

# Friends

NEWS | AUTUMN 2024



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the first Friends of the National Library Newsletter for 2024. It promises to be another great year for the Friends with a program, we hope, to cater to all tastes. The Committee has been working hard already to make sure the Friends organisation expands and grows as we all contribute to the mighty work of the Library. If you know of people you think might be attracted to our activities, please let them know of our work and invite them along to our events.

Further details on upcoming events are included as usual on the last page, alongside your new quarterly offer from the Bookshop. We would also like to remind you, and advise our newer members, that a range of our events since 2022 are now available to view on the **Friends YouTube playlist**. The **Library's YouTube channel** includes a range of excellent content including 'how to' guides, Conversations with Curators, Fellowship Talks and Learning Webinars.

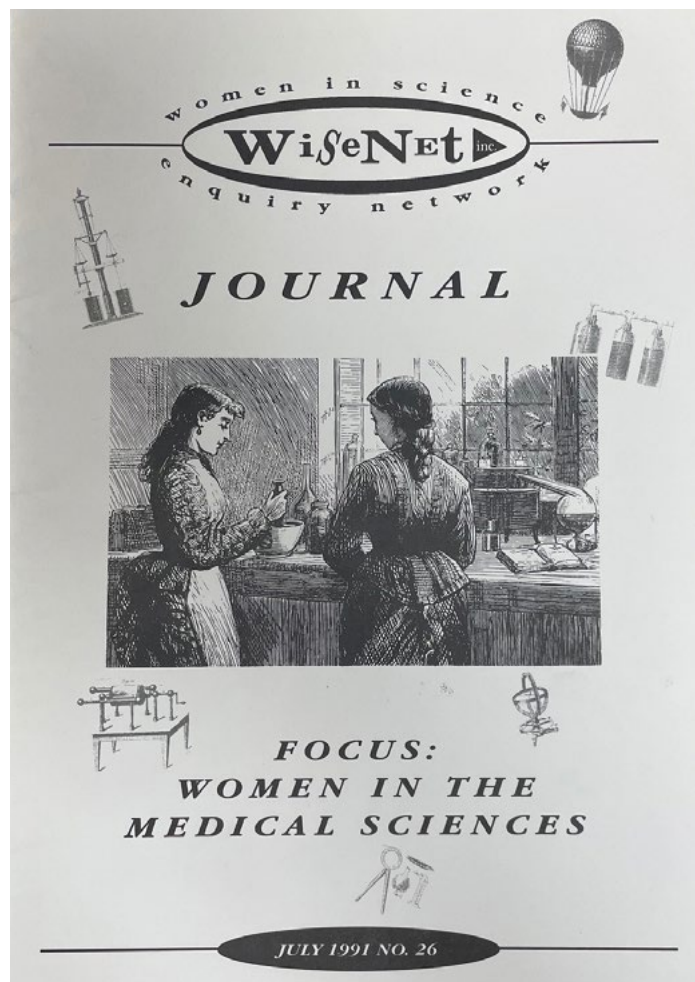
Elsewhere in the Newsletter there is an excellent summary of the 2023 AGM which saw the return of past members to the Committee as well as Friends new to the role. We would also like to thank those past members of the committee whose terms finished in 2023.

A special thank you to Margaret Nichols, outgoing Chair, for her dedication to the role. We have benefitted from her advice, and it is great to know that her knowledge, experience and kindness is never far away. Also, many thanks to Kerry Blackburn for her outstanding contribution as editor of the Friends Newsletter.

The Committee will soon commence its budget planning process for the next financial year and, as part of that, will be considering new Library projects to support and contribute to. We look forward to bringing you further news on that in upcoming newsletter editions.

The Friends will always benefit from new ideas and feedback, so if you have any suggestions or comments please let your Committee know by emailing [friends@nla.gov.au](mailto:friends@nla.gov.au).

**Michalina Stawyskyj and Catherine Anderson** | Co-Chairs

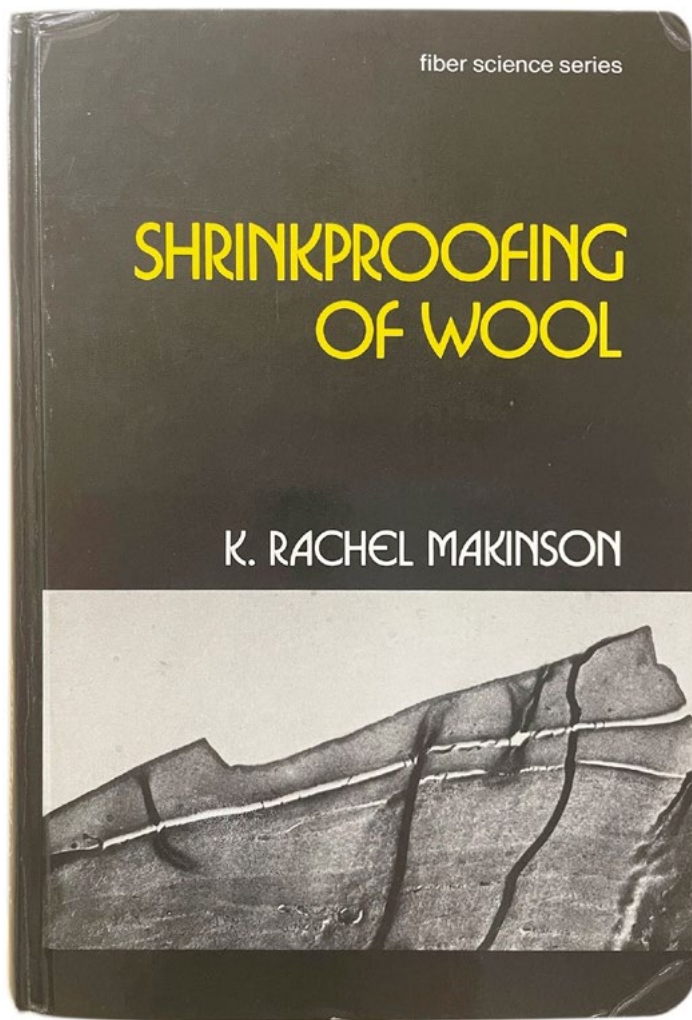


## CELEBRATING WOMEN IN SCIENCE

What notion comes to mind when you hear the expression "Matilda Effect"? Likely it'd include memories of the FIFA 2023 Women's World Cup. Yet another, very different reference to the expression is derived from the work and writings of Matilda Gage (1826–1898), an American social activist. Her 1870 pamphlet *Woman as Inventor* described the tendency to diminish, ignore, indeed often deliberately misrepresent the accomplishments of women scientists.

Margaret Rossiter (b.1944), a science historian, coined the expression "Matilda Effect" in 1993 to highlight the downgrading ▶

*Wisenet Journal/Women in Science Enquiry Network*, vol.26, 1991,  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1672156](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1672156)



of women's science when she was undertaking a review of Gage's activities. She acknowledged that it was Gage who initially identified the widespread practice. Jane Carey's 2023 publication, *Taking to the Field: A History of Australian Women in Science* also demonstrates that there is little public memory of the wide involvement of women in Australian science through to the 1950's.

In more recent times, academic and various national institutions like the Australian Academy of Science and CSIRO, have been endeavouring to acknowledge the contributions of women scientists more accurately. The National Library is no exception. Through Library holdings (both texts and oral histories), the contributions to scientific endeavours by women can be better appreciated.

The Library's Oral History Project on Australian Women Scientists includes 23 recordings of interviews conducted by Dr Ragbir Bhathal (1936–2022). One of these is with Dr Kathleen Rachel Makinson (1917–2014), a Cambridge trained physicist who became a Chief Research Scientist and the first female Head of a Division (Textile Physics) at CSIRO. She came to Australia in 1939 with her Australian husband and initially worked as a research assistant at the University of Sydney. After the birth of her first child, she returned to work there in radio physics, training (mostly men) in a push to upgrade local expertise in the field as the threat of WWII increased.

K. Rachel Makinson, *Shrinkproofing of Wool*, 1979,  
[nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2641091](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2641091)

She felt that initially, the working environment for women was pretty fair although she admitted that when an opportunity came to apply for a more ongoing position, she chose wool because she noticed that few men were interested in the 'new' areas of research, and this might increase her chances of an appointment. And it did, so, for almost 20 years she studied the physics of wool which considers the differential friction of movement of individual wool fibres against one another (or felting). At CSIRO, largely funded by a post-war levy on wool, she came to understand and then explain the details of this to the industry through writing the book *Shrinkproofing of Wool*. That book remains the standard in the industry today. No doubt, her scientific understandings contributed to the wealth that wool provided in the post-war Australian economy.

Dr Makinson's recollections on gender issues during her career include differential pay and entitlement issues, and that there was more discrimination against married women than against women in general. She felt that when young, she was encouraged to study science, particularly by her father and female teachers. Rarely did she have the camaraderie of fellow female students and scientists, and specific career obstacles were more associated with specific individuals (male bosses) and less so, institutional. She worked to support women in science through committee representations, was made a fellow of Australian Technological Science & Engineering Society and was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia in 1982 for her contributions to Australian science.

In addition to holdings about specific female scientists, the National Library holds the complete journal collection of the Women in Science Enquiry Network (WISNET). WISNET began in Canberra in the 1980s. It expanded nationwide, promoting, fostering and acknowledging women's participation in science. The organisation produced a quarterly journal and 53 issues are held at the Library. To enhance this historical record with associated ephemera, a local archive working group is encouraging donations. If you were a WISNET member or have relevant materials, please consider contacting [wisnetarchive@gmail.com](mailto:wisnetarchive@gmail.com).

Peggy Horn | Friends Committee Member



**YOUR FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP  
HELPS THE NATIONAL LIBRARY**

Friends members are part of a community of passionate National Library supporters and advocates. Friends benefit from on-site and online events and presentations that promote our cultural heritage and scholarship. Friends support fellowship programs, digitisation projects and have gifted art to the Library.

When reminded, please [renew your membership online](#) and encourage others to join.



## TOTALLY HOOKED

It's hip to be (a granny) square! Some of you might recall seeing a call-out to Friends and crochet enthusiasts for volunteers to help crochet retro pieces pulled from the Trove archive for our upcoming publication *Vintage Crochet* 1 April 2024.

*Vintage Crochet* builds on the success of *Vintage Knits* (2022) and features vintage patterns from Australian publications—such as *Australian Women's Weekly*, *The Woman's Mirror* and even the *Colonist*—from as far back as 1888.

In making the book, the NLA Publishing team got to immerse themselves in the world of crochet. With the immense help of Friends, library staff and family members to test out these patterns with modern yarns and tools, we made sure the patterns selected could be translated to fit contemporary crochet needs.

We researched the varied and complex history of its origins (did you know crochet appeared in a tailoring invoice from Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1567?), its use in art and activism (see: Frances (Budden) Phoenix's *'Who Killed Juanita?'*) and even the evolution of the famous granny square. These topics, and many more, are explored in the text boxes throughout the book, and trace social, cultural and historical threads connected to crochet.

Another part of the process involved organising, designing and facilitating a photoshoot of the pieces, with library staff volunteering to model the garments and our photographers cleverly staging an assortment of homewares and kids' toys. Over 2 weeks, a revolving door of fourteen models came through the photography studio at the Library, primarily used for the digitisation of collection material, and donned the handmade pieces.

The result was over 38 patterns for garments, homewares, accessories and children's toys, tried and tested, and collated in a beautifully bound, jewel toned book. Below we've included a sneak peek excerpt from *Vintage Crochet*. We hope to see you at the Library from 9 April for our week-long program of events to celebrate the book's launch.

*If you're addicted to crochet, blame the French: crochet—the term is derived from the French word for 'hook'—probably began as an adjunct of lace-making in France sometime in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, a crochet hook was used to pull loops of thread (usually silk) through each other, at first as a way of joining pieces of lace, but soon the craft developed to create lacy fabrics. Meanwhile, in eighteenth-century Scotland, crafters used a 'shepherd's hook' to work with wool yarn and the result was known as 'shepherd's knitting'.*

*The first published instructions for crocheted items appeared in a Dutch magazine, the aptly named *Penélopé*, in the early nineteenth century: three patterns for purses crocheted in silk using chain stitch, slip stitch and double crochet (dubbelde hekelsteek—literally double hedge stitch) to make different designs.*

*Early crocheted pieces used the same coloured silks that were favoured by the lace-makers who developed the craft and the women who used the items. By the Victorian era, white was the preferred colour for the lacy crocheted accessories that were being produced, often in cotton now that fibre was being imported into Europe from the colonies.*



*In the first half of the twentieth century, crochet was still very much used for lace-making, in homewares and small lacy personal accessories, although some crochet in wool was beginning to be seen in crocheted blankets and rugs. The postwar availability of synthetic fibres such as rayon and acrylic yarns allowed for the development of bright new colours and inexpensive yarns. However, it was the swinging sixties and seventies that really saw crochet blossom into a significant fashion statement. Crochet clothing and accessories capitalised on the new casual vibe in groovy colours and the hypnotic mandala-style art that exemplified that era.*

*Like other crafts and home-made clothing, crochet went into abeyance in the last two decades of the twentieth century, when it was generally considered an old-fashioned craft not in keeping with the corporate mentality and sophisticated fashions of the time.*

*There has been serious interest in reviving and rejuvenating the craft in the twenty-first century, with more interesting yarns and materials now available. Covid-19 lockdowns in the early 2020s also drove significant growth in the practice of fibre arts like knitting and crochet, especially among younger generations.*

**Madeleine Warburton** | Senior Administration Officer, Publishing

## ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH LEGAL DEPOSIT?

Have you published a book? Do you know someone who produces a community newsletter? Perhaps a friend of yours has used an online platform to self-publish their work. Did you know that all works published in Australia should be submitted to the National Library under legal deposit legislation?

Over the last 12 months the Library has run a project investigating how well publishers understand and comply with legal deposit.

Stage one of this project aimed to improve our understanding of changes in the contemporary publishing landscape that were impacting compliance with legal deposit. It identified opportunities to improve understanding of legal deposit in the publishing and general community. In Stage two, which kicked off in September, we are implementing some of the recommendations with a focus on community outreach.

Legal deposit, at its heart, is a law that exists to ensure that we preserve our published history for future generations. Something that may have seemed insubstantial at the time of publication can provide crucial details that inform our understanding of history. Legal deposit laws, which are a provision of the Copyright Act (1968), ensure that our collections form a diverse and inclusive picture of the nation. Legal deposit collecting captures what we are thinking, imagining, and writing about over time - without privileging some voices over others. Legal deposit laws mean that publishers must deposit at the National Library of Australia, as well as at the relevant state or territory library.

In the past, the Library would focus on building relationships with traditional publishers to ensure they were aware of both the value of legal deposit and their obligation to contribute to the national collection. Now, advances in technology mean everyone is a potential publisher. To completely fulfil our obligations, we need to reach out to everyone who might publish.

It's a gargantuan task.

We're talking to universities, writers' centres, historical and genealogical societies, editors, the authors societies, publishers' associations, and many more in our hope to get the word out where it is most needed. We've visited festivals and conferences and it's become clear we have a lot more work to do.

As Friends of the Library, you can help us.

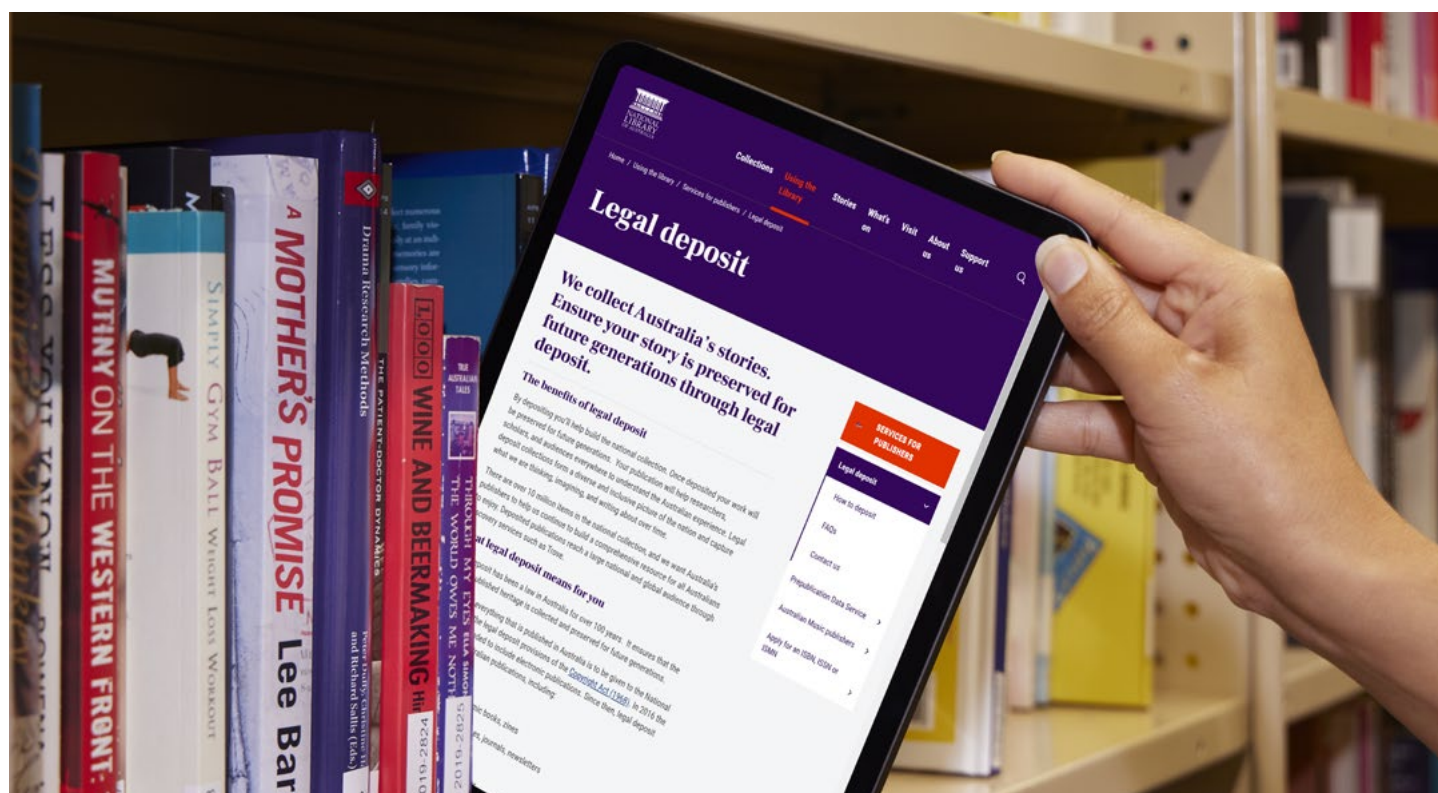
So far, we've found our outreach is significantly increasing the number of people looking at our information online, and we are hopeful that the word is getting out, but we can always use your help. If you know anyone who is writing a book, or a community newsletter - you can check whether they are aware of legal deposit. You can promote the value of contributing through legal deposit and share some of the below resources:

- Information on **our website** has been made more accessible for people who aren't full-time publishers.
- A **PDF fact sheet** is available that interested organisations can share on their website.
- **This blog** for indie publishers shows how legal deposit fits within a range of useful steps.
- This **YouTube video** explainer

Your assistance will help us to ensure that our collection continues to grow and provide a resource for researchers, scholars, and audiences everywhere to understand the Australian experience - now and into the future.

Write yourself (and your friends) into history. **Learn more about legal deposit.**

**Lynda Carmody** | Project Officer, Legal Deposit Publisher Communications





## BIOGRAPHICAL CUTTINGS FILES

A set of public service grey metal cabinets lines a corridor on Lower Ground 1 in the Library building. There are 23 six drawer cabinets. They have been there as long as I can remember – from early 1980. They contain the biographical cuttings files, all 62,152 of them.

As a volunteer guide I show these files to visitors and they create a lot of interest, although no one has yet asked to check for a specific name! The collection presents a fascinating body of material which involved a huge amount of work to create.

The NLA web site tells us that the articles in these files were collected from the late 1960s until 2000 and cover the period from the late nineteenth century to approximately 2000. The files, containing articles from Australian national, regional and local newspapers, were selected and maintained by Library staff. During the 1970s and 1980s the number of Library staff numbered in the 700s, so labour intensive activity such as this was possible.

Daily newspapers were delivered to the Library each morning and a team of people would scour them for articles about a specific person. Each person represented was not necessarily a famous or well-known personality but a member of the public whose activities captured the eye of the reporters of the day. The item was cut out and pasted on A4 paper, the newspaper title and date added and a manila folder created for that person.

Many of those represented were or are well-known – Donald Bradman has a large plastic sleeve for his articles. Pamela Ashcroft, an artist, has only one page from *The Age* in 1985 (pictured).

The research value of this collection of cuttings is enormous, mainly because the majority of articles cover a time period largely not covered by the current online newspaper services such as the **Trove digitised newspapers** and the international and national newspaper databases available from the National Library **eResources service**.

How do you access these files?

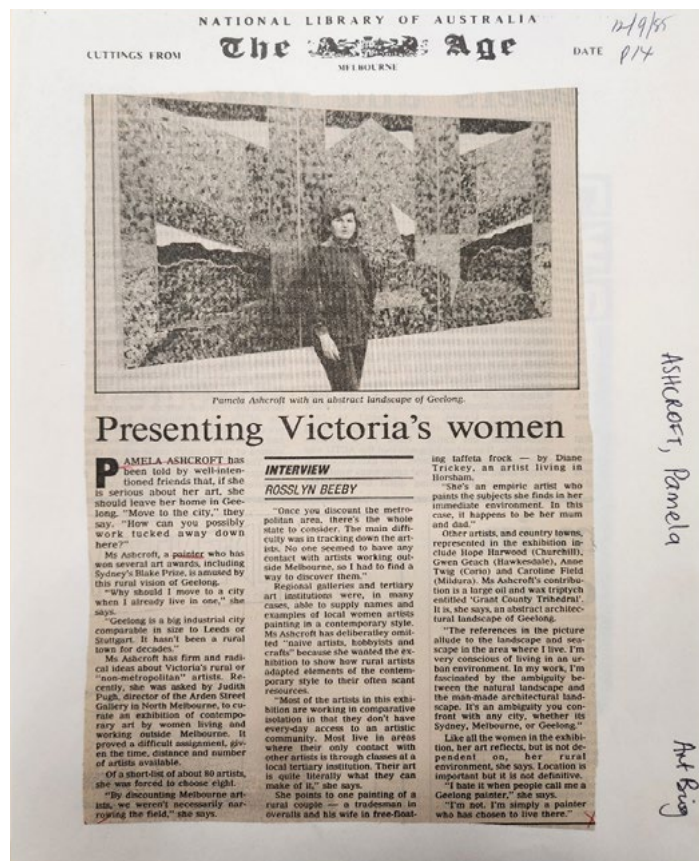
The biographical cuttings files have been catalogued and can be requested online by searching the catalogue using the name of a person and add 'biographical cuttings' into the search area. Request the item using your National Library card and it will be delivered to the Main Reading Room. The files have yet to be digitised.

Copies of files may also be requested via the **Copies Direct** service. Contact the **Ask a Librarian** service to obtain an indication of the content of the file prior to placing a Copies Direct request.

But wait, there's more!

There are six cabinets of book reviews adjacent to the biographical cuttings files. This collection has **12,754 records**, containing copies of newspaper book reviews, collected as clippings.

The books reviewed are by Australian authors, published in Australia and overseas. The reviews are predominantly for works of fiction although some non-fiction cuttings can be found. Many



of the authors in this sequence also contain a separate file in the biographical sequence so it is useful to request files from both sequences as the content may be complementary. The sequence ceased in 2000.

This sequence is not yet totally available to request online. Requests for files can be made via the online catalogue by entering the name of the author and the words 'book review cuttings' as a keyword search. Give it a try – you might be lucky!

**Margaret Nichols** | Volunteer Guide

## ANNOUNCING THE 2024 CREATIVE ARTS FELLOW

Congratulations to Celia Craig, recipient of the Friends Creative Arts Fellowship for 2024.

An Associate of the Royal Academy of Music since 1997, Celia is a neurodiverse classical artist with synesthesia. Trained by renowned Hungarian educator, Bela de Csillery, Celia was personally invited by London Symphony Orchestra to the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo for tuition with Leonard Bernstein. She enjoyed a 30-year elite orchestral career, touring on five continents and inspiring Master of The Kings Music, Judith Weir CBE, to write her first oboe concerto.

Celia is a visiting lecturer in oboe at the Australian National University and runs a nationally touring musical education program for children for Musica Viva. Celia is also Resident Artist for the National Trust of South Australia and produces chamber music concerts. She founded independent record label Artaria in 2017.



Celia's fellowship project is titled *Complete Accord: Miriam Hyde*. Dr Miriam Hyde OBE AO, is often remembered for her contributions to the Australian music education scene, as a composer of exam music and patron of competitions. However, she began her career as a teenage piano virtuoso, taking London by storm while playing her own piano concerti and others with England's major orchestras and conductors, while still a student. Her early compositions are dramatic, painting vivid pictures of her mental health and personal experience of war.

Through the Creative Arts Fellowship supported by the Friends, Celia will delve into original manuscripts, letters and autobiographical sketches held at the Library in the papers of Miriam Hyde to develop a playing edition for her Tarrawatta Trio; comprising oboe, piano and cello. Once developed, alongside contextual commentary, the playing edition can be performed and recorded, increasing the available chamber music repertoire for oboists, and creating more awareness of Miriam Hyde's work.

This fellowship presentation in July is sure to be a highlight in the Friends events calendar.

**Lauren Conron** | Friends Executive Officer

## 2020 STAFF TRAVELLING FELLOWSHIP

Some time ago I was fortunate enough to be awarded a Friends of the National Library of Australia Staff Travelling Fellowship. What was a bit unfortunate about it, though, was that it happened in April 2020. Everyone remembers all too well what was going on right about then.

I had initially proposed to visit the United States to look at student and teacher learning resource development connecting to the big digital library collections of the Library of Congress and the Digital Public Library of America, to try to understand how we might do similar things with Trove.

But travel of any kind, and particularly to the US was not possible for a long time due to Covid-19. After a while, the Committee invited me to reshape my proposal to 'somewhere closer to home' like Singapore or New Zealand. By that stage I was in a different role with broader responsibilities than just Education. An exciting conference, Communicating the Arts, had been on my radar for years, and once I realised the next instalment would be held in Singapore in November 2023, everything started to fall into place.

Over three years later, I was finally able to undertake the travel.

Communicating the Arts was an incredible and inspiring, absolutely jam-packed three days of keynotes, workshops, tours, visits to cultural institutions, and discussions, exploring how technology is transforming the arts and cultural sectors.

Overall, I learnt more than I could have imagined. Including about new immersive exhibition experiences, very impressive augmented reality programming, case studies on embedding customer focussed practices in an organisation, and how other institutions are using (and being wary of) generative AI. I also learned the basics of curating an exhibition in the Metaverse.

I was introduced to leading edge 3D scanning and digitisation techniques, which can create amazingly detailed 'digital twins' of moveable and built heritage, enabling all sorts of creative use. I had my mind blown by examples of an approach called 'computational museology' which uses extremely powerful computing to help extract and create meaningful narratives from gigantic datasets.

On top of that, it was a privilege to meet so many passionate and talented people from all around the world - from artists to academics and museum professionals.

But that wasn't the end. When Communicating the Arts wrapped on the Wednesday evening, I still had two full days of experiences ahead of me.

I was completely humbled by the generosity of colleagues at the National Library Board (NLB) Singapore in sharing so much of their time, expertise, and honest insights. Over the two days I met with representatives from the Partnerships Team, the Libraries and Archives Blueprint 25 (LAB25) initiative, the NLB's Data Office as well as my 'opposite numbers' in the programming teams for both the NLB's Public Library and National Library functions and toured their sixteen-story main building on Victoria Street.

The next day I toured the Punggol Regional Library, the first brand new public library built by NLB using the LAB25 principles I had





visited to learn about. It was a great way to better understand the approaches to improving the impact of their Library services and came with plenty of good ideas to import.

I finished the trip by presenting to NLB colleagues on our engagement activity here at the Library and participated in a great Q&A. They hosted my session in ‘the Pod’, a stunning event space on the top level of the NLB building.

All in all, I think it’s fair to say this trip is something I will never forget.

I need to thank my teams and managers for letting me disappear overseas during one of busiest times of year. But most of all, of course, I’d like to thank the Friends of the National Library of

Australia for supporting me in this incredible opportunity. It is such a special thing to have been able to do. Please know that I sang your praises to everyone I spoke with and let them know exactly why it was possible for me to be there.

**Ben Pratten** | Assistant Director, Education and Public Programs



**Top:** Punggol Regional Library, Singapore  
**Bottom left:** Interior, National Library Singapore  
**Bottom right:** Exterior, National Library Singapore  
 Images courtesy Ben Pratten

## 2023 AGM AND FRIENDS MEDAL RECIPIENT

The 2023 Friends AGM was held on 30 November. The Committee Chair Margaret Nichols gave an overview of the Friends events held over the year, noting that membership numbers have been slowly increasing. Margaret thanked outgoing Committee members Gary Kent, Kerry Blackburn and Grahame Thom for their time and commitment to the Friends over many years. Margaret also finished her term on the Committee and we would like to thank her for her significant contribution, particularly in leading the Friends through the difficult pandemic years.

2023 Treasurer Michalina Stawyskyj presented the financial report and confirmed that the Auditor issued an unqualified opinion. While the Friends' financial position remains stable, there have been, and will continue to be a number of challenges to be managed.

Your 2024 Friends Committee:

Catherine Anderson (Co-Chair)  
Nancy Clarke  
Sue Gage  
Peggy Horn  
Larissa Karpish  
Amanda Lynch  
Jo Schumann (Treasurer)  
Michalina Stawyskyj (Co-Chair)  
Arnis Stonis

This year marks the 17th year in which the Friends medal has been awarded to recognise a significant contribution to the work of the Library by Friends members or Library staff or volunteers. The Friends Committee were pleased to award the 2023 Friends Medal to Dr Susannah Helman, in recognition of her significant contributions to the Friends and to the Library over the past 15 years.

Susannah is very well known to the Friends, as a presenter of lectures and online events, regular contributor to the Friends Newsletter, and from the favourite 'Coffee with the Curator' events. During her years as a curator, Susannah presented major exhibitions such as Cook in the Pacific, Mapping Our World, Handwritten and The Dunera Boys. In between, Susannah curated ongoing changes to the Treasures Gallery. Now, as Rare Books and Music Curator, her work involves writing blogs and presenting video content on items of public and historical interest, all available on the Library's website. Susannah's contribution to the public knowledge and appreciation of the Library's collections is remarkable. It is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge her selflessness and diligence in this small way.

**Lauren Conron** | Friends Executive Officer

## FRIENDS EVENTS

For further details keep an eye on the weekly eNews or go to the Library's **What's On** page.

### April

**Book launch and crochet workshop**  
*Vintage Crochet*

### May

**Panel discussion**  
*Provocations: Arguing about History*  
With Frank Bongiorno and Peter Stanley. Moderated by Anne-Marie Schwirtlich.

### June

**Author discussion**  
*The Craft of Crime*  
In conversation with Sulari Gentill and Chris Hammer

### July

**Coffee with the Curator**  
With Allister Mills  
**2024 Creative Arts Fellowship Presentation**  
With oboist Celia Craig

## NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP OFFER FOR FRIENDS

In April our Bookshop will be launching a new t-shirt designed by the artist Trevor Dickinson and featuring our iconic building. Dickinson issued a limited edition 100 print run of his Library design in 2019 (and **gave one copy to the Library**). Now he has adapted the design for us to commission a line of t-shirts. The retail price in store will be \$55 but for our Friends across Autumn we are offering a special price of \$40.



Shirts are Gildan 'ultra cotton' Classic Fit in Sizes S - 5XL\* and our initial run of Friends shirts will be available in black cotton. **Click here to place your order.**

You can also use the code **DICKINSON** to receive your usual Friends 15% discount\* on other purchases.

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