

# Friends

NEWS | AUTUMN 2022



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Warm greetings for 2022. It is great news that our valued National Library of Australia, along with other premier cultural institutions, can gradually restore normal operations with COVID-safe protocols. While the Library has continued many important services throughout the pandemic, it is very welcome returning to this iconic place and all that it offers.

This new year already promises a diverse range of Friends events back at the Library. And it also brings changes to our Committee, mainly due to time limits on Committee membership. Sincere thanks for substantial contributions from outgoing Chair Kerry Blackburn and other departing Committee members Janice Taylor, Grahame Thom, Meredith Hinchliffe, Margo Geering and Colleen Kinnane. I'm sure you already know of Kerry's multi-faceted and dynamic leadership for Friends' activities, and Kerry is still generously supporting our work.

Fortunately, there are some members who are returning to the Committee, and they continue to share their expertise and knowledge. Thanks also to the Library staff who crucially support our day-to-day activities and planning, especially Melanie Olde and Belinda Jessup.

Please take advantage of our many activities in 2022, which will continue to provide special insights into the Library's rich resources. I'm looking forward to spending time in the new special exhibition *On Stage: Spotlight on Our Performing Arts* that is open from 4 March until 7 August. Another highlight will be an event to meet the curator of *Circus: Roll up, Roll up!* It's hard to choose a favourite from the colourful material on display in that exhibition, but a circus in New Zealand in 1919 included Starlight, 'The World's only Talking Pony'. It must have been quite a show. You can read more about these 2 exhibitions in this newsletter.

I'm looking forward to meeting you at our many events this year.

**Christopher Kenna** | Chair



## ON STAGE: SPOTLIGHT ON OUR PERFORMING ARTS

The 2020s have not been kind to the performing arts. The COVID-19 pandemic has made gathering together indoors or outdoors difficult, if not impossible.

Few would argue that there isn't something special and very human about live performance—to tell, see and listen to stories unfolding in words, sound or music in real time.

Despite advances in audiovisual and digital technologies, people still go out, when they can, to participate in that live conversation that happens between performer and audience. There's often anticipation, possibility and magic in the air. Performers talk about the connection they make with audiences and the energy to which they respond. By nature, an evening's performance ends. It's ephemeral. But its impact can be long-lasting.

The Library's new exhibition *On Stage: Spotlight on Our Performing Arts* reflects on the history of performing arts in Australia through the Library's vast collections and looks forward to the return of better days. With just over 180 objects, it surveys many key moments, people and productions by or for Australians. It is a rich and diverse history, and one that deserves to be better known.

Australia has often been seen as a victim of cultural isolation and cringe. The exhibition explores how, throughout its history, Australia has been connected to the wider world through overseas touring performers, and by Australians performing

Maurice Biais (1872–1926) *Wintergarten: Saharet*, chromolithograph, Berlin: Hollerbaum & Schmidt, 1902, [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-355224202](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-355224202)

overseas. It will explore how Australian performing arts reflects on and relates to questions of Australian identity and voice.

The Library's collections document our history from the perspective of the audience and that of the creators' programs, playbills and posters, as well as items that shed light on the business of putting on a production—costume designs, scripts and salary lists, for example. The exhibition brings together diverse collections—from silk playbills to large band posters, musical scores and scripts, and even a performing wig and set model for the ballet *Swan Lake*. I have loved immersing myself in these collections, to scan the details they offer on how the entertainment may have played out.

The exhibition features people, bands and companies that are still well known to us today—soprano Dame Nellie Melba, actor, dancer, choreographer and artistic director Sir Robert Helpmann, soprano Dame Joan Sutherland and familiar names from more recent times such as INXS, Kylie Minogue and AC/DC—and those whose fame has receded into the shadows. For example, have you heard of banjo player Bessie Campbell 'Banjo Queen' or actress Nellie Stewart, once called 'Australia's idol'?

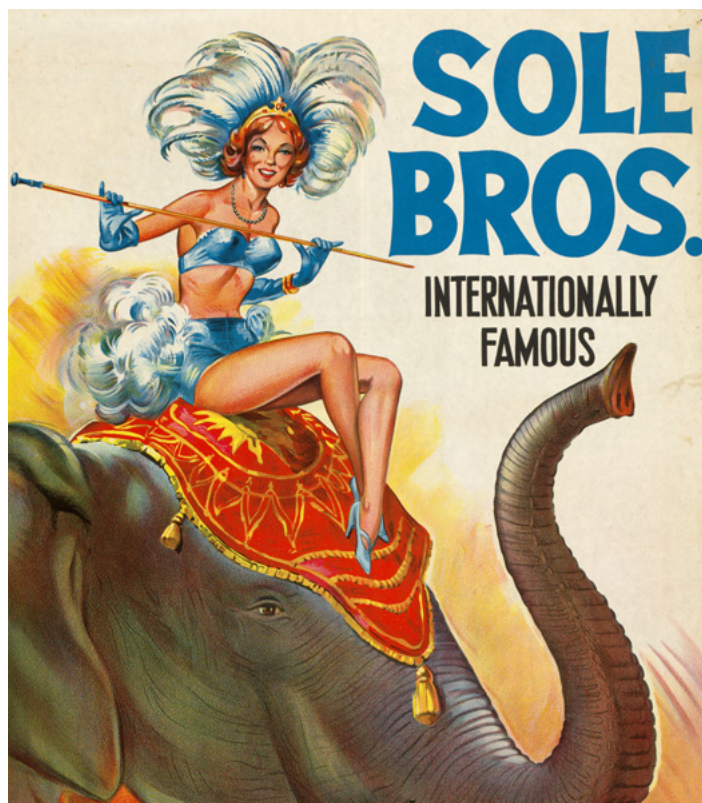
I have also tried to represent the spectrum of performing arts— theatre, opera, dance, variety and vaudeville, festivals, folk music, comedy, magic, rock, pop and more. Performing arts is a vital, ever-changing art form that evolves as we, our tastes and our concerns change. The exhibition showcases productions that have provoked and challenged the conversation, as the arts should. Some that are explored in the exhibition are Alex Buzo's *Norm and Ahmed* (1968), *The Legend of King O'Malley* (1970), Bob Maza's *National Black Theatre*, Nimrod's production of *Basically Black* (1972) and a 1996 performance of Deborah Mailman and Wesley Enoch's play *Seven Stages of Grieving*.

Exhibition highlights include the 1796 playbill, the earliest surviving document printed in Australia. It documents an evening's entertainment at Sydney's first purpose-built theatre, the main event being a performance of the tragedy *Jane Shore*. There is a lagerphone—a makeshift instrument constructed from a broom-handle and beer bottle caps—associated with the influential folk group The Bushwhackers in the 1950s. There are spectacular posters, such as the poster featuring Saharet, the Victorian-born dancer of Asian heritage who performed in Europe and America from the late 19th-century; and a poster featuring the comedy duo Nat Phillips and Roy Rene performing as Stiffy and Mo.

We invite you to visit us to see these wonderful collections in this survey of the history of Australia's performing arts. Unlike most performances, entry is free, and no tickets or bookings are required.

*On Stage* runs between Friday 4 March and Sunday 7 August, at the National Library of Australia. An illustrated companion to the exhibition is available at our Bookshop.

**Dr Susannah Helman** | Exhibition curator



### CIRCUS: ROLL UP, ROLL UP!

Tumbling into the Library this summer is a display of circus memorabilia from the collection of Vivian James Carter. Carter had a passion for circuses and carnivals where he had worked as a youth. In 2015, the Library acquired 565 items—including posters, photographs and programs—from his collection.

Carter's collection provides an insight into the changes that occurred in the Australian circus industry from the early 20th to the early 21st-century. For more than a century until the 1960s, travelling shows like circuses were the main form of entertainment for Australians across the continent. However, between 1911 and 1996 the proportion of the population living in rural areas declined from 43 per cent to 14 per cent. This demographic change, plus rising transport costs and the introduction of other forms of entertainment like television and cinemas, contributed to the decline of the travelling circus. The 1960s and 1970s, however, witnessed the rise of a new type of circus, which focussed on telling stories and on human performance. International circus troupes also began to include Australia on their world tours again.

The display features posters and programs from prominent Australian circus families including Bullens, Perry Brothers, Sole Brothers, Ashtons and Wirths, as well as more recent circus companies like Circus Oz and Circus Monoxide. Circus artists such as rope-walkers, clowns and acrobats as well as wild and domestic animal shows appear on the posters and programs.

*Circus: Roll up, Roll up!* is on display in the Collection in Focus area of the Treasures Gallery until Sunday 19 June 2022. You can also watch a short curator talk at [nla.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions](http://nla.gov.au/whats-on/exhibitions).

**Karen Schamberger** | Exhibition curator

*Sole Bros internationally famous circus: famaso circo auestro internazionale fratelli Sole; internazional berühmter Zirkus Gebrüder Sole poster by Sole Bros Circus (detail), 1970.*



## DR TONYA LEMOH: 2022 CREATIVE ARTS FELLOW

'I've learnt that you can find the most spectacular treasures in the most unexpected places,' said Dr Tonya Lemoh when she spoke at the Friends 2021 AGM after being announced as the Friends 2022 Creative Arts Fellow. She hopes, among the wealth of material in the Henry Handel Richardson manuscripts held in the National Library's collections, to reveal insights into Richardson's creative journey in music.

While Richardson's writings are renowned, there is a fusion between writer, pianist and composer that Tonya will explore through the author's songs, letters and novels. From her research, she will develop and stage a multimedia presentation 'Interiors: a journey through the musical world of Henry Handel Richardson', together with soprano Dr Narelle Yeo. This event will, no doubt, be a highlight of the Friends events' calendar this year.

The competitive Creative Arts Fellowship is supported through funding of \$10,000 each year from the Friends. It enables artists from fields such as music, dance, theatre and the visual arts to spend time in the Library to immerse themselves in the collections and develop new work creatively using or inspired by the collections.

Tonya is internationally recognised as a performer, recording artist, music researcher and academic. She is a passionate advocate for Australian music. Her research has centred on exploring music by lesser-known composers of cultural significance and creating audio documents of their output.

Her own musical journey began in London at the age of 5 when, like Richardson, she had the ambition of becoming a concert pianist. Her father, a Sierra Leonean paediatrician, was keen to return to his home country to work, as there was a great need for doctors. In between his busy work at hospitals and outreach clinics, he drove Tonya to music lessons in Freetown, the capital city, 5 hours away! In later years, her studies and academic career took her back to Australia, then to the United States, Germany and Denmark, among other countries. She became fascinated by, as she described it, 'the unexpected juxtaposition of thinking you know about something but finding it has a whole lot of other aspects'. Being able to hold Richardson's correspondence and see her notes on her composition manuscripts will no doubt lead Tonya to an enhanced appreciation of Richardson and her music.

Tonya became aware of the depth of the National Library's collections when completing her PhD research on Australian composer Raymond Hanson. She subsequently released the world premiere recording of Hanson's complete piano works and published an associated article in *Limelight* magazine (June 2021). Her research on and performances of lesser-known composers has included Joseph Marx (from Austrian National Library sources) and Svend Erik Tarp (from Royal Danish Library sources). Tonya speaks fluent Danish herself and was on the music faculty of Copenhagen University for many years. She was intrigued by Richardson's interest in Scandinavian literature, and her translations and settings of works by Danish author J.P. Jacobsen.



*The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* had resonated with Tonya when she was an undergraduate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Learning of Richardson's connections to Leipzig where she studied piano and composition, and the links to composers such as Richard Wagner, Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Schumann and Franz Liszt in her novels and music, inspired Tonya to look further into Richardson's musical life. Like Richardson, she spent time in both England and Germany.

In the AGM Zoom link, Tonya said that, after what has been a tough year for the Arts, she is 'filled with joy' to be returning to the National Library to explore, through primary sources, how Henry Handel Richardson's musical consciousness was shaped and manifested. Richardson said in a letter to Nettie Palmer in November 1929, 'what I am trying to say ... could be better expressed in tones than in words'.

Friends can look forward with joy to experiencing in coming months the creative world of Henry Handel Richardson from a different perspective through Dr Lemoh's research.

**Kerry Blackburn** | Newsletter editor, Library volunteer



### YOUR FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP HELPS THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

You can be part of a community of passionate National Library supporters and advocates through your Friends membership. Friends benefit from on-site and online events and presentations, that promote scholarship and awareness of our cultural heritage. In turn, Friends support fellowship programs, digitisation projects and have gifted art to the Library.

When reminded, please renew at [nla.gov.au/friends/join-the-friends-online](https://nla.gov.au/friends/join-the-friends-online) and encourage others to join.

## YESTERYEAR: 'THRILLING DRAMA' IN A GOLD RUSH TOWN

A playbill from a theatre that survived only 6 weeks in a Victorian goldfields town where the rush lasted barely 12 months—what are the odds it would survive, and be held in the National Library of Australia? Here it is, another intriguing discovery by the small team of Library volunteers doing research for the AusStage database.

The grandly named Lamplough Royal Garrick Theatre staged what it advertised as a 'thrilling drama' *Poachers, or Love and Revenge!* together with the last night of the 'celebrated' Poses Plastique Troupe and concluding with a 'laughable farce' *Hunting a Turtle!*

Lamplough, about 7 kilometres south-east of Avoca, was the site of a gold rush which commenced in late 1859. The tiny population reached more than 16,000 during 1860. The extraordinarily rapid growth of Lamplough illustrates why the term 'rush' is used about the goldfields. The find was officially reported on Saturday 26 November 1859. On the Sunday there were 500 diggers at Lamplough. By Monday there were an estimated 3,000 people on the field, including, according to Detective Thomas Evans, '300 of the Criminal Class', coming from nearby diggings at Back Creek, Kangaroo, Amphitheatre and Mountain Hut.

The speed at which the settlement formed is impressive. It took only days for grog shanties to be established. Barely 2 weeks after the first miners arrived at Lamplough 2 theatres had opened—the Theatre Royal and the Royal Garrick. Given the speed of the build, one wonders if the description on the handbill of the Royal Garrick being 'this splendid temple of the drama' might have a touch of 'spin' about it.

The handbill in the Library's collections is for a performance on Saturday 7 January 1860. By the first week of February *The Ballarat Times* reported that the Lamplough Royal Garrick had closed and its proprietor, Mr James Bunn, was insolvent.

This handbill may be the only printed record surviving from the Lamplough goldfield. The nearest local paper *The Amherst and Back Creek Advertiser*, whose correspondent first reported the rush, does not appear to have survived in Australian public libraries. However, items from that paper were reproduced in other newspapers that have survived, for example *The Ballarat Times*, *Ballarat Star* and *Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser*, so we have some idea of the happenings in Lamplough.

On this small handbill there is sufficient information to build at least a sketchy picture of the 'performance industry' of the goldfields. The advertised performance is a little over 3 weeks after the theatre opened, suggesting that the actors and backstage staff were all on hand to move from one gold rush to another.

At the top of the handbill, up in lights with the proprietor, is the stage manager and, at the bottom, the backstage staff are listed—a scenic artist, machinist and the leader and musical director. There are some 28 actors, singers and dancers and, after checking their names in the AusStage database, we find that most of them performed at other goldfields theatres and circuses before and after the short life of the Lamplough Royal Garrick Theatre.

**ROYAL GARRICK THEATRE.**  
New Theatre. New Company.  
PROPRIETOR MR JAMES BUNN  
STAGE MANAGER MR WARDE  
This Evening, Saturday, January 7.  
This splendid temple of the drama will open with the best and most powerful *Corps Dramatique* on the goldfields, comprising the following distinguished artistes :—  
**Mr C. WARDE,**  
**MRS EVADNE EVANS,**  
Messrs Fawcett, Furrian, O'Brien, Rainsforth, Chalmers, Ransford, Jones, Thomson, Robinson.  
Messrs Evans, Elmer, Holmes, Gilbert, Burke, Rowe, Hanbury, Bunn.  
The Celebrated  
**WISEMAN FAMILY**  
Miss Emily Wiseman, Miss Fanny Wiseman, Miss Isabella Chalmers, Mrs Elmer, Middle Eugenie, Madame Cushla, Miss Maxwell, Miss Derangh.  
The performance will commence with the beautiful and thrilling drama of intense interest, entitled **THE POACHERS**  
OR,  
**Love and Revenge!**  
ROBERT SHELLEY (a young poacher), JAMES GREENFIELD (a gamekeeper), UNION JACK (Scamp of the village), CHALK (Landlord of the Lucky Horseshoe), MOETHAP, WINDFIELD, GROUSE, RACHEL RYLAND, FANNY DROSSET (a servant).  
Mr C. WARDE, Mr O'BRIEN, Mr FURRIAN, Mr RAINSFORTH, Mr THOMSON, Mr ROBINSON, Mr JONES, Mrs Evadne Evans, Miss EMILY WISEMAN.  
*Poachers, Poachers, &c., by numerous auxiliaries.*  
LAST NIGHT OF Mons. CUSHLA, Mr T. WILLIAMS  
And the celebrated  
**POSES PLASTIQUE TROUPE**  
Grand Medley Dance, Miss F. Wiseman  
Burlesque Song Mr Furrian

There are no provenance notes on the catalogue entry for the handbill but perhaps the assiduous AusStage volunteers team might find some information in accession records about how this extraordinary little survivor made its way from Lamplough, which today is simply a location on the map with one placename sign and one shed, to the National Library. In the meantime, go online to [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-52723279](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-52723279) to view this small piece of theatre history.

Margaret Goode | Library volunteer



## SPOTLIGHT ON LIBRARIES ACT

Libraries ACT provides public library services to the Canberra community, and is home to the ACT Heritage Library whose focus is helping to tell the stories of Canberra and its people—the lives of Canberrans at home and in the wider community.

Nine public library branches serve the city and upgrades recently completed at the largest, Woden Library, have added a range of new community spaces, including a recording and rehearsal studio and podcast suite. These spaces expand the library's flexible and multifunctional facilities and access to specialist technology.

Programs that celebrate books and reading, and offer lifelong learning opportunities, are an important part of the services offered by Libraries ACT. Recently, the 'Too Busy Book Club' was established to encourage people to get into reading, for the first time or again. A new title is nominated each month and can be borrowed as an eBook or eAudio. This popular initiative began as a completely online book discussion group and readers can now join the Facebook group and participate as much or little as they like. There are even online discussions with the author. Simply search 'Too Busy Book Club' for more information.

The ACT Heritage Library collects, preserves, promotes and provides access to material about Canberra's social history and heritage using a range of materials and initiatives. Much of this is in physical format, though some has been digitised.

The library includes:

- An extensive collection of Canberra Theatre Centre Performing Arts Ephemera beginning in 1928.
- Posters, plans and papers of landscape architect Chris Slotemaker de Bruine, whose original Bicentennial Park proposal evolved into the annual spring flower festival known today as Floriade.
- Memorabilia and copies of the first ballot paper for the first election for the Legislative Assembly in 1989, including one signed by some candidates and with caricatures by cartoonist Geoff Pryor.
- Canberra-themed jigsaw puzzles, playing cards and board games.
- The papers of Eva Jean Starling who moved to Canberra in 1928, was the first librarian at the Canberra Community Library in Acton, and enlisted and worked as a specialist photographic interpreter within Intelligence in Britain during the Second World War. Her postwar journals show her extensive travel and sense of adventure.
- A significant collection related to Charles Weston, Canberra's first Nurseryman, responsible for afforestation and city plantings between 1913 and 1926.
- Images including *The Canberra Times* collection.

Amongst the library's recent acquisitions are 4 photographs of Sir Donald Bradman, who played his final international cricket match at Manuka Oval in 1963, aged 55, when then Prime Minister Robert Menzies officially opened the Bradman Pavilion. He was out for 4 and the Marylebone Cricket Club won by 3 runs!



In 2020, the ACT Heritage Library began capturing the lived experiences of Canberrans through a 'COVID-19 Community Archive'. Documenting the community's lives during an unprecedented time in our history will provide invaluable information for researchers now and in the future. Go online to see how you may be able to contribute.

The ACT Heritage Library also collects works published by authors based in Canberra and the region, including those shortlisted for the ACT Book of the Year Awards. The library coordinates a 'Local Author Showcase' with copies of recent books by local authors made available for loan. It hosts public programs connected to local topics, and in 2020, it hosted a series of 'Read Local: Author Conversations' which were recorded and have been made available online.

The ACT Heritage Library also coordinates the ACT Memorial database, commemorating men and women associated with the ACT who served in conflicts, peacekeeping missions and related service around the world. Nominations are accepted for people with an association with the ACT, and can be made via the ACT Memorial website. A number of stories about these people are featured in 'Stories from the ACT Memorial', which have been submitted by families or volunteer researchers to highlight personal stories and achievements.

Libraries ACT welcomes you in-person and online at [www.library.act.gov.au](http://www.library.act.gov.au).

**Kerry Blackburn** | Newsletter editor, Library volunteer

*With thanks to Libraries ACT*

## WHAT'S IN A NAME ...

Search 'VEGEMITE' in the Library's catalogue or on Trove and you find some interesting links—recipe books, children's books, Geoff Pryor cartoons, the fun 'Tastes like Australia' online video and even corporate governance case studies. Delve deeper and you may be intrigued by the battle between Australia's VEGEMITE and Britain's Marmite.

The by-product of brewer's yeast based on the research of 19th-century German chemist Justus Freiherr von Liebig, Marmite was launched in Britain in 1902. It was soon imported to Australia. However, supplies were disrupted during the First World War after the British army commandeered the entire supply of English Marmite for its rich source of B group vitamins for the health of its troops. In Australia, the Fred Walker Company (later Kraft), seeking to develop a product that would supplant the 'foreign' Marmite, hired a young Melbourne chemist, Dr Cyril P. Callister, to develop a local spread from brewer's yeast. He succeeded in 1922 and a national naming competition, with a £50 prize pool, was held to name his 'Pure Vegetable Extract'. VEGEMITE was chosen.

The new spread was in stores Australia-wide, marketed against the 'foreign line' as 'Delicious on sandwiches and toast, and improving the flavours of soups, stews and gravies' and targeting mothers with 'Your Baby Needs the 3 Vital Vitamins'. Yet sales were poor against Marmite.

In what the company must have considered inspired, in 1928 VEGEMITE was rebranded 'Parwill' and marketed with 'If Marmite ... then Parwill'. Extensive promotion followed in newspapers and by 'lady demonstrators' in shops providing samples. There were appeals to be 'Loyal. Stand by Australia', enjoy it as a 'nightcap—hot or iced', 'soothing to the nerves', and even 'blondes and brunettes insist on Parwill'.

The marketing pitch failed and in 1935 the name VEGEMITE was reinstated. Perhaps the decision was influenced by this tongue-in-cheek report in *Eyre's Peninsula Tribune* in 1932: 'That well-known grocery item "Marmite" has been followed on the market by "Parwill." We anticipate the next pot of mystery may be labelled "Kids-won't".'

A new marketing pitch in 1937 saw a limerick competition with prizes including Pontiac cars but a more substantive endorsement came in 1939 when the British Medical Association recommended VEGEMITE as a nutritionally balanced food. In the 1940s, the Australian Army bought VEGEMITE in bulk. The company introduced public rationing across Australia to meet demand and VEGEMITE became even more sought after.

In Australia, VEGEMITE has continued to outsell Marmite (now made in New Zealand), no doubt assisted by marketing such as the 1956 jingle 'Happy Little Vegemites' and featuring in the lyrics of Men at Work's 'Down Under' (1981). In 1984, this umami spread that has been described as having 'the consistency of old engine oil' had the distinction of being the first product to be electronically scanned at a checkout in Australia.

**Kerry Blackburn** | Newsletter editor, Library volunteer

## DORA OHLFSEN AND HER ANZAC MEDAL

In 1916, Dora Ohlfsen (1867–1948) became the first Australian artist to create a medal to mark the tragedy of the Gallipoli campaign. She was also the first to portray the women left to grieve.

The obverse of the bronze medal depicts a dead soldier cradled in the arms of a woman; the reverse, an Anzac and the inscription 'Anzac. In eternal remembrance. 1914–18'. The medal can be viewed at the entrance to the Treasures Gallery and by entering [nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn683836](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn683836) in the Library catalogue .



Dora, seeking a career in music, moved to Europe in the 1880s. After travelling to St Petersburg in 1896, she found her forte in art and met her lifelong companion, Baroness Heléne (Ella) de Kuegelgen.

After moving to Rome in 1902, Dora became recognised as one of the finest sculptors and medal designers in Italy. She attracted the attention of Benito Mussolini and produced a medallion relief portrait of him. For her greatest work, Formia's war memorial 'Sacrifice', she was conferred with the freedom of the city and children screamed 'Viva La Scultrice!'. Patronised by the Fascists in the 1920s, she later gained new patronages from the church.

Dora had served as a nurse with the Italian Red Cross during the First World War. In 1919, she travelled to London to organise sales of her Anzac medal under the *British War Charities Act* to raise funds for disabled Australian and New Zealand servicemen. Dora persuaded Sir Charles Wade (former premier of New South Wales and then agent-general in London) to take the medals on his return to Australia. They would be sold for 2 guineas each.

Not all of Dora's works came to fruition. In 1913, the Art Gallery of New South Wales commissioned her to design a bronze panel for above the entrance doors to the gallery. Despite her 'Greek chariot race' design being approved, sending plaster casts to the trustees and her often feisty correspondence, including pointing out that the brief for portrait roundels of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci either side would be anachronistic to the Greek epoch, her commission was abruptly cancelled in 1919, a shortage of funds being cited. The trust's chair wrote: 'Miss Ohlfsen is a woman, and although she has no case, can cause mischief.' More than 100 years later, a new work by Karla Dickens, a Wiradjuri artist, has been commissioned to fill the empty space.

Dora, together with Ella, died in 1948, found in their gas-filled studio in Rome.

**Kerry Blackburn** | Newsletter editor, Library volunteer

## 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2021 Annual General Meeting was conducted using Zoom for the first time on 30 November. Attendance exceeded that of recent years, a welcome sign of commitment to the Friends.

Chair Kerry Blackburn noted in her report that, despite ongoing challenges associated with COVID-19, 6 well-patronised Friends-exclusive events were held on-site in the first half of the year. These included partnerships with the Australian Garden History Society and Goulburn Heritage Group. Zoom was utilised to reach wider audiences throughout the year: 3 'Meet the Author' events, a 'Curious Collections' introducing Friends to the Library's collection of pocket globes and a new initiative 'Poetry Lounge'. Plans are in place for more events in 2022.

Other achievements included the Friends and NLA signing of Memoranda of Understanding for the 2 Fellowships supported by the Friends, the Creative Arts Fellowship and Travelling Staff Fellowship. The MoUs formalised arrangements for these 2 important funding initiatives. Outreach continued, with the 'Spotlight' series in the Friends quarterly newsletters featuring contributions from Tasmania, Geelong and the Northern Territory.

Membership numbers declined, with the age cohort and COVID-19 restrictions both factors. However, the Friends Committee approved a 3-month extension of memberships in recognition of members' loss of access to the Library during the 2021 lockdown and to encourage renewal of memberships.

Treasurer Grahame Thom reported that the auditor again issued an unqualified opinion. Financial outcomes were affected by COVID-19 through membership numbers and some events not being able to proceed. Total income and surplus decreased; however, equity and cash reserves increased from the previous financial year. Grahame also noted a member's generous donation to the Friends of \$2,000. The decision on how these funds may be best utilised will be agreed in coming months.

A Travelling Staff Fellowship was not awarded this year given COVID-19 travel restrictions. However, the 2022 Creative Arts Fellowship has been awarded to Dr Tonya Lemoh and the 2021 Friends Medal to Margaret Goode. Tonya and Margaret accepted their awards online and briefly addressed the meeting. (See more on these 2 awards in this newsletter.)

Twelve nominations were received for the 12 elected positions on the 2022 Friends Committee and all accepted by the meeting.

Kerry thanked fellow Committee members, all Friends and Library staff, especially the Friends executive officer Melanie Olde, for their support throughout the year.

## THE 2022 FRIENDS COMMITTEE

### Elected members:

Dr Christopher Kenna—Chair  
Margaret Nichols—Deputy Chair  
Jo Schumann—Treasurer  
Nancy Clarke  
Ken Douglas  
Sue Gage  
Dr Peggy Horn  
Larissa Karpish  
Gary Kent  
Nivarith Nair  
Karin Oldfield  
Dr Anna Robinson

### NLA representatives:

Dr Marie-Louise Ayres—Director-General  
Stuart Baines—Acting Director, Community Engagement  
Helen Wade—Reading Rooms Manager  
Melanie Olde—Friends Executive Officer

## 2021 FRIENDS MEDAL RECIPIENT



Awarded annually since 2006, the Friends Medal recognises a significant contribution to the work of the Library by Friends members, Library staff and volunteers.

The 2021 medal recipient, Margaret Goode, led the comprehensive review in 2020 of the Friends Rules of Association, unchanged since 2011. The updated Rules ensure compliance with relevant ACT legislation and now better reflect the role and objectives of the Friends.

Margaret has been a Library volunteer for more than 10 years: a tour guide; key member of working groups to prepare guides' guides; and the concept-developer for the more recent, and very popular, Art and Architecture of the Library tour, hopefully available again this year. Margaret was also an initiator of the small group of Library volunteers contributing to AusStage, the wonderful digital database hosted by Flinders University that is preserving the history of live performance in Australia from 1789 until the present. AusStage was recognised earlier this year in the Australian Memory of the World Register. Margaret's involvement with the Library continues, beyond her award of the 2021 Medal.

Margaret Goode with the Friends Medal



## POETRY LOUNGE

A small group of Friends, lovers of poetry or poets themselves, came together to take part in a new event, Poetry Lounge, in November last year. Initiated by Friends executive officer Melanie Olde and Committee member Meredith Hinchliffe, the Zoom format gave a sense of intimacy as we watched and listened to poems being read and the participants sharing the passion behind their choices.

Five Friends accepted the invitation to share with the group a favourite poem or one that brought them joy or moved or resonated with them in a particular way. While it can sometimes be simply the rhythm of the language that is appealing, the relaxed, informal discussion on the choices added to the experience.

Among the readers, K A Nelson chose 'Behind the Counter', her poem recalling memories from working as a child in her father's country barber shop, and published in her first collection *Inlandia* (2018). Melanie Olde read Judith Wright's 'The Bower Birds' from the anthology to be published this year by the National Library. The other choices were varied and thought-provoking.

The Friends Committee hopes to hold another Poetry Lounge event later this year. Keep an eye on the online Friends Weekly News. In the meantime, check the Library Bookshop for its range of contemporary Australian poetry, search the Library catalogue for poetry accessible online and Google 'poetry in Canberra' if you're interested in joining a local poetry Slam, Slamboree or 'open mic'.

Kerry Blackburn | Newsletter editor, Library volunteer



Read the latest Friends blog posts at [nla.gov.au/friends](https://nla.gov.au/friends).

## FRIENDS EVENTS

For more details and bookings for Friends-exclusive events, see the online Friends Weekly News emailed to members and visit the Library website.

**March:** Preview of the special exhibition *On Stage: Spotlight on Our Performing Arts*

**March:** Author talk by Dr Peter Dowling *Fatal Contact: How Epidemics Nearly Wiped Out Australia's First Peoples (2021)* in association with the ACT National Trust

**April:** Coffee with the Curator of *Circus: Roll up, Roll up!*

**May:** 'Your Artist Book' workshop with Dr Caren Florance (deferred from 2021)

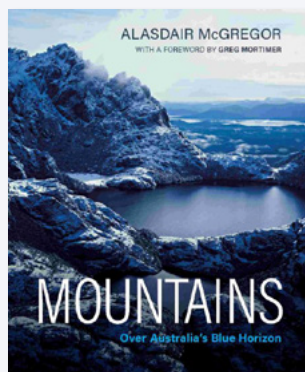
**May:** Friends knitting event to celebrate the launch of *Vintage Knits* from the Library's collections

**June:** *White Gloves: The Irish experience highlights from the Library's collections* curated by Dr Richard Reid, historian and writer

Friends are eligible for a discount on any ticketed Library events. To claim your 15% discount, bookings must be made online at [nla.gov.au/whats-on](https://nla.gov.au/whats-on) and the discount code **FRAUTUMN2022** entered when booking. This code is valid from 1 March to 31 May 2022 and does not apply to Friends events (select the member's ticket option for these) or events that are free of charge.

## NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

Friends will receive a 20% discount on copies of *Mountains: Over Australia's Blue Horizon* by Alasdair McGregor when purchased between 1 March and 31 May 2022, online and in-store.



To claim your 20% discount on *Mountains*, use the promotional code **FRAUTUMN2022** at checkout. You can also use this code to apply the usual Friends 15% discount\* to other eligible online purchases.

\* Discount does not apply to limited-edition prints, discounted and remaindered stock, newspapers, stamps, copy cards, magazines or vouchers.

Barber shop photo from 'Behind the Counter' by K A Nelson