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The Whispering Wire

*Tracing the Overland Telegraph Line through
the Heart of Australia*

by Rosamund Burton

10 October 2022, Memoir, RRP \$34.95, PB, ISBN 9781743059609



Interweaving history and travel, this entertaining story traces one woman's journey tracing the 3200 km Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin. Constructed between 1870 and 1872, the line transformed Adelaide into Australia's communication hub, connecting the continent with the rest of the world and heralding the dawn of instant communication.

Struggling with a lack of experience and fitness, Rosamund Burton and her friend cycle the first 800 km from Adelaide through the Flinders Ranges to the deserted outback town of Farina, battling piercing winds and pelting rain, visiting sites and chatting with locals as they go. She continues with her husband by 4WD along remote dirt tracks searching for derelict repeater stations, before completing the journey from Alice Springs to Darwin delivering a unwieldy campervan.

The author moves across the continent, storytelling, sharing its sometimes brutal history and listening to those who have lived in this harsh but beautiful country. This quest for connection with the land and an understanding of its people, is also an exploration of what it means for the author, being Irish born, to belong in Australia.

Rosamund Burton was born in Ireland and grew up in England, before returning to Ireland with her family when she was eighteen. She became an actress, performing at Dublin's Gate and Gaiety Theatres, and in the film *Educating Rita* with Julie Walters and Michael Caine. She then worked for the UK's first left-wing think-tank. She moved to Australia in the mid-1990s following her fascination with her mother's stories of growing up in Australia. She writes for a range of newspapers and magazines and lives in Sydney with her husband Steve.