

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

We were delighted to hear the announcement in the Federal Government's 2016–17 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook of additional funding for the National Library —\$16.4 million spread over four years. This funding is a hugely welcome boost to support the Library's national and international reach through its programs and services.

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the retirement of our Director-General, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM. As well as being a simply marvellous 'DG', Anne-Marie has been incredibly supportive of the Friends. We will miss her thoughtful and wise counsel.

We are delighted that Marie-Louise Ayres has been appointed as the Library's new Director-General. Marie-Louise is of course already well known to many of you through her work in a number of senior Library roles.

The first meeting of the new Committee, elected at last year's Annual General Meeting, was held on 6 December 2016. It elected the following office-bearers: Chair Gary Kent, Deputy Chair Kathryn Cole, Treasurer James Ferguson and Newsletter Editor Jenny Oates.

Other Committee members elected or re-elected at the AGM were Anne Davis, Geraldine Mackey, Ingrid Moses, Jennefer Nicholson and Janice Taylor. The Committee has also co-opted Lynette Adams, Susan Ford and Rosaline Welch to fill vacant Committee positions.

On behalf of the Friends, I would like to acknowledge our retiring Committee members Alan Ives, Alan Kerr and John Seymour for their hard work and dedication to the Library's cause. They will be missed. Extra-special thanks to our departing Chair, Robyn Oates, who led the Committee with distinction and aplomb for the past two years.

A membership sub-committee, chaired by James Ferguson, has been established to examine ways to help us continue to attract new, and retain existing, members. We hope to report to you in our next newsletter on initiatives in this regard.

Best wishes
Gary Kent, Chair

FRIENDS NEWS



Anne-Marie Schwirtlich at the 2016 Kenneth Myer Lecture in Melbourne
Photographer: David Hannah

Friends farewell Anne-Marie Schwirtlich

As we prepare to farewell the Library's Director-General, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM, who retires on 1 March, I met with her to talk about her time at the Library as a long-term supporter of the Friends and as the National Librarian.

Among the highlights of her Library career, Anne-Marie recalled arriving here in time to open the new Treasures Gallery—the 'jewel' of the National Library because it encapsulates and tells important stories about Australia's history. 'It is marvellous how, in so few items from our vast collection, this display tells so many fascinating stories, and all on a very human and touching scale,' she said.

The items on display are drawn from the wealth of materials in the Library's collection and include manuscripts, documents, diaries and journals, newspapers, maps, oral history, sketchbooks, paintings, photographs and realia. Visitors can appreciate the range and depth of the collection and better understand the value of the Library's role as a National Collecting Institution.

When asked about major achievements during her stewardship of the Library, Anne-Marie was quick to respond that the challenge over the last 20 years had been how to build the Library's digital capability. In 2011, the Library embarked on a Digital Library Infrastructure Replacement Program to achieve a state-of-the-art digital management system. This major project will be completed in June 2017 and will mean that the Library's digital capability will rival the most advanced libraries in the world, a great achievement.

Anne-Marie said she felt very proud to be part of the Library's staff, who maintained their strong service ethic especially throughout the recent times of significant financial constraints. No-one seeking information or support from the Library would have been aware of the constraints impacting on staff at that time because staff continued to provide services 'as usual'. Anne-Marie thought this was fantastic; she considered it a privilege and a pleasure to work alongside such dedicated people.

Anne-Marie also talked about how much she really valued the Friends of the National Library as a group of supporters who contribute to the sense of community that sets the Library apart from other institutions. The fact that the membership of the Friends is so broadly based shows how well regarded the Library is by many Australians and ensures we reach a national audience. The practical support given to the Library by the Friends is most generous and very, very much appreciated.

On behalf of all the members of the Friends, the Friends Committee wholeheartedly thanks Anne-Marie for her encouragement and generous support in making the Friends a valued part of the National Library community.

Jenny Oates



Dr Marie-Louise Ayres

Welcome to our new Director-General

The Friends welcome Dr Marie-Louise Ayres, who commences as the new Director-General of the National Library of Australia on 2 March 2017 for a five-year term.

While many of you may know Marie-Louise as the National Library's Assistant Director-General, National Collections Access, you may not be aware that she was also the recipient of the Friends Travelling Fellowship in 2007, during her early years at the Library as Manuscripts Curator. The Friends are proud to have provided this professional development opportunity for her, as well as for many other Library staff, since the fellowship was introduced in 2006.

An interview with Marie-Louise Ayres will feature in the next issue of the Friends newsletter.

Friends Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the National Library of Australia was held on Monday 14 November 2016.

Robyn Oates, Chair of the Friends Committee, welcomed those present and thanked committee members and Friends office staff for their contributions during the year.

Robyn also acknowledged the support of the National Library itself, through Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM and her dedicated staff. Robyn said 'our organisation simply could not flourish without the continuing generosity of the NLA itself'.

Robyn described 2016 as another successful year for the Friends of the National Library. Our membership has maintained itself within the 1,900–2,000 band and, although this is sound, we recognise the need to maintain and increase our numbers. A sub-committee was convened in October to develop a strategic plan for increasing and consolidating Friends membership.

2016 saw a total of eight functions held by the Friends, including a White Gloves event showcasing items from the Library's Ephemera Collection, the National Library and Garden History Society joint lecture, the popular Coffee with the Curator and the Harold White Lecture. In 2016, the Friends have moved into electronic communication with the introduction of our weekly online newsletter. One of the advantages for the Friends Office is that they can track 'hit and open' responses, and the statistics show a higher than average response for newsletters of this kind. Membership renewals are now sent out by email.

Some highlights from the AGM are detailed below.

Friends farewell gift for Anne-Marie Schwirtlich

Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM has been a great leader of the National Library of Australia and a great support to the Friends throughout her tenure as Director-General and National Librarian.

In recognition of her exemplary contribution to the work of the Library, and as a farewell gift from the Friends, the Committee has allocated \$10,000 towards a one-off digitisation project. This project will be named the Friends of the National Library / Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM Digitisation Project.

The Committee agreed that this digitisation project should be something of Anne-Marie's choosing, something of particular interest to her. We are delighted that Anne-Marie has chosen the papers of Jessie Street for this project, which will support improved access by selective digitisation of this collection.

Jessie Street (1889–1970) was born in India, like Anne-Marie herself. She was a key figure in Australian political life for over 50 years, well known for campaigning on human rights and women's issues. In 1945, she was the only female Australian delegate at the founding of the United Nations. In 1967, she initiated a successful amendment to the constitution to remove discriminatory references to Indigenous Australians. The papers of Jessie Street include diaries, photographs and writing on feminism, peace and Aboriginal rights. It is a collection in constantly high use and eminently worthy of having some parts digitised.

2017 Friends Creative Arts Fellowship awarded to Timothy Daly

Playwright Timothy Daly was announced as the successful recipient of the 2017 Friends Creative Arts Fellowship.

This \$10,000 fellowship enables creative practitioners and artists to undertake a sustained period of intensive work at the Library, using the rich and varied collections to develop a new artwork, body of work or an artistic concept for future elaboration. The fellowship is open to both established and emerging artists.

Timothy Daly is one of Australia's most internationally produced playwrights, with many national and international productions to his credit. His play *Kafka Dances* has won a dozen national and international awards since its premiere and is regularly performed abroad. Other plays of his include *The Man in the Attic*, *Derrida in Love* and *Richard III (or Almost)*.

Using this fellowship and the resources in the National Library's collection, Timothy proposes to research the records of Donald Friend and write a script called 'Fragrance—the Dream-Life of Donald Friend'.

In Timothy's letter of acceptance he wrote:

To receive creative and artistic support from the Friends is a great, touching and humbling honour. Thank you! I hope to do all the Friends proud by the creation of a work worthy of both the artist I will be studying and of the culture of the Friends, who are supporting me and this endeavour.

The Friends congratulate Timothy and eagerly await the results of his efforts. At the completion of the project, he will give a presentation at the Library about his research.

Presentation of the 2016 Friends Medal

The Friends Medal is an annual award provided by the Friends of the National Library that can be awarded to a staff member, a Volunteer or a Friend, for a significant contribution to the work of the Library.

The recipient of the Friends Medal for 2016 was Dr Patricia Clarke, with the medal awarded for Patricia's significant contribution to the National Library over many years.

Patricia generously gave her time as a Friends Committee member between 1997 and 1999 and also filled the Deputy Chair position in 1998.

For 20 years, from 1997 to 2016, Patricia continuously represented the Australian Society of Authors as a member of the Library's Fellowships Advisory Committee, assisting in the selection of all Harold White Fellows, National Library Fellows and Summer Scholars, and she was a tenacious advocate for the establishment of the Creative Arts Fellowship. She has also chaired the National Folk Fellowship selection panel since 1996.

As a former Harold White Fellow and still a Petherick reader, Patricia continues to contribute to the intellectual life of the organisation on a daily basis.

Patricia is a tireless supporter of the Library, and the Friends are delighted to be able to acknowledge her with this award.



Friends Medal recipient Dr Patricia Clarke (left) with Friends Committee Chair Robyn Oates

2016 Friends Travelling Fellowship

The 2016 Friends Travelling Fellow, Monika Szunejko, spoke about her fellowship to visit the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris and the British Library in London. This fellowship enabled Monika to assess the applicability of linked data to a national bibliographical database and examine how these libraries manage linked data.

Monika thanked the Friends for a wonderful professional development opportunity, which gave her the chance to connect with colleagues in the UK and France. In particular she noted that, as a direct result of this fellowship, three of the specialists she met with will either be speaking with National Library staff or delivering webinars to the wider Australian library community in 2017. Monika emphasised that, without the opportunity to meet these experts in person, she would not have been able to facilitate these development opportunities for colleagues.

2017 Friends Travelling Fellowship

In December, the Friends Committee was advised that no Friends Travelling Fellowship would be offered in 2017. The selection panel, which included the 2016 Friends Chair, agreed that the applications did not demonstrate close enough alignment with the Library's strategic priorities to meet the fellowship requirements. The Friends Committee looks forward to offering the Travelling Fellowship for Library staff again in 2018.

Friends seek new members

We, as the Friends of the Library, support and assist the Library to achieve its strategic goals. The value the Friends can contribute to the Library is increased and deepened by the extent of its membership. The larger our membership the better the Friends can extend knowledge of, and support for, the Library within the community and make tangible contributions to it, such as the Friends Travelling Fellowship, which allows Library staff to extend their knowledge through working with leading overseas institutions, or the Friends Creative Arts Fellowship, which allows the Library to foster creative research by Australian artists.

For these reasons, the Friends Committee is actively seeking to increase our membership numbers, which currently stand

at around 2,000. Even a ten per cent increase would significantly enhance the value of the Friends contribution. A small sub-committee has been established to develop a strategy to extend our membership among groups who use or have an interest in the Library but who may not have realised the important contribution members can make or the benefits that flow from membership. There may well be people such as students, Special Collections readers, visiting scholars, family history researchers, those who attend Library events and those interested in oral history who would benefit from becoming Friends of the Library.

The Committee welcomes any suggestions from our members as to how to improve the Friends contribution to this wonderful national institution that we all love and respect and that needs our continuing support.

James Ferguson

Lake View Book Club

The Lake View Book Club meets in the Friends Lounge at the National Library on the last Tuesday of each month from 6.15 to 7.45pm. It is open to all Friends of the National Library, so feel free to come and join in. If you have any questions, please contact kathryncole@grapevine.net.au.

Forthcoming titles for discussion are:

- Tuesday 28 March – *A God in Ruins* by Kate Atkinson
- Tuesday 25 April – *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos* by Dominic Smith
- Tuesday 30 May – *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance
- Tuesday 27 June – *The Good People* by Hannah Kent

FRIENDS EVENTS

Bookings: nla.gov.au/events or 02 6262 1698



Athol Shmith (1914–1990), *Pauline Kiernan* (detail), c.1959, gelatin silver photograph, nla.cat-vn3049046, © The Estate of Athol Shmith, courtesy Kalli Rolfe Contemporary Art

Coffee with the Curator: Athol Shmith Fashion Photographs

Enjoy an intimate curator-guided tour of this glamorous collection of fashion photographs by Athol Shmith, followed by morning tea in the Friends Lounge.

Friday 17 March, 10.30am

Treasures Gallery

\$15 Friends (max 20 guests)



Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892), *Looking Tiresome (Urusasō)*, 1888, nla.cat-vn5752842

Be the first to see *Melodrama in Meiji Japan*

The Friends host an exclusive preview of the new Library exhibition, *Melodrama in Meiji Japan*, with an introductory lecture by curator Dr Gary Hickey.

Step into the tumultuous world of Meiji Japan (1868–1912), through a selection of stunning Japanese woodblock illustrations. Used to illustrate Japanese novels, these beautiful images accompany stories filled with drama, tragedy and intrigue, reflecting the uncertainty of the times.

Monday 22 May, 6pm

Theatre and Exhibition Gallery

\$20 Friends, \$25 non-members

FRIENDS DISCOUNT CODE FOR NATIONAL LIBRARY EVENTS

To claim your 15 per cent discount on ticketed National Library events, bookings must be made online at nla.gov.au/bookings and the discount code **FRAUT17** entered when booking. This code is valid from 1 March to 31 May 2017 and does not need to be entered for Friends events or events that are free of charge.

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

In conjunction with the Library's Bookshop, the Friends are pleased to announce a special offer for members who make a purchase using the National Library's online bookshop.



Friends will receive a Louis Renard Marine Life card set for any purchase they make between 1 March and 31 May 2017. This offer is in addition to the usual Friends discount and any other offers advertised on the Library Bookshop website.

To claim your free Louis Renard Marine Life card set and your 15 per cent discount with all online purchases, use the promotional code **FR17AUT** at checkout. This code is valid from 1 March to 31 May 2017.