Book would become perennial features in kitchens throughout Australia. Others, including the Rational Cookery: containing 116 Practical Recipes for Meatless Dishes and Uric Acid-free Dishes, appear to have been little more than curiosities with a very limited distribution. Some cookbook authors, like Harriet Wicken, Flora Pell and Amy Schauer, would become household names throughout Australia. Others remained largely unknown and, like their cookbooks, failed to reach a wider reading audience.

Often, locally produced cookbooks competed with British imports that remained steadfastly popular with the Australian reading public. The Australian book market was inundated with British publications and it accounted for 25 percent of all British book exports. For example, only two of the fifty or more cookbooks listed in the 1890 catalogue for Watson, Ferguson & Co. booksellers in Brisbane were Australian. It is estimated that during the inter-war period books published by Australian firms accounted for only 10 percent of books sold in Australia. A number of different versions of Mrs Beeton, for example, were readily available in many bookstores. Most of these bore the imprint of the British publisher Ward, Lock and Co which had an office in Melbourne. Some editions of Beeton's work were published on behalf of Australian firms, such as E.W. Cole booksellers and Foy and Gibson's department store. As noted

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Previously it was only after 1888 that Beeton’s work carried a small section devoted to Australian cookery. Even books explicitly advertised as Australian, such as *Dymock’s Australian Cookery Book*, were re-issues of British cookbooks that did little to cater for local conditions save including the word Australia in the title. Yet, despite the onslaught of British cookbooks, Australian books were still able to maintain a significant presence on the market.

**An Australian cookery book**

*The English and Australian Cookery Book* appeared under the pseudonym ‘an Australian Aristologist’. This rather obscure term was derived from an 1835 book entitled *Aristology, or, the Art of Dining*. ‘I call the art of dining Aristology’, wrote the author Thomas Walker, ‘and those who study it, Aristologists’. However, even the early advertisements for the book that appeared prior to its publication made no secret of the author’s true identity. One prominent advertisement for the book, which also featured in *The Cornwall Chronicle*, noted the Honourable Member for Clarence (Tasmania) was about to publish a most important work and stated that ‘nothing could be done without a good dinner’. That Honourable member was a man by the name of Edward Abbott. Indeed, once the book appeared in print Abbott signed the preface ‘E.A., Bellerive, Tasmania. 1864’.

Edward Abbott was born in Sydney in 1801, the son of a Canadian-born army officer also named Edward Abbott. In 1814 the Abbotts arrived in Tasmania where Abbott senior took on the post of Deputy Judge-Advocate, sitting in on both military and civil court cases. Edward Abbott junior served under his father in the Judge Advocates office and was made a Justice of the Peace in 1828. Abbott continued to serve in a variety of

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public offices during his lifetime including as the aforementioned Member for Clarence in the Tasmanian House of Assembly, as a member of the Legislative Council and as a police magistrate. In 1839 he founded the *Hobart Town Advertiser*, of which he was the publisher and editor for three years.

Abbott’s choice of the pen name Aristologist went largely unexplained save for the abovementioned quote from Thomas Walker and a small excerpt from a book entitled *Analysis of Plato’s Republic* buried towards the end of the cookbook. Colin Bannerman argues that the choice of this name would have led potential readers, unfamiliar with the term, to associate it with the word aristocracy and thus potentially label the author as a person of ‘literary and aristocratic pretensions’. Abbott’s pretensions did not end at the choice of an obscure pseudonym, but were also clearly evident in the subtitle of the book: *cookery for the many, as well as for the upper ten thousand*. The term ‘upper ten thousand’ was coined by an American writer in 1852 to describe fashionable society in New York City. The term was later taken up in Britain to describe the members of the ever-growing aristocracy. Abbott’s use of the phrase is one of the earliest in a British context.

*The English and Australian Cookery Book* was unique not only in being the first cookbook written by an Australian but also in the manner in which it was written. In many ways it was a gastronomic treatise that stretched beyond merely being a guide for preparing dishes. Amongst the wide range of topics Abbott covered were nutrition and digestion; the varieties of fish available in Britain, Australia and New Zealand; servants and smoking. The eight page introductory preface is a veritable dissertation on all matters gastronomic. Abbott quotes liberally from an extensive number of texts, including Byron, Milton, Shakespeare and Edmund Burke as well as some of the pre-

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eminent food writers of the time.

While the book bore the title *English and Australian Cookery*, the recipes contained within it were overwhelmingly of British origin. Bannerman identifies only thirty or so recipes that are of distinct colonial provenance. Amongst these colonial recipes was one for a dish with the rather peculiar name of ‘Kangaroo Steamer’. ‘Our colonial venision (sic) dishes’, noted one Sydney newspaper, ‘absolutely require the coining of a new word to denote their excellencies’.¹⁰ There had been written references to the dish since 1820 and it had been a popular and common dish in the colonies before this date.¹¹ Numerous accounts of colonial foodways mention this particular dish by name. In his account of his rambles through the colonies in the late 1840s, the aristocratic military officer Godfrey Mundy devoted considerable space, and a gourmet's eye, to food. Mundy described, amongst other things, a high society dinner party, bush recipes, the dearth of good cooks and the over-abundance of meat. He showed a keen appreciation for kangaroo meat and provided his readers with a glowing report on the various ways of preparing this marsupial, including one for skewered kangaroo ‘kabaubs’ (sic) and for the slow cooked kangaroo 'steamer'. He described the steamer as 'very popular with those who have time and patience' and pronounced the dish to be very tasty.¹² This dish also attained some fame in Britain. A dinner organised by the Acclimatisation Society of Great Britain in 1862 featured Kangaroo Steamer, highlighting its Tasmanian origin, alongside other colonial dishes and wines.¹³ While the dishes of colonial origin in Abbott’s cookbook might have been few in number, they did reflect some colonial eating practices and dishes like Kangaroo Steamer had long been a feature of the colonial culinary landscape.

¹⁰ ‘New South Wales.—No. IX.’, *The Australian*, 13 March 1827, 3.
¹³ *The Epicure’s Year Book and Table Companion* (London: Bradbury, Evans & Co, 1868), 92–94.
The large number of British recipes demonstrated that Abbott was most wedded to the existing British culinary paradigm, but he also showed some ambivalence towards the fastidious replication of traditional rituals. In a section devoted to the iconic Christmas plum pudding Abbott noted that ‘we like these quaint old customs and ceremonies, and hope they will always be kept up in the old country’ but, he added, ‘in the colonies it cannot be expected...the heat of summer is discouraging to festivity’.14 However, in the very same section Abbott agreed that old customs and dishes should be preserved as they helped to keep together ‘time honoured remembrances’ and that as descendants of ‘Englishmen at the Antipodes’ these were looked upon with filial respect.15 This ambivalence reflects some of the tensions and difficulties of replicating British cultural mores and habits in a different, and at times challenging, environment.

Significant portions of the book were lifted from other works, at times with acknowledgement and at others without. As noted in the previous chapter, Abbott appears to have reproduced recipes from Isabella Beeton’s work. An entire chapter dedicated to Jewish cooking, entitled ‘Hebrew Refection’, was lifted from a pre-existing book. Abbott credited the recipes as the work of ‘a lady’, written for the ‘peculiar people to which she belongs’.16 It is highly likely that the ‘lady’ Abbott alludes to was Lady Judith Montefiore, the putative author of The Jewish Manual published in Britain in 1846.17 Less acknowledged are recipes copied from a book entitled Hints for the Table compiled by John Timbs and from the works of Eliza Acton, William Kitchiner and Alexis Soyer amongst others.18 While at times Abbott was remiss in indicating the original sources for the recipes that appeared in his book, he did, however, acknowledge

15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 259.
the ‘grateful aid’ he received from the different authors who preceded him. Abbott’s permissive appropriation of other works has led culinary historian Barbara Santich to label The English and Australian Cookery Book as ‘Edward Abbott’s Scrapbook’ and to argue that this diminishes its iconic role as Australia’s first cookbook. While these conclusions are not completely unwarranted, the manner in which the book was received, both at home and in Britain, indicates it was clearly identified as a work by an Australian written for Australians. Moreover the choice of the word Australian in the title shows that Abbott intended it to be recognised as such.

Figure 4: Advertisement for The English and Australian Cookery Book
The Argus, 22 September 1864

The appearance of Abbott’s work was noted across the Australian colonies. Prominent advertisements for the work were featured in capital city newspapers such as The Sydney Morning Herald and The Argus in Melbourne. These advertisements included an extensive listing of the book’s contents. Abbott was keen to spread his work extensively partly, as Bannerman suggests, as a way of reviving his failing financial fortunes. It is estimated

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21 For a further discussion on the Australian nature of The English and Australian Cookery Book see Chapter 3
approximately three thousand copies of Edward Abbott’s book were printed in its initial run.\(^{23}\)

One advertisement for Abbott’s book ambitiously noted it was available at ‘all booksellers and Railway Libraries in Great Britain, Australia, India, New Zealand, and the States of America- Federal and Confederate’.\(^{24}\) There is little evidence to show Abbott’s work reached much beyond the shores of Australia. While New Zealand newspapers carried numerous advertisements listing it for sale in bookstores, it appears to have received scant mention beyond that. One review that appeared in the *Daily Southern Cross*, an Auckland newspaper, described it as a ‘literary curiosity’ which could be perused independently from its role in the teaching of cookery.\(^{25}\)

British newspapers carried generally positive reviews of Abbott’s book. One appeared in *The Athenaeum* along with a review for *Cookery for English Households* authored by ‘A French Lady’. The reviewer noted there was ‘an air of plenty...of honest appetite and hearty enjoyment in the Australian book’.\(^{26}\) However, the same review highlighted some of the colonial recipes as being evidence of a ‘more primitive and uncultured’ appetite.\(^{27}\) Despite the unrefined nature of the Australian dishes, and perhaps as a sign of imperial solidarity, the reviewer did observe that they were more ‘intelligible to English palates’ than those provided by the French Lady.\(^{28}\) *The Spectator*, for its part, was less welcoming of Abbott’s book. The author, according to the reviewer, sacrificed his book to his literary ambitions; ‘the recipes bore the general reader and the jokes bewilder the cook’.\(^{29}\) The recipes contained within it, and in particular those for kangaroo, the

\(^{23}\) Santich, ‘Edward Abbott’s Scrapbook’, 106.
\(^{25}\) ‘English and Australian Cookery Book’, *Daily Southern Cross*, 4 August 1864, 5.
\(^{26}\) *The Athenaeum*, 5 November 1864, 595.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 596.
\(^{28}\) Ibid.
\(^{29}\) *The Spectator* (F.C. Westley, 1864), 1366.
reviewer concluded, would be of most use in Australia.\textsuperscript{30}

An expanded version of the chapter on ‘Hebrew Reflection’ would appear as a small pamphlet in 1867 under the title \textit{Hebrew Cookery}. This was published in Britain by Low & Co., the original publishers of the cookbook, and in Australia by George Robertson. This gave \textit{Hebrew Cookery} the distinction of being the first cookery text published and printed on Australian soil. Few changes from the original chapter of the cookbook appeared in this pamphlet. Abbot did, however, further elaborate on the source for many of his recipes and actually named \textit{The Jewish Manual} as their origin.\textsuperscript{31} The recipes were interpolated with brief descriptions of other ‘ethnic food’ including Chinese, Thai, Swedish and African. The choice of this section of Abbott’s book for further distribution is an intriguing one. While there had been a Jewish presence in the colonies since the 1780s, they were never more than a small minority, particularly in Tasmania. A review of this pamphlet noted its release was part of a plan to make many sections of \textit{The English and Australian Cookery Book} ‘accessible to the millions’.\textsuperscript{32} The promised pamphlet for ‘Dinner according to Count D’Orsay’, another chapter from the book, never materialised, perhaps due to Edward Abbott’s death in 1869.

\textit{The English and Australian Cookery Book} remains unique in the annals of the cookbook industry in Australia. It was the first cookbook credited to an Australian and recognised as Australian by the general reading public. It was the first cookbook to include recipes for Australian wildlife and dishes of distinct colonial origins. Yet, in many ways, it was destined to remain a curiosity. Its style, and much of its content, was unsuited to the practical needs of colonial cooks. Its literary ambitions made it more likely to find a place on a shelf in a study than on a shelf in the kitchen. His book would not be reprinted until the 1970s when it appeared, in an abridged form, under the title \textit{The

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{30} Ibid.
\bibitem{31} An Australian, \textit{Hebrew Cookery} (Melbourne: George Robertson & Co, 1867), 23.
\bibitem{32} ‘Town Talk and Table Chat’, \textit{The Cornwall Chronicle}, 26 December 1866, 8.
\end{thebibliography}
Colonial Cookbook. It would take more than a decade after the initial publication of The English and Australian Cookery Book before another cookbook would be published in Australia.

The Australian Cook, by Alfred Wilkinson, saw the light of day in Melbourne in 1876. Wilkinson, the head chef at the Athenaeum Club, was following in the tradition of professional male chefs penning cookbooks for the wider public. Much more practical in style and content than Edward Abbott’s book, The Australian Cook highlighted the professional expertise of its author. ‘Each receipt may be depended on as thoroughly workable’, wrote Wilkinson, ‘being the same as I have in daily use myself’.33 The subtitle of the book proclaimed it to be ‘a complete manual of cookery suitable for the Australian colonies’.34 Wilkinson recognised the real need for a cookbook specifically for Australian conditions noting that the majority of cookbooks available were of European origin and only partially satisfied the ‘requirements and resources of the Australian colonies’.35 Yet, despite these claims, the cookbook contained no recipes for Australian game or other native ingredients except Murray cod. One review of the book, while praising its practical nature did admonish Wilkinson for omitting to provide instructions for cooking such ‘an essentially Australian dish as wild turkey’. The recipes contained in Wilkinson’s book are primarily British in origin and also reflected some Francophile tendencies as would be expected in a book composed by the Chef de Cuisine at one of Melbourne’s leading eating establishments. The Australian Cook was most notable for its ambitious embrace of modern technology in the form of the gas stove.36

The first cookbook to truly satisfy the practical needs of those living in Australia,

34 Wilkinson, The Australian Cook.
35 Ibid., v.
36 See Chapter 6
particularly in the bush, and to present a readily identified Australian style of cuisine was Wilhelmina Rawson’s *Queensland Cookery and Poultry Book* published at Maryborough in 1878. More commonly known as *Mrs Lance Rawson’s Cookery Book and Household Hints*, this book would see three editions spanning twelve years. Born in Sydney in 1851, Wilhelmina Rawson came from a distinctly middle class and genteel background. She spent a significant portion of her childhood on her stepfather’s sheep property near Tamworth; here she learnt the bushcraft skills required to live in rural Australia, skills that she would later impart to her readers in her cookery and domestic advice books. In 1872 she married Lance Rawson, by whose name she would become well known as a cookery book author throughout colonial Queensland. She arrived at ‘Kircubbin’, a sugar plantation fifteen kilometres outside of Maryborough in 1877, after a five-year stint on a cattle property west of Mackay. Her experiences as a housewife and housekeeper in remote areas of Queensland provided her with the impetus to write a book of recipes and household hints aimed at the ‘young and inexperienced housewife’ living in the bush. *Mrs Lance Rawson’s cookery book and household hints*, which was published by local Maryborough bookseller John Horsburgh, marked the beginning of a long publishing career for Rawson. This book was followed, amongst others, by *The Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information* in 1894 and the *Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion* in 1895, a book that would remain in print into the last decade of the twentieth century.

While not quite becoming an Antipodean Mrs Beeton, Mrs Rawson’s works would go on to feature on many Australian kitchen shelves, providing distinctly Australian recipes

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and household hints to a colonial society growing both in size and affluence. The hallmark of her cookbooks was her practical approach to cookery and other domestic duties, which became the template copied by many other Australian authors. While cookbooks written by British women had long been available in Australia, Wilhelmina Rawson holds the distinction of being the first woman to publish a cookbook in Australia. Over the next fifty years women authors played a major part in the Australian cookbook industry, penning the overwhelming majority of all cookbooks published in Australia.

**More than recipes**

A number of distinct types of cookbooks emerged in the Australian marketplace reflecting the differing commercial motivations of those who issued them. Many cookbooks were written by individual authors whose intention was to profit from the sale of their book. However, a significant proportion of cookbooks published in Australia between 1864 and 1939 departed from this format, and were published on behalf of commercial concerns for the sole purpose of advertising. Others still were issued to raise money for a wide range of community organisations or to serve as educational texts. While all these cookbooks provided recipes for their readers, they contained subtle differences in the manner in which they were written and marketed to consumers.

One of the most prevalent types of cookbook to appear on the Australian market was that intended to promote a particular service or product. These have been estimated as representing 46 percent of the overall market. The most significant number of these involved the promotion of manufactured and processed food. Cookbooks were issued to

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advertise products such as baking powder, cocoa, flour and even pasta amongst many others. Well-known companies including Arnott’s biscuit company, the Davis Gelatine company and Uncle Toby’s Oats issued cookbooks to advertise their wares. One of the earliest cookbooks issued by a food manufacturer was the *Kandy Koola Cookery Book and Housewife’s Companion* published in 1898 by the proprietors of the Kandy Koola Tea Company. Often, the recipes contained within these promotional books like this one bore little relation to the products manufactured by the company selling the cookbook; in this instance the book carried no recipes that explicitly called for the use of tea. The main purpose of the work was to spread the company’s name far and wide through the means of a free book. The publishers of the *Kandy Koola Cookery Book*, however, felt the need to justify the fact that the book was distributed for free, assuring readers that it was as valuable and reliable as one that could be purchased at a cost of a few shillings at a bookseller.41 This free cookbook was one of many promotional devices, which also included free samples and competitions, used by the company to advertise its product.

The *Aunt Mary’s Cookery Book*, first published around 1904, was intended to advertise and promote the company’s baking powder. While the book did include recipes particularly for baking cakes that required the use of baking powder, a large number of them did not. Almost all the pages of the book carried small advertising slogans such as ‘Aunt Mary’s Baking Powder makes labour light’.42 The importance of a good baking powder, according to the book editors, was paramount. A poem praising the merits of Aunt Mary’s Baking Powder concluded with the following, somewhat hyperbolical, stanza:

In the marriage service all brides should say

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41 Kandy Koola Tea, *The Kandy Koola Cookery Book and Housewife’s Companion* (Melbourne: Kandy Koola Tea, 1898).

42 *Aunt Mary’s Cookery Book* (Sydney: Tillock & Co., proprietors of Aunt Mary’s Pure Food Products, n.d.).
With “love, honour, obey”—but louder—
“I solemnly promise to use each day,
Aunt Mary’s Baking Powder”. 43

*Aunt Mary’s Cookery Book* also tied in with a wide range of cross-promotional exercises, including widespread advertising campaigns in newspapers throughout the country and competitions. For its forthcoming 1936 edition the publishers of the book called upon readers to send in their favourite recipes offering the hefty sum of £25 for the winner.44 The book was initially available to customers for free but latter editions incurred a cost of one shilling. It had a sporadic publishing history throughout the first half of the twentieth century reaching its peak in the 1930s with the last edition appearing in 1951. This pattern of publication probably reflected the changing fortunes of Tillock & Co., the manufacturer of Aunt’s Mary Baking Powder. In an increasingly competitive market, promotional books, like *Aunt Mary’s Cookery Book*, provided food manufacturers with a reliable means through which they could advertise their products directly to their primary consumers.

Retailing and wholesaling concerns, both large and small, also issued cookbooks to promote their services. In 1890 a series of cookbooks appeared on the market all based on the same basic template. The first of these was the *Australian Cookery Book* distributed by James Kidman, a Sydney grocer and wine merchant. Shortly after a book with the identical title was published by another Sydney grocer named S. Bennett. Similar books were published by grocers across the country including in Adelaide by the local grocers H. Cashmore. While the original source from which these books were derived has not been identified, its prevalence across the country raises the possibility that the book was created specifically to be sold to the various concerns that issued it. These booklets appear to have been produced at little cost, if the quality of many of the

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43 Ibid.
44 “‘Aunt Mary’s” Recipe Competition £200 in Cash Prizes’, *Singleton Argus*, 29 May 1935, 4.
extant copies is any indication, and they were often offered at no cost to the consumer. These books featured copious amounts of advertising in their pages presumably featuring products for sale at the premises of each individual grocer who issued the book. Once again, cookbooks proved to be an excellent medium through which to advertise products to those most likely to use them. This practice continued well into the second decade of the twentieth century.

Some businesses relied on the expertise and reputation of cookbook authors to promote their services. One such author was Harriet Wicken whose *Kingswood Cookery Book* had been on the market since 1888 and who had taken on the role as domestic science instructor at the Sydney Technical College.\(^45\) Two promotional cookbooks appeared bearing Wicken’s name as the author. *The Cook’s Compass*, from 1890, promoted the services of J. G. Hanks & Co. a Sydney-based grocer and tea merchant, and noted Wicken’s position as a lecturer in domestic economy as well as the fact that she had previously published a cookbook.\(^46\) In 1892 Melbourne’s Mutual Provedoring Company issued *Fish Dainties*. In the preface of this book Wicken stated that it had been explicitly written at the request of the company.\(^47\) That the Mutual Provedoring Company sought out Wicken to write their cookbook demonstrates there was some desire to cash in on her reputation to elevate the profile of their products.

Grocers were not the only retailers who issued cookbooks to advertise their businesses. The prominent Melbourne department store George and George began to publish their *Family Cookery Guide* in the last decade of the nineteenth century. While the book purported to provide recipes for those interested in economy, it appears its real audience was the store’s well-heeled clientele. The preface of the 1910 edition of the *Family Cookery Guide* continued to remark on the presence of servants in the home at a time

\(^{45}\) For more on the career of Harriet Wicken see Chapter 5

\(^{46}\) Harriet Wicken, *The Cook’s Compass* (Sydney: J.G. Hanks, 1890).

\(^{47}\) Harriet Wicken, *Fish Dainties* (Melbourne: Mutual Provedoring Co. Ltd, 1892).
when these were primarily the purview of the well-off. Zara Aronson was a well-known cookbook author and journalist, as well as the cookery editor for a number of newspapers in Sydney and Brisbane. In 1918 she became the proprietor of the Mary Elizabeth Tea Room in Sydney which she operated until the 1930s. The Mary Elizabeth Cookbook, compiled and edited by Aronson, appeared on the market soon after the tea room began operation. While the book made no allusion to the recipes contained within it being available on the tea room’s menu it did carry a prominent advertisement for the business. Furthermore, for Sydney readers at least, the title of the book would have created an association with the Mary Elizabeth Tea Room. This book is one of the earliest cookbooks to be published as a cross-promotional exercise for an eating establishment in Australia.

Figure 5: Diminutive copy of the Handbook of Practical Cookery
Issued by Wallace Bishop, 1906

Even businesses that bore no relation to the food manufacturing and retailing industry took advantage of the promotional qualities of the cookbook. The Golden Nugget cookbook, for example, was issued in Bendigo in 1897 with the compliments of local chemist and dentist W. J. Donegan. Brisbane jeweller’s Wallace Bishop distributed a copy of the British cookbook Handbook of Practical Cookery in 1906. In a clever, if somewhat impractical, promotional ploy, the book was small enough to fit in a standard ring box.

48 George & George Ltd, Family Cookery Guide: Containing Valuable Recipes for Those Who Regard Economy as Well as Excellence in the Cuisine and Toilet (Melbourne: George & George, 1910), 11.
50 W. J. Donegan, Golden Nuggets (Bendigo: W. J. Donegan, 1897).
With the advent of radio broadcasts in Australia many radio stations sought to promote themselves through cookbooks. Radio stations such as 2KY in Sydney collected recipes from their readers and published cookbooks with the station’s name prominently displayed on the cover. Large corporations with no discernible links to the food industry also saw the benefits of these texts. The Colonial Mutual Assurance Company, for example, began to publish cookbooks as promotional material in 1924.\(^{51}\)

One of the most blatant exercises in the use of a cookbook as a promotional vehicle was the 1926 cookbook *To Mr and Mrs Newlywed*. The book was distributed for free on behalf of ‘the leading business firms of Sydney’ by a firm called Direct Advertising Services N.S.W. It contained advice on a broad range of matters concerning a newlywed couple including cleanliness, prospective motherhood and home building.\(^{52}\) The book’s recipe section was extensive and quite adventurous for the era, including an entire chapter devoted to ‘Oriental Dishes’. However, the most distinguishing feature of *Mr and Mrs Newlywed* was the copious amount of advertisements featured in its pages. All manner of goods and services were promoted including chiropodists, travel agents, manicurists and mortgage providers. A directory found at the end of the book provided further information, such as phone numbers and locations, of all of those who advertised within the pages of the book.

Appliance and kitchenware manufacturers also used cookbooks to promote and sell their products. They had the added difficulty, unlike grocers and food manufacturers, of selling products that in most cases required significant expenditure on the part of the consumer. As new domestic technologies appeared on the market, cookbooks followed in their wake. Electric refrigerator manufacturers, for example, issued numerous cookbooks to instruct readers in the use of their appliances. Gas and electricity suppliers


\(^{52}\) *To Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed: From the Leading Business Firms of Sydney*. (Sydney: Direct Advertising Service N.S.W, 1926), Preface.
also took advantage of cookbooks as a means through which to advertise their services. In addition, both these industries utilised the expertise and reputation of well-known cookbook authors to further promote their goods and services through the provision of cookery classes. This facet of the Australian cookbook industry is explored at length in a later chapter of this thesis.

Fund raising or community cookbooks were another popular form of the medium that found widespread acceptance in many Australian kitchens. Their primary aim, as their name implies, was to raise money for the organisation that produced them. A broad range of community groups and associations throughout Australia became involved in creating cookbooks. Temperance leagues, soldiers’ associations and women’s groups, amongst others, all issued their own cookbooks to raise money for their respective causes. A number of groups, for example, issued cookbooks to raise money for the Red Cross in 1915. The second edition of *The Hamilton Cookery Book of Tried Recipes* was compiled in aid of the Hamilton Red Cross Fund in Victoria, while a similar book was issued by the Tasmanian Division of the Red Cross Society under the title *The Red Cross Cookery Book*. In the same year, another book appeared in New South Wales with the title *The Red Cross Cookery Book: 250 Recipes*. The editor of the book, a Mrs Eric Lowe, stated in the foreword that profits from the sale of the book were destined for the assistance of wounded soldiers.  

These books were usually compiled in a collaborative fashion by volunteers. Recipes were solicited from members of the community and then selected and edited by either a committee or an individual entrusted with that task. The editor of the 1896 *Temperance Cookery Book*, Olive Lucas, recognised the collaborative nature of the work and the importance of those who contributed recipes to the book. She thanked the

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many ‘ladies who kindly forwarded their best recipes’ without whom the task of compiling the book would have been exceedingly difficult. 55

By far, the most active organisations involved in issuing fundraising cookbooks were church-based groups that supported charities and other church activities. This was motivated by the need to raise funds after the abolition of state aid to religion began in the mid-nineteenth century. 56 John Hoyle estimates that cookbooks produced by church-based groups accounted for approximately 36 percent of all fundraising books. 57 The best-known of these was *The Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book* but a large number of cookbooks were issued by other church groups. *The Housewife’s Friend* published in Grafton in 1895 was created explicitly to raise funds in order to liquidate the debt of the Church of England Parish Hall in that city. 58 The editor of the book noted that the first edition of a thousand volumes had rapidly sold out necessitating the publication of a second edition. 59 While book sales would have provided the largest source of fund raising revenue for the publishers of *The Housewife’s Friend*, the book also contained numerous advertisements. The revenue from these advertisements would have served to offset some of the expenses incurred for the printing of the book.

The genesis of *The Green and Gold Cookery Book* illuminates the motivations and methods involved in the production of a fund raising cookbook. First appearing in South Australia in 1924, the book was intended to raise funds for the establishment of King’s College in Adelaide. The school was a joint project of the Congregational and Baptist churches to provide education to young men under the precepts of their own

59 Ibid.
denominations. Development for *The Green and Gold Cookery Book*, named after the school’s colours, began in late 1923 during preparations for the inaugural school fete. Miss Annie Sharman, one of the eventual editors of the book, suggested that a small cookbook of ‘tested recipes’ might prove to be a good source of revenue for the school. The editorial committee entrusted with producing the book consisted of Sharman and three other members who each took responsibility for a different aspect of the book’s editing and publication. Recipes were collected from a number of congregations throughout South Australia where churches were requested to appoint their own Recipe Collectors. Editors were also able to rely on members of these congregations to actively promote and distribute the book. The efforts of the organising committee did not go unrewarded with the first edition of *The Green and Gold Cookery Book* selling five thousand copies in its first year. The practical nature of the book became one of its strongest selling points. ‘As a purely Australian cookery book’, one early reviewer noted, ‘the ingredients for each dish are in daily use in every Australian home’ and the recipes were tested and reliable. Following editions fared just as well and by the end of 1926 the book had brought in approximately £400 in profits for the school. The book became a staple in many South Australian homes and its remarkable longevity is evident from the fact that the latest edition of *The Green and Gold Cookery Book* appeared in 2013.

Many cookbooks explicitly intended for use as textbooks for domestic science and cookery classes also appeared on the market. New ideas concerning a rational approach to the teaching of domestic science had begun to emerge in Australia by the final

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61 Ibid., 71.
64 Ibid., 2.
65 ‘For the Practical Woman’, *The Register*, 22 April 1924, 4.
66 ‘King’s College: A Happy and Record Year’, *The Register*, 15 December 1926, 18.
decades of the nineteenth century. This new approach to the instruction of cookery necessitated a new type of cookbook that could meet the required standards of this new discipline. Domestic science instructors, like Harriet Wicken and Amy Schauer, as well as education departments across Australia, published cookbooks to satisfy this need. The importance of cookbooks, and their authors, in the domestic science movement is examined in a later chapter of this thesis.

**Not such a bad speculation**

A large number of publishers populated the cookbook market in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with prominent publishing firms, like Angus and Robertson and George Robertson, responsible for the publication of a significant number of Australian cookbooks. George Robertson (1825-1898) was a Melbourne publisher; he was no relation to George Robertson (1860-1933) the founding partner of Angus and Robertson. However, many cookbooks were published by small firms who saw in them the possibility of a profitable publication. These firms provided Australian cookbook authors with the opportunity to publish their books and to make them available to a wide reading audience.

The relationship between Harriet Wicken and her publisher Angus and Robertson, although by no means typical, casts some light on the dealings cookbook authors had with large publishing firms. By 1896, when she began to deal with Angus and Robertson, Wicken had an established track record in the industry and, as the author of several well-known cookbooks that had sold thousands of copies, she was well placed to negotiate a favourable contract with her publisher for the fourth edition of her best known work *The Kingswood Cookery Book*. She had also produced the recipe section of a previous Angus and Robertson publication entitled *The Art of Living in Australia* written by Sydney doctor Philip Muskett. Authors under contract to Angus and
Robertson had a range of options available to them as to the manner in which they could receive payment for their work. Payments could be received on commission, they could receive a royalty, agree to a profit share or the work could be bought outright by the company.\(^67\) One of Wicken’s other books under the banner of Angus and Robertson, the 1896 *Recipes for Lenten Dishes*, had been published on commission.\(^68\) While *Lenten Dishes* was not very successful and did not see a second edition, Angus and Robertson were still willing to negotiate with Wicken for the publication of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*.

In a letter to Wicken in 1896, George Robertson expressed a keen interest in publishing her work. Here, Wicken’s reputation was a key factor. ‘We intend to do a Cookery Book of some sort’, Robertson told Wicken, ‘and would very much prefer to have yours to running the risk of a new one’.\(^69\) Robertson was willing to provide very generous terms for the rights to publish the book. He offered to undertake the book’s printing and publishing at the company’s expense, and proposed a royalty of four pence a copy for the first three thousand copies sold and an additional penny for any subsequent copies.\(^70\)

In the first three months after publication in 1898 *The Kingswood Cookery Book* sold 1189 copies, earning Wicken £19 16s 6d in the process, with a further 537 copies sold by the end of the year.\(^71\) The book proved to be successful enough for Angus and Robertson to offer Wicken £25 for five years in exchange for the rights to the book.\(^72\) In an attempt to increase sales the company lowered the price of the book and the fifth edition sold for 1s which was considerably cheaper than the price of 3s 6d that Wicken’s Melbourne publisher George Robertson had put on the book in 1891. This lower price

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 31. 
\(^{69}\) ‘Letter from George Robertson to Harriet Wicken’, 30 March 1896, ML MSS 3269 71/4, Mitchell Library. 
\(^{70}\) Ibid. 
\(^{71}\) Alison, *Doing Something for Australia*, 140. 
\(^{72}\) Ibid.
was facilitated by changes occurring in the Australian printing industry. The 1900 edition of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, unlike earlier ones, was printed, folded, sewn and bound wholly by machine.\(^{73}\)

One of the advantages of a large publisher like Angus and Robertson was that they could actively promote the works in their catalogues. They sent out over two hundred copies of *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, copies for which Wicken received no royalties, to newspapers and magazines throughout Australia. Company documents note that one hundred and thirty six reviews appeared for Wicken’s book.\(^{74}\) These reviews varied from short and simple ones that provided a brief description and price of the book, to longer ones that praised the many merits of the work. A large company also facilitated the widespread distribution of a book like *The Kingswood Cookery Book*. Angus and Robertson supplied Cole’s Book Arcade, a large Melbourne bookstore, with five hundred copies of Wicken’s book which were labelled under Cole’s own imprint. Angus and Robertson also offered Coles very generous credit terms for the purchase of the books.

The fourth edition of *The Kingswood Cookery Book* was deemed sufficiently profitable by its publishers to warrant the production of a further edition the following year. After the five-year agreement with Wicken had elapsed the company sold the rights to the

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\(^{73}\) Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, 28 September 1900, 2.

\(^{74}\) Alison, *Doing Something for Australia*, 71.
book to another publisher. By this time Angus and Robertson had commenced selling another cookbook that would be one of the mainstays of its business, *The Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book*. *The Kingswood Cookery Book* was a financial success for Wicken who, as Jennifer Alison argues, probably benefited more than the company from the work. Wicken’s success, however, did not guarantee any further contracts with the company who declined a manuscript on ‘Breakfast and Tea Dishes’.

Cookbooks were a highly profitable proposition for publishers such as Angus and Robertson. The *Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book*, which replaced Harriet Wicken’s book as the company’s bestselling cookbook at the end of the nineteenth century, amassed twenty three editions and boasted 440,000 copies in print between 1902 and 1943. The *Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book* had first appeared in 1895 as a fundraising vehicle for the Women’s Missionary Association of the Presbyterian Church of New South Wales under the title of *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*. Like many other fundraising cookbooks of its type, its publication was coordinated by a staff of volunteers with little experience in the business. The printing and binding of the books, a task well beyond the means of the amateur publisher, was done by Sydney firm S.T. Leigh & Co. The all-important task of distributing the book was carried out by the large army of volunteers involved in the Women’s Missionary Association and through the myriad stalls, fêtes or bazaars organised by them. By the time Angus and Robertson began publishing the *Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book* in 1902 it already was a well-known book with a significance presence in the cookbook landscape of Australia.

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75 Ibid., 140.
76 Ibid., 197.
78 Black, “‘Tried and Tested’: Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890-1980”, 53.
79 Colin Bannerman, ‘Cookery Books as History: Crunching the Numbers’ (presented at the Cookery Books as History, the Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink, Adelaide, 2006), 3.
Another of Angus and Robertson's bestselling cookbook was the *Common-sense Household Cookery Book*. First published in 1914, the book was compiled by members of the New South Wales Cookery Teachers Association as a text to meet the requirements of the cookery curriculum in the state's public schools. School books such as this one played an important part in the Angus & Robertson business model and the company actively sought to have their textbooks adopted by educational authorities. Later known as *The Commonsense Cookery Book*, it would sell 142,000 copies in little over a decade. So successful was the book that George Robertson’s grandson claimed that ‘many a first novel saw the light of day on the back of the *Commonsense Cookery Book*’. Some lesser-known cookbook writers needed to demonstrate a proven track record of sales before a publisher was willing to take upon their work. Hannah Maclurcan, for example, self-published the first two editions of her *Cookery Book* after it had been rejected by several publishers. In a letter to A G Stephens, the editor of *The Bulletin*, Maclurcan wrote: 'I took the first one to Melbourne to try and get one of the publishers to take it up but they were very discouraging and told me that “Cookery Books” were a very bad speculation'. Like many other self-published authors of the period, Maclurcan used the services of a local printer and bookseller to produce her book. Ever the enterprising businesswoman, Maclurcan helped the printer set the type, for which she had paid out of her own pocket. She was also most likely responsible for soliciting the numerous advertisements that featured in the cookbook; the income from these would have helped to offset some of the production costs. Maclurcan also sent out

81 Ibid., 33.
review copies to numerous city and regional newspapers throughout Queensland as a way to promote her work. The book garnered positive reviews with many highlighting the practicality of the work for Australian conditions. Almost immediately after publication excerpts of the book appeared in the pages of these same newspapers. After the initial run sold out within a matter of weeks, Maclurcan published a second edition of her book. It was only after this success that a large publisher, George Robertson of Melbourne, took interest in her work and published it in 1899, giving it nationwide distribution.

Cookbook authors often needed to use their own initiative and had to rely on the myriad of publishing and printing firms in order to see their work appear in print. Many first-time authors also were obliged to self-publish their books. The author of Mrs Carter’s *Cookery Book*, for example, responded to the request for a printed version of the recipes she gave in her cookery class by issuing a small book that was produced by a local printer. Even authors with a reputation found the need to self-publish at times. The small booklet entitled *Recipes given by Mrs. Wicken at Cookery Class, Warrnambool*, does not show the name of any publisher, just that of a printer. Those issuing fund-raising cookbooks generally eschewed publishing firms and relied instead on local printers and their own distribution networks. However, as noted earlier, if the book attained some success it was invariably taken up by one of the larger publishing companies.

George Robertson of Melbourne, as noted earlier in this chapter, was notable for publishing Edward Abbott’s small pamphlet on Hebrew cookery, the first on Australian soil. Robertson also published Alfred Wilkinson’s *The Australian Cook*. The first edition of Harriet Wicken’s *The Kingswood Cookery Book* published in Australia, almost ten years before her contract with Angus & Robertson, was issued by George Robertson in

Melbourne. The company would eventually include some of the country's most prominent cookbook writers in its stable of authors. These included, amongst others, Wilhelmina Rawson, who published *The Antipodean Cookery Book* with the company, Flora Pell the author of *Our Cookery Book*, and Rita Vaile a prominent newspaper columnist and author of *Cottage Cookery (Hygienic and Economic)*.

Newspapers and periodicals were also significant publishers of cookbooks in Australia. Between 1927 and 1929 Melbourne's *The Argus* published five cookbooks. Three of these books appeared under the authorship of Vesta, the pen name for Stella Allan who edited the 'Women to Women' column in the newspaper. The popular *Australian Home Journal* issued, as a supplement to the magazine, sixteen cookery booklets within a two-year period. These covered a wide variety of ingredients including fish, salads and oranges and lemons. Both these collections of books were distributed at no cost and served as promotional material for the respective publications that issued them. The *New Idea* magazine, for its part, published more substantial cookbooks at a price including "*The New Idea*" *All-Australian Cook Book* in 1931. The *Age*'s rural weekly magazine, the *Leader*, published numerous cookbooks drawn from the pages of its women's section entitled *The Spare Corner*. The *Leader Spare Corner Book* was first published in 1929 and various editions would appear until the 1960s. The books were issued in two formats: first as single editions which were free, then after three issues appeared, they were bound together and sold for sixpence.86 The books were edited by Caroline Isaacson under the pen name of Viola.87 In the introduction to the 1938 edition Viola highlighted the practicality and reliability of the recipes within it and urged

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readers who did not already subscribe to *The Leader* ‘to do so without delay’.  

Some authors used a number of publishers throughout their career. Ella Winning, the author of three cookbooks, worked with three different publishers during a career that spanned sixteen years. Her book *The Household Manual: A complete repository of useful information* was first published in 1899 by Sydney publishers Edward Lee and Co. and by another publisher, Kealy and Philip, the following year. Winning remained with Kealy and Philip for the publication of her next book, *The Australian Housewife’s Guide To Domestic Economy*. The book would see at least six editions in only two short years, highlighting its appeal to a publishing firm and her potential negotiating power. Her final work would not appear until 1915 and, once again, in the hands of a different publisher.

One way through which cookbook authors could increase their profits was to include advertisements in the pages of their work. The value of Australian cookbooks as a useful medium through which to advertise products was highlighted with the appearance of *The English and Australian Cookery Book*. A newspaper article noting its forthcoming publication claimed the book’s large prospective readership made it ‘an excellent medium...for advertising extensively’.  

89 The author urged business proprietors to advertise in the pages of the book which, he rather optimistically predicted, would become ‘universally popular’ across all the colonies and Europe.  

Abbott’s book did, in fact, include a twelve page advertising section for a wide range of both British and colonial business concerns. A number of local Tasmanian businesses, such as the Duchess of Kent Hotel and Ballantyne’s Wine Merchants, placed advertisements in the book. Colonial advertisements were not just restricted to Tasmanian businesses and an


89 ‘Town Talk and Table Chat’, 20 June 1863, 4.

90 Ibid.
Adelaide bookseller is also featured in the section. Notably, a significant number of the advertisements were for British companies conducting operations both at home and in the colonies. Ella Winning’s 1899 *Household Manual* featured a large number of advertisements both for Sydney companies and for businesses in her home town of Moree. The book even included an advertisement for her own brand of baking powder. This practice of including advertisements in the pages of Australian cookbooks would continue into the twentieth century and would have served as a way for many individual authors to subsidise the costs of their books.

A number of publishing firms issued cookbooks that reflected a particular ideological outlook or religious doctrine. One of these was the Echo Publishing company, later known as the Signs Publishing Association, which was established in Melbourne in 1895 by members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The company published a number of cookbooks that promoted the dietary principles advocated by the church. *A Friend in the Kitchen*, published in 1898 and written by Anna L. Colcord, promoted vegetarianism, temperance and a healthy approach to eating. Colcord, an American and the wife of the Secretary of the Adventist General Conference, resided for a number of years in Australia where she and her husband worked alongside Seventh-day Adventist prophet Ellen Gould White. Colcord’s book had previously been published in the United States but was taken up by the Echo Publishing Company soon after her arrival in the country. Early editions of the book included a section providing recipes for meat but in the second Australian edition of the book this was replaced by a chapter on meat substitutes. The book reached a much broader audience than just Seventh-day Adventists and remained in print for almost two decades with the 1918 edition claiming that over 125,000 copies had been sold throughout Australia. Another American

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expatriate to be published in Australia by the company was Lauretta Kress whose *Good Health Cookery Book* appeared in 1904. Before arriving in Australia, Kress had trained under Harvey Kellogg at the famous Battle Creek Sanatorium operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Together with her husband, Colcord came to Australia to establish a similar institution in Wahroonga, New South Wales. Here, Kress set up an experimental kitchen where she was able to put into practice the dietary principles advocated by the church. These principles were also clearly articulated in her cookbook, which is notable for the promotion of Sanitarium food products, another business enterprise of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The Echo Publishing Company saw great value in cookbooks as a means to disseminate the church’s particular approach to diet and to cross promote its manufactured food products to a wider audience that might not otherwise have come in contact with them.

**Everyone had one**

While the popularity of cookbooks is relatively easy to gauge through numbers of editions and sales, assessing the manner in which they were perceived by individuals is a far more difficult task. Although historians like Wallace Kirsop and Elizabeth Webby have examined the role of readers in Australian culture they do not include cookbooks in their analyses. The omission of cookbooks from these studies is partially due to the utilitarian nature of these texts, which were ‘used’ rather than ‘read’. However, not all historians of the book in Australia have neglected the ways in which readers regarded these pervasive books that were to be found in almost every Australian home. For their *Australian Readers Remember: An oral history of reading 1890-1930* Martyn Lyons and

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Lucy Taksa conducted a series of interviews with sixty one individuals, who were asked to recall their experiences reading books in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Interviewees were asked, amongst other things, about the presence and use of cookbooks in their homes. These recollections provide an invaluable source on attitudes towards and perceptions of cookbooks in Australia.

The cookbook most commonly remembered by respondents was the *Common Sense Cookery Book*. ‘Everyone had one’, recalled one interviewee named Vera. The presence of this book in many homes was most likely due to the fact that, as mentioned previously, this book was a best seller of the era. Moreover, as a textbook for domestic science education, its purchase could be justified as a valid educational expense rather than as a luxury. A number of respondents recalled the presence of the *Common Sense Cookery Book* in conjunction with at least one other cookbook in their home.

Some of the titles remembered by interviewees attest to the longevity some books had in the Australian market. One of these was *Inquire Within Upon Everything*. As was shown in the previous chapter, this book had a considerable presence in Australia from the 1860s. A number of readers also recalled the presence of the ubiquitous Mrs Beeton on the kitchen shelf. Since its initial publication, Beeton’s book had gained a strong foothold in many Australian homes despite its considerable expense. One Brisbane newspaper noted in 1898 that many a home possessed a Mrs Beeton as it was ‘a favourite present for a young bride’. A copy of Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* was even to be found in the personal library of well-known Australian

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96 Ibid., 105.
writer Miles Franklin, the book probably inherited from her mother. However, a number of interviewees did note that, while they were aware of Beeton’s work, the book was far too expensive for most working class people to afford. Almost fifty years earlier Wilhelmina Rawson had suggested that a copy of her own book was a cheaper alternative to the more expensive Beeton. While many would have purchased cookbooks for use in the home there is some evidence to suggest that people did seek out cheaper alternatives, and sometimes these types of books were borrowed from libraries. At the Sydney School of Arts Library in 1905, for example, new cookbooks were ‘constantly being asked for’ and were often added to the library’s collection.

Australian women, Lyons and Taksa argue, tended to cook by religion. This act of denominational solidarity would have been facilitated by the large number of books issued throughout Australia by church and religious organisations which were some of the more significant producers of fundraising cookbooks. Many of these books found a ready-made market amongst the parishioners who produced them. Some like the Bondi “Record Reign” Manual of Cookery, compiled in 1897 by the ‘Ladies attending St Matthew’s Church’ in Bondi, were small publications and unlikely to have found wide appeal beyond their own congregation. Others, like the Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book, as the sale figures suggest, found a much larger market amongst the general population. Another denominational cookbook recalled by interviewees was the Goulburn Cookery Book. The book was produced in 1899 as a fund-raiser for the Church of England Diocese of Goulburn under the editorship of Jean Rutledge. By 1929 the book had seen twenty three editions and sold over 200,000 copies indicating that it

100 Lyons and Taksa, “If Mother Caught Us Reading...!” Impressions of the Australian Woman Reader 1890-1933’, 48.
101 Rawson, Mrs. Lance Rawson’s cookery book and household hints.
102 ‘How We Read Now’, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 December 1905, 5.
103 Lyons and Taksa, Australian Readers Remember, 105.
popularity spread well beyond the limits of Goulburn and its surrounding areas. One interviewee recalled that almost everyone she knew had a copy of the book.\textsuperscript{104} Interestingly, no cookbooks issued by Catholic congregations appear to have been published during the time period covered by this thesis. The first Catholic community cookbook on record was not published until the 1950s.\textsuperscript{105}

Lyons and Taksa suggest that class was an important factor in determining attitudes towards cookbooks. Several self-identified working-class respondents claimed that the use of cookbooks implied criticism of their own or their mother’s culinary expertise.\textsuperscript{106} One of them, whose mother operated a boarding house in Sydney, argued that her mother did not require a cookbook as she ‘cooked by touch’.\textsuperscript{107} While these attitudes might have prevailed within the relatively small sample interviewed by Lyons and Taska, there is some evidence to demonstrate that some cookbooks, such as Mary Gilmore’s \textit{The Worker Cookbook}, did cater for the needs of those on modest incomes.\textsuperscript{108}

A significant number of respondents, over 20 percent, recalled the presence of home-made manuscript cookbooks in their homes.\textsuperscript{109} Almost all of them, Lyons and Taksa note, were identified as coming from ‘upper class’ families who were more likely to own cookbooks of all kinds.\textsuperscript{110} Often, as well as being handwritten, these manuscript cookbooks contained recipes cut out from newspapers and magazines; the cost of the latter might have proved a hindrance for those with little disposable income. The reciprocal nature of manuscript cookbooks discussed in the previous chapter was echoed by one of the respondents, who remembered this type of book as ‘an artefact

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Black, “‘Tried and Tested’: Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890-1980’, 69.
\textsuperscript{106} Lyons and Taksa, “‘If Mother Caught Us Reading...!’” Impressions of the Australian Woman Reader 1890-1933’, 106.
\textsuperscript{107} Lyons and Taksa, \textit{Australian Readers Remember}, 107.
\textsuperscript{108} For more on class and cookbooks see Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{109} Lyons and Taksa, “‘If Mother Caught Us Reading...!’” Impressions of the Australian Woman Reader 1890-1933’, 48.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
which united a female cultural milieu’.111

In a short piece entitled ‘The Secret Library’, which appeared in the high-class, glossy magazine *The Home* in 1921, Nettie Palmer explores the cookbooks owned by her seemingly well-to-do hostess. After being shown the parlour and the study and politely scanning the books on the shelves, Palmer turns to her hostess and says ‘But you haven’t shown me your real books, the ones you read every day or else know by heart. Where may I see your important library?’.112 At this request Palmer’s hostess unhesitatingly guides her to the kitchen where ‘on a special shelf, in a special cupboard’ was her collection of cookbooks.113 The collection was relatively small but the books showed all the signs of wear and tear that befit a well beloved cookbook. Amongst the volumes on the shelf, there is one on vegetarian cookery looking like, Palmer tells us, a ‘semi intellectual curate’, a volume entitled *Delectable Dishes* and a copy of the ever present Mrs Beeton.114 However, the one that catches Palmer’s eye was a French volume entitled *La Veritable Cuisine de Familie* by Tante Marie. While reading this book, Palmer muses on the practical value of cookbooks and ridicules their sense of self-importance. ‘The books take themselves so seriously’, she writes, ‘pausing every now and then to remind themselves and the reader that on them the human race depends’.115 Yet, so enchanted is Palmer by the book that she concludes her piece by telling us that, somehow, when she reached home she found Tante Marie in her bag and that ‘she now sleeps under my pillow’.116 While Palmer most likely took some poetic license in her account, it does provide some insight into what type of books might have been found in an upper-class home. The presence of a French cookbook, of an exotic, at least by 1920s standards, vegetarian cookbook and of an expensive Mrs Beeton shows a

111 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid., 70.
household that had more than just a passing interest in food and could afford to buy numerous books to cater to that interest.

The author and arts patron Barbara Blackman, who grew in a more modest home than that described by Palmer, recalled the presence of only one cookbook on the kitchen shelf of her childhood home in Brisbane during the 1930s. The book, which she remembers as being titled *Everywoman's Cookery Book*, does not appear to correspond with any cookbook published either in Australia or Great Britain.\(^{117}\) However, despite the misremembered title, its rather generic name is telling in itself. This was obviously a practical and unpretentious work that catered for all the culinary requirements of a family on a modest income that found no need for the elaborate meals found in a Tante Marie or an expensive Mrs Beeton.

However, Blackman’s experience of cookbooks did not end with the single volume found in her home. Like many young girls of her generation, she took domestic science classes during her time in primary school. These classes, Blackman noted, involved ‘knowing the constitution of eggs, sugar and flour; how they changed under heat and in collusion with other ingredients’.\(^{118}\) This knowledge was imparted through professional domestic science instructors and the use of educational cookbooks. While Blackman does not mention any particular cookbook by name, the standard domestic science text in Queensland during this era was *Simple Cookery* published by the Department of Public Instruction.

**Conclusion**

After a sluggish start in the wake of the publication of *The English and Australian Cookery Book*, cookbooks eventually became one of the mainstays of the Australian


\(^{118}\) Ibid., 13.
publishing industry. It is estimated that over twelve hundred separate editions of
Australian cookbooks were issued during the seventy five years covered by this thesis,
with almost one thousand of them published in the first four decades of the twentieth
century.\footnote{Hoyle, \textit{An Annotated Bibliography of Australian Domestic Cookery Books, 1860s to 1950}, 11.} Cookbooks of one form or another found their way into almost every
Australian home. Some of these would have been free booklets issued by grocery stores
where their owners shopped. Others would have been fundraising books most likely
denoting the religious affiliation of their owners. Many would have been cookbooks by
prominent authors that found their way on to the kitchen shelf in one way or another,
possibly given as a wedding present to a new bride or passed down from mother to
daughter. Publishing firms across Australia, if the number of different cookbooks
published is anything to go by, saw cookbooks as a viable investment. Some cookbooks
even became the lynchpin on which a company’s profits depended. The authors
themselves were able to negotiate with publishers according to their reputation.
Sometimes authors bypassed the publishing industry entirely and published their
cookbooks themselves. Despite stiff competition from British publications, Australian
cookbooks established a niche for themselves in the Australian market by providing
advice and recipes that were suited to local conditions. These locally produced
cookbooks began to reflect, not only distinctly Australian foodways but also, many
aspects of a distinct Australian culture.
Chapter 3
You are what you eat or you eat what you are: Cookbooks and Australian cultural identity

**Australian Soup**

1 qt. clarified brown stock  
1 or 2 large tomatoes  
1 ½ oz. tapioca

Mode,-Crush the tapioca in a mortar, then add it to the boiling stock and boil until the tapioca is quite clear; add the tomatoes, which have previously been squeezed through a sieve.

*Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book* (1898)

Why Hannah Maclurcan chose to call this recipe, published in her 1898 cookbook, ‘Australian Soup’ is unclear. Despite the word Australian being included in the title there is very little, either in the ingredients or in the method of preparation, which can be regarded as distinctly Australian. While the ingredients for the stock and the tomatoes could be sourced locally, the tapioca would most likely have been imported, as were many other staples in the Australian diet such as tea, coffee and sago. So why did Maclurcan chose to call this particular dish ‘Australian Soup’? A clue might lie in the subtitle of the book: ‘A collection of practical recipes specially suitable for Australia’.¹

Like many other Australian cookbook authors before and after her, Maclurcan attempted to create a work that was clearly identifiable as Australian and that sought to cater for the needs of Australians. Yet, the inclusion of the word ‘Australian’ in Maclurcan’s recipe goes beyond mere practicality and reflects a clear assertion of distinct Australian cultural identity.

This chapter will examine the manner in which cookbooks illuminate a number of aspects of Australian culture between 1864 and 1939. Ideas of nation, class and

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ethnicity were articulated in a number of ways, both explicitly and implicitly, within the pages of these books. These ideas are evident in the choice of ingredients, the names of recipes, the titles of individual cookbooks and the discursive language which they contained. The first part explores how ideas of nation, patriotism and of Australian particularism were manifested in these cookbooks and how these shifted over time responding to wider developments in society. The second part examines the ways in which cookbooks broached issues of race, ethnicity and class and how these were both reflected and hidden within the pages of cookbooks.

Sociologists and anthropologists have long been recognised foodways as a crucial marker of identity. The food choice of an individual or group ‘asserts its diversity, hierarchy and organisation, and at the same time, both its oneness and otherness with whoever eats differently’. Cookbooks also play an important part in demarcating cultural identity. The choice of cookbook to be used in the home locates the reader within ‘the ideal community proposed by the text’. Chapter 1 discussed the crucial role foodways and cookbooks played in the maintenance of a British cultural identity in the colonial setting. With the rise of a local cookbook industry more distinct and local identities began to be manifested in the pages of Australian cookbooks. These cookbooks, as Elizabeth Driver argues, show how people have ‘adopted, adapted or rejected external influences’ and reflect local practises and identities.

A national cookery book?

Cookbooks were one of the earliest forms of the printed book and were extensively available across Western Europe from the middle of the sixteenth-century. They can be

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3 Sandra Sherman, *Invention of the Modern Cookbook* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Greenwood Press, 2010), 9.
regarded as one of the foundational pillars of the ‘print capitalism’ that Benedict Anderson has associated with the rise of nationalism. Yet, there is another form of nationalism manifested in cookbooks which Michael Billig terms ‘banal nationalism’. This type of nationalism can be observed in the practices of everyday life, such as foodways, by which national identities are maintained on a daily basis. Cookbooks carry within their pages many different elements through which ideas of nation are articulated. Cookbooks offer, as Janet Floyd argues, ‘an arena in which a less coherent experience and less confident definition of the nation may be explored’.

One way in which local cookbook authors and publishers attempted to distinguish their products was to clearly state that the book was Australian. The title of the colonies’ first cookbook, The English and Australian Cookery Book, locates the book not only as both English and Australian but also as part of the broader British Empire. Colin Bannerman argues that the inclusion of the word ‘English’ in the title was an indication of commercial exigencies that required the book to be able to be marketed in Britain in order to return sufficient profits. Yet, soon after its initial appearance on the market Abbott began to refer to it as The Australian Cookery Book. The book’s reviewers in Britain, as was shown in the previous chapter, clearly considered the book to be Australian. Alfred Wilkinson’s The Australian Cook continued with the trope of including the word ‘Australia’ in the title. While this book’s contribution to a distinctive Australian cuisine is debatable, its putative audience is not. Over the ensuing seven

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decades after the publication of Abbott’s book, a significant number of cookbooks included some variant of the word ‘Australian’ in the title.

Another common practice was for authors to note in the preface of their books that they were written to cater for Australian conditions. The author of *Australian Plain Cookery*, first published in Melbourne in 1882, recognised that none of the cookbooks available on the market were ‘written especially with reference to Australia’ and expressed the hope that the work would be able to satisfy the particular needs of the colonies.11 *The Australian Household Guide*, edited by prominent Western Australian society hostess and philanthropist Deborah Vernon (Lady) Hackett and first published in 1916, made no secret of its intended audience. The book was meant, according to Hackett, to provide practical advice to help with the ‘problems with which the Australian mother’ was confronted on a daily basis.12 *The Australian Household Guide* contained more than just recipes and included dedicated sections on a variety of household topics including ‘Poultry Keeping’, ‘The Home Garden’ and ‘The Australian Baby’. One reviewer praised the work for its usefulness particularly as it had been written from ‘an Australian point of view’.13

The inclusion of some variant of the word ‘Australia’ could also be regarded as a strategic move on the part of authors and publishers in order to differentiate locally produced books from British imports. As noted in Chapter 2, British cookbooks for sale on the Australian market were sometimes rebranded with the word Australian included in the title. *Cole’s Australian Household Guide*, for example, was a compilation of recipes gathered from Beeton’s cookbook and household information from another


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British work entitled *Enquirer’s Oracle*. Whilst a useful guide, the book did little to accommodate specific Australian conditions.

**Colonial culinary nationalism**

Edward Abbott’s inclusion of recipes for native Australian produce in *The English and Australian Cookery Book* demonstrates an attempt at formulating what Priscilla Ferguson has termed ‘culinary nationalism’. Ferguson argues that culinary nationalism is an example of where food and place are seen to coincide and where recipes become a marker of identity. Manifestations of culinary nationalism were even more evident in the works of Wilhelmina Rawson. She called for the Australian housewife living in the bush to make the most of the abundant edible wildlife available to her. Kangaroos, bush turkeys and bandicoots were more than just foods of last resort, they were, according to Rawson a ‘sumptuous repast not far from her kitchen’. Embedded within Rawson’s recipes and advice is an embryonic and distinctive Australian culinary character which in turn reflects a changing colonial cultural identity that does not shy away from its distinctiveness. While Hannah Maclurcan’s ‘Australian Soup’ can be regarded as an act of culinary nationalism in name only, other recipes in her book embraced the consumption of native wildlife.

Culinary nationalism is evident in what cookbooks exclude as well as what they include. Since the sixteenth century, beef had been at the centre of English culinary imagination. It had long been considered as the foodstuff that best expressed the national characteristics of the English people; those of common sense, manliness,

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17 Ferguson, ‘Culinary Nationalism’, 102.
military prowess and the love of liberty. The symbolic stature of beef, and other meats, was also reflected in Australian colonial foodways. This was recognised in colonial Australia from the earliest days. The first ever banquet held in the colony, to celebrate the King’s birthday on the 4th of June 1788, had a number of meat dishes as the centrepiece. Over half a century later, the colony was being lauded as a workingman’s paradise where meat was available three times a day! In 1852 Godfrey Mundy opened his account of his travels in the colonies with an excerpt from Punch magazine describing Australia as a land ‘deficient in mouths, overburthen’d in meat’. Prosperity and high standard of living in the colonies were assured by the easy availability of meat.

In The English and Australian Cookery Book Edward Abbott opened his recipe for Roast Beef with an apocryphal story that claimed the sirloin of beef got its name after King Charles the Second honoured it with a knighthood. He quoted from the poem The New Ballad of Sir John Barleycorn:

Our Second Charles of fame facele,
On loin of Beef did dine;
He held his sword, pleas’d, o’er the meat.
Arise, thou fam’d Sir-Loin.

Abbott, like many Australians of his generation, held beef in high regard. The majority of Australian cookbooks published between 1864 and 1939 contained copious recipes for the preparation of meat dishes.

One writer on matters of gastronomy to challenge the centrality of meat in the Australian diet was the journalist Marcus Clarke. Clarke decried ‘the tendency in

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22 Ibid.
Australia to return to the bleeding bullock flesh and barbarous masses of meat which were the original provender of the original pioneers'. Clarke argued that the character of a race was determined by two crucial factors: food and climate. He recognised what Michael Meehan has described as the ‘contradictions between the gastronomic messages of climate and topography on the one hand, and inherited and imported gastronomic preferences on the other’. To this end Clarke advocated a ‘regenerated Australian food system’ more adequately suited to the natural environment of the country by including increased consumption of fish and vegetables. Clarke also believed in the gastronomic potential of Australia’s native species and recommended, in a somewhat prescient prediction of what would become known as Mod Oz cuisine more than a century later, a dish of young wombat with coriander, turmeric, ginger and green mango. Elspeth Probyn argues that Clarke’s disdain for British food habits and manners, and his search for an appropriate and distinctive Australian cuisine, is one of the many examples of white Australia’s wrestling with colonialism.

Other writers also demonstrated a concern with the social consequences of eating too much meat. The British author George August Sala, who penned The Thorough Good Cook in 1894, wrote extensively about his time in Australia during 1885 in a series of articles entitled The Land of the Golden Fleece. Sala contended that the abundance of food throughout the colonies and in particular the preponderance of cheap meat had given rise ‘to that most detestable nuisance known as larrikinism’ and concluded that ‘meat three times a day may have had much to do with the making of the Australian

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26 Marcus Clarke, ‘Something to Eat’, The Herald, 3 February 1874, 5.
27 Ibid.
larrikin'. In 1890, an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* noted Australia’s preeminent position as the world’s largest consumer of meat at a rather astonishing yearly amount of 276 pounds per head. This over-consumption of meat, the article claimed, had inevitably led to an increased population of larrikins given to ‘violence of language and behaviour’ and with ‘no redeeming virtues’.

Amongst those who wished to reform the eating habits of Australians was Sydney doctor Philip Muskett. Muskett was particularly concerned with issues regarding infant health and welfare and published a number of books on this topic, including *The Health and Diet of Children in Australia* in 1888 and *The Diet of Australian School Children and Technical Education* in 1899. His most concerted attempt to reform the dietary habits of the nation, however, came in the form of his 1893 book *The Art of Living in Australia*.

*The Art of Living in Australia* is most notable for its bold attempt to re-imagine Australian foodways along lines more suited to its physical environment. For too long, Muskett wrote, Australian people have lived ‘in direct opposition to their semi-tropical environment’. The book’s title page bore the legend ‘Australia is practically Southern Europe’. He duly recognised this by pointing out that in many Australian cities the climate mirrored that of those lying along the Mediterranean and in Southern Europe. In these locales, unlike in Australia, the diet was in ‘rational harmony with its climate’. Muskett contended there was a struggle being played out between the nation’s Anglo-Saxon heredity and Australia’s natural environment and that the environment would be

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30 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1890, 8.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 115.
the eventual victor. The solution to this problem, according to Muskett, was a complete transformation in the diet of Australians.

Of primary concern was the over-consumption of meat and the poor and unsuitable manner in which it was prepared, all of which Muskett believed had a detrimental impact on national life. To counter this problem Muskett advocated the increased consumption of fish, vegetables and salads. Muskett devoted a whole section of his book to the variety of fish available in Australia. He expressed his disbelief that an island nation had paid such little attention to the bounty that abounded in its oceans and labelled this neglect a ‘national calamity’. He also provided an extensive and detailed list of what he deemed to be unknown vegetables for Australians to consider including eggplants, kohlrabi, celeriac, sea kale and sweet corn (a product for which Australians had had a long held aversion). This was a rather Sisyphean task in a land where, as Richard Twopenny wrote, ‘vegetables are for the most part despised’. Muskett also decried the manner in which those vegetables that Australian’s did consume, the inevitable potato, carrot and cabbage, were deprived of their nutrient value by overcooking. Salads, which he described as ‘the sea breeze of the table’, were also to be a feature of this new dietary regime.

Muskett also wrote with palpable indignation about the lack of a national Australian dish. He denied that the traditional ‘tea and damper’ could be regarded as such, arguing that few Australians far from home would ‘perpetuate their patriotism’ by partaking of it. He further argued that those dishes bearing the appellation Australian in the title were seldom so and were merely given that name for the sake of it. He hoped, rather

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34 Ibid., 92.
35 Ibid., 128.
37 Muskett and Wicken, The Art of Living in Australia, 124.
38 Ibid., 161.
39 Ibid., 125.
optimistically, that in the future an Australian national dish would be a ‘vegetable curry or a well-concocted salad’.  

While Philip Muskett wrote what can be regarded as the ideological and theoretical content of *The Art of Living in Australia*, the practical aspects of the work were entrusted to Harriet Wicken. As a strong advocate of cookery education, Muskett’s choice of Wicken, one of Australia’s leading domestic science instructors, is not a surprising one. Wicken provided three hundred recipes following Muskett’s instructions that they should be suited for Australian use and of an economical nature (all of the recipes included are costed to the last detail). While Muskett advocated a new dietary regime with its sights firmly aimed at the Mediterranean, the recipes provided by Wicken continued to look to Britain for their culinary inspiration. Given Muskett’s exotic list of recommended vegetables, Wicken’s recipes, though extensive, were less adventurous than those found in similar cookbooks of the era. Furthermore, despite Muskett’s injunctions against the excessive consumption of meat the recipe section contains fifty recipes for a variety of meat dishes, almost all of them of British origin. Most surprising, considering Muskett’s advocacy of a diet suited to the environmental conditions of the land, is the absence of any recipes for native wildlife.

Throughout Muskett’s book there is a strong, if somewhat critical, nationalist narrative. The book is dedicated to ‘Australia: One and United’ with the ‘abiding hope for the development of all the great natural food industries of our country’. Like Marcus Clarke before him, Muskett was critical of the British influence over Australian food habits and called for a new and uniquely Australian diet that reflected the environmental conditions of the country. His motivation for improving the diet of Australians was to improve the health of the ‘race’ and of the nation. This poor and inappropriate diet had no place in a

40 Ibid.
nation whose people were, for the most part, ‘progressive in their ideas and advanced in their views’. Muskett published his work during a period which is usually regarded as the high point of cultural nationalism in the lead up to federation.

The patriotic cookery book

While ideas of culinary nationalism are intrinsic in the recipes of dishes reproduced in cookbooks, other forms of nationalism can also be observed within their pages. The English and Australian Cookery Book published in 1864 opens, not with a recipe, but with an extract from the poem Australasia by William Charles Wentworth extolling Britain’s possessions in the Antipodes:

Soon, Australasia, may thy inmost plains-
A new Arcadia-teem with simple swains....

Abbott then continues with a long footnote praising Wentworth and his role in the development of the Australian colonies. He notes Wentworth’s struggle against the ‘autocracy of Downing Street’, his advocacy for a free press and his part in the creation of the first university on Australian soil. Abbott’s plaudits were not surprising as he would have readily identified with a man like Wentworth. Both men were vigorously active in the social and political life of their respective home towns. And, like Wentworth, Abbott was a strong advocate for the cause of responsible government; signing his name to a number of petitions to that purpose. In 1856, he was elected as the member for Clarence in Tasmania’s first House of Assembly. At the time of his death The Cornwall Chronicle remembered him as ‘being always associated with the

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42 Muskett and Wicken, The Art of Living in Australia, 117.
43 Dedication in Abbott, The English and Australian Cookery Book.
44 ‘Public Meeting for a Representative Assembly’, The Observer, 12 December 1845, 3.
liberal opposition to the arbitrary and often tyrannical government of the irresponsible nominees of Downing-street.\textsuperscript{45}

Like the title of his cookbook, Edward Abbott was at once English and Australian. Wentworth’s poem ends with the following lines, which are not included in Abbott’s dedication:

\begin{quote}
May this, thy last-born infant, — then arise,
To glad thy heart, and greet thy parent eyes;
And Australasia float, with flag unfurl'd,
A new Britannia in another world.
\end{quote}

His book can be read as a nationalist text that, as Russell McGregor argues, recognises an ‘Australian particularism’ while registering fully the pervasiveness and potency of ‘Britishness’ in Australian culture.\textsuperscript{46} Ideas of colonial nationalism were also manifested in belief in the commercial potential of the colonies. England, Abbott wrote, ‘has every right to be proud of her Australian possessions; and most justly so’, adding that they ‘yield her valuable imports... as well as golden treasures’.\textsuperscript{47} The frontispiece of Abbott’s book resembles a coat of arms bearing the mottoes ‘Colonies, Ships and Commerce’ and ‘English and Australian Cookery’. The central escutcheon, supported by a kangaroo and an emu, contains six smaller shields. These shields bear the names of Australia, New Zealand, South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania and list the principal products of these colonies, including: wool, corn and gold. Interestingly the colony of New South Wales does not merit a place on Abbott’s shield or perhaps it is ‘Australia’.

\textsuperscript{45} ‘The Late Edward Abbott, Esq’, \textit{The Cornwall Chronicle}, 7 April 1869, 3.
\textsuperscript{47} Abbott, \textit{The English and Australian Cookery Book}, xi.
From the middle of the nineteenth century, Australian produce had been promoted in exhibitions, both in Great Britain and other colonial sites, to great success. These exhibitions served to legitimise the quality of Australian produce and manufactured products in an imperial arena.48 One of the Australian products that found a ready, if somewhat limited, market in Great Britain was tinned meat which, by the 1870s, accounted for 7 percent of the meat supply to Britain.49 The value of imported Australian tinned meats increased from £320 in 1866 to over £500,000 in 1871.50 The promotion of Australian tinned meat was seen to be beneficial not only to the British

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public, but also for colonial trade. In 1872 a small booklet entitled *Recipes for Cooking Australian Meat* was published in London. The book deals with the cooking and preparation of Australian tinned meat and showed concern with dispelling some of the negative perceptions surrounding the quality of the product. It was often regarded as being insipid and flavourless and some consumers reviled it as ‘filthy nasty stuff’ and ‘not fit for a Christian to eat’. But this, the author noted, was ‘a baseless assertion’. Thus, the purpose of the book was to demonstrate how tinned meat could be ‘rendered pleasing to the palate, as well as satisfying to the appetite’. While the book contains primarily recipes for beef and mutton it also provides additional colonial flavour in a number of recipes for tinned kangaroo meat. The author describes this as ‘an economical luxury’ within the reach of most consumers. The benefits of the Australian tinned meat trade were reciprocal; the metropole benefited from the availability of cheap meat while the colonies reaped the earnings from their exports. A small booklet like this one potentially facilitated the consumption of these products in a market with little experience or knowledge of their use.

Over the next decade recipes for Australian tinned meat appeared in a number of British cookbooks. Amongst these were Christina Reeve’s *Cookery and Housekeeping* and latter editions of Isabella Beeton’s book. Another book to feature recipes for Australian tinned meat was *The Scholar’s Handbook of Household Management and Cookery* published in 1876 for the School Board of London. The appendix of recipes in this volume, in which the ones for Australian meat appeared, was compiled by the teachers at the National School of Cookery. The inclusion of Australian products in such a text was noted with some relish in the *Rockhampton Bulletin* which observed the growing

53 *Recipes for Cooking Australian Meat*, 3.
54 Ibid., 1.
55 For more on the National School of Cookery and its impact in Australia see Chapter 6.
demand for Australian meat products in Britain and commented that this could be seen as encouragement for the increased production of processed meat in the colonies. Until shortly before the publication of *The Scholar's Handbook* the Central Queensland Meat Processing Company, near Rockhampton, had been one of the major centres for the processing of meat in Australia. Clearly, the inclusion of Australian tinned meat products in British cookbooks was seen as a way to revive the industry.

Following Australia’s entry into the First World War, cookbook authors and publishers responded as befitted their patriotic duty, and this was reflected in the titles of their publications. *The War Chest Cookery Book*, published in 1917 for the Australian Comforts Fund, featured an Australian soldier in full uniform on its cover. The book’s foreword declared that all profits from its sale would benefit the ‘fighting men who have gone out in defence of their country’. The Australian Comforts Fund was one of a number of organisations created to provide aid and relief to soldiers in the frontlines as well as those affected by the war on the home front. These organisations played an important role in allowing women to feel as if they were taking an active and important role in the war effort and fulfilling their patriotic duties. The Comforts Fund’s legacy has been a long lasting one, at least to the nation’s culinary landscape. Members of the fund’s Victorian branch requested biscuits in sealed tins that could be sent to the front. Sian Supski argues that given these biscuits needed to be easy and cheap to make, and needed to survive the long journey to the front, that this is the most likely birthplace for that Australian icon—the Anzac Biscuit. Similarly, the *Patriotic Cookery Book*, published towards the end of the war in 1918 with approval from the Department of

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61 Ibid.
Repatriation, supported the Red Cross and the ‘brave boys, who are and have been fighting for our liberty’.

A number of community fundraising cookbooks also raised money for the war effort. The Red Cross Cookery Book from 1915 pledged its support for the young men fighting ‘for home and Empire’. The compilers of the 1915 Australian Missionary Cookery Book, as Sarah Black has noted, diverted the book’s profits from their traditional destination of church missions towards war-related causes. An enlarged edition of the Missionary Cookery Book appeared in 1918 under the title “Carry On” with its proceeds devoted to reconstructing war-torn Belgium.

Some groups found cookbooks a useful medium through which to assert their patriotism and loyalty to Australia and the British Empire. The Barossa Cookery Book, first published in 1917, emerged from a region where there was a significant population of German origin. From the beginning of the war the region had suffered from xenophobic sentiment. It had been accused of disloyalty and the South Australian government had closed down Lutheran schools in the area as a punitive measure. The cookbook, according to Angela Heuzenroeder, was an exercise in patriotism aimed at showing the rest of the country they too were loyal citizens. The book was launched at a gala ceremony aimed at raising money for the South Australian Soldier’s Fund. Residents of the Barossa were able to assert their commitment to the nation and the Empire by

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63 The Red Cross Cookery Book: 250 Recipes (Sydney: Carter’s Printing Works, 1915).
65 ‘Carry on’: a Collection of Recipes, Simple, Practical and Up-to-date, 2nd (New South Wales: s.n, 1918).
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 46.2.
demonstrating, in fact, they were not so different to other Australians for, after all, they also ate the same food.

Many cookbooks demonstrated a practical approach to patriotism. The war had created food shortages due to increased exports to Britain in order to feed the troops at the front and because of the decreased workforce available for agricultural labour. While no official rationing policy was imposed on Australians, they were encouraged to practise thrift and economy. In 1915 a small booklet of recipes entitled *Facts about Food* was distributed throughout Queensland schools. ‘Economy’, the author noted, is not only a virtue, but also ‘a necessity in these days of war’. The book proceeded to provide recipes which were inexpensive, nutritive and appetising and that were prepared by domestic science instructors at the Brisbane Central Technical College. It also provided a series of recipes using ingredients such as pulses, which could be used as a substitute for meat, a product that had already become scarce and expensive. The *Australian Missionary Cookery Book* included recipes that accounted for the scarcity of products such as butter and eggs. A number of cookbooks also responded to scarcity by giving recipes for meatless dishes. The focus on a reduced consumption of meat was regarded as a way of rendering a ‘patriotic service to the Empire’. In 1917, various organisations throughout Australia began Thrift Campaigns that included lessons in ‘economical cookery’. Well-known cookery writers and instructors, like Isabel Ross, were recruited to give free classes and women and girls were encouraged to ‘do their bit’ by attending. Organisations such as the Australasian League of Honour published small booklets to assist housewives in their thrifty endeavours. The 1917 *Economic Cookery Recipes* book was distributed for free as part of the Melbourne Thrift Week

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69 *Facts About Food* (Brisbane: Queensland Department of Public Instruction, 1915), 1.
70 Ibid., 2.
Campaign and in connection with cookery classes held at the Metropolitan Gas Company by the likes of Isabel Ross.\textsuperscript{74} The book contained a message from Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, the wife of the Governor General, who established the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society. Lady Helen called upon Australian women to join their British counterparts in practising thrift and economy and to play their part in ‘winning the victory’.\textsuperscript{75} During the war, thrift became more than a moral virtue, it was a patriotic imperative.

Another variant of nationalist sentiment evident in the early twentieth century was economic nationalism. This was manifested in a swathe of protectionist measures including tariffs, quotas and restrictions on foreign imports.\textsuperscript{76} This form of nationalism called for a preference for locally produced resources and manufactured goods. In 1924, the Australian Made Preference League published \textit{The “Australian Made” Cookery Book and Housewives’ Guide}. The League was formed in 1924 to promote the buying of Australian-made products in order to safeguard the nation’s emerging manufacturing industry.\textsuperscript{77} One of the league’s co-founders was the journalist and politician Wallace Nelson, who preceded Wilhelmina Rawson as the editor of the \textit{People’s Newspaper} in Rockhampton.\textsuperscript{78} The League clearly linked broader nationalist sentiments with the purchase of Australian-made goods. The public, stated a League souvenir publication, ‘demand the rigid enforcement of the White Australia policy as applied to humans, to prevent the country being over-run with coloured foreign races. The SAME POLICY

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{75} Ibid., 3.
\bibitem{76} Ted Evans, ‘Economic Nationalism and Performance: Australia from the 1960s to the 1990s’ (1 June 1999): 3.
\bibitem{78} ‘Smoke Ho’, \textit{Worker}, 29 June 1901, 9.
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Amongst the League’s largest promotional ventures was ‘The Great White Train’ that travelled across New South Wales promoting locally made products. The train’s visits were held in conjunction with an ‘Australian Made Preference Shopping Week’.

The “Australian Made” Cookery Book echoed many of the league’s sentiments and its frontispiece admonished the women of Australia to loudly proclaim ‘I must have Australian Made’. In the brief introduction, under the heading of ‘Practical Patriotism’, the book’s editors stated that women, as the main purchasers of food, clothes and ‘a hundred and one everyday requirements’, had the power to build up the industrial strength of the nation. To this end, readers were urged to:

1. Clothe themselves and their families with Australian apparel.
2. Feed their families with Australian food.
3. Buy Australian made goods for their household.

80 Crawford, But Wait, There’s More..., 48.
The book featured a series of mottoes throughout its pages advocating the League’s ideals. These included ‘Good Australians should buy Australian Goods’ and ‘Australian-made hats for Australian heads’. Another of these mottoes reflected the concerns regarding the supposed under population of Australia. ‘More Population Means More Markets’ the book boldly declared. This sentiment partially reflected the League’s concerns with the relatively small size of the Australian market for their manufactured goods. However, it can also be seen in light of prevalent concerns regarding declining birth rates and the ‘white man under siege’ thesis that had informed the foundations of the White Australia policy. Since the time of Federation many regarded Australia as being beleaguered by the ‘expansion and dynamism of the “Black and Yellow races”’.84

Recipes for a (white) nation

Most Australian cookbooks published between 1864 and 1939 had an Anglo-Australian audience firmly in mind and catered for their particular tastes and habits. These cookbooks actively maintained and reproduced British foodways and a British cultural and ethnic identity with distinct Australian overtones. Race relations between Europeans and Aboriginals in Australia were not a matter that could easily be addressed within the pages of a cookbook. Perhaps the only cookbook author to explicitly refer to Aboriginal Australians was Wilhelmina Rawson. A strong advocate for the consumption of native fauna and plant species, Rawson gained much of her knowledge from local Aboriginal people. She wrote appreciatively of the wild mushrooms and of the edible young shoots of the wild rough-leaved fig which had been pointed out to her by Aboriginal women in

82 Ibid., iv.
84 Ibid., 41.
the Maryborough area. And, in her 1894 *Antipodean Cookery Book*, Rawson clearly stated that: ‘I am beholden to the blacks for nearly all my knowledge of the edible ground game’. 

If her later autobiographical writings are anything to go by, Rawson’s relationships with local Aboriginal people reflected the racial tensions present in colonial Queensland. In her serialised memoirs, written forty years after the publication of her first cookery book, she bluntly professed that she had no ‘love or even liking for the blacks’ and that, in fact, she ‘hated them all’. However, her relationship with Aboriginal people was also complex and nuanced. Demonstrating an understanding of the dispossession of land occurring in Queensland at the time, Rawson wrote sympathetically of ‘the lessons white men should learn from the blacks before the work of extermination which is so rapidly going on has swept all the blacks who possess this wonderful bush lore off the face of the earth’. Here she was voicing common sentiments about the predicted demise of the Aboriginal race. Rawson’s long periods of living in remote rural locations throughout Queensland had most likely placed her in closer contact with Aboriginal people than cookbook writers who lived in towns or cities. Furthermore, Rawson lived in areas of Queensland that were not extensively settled until the late nineteenth century. This isolation, combined with the harshness of the environment, served to increase the anxiety about legitimacy and belonging that characterised the colonial enterprise. In many ways, Rawson’s musings on race in her cookbooks echoed the contemporaneous fictional narratives of authors, such as Rosa Campbell Praed, who also lived in the

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85 Rawson, *Mrs. Lance Rawson’s cookery book and household hints*, 34.
87 Wilhelmina Rawson, ‘Making the Best of It’, *The Queenslander*, 6 March 1920, 5.
contact zone in Queensland. These narratives often were explorations of what it meant to be agents of colonialism and the uneasiness of racial interaction.  

A number of cookbook writers expressed the belief that an improvement in the diet of Australians would inevitably lead to a general improvement of the nation as a whole. However, while these books were implicitly written with a ‘white’ Australian audience in mind, few cookbooks expressed overtly racialised sentiments. There were, nevertheless, exceptions to this. A section dedicated to ‘Personal Appearance’ in *The Australian Household Guide* stated that ‘in Australia, where a branch of the virile world-conquering Aryan race is planted to grow up and develop on its own lines, it is imperative that the attention of the women of the Commonwealth should be arrested upon the subject of beauty’.

The 1926 cookbook entitled *Queensland Fruit and How to Use It* was published by the local branch of the New Settler’s League of Australia, an organisation dedicated to the promotion of migration schemes for British workers to Australia and the provision of assistance in their settlement. The section expounding the tenets of the organisation at the beginning of the book had no qualms in declaring that Australia was ‘a continent all white and all British’ and urged the new settler to share these ideals with the ‘native born’. Their description of ‘native born’ did not likely include Aboriginal Australians or those of non-European background born in the country. Sentiments like these reflected little doubt about the superiority of white Australians and echoed the popular rhetoric of racial hygiene and eugenics prevalent in Australia in the first decades of the twentieth century.

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90 Ibid., 163.
91 For more on the relationship with diet and social improvement see Chapter 5.
93 *Queensland fruit and how to use it* (Brisbane: New Settlers League of Australia Queensland Division in conjunction with Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, 1926), 13.
Exotic dishes

While Anglo-Australian recipes were the most prominent within their pages, from their first appearance on the market, Australian cookbooks included recipes for ‘foreign dishes’. Indeed, as was seen in Chapter 2, the second cookbook to appear in Australia was a book of recipes for Jewish food. French dishes earned a place for their supposedly high gastronomic status and curry was almost considered a British dish. German dishes also featured regularly in Australian cookbooks. The Barossa Cookery Book contained many recipes of German origin although often disguised under English names. Flavours of ‘The East’ also made the odd appearance in Australian cookbooks if in name only. Wilhelmina Rawson’s ‘Chinese Dish’, for example, included gravy and grated cheese and bears little resemblance to any authentic Chinese recipe.\(^95\) A cookbook entitled To Mr and Mrs Newlywed, from 1924, included a section under the title ‘Oriental Dishes’ but the author’s conception of the orient did not stretch beyond India.\(^96\) Another book entitled Cookery Book: tried recipes of 26 nations A Cook’s Tour for Cooks, produced by the International Club of Victoria proved to be more authentic and ambitious in its culinary explorations. It included recipes from Denmark, Estonia and Finland. The two Chinese dishes it featured explicitly called for authentic ingredients such as bamboo shoots, water chestnuts and ‘Gau Beh (dried mandarine peel)’.\(^97\) A Cook’s Tour for Cooks, published in the early 1931, carried the subtitle ‘national dishes of nineteen nations’. It promised readers a gastronomic excursion through China, Mexico and Greece amongst other countries.\(^98\) However, recipes for foreign dishes in Australian cookbooks remained, for the most part, gastronomic curiosities. They can be considered

\(^{95}\) Wilhelmina Rawson, Australian enquiry book of household and general information: a practical guide for the cottage, villa and bush home (Melbourne: Pater & Knapton, 1894), 72.
\(^{96}\) To Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed: From the Leading Business Firms of Sydney. (Sydney: Direct Advertising Service N.S.W., 1926), 80–81.
not so much as an act of inclusion of other ethnic groups within the fold of Australian society, but rather an attempt to place Australia within the context of the wider world.\textsuperscript{99}

One of the first truly ‘foreign’ cookbooks to be published in Australia was \textit{The First Australian Continental Cookery Book}. The book was published both in English and in Italian versions and contained recipes for a wide variety of European dishes with the majority, however, being of Italian origin. The English language foreword of the book praised the supremacy of Italian cookery and argued that French cookery, the paragon of the gastronomic world, was but a mere off-shoot of Italian cuisine. And, although praising the merits of British cuisine, it argued that it could not boast the same pedigree as Italian food.\textsuperscript{100} In sentiments similar to those expressed by Philip Muskett almost fifty years earlier, the authors called upon Australians to realise that ‘what one may call Mediterranean Cookery has much to offer them’ as it embodied ideas and methods evolved in climatic conditions resembling Australia’s.\textsuperscript{101} The preface to the Italian version of the book was very different in tone. It addressed the Italian housewife who, according to the author, was an instinctively good cook.\textsuperscript{102} Its aim was not to teach the already competent housewife how to cook but rather to complete her knowledge of the culinary arts and to facilitate her endeavours in the kitchen with the available Australian ingredients.

A review of the book which appeared in the \textit{Argus} praised the work claiming the recipes were appetising enough to tempt even the most conservative of palates.\textsuperscript{103} However, the motivation behind \textit{The First Australian Continental Cookery Book} might have been more than merely to promote Italian cuisine in Australia. The book’s publishers were a

\textsuperscript{100} \textit{First Australian Continental Cookery Book} (Melbourne: Cosmopolitan Publishing, n.d.), 2.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{La Cucina Continentale} (Melbourne: Cosmopolitan Publishing, n.d.), 1.
Melbourne company called The Cosmopolitan Publishing Company, which had strong links with the Italian fascist movement in Australia. One of its board members was Filippo Maria Bianchi who also served as the director of Il Giornale Italiano a pro-fascist newspaper in Melbourne. These were one of a number of fascist controlled organisations operating in Australia that promoted Italian culture for political purposes during the 1930s. The First Australian Continental Cookbook can be regarded as an attempt to promote Italian cultural values and identity; food, as a marker of culture, became an ideological tool. Fascist authorities in Italy had actively promoted the concept of a distinct Italian cuisine as a unifying cultural force since the 1920s.

Similar attempts to promote and encourage a German identity through the consumption of traditional German food were carried out by supporters of National Socialism within the German-Australian community, however no cookbook expressly for this end was ever published in Australia.

**Good plain cooking for all**

Australian society, from the earliest days of settlement, has been subject to class distinctions. These distinctions were manifested in a number of ways including in the food that people ate. While humans tend to mark their basic sense of belonging to social groups by eating the same food, they also use different patterns in food consumption as an important determinant of social status.

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106 Kate Darian-Smith, On The Home Front (Melbourne University Press, 2009), 27.
107 Carol Helstosky, ‘Recipe For The Nation: Reading Italian History Through La Scienza In Cucina And La Cucina Futurista’, Food and Foodways 11, no. 2 (2003): 115.
Foodways in the early days of the colonial setting were constrained by fluctuations in the availability of resources. This led to periods of food shortages and the real peril of starvation. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, improved conditions and standards of living in Australia meant that food, at least in the quantity that it was consumed, lost some of its potency as an expression of social position. While somewhat disparaging of the gastronomic quality of food in Australia, the author Richard Twopenny recognised that for those living in the colonies food was cheaper and more plentiful than it was in Britain.\textsuperscript{110} Even those on modest incomes could enjoy quantities of food, particularly meat, unimaginable to people living on a similar income in Britain. Food historian Stephen Mennell argues that a more equal distribution of food across the various strata of society inevitably leads to the creation of a somewhat more uniform and less differentiated cuisine.\textsuperscript{111}

Barbara Santich, however, argues that there is some evidence to indicate Australian foodways were stratified in accordance with social position. She distinguishes between low and high cuisine using terms conceived by sociologist Jack Goody. High cuisine in Australia was characterised by the use of expensive ingredients, complex preparation methods and a strong French influence.\textsuperscript{112} Low cuisine, by contrast, is identified as the everyday food produced in a domestic setting. Santich does note, nonetheless, that the distinctions between ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ cuisines in Australia, while discernible, were less obvious than in other places.\textsuperscript{113}

The strong French influence on high cuisine in Australia was most evident in the Francophile nature of the menus composed for official banquets.\textsuperscript{114} Even for eminently

\textsuperscript{111} Mennell, \textit{All Manners of Food}, 39.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 45.
patriotic celebrations, such as the centenary of European settlement in Australia held in Sydney in 1888, the menu was written entirely in French as befitted such an important occasion. The presumption was that those invited to the banquet had sufficient social distinction to be able to read and understand the menu. French cuisine also featured prominently on the menus of the more expensive restaurants that were becoming increasingly prevalent throughout the colonies. Yet, despite their usual association with high class cuisine, French dishes also appeared in countless cookbooks aimed at middle class households. These recipes, however, tended to be influenced and mediated through a 'vernacular English style'.

Nevertheless, the vast number of cookbooks published in Australia between 1864 and 1939 document the types of dishes consumed by a significant proportion of the population that belonged to the middle classes, including the 'upper middle class' and the 'lower middle class'. According to Richard Twopenny, in 1880s Australia, these two groups were less distinct than in Britain and were continually in contact with each other. This broad definition of 'middle class' also included those who belonged to the 'respectable' working classes, such as tradesmen. In his extensive analysis of representations of culinary culture in Australian print media between 1850 and 1920 Colin Bannerman argued that cookbooks during this period overwhelmingly contained recipes which reflected middle-class tastes. In the preface to the second edition of her *Cookery Book*, one of the earliest published in Australia, Wilhelmina Rawson explicitly

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117 Graham Pont, 'The French Influence in Early Australian Gastronomic Literature', in *The French-Australian Cultural Connection* (Kensington, N.S.W., Australia: School of French, University of New South, 1984), 266.
118 Santich, 'The High and the Low: Australian Cuisine in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century', 41.
119 Twopenny, *Town Life in Australia*, 90.
120 Ibid.
121 Bannerman, 'Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating C. 1850 to C. 1920', 45.
stated that the book was intended for the middle classes of the colony: for ‘those who cannot afford to buy a Mrs Beeton or a Warne, but can afford the three shillings for this [book]’. Many of the recipes contained within the cookbooks aimed at the middle classes reflected the predominantly ‘plain’ cuisine that was found in most homes, ‘the soups and savouries, pudding and pies that must be provided 365 days a year’. No one expected, according to cookery instructor Isabel Ross, that the average Australian housewife ‘should master the intricacies of high class cookery’.

As noted in Chapter 1, a number of British cookbooks available in Australia were written expressly for those with modest incomes in mind and this practice continued to be reproduced in some cookbooks published in Australia. The *Australian Housewife’s Manual*, written under the pseudonym of An Old Housekeeper, appeared on the market in 1884. The author clearly acknowledged that the book was written for those who were required to live on workman’s wages or on a clerk’s salary. She distinguished between those whose ‘daily bread depends on their daily work’ and those fortunate enough to afford to live in a large house and have the financial ability to employ servants. The best manner in which to make do on a limited income, according to an Old Housekeeper, was to prevent waste and pay close attention to economy. Yet, while the book was aimed at those with ‘small incomes’ the author acknowledged that her readers were ‘properly ambitious of living in decent comfort, and of keeping up a respectable appearance in the world’.

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126 Ibid.
127 Ibid., 64.
128 Ibid., Introduction.
Another cookbook to depart from a middle class audience was *The Worker Cookbook*, first published in 1914. Social activist and writer Mary Gilmore compiled the work from recipes sent in by readers of *The Worker* newspaper, an organ of the Australian Workers’ Union. Gilmore had acted as editor of ‘The Women’s Page’ of the newspaper for almost twenty two years. The foreword stated that the recipes contained within the book were ‘the every-day recipes of Australian housekeepers in working-class homes’. The book, according to Gilmore, was more than just a collection of recipes because it traversed ‘the grounds of personal experience’. Colin Bannerman argues that Gilmore’s book was ‘political’ rather than gastronomic and that it served as a mechanism through which to engage working-class women in politics.

While notions of thrift and economy were a fiscal imperative for those on limited incomes, they were also considered a moral imperative for middle class households. Many of the British cookbooks which had been in use in Australia since the early days of settlement had urged housewives to exercise thrift and economy in their domestic duties. Maria Rundell’s *Domestic Cookery*, a book readily available in the colonies, carried an injunction against ‘excessive luxury’ and exhorted housewives to be meticulous in keeping their household accounts. Similarly, Isabella Beeton repeatedly called for the greatest of economy to be practised. Australian housewives were also expected to practise thrift and economy in their homes. Edward Abbott’s cookery book bore the subtitle ‘cookery for the many, as well as the upper ten thousand’, yet the recipes contained within it were unlikely to find a place in the kitchens of those with

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129 Preface in Mary Gilmore, *The Worker Cook Book: Compiled from the Tried Recipes Of Thrifty Housekeepers, Sent from All Parts of Australia to the Worker’s Woman’s Page* (Sydney; Melbourne: The Worker Trustees, 1914).


little disposable income. Nevertheless, Abbott did highlight the benefits of economy and of living within one’s means.\textsuperscript{133}

Thrift and frugality continued to be a recurring trope in Australian cookbooks throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century regardless of the presumed social class of the intended audience. This is intimated in the usage of the word ‘Economic’ in the title of a number of cookbooks during this period.\textsuperscript{134} However, while some cookbooks purported to promote ideas of thrift in the home, this was not always clearly evident in their contents. \textit{The Bile Bean Cookery Book}, published by a Sydney patent medicine manufacturer, claimed that: ‘Because it is intended for the home of workers no recipes for fancy dishes and costly luxuries will be found’ within its pages.\textsuperscript{135} Yet, recipes for roast goose, whole hams and expensive fish belie these claims of frugality.

Interestingly, there does not appear to be any marked increase in cookbooks advocating thrift and economy during the two major economic depressions that impacted on Australia in the 1890s and the 1930s. While these depressions undoubtedly had a significant effect on the standard of living of many Australians, and in particular on their diet, there seems to have been little recognition of this in the pages of most cookbooks published during those periods. Perhaps the notions of thrift and economy were so ingrained in the minds of cookbook authors that they felt there was no need to further elaborate on the matter. Another possible explanation might be that the purchase of new cookbooks, even those promoting a thriftier lifestyle, required a degree of disposable income which those most affected could ill afford. There were, however, a few cookbooks that explicitly addressed strained economic and social conditions. Sarah

\textsuperscript{133} Abbott, \textit{The English and Australian Cookery Book}, vii–viii.
\textsuperscript{134} Ideas of thrift and economy played an important part in the instruction of domestic science throughout Australia. For more see Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{135} \textit{Bile Bean Cookery Book} (Sydney: Bile Bean Manufacturing Co, 1908), Preface.
Black argues that cookbooks produced by the Country Women’s Association, for example, attempted to reflect the difficulty of managing a household on a tight budget and with limited resources.\footnote{Black, “‘Tried and Tested’: Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890-1980”, 109.} Phyllis Cilento’s \textit{Square Meals for the Family}, published in the early 1930s, recognised that ‘during this world-wide period of depression it has been increasingly difficult to find abundance in this land of plenty’.\footnote{Phyllis Cilento, \textit{Square Meals for the Family} (Brisbane: The Queensland Social Service League, n.d.), 4.} The book was published by the Queensland Social Services League, an organisation created to facilitate charitable relief throughout Queensland.\footnote{Blake Singley, “‘Skilful Handling and Scientific Treatment”: The Charity Organisation Society of Brisbane During the Great Depression”, \textit{Queensland Review} 17, no. 2 (2010): 93.} It is apparent, however, that ideas of thrift and economy crossed class barriers and were regarded as a moral imperative to be upheld by all members of society, regardless of their income or social position.

**Human like ourselves**

One clear manner in which social stratification was manifested in the Australian home was in the relationships between employers and their domestic servants. The ways in which Australian cookbooks dealt with the issue of servants illuminate some of the tensions which existed in the contact zone of class within the walls of the home. According to Beverley Kingston, the role of the mistress assumed a maternal tone which extended to the moral and physical wellbeing of her servants.\footnote{Beverley Kingston, \textit{My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia} (West Melbourne, Vic: Thomas Nelson, 1975), 15.} Kingston also notes that the evolving relationship between employers and servants reflected some of the major changes occurring in Australian society, including the impetus towards a levelling of the various classes.\footnote{Ibid.} In his history of domestic service in Australia, Barry Higman has noted that the role of specialised cook was relatively uncommon in
Australia. Many servants came into household service with little or no experience in
the kitchen and required some form of training and instruction in order to be able to
carry out their duties. Cookbooks played a part not only in providing cookery
instructions for servants but also for assisting employers in their management and
training. Concerns regarding the qualifications and abilities of servants to adequately
prepare meals were part of the motivation behind the introduction of domestic science
classes in Australia by the end of the nineteenth century.

Sections on the management of domestic servants were found in a number of the British
cookbooks available on the Australian market in the first half of the nineteenth century.
These books reflected the complex social relationships that existed between employers
and servants in Britain at the time. Of particular concern was the perceived propensity
of servants to be careless and wasteful. Maria Rundell’s *A New System of Cookery* urged
mistresses to keep a watchful eye on their servants lest they ‘waste as much as would
maintain a small family’. Rundell suggested mistresses carefully organise and
rigorously manage the home in order to avoid the pitfalls of poorly trained, indolent and
profligate servants.

William Kitchiner’s *The Cook’s Oracle* also outlined strategies on the best manner in
which to deal with servants. He railed against employers becoming too familiar with
their servants, suggesting this only led to contempt on the servant’s part but,
nevertheless, he advised that servants should be treated fairly and kindly. Kitchiner
saw his book as a crucial vehicle for the training of servants, particularly in the kitchen,
and included a section explicitly addressing them. He enjoined servants to demonstrate

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142 See Chapter 6
industry and moderation and to be respectful, obliging and meek.\textsuperscript{145} He also reminded cooks to ‘keep their stomachs free from strong liquor till after dinner’.\textsuperscript{146} During her stay in Australia in 1856-57 Mrs Allan Macpherson relied on a copy of The Cook's Oracle to learn how to prepare meals. Macpherson noted that while it would not always be necessary for a lady to carry out domestic duties herself, she should have the knowledge on how to perform all domestic offices in order to direct others in their duties.\textsuperscript{147}

In Australia, one of the earliest published works containing domestic and instructional advice for servants was Lady Eliza Darling's Simple Rules for the Guidance of Persons in Humble Life: More Particularly for Young Girls Going Out to Service, published by James Tegg in 1837. In her role as the Governor's wife Lady Darling was instrumental in the setting up of the Female Schools of Industry in Sydney in 1826 and Parramatta in 1829. These institutions sought to provide religious instruction and basic education, including domestic training, to underprivileged women in the colony.

First published upon her return to England, but finding a ready market in Australia, Darling's small booklet provided a mixture of religious evangelism and domestic training advice for the young women entering service in colonial households. The book, which appears to have been culled and compiled from a variety of sources rather than written by her, used complex and elaborate language. Considering that her target audience was domestic staff, who would have had only basic literacy and numeracy skills if any, it appears that the guide was also a manual for the use of the mistress of the house. In many colonial households the role of the mistress was changing and evolving into one that has been labelled one of participatory responsibility, with the mistress

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{147} A. Macpherson, My Experiences in Australia: Being Recollections of a Visit to the Australian Colonies in 1856-7 (London: J.F. Hope, 1860), 197.
taking on a larger role in the day-to-day running of the household.\textsuperscript{148} Embracing this new role, for example, was Mrs Thomas Ann Cole, living in Victoria in the 1840s, who bemoaned the lack of good cooks available amongst the servant class and took it upon herself to train new cooks and even to prepare meals.\textsuperscript{149} Books like Darling's would have been of equal service both to mistresses and staff attempting to learn domestic duties, and to familiarise themselves with their respective roles in the household.

Whilst the role of the mistress within the household was changing, the class divisions inherent in the mistress/servant relationship were still deeply ingrained.\textsuperscript{150} Darling took a patronising and sententious tone towards servants warning of the perils of staff displaying a 'slatternly appearance' and with 'vulgar and disagreeable habits'.\textsuperscript{151} This partly reflected the attitudes of the middle and upper classes, who were responding to profound changes in social relations occurring in Britain. In Australia, the unique conditions of settlement meant that social differences were more fluid than in England and a new social hierarchy was being negotiated between convicts, settlers and government officials.\textsuperscript{152} This was particularly exacerbated in the homes where convicts formed a large proportion of domestic servants.\textsuperscript{153} Darling's mixture of domestic advice, evangelism and reformist zeal served to reinforce the role middle and upper class women played in attempting to solve some of the colony's social problems through a tutelary relationship with their servants. This relationship entailed an almost parental

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\textsuperscript{150} Dorice Williams Elliott, 'Convict Servants and Middle-Class Mistresses', \textit{Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory} 16, no. 2 (2005): 165.


role for the mistress, whose duty was to inculcate in the servant the virtues of obedience, respect and thrift.  

Edward Abbott included a small two-page section on dealing with servants in his cookbook. It consisted of three extended quotes from British sources as well as a number of Biblical exhortations directed at servants with very little authorial intrusion on Abbott’s part. What is notable about Abbott’s choice of quotations is the liberal attitude they express towards the relationships between employers and servants. Abbott quotes the British judge Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd who, in his final address to a jury before dying of an apoplectic seizure, proclaimed: ‘I am afraid we all of us keep too much aloof from those beneath us, and whom we thus encourage to look upon us with suspicion and dislike’. This attitude, according to Talfourd, unfortunately led to treating servants ‘as if they were inhabitants of some other sphere’. He urged masters and mistresses to become more closely acquainted with their servants and to demonstrate a modicum of sympathy and understanding for their position. This generous sentiment, Abbott suggested, should also be one that was reproduced in the colonies. Abbott also quotes from the Reverend William Paley who admonishes employers to treat servants kindly and fairly and forbids them to insult them, ‘refusing them harmless pleasures’ and from subjecting them to ‘immoderate anger’ and ‘groundless suspicion’. While clearly recognising that servants had rights, Abbott also noted their responsibilities: ‘The attention of servants is directed to the following Scriptural authorities for the performance of their relative duties’. These included:

- Love not sleep but rise early (Prov. xx. 13)
- Be not slothful (Prov. xvii. 9)

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154 Ibid.
156 Ibid., 237.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
• Be obedient and serve heartily (Col. iii. 22,23)
• Be content with your calling (1 Cor. vii. 20)

In her 1878 *Cookery Book* Wilhelmina Rawson declared that ‘servants have truly become a plague’ but added the caveat that there was much to be said ‘both for them and against them’.\(^{160}\) She notes many of the servants who have arrived in Australia as migrants came ill prepared for the tasks they were required to undertake. However, she does not lay the blame exclusively on the servants, who according to her are often ‘the scum of large cities’, but also on those who have organised their passage.\(^{161}\) Rawson acknowledged that much of the responsibility for the proper management of the home lay with the mistress rather than the servant. It was up to her to know exactly how the work should be done and to demonstrate these duties to the servant.\(^{162}\) She also advocated that the young housewife use a firm, strong hand in dealing with her servants lest she became ‘second instead of first in command’.\(^{163}\) To this end she warned mistresses not to be overly familiar with their servants, claiming this led them to become ‘saucy and above their work’.\(^{164}\) In the pages of *The Antipodean Cookery Book*, published almost twenty years after her first cookbook, Rawson makes no mention of servants. Here she recognised that the bulk of household tasks, including the cooking, were carried out by the housewife with little assistance from anybody else.

Not everyone agreed that cookery books were the ideal medium through which to train servants how to cook. One advocate of formal cookery education for young girls going into service argued that ‘any intelligent woman with a cultivated palate can learn how to cook from a good book’ before adding that ‘the reason our servants turn out the best

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\(^{161}\) Ibid., 4.
\(^{162}\) Ibid., 1.
\(^{163}\) Ibid.
\(^{164}\) Ibid., 2.
receipts so badly is from want of taste’. This particular correspondent believed the ‘class of servants’ that were available in Queensland had little opportunity to practise anything except the ‘most primitive cottage cookery’ and this was reflected in the quality of their work in the kitchens of middle class homes. Taste and a refined palate, apparently, was the purview of the middle classes and required more training than a mere cookbook could provide.

The turn of the century saw the beginning of a rapid decline in the number of servants, including cooks, in Australian homes. Yet, some cookbooks continued to include advice for dealing with them such as Zara Aronson’s *XXth Century Cookery* published in 1900. The book contained an extensive section on the management of servants and, while encouraging the kind treatment of servants, the advice is redolent with class snobbery. ‘A domestic servant is, after all, human like ourselves’, admitted Aronson, but she added servants had ‘less education, less knowledge and commonsense’. Aronson’s criticisms of servants did not end there; she concluded that not much could be expected from those who did not have the advantages of a proper home influence or of culture.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, servants receive scant attention in the pages of Australian cookbooks. Authors reacted to the realities of life for the majority of their readers who no longer could afford to employ servants. Even the well off began to feel the impact of the scarcity of domestic staff. In 1920, *The Home* magazine, aimed at an affluent readership, noted with some concern that ‘it is obvious that we have now reached a stage in the social history of Australia when the long standing Mary Jane (servant) shortage has developed into a serious and permanent problem. Mary Janes still exist; but they are a dwindling band. With the tendency

165 ‘Colonial Cookery’, *The Queenslander*, 1 January 1876, 11.
166 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
towards shorter hours, towards social equality, towards Bolshevism (if you like), they will dwindle even further'.

The presence of non-European labour in the domestic sphere is a fact rarely addressed in the pages of cookbooks and domestic management guides published in Australia. Rawson, for example, did not specifically address the ethnic or racial origins of the servants she wrote about in her *Cookery Book*. However, in her home and during the period in which she wrote the cookbook, Rawson exclusively employed Melanesian women as domestic servants. While not uncommon in Queensland this situation was not mirrored across other parts of Australia. Rawson’s relationship with her Melanesian servants was complex and defies easy interpretation. In a series of autobiographical reminiscences published later in life, Rawson recalled the relationship with her favourite servant Dinah. She remembered her as a loyal servant and, apparently against her own advice, as a good friend of whom she was exceedingly fond. Yet, Rawson also noted that she ‘had some very funny ways, which one could hardly reconcile with civilised life’. Dinah’s place in the Rawson household is only alluded to in the *Cookery Book* in the description of the cleaning and preparation of flying fox for the pot.

Non-Europeans had long been employed in various aspects of domestic service across Australia. Indians, Pacific Islanders and other ethnic groups had served as cooks and domestic servants in the colony since the 1830s. Chinese cooks were a mainstay on many sheep and cattle stations across Australia. The poet Brunton Stephens wrote thus about the Chinese cook:

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169 ‘A Practical Study of Mechanical Substitutes for Mary Jane (deceased)’, *The Home*, December 1920, 86.
170 Wilhelmina Rawson, ‘Making the Best of It’, *The Queenslander*, 21 February 1920, 5.
171 Ibid.
173 Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia*, 60.
There was nothing in creation that he didn't put to use,
And the less he got to cook with, all the more he did produce;
All nature was his kitchen range, likewise his cookery book—
Neither Soyer nor Meg Dod could teach that knowing Chinee cook.  

By the beginning of the twentieth century the enforcement of the White Australia Policy severely restricted the employment of non-white workers other than Aborigines in domestic service.

Aboriginal people, particularly women, were also to be found in domestic service across Australia. While they were a significant proportion of domestic servants in rural and frontier areas, they only formed a relatively small part of the overall population and constituted a minor fragment of the general domestic servant population throughout Australia. Those Aboriginal women who were engaged in service worked long hours and catered for the ‘white family’s needs, values and lifestyle’. Maggie Ross, an Aranda woman who worked as a domestic servant in the 1930s recalled that white women could not ‘cook a bloody lizard, [or] make a Johnny cake, whole lot of them, nothing! ...Got to have a look [in a cookbook] first to cookem cake! Hahaha! The Black woman bin learn fast how to cook bread, cakes, everything’. 

In contrast to Australian cookbooks, Anglo-Indian cookbook authors demonstrated significant preoccupation with the place of indigenous servants within the home. Dr Robert Riddell’s *Indian Domestic Economy* published in Bombay in 1849, and regarded as the first Anglo-Indian cookbook, goes to great lengths to explain the complex ethnic and cast hierarchies in India and the manner in which these needed to be recognised in

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175 Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia*, 61.
the arrangement of domestic servants. The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook, written by Flora Steel and Grace Gardiner and first published in 1888, devoted considerable space to the complexities of dealing with ‘idle and unintelligible’ servants and ‘skulking savages with a reed broom’. Steel and Gardiner noted that ‘in India, the personal attention of the mistress is infinitely more needed here than at home’. The first duty of a mistress’, they continued, ‘is to give intelligible orders to her servants, therefore it is necessary she should learn to speak Hindustani’ Rawson, for her part, made little attempt to learn the language of her Melanesian servants and expected them to learn English.

**Conclusion**

The cookbooks published in Australia between 1864 and 1939 provide valuable insight into the ways in which a number of cultural identities were constructed in society. Nationalism, or at the very least, a sense of Australian particularism, was articulated through the use of local ingredients, the deliberate labelling of recipes and books with some variant of the word Australia and through other discursive practises. Patriotism took a more explicit form in the pages of Australian cookbooks during periods of economic strife or war. A number of cookbooks articulated the ways in which Australian society constructed and understood ideas of race and of a ‘British-Australian’ culture. Despite the fact that class stratification was an inherent aspect of Australian society, the vast majority of Australian cookbooks were aimed at a middle class audience. Elements of the egalitarian nature of Australian society were hinted at in the similar foods consumed across classes in Australia. Nevertheless, some of the class

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180 Ibid., 2.
181 Ibid.
divisions apparent in society were evident in the manner in which cookbooks articulated the relationships between employers and servants.

While it is difficult to assess the extent to which cookbooks actually shaped notions of nation, class and race they did, nevertheless, reflect how these were evolving and changing in Australia. Cookbooks became part of a discourse that hinted at a wider 'imagined' community sharing the recipes. Moreover, the ubiquitous presence of cookbooks in Australian homes indicates that new articulations of cultural identity were being broadly disseminated through a popular, if somewhat unexpected, medium. It was in this very home, however, that cookbooks played a crucial role in the construction, promotion and reiteration of gendered norms for many Australian women.

Chapter 4
Your kitchen is your world: Cookbooks, gender and the ideology of domesticity

A Wedding Recipe
Take two half pound packets of love, well sifted (be very careful to see that it is two packets, the whole success depends on this), same quantity of unselfishness, as much forbearance as you have on hand, half pound each of tact, cheerfulness, common sense, good health and energy. Mix well with good cooking, season moderately with good looks (not a necessity). Serve daintily and regularly with plenty of cash sauce. A very palatable dish.

_Ladies’ Handbook of Tested Recipes_ (1905)

Forbearance, unselfishness, energy and, most importantly, the ability to cook; these were some of the many qualities that were deemed necessary in the 'ideal' wife in early twentieth century Australia. For almost seven decades after their first appearance, Australian cookbooks reiterated many of the gendered norms of society. Within their pages, these texts mirrored many of the existing cultural attitudes and social practices on which ideologies of domesticity in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia were predicated. These cookbooks not only provided recipes, they also played an important part in delineating the domestic and social responsibilities that women were expected to undertake. Together with newspapers and magazines, these texts formed part of a range of mass produced materials that reinforced and perpetuated gendered social norms and that gave detailed accounts of the correct manner in which to carry out gender specific activities such as cooking.1 The primary role traditionally played by women in the preparation of meals in the private domestic sphere clearly identified them as the main consumers of these culinary texts. Furthermore, the vast majority of these cookbooks reinforced a domestic ideology that emphasised the role of

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women within the private sphere of the home. However, cookbooks not only helped to demarcate the boundaries of the feminine but also often allowed for an expansion of those boundaries into the public realm.

This chapter will examine the manner in which cookbooks reflected and promoted ideologies of domesticity in both overt and inferred ways. It will explore how cookbook authors promoted particular visions of what they deemed to be the 'ideal' woman and her role within the home. It will also consider how this ideology of domesticity did not always represent the reality of many women's lives, especially for working class women. This gap between ideology and reality is underscored by the role of texts like cookbooks in continuously reminding women that they should be domestic creatures. This chapter also examines how a powerful set of gendered social norms were reiterated through advertisements, recipes and images in cookbooks.

The late eighteenth century saw the emergence of a domestic ideology that promoted the notion of separate spheres of life for women and men. This ideology defined a woman's sphere as the private world of the home and children, where motherhood and domestic duty were deemed to be the most important roles in a woman's life. The male domain, on the other hand, was the public world of politics, commerce and of paid labour outside the home. The idea of separate spheres also implied idealised notions of motherhood and wifehood that created a 'cult of domesticity'. Furthermore, it led to a distinct division of labour between men and women in the public and private spheres. These assumptions regarding the roles of men and women were 'imported wholesale into Australia' in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This 'cult of domesticity',

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as Gillian Whitlock argues, was central to British imperial identity and played an important role in social and cultural reproduction, as well as in the various constructions of femininity and motherhood in settler colonies. However, as Sue Rowley has pointed out, by the 1890s in Australia the ideological construct that underpinned the rhetoric of separate spheres was beginning to fracture. The strident nature with which this rhetoric was articulated in society, including cookbooks, belied the 'uncertainty, anxiety and change' that were the characteristics of the relations between women and men in Australia. Furthermore, for many working class women and for those living in rural areas the neat divisions proposed by an ideology of separate spheres did not mirror the realities of their daily lives.

The 'cult of domesticity' that shaped the Victorian era created an idealised 'woman' whose role was held to be nurturant, selfless and morally superior. The focus of women's lives was turned inwards to the closed world of the family and the home. As a well known and popular guide to etiquette (like cookbooks another form of prescriptive literature) in late nineteenth century Australia noted 'home is the woman's kingdom, and there she reigns supreme. To embellish that home... is the wife's province to perform'. This 'cult of domesticity' had the effect of creating a renewed emphasis on housework and domestic pursuits. These practices contributed to the ways in which gendered identities were constructed and experienced. Domestic advice literature, in the form of housekeeping manuals and cookbooks, provided women with the necessary skills to carry out their domestic duties and live up to the expectations society had of them.

6 Ibid., 186.
In an essay submitted for a competition at the 1888 Exhibition of Women's Industry in Sydney, Frances Gillam Holden, a prominent women's activist and co-founder of The Dawn Club with Louisa Lawson, actively promoted the idea of separate spheres for men and women. 'I should have every woman remember that no sphere is more important than home', Holden wrote, adding that the 'home is, and must always be, the sphere in which the great majority of women must pass through their earthly probation' before concluding that 'no duties [are] more honorable (sic) than domestic duties'. Holden recognised that chief amongst these duties was the preparation and provision of family meals and noted that hard work involved in these tasks was often carried out with 'scant appreciation and no thoughts of praise'. In Holden's opinion, the provision of well cooked and appetising food, was not only a woman's domestic duty but also a moral obligation.

Domestic work, as Luce Giard contends, is not a manifestation of a feminine essence but, rather, stems from the social and cultural conditions in which women live. Yet, despite this (or indeed because of this), cooking within the domestic sphere of the home has traditionally been considered to be the responsibility of women. The oft quoted poem by Lord Byron tells us that 'since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner'; however, Byron fails to point out that for dinner to appear on the table much has depended on Eve to prepare it.

**Passably domestic**

The dominance of men and the subordination of women was evident in many Australian social structures and none more so than within the household. Patricia Grimshaw and Graham Willett argue that while men remained the head of the house in many colonial

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11 Ibid.
families, many were not the stern and domineering type and they point to the existence of a social environment that supported the values of home, domesticity and compassionate marriage. Yet, they also note the success of the family unit was, to a great degree, built upon the exclusion of women from the public sphere. The cost of a domestic ideology that idealised the role of the wife and mother, according to Renate Howe and Shurlee Swain, was drudgery and dependency. Many Australian cookbooks re-inscribed the subordinate role of women through the active promotion of a domestic ideology, which placed women's labour as subservient to the needs and desires of men. While burdened with the daily responsibility of preparing meals for the family, many women were encouraged to cast their own needs and tastes aside.

Food studies scholars have held differing perspectives on whether women's food production within the home gave them power in the family, or whether it only served to reinforce their subordinate gender roles. Women, as part of their daily household tasks, were usually in charge of purchasing, storing, cooking, and serving food. Some have argued that this primary role in food production within the home gave women power because they acted as gatekeepers who had control over the food consumed in their households. Others have contended that, whilst women had the responsibility for the flow of food into the home, this did not equate to actual control and this control was, to varying degrees, in the hands of men.

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The problematic power dynamics over the control of food in the home were evident in the discourse found in many early Australian cookbooks. *The Australian Housewives' Manual*, from 1883, suggested the preparation of food was 'a labour of pleasant character' particularly 'repaid in the sight of the gratification it gives others'. The implication in this advice was that the young housewife would cook to satisfy her husband's tastes and desires rather than her own. *Warne's Domestic Cookery*, an 1888 British cookbook adapted to suit the Australian market went one step further in emphasising the subordinate role of women in the home. Its reader, addressed as 'the lady of the house', was told to practice scrupulous thrift and economy lest she 'squander the property of her husband' through waste or ignorant misuse. A woman's economic dependence on her husband placed her in a subordinate position which, in turn, also entailed becoming subordinated to his tastes. Philip Muskett wrote of the need for women to attain knowledge of cookery if they wished to maintain 'domestic power'. However, he did add the caveat that in order to prevent a husband from neglecting his family, the wife must ensure that he had well-cooked food at home. In her 1895 *Antipodean Cookery Book* Wilhelmina Rawson advised the young housewife that 'man must be cooked for' and that only by 'feeding him well you will succeed in gaining your husband's respect and affection'. Almost two decades later the author of *Everybody's Cookery Book* informed readers that 'your kitchen is your world which you govern and in which you live', locating the housewife firmly at the centre of responsibility in the preparation of meals and seemingly in control of the kitchen. Yet, any form of control

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21 Ibid.
23 Clements Tonic Ltd, *Everybody's Cookery Book; or Useful Recipes for Every Home* (Rozelle, N.S.W: Clements Tonic, 1911), 2.
or authority was relinquished when readers were also told that to ensure a happy home they should diligently study the tastes of their husbands and children and cater to these.\(^\text{24}\) As late as 1938 the *Simpson's book of baking treats*, distributed by the Simpson Flour Company, continued to emphasise the subordinate role of women in the home. The book is dedicated to the ‘noble housewife’ who does her utmost to ‘bring happiness in the home...happiness in the service of others’.\(^\text{25}\) Constant reminders for women to assiduously cater to the tastes and preferences of their husbands and family suggest unresolved tensions that most likely existed regarding the provision of meals in many homes.

Domestic proficiency, particularly in the kitchen, was a highly valued commodity in the marriage stakes in late nineteenth century Australia. Many cookbook authors saw the education of young women in the arts of cookery as an essential aspect of their preparation for marriage and their roles within the home. Well-known cookery writer Hannah Maclurcan claimed that the ability to cook was crucial in getting husbands and keeping them, adding that 'I've probably got husbands for dozens of girls through my little book'.\(^\text{26}\)

In Australia's earliest cookbook, *The English and Australian Cookery Book*, the author, Edward Abbott, had no doubt as to what a wife's role in the home should be. He quotes from the poet Milton when reminding his readers that:

> nothing lovelier can be found
> In woman, than to study household good.

He goes on to add that it 'is the peculiar duty of the mistress to see to the arrangements of the table' and he is certain he will be thanked 'for this recommendation by many

\(^\text{24}\) Ibid.
husbands' throughout the colony. These sentiments were also common amongst Abbott's contemporaries. 'A woman does her duty to her husband', the Launceston Examiner reminded its readers, 'if she is faithful and passably domestic.' Furthermore, Abbott showed complete disdain for any woman unwilling to carry out her domestic duties casting her as nothing more than a 'slattern' and even going as far as recommending a husband divorce his wife when she was not proficient in the kitchen. Abbott relegated his idealised women to the home and the kitchen; here is where they could best carry out their duty as mothers and wives. Those who failed to live up to these high expectations of domesticity were deemed inferior and could be cast aside by the whims of an unsatisfied husband.

A short story entitled She Could Cook, published in 1888, told of Sam Snapper and his desire to find a suitable wife. Sam did not want just any wife and particularly did not want a 'learned wife', Sam was adamant that 'he wasn't going to have mathematics served up hot to him, with equations for vegetables' and pitied his friend Frank who is engaged to a 'college book worm'. What Sam Snapper desired the most was 'a girl who could cook', a woman who could supply him with the 'savoury odours of gravys (sic), brown, rich and rare'.

Many Australian cookbooks actively promoted the notion that it was a wife's duty to tend to her family's needs and to ensure their wellbeing and happiness. 'An intelligent woman', Harriet Wicken asserted in The Kingswood Cookery Book, needed to accept that the 'happiness of her home' rested on proper and efficient housework. Almost three decades later William Naylor, the author of the Householder's Friend, stated in no

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28 'Wives', Launceston Examiner, 20 June 1865, 5.
30 Ibid.
31 'She Could Cook', South Bourke and Mornington Journal, 4 January 1888, 2.
32 Ibid.
33 Harriet Wicken, The Kingswood Cookery Book (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1898), 34.
uncertain terms that the foundation of the home lay in the kitchen and, consequently, in the hands of the women who laboured in it. Failure to live up to the required standards demanded of women could be catastrophic, with Naylor claiming that ‘whom God hath joined in matrimony, ill cooked joints and half boiled potatoes have very often put asunder’. However, as one author did note, that while cooking was important in maintaining a harmonious home it was not the ‘be all and end all of existence’.

Young, inexperienced housewives were often the butt of jokes that cast aspersions on their skills in the kitchen. One recurring joke, which appeared in newspapers over a period of at least forty years, had the husband complaining about the dish placed in front of him, saying that it tasted horrible, to which the wife responded incredulously: ‘It is impossible, for the cookery book says it tastes delicious’. One cookbook included a short poem gently making fun of a young woman embarking on preparing her first cake:

She measured out the batter with a very solemn air;
The milk and sugar also; and she took the greatest care
To count the eggs correctly, and to add a little bit
Of baking powder, which you know, beginners oft omit’
Then she stirred it all together, and she baked it for an hour,
But she never quite forgave herself for leaving out the flour.

Food has often been linked to conceptions of female sexuality and desire and its preparation has been seen as a metaphor for female sexual behaviour. Agnes Rose Soley, writing about food in the *Sydney Morning Herald* under the pseudonym of Rose

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35 Ibid.
37 *West Gippsland Gazette*, 8 December 1903, 5.
38 *The Busy Woman’s Home Companion*, 2nd ed (Bendigo: Bendigo Branch, Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1910).
de Boheme, appreciated and understood the connections between art of cookery and the sensual physical responses it elicited. For Rose de Boheme food and romance were intimately connected and she argued that romance, ‘like everything else...needs nourishment’. These jokes and humorous scenarios concerning food preparation at the expense of inexperienced women might have served to allay any fears newly married women embarking on a life of domestic pursuits might have felt about inadequacies in the kitchen or indeed the bedroom.

Yet, despite the general desire for a wife with a basic knowledge of cooking and housekeeping, there is ample evidence of the general lack of these skills amongst many young women of a marriageable age. As Wilhelmina Rawson despairingly maintained in The Antipodean Cookery Book, 'it is the exception, rather than the rule, to find a young lady who can really cook and serve a dinner that is eatable, let alone enjoyable'. Rawson also explicitly stated her books were aimed at the inexperienced housewife and gave not only recipes, but also household hints which she considered 'useful to those beginning housekeeping'. She, somewhat disingenuously, claimed she still had much to learn, but was willing to pass on her housekeeping skills to those she deemed less experienced than herself. The kindly, maternal persona adopted by Rawson in this and following cookbooks, as well as the advice column she wrote in The Queenslander under the pseudonym “A Mother”, was a common trope amongst cookbook writers of the time. This form of authorial voice allowed them to mirror and reproduce the matrilineal form through which cooking knowledge had traditionally been handed down and had begun to disappear with a colonial mobility that often separated families across

40 Rose de Boheme, ‘Culture and Cookery’, Sydney Morning Herald, 13 December 1890, 4.
41 Ibid.
44 Wilhelmina Rawson, Mrs. Lance Rawson's cookery book and household hints (Rockhampton Qld.: William Hopkins, 1886), v.
45 Ibid., vi.
vast distances. Cookbooks played an important part in filling in many of the gaps in the culinary knowledge of inexperienced cooks as well as providing them with a whole range of other housekeeping information. Furthermore, they continued to promote domestic work as a central aspect of a woman's role.

The status of women has often been determined based on their performance of domestic duties, such as the purchasing and preparation of food. Many Australian cookbooks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century associated elevated social status with domestic proficiency. This higher social status, however, fell within the parameters of the middle class values that were so clearly articulated by cookbooks during this period. Zara Aronson, a prominent journalist, philanthropist and restaurateur, clearly believed this when she told her readers that 'success in housekeeping adds credit to the woman of intellect, and lustre to a woman's accomplishments'. Ina Strickland, author of the 1904 *The Commonwealth Cookery Book*, also agreed, asserting that a 'woman of refinement will always take delight in making the home attractive'.

The early nineteenth century saw an increased focus on home life that also saw domesticity take on a moral character; wifehood was 'affirmed to contain the essence of female godliness'. The virtuous wife was also the practical and efficient wife able to provide for the needs of her family. One cookbook author extolled the virtues of housework as an intrinsic and inseparable part of a woman's role in the home and called for women to exercise self control and self denial in pursuit of the happiness of those they loved. Aronson condemned the inefficient or incapable housewife by declaring that it was 'discreditable for any woman to be without housekeeping

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46 McIntosh and Zey, ‘Women as Gatekeepers of Food Consumption: A Sociological Critique’, 133.
49 Linda Young, *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 76.
knowledge'. Strickland, for her part, deemed the home to be 'the chief school of human virtue'. The focus on thrift and economy that was evident in many Australian cookbooks, and described in the previous chapter, is another indication of the high moral character that was expected of women. A number of prominent domestic scientists also drew links between cooking ability and the regenerative powers it had on the moral fibre of the nation. The cookbook writer and Inspectress of Domestic Arts Colleges in Victoria, Flora Pel, argued that adequate cookery training for girls would enable them to impart 'moral stamina' in future generations of Australians. Once again, this highlights the contradictory nature of a domestic ideology that is predicated on women being domestic beings in the private sphere, yet also envisages them outside this sphere as the moral saviours of the nation.

Jill Matthews contends that much of the work carried out by women within the private sphere was considered to be a natural function of maternal activity, and that women's legitimate role was restricted to the home, childbearing and 'maintaining the health and wellbeing of the family'. This aspect of maternal domestic activity was most evident in the large number of Australian cookbooks that included sections on the preparation of food for the sick and invalid. As was seen in Chapter 1, this was a practice was one that was continued on from British cookbooks. Writing about Melbourne in the middle of the nineteenth century, Penny Russell has noted that women had little choice but to take over nursing duties and that, while the role of the doctor was important, the care of the sick in the home was a domestic responsibility for women. ‘The ideal woman’, Russell goes on to argue, ‘was caring and nurturant’ adding, however, that under the

51 Aronson, XXth Century Cooking ... and Home Decoration, 15.
guidance of a doctor women could also exercise a certain degree of power in the sick room.57 Caring for the ill was also regarded as a moral responsibility. It was, as one author proclaimed, a ‘woman’s noblest mission’ which called forth her ‘best virtues’.58 In the last decade of the nineteenth century, The Dawn magazine saw fit to inform its readers that the care of the sick should be regarded as a ‘labour of love’ and the responsibility of every intelligent woman and that the ‘provision of proper food’ was an indispensable aspect of this role.59

Alison Bashford argues that, by the beginning of the twentieth century, domesticity was already being reworked and reconceptualised as ‘household hygiene’, ‘domestic science’ and ‘kitchen physic’ (sick-cookery).60 Cooking for the sick and invalid began to be an integral part of the ‘scientific housewifery’ promoted by the domestic science movement.61 And, indeed, a number of domestic science experts who published cookbooks tackled this subject at length in works aimed both at professional nurses and housewives. In 1912, Amy Schauer, whose career will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, wrote a book entitled Cookery for Invalids. Whilst primarily aimed for the instruction of nurses, the book also included information for ‘others who tend the sick’.62 These authors attempted to reconcile what had been traditionally regarded as the ‘natural’ feminine qualities of care and nurture with a more scientific and rational approach to caring for the ill in the home.

Lucy Drake was a domestic science instructor at the Swinburne Technical College in Melbourne and had previously trained at the prestigious Kensington School of Cookery and it was this rational approach to all aspects of cookery that was distilled in her

57 Ibid.
59 ‘Nursing’, The Dawn, 5 June 1890, 6.
61 Ibid.
62 Amy Schauer, Cookery for Invalids: For Hospital and Home, Nurses in Training Schools, in Private Practice, and Others Who Tend the Sick (Brisbane: Edwards, Dunlop, 1912).
cookbooks. In a section of the *Everylady's Cookbook* dedicated to 'Invalid Cookery' she wrote: ‘from time to time many little indispositions are sure to crop up frequently, not necessitating the services of a doctor, but only the intelligent application of knowledge by the mother’. She continued by noting that it should be regarded as a 'social crime' if a woman was not able to prepare a few dishes which would help, and 'not retard, an invalid’s recovery'. Whilst attempting to provide sound advice for the treatment of the ill based on a ‘rational’ approach to cookery, Drake still drew on older ideas regarding women as ‘natural’ caregivers and casting aspersions on those who failed to adequately fulfil this role.

**More than flesh and bones can endure**

The idea of separate spheres for men and women also dictated a strict division of labour in the domestic realm. As Kerreen Reiger argues in *The Disenchantment of the Modern Home*, ‘the core ingredients of the dominant familial ideology—the home as a sanctuary and as woman's sphere—rested upon the assumption of the complementarity in marriage of a sexual division of labour’. Rapid increases in urbanisation coupled with the working classes acquiring of individual, private dwellings meant that the demarcation of male and female roles became more distinct. Women, particularly in middle-class homes, took upon the responsibilities of looking after the home, while men took upon the role of breadwinner. Jill Matthews has labelled unpaid house work as 'non work', arguing that patriarchal society held it in lower regard than other forms of work.

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63 For more on the Kensington School and its important role in the development of domestic science in Australia see Chapter 5.
65 Ibid., 204.
for which wages were paid. The author of The Australian Housewives' Manual, writing under the pseudonym 'An Old Housekeeper', asked, 'who is it that does in effect look after you ....by giving up his days to labour and his nights to thought in order that he may find you the material to work with?'. While cognisant of the arduous tasks involved in maintaining a home, she clearly valued the paid work of the husband as more important and had little expectation that he would contribute, except financially, to the care of the home. This idea of a man's labour being more valuable that woman's was cemented in the 1907 Harvester Judgement. Justice Higgins based his concept of a 'living wage' on the premise that men were the breadwinners and that women undertaking paid labour had no dependants.

This strict division of labour and spheres also led to the gendering of spaces within the home. The kitchen, at least in the family home, became the realm of women. Interior spaces in nineteenth century Australian homes were clearly demarcated, with social customs determining the activities carried out in them. This demarcation of space was clearly gendered with particular areas, such as the kitchen and laundry, considered the locus of women's activity. Furthermore, this form of spatial segregation also allowed for the reinforcement of the unequal power relations of gendered identity. The separation of the spheres was more than rhetoric; it was also embodied in the physical space of the home.

In nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia the preparation of food formed a considerable part of the unpaid household tasks carried out by women. Domestic labour, particularly kitchen work, in turn of the century households in Australia was described

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68 Matthews, Good and Mad Women, 152.
as being 'more than flesh and bones can endure'. In 1900 domestic labour took up approximately the equivalent of a full work week, with most of the work related to the production of food. 'Yesterday, to-day and forever the same old story.....always food to cook', was how one woman described housework in 1896. The author of the 1911 *Keeyuga Cookery Book* recognised that it was the ordinary housewife who was responsible for cooking the vast majority of meals in Australia. Moreover, despite advancements in domestic technology such as the introduction of gas stoves in 1873, many Australian households still used wood or coal stoves in their kitchens until the middle of the twentieth century. These stoves were hot, laborious to maintain and clean, and added considerable discomfort in the kitchen and to household tasks. Writing in 1883, for example, 'An Old Housekeeper' deplored the state of many kitchens found in the suburbs of Melbourne claiming that 'the kitchen, so called, is merely a back room fitted with a ‘colonial oven’ in it'.

Many foods were also prepared from scratch, particularly in rural areas where there was limited access to shop-bought goods. Cookbook authors recognised the monotony and the arduous tasks involved in cooking for the family and believed proper advice and training could ease this burden for many women. The publishers of the *Australian Cookery Guide* claimed their cookbook provided possibilities so that cooking became 'a delightful surprise' instead of the drudgery that it was often considered. Prominent cookbook author Harriet Wicken argued that an adequate knowledge of cookery, which,
of course, was gained through the use of her cookbook, raised domestic labour above drudgery and allowed women to cultivate their intellectual faculties.\textsuperscript{81}

Not all cookbook writers had such a high estimation of women but rather blamed inefficiency and a lack of skills on the part of the housewife as a key factor in the toil involved in housekeeping. Rita Vaile, who also wrote a popular cookery advice column in the women's pages of the \textit{Melbourne Herald}, bemoaned the inefficient way in which many women carried out their household duties. In her 1897 book entitled \textit{Cottage Cookery}, she admonished her readers to work quickly and methodically and did not wonder at women being tired, claiming it was 'enough to tire one to watch them move about, so slow are they'.\textsuperscript{82} This emphasis on efficiency became more explicit in the works of the later domestic economy movement. Hannah Rankin, author of the \textit{Handbook of Domestic Science} and supervisor of cooking in New South Wales schools, noted that 'to be always working is not a sign of good housekeeping but rather of mismanagement'.\textsuperscript{83}

Kitchens, however, were multi-modal spaces where women carried out a whole range of domestic tasks besides cooking. An 1884 oil painting by Frederick McCubbin, entitled \textit{Kitchen at the old King Street Bakery}, shows a fairly typical urban kitchen of the era with a colonial oven set into the fireplace, shelves and a large table upon which sits what appears to be a well worn cookbook. The painting also shows a wooden armchair next to which sits an open sewing kit, indicating that other activities besides cooking took place within that space.

\textsuperscript{81} Harriet Wicken, \textit{The Cook's Compass} (Sydney: J.G. Hanks, 1890), 12.
\textsuperscript{82} Rita, \textit{Cottage Cookery (hygienic and Economic)} (Melbourne: Geo. Robertson & Co, 1897), 72.
\textsuperscript{83} Hannah Rankin, \textit{Handbook of Domestic Science: Specially Adapted for Use in Australasia} (Sydney: William Brooks, 1907), 41.
However, the kitchen was not only a place of toil but also, as Katie Holmes has noted, a site for friendship and socialisation. An 1890 painting by A. H. Fullwood depicts a rustic yet large, airy kitchen. This space is undoubtedly a place where the daily labour of preparing meals is carried out. It contains two colonial ovens set into the wall, shelves loaded with all manner of cooking utensils and a long bench where a woman can be seen at work. Yet, despite its utilitarian purpose the room appears ample enough to become a site for friendly gatherings ‘largely unfussed by great social distinctions’.

However, the distinctions between the private and public sphere were often blurred. These distinctions have been posited on the premise that the private sphere was a realm for consumption and the public sphere one of production. This ignores the fact that female domestic labour was primarily one of production. Furthermore, in many households there was a need for women to supplement the income brought in by the

87 Ibid.
husbands, and they made a significant contribution to the finances of the household.\textsuperscript{88} This often involved a double burden for women, who were obliged, not only to do housework, but also to find alternative ways to supplement their income. In \textit{Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book and Household Hints} Wilhelmina Rawson recommended women keep poultry as a means to earn extra income. She noted some of the local women going to the markets to sell their eggs and remarked that 'you may be quite sure they would not do this unless it paid them, and paid them well too'.\textsuperscript{89} Homes were also used for commercial purposes such as the production of piece work for the garment trade, as boarding houses or for the production of foodstuffs. The Women's Industrial Guild, for example, provided opportunities for those ‘desirous to help themselves’ and established a space where women could sell their home-made products including cake, sauces and pickles.\textsuperscript{90}

\textbf{Foodstuffs for a living}

The idea of separate spheres for men and women did not fit in with the daily reality encountered by many Australian women. Financial necessity dictated many women find some form of employment outside the home. Married women's participation in the workforce, however, was constrained by a number of factors, including societal expectations, such as leaving the workforce upon marriage, and the arduous tasks involved in domestic duties.\textsuperscript{91} As Susan Nugent Wood noted in \textit{Woman's work in Australia}, ‘“Woman's Work” must begin at home, and very often she never need move from the common round of an uneventful life to fulfil her noiseless part’.\textsuperscript{92} Paid labour outside the home was deemed by many as anathema to the prescribed and idealised role

\textsuperscript{89} Rawson, \textit{Mrs. Lance Rawson's cookery book and household hints}, 111.
\textsuperscript{90} ‘Women’s Industrial Guild’, \textit{Australian Town and Country Journal}, 25 August 1894, 36.
\textsuperscript{91} Raelene Frances, ‘Never Done but Always Done Down.’, 125.
\textsuperscript{92} Susan Nugent Wood, \textit{Woman's work in Australia} (Melbourne: Samuel Mullen, 1862), 35.
expected of middle class married women. Their role was to be mothers and to render the man's home (for inevitably it was considered HIS home) happy and comfortable. In her 1891 book entitled *The Australian Home*, Harriet Wicken made her views on this matter explicit:

There is a great deal of talk now-a-days about “women’s rights” and some seem to think she can only obtain her rights by rushing into the world of business and politics, but surely this is a mistaken notion....There may be cases where a woman of exceptional ability, and without home occupations, can take part in public business without detriment to her womanhood, but these cases are rare and merely prove the rule that women’s best and highest rights lie within the four walls of her home.

The availability of jobs for many married women was limited as the requirements of many of these, such as live-in domestic service, were incompatible with the many and time consuming tasks required to run their own household. The actual number of women in the labour market in the last decades of the nineteenth century is difficult to assess as figures were obfuscated by the manipulation of census data, which led to underenumeration of female labour and the reclassification of women as ‘dependants’ of their husbands. Despite this, economic reality dictated most working class women had no choice but to work outside the home.

Cooking was one avenue for earning income that was open to both married and single women. This could be done through the preparation of foodstuffs in the home to sell to the public, as a domestic servant in a private home, or as a cook in a public establishment such as a hotel or a restaurant. From the earliest days of colonial

93 ‘Woman-Her Sphere, Her Qualities, and Her Duties’, *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 6 August 1870, 21.
settlement some women were able to earn a livelihood through the preparation of food.
In 1803, Mrs Rosetta Stabler opened her new eating house where she promised her diners that they could find a taste of home with 'boiled mutton and broth every day at 12 o'clock' and other victuals dressed in the English way'.  

A more common experience for working women, however, would have involved some form of domestic service in a private home. Until the 1920s, women undertaking this role encompassed more than a quarter of the overall female workforce. This form of labour was generally regarded to be of fairly low status and involved arduous toil under bad conditions and was poorly remunerated. However, within the internal hierarchy of domestic service, the role of cook commanded both the highest status and the highest wages. Cooking skills also opened up the possibility for women to change their employment opportunities from domestic service in private homes to public establishments, such as hotels and restaurants, where their skills were sorely needed and wages and working conditions could be more easily negotiated. A few cookbook authors often recognised the need of some women to earn additional money to supplement the family income. They actively promoted women's participation in areas such as domestic service and the catering and hospitality industry. At times, these women were part of what Katrina Alford has termed a 'hidden labour market and economy' that traded goods and services without official recognition. At other times they entered the labour market in roles that were almost exclusively for women, such as domestic service. In other roles, particularly cooking in public establishments, they competed with men for jobs.

97 The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 26 June 1803, 3.
100 Higman, Domestic Service in Australia, 168–169.
101 Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann, 47.
Henrietta McGowan was a prominent Melbourne journalist, who edited the women's page for *The Age* newspaper for almost two decades. She was the author of several books, including *Woman's Work*, regarding the conditions of working women in Victoria, and *The Keeyuga Cookery Book* published in 1911. In the introduction to her cookbook, McGowan recognised that the utility of her book might extend beyond private domestic use and be relied upon as a guide for culinary professionals. When writing her book McGowan ‘kept well in mind’ both women working in domestic service and those who sold 'foodstuffs for a living'.\(^{103}\) She suggested that women could earn a good living from their labours by preparing foodstuffs that commercial food concerns seldom attempted, such as certain varieties of jams, pickles and cakes.\(^{104}\) These could be sold to hotels and boarding houses, according to McGowan, as long as they were of top quality and reasonably priced.\(^{105}\) She also urged her readers to adopt a professional demeanour and recommended that they present themselves as 'well dressed and well spoken' when calling on potential customers to provide samples of their wares. *Everybody's Cookery Book*, a promotional cookbook issued by the Clements Tonic Company, whilst subtitled ‘useful recipes for every home’, also gave suggestions to women engaged in paid domestic labour or working in the catering industry. They were reminded that they were cooking to suit the taste of their employers and not their own and to maintain high levels of professionalism.\(^{106}\)

The overwhelmingly gendered nature of cookbook writing in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia placed women writers at the centre of this form of publishing. While many cookbook authors were amateurs who only published one book, some women were able to pursue a career from their cookbook writing and other food-related enterprises. Authors such as Rita Vaile, Zara Aronson and Henrietta McGowan


\(^{104}\) Ibid.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 4.

\(^{106}\) Clements Tonic Ltd, *Everybody’s Cookery Book; or Useful Recipes for Every Home*, 2.
combined cookbook writing with careers as journalists and advice columnists in newspapers. For others, including Harriet Wicken and Amy Schauer, cookbook writing was a natural extension of their careers as cookery educators and promoters of domestic science.\textsuperscript{107} Wilhelmina Rawson and Hannah Maclurcan were two women, born only nine years apart, who were able to parlay their initial success as cookbook writers into very different careers. They were visible women with high profiles in the public sphere.

Wilhelmina Rawson’s reputation as a well-known cookbook author, which was discussed in the previous chapter, allowed her to expand into other mediums. She contributed to the women’s pages of \textit{The Queenslander} and \textit{The Courier Mail} where she used her expertise to advise readers on all matters culinary. She also wrote on one of her favourite topics, the raising of poultry in Australian conditions and published fairy stories in the \textit{Wide Bay News}. In 1890, her literary aspirations were recognised when one of her short stories appeared in an edited collection called \textit{Coo-ee Tales of Australian Life by Australian Ladies}, which also included a story by Rosa Campbell Praed. In 1901, Rawson briefly served as the editor of the Labor-leaning \textit{People’s Newspaper} in Rockhampton, where ‘she broke a number of conventions that hedged round about a woman of 30 or so years ago’.\textsuperscript{108} In this role she acted as a strong advocate for the retention on Melanesian indentured labour in Queensland. In 1919, as a well established figure and a ‘Queensland Pioneer’, she was asked to serialise her memoirs and reminiscences in \textit{The Queenslander}.

Hannah Maclurcan came from a family of hotel keepers and by the age of seventeen was already managing one of her father’s establishments in Toowoomba.\textsuperscript{109} After marriage and a move to Townsville to manage the Queen’s Hotel, Maclurcan embarked

\textsuperscript{107} See Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{109} Charles D Maclurcan, \textit{The Story of the Wentworth Hotel: And the Historic Site on Which It Is Built} (Sydney: John Sands, 1946), 24.
on writing a cookbook. *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book: A Collection of Practical Recipes Specially Suitable for Australia,* as was seen in Chapter 2, attested to its author's unbridled energy and verve. The initial print run of two thousand volumes, which appeared in April 1889, was exhausted in a matter of weeks. The book would go on to become a mainstay on Australian kitchen shelves with at least twenty editions being published, the last in 1930. The book received high praise in the press with one reviewer going as far as calling Maclurcan 'one of the best cooks in Australia' and another describing her as 'one thoroughly skilled in the culinary art'. The second edition of her book contained a vice-regal seal of approval in the shape of a letter of praise from Lady May Lamington, the wife of the Governor of Queensland.

Although Maclurcan would only publish one more cookbook, *The 20th century cookery book: a thousand practical recipes for everyday use,* she would continue to be a prominent figure in the hospitality industry. In 1901, together with her husband Donald, Maclurcan took over the lease of the Wentworth Hotel in central Sydney. Under her directorship the hotel grew from thirty two rooms to become a grand establishment of over one hundred rooms in 1925. The hotel became highly regarded for its fine food and its restaurant The Palm Court was known as 'Sydney's Premier Cafe'. The hotel published its own glossy in-house *Wentworth Magazine,* which showed off the glamorous lifestyles of the hotel's guests. It also carried writing by the likes of Mary Gilmore and Nettie Palmer and included sections on poetry, art and fashion. The magazine also included a recipe and cookery section that was, of course, under the direction of Maclurcan. Ever the shameless self-promoter, Maclurcan's role as a hostess was lauded by her own magazine, which called her 'a wonderful compiler of fascinating

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dishes' and praised her for turning the hotel into the 'centre of Sydney's social life'.¹¹² Maclurcan's fame reached beyond that of a cookbook author and she became the doyenne of the hotel industry in Sydney. Beverley Kingston has called her perhaps Australia's first celebrity cook.¹¹³

However, not all work that women did outside the home brought in an income. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century many Australian women undertook voluntary work. While this form of activity has often been labelled as merely a 'charitable pastime' and an extension of their roles within the home Joanne Scott argues that it should be regarded as a valid form of labour.¹¹⁴ Scott notes that a considerable proportion of the voluntary work undertaken by women drew upon pre-existing domestic skills such as sewing and cooking for fetes and church conferences.¹¹⁵ To these activities I would also add the production of fund-raising cookbooks. As mentioned previously, community and fund-raising cookbooks represented more than a quarter of all cookbooks published in Australia between the 1860s and the late 1930s and, therefore, account for an untold number of hours of unpaid labour undertaken by the women who assisted in their compilation. For Susan Magarey the movement of women into such philanthropic activities marked a shift in the boundaries between the separate spheres of the domestic world inhabited by women and of the public sphere of men.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 17.
What's in a name?

The evolving vocabulary used in the titles of Australian cookbooks helps to illustrate many of the changes occurring in the wider society. As Michael Symons points out 'book titles are ready-made encapsulations of prevailing interests and expectations' and they respond, both consciously and subconsciously, to underlying cultural and social changes.\(^{117}\) The titles of Australian cookbooks took on many forms and might simply include the name of the organisation that produced the book, like the *Women's Missionary Union Book of Tried Recipes*, or the subject matter, like Harriet Wicken's *Fish Dainties*. The period encompassing the First World War saw cookbooks bearing titles such as *The War Cookery Book* and *The Patriotic Cookery Book*. The various ascensions to the British throne, for their part, inevitably led to a spate of cookbooks containing the term 'coronation' in the title.

A small but significant proportion of Australian cookbook titles contained explicitly gendered terms such as 'housewife', 'woman' and 'lady'. Between 1864 and the late 1930s such gendered terms were present in approximately 8 per cent of all published titles.\(^{118}\) The term 'housewife', in particular, was in common usage in Australian popular literature from the 1860s onwards as a word to describe a female home-maker.\(^{119}\) 'Housewife' became a culturally loaded term that indicated a woman's social relationship, status and presumed place in the world and which had no equivalent gendered alternative.\(^{120}\).


\(^{118}\) This figure is derived from Johan Hoyle's exhaustive bibliography of Australian domestic cookery books.


\(^{120}\) Ibid., 175.
In titles where non-gendered terms such as home, domestic, family and household were used the gendered assumptions were implicit due to the pre-eminent role women played in carrying out housework duties. Of the cookbooks that did not have a gendered title many addressed a female audience in their preface or introduction with terms such as housewife or mistress of the house. The first Australian cookbook to contain such an explicitly gendered title was *The Australian Housewives' Manual* from 1883. As was seen earlier in this chapter the author openly, and exclusively, addressed the mistress of the house throughout the book. Although having a less gender specific title, Rawson showed no qualms as to whom she was addressing in her book *Mrs Lance Rawson's Cookery Book and Household Hints*. She wrote with the full expectation that her readership would be almost exclusively women and referred to her audience as 'housewife' and 'matron'. A reviewer of Rawson's work recognised the putative audience for her cookbook by claiming that the work was 'intended more for the young housewife at the homestead than for the shepherd or miner in his hut'.\(^{121}\) The use of Rawson's married title and the name of her husband in the title of the book also clearly marked the author as a woman, albeit inseparable from her husband, and further placed her cookbook within an almost exclusively feminine genre. *The Housewife's Friend*, published in 1895, did more than just use an explicitly gendered term in its title. The use of the word 'friend' within this context located the book's potential audience within a broader imagined (and sisterly) community of housewives, who required help and assistance in carrying out the cookery aspects of their domestic duties.

\(^{121}\) 'Review', *The Queenslander*, 9 November 1878, 170.
Over the subsequent years, the gendered nature of cookbooks changed little. The 1910s saw the publication of the *Everylady's Cook Book* in 1911 and *Every Woman's Domestic Companion* in 1912. Amongst cookbooks published in the early 1920s were the *Housewife's Guide* in 1921 and *The Busy Woman's Home Companion* in 1924. Although the title of *Mr and Mrs Newlywed*, also published in 1924, alludes to both a male and female readership, the book itself is overwhelmingly geared towards a female reader. It gave advice to mothers and prospective mothers and considered itself a valuable tool in assisting the new housewife to appease the desires of her family and, implicitly, her husband. While the wife followed the instructions to prepare Lobster a la Newburg and was informed of the dos and don'ts of child rearing, the husband could rest contentedly knowing he was the head of the household and could amuse himself by

122 *To Mr. and Mrs. Newlywed. From the Leading Business Firms of Sydney.* (Sydney: Direct Advertising Service N.S.W, 1926).
perusing the one page dedicated to the masculine pursuit of driving a car. This book also appears to be the only one that expressly addressed a male readership.

However, it was not only the language of Australian cookbooks that was explicitly gendered. The images, both on the covers and within the pages, of Australian cookbooks also served to promote a particularly gendered vision of cookery. On the cover of Harriet Wicken's *Kingswood Cookery Book* was an illustration of a neatly dressed woman standing in front of a hot stove. The woman, however, shows no signs of the hot and hard work involved in the preparation of meals in a nineteenth-century kitchen. Hannah Maclurcan's *Twentieth Century Cookery Book* depicted a woman in a white apron and cap, holding a tray of steaming hot food, with a contented smile on her face. The cover of the 1924 *"Australian Made" Cookery Book and Housewives' Guide* showed a more modern woman, this time with a fashionable bobbed haircut, stirring a bowl. An advertisement for a modern electric stove found within its pages showed a fresh and clean-looking woman holding up the product of her labours. Many of these images, while reflecting the changing fashions of the time, continued to portray an idealised image of women engaged in domestic labour. However, there were some exceptions to these idealised images. The drawing on the cover of Mary Gilmore's *The Worker Cook Book* showed a slightly weary woman, wearing a plain dress and apron, stirring a bowl. The kitchen in which she is working is simple and modest and chickens can be seen wandering in the yard in the background. However, not all cookbooks presented such an overly feminised perception of women on their covers. A book issued by the North Shore Gas Company in the early 1930s attempted to show a more professionalised view. The cover describes a woman sitting behind a desk; behind her is

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123 Ibid., 163 & 143.
a plaque which reads: ‘Let us solve your cooking problems’. Here, the important role of the professional cookery instructor in dispensing advice is evidently clear.

**Dainty dishes**

The prescriptive nature of cookbooks went as far as dictating what types of food were suitable for different sexes. The term 'dainty' was one that gained much currency in the late nineteenth century to describe food that was deemed particularly appropriate for women. Numerous cookbooks featured the term in their title or included it in the description of their recipes. The portions were to be small and the dishes themselves were to appear light (although they often were richer than their appearance might indicate). The term itself echoed societal perceptions of how 'ideal' women should look and act. To be seen to have lusty tastes in food might be regarded as betraying other lustful desires such as pleasures of the flesh. Women could display their femininity by the dainty foods they consumed and thus distinguish themselves from the coarser tastes of men. In the pages of the *Australian Home Journal*, for example, Harriet Wicken provided recipes for a 'Pink Tea' which included a delicate pink jelly. These types of dishes perpetuated stereotypical notions of femininity, in the food prepared and in its presentation. Ironically, despite their more delicate presentation, many of these dishes required precise measurements and a deft touch of hand to produce them, elevating them from many of the more mundane and masculine dishes such as a steak or a roast. Feminist writer Louisa Lawson decried the considerable efforts required for women to

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126 Sherrie A Inness, *Dinner Roles: American women and culinary culture* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa City, 2001), 56.
produce such dishes claiming that they had better things to do than worry over ‘such trifles as the particular degree of clearness in a jelly’.  

Wicken's 1897 cookbook *Australian Table Dainties* is notable for the relative absence of meat dishes. Wicken bemoaned the 'daily diet of chops and steaks' consumed by many Australians and called instead for one that includes more fish, vegetables and fruit. Indeed, over half of *Australian Table Dainties* is given over to dishes using these three ingredients. One reviewer of the book noted: 'The author is a staunch advocate of a less carnivorous policy in the household', and praised the lightness of recipes that would tempt the jaded appetites of those dwelling in the warm climates of Australia.

Wilhelmina Rawson advocated a similar diet of fresh fruit, vegetables and salad for those she termed literary workers, women and 'all who lead a sedentary existence'; 'strong meats and drinks', Rawson admonished, 'should be avoided at all times'. This injunction against the consumption of meat feminised the male 'literary' worker by placing him in opposition to the manual labouring 'real man', who was considered entitled to a diet of meat, often seen as a symbol of masculinity in many western societies.

Although she staked a claim as an expert in culinary matters by titling her cookbook *The Lady Chef* (with chef being a masculine gendered word in the original French and generally considered a term of professionalization), Hilda Greene subtitled her book 'a collection of small and dainty dishes'. Both the portion size and the daintiness of the dishes she included in her book pointed to her intended audience, ladies of leisure with the time and inclination to prepare such elaborate dishes as the pink-coloured Bouchées

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127 In Barbara Santich, *What the Doctors Ordered: 150 Years of Dietary Advice in Australia* (South Melbourne: Hyland House, 1995), 44.
129 ‘Publication Received’, *The Queenslander*, 10 April 1897, 788.
of Prawns with Cream Sauce garnished with Coralline pepper and a tiny sprig of parsley.\textsuperscript{132}

During the 1920s and 30s many commercial food manufacturers distributed cookery booklets that included the term dainty or promoted a distinct feminine aesthetic. Both Nestlé and the Davis gelatine company produced cookbooks that emphasised daintiness and femininity and featured elaborate and time-consuming dishes. The Asparagus Tip Salad, from the \textit{Davis Dainty Dishes} cookbook, involved encasing asparagus tips and the white hearts of celery in gelatine and setting them in a fluted mould.\textsuperscript{133} A deft touch would have been needed to reproduce the dish in all its quivering glory as illustrated in the book. The Nestlé Company carefully selected and tested their recipes to cater to the discriminating housewife allowing her to prepare ‘attractive dishes that appeal by their purity and daintiness’.\textsuperscript{134}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{nestle_dainty_dishes_cover}
\caption{Cover of Nestlé’s \textit{Dainty Dishes} cookbook c.1920}
\end{figure}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{132} Hylda Greene, \textit{The Lady Chef} (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird & Co., 1907), 28.
\textsuperscript{133} Davis Gelatine Organization (Australia), \textit{Davis Dainty Dishes} (Sydney: Davis Gelatine (Australia), 1922), 13.
\textsuperscript{134} Nestlé Company (Australia), \textit{Dainty Dishes: A Book of Selected Recipes} (Sydney: Nestles, n.d.).
\end{footnotesize}
100 Tested Recipes, published in the mid-1930s by the Robur Tea Company, included a series of menus for ladies’ teas that featured a ‘Marigold Tea’, with dishes artificially hued with yolkine (a yellow food colouring) and, like Wicken almost forty years earlier, a ‘Pink Tea’. These highly decorated and elaborate dishes reflected the image attached to the women who produced them. Whilst the overtly feminised dishes featured in 100 Tested Recipes were selected (and most likely written) by an eminently-qualified woman, a trained cookery educator named Miss Nell Rapley from the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy, the publishers of the book created a fictitious male character as the spokesperson for the company. This character, with the French sounding name of Robiére and a play on words on the company name Robur, is hailed as a genius of the modern culinary arts. ‘When he speaks, let us listen’, the book told readers, ‘for in his advice is contained wisdom’. Even when selling an image of daintiness to a largely female readership, the publishers of 100 Tested Recipes felt the need to rely on a masculine symbol of culinary professionalism to market their wares.

In One Continuous Picnic, Michael Symons argues that the fashion for daintiness in the early decades of the twentieth century in Australia was actively promoted for financial gain by large, modern food manufacturers:

....they could coax housewives to adopt profitable frills. They could convince women to accept a new role as consumers. Daintiness—which embodied “feminine” qualities like lightness, prettiness and gentility—was part of a long campaign to pervert the traditional caring concerns of women into petty materialist preoccupations.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{135}}\text{ Laura Shapiro, Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century (New York: Farrar, Straus And Giroux, 1986), 100.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{136}}\text{ Nell Rapley and Robur Tea Company, 100 Tested Recipes: Cakes, Biscuits, Fillings, Savouries, sandwiches, Etc (South Melbourne: Robur Tea Co. Ltd., 1933).}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{137}}\text{ Michael Symons, One Continuous Picnic: A History of Eating in Australia (Adelaide: Duck Press, 1982), 139.}\]
However, as Sherrie Inness has noted, the fashion for daintiness had larger cultural reverberations by encouraging women to remain in the kitchens for longer in order to prepare the elaborate dishes required to meet the new standards of fashion.\textsuperscript{138}

Another manner in which cookbooks reinforced gender norms was in the range of products that they advertised within their pages. As well as advertisements for basic food products and kitchen equipment, many cookbooks contained advertisements for products and services directly aimed at women. The Swinburne College's \textit{Student's Text Book for Home Cookery} was confident of having an almost exclusively female readership. Page after page contains small banner advertisements for a range of beauty products aimed at women. An advertisement for 'Veloute de Beaute- a Face Powder of the highest excellence' sat incongruously alongside a recipe on how to prepare old potatoes.\textsuperscript{139} Even whilst labouring in a hot kitchen women were expected to maintain their feminine graces and a soft skin.

In 1930, an advertisement for a Sunbeam Mixmaster appearing in the \textit{School of Mines Cookery Book} proclaimed that 'the way to a husband's heart is still through his stomach' and urged housewives to purchase one in order to prepare the tasty meals her husband enjoyed.\textsuperscript{140} Not only was his stomach the way to his heart, but it was also the way to his wallet. 'Tasty meals do make for a happy home' the advertisement continued, 'but good recipes are half the battle. And it can be a battle—especially when it needs a pavlova to get him to buy [you] that new hat... Ever try and make a pavlova with a hand mixer? Wow! Yet it's easy as pie with a Sunbeam Mixmaster.'\textsuperscript{141} Advertisements like these continued to reiterate the role of women as economically subservient to their husbands

\textsuperscript{138} Inness, \textit{Dinner roles}, 57.
\textsuperscript{140} Beth E Ross, \textit{School of Mines Cookery Book} (Adelaide: Beth E. Ross, 1930).
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
and dependent on their goodwill to be able to purchase goods deemed to be frivolous and unnecessary.

Women were consumers of images as well as goods, as Mary Drake McFeely has noted, and cookbooks sold images of the cook. On the surface, these images were often positive ones where the cook was portrayed as an artist, chef and a perfector of domestic bliss. Yet, at the same time they also sold an image of women who were subservient to societal expectations and encouraged to place the needs and desires of their family above their own. The use of gender-specific words in the titles of Australian cookbooks, the manner in which their authors addressed their readers and the images these books contained reflected the profoundly gendered nature of domestic texts in Australia and they placed women at the centre of household duties, including cooking, within the domestic sphere of the home.

**Conclusion**

Australian cookbooks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century actively promoted a domestic ideology that was predicated on separate spheres of life and action for women and men. Many cookbook authors advocated a role for women based around the home and domestic duties. It was here, in front of the stove, where they could most successfully fulfil their role as wife and mother. Proficiency in the kitchen and in the home was also deemed to be morally virtuous. Idealised notions of femininity were fostered on a predominantly female readership of cookbooks in subtle fashions, through recipes, images and advertisements.

Yet, for most women the reality was of drudgery and hard labour in the kitchen. Some cookbook authors recognised this and attempted to give advice and succour in order to

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help their sisters in distress. Others understood the financial strain many Australian families were under and encouraged their readers to use the knowledge contained within their cookbooks to pursue careers outside the home. For a lucky few even the act of writing a cookbook became a springboard for a career and financial freedom.

The narrow and conservative domestic ideologies evident in many of these cookbooks were also remarkably long-lasting and echoed throughout the period examined throughout this thesis. While the lives of women were invariably adapting to the realities of a changing world, the cookbooks upon which they relied failed to keep up with these changes. The domestic ideology that was been promulgated by these books was often at odds with the real circumstances encountered by their readers. Some of the ambivalence which is found within cookbooks points to the uncertainties regarding domestic ideology and gender roles in Australia. Continued and vociferous calls for women to remain within the confines of the home, fulfilling their role as ‘domestic angels’, indicates that not all women were heeding this advice. The domestic science movement, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in Australia, also began to question whether women were indeed naturally born nurturers or were, in fact, in need of scientific and rational advice.
Chapter 5
A science of no mean order: Cookbooks and the instruction of domestic science

**Dry Toast**

*Materials*- Slices of stale bread 1/4 inch thick.

*Utensils*- Board; knife; fork; toast rack.

*Method*- From a loaf of bread not less than one day old cut slices 1/4 inch thick. Using a long fork, hold each side of the slice of bread close to a clear hot fire until it becomes crisp and of uniform golden colour. Stand the slices as they are toasted on edge separately to allow the steam to escape; served on a toast rack.

*Simple Cookery* (c.1930)

Today, given we are accustomed to placing a piece of conveniently pre-sliced bread in an electric toaster and waiting for the tell-tale spring sound to announce our bread is toasted to our liking, a recipe for dry toast appears almost risible. This recipe was included in a cookbook entitled *Simple Cookery*, published by the Queensland Department of Public Instruction in the 1930s, which was used as a textbook in cooking classes in schools throughout the state. The inclusion of this modest recipe, however, highlights the most basic and fundamental function of cookbooks: to teach how to prepare a dish.

The turn of the twentieth century saw the rise of a transnational domestic science movement across the Anglo-phone world. Its goal was to reproduce the rising modern industrial world in the heart of the home. Domestic science drew power both from the increasing prestige of science and growing demands for women’s rights. The kitchen had always been a site of female production. Now, under the guidance of the domestic science movement that production was to be rationalised and taught in schools, as well as through cookbooks, to the women and girls of the nation.
This chapter examines the role of cookbooks in promoting the domestic science movement in Australia. First, it will begin by exploring the way in which this new approach to domestic management impacted on the manner in which cookbooks were written. The form and language of recipes in Australian cookbooks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century evolved over time and changed according to the intended audience and the book’s function and the particular skills and training of the author. Those authors who intended their cookbooks to be used as educational texts brought a new approach and style to their writing. Secondly, it will briefly examine some early experiments to promote cookery education in Australia. Thirdly, it will analyse the ideological concerns surrounding the introduction of domestic science classes in Australia. Finally, it will focus on the career of several prominent cookery teachers and authors, in particular those influenced by the Kensington School of Cookery in London, in order to examine the role they played in disseminating new ideologies of domestic management both within and outside the domestic sphere. Apart from their intrinsic role as cookery instruction manuals in most homes, cookbooks also served other, broader pedagogical purposes. Cookbooks were used in schools and other educational institutions, not only to teach students how to cook, but to inculcate a range of ideas on what was deemed to be the proper management of the home. In the late nineteenth century many of the authors who published cookbooks as educational texts sought to promote a new domestic ideology imbued with the reformist zeal of the era. By the last decades of the nineteenth century the notion of a rational and scientific approach to cookery was gaining much currency in Australia. This shift in focus had a profound influence in the teaching of cookery as a subject in classrooms well into the third decade of the twentieth century.
'Good and tried receipts'

The present ubiquity of cookbooks and other forms of cookery instruction show cooking as being one of the most widely taught activities in society.\textsuperscript{1} But for a long time cookbooks were only within reach of a literate elite. It was only with the expansion of schooling and an increase in the levels of general literacy in the early nineteenth century that cookbooks were able to reach a wider readership.\textsuperscript{2}

Cookbooks served to replace the traditional matrilineal form of cookery instruction where a mother, grandmother or other female family member taught a young woman how to prepare a repertoire of dishes. In early colonial Australia these physical matrilineal lines were often severed, not only between the metropole and the colony, but also by a certain degree of mobility within the colonies themselves. Cookbooks would have been a crucial source of information in the kitchen for young women setting up homes far away from the guiding hand of a previous, more experienced generation.

A cookbook's basic purpose is to provide instructions to the reader on how to prepare a given recipe or dish. Within the pages of a cookbook, the recipe is the most fundamental element in the instructional process, providing the reader with all the necessary information to cook the dish in question. While the basic function of the recipe has not changed over the centuries, its form has changed considerably since the earliest cookbooks were published. The orality of recipes was displaced by written traditions, which eventually led to textual conventions becoming apparent in


a range of cookbooks. Textual conventions inherent in recipes vary significantly depending on the type of cookbook in which they appear and their intended audience. Recipes range from a simple list of ingredients to a detailed technical explanation of how to prepare a dish, and fall within three broad types: prescriptive, indicative and descriptive. A prescriptive recipe provides complete and precise instructions leaving little to chance in the hands of the cook. An indicative recipe provides the reader with sufficient information to produce a dish allowing for variations in ingredients and processes; lamb instead of beef, or frying instead of grilling, for example. The descriptive recipe, as its name suggests, gives a detailed description of the finished dish without elaborating on the ingredients and methodology required to achieve the end product.

These different forms of recipes have a significant influence on the usefulness and pedagogical impact of the cookbook in which they appear. Take the following recipe for scones provided by a Mrs Cochrane in The Housewife’s Friend, a compilation fund-raising cookbook from 1895:

2 cups flour, 1 tablespoon butter, 1 egg, a little sugar, cup of milk, 2 teaspoons baking powder; beat egg and milk together, then add other ingredients.

This recipe gave no hint as to the technical method required for making scones or the length of time and temperature necessary for baking (both crucial elements in making light and fluffy scones). It, in fact, fails to meet the necessary requirements for a recipe as we understand it today. Perhaps the recipe was a victim of faulty

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5 Ibid., 180.
editing, but the number of similarly vague recipes in this book and others seems to belie this; or perhaps Mrs Cochrane was merely providing an aide de memoire for a busy housewife who knew how to make scones but just needed to be reminded of the measurements in order to complete the task. By contrast Harriet Wicken's scone recipe (of which she was particularly proud) in *The Kingswood Cookery Book* differed considerably from that of Cochrane:

1lb. Flour    1 large dessertspoonful (sic) Baking Powder

½ pt Sour Milk

Mix the flour and baking powder together and sprinkle over a little salt; mix up quickly with the sour milk and knead a few minutes until quite smooth; roll out about one inch thick, cut into round and bake in a hot oven for ten minutes; cut open and butter, and serve at once; if no sour milk is at hand stir a little baking powder into some milk—that will turn it.7

Wicken was a trained cookery educator, a fact that became apparent in her recipe writing style, which was explanatory and didactic. Wicken had no preconceptions as to the culinary skills or abilities of her readers and she clearly elucidated the methodology for achieving the required end product. Her scone recipe also demonstrates two of the key components of the evolving rationalisation of cookbooks that had begun at the beginning of the nineteenth century, time keeping and accurate measurement.8

These two contrasting scone recipes demonstrate the broad range of instructional styles that were present in Australian cookbooks. Harriet Wicken's recipe appeared in a book with an explicit educational purpose that was published as an ancillary resource to her cookery lessons. Mrs Cochrane's recipe is the work of an amateur aimed at an audience of her peers. Yet, despite the inherent differences evident in

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7 Harriet Wicken, *The Kingswood Cookery Book* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1898), 255.
these two recipes they both strive for the same didactic purpose, to teach the reader how to make scones.

The language in which recipes were written often varied depending on their intended readership, and the cookbooks in which they appeared. Recipes often have embedded within them a range of assumptions regarding cultural, social and technical knowledge. Some made their instructional purposes explicit, almost patronising. Wilhelmina Rawson left no doubt as to the purpose of her *Australian Enquiry Book of Household and General Information* from 1894; the frontispiece declared that it was a 'practical guide' providing 'recipes and information upon everything and for everyone' and exhorted her readers to 'refer to me for everything'. Rawson introduced her book as a 'complete course of instruction' leaving no doubt as to the didactic intent of her work. She addressed her readership with stentorian authority exhorting them, amongst other things, to understand their ovens, to embrace punctuality and economy, and most of all to study their cookery books. Her recipes and instructions were detailed and rigorous, explaining and elucidating every step in order for readers to achieve the desired result. This was in contrast to other cookbooks which implied a degree of prior knowledge on the part of their readers; elaborate instructions such as 'truss' or 'bone' were often given with no further explanation in many recipes, the author presuming that these terms and techniques were familiar to the reader.

Knowledge regarding food, as Beverley Kingston argues, was provided by experts including food writers and their cookbooks. These texts, together with practical lessons, became the crucial medium through which domestic science experts spread

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10 Ibid., 9.
11 Ibid., 11–12.
their message of a rational approach to cookery. Penned by trained experts cookbooks ceased to be simple compendiums of recipes and instead became technical manuals worthy of a new scientific discipline.

**A 'wretched destitution' of good cooks**

A correspondent to *The Sydney Gazette* in 1817 noted that the best method to improve the condition of the poor was to provide them with proper skills in the art of cookery. 'The education of females of this class...is so bad', he went on to add, that 'they have scarcely an idea of domestic economy'. Almost four decades later Godfrey Mundy observed, rather acerbically, that the 'crowning disgrace' of New South Wales was the 'wretched destitution' of suitable cooks. Early colonial reformers attempted to introduce various measures to improve the culinary skills of individuals, not only for their personal good but also to improve their skills as domestic servants. These reformers can be seen as the early precursors of the domestic science movement that was to emerge in Australia at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Female School of Industry established in Sydney in 1826, of which Eliza Darling was one of the leading patrons, aimed to train young girls for domestic service. The primary focus of the school’s training was on needlework, as the finished products provided a source of income for the institution. Other domestic skills, such as cooking and washing, were taught ‘on the job’ whilst the girls were carrying out the daily housekeeping tasks required of them at the institution. It was expected that these basic skills would be perfected once the girls were in

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12 ‘To the Editor of the Sydney Gazette,’ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 15 February 1817, 2.
employment as domestic servants. To this end, those who had acquired literacy skills during their time at the school might have found it useful to turn to a small book compiled by their former patron. Eliza Darling's *Simple Rules for the Guidance of Persons in Humble Life* was dedicated to the children educated at the school. She expressed the fervent desire that the rules and instructions which she had compiled would serve to guide them in their roles as domestic servants. The book gave a clear account of the types of duties to be carried out in domestic service, preferably under the supervision of the mistress of the house. Darling recognised that in many homes only one household servant was necessary and that they would need to carry out all the required domestic duties, including those of the cook.

The Useful Book Society, formed in Sydney in October 1829, established a library of 'useful knowledge' open to people of all social ranks and religious denominations, but primarily aimed at the middle and lower orders. Besides the expected tomes on practical subjects, such as mechanics and chemistry, the library also included books on cookery. These, the society expected, would not only teach the working class to 'cook [their] morsel better' but also to vary their diet and save fuel as well. The founders of the Useful Book Society saw cookbooks as a means through which they could improve the living conditions of the lower classes in the colony. While these cookbooks would have been of British origin catering to British conditions, nevertheless, they would have provided sufficient information for those willing and able to use them to improve their diet.

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16 Ibid., 65.
17 'A Brief Account of a Society Lately Formed in Sydney, Designated the Useful Book Society.', *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 6 October 1829, 3.
Almost four decades after the publication of Darling's book, cooking skills were still seen by many reformers as providing a potential avenue for employment for young working class girls. The lack of competent kitchen servants led to calls for more cookery training to become available to the poor, such as that provided at the Melbourne Home from 1875. The Melbourne Home was an establishment that provided board and lodging for governesses, servants and 'respectable' single females. Furthermore, the Home acted as a labour bureau placing these women in jobs throughout the city. In 1875 it began offering a course in cookery for the sum of £2 2s; these classes were conducted by a professional chef and the students were to receive a certificate of competency at the end of the course. The directors of the Melbourne Home believed a sound knowledge of cookery gave many working class women an advantage in the domestic job market. While some of the students attending the course at the Melbourne Home were middle-class 'ladies' undertaking the classes purely for 'useful amusement', the majority of the participants were expected to be working class women who would find that the classes would provide them with 'the business of their lives'.

**More than just cooking classes**

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw a concerted push for the introduction of domestic economy classes, and in particular cookery lessons, across Australia. Educationalists and social reformers saw great value in inculcating a rational and scientific approach to domestic duties in the Australian housewife. This approach would also include the practical, moral and social imperatives already apparent in some of the previous discussions relating to the teaching of cookery. By

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19 *The Argus*, 10 September 1875, 5.
the early 1880s education departments across the country began to examine the possibilities of introducing such lessons into their curricula. These reformers attempted to reshape the management of the domestic sphere to conform to the perceived needs of a new and modern society.20

Social reformers and proponents of domestic education and cookery classes in schools saw the introduction of such classes as a way to improve more than just domestic skills. One New South Wales Minister of Public Instruction argued that they were performing a public service. The training of 'the future mothers of the country qualified to perform domestic duties connected with the preparation of food', he declared, would undoubtedly be 'for the benefit of the masses of the people'.21 These reformers closely associated the teaching of domestic science, not only with improvement in the home, but also with improvements in the country as a whole. When scientific knowledge was brought to bear upon the daily tasks of household management, according to Harriet Wicken, a strong and powerful people would arise able to 'take a prominent place amongst the nations of the earth'.22 The survival of Australia, and indeed of the white race, was predicated on the training of these future mothers. Only they could build a strong and self-reliant people fit to take their place in the British Empire.23 With appropriate training and a cookbook in their hand these women would have a ' sceptre with which to rule the world'.24 These notions regarding the improvement of individuals were intrinsically linked with anxieties about the perceived deterioration of the ‘white race’, particularly in the warmer

24 The Sydney Morning Herald, 22 December 1897, 7.
climate of Australia. Fears existed that a weakened nation would not be able to face the challenges posed by nearby Asia.\textsuperscript{25} These concerns were, as Kereen Reiger has noted, a dominant feature of social and political debates in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.\textsuperscript{26} Improvements in health and nutrition wrought through a rational approach of domestic science were seen by many as an initial step in preserving the racial purity of the nation. One member of the women's branch of the People's Reform League asserted that domestic science concerned the whole nation, not only women, and that it would build up the physical, intellectual and spiritual qualities of the white race.\textsuperscript{27} As noted in Chapter 3, the racialised discourse contained in cookbooks was implicit rather than explicit and domestic science texts that emerged during this period were similarly aimed at a predominately white audience.

Many of the proponents of domestic education in Australia sought to elevate domestic sciences to the level of prestige accorded to other sciences. The domestic science movement also attempted to model a new breed of efficient, rational housewife.\textsuperscript{28} Cookery, in particular, was seen as a perfect vehicle to promote a rational and scientifically grounded method to what was considered an integral part of domestic duties. This new approach placed an imperative on the health and nutritional aspects of cookery, but also included an emphasis on economy and thrift. This particular rhetoric of domesticity saw the appropriation of a scientific methodology and terminology that was primarily the domain of men. While women

\textsuperscript{25} Reiger, ‘All but the Kitchen Sink’, 503.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} ‘Women in Conference: The Domestic Arts’, \textit{The Brisbane Courier}, 6 August 1909, 5.
may have been partly excluded from the professional sciences they were urged to share similar values in the kitchen.29

The domestic science movement attempted to reconcile this modern rational approach with what had always been regarded as an intrinsically feminine pursuit.30 In an introduction for Harriet Wicken’s 1891 *The Australian Home*, Mrs Edgeworth David, left no doubt as to the value of domestic science education and to its gendered nature: ‘It is an intellectual subject, a downright practical subject, and distinctly a woman’s subject!’31 Almost fifteen years later, a New South Wales government report noted that the ‘traditional usage in the management of home affairs has ruled in the past; the aim now is to bring intelligence to the task’.32 The report continued by calling for the kitchen to become ‘an experimental laboratory’ which could raise ‘intense interest’ in the subject of cookery.33 During the early decades of the domestic science movement in Australia, those cookbooks that emerged to be used as textbooks in cookery classes were imbued with this spirit of rationalism and scientific certainty, while at the same time recognising the traditional role of women in the home.

Some critics of the domestic economy movement have claimed that the growth of cookery classes can be regarded as an imposition, by the state, of middle class values and behaviours upon the working class.34 In her study of the introduction of 'Domestic Arts' in South Australia, Jill Matthews argues that domestic education was an attempt to define a specific meaning of working class femininity by special

29 Lieffers, ‘“The Present Time Is Eminently Scientific”’, 943.
32 New South Wales, *Joint Volumes of Papers Presented to the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly and Ordered to Be Printed*, vol. 4 (Sydney: Govt. Pr, 1906), 53.
33 Ibid.
interest groups. Both these attitudes were in clear evidence in the discourse surrounding the introduction of domestic science education, including cookery, in Australian schools at the turn of the twentieth century. J W Turner, the New South Wales Superintendent of Technical Education in 1907, saw domestic science as a way of raising the status of home duties to that of all other sciences; but he also added that it was a way to attract young girls back to housework and domestic service and stop their drift to 'other avenues of employment erroneously regarded as more dignified'. Whilst there was a general consensus that domestic duties, such as sewing and cooking, were primarily women's work, educationalists and social reformers disagreed with the professional domestic science instructors as to whom their primary audience should be. For the government officials and social reformers attempting to introduce cookery classes in schools the primary concern was that the instruction should be focused on the working classes. Marjorie Theobald has noted that many of the more academically minded girls' schools resisted the introduction of domestic education and that the movement proved most successful amongst working class girls. Many of the young Queensland schoolgirls chosen by the Department of Public Instruction to attend cookery classes in Brisbane came from public schools in some of the poorest areas of the city. These pupils were to be selected according to their 'intelligence, and probability of profiting by the instruction' and, presumably, for their potential contribution in the workplace. Many at the forefront of social reform considered these working class girls to be the primary beneficiaries of domestic science education.

35 Jill Matthews, 'Education for Femininity: Domestic Arts Education in South Australia', Labour History no. 45 (1 November 1983): 52.
36 Bessant, 'Domestic Science Schools and Woman’s Place', 5.
37 Reiger, The Disenchantment of the Home, 57.
39 ‘Queensland State Archives Item ID996669, Correspondence’, 1908.
Professional cookery teachers like Harriet Wicken, however, believed that all women, regardless of their social class, could benefit enormously from appropriate cookery education. The cookbooks these authors published were aimed at all sections of society; both the rich and poor alike could improve their diet and wellbeing by producing the healthy and appetising dishes included in these books. As Eliza Darling had done more than fifty years earlier, Wicken expected the mistress of the house to use the knowledge gathered from her books and to pass it on to her servants and to those less fortunate than herself. Cookbooks were a perfect medium to reach out to a broader audience that might not otherwise attend cookery classes in a formal setting. Women from all walks of life could purchase a cookbook and reap the benefits of the rational and practical recipes within it.

The Kensington legacy

Many of the influential early domestic science instructors to teach in Australia received their training at the National Training School of Cookery in Kensington, England. Established in 1874, the school's initial aim was to train women of all social classes in the skills of cookery. In the first year of operation there were 176 graduates from the School, of whom twenty seven were professional cooks. Subsequently it embarked on the training of cookery teachers in the rational principles of food production. After training at the Kensington School these students were then expected to pass on their skills to students across the kingdom and throughout the empire. Initially classes consisted of demonstrations in the form of public lectures, but this form of instruction was found wanting and practical, hands-on classes were soon introduced. Not only were students taught the practical basics

40 Wicken, The Australian Home, 78.
of cooking but were also instructed in the scientific and nutritional principles that underpinned the production of food. Knowledge of nutrition, in the eyes of the school, went hand in hand with the ability to make food palatable. Many social reformers saw this knowledge as an important factor in eradicating many of society's ills and improving the human race.\(^{42}\)

The school aimed to rationalise the practice of teaching cookery, and when no existing cookbooks met the institution's strict criteria the teachers took matters in to their own hands. The authors of *Lessons in Cookery*, the handbook created for use by the School, made no claim to literary merit and asserted that theirs was not a recipe book, but rather a book to show how to use and improve recipes.\(^{43}\) It was, they said, not a 'dictionary of reference but rather a grammar of processes'.\(^{44}\) Here, loose expressions, such as 'a pinch' and 'a little', which were still common in many cookbooks at the time, were to be rigorously avoided, and precise measurements and quantities were given instead.\(^{45}\) These traits would continue to be apparent in the recipe styles of the cookbooks written and published by the school's diplomées who settled in Australia.

The school's first superintendent was Lady Mary Barker. She claimed surprise at being appointed to the position as she had 'little care' for what she ate as long as it was 'neat and clean'.\(^{46}\) Yet, despite these claims of disinterest in food, she was the author of a book entitled *First Lessons in the Principles of Cookery* published the same year as her appointment and in which she demonstrated a sound knowledge of nutrition. In this book, Barker advocated that the skills and knowledge necessary to

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\(^{44}\) Ibid., ix.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., x.

produce healthy, tasty and economical food could only be achieved through a practical knowledge of household management.\(^47\) This rational and practical approach to the teaching of cookery made her the ideal figure to head an organisation imbued with the reformist zeal that characterized social work in the Victorian age. Gillian Whitlock argues that her appointment was also ideal as it came at a time when domestic science, and cooking in particular, where part of a social mechanism that regulated middle-class values and sensibilities.\(^48\) In 1883 Lady Barker began a six-year residency in Australia accompanying her husband, Frederick Broome, in his role as Governor of Western Australia. It was during his tenure as governor that domestic science classes were introduced in that state. However, there is little evidence in newspapers or official correspondence to show that Lady Barker had any influence in these developments.

The new reformers

In 1874 a writer to the *Sydney Morning Herald* bemoaned the state of cookery in New South Wales and urged the establishment of a similar institution to the National Training School of Cookery in the colony.\(^49\) These calls would go unheeded for eighteen years until the training of cookery teachers would commence in the colony in 1892.\(^50\) Once the impetus for the establishment of domestic education began in Australia, those in charge relied on the expertise of Kensington School graduates. Former students like Harriet Wicken and Margaret Pearson would become important figures in the teaching of domestic economy in Australia. They also had a crucial

\(^{49}\) ‘Training School for Cookery’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 September 1874, 3.
\(^{50}\) Bessant, ‘Domestic Science Schools and Woman’s Place’, 3.
influence on the manner in which cookbooks were written, both as educational texts for cookery lessons and as books for the general public.

One of the most prominent of these instructors was Harriet Wicken, who arrived in Australia in 1886 after having worked as a cookery teacher in London. After teaching cookery classes in Victoria and Tasmania she moved to Sydney, where she was appointed as teacher of cookery and instructor of domestic economy at the Sydney Technical College in 1889. Here, as well as in other technical colleges throughout Australia, she would play an instrumental role in the training of cookery and domestic economy instructors who then went on to teach the new domestic economy courses instituted by education departments across the colonies. By the time of her departure from England, Wicken had already published a cookbook, entitled *The Kingswood Cookery Book*, based on her cookery lessons. Upon her arrival in Australia, she adapted *The Kingswood Cookery Book* to suit local conditions and over the next two decades published nearly a dozen cookbooks and domestic economy texts.51 These cookbooks bore all the hallmarks of the Kensington School.

Two of Wicken’s early publications were booklets based on cookery lessons given at Warrnambool and Hobart. As expected from a graduate from the Kensington School, these booklets provided clearly written recipes as an addendum to the practical demonstrations given in class.52 Wicken also wrote bespoke cookbooks for a variety of commercial concerns. One of these, *The Cook’s Compass* published in 1890, was a promotional vehicle for Sydney grocers J.G. Hanks & Co.53 In this volume Wicken

52 Harriet Wicken, *Recipes Given by Mrs. Wicken at Cookery Class, Warrnambool* (Warrnambool, Vic.: s.n, 1888); Harriet Wicken, *Recipes Given at the Cookery Class, Hobart, January 1890* (Hobart: Mercury Office, Print, 1890).
preached the virtues of thrift and economy, arguing that they did not imply meanness and parsimony, but rather that they allowed for sufficient savings to permit spending for pleasure and charity. The imperatives of economy and thrift she had learnt at the Kensington School, and that she wished to impart to her readers, were in evidence even in a book specifically produced to promote the wares of a grocery company.

1891 saw the publication of two books by Wicken, a new edition of the *Kingswood Cookery Book*, to be used as a textbook for her cooking classes at the Technical College, and a volume on domestic economy entitled *The Australian Home* to be used as a companion text. Not surprisingly, *The Australian Home* was imbued with the ethos of the Kensington School and promoted a rational, modern and scientific approach to domestic economy. Like her counterparts, who authored *Lessons in Cookery*, Wicken claimed that her work had no literary merit, but that it attempted to impart her knowledge of the science of domestic economy in the simplest possible language. Along with other social and health reformers in nineteenth century Australia, Wicken saw the home as the foundation of national stability. She was adamant that domestic economy was a science which taught the 'right' way to manage households. *The Australian Home* devoted space to the theory and methods of cookery, but also paid considerable attention to such topics as nutrition, digestion and the 'machinery of the body'. Wicken recognised the importance of both taste and nutrition as crucial factors in the production of domestic meals and used the latest scientific developments in nutrition to educate her readers in how to achieve this.

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54 Ibid., 11.
Wicken's most successful work was *The Kingswood Cookery Book*; it would go through six editions and be published into the second decade of the twentieth century. She adapted her original British book to conform to the peculiarity of Australian seasonal and climatic conditions, omitting dishes that were unsuitable and providing better and more appropriate recipes in their stead. Unlike many other contemporary cookbooks, Wicken devoted the first eighty pages of her book to the theory and technique of cookery. She instructed her readers in the technical nuances of making soup, the differences between boiling and stewing, and numerous other practical hints for the kitchen before giving them specific recipes for dishes. Unsurprisingly, one reviewer praised not only the simplicity of the recipes, but also the practical value the book.\(^\text{57}\) Another reviewer lauded Wicken's clear and methodological recipe writing style, while describing recipes in other cookbooks as being more difficult to understand than Chinese puzzles.\(^\text{58}\) The book's practicalities even extended to its physical properties with clear easy to read type and a pliable spine, which allowed the book to remain open at the desired page while the ingredients were collected.\(^\text{59}\)

The use of *The Kingswood Cookery Book* as a text in the cookery classes at the Sydney Technical College clearly denoted the book as primarily a didactic text. In it Wicken addressed her reader both as a 'student' and a 'housewife', making little distinction between the two and no assumptions as to the prior knowledge of her audience.\(^\text{60}\) The book demonstrated all the characteristics of a tome written by a graduate of the National Training School of Cookery, clear and straightforward explanatory language, a rational and scientifically based approach to cookery and

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\(^{57}\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 March 1889, 4.
\(^{58}\) 'A Want Long Felt Supplied', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1889, 7.
\(^{59}\) *The Brisbane Courier*, 18 May 1898, 7.
\(^{60}\) Wicken, *The Australian Home*, 78.
domestic economy and a focus on thrift. This kind of rational approach, in the eyes of Australian social and educational reformers, elevated what had been previously considered a menial household task to a practical craft worthy of inclusion in a technical education curriculum.

As was noted in the previous chapter, Wicken collaborated with Philip Muskett in his book *The Art of Living in Australia*. Muskett was a strong advocate of domestic science education in schools that included ‘a thorough and systematic teaching of Cookery for girls’ and devoted an entire chapter of his book to the subject.\(^{61}\) He recognised the future of boys and girls differed greatly once their schooling was over and that while boys were destined to be bread-winners, many girls looked ‘forward to the destiny of housewife’.\(^{62}\) A sound knowledge of cookery was deemed to be a crucial element in a girl’s ability to maintain a proper home once she was married. Bad cookery, Muskett argued, could only result in ill-health and unhappiness for the family and, most likely, drunkenness for the husband.\(^{63}\) Muskett also saw great value in cookery education for the formation of moral character. Cookery, according to Muskett, was a science as well as an art and it required the virtues of accuracy, punctuality, cleanliness and thrift.\(^{64}\)

Despite his claims surrounding the predestined role of girls as homemakers, Muskett was forced to admit that many had a growing indifference to domestic life and were seeking a future outside the home.\(^{65}\) He called upon educators throughout the colonies to continue to provide cookery classes in schools in order to reverse this

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\(^{62}\) Ibid., 98.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., 113.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 110–111.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 112.
trend. Teaching of cookery and domestic management, argued Muskett, was crucial to the welfare of both the home and the nation.

Another Kensington diplomée to practice her trade as a cookery instructor in Australia was Margaret Pearson. Before her arrival in Australia she had served as superintendent of the School of Cookery in Dundee; one of the many similar institutions set up in the wake of the National Training School of Cookery. In 1886, Pearson first offered private cooking lessons in high-class and plain cookery in Sydney before moving on to Melbourne to conduct similar classes. After her arrival in Melbourne Pearson was appointed as the first instructor in cookery at the Working Men's College, shortly after that institution was inaugurated in 1887. Despite the institution's name, these classes were given exclusively to girls and women. Along with Harriet Wicken, Pearson presented cookery classes and demonstrations at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition. Such international exhibitions became sites where education and culture intersected outside the classroom and an ideal place to promote the new scientific and rational approach to cookery and domestic economy to a wider audience.66

In 1888, Pearson published *Cookery Recipes for the People*, a book which she saw as promoting cookery as the most important branch of women's education.

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Most of the recipes included in Pearson's book were based on her practical cookery demonstrations and aimed to present 'correct and concisely worded rules, arranged in such a manner as to improve the general intelligence of the pupils'. Like Wicken, Pearson viewed the readers and users of her book as students in need of instruction. Pearson's cookery lessons were generally well received; one commentator noted the neglect of cookery education in schools and called her a public benefactress whose skills would help to reduce domestic misery. Both in her cookery classes and her cookbook Pearson encouraged housewives to practise scrupulous cleanliness and thrift in the kitchen. However, not everybody was impressed with her pedagogical style. One critic saw the teaching of cookery to working class women as a waste of time, claiming that they would rather have 'the meat and the seasoning than the lessons'.

Annie Fawcett Story was another graduate of the National Training School of Cookery to play an influential role in the domestic economy movement in Australia. Fawcett Story worked as a cookery instructor at the Sydney Technical College and was a lecturer in domestic economy at the Hurlstone Teacher Training College of Female Teachers. Her public lectures were popular and well attended, providing her with a congregation to whom she could preach the virtues of healthy and thrifty cookery. During these demonstrations Fawcett bemoaned the quality of food in many Australian kitchens and claimed that proper cookery education would ensure that thousands of sickly children around the country would be made strong and robust with good, well-cooked food. In 1889 Fawcett Story was also instrumental in

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70 'Lecture on Cookery', *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, 20 March 1886, 6.
establishing cookery classes at the Fort Street Model School in Sydney, and it was at her suggestion that the training of specialist cookery teachers began in 1892. In 1898, at the behest of the Victorian Minister of Public Instruction, Fawcett Story moved to Melbourne and became the department's Supervisor of Cookery. Here, the prevailing ethos that had permeated the Kensington School was again in full evidence with thrift being 'continually taught' and cleanliness 'exhibited and enforced' at all times. Fawcett Story was convinced of the beneficial impact that good cooking had as a vehicle for moral regeneration. In one article written for the Victorian Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid in 1900, she claimed that a healthy, happy and prosperous home encouraged young people to spend more time in the home and less time on the streets. She also claimed that the improvement in the behaviour of the 'irrepressible juvenile criminals' at the Parramatta Girl's Reformatory was due to the moralising influence of her cookery lessons.

However, it was Annie's daughter, Fanny Fawcett Story, who would find herself in print promoting the virtues of rational and scientific approaches to cookery and domestic economy with the publication of the Australian Economic Cookery Book and Housewife's Companion in 1900. The very cover of Fawcett Story's book legitimised her credentials as a 'professional' instructor. Firstly, it bore an image of the Sydney Technical College where Fawcett Story worked as a cookery instructor. Secondly, it was promoted as part of a 'technical series' edited by the publisher Kealy and Philip. Finally, it asserted it was 'the Authorised textbook in the cookery school

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72 Bessant, 'Domestic Science Schools and Woman's Place', 4.
73 Report of the Minister of Public Instruction for the year 1898-9 in Ibid.
74 'Biography - Ann Fawcett Story - Australian Dictionary of Biography'.
75 'A National System of Cookery: Interview with Mrs Fawcett Story', The Argus, 23 March 1899, 7.
classes throughout the state' (or colony in some editions). All these devices would have assured Fawcett Story's readers that the book they were purchasing was a professionally produced instructional manual, which would provide them with rational and technically accurate recipes. Once inside the pages of Fawcett Story's book, the readers were urged to regard cookery as a rational pursuit that would impact on the 'appearance, temperament, vital statistics and general happiness' of Australians. She believed, as her mother did, that many of the nation's health problems were a result of bad diet and poorly cooked food, and exhorted parents to teach their daughters how to purchase, choose and prepare wholesome food. In Fawcett Story's view, healthy and palatable food was not only good for the body but also good for the mind and made children more ready and capable to receive instruction at school and in the home. Thrift was also a priority and she instructed her readers that a little economy in the kitchen would allow them to save enough money to afford a little holiday in the country or a new dress. The imperatives of health, thrift and practicality so appreciated by the National Training School of Cookery were in evidence in a new generation of cookery instructors who spread the gospel of rational cookery and scientific domestic economy.

Three years prior to the publication of her cookbook, Fanny Fawcett Story had published what amounted to a manifesto on domestic economy in *The Australian Technical Journal*. Here she clearly set out many of the ideas and attitudes that would inform the manner in which she approached her work in the *Australian Economic Cookery Book*. Like many others seeking to reform the domestic sphere in

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76 Fanny Fawcett Story, *Australian Economic Cookery Book and Housewife's Companion* (Sydney: Kealy & Philip, 1900).
77 Ibid., i.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., ii.
80 Ibid.
Australia, Fawcett Story saw the decadence of the home as symptomatic of the decadence of the nation and stressed the important role of domestic economists in remedying this decline. She strove to help produce more efficient housewives and mothers through the application of scientific principles to all aspects of domestic economy. Part of her rationale was to elevate the status of domestic work in the home. She recognised that many men regarded domestic duties as trivial and that they believed they required little knowledge or skill. Her ambition was for her readers to regard cookery and other aspects of domestic economy, not as a form of servile employment, but as a science that would raise the prestige of women in the home. Fawcett Story also argued that proper and efficient domestic work, through the application of thrift and economy, provided just as important an economic contribution to the home as men did through their weekly wages. She strongly contended that marriage was a way for many women to earn a living, but that to do so honestly and well women needed precise skills and knowledge that could only be imparted through a rational approach to domestic economy. The appearance of ‘The Meaning and Uses of Domestic Economy’ in a technical journal, sharing space with other articles on technological advancements of the day, is also very salient. It served as an attempt to legitimise domestic economy as a modern, rational science that had risen from a mere bagatelle to a pursuit of vital national importance.

In the prefaces and introductions to their cookbooks, many authors attempted to build an understanding between themselves and their readers. Such prefaces

82 Ibid.
83 Fawcett Story, Australian Economic Cookery Book and Housewife’s Companion, i.
86 Daniela Cesiri, ‘The Evolution of Terms for Addressing the Readership in Late Modern English Cookery and Gardening Manuals’, in Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on New
enabled these authors to gain the public's approval and recognition as to their
competence on the topic. As was noted earlier, many cookbook authors addressed
their readership in their introductions using such words as 'student' and 'pupil' almost
interchangeably with the term 'housewife'. These forms of address not only
highlighted the didactic nature of the works, but also brought attention to the
professional qualifications of the writers who often listed their educational pedigree
on the frontispieces of their books. Many of these authors also highlighted the
practical nature of their recipes; and how they had been conceived and developed as
a result of their applied experience and professional training in cookery. Fanny
Fawcett Story informed her readers that the practicality of her recipes was the result
of precise scientific knowledge, followed by experience, observation and practice.87
These introductions and prefaces also provided an indication of the intended target
audience of the cookbook and justified authorial choices.88 In her preface to *Cookery
Recipes for the People* Margaret Pearson stated that she was 'seeking to make
cookery better understood than it is by many young house keepers in the Colonies'
and that 'most of the recipes are tried ones, which I can confidently recommend'.89 In
these two short sentences Pearson made explicit her audience and the purpose of her
book, as well as asserting her experience and credentials as a cookery instructor. A
culinary hierarchy has been apparent in much of Western society, with a higher status
was accorded to public professional cooking than that done in the private domestic
realm.90 Many public cookery professionals had been men like Alfred Wilkinson,
author of *The Australian Cook* (1876), who had made his reputation as chef de

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87 Fawcett Story, *Australian Economic Cookery Book and Housewife's Companion*, iii.
88 Cesiri, 'The Evolution of Terms for Addressing the Readership in Late Modern English Cookery
and Gardening Manuals', 27.
89 Pearson, *Cookery Recipes for the People*.
90 Vicki A Swinbank, 'The Sexual Politics of Cooking: A Feminist Analysis of Culinary Hierarchy in
cuisine at the Athenaeum Club in Melbourne. Women authors like Wicken, Pearson and Fanny Fawcett Story were able to elevate their status in this 'culinary hierarchy' by staking a claim as professional instructors and asserting their educational credentials.

While many praised the establishment of cookery schools along the lines of the Kensington model, there were some critics. They argued that these schools were not designed for the 'masses', but were mere reproductions of the Kensington School which, they claimed, was primarily patronised by society ladies and the aristocracy. In addition, not everyone was convinced that the work undertaken by the Kensington-trained teachers would be able to redress the poor eating habits of Australians and, in particular, what the *Bulletin* called 'the culinary cussedness of the working-man's wife'. ‘Confiding philanthropists hope that the South Kensington missionary is destined to turn the frying-pan sinner from the error of her ways’, but, the magazine concluded, ‘most likely they will fail’.

**The next generation**

One of the beneficiaries of the new system of cookery education was Flora Pell, who began training as a cookery instructor under Annie Fawcett Story in the 1890s. Pell had a long career that spanned more than thirty years and included roles as headmistress of the Collingwood Domestic Arts School and Inspectress of Domestic Arts Colleges for the state of Victoria. She also made a significant contribution to the teaching of cookery in her role as a cookbook author. First published in 1916,
Our Cookery Book remained in print until the 1950s and had at least twenty-four editions. Pell intended Our Cookery Book to be used as a textbook for cookery instruction in Victorian schools. Previously students had used a series of recipe cards that provided only scant information and were easy to lose.96

Praised for its 'simplicity and definitiveness', Pell’s book was deemed to be of great value to new housekeepers and inexperienced cooks.97 Her recipes were emphatically prescriptive, with the methods for preparation given in short, clear directions and in the precise order in which they needed to be carried out.98 Pell prefaced her recipes with information on the nutritive value of foods and supplied readers who lacked weights and scales with a simple table of measurements. The didactic intent and writing style of Our Cookery Book bore all the characteristics advocated by the first generation of cookery educators and reformers. Early in her career, Pell had begun to argue that proper domestic science education made for a happy home which, in turn, led to a prosperous nation, a sentiment that she continued to advocate in Our Cookery Book.99 Pell’s education was part of the lineage of the British domestic science movement passed down in Australia by graduates of the Kensington School. This, however, did not stop her from seeking inspiration elsewhere. In 1923, Pell embarked on a tour of the United States with the explicit intention of examining the teaching of domestic science in that country.

Whilst praising the facilities and equipment in schools in the United States, she claimed that the discipline in Australia had little to learn from American one and that the results fell short of her expectations.100 Pell was a strong proponent of the

96 Ibid.
100 'American’s Palate', The Argus, 17 November 1923, 21.
application of scientific and business principles to domestic education, arguing that only then would household work command the same respect as other forms of labour.\(^{101}\) In her 1925 book *Tested Cookery Dishes* Pell continued to advocate a rational approach to domestic duties and to espouse its scientific credentials, labelling the preparation of food 'a science of no mean order'.\(^{102}\)

Education departments and other organisations across Australia published a number of cookbooks to be used as textbooks in cookery classes in schools and technical colleges. Many of these were written by cookery graduates of the Sydney Technical College and other similar institutions and these texts continued to show similar approaches to the teaching of cookery as those published by the well-known culinary reformers. These cookbooks also shared the same reformist ideology that saw the kitchen as an important locus for the improvement of the individual and the home. The *Adelaide Cookery Note Book*, published in 1902 by the South Australian Education Department, was intended for the use of domestic economy students. It provided them with recipes, cookery methods, instructions on how to use stoves and nutritional information. The book was intended to be used in conjunction with, but not to take the place of, the cookery classes provided by the department.\(^{103}\) A similar book entitled *Manual of Domestic Arts (Cookery)*, published by the same education department thirty years later, continued in the same vein, giving practical recipes and explicit instructions on all elements of kitchen work. This included a definition of a

‘recipe’, a section on invalid cookery, and the precise order in which the work of preparing the dish should be carried out.¹⁰⁴

One of the best known school cookery textbooks was the Common-Sense Cookery Book compiled by the New South Wales Public School Cookery Teachers’ Association. Originally published in 1914, the book was officially approved for use in classrooms by the Department of Public Instruction. One early reviewer of the book praised it for its attention to detail and simplicity, claiming that ‘a child of twelve could follow the directions with success’.¹⁰⁵ Precision, according to the compilers, was key to successfully following the recipes in the book and they called for reliable scales, measures and a clock, as essential requisites for the kitchen. However, its usefulness beyond the classroom was also recognized. The preface of the first edition stated that it was ‘hoped that the simple and economical recipes’ which the book contained would be of value to ‘all housewives, especially the more inexperienced ones’.¹⁰⁶

![Figure 13: Cover of The Common Sense Cookery Book, c.1919](image)

Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

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Seventeen years and 174,000 copies later, little had changed in the pages of the *Common-Sense Cookery Book* with the 1931 edition being almost identical to the first. One notable exception is in the advertisements contained within them. Though intended for use in classrooms, these books featured a number of advertisements for a variety of products including domestic appliances. It is in these advertisements that we can glimpse the technological changes occurring in many Australian homes. The 1914 edition of *The Common-Sense Cookery Book* features an advertisement for a solid fuel stove; in contrast the 1931 edition promotes a more modern gas stove as well as an electric refrigerator. This book has had a remarkable lifespan, continuing in print in one form or another into the twenty first century. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 2, the *Common Sense Cookery Book* became the financial backbone for its publishers, Angus and Robertson.

The New South Wales Public School Cookery Teachers' Association published a number of other books on matters relating to domestic science including *Common-Sense Hints on Plain Cookery* in 1916. The book did not contain any recipes; rather its aim was to be a companion piece to the cookbook and to provide instruction on the 'theory of plain cookery'. It included sections on nutrition, invalid cookery and shopping. In an early example of economic nationalism and patriotic fervour the authors urged readers to purchase 'goods made in Australia' or, if these were not available, 'from some part of the British Empire or her Allies'.

**Amy Schauer: Leader of good cooks**

The career of cookery instructor and cookbook author Amy Schauer shows the profound influence that the graduates of the National Training School of Cookery

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107 For more on cookbooks and domestic technology see Chapter 6
had on the following generation of their students. Born in Sydney in 1871, Schauer trained at the Sydney Technical College under the tutelage of Harriet Wicken. She arrived in Brisbane in early 1897 after graduating second in her advanced cookery class.\textsuperscript{109} Here she would commence assisting Harriet Wicken in a series of public cookery demonstrations. These cookery classes were held in conjunction with the Brisbane Technical College and took the form of a course of ten weekly lessons, which included plain dishes and invalid cookery, and were followed by another ten lessons involving more elaborate dishes. Schauer also provided instruction in ironing and clear starching and provided cookery demonstrations of her own throughout regional Queensland. By the beginning of 1898 Schauer was permanently engaged by the Brisbane Technical College in the Domestic Economy Department to conduct a variety of cookery classes.

The teaching of domestic economy in Queensland classrooms began in 1881, with the introduction of 'home management' and 'cookery' classes in girls' schools as an alternative to classes in mechanics. These cookery classes involved study of the functions, composition and nutritive value of food, as well as its preparation and culinary treatment.\textsuperscript{110} In Queensland, there had long been calls for the introduction of some form of basic domestic training for girls. One correspondent to The Brisbane Courier advocated classes along the lines of those provided by the Kensington School in London, and recommended that they should be taken by both servants and their mistresses.\textsuperscript{111} However, within a few years of the inception of domestic economy classes, school inspectors noted the limitations of this new system, with only a small number of schools entitled to offer classes, and criticised

\textsuperscript{109} 'Technical College and Branch Schools: Examination Pass List, 1896', \textit{The Sydney Morning Herald}, 8 January 1897, 3.
\textsuperscript{110} Queensland. Dept. of Public Instruction, \textit{Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction Department of Public Instruction} (Brisbane: Govt. Printer, 1880), 60.
\textsuperscript{111} 'Colonial Cookery', \textit{The Brisbane Courier}, January 1876, 5.

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both the quality of the teaching and the status of the subject. In 1883, the editor of the 'Housekeeper' section of *The Queenslander* remarked on the 'barbarous' quality of the food produced by Brisbane's cooks and urged the Education department to introduce cookery lessons in more state schools to remedy this situation. Over the following years, the teaching of domestic education in Queensland faltered due to the high cost of the practical component in the lessons. It was not until 1900 that there would be attempts to remedy this situation by using the existing facilities at various technical colleges to provide cookery classes to schoolgirls. This scheme would become the primary means for the provision of domestic economy education throughout the state. At the Brisbane Technical College, Amy Schauer took on the primary role as a cookery instructor for these schoolgirls.

Some of the early textbooks prescribed by the Department of Public Instruction for use in domestic economy lessons included Joseph Hassell's *Domestic Economy* and Robert Mann's *Domestic Economy and Household Science*. These British books contained much material, including the minutiae of British banking regulations, that was completely irrelevant for Queensland conditions. One school inspector found these books to be 'dull, uninteresting and...perfectly useless'. It was in light of this dearth of any appropriate textbooks, and in her role as cookery instructor at the Brisbane Technical College, that Amy Schauer, with the assistance of her sister Minnie, embarked on writing a series of cookery books to be used as textbooks for her classes.

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113 E, 'Cookery', *The Queenslander*, 20 October 1883, 635.
115 Queensland. Dept. of Public Instruction, *Report of the Secretary for Public Instruction Department of Public Instruction* (Brisbane: Govt. Printer, 1887), 85.
In May of 1908 Schauer submitted three books, Theory of Cookery, Invalid Cookery and Fruit Preserving and Confectionery (which had already been available to the public since 1905) to the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction, J D Story. In a letter to Story, Schauer stated that she felt the need for special books to be written so students could learn and be examined from a uniform standard.116 Schauer recognised the lack of suitable textbooks for Australian, and specifically Queensland conditions, and argued that her books would partly help resolve this issue. Like her mentor, Harriet Wicken, Schauer emphasised the practical and didactic nature of her books and claimed they were the result of years of experience and training.117

The department forwarded these books to the state-appointed Examiner in Cookery in order for her to ascertain their suitability as texts to be used in technical colleges. In her report to the minister, Mrs Marshall acknowledged the great need for suitable and procurable books in all branches of cookery taught in Queensland. She praised all of the Schauers' works as being so clearly and correctly written that no student could fail to understand them.118 Marshall recommended that Theory of Cookery be immediately adopted as the standard theory book to be used in all courses and examinations in technical colleges throughout the state. Invalid Cookery, for its part, was deemed to be an eminently practicable tome that provided all the necessary information required for cooking for the sick.119 Marshall also acknowledged the usefulness of Fruit Preserving and Confectionery as there had been no textbook on the subject set down on the syllabus and, furthermore, that it provided recipes and

116 ‘Queensland State Archives Item ID996669, Correspondence’.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.
techniques suitable for fruits and vegetables procurable in Queensland. Marshall was enthusiastic in her approval and recommendation of all of the Schauers' books informing the Minister that 'they are written by experts, every recipe has been well tried; proportions and methods, being correct. I think we are fortunate to have them and can recommend them highly. They are not copied matter, but are the experience of years of study'. In light of the Head Examiner's glowing report, the Under Secretary of the Department of Public Instruction showed no hesitation in approving all of the Schauers' cookbooks as textbooks for students and teachers in technical colleges across Queensland. In addition he urged Amy Schauer, on Marshall's recommendation, to complete a book on 'General Cookery', which would be used in the practical component of cookery education and to replace the hard-to-find British book *Principles of Practical Cookery* that had been used so far. The 1918 syllabus for the Brisbane Technical College shows that all three of the Schauers' cookbooks were the prescribed texts for their respective subjects.

Schauer's textbooks produced for the Technical College were straightforward, didactic tomes. *Fruit Preserving and Confectionery* gave the readers precise recipes and exact methodologies on what were usually considered technically challenging preparations. It is also important to note that proper and sanitary preservation techniques would have been crucial in Queensland's subtropical climate where higher temperatures and humidity increased the likelihood of spoilage. The success and popularity of this book is attested by the fact that it continued to be published into the last decades of the twentieth century. *Invalid Cookery*, for its part, was a more specialised book to be used in the education of Queensland nurses whose

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120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 The Department of Public Instruction Queensland, *Syllabus Giving the Outlines of the Courses of Instruction in the Technical Colleges of Queensland* (Brisbane: Govt. Print, 1918), 50.
training included the preparation of meals for the sick. Schauer considered the
careful preparation of food as a necessary element to keep people healthy and fit for
work and, if health was impaired by illness, food for the invalid was a crucial part of
the treatment to 'restore them to a normal state'.¹²⁴ Not only did the book contain
recipes, but also provided nursing students with a wealth of information on nutrition
and the chemical composition of different foods.

Amy Schauer's professional profile began to grow soon after her arrival in Brisbane.
As early as 1900 she had already begun to contribute recipes to the cookery section
of The Queenslander. Schauer was also called
upon by the media, in her role as expert, to
proffer information on a variety of culinary and
nutritional topics. The women's pages in
newspapers contained 'mutual help' sections,
which were part of an informal information
network that allowed women to transmit
culinary knowledge and experience, and
Brisbane newspapers often relied on Schauer to
answer readers' queries on cookery matters. It was
through becoming recognised in such informal
channels that Schauer was to gain popular appeal, and through her official role as
cookery instructor at the Technical College that Schauer's professional reputation and
prestige grew. This would lead to the rapid success of her first mass-circulation

¹²⁴ Queensland. Dept. of Public Instruction, Invalid cookery (Brisbane: Dept. of Public Instruction,
1929).
The Schauer Cookery Book would prove to be hugely popular, with numerous editions published up to the twenty first-century. Originally credited to both Amy Schauer and her sister Minnie, later editions credited her as the sole author. Like many of the other reformist cookbook authors, Schauer expounded a rational, scientific and practical approach to cookery, urging her readers to understand the nutritional benefits of the food they prepared and to master the simple techniques of cookery before preparing more difficult dishes. She also exhorted them to practise scrupulous cleanliness in the kitchen calling it one of the most important branches of kitchen work.125 Economy and thrift were seen as paramount, and Schauer claimed good cookery was about 'forethought and skill much more than expense'.126 Schauer's book provided the reader with all the necessary information to teach these skills and to put them into practice. Schauer's prestige and prominence as a cookery professional was in evidence in the use of her name for the purpose of advertising a range of food products within the pages of her book.

Throughout her career as a cookbook writer and cookery educator Amy Schauer had a profound influence on many Queensland women and beyond. During the First World War Schauer was commissioned to act as an instructor in the training of over 250 men in cookery for the ill and wounded for the Army Medical Corps.127 In 1919 she was appointed as Supervisor of Cookery at the Brisbane Technical College in charge of all aspects of cookery education, holding the premier role in the state. Schauer was also instrumental in initiating professional cookery classes in the major regional centres throughout the state and, moreover, trained all the teachers

126 Ibid., 12.
127 ‘Miss Amy Schauer, Leader of Army of Good Cooks: Teacher of Domestic Science for 40 Years.’, The Courier-Mail, 20 June 1938, 8.
controlling these classes.\footnote{Queensland State Archives. Item ID996646, Correspondence.\textemdash, n.d.} She is apocryphally credited for inventing one of the nation's culinary landmarks, the lamington.\footnote{Alan Davidson, \textit{The Oxford Companion to Food} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 444; For more on the history of the Lamington see Maurice French, \textit{The Lamington Enigma: A Survey of the Evidence} (Toowoomba: Tabletop Publishing, 2013).} Her training at the Sydney Technical College under the aegis of Harriet Wicken informed both her teaching and writing style. She brought much of the rational and scientific approach to cookery that had originated at the Kensington School to bear on her own work. She sought to give her students and readers an understanding of 'the scientific reasons and principles' that lay behind the preparation of meals.\footnote{‘Miss Amy Schauer, Leader of Army of Good Cooks: Teacher of Domestic Science for 40 Years.’, 8.} Thanks to the cookery training that she received in her youth, Amy Schauer was able to pursue a professional career that spanned nearly four decades, until her retirement in 1937, and allowed her a level of financial independence not available to many women of her era.

**Conclusion**

The basic function of cookbooks is to provide the reader with the necessary information to prepare a given dish. Most cookbooks perform this role, with varying degrees of success, in one form or another. Authors who penned cookbooks as didactic texts attempted to expand the role and utility of their books beyond the mere provision of recipes and cookery instructions. Authors such as Harriet Wicken, Flora Pell and Amy Schauer considered themselves social reformers who could transform the lives of their readers through the advancement of a new rational and scientific approach to cookery. Their aim was for domestic duties, and those who performed them, to be recognized as equal to other forms of labour performed outside the home. Through the inclusion of the scientific principles of nutrition in their works, they not only endeavoured to improve the health of individuals and the nation as a
whole, but also to elevate the status of cookery to that of other scientific pursuits. The application of rational principles, such as efficiency and thrift, to the everyday tasks of cooking meals in the home was regarded as a means to save time and money. This, they argued, allowed women to free themselves from the drudgery of kitchen work and enabled them to pursue other interests.

Domestic science was a transnational movement emerging almost contemporaneously across many parts of Western Europe as well as in Australia and the United States. Yet, it was the British variant of the discipline, and in particular the one articulated by the graduates of the Kensington School of Cookery, that would have the most significant impact in Australia. The Australian domestic science movement, nevertheless, echoed many of the sentiments and concerns expressed by domestic scientists across the globe.

These cookbook authors worked side-by-side with other educational and social reformers who were attempting to introduce new forms of education for girls in Australia. The cookery education initiated by these reformers became a staple across primary and secondary schools throughout the country. They were also instrumental in establishing cookery classes in institutes of further education such as technical colleges where it became a subject to be undertaken for a professional career as a cookery instructor. While many educationalists saw cookery education as an avenue to reform and improve the labour prospects of the working classes, and to inculcate middle-class values, the cookbook authors saw a much broader audience for their reformist agenda. Despite the fact that many of these cookbooks were originally intended as textbooks for cookery classes, their readership extended far beyond the classroom and could be found on the kitchen shelves of many homes across Australia. These authors also brought a new approach and methodology to the
writing of cookbooks. The recipe-writing style they introduced and championed is the one that is most familiar to modern cookbook readers today. Furthermore, as will be seen in the next chapter, many of the key figures would play an important part in the dissemination of and education in the use of new domestic technologies in Australia. The modern approach to cookery which they espoused required, after all, a modern kitchen.

The cookery reform movement that emerged in the last few decades of the nineteenth century and blossomed in the following decades was only partially successful in changing the diet of Australians and raising the status of domestic work. The cookbooks that appeared during this period were undoubtedly popular as their numerous editions and longevity attest. Yet few of these writers live on in the popular imagination of modern Australians; many are more likely to recognise the name of Mrs Beeton rather than that of Mrs Wicken or Miss Schauer.
Chapter 6
Selling the modern kitchen: Cookbooks and the promotion of domestic technologies

To Clean a Gas Stove
Remove the slides and grids from the oven, the bars and the burners from the top. Thoroughly scrub the stove inside and out with hot water and soda to remove the grease. Dry thoroughly and brush outside with a hard brush. Keep all bright parts well polished. Do not use black lead.

A Small Collection of Plain Cookery Recipes for Household Use (1911)

When new technologies were introduced into the home it became imperative to provide the inexperienced user with some form of instruction in their operation. Even mundane tasks, such as the most appropriate method to clean a new gas stove, were deemed as needing careful instruction. Australian cookbooks played an important part in instructing and educating readers in the practical uses of new domestic technologies becoming available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Cookbooks also played a significant role in the actual promotion and diffusion of technologies for use within the home. Advertisements contained within their pages were an ideal vehicle to promote a wide range of kitchen appliances directly to the primary consumers of these items. Manufacturers of kitchen utensils and appliances themselves published cookbooks to instruct their customers on the best manner to prepare recipes with the aid of their products. With the growing availability of gas and electricity in domestic kitchens, the suppliers of these utilities also began to commission and publish cookbooks to educate their customers in their use.
This chapter examines the role of cookbooks in the introduction and dissemination of new domestic technologies in Australia. It will firstly address the nature of 'domestic technology' particularly as it was conceptualised in the realm of the kitchen. It will briefly analyse some of the changes that occurred in Australian society and the implication these had for the growth of consumption of domestic technologies. This chapter also draws close attention to the dual purpose of cookbooks as promotional vehicles and instruction guides for these new technologies. In particular it, will trace the part played by cookbooks in the introduction of the most essential appliance in the kitchen, the stove. It will also highlight the manner in which cookbook authors used their expertise beyond the pages of their books to promote and instruct on the uses of domestic technologies.

An analysis of Australian cookbooks demonstrates the complexity surrounding the adoption of new domestic technologies in the Australian home. These transitions were not linear, involving the wholesale replacement of one form of technology with a new one, but often involved periods when one form of technology overlapped and competed with another. Even as late as 1932 The New Way: A Guide to Modern Housewifery cookbook provided its readers with detailed and separate instructions for cooking on coal, oil, gas and electrical stoves.¹

The very act of cooking is a complex technological activity. Firstly, it involves the use of tools in the form of the various kitchen utensils necessary for the preparation of meals. Secondly, it involves the use of all manner of machines; ranging from small kitchen appliances to large ovens and stoves. And, finally, it often involves the use of a technical manual in the shape of a cookbook.

In her seminal work on the history of housework and domestic technology in the United States, Ruth Schwartz Cowan notes two distinct organising concepts involved in domestic work which she terms ‘work processes’ and ‘technological systems’. The concept of work process implies that housework is not merely a series of definable tasks but that these are linked to one another. The process of cooking a meal on a stove involves a whole series of distinct tasks that need to be linked together to arrive at a final product. These tasks range from the procurement of the ingredients, their initial preparation (cleaning, peeling, trimming etc.) and the cooking of these ingredients through a variety of methods. Moreover, depending on the nature of the stove used, historically a number of different tasks have been carried out, from the labour intensive chopping of wood to fuel a colonial stove to the mere flick of a switch on an electric range. Utensils also need to be prepared and maintained—knives sharpened and pots scrubbed—as part of this process. As a form of prescriptive literature, playing a role analogous to any other technical manual, Australian cookbooks delineated and clarified many of the elaborate processes involved in the preparation of meals.

The second of Cowan’s organising concepts is that of the technological system. In this system each implement used in the home is, in some way, intrinsically linked to another in order to work and function properly. The prime example of this technological system is the necessity for gas or electric stoves to be connected to some form of supply grid. Without the adequate provision of gas or electricity to fuel them, these stoves would be rendered useless. Cowan argues the industrialisation of the home was partly determined by the decisions of homemakers and partly by larger

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3 Ibid., 12.
4 Ibid., 13.
social processes over which they had little control. The decision to buy a new gas or electric stove was contingent on the availability of the energy sources to fuel it. Once again, cookbooks aided in the introduction and promotion of such a technological system into Australian kitchens.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth Australia, the domestic setting, and in particular the kitchen, was part of an increasingly commodified culture. Many of the goods required to carry out the day-to-day processes of cooking were no longer produced in the home. The role of the housewife began to shift from that of a producer to that of a consumer. The last decades of the nineteenth century in Australia saw a significant shift from home-centred production to one of industrial manufacture which consequently resulted in technological changes in the home. Furthermore, a modern technological system was intruding into Australian homes from the 1870s as new forms of energy sources, such as gas and electricity, were required to fuel the new appliances.

One of the hallmarks of consumerism was the increased need and desire to purchase goods; this consumerism itself was underpinned by an increased encouragement to purchase an ever-growing range and variety of consumer goods. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the rise of a new form of commodity culture dominate advertising, with the home becoming the locus for many of the products of this new culture. The vast majority of these consumers, as could be expected for

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5 Ibid., 14.
goods to be used in the domestic kitchen, were women. To promote their wares manufacturers were required to use of a range of media, including newspapers and women's magazines and a medium that was to be found in almost every Australian kitchen, the cookbook. However, it is important to note, as Kimberley Webber points out, these advertisements do not necessarily paint a true picture of actual consumption and that inherently conservative practices delayed the process of mechanising the home.  

A number of different factors contributed to the spread of domestic technology in Australian homes in the last decades of the nineteenth century. One of these was the continuing scarcity of domestic servants, a situation which found many women obliged to perform most of their own domestic tasks.  

Labour-intensive tasks that had previously been carried out by servants now needed to be undertaken by the lone housewife. The myriad of new technologies available on the market were lauded as the panacea to resolve this problem. Ideally, these new appliances offered savings of labour and time and, indeed, many of the advocates of these new technologies highlighted and praised these particular qualities. Moreover, these technologies were to be used in conjunction with the rational and modern approach to domestic practices fostered by the domestic science movement to further ease this burden. Yet, despite these perceptions of increased ease and convenience, the reality for many Australian women was that even modern appliances brought little relief from the drudgery of housework. While some appliances did ease some of the more onerous physical requirements involved in the management of the home, particularly in the

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laundry, they did not necessarily reduce the amount of time required to carry out these jobs. A visitor to Australia in the 1920s noted the heavy burden for many women, pointing out that in Britain they had more help in the house and in America they had more labour-saving devices but, in Australia, they had neither. As well, there were increased societal expectations as to the quantity and quality of the work required from housewives. Many women felt the full weight of these expectations and advertisers and promoters of kitchen technologies did not hesitate to play on these concerns when marketing their products.

The Kitchen is our workshop

The kitchen had long been idealised as the heart of the home. With the growth of the domestic science movement in Australia at the end of the nineteenth century, and its rational approach to domestic matters, perceptions of the kitchen shifted. It now became the workshop where the technological process of cooking was carried out. In 1892, pioneering feminist Louisa Lawson wrote an editorial for *The Dawn* entitled 'Saving Steps'. Here, she encouraged her readers to be practical and plan the cooking of meals so they could be carried out with the least expenditure of time and strength. Lawson urged them not to forget that 'the kitchen is our workshop, and we do not show good sense when we put our tools out of reach'. For Lawson the kitchen needed to be as rational a workspace as a man's office or a carpenter's workshop. These sentiments were echoed by many cookbook authors. Writing in

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18 'Saving Steps', *The Dawn*, 1 September 1892, 10.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
The Art of Living in Australia, only a year after Lawson's article, Harriet Wicken was adamant that 'order and neatness must reign in the kitchen'. A proper workshop needed the proper tools with which to carry out the required work. Wicken stressed the importance of an adequately furnished kitchen noting that a cook could not be expected to 'send up a good dinner without proper utensils' any more than a carpenter could be relied upon to 'turn out a piece of furniture without proper tools'. Manufacturers of kitchen appliances and utensils sought to introduce their products into this newly envisioned rational kitchen and cookbooks proved to be an excellent medium through which to do this.

Kitchen utensils are one of the crucial elements in Cowan's conception of technological processes. They are indispensable items needed for the preparation of meals: knives to chop with, spoons to stir with and pots to cook in. They are also an element of the technological systems of which kitchens form a part. Most kitchen utensils cannot be made at home and need to be purchased from a manufacturer, another link in the complex commodity system involving the production of food.

Early settlers in Australia made do with a simple range of utensils for the preparation of meals. These consisted mainly of a knife, a pannikin (a small drinking cup), a cast-iron pot and some simple wooden spoons. In his description of a Melbourne kitchen in 1853, British author John Sherer observed that little had changed since the early days and that the majority of families made do with no more than two or three cast-iron sauce pans, a frying pan and 'that indispensable domestic requirement', the tea kettle. Sherer also noted the significant expense of acquiring

21 Philip Muskett and H. Wicken, The Art of Living in Australia (London; Melbourne: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1893), 254.
22 Ibid., 251.
kitchen utensils in the colony compared to Britain. This suggests many of these items continued to be manufactured in Britain and imported to the colonies.

In his *English and Australian Cookery Book* Edward Abbott makes scant mention as to the requisite tools to carry out his culinary creations. The only utensil that he addresses directly are copper pans, and then only to warn against the dangers involved in using tainted pans and the possibility of poisoning. This focus on copper pans appears to be aimed at the 'upper ten thousand' of Abbott's complete title, as they would be the only ones likely to afford these most expensive of cooking implements. Michael Bogle notes the use of highly conductive copper pots would have been limited to a fuel range with a degree of temperature control.

In 1895, Wilhelmina Rawson remarked on the unsatisfactory utensils and appliances that many women of a previous generation had been obliged to use in their kitchens and labelled these women 'martyrs'. She recommended that the modern colonial housewife should have a number of utensils at her disposal in order to carry out her domestic duties with as little exertion and fatigue as possible. Her list of essential utensils included: a mincing machine, a knife cleaning machine, a chain pot cleaner and a patent egg beater. However, regarding the last item on her list, the ever practical Rawson admitted to her readers that 'for my own part, I much prefer a fork'. Almost fifteen years later a Launceston newspaper echoed similar sentiments and urged women not to be satisfied with using the same primitive kitchen utensils

24 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 6.
29 Ibid., 8.
their grandmothers did. However, Harriet Wicken showed some resistance to the ever growing number of gadgets available in the kitchen, suggesting too many could confuse an inexperienced housewife. In *The Mary Elizabeth Cookbook* published c.1910, prominent cookbook writer, Zara Aronson, provided an extensive list of utensils and kitchen-ware she believed necessary for a small family. This comprehensive list included items such as an egg poacher, a waffle iron, two graters and a hammer. Aronson clearly believed that the housewife should be able to meet any contingency.

Utensil manufacturers, like their large appliance counterparts, also found cookbooks a fruitful vehicle through which to promote their wares. The 1918 *Patriotic Cookery Book of Well-tried Recipes* featured an advertisement for John Martin & Co. one of Adelaide's largest and best-known department stores. The advertisement boldly declared: 'Good Cooking Calls for a Well Equipped Kitchen!' and urged readers to visit its store in order to avail themselves of the 'many useful time and labour saving inventions for use in the modern kitchen'.

Some utensil manufacturers even commissioned their own cookbooks. The tinware manufacturers Willow published *The Willow Housewife's Handbook of Cookery* in the 1920s. The company's products are advertised throughout the pages of the cookbook, although the editor did note that in order to give sufficient space to recipes, the manufacturers of Willow tinware only illustrated a small number of the five hundred items available in their range. The wide range of utensils featured in

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32 Zara Aronson, *The Mary Elizabeth Cook Book: Over 900 Recipes (many New) for All Homes* (Sydney: George B. Philip and Son, 1917), 5.
the pages of this book included a fish fryer, a whistling kettle and a threefold grater. Many of the items are advertised as 'efficient', 'easy' and 'economic'. These types of words were common tropes in advertising such products and were attempts to market these utensils as labour and money saving devices. In fact, the 'scientifically made' Willow Baking Dish is nothing more than a square and deep baking tray manufactured from tin and indistinguishable from the many other ones manufactured and sold throughout the period.

One of the most peculiar items advertised in the Willow cookbook was an elaborate two-piece cylindrical egg beater. This device was described as quick, efficient and clean yet the beater's intricate design would have hardly made it easier to use and clean than Rawson's much preferred fork. Replacing simple tools with newer, more elaborate ones did not always mean there would be a more efficient or simpler method of carrying out a specific task. With the Willow egg-beater, it appears to be a case of style and marketing hype triumphing over substance. So keen were the manufacturers to promote the simplicity of this utensil that they claimed, with a hint of irony one would presume, that it was so simple to use that 'A man can operate it'.

Figure 15: The Willow Egg beater, *The Willow Housewife's Handbook of Cookery*, 1920

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35 Ibid., 56.
As small and usually inexpensive items of technology, kitchen utensils were comparatively simple to market. Yet, these utensils were often non-essential, and many households found simple homemade devices functioned as alternatives to these new factory-made goods even if it meant sacrificing convenience and modernity. The most essential item required in the kitchen, the stove, was more difficult to substitute.

A handsome piece of furniture

The humble cooking stove is a useful medium to chart the changes occurring in domestic kitchens in Australia. Many of the changes in household technologies and domestic spaces mirrored the broader changes in society. The proliferation of cast-iron stoves in Australian homes initially demonstrated a lively international trade with both the United States and Great Britain, followed by a nascent domestic manufacturing industry that produced Australian-made stoves. The increased popularity of gas and electric stoves reflected the growing urbanisation of Australian society; a society that by the end of the nineteenth century was slowly becoming connected to the essential grids that supplied these utilities. In all these cases the manufacturers and suppliers of these products needed to encourage customers to purchase them.

During the earliest decades of colonisation in Australia, most settler homes made do with a simple open fireplace on which to cook their meals. For those cooking in an open fireplace controlling temperature involved changing the distance between the cooking vessel and the fire through the use of a series of devices such as chains, rods and trivets. The meals cooked in this manner differed little from those prepared in

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Britain since the seventeenth century and the predominantly British cookbooks settlers used as guides for the preparation of meals would have been suitable for use on this traditional heat source.

The first development in stove technology to have a significant impact on Australian domestic kitchens came in the form of the solid-fuel burning cast-iron cooking stove. A number of factors contributed to the adoption of these stoves. Open fireplaces radiated heat that was often a source of great discomfort in Australian homes, particularly in warmer climes, and in many parts of the country kitchens were often located in out-buildings. Changes in housing design which, due to a number of factors, began in the 1870s saw more and more kitchens being incorporated into the main house building therefore necessitating new modes of cooking appliances to cater to these new conditions. These new stoves allowed for a wide range of fuels to be used including coal and charcoal as well as wood. Moreover, they were simpler and more efficient to use. As Beverley Kingston has pointed out, it was the transition from the open fire to the more readily controlled stove that wrought the domestic revolution. Yet, it is important to note that this new technology did not necessarily ease the burden of labour required to carry out cooking activities. While it did save considerably on fuel preparation this was a task usually carried out by men or labourers. Furthermore, as Ruth Cowan argues, the increased practicality of stoves inevitably led to the ‘death of one-pot cooking’ and raised expectations as to the number of dishes that would be prepared. Lastly, these new stoves also required a significant amount of regular maintenance on the part of women.

40 Ibid., 62.
41 Priscilla J. Brewer, “We Have Got a Very Good Cooking Stove”: Advertising, Design, and
By the 1830s, advertisements for British and American stoves began to appear in Australian newspapers, and the early adopters of this new technology used these imported models. According to Roderick Lawrence, the main difference between Australian and British homes was that, until the 1870s, the vast majority of kitchens in Australia were detached from the main residence.42 While the kitchen spaces in Australia did not resemble those of Britain, the technologies contained inside them did.43 By the 1850s Australian-built stoves began to appear on the market. One of the earliest locally manufactured models was built by Sydney founder P. N. Russell, the maker of 'Russell's Patent Economic Roasting and Charcoal Stove'. However, despite their being locally made, Russell relied on imported materials to manufacture his stoves.44 John Sherer noted that, while cooking stoves were becoming more readily available in Victoria by 1853, they were too expensive to be found in general use in most colonial homes.45 One problem encountered by stove manufacturers, as opposed to utensil manufacturers, was that the expense involved in purchasing them necessitated a significant degree of joint decision-making within the home.46 As well, prevailing ideas of thrift and economy in late nineteenth century Australia hindered investment in expensive domestic appliances.47

Expense, however, was not the only reason for the initial resistance to this new technology. Kimberley Webber argues that one of the causes of consumer resistance to the cast-iron stove was the challenge it presented to the notion of the 'cheerful

Consumer Response to the Cookstove, 1815-1880', Winterthur Portfolio 25, no. 1 (1 April 1990): 44.
43 Ibid., 134.
fireside' and the domestic ideal of the home. This idealisation of the open hearth was reflected in concerns about the inadequacy of stoves for preparing that most emblematic of British dishes— roast beef. Roasting was traditionally the process of cooking over an open fire, whilst cooking within the confines of an oven was deemed to be baking. Even after stoves had become firmly entrenched in Australian kitchens many cookbook authors bemoaned the loss of flavour experienced by cooking the traditional roast beef in an oven. Harriet Wicken noted, in her 1891 book *The Australian Home*, that 'roasting before an open fire is, no doubt, the finest way of cooking the finest joints of meat', adding that the stoves 'now commonly in use prevent this method from being carried out'. However, not all cookbook writers were concerned about the impact this new technology had on traditional cookery methods. While praising the merits of beef roasted before an open fire, Edward Abbott, writing twenty five years before Wicken, contended that it would take the most 'fastidious epicure' to distinguish it from one prepared in his favourite American stove. Whilst at least appreciating or understanding the gastronomic superiority of roasting meats before a fire, both these authors were also aware of the fact that in most Australian homes this process was carried out in an oven. Ease and convenience took precedence over more ephemeral pleasures.

Furthermore, Webber contends many cast-iron stoves were 'black, heavy and almost monstrous in appearance' and an 'archetypal product of the industrial revolution'. The acceptance of the cast-iron stove into Australian homes, therefore, was predicated on its becoming more feminised and domesticated. Cookbooks, and their predominantly female authors, became a crucial element in this domesticating

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51 Webber, ‘Romancing the Machine’, 90.
52 Ibid.
process. In her *Cookery Book and Household Hints* Wilhelmina Rawson addressed issues regarding the aesthetic values of a kitchen stove. She particularly favoured American stoves, which she deemed to be both strong and ornamental, describing them as a 'handsome piece of furniture'. The brand names of stoves that Rawson recommended, amongst them the Empress and the May Queen, highlight the attempts by some manufacturers to feminise these appliances to suit the perceived aesthetic tastes of women. Despite this initial resistance, this type of stove would become the predominant form of cooking technology until the turn of the century.

**With the greatest perfection**

Cookbooks played a significant part in the promotion of cooking stoves and their introduction into the Australian kitchen. The earliest example of this appeared in Edward Abbott's 1864 *English and Australian Cookery Book*. In it Abbott devoted a small section to the practicalities and costs of different cooking stoves available on the market. For a small home, Abbott suggested a model named the ‘Newark’ which consisted of a simple oven and a boiler. For a large family he recommended the 'Improved Leamington Kitchener'. This stove had won an award at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and came recommended by none other than Isabella Beeton. Abbott also claimed that American-built stoves were superior to British ones, particularly for Australia's warmer climate, and that he himself used an American model called 'The Golden State'. Over the ensuing decades all manner of Australian cookbooks would actively promote various brands of solid-fuel cooking stoves. As

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55 Ibid., 184.
late as 1924, with stiff competition from gas and electric stoves, manufacturers of solid fuel stoves continued to advertise their wares in the pages of cookbooks. An advertisement for the 'Lux Stove', which appeared in *The Busy Woman's Home Companion* in 1924, promoted its product as a modern appliance despite its apparent technological redundancy.58

While gas lighting had arrived in Hobart, Edward Abbott's home town, in 1857, there was resistance to the use of this new source of fuel for cooking.59 A small booklet entitled *Advantages of Gas in Private Houses*, published in Launceston under the aegis of the Launceston Gas Company, promoted the virtues of gas as a suitable fuel source for cooking. Although a British publication, the publishers hoped it would be of value to the city's householders. The author claimed that many cooking processes could be achieved with a precision that could not be attained with a common fire, and it only required two to three days training to achieve proficiency in its use.60 However gas stoves were competing with two pre-existing technologies and it would take at least two decades for them to find a place in domestic kitchens in Australia.

Alfred Wilkinson's 1876 *The Australian Cook* was one of the nation's earliest cookbooks and the first to make explicit reference to the use of gas stoves. Wilkinson devoted two separate sections of his book to the promotion and instruction on the use of gas stoves in the domestic kitchen. One of these, entitled 'The Gas Cooking Stove', dealt with the merits and advantages of this new technology. Wilkinson praised the convenience of gas stoves compared to the older wood and coal fired models. No longer was it necessary to deal with the 'cumbersome machinery' of the

58 *The Busy Woman's Home Companion* (Bendigo: Bendigo Branch, Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1924).
past and the labour-intensive procedures required for its use. Modern science, Wilkinson claimed, had delivered a new technology that performed ‘every operation of cooking with the greatest perfection’. Wilkinson also attempted to dispel what he perceived to be some of the myths surrounding the use of gas stoves. He rejected the idea that these stoves were expensive to operate, arguing that excessive gas usage was primarily due to mismanagement and inefficient operation on the part of the user. And, while conceding that gas stoves involved a more significant initial investment than older solid fuel stoves, he suggested this additional expense would be recouped by savings on the cost of fuel and labour. He also dismissed the commonly held misconception that gas stoves were likely to produce noxious fumes and taint the foods cooked within them, arguing that adequate ventilation readily resolved this issue. In the section entitled 'Directions for using the gas cooking stove', Wilkinson provided his readers with simple general instructions on how to carry out different cooking techniques, such as baking, stewing and grilling, using a gas stove.

Wilkinson's book was notable for the active promotion of one particular brand; he urged readers who intended to use gas to give preference to the Walker's Patent Stove. He himself used these stoves at the Athenaeum Club, one of Melbourne’s leading gentlemen's clubs, where he was head chef. This raises the question of whether Wilkinson truly appreciated the stoves or if he was receiving some form of commission for promoting them. The book contained two prominent full-page advertisements for the company's products and the Walker stove advertisement

62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., xi.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
highlighted the superiority of gas stoves over older models noting the cleanliness, efficiency and economy of its product. It continued by informing the readers that three of the company's stoves had just been placed in Government House and a further one had been commissioned for Parliament House. 66 By wedding their product to prestigious institutions the manufacturers of Walker's stoves were attempting to raise their profile and reputation. Gas suppliers such as the South Melbourne Gas Company and the Collingwood, Fitzroy and District Gas and Coke Company also featured advertisements in Wilkinson's book. In 1873, a stockholder for this last concern called on the company to make arrangements 'with a view to encouraging the use of gas' for cooking and purposes other than lighting. 67 Advertising in a book that so actively promoted cooking with gas certainly answered this call.

A decade after the publication of Wilkinson's book an estimated one in four of Melbourne's homes was using gas to fuel their stoves. 68 Furthermore, at a time when gas was used primarily for lighting purposes, daytime consumption of gas had increased considerably, accounting for one third of the overall usage. 69 In 1892, one leading Melbourne gas supplier estimated that over twenty five thousand people were using gas stoves on a daily basis. Sydney's take-up of this new technology was a little slower. The Australian Gas and Light Company, the city's largest gas supplier, had installed a mere 156 gas stoves throughout the city by 1878, with this number increasing to four thousand a decade later. 70 With electricity becoming a more affordable alternative for lighting throughout urban centres by the 1880s, many gas

66 Wilkinson, The Australian Cook.
67 Lawrence, 'Household Technology and Domestic Space: The Development of the Domestic Kitchen in Australia', 133.
69 'Cooking and Heating Appliances', The Argus (Exhibition Supplement), 9 October 1888, 51–52.
70 Rosemary Broomham, First Light: 150 Years of Gas (Sydney, NSW: Hale & Iremonger, 1987), 69 & 76.
suppliers felt the need to actively promote gas for cooking and heating in order to maintain profits.

One of the most significant challenges faced by gas companies and stove manufacturers was to allay some of the common misapprehensions surrounding the use of gas stoves. One correspondent to The Argus in 1877 deemed gas stoves only fit for boiling; claiming that any meat cooked within them became a 'tough sodden mass'.71 He also expressed grave concerns as to the possible injurious effects that these stoves might have on their users.72 Concerns surrounding the deleterious effects of gas were common. Poor ventilation and ineffective gas purification often led to the strong smell of hydrogen sulphide emanating from stoves. Added to this was awareness by many that the gas was both explosive and toxic if inhaled.73 There was also ignorance as to the technological system of which stoves formed a part. In 1878, the Australian Town and Country Journal saw it necessary to inform one of its readers that gas stoves did not generate their own gas and could only be used in locations where there were gas works to supply the required fuel.74

One method used by gas suppliers to encourage the use of gas and gas stoves, and to educate prospective users, was to stage cooking demonstrations using their product. For this purpose they enlisted the help of some of the more prominent cookbook writers of the time. As Kerreen Reiger has noted, the introduction of new technologies into Australian homes often came with the advice of domestic science experts attached.75 One of these experts was Harriet Wicken, the author of numerous popular cookbooks, a professional cookery educator and a leading figure in the new

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72 Ibid.
domestic science movement emerging in Australia. Between December 1889 and January 1890, Wicken conducted a series of cookery lessons under the auspices of the Hobart Technical Board. These events were also sponsored by the Hobart Gas Company, who not only supplied the gas free of charge but also supplied the state-of-the-art stoves on which Wicken carried out her lessons. The information imparted during these classes was published as a small booklet entitled Recipes given at the Cookery Class, Hobart. In her study of women and the British gas industry, Anne Clendinning argues that the use of women demonstrators was a concerted effort on the part of stove manufacturers to change perceptions of their new gas products. Women demonstrators could convince reluctant housewives that the stoves were simple and safe to operate and that ordinary women too, had the skills and ability to master this new technology.

Melbourne's Metropolitan Gas Company placed advertisements in the pages of cookbooks published by professional cookery instructors. The company ran a full-page advertisement in Margaret Pearson's 1889 cookbook Cookery Recipes for the People. This advertisement appears to have been specifically aimed at an audience unfamiliar with cooking on a gas stove. It recognised that gas had hitherto been used primarily as an illuminant, and urged prospective customers to consider gas as an alternative to coal or wood. Another advertisement that appeared in Pearson's 1892 Australian Household Book on Fruits, Canning, Preserving, Drinks and Light Summer Dishes praised the advantages of using gas as a fuel source. In it, the Metropolitan Gas Company claimed the mantle of a 'public benefactor' for the role it played in lightening the workload of housewives and for making work in the kitchen

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76 'Epitome of News', The Mercury, 12 December 1889, 2.
77 Clendinning, Demons of Domesticity, 67.
78 Ibid.
more pleasant. The advertisement highlighted the advantages of using gas over other sources of fuel for stoves, noting it produced less heat, dust and discomfort than its counterparts. Moreover, it also noted that gas stoves required less supervision than wood or coal-fired stoves thereby allowing their user to devote their attention to other household tasks while preparing a meal. That the company chose Pearson's books as a vehicle for its advertisements was not surprising as she was well-known throughout Melbourne as a cookery instructor with impeccable credentials, having trained, like Harriet Wicken, at the National School of Cookery in Kensington, England. Pearson conducted a series of free classes for the Metropolitan Gas Company, demonstrating her skills on a series of different stoves that were available for sale through the company's stores.

Figure 16: Sample advertisement for the Metropolitan Gas Company, c.1890

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81 ‘Cookery Classes’, *The Argus*, 4 December 1888, 79s.
Isabel Ross travelled throughout Australia and New Zealand providing her services as a cookery instructor for various gas companies. Ross, like many other early domestic science instructors who plied their trade in Australia, was also a Kensington graduate. This made her an ideal candidate as a public demonstrator for the Melbourne, Hobart and Auckland Gas Companies. By 1894 she was conducting regular classes at the Metropolitan Gas Company's kitchens in Melbourne and surrounding areas. Many of the advertisements promoting her classes not only highlighted her expertise and her credentials, but also informed readers as to the services and equipment provided by the Metropolitan Gas Company. These classes were conducted without charge at the company's premises and Ross would devote particular attention to instructing those who had no previous experience in using gas stoves. Ross would pen three cookbooks, including *Original and Well-certified recipes in Economic Cookery* in 1894 and *Cookery Class Recipes* in 1900, all published under the auspices of the Metropolitan Gas Company.

In 1911 South Australian professional cookery instructor Annie Bishop published *A Small Collection of Plain Cookery Recipes for Household Use*. Bishop worked as a demonstrator for the South Australian Gas Company and her book was specifically intended as an instruction manual for the use of gas stoves. She paid particular attention to the different ways to economise on gas usage. Her book reflected the desire of many gas companies to market their product as an affordable alternative to other fuel sources. Yet, as one advertisement for a gas stove sold through the company pointed out, the use of gas was about more than just economy. Not only

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82 ‘Cooking by Gas’, *Fitzroy City Press*, 20 November 1903, 2.
would the stove save money, it would also help women to ‘live longer’ and even to ‘look younger’.  

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s gas companies continued to find ways to promote their product to a wide audience. This included the publication of magazines like *The Quest* by the Melbourne Metropolitan Gas Company. This magazine featured articles on the latest developments in household gas appliances including improvements in modern gas stoves. As well, the magazine provided recipes by the likes of well-known cookbook author Flora Pell. Gas companies, like the Colonial Gas Association, continued to provide cooking demonstrations and featured a Home Services department to assist with the needs of its customers. One of the key features of this department was the compilation of recipe books that, according to the company, enjoyed a very wide circulation. These included such titles as the *Souvenir book of recipes* from 1932 and *More tested recipes compiled by the Home Service Department of the Colonial Gas Association* from 1937. Sydney's Australian Gas Light Company also published cookbooks, such as *Ruth Boyle's Recipes* in 1937, under the aegis of its Home Service Club.

As late as 1939, the Brisbane Gas Company published a cookbook entitled *Gas Cookery* compiled by one of its demonstrators Eugenie Ludlow. The book’s aim was to enable the users of gas stoves to obtain the best results possible from their appliance, and to render the process of cooking more efficient, effective and 'a much easier task'. The book’s instructions differed little from those provided in the previous six decades, with sections covering the basic maintenance of stoves and

85 Flora Pell, ‘Small Roasts’, *The Quest*, 1930, 16.
86 Colonial Gas Association, *Fifty Years of Good Public Service* (Melbourne: s.n, 1938), 56.
87 Ibid., 57.
simple directions for their use. Like its older counterparts, *Gas Cookery* also included numerous advertisements for different models of gas stoves. The Brisbane Gas Company also advertised gas cookery demonstrations in its showrooms free of charge in order to instruct and encourage customers in the use of their products.

The use of cookery educators for the purpose of advertising and promoting the use of gas in domestic kitchens served various purposes. As well-known and respected individuals, and maybe even minor celebrities in their field, they added an element of credibility to the company's claims. Their expertise was brought to bear in order to change the misconceptions that many householders might have had about using gas. Not only were they promoting gas as a cheaper and viable alternative to wood or coal, they were crucial in dismissing some of the fears surrounding the use of gas. These experts served to instruct inexperienced users in what was a new technology. Finally this exercise in using domestic science professionals can be seen as a clever cross-promotional marketing exercise that involved public appearances, heavy advertising in newspapers and the publication of related cookbooks, all featuring the company's name and products. However, this form of promotion also helped raise the profile of the cookery instructors and it gave those attempting to promote a rational approach to cookery a platform for their message.

**An unpaid servant**

The biggest challenge to the continuing commercial success of gas as a fuel for domestic purposes came from the newest form of energy available on the market, electricity. The use of electricity in the home kitchen began to be mooted in the last decades of the nineteenth century. An article appearing in the Hobart *Mercury* in 1894 boldly predicted that the time was approaching when 'electricity will be the
universal heating agent' for cooking. This time would herald a 'golden age for woman' when all the inconveniences of the past would disappear and the kitchen would become a cool and clean haven. Over a decade later The Australian Town and Country Journal continued these predictions when it described the leisurely pace required to manage a new electric kitchen. Everything in this kitchen could be carried out by 'an unpaid, unfed servant, who never sleeps, but is always at the call of anyone who will touch the button. And the servant's name is Electricity!' The housewife only needed to sit back and enjoy the fruit of this new technology. The use of electricity in the home was often described in this utopian manner; technology was seen as a solution to many of society's problems including the drudgery of kitchen work.

In many parts of Australia, however, the reality was not so simple, and the electrification of urban and regional areas was a slow process. The process began in Sydney in 1863, but it was not until the 1880s that electricity began to supplant gas as a common form of lighting in the streets. Despite the growing availability of electricity in public spaces its private use was primarily confined to lighting the homes of the wealthy and it was not until the turn of the century that it began to be used for other domestic purposes, such as cooking. Even by the early 1920s only a minuscule proportion, 0.1 percent, of homes that were electrified used an electric stove.

It was in one of the country's remote regional areas that one of the earliest and most concerted experiments to supply electricity for cooking purposes was carried out.

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89 'Electricity in the Kitchen', The Mercury, 28 November 1894, 4.
90 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 3:118.
94 Dingle, ‘Electrifying the Kitchen in Interwar Victoria’, 124.
The electrification of Kalgoorlie began in 1896 when the Kalgoorlie Power Corporation began to supply power for the mines.95 As in other parts of Western Australia where power was supplied for industrial purposes, domestic premises also benefited from the availability caused by excess supply.96 On the 29th of November 1905 David Curle Smith lodged an application for an ‘Improved electric cooking stove’ with the Commonwealth Department of Patents. Curle Smith was an electrical engineer who migrated to Australia in 1887 when he took a position at the New Australian Electric Company in Melbourne. He would subsequently move to Western Australia where he took on the role of Chief Engineer for the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council.97 Curle Smith's model was the first electric stove to be designed and patented in Australia and appeared almost contemporaneously with the earliest imported stoves.

The stoves consisted of three separate compartments; the lowest for grilling, the middle for roasting and the upper one for boiling. Heat for the stove was generated by an electric current which was passed through wire coils placed around the bottom, top and sides of the oven. These coils were made up into nine separate circuits that were connected to switches attached to the front of the stove and which allowed for the heat to be regulated.98 This complex method of controlling the heat was due to the fact that the thermostat was not patented until four years later and would not be in common use in electric stoves until 1919.99 Curle Smith also patented the design for an electric kettle.

99 Nell Du Vail, Domestic Technology: A Chronology of Developments (Boston, Mass: G.K. Hall,
By 1907 the stoves began to be manufactured under patent by the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council at an estimated cost of £10 per unit. For his part Curle Smith received a commission of £2 for each stove manufactured.\(^{100}\) By the middle of that year forty stoves had been leased to consumers in the Kalgoorlie area at a price of two shillings per month, with a deposit of £1 being required.\(^{101}\) The previous year the Kalgoorlie Council put into place a plan to make and install cooking stoves in order to increase the average daytime consumption. During the early days of electricity supply to domestic premises, the bulk of the energy was used for lighting purposes, with most homes being content using either solid fuel or gas stoves for cooking purposes. Electricity suppliers found the need, as had gas companies a few decades earlier, to find ways to encourage increased usage during the daylight hours and increased use of electrical appliances in the home would certainly do this.

\(^{100}\) *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 14 May 1907, 18.

\(^{101}\) Ibid.
A number of homes in Kalgoorlie installed these new electric stoves in their kitchen. But the complex nature of Curle Smith's stove required careful instructions, and this need was met with the publication of the *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* cookbook in 1907. This book was penned by none other than the inventor's wife Nora Curle Smith. Curle Smith was not only a cookbook author but also an artist, and gained prominence as the secretary of the Kalgoorlie branch of the Red Cross during the First World War. In 1920 Curle Smith was recognised for her contributions to Western Australian society when she was awarded an MBE in that year's Honours List. Curle Smith was also the sister of the noted Australian academic Sir Walter Murdoch and a great-aunt to Rupert Murdoch.

In January 1907 the Council agreed ‘that 1000 copies of the Electric Stove Cookery Book, compiled by Mrs D.C. Smith, be printed for selling to consumers’. In late March the books went on sale at the price of one shilling and were promoted as ‘giving full instructions how to manage Electric Cooking Stoves, with proven recipes for same’. The following month Curle Smith conducted a series of cookery demonstrations for the public on the uses of the new stove. These classes appear to have been well received by the public. One attendee to these classes noting that ‘the tasty pastry and succulent dishes cooked while the crowd waited proved the best and most practical forms of advertisement that the apparatus... could receive’.

The promotional nature of *Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy* was evident in the book’s subtitle, 'Proved recipes for guidance in the use of the “Rational Electric...
Cooking Stove. Curle Smith recognised that the expense of electrical cooking stoves and the price of electricity had previously put cooking with electricity beyond the reach of those with modest incomes. She claimed, however, that due to 'the farsighted policy of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, and the fortunate invention of the “Rational” Electric Stove, cooking by electricity comes within the reach of anyone'.

Curle Smith praised the merits of this revolutionary technology in the pages of her book. In language similar to that used by those who promoted the convenience of gas stoves only a few years earlier, Curle Smith noted the simplicity of using the electrical stove claiming that even those of 'ordinary intelligence manage it very easily after one or two lessons'. This new stove, according to Curle Smith, was both clean and cool to operate saving the housewife much mental strain. The design of the stove that Curle Smith provided instructions for in her cookbook varied slightly from that given in the patent documents, with the order of cooking compartments somewhat altered. Yet, despite these small changes, the complicated switch controls to regulate the heat were the same, belying her claims to simplicity, and required comprehensive advice for their proper use. A simple recipe for a beef stew with vegetables, for example, required the turning on and off of a number of different switches at different stages of the cooking process.

Curle Smith gave detailed instructions on the manner in which to most efficiently use the stove. This included providing the rate of electricity consumed by the various coils being used during any particular cooking operation. She estimated, for

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108 Ibid., 3.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid., 5.
example, that a five-pound joint of meat, surrounded by potatoes, with a pudding in the bottom compartment of the oven and with something else stewing on the top element could be cooked for the cost of 2d. To use the stove economically, Curle Smith admonished her readers, 'one has to plan how to use the heat generated to the best advantage'. Curle Smith suggested only the thinnest pots and pans, such as those made from tin and aluminium, as the most suitable cookware to use on the electric stove and told her readers that they should on no account use heavy cast-iron pots as these would lead to a huge waste of energy.

Curle Smith provided her readers with the required information for operating a stove that was, at the time, cutting-edge technology. The use of the words 'Thermo-Electrical' in the title of her book and the name of the appliance itself, 'the rational electrical stove', implied modernity, a much valued attribute at the time. But it was also specifically written for use with one particular model of stove. It is estimated that no more than fifty of the ‘Rational’ stoves were ever built thereby minimising the impact and reach of her book. The 1907 annual account for the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council showed only twenty seven copies of the cookbook had been sold and that the bulk of the one thousand copies printed remained undistributed. Furthermore, it would take more than a decade for electricity to make any serious advances into domestic kitchens. Yet the importance of her book extends beyond its commercial reach and practicality in the kitchen; it is most notable as probably being the world’s first book dedicated to cooking on an electric stove. A thorough search through a number of library catalogues, including the Library of Congress and the British Library, has failed to find an earlier cookbook explicitly written for this

113 Ibid., 4.
114 Ibid., 6.
115 Ibid., 7.
116 Curle Smith and Willis, Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy, 17.
purpose. In his introductory essay to the 2011 edition of the *Thermo-electrical Cooking Made Easy* cookbook, H. A. Willis also reached the same conclusion.\(^{117}\)

Like their gas counterparts, electricity supply companies saw cookbooks as a useful way to promote their products in order to increase the consumption of electricity in the home. The manufacturers and distributors of electrical appliances also felt the need to address concerns among customers that their products were unaffordable luxuries.\(^{118}\) Throughout the early 1920s all the electric stoves available on the Australian market were manufactured overseas and subject to considerable import duties, making them more than four times more expensive than gas stoves.\(^{119}\)

In 1930 the Brisbane distributors of ‘Moffat’s gold medal electric ranges’, which were manufactured in Canada, did much to promote their product as affordable. Not only did they announce a price reduction of £3 on every model, they also offered a twelve-month instalment plan to pay off the stove.\(^{120}\) The stove came fitted, they claimed, with ‘every modern device’, including heat-regulating switches and a thermometer.\(^{121}\) In addition, the suppliers included a ‘lavishly designed cookery book’ for their customers.\(^{122}\) Nine years later, the New South Wales agents for Moffat’s Stoves issued the *Moffat Electric Cookery Book*. The author praised the advantages of electricity, particularly its efficiency and value. Yet, according to the author, the ‘electric age’ promised much more. It also had the power ‘to transform housekeeping so that the hours of the day shall be fairly divided between work and

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\(^{117}\) Ibid., 12.


\(^{119}\) Dingle, ‘Electrifying the Kitchen in Interwar Victoria’, 123.

\(^{120}\) ‘Moffat’s Electric Stoves’, *Sunday Mail*, 2 March 1930, 16.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.

\(^{122}\) Ibid.
play...to make our dreams come true'. The Moffat Stove Company had been publishing cookbooks in Canada since 1915, first for use with gas stoves and later electric ones. Besides noting in the introduction that there was an increase in the use of electric stoves in Australia, there was little to indicate that the book was written for local conditions and it is likely that it was a re-print of a Canadian book.

A number of electricity supply companies also attempted to change public perceptions regarding the expense of electric stoves, and cookbooks once again proved useful. The Adelaide Electric Supply Company not only promoted the power source it supplied, but also its own electric stoves in the 1935 Instruction Book for 'Adelect' Electric Cookers: Hints and Recipes. The company made its stoves affordable to the general public through a hire scheme that included free maintenance. In its introduction, this book noted that many of the recipes it contained were derived from classes given at their demonstration rooms. The company's chief demonstrator, Nellie Holmes, was a regular contributor to the women's page of the Adelaide Advertiser. Concerned as they were to promote their own company's products, this small book featured no advertisements for any other products. The same could not be said for The Nesca Home Hints and Cookery Book, published by the Newcastle Electric Supply Department in the same year. In their introduction the company claimed unhesitatingly that the use of electricity in the home would ease daily burdens as well as increase leisure and make life 'much happier, easier and more pleasant'. To facilitate this pleasant life the Nesca cookery book included numerous advertisements for electrical appliances including

washing machines, fridges and stoves. All of these advertisements extolled the labour-saving and economic virtues of their products. The use of cookbooks as a marketing tool for electrical appliances and services, as Carolyn Goldstein argues, allowed for these new products to be placed in a familiar context.  

One of the most significant figures in the promotion of electricity for domestic purposes was Violet McKenzie. Born in Melbourne in 1890 McKenzie demonstrated a precocious interest in all things electrical. As a small child she repaired faulty plugs around the home and set up a light in the kitchen pantry that would switch on when the door was opened. In 1915 McKenzie studied at the University of Sydney where she undertook courses in chemistry and geology, and in 1922 she opened the Wireless Shop in Sydney's Royal Arcade. During this period McKenzie also enrolled in a Diploma of Electric Engineering at the Sydney Technical College, having exaggerated her experience as an electrical contractor in order to be allowed to enrol. McKenzie was awarded a diploma in 1923 and holds the distinction of being the first female electrical engineer in Australia. She was also the first woman to take out an amateur radio operator’s license and founded The Wireless Weekly, a magazine for radio enthusiasts. In 1934 McKenzie founded the Electrical Association for Women (EAW), an organisation dedicated to educating women in the uses of electricity. During the Second World War she established the Women's Emergency Signalling Corps (WESC) to train women in Morse code and other communication techniques. While originally intended to train women, the WESC

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130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
also trained thousands of male servicemen during the war. McKenzie was able to run the WESC without any financial support from the government, relying instead on donations from her students. In 1950 McKenzie was awarded an OBE for her services rendered during the war.

The primary role of the EAW was to encourage women to use and become familiar with electrical appliances, and to assist them in easing the burden of domestic labour. In 1935 McKenzie wrote that 'to see every woman emancipated from the "heavy" work of the household by the aid of electricity is in itself a worthy object'. The Australian EAW was set up along similar lines as its British counterpart, which had been established a decade earlier and with which it was affiliated. The EAW had a number of declared aims and objects for its organisation. These included the collection and distribution of information on the uses of electricity and organising regular meetings and lectures on the subject. These lectures were given in as broad a range of locales as possible, including schools, clubs and colleges, in order to reach women from all walks of life. They also set up premises where electrical equipment could be inspected free of charge and women could obtain reliable, unbiased information on their proper usage and cost of operation. Particular emphasis was placed on purchasing safe and approved appliances and on employing only licensed electricians for their installation. Finally, the EAW endeavoured to reduce the cost of electricity supply and of electrical appliances. The EAW was clear that it was an independent organisation, which was not associated with any particular electrical firm or supply company, and that it was catering to the 'electrical needs of

133 Violet McKenzie, ‘What Have the Ladies to Say?’, The Contractor, 8 November 1935, 78.
134 F. V. McKenzie and Electrical Association for Women (Australia), Cookery Book (Sydney: Electrical Association for Women, 1936), 16.
women'. As Carroll Pursell noted in his study of the British EAW, and which was also reflected in the Australian EA, the organisation sought to understand the needs of women and to bring these to the attention of the electrical industry.

One of the most direct ways to educate women in the use of electricity in the home was to focus on the most common of all daily household tasks, cooking. It was during her time as the head of the Electrical Association for Women that McKenzie saw the need for a cookbook dedicated specifically to cooking on an electric stove. To this end, she compiled and published a cookbook in 1936. The book provided basic instruction in how to prepare dishes on an electric stove and included sections on poultry, vegetables and puddings. As well, it included specific instructions on the operation of these appliances.

Figure 18: Cover of Violet McKenzie’s Cookery Book, 1936
http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/mckenzie_violet.

The section entitled 'Electrical Guide' informed readers as to the best location for the electric stove (near a window so as to take best advantage of natural light) and stated that it would post the reader an illustration of their 'ideal kitchen' if so desired. It proceeded to explain, in detail, how to use the various components of the stove, such as the hot plate and the oven. This section also paid

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135 Ibid., 12.
close attention to the safe operation of electrical equipment. McKenzie told her readers, in no uncertain terms, never to attempt to repair faulty stoves themselves as this could leave them in a 'dangerous condition' and urged them to use a qualified electrician or to contact the EAW. Despite some of her ominous warnings, McKenzie concluded this section by noting that there was 'only a very remote possibility' of an accident occurring as long as good quality appliances were 'intelligently' used.

McKenzie encouraged readers to purchase well-known and reputable brands of stoves, preferably those of British manufacture. And, while claiming the organisation to be a purely educational concern and that it refrained from trading and accepting commissions, she showed no hesitation in recommending the stove models advertised in the pages of her book. In fact, the book contained numerous advertisements for a wide selection of electrical appliances. Many of these repeated the same themes of cleanliness, efficiency, economy and modernity. One advertisement for the Hi-Speed Electric Range told readers to 'cook the modern way'. 'If you want to cut your housekeeping costs', it declared, 'you must cook by electricity. Every meal you cook in another way is costing you more than it should, taking longer to cook than it should; wasting your time, absorbing your energy'. Another appliance manufacturer claimed to have eliminated the drudgery of housework and happily told housewives that 'cooking and washing are now pleasant hobbies'.

Modernity was one of the prevailing themes in electric stove advertisements throughout this era. Stove manufacturers, however, were selling an ideal rather than

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118 McKenzie, "Cookery Book", 228.
119 Ibid., 229.
119 Ibid., 221.
140 Ibid., 218.
141 Ibid., 15.
The ‘convenience’ and ‘economy’ that they promoted in their products had also featured in advertisements for both solid-fuel and gas stoves for over seventy five years. The evocation of modernity in electric stove advertising had more to do with fashion and status than the actual characteristics of the stove. Stove manufacturers were selling more than a commodity to cook on, they were also selling the increased social status of owning a modern, up-to-date appliance.

Electricity supply companies also featured advertisements in the EAW cookbook and they too tried to sell a lifestyle as much as a utility. The Sydney County Council's Electricity Undertaking Company asserted that an electric range was an essential component of truly modern housekeeping. Another utility company, for its part, resorted back to the language that had emerged at the turn of the century, calling electricity a servant in the home. Thanks to electricity, the advertisement claimed, the housewife ceased to be 'a slave to the household'.

Whilst being strong advocates of the role of modern technology in improving domestic practices, many of those involved still characterised domestic pursuits as being an essentially feminine activity. In the foreword to the cookbook, the president of the EAW advisory council, Dr Frances McKay heralded that 'the modern method of preparing food for consumption is ELECTRIC COOKING' (emphasis in the original). It was, she added, 'quite simple to anyone of ordinary intelligence, making it possible for anyone to lay claim to the truly feminine virtue of being a

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143 Ibid.
144 Ibid., 244.
145 McKenzie and Electrical Association for Women (Australia), Cookery Book.
146 Ibid., 72.
147 Ibid.
149 McKenzie and Electrical Association for Women (Australia), Cookery Book, 8.
good cook'. McKay praised the convenience of electricity and the ease and comfort it provided in the kitchen. In language similar to that used by Nora Curle Smith almost three decades earlier, McKay told the housewife that by using an electric stove 'she has a cool kitchen, hence she herself has less wear and tear on her own nervous system as she has both less work and less worry'.

Electricity suppliers and electrical stove manufacturers faced stiff competition from existing technologies. They entered a market that was already saturated, with most homes already having a stove in the kitchen. They needed to find a way to market their products to their potential customers. Like the manufacturers and suppliers of previous technologies, they found cookbooks a fruitful medium through which to do so. The one advantage they had over their competitors was that they could rightly lay claim to being the newest and most modern technology available on the market.

**Conclusion**

From the moment locally produced cookbooks appeared on the Australian market, they were intrinsically linked with the rise of new domestic technologies. Their pages featured advertisements for a wide range of new utensils and appliances that were appearing on the market and finding their way into Australian kitchens. New energy sources like gas and electricity became widespread in the home and were promoted in the pages of cookbooks. Many cookbook authors in late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia found themselves at the nexus between production and consumption. They were attempting to redefine the nature of domestic work in the kitchen in a rational and scientific manner and the advent of new technologies suited their purposes. They used their expertise to provide detailed instructions on

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150 Ibid.
151 Ibid., 10.
the use of these technologies and to promote their role in the modern and rational
dish. These authors also used their reputation as experts to become an intrinsic
part in the broader marketing of utilities and appliances through the provision of
cooking classes to the public.

The marketing strategy of the companies that manufactured and provided these
products was explicitly aimed at a female audience who were their primary users.
The companies promoting new domestic technologies, such as stoves, were
attempting to sell an idealised vision of their products; one that was primarily
predicated on their labour-saving properties. Yet, as Ruth Cowan points out, there are
three distinct steps in the work process associated with stoves: fuel must be supplied,
the meal must be cooked and the appliance must be cleaned; the introduction of
modern stoves using gas or electricity only eliminated the first of these steps.\textsuperscript{152}
Many of the advertisements appearing in cookbooks for these appliances, and the
utilities which fuelled them, insisted that these last two steps would also be
simplified by the marvels of these new technologies. While some aspects of
housework were indeed reorganised by technological changes, the actual changes to
the nature and amount of labour required of housewives, as Cowan recognises,
remained debatable.\textsuperscript{153}

The success of promoters in convincing individuals to actually purchase these goods
is also debatable. The adoption of new technologies in the Australian home was a
slow and sporadic process; one that was contingent on a wide number of factors
including availability and cost. Nevertheless, the rise of commodity culture in
Australia, a culture that was selling a lifestyle as much as it was selling a product,
can be clearly seen in the pages of cookbooks.

\textsuperscript{152} Cowan, \textit{More Work for Mother}, 98.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
Conclusion

Beef-steak Pudding

Take two pound, of rump steak, and cut into seasonable pieces; and cut into shreds two or three onions. Paste the pudding-basin with good crust, not too rich nor too poor. Put the meat into the basin, with some pepper and salt, and a dozen oysters, with a little thickening, composed of mushroom ketchup, flour and water, and mustard. Simmer for an hour and a half, and serve in the basin; or turn it out, if the gravy in the pudding can be retained.

*The English and Australian Cookery Book* (1864)

In many ways, the cookbooks examined throughout this thesis expose an inherently conservative streak in Australian culture. Lingering British tastes and culinary xenophobia meant Australia would have to wait until the last decades of the twentieth century to fully embrace gastronomic change. There are those who argue, however, that many Anglo-Australians still demonstrate a marked predilection for the traditional ‘meat and three veg’. The recipes contained within Australian cookbooks changed little between 1864 and 1939 and even these mirrored their British predecessors. It is the remarkable similarity in the culinary content of cookbooks that makes them such a useful vehicle to chart the many other changes occurring in Australian society. While many of the recipes remained the same, the other implicit and explicit discourses contained within their pages did not. Many aspects of Australian culture can be discerned in the pages of cookbooks, albeit often in subtle ways. Through their pages we can explore many of the changes in Australian society and the manner in which these changes resonated in the lives of everyday Australians.

The recipe for beefsteak pudding in Edward Abbott’s 1864 work *The English and Australian Cookery Book*, for example, bears a close similarity to that in Stella Allen’s 1938 cookbook *Recipes by Vesta*, save for the substitution of kidneys for oysters. Yet, these two books are very different and reflect the evolution of the cookbook in Australia.
and that of Australian culture as a whole. These books represent two distinct examples of the various genres of cookbooks that were available on the Australian market. Abbott’s book was the first of many examples of the single-authored cookbook in Australia. Allen’s work, which grew from the pages of the *Argus*, illustrated both the compiled and cross-promotional genre of cookbook that was so prevalent throughout the nation. The physical properties of the books also differed greatly. Abbott’s work was a handsome hardbound volume with a gilt design on the front cover. *Recipes by Vesta*, on the other hand, was produced cheaply and stapled into a paper cover. Priced at between 4 and 5 shillings, *The English and Australian Cookery Book* was by no means the most expensive cookbook on the market but still beyond the financial reach of many people in the colonies. Allen’s book, like many other promotional cookbooks examined throughout this thesis, was issued for free. Finally, the individuals who wrote these books were very different and reflect the changes that were occurring in Australian society. Abbott was an amateur with a reputation for keeping a good table who turned his hand to writing a cookbook. Allen, in turn, was a professional and a well-known and respected journalist who edited the women’s section in the *Argus* for over thirty years and edited a number of cookbooks.

This thesis has explored how cookbooks were a crucial element in actively contributing to a distinct Australian culture. As a popular cultural form they influenced Australian society in ways that extended far beyond their intended use in the home. Yet, it is their prominent place within the home that made cookbooks such a significant element in the shaping of that society. Cookbooks also reflected many of the transformations that occurred within Australian society. Their pages resonate with these changes and mirror the culture and times that produced them. In turn, many aspects to be found within them are also indicative of the continuities that were present within that society.
Notions of class stratification in Australia are complicated by the ‘middle class tastes’ catered for by the vast majority of Australian cookbooks. Social classes across Australia ate in remarkably similar fashion. This is not only an indication of the relative prosperity of the nation but also of a defined ‘middle class’ that encompassed a wider section of society than it did in Britain. The much cherished ideal of egalitarianism which, for many Australians, marked them as distinct from their British brethren was in ample evidence on the table and in the pages of cookbooks. It is only in the way that cookbooks dealt with the issue of servants in the home, I argue, that they clearly evince some of the class divisions that existed in Australian society.

Australian cookbooks to 1939 overwhelmingly catered for the Anglo-Australian palate and reflected a general ambivalence toward all things foreign. The putative ‘white Australian’ audience for these books was implied in the choice of recipes they contained. For many in Australia, food often had a deeply private component, being prepared and consumed within the realm of the home. Yet, food was also a communal experience and was openly shared through rituals, feasts, the contexts in which it was bought and sold, and, most importantly, reciprocal exchange. This act of sharing of food is also known as commensality, from the Latin for shared table. Commensality is an important activity that indicates equality, friendship, and the promise of further links stemming from the intimate act of dining together. However, commensality does not only foster close personal relationships, it is also one of the elements in the construction and maintenance of a collective identity.¹ Cookbooks facilitated a virtual commensality across the country with an imagined community of diners sharing recipes from the same page.

Not everyone, however, was allowed a place at the table. A number of cookbooks expressed racialised sentiments arguing for the superiority of the white inhabitants of Australia. Many authors believed that improved diet and nutrition facilitated by cookbooks would serve as a means to improve the racial fitness of Australians. Here, cookbooks echoed wider concerns in Australian society regarding fears of racial degradation as well as confirming ideals of racial exclusion.²

The vast majority of Australian cookbooks that appeared on the market to 1939 were written by women. Only a handful of men found their way into print in what was a distinctively feminine genre. The authors of these cookbooks represent a wide, if not necessarily complete, cross-section of women in Australian society. They ranged from housewives to journalists and from publicans to professionally trained cookery instructors. The writing of cookbooks, as I have shown throughout this thesis, became a way through which women could demonstrate their knowledge and expertise to a broader audience. A number of cookbook authors were able to turn their skills in the art of cookery into full-time professional careers as advice columnists in newspapers. The rise of the domestic science movement in Australia led to the increased professionalization of cookbook writers, who produced books in conjunction with their teaching roles as cookery instructors in schools and technical colleges. The amateurs who contributed recipes to the myriad fundraising cookbooks in Australia found an outlet not only to express their creativity and culinary abilities but also a way to contribute to the wellbeing of their local community. While this thesis has briefly examined the careers of some of the more prominent women cookbook authors, their lives are worthy of further biographical exploration.

Many of the cookbooks examined in this thesis attempted to reiterate gendered norms of behaviour, placing women firmly within the domestic sphere. These books were written with a female audience clearly in mind, often explicitly addressing the housewife or lady of the house in their introductions and titles. They often prescribed what were deemed to be suitable dishes for women, favouring the light and dainty over the heavy and coarse. However, as my study shows, the insistent manner in which authors called upon women to maintain traditional domestic and feminine roles can be read as evidence that these roles were being challenged by many. The separate spheres of life advocated by cookbook authors did not fit with the real experiences of all of their readers. A number of authors also realised that a life lived firmly ensconced in the domestic sphere was not an option for many women, so they provided advice in order for them to be able to use their cooking abilities beyond the home. The persistence of gendered stereotypes throughout the cookbooks examined in this thesis, however, is suggestive of continuing concerns regarding what was deemed to be the most suitable role for women in Australian society.

The cookbook authors involved in the domestic science movement strove to elevate the status of cookery and other aspects of domestic work. While authors such as Amy Schauer and Flora Pell were successful in promoting domestic science classes in their respective states and establishing careers as instructors in the discipline, they ultimately failed in their pursuit to raise perceptions of the status of housework. Culinary reformers had to tackle a range of cultural and social conflicts, as well as contradictions and ironies in promoting domestic science. These experts had expanded their activities into the public sphere while continuing to advocate an intrinsically domestic role for most women. The cookbooks produced by the domestic science movement, including the *Australian Economic Cookery Book and Housewife's Companion*, also attempted to redefine the genre by rationalising the approach to cookery in the home. What had
previously been regarded as an art was now deemed to be a science. Cookbooks also reflected broader concerns that were present in Australian society regarding the physical and moral wellbeing of the nation. As one element in the social reform movement in Australia, the recipes within the pages of domestic science cookbooks were one of the formulas that led Australia to become the much vaunted ‘social laboratory’ of the world.

From the earliest days of European settlement in Australia, cookbooks played a significant part in shaping the colonial project. Throughout the nineteenth century, the British cookbooks used by settlers to Australia helped to ease anxieties about their place in a new land. The comfort and familiarity provided by the dishes reproduced from these books was a continual reminder of the essentially British nature of colonial society. Even when settlers introduced the exotic local fauna into their diets it was negotiated through British cookbooks. Kangaroo replaced hare in a traditional British recipe to become the Australian recipe for ‘Kangaroo Steamer’. In 1861 Isabella Beeton wrote that ‘a Christmas dinner, with the middle classes of this empire, would scarcely be a Christmas dinner without its turkey’.² Twenty years earlier and in the most distant reaches of that empire, Katherine Kirkland had replicated this British tradition using a native wild turkey, most likely using her copy of Meg Dods’ *The Cook and Housewife’s Manual* for inspiration. These British cookbooks became a way through which settlers attempted to tame and civilize their new environment. In many ways the civilising process wrought on the edible landscape through the use of British cookbooks is emblematic of a similar process carried out on the broader environment through the imposition of European farming practices. The British cookbooks on which settlers relied became one of the means through which the practice and material culture of colonialism could be spread to all corners of the empire. The fact that it took more than

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seventy five years before a book written by an Australian appeared on the market highlights the enduring impact of British cookbooks on colonial culture in Australia.

Cookbooks were an important part of the publishing industry in Australia with countless publishing firms, printers and individuals involved in their publication. They began as a trickle but soon proliferated in the market and became a profitable concern for many publishing firms. By their own admission, Angus and Robertson owed their commercial success to profits from their most popular cookbooks. Many cookbooks, however, did not benefit from the services of large publishing concerns and only saw the light of day thanks to the ingenuity and enterprise of their authors.

It was not only authors and publishers who profited from cookbooks. Businesses of every ilk used cookbooks to promote and advertise their products. In particular, those selling products for use in the home found them useful vehicles through which to directly reach consumers. Community groups throughout Australia also took advantage of the popularity of cookbooks in order to raise funds for their causes. Religious organisations and schools were amongst the groups that produced some of Australia’s most iconic cookbooks, such as the Presbyterian Women’s Cookery Book or South Australia’s Green and Gold Cookery Book.

The arrival of new domestic technologies in Australia was mirrored by a rise in cookbooks featuring advertisements for these products in their pages. Manufacturers of domestic appliances, such as refrigerators and stoves, as well as the utility companies whose services fuelled these appliances, found in cookbooks an invaluable resource through which to market their wares. Cookbook authors also became part of the promotional apparatus through the cookbooks they produced and the provision of classes, which educated many in the use of these new technologies. These writer’s reputation and prestige were also instrumental in convincing householders to purchase
expensive goods. In most cases, these cookbooks were selling to the Australian consumer an ideal of modernity that promised relief from the arduous tasks of household labour. In reality, these promises did not live up to expectations. Most significantly, I argue, the promotion of these goods and services through cookbooks was part of a concerted effort to specifically target women as consumers.

Once locally produced cookbooks appeared on the market they still overwhelmingly reproduced the traditional foodways of Britain while, at the same time, recreating them in response to changing tastes and conditions. From the very start they aspired to reflect the changing nature of Australian society. Echoes of the larger social and political concerns of a society tentatively beginning to emerge from the shadow of Britain resonated in the pages of cookbooks. These concerns were manifested in the choice of ingredients, in the name of a recipe or in the title of the book. The choice of some variant of the word Australian in the title of a cookbook, as I have argued, was a deliberate one and was imbued with symbolism. Cookbooks produced in Australia reflected the emergence of a culture that was increasingly self-conscious, considering itself part of the British Empire but also demonstrating traits that were uniquely Australian. This study draws attention to the fact that emerging ideas of nationhood were present across many different aspects of Australian society; not only in the corridors of power and in the pages of magazines like the Bulletin but also in the pages of quotidian texts like cookbooks.

Authors and publishers became increasingly aware of the need to produce cookbooks that catered for Australian conditions. This was often a pragmatic, and at times cynical, commercial decision to increase the market share of locally produced books in the face of stiff competition from imported volumes. Nevertheless, despite these commercial

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realities, the decision to write and publish Australian cookbooks was also a reflection of changes in the way that Australians saw themselves and their place in the world. The rapid growth of local cookbooks on the Australian market from the 1880s onward paralleled the emergence of other works written by Australians for Australians, such as those by Banjo Patterson and Henry Lawson. The public's appetite, both literally and metaphorically, demanded books that catered for Australian tastes. While Henry Lawson was called the 'first articulate voice of the Real Australia', I argue such an Australian voice was strongly present in the work of Wilhelmina Rawson almost a decade before Lawson's work appeared in print.5

This study has examined the ways that cookbooks can be used to explore some of the core developments in Australian culture, from the time of European settlement to 1939. Yet, many more possibilities abound for further research using these sources. An examination of cookbooks published after the Second World War, for example, would provide useful insights into developments in multiculturalism in Australia. The increased participation of women in the workforce could possibly be traced in the popularity of cookbooks in the 1960s and 70s with words such as 'easy' and 'fast' in their titles. Further examination of the many sub-genres of cookbooks, in a similar vein to Sarah Black's analysis of community cookbooks, would also be of scholarly significance.

Cookbooks were to be found at the heart of almost every Australian home and it was within these four walls that the foundations of Australian culture and society were forged. 'As the younger members of the family grow up and become themselves the heads of households', Harriet Wicken reminded her readers, 'the influence of their early

homes will be upon them.\footnote{6} Cookbooks became a key site through which many aspects of Australian culture were constructed; they functioned not only as a vehicle for culinary instruction but as a means of defining what it was to be Australian. The contrasting and often contradictory discourses that were evident in the pages of cookbooks were reflective of a society in a state of flux, a society that was changing in response to the expectations of its citizens as well as to broader national and global concerns. The evolving characteristics of Australian society found a clear expression in the pages of the cookbooks it produced. Cookbooks articulated and shaped the tastes, ideals and prejudices of a dominant white, middle-class Australian culture and provided recipes for creating a nation in their image.

\footnote{6 Harriet Wicken, The Australian Home: a Handbook of Domestic Economy (Sydney: Edwards, Dunlop, 1891), 244.}
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