



Australian
National
University

BIOGRAPHY FOOTNOTES

The Newsletter of the National Centre of Biography

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Lisa Hilli

Filae Maria Immaculata Sisters of Vunapope, 2018-20

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A Note from the Editor

Following on from the last issue in December 2020, *Biography Footnotes* will now be published annually every December.

In this issue we are pleased to feature the work of the Oceania Working Party. Our front cover features the work of OWP member and artist, Lisa Hilli.

Please contact us if you have any material or news you wish to be included in next year's edition of the newsletter; contributions are always welcome.

At the end of another difficult year we, at the NCB, hope you enjoy a restful holiday season and look forward to the coming year.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Melanie Nolan, *Canberra Times*,
3 April 2021 (Dion Georgopoulos)

Welcome to Issue 22 of *Biography Footnotes*

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has attracted some remarkable commitments from its volunteers over the years. The Tasmanian Working Party epitomises this. As of last month, its six members had a combined service of 225 years—on average almost 38 years each. Three members are nonagenarians, one of whom is Michael Roe. He has written 33 *ADB* articles (the average number for an *ADB* author is one or two) and has been an *ADB* working party member for 61 years (1960–2021). Michael has been the anchor of the Tasmanian Working Party since its inception, holding the executive positions of chairman and section editor until Stefan Petrow succeeded him in 2012. Now, the entire working party has resigned, deciding that this is the right time to hand over responsibility to a new group, given the *ADB* Editorial Board has decided to revise the *ADB* once we complete volume 20.

As I wrote letters of thanks for outgoing Tasmanian working party members and warm welcomes to incoming new members, and chair Kristyn Harman, I was all too aware of the huge obligation the *ADB* owes to its volunteers. For over sixty years the *ADB*'s success has rested on the voluntary contribution of community networks throughout Australia.

There is a feeling of a changing of the guard, which is underlined by a series of deaths of esteemed volunteers. In this number there are obituaries for Peter Howell (featured previously), Wendy Birman and Gail Clements. Wendy gave 55 years of service to the *ADB* from 1966 as a State research assistant, then working party member and emerita member; she was a close family friend of Malcolm Allbrook, our managing editor. Gail Clements was an *ADB* research editor, managing editor, contract editor, and an advisor thereafter; her husband, Bob, is an *ADB* editorial fellow.

Indeed, the trend for some staff members to go on to be *ADB* volunteers continues; Darryl Bennet is playing an

advisory role in the revisions planning, and Chris Cunneen is transferring the 2,000 subjects in the *Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement* to *People Australia*. Family connections among those involved in the *ADB* are remarkable, too, when there is intergenerational commitment to the *ADB*, as with the Clements. I take up this theme more extensively in an article in this number of the newsletter.

On face value the *ADB* might seem to be one of the only organisations that historian Stuart Macintyre, who died last month, did not belong to. However, he greatly contributed to the funding and survival of the *ADB*. He was a CI on the ARC LIEF grants, which funded the *ADB*'s online transition; he made a submission on the *ADB* to the ANU's Gregory Review in 2007; he was a member of the Editorial Board of the NCB/*ADB*'s ANU.Lives series in biography; and he checked in with me regularly to find out how the *ADB* was faring. He was also an *ADB* author, having written a dozen articles. His, then, is another recent 'death in the *ADB* family'.

The *ADB* Editorial Board for the term 2021–2026 has been appointed. I warmly welcome new board members Melanie Oppenheimer, Mark Dunn, Rae Frances, Deborah Gare, Karl James, Mark McKenna, and Elizabeth Rushen. And I thank retiring members Joy Damousi, Beverley Kingston, Lenore Layman, Stefan Petrow, and Paul Pickering for their service.

At any one time, in its national collaboration the *ADB* has hundreds of volunteers, who give their services freely. It shows the power of people, even working 'part-time' or fractionally, together on one project.

Melanie Nolan

Director, National Centre of Biography
General Editor, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

Congratulations

Helga Griffin, long time *ADB* bibliographer and research editor (1979–1998), published her book, *At Home in Exile: A Memoir* (ANU Press) in February. In her memoir Helga portrays everyday life in the Australia of the late 1940s and early 1950s, and reflects on her identity as a German migrant.

ANU Giving Day 2021

The *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* was highlighted as one of the key funds for the ANU's 2021 Giving Day. During the fundraising event \$6,000 was raised for the *ADB* Indigenous endowment. The *ADB* is grateful for the support of this important project. If you wish to contribute, donations are still being accepted.

Book Donation to the NCB/ADB Library

Ian Mason has recently gifted the *ADB* two copies of Ian J. Mason and Gilbert H. Pfitzner, *Passions in ornithology: A century of Australian egg collectors* (Canberra: Ian J. Mason and Gilbert H. Pfitzner, 2020) and a supplementary edition to this publication (2021).

An ornithologist, taxonomist, and authority on oology, Ian is the Senior Collection Manager for the Australian National Wildlife Collection at the CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems Division in Canberra. An army of people (mostly scientists) have helped produce this splendid limited-copy book, which includes 303 biographies of those prominent in Australian egg collecting over the last century.

Like other Australian national cultural institutions, the *ADB* does not have funds to buy books for the library. Ian works in the same way as the *ADB*, which one of our authors has described as the “smell of an oily rag and lots of loving volunteers”. As such, we are very grateful for Ian's generous donation.

Biographical Register of Indigenous People in WA

Dr Neville Green AM, together with his daughter Susan Aguiar, has compiled a broadsheet of Indigenous people in Western Australia.

After working on the project for more than 11 years, Neville and Susan have digitised their work and are distributing free copies to libraries in WA. They have generously offered to gift a copy to the *ADB*.

Neville hopes to digitise and disseminate his previously published biographical registers, *Aborigines of the Albany region 1821-1898* (1989); and, with Lois Tilbrook, *Aborigines of New Norcia 1845-1914* (1989).

Links to *People Australia* on HDAE graduates

Data on Australian university graduates is now live on Richard Harrison's website, [Historical Data on Australian Elites](#).

Currently available are data for 37,000 graduates and their 50,000 degrees for the period 1856 to 1945. There is more work to do yet on adding additional information, improving search functionality, and listing source information.

Richard has made an effort to link every entry to our biographical websites, where there is one for that graduate. So far there are 2,067 entries linked to an *ADB* article, 276 linked to an *Obituaries Australia* page, and 172 entries linked directly to a *People Australia* page. The total number of graduates with links is 2,515, which is 6.7 per cent of all entries.

The *ADB* in translation

The *ADB* is being translated into Chinese. On 6 November 2020 the General Editor signed a Translation Agreement with the Shaanxi People's Publishing House and the Australian Studies Centre at the Xi'an International Studies University to enhance and broaden the study of Australian history in China by translating selected *ADB* entries.

The publication of the first of five volumes of 澳大利亚名人传选译 (五卷 Selected Translation of the *ADB* into Mandarin), with a preface by the General Editor, is forthcoming. Volume 1 is on novelists who died before 1950; volume 2 on novelists who died after 1950; volume 3 is playwrights in the *ADB*; volume 4 is on poets who died before 1950; and volume 5 is on poets who died after 1950. In all, over six hundred *ADB* entries will be translated and published.

Translating selected *ADB* entries into Chinese is enhancing and broadening the study of Australian history in China. The project is being led by Dr Tiping Su (苏缙平) of Xi'an International Studies University, who was a post-doctoral fellow in the NCB/ADB, ANU, for a year (2015–16). Dr Su's postdoctoral project was to explore the *ADB*'s inclusion of Chinese Australians, particularly in the colonial era which he wrote up as ‘Chinese in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and in Australia’—published in the first number of the [Australian Journal of Biography and History](#), in 2018.

At the same time, Dr Su is now Director of the Australian Studies Centre at the Xi'an International Studies University. This centre was established in 2000 in the School of English Studies at the Xi'an International Studies University by a member of the ‘Gang of Nine’, who was among the first Chinese students to study in Australia in the late 1970s. Its mission is to act as a centre of activity for Australian Studies, and to introduce Chinese culture to Australians and Australian studies to Chinese. The *ADB* translation project was conceived in the hope that more Chinese people will gain access to Australian literature, culture, and people, and that this, in turn, will play a role in forming closer connections between the two countries.

ADB Working Parties

We thank the outgoing *ADB* Tasmanian Working Party members for their many years of dedicated service:

Michael Roe served 61 years as an *ADB* Working Party member from 1960 to 2021.

Margaret Glover Scott served for 42 years as the *ADB*'s Tasmanian research assistant (1978–84, 2009–8), and was an *ADB* Working Party member from 1979 to 2021.

Shirley Margaret Eldershaw served for 33 years as an *ADB* Working Party member from 1988 to 2021. Her late husband, Peter Ross Eldershaw (1927–1967), was a Working Party member from 1960 to 1967.

Stefan Petrow served for 33 years as an *ADB* Working Party member from 1988 to 2021.

Elizabeth (Beth) McLeod (1931–2021), who passed away this year aged 90, was the *ADB*'s Tasmanian research assistant from 1974–77 and served for 47 years on the Tasmanian Working Party, from 1974 to 2021.

Publication News

Australian Journal of Biography and History, no. 5 (ANU Press, 2021)

Edited by **Joshua Black** and **Stephen Wilks**, volume 5 of *AJBH* is a special issue on political biography, published in August. This issue of *Biography Footnotes* features an edited version of Jack Waterford's speech from the volume's launch held via Zoom on 10 September.

Family History and Historians in Australia and New Zealand (Routledge, 2021)

Edited by **Malcolm Allbrook** and **Sophie Scott-Brown**, this volume arose from an *NCB* conference held in 2017. The collection brings together leading and emerging Australian and New Zealand scholars to consider the relationship between family history and the discipline of history, and the potential of family history to extend the scope of historical inquiry, even to revitalise the discipline.

In the Media

Joshua Black interviewed by Steve Austin on [ABC Radio Brisbane](#) about Australia's political memoirs on 7 July 2021.

Joshua Black, 'Julia Banks' new book is part of a 50-year tradition of female MPs using memoirs to fight for equality' published in [The Conversation](#) on 8 July 2021.

Melanie Nolan discussed *ADB*, vol. 19 with Georgia Stynes on [ABC radio](#) on 10 March 2021.

Staff News

Dr Nicholas Hoare joined the *NCB/ADB* on contract as a research editor for the second half of 2021.

Joshua Black, *NCB* PhD candidate, won a CASS Award for Excellence in Tutoring or Demonstrating for his tutoring in the School of History. We congratulate Josh and applaud his hard work and dedication to teaching.

Em. Prof. Mark McKenna is to be an Honorary Professor in the *NCB/ADB* from 2021 to 2026. Mark has an expertise in biography, having written about biography as a literary form/genre as well as being a prize-winning biographer. Mark is an incoming member of the *ADB* Editorial Board 2021–2026.

Dr Chris Wallace, Visiting Fellow, 2021–22. Chris is working on several projects including the 'Caseys in Washington 1940–42: Smart Power Strengths and Limitations'.

Dr Jacqueline Kent was to have been a visitor at the *NCB* from 1 September to 31 October 2021. This was postponed due to COVID and rescheduled to coincide with the annual Seymour Biography Lecture which she will deliver in March 2022 as part of International Women's Day celebrations. While a centre visitor, Jacquie will conduct research for her book about radical women writers, to be published by NewSouth Publishing.

Congratulations

to *ADB* volunteers—authors and members of Working Parties—who received Australian honours since the last newsletter.

Australia Day Honours (2021)

Order of Australia Companion (AC) in the General Division

Rabbi Dr John Levi

Officer (AO) in the General Division

Emeritus Professor Andrew Markus

Professor Paul Memmott
Emeritus Professor Kay Saunders
Member (AM) in the General Division
Dr Stephen Judd
Emeritus Professor John Melville-Jones
Dr Milton Osborne
Emeritus Professor Wilfrid Prest

Medal (OAM) in the General Division

Mr Norman Houghton
Dr Hilary Rubinstein

Queen's Birthday Honours (2021)

Member (AM)

Emeritus Professor Jaynie Anderson
Emeritus Professor David Carter
Mr Lee Christofis
Emeritus Professor Ann Curthoys
Dr John Jell

Medal (OAM)

Dr Susan Lever
Dr Valerie Yule

ADB author deaths

It is with sadness that we note the deaths that have been reported to us since December 2020, of the following *ADB* authors:

J. Bach
Wendy Birman
Diane Collins
Dorothy M. Gibson-Wilde
Gail Clements
Peter Howell
Kenneth W. Knight
Stuart Macintyre

Beth McLeod
Alan Powell
J. A. Ryan
Graeme Starr
Bill Tully
Bill Wilson
Valerie Constance Yule

1997 ADB ENTRIES

Christine Fernon highlights new entries from 1997

Entries are being added to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* website for those who died in 1997 from December, after COVID-related delays. As usual they include a diverse range of people. Many of the selection below will be familiar:

Lance Barnard (1919–1997), labor politician, followed in the footsteps of his father Herbert (who is also in the *ADB*), becoming the member for the Tasmanian seat of Bass in the House of Representatives in 1954. Appointed deputy leader of the party in 1967, Lance proved to be a loyal assistant to Gough Whitlam. As Minister for Defence (1972–1974) he presided over the merger of five departments—defence, navy, army, air, and supply—and the redirection of strategic policy to focus on Australia's immediate region. In 1973 he declined the offer of being the next governor-general (accepted by Sir John Kerr), and the following year lost the deputy leadership of the parliamentary party to Jim Cairns. In 1974, exhausted and dispirited, Barnard decided to leave parliament for a diplomatic appointment. The resultant 14.3 per cent swing in the byelection to the Liberals was widely seen as convincing Liberal Party leader, Malcolm Fraser, that he should withhold supply in the Senate, eventually precipitating the crisis that led to the dismissal of the Whitlam government in November 1975.

Burnum Burnum (1936–1997) was one of the stolen generations. While studying law at the University of Tasmania in the early 1970s, he was involved in the successful campaign to remove Truganini's bones from public display in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery for reburial. In 1973 he was appointed executive officer for Aboriginal Hostels Ltd. He is perhaps best remembered for planting a large Aboriginal flag dramatically into English soil beneath the White Cliffs of Dover during Australia's Bicentenary in 1988, declaring that he was claiming England, and offering the British 'a Koompartoo—"a fresh start"'. He continued that 'we are here to bring you good manners [and] refinement,' and stated 'we do not intend to souvenir, pickle and preserve the heads of 2,000 of your people, nor to publicly display the skeletal remains of your Royal Highness, as was done to our Queen Truganinni for 80 years'. The stunt resonated in television news around the world.

Edna Ryan (1904–1997) joined the NSW Communist Party (CPA) in 1927 and attended the first Australian demonstration for International Women's Day in Sydney the following year. In 1929 she was a delegate to the inaugural conference of the Militant Women's Movement. Expelled from the CPA in 1932, she joined the ALP in 1944. Following her husband's death in 1958, and with three young children to support, she became a clerk typist at Prospect County Council. It wasn't long before she began agitating for equal pay, becoming president of the local government association officers' branch (1965–72) and a member of the executive of the Municipal Employees Union. In her retirement she joined the Women's Electoral Lobby

and began 'a new life as a committed feminist', co-authoring WEL's submission for the 1974 national wage case. With Ann Conlon she wrote *Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work 1788–1974* (1975). In 1978 she prepared WEL's maternity leave case. By 1995 she had become an Australian feminist icon.

Hazel King (1908–1997). After studying history as a mature student at the University of Sydney in the 1950s, gaining an MA in 1956, King was awarded a PhD from Oxford University in 1960. In that same year she was appointed a lecturer at the University of Sydney, where she taught early modern European history until her retirement as a senior lecturer in 1974. Her scholarly reputation rested on her work on early colonial New South Wales. Joining the Royal Australian Historical Society in 1954, she served as the society's first female president (1982–84). Her [grandfather](#), [father](#), [aunt](#), and [sister](#) also have *ADB* entries.

Mollie Dive (1913–1997) began playing cricket for the University of Sydney women's cricket club as a student in 1932, scoring 107 not out in her first game. Selected for New South Wales the next year, she became captain in 1938. In 1948 she was selected to captain Australia in her first Test, played against New Zealand at Wellington and won by Australia. In 1949 she was the first Australian female captain to win an Ashes series, and in 1951 a drawn series made her the first to retain the Ashes in England. Following her playing days, she contributed much to sports administration. She was inducted into the New South Wales Hall of Champions in 1995 and the Cricket New South Wales Hall of Fame in 2015.



Mollie Dive, tour of England, 1951, Stanton Library

Colin Arthur Eather (1953–1997), electrician, coalminer, and farmer, and **Edward Henry Hughes** (1955–1997), council-worker, were highly experienced volunteer firefighters. Both died fighting a bush fire on 2 December 1997 on Scotsmans Hill at Lithgow, New South Wales. They were fighting the aftermath of a brush fire, and had gone to the top of a ridge above the local rubbish dump to finish bringing the fire under control. A sudden increase in wind strength caused the fire to flare and they became trapped. The names of the two men are inscribed on a monument commemorating New South Wales Emergency Services volunteers in the Sydney Royal Botanic Gardens and on the national memorial for fire and emergency services in Canberra.

Melanie Nolan welcomes a 'refitted' ADB

ANU Chancellor, Hon. Julie Bishop, launched volume 19 of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ANU Press) on 9 March at a function in the RSSS Building.

Below is a revised version of the speech by ADB General Editor, Melanie Nolan at the launch.

The video recording of the launch is available on [YouTube](#).

Volume 19 includes 680 short histories, by 513 authors, of representative Australians who died between 1991 and 1995. The first of two volumes for the 1990s, the book presents a collective biography of late twentieth-century Australian life. While biography necessarily focuses on the individual, collectively the biographies illuminate broader themes in Australia's recent history. While the volume is still in the shadow of World War II, with servicemen and women who enlisted young appearing, these influences are dimming. There are now increasing numbers of non-white, non-male, non-privileged, and non-straight subjects, as well as the usual suspects, Australians all.

Together the in-depth entries in this volume illuminate the changing nature of Australian society. First, the effects of post-war migration and increased mobility is being felt. By the 1990s, Australian society had become a diverse mix of cultures from all over the world with an estimated five million people living in Australia who were born overseas, and that is being reflected in the articles in the ADB.

The arts, for instance, are always well-represented. This volume includes writers: such as [Frank Hardy](#), [Mary Durack](#), and [Nene Gare](#). However, the effects of the steep rise in postwar immigration means there are articles on the likes of artist [Joseph Stanislaw Ostoja-Kotkowski](#) who was born in Golub, Poland. [Eva Bacon](#), dress designer, political activist, and feminist, was born in Vienna and arrived in Australia in 1939, later becoming active in the Communist Party of Australia and the women's movement. This flow of immigration is evident in all the walks of life. New organisations resulted from this huge social change and vol. 19 includes founders of modern Australian ethnic clubs. Diversity internal to Australia is on display too, like author, poet, and community leader, [Daisy Gawoon Utemorrhah](#). The extent to which ADB authors have worked with Indigenous families is a notable feature of the research towards this volume.

At the same time Australians were enthusiastic travellers and sojourners in this period. Decreases in the time and costs of air travel correlated to increases in the numbers of people travelling to and from Australia; arrivals exceeded departures by the 1990s. This has meant that the ADB's research editors are increasingly indebted to overseas universities and libraries for records and research.

A second major development reflected in this volume of late twentieth century ADB articles is that more tertiary and university-educated Australians came from a varied cultural background and included increasing numbers of women. A large proportion, 47.5 per cent, of subjects in this volume were



ADB staff with Editorial Board chair, Tom at the launch on 9 March 2021. [From left to right: Jenny Higgins, Karen Ciufettelli, Karen Fox, Sam Furphy, Melanie Nolan, Malcolm Allbrook, Stephen Wilks, Tom Griffiths.]

tertiary educated, having completed college, university, and vocational courses.

Thirdly, the selection and discussion of subjects has involved a lifting of silence on matters to do with sex, from same-sex relationships, and diseases associated with sex, to sexual abuse and domestic violence. Often in the past we have had a dearth of information on sexual relationships or domestic violence. In 1993 politician [Olive Zakharov](#) disclosed publicly that she was a survivor of domestic violence in her second marriage at the Victorian launch of the Federal government's campaign to Stop Violence against Women.

The ADB is constantly being refitted

We are setting out to ensure that the ADB is a resource of national significance about, as well as for, all Australians to be able to recognise themselves in its pages. The ADB is not static, but sets out to pick up those affected by historical developments. The ADB has prided itself on its blend of elitism and egalitarianism. We are all too aware that we still fall short, but we are making revisions continually. And we are working on plans for systematic revision after we complete volume 20.

It seems appropriate, perhaps especially on the day after International Women's Day, that the cover of this volume is [Dora Chapman](#)'s self-portrait, a canvas that she painted in about 1940. Because—well, let me count the ways—she was a married woman, who was mostly in paid employment all her life. She was tertiary educated at the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts and had a prize-winning career. Chapman served in the Australian Women's Army Service during World War II. She travelled overseas, spending five years in London and Europe. And she was interested in representation, or as she described it, 'in subject matter' or the 'likeness-as-genre'. Chapman's was realist portraiture, grappling with the art of representing aspects of human character, an objective to which ADB writers also aspire.

Melanie Nolan, 9 March 2021

Katerina Teaiwa reports on the activities of the OWP

We are delighted that Katerina Teaiwa has recently been promoted to Professor in Pacific Studies and Gender, Media and Cultural Studies in the School of Culture, History & Language at the ANU. Katerina became the inaugural Chair of the Oceania Working Party in 2017. An earlier PNG working party had faded away. Of over 13,500 entries in the *ADB*, only 31 were Pacific Islanders and only one had been authored by a Pacific Islander. With the assistance of Nick Hoare and Talei

Mangioni, Katerina is running a series of Pacific biography workshops. Only one other *ADB* working party has developed workshops to further its research and profile. In February 2021, the General Editor welcomed participants to the OWP's first workshop for 2021 'Sharing Pacific Lives in Australia'. Below is Katerina's fuller report on the Oceania Working Party for the year ending June 2021.

Working Party Members

Prof. Katerina Teaiwa, School of Culture, History and Language ANU (Chair)
Nicholas Hoare (Research officer)
Talei Mangioni (Outreach and engagement officer)

Indigenous Pacific Islanders/ South Sea Islanders/ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

Namila Benson (ABC Arts presenter and journalist)
Dion Enari (PhD candidate)
Dr Ruth Faleolo (School teacher)
Innez Haua (PhD candidate)

Lisa Hilli (PhD candidate and artist)
Kimberley Kruger (PhD candidate)
Dr Leah Lui-Chivizhe (University of Sydney)
Dr Melinda Mann (Adjunct, Central Queensland University)
Dr David Lakisa (Talanoa consultancy)
Dr Kirsten McGavin (University of Queensland)
Prof. Jioji Ravulo (University of Sydney)
Dr Rita Seumanutafa (VASA consultancy, musician)
Dulcie Stewart (Artist and University of Queensland librarian)
Seini F. Taumoepeau (Creative industries professional)

Emele Ugavule (Writer, director, creative producer)
Emelda Davis (South Sea Islander community leader)

Non-Indigenous Pacific OWP members

Kari James (Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, ANU)
Dr Jonathan Ritchie (Deakin University)
Assoc. Prof. Patricia O'Brien (Adjunct, Georgetown University)
Dr Vicki Luker (Retired)
Dr Chris Ballard (ANU)
Dr Nic Halter (University of the South Pacific and section editor)
Prof. Stephanie Lawson (Macquarie University)



Screenshot of the Pacific Biography in Australia Facebook Page

In spite of the COVID-19 lockdown challenges, the work of the Oceania Working Party (OWP) has gone from strength to strength over 2020–21. We continue to chart our evolution from a small, Canberra-based working party to a much larger, online network attracting the best of Australia's Pacific Islander minds, reflecting the depth and breadth of Australia's Pacific connections: from Torres Strait Islanders and Papua New Guineans, to the South Sea Islander community, to Maori, and other Polynesian and Micronesian communities in Australia.

Our goal remains to launch a Pacific Australian Dictionary of Biography. After spending last year's lockdown putting together an unsuccessful (but top 10% ranked) ARC Special

Research Initiative for an Australian Society, History, and Culture grant application with Malcolm Allbrook and the ANU's Research Office, the OWP now has a solid base to apply for further funding. We are exploring this, including philanthropy options, through the College of Asia and the Pacific (CAP).

In July 2020, we won a competitive Asia Pacific Innovation Program New Directions Grant from the CAP to support the OWP's work through to 2021. This CAP funding has provided casual salaries for our two RAs based with Katerina in CHL, Talei Luscia Mangioni and Nick Hoare, and will help us run a series of Pacific biography workshops. Katerina, Nick, and Talei were also able to co-author and submit an essay earlier this year on 'Finding Australia's Missing Pacific Women', for a forthcoming book *Reframing Indigenous Biography* edited by Shino Konishi, Malcolm Allbrook, and Tom Griffiths.

The first of these workshops, *Sharing Pacific Lives in Australia*, was held in February 2021 and featured a keynote lecture by Gunantuna (Tolai) artist and scholar Lisa Hilli. Lisa's talk was followed by a stimulating Q&A and several hours of smaller group discussions on the practice of 'Pacific Biography in Australia.' Over the course of the workshop, Talei, Nick and Katerina were able to showcase the work of the OWP, highlighting in particular the success of our Facebook page, also called 'Pacific Biography in Australia', which has over 1,700 followers.

Elsewhere, the OWP has been working hard on building

relationships and raising our profile. To this end, we have: created a call out for nominations to the *ADB*, published articles in the *ADB* and Pacific Manuscripts Bureau newsletters, and have held meetings with groups such as the DFAT funded Digital Pasifika online museum team (based in NZ) to have our biographical entries featured on their website. More recently we have started planning a workshop with Rockhampton-based working party member, Melinda Mann, about telling ASSI lives. In May, Talei spoke about our work at the Talanoa Digital Symposium on Archiving Ancestors alongside several Papua New Guinean storytellers (Wap-Hill Imbun, Samira Homerang-Saunders, and Lavau Kwalam) about using the OWP Facebook Page as a way of building connections across Pacific Australian communities through storytelling. The OWP plan to have their second official workshop, in collaboration with the CHL Indigenous

Remix Flagship, focusing on Australian South Sea Islander biography with Kim Kruger and Melinda Mann in Canberra in 2022, after COVID delays).

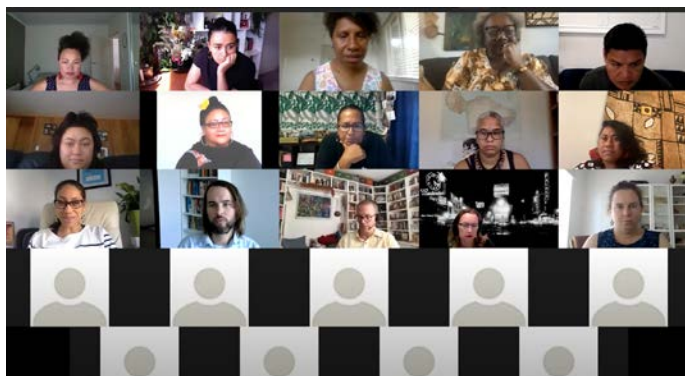
In terms of core business, the OWP maintains a list of 200+ personalities missing from previous decades or due for entry (1844–2000), and has published the following articles in 2020:

[Sir Paliau Maloat](#) (c.1907–1991)
[Oliver Noel Fatnowna](#) (1929–1991)
[Hammer DeRoburt](#) (1922–1992)
[Elizabeth \(Betty\) Crouch](#) (1917–1996)
[Aisoli Salin](#) (1913–1996)

Katerina Teaiwa, Professor in Pacific Studies and Gender, Media and Cultural Studies in the School of Culture, History & Language at the ANU, is the chair of the OWP.

Sharing Pacific Lives in Australia: Oceania Working Party Workshop Numba Wan

In February 2021, members and friends of the Oceania Working Party of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* learned more about the overlooked her-stories of the F.M.I. (Filae Maria Immaculata) Sisters of Vunapope in New Guinea. Gunantuna (Tolai) artist and scholar Lisa Hilli used her creative arts practice to research and represent this story. Composed of 45 brilliant, brave, and selfless Melanesian women, the congregation lived through the brutal Japanese occupation of Rabaul during World War II. Inspired by this act of courage, Lisa used this as an opportunity to foster a sense of visual kinship between Australian audiences and the F.M.I. Sisters for an Australian War Memorial commissioned work from 2018–2020. She honoured these women with a powerful and generative methodology, blending archives, photography, and textiles, to demonstrate these Melanesian women's historical experiences and contributions throughout a war that was not of their making.



A screenshot of attendees at the online OWP workshop

After her keynote address to the workshop organised by Katerina Teaiwa, Talei Mangioni, and Nicholas Hoare, the Oceania Working Party members and affiliates let Lisa's words sink in and listened to a brilliant dialogue between two

pawa-meris (power women) of the Papua New Guinean diaspora in Australia: Lisa and Wendy Mocke, actor and writer. Sharing stories such as those of the F.M.I. Sisters of Vunapope made the group rethink some important questions around Pacific biography: What protocols do we need to follow in doing Pacific biography? How do we move beyond literary texts and academic canons in telling Pacific lives? How do we make knowledge accessible and creatively engaging for our communities? How do we decolonise biography to move it from individual to collective and shared contexts? How can we be radically inclusive and highlight the endeavours of women, LGBTQIA+, and disabled peoples who are often sidelined in conventional narratives of the Pacific? Lisa's presentation raised as many questions as it pointed to solutions, and will inform and inspire future work of the Oceania Working Party of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. In 2022 their work will include a focus on Australian South Sea Islander lives and stories.

The full version of Lisa Hilli's keynote is available on the ANU CHL [Youtube Channel](#) and a more thorough article is available on [The New Outrigger blog](#).

For more updates on the Oceania Working Party's activities, follow us on *FaceBook* at [Pacific Biography In Australia](#).

Talei Luscia Mangioni is a Fijian-Italian PhD candidate at the School of Culture, History and Language at the Australian National University. Talei's scholarship examines the critical and creative histories of the Nuclear Free and Independent Movement in the Oceanic region. Exploring these stories through creative works, she engages a trans-disciplinary research practice through writing and filmmaking.

Lisa Hilli kindly gave the NCB permission to use her artwork as the cover of this number of *Biography Footnotes*: F.M.I. Sisters of Vunapope, 2018-2020, inkjet print; Australian wool yarn and black cotton, AWM2019.141.1

ADB WOMEN'S WORKING PARTY

Karen Fox introduces the newly formed Women's Working Party

An exciting new development for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in 2021 has been the establishment of a new Women's Working Party. Created in response to the 2019 Editorial Board decision to establish a number of thematic working parties, the Women's Working Party will play a part in making the *ADB* a world leader among national biographical dictionary projects in terms of diversity and inclusivity.

The working party is co-chaired by Professor Melanie Oppenheimer and Dr Karen Fox, and its members are: Professor Michelle Arrow, Dr Cath Bishop, Kiera Donnelly, Dr Nikki Henningham, Professor Grace Karskens, Dr James Keating, Associate Professor Catherine Kevin, Dr Kiera Lindsey, Dr Yves Rees, Professor Kim Rubenstein, Professor Penny Russell, and Dr Zora Simic. The working party is ably supported in its endeavours by the dedicated work of Emily Gallagher as research assistant. As co-chair, Melanie Oppenheimer also joins the Editorial Board.

The Women's Working Party is an enthusiastic group with a wide range of expertise among its members, and Melanie Oppenheimer and I are excited to be leading this important endeavour.

In the immediate future the Women's Working Party has three main priorities. First, it will seek to improve the gender balance in Period 6, covering individuals who died between 1991 and 2000, by nominating additional women to be included in Volume 20, the next *ADB* volume scheduled for publication, which includes those who died between 1996 and 2000. This task is the working party's first priority, and the one with the most urgency.

Second, the Women's Working Party will be involved with the task of revising the *ADB*. Over the years there have been a number of minor entries published within major entries, and in some cases those minor articles deal with the lives of women who deserve to receive major articles of their own. The working party will therefore consider these entries in order to identify such 'missing' women.

Last, but certainly not least, the working party will oversee

the 'Colonial Women in the *ADB*' project, which has been gathering nominations of women who lived and flourished during the colonial period for some years now, and which aims to greatly improve the representation of women from the colonial era in the *ADB*. At present we have received more than 800 nominations of such women, and our goal is 1,500. Through this project we seek to raise the proportion of entries covering the colonial period that tell women's life stories from around 4 per cent to around a third.

The new working party met for the first time on Monday 8 November, and began its task of considering nominations of additional women to be included within Volume 20. We had a very fruitful and enjoyable meeting, via Zoom, and the range of potential inclusions underlined the diversity of women's stories still waiting to be told. Much fun was had discussing the various women on our list of possible entries, among whose occupations were botanist, writer, cricketer, sleep researcher, artist, pilot, stripper, activist, and architect. We are now looking forward to our second meeting, scheduled for mid-December.

Since the *ADB* project was established in the 1950s, its working party structure has been a core of its strength and success. Thanks to the wonders of Zoom—our newfound familiarity with this technology being a silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic—we are now able to form this working party as a nationwide group, and to meet with each other from our various locations around the country. Together with other exciting initiatives, such as the 'Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography' project, and the *ADB*'s plans to increase the number of convicts and working-class subjects in the dictionary, the Women's Working Party will make an important contribution to the task of presenting the variety of Australian life through the pages and pixels of the *ADB*.

Karen Fox is a research fellow in the National Centre of Biography and research editor for the ADB, and co-chair of the ADB's Women's Working Party.

Pictured below are images of a few of the existing women in the ADB. [Lucy Beeton](#) (1829–1886); [Martha Sarah Bidmead](#) (1862–1940); [Lola Montez](#) (1821–1861).



Drawing of Lucy Beeton, n.d. (photograph, 1970), Libraries Tasmania



Martha Sarah Bidmead and nurses, 1899, State Library of SA



Lola Montez, by C. D. Fredericks, 1856, State Library of Victoria

HOUSE OF REPS PROJECT

Stephen Wilks on the *House of Representatives* biography project



Federal Parliament House, Canberra, c.1940 (R. C. Strangman), National Library of Australia

The completed *Biographical Dictionary of the House of Representatives* shines historical light on Speakers, Deputy Speakers, and Clerks of the House since Federation. This *Dictionary* was compiled by the National Centre of Biography and funded by the Department of the House of Representatives. Its 64 biographies are by an array of skilled contributors and are [available online](#).

The Speaker is an MP, and as the House's principal officer presides over debates to ensure accordance with standing orders. The Clerk, as a senior parliamentary officer, administers the Department and advises the Speaker.

Most past studies focussed on a rather abstract political assessment of the speakership alone, but a biographical approach brings out the importance of a Speaker's non-partisanship and ability to assert authority.

The speakership is no sinecure; imagine sitting in the Speaker's Chair during question time. An effective Speaker determines the tone of the House, often using a seemingly light touch. Speakers typically have a strong personal presence in party and Chamber. Over two thirds had over ten years parliamentary experience. Most seemed unlikely to attain the ministry, but not necessarily for want of ability. Several were past senior office holders for whom placement on the backbench would invite trouble, a few raised a similar problem of being unduly opinionated, and a couple of others were party elders.

The main development over time is the appearance of female Speakers, [Joan Child](#) (1986–89), [Anna Burke](#) (2012–13), and [Bronwyn Bishop](#) (2013–15). The first female Clerk, Claressa Surtees, was appointed in 2019. The pre-parliamentary occupations of Speakers are evenly spread, including six lawyers, six farmers, and six trade unionists. The office has only recently reflected the rise of the professional party activist turned parliamentarian in the person of Tony Smith (2015–21).

Discussion of Speakers invariably raises issues of independence and impartiality. Much depends on the individual and political circumstances. [Frederick Holder](#)

(1901–09) sought to embed the Westminster ideal of the Speaker ceasing to be an active member of a political party, despite such practice not having been strong in the colonial legislatures.

The anointing of [Carty Salmon](#) (1909–10) as Holder's successor is seen as decisive in determining that the Australian speakership would not follow Westminster. This also reflected the hardening of the party system.

Has an Australian model of the speakership emerged in place of Westminster practice? Yes, but one based more on tacit assumption than express definition of the Speaker's role.

That one Speaker, [Neil Andrew](#) (1998–2004), rejected suggestions of the speakership being dominated by the governing party is significant. He thought that it is counterbalanced by an impartiality rooted in the Australian 'fair go' ethos. Lack of formal independence does not necessarily mean lack of impartiality.

The *Dictionary* seems to suggest that most Speakers have indeed sought to balance party loyalty with wider expectations, keeping favouritism within tolerable bounds. Very few, such as [Archie Cameron](#) (1950–56), attracted persistent calls for resignation. Such qualified non-partisanship was helped by the speakership not serving as a career stepping stone; no incumbent has proceeded directly into the ministry.

This compromise was reached early. The speakerships of [Charles McDonald](#) (1914–17) and [Elliot Johnson](#) (1913–14, 1917–23) appear to have consolidated the aforesaid model. McDonald so effectively overcame fears about his partisanship that his constituents applauded him for affirming that "he endeavoured to be fair to both sides".

How very Australian this all seems, being reached more through pragmatic trial and error than tradition! Will this continue to stand up to the remorseless encroachment of party politics?

Stephen Wilks of the National Centre of Biography edited the online Biographical Dictionary of the House of Representatives. All views in this article are his alone.

LAUNCH OF *AJBH*, no. 5

Jack Waterford's thoughts on politics and biography

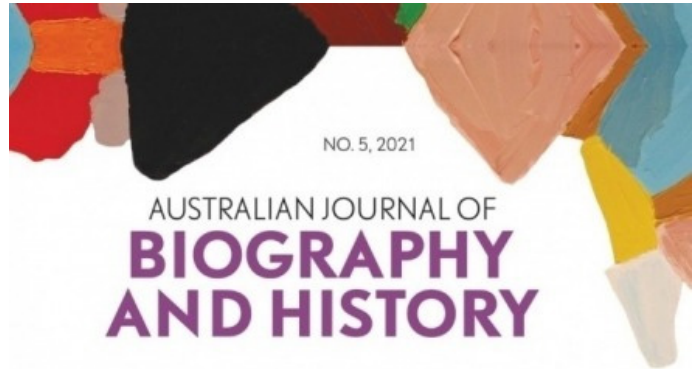
Jack Waterford was invited to launch *Australian Journal of Biography and History* no 5 on 10 September via Zoom. We include an excerpt of his speech.

Surrounding my desk in my old office at the *Canberra Times* were high bookshelves, and on the ones immediately behind me were books of biography: the first set of shelves focused on Australian politicians, judges, and people involved in public policy, including public servants. The one alongside involved British and American biography. They were the most consulted of the books in the room, whether for mere reference material—a date, a spelling, the composition of a cabinet or something, or, just as importantly, for an anecdote, or an account of some event or plot in which the subjects were involved. These books were among my closest friends and constant companions—often indeed worth idly browsing while waiting for inspiration or some material to arrive.

Styles in biography vary, including over time, and I do not have firm views on what ought to be the right approach, or what ought to be in and out. In some cases, fresh styles arise out of discussion of the rights and wrongs of new biographical subjects. On that account, and on the basis that the more one reads, the more dimension the person acquires, I sometimes read multiple biographies of the same subject.

Although I find the books useful for reference detail, I have little interest in bare narratives as such. I read them to find something of a person's character and the quality of her or his ideas. By reading more on the same person, the more dimension the person acquires at least sometimes, the stronger one's feel for a person's strengths and weaknesses, their background, and judgments, and their measure as leaders, as thinkers, and as persons of moral fibre. I want to know something of their experiences: how they were formed and tested, and the light they shed on events that happened. I am interested how they related to other people and in their influence over others, and how they used persuasion or example to persuade people to their views. Equally, I am interested in what this influence has left in the way of enduring ideas—monuments, as it were to their existence—and the influence on later events. I am interested in types and qualities of leadership: capacity to change and capacity to inspire. I am interested in their relationships, within their family, with their parents and their children, with people of the opposite sex, with spouses, partners, and lovers.

It was once a bit prurient to affect a lack of interest in an extracurricular sex life, or appetite for alcohol or drugs, unless (and the onus was on those who broke the convention) it was very relevant, material, and necessary to back up some important point. Post John F. Kennedy, and the ways various boys' clubs concealed his serious excesses, as well as any number of other characters once protected by such clubs, I now think that such matters are not only usually relevant, but that they almost invariably go to any assessment of character



and worth. I do not say that with puritanical zeal so much as to suggest that a want of discretion and restraint in one's person life is almost invariably relevant to a biography.

The longer I have been an observer of politics, the more I have decided that some likeable people are complete monsters, and that some complete monsters in public life are capable of being quite likeable in private. I should say that my father was a Changi prisoner of war, whose sergeant became the chief attendant of the House of Representatives. When I met him in the early 1970s, he took me around the offices of the old parliament, introducing me to cooks, barmen, attendants, secretarial staff, Commonwealth car drivers and other below-stairs folk. I understood very well from him that indiscretion could be fatal to good relationships, personal or journalistic. But I often heard, and filed away, stories of the goodness and the badness of the folk upstairs. By the end of the careers of such folk, my opinion of the worth of many of them owed as much to the downstairs assessment as anything put into the Hansard.

I have had the opportunity to read the volume, and have views on not a few. I agree that we await a great biography of any of our leading women politicians, let alone from a feminist point of view. It is still far too early to come to any sort of considered judgment of the obvious candidate, Julia Gillard, but even the first drafts of her history leave big gaps and room for argument. We have some good biographies of women judges, of Mary Gaudron, Roma Mitchell, and Elizabeth Evatt, for example. By now there have been many female ministers who have been the subject of pop biographies, but none have left much impression on me.

I very much enjoyed the essay on Neil Blewett's very fine diaries, in part because they contain an anecdote that might be read to suggest that I was a very fine and wise fellow. It recounted Blewett's reading one of my columns discussing the increasingly disastrous presidential style of a distracted and dextral Paul Keating. Shortly after reading it, his departmental secretary drew his attention to it and said that it pointed to a very significant and dangerous problem within the Keating style of government. Blewett agreed, and thought the analysis close to his own forebodings, then immediately went

LAUNCH OF *AJBH*, no. 5 (CONT'D)

to discuss it with Joe Dawkins, so that they could drag Keating back to earth.

Nice and flattering, but the truth is that when I read this diary entry, I realised that I had been played and used. Only the day before the article had appeared, I had been cordially invited to lunch by Blewett's departmental head—something we did regularly enough. The lunch was, as usual, informal, gossipy, and involved exchanges of intelligence, if generally more about public administration than about politics. Over that lunch, all of the secretaries had complained of the developing Keating style, of increasing difficulties with the PMO, problems of getting Keating to listen to anything, and so on. It was material I adopted, ingested, and more or less reproduced in my column the next morning—as, I now realised, I had been intended to. I bear no grudge now, for having been used, but learned that sometimes bits of information were dangled so as to cause some desired result—particularly, in this case, to send a signal to Cabinet that the Keating system was not working.

There's an article about prime ministerial portraits. When Malcolm Fraser was PM, a portrait was commissioned, at considerable expense, but Fraser thought it made him too austere, severe, and forbidding, and rejected it. By convention, one is allowed to do this, and a second was commissioned. By chance, I heard about the rejected one and asked to see it, and was told that by convention, it was turned to the wall and not available for inspection. The FOI Act had just come into operation, and I suddenly realised that under a wide definition in that Act, a painting was to be regarded as a document. I filed a request, and it was soon clear that none of the standard exemptions applied. My sense of triumph was destroyed by the bad sportiness of the agency in possession of the portrait. It issued a morning press release of its being available, and every TV station and other newspapers had had their go before me.

The chapter on back benchers was also interesting. I have a modest collection of backbench autobiographies—and even a biography or two. The most interesting, I thought, if only for me, was Ken Fry's because of its background in Dubbo and Canberra.

I was intrigued by Chris Wallace's account of a PR biography of Menzies. I have more than a dozen books about Bob Menzies, including his own memoirs, and probably at least half a dozen which treat primarily with Doc Evatt. I am not like John Howard, who enjoys biography, but only ones by or about Winston Spencer Churchill, though I will confess to perhaps a score of these. About 40 years ago, I was one of the first to get access to a new stack of Menzies papers at the National Library, which included the diaries of his pre-war and wartime trips to Britain.

Anyone who tried to draw the McMahon archives together commands my admiration. I knew several who tried—one described what was there as an unorganised bunch of press statements, bland speeches, and the odd Cabinet minute, but almost nothing reflecting anything actually coming out

of Billy's brain, if there was one. David Bowman, a former Editor of the *Canberra Times*, also tried valiantly but ultimately unavailingly. I have the biography—still unread I am afraid, but I mean to get to it by Christmas—but any number of people have praised it warmly to me, most with surprise given their opinions of the man.

I enjoyed Bob Tickner's article on political memoir writing, and had been previously unaware of the parent finding. Bob is one of the very few politicians I have known who has seen and encountered some very rough times in politics without it much affecting either his good humour, his essential optimism and belief in the human spirit, or his being in every sense a good and decent man. I did not think him too naïve and idealistic for politics as such, but wondered whether it would embitter or damage him, not least after his travails on Indigenous affairs, and the personal hatred visited on him by many opposition politicians. Sometime after losing his seat in 1996, however, he was rendering further service with the Red Cross and with other causes.

I have known or watched at reasonably close hand, 12 prime ministers from Gorton on. In more recent times, I have been at a distance, watching, but relying on others for reportage of the speeches and activities which make up the factual basis of commentaries I write. The earlier ones, at least up to Howard, have been intrinsically more interesting for having backgrounds outside of the political process before they entered politics. What many journalists call suits—the party professional classes working in unions, politician's offices, as minders, in think tanks, and so on—are remarkably similar and a generally unattractive and uncharismatic lot.

Most are formally better educated and trained than the civilian politicians who were their predecessors, but few were smarter, and few have shown themselves to be guided by ideas and ideals to the same extent. They are the ones chiefly responsible for the decline of trust in and respect for politicians, and for the widespread, and often true impression, that some are corrupt—and have deeply cynical and corrupted ideas of what public life and public service is about. The more professionalised modern politicians have become, the more plastic they are as characters, the more plaster the images they present, and the more confected and sloganized their vocabulary, and the more confected their emotions.

Winston Churchill, as the exiled and discredited journalist-backbencher, wrote during the 1930s of a minor affray within the government of the day. He wrote that the dissidents were the usual collection, motivated by unrequited ambition. There were those who had been tried and found wanting. There were those who were wanting to be tried. There were those who were manifestly trying. And there were those who were manifestly wanting. There are still many politicians, men and women, who divide themselves into such categories.

Jack Waterford AM, journalist and former editor of the Canberra Times, is one of Australia's foremost political commentators and columnists. In 2007 he was named Canberra Citizen of the Year.

2021–26 EDITORIAL BOARD

Melanie Nolan welcomes the incoming Editorial Board

The ANU's Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, recently extended invitations to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* Editorial Board for five-year terms from 2021 to 2026, beginning in December. The main task facing the Board is to reimagine the *ADB*. The *ADB* Editorial Board decided at its 2019 meeting to complete the current Period 6 (those who died between 1991 and 2000), and then take the whole *ADB* work process back to Period 1 (those subjects who died before 1850) revising and adding articles, for which a revisions project has prepared the way.

Alongside the existing projects such as: the 'Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography' (IADB), the 'First Three Fleets and their Families', the 'Colonial Women', and the 'Biographical Register of Australian Labour Movement' (BRALMS), and together with the realisation of other plans currently under consideration, would make the *ADB* conspicuous among national dictionary projects in terms of diversity.

As the *ADB* has evolved and changed, so too has the Editorial Board: included are pictures of the Editorial Boards of 2009 and 2019 (the last in-person meeting to-date). These two photos, taken a decade apart, highlight how the Board has grown over the years. We look forward to the first meeting of the new board.

Short biographies of the incoming board members are featured below.

The members of the *ADB* Editorial Board (2021–2026) are as follows:

New members

Dr Mark Dunn (NSW) is former chair of the Professional Historians Association of NSW and ACT, President of the History Council NSW and Deputy Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW.

Mark was the historian for a heritage and archaeology firm in Sydney for 15 years, involved in major conservation, archaeology (including digging), oral history, significance, and interpretation projects Australia wide. More recently he has been a consultant historian in NSW heritage and research, as well as developing and leading Sydney city tours for an American tour company Context Travel.

Mark has been a member of the NSW working party and revision group since 2017. He is the author of the *ADB* entry on Sydney architect [Donald Crone](#).

Professor Raelene Frances (ACT) has been Dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences, ANU since 2017. Rae has held a range of leadership roles. Her research interests include labour history, women's and gender history, and Australian social and cultural history, including interaction between Australian Indigenous communities and European settlers. She was elected a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA) in 2011, and was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2020 for "significant service to history studies as a teacher, researcher, and author".

Rae has written five *ADB* articles, and previously served *ex officio* on the *ADB* Editorial Board, but it is proposed she serve now as a member, given that she retires from her role as Dean in 2022.

Professor Deborah Gare (WA) is a Professor of History and Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning at The University of Notre Dame Australia. In January 2021, Deborah will commence a new role as Head of Social Sciences and Arts,

and Professor of History, at Murdoch University.

Deborah has researched Western Australian history intensively. Her engagement in biographical work includes international research on Mary Ann Friend (1800–39), an artist and writer who visited the Swan River Colony in 1830.

Deborah has taken several leadership roles in the Humanities and Social Sciences. She has been a member of the *ADB's* WA Working party since 2013, she took up the role of Chair of the working party at the end of 2021, and has written an entry for the *ADB*.

Associate Professor Kristyn Harman (Tas) lectured in Aboriginal Studies before joining History within the School of Humanities of the University of Tasmania. She has served as the Academic Director, Curriculum Innovation and Digital Engagement for the College of Arts, Law and Education and is currently the Deputy Chair of Academic Senate.

Kristyn specialises in cross-cultural encounters across Britain's nineteenth century. She is a member of the Australian Historical Association, the Australian Women's History Network, Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology, Australia and New Zealand Criminology Network, the Convict Women's Press, and the Female Convict Research Centre. Kristyn is the incoming Chair of the *ADB's* Tasmanian Working Party.

Dr Karl James (ACT) has worked as a historian at the Australian War Memorial since 2006 and is currently the Head of the Military History Section. He has been a Departmental Visitor with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the ANU.

Karl's research focuses on Australia's involvement in the Second World War. He has worked on major exhibitions at the Memorial. Currently, he is working with Professor Peter Dean on the edited volume *Australia in the Second World War: On Campaign and the Home Front* (to be published in

2021–26 EDITORIAL BOARD (CONT'D)



ADB Editorial Board, 2009

2022 by Brécourt Academic and the University Press of Kentucky). He is researching a new history of the 1941 siege of Tobruk during the Second World War.

Karl is a member of the editorial staff for the Memorial's magazine *Wartime*. In 2021 he became co-Chair of the ADB's Armed Services working group.

Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna (ACT), BA (University of Sydney) and PhD (University of NSW), was a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Research School of Social Sciences (ANU, 1997–2000) and an Australian Research Council QEII Fellow (ANU, 2001–05). He subsequently held chairs of Australian History at Copenhagen University, Denmark (2006), and at University College, Dublin, Ireland (2011). He was an ARC Future Fellow at the University of Sydney (2012–15), becoming Professor of History (2015–21) and Chair of Department (2020), before retiring in April 2021.

In 2021 Mark was appointed Honorary Professor in the NCB/ADB, School of History, ANU from 2021 to 2026. He has a general expertise in biography having written about it as a literary form and genre, as well as being a prize-winning biographer. He wrote the ADB entry on [Manning Clark](#).

Professor Melanie Oppenheimer (ACT) has been Chair of History at Flinders University (2013–21). Melanie completed a three-year term as a member of the ARC College of Experts in 2018, was Visiting Chair in Australian Studies at the University of Tokyo (2018–19), and was awarded the 2021 National Library of Australia Fellowship.

She holds an ARC Discovery Grant for 'Resilient Humanitarianism: The League of Red Cross Societies, 1919–1991' (2019–23), and a Linkage Grant, 'Developing a National Volunteering Roadmap' (2021–24). She is currently working on a biography of Helen and Ronald Munro Ferguson.

Melanie was elected a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 2017, and was elected President of the Australian Historical Association for a two-year term (2020–22). She was appointed an Honorary Prof. in the School of History at the ANU from March 2021. Melanie was a member of the ADB's Armed Service working party from 2010 to 2021. In 2021 she became co-chair of the ADB's Women's Working Party.

Dr Elizabeth Rushen (Vic) is a public historian, Director of Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network, a former Executive Director of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and a former Chair of the History Council of Victoria. She has been involved in, and with, a wide range of historical audiences.

Liz's first biography was a study of the life of John Marshall, a nineteenth-century shipowner and emigration agent. In 2018 Liz was awarded a Creative Fellowship by the State Library of Victoria to research the life and writings of Edmund Finn ('Garryowen'), a project which is ongoing. Liz's publications are mainly in the field of migration history and women in colonial Australia. This is an area of critical importance for the forthcoming revisions of the first volumes of the ADB.

Liz was appointed a Member (AM) of the Order of Australia for significant service to community history and heritage preservation. She has been a member of the Victorian Working Party since 2020.

Continuing members

Professor Odette Best (Indigenous) is a Professor in Nursing and Associate Head, Indigenous Research and Community Engagement, in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Health at the University of Southern Queensland, Ipswich Campus.

As well as working on the provision of better health practices, she undertakes research on the history of Aboriginal nurses and midwives in order to make a significant difference to nursing students' understanding of Indigenous health issues and practice. Her current ARC-funded project is 'Historiography of Aboriginal nurses and midwives in Queensland 1890–1950'.

Odette was appointed Chair of the Indigenous Working Party in 2016.

Professor Pat Buckridge (QLD) has lectured on literature at Griffith University since 1981 and was Professor of the School of Humanities and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences where he is now adjunct professor.

For many years, Pat researched and taught Australian literature and biography, but in the latter part of his career he

2021–26 EDITORIAL BOARD (CONT'D)



ADB Editorial Board, 2019

designed and taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses on the great works of world literature. Pat has chaired the Queensland Working Party since January 2000. He has been a member of the Editorial Board since April 2000 and has written eleven entries for the *ADB*.

Dr Chris Cunneen (NSW) was a research fellow (1974–82) and deputy general editor (1982–96) of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. In 1996 he was appointed research fellow in the Department of Modern History at Macquarie University.

In 2001–05 he was project manager and editor of the *ADB's Supplementary Volume*. He has been a member of the *ADB's* NSW working party since 1975. Chris was invited to join the Editorial Board in June 2011.

In 2015, he was awarded an *ADB* Medal for long and distinguished service. Chris has been closely involved in the revision of entries in volumes 1 and 2. He is currently working on transferring the *Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement* to *People Australia* and has written 82 *ADB* entries, and is on our author's roll of honour.

Professor Stephen Garton (NSW) began his career teaching history before moving into leadership. He was appointed Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (2009–19) of the University of Sydney, and recently resumed his role as Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor after serving as Vice-Chancellor and Principal (2020–21). In 2020 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for services to tertiary education administration and to History.

Stephen has written extensively in areas such as the history of madness, psychiatry, crime, incarceration, masculinity, eugenics, social policy, poverty, returned soldiers, and sexuality.

As well as serving on the NSW Working Party since December 1989, he has served on the *ADB's* Editorial Board since May 1999, and is the author of 20 entries for the *ADB*.

Stephen was an Associate Editor of the *ADB's Supplementary Volume* (2005) of missing persons and was closely associated with the ongoing *Dictionary of Sydney* project.

Associate Professor Geoffrey A.C. Ginn (Qld) is a former heritage consultant. Since 2002 he has taught History at the University of Queensland and is currently the History program convenor. He is currently researching the intimate politics of the Edwardian 'New Liberals' based on biographical case studies. He holds an ARC Linkage project grant (2019–22) to develop a *Queensland Atlas of Religion* in partnership with the State Library of Queensland.

As an active public historian, Geoff has served on the Board of the State Library of Queensland (2005–08), the Queensland Museum (2008–13, 2017–present), as a member of the Board of the Abbey Museum of Art and Archaeology, and as a judge in the Queensland Literary Awards.

Geoff has been a member of the Queensland Working Party since 2008, and has written one *ADB* article.

Prof. Bridget Griffen-Foley (NSW) held postdoctoral fellowships at the University of Sydney, before returning to Macquarie University in 2003 to take up an ARC Queen Elizabeth II Fellowship. She became founding Director of the Centre for Media History in 2007, Professor of Media in 2013, and took up an ARC Future Fellowship in 2014. In 2011 she was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and currently heads its Cultural and Communications Studies section.

She specialises in the history of the media, particularly the Australian media and is a selector for the Australian Media Hall of Fame.

Bridget has been a member of the NSW Working Party since 2000 and has written sixteen entries for the *ADB*.

Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths (ACT, Chair of the Board) is Emeritus Professor of History in the Research

2021–26 EDITORIAL BOARD (CONT'D)

School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. In 2000 he was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. In 2014 he was appointed an AO for “distinguished service to tertiary education, particularly social, cultural and environmental history, and through popular and academic contributions to Australian literature”.

His research, writing and teaching interests are in the fields of Australian social, cultural and environmental history, the comparative environmental history of settler societies, the writing of non-fiction, and the history of Antarctica.

Tom chaired the *ADB*'s Commonwealth Working Party between 1999–2004, and has been chair of the Editorial Board since 2006. He has written four entries for the *ADB*.

Associate Professor Catherine Kevin (SA) is currently Associate Professor in Australian history in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Flinders University.

Catherine specialises in feminist histories and is currently lead CI on an ARC-funded project: ‘The History of Domestic Violence in Australia 1850–2020’. She has published widely on the history of the reproductive body and maternal loss, including among migrant women, gendered violence, race relations in Australia and their cinematic representations.

Catherine began section editing South Australian articles in 2015. She has written two *ADB* articles. She is a member of the newly formed Women's Working Party which is advising the *ADB* over the representation of women in the Dictionary.

Stephen Kinnane (WA) is a Marda Marda researcher and writer from Miriwoong country in the East Kimberley. He is currently writing a PhD part-time in the School of History at the ANU. Steve is currently the Research Coordinator for the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC), and an Adjunct Research Fellow for the Nulungu Research Institute, University of Notre Dame (UNDA), Broome.

He has researched and published widely in the field of Indigenous history and community cultural heritage. Steve has held roles as a Deputy Chair of the AIATSIS Council, Chair of the AIATSIS Foundation, and has completed terms on the AIATSIS Research Advisory Committee, and Aboriginal Studies Press Advisory Committee. He is currently a Director of Magabala Books and a Member of the AIATSIS Foundation.

He was an inaugural member of the *ADB*'s Indigenous Working Party in 2015 and joined the Editorial Board in the same year.

Associate Professor Shino Konishi (WA) descends from the Yawuru people of Broome, WA. Shino was previously at the University of Western Australia, and is now at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Melbourne Campus of the Australian Catholic University.

Her research has focused in particular on the early interactions between Indigenous people and European

explorers, and the way in which early European observations and representations of Indigenous Australian people, bodies, and cultural practices continue to shape broader understandings of Aboriginal politics and society.

Shino joined the Editorial Board in 2015. She is leading the ARC funded project on the ‘Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography’ (IADB) with Malcolm Allbrook and Tom Griffiths, in collaboration with the *ADB* (2017–2022).

Assoc. Prof. David Lee (ACT) joined the University of New South Wales, Canberra, in 2019, having previously been Director of the Historical Publications and Research Unit of the Department of Foreign Affairs (1995–2019), and an Adjunct Professor in History at Deakin University.

He researches and writes on twentieth century Australian history and international history. He is currently working on a collaborative research project about Sir John Crawford, with Professors Nicholas Brown, Frank Bongiorno, and the late Stuart Macintyre.

David has been a member of the Commonwealth Working Party since 2012 and became its Chair in 2016.

Dr Carolyn Rasmussen (Vic) is a member of the Professional Historians Association and an Honorary Senior Fellow in Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne.

Carolyn has written 15 *ADB* entries, has been a member of the Victorian Working Party since December 1995,. She joined the *ADB* Editorial Board in August 2011, and became Chair of the Victorian Working Party in 2015.

Prof. Katerina Teaiwa (Oceania) was born and raised in Fiji and is of Banaban, I-Kiribati and African American descent. She teaches in the School of Culture, History and Language in the ANU's College of Asia and the Pacific, and is a practising visual artist.

She has worked in contemporary cultural policy areas, as well as the history of Indigenous encounters and phosphate mining. Her publications include work on the Pacific diaspora and the arts. She was convener of Pacific Studies in the College of Asia and the Pacific (2007–15), Head of the Department of Gender, Media and Cultural Studies (2014–15 and 2019), and co-founder of the Pasifika Australia Outreach Program (2007–2012). She is currently Deputy Director, Higher Degree Research Training, in CHL and Vice-President of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies.

She became chair of the *ADB*'s Oceania Working Party in 2015.

WENDY BIRMAN, 1926–2021

Malcolm Allbrook remembers the life of Wendy Birman

Frances Wendy Birman, who died in Perth on 23 November 2021, was an *ADB* 'original' who maintained her active involvement until her year of death. She published her fifty-ninth, and final, article on her friend and mentor, the long-serving professor of history at the University of Western Australia, [Fred Alexander](#) (1899–1996) this year.



Wendy Birman at the *ADB*'s 50th birthday celebration, 2009

Born 18 January 1926 at Albany, Western Australia, Wendy's parents were Victorian-born Harold, bank manager, and Patricia, née Whitlock, whose family were lessees of Giralia station near Carnarvon in the north-west of the State. Growing up at Greenbushes, a forestry town in the south-west, she spent her holidays at the family beach house, also Giralia, at Middleton Beach near Albany, and every now and again in Perth. At this time, the State's capital was like a 'big country town' situated on the banks of the expansive Swan River, with charabancs for public transport, small department stores such as Foy and Gibson, and no building over five stories.

Moving to high school, she became a boarder at the Park School, a 'dame school' led by Margaret Swan, a graduate of UWA. Wendy credits her as an early mentor to girls like her and her life-long friend Margaret Metcalf, who both developed aspirations to have professional careers. The school shifted to Claremont, a suburb of Perth, and Wendy and Margaret matriculated in 1941, intending to proceed to university. Instead, World War II intervened, and both were evacuated to Albany, an inexplicable choice to Wendy given the port's

strategic role in provisioning troop ships *en route* to the northern spheres of war.

At UWA Wendy studied history and French at a time when at least half the students taking arts were women, many of the young men being engaged on overseas service. She graduated BA in 1946 having little idea what she wanted to do, but noticed advertisements for scholarships to undertake a degree in the then new field of library studies, one a Carnegie at the State Library of New South Wales, the other a public service bursary in Canberra. Successful with both applications, she decided on the Canberra option and travelled by sea, via Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney, to take up residence in the bush capital.

On her arrival, the parliamentary librarian [Kenneth Binns](#) told her that the course had yet to be organised and put her to work in the public service library at Gorman House. Although she would periodically visit Parliament House to ask Binns whether the course was to proceed, she decided eventually to move to Sydney to take up the Carnegie scholarship, and graduated as a librarian in 1949.

She returned to Perth, intending only to see her parents before travelling overseas, initially to England. But Alexander immediately offered her a job, and she started as the adult education librarian at UWA, a position she held until 1954. There she also met her future husband, Polish-born [John Birman](#) (1913–1989), who had been assistant director of adult education since 1948. After a year in England, Wendy and John married in 1952.

The next few decades were hectic for Wendy and her family. Although she left adult education after the birth of her first son Jeremy in 1954, she soon became involved in the nascent school library system. She helped to start a library at Hamilton Hill Primary School near Fremantle, an area of cultural diversity and a situation she enjoyed immensely. Her next move was taking a part-time role at Melville Primary School, near the Birman home in the riverside suburb of Applecross.

John had added the role of executive officer of the Festival of Perth (now Perth International Arts Festival) to his already demanding duties, a job he undertook for the next 22 years. Geoff Bolton's *ADB* biography identifies John's 'engaging smile', his 'imagination, intelligence, energy and ... lively appreciation of the cultural needs of Western Australia', but does not mention Wendy's contribution. In an oral history for the National Library in 2012, she recalls a 'hectic life' balancing a family of three boys, work, her growing interest in historical research and writing, and every night during festival time attending performances and receptions, as well as looking after visiting performers. Rushing home after work, she would meet the baby-sitter, 'throw on a ball dress', and be out until late. Life was demanding but immensely fulfilling, and she was able to meet and often get to know some of the world's leading performers, including Count Basie, Henry Mancini, and Duke Ellington.

Wendy had known [Douglas Pike](#) (1908–1974), who in 1962 was appointed inaugural general editor of the *ADB*, when he was a lecturer in history at UWA for a short period. In 1966 he recruited her to undertake biographical research for the first volume, published that year. Thus began her 55 years of service to the *ADB* which saw her join the WA working party preparing Volume 4 (1972), before her appointment as State research assistant (1977–96), and continue her involvement after her ‘retirement’ as an emerita member. She was awarded an *ADB* Medal in 2004.

As an [author](#), she published in each volume, apart from Volume 1 which carried only eleven WA entries, and the most recent Volume 19; her biography of Alexander will appear in Volume 20. She reserved particular affection for her first biography on the famed Noongar intermediary and guide [Wylie](#), who travelled with [Edward Eyre](#) between Fowler’s Bay and Albany (King George Sound) in 1841.

The diversity and range of Wendy’s biographical interests were remarkable, including WA luminaries from the colonial era to the more recent past. Her full-length biographies included: with Geoffrey Bolton, *Augustus Charles Gregory* (Oxford University Press, 1972), the famed explorer and surveyor-general; a second work on Gregory, *Gregory of Rainworth: A Man of his Time* (UWA Press, 1979), and with Joan Pope and Ron Bodycoat, *Personalities and Places on Crawley Campus* (UWA Historical Society, 2013).

She excelled though in the art of the succinct biography. As with the best entries in the *ADB* corpus, she melded detailed historical research with acute insights and an eye for the eccentricities and foibles of her subjects, those pearls of knowledge that can lift a work from the efficient to the adroit. Thus, the former Chief Justice [Sir Albert Wolff](#) (1899–1977) was intensely formal in public but at home would get about in ‘carpet slippers and a carpenter’s apron’; no doubt Wendy was writing from personal experience as a member of the Library Board of Western Australia when she described him as ‘conservative, autocratic, and uninspired’ (Birman 2005) in his four-year term as president of the board of trustees.

The Irish patriot [John Boyle O’Reilly](#) (1844–1890), famous in both Australian and Irish-American history for his daring escape from penal servitude in 1869, and then, in 1876, for organising and financing the flight of six Fenian convicts on the *Catalpa*, was ‘gregarious and always surrounded by a host of friends’ (Birman 1974). Fred Alexander preferred catching the bus to work rather than driving, and would arrive ‘complete with hat, gloves, walking stick, and heavy-rimmed glasses’ (Birman 2021).

I was fortunate to count Wendy as a friend and a colleague, although I only came to know her in the latter period of her life. She was a close family friend, and had known my father-in-law Malcolm Smith and his sister Robin Neville since their teenage years and remained a regular at the many parties thrown by my in-laws. Of course, we shared an interest in history, and she was delighted when I started work with the *ADB*.



Wendy Birman at the Rethinking Indigenous Biographies Conference, 2018 (Christine Fernon)

She visited Canberra whenever she could, flying over from Perth for the presentation of an *ADB* Medal to her long-time colleague and friend Geoff Bolton in 2012, attending the ‘True Biographies of Nations’ international conference at the National Library in 2017, and the ‘Reframing Indigenous Biographies’ conference at the ANU in 2018. She participated enthusiastically and did not miss a session, contributing her sharp insights and experience, and always willing to rethink long-held assumptions and practices.

This, I think was a true measure of Wendy as a historian. There was always something new to learn. She recognised that biography, like all realms of scholarly endeavour, was forever evolving and developing. There was always room to rethink biography, even to the point of discarding the sacred cows of the past, while never abandoning the principles of scholarly integrity and rigour. This is what made Wendy always seem youthful, even when she was facing physical decline and the loss of her mobility.

The last time we spoke was in April when we were in Perth for work, and I phoned her to make a time to catch up. Responding to my inquiry as to how she was, she said ‘I’ve been better’, and quickly changed the subject to the *ADB* and history. We were not able to keep our appointment, just one small victim of a governmental snap lockdown, but when I phoned to cancel, she was typically sanguine, disappointed but quickly moving on to a discussion of the pandemic as an historical moment, the first such episode she had witnessed, the Spanish flu having preceded her birth by a few years.

Vale to a wonderful historian, colleague, and friend.
Condolences to her family. We will miss her.

Malcolm Allbrook is the managing editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

GAIL CLEMENTS, 1943–2021

Gail Clements and her contribution to the *ADB*



Gail Clements, 2010

Gail was the eldest child of Winsome and Alex Matchett of 'Nangwarrie', between Grenfell and Forbes, New South Wales. She grew up with her sisters, Philippa and Peta, and brother, Bill, on the family farm. Gail identified strongly with the Grenfell community throughout her life.

From an early age it was clear that Gail was intellectually gifted. There were no schools near 'Nangwarrie', so at the age of five she was sent to live with her grandmother in Grenfell, returning home on weekends. This arrangement continued for a couple of years, until her mother employed a succession of governesses at 'Nangwarrie'. Towards the end of her primary education, when one governess moved back to Sydney, Gail's mother allowed her to accompany that governess in order to complete her final primary school year at Randwick Girls' Primary School. Gail breezed through that year and earned a place at the selective Sydney Girls High School. At the end of her first year at high school she won a scholarship to Presbyterian Ladies' College, Pymble. She boarded at PLC for the rest of her school years. In her final year she became head student of the boarding house.

Gail briefly attended the University of New England in 1960, studying agricultural economics. However, in that year, at the age of 17 she won an American Field Service (AFS) scholarship to study in the USA. She lived with a family in Minneapolis for a year, attending high school and travelling widely. She returned to Australia, entered Sydney University, and emerged with a first degree in economics (B.Ec.) in 1964. In the decades that followed Gail acquired a Bachelor of Arts degree with first class honours, a Master of Arts, and a PhD, all from Griffith University in Queensland. During that period, she steadily shifted her focus from economics to history.

In a notable career, she worked for commercial companies and individuals, in Australian Government service, and in universities in Australia and New Zealand. Her intellect, organisational skills, diligence, and loyalty earned her wide respect. Her final job, as an editor at the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* at the Australian National University (research editor, 2000–08; managing editor, 2008–10; contracted editing, 2010–12), gave her a great deal of satisfaction and an opportunity at last to show what she might have achieved if she had not—like most women of her generation—always put the careers of her husband and children ahead of her own. She was humble and modest about her own achievements and capabilities.

In 1966 Gail married Bob Clements. Their two daughters, Catherine and Rachel, were born in New Zealand while she and Bob were working at Massey University. The family returned to Australia in 1973. Living at Moggill on the outskirts of Brisbane, for more than 20 years the family were closely involved in the activities of the Moggill Uniting Church. Later, when she and Bob moved to Canberra in 1995, they became members of City Uniting Church. Among other contributions, Gail represented the church on the Council of Burgmann College, ANU, for many years.

Gail was a woman of great intelligence, common sense, integrity, moral strength, generosity, and good humour. She made friends easily and stayed close to them throughout her life. Her network was extraordinary. She was a 'rock' to her extended family, a mentor to many, a good friend, a trusted colleague and a strong team player. We give thanks for her life of excellence.

This account of Gail's life was written by her husband Bob with her daughters, Catherine and Rachel.

A version of this text was previously published in the newsletter of the City Uniting Church, Canberra; republished with the author's permission.

A reflection on Gail's contribution to the *ADB*

Gail joined the *ADB* in 2000 after moving to Canberra from Brisbane. Her BA (Hons.) in 1993 included a thesis on 'Ladies of Science: Female Cultivators of Science in Australia 1830–1880'. Her 1999 PhD thesis was on 'Science and Colonial Culture: Scientific Interests and Institutions in Brisbane, 1859–1900'. As research editor, Gail had the task of research editing the entries for the 'smaller' states—South Australia, Western Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania.

She was appointed acting managing editor of the *ADB* (2008–10), following the retirement of Darryl Bennet, and in her usual manner, took on the challenge with great aplomb. Gail was among former *ADB* employees who continued to support our work in extraordinary ways in her retirement; she copy-edited *The ADB's Story* in 2013. She wrote four exemplary *ADB* articles, the last of which will be published soon.

Melanie Nolan, Director, NCB, General Editor, ADB.

PETER HOWELL, 1938–2021

David Hilliard reflects on the life of Peter Howell

Peter Anthony Howell was born in Devonport, Tasmania on 25 December 1938, the only child of Alan Thomas Howell and Mary Alice Howell (née Tolhurst). He received his schooling at Catholic parish schools and St Virgil's College in Hobart. After two years studying medicine at the University of Queensland, he realised that this was not for him and returned to his family in Hobart to begin a BA in History at the University of Tasmania. There he was taught and influenced by two significant historians: John McManners, who was soon appointed to a chair at the University of Sydney and ended up as Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the University of Oxford, and [Douglas Pike](#), who became the first general editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

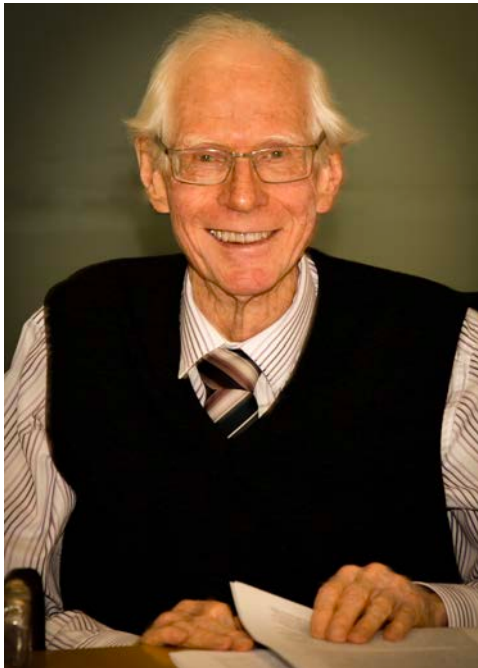
Peter then wrote an MA thesis on the Boothby case—the dismissal in 1867 of a difficult South Australian judge. From Tasmania he went, on a postgraduate scholarship, to Cambridge University where he undertook a PhD in History, supervised by Derek Beales. The book derived from his doctoral thesis, *The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, 1833–1876* (Cambridge University Press, 1979) is still well regarded internationally and was reprinted in 2008.

In 1968 Peter moved to Adelaide to take up a lectureship in History at Flinders University. He remained there until his retirement from teaching in 1999. In 1973 he married Louise Deakin of Melbourne, a graduate in medicine. Their marriage was underpinned by a shared religious faith.

At Flinders, Peter continued his interest in constitutional, legal and political history, particularly that of South Australia. He embarked on a project to write a history of the social and political role of the governors of South Australia but sadly never completed it. However, it did lead to his writing *ADB* entries on ten governors.

After the death of his colleague Jim Main in 1984, Peter took over Jim's Honours topic on the history of South Australia; this drew students from Adelaide University as well as from Flinders. Peter was promoted to Associate Professor in 1985 and was head of the History department in 1989–90. His lively survey of South Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century, *South Australia and Federation*, was published in 2002 but it did not get the attention it deserved.

In addition to his academic studies Peter was active in bringing history to the community and was an adviser on South Australian history to several organisations. He was a foundation member of the Historical Society of South



Peter Howell, 2017

Australia in 1974, president of the Society in 1979–80 and served on its council. Over the years he gave ten lectures to the Society, on a variety of topics: vice-regal lives, colourful individuals, and the origins of the Hills Hoist rotary clothes line. In addition, Peter contributed to public debate on constitutional, legal, and political matters. He advised the Australian and British governments on legislative matters relating to the Privy Council, and in 1995 he chaired the South Australian Constitutional Advisory Council.

Peter's most enduring work was done with the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. In 1974 he was appointed to the South Australia Working Party of the *ADB*. In 1996 he succeeded John Playford as chair and section editor, and as a member of the national editorial board. He played a major part in the selection of South Australian entries

for the *ADB*, carefully reviewing the 'blues', and often doing additional research to correct errors, or if he suspected that authors were whitewashing their subjects. Peter achieved a remarkable record of [forty-six articles](#), on a wide variety of individuals connected with South Australia. He relished the opportunity to explore a completely new subject. He had at least one entry in each of the volumes published to date, with four entries in volume 19, launched a few days after his death. In recognition of his significant contribution over many years, in 2016 he was awarded the Medal of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Peter's strengths as a historian were his capacity for detailed research, his wide general knowledge and retentive memory, his willingness to challenge established orthodoxies, and his vigorous and witty writing style. He found it hard to write a dull sentence. He was widely regarded as a conservative. At Flinders when teaching he always wore a jacket and tie, he instinctively looked to tradition, precedent and the letter of the law, he enjoyed the company of top people, and he was a member for twenty-five years of the Adelaide Club. In fact, Peter was never quite predictable. A devout and well-informed Catholic, he was generous in his religious sympathies and supported some of the reforming movements within the Church. During the debate in the 1990s over whether Australia should become a republic, Peter began defending the monarchist side but came to support the case for a republic. He was willing to challenge those in authority when he felt they were wrong or had misused their position; indeed, he rather enjoyed the ensuing debate. Peter's daughter Catherine aptly described her father as a 'Red Tory'.

FAMILIES AMONGST ADB AUTHORS

Peter Howell (cont'd)

Several times, in our retirement, Peter and I went away together on trips to rural South Australia, to Yorke Peninsula and the Mid-North, exploring the region and visiting places associated with ADB subjects on whom he was writing. He was a congenial travelling companion—well informed and interested in everything we saw.

During the last four years Peter's health declined. In 2019 he reluctantly resigned as chair of the South Australia Working

Party, but he remained involved in its work and completed his final entry, on [Ward McNally](#) ('criminal and author'). Finding the truth about this elusive subject tested all of Peter's detective skills. He died at the Mary Potter Hospice in North Adelaide on 5 March, survived by Louise and their three children, Catherine, John, and Elizabeth.

David Hilliard is an Associate Professor in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Flinders University.

Melanie Nolan considers intergenerational ADB contributions

Some families have produced more than one ADB author and sometimes there are family members from several generations. This was recently brought home to us when one of the ADB's researchers was coordinating a course at the ANU. One of the assignments Nick Hoare set was a biographical exercise whereby students chose a figure from the Pacific War to write a short biography modelled on an ADB entry. One student mentioned how excited she was to write one of these because her grandmother used to work for the ADB, and she has fond memories of having the ADB office pointed out to her as a young girl. Her grandmother is [Sue Edgar](#) who wrote 53 ADB articles. Sue was a long-serving ADB staff member (1969–98) and also contributed to many other articles as a research editor. We were able to republish a poem that Sue wrote in *The ADB's Story* (2013). Hopefully her granddaughter, Elizabeth Littley, could also write an ADB article someday.

Many of the families of authors have been even more directly involved with the ADB: parents and children, wives and husbands, sisters and brothers. [Douglas Pike](#), was the foundation general editor of the ADB (1962–73), while his son, filmmaker [Andrew Pike](#), wrote 16 articles. When they worked in the Mitchell Library on their articles for volumes 1 and 2 in the 1960s, the staff distinguished them from each other by calling them Pike and Pikelet. [Geoffrey Serle](#), the *Dictionary's* general editor between 1975 and 1988, wrote 49 articles. His historian wife, [Jessie Serle](#), who died in December 2019, wrote an article on one of the first Australian women architects in the 1930s. Their daughter, [Oenone Serle](#), is also an ADB author.

[Helga Griffin](#), the ADB's bibliographer between 1979 and 1998, also edited hundreds of ADB entries, and has written nine; her husband, [Jim Griffin](#), wrote 21. [Chris Cunneen](#), the ADB's deputy general editor from 1982 to 1996, has written 82 ADB entries, while his wife, [Kerry Regan](#) has written 10. Chris's brother, [Tony](#), has recently written his first *Dictionary* entry. [Jill Roe](#) was chair of the ADB's Editorial Board from 1996 to 2006. She wrote 19 entries for the ADB, and was co-editor of its 2005 supplement, together with others including her partner—[Bev Kingston](#), who has long chaired the NSW Working Party and has written 26 articles.

While Governor General [Sir Paul Hasluck](#) declined our

invitation to write an ADB article, [Alexandra](#), a historian and his wife, wrote six entries, and their son [Nicholas Hasluck](#) and daughter-in-law, [Sally-Anne Hasluck](#) are both contributors. The [Reverend Dr A. de Quetteville Robin](#) was the author of six *Dictionary* articles. His daughter, historian [Libby Robin](#) is an ADB Commonwealth Working Party member and Libby's husband, [Tom Griffiths](#), is also an ADB author and presently the chair of the ADB's Editorial Board.

[Melanie Oppenheimer](#) is a second-generation ADB author: her stepfather Bruce Mitchell wrote 28 ADB entries, her mother [Jillian Oppenheimer](#) wrote five articles and Melanie has written 9 articles so far. She was a member of the ADB's Armed Service Working Party from 2010 to 2021 and earlier this year she became co-chair of the ADB's Women's Working Party.

Fathers and sons writing for the ADB include historian [Manning Clark](#) and his sons, [Axel](#) and [Sebastian](#). Mothers and daughters include [Rica Erickson](#) who wrote nine ADB entries and her daughter, [Dorothy Erickson](#) who has written 10 so far. [Carolyn Rasmussen](#) has written 15, and her daughter [Amanda Rasmussen](#) is also a contributor. Mothers and sons include historian [Helen Jones](#), a long-time member of the ADB's South Australian Working Party, who wrote her first of 29 ADB articles in 1985 and her last in 2011. Her son, senior museum anthropological curator [Philip Jones](#), has written 10 articles so far. Amongst several generations of Indigenous contributors, [Ysola Best](#) wrote five articles; her first cousin's daughter, Odette Best, is currently chair of the Indigenous Working Party and is contributing biographies to the *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* project.

We have at least one family group spanning three generations. [Sir Ronald East](#) was an engineer who played a central role in the Snowy Mountains scheme, and as River Murray water commissioner (1936–65) thought he had 'drought-proofed' the Murray. He later wrote two ADB articles. His daughter [Val Yule](#) wrote three articles. Her son, [Peter Yule](#) is also an ADB author who has written four articles. A.G.L. Shaw was Val's husband's cousin who was also involved in the ADB: he was a foundational Editorial Board member from 1960 to 1999, he contributed 10 articles and was awarded an ADB Medal in 2002.

The *Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement, 1788–1975* was begun over thirty years ago, with funding from an ARC grant. It was a labour of love for John Shields, Professor of Human Resource Management and Organisational Studies at the University of Sydney Business School, and Andrew Moore, Associate Professor of History at the University of Western Sydney. *BRALMS* consists of over 2,000 people involved in the

Australian labour movement, most of whom are not in the *ADB*. John and Andrew gifted the project to the *ADB* in 2011. We did not have the resources to integrate it into our website until former Deputy General Editor, *ADB* Editorial Board member and long-serving NSW *ADB* Working Party member, Chris Cunneen offered to do this work.

WITHOUT

FREEDOM **UNIONIST PRISONERS** **DISHONOR**

*Sentenced at Rockhampton, Q., May 1890, for violations
arising out of Bush Strike.*

State Library of Queensland
John Oxley Library

W. J. Dwyer	H. W. Jones	A. L. Scott	J. S. Scott
E. Dwyer	P. Jones	E. H. Jones	H. D. Jones
A. J. Brown	B. Palmer	W. Bennett	D. Murphy

William Hamilton

RELEASED Nov 93.

Union members who were sentenced to prison terms arising out of the
Shearers' Strike, 1891, State Library of QLD

Queen's Park, North Rockhampton, August 5th, 1946

As an old time shearer, I wish to contribute to your A.W.U. levy.
Postal note for 2/6 herewith.

In passing I desire to mention that I am the sole survivor of 22 members who marched down East Street, Rockhampton, in chains to the steamer, "Otter", to be taken to St. Helena, for participation in the 1891 shearer's strike.

Thanks to the Labor Party, a repetition of those days has gone. In 1895 I was made a life member of the Shearers' Union, of Queensland.

Wishing our members every success in the forthcoming election.

I remain your sincerely

Dave Bowes

The Worker (Brisbane), 12 August 1946, p.1

Want to know who he was?

What did he mean by St Helena?

Who else marched with him and why?

What was the 1891 shearers' strike?

The answer to these and thousands more questions can be found in the project currently being undertaken to upload to the *People Australia* website a remarkable Labour History project: *The Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement*.

Chris Cunneen (with acknowledgment to Lin-Manuel Miranda and his wonderful musical *Hamilton*)

Nicole McLennan writes about Miss Peggy Brown—A baker of beaut' cakes



Peggy Brown, *Bulletin*, 19 February 1936, page 43

In December 1932 the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Percy Greenaway, accepted the gift of an enormous Christmas cake made from Australian products. Reports vary as to its weight (a quarter to three quarters of a ton), but the cake was large enough to be distributed to 24 hospitals and other charitable institutions across London. It was decorated with a scene from the Sydney Cricket Ground and featured a kangaroo bowling to a lion at the crease. It was certainly not the only Christmas cake used to promote Australian products to Britain—such cakes were baked regularly in the early twentieth century. What caught my eye was a brief mention of Miss Peggy Brown, an Australian who, it was reported, had become well-known in London for her home-made cakes. A young boy, present when the cake was cut, remarked, “‘That cake is a beaut’. Ain’t it? I bet Peggy Brown made it’”. The journalist would discover what while Peggy had not made the cake—her oven was too small—she had supplied the recipe.

I was intrigued: who was Peggy Brown? A search on Trove revealed many articles in the Australian press, most published when Peggy made trips back home (1936, 1950/51, and 1966). They recounted the sizeable achievements of this ‘tiny’ woman with a ‘rosy complexion’. What soon became apparent, however, was that Peggy was not her real name, nor was it a diminutive for Margaret. It was only when I found her address in London—44 Clarendon Street, Surbiton—that I was able to confirm her identity as Frances Annie Brown, a ‘Caterer-Cakes etc.’ in the 1939 Register for England and Wales.

Frances Annie Brown was born on 10 February 1887 in Prahran, Melbourne. The only daughter and the youngest of five surviving children (a younger brother died aged three) born in Australia to Richard Brown and Isabella, née Dean. Her parents had grown up in the northern industrial city of Bradford, England. At the time of their marriage, Richard was a skilled woodworker while Isabella was employed as a worsted power loom weaver. They migrated to Australia in 1878 and soon after settled at 132 Commercial Road in the bustling inner south-eastern suburb of Prahran. There he set up as a woodturner, advertising his firm’s skills as ‘designers and originators, not copiers and followers’.

Frances was educated at the local high school before taking art classes at the Prahran Technical College. In 1910 she was awarded a certificate for her drawing of plant forms from nature. Although the ubiquitous ‘home duties’ was listed as her occupation on the electoral roll of 1919, by then she was also baking cakes. Her business, Billabong Home-Made Cakes, operated from their Commercial Road premises and attracted enough custom for the bakehouse to need the assistance of a ‘smart’ boy. That year a local paper noted that Frances displayed ‘the energy and business ability of her brothers’, and that her enterprise, which had begun ‘in a small way, is now quite a large concern’. The Prahran Council formally approved her application to register her cake making business at that address in 1920.

Sometime in the early 1920s (probably in late 1922), Frances left Melbourne for England. In later years she would say that she left for a holiday or to try her luck at an artistic career in London. Her move may have been prompted by three significant events that had occurred in quick succession in the months prior: the death of her mother in February 1921, a fire causing significant damage at the bakery in July 1922, and her father’s remarriage in September 1922.

In 1933 Peggy Brown, as she was now known, came to the attention of the Australian press. The headline ‘Fame and Fortune/ An Australian Girl Abroad/ From Arts to Tarts’ signalled the good news story of a ‘plucky’ local lass who had succeeded in the home country; having arrived with enough money for six months but she could now return with a credit note of twenty thousand pounds. In the newspaper account—often repeated—it was said that she, ‘had no business training, and had never had a lesson in cooking’. Her formative years with Billabong cakes is not acknowledged. By way of explanation for her baking skills, she would later add ‘well, I had five brothers!’

Described as a ‘strong feminist’, Peggy was a ‘firm believer in the capacity of her own sex and in a woman’s initiative in taking a risk when a man would sit back and wonder whether it was wise.’ She began with one employee and two tables in a rented shop in Surbiton in south-west London. Her small shop was advantageously positioned beside a bus stop and a stone’s throw from the railway station. She

PEGGY BROWN (CONT'D)

shrewdly recognised that instead of the solid fruit and madeira cakes commonly found in England, she could offer 'lighter' Australian sponge cakes that were 'easier to make and more profitable'. And she decided that the name Peggy Brown was 'nice [and] simple ... with an English flavour and easy to remember'. After selling out her stock by lunch time on the first day, she hired more staff for the second week.

By 1936 the cakeshop was the 'core' of her establishment that also encompassed a tea-room, coffee lounge, bakehouse, and six flats. Her staff had grown to 40 and they had a fleet of two delivery vans to service the flourishing catering business. She would report that she hung an Australian flag outside her shop; used Australian butter, eggs, fruit, and flour in her cooking; and borrowed replica kangaroos and koalas from Australia House for use in her elaborate window displays. Over the Christmas period in 1937 she sold more than 1,000 decorated cakes and 7,000 mince pies, and serviced orders in Australia, India, and the United States. That year she also supplied some 6,000 cakes a week to Chessington Zoo. In turn, the zoo named twin bears 'Peggy' and 'Brownie' in her honour.



Peggy Brown, pictured with the Christmas cake made with Australian produce presented to London Hospitals. *Herald* (Melbourne), 26 January 1933, page 32

way she knew how many were staying was by asking her housekeeper to 'count the service caps hanging in the hall'.

At the time of her death in mid-September 1973, Peggy was a resident at Cossins House, a nursing home in the village of Cobham, a few miles from Surbiton. She had sold the business in 1954 but kept busy by making cakes a couple of days a week for a hospital and aged care home. She also made three further return journeys to Australia in 1966, 1968, and 1970, visiting family and 'my boys' as she affectionately called the servicemen who had stayed at her London home.

Peggy's story is not uncommon. She was one of many enterprising and ambitious Australian women, who sought success abroad, often in the home country. Some, like Peggy, used their Australian traits when crafting their public image. Capturing their stories in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, however, can be hampered by their expatriate status and that they often live for long periods after their 'fame' has subsided. For the *ADB*, identifying and recording the lives a representative selection of Australian women who flourished abroad remains an ongoing task.

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Cake made by Peggy Brown served at a party with servicemen and voluntary workers at Australia House, London, 1942, Australian War Memorial. Peggy is pictured standing in the back (wearing black hat).

During World War II, Peggy was praised for her work towards the war effort. She was engaged to provide meals to Air Raid Precautions men and lunches for Australian servicemen attending tea dances at Australia House each Saturday. She would go on to supply the 'Boomerang Club', as it became known, with meals and cakes free of charge, later estimating that she baked 130,000 cakes a year for visitors to the club. At her residence in Surbiton, she maintained an open house for Australian servicemen on leave and claimed that the only

ADB STYLE ACTIVITY

Test Your Knowledge of ADB Style

Below we have scrambled the opening sentence of an ADB entry that appears in the Supplementary Volume (2005).

In the first sentence of an entry, the ADB endeavours to be consistent in style and, where possible, present the same life components.

Demonstrate your proficiency by unscrambling the tiles below to identify our mystery entry.

b	e	r	y	w	o	m	e	w	s	-	1	9	1	w	a	s	i	g	i	n	L	i	v	e	i	s	w
A	b	o	r	a	t	6)	,	b	o	r	n	a	r	m	e	n	A	b	h	e	l	l	o	u	t	h
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l	,	N	e	s	,	a	l	d	e	a	n	.	n	,	f	T	i	m	h	t	e	r	r	t	W		
H	u	b	e	1	8	4	2	o	f	n	d	h	y	,	a	w	a	l	(c	.	w	o	r	k		
o	r	i	g	E	m	m	a																				

Note: Each tile is only used once. Use spacing, punctuation, and common words to find adjacent tiles.

Need some assistance? Scan the first lines of a couple of ADB entries in the [Supplementary Volume \(https://adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/search/?query=volume%3A%22S1%22\)](https://adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/search/?query=volume%3A%22S1%22). You should be able to identify the usual elements found in the first sentence (eg. occupational descriptor) and the order in which they are typically arranged (although we do make slight tweaks on occasion).

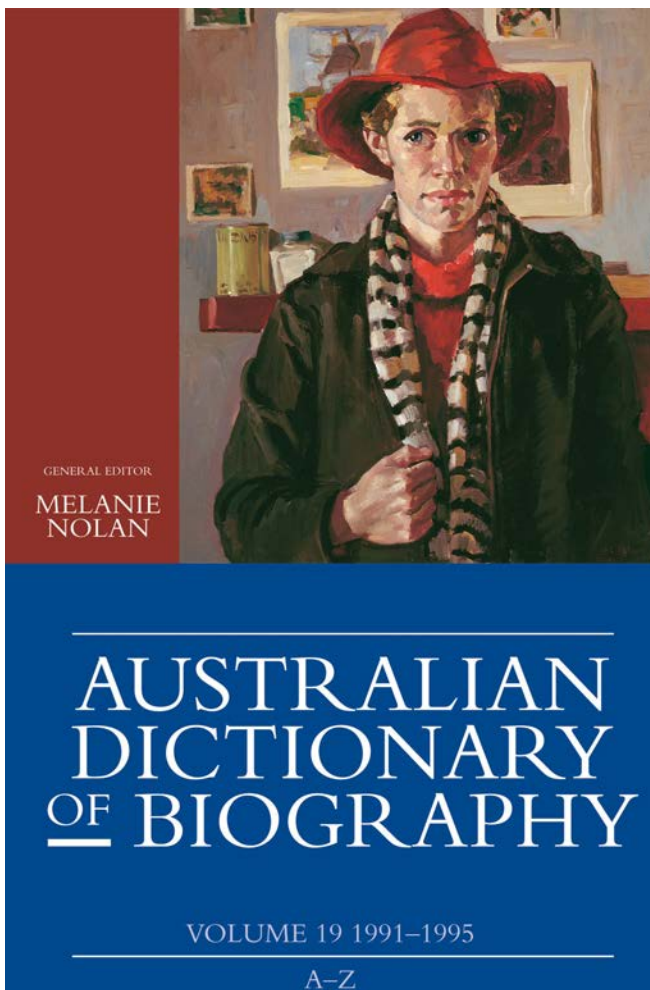
An example of a completed puzzle is below:

B	e	r	e	e	n	E	n	g	l	K	e	e	n	p	h	K	i	n	g	,	a	t	w	i	f			
e	s	a	w	a	s	9	2	)	,	J	o	s	r	m	a	.	J	a	n	u	n	é	e					
e	p	h	m	e	n	t	(	1	8	1	k	s	h	i	a	n	d	,	e	l	d	r	a	h	, R	e	a	d
9	-	1	8	a	n	d	1	8	1	9	k	e	r	,	a	r	y	r	e	,	n	o	n	e	s	t		
c	l	e	o	w	d	e	d	o	f	J	o	s	e	1	1	c	h	i	l	c	u	r	r	y	-	p		
h	i	s	b	o	r																							

J	o	s	e	p	h	K	e	e	n	(1	8	1	9	-	1	8	9	2)	,	c	u	r	r	y	-	p
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a	r	y	1	8	1	9	a	t	R	e	a	d	i	n	g	,	B	e	r	k	s	h	i	r	e	,		
E	n	g	l	a	n	d	,	e	l	d	e	s	t	c	h	i	l	d	o	f	J	o	s	e	p	h		
K	e	e	n	a	n	d	h	i	s	w	i	f	e	s	a	r	a	h	,	n	é	e	c	l	e			
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Mike Fogarty reviews the most recent volume of the *ADB*

Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol. 19, 1991–1995, A–Z, ed. Melanie Nolan, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2021).



Why should the latest edition in a long-running social sciences project be reviewed? Simply put, because it is not just another academic book which will remain unread and soon gather dust. Its companion volumes extend back to 1966. It is a useful research tool. The series covers many significant Australians (not all), and it is still a work in progress. Be assured, the now digital collection gets countless 'hits'.

What do we make of volume 19? It features 680 biographies of eminent and representative Australians who died between 1991 and 1995. As expected, many entrants were of a certain age and formed the great generation who served in WW II. Some 500 authors freely contributed to this voluntary project. Articles have a long gestation period from submission to publication, being made to adhere to the *ADB* style and format.

The *ADB* entries list Australians who made an impact during their lifetime. Some were notable—and any prime minister would expect to earn a lengthy account—others were significant for their lack of distinction. The famous and the infamous make for odd bedfellows but they still warrant consideration, their own feats have touched the national consciousness. Saints and sinners abound in Australian folklore. How do we assess the Australian character? Gina Marchetti, a critical studies theorist, advanced that we cannot speak for others. The *ADB*, to its credit, ignores that precept. It is left to the living to bequeath that old legacy for future generations; this, the heritage project does so remarkably well.

Where once the criteria mostly profiled dead white males, times have changed, and this institution has responded to it. Importantly, more women are included. The age range spans the young through to the old. As a reflection on society itself, the sexual preferences of a few shun hetero-normative behavioural expectations. The book is a mosaic of Australian socio-cultural representation as they form its array.

The *ADB* is a commendable social sciences instrument which both describes and explains the quintessential Australian character. Our people have a unique identity, and they should be celebrated within the historical span in which their past lives flourished. To interpret and enhance our memory, let us now examine some indicative subjects.

There is little space to expand on a cavalcade of entries, here are a few by occupational strata. They span: politicians (Sir Magnus Cormack, Sydney Einfeld, and Gordon Bryant); governors-general (Viscount De L'isle, Sir Paul Hasluck, and Sir John Kerr); diplomats (Kevin Kelly and Peter Wilenski); surgeons (Sir Edwin Dunlop, Dr Victor Chang, and Dr Fred Hollows); sportspeople (Isabel Letham and Lew Hoad); academic (Dorothy Green); jurist (Murray Farquhar); artists (Peter Allen and Frank Thring); RAN (Rear Admiral Sir Brian Murray, Captain Rodney Rhoades, and Captain Joan Streeter); RAA (Sir Mervyn Brogan and Russell Braddon, POW); RAAF (Indigenous pilot Len Waters, Air Commodore Robert Dalkin and Group Captain Clive Caldwell); mining magnate (Lang Hancock); public servant (Sir John Bunting); intelligence officers (Sir Charles Spry and Harvey Barnett); KGB defector (Vladimir Petrov); criminals (Darcy Dugan and John Friedrich).

This book is highly recommended. Its price (\$130) should not deter potential readers. After all, it is freely available on-line, and it is meant for convenient access. It need not be read in one sitting, but it can be dipped into over time, as it allows.

Mike Fogarty has contributed six entries to the ADB.



Get Involved

Is there someone who did important work for your people and you think everyone should know their story? Is there someone in your community who lived a long time ago and who you still remember and talk about today? Is there someone real deadly you want to tell us about?

If you are keen to share their story, tell us their name and a bit more about them on this nomination form.

We're looking for nominations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to be included in the ADB, and writers to help us compile these 200 biographies. If you are interested in nominating someone please send in a nomination form whether you're a community member or an experienced researcher, or get in touch with us.

More information and nomination forms can be found online at the [IADB project website](#).

Dr Shino Konishi is of Aboriginal descent and identifies with the Yawuru people of Broome, Western Australia. She leads the project and can be contacted at shino.konishi@uwa.edu.au.