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Jennifer Byrne says goodbye to ABC

Jennifer Byrne, host of ABC's *The Book Club*, will step aside from her long-running role after *The Book Club's Christmas Special* which goes to air on 19 December, 2017.

Jennifer says, "What a joy these past 11 years have been. And what a privilege to share my love of books with a wide, loyal audience on the national broadcaster. You don't get better jobs – or better co-conspirators than Jason and Marieke, who've been with me from the start. We've had huge fun, tangled with some brilliant minds (and books), and read like threshing machines.

"For me it's now time for a break, both to explore what might come next and remember what it's like to read for pleasure alone. I'm proud we've run so long and strong. International authors were often astonished – and envious – that a show like ours existed, let alone endured. Thanks to the ABC which backed us, to the publishing industry which embraced us - and deepest thanks to the readers who travelled with us. I've loved the journey more than I can say."

Jennifer and fellow book lovers Marieke Hardy and Jason Steger have been the go-to team for book-lovers for over a decade. Born out of *My Favourite Book* in 2004, a 90-minute Sunday night special that reached over a million viewers, *First Tuesday Book Club* established itself in 2006, as a reliable guide to the best in books, reading and smart conversation.

Attracting giants of the Australian and international literary scene to both *The Book Club* and *Jennifer Byrne Presents*, guests have included JK Rowling, Helen Garner, Bill Bryson, Paula Hawkins, Jeanette Winterson, Richard Flanagan, Tim Winton, Alan Cumming, Richard E Grant, Junot Diaz, Peter Carey, Michael Palin, Michael Robotham, Di Morrissey, Toni Jordan, Will Self and Jon Ronson, to name a few.

A well-credentialed Jennifer Byrne was the perfect choice to host the new show when it began: not only is she an avid reader, but she had previously worked as Publishing Director at Reed Books. Having trained as a print journalist - she was at one-time Assistant Editor at *The Age's Monthly Review* - Jennifer moved on to television, where she became a Logie-winning television reporter for the *Sunday* program and spent seven years travelling the world for *60 Minutes*. She then went on to present ABC TV's *Foreign Correspondent*.

David Anderson, ABC Director of Television says, "For 11 years Jennifer Byrne has been entertaining book lovers with her erudite mix of guests; heartily arguing over new releases, disputing the classics, grappling with the best summer reads, and managing to do it all with a healthy dose of laughter, affection and insight.

"We will be sad to see *The Book Club* go, but understand Jennifer's decision and thank Jennifer, Marieke and Jason for the hours of reading, thinking, and talking they have shared with our audiences."

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