



# National Centre of Biography News

July/August 2025

The NCB News is the monthly newsletter of the National Centre of Biography. Got biographical news to share? Send us an email at [ncb@anu.edu.au](mailto:ncb@anu.edu.au).

Note: this issue of the NCB News republishes material from the July number, which some readers may have not have received.



The Australian Crowd, by Stephen Baxter (2014)

## Dr Malcolm Allbrook retires



Prof. Melanie Nolan and Dr Malcolm Allbrook, 10 July 2025.

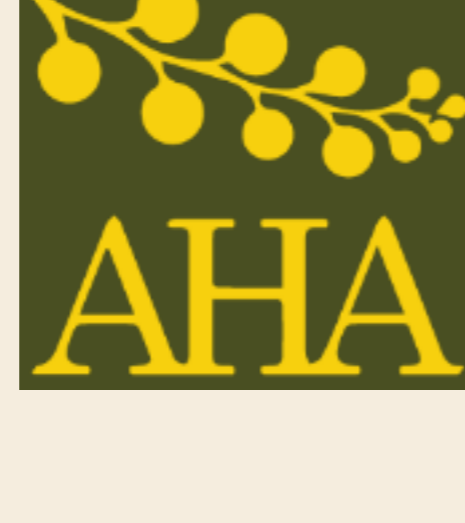
Last month we farewelled our colleague Dr Malcolm Allbrook, who recently retired after over a decade as the ADB's managing editor.

Malcolm's career has been a rich and varied one, seeing him work in the Western Australian public sector and with Aboriginal organisations before joining the ANU's School of History in 2011 as manager of the Mungo project. In 2014 he became part of the ADB/NCB and took up the post of managing editor.

The NCB hosted a farewell event at which several of Malcolm's colleagues and friends spoke about his generosity as a scholar and person and reflected on various aspects of his work. You can read a fuller account of the event, and see some pictures taken on the day, on our [website](#).

Malcolm will be sorely missed, but we wish him all the very best for a wonderful retirement!

## News & notices



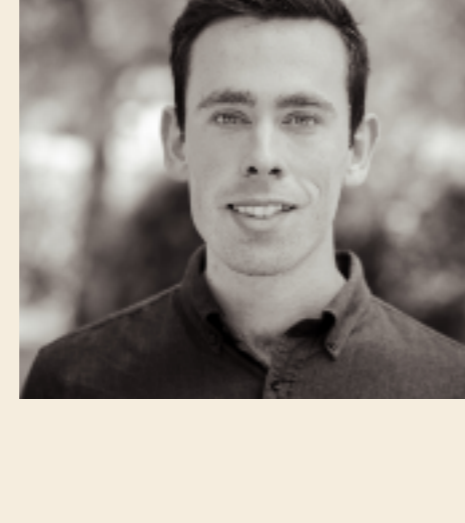
### Sign the petition

The Australian Historical Association is calling for people to add their signatures to its [petition](#) demanding that the Australian government abolish the Job-Ready Graduates (JRG) Package. This scheme incentivises students to choose STEM, education, and health degrees, and has caused the cost of BAs to increase to \$50,000. You can add your name to the list of over 2,500 others [online](#) now.



### ABC TOP 5 success

A big congratulations to Indigenous research editor Dr Shauna Bostock, who is one of five humanities researchers selected for ABC Radio National's prestigious [TOP 5 residency program](#). As part of this she will spend two weeks learning from leading journalists and producers about communicating with the media and their audiences. Read more about what this opportunity means to her via our [website](#).



### Teaching award

Congratulations to PhD student Matthew Cunneen who has been awarded a Teaching Merit Certificate from the University of Tasmania for his work teaching the course 'Convict Ancestors'.



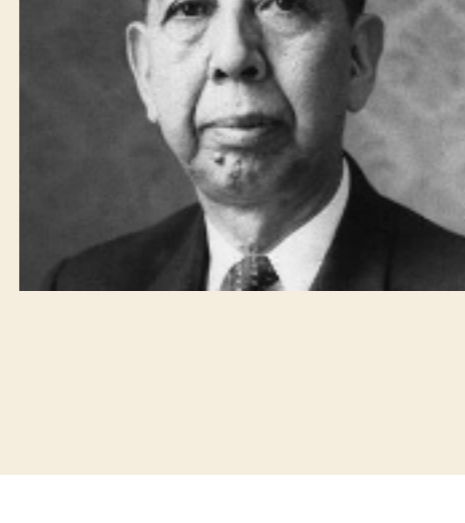
### New street names

In more good news, we have learnt that two more of the Denb's nominations for street names in Denman Prospect have been accepted. Beddie Crescent will commemorate shopkeeper and Labor Party activist [Mary Beddie](#), and Cheong Street will commemorate [Cheok Hong Cheong](#), missionary and social reformer. Thank you ACT Place Names!



### She Shapes History

On 19 August the NCB is joining forces with Harry Hartog to bring you an in-conversation event with Sita Sargeant, founder of the tour company She Shapes History and author of the travel book by the same name. Free but registrations essential; visit the [Harry Hartog website](#) for further details.



### Biography workshop

In this month's Biography Workshop (28 August) Andrew Levidis (ANU) will be speaking about former Japanese politician and prime minister Kishi Nobusuke. Keep an eye on our [website](#) and on your inboxes for further details.



Prof. Nicholas Brown, Dr Patricia Clarke and Dr Malcolm Allbrook, 24 June 2025.

## ADB medal awarded to Dr Pat Clarke

Since 2002 the ADB Medal has been awarded to people who have given long and distinguished service to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

On 24 June Dr Patricia Clarke became the 27th recipient of this award in recognition of her many and varied contributions to the ADB as an author, reader and working party member. The medal also recognised her involvement in the field of biography and her leading role in the Canberra historical community. Warmest congratulations to Pat on this achievement!

Read the full citation for Pat's ADB Medal our [website](#).



## Dictionary of New Zealand Biography

We are dismayed to hear of the latest news from Aotearoa New Zealand, where the Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage is proposing cuts that will affect the history discipline in various ways.

The New Zealand Historical Association reports that these proposed cuts threaten historian positions, as well as digital platforms, notably: *Te Ara/The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*; *Ngā Tangata Taumata Rau/Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*; and *NZHistory.govt.nz*.

Anyone interested in writing to express their views on this matter may find some useful advice on this [page](#) of the NZHA website. We encourage members of the ADB/NCB community to consider sharing their support for our colleagues across the Tasman.

## Read, listen, learn



### 'Jewel in the crown'

In case you missed it, chair and members of the ADB editorial board, Em Prof Tom Griffiths and Em Prof Mark McKenna, wrote a [piece](#) about the ADB for *Inside Story*. Read it [online](#) now.



### The value of an arts degree

At the end of July *The Guardian* published a [piece](#) reporting on an [open letter](#) calling for a reversal of the Australian government's Jobs-Ready Graduate scheme. The letter was organised by the Australian Historical Association and signed by 100 prominent Australians who have benefitted from their access to free or affordable Bachelor of Arts degrees. Such as authors Tim Winton and Charlotte Wood, The Hon Margaret Reynolds, The Hon. Barry O'Farrell, and many others.



### Exhibition review

There NCB's Dr Michelle Staff and Dr Emily Gallagher have written a review of the NLA's recent exhibition *Fit to Print*. Read it via [History Australia](#) online.



### Arrernte child artists

Thanks to the Minoru Hokari Memorial Scholarship, Dr Emily Gallagher recently visited Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and Ntaria (Hermannsburg) to share knowledge of the Arrernte children's art she found while researching the history of Australian childhood for her forthcoming book, *Playtime*. Read a full [account](#) of her fieldwork trip.



### New podcast episodes

Several new episodes of *Biographers in Conversation* have been released in the past month. Visit the [website](#) to listen to each in-depth interview, hosted by NCB visitor Dr Gabriella Kelly-Davies.



### Final blog instalment

The final piece in our 'Gender and Biography' series with *VIDA!* *The blog of the Australian Women's History Network* is now [online](#). In it Emeritus Professor Richard Fotheringham explores how his work on Jenny Howard's ADB entry led him to the notion of 'echoic biography'.

## ADB feature entry

Each month we highlight a new addition to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. This month's feature is brought to you by the newly established ADB GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) Advisory Group.

In collaboration with the National Museum of Australia, last month we published a special entry on cartoonist and puppeteer, Norman Hetherington. You might not recognise the name, but you will surely recognise that of his most famous creation: Mr Squiggle.

Read all about him in the [entry](#) written by the NMA's Dr Sophie Jensen, online now. Then check out the exhibition [Mr Squiggle and Friends: The Creative World of Norman Hetherington](#) at the museum, open till 13 October 2025.



Norman Hetherington with Bill Steamshovel, Mr Squiggle & Gus the Snail, NMA

