Australian National University | National Centre of Biography

National Centre of Biography News

November 2026

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



The Australian Crowd, by Stephen Baxter (2014)



Incoming and outgoing chairs, Kate Fullagar and Tom Griffiths

Changing of the guard

Last month we farewelled outgoing chair of the ADB's Editorial Board, Em. Prof. Tom Griffiths, at a celebration held in his honour at University House.

Tom has ably served as chair since 2006, guiding the ADB with much wisdom, insight, and generosity. In recognition of his many contributions, on the night he was awarded an ADB Medal for long and distinguished service. You can read the full citation on our website.

Tom welcomed incoming chair, Prof. Kate Fullagar, into the role. We all look forward to working with her in the years to come.

News & notices

New website

Regular users of the ADB will have noticed that the website looks a little different to usual. On 21 October we launched the new site, which has all the same content but is now much more user-friendly. There may be a few teething issues, but our tech whiz web programmer is on the job to make sure everything goes smoothly. Check it out at adb.anu.edu.au.



Matt joins the team

We are excited to welcome Matthew Cunneen (who submits his PhD today!) to the team as a research editor with the ADB. Matt specialises in convict history and will bring great expertise in the colonial period, and much else besides, to our wonderful group of research editors.



Intellectual Biography special issue

Number 12 of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* is a special issue on Intellectual Biography, guest edited by our director, Prof. Melanie Nolan. It is available open-access online via ANU Press.



Biography Workshop

In the final Biography Workshop session for 2026, Benedict Moleta will share his research on the life and work of Coral Bell. Thursday 26 November, 11am-12pm, all welcome. Further details available on our website.



Funding opportunity

The Kathy Chamberlain Research Awards, offered by Women Writing Women's Lives, offer $1,000 funding to support a biographical research project about and by women. Applications are due 30 November, further details on WWWL's website.



Donate to the ADB Endowment

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

Read, listen, learn

The art of the obituary



Read the NCB's Dr Stephen Wilks' musings on the genre of the obituary in his review of *Are They Dead Yet? The Art of the Obit*. Available via *Inside Story*, online now.

New journal article



Dr Samuel Furphy's latest journal article with *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* has just been published. Read 'Protector of Settlers? Charles Symmons and Aboriginal Protection in Western Australia, 1840–1855' (open access) via the journal's website.

Reconsidering Anita Brookner



Acclaimed British biographer, Dame Hermoine Lee, has published an account of the life of novelist and art historian Anita Brookner, and A/Prof Patrick Mullins has reviewed it. Read his thoughts online now.

Historical sisters



Dr Michelle Staff has reviewed Iola Mathews' latest, *The Remarkable Greig Sisters: Pioneers in medicine and law* for the *Australian Book Review*. Read it in the latest issue of the magazine or online.

Expert commentary



Dr Stephen Wilks has provided commentary for renowned journalist Michelle Grattan's recent piece asking: are the Nationals on life support? Read it in *The Conversation* online.

Myth and mischief



A/Prof Patrick Mullins has reviewed another new title this month: *The Curious Case of the Stolen Mace: Solving Australia's strangest political crime*, by Sally Young. Read it in the latest number of the *Australian Book Review* now.

The ADB on ABC Radio



Members of the ADB staff are continuing to appear on ABC Radio Canberra every Wednesday around 3.15pm to play a game of 'Who Am I?' You can listen to previous weeks' segments online via ABC Listen.

New podcast episodes

The podcast Biographers in Conversation is hosted by NCB visitor Dr Gabriella Kelly-Davies. Visit the website to listen to new interviews with Sonia Orchard, Anna Thomasson, Tim Dobbyn, Joshua Kendall, and James Bailey.

ADB feature entry

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

Marjory Clara Calland Scoble was a Salvation Army officer and nurse who served in the Middle East and New Guinea during World War Two.

Read all about Scoble's life and career in the entry written by Barry Gittins online now.



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The Australian National University 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 we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.