**Vale - Lara Amy Irvine**

**9/12/1982 - 24/04/2020**

Lara was born in Stawell, Victoria, the second child of Alison and Robert Irvine.

She was educated at Stawell Cooinda Kindergarten, Stawell Primary School and Stawell Secondary College.

School was a great outlet for Lara, she nurtured a love for knowledge, learning and understanding and she made lifelong friends.

Lara was curious about the world, so it was no surprise when she applied to be part of the Rotary Youth Exchange Program through the Stawell Rotary Club. Lara spent the year 2000 living and studying in Tuxtepec, Oaxaca, Mexico. Lara learned to speak and write Spanish and gained many international friends through the Youth Exchange Program. She returned to Stawell and completed Year 12 in 2001. Lara then moved to Melbourne to attend RMIT University and she successfully completed a degree in International Studies with Spanish language as one of her majors. As part of her studies, she gained a scholarship to travel and study in South Korea for 6 months.

From 2005 until 2007, Lara moved to London and very soon found a variety of work to help finance her European travels.

Lara returned to Australia in 2007. In 2008 she returned to study, as her auto-immune illness restricted her health, and she was unable to work. She completed a Graduate Diploma of Literary Studies at Deakin University over several years, as her health allowed. During this time, she was awarded The Meg Endersby Bursary for Coursework Masters through the then Federation of University Women (now Graduate Women – Victoria).

Lara did not want to be defined by her illnesses. She was an avid writer and reader. She used her literary skills to pursue her writing in many genres, she reviewed books and was a valued editor and sounding board for her writing colleagues. Her novel, a longtime project, remains unfinished.

Lara is survived by her parents Alison and Robert, older brother Jeremy and her younger sister Sian; and missed by her long term faithful, furry friends Fred and Boop.