

Biography Footnotes, no 1, Dec 2008-Feb 2009

National Centre of Biography established

The Gregory review of the Australian Dictionary of Biography recommended, in 2007, the establishment of a National Centre of Biography in the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU. The review envisaged the Centre would:

- 1) act as a focus for the study of biography in Australia, maintaining that study in line with the highest and most innovative biographical work internationally.
- 2) develop expertise in the study of, and co-ordinate the activities of biographers working on, individuals important in Australian history.
- 3) produce the Australian Dictionary of Biography as a continuing resource.
- 4) continue to develop ADB Online.
- 5) co-ordinate the activities of biographers throughout the College of Arts and Social Sciences and the ANU.
- 6) conduct public lectures, seminars, symposia, and other forms of academic and scholarly exchange in the field of biography.
- 7) attract outstanding scholars nationally and internationally to the Centre as Visiting Fellows and other short-term appointments.
- 8) train the next generation of biographers through MPhil and PhD programs and, possibly, coursework Masters and Summer School programs.

In response to the review the National Centre of Biography was established in June 2008 with Professor Melanie Nolan appointed the NCB's first Director and, following the retirement of Dr Di Langmore, general editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Professor Nolan will discuss her aims for the NCB in the March edition of Biography Footnotes

New websites to be launched in February 2009

The NCB and ADB websites are currently being redeveloped by [Kudasai](#) and will be launched early next year. Over time we hope to include a lot more information on the sites about recently published biographies and works in progress.

Staffing News

Dr Paul Arthur has been appointed Managing Editor of ADB/NCB. He is currently a research fellow at Curtin University of Technology, working on a project entitled 'Biography and Technology: Using Networked Digital Media to Build and Enhance Australia's Public Intellectual Capital'. As a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Murdoch University in 2004-07, Dr Arthur managed the research project, 'Interactive Histories: Digital Approaches to the Past'. Next year he will be taking up fellowships at Universities of Rutgers and Umea where he will complete a monograph on digital biography. Dr Arthur will take up the position of Managing Editor ADB/NCB early in 2010.

In the meantime, Dr Gail Clements will act as Managing Editor. Dr Janet Doust will replace Dr Clements as Research Editor on the Queensland and other small states desk.

Christine Fernon will be the NCB/ADB's Online Manager.

Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Biography to be offered in 2010

The Director, RSSS, has agreed that salary savings from Dr Nicholas Brown's appointment on a half-time, seven-year contact to the Centre for Historical Research at the National Museum of Australia can be used for a two-year postdoctoral fellowship in biography at the NCB. We will be advertising the position in 2009.

ADB Working Parties

The State Working Parties have the difficult task of devising the lists of subjects and authors for inclusion in the ADB. At the moment lists are being drawn up for people who died between 1991-2000. The current schedule stipulates that the subjects lists be completed by June 2009 and the authors lists by December 2009.

Professor Melanie Nolan has undertaken to attend meetings of the all working parties. She attended the Indigenous Working Party meeting on 24 November. Four members have resigned: Ms Frances Peters-Little, Professor Tim Rowse, Professor Ann Curthoys and Ms Dawn Casey. We thank them for their contributions and welcome two new members: Ms Samantha Faulkner and Dr Shino Konishi.

Professor Nolan and Dr Gail Clements attended the Queensland Working Party meeting on 27 November.

Visits are planned for the Western Australian and South Australian Working Parties on 4-6 March 2009. Trips to Tasmania, Victoria and NSW for their Working Party meetings will follow later that month.

Biennial Editorial Board Meeting Held

The ADB hosted the biennial Editorial Board meeting on 12 November. Professor Tom Griffiths chaired the meeting. ADB staff joined Editorial Board members for lunch at University House after the meeting.



ADB Editorial Board meeting, 12 November 2008

(l. to r., standing) Associate Professor Beverley Kingston, Professor Stephen Garton, Emeritus Professor Jill Roe, Dr Nicholas Brown, Professor Tom Griffiths, Professor Melanie Nolan, Emeritus Professor Geoff Bolton, Dr David Dunstan (seated) Professor David Horner, Associate Professor Peter Howell, Associate Professor Pat Buckridge, Associate Professor John Lack (absent) Professor Janet McCalman, Professor Michael Roe, Professor David Marsh

ADB Medals

Long-time ADB research assistant, Dr Jennifer Harrison, was awarded an ADB Medal at a special ceremony hosted by Professor Kay Ferres, a member of the Queensland Working Party on Friday 28 November at the Griffith University College of Art. Assistant Professor Pat Buckridge, also of Griffith University, and chair of the Queensland Working Party, orchestrated proceedings which were attended by Jenny's family, friends and present and past Working Party colleagues, including Spencer Routh, Manfred Cross and Dr Ross Johnston - formerly Head of History at the University of Queensland and the earlier Working Party chairman - who all spoke.

The medal citation read:

Dr Jennifer Harrison became the Queensland research assistant for the Australian Dictionary of Biography in 1987, and in that position provided able support to the editorial staff of the ADB and to the wider ADB community in Queensland, for the following twenty years. She has now resigned as research assistant, but continues to support the ADB as a member of the Queensland Working Party, which she joined in 1997.

Jennifer's effortless command of primary and secondary sources of Queensland history is the stuff of legend. Nor is the ADB the sole beneficiary of her archival skills: her work on developing and describing resources for family historians and other researchers was recognised by the State Library of Queensland in 1999; and her services as a research consultant have been retained at various times by other national biographical dictionaries. Local historical societies and students at the University of Queensland, where she has taught and supervised for many years, are also indebted to her intellectual generosity and organisational flair.

Over the years she has also earned a considerable reputation as a historian in her own right, with a particular interest in Irish and Scottish migration histories. Her interest in local church history has also borne fruit this year in her edition, with Ross Johnston, of *The Brisbane Anglican Companion, 1859-2009*.

For her indispensable support of its editorial staff, and for her invaluable contributions to the work of the ADB more generally, the Australian Dictionary of Biography is pleased to award Dr Jennifer Harrison its ADB Medal.

The ADB Editorial Board decided at its recent meeting to also award ADB Medals to Diane Langmore and Darryl Bennet. Dr Langmore was the General Editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography from October 2002 until her retirement in May 2008. Darryl Bennet, who was Deputy General Editor from October 2002, retired in April 2008. Together they oversaw the ADB Online project, 2004-2006. We will be arranging a presentation ceremony in Canberra early in the New Year.

Collective Biography and Thematic Essays

The NCB has begun commissioning thematic and collective biography essays. These long essays (8000-14,000 words) will be peer-reviewed and will start appearing on the new NCB website next year.

In addition, Simon Couper, Editor of the ANU Reporter, has commissioned a regular column, 'Life Sentences' about ADB work. The first column, on suicide, will appear in the summer 2009 edition.

ANU.Lives

ANU E Press has established a series in Biography, ANU.Lives. The Editorial Committee is chaired by Professor Melanie Nolan and consists of Professor Desley Deacon, Professor Paul Pickering, Dr Carolyn Strange and Dr Paul Arthur. Book proposal forms, author guidelines and other information can be downloaded from the ANU E Press website (<http://epress.anu.edu.au/>).

The Series note is as follows: The ANU.Lives Series in Life Writing is an initiative of the National Centre of Biography (NCB) in the History Program, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. The NCB was established in 2008 to extend the work of the Australian Dictionary of Biography and to serve as a focus for the study of life writing in Australia, supporting innovative research and writing to the highest standards in the field, nationally and internationally. This initiative was a response to the current popularity of biography but wanted to nurture best practice and the cutting-edge in biographical scholarship. Books published in the ANU.Lives Series will recount interesting and telling stories and engage critically with issues and problems in historiography and life writing. Books that appear in the ANU.Lives series are intended to be lively, engaging and provocative.



The first publication in the series is *Transnational Ties: Australian Lives in the World*, edited by Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woollacott. This collection asks the question what it might mean to be 'Australian'? And the answer? The making of Australian identity is not contained within the Australian continent. There is thought-provoking potential here to interrogate Australia as a nation and to break down the unnatural limits determined by studies preoccupied solely by national borders. This work indicates ways that the study of individual life stories can contribute to a transnational perspective.

Transnational Ties is now available online at http://epress.anu.edu.au/transnational_citation.html and can also be purchased for \$49.95 in hardcopy from the ANU Bookshop or ANU E Press.