



Australian
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of Biography

National Centre of Biography News

June 2026

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.



The Australian Crowd, by Stephen Baxter (2014)



Who Do You Think You Are?

We were super excited this month to see PhD candidate Nicola Garvey appearing as a subject-matter expert on the SBS series *Who Do You Think You Are?*

The episode explored Australian actress Essie Davis's family history. Nicola showed Essie historic musters about her three-times great-grandmother Sarah Greggs/Griggs, a woman who came out on the convict ship the *Neptune* in 1790 as part of the Second Fleet.

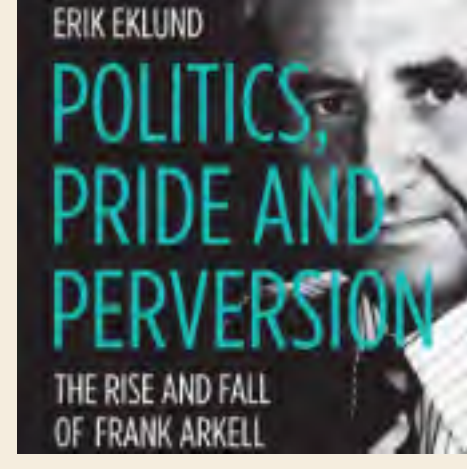
Watch the [full episode](#) to find out more.

News & notices



Two shortlistings!

Dr Emily Gallagher's book *Playtime: A history of Australian childhood* (La Trobe, 2025) has been shortlisted for not one but two awards this month! The W.K. Hancock Prize is awarded to an Australian scholar for a first scholarly book in any field of history. The winner will be announced at the AHA conference in a few weeks' time. In the ACT Literary Awards *Playtime* was shortlisted in the nonfiction category. The winner will also be announced soon. Congratulations and good luck Em!



More congratulations

Erik Eklund has also been shortlisted in the ACT Literary Awards nonfiction category for *Politics, Pride and Perversion: The Rise and Fall of Frank Arkell*. This book was published by ANU Press as part of the NCB's Biography Series. Congratulations and good luck Erik!



RAHS lecture

On 17 June at History House in Sydney ADB research editor Dr Emily Gallagher will deliver a special lecture on her recent book *Playtime* to the Royal Australian Historical Society. Book your free ticket via the [website](#).



Biography Workshop

This month's Biography Workshop (25 June, 11am) will be given by Atul Joshi on 'Queering Auto/Biography: The Many Lives of Alison Clark'. This session will be presented via Zoom. [Further details](#).



AHA conference

Some members of the NCB will be heading to Macquarie University's Wollumattagal campus later this month to present at the Australian Historical Association's conference.

- Emily Gallagher, 'New age grandparents and thrill-seeking grannies: reimagining old age in postwar Australia'
- Michelle Staff, 'Snapshots: Who is the Bessie Rischbieth we see in family photographs?'
- Matthew Cunneen, '"Fare Ye Well": Ex-Convict Departures and the Rethinking of Australian Settlement, 1788-1901'



ADB website

Visitors to the ADB website might have had trouble accessing it at times over the past few days. We are very sorry for the disruption. Please bear with us as we do our best to fix the problem quickly as possible!



From the archive

While researching the *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* history, some of our team members came across this *Canberra Times* x *ADB trivia quiz* from 1990. Do you know the answers to all 10 questions?

Read, listen, learn

The Rest is History



We were chuffed to hear the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* receive a mention on the latest episode of the popular podcast *The Rest is History*! Listen to 'The First World War | Churchill's Calamity (Part 6)' wherever you get your podcasts to hear about Simpson and his donkey, the Anzacs, and Gallipoli -all informed by our very own ADB!

Patrick Mullins talk recorded



The recording of the Writing Lives conversation between Dr Patrick Mullins and Dr Emily Gallagher about *The Stained Man: A crime, a scandal, and the making of a nation* is now available to listen to online via YouTube. Access it via the [event page](#) (scroll all the way to the bottom).



New podcast episodes

The podcast *Biographers in Conversation* is hosted by NCB visitor Dr Gabriella Kelly-Davies. Visit the [website](#) to listen to new interviews with Micaela Sahhar, Karen Fang, Troy Bramston and Ian Hembrow.



NPG exhibition

We were interested to see ADB subject [John Brack](#) featured in the current temporary exhibition on display at the National Portrait Gallery, *John Brack x Noel McKenna: A face in the mirror*. Check out our [Instagram collab](#) with our friends at the NPG for more.

ADB feature entry

Each month we highlight a new addition to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

This time we have a local ANU story to share. Anthropologist Marie Reay studied for her PhD here and later returned to work as a lecturer. You might recognise her name from the teaching centre in Kambri dedicated to her.

Read all about Reay's life and career in the [entry](#) written by Erin Gates now.



Donate to the ADB Endowment

Love our work and want to see more of it? Consider donating to the ADB Endowment! All donations over \$2 are tax deductible, and it's as easy as filling out this [online form](#).

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