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Sucked In. Shane Maloney. Text, 2007.

Review by Gillian Dooley for *The Adelaide Review*, 8 June 2007, p. 19.

Number six in Shane Maloney's Murray Whelan series shows the likeable Victorian Labor MP in the doldrums of 1990s state politics. Maloney's ironic disclaimer claims that 'the author of this book, its setting and characters, are entirely fictitious. There is no such place as Melbourne. The Australian Labor Party exists only in the imagination of its members.' Sure, and there was no Liberal Premier named Kenneth Geoffries who 'could strut standing still', either.

The book's cover calls it a thriller. I'm inclined to cry false advertising. It's a page-turner, certainly, and highly enjoyable, but that's not because of the plot. I found myself drawn back to reading *Sucked In* at every available moment not because I desperately needed to know what would happen next, or who done it. The nearest I can come to a reason is that I enjoyed Whelan's company. I liked following him around a Melbourne sketched in just enough detail to make it feel familiar. I enjoyed his genial, profane, phlegmatic approach to politics, love, fatherhood and life in general. I even quite liked his addiction to dated Aussie slang. Murray Whelan is due for one more outing, according to Maloney's website. I'm looking forward to it.