



National Centre of Biography News

February 2025

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



The Australian Crowd, by Stephen Baxter (2014)



Chinese New Year Festival, Darwin, pre-1969 [detail]. Library and Archives NT, PH0497/0018

Welcome to 2025!

Happy New Year, and welcome to the first edition of the NCB News for 2025.

The National Centre of Biography's staff and students already have much to celebrate this year, from a major thesis award and literary fellowship shortlisting to a graduation and new publications. You can read all about these achievements below.

We look forward to what else 2025 will bring, including what promises to be a wonderful lineup for the Biography Workshop series.

Please do get in touch if you are working on biography in other parts of the university and beyond -we'd love to meet you!

News & notices



Lyndall Ryan thesis prize

Congratulations to ADB research editor Dr Emily Gallagher, whose PhD thesis was awarded the International Australian Studies Association's Lyndall Ryan Thesis Prize. Readers will remember that last year Emily's thesis also won the Australian Historical Association's Serle Award. Well done on this amazing achievement!



Fellowship shortlisting

Congratulations to Dr Michelle Staff, the NCB's online & outreach manager, who has been shortlisted for the Hazel Rowley Literary Fellowship for her work-in-progress, a joint biography of the feminists and sisters Bessie Rischbieth and Olive Evans. The winner will be announced on 5 March at Adelaide Writers' Week.



ConGRADulations

At the recent CASS graduation ceremony Dr James Watson was officially conferred his PhD for his thesis 'Fibro Modernity: A Social History of Asbestos in Australia, 1878-2024', which was supervised by Prof. Melanie Nolan.



Biography Workshop

In the first Biography Workshop for 2025, Prof. Jessica Jacobson (Birkbeck) will speak about her current project: a family memoir centred on her grandmother Liebe, mother of the South African-born writer and Jessica's father, Dan Jacobson. Thursday 13 February, 11am-12.30pm. Details [here](#).

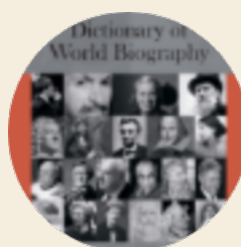


Biography Workshops 2025

The 2025 Biography Workshop series features an exciting lineup of guests who will speak on a wide range of topics, from family history to Indigenous biography to figures like Harold Holt and Les Murray.

Check out the full program [here](#) and save the dates in your diary - we'd love to see you there!

For your reading list



Dictionary of World Biography

The tenth edition of the *Dictionary of World Biography* was published last month by ANU Press. Congratulations to Professor The Hon Barry Jones on this achievement! You can download your copy of this open-access title [here](#).



'Shimmering multiple and multitude'

In this piece for the *Australian Book Review*, Dr Georgina Arnott reflects on her experience writing the *ADB* entry for the esteemed poet, author, and activist, Judith Wright. Read it [here](#).



Griffith Review 87

The latest issue of the *Griffith Review* focuses on the concept of 'home'. It features ADB Indigenous research editor Dr Shauna Bostock's essay 'Home as a weapon of cultural destruction: The politics of dispossession'. Purchase a copy [here](#).



Biography Footnotes

Each year we produce *Biography Footnotes*, our annual newsletter, which reports on NCB activities, events, publications, and more. *Biography Footnotes* no. 25 (2024) is now available to download from our [website](#).



What is the ADB?

Ever find yourself wondering: what actually is the ADB? Check out [this](#) reel on our Instagram page for a quick one-minute rundown of everything you need to know!

ADB feature entry

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

Esther Freda Rofe (1904–2000), composer, wins the honour of being the first ADB entry published in 2025.

Hailing from Melbourne, she was a highly skilled musical prodigy who learnt to read music before she could do the same with words.

Read about Rofe in the entry written by Dr Suzanne Robinson [here](#).



Esther Rofe c.1940s, National Library of Australia

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