



Australian
National
University

Biography Footnotes

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
NATIONAL CENTRE OF BIOGRAPHY

No. 25, December 2024

National Centre of Biography,
School of History

ANU College of Arts &
Social Sciences

The National Centre of Biography acknowledges, celebrates, and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region, and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands members of our wider community meet, live, and work.

Cover image: Australian athlete Clarice Kennedy throwing a discus, New South Wales, 18 December 1933. Photo: National Library of Australia, PIC Row 14/5/2 #PIC/15611/1775.

Biography Footnotes no. 25 was edited by Dr Michelle Staff.



**Australian
National
University**

National Centre
of Biography

Contents

01	From the director's desk	1
02	<i>ADB</i> news	2
	Congratulations	2
	Honours	3
	<i>ADB</i> author deaths	3
	New website	3
	Editorial Board meeting	4
	Chris Cunneen	6
	<i>ADB</i> entries published in 2024	7
	Discovering Pearlie Watling	9
03	NCB staff & student news	10
	Staff movements & visitors	10
	Successes	11
	Teaching	13
	Research activities	14
	Children's history & biography	16
	Convict history in Iutruwita/Van Diemen's Land/Tasmania	18
	Fibro Modernity	19
	Reframing Indigenous Biography	21
	Publications	23

04	Outreach & engagement	24
	Communications	25
	Cross-campus collaborations	26
	GLAM collaborations	27
	Community engagement	28
	Education outreach	28
	Athletes in the <i>ADB</i>	29
05	Oceania news	30
	Revisiting the Papua New Guinea Dictionary of Biography	31
06	People Australia projects	32
	Legacies of slavery	33
	An elusive love story	34
07	ANU Press publications	35
	<i>AJBH</i> no. 8	36
	Writing Rosalie	38
08	NCB events	39
	Biography Workshop series	40
	Intellectual biography workshop	41
	The historian at large	43
	What is a classic in history?	44
09	Contributors	45

From the director's desk



Melanie Nolan. Photo: *Canberra Times* (Dion Georgopoulos).

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) has three core priorities, which the Editorial Board endorsed at its 2024 annual meeting, and which form the basis of our five-year strategic and operational plans: to complete Volume 20 and work towards commissioning articles for the revisions project by the end of 2026; to develop the ADB online, especially the Biographical Information Management System (BIMS) 2.0, following best practice and facilitating interoperability; and to curate and communicate our high-quality research clearly to a wider audience.

New staff have joined long-serving team members in the last year to work on these priorities. Our focus on Volume 20 honours the commitment made in the review of the ADB in 1988 and, more recently, to our publishers. Dr Shauna Bostock was appointed as Indigenous Australian research editor in July. While Shauna is focused on the First Nations Biography Australia project, funded by the J. T. Reid Trust, she, Dr Peter Woodley, and Dr Rani Kerin are also advising on Indigenous matters relating to Volume 20 and preparing for the revisions. All the ADB Working Parties are now beginning to work towards the revision of early volumes.

Shenhai (Howie) Chen, who joined us as web programmer and developer during 2023, is redeveloping BIMS, which Scott Yeadon developed in 2012–13. BIMS 2.0 will result in two websites: the ADB and People Australia. It is hoped that these will go live at the beginning of 2026.

There is little point in peopling our websites without attending to the dissemination of our work. Dr Michelle Staff joined us at the beginning of the year as online and outreach manager. In addition to curating and managing the online publication of our content, she and Dr Emily Gallagher are developing our collaboration with the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) sector through establishing a GLAM Advisory Committee. They are also leading plans in the broader School of History to work with schoolteachers.

Maintaining a dictionary that was begun six decades ago is a challenge, not least because we continue to take on new responsibilities. Michelle and I discussed some of these in the [Australian Book Review](#). We are now a research centre of excellence, a focal point of biography and life-writing expertise, and the ADB is building up a suite of digital research tools. You can read more about all these matters in this issue of *Biography Footnotes*.

Professor Melanie Nolan
Director, National Centre of Biography
General Editor, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

ADB news



Members of NCB staff & the Editorial Board, May 2024. Photo: Michelle Staff.

This section reports on everything **ADB**: from the annual board meeting to what's been published so far from Volume 20.

Congratulations

2024 has brought various achievements for several members of the ADB Editorial Board and Working Parties that we wish to recognise:

- **Associate Professor Shino Konishi** (First Nations Working Party) has been awarded an ARC Future Fellowship.
- Chair of the Tasmanian Working Party, **Professor Kristyn Harman**, has been promoted to professor at the University of Tasmania.
- Oceania Working Party co-chair **Professor Kate Fullagar**'s latest book *Bennelong and Phillip: A History Unravelling* was shortlisted in the NSW Premier's History Awards and the Prime Minister's Literary Awards.
- Member of the NSW Working Party, **Associate Professor Alecia Simmonds**, enjoyed much success with her book *Courting: An Intimate History of Love and the Law*. It won a NSW Premier's History Award, the W. K. Hancock Prize, and the Australian Legal Research Award for a Book, and was shortlisted in the Prime Minister's Literary Awards.

Honours

Congratulations to those *ADB* volunteers — authors and members of working parties — who have received Australian honours since the last edition of *Biography Footnotes*.

Australia Day Honours 2024:

Officer (AO) in the General Division

Emeritus Professor Peter McDonald

Member (AM) in the General Division

Dr Dorothy Erickson

Professor Anna Haebich

Dr John J. Taylor

Mr John Vallance

Medal (OAM) in the General Division

Associate Professor Ian J. Bickerton

Dr Judith M. McKay

King's Birthday Honours 2024:

Member (AM)

Professor Heather Goodall

***ADB* author deaths**

It is with great sadness that we note the deaths that have been reported to us since 25 December 2023:

Mr Kim Akerman

Professor Judith Allen

Ms Margaret Bettison

Dr Maxwell J. Coleman

Mr Manfred Cross

Professor Donald Denoon

Commander Denis Fairfax

Dr Alan Gregory

Dr Carmel Maguire

Dr Raoul F. Middelmann

Dr Frances Peters-Little

Professor John Rickard

Professor Lyndall Ryan

Mr Frank van Straten

New website

Howie Chen & Michelle Staff

In 2024 Shenhai (Howie) Chen, the *ADB*'s web programmer and developer, made great progress on the *ADB* website redesign. We are implementing new technologies to develop this website, enhancing its management, maintainability, and scalability. The information architecture will also be reorganised to facilitate easier access to data through the search function.

We demonstrated the prototype to the Editorial Board in May and collated their feedback on this work in progress; throughout the year NCB/*ADB* staff have also looked at the new design and offered their comments on it. As of this month, Howie has completed both the public section and the internal user dashboard interface. He is currently working on the server-side code, which is the most complex aspect of the new website. It will encompass the entire search functionality, logic operations, and database interactions.

The decision has now been made to launch two websites: the *ADB* website, which will focus solely on *ADB*-related entries and include links to obituary information where relevant; and People Australia, which will include all entries contained in the other five websites we currently host (People Australia, Obituaries Australia, Indigenous Australia, Women Australia, and Labour Australia). This represents a significant change for the new site and will require the redevelopment of the data indexing and query functions. We estimate that these websites will be completed by December 2025 and look forward to them going live by early 2026.

Editorial Board meeting

Melanie Nolan

The Editorial Board is almost as old as the *ADB* itself. By 1960 there was:

1. a National Advisory Panel consisting of representatives from every Australian university. This was formed to reflect the national character of the enterprise, and;
2. a small provisional editorial committee — which had met for the first time in June 1959 in Professor Keith Hancock's office — that determined the *ADB*'s broad lines of strategy and procedural, budget, staffing, and publication matters. This was predominantly a group of ANU staff members, and it had responsibilities to the university, which has always been the *ADB*'s main financial provider.

At a joint meeting of these two groups in April 1960 the Editorial Board was confirmed, and the advisory panel became the National Committee, which was charged with defining policy. Professor Douglas Pike was appointed the foundation General Editor of the *ADB* on 31 January 1962. With most of its members being chairs of the various working parties established in each of the States and Territories, the National Committee began to meet annually and operated with a 'decentralised collaborative design' or, as Professor Jill Roe later described it, 'consultative constitution'. But, as Hancock noted, it was 'insufficiently engineered'. In November 1979 the Editorial Board therefore decided to dismantle the National Committee. It was formally abolished in 1983, with the consent of its members, and State membership of the Editorial Board was expanded.

For the past four decades, then, the *ADB*'s Editorial Board has been something of both a board of directors — concerned with the governance and management of the *ADB*, and with achieving its vision, mission, and goals — and an editorial board of experts able to advise and support the General Editor in the production of the dictionary. It is responsible for the scholarly direction as well as the management of the *ADB*. Currently it has twenty members, whom the ANU Vice Chancellor appointed for five-year terms from December 2021 to December 2026.

I presented the 77th General Editor's report to the Editorial Board on 28 May 2024. This is an annual occurrence. As is custom, all the working parties, which are autonomous, reported on their year's work and shared best practice at the meeting as well.

There is usually a workshop associated with the annual meeting at which an issue of importance is highlighted. Of late, the future revisions project has dominated the workshops. This year the workshop was presented by Shenhai (Howie) Chen, Dr Michelle Staff, and research editor Dr Emily Gallagher and centred on the development of the new *ADB* website as well as aspects of the *ADB*'s new approach to outreach and engagement.



Members of the *ADB* editorial board, May 2024. From back left: Chris Cunneen, Mark Dunn, Annemarie McLaren, Geoff Ginn, Malcolm Allbrook, Bridget Griffen-Foley, Melanie Oppenheimer, Cath Kevin, Carolyn Rasmussen, Kristyn Harman, Tom Griffiths, Melanie Nolan. Photo: Michelle Staff.

The Editorial Board is concerned with recognising the countless number of people who work tirelessly on the dictionary, whether as paid staff, volunteers, working party members, or authors. The thanks we all owe to *ADB* volunteers is most clearly articulated at *ADB* celebrations and Medal presentations, over which the Chair of the Editorial Board, Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths, presides.

Recently, Emily Gallagher (with assistance from Michelle Staff) set out to honour a woman in the naming of the *ADB*'s library. The shortlist consisted of the first woman on the Editorial Board, Dr Heather Radi; the long-serving research editor and *ADB* Medal recipient Martha Campbell; and the long-term administrator and researcher Nan Phillips. As Dr Chris Cunneen observed, with her husband having donated 830 of her books to the *ADB* library after her death, Phillips was essentially its founder. We are in the process of gaining approval from the university to officially name the Nan Phillips Library.

All too clearly, Chris himself reaching his 50th year of service with the *ADB* puts the spotlight on the variety of kinds of service from which we benefit. Authors are all volunteers; sometimes staff members are as well. Chris was on the *ADB* staff from 1975 to 1996, becoming Deputy General Editor. In 1975 he also joined the NSW Working Party. After retiring, Chris was project manager and co-editor of the *ADB*'s Supplementary Volume. He was invited to join the Editorial Board in 2011, and he was awarded the *ADB* Medal for long and distinguished service in 2015. He is now fourth on our author's roll of honour, with 83 entries to his name so far, and continues as a volunteer, working with Christine Fernon on the Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement 1788-1975. To thank Chris for this continuing service, the Editorial Board held a celebratory lunch at its annual meeting in May. If Chris' record is any indication, volunteering and service to the *ADB* are not old-fashioned activities or concepts that are dying out but are alive and well.



Bede Nairn, Nan Phillips, and Geoffrey Serle in the *ADB*'s library. Photo: ANU Archives ANUA226-680.



ADB staff, Chris Cunneen, Marion Consadine, and Bede Nairn, 1983 Photo: ANU Archives, ANUA226-689

Chris Cunneen: Speech at the ADB lunch in honour of Chris's 50 years of service, 28 May 2024

Tom Griffiths



Tom Griffiths (far right) delivering his speech for Chris Cunneen (second from left). Photo: Michelle Staff.

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has been in existence now for two-thirds of a century and Chris has served it for half a century; in other words, he has worked for the ADB for three-quarters of the institution's long life. Most of us don't know an ADB without Chris Cunneen. The ADB, I'm pleased to say, has proven very adept at securing long service from its staff and volunteers. But Chris's service – and the high quality of his achievements along the way – have been extraordinary. And happily, this is a work in progress! We are celebrating him today because such sustained dedication is magnificent; it's inspiring; it is heartwarming. And it is also highly productive for the institution lucky enough to secure such devotion.

As historians we value memory and knowledge and tradition, but because society and historiography and academic culture constantly change, we also appreciate innovation and open-mindedness. That balance is hard to achieve in a long-running institution: the balance between tradition and innovation. Chris's career exemplifies that balance. He brings a deep, experiential knowledge of the past to our work and also a youthful enthusiasm for new projects, new ideas, and new people. How lucky we are.

During the half-century that Chris has worked for the ADB, universities have changed beyond recognition. Many of us feel, sadly, that the moral core of the university system has rotted away; its sense of public service has declined; corporate values have overwhelmed academic ones; competition has triumphed over collaboration. Yet the ADB forges on, a rare bulwark against this degradation of values. It's one reason, I think, why the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* secures such loyalty. It remains completely collaborative; it is committed to a federal model of cooperation; it is a truly national project; it values volunteerism and believes in public service; its scholarly articles are freely available and not guarded behind a paywall; it is Australia's greatest and most enduring initiative in public history. And, steeped in tradition as it is, it has also changed with the times and the discipline, often leading those changes. All this is possible because of the calibre and longevity of service of people like Chris Cunneen.

Chris, we are so grateful for your scholarship, good grace, dedication, and deep commitment to the craft of biography and to the institution of the ADB. On behalf of the Editorial Board and its wonderful Working Parties across the nation, on behalf of the ANU, I honour you and I thank you!



Chris Cunneen at the Editorial Board lunch. Photo: Michelle Staff.

ADB entries published in 2024

Michelle Staff

The subjects that have been added to the ADB this year demonstrate the great diversity of people now deemed worthy of inclusion in a national dictionary. This is vastly different to earlier volumes of the ADB, which would have had readers believe that women, migrants, and Indigenous people made very few (or no) contributions significant enough to be remembered. Thankfully that is changing, and Volume 20, alongside the *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography*, is doing much to rectify this historic imbalance.

I index each entry that comes through our editors' queues. This provides the foundations of the dictionary's capabilities as a tool of network analysis, but it also means that I get to see and read every single story we publish. In 2024 we have published over 123 new entries on the ADB's website.

Here are just a few of the entries that have caught my eye in 2024.

Gwoja Jungarrayi

If you recognise this face, it could be from a number of places: *Walkabout* magazine, a run of 1950s postage stamps, or, most likely, the two-dollar coin.

Gwoja Jungarrayi (c. 1895–1965) was a Ngalia (southern) Warlpiri–Anmatyerr man with Arrernte ancestry, an urrempelel (ceremony) man, entrepreneur, and iconic figure. He came to be known as One Pound Jimmy, possibly because he negotiated a cash payment for his portrait rather than accepting the usual 'payment' of tobacco.

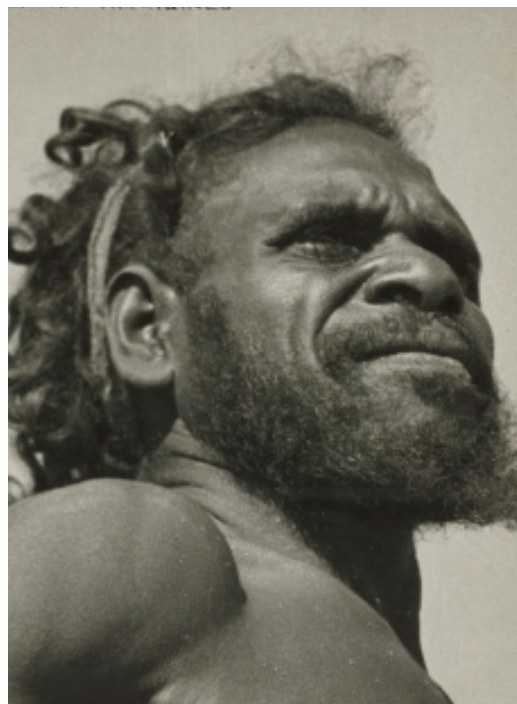
The entry shows there is more to learn about the man behind the photograph, who survived a government-sanctioned mass killing, worked on pastoral properties, became a senior knowledge holder, and much else besides.

Joan Richmond

It was on a trip to Scotland that nineteen-year-old Joan Richmond caught the motoring bug. She had already tried her hand at horse racing, but she found that there were far fewer barriers in the way of women getting involved in motorsports, so changed course.

Back in Australia a few years later she began competing. She eventually went to Europe to take part in events such as the Rallye Monte-Carlo and the 24-hour race at Le Mans. To support herself she worked as a chauffeur, demonstrator at motor shows, and tour guide.

During World War II she put her skills to use as an ambulance driver. Afterwards, lacking financial support for racing, she worked for the Animal Welfare League of Victoria in what was quite a change of pace. Some of her memorabilia is held just down the road from the NCB's offices at the National Museum of Australia.



Gwoja Jungarrayi, by Roy Dunstan, 1935. Photo: State Library of New South Wales.



Joan Richmond. Photo: National Museum of Australia.

Maryann Bugg

The entry on Maryann Bugg shows that she was more than just a bushranger's wife, as people commonly see her. Though there are many unknowns about her life, with only glimpses provided in various historical sources, we do know that she was born to a Birrpai Goori woman named Charlotte and a convict named James Bugg and was removed from her family to be raised at the Female Orphan School, Parramatta.

While documenting her relationship with Frederick Ward (aka Captain Thunderbolt), the entry — written by John Heath, Maryann's second-great-nephew — delves into the archives to find out as much as possible about this woman on her own terms, recasting our picture of her to give a much fuller life story.

Roy Goon

We've had a few aviators come through the *ADB* this year: Peggy Kelman, Gwen Caldwell, and Roy Goon.

Goon drew my attention as he was the first Chinese Australian commissioned into the RAAF. This came after he was rejected not only once but twice under the Defence Act's exclusion of people who were 'not substantially of European origin or descent'. As we look to include a wider variety of subjects in the *ADB* — such as people with Asian or Pacific heritage — we are coming across the many complex issues stemming from the White Australia Policy more and more.

Enid Moon

In this entry, Dr Yves Rees describes the 'determinedly independent' Enid Emily Moon as 'a bohemian who rebelled from the conservative milieu of her youth'. Moon's family expected her to become a teacher after university, but she only spent six weeks in front of a classroom before turning to another occupation. Her decades-long career was spent as a proofreader and copyeditor for various magazines, newspapers, and presses.

She had a 'rather wild' social life that saw her involved in multiple car crashes, one of which reportedly caused her to lose an eye. Moon certainly is one of the more colourful, if less well-known, subjects in the *ADB*!

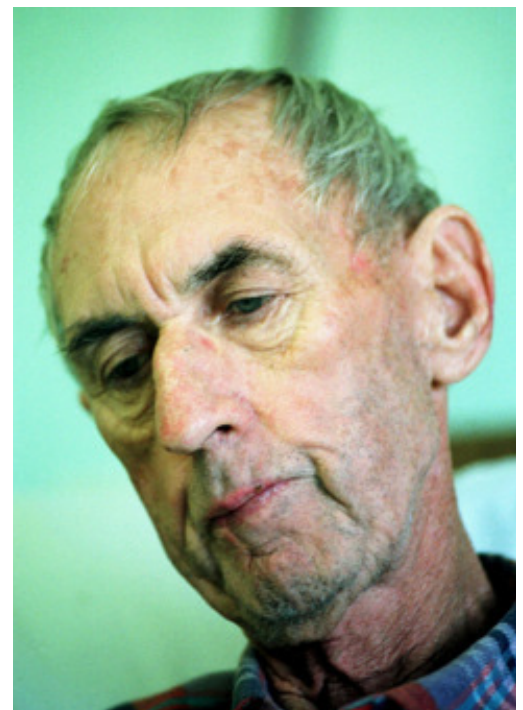
Max Bell

I might be a bit biased here, as I was the research editor for Max Bell's entry. What is fascinating about it is that it challenges the *ADB*'s criteria for what counts as a 'significant' life.

We don't know much about Bell's life until his final years. He was just an ordinary person, moving around and working different jobs. He has made it into the history books because of the confluence of his terminal cancer diagnosis and the Northern Territory's controversial and short-lived Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 1995, which was the first right-to-die legislation anywhere in the world. Bell was denied a humane and dignified death, but his story helped others secure this important human right.



Roy Goon, 1934. Photo: Goon family.



Max Bell, 1996. Photo: David Hancock.

Discovering Pearlie Watling

Catherine Kevin

It was very satisfying to receive the [link](#) to the final version of my *ADB* entry on Pearlie Irene Watling (née Collins) last month. Her nomination by the NSW Working Party for Volume 20 reflected the expanding remit of the *ADB* in recent years. In various ways, the *ADB* is being revitalised to reflect the ever-widening audience for its online platform and a broad and deep re-evaluation of our national story and who counts in telling it.

As a member of the Women's Working Party, when I accepted the invitation to write this entry I was aware that there would be challenges. Watling spent one day at school. From a young age she survived by hard physical labour. She was a remarkable musician who never attended a formal lesson, and she was known for her sporting prowess in adult life, which reflected her habit of taking non-institutional pathways to joining, doing, and contributing. Without educational records, an illustrious career, or formal accolades to her name, the research for this entry began with a conversation on an aeroplane.

Flying from Sydney to Adelaide, I found myself seated next to a woman who was having a weekend away from her hometown of Goulburn. My invitation to write about Watling, who spent most of her life in and near Goulburn, had arrived recently. I soon brought our conversation around to asking my fellow passenger if she had heard of



Pearlie Watling, Goulburn, New South Wales, 1983. Photo: National Library of Australia.

Pearlie. 'Heard of her?!' She was the great-granddaughter of Pearlie's sister-in-law — and proud of it. Her mother would have stories, and she would be in touch on her return. Home in Adelaide, and at a distance from the National Library, where I knew there were recorded interviews, this felt like a good start. When I received the email, however, it contained a story of a family rift and news that implied her mother's reticence to talk. My new acquaintance did, however, invite me to join the Goulburn History and Pictures Facebook group, where I'd be sure to find people with stories.

I made my post in the group and the one-or two-line memories came flooding in. The references to Pearlie's sense of humour and warmth in the obituaries and

interviews I had read were confirmed and made more vivid. Her significance in her community became very clear and I knew this would be an entry that described a remarkable life and character who mattered a great deal to the many people who knew her. Through the page I organised a conversation with someone who observed her when he was a child, which added to my sense of her character and community.

The National Library's recordings of Watling and her family members playing music and talking gave me much more to work with. In them, she told of playing a Spanish waltz to a group of blind men and women who danced in formation to her music. She spoke of her 'hoity-toity' English ancestors who paid her convict great-great-grandfather to change his name from James to Collins. He was the first to arrive in Australia and a violinist. The family's contribution to folk music was made through every generation of his descendants, including her grandfather, who learnt songs as a child by listening while waiting outside the pub to take his father home.

Research editor Dr Emily Gallagher's meticulous consulting of extra state, war, and census records, and her ear's sensitivity for the perfect phrase in the recordings, brought crystal clarity to some details I hadn't pinned down. These entries are always a joint effort, and much better for it, and this one will hopefully bring some new readers to the *ADB*'s vast collection. Writing this is a good reminder to post the link on the Goulburn History and Pictures Facebook page, in case its readers haven't found it already.

NCB staff & student news



Shauna Bostock delivering her acceptance speech at the NSW Premier's History Awards, September 2024. Photo: State Library of New South Wales.

Read on to find out what the team at the ANU have been up to.

Staff movements & visitors

In February we had a farewell morning tea for Dr Kiera Donnelly to thank her for her contributions since joining the National Centre of Biography in 2020 and to wish her well for the future. At the start of the year we officially welcomed Dr Michelle Staff in her new role as online and outreach manager, and in March Dr Peter Woodley and Dr Rani Kerin took up their research editing contracts (2024-29) to work on the First Nations Biography Australia project, which the J. T. Reid Trust is funding. In July we welcomed our new Indigenous Australian research editor, Bundjalung woman Dr Shauna Bostock. Dr Emily Gallagher organised a well-attended School of History reading group on Shauna's book, *Reaching Through Time: Finding My Family's Stories* (Allen and Unwin, 2023) on 8 November. Shauna has also been teaching workshops on family history to Indigenous students as part of the Research Centre for Deep History's Indigenous Family History Research Residencies.

In June and then again in November we welcomed visiting student Megan Graham, a PhD candidate from the University of Leeds. Other NCB visitors this year include: Professor Jaume Aurell, Professor Emile Chabal, Dr Mary-Anne Jebb, Dr Ian Kumeakawa, Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna, Dr Patrick Mullins, Dr Sophie Scott-Brown, Dr Jill Waterhouse, and Professor Richard Whatmore.

Successes

NCB staff have had a stellar year when it comes to recognition of their work.

At the Australian Historical Association conference in July, **Dr Emily Gallagher** was announced as the winner of the Serle Award for the best postgraduate thesis in Australian history. Her thesis, titled 'The Childhood Imagination in Australia, 1890-1940', was deemed by the judges 'a striking contribution to children's and educational history in Australia and internationally'. As she was overseas at the time delivering an invited keynote address for the Children's History Society conference at Newcastle University in England, her PhD supervisor, Professor Frank Bongiorno, accepted the award on her behalf. Just this month it has been announced that Emily's thesis has been shortlisted for the International Australian Studies Association's Lyndall Ryan Thesis Prize. We wish her the best of luck! Keep your eyes peeled for Emily's forthcoming book, under contract with La Trobe University Press.



Emily Gallagher, 2024. Photo: Jessica Urwin.

‘extremely beautiful,
wonderfully crafted
both in structure
and content, and
highly inventive in its
use of sources and
argument’

— SERLE CITATION FOR EMILY GALLAGHER

In the second half of the year, **Dr Shauna Bostock** was recognised for her book *Reaching Through Time: Finding My Family's Stories* (Allen & Unwin, 2023). Shauna won the NSW Community and Regional History Prize at the NSW Premier's History Awards, presented at the State Library of New South Wales in September. Shauna was also one of six authors shortlisted for the Mark & Evette Moran Nib Literary Award from a competitive field of 175 submissions. Congratulations Shauna!

‘a compelling blend
of Indigenous history,
community history and
the history of colonial
settlement’

— NSW PREMIER'S HISTORY AWARD CITATION FOR
SHAUNA BOSTOCK



Shauna at the NSW Premier's History Award ceremony, September 2024. Photo: supplied by Shauna Bostock.

As always, our PhD students continue to shine. In May **Tim Adams** won a Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council heritage award for his outstanding contributions to and promotion of heritage, particularly his work interpreting the social history of Riverside Cemetery in his paper 'Carved in Stone: An Examination of Identity in an Early Regional Cemetery.' Well done Tim!

In November the soon-to-be Dr **James Watson** was awarded The Patrick Troy Memorial Prize in Urban and Environmental Studies for his PhD thesis 'Fibro Modernity: A Social History of Asbestos in Australia, 1878-2024'. This prize supports a student who has made a valuable contribution in the area of Urban Systems and Sustainability. Congratulations James!

This year NCB staff have also enjoyed great success with grant applications. **Dr Karen Fox** and **Dr Michelle Staff**, together with Women's Working Party member **Professor Kim Rubenstein**, were awarded a grant from the ANU Gender Institute to hold a workshop on 'The Privilege of Trailblazing' in 2025. The workshop aims to critically investigate the figure of the trailblazing woman, exploring how gender, privilege, power, and legacy operate in trailblazing in a variety of fields of endeavour and historical moments in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific. The call for papers saw the convenors receive many proposals from around the country and even overseas on a wide range of topics. The workshop will be held at the ANU in March 2025 during Women's History Month. Karen, Kim, and Michelle hope to produce an edited collection of essays in the wake of this event.



Tim receiving his Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council heritage award, May 2024. Photo: Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council.

Women's Slang

WHY do so many people complain against radio announcers who at least try to improve their diction, when around us every day we hear such dreadful enunciation, and slang—particularly from young women? It revolts one to hear an otherwise attractive female use such expressions as "cripes" and "Gawd." Psychological self-consciousness causes most of it, but the silly things haven't the sense to realise that they can break the habit as easily as they split the ear-drums of others.

L. HARKER, C/o. Post Office, Macleay St.

Letter in the *Daily Mirror* (Sydney), 6 September 1946, p. 14. Photo: Trove.

Finally, in November we were delighted to learn that **Associate Professor Amanda Laugesen** (director of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, ANU) and **Dr Karen Fox** were awarded a 2025 Discovery Project by the Australian Research Council. Their project aims to examine the role of women in shaping the history of colloquial language in Australia. It will use a range of historical sources to generate new knowledge about how women collected, recorded, engaged with, and wrote about colloquial language. The project will place this history into a broader discussion of gendered discourses surrounding English, language, and speech in Australia. Expected outcomes include a better understanding of the gendering of Australian national identity and new knowledge about women's role in the story of colloquial language. It will benefit Australia through communicating and providing new perspectives on national myths around language. Congratulations to Amanda and Karen!

Teaching

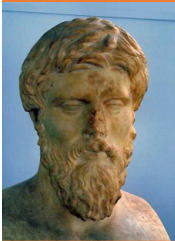
Malcolm Allbrook

Encouraging and supporting budding biographers has always been one of the prime functions of the National Centre of Biography. Each year the staff of the NCB share the teaching of a Master's course, History and Biography (HIST8011).


In Semester One 2024 the program was convened by Dr Malcolm Allbrook, who coordinated four of the sessions ('History and Biography', 'Biography in Antiquity', 'First Nations Biography', and 'Future Directions in Biography'). He was joined by fellow NCB staff members, Dr Karen Fox ('The Individual in History', 'Heroic Reputations'), Dr Sam Furphy ('Collective Biography', 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography and National Biography'), Dr Michelle Staff ('Feminist Biography'), Dr Stephen Wilks ('Autobiography and Memoir'), and Dr Emily Gallagher ('Childhood and Memory'). Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna – NCB visitor and member of the ADB Editorial Board – also joined us for one session on ethics in biography.

Ten enthusiastic students gathered each Monday morning at 9 a.m. for a three-hour session of lectures and tutorials. And all passed with flying colours, two of them gaining HDs for their critical book reviews and research essays – as well as their diligence in turning up first thing on a Monday! We anticipate that some of the graduates will proceed to HDR studies in the School of History.

In 2025 the program will be convened by Karen Fox and, as with this year, members of the NCB team will share the teaching load.



Plutarch of Chaeronea
AD 46 – AD c119.




Prolific Greek historian and biographer
Fifty 'Parallel Lives'
Plutarch conceives of each *Life* as a mirror, in which readers can adjust their comportment and strive for composure.
The biographer's aim is to bring out 'the character and manner' of his subject with lavish attention to detail, like a sympathetic – or on occasion a cold-eyed – portraitist.

Johnson and Boswell: 18C Biography



Samuel Johnson, by Joshua Reynolds (1772)



James Boswell, by Joshua Reynolds (1785)

20th century dictionaries



what is feminist biography?

Teaching slides used in HIST8011: Photos: Malcolm Allbrook, Karen Fox, Sam Furphy, and Michelle Staff.

Research activities

Australian Historical Association conference, Flinders University, Adelaide

Sam Furphy

In July several members of the NCB team presented their research at the Australian Historical Association's annual conference in Adelaide. Hosted by Flinders University, the theme of the conference was 'Home Truths.' Dr Karen Fox presented a paper titled 'A Tale of Two Reputations' which explored the literary fame of two Australian writers: Adam Lindsay Gordon and Dame Mary Gilmore. Dr Sam Furphy spoke about the South Australian Protector of Aborigines, Matthew Moorhouse, with a focus on Moorhouse's connections with the British craniologist J. Barnard Davis. Dr Michelle Staff's paper was titled 'Telling the truth through (or about) feminist biography.' Since the conference, all three of these papers were further developed as written pieces for the NCB's drafting group, 'Feedback Merchants.' Recently completed PhD student James Watson also presented in Adelaide, with a paper title 'Fibro Home Truths: On Contested Asbestos Histories in Australia.'

IFRWH conference, Tsuda University, Tokyo, Japan

Michelle Staff



Left: Michelle, Angela, and Zoe after their panel. Photo: Rumi Yasutake. Right: Michelle presenting her paper. Photo: Zoe Smith.

In August I left frosty Canberra for a sweltering but invigorating adventure in Japan. With academics from the northern hemisphere on summer break, members of the International Federation for Research in Women's History gathered at Tsuda University in Tokyo for the organisation's first international conference since the pandemic. The location offered a meeting point for scholars from many different parts of the world including Japan, China, England, Ireland, the United States, Canada, Iceland, Italy, Spain, France, Taiwan, New Zealand, Sweden, and elsewhere.

I participated in a panel on 'Reimagining Feminist Relationships in Australian History,' alongside ANU School of History colleagues Professor Angela Woollacott and PhD candidate Zoe Smith, with Associate Professor Alecia Simmonds (UTS) acting as chair and discussant. My paper was titled 'Intergenerational and family dynamics in twentieth-century Australian feminism'. In it I explored some of the questions I am facing in writing a joint biography of the Australian feminist Bessie Rischbieth and her lesser-known sister Olive Evans.

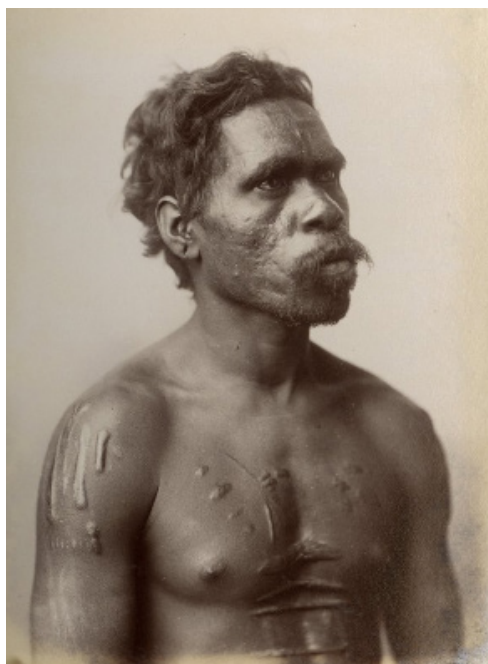
The full program of presentations was too wide-ranging to recount properly here, but one session that is worth noting was the roundtable on the continuing racism and inequality in women's history organisations. Led by several US scholars, this was a response to events that happened at the 50th Berkshire Conference of Women Historians the year before when one of the group's founding members publicly made racist remarks. The discussion was an honest but generous one that allowed us to reflect on how structures within the academy continue to privilege some voices and silence others.

Along with Dr Ana Stevenson and Professor Emerita Margaret Allen, I contributed to a fuller report on the conference for *VIDA*, the blog of the Australian Women's History Network, which you can read [here](#).

The Many Rivers People Project

Shauna Bostock

My latest project is called The Many Rivers People Project. 'Many Rivers' is the term that Aboriginal elder, Uncle Lewis Walker, uses when he refers to the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. This region is on the greater Bundjalung Country from where we both descend. He is a descendant of the Wahluwal family group and I am a descendant of the Wollumbin family group. Uncle Lewis is featured in the epilogue of my book, and when I interviewed him, he told me incredible information about the famous photographs of our ancestors that were taken by J. W. Lindt in the 1870s and 1880s. Their images were reproduced and sold as *carte de visite* postcards. The



One of the photographs from the Lindt collection. Photo: Grafton Regional Art Gallery.

1800s craze for collecting the small, cardboard-mounted, postcard-style photographs of royalty and 'celebrities' extended into the craze for the collection of photographs of 'savages' and 'natives' from all over the world. Lindt set up a studio in Grafton to make a profit out of photographing our ancestors.

Nearly all of the photographs capture the culturally significant cicatrice scars/body markings on these ancestors' chests and arms. Uncle Lewis explained that some of the markings indicate hierarchical levels of initiation, but most indicate sorry business. Sorry business is mourning for deceased loved ones. Markings on the person's left side of their body record and memorialise the life of female family members, and markings on the person's right side of their body record and memorialise the life of male family members. Watching Uncle Lewis visually devour each photograph that I showed him, and hearing what he had to say about each person as he seemingly 'read' the scars on our ancestors' bodies, made me see these markings in a new light. I believe they could be described as a form of 'body biography'.

The J. W. Lindt photographs capture the two-dimensional likeness and image of the Many Rivers People, but since the 1800s they have remained nameless and unknown. I believe that The Many Rivers People Project is a restoration project. By situating their

lived experience within the context of the historical colonisation of their homelands and sharing what their body markings tell us about them, we are acknowledging them and restoring their humanity.

Other staff projects

In addition to those mentioned above, we note the following current staff projects that are in their early stages, underway, or about to come to fruition:

- Dr Karen Fox has begun work on a new book project, tentatively titled *Making, Unmaking, and Recasting Historical Reputations in Australia*. The project aims to investigate the nature of historical reputations in Australia, using a series of case studies from across Australia's past to interrogate the nature and variety of reputational afterlives, and the social, cultural, and political drivers of change in reputation and remembrance.
- Dr Sam Furphy continues to research broadly in the field of Aboriginal history and is preparing articles on two Aboriginal protectors from the early colonial period, in which biographical approaches will help to explain the shift in focus for Aboriginal protection in the mid-nineteenth century.
- Dr Emily Gallagher has secured a contract with La Trobe University Press to turn her PhD thesis into a book.
- Dr Stephen Wilks is contracted to Connor Court Publishing to write *The Seventeen Year Stopgap: How Henry Bolte Ran Victoria 1955-1972*.
- Dr Peter Woodley's book *'We are a farming class': Dubbo's hinterland, 1870-1950* will be published with ANU Press very soon. Sign up to be notified when the book is released [here](#).

Children's history & biography

Emily Gallagher



Emily presenting her keynote at the Children's History Society conference. Photo: Saskia Roberts.

In July this year, while many of my colleagues were in Adelaide for the Australian Historical Association's annual conference, I travelled to Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the Children's History Society's fourth biennial conference. This year's theme was 'Children's Worlds Through Time' and I had the pleasure of presenting a conference paper as well as a keynote address on 'The Childhood Imagination'.

The Children's History Society has always platformed younger voices. In the last few years, for example, conference convenors have not only invited children and youth to address attendees but have also had an early career researcher deliver one of its two conference keynotes. The other keynote speaker for this year was Dr Sneha Krishnan, an associate professor in human geography at the University of Oxford, who shared her research on the experiences of Indian girls at the Women's Christian College at Madras (now Chennai) in the early twentieth century. She spoke powerfully about 'attic archives', 'reading' photographic sources, and the complex negotiations that these young unmarried women made to navigate ideas of modern girlhood, Christian womanhood, and domestic modernity.

The process of preparing my keynote helped me find new energy and inspiration for the research I began as a PhD student. It also provided an opportunity to reconsider the historiographical and methodological implications of my work for an international audience. Beyond showcasing something of the colour and complexity of Australian children's imaginative lives in the early-to-mid twentieth century, I set out with three main objectives: to introduce the 'childhood imagination' as an interpretative paradigm for children's historians; to challenge the idea that writing histories of children and youth inherently involves a 'problem of sources'; and to suggest that children's history would benefit from returning to a productive dialogue with folklore studies. I also used the address as an opportunity to reflect on the concept of children's agency, its strengths, limitations, and challenges.

For many years now, questions of agency have circled histories of children and youth. The debate about agency has been an important rite of passage for the field, especially as a comment and corrective to what Mona Gleason and others have described as 'the agency trap': where, in seeking to rescue children from historical obscurity, scholars risk celebrating rebellion and expressions of youth autonomy 'while ignoring or marginalising agentic expression that might involve children's compliance with mainstream cultural traditions or adult priorities'.

As an interpretive paradigm, however, agency becomes more problematic. Notwithstanding all the work that has tried to complicate and give nuance to the concept, agency still encourages us to measure children against a dominant group — often adults — and privileges those forms of expression and action that are celebrated, or even simply recognisable, in adult culture. It tends to obscure questions about relative age and the importance of intergenerational alliances, such as those that existed across settler society, or across gender or class lines. It has also often failed to recognise those aspects of children's everyday lives where they themselves felt powerful: among friends, at play, or in the daydreams they fashioned for themselves.

Since I joined the NCB/ADB as research editor nearly two years ago, I have often reflected on the relationship between children's history and biography. To what extent have we ever really considered how childhood and youth is represented in the *ADB*? How do authors and research editors write about childhood and youth? How is childhood imagined and what purpose have these imaginings or representations served over time? What childhoods are deemed worthy of inclusion? Which are not? Where are children in the *ADB*?

Many of those nominated and selected for *ADB* entries lived long lives. In fact, with the exception of Azaria Chamberlain and two HIV/AIDs child advocates (Troy Lovegrove and Eve Van Grafhorst), all our biographical subjects lived into adulthood. Where childhood appears at all in the *ADB*, it typically figures as part of the lifecycle, as a precursor to adulthood rather than as a social experience worthy of inclusion on its own terms. Within this framing, there is a temptation to spotlight aspects of the childhood experience that 'fit neatly' into the adult story — the scientist who had loved playing Meccano or the novelist who submitted short stories to the local children's page. The craft of biography exerts its own pressures and priorities, particularly in *ADB* entries, where childhood has often been used in service to the adult life. It is important to remember, though, that childhood and youth are formative as well as independent phases of the lifecycle and what we choose to include about someone's early life should not rest entirely on who they became, but also who they were.



Top: children at school in Taylorville, South Australia, on Empire Day, 1927. Bottom: Aboriginal children and adults watch a plane take off from Hermannsburg, Northern Territory, c.1928-36. Photos: State Library of South Australia.



Following the conference, I visited the Museum of Childhood in Edinburgh, which was the first museum in the world dedicated to the history of childhood when it opened in 1955. Interestingly, after visiting the museum in the 1960s, Perth woman Mary McKenzie began a 16-year-long crusade to create a museum of childhood heritage in Australia. Today, her collection forms the basis of the Edith Cowan University Museum of Childhood Collection at the Western Australian Museum.

Emily at the Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh, 8 July 2024. Photo: Emily Gallagher.

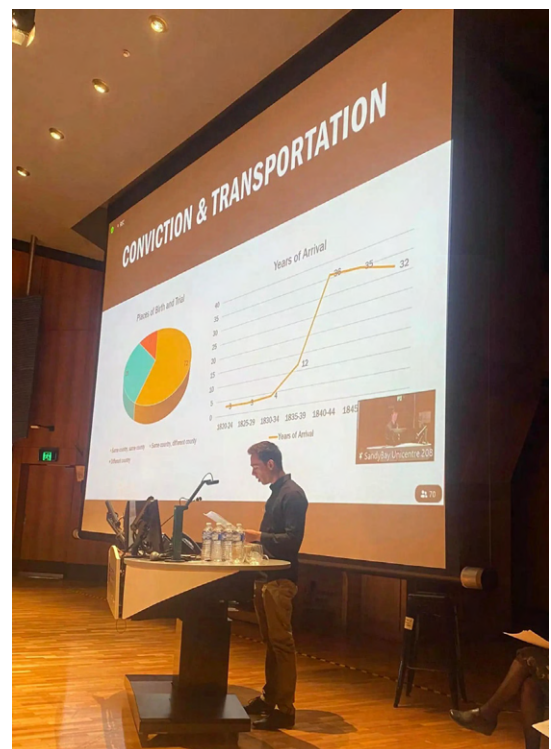
Convict history in lutruwita/Van Diemen's Land/Tasmania

Matthew Cunneen

Based in Hobart, the Female Convict Research Centre is an organisation that promotes research on the women transported to Tasmania as convicts. As part of its mission, the centre hosts an annual research seminar featuring speakers from a range of backgrounds, including family historians, local historians, and academic scholars. The centre's president, Dr Dianne Snowden AM, is a renowned genealogist and professional historian and by coincidence, as she and I would discover, a distant cousin of mine through shared convict ancestors. In May I had the opportunity to present at this year's seminar, titled 'Pathways to freedom – time served, moving on', which considered the various avenues women took through the convict system to acquire their freedom and what became of them. My paper drew on my thesis research into convicts who left the Australian colonies once free to explore the life courses and stories of the 125-odd Vandemonian convict women who are known to have left the Australian colonies once free. I sought to understand more about who these women were, why they made the unusual and uncommon decision to leave their former place of servitude, and what became of them after they left.

The fragmentary nature of the archives makes comprehensive answers to these questions elusive, but it is possible to arrive at some generalisations. In much of their key demographic qualities — their ages on arrival in Australia, places of birth, occupation, and similar categories — these women were for the most part typical of those who arrived in the colony more broadly. What stood out more was that these women had a far smoother experience of transportation than many others: they were reported to have escaped sickness on the voyage, arriving in good health; they committed very few offences once in the colony, showing that they had secure living arrangements and were valued employees; and most married during or after their sentence. The circumstances and motivations behind their departures were disappointingly elusive, but their post-departure lives reveal a diversity of outcomes, with some women dying of ailments not long after having left while others lived long and healthy lives. One woman, Eliza Williams, became the first woman in the United States to own a Cadillac. Stories of women such as these complicate our understanding of the role of convicts in forging the Australian nation.

Much of my research into these women drew on the work of their descendants tracing their family history, a pursuit which remains one of the most popular pastimes in Australia. Family history's practitioners have a near-infinite range of options for educating themselves in their craft, from books, blogs, and online guides to formal education. The University of Tasmania is one such institution that offers the latter through its Diploma of Family History. From April to June this year I spent time in Hobart, residing at Jane Franklin Hall, to tutor for and lecture in HAA007 — Convict Ancestors, a unit for the diploma. The course, which had an enrolment of 188 students from all backgrounds, traced the history of convictism in Australia from its global origins throughout previous centuries to its final years in Western Australia in the 1860s. In tutoring for this course, I was able to film a short documentary based on my thesis research that would serve as a module for students learning about convict life outcomes. The course also presented a fantastic opportunity to draw on my experience learning about convict history and biography at the National Centre of Biography to assist students in writing short convict biographies, many of which will be added to People Australia in due course.



Matt at the Female Convict Research Centre seminar. Photo: Female Convict Research Centre.

Fibro Modernity

James Watson

In July 2024 James Watson submitted his PhD thesis, 'Fibro Modernity: A Social History of Asbestos in Australia, 1878-2024.' This project was supervised by Professor Melanie Nolan. In October James received his examiners' reports and passed with flying colours, receiving high praise from all three. He will graduate in early 2025.

Asbestos is a very emotional subject for many Australians. A mineral highly resistant to fire and heat, it was installed widely throughout the developed world to make the built environment safer. It was an essential ingredient of post-war reconstruction in Australia, leading to the country becoming the highest per-capita consumer of asbestos globally between 1955 and 1977.

This made the discovery of mesothelioma in the 1960s and 1970s all the more painful. Mesothelioma is a terminal cancer of the mesothelium (the lining of the organs) that is caused by the inhalation of asbestos dust. Even a small dose is enough to cause the cancer. Australia now has one of the highest rates of asbestos-related disease in the world, with an estimated thirty to forty thousand cases so far. By one estimate, roughly eighty per cent of the population has been exposed whether they are aware of it or not. It is ubiquitous in Australian life, and a future without asbestos is unlikely.

That said, Australians have done a shockingly good job of combatting this permanent risk in our lives: removing it when necessary; holding asbestos firms responsible; and re-embracing asbestos as a carcinogen by incorporating it into our culture, including through the creation of new styles of architecture, literary genres, and a particularly Australian brand of humour, all centred around asbestos.

My thesis, 'Fibro Modernity', tells this story from the opening of the first asbestos mine in Australia (1878 in Gundagai) to the recent Mr Fluffy crisis in Canberra. The first two chapters tell an 'optimistic' tale, beginning with the colonial mining industry and asbestos' importance in rural economies, before turning to the successes of asbestos-fibre cement (fibro) as a building material during the post-war period.

The thesis then turns to tell a more 'pessimistic' story. Chapter 3 is a medical history of asbestosis and mesothelioma, and of the poor record of doctors and public health authorities in addressing asbestos hazards in Australia. Chapter 4 studies a union campaign that led to the creation of the Dust Diseases Tribunal, the only court in the world that specialises in asbestos cases. Chapter 5 looks at asbestos hazards in the Australian Capital Territory in the 1980s, and its important (and often unacknowledged) role in leading Canberrans to claim self-administration in 1989. And Chapter 6 considers the communitarian politics of two activist groups in Gippsland and in Canberra.



Leo Uittenbogaard explains the quality of a piece of fibro which is used for roof capping, 1960. Photo: National Archives of Australia, A12111, 1/1960/16/41.

Throughout the thesis, we encounter key figures in this history: Bernie Banton, the James Hardie worker and activist who fought for fair compensation until his death in 2007; John Reid, the Hardie chairman who was championed as a pillar of the Australian business community (even after the discovery of mesothelioma); Jim McNulty, the Perth doctor who single-handedly closed down the Wittenoom asbestos mine in 1966; and Peter O'Dea, the Communist rabble-rouser who blockaded the National Library of Australia in 1983 and was once considered the most dangerous man in Canberra. By studying asbestos through these various perspectives and individuals, the thesis tells a nuanced and compelling story about what asbestos has meant to Australians over time, and how asbestos was at the centre of a distinctly Australian sense of 'modernity' in the mid-twentieth century.

I became interested in asbestos in Australia after a year working as a paralegal for a firm that specialised in James Hardie cases. This was brutal work. I spent a lot of it reading the medical records of victims and then travelling through the countryside to record their testimonies from their death beds. These interviews always took place in the back rooms of suburban houses. Many of these people mentioned the boredom: staring out the window or at the corner of the ceiling, the only sound either the ventilator or a dog next door. Leaving, I couldn't help but think how much sadness can be found in the back room of a house. So much of the mesothelioma pandemic occurred in private – hidden away in bedrooms in small towns. As I got closer and closer to my submission, I realised that parts of my thesis were a sort of history of private moments before death. I hope my thesis has given some dignity to these moments.



Warning sign outside Woodsreef asbestos mine in northern NSW, 2021. Photo: James Watson.

Reframing Indigenous Biography

Malcolm Allbrook

Konishi, Shino, Malcolm Allbrook, and Tom Griffiths, eds. Reframing Indigenous Biography. London and New York: Routledge, 2024.

Reframing Indigenous Biography is one of the key outcomes of the ARC Discovery Project ‘An Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography’. Led by the Yawuru historian Associate Professor Shino Konishi (University of Western Australia and First Nations Working Party), Dr Malcolm Allbrook (ADB Managing Editor), and Emeritus Professor Tom Griffiths (ADB Editorial Board chair), the volume explores the history, practice, and possibilities of writing about First Nations’ people who lived in recent and distant pasts. It examines the challenges in producing these biographies and asks how scholars — Indigenous and non-Indigenous — might address, overcome, or contend with such challenges.

National biographical dictionaries have long deemed Indigenous lives insignificant and peripheral. Yet those we know about are, by definition, extraordinary. As the Māori historian Professor Alice Te Punga Somerville declares in her chapter, ‘There’s something remarkable about any Indigenous ancestor who has survived the attempted genocide of the last centuries’. The Indigenous lives explored in the collection were significant in themselves and in their own cultures, but the experience of colonialism — of navigating ‘a new, dynamic, dangerous, hybrid world’ (as Emeritus Professor Grace Karskens puts it) — endowed many with exceptional meaning. Empire and its overbearing archive dismissed Indigenous creativity, marginalised these peoples, imagined them absent, belittled their lives, and rationalised their deaths. How is their full humanity now to be reclaimed?

The contributors to this collection wrestle with the awesome task of how biographers might free themselves from the stereotypes and power of the settler narratives that so dominate history-making and the documentary archive. Of her subject Nah Doongh, a woman from Dyarubbin (the Hawkesbury-Nepean River), Karskens poses the question: ‘what happens when we place Nah Doongh at the centre of her own story?’ Professor Kate Fullagar asks, ‘what if we try to look beyond the drama of contact

to measure the full length of a life, from cradle to grave rather than from encounter to encounter?’ Professor Mike McDonnell finds that his biographical subject, an Anishinaabeg leader at the centre of the Odawa community of North America, operated in an almost entirely independent and complex tapestry of Indigenous worlds where Europeans were marginal. Konishi strives to free the Whadjuk Noongar man Yagan from the cruel definition of his death and recovers instead the fullness of his living, charismatic presence.



Nah Doongh, probably outside the Shand home in High Street, Penrith, c. 1891. Photo: Local Studies Collection, Penrith City Library.

As the editors declare in their opening chapter, 'Naming people changes the kind of history we write'. Part of the magic of biography is to conjure intimacy through the power of a known name and the example of a real, individual life. But traditional Western parameters of biography, such as a consistent name and precise birth and death dates, are often undermined by Indigenous life experience, especially under colonialism. Māori naming practices, for instance, are more fluid, less focused on control, and more event-based; they maintain immediacy, cultivate a living dialogue, and connect past and present. Moreover, as the contributors' discussions of different conceptions of time

and place reveal, biography is not restricted to the 'human'. The landscape is 'seeded with ancestors', as the Māori scholar Dr Arini Loader puts it; it is 'deeply biographic'.



Princess Fusipala, 1927. Photo: Methodist Ladies' College, Kew, RS 629/1870.

In the early days of the *ADB*, documentation explicitly determined selection. As Professor Katerina Teaiwa, Dr Nicholas Hoare, and Talei Luscia Mangioni explain in their chapter on Australia's 'missing' Pacific women, the Pacific historian Professor Harry Maude made it clear in 1959 that the inclusion of Islanders in the *ADB* should be predicated on there being 'enough documentary material extant relating to them' — which, given the state of the field at the time, necessarily excluded many possible Islander entries. These authors argue for Australian histories that are less 'domestic' and more conscious of Oceania; indeed, they call for 'an expansion of the traditional scope of what constitutes Australian coloniality'.

Telling life stories is a practice that takes many forms. Collaborative, multifocal storytelling is at the heart of the Waanyi woman Distinguished Professor Alexis Wright's monumental biography of the Arrernte man and Aboriginal leader, Tracker Tilmouth, as she explains in an interview published in the book. Associate Professor Natalie Harkin, a Narungga woman living on Kurna country, was inspired

by Wright's 'consensus' model of storytelling in her current writing of an archival-poetic collective memoir or collaborative biography of her 'Aunt Glad'. These approaches are a far cry from the traditional Western model, and show the possibilities of biography to adapt to the demands of the present day.

To illustrate the practical intent of this volume, we include a series of life stories from the *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography (IADB)*, such as Allbrook's biography of Mungo Lady and Mungo Man, both of whom lived in the Willandra Lakes region of western New South Wales around 40,000 years ago. It recognises the two, not as the mute, ossified remnants of scientific research, but as individuals who once had a corporeal presence, and as ancestors who have returned to show all Australians that the land they occupy and enjoy is Aboriginal. Dr Laurie Bamblett and Wendy Bunn powerfully relate stories of the Wiradjuri men Ooloogan (John Noble) and Nangar (Jimmy Clements). These men's biographies have often been linked by their intervention at the opening of Parliament House in 1927. But that is not what defines them in the Wiradjuri cosmos. They were and remain formidable cultural figures, their lives remembered, and legacies treasured as leaders of their people. Other entries featured in the collection include Professor Lynette Russell's biography of Tommy Chaseland; Dr Kath Apma Travis Penangke's biography of her Arrernte grandmother Undelya (Minnie) Apma; and Kim Kruger's biography of her cousin, the Blak feminist, poet, and broadcaster Lisa Bellear.

We also republish the story of the Wild Australia Show, a travelling troupe of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women (and one child) that toured the Australian Eastern State capital cities in 1892/3. The essay tells an enthralling story but more potently, perhaps, illustrates the potential of collective biography to restore the identities, indeed the personhood, of the hitherto nameless and voiceless.

Publications

Below are staff and HDR student publications from 2024 (NB media pieces are reported under 'Communications').

Peer-reviewed articles

- Cunneen, Matthew. '[Ann Spinks \(ca. 1783-\)](#).' *Harry Gentle Resource Centre Dictionary of Biography*, Griffith University, 2024.
- Fox, Karen. '[Mary Taylor Burnell \(1907-1996\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Furphy, Samuel. 'Remembering assimilation: Queen Elizabeth II's 1954 visit to Shepparton and a 'new deal' for Victorian Aboriginal people.' *Aboriginal History* 47, <http://doi.org/10.22459/AH.47.2023.02>.
- Garvey, Nichola. 'Women's lives in a fragmented archive: The story of *The Wilful Murder*.' *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, no. 8 (2024): 99-120.
- Murr, David, and Peter Woodley. '[Keith Leopold \(1920-1999\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Nolan, Melanie. 'Thinkers, Writers and Kinds of Intellectual Biographies: Contribution to a Symposium on Sophie Scott-Brown's *Colin Ward and the Art of Everyday Anarchy*.' *History of European Ideas* 50, no. 5 (2024): 864-67.
- Nolan, Melanie. '[Nellie Simpson \(1904-2000\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Nolan, Melanie. '[Hilda Violet Barclay \(1905-1997\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Staff, Michelle. '[Dorothy Shelagh Leighton \(Shelagh\) Garland \(1913-1999\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Wilks, Stephen. '[Freda Mott \(1905-1998\)](#).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, volume 20, online 2024.
- Woodley, Peter. 'Entangled experiences of class: The 1891 Queensland bush workers' strike.' *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, no. 8 (2024): 137-54.

Edited collections

- Konishi, Shino, Malcolm Allbrook, and Tom Griffiths, eds. *Reframing Indigenous Biography*. London and New York: Routledge, 2024.

Book chapters

- Wilks, Stephen. 'The Origins and Early Years of the Victorian Liberals.' In *Unity in Autonomy: A Federal History of the Founding of the Liberal Party*, edited by Zachary Gorman, 115-46. Redland Bay: Jeparit Press, 2024.
- Wilks, Stephen. "'Falling Dully" on His Ears: Menzies, Bolte and the Travails of Australian Federalism.' In *The Menzies Ascendancy: Fortune, Stability, Progress 1954-1961*, edited by Zachary Gorman. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2024.

Book/exhibition reviews

- Bird, Jennifer. 'Review of Joel Stephen Birnie, *My People's Songs: How an Indigenous Family Survived Colonial Tasmania*.' *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, no. 8 (2024): 187-91.
- Furphy, Samuel. 'Review of *The Years of Terror: Banbu-Deen: Kulin and Colonists at Port Phillip 1835-1851*: By Marguerita Stephens, with Fay Stewart-Muir.' *Australian Historical Studies* 55, no. 3 (2024): 614-16.
- Furphy, Samuel. 'Ann Curthoys, Shino Konishi and Alexandra Ludewig Explore an Island's History through Biography.' *History Australia* 21, no. 1 (2024): 137-39.
- Gallagher, Emily, and Michelle Staff. 'Feared and Revered: Feminine Power through the Ages, National Museum of Australia, Canberra.' *Australian Historical Studies*, 55, no. 1 (2024): 208-211.
- Wilks, Stephen. 'Lyndon Megarrity discovers significance in a Queensland capitalist politician.' *History Australia* 21, no. 1 (2024): 140-141.
- Wilks, Stephen. 'Review of Bridget Brooklyn, Benjamin T. Jones, and Rebecca Strating (Editors), *Australia on the World Stage: History, Politics, and International Relations*.' *Journal of Australian, Canadian, and Aotearoa New Zealand Studies* 4 (2024): 297-298, <https://doi.org/10.52230/CXPQ7218>.

Outreach & engagement



Asia-Pacific Lives exhibition. Photos: Michelle Staff.

2024 has seen a renewed focus on outreach and public engagement at the NCB.

In 2024 the NCB has reenergised its outreach and engagement portfolio. This is based on an understanding of the centre, and of the dictionary, as fundamentally public history institutions. With biography being such a popular genre both in and outside the academy, the NCB is uniquely placed to contribute to a range of conversations across society. The outreach plan for 2024 onwards centres on five key pillars:

1. a cohesive, multifaceted communications strategy
2. cross-campus collaborations at the ANU
3. working closely with the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) sector
4. community engagement. including with local government agencies and special events
5. education outreach, through working with teachers and school students.

Communications

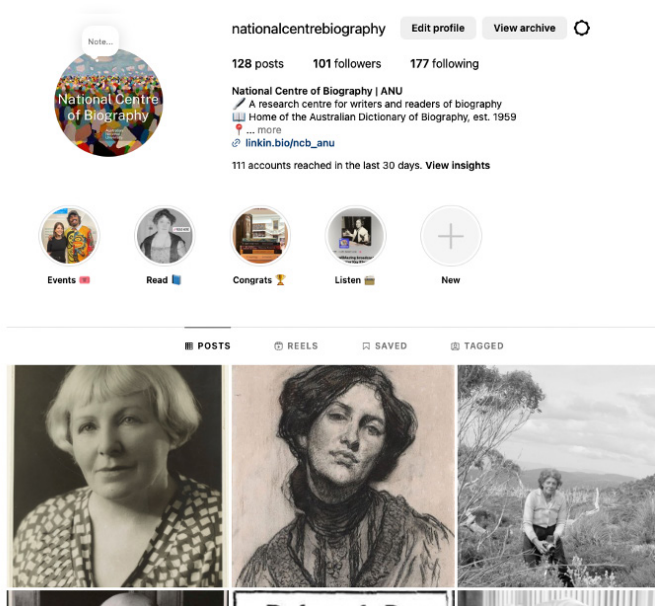
Michelle Staff

A strong and coherent communications strategy underpins the NCB's outreach and engagement activities. Since November 2017 the centre has managed a Twitter/X account, which now has 1,626 followers (this number has decreased due to users leaving the platform across the board). As an experiment to find ways to reach new audiences, in 2024 the NCB joined Instagram and Facebook as well. Over the course of almost eleven months, they attained 114 and 87 followers respectively. It will take some time to build audiences of a similar size to the X account, but we feel it is worthwhile exploring the various possibilities offered by social media.

This year we introduced the 'National Centre of Biography News', a monthly newsletter circulated via email to various ANU and NCB mailing lists (and published on the NCB's website). Eleven issues have been produced to date. The aim of the NCB News is to develop a more frequent line of communication with our community. In each number we highlight staff achievements, flag upcoming events, share things to read and listen to, and spotlight a recent addition to the ADB. Members of the NCB team have written short pieces for the newsletter each month. We encourage people to share events and news by contacting us at ncb@anu.edu.au.

Finally, a central part of the NCB's communications strategy is establishing a consistent media presence. The ADB and NCB staff frequently appear in the media. We are working to build on this so that we continue to be a trusted and well-known voice on historical and biographical issues. Such efforts have appeared in a wide range of formats, from podcast interviews to published magazine articles. They include:

- Tim Adams, interview on ABC Canberra Radio, 14 May 2024.
- Kylie Andrews and Michelle Staff, 'The trailblazing broadcaster and educator Kay Kinane,' *Late Night Live*, ABC Radio National, broadcast 10 June 2024.
- Melanie Nolan, 'Fixing up Australia's written history,' *Late Night Live*, ABC Radio National, broadcast 7 August 2024.
- Melanie Nolan, 'The ADB's Story,' *Biographers in Conversation* podcast, 8 August 2024.
- Melanie Nolan, 'Brief Lives,' *Life Sentences* podcast, 21 June 2024.
- Melanie Nolan and Michelle Staff. 'Reimagining the ADB,' *Australian Book Review*, no. 466 (July 2024).
- Michelle Staff, 'An extra-ordinary collaboration,' *Inside Story*, 9 July 2024.
- Michelle Staff, interviewed for Hannah Dixon, 'Here's three history-making Australian women you may not have heard of but should know,' *ANU Reporter*, 5 March 2024.
- Stephen Wilks, 'The Origins of the Victorian Liberal Party: "The freedom to be an individual",' *Afternoon Light Podcast*, Robert Menzies Institute, October 2024.

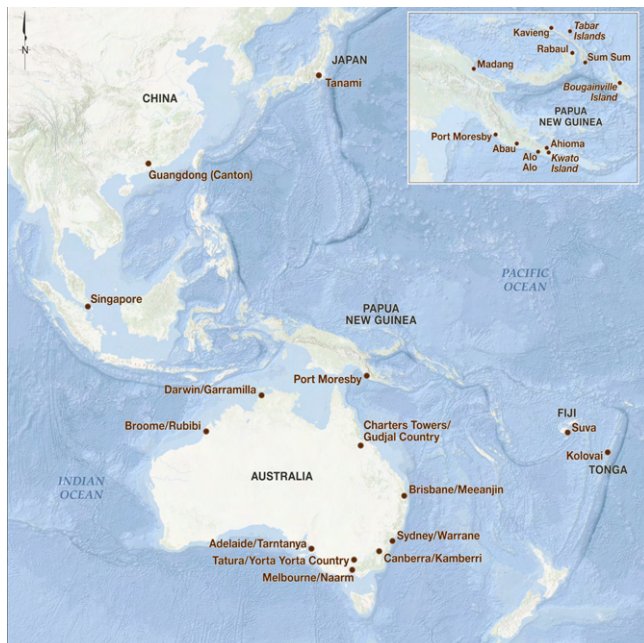


Top: NCB Instagram page screenshot. Photo: Instagram.
Bottom: Michelle at the ABC Canberra studio. Photo: Michelle Staff.

Cross-campus collaborations

Michelle Staff

In 2024 the NCB participated in collaborations with other departments and events across the ANU. This builds on established connections, for example with the College of Asia & the Pacific (CAP) through the Oceania Working Party.



Map produced for Asia-Pacific Lives by CartoGIS. Photo: CartoGIS.

Immersia

In September the School of Culture, History & Language (CHL) in CAP hosted its annual research showcase, *Immersia*. The NCB and CHL collaborated to produce an exhibition called *Asia-Pacific Lives*. This was on display in the RSSS Building Foyer from 9 to 23 September. The exhibition showcased several individuals from the ADB with Asian and/or Pacific heritage (see page 24 for some photos of the displays). These subjects included a Japanese migrant and internee, a Tongan historian, a Rabaul-born Chinese photographer, two members of Papua New Guinea's Legislative Council, and two Chinese-Australian businesswomen and matriarchs. We also worked with CartoGIS to produce a map to visually represent the mobility of this group of individuals. The exhibition is now on display in the foyer of the Menzies Library at the ANU, and we hope that it will become a travelling exhibition that we can take to conferences and other events.

Research Infrastructure Expo

The ADB is one of the ANU's major pieces of research infrastructure, especially within the arts and social sciences. In November we were featured in the university's Research Infrastructure Expo, held in Melville Hall. This was a public event designed to showcase the research capabilities and facilities housed at the ANU. One of five humanities and social science exhibitors, we participated to show the cutting-edge work happening in these fields. We were able to chat to people about what the ADB is and what its capabilities are, and we even got to give people a sneak peek at the prototype for our new website.

For more on this, download the ANU Research Infrastructure Handbook [here](#).



Left: Karen Fox and Michelle Staff at the expo. Photo: ANU Communications and Engagement. Right: Michelle showing off the ADB's booth. Photo: Karen Fox.

GLAM collaborations

Michelle Staff & Emily Gallagher

Recently the ADB/NCB has entered a period of renewed energy in terms of outreach and engagement. In particular, we are in the process of reimagining and strengthening our relationship to the wider cultural sector, especially the GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) community. Of course, the ADB has always been public facing. The NCB is also increasingly acting as a centre for public history, engaging widely with researchers of all types through its seminar series, workshops, academic publications, and other special projects (such as 'The Quest for Indigenous Recognition').

Though the ADB has long had productive working relationships with various cultural institutions and other public bodies, it has not traditionally seen itself as belonging to the GLAM sector. In the digital age, especially in the face of rising challenges to arts funding and support, we are hoping to forge stronger partnerships and collaborations with those working in the public history space.

Earlier this year, we proposed the idea of establishing a dedicated GLAM Advisory Group to the ADB General Editor and Editorial Board. Through this group, which will include representatives from various cultural institutions in the Canberra region, we hope to build relationships with these institutions that will enable us all to work together more frequently, meaningfully, and efficiently.

A pilot ADB GLAM Advisory Group (GMAG) is now underway. It has been very invigorating getting to meet curators, archivists, and

other GLAM professionals over the course of the year and to visit institutions all around Canberra. It has been fascinating hearing about their current work and interests as well as exploring ways in which we might collaborate on new projects. The first of these collaborations, with the National Museum of Australia, is already underway and will give us an opportunity to 'pull a few strings' and see what might be possible on a larger scale. Watch this space for more in mid-2025.

It turns out that we are not the only ones thinking about collaboration between the GLAM and university sectors. Notably, ASSEMBLY is a new national collaborative research development initiative that is coordinated by the Australian Museums and Galleries Association. The central question driving the project is: 'How might we reimagine new forms of museum collaborative research for public value?' This conversation is taking place through a series of forums, which we have both attended and from which we have already learnt a lot.

We are excited to hold the first GMAG meeting early in 2025 and to see where it goes from here. Likewise, we look forward to continuing our participation in ASSEMBLY and welcome other GLAM partnerships and conversations as they arise — GLAM readers of *Biography Footnotes* are welcome to email their ideas to michelle.staff@anu.edu.au.



A clue to the first of our GLAM collaborations for 2025, perhaps? Norman Hetherington alongside Mr Squiggle, Bill Steamshovel, and Gus the Snail. Photo: National Museum of Australia.

Community engagement

Michelle Staff, Emily Gallagher, Michele Horne & Tim Adams

This year the NCB has established new working relationships with other organisations in Canberra.

ACT Place Names

In April we were contacted by the ACT Government's Place Names Unit regarding the naming process for streets in the future Stromlo Reach Estate, near Denman Prospect. This suburb's theme is 'activism and reform'. We met with Angus Martyn (ACT Placenames Officer) and Jenni Bird (ACT Place Names & Engagement Officer, and NCB PhD student) to discuss recent additions to the ADB who could be put forward as candidates. We were pleased to share some ideas and connect the Place Names Unit to subjects' family members. The process is ongoing, and we look forward to learning the outcomes.



CWF masterclass: Tim Adams, Stephen Wilks, Michele Horne, Bernadette Brennan, and Michelle Staff. Photo: Theodore Ell.

Canberra Writers' Festival

The other partnership we established was with the Canberra Writers' Festival. Discussions with the CWF led to an NCB-sponsored 'Writing Lives' masterclass with the award-winning biographer Dr Bernadette Brennan. Below we share reflections from two HDR participants:

'How does a biographer keep on going with a project when, while researching a subject's life, you discover material that is not public knowledge? It is, in fact, sensitive material and the family is not keen for its inclusion in the biography. As an example, Bernadette described her interactions with the family of her subject while writing the biography *Leaping Into Waterfalls: The Enigmatic Gillian Mears* (2021).

It made me think that writing a biography is not for the faint hearted. It can be a roller coaster ride of emotions especially when, "at some stage you may like your subject less". Ultimately, Bernadette advised that a biographer needs to be clear about their purpose in writing the biography from the beginning. Referring back to the project's purpose regularly will guide a biographer in making difficult decisions about sensitive material.' **Michele Horne**

'My biggest takeaway from this masterclass was all about perspective. I guess one could say that, from my perspective, the most important aspect of biography is understanding perspective! It became evident from the very start that, with 13 people in the room, there were 13 different interpretations of a question, as well as 13 different sources of inspiration and motivation. An early lesson was that to better understand the subject of a biography, one needs to understand the point of view of the biographer. Although much may have been written before, it's important to remember that a change in perspective can create a different understanding of previously read material. This new viewpoint can stem from a range of sources, from the author's own experiences through to societal change. Another vitally important facet of perspective is in relation to one's subject or topic. When writing biography, it's not uncommon to not like the person about whom you write. However, there's a difference between not liking them and judging them. This is not the role of the biographer — it's the role of the reader. In these cases, the biographer must maintain a strong sense of... yes, you guessed it... perspective.' **Tim Adams**

Education outreach

Michelle Staff & Emily Gallagher

Readers of *Biography Footnotes* 2023 will remember that research editors Dr Emily Gallagher and Dr Sam Furphy spoke to the History Teachers' Association conference last year to explore how the ADB could be used in new ways for educational purposes. We are currently investigating options for extending our education outreach alongside other colleagues in the School of History; as we all want to do more in this area, it makes sense to work together. Dr Emily Gallagher and Dr Michelle Staff, along with Professor Frank Bongiorno, are leading plans to develop workshops for history teachers. We look forward to seeing what 2025 brings in this space.

Athletes in the ADB

Michelle Staff



Australian swimmers Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie with British swimmer Jennie Fletcher, c. 1910-25. Photo: National Museum of Australia, 1998.0017.0012

This year the Olympics and Paralympics had me looking through the *ADB* for stories of Australian sportspeople to share on social media. Of course, swimming came up a lot; it is, after all, essentially a national sport, with Australians winning 239 medals in the pool since the modern Olympics began in 1896. The *ADB* contains 26 swimmers, including people like [Fanny Durack](#) and [Mina Wylie](#) (pictured above). These two friends and competitors made history in 1912 when they became the first women to represent Australia at an Olympic games. But at first neither of them was selected due to an obscure and archaic rule of the New South Wales Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association that did not permit women to compete in the presence of men. If that wasn't enough, the Olympic committee claimed they only had enough money to send the men anyway. Public outrage led to the rule being relaxed and funds raised to send the young women to Stockholm, where Durack won gold and Wylie won silver in the 100-metres freestyle.

Other fascinating women athletes came up in my search, including [Clarice Kennedy](#), who is featured on the cover of this number of *Biography Footnotes*. Her entry was published just this year. Showing sporting prowess from a young age, she played vigoro, basketball, hockey, and tennis and competed in athletics, swimming, and diving. Yet despite her talent, she did not compete in an Olympic Games due to injury and, in her own words, because 'the "powers" in my own State have branded me second-rate'. Hers is a fascinating story that is worth reading in full in the *ADB*.

The sportspeople in the *ADB* are an eclectic mix. I was also fascinated by the stories on and off the playing field of sculler [Bobby Pearce](#), fencer [Ivan Lund](#), cyclist [Russell Mockridge](#), and athletics coach [Franz Stampfl](#). However, we only have one Paralympian in the whole dictionary: Harry Mosby, a railway worker from the Torres Strait who had both legs amputated after they were crushed by a train. He took part in the 1976 Paralympics in Toronto, where he won a silver medal in the men's discus C1. The lack of Paralympians is due in part to the fact that the event emerged only after World War Two, and by the *ADB*'s coverage only of people who died up until 2000. Nevertheless, this is an important reminder of the various walks of life we might look towards to find interesting and important life stories in the future.

Oceania news



'Revitalizing the PNG Dictionary of Biography'. Photo: ANU Department of Pacific Affairs website.

Considering Australia in its region has long been an important task for the *ADB*.

The Pacific has long had a central place in the *ADB*, just as it does at the ANU at large. Professor Jim Davidson, historian in the ANU's Research School of Pacific Studies, was a founding member of the *ADB* Editorial Board. The idea of a Pacific history working group first arose during the planning stages when two pilot working parties — one on the Pacific, the other concerning the period of the naval governors (1788-1809) — were proposed. A specialist Pacific working group was officially convened a few years later in August 1962. Its chair was Davidson, and its members were Professors Niel Gunson, Henry Maude, Deryck Scarr, Dorothy Shineberg, and Francis West. Davidson died in 1973, and the Pacific working party ceased to formally operate during the 1970s. An informal PNG Working Party, led by Dr Di Langmore, Professor Bill Gammage, Professor Ken Inglis, and Professor Hank Nelson, met for around two decades up until 2007.

In 2015 a new Oceania Working Party was formed, with Professor Katerina Teaiwa as chair. Today, the OWP is a large and dynamic group that endeavours to represent Pacific subjects more consistently and meaningfully in the *ADB*. Their work is critical to ensuring that we live up to the project's mission to document both significant and representative lives.

Revisiting the Papua New Guinea Dictionary of Biography

Theresa Meki, Nicholas Hoare & Keimelo Gima



Lorraine Kluki, Theresa Meki, Tukul Kaiku. Photo: Geline Narekine.

With support from the Oceania Working Party and Pacific Research Program, Dr Theresa Meki and Dr Nicholas Hoare (Department of Pacific Affairs, ANU) have partnered with Keimelo Gima (University of Papua New Guinea) to revive the *Papua New Guinea Dictionary of Biography* project in the lead-up to the country's 50th anniversary celebrations in September 2025.

Biography workshops were held in Port Moresby during June and August featuring writers from across PNG. Befitting the upcoming national milestone, the group settled on the theme of 'Nameless Champions' for volume one and will focus on producing biographical entries for the civil servants, educators, business leaders, and intellectuals who made the nation from 1975 onwards.

The project leads are especially delighted to see continuity from the Professor Jim Griffin-led *PNG Dictionary of Contemporary Biography* (1984–89) and have enjoyed working with the UPNG's Tukul Kaiku (pictured) who contributed entries to the PNGDCB. They are also thankful for the support received from the ADB community so far, including Helga Griffin, who provided support and valuable access to Jim Griffin's academic papers, and Dr Malcolm Allbrook, who has joined the project's advisory board. Others involved in the project during the 1980s are very welcome to get in touch with Theresa, Nicholas, and Keimelo via email, as are Australian-based writers with an interest in PNG history.



Gabriel Kuman, Bomai Witne, Reilly Kanamon, Keimelo Gima. Photo: Geline Narekine.

People Australia projects



The members of the Seaman's Union of Australia, gathering prior to the Labour Day march of 1975, Townsville. Photo: City of Townsville.

People Australia hosts a range of biographical projects that are freely accessible online.

Many *Biography Footnotes* readers will be familiar with People Australia (PA). The concept originated with the ADB's biographical register, which consisted of many stacks of index cards containing biographical information on a wide range of people. These were stored in a set of index drawers that we still have at our offices.

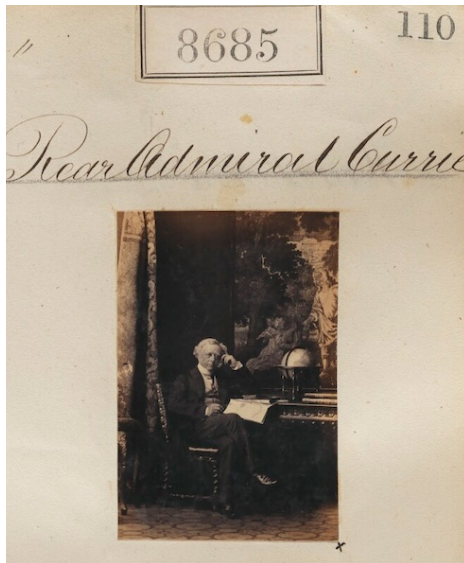
We decided not to digitise these 300,000 cards, which would have needed to be systematically checked first. Instead, we started anew by digitising obituaries (Obituaries Australia) and beginning a new biographical register, PA. The PA site also hosts a range of other biographical projects, including the Legacies of Slavery project, the Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement (BRALM), and, soon, a collection of convict biographies produced by students of the Diploma of Family History at the University of Tasmania.

Legacies of slavery

Caroline Ingram & Jane Lydon

People Australia's [Legacies of Slavery project](#) forms part of a research program that is examining the importance of the legacies of British slavery for the colonisation of Australia. In August 1833 the British Parliament abolished slavery in the British Caribbean, Mauritius, and the Cape. While this momentous event has been widely celebrated, it is often forgotten that many of those who benefited from slavery had ties to other parts of the British Empire, including the settler colonies of Australia, Canada, and South Africa.

Our work started with tracing the movement of people, goods, capital, and practices from the Caribbean to the newly established colony of Western Australia (funded by the Australian Research Council DP200100094), and



Mark John Currie, by Camille Silvy, 1862.
Photo: National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG Ax58508

will continue by exploring the legacies of British slavery in South Australia and Victoria (DP240101389). This is a partnership with the National Centre of Biography and the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery at University College London. The project aims to add biographies of people who had links to British slavery to People Australia.

To date we have published 19 biographies. Some of the most recent ones examine men whose wealth derived from slavery, allowing them to settle on land belonging to the Noongar people without permission, treaty, or compensation. [Marshall Waller Clifton](#) (1787–1861) was the grandson of a resident slave owner who had a sugar plantation on St Christopher (St Kitts). As the Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Company, Clifton brought his family to Australind in 1840 where he took First Nations land for himself and distributed some to other Company members. Vice Admiral [Mark John Currie](#) (1795–1874), whose family's bank Curries & Co. was linked to slavery through its provision of mortgages for slave estates across the West Indies, arrived in the Swan River colony in 1829 with his wife, Jane, and was granted 12,200 acres of land. He served as

a member of the Board of Counsel and Audit which determined how much land was to be granted to new settlers in the colony. [Adam Wallace Elmslie](#) (1781–1873) also emigrated to Western Australia in 1829. His father was the absentee owner of considerable estates and enslaved people in Jamaica, some of which Elmslie inherited in 1822. On arrival in the new colony, he was granted 4,306 acres. These life stories exemplify the movement of people, capital, and practices stemming from the use of enslaved people in the Caribbean to the colonies of Australasia.

An additional outcome of this research program has been a new exhibition, [Chains of Empire: Australian Legacies of British Slavery](#), launched on 23 August 2024 at the Australian National Maritime Museum to commemorate International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. The exhibition explores Australia's historical ties to the Atlantic slave trade and its aftermath and tells the stories of wealthy British slave-owning mercantile families who invested in the Australian colonies and promoted new forms of coerced labour. The exhibition also profiles the experience of those exploited, such as Badimia woman Melbin, taken from her Country in the 1860s. Melbin's portrait, painted by her great-great-granddaughter and famous artist, Julie Dowling, holds pride of place.



Chains of Empire exhibition. Photo: Jane Lydon.

An elusive love story

Chris Cunneen, Christine Fernon & Jenny Higgins

James Slattery (1862–1938) was a shearer and trade union leader who broke bad. After co-founding the Australian Workers' Union he turned to crime, embezzling funds from the shearers' union and obtaining £3,200 by forgery. When released from prison, he then committed armed robbery of a bank in Victoria. For this he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment with hard labour. You can read his story in the Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement [here](#).

The crime was a sensation, and [the press soon found that he had a fiancée](#), a Miss Molloy. Dr Chris Cunneen and Christine Fernon needed expert help to find out more about what happened to the pair after the media furore died down, so they turned to the ADB's stalwart genealogist, Jenny Higgins.

'I have not really been able to establish details of his life after release, except that he was living at 199 Nicholson Street from 1936, until his death, with no other people called Slattery at that same address,' Jenny wrote after searching the records. But she was able to uncover more about Slattery's early life.

Slattery was born at Fryers Creek in 1862, eldest of 11 children of William Slattery and Mary Whelan. In 1873 he lost three of his siblings in a matter of days, most probably from diphtheria. Another two of his brothers later met painful deaths: [Edward was thrown from a horse](#), broke his spine, and died in hospital after being transported over 150 kilometres, and [John died of peritonitis](#) at Bendigo Hospital after being sent there in agony by train from Kerang.



James Slattery, alias James Ryan, prison record [detail]. Photo: Central Registry of Male Prisoners, Public Records Office Victoria.

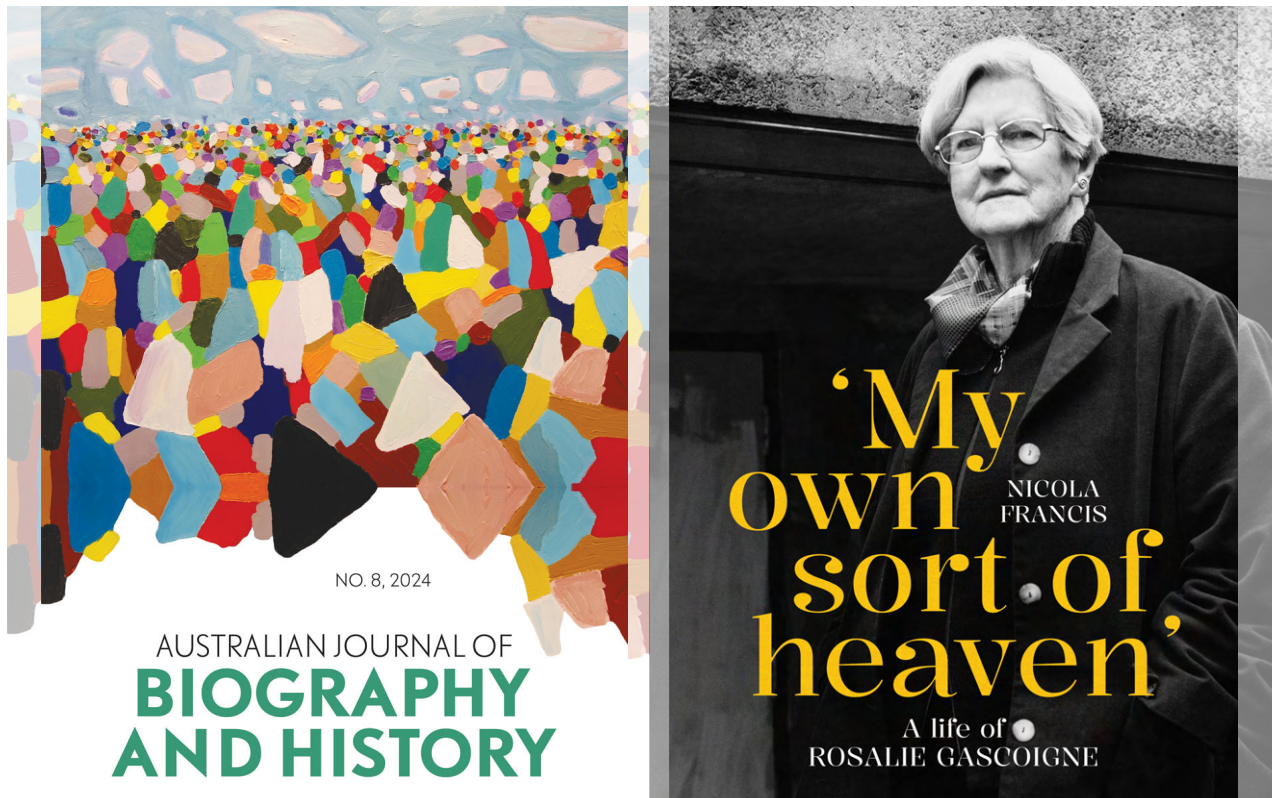
The question about the full name of his fiancée remained unsolved until Jenny happened to look at Slattery's gravestone at Fawkner Cemetery in Melbourne. The headstone listed both James Slattery and a woman named Agnes Molloy, who died in 1941. The Victorian BDM (births, deaths, and marriages) index showed that she was 68 years of age. Jenny found her will and it held two very strong confirmations that this woman might have been the reported fiancée. One of her executors was John Hinde, Slattery's brother-in-law, and some of her money was left to St George's RC Church, Carlton for masses for the repose of soul for herself and Slattery.

Looking further into Molloy's background, Jenny sought evidence of the reported inheritance that she gave to Slattery after she turned 21. In 1881 her father died, leaving his estate to his wife in trust for his remaining three children. Newspapers revealed the full value of his estate was just over £900. Her mother died the next year, so Molloy would have received her inheritance around 1893, which fits with Slattery's story.

Molloy's will indicates she was living at 68 Queensberry Street, North Carlton when she made it in August 1938, a few months after Slattery's death. Electoral rolls show she had been at the address from 1924 and was a tobacco worker. This entry also shows she was known as Agnes Josephine Molloy at times (perhaps a confirmation name), and knowing that name we can track her in the rolls from early in the twentieth century until her death. She and Slattery were not recorded as living at the same address at any point.

What happened to the relationship? Why did they not marry? Molloy obviously had a close relationship with Slattery until his death; she may have even paid for his grave. For now, the paper trail leaves us still wondering.

ANU Press publications



Front covers of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, no. 8 and *'My own sort of heaven': A life of Rosalie Gascoigne*, by Nicola Francis. Photos: ANU Press.

**In partnership
with ANU
Press, the
NCB publishes
biographical
research in
other forms,
too.**

In 2024 the NCB continued its partnership with ANU Press to publish high-quality biographical research in different formats.

The *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, edited by Dr Malcolm Allbrook, is published by ANU Press and has been since its inception in 2018. Number 8 was issued this year; number 9 is well underway, as are plans for other future issues. The journal publishes original research as well as in-depth book reviews.

The NCB also supports the press' Biography Series (formerly known as Writing Lives). This year we celebrated the publication of a new biography of Rosalie Gascoigne by Dr Niki Francis as part of this series.

AJBH no. 8

Malcolm Allbrook

Australian Journal of Biography and History, no. 8 (2024), ANU Press, <http://doi.org/10.22459/AJBH.08.2024>

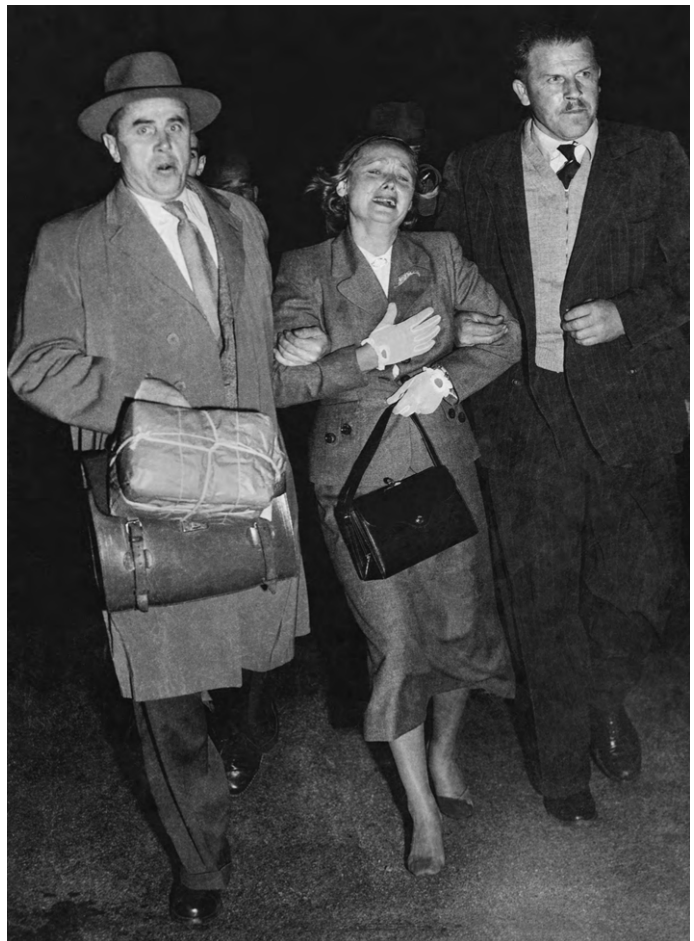
The articles in the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* (AJBH) no. 8 apply biographical methodologies to illustrate and enliven a range of themes and episodes in Australian history.

Using the example of the head of the federal Department of External Affairs, John Wear Burton, Dr Adam Hughes Henry explores some of the ways in which anti-communism in 1950s Australia served to limit critical thinking on the country's foreign policy. The article focuses on Burton's controversial but often-overlooked visit to the People's Republic of China in 1952, an episode that enraged both major Australian political parties and brought about his professional and personal isolation. It shows how those who ignored or failed to recognise the emerging political realities of the period could find themselves cast as 'figures of suspicion and scorn', or, more seriously, as 'a secret communist, dupe or sympathiser'.

In their article on the black sports promoter and entrepreneur Jack Dowridge, who lived and largely thrived in Brisbane between the mid-1870s and his death in 1922, Associate Professor Gary Osmond and Dr Jan Richardson argue that the biography of such a figure must not only 'situate a life in its broader context' but also recognise the 'ultimate unknowability of past lives'. The task of illuminating relatively obscure lives like his is dependent on a 'patchwork of archival fragments', and the rapid expansion of digital resources and tools to access them, the latter adding new dimensions to the potential of biography.

Professor Phillip Deery and Dr Julie Kimber, in their study of the often-overlooked figure of Evdokia Petrov, consider the 'disjuncture between historical imagination and the archival record'. The authors started their project with the intention of giving Evdokia just historical and biographical recognition. But what they encountered was a 'world of deception and dissembling' that meant they became ever less certain the further their research proceeded. Biography became an exercise of frustration, and the search for the 'real' Evdokia instead amounted to a 'biography plagued by ambiguity'.

In a similar vein but with a very different subject, Professor Richard Fotheringham's article on the variety entertainer and singer Jenny Howard, aka Daisy Blowes, had the benefit of a wealth of source material. A figure such as Howard emerges as a character in her own play, a self-idealised figure, the details of her life so complex and manufactured as to bamboozle even the experienced biographer. And, as with Petrov, the biographical quest of finding the 'real' person behind the curated one not infrequently leaves a biographer less certain than ever that they have succeeded in their aims.



Evdokia Petrov at Mascot Airport, Sydney. Photo: National Archives of Australia, A6201, 62.

David Marr, though, in his biography of the novelist Patrick White, was left in no doubt as to whether he had succeeded in his biographical quest, at least from the perspective of his subject. Professor Martin Thomas relates in his article 'Patrick White and the Path to Sarsaparilla' that the novelist demanded a 'final pound of flesh from his biographer' by making Marr 'sit with him at the dining table while he read it in front of him from beginning to end'. The process went on for days, White sometimes laughing 'uproariously, often at his own witticisms', sometimes challenging a point of syntax or a fact, but nevertheless placing the biographer in an extraordinary position, which, although 'excruciating' at the time, was an 'amazing gift'.

Dr Patricia Clarke, in her article 'Divorce Divide' describes the experience of the journalist Iris Dexter, née Norton, in seeking, but until 1950 failing to obtain, a divorce from an abusive husband, and the devastating impact the drawn-out episode had on her life. Within a few months of their marriage her husband started to drink heavily and beat her. After two years she sought a divorce on the grounds of 'constructive desertion'. Norton had started out with the ambition and talent to pursue a career as a journalist, but the disaster of her violent marriage and the barriers against arguing the case for constructive desertion essentially ruined her career and her aspirations.



Shearers' strike camp, Hughenden, central Queensland, 1891. Photo: State Library of Queensland.

Finally, two articles utilise collective biographical methodologies to illuminate historical episodes that have become emblematic in Australian history. Nichola Garvey relates the story of the 'death ship' *Neptune*, which arrived in New South Wales in 1790 as part of the infamous Second Fleet. On board was a cargo of women convicts, numbering just over 500 on departure but only 340 on arrival, the remainder having died en route. Garvey sets out to find these lost women, utilising a hitherto little-used archive of depositions taken in 1791 as part of a criminal investigation of the captain and his first mate. Dr Peter Woodley also focuses on a well-known historical episode that has become iconic in Australian history: the 1891 Queensland bush workers' strike. The episode has generally been portrayed as a 'war' between capital and labour. But, as Woodley argues, as well as signifying a 'clash between abstract class interests', the strike showed the 'often intense and fraught intersections of individuals' lives', many of which would never have come to light otherwise. The article exemplifies the potential of collective biographical methodologies 'as a window into the experience of class — examining the convergence of disparate lives in a moment, how they influenced and, in turn, were affected by it, and how ... that experience shaped their subsequent trajectories'.

AJBH no. 8 can be freely downloaded or purchased in hard-copy via [ANU Press](#). A series of blog posts relating to some of these articles is also being published with [VIDA](#), the blog of the Australian Women's History Network.

Writing Rosalie

Melanie Nolan & Niki Francis

'My own sort of heaven': A life of Rosalie Gascoigne was launched at Paperchain Bookstore in Manuka on the evening of 7 November. A large, appreciative audience witnessed a conversation between the book's author Dr Niki Francis, Rosalie's daughter Hester Gascoigne, and Professor Melanie Nolan, who was involved in the supervision of Niki's doctoral thesis and later the book as chair of ANU Press' Biography Series editorial board.

Born in New Zealand, Rosalie Gascoigne (1917–1999) graduated from Auckland University in 1939 and taught for several years at local secondary schools. She met Ben Gascoigne at university over bridge matches; he completed his physics PhD at the University of Bristol before securing a position at the Commonwealth Observatory (later the ANU's Mt Stromlo). Rosalie joined him, and they married and raised three children. She started growing flowers, which led her to flower arranging and then sogetsu ikebana. She later began the sculptures and artwork for which she is well-known, using materials she found in the Monaro landscape. She exhibited for the first time at the age of 57 and in 1982 was the first Australian woman to show at the Venice Biennale.

The discussion began with Niki's motivation to write this biography. Niki pointed out the parallels between Rosalie and herself which drew her to this subject: both were New Zealand born and living in Australia, both shared an involvement in art, and so on. Niki's is the first biography of Gascoigne, probably because of the scarcity of sources and Rosalie's being a private woman. While congenial to Niki, the panel discussed whether the project was also congenial to the family. In 1993 Janet Malcolm opined: 'The biographer at work, indeed, is like the professional burglar, breaking into a house, rifling through certain drawers ... and triumphantly bearing his loot away.' Hester said that she did not feel that about this biography. Indeed, she contributed material, wrote the foreword, and welcomed a full account of her mother's life.

Secondly the conversation considered the kind of biography Niki wrote. Niki emphasised that hers was a historical biography: a contextualised, contingent, and critical account of what led Rosalie to create her art. It was chronological and thematic, but it was not a simple and inspiring story of an older woman 'finding herself' later in life. Rather, her story is about the complexities of identity. Recent accounts of Rosalie's contemporaries are about the struggles creative Australian women endured, such as Ann-Marie Priest's biography of poet Gwen Harwood and Jillian Graham's of composer Margaret Sutherland. By contrast, the Gascoignes' marriage was largely supportive. Rosalie was not a 'woman alone' but had facilitators like James Mollison, Carl Plate, and Michael Taylor. Hester was able to elaborate on the hindrance as well as the assistance Rosalie received from Mollison.

Finally, we talked about the Rosalie who emerged from the biography. Niki focused on identity, rather than character or personality, invoking Erik Erikson's view that identity is never completely resolved. Referencing Czech-born philosopher Vilém Flusser's ideas about exile and creativity, Niki explained that the acute edges of difference at Stromlo pierced Rosalie's awareness, causing her to look and look again at a strange new country to make sense of and synthesise it with the visual cargo she had brought with her from New Zealand.

The conversation concluded with warm congratulations to Niki and the book was thus launched.



Hester, Melanie, and Niki in conversation at the book launch. Photo: Anna-Maria Sviatko.

NCB Events



Some of the participants of the intellectual biography workshop, 5-6 December 2024. Photo: Michelle Staff.

**The NCB
hosts a variety
of events
throughout the
year to keep the
biographical
conversation
going.**

As happens each year, during 2024 the NCB hosted a wide range of events that allowed various audiences to engage with the craft of biography. Alongside more informal sessions, such as the in-house writing group 'Feedback Merchants', in which NCB staff and PhD students share and give feedback on draft work, we again ran the monthly series known as Biography Workshop, which was ably convened by Dr Stephen Wilks.

The NCB also hosts a special annual workshop or symposium. This year the topic was intellectual biography. Taking place in December and led by Professor Melanie Nolan, this was a two-day event that involved contributors from the ANU, around the country, and even from overseas. To wrap up the year we held two masterclasses for staff and students from across the university, which were led by three of our overseas visitors.

Biography Workshop series

Stephen Wilks

The NCB hosted ten biography workshops in 2024, convened by Dr Stephen Wilks as coordinator and chair. The full array of expert speakers who so generously gave their time is listed on the NCB's [website](#), with workshop topics ranging from Dr Greg De Moore's presentation on 'Tom Wills: The Insubordinate Life of an Australian Sporting Legend', to Morag Fraser on "'The Name of the Product I Tested is Life': The Life and Poetry of Peter Porter', and Thea Gardiner on 'The World of Mab Grimwade: The Untold Story of a Great Australian Philanthropist'.

It was the NCB's privilege to host these ten scholars and writers of talent, and to hear about their projects and books. These workshops help to impart the excitement of biography as history. Speakers not only stressed the importance of biography as a literary form, but also raised questions of research and method, often grappling with the challenges of organisation, unanswered questions, and reactions from readers. Some were still works in progress. We aimed for variety, creativity, and interest.

There was a certain theme of contact with Asia, embodied in the presentations given by Nick Hordern on 'Shanghai Demimondaine: From Sex Worker to Society Matron', Professor Tessa Morris-Suzuki on 'A Secretive Century: Monte Punshon's Australia', and Professor Ben Penny on "'All my petty schemes": The Hong Kong diaries of Chaloner Alabaster, 1855-56'.

We have just finished developing what will hopefully be an equally popular series of workshops for 2025. We are always pleased to welcome to our monthly workshops visiting scholars and friends of the NCB and ADB as well as colleagues from across the university or even further afield. The program is now available to view [online](#). Do keep an eye on the events page of the NCB website if you're interested in attending next year!



Clockwise from above: Aboriginal cricketers alongside the Melbourne Cricket Ground Pavilion, c.1867 (Tom Wills is standing in the back row, second from the left). Photo: State Library of New South Wales; Ethel Punshon as a child. Photo: State Library of Victoria; Punshon and at her 103rd birthday. Photo: Helen Pausacker.

Intellectual biography workshop

Melanie Nolan



Melanie Nolan opening the intellectual biography workshop, 5 December 2024. Photo: Michelle Staff.

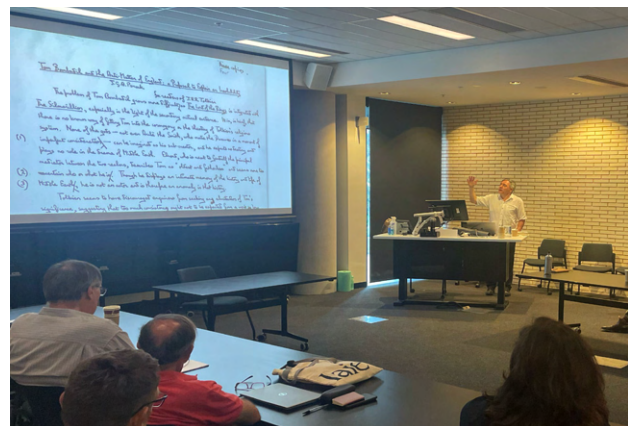
The NCB hosts a workshop or a conference annually. These symposia are usually related to the NCB's core business, especially that of the ADB. This year's workshop was held on 5-6 December and was dedicated to intellectual biographies. Intellectual biography is not extraneous but is fundamental to the ADB's work. Concise biographies consider what makes someone 'tick' and concomitant to this is the question: what ideas animate a life? All too often concise biographies concern themselves only with what someone achieved in their life. However over 650 ADB entries out of 14,000 – that is, 5 per cent – explicitly discuss intellectuals, their ideas, intellectual movements, and/or intellectual networks. Moreover, the NCB is interested in biographical methodology, the reach of individual agency, and, with that, the influence as well as limits of people's ideas.

For their part, intellectual historians are turning to biographical methods. Professor Richard Whatmore's recent account, *The End of Enlightenment* (2023) was organised around the lives and ideas of eight people (David Hume, William Petty, Catharine Macaulay, Edmund Gibbon, Edmund Burke, Jacques-Pierre Brissot, Thomas Paine, and Mary Wollstonecraft). Similarly, Professor David Runciman's recent *The History of Ideas: Equality, Justice and Revolution* (2024) is organised around 12 thinkers and their works (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham, Frederick Douglass, Samuel Butler, Friedrich Nietzsche, Rosa Luxemburg, Carl Schmitt, Joseph Schumpeter, Simone de Beauvoir, John Rawls, Robert Nozick, and Judith Shklar).

Professor Jaume Aurell (Universidad de Navarra), a medieval historian, opened the workshop with a consideration of historians as intellectuals. Professor Emile Chabal (University of Edinburgh) discussed space and place in intellectual biography in regard to his forthcoming biography of Eric Hobsbawm. Dr Sophie Scott-Brown (independent scholar) reconsidered the 1950s by way of the intellectual biography of a political moment. Professor Nicholas Brown (ANU) pondered whether J. G. Crawford, who would never have claimed to be an intellectual, was indeed an 'applied economist' or an intellectual.

On day two, Dr Ian Kumekawa (Harvard University) began with a footnote to consider what is meant by the intellectual biography of an 'economist', showing that A. C. Pigou's intellectual biography was entangled with those of Ernest Simon and Marion Fitzgerald, and advocating a more capacious view of the history of economics itself. Whatmore (University of St Andrews) put the spotlight on J. G. A. Pocock, author of the influential *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975), *inter alia* examining how being a New Zealander was relevant to his intellectual biography. Having written three intellectual biographies, and most recently *An Intimate History of Evolution: The Story of the Huxley Family* (2022), Professor Alison Bashford (UNSW) reflected on how she had approached the genre. Professor Robert Ackland (ANU) also discussed social network analysis (SNA) methods as a way of uncovering a fuller intellectual population. Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna, Scott-Brown, Dr Stephen Wilks, Emeritus Professor Tim Rowse, Professor Kate Fullagar, Dr Aditya Balasubramanian, and Dr Alex Cook opened each discussion respectively with thoughtful commentaries. Over the course of the two days participants considered the question: should the biography of a person whose business is thinking be, as R. G. Collingwood suggested in 1938, 'simply' the story of their thought?

The NCB's symposia have generally led to publications. In 2015, for instance, the NCB hosted a symposium on 'Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians: their historiographic significance'; a publication subsequently emerged from that event: *Clio's Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2017), which Professor Doug Munro and Professor John Reid edited. The 2016 international conference "'True Biographies of Nations?' The Cultural Journey of Dictionaries of National Biography', held at the National Library of Australia, resulted in *"True Biographies of Nations?" The Cultural Journey of Dictionaries of National Biography* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2019), edited by Dr Karen Fox. Dr Malcolm Allbrook and Dr Sophie Scott-Brown's edited collection *Family History and Historians in Australia and New Zealand* (London: Routledge, 2021) was based on the 2017 international conference 'Related histories: studying families in the 21st century', held at the National Library of Australia. Professor Melanie Nolan and Scott-Brown are co-editing a special number of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* which will include papers that were presented at the NCB's 2024 intellectual biography workshop.



Clockwise from top left: Jaume Aurell, 5 December 2024; Richard Whatmore, 6 December 2024; Kate Fullagar, 6 December 2024; Ian Kumekawa, 6 December 2024. Photos: Michelle Staff.

The historian at large

Sophie Scott-Brown

R. G. Collingwood once said that the question is never whether one is a historian or not, but rather how good a historian one wants to be. In the 'Historian at Large' masterclass, two further questions were added to this: what kind of historian are you, and where are you a historian? The session, co-run by Dr Sophie Scott-Brown (independent scholar) and Professor Richard Whatmore (University of St Andrews) took the current academic job market as its jumping-off point. Fact: universities produce more PhDs in history than they do academic jobs. While it is customary to be gloomy about this state of affairs, this seminar attempted to approach the issue positively because while the academic humanities seem under threat, history in the wider world — in publishing, heritage, the media (not least via the internet) — is in rude health. How could, or should, graduate programs engage with this flourishing world of past production?

I opened by suggesting that there are four main categories of public history making: (1) academic history done in public via TV/radio/publishing or in official capacities such as policy advising; (2) public history as the constitution of a distinct discipline concerned with topics like heritage and the politics of public commemoration; (3) history of publics, which was history research devoted to 'ordinary' people, including histories of the crowd or social movements; and (4) the public as historians, history making intended to engage with or inspire a broad range of history production including family or oral histories. I then showed how most literature on the subject reveals the slipperiness of these categories and the ways they constantly bleed into each other. In general, public history converses with academic history — sometimes critically, other times creatively — yet still it is a distinct space inviting different kinds of historical thinking.

To illustrate this point we both shared our personal experiences of public history work. Richard's recent book *The End of Enlightenment* (2023) marked his first foray in commercial history publishing with Penguin.

He reflected on the difference between writing conventional historical monographs and books intended for a wide general audience. The major differences were, first, the more prominent presence of the reading audience in the planning and preparation stages of the book, and second, the way these invisible readers altered the structure and shape of the final product. He noted, however, that this did not necessarily equate to a dumbing down of the argument, but rather an intense scrutiny over how the argument was best communicated. I shared my work in the media, including online content production, with philanthropic organisations, and through heritage groups and agreed that the audience is an ever-present consideration in a way it is not elsewhere. One aspect I struggle with is the pressure to be continually relevant and resonant with contemporary issues. This can often go against our academic training to consider things in deep context. Far from being dissuaded, however, I relish the challenge to forge connections without over-compromising.

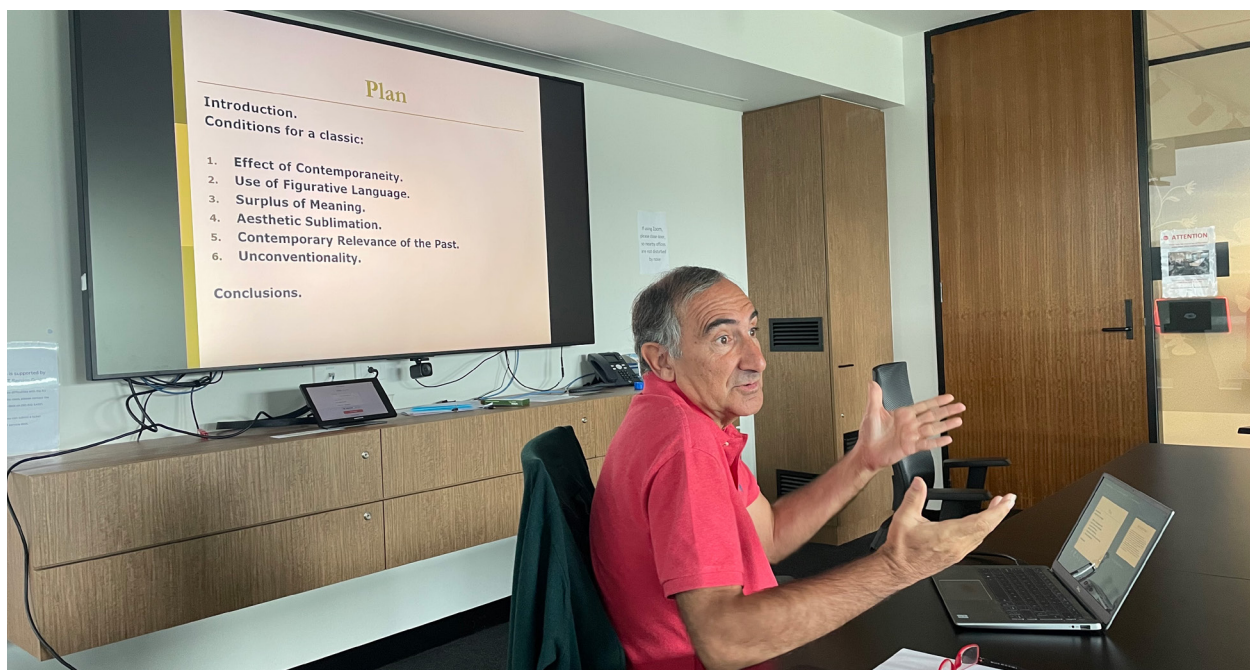
So should graduate programs adapt their structure and content to better prepare students for career alternatives? In the discussion that followed, the general view was that while other options should be better acknowledged, signposted, and their potential more robustly welcomed, the academic rigour associated with a strong, classic PhD programme was actually the very thing that best maintained the vibrancy of public history. The 'disciplined scepticism' (as the redoubtable Stefan Collini once called it) that keeps an academic 'firmly and decisively on the fence' (as the no less redoubtable Alex Cook once remarked) can prevent public history slipping into unreflective routines, while the innovative, inclusive instincts of the latter can equally do the same for the academy.



Richard Whatmore and Sophie Scott-Brown delivering the masterclass, 3 December 2024. Photo: Michelle Staff.

What is a classic in history?

Jaume Aurell



Jaume Aurell delivering his masterclass, 9 December 2024. Photo: Michelle Staff.

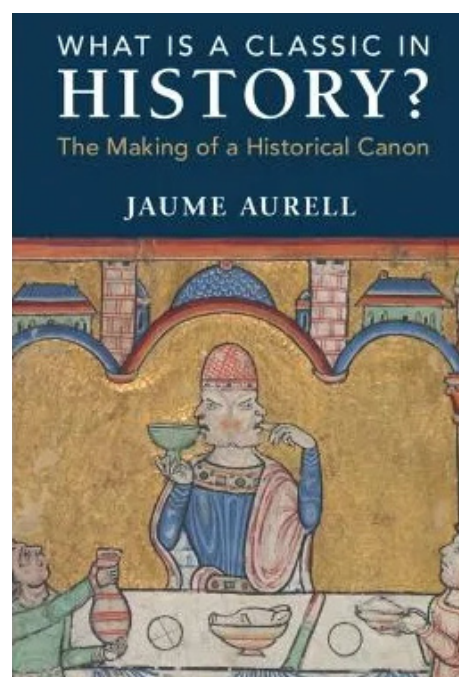
What is a classic in historical writing? How do we explain the continued interest in certain historical texts, even when their accounts and interpretations of particular periods have been displaced or revised by newer generations of historians? How do these texts help to maintain the historiographical canon?

In this masterclass Jaume Aurell, professor of medieval history at the Universidad de Navarra, Spain, discussed themes from his latest book, *What is a Classic in History? The Making of a Historical Canon* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), which explores how certain texts have been able to stand the test of time, gain their status as historiographical classics, and capture the imaginations of readers across generations. The study ranges from the heroic writings of ancient Greek historians such as Herodotus to the twentieth century microhistories of Carlo Ginzburg and investigates the processes of permanence and change in both historiography and history, that is, the creation of historical genres and canons.

In this session Aurell reviewed some of the conditions that a history book must have to gain durability and enter the pantheon of classic books: effect of contemporaneity, use of figurative language, surplus of meaning, aesthetic sublimation, contemporary relevance of the past, and unconventionality, among others. These criteria are based on his reading of hundreds of classic historical books and the respective histories of historiographies.

We also talked about some concepts related to the subject, such as the canon, the historical genre, and genealogy. The session aroused much interest, especially for its interdisciplinary, theoretical and conceptual aspects, and the debate went on for a long time.

Jaume Aurell, *What is a Classic in History? The Making of a Historical Canon*. Photo: Cambridge University Press.



Contributors



Timothy Adams

PhD candidate



Matthew Cunneen

PhD candidate



Dr Malcolm Allbrook

ADB Managing Editor



Karen Ciuffetelli

NCB administrator



Professor Jaume Aurell

NCB visitor



Dr Sam Furphy

Senior academic research editor



Dr Shauna Bostock

Indigenous Australian research editor



Dr Karen Fox

Senior academic research editor



Shenhai (Howie) Chen

Web programmer & developer



Dr Niki Francis

Biography Series author



Dr Chris Cunneen

NSW Working Party & Editorial Board member



Dr Emily Gallagher

Research editor



Keimelo Gima

PNG Dictionary of Biography



Professor Jane Lydon

Legacies of Slavery project lead



**Emeritus Professor
Tom Griffiths**

ADB Editorial Board chair



Dr Theresa Meki

*PNG Dictionary of
Biography*



Jennifer Higgins

ADB biographical researcher



**Professor Melanie
Nolan**

*NCB Director & ADB General
Editor*



Dr Nicholas Hoare

Oceania Working Party member



**Dr Sophie Scott-
Brown**

NCB visitor



Michele Horne

PhD candidate



Dr Michelle Staff

Online & outreach manager



Dr Caroline Ingram

*Legacies of Slavery research
assistant*



James Watson

PhD candidate



**Associate Professor
Catherine Kevin**

*South Australia Working Party
chair*



Dr Stephen Wilks

Academic research editor

Contact us

Dr Michelle Staff

Online & outreach manager

Australian Dictionary of Biography &

National Centre of Biography

Level 5, RSSS Building

146 Ellery Cres

Acton ACT 2601

E michelle.staff@anu.edu.au

W history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/ncb



facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556451593978



https://x.com/NCB_ANU



instagram.com/nationalcentrebiography