ANU Chancellor, Professor the Hon Gareth Evans (centre), with Dr Ann Moyal and Professor Weston Bate, at the reception to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the launch of volume one of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Great Hall, University House, ANU, 30 June 2016)
Photographer: Natalie Azzapardi
Welcome to Issue 16 of Biography Footnotes

This is the third time in a row that the ANU's Chancellor Professor Gareth Evans has graced the cover of Biography Footnotes. In issue 14 he was photographed presenting Chris Cunneen with an ADB Medal. In the next issue he will be congratulating NCB PhD graduants. In this issue he is meeting two of the authors who wrote for the first volume of the ADB at its 50th anniversary celebrations at University House on 30th June.

We were very pleased that Ann Moyal and Weston Bate were able to attend the reception on behalf of the 248 authors who contributed entries to volume one. Andrew Pike, the son of the ADB's first general editor Douglas Pike, was also present.

The next day Professor Evans welcomed participants to the NCB's 'True Biographies of Nations? Tracking the Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biography’ conference at the National Library of Australia.

Speakers included Professor Sir David Cannadine, general editor, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography; Professor Susan Ware, general editor, American National Biography, Turlough O'Riordan, editor, Dictionary of Irish Biography; Jock Phillips, editor, Dictionary of New Zealand Biography/Te Ara; and Professor Elizabeth Ewan, editor, Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women. Locally Barry Jones, author of the Dictionary of World Biography, and a raft of those working on Australian dictionary projects, such as AustLit, the Australian Women's Register, the Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate and the Encyclopedia of Australian Science also spoke.

During a debate on the contemporary role of national dictionary projects, computing specialist Kent Fitch controversially argued that if we want ADB entries to be read by the widest audience we should place them in Wikipedia. We will respond to his paper in the next issue of Biography Footnotes. Meanwhile, in this issue, we have reproduced his talk – and some of his graphs comparing the readership of ADB and Wikipedia entries. We would be very interested in your responses to his arguments.

The conference proceedings were taped and can be downloaded at https://soundcloud.com/nationallibraryaustralia/sets/conference-true-biographies-of

The Hon. Michael Kirby's speech at the celebration of volume one on 30 June was not taped. With his permission we have published an abridged version of it here so that those who were unable to attend the event might enjoy it.

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General Editor, Australian Dictionary of Biography

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Colonial Women in the ADB

The Australian Dictionary of Biography's General Editor, Professor Melanie Nolan, along with Professor Joy Damousi, Emeritus Professor Pat Grimshaw and Dr Carolyn Rasmussen have formed an Australian Women in the Colonies Committee (AWICC) with the aim of adding a further 1,000 entries on women who flourished during the colonial period to the ADB.

Women are generally underrepresented in the ADB, accounting for just 14% of entries. If you look just at those who flourished during the colonial period women account for 4% of entries (161 entries as opposed to 3,895 for men). Furthermore 17% of colonial women don’t even have a full entry to themselves – they share their entry, usually with a family member.

The first stage of the project involves compiling a list of women who flourished during 1788-1890 for possible inclusion in the ADB. The women will be chosen from all fields of endeavour including politics, domesticity, business, religion, the land, the professions and the arts. Representative entries will also be included to reflect what life was like for all social groups and spheres of endeavour.

As well as trawling through books, and seeking the advice of experts, AWICC is inviting the public to contribute names of women for consideration. A notice about the project will also be added to the Dictionary’s website.

If you know of any women that you think should be included, you can forward their biographical details to AWICC at ncb@anu.edu.au. Please include their birth and death years, a brief description of their activities and any useful references.

It is hoped that a long list of names can be compiled by November so that ARC funding for the project can be sought next year.

ADB Working Parties

Dr Carolyn Rasmussen has taken over as head of the ADB Victorian Working Party. The former head Dr David Dunstan will continue to serve as a party member. We thank David for his long and continuing service.

Dr Lenore Layman has agreed to take over as section editor of the Western Australian Working Party. Patrick Cornish will remain as its chair.

Griffin Way

Congratulations to former ADB staff member, Helga Griffin, who recently had a set of residential buildings in a new suburb of Townsville named after her.

Helga was one of thirteen ‘remarkable women’ to be honoured on Queensland Women’s Day (10 March 2016) for their contribution in ‘shaping the City and the region’ of Townsville. While living in the city in 1976-79, Helga taught Australian Race Relations and History at the College of Advanced Education and upgraded her B.A. degree to an honours qualification in History at James Cook University. Her thesis was later published as Frontier Town, A History of Early Townsville and Hinterland 1864-1884 (2014).

In 1979 Helga moved with her family to Canberra where she worked for four months as a staffer for the Labor Shadow Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Dr Moss Cass, before joining the ADB as its bibliographer. She subsequently also became editor of the Queensland biographical entries.

Since retiring in 1998 Helga has edited, with Anthony Regan, Bougainville Before the Conflict (2005) and published a memoir, Sing Me That Lovely Song Again (2006) about her childhood, including the internment of her German family during World War II as enemy aliens.

She is currently compiling a bibliography of her late husband, Jim Griffin’s numerous writings and speeches, as a guide to librarians, and is translating, from German into English, Hilde Thurnwald’s biographical portraits of people in Buin, Bougainville, Menschen der Südsee (1935).

First Three Fleets Project

Work is progressing steadily on the first three fleets project with 1500 biographical records having been added to the NCB’s Obituaries Australia and People Australia websites so far. A Facebook page is also being developed to encourage fleeters’ descendants to become involved in the project.

Although the project is only recording fleeters’ children and grandchildren we are always keen to discover more recent prominent descendants. We already knew that Malcolm Turnbull and Kevin Rudd were descended from first fleeters. So was former governor-general, Richard Casey, who was descended from John Harris, one of the first Jewish convicts to arrive in Sydney. We wonder if artists Frank Hinder and Lyndon Dadswell knew that they were distantly related and were descended from John Cobcroft a highway robber who arrived in the Second Fleet.

We invite readers to share with us the names of any other prominent descendants of people who arrived on the first three fleets. We will list them on the project’s Facebook page.

Causes of Death in NCB Websites

Where possible, the NCB acquires birth, death and marriage certificates for all subjects in the ADB. We then send death certificates, which are often hard to interpret, to a medical historian to determine the primary cause of death. This information is then included in ADB entries for those aged under 75.

Since 2011 we have also been indexing cause of death in the NCB’s
Websites. Those interested can find the list in the faceted browse search on the People Australia website at http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/facets/?facet=causeOfDeath

As to be expected there is a large variety of ways in which people died. ‘Heart disease’ is by far the most common civilian cause, followed by ‘stroke’, ‘pneumonia’ and then, somewhat surprisingly, ‘drowning’. Some of those who drowned were seamen – typically sealers and whalers – and passengers who died when their ships sank. The majority of people who drowned, however, were colonial settlers who didn’t know how to swim. Richard Wall is one tragic example. He died, along with his two daughters, after their boat was upturned on the Hawkesbury River. He was found, a day later, still clasp ing his youngest daughter. ‘Suicide’, ‘kidney disease’, ‘influenza’, ‘childbirth complications’, ‘tuberculosis’ and ‘car accident’ are the next most common causes that we have listed.

Childbirth complications is often understated as a cause of death on death certificates – particularly in the 19th century. On the advice of a demographer we are now listing it for women who die within a few months of childbirth unless they clearly died from an unrelated cause such as a car accident.

‘Dementia’, which the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare records as the second most common cause of death, is 23rd on our list. This is probably because the diagnosis of the disease has been fairly recent.

Twenty-eight people died in buggy accidents – some rather gruesomely; 51 died in horse riding accidents, many because their horses shied, others because they were riding too fast or were drunk. Anthony Best died because his ‘corpulence’ made it necessary for him to use a stool to mount his horse. On that fateful day the stool knocked against the horse’s legs causing it to fright and buck. Best fell and broke his neck.

Twenty-three stillbirths and 23 premature births that ended in death have been recorded in the NCB’s websites. One of the saddest incidents we have come across involved the family of 20-year-old Margaret Cobcroft. She died in 1872, a year after her marriage, giving birth to twins, who also died. The deaths of all three were listed in separate entries, one after another, in the Sydney Morning Herald. Her husband did not remar y and died seven years later.

A rather staggering 70 people in the NCB websites were shot dead, 24 of them accidentally, often when cleaning their guns or in hunting accidents. Of the 46 deliberately shot, bushrangers and underworld figures killed the majority; five were police shootings of bushrangers.

Four people died of alcohol poisoning, three had the plague, five died after having an illegal abortion, two were strangled, and another two were struck down by lightning.

Most recently, and after some debate, we recorded our first death as a result of child abuse. The ultimate cause of death was peritonitis but it was the result of extensive beatings at the hands of the child’s aunt and uncle – who were gaoled for the offence.

We have subsequently decided to also include ‘spousal murder’ as a specific cause of death as it is an important area of research.

Death certificates are generally grim documents. There was one though that we received recently that we couldn’t help but laugh at. It was for Sydney Grimes, an old seaman. His cause of death was given as ‘heart failure (after eating an enormous meal)’. He died at Victors Café, in George Street, Manly, in 1917. One hopes that he enjoyed his meal.

USA Meeting of General Editors

The ADB’s recent ‘True Biographies of Nations’ conference was the second time that the general editors of the ADB, the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and the American National Biography had met this year. In January they were part of a panel on ‘National Biography in a Transnational Age’ at the American Historical Association conference in Atlanta, USA. You can listen to their session at https://soundcloud.com/odnb/sets/historians-on-history

Congratulations to ADB authors and members of Working Parties who received Australian honours this year:

Australia Day Honours

Member (AM) in the General Division
Dr Neville G. Marchant

Medal (OAM) in the General Division
Dr Jane Carolan
Professor John R. Cole
Assoc. Professor Donald S. Garden
Dr Brian C. McFarlane
Dr Michael D. White
Dr Paul R. Whiting

Queen’s Birthday Honours

Member (AM)
Dr John C. H. Dewdney

Medal (OAM)
Emeritus Prof H. Trevor Clifford
Mrs Helen C. Coulson
Mrs Beverley E. Earnshaw
Dr Richard L. Travers
Mr Geoffrey S. Wharton

Deaths of ADB authors

It is with sadness that we note the deaths, that were reported to us during the year, of the following ADB authors:

David Bradley
John Farquharson
Jeffrey Grey
John Hirst
John Legge
Heather Radi
Peter Ryan
Margot Z. Simington

You can find obituaries for John Farquharson, Heather Radi and Peter Ryan in Obituaries Australia.
I salute the Indigenous Australians, until recently neglected and despised in their own country. As I will mention, this attitude was originally even apparent in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB).

I salute the Chancellor of the Australian National University, Gareth Evans, an eloquent advocate for the *ADB*. He has declared that it captures the life and times and culture of Australia in ‘a distinctive and irreplaceable’ way. The Honourable Gareth Evans will in due course (but not too soon we hope) attract a mega entry in the *ADB* for his huge contributions in diverse positions, held in Australia and overseas. An entry no larger, I trust, than my own. I first met him when he was President of the University of Melbourne Students’ Representative Council in the mid-1960s. I had been elected to the equivalent post at the University of Sydney – twice. When I first laid eyes upon him, I suspected that he was a Welsh revolutionary. Now he is clothed in a Chancellor’s gold. However, I have only lately admitted that I also considered him a ‘good looker’.

I honour those who founded the ambitious project of the *ADB*. It has been a mighty enterprise. Full praise must go to the dedicated band who gathered together in the 1960s to take up the challenge offered a decade earlier by Keith Hancock. I am delighted that so many of the ‘66ers are here at this Silver Jubilee. They can be proud of their achievement and of its intellectual progeny.

When, in 1993, after concluding service as Chancellor of Macquarie University in Sydney, I was asked to propose a gift that would adequately repay me for the innumerable ceremonies and countless committee meetings, I immediately suggested a hard copy set of the *ADB*. Proudly I have it in pride of place in my Sydney office. It fulfils a dual function. It is at once an indispensable book of reference, constantly in use. It is also a delight to read. Any necessary research being fulfilled, the eye roams to the nearby entries. Hours can easily disappear in reading the marvellously succinct, tight record of lives both notable and representative: lives important for Australia.

It is astonishing to one accustomed to the verbosity of the law to see how the very greatest of lives important for our continental country have been told accurately and eloquently in so little space. Who would ever have thought, for example, that James Cook (described simply as ‘navigator’) could be encompassed in its essentials in little more than a single page? It seems a trifle disproportionate when, a few pages later, Barron Field, a mere judge who caused a great deal of trouble to the early colony, is deemed to merit more than three full pages. However, the latter were written by my lecturer in legal history, C. H. Currey. He would have fought for every precious word.

The dictionary format of the *ADB* stamps on its entries an alphabetical order as does the standard size of the volumes which predetermines the number of entries and their length. Yet it is still essential to trust someone to make the selections; who goes in and who does not. The editors of the *ADB* are, with the Director of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra, the principal donors of national immortality. Their choices confer a kind of life eternal for those who make the cut. Yet plenty of room remains for variance. Particularly about the precise length, style and candour of the entries. And what the particular admissions say about the subjects and the categories they represent.

Of course, some entries effectively choose themselves. They are notable for the tasks they performed in shaping the nation. Or they have held high office or contributed in some way to our view of ourselves. Unlike some other biographical works, the *ADB* supplements the ‘stand outs’ with individuals chosen to reflect the diverse ethnic, social, employment, personality or celebrity features of their lives. Yet other entries have been included simply to illustrate the life of an Australian of the era, who was a shearer, drover, barmaid, jihadist or landlady. I was particularly glad to see the last class celebrated. In a memoir of my father, happily prepared by my brother Donald shortly before our father’s death, some of his most vivid recollections are of landladies whom he knew during the years of adolescence. To hear their tales is to recreate an age of boarding houses that is no more.
R.G. Menzies and His Notes

I have never served on the organising committees that developed the concept of the ADB or translated it into actuality. Instead, I have been asked to speak on this occasion as a voice for the volunteers who have written a majority of the entries that now fill the 19 volumes of the ADB, with more still to come.

I have contributed a small number of entries, most of them on judges. They represent a vocational group whom I have come to know well in the past 40 years. To others they will be remote figures of a largely hidden world. To me they were all too human with flaws but also many strengths. A capacity to go beyond their record of public appointments and to give a clue to the personality behind the ‘purple curtain’ is definitely a desirable attribute of an entry in the ADB. This is not only my own view. It was the view held by Robert Gordon Menzies who officiated at the launching event on 4 March 1966, whose 50th anniversary we celebrate today.

With the thoroughness of a judge, but the curiosity of a historian, I called for the speech that Menzies made on that occasion. Imagine my surprise that the text that was produced was in a form that took me straight back to the years of that occasion.

As the world knows, Menzies was a great advocate and barrister before he entered upon the political career which was long, with ups and downs and ultimately full of achievement. The ‘speech’ produced from the archives was not actually a speech at all, but a set of notes laid out with the self-confidence that came from Menzies’s years arguing some of the most important constitutional cases in the history of our nation.

Menzies prepared for the celebration of the ADB in a way I had seen other top silks prepare to address judges and juries in the mid-1960s. This is no pallid text prepared by a middle ranking official. Instead, key words of the great man’s ‘speech’ leap straight from the page. Obviously, he had dictated those words. They were laid out in a style that would prompt his mind with each succeeding thought. That was all he needed. A prompt sheet. No full text narrative. As I looked at the document, I thought of the Queen’s Counsel whom I was briefing at about the time of Menzies’s address. Their notes looked exactly the same as his. Typewritten. Arranged on the page. The most important words in uppercase. Indented numbering, subheadings and underlinings to make sure that he got the emphasis just right.

Menzies was a speaker of eloquence. Those of my age remember him and his long-time adversary H. V. Evatt locked in mortal political combat from which only one could truly emerge victorious. Each was an outstanding leader and intellect. Each had enjoyed a substantial career before politics. Each had heroic but also petty elements in their nature. Looking at Menzies’s bare notes gave me a direct insight into the mind of this most successful Australian politician.

Nowadays, it will be extremely rare on grand occasions for a busy political leader to come without a text drafted by officials. When the new parliamentary edifice, child of a committee over which Chancellor Evans presided, was opened by the Queen in May 1988, Bob Hawke read an appropriate prepared speech. But John Howard, Leader of the Opposition, spoke, like Menzies, from the barest notes. It was Howard’s speech that emerged the more powerfully because it had a logic and a flow possible with a delivery freed from a detailed written text.

Come with me therefore into the mind of R.G. Menzies. Under the heading and the date and the name of the projected work the following solution for what he took to be the essential ingredients for future success in the ADB are laid out:

How does the ADB measure up to this Menzian formulation of the criteria for success? First, all would agree that good source material is essential, with accuracy about the main events of the life. The ADB has been most insistent on the checking of sources. No factual assertion passes under the editors’ scrutiny unless it is supported by an identified source. The endnote references may be few. But the checks are many and scrupulous.

I skip over the next criterion to the requirement of a ‘vivid literary style’. This is certainly a feature of many, perhaps most, entries. Of course skills of writing will vary greatly, including from the same author. In the latest volume of the ADB, an entry on the notable journalist and author Alan Moorehead suggests the envy that he suffered precisely because of his success in writing. Not everyone can produce
the stylistic elegance Menzies demanded. But many entries do contain surprises and delightful shocks. A dictionary alone will rarely do this. A biographical dictionary must aspire to do it often.

Menzies’s assertion of ‘genuine objectivity of judgment’ is more controversial. It amounted to a reflection of the view about law that was held at that time by Menzies’s mentor, Sir Owen Dixon. Dixon demanded, and advocated, ‘strict and complete legalism’ precisely to differentiate the judicial branch from the political branches of government. Yet today most Australian lawyers would accept the instruction of Professor Julius Stone. He taught the inescapable importance of values and policy undercurrents. Only awareness of these would help the person to conceive the problem at hand; or whether any problem existed in the first place. The search for complete objectivity in law, biography or anything else, may be illusory.

Perhaps Menzies understood this after all. All he demanded was ‘genuine’ objectivity of judgment. If this meant setting aside personal biases and prejudices which might distort the assessment, who could dispute the justice of that demand?

Menzies turned in his speech notes to a particular subject that was clearly exercising his own mind: possibly as he looked forward to what Winston Churchill had called ‘Operation Hope Not’: his funeral at which Menzies spoke and the obituaries that would quickly follow. For Menzies:

Here we see Menzies emphasise the need to avoid any rush to judgment. The need for time and distance to permit a life to be viewed in context: with its inevitable strengths and weaknesses. His years of experience had given him the measure of the Canberra mandarins who were sometimes vying with the ultimate power of political leaders by writing their speeches and seeding the speaker’s ideas with their own. Menzies’s trust of the press and his awareness of lies often repeated, so that they morph into truth, is undoubtless justified, probably more today than in his era.

In the last page of his notes Menzies went on to reflect on the proposition that everyone should write memoirs of people we have known and events in which we have participated. His ultimate object was then expressed as a kind of motto for ADB contributors. The object is that:

‘Out of such memoirs somedays serious historians will be helped to see such things in the round.’

Standing back from the hurly-burly of life. Looking for the greys beyond the black and whites. Suspecting the regurgitated lies. Looking for the vivid way to portray a life ‘in the round’. Yet to be brief in doing so. It is a tall order. These remain the challenge 50 years on. We could do worse than to remind contributors of what Menzies suggested we should all aspire to.

One of the most distinctive features of the ADB, not universally followed in other equivalent works, is the badge of pride that authors wear. They all labour for the ADB without hope or expectation of financial reward. In a time when little is done by most professionals without payment of some kind, this is a holdover from an earlier, more gentlemanly time. To be asked to contribute for the ADB is still an honour. Authors, including professional historians whose vocation is to write history, accept these terms. In this way each of us contributes what is often described as a ‘gift of scholarship to the nation and the world’. There is, of course, no necessary virtue in poverty. However, we all recognise that this labour would not have materialised without voluntary contributions from many sources. Especially from the historians of our country. On behalf of those who have invited and those who have responded, I express pride that the product, like our country, is varied, diverse, sometimes flawed, generally robust and occasionally vivid and even uplifting.

Historians in Changing Times

One of my early achievements was notched up when I attended Fort Street Boys’ High School 1951-1955. In the leaving certificate of the last-mentioned year I was placed first in the State of New South Wales in Modern History. The chief examiner was John Ward, himself a fine historian who, decades earlier, had attended the same school. It is still a flagship of public education, founded by the ill-humoured ‘Governor-General’ FitzRoy, whose entry in the ADB was written by Ward himself in five tight pages full of accomplishments.
I have often wondered whether this early success in history should have turned me in that direction for my career. But it was not to be. Still, my schoolboy triumph did make me appreciative of the role that history plays in the law. Certainly, it convinced me that the study of legal history should be an essential in legal education; but now does not.

By collecting and publishing entries on notable and representative Australians, the ADB holds up a mirror to ourselves. In each succeeding volume of the ADB we see the reflections in that mirror. We can also see it in our schools, workplaces, and civil society. Australia as a country is changing, rapidly. So the ADB must change to keep up.

A week ago I visited my old school to speak to the assembly of 800 students. In the school memorial hall, built to honour the students who fell in the First World War, I saw once again the honour board with the names of the fallen and the Latin inscription that troubled me as a boy: Pro tanto quid retribuamus? For so much, how can we ever repay? I was there to attempt to repay, just a little, my debt to the excellent public education that nurtured my interest in history, and much else.

I reflected in my talk on the differences in the assembly of my school days and the school, of today:

• Then there were no Aboriginal students. Now there is one.
• Then there were no female students and only one female teacher. Now half the school and half the teachers are female.
• Then, in the midst of White Australia, there were nine boys in the school of Asian origin. Now about 65% of the school are non-Caucasian.
• Then there were no Islamic students. Most of us were Anglicans. Now there is a reflective sample of Islamic students. Most of the others skip special religious education.
• Then there were no openly gay students at the school. Now there is a diversity group: including LGBTI students, male and female.
• Then there was no bullying. Now there is zero tolerance for bullying, if ever it appears.

Learning from these changes the leaders of future Australia can understand how discrimination is corrosive of community empathy. The changes evident in the attitudes and the questions showed just how far we had come in the 60 years since my school days. The ADB must cover the same distance and keep pace with the momentum.

Over the past 50 years, the ADB has tracked changes similar to those in my school:

• In 1966 the entries of Aboriginal Australians comprised but 0.7% of the total. In 2005 they were 9% of the total.
• In 1966 women comprised 1.74% of all entries. In 2005, the ‘missing persons’ volume had nearly 30% women. Trying to catch up.

Obviously, there has been an acknowledgement of sexual diversity and its new state of openness, as the old criminal laws fell away. Mark McGuiness undertook an online text search on this topic. He found that the word ‘homosexual’ appeared just 19 times and the word ‘gay’ only 4 times.

Only one Australian (Colin Campbell McInnes (1914-1976) was described as (bisexual). And only one (Marion (Bill) Edwards (1874-1956) was described as ‘transsexual’ (a transsexual barman, pony trainer and bookmaker). Not until approximately a decade ago did the ADB identify subjects as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI).

The entry in volume 17 on Bobby Goldsmith, who died aged 38 of AIDS was explicit. Nothing else would have adequately explained his entry. In part, this was because of law and, in part, because of stigma and shame.

Christopher Sexton’s entry on Sir Robert Helpmann put the facts most delicately:

Despite his showmanship, Helpmann was a private man. The great love of his life with whom he shared a flat in London, was Michael Benthall (d.1974).
In Volume 18, Ethel Monte Punshon appears. She was only partly candid about her sexuality in the presence of strangers; but her story hints at the hostility she faced in her early and not so early years. She died in 1989 aged 106, having taught English in Tokyo for decades. She was appointed to the Japanese Order of the Sacred Treasure in the 1980s. She was reputed to be the world’s ‘oldest lesbian’. I hope that I do not have to live, as she did, to age 106 to become a sacred treasure. Although, for such an honour, I might be willing to try.

In the extended entry on Patrick White, references are made to an early lover and mentor, Roy de Maestri and to his later meeting with Manoly Lascaris who ‘became his life partner’. The omission of such details from entries in the earlier volumes would undoubtedly have occurred in an unstated conspiracy between the subject, the subject’s family and the writer. It did not fall to all of them to live to 106 so as to witness the changes in the laws and attitudes. Even today some LGBTI Australians, have grown accustomed to silence and secrecy. They prefer not to cast any light on their reality in this respect by revealing it to a gaze that for so long was antagonistic. Yet, if sexuality is a central part of a subject’s life story, it is difficult now to go along with a conspiracy of silence. For example, when an entry is written for Dame Joan Hammond (1912-1996) one of our greatest sopranos, it would be unthinkable to omit reference to her life partner, Lolita Marriott. Her relationship with Lolita is discreetly passed over in the Wikipedia entry on Dame Joan’s life, although mischievously, it contains a photograph of her gravestone acknowledging that she was the ‘loving companion’ of Lolita. More was not said.

Nor would it now be possible, still less desirable or necessary, to pass over the later life of Sir Kenneth Jacobs (1917-2015), a Justice of the High Court of Australia and a friend of mine. After illness, he resigned from the High Court and went to live in England with his wife and daughter. However, after his wife’s death he formed a loving relationship with Christopher Horodyski. They even entered a civil partnership under English law. The funeral, by agreement, was organised by his daughter and partner together. Again, the relationship is not mentioned by Wikipedia. However, it was certainly acknowledged by the High Court of Australia in the ceremonial sitting to mark Sir Kenneth’s death. No one could have been more faithful and supportive in Jacobs’s last years than his partner was. Intense human feelings may sometimes be tricky. But their significance is incontestable. Some people, even in modern Australia do not acknowledge these realities. The ADB must do so even if Australia has not yet taken the step to formalise, in law, the changes that have been coming in the suburbs and the courtrooms.

Revealing full details of a subject’s sexual life may neither be feasible nor desirable, especially in entries as short that the ADB typically are. The issue is not simply one for LGBTI people. It may apply equally to heterosexuals in conventional relationships. I agree with the comment of Colin Matthew, editor of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography when he said that integration of the domestic and sexual lives of subjects was ‘perhaps the central challenge for such compilations in our time’.

Historical understandings of an individual and of the period and society of that individual’s life will be enriched by a willingness, to some extent to investigate intimacy and sexual life. Sometimes they are relevant to career achievements. Generally there is a need to acknowledge the importance that a personal life can play in the intellectual, artistic, professional and community existence of the subject. Such topics may have been taboo in the patriarchal society of earlier Australia. Commonly it liked to place emphasis on monogamy and orthodoxy. Sir John Monash, our greatest soldier, had somewhat unorthodox personal relationships which he did not hide. It may have closed the gates of Buckingham Palace to him at the time. But it cannot be avoided in any attempt to portray Monash accurately, in ‘the round’. In my biographies and autobiographical essays about my own life, I have not avoided this issue. Nor could I suggest that it was irrelevant to my work and values. Getting a correct balance should surely be the objective. There is no balance if the subject is censored.

The Coming Waves
Changes in the acknowledgment of sexual orientation in entries in the ADB will come to be regarded as the new normal, if it is not already so. However, there are many other changes that are on the way. They will affect the design and
content of the ADB as we have come to know it over its first half a century. A few that spring to mind are:

• Photographs: The inclusion of photographs to enliven the text. It was common to include in entries in the ADB, where it was known, details about any portrait of the subject and its whereabouts. With high pixel photographs now in the possession of every cell phone owner, multiple photographs in the future will always be available. Should they not be used? Or at least a link established to where the inquisitive can view them?

• Moving pictures: Moving pictures of subjects can equally be now recorded on cell phones using digital technology of great accuracy and quality. Why should links to the living reality of key moments in the life of a subject not be available?

• Tweets and social media: Handwritten letters, as a source of insight into the lives of subjects will become much less common in the future. Eternal emails, if preserved from ‘trash’, will surely be critical if historians are patient enough to wade through that mountain of material.

• Self-revelation: In a sense, the tweet is somewhat similar, in brevity and insight into the subject’s mind, to the speaking notes of R.G. Menzies. There may be revealed, with crude accuracy, the inner workings and instant reactions of the subject. Elections of the future may be won and lost on such materials. They cannot be wholly ignored by the ADB.

• Linkages: Several repositories now carry materials important to any biography on a number of the persons chosen for inclusion in the ADB. The National Archives of Australia, the National Library, university collections and specialised libraries will contain precious materials which, over time, will in many cases be digitised. This will permit highly efficient searching with minimum time, cost and effort. Skills in the writing of entries will need to master the new technology of information and mobilise it.

• Collectivity: Racial, religious, sexual, gender and other forms of discrimination which existed in earlier times extended beyond omissions from the entries of those selected for inclusion. In the past, they would have doubtless affected the exclusion of some otherwise suitable subjects simply because of the revulsion or distaste by writers, self-hate by the subjects and an inclination to opt for exclusion and the quiet life. In catch up volumes of the future, like the ADB Supplement of 2005, the touchstones for reconsideration will need to include the exclusions that were formerly considered proper or necessary.

• Numbers: Because biographical material is now much more readily, immediately and cheaply available (through Wikipedia, search engines, Amazon purchases and other means) the challenge of the future may include the oversupply of heroes. Certainly ‘selfies’, if they survive, will offer a tidal wave of photographic images. In my own case, I have deposited in the National Archives of Australia huge collections of photographs that will, in part at least, be unique. Not only will there be personal and family records of a conventional kind, there will also be photographs of the entire history of the HIV/AIDS epidemic; of global bioethics and the human genome project; of the struggle of LGBTI rights worldwide, of participants in the inquiry into North Korea; and many other projects. With the digitisation of the photographs of life in the higher courts behind the purple curtain, institutions that have been largely closed off may be opened just a fraction to new inspection. The revolution in information technology will profoundly affect the ADB of the future. It will doubtless promote continuance of the encyclopaedic dictionary; but alongside a huge wealth of biographical material organised to enhance the universality and coverage of the service.

• Mix and match: Amongst the potential of the new technology will be one to mix and match the lives of subjects and the themes professional, artistic, economic, political, spiritual, sexual and otherwise, created by the one single life viewed in relation to many others.

In the Round
At this stage it is no more possible to foretell accurately the way in which the ADB will continue to evolve than it was in 1966. The new technology will certainly impose changes and modifications beyond those even dreamed of by Robert Menzies 50 years ago. Exactly where the changes take us is beyond our capacity to foretell. However, the fidelity of the project; the devotion of the editors; the commitment of the volunteers; the support of the sponsors; and the love of the product amongst the citizens promise a future even more bright than the past. Especially if the ADB continues to take its mission seriously; to avoid premature judgment; to be wary of propaganda and lies; to search for original avenues into the minds and lives of the subjects; to embrace the new diversity of our country which is the richest development of the past 50 years; and to struggle to ‘see things in the round’.
David Carment reviews entries for people who died in 1992 which were added to the ADB website in March.

On 18 March 2016 entries for people who died in 1992 were added to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* website. This continues a process commenced a year earlier in which the most recent entries are only found online until the next printed volume appears. Given the extraordinary success of the ADB's website and the increasing numbers of users who mainly and sometimes only refer to the Dictionary online, it is a sensible decision. Most other major reference works are now available online with many not being produced in printed editions.

Another noteworthy feature of the latest ADB additions is that, like those made a year earlier, they include subjects that numerous readers are likely to recall. As an Australian baby boomer, while reading new entries, I was frequently reminded of people who attracted my attention from the late 1950s onwards. Many of the additions also cover individuals about whom I knew little or nothing but who contributed to the times through which I lived.

The new entries are easily found and accessed. They are listed at [http://adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/death/?ddate=1992&sortOrder=asc](http://adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/death/?ddate=1992&sortOrder=asc). Readers can then use the links to see other entries for the same person. The list helpfully provides life spans and occupations. The entries can be searched for in other ways. Not every 1992 entry was added in March 2016. Further additions are being made as they are completed.

Reflecting the ADB’s rigorous editing procedures, the entries are logically organised, clearly and competently written, and carefully researched. They include the usual details about key life events. Conclusions reached are supported with the evidence presented. As is now normal with the ADB, 1992 entries encompass considerable diversity in places lived, ethnicity and personalities. There are female and male academics, artists, authors, entertainers, politicians, soldiers, sportspeople, and various other occupations represented. Authors are also diverse. Many are not academic or professional historians. Some knew the people about whom they wrote.

While it is only possible in a short review to briefly consider a small proportion of entries, all provide illuminating reading.

Beverley Kingston's well-crafted account of the editor Beatrice Davis (1909-1992) is a good example here. It explains that from her tiny office at the Angus & Robertson building in Sydney, Davis became an important figure in the development of Australian writing. Despite this, she was underpaid and lacked a formal management position. She was ‘no feminist, preferring to flatter and cajole’, emphasising ‘the need for an informed critical sense’ but advocating ‘a self-effacing role for the editor as “invisible mender”’. Such was the high regard in which she was held among authors there was consternation when Richard Walsh dismissed her from Angus & Robertson in 1973. Kingston concludes, however, that as Davis ‘became more influential, she was a restraining rather than a driving force in Australian publishing’.

Rafe de Crespiigny demonstrates how the English born Australian National University sinologist Charles Fitzgerald (1902-1992) did so much to promote better-informed understanding of China in Australia. During the 1950s he became a ‘leading commentator on Chinese affairs, seeing the new regime as a continuation of past tradition rather than qualitative change’. He did not, though, predict the turmoil of the late 1950s and the 1960s. While never losing his admiration of the Chinese people, he ‘became critical of their government’. In spite his numerous and highly regarded scholarly publications, he only acquired his first degree in 1968 when he was awarded a doctorate of letters.

Melville J. Davies’s entry on the Western Australian pastoralist and mining magnate Langley (Lang) Hancock (1909-1992) is rightly longer than many others. Davis acknowledges Hancock’s entrepreneurial skills but also points to his stubborn refusal to see nuclear radiation as a health hazard, the bitter falling out with his daughter Gina, his ‘disdain for central government and its bureaucracy’ that led him to energetically support Western Australia’s secession from the Commonwealth, and his opposition to Aboriginal land rights. ‘In Hancock’s view’, Davies writes, ‘his most valuable contribution to society was creating employment and wealth that benefited the local and national economy’.

Noel Loos’s fine assessment of the land rights campaigner Edward (Eddie) ‘Koiki’ Mabo (1936-1992) benefits from its author’s long personal association with Mabo. As the entry shows, after learning from Loos and Henry Reynolds that he and other Murray Islanders in far north Queensland were not legal owners of land that they believed they had inherited, Mabo joined with some of them in presenting an ultimately successful case to the High Court of Australia for the recognition of their ownership rights. ‘Throughout his life’, Loos observes, Mabo ‘demonstrated initiative, originality, determination, intelligence, and commitment to obtaining justice for Indigenous Australians and recognition of the traditional land rights of his family and people’.

The New South Wales politician Anne Press (1903-1992) is little remembered today yet, as Rachel Grahame explains, she deserves recognition as one of seven Labor members of the state’s Legislative Council who were expelled from their party after voting with the Opposition in a motion designed to prevent legislation abolishing the Council from being passed. A 1961 referendum ensured that the Council continued, meaning that Queensland remains the only Australian state...
without an upper house of parliament. Press later joined the Liberal Party. She was also a ‘fierce opponent of gambling’, describing poker machines as ‘iniquitous monsters’.

Nic Kassen shows how the South Australian tourism operator and promoter Kevin Rasheed (1919-1992), whose parents were Irish and Lebanese, took over the lease of the chalet at spectacular Wilpena Pound in the Flinders Ranges in 1958. He subsequently transformed it from a very small operation to one accommodating over a hundred guests. He ‘never missed an opportunity to publicise the chalet’, appearing on television and in print advertising campaigns. ‘His efforts’, Kassen notes, ‘put Wilpena Pound on the map as an international tourist destination’.

Elinor Wray (1899-1992), a pioneer Sydney speech therapist, emerges from Diana Maloney’s account as a tireless advocate for the need to treat children’s communication problems, warning that they could prevent normal development if left untreated. She also opened clinics for adult patients. Her compassion for people with speech and voice disorders led her to seek knowledge about the most effective treatments. She ‘attributed her longevity to her vegetarian diet, and to exercise’.

The entries just discussed are both authoritative and readable. Their well-informed judgements are usually perceptive. The entries provide a flavour of the quality and variety found among the ADB’s more recent inclusions and its efforts to cover a wide cross section of the Australian community.

Probably not surprisingly given the power they often held, men with Anglo-Celtic backgrounds loom large. Eddie Mabo appears to be the only Indigenous 1992 entry. The range, nevertheless, is far greater than was once the case in the ADB as is the proportion of women. The list of proposed entries for people who died between 1991 and 2000 (http://adb.anu.edu.au/adb-entries-1991-95/) indicates more Indigenous subjects over the next decade.

Although some ADB users think that there ought to be less concern with length in an online resource than in a printed volume, the continuing imposition on authors of specified numbers of words reflects expert working parties’ decisions about each subject’s significance. It also normally ensures that words are carefully chosen.

As the ADB commemorates 50 years since its first volume’s publication, the latest additions amply show that it upholds its founders’ vision while adapting to changing historical approaches.

* David Carment is Emeritus Professor of History, Charles Darwin University and Editor of the Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography

The ADB Editorial Board met in Canberra on 18 March 2016

(L-R) Standing: David Dunstan, Malcolm Allbrook, Chris Cunneen, Steve Kinnane, Pat Buckridge, Darryl Bennet, Carolyn Rasmussen, Nick Brown, Patrick Cornish, David Horner, Stefan Petrow

Sitting: Shino Konishi, Melanie Nolan (general editor), Tom Griffiths (chair), Peter Howell, Paul Pickering

Missing: Joy Damousi, Jill Roe, Beverley Kingston, Stephen Garton
Kent Fitch is a computing and database specialist whose recent work has focused on library-related systems including AustLit and the NLA’s Trove project. At the NCB’s ‘True Biographies of Nations’ conference he argued that if we really wanted ADB entries to be read we should place them in Wikipedia. Read on ...

On 29th June the Internet search engine Google commemorated the 80th anniversary of Eddie Mabo’s birth with a ‘doodle’ on their home-page. Clicking on the ‘doodle’ issued a Google search on Mabo. The first result was Mabo’s Wikipedia biography. Over 68,000 people clicked on the doodle and then clicked a second time to read Mabo’s biography on Wikipedia. Over the same period, just 33 people visited the Australian Dictionary of Biography’s entry for Mabo.

Those 68,000 people were clearly interested in learning more about Mabo. They interrupted their search plans to click twice to get to it. The basic biography they found lacks the richness and insight of the ADB’s Mabo biography. But on a typical day, Wikipedia’s Mabo biography still attracts 550 readers, the ADB version just 20. This isn’t surprising, as a link to Mabo’s Wikipedia biography appears first on a Google search results page, while the ADB’s entry is relegated to the second page. Dozens of other Wikipedia pages also link to the Wikipedia Mabo biography, including entries on Townsville, the National Library of Australia and the High Court rulings bearing his name. Hence, Mabo’s Wikipedia entry is very easy to come across and, in turn, link to, encouraging a ‘winner takes all’ snowballing affect: the more accessed a page is now, the more likely it will be accessed in the future.

That ratio of readers, 33 (ADB) to 68,000 (Wikipedia), is hard to imagine, but here are two analogies. (1) It’s grand final day at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the players and umpires are lining up for the national anthem. The ratio of people on the ground to those in the stands is about 33 to 68,000. (2) Its federal election day 2016, a few days after Mabo’s birthday. Political parties are handing out ‘how-to-vote’ sheets at 7,000 polling places around Australia. Imagine 6,996 of those were for Mabo. Those 68,000 people were clearly interested in learning more about Mabo. They interrupted their search plans to click twice to get to it.

The ADB has created an extensive resource of immense quality over the last fifty years authored by 4,500 authors. Its website attracts an audience which is the envy of its peers in the Australian humanities. The National Library’s massive and high-profile Trove website, with its hundreds of millions of resources, receives only slightly more than double the number of click-throughs from Google searches than does the ADB.

By comparison, his Wikipedia article is prosaic and unenlightening:

In 1856 Seekamp wrote a review in the Ballarat Times of Lola Montez and her erotic Spider Dance and in a notorious incident Montez chased him with a whip. Shortly after Clara and Henry Seekamp moved to Queensland. He died at the Clermont gold diggings in Queensland on 19 July 1864.

Later in life Clara commented on the importance of her husband: ‘If Peter Lalor was the sword of the movement, my husband was the pen’.

This Wikipedia article is linked from Wikipedia entries on Lola Montez, the Eureka Rebellion and even Australia’s sedition laws, and as a consequence of its number one search ranking in Google, receives eight times more readers than Seekamp’s ADB entry.

The ADB has created an extensive resource of immense quality over the last fifty years authored by 4,500 authors. Its website attracts an audience which is the envy of its peers in the Australian humanities. The National Library’s massive and high-profile Trove website, with its hundreds of millions of resources, receives only slightly more than double the number of click-throughs from Google searches than does the ADB.

But as the ‘Mabo’ results demonstrate, whilst the ADB is a big fish in a small pond it is a minnow in the information ocean; its typically excellent material languishes largely unread by those whom it could enlighten.

Consider the story of Henry Seekamp, the campaigning editor of the Ballarat Times and the only person to have been jailed as a result of the Eureka Rebellion. He was the public’s hero until his run-in with the exotic dancer, Lola Montez. Seekamp’s ADB entry summaries his fate and character evocatively:

Seekamp gained further notoriety in February 1856 when he turned his vitriolic pen upon the Irish-born actress Lola Montez, accusing her of immorality. They took to each other with whips in the main street of Ballarat, and accused each other of assault and libel, creating a public sensation. The court cases were dismissed, but public sympathy went to Lola, and the fiery editor lost much of his popularity.

In October 1856 the Seekamps sold their newspaper and left Ballarat. Henry headed north, to Sydney and then to Queensland. He died of ‘natural causes accelerated by intemperance’ ...

Carboni best characterized Henry Seekamp, writing that his energy never abated, though the whole legion of Victorian red-tape wanted to dry his inkind.

I have assembled some representative collections of people with biographies in both the ADB and Wikipedia to compare access counts over a four month period (February to May, 2016) using total page-views as reported by Google Analytics (for the ADB) and Wikipedia’s own page-views-by-humans accounting tool. Because the ADB’s coverage of people dying
after the early 1990s is minimal, only entries existing in both the ADB and Wikipedia are included.

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<tr>
<td>Australians of the Year</td>
<td>1 : 19</td>
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<td>Queensland Senators 1932</td>
<td>1 : 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Seven dwarfs’ (notable public servants)</td>
<td>1 : 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Creatives’ and journalists (17 people)</td>
<td>1 : 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science, exploration, sports (14 people)</td>
<td>1 : 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Politicians, military (19 people)</td>
<td>1 : 9</td>
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The ADB receives a higher percentage of readers looking for well-known colonial identities, including some explorers, particularly when their biographies are linked from highly trafficked educational resource websites:

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<td>Henry Parkes</td>
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<td>Edmund Barton</td>
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<td>Caroline Chisholm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter Lalor</td>
<td>1 : 1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert O’Hara Burke</td>
<td>1 : 1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>William John Wills</td>
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It is revealing to compare the total number of accesses to ADB biographies and obituaries with Wikipedia accesses to some deceased Australians, not represented in the ADB: Wikipedia’s Health Ledger entry alone receives more accesses than the combined total of all ADB entries (see graph on top of page 15). Steve Irwin’s (died 2006) Wikipedia entry receives 42% of the ADB’s combined total while Bon Scott’s (died 1980) receives 30%.

The biographies of living Australians are also very popular on Wikipedia, with those of entertainers Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchett and Mel Gibson each attracting over 60% of the accesses.
The failure of the ADB to attract ‘drive-by’ readers looking for information related to issues of the day extends beyond the Eddie Mabo example. The Wikipedia’s Andrew ‘Boy’ Charlton’s biography typically received 20 times more accesses than the ADB version at the start of 2016. With the publicity associated with the reopening of the Andrew ‘Boy’ Charlton pool in Sydney over March and April, the Wikipedia accesses spiked to over 4000 per day, whilst the ADB accesses barely changed. In May and June, the ADB:Wikipedia access ratio settled back to 1:300.

As with Eddie Mabo, whatever the ADB is saying about Charlton, the public aren’t reading it.
I assert that the responsibility of the ADB's authors, editors and custodians goes beyond the obvious role of selecting lives to describe, and then producing the best possible biographies. It extends to taking all reasonable steps to get that content in front of people.

Making the best content discoverable is no longer enough; it must be put in the path of potential readers, and made unavoidable.

The Dictionary of Sydney project shows how this may be done. They encourage authors to licence commissioned articles under the Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike licence (commonly referred to as CC-BY-SA). This licence allows third parties to reuse and adapt the article provided the original source is acknowledged and that any adaptations are also made available for reuse under the same CC-BY-SA licence. It is worth comparing the quality of two Dictionary of Sydney biographies published under this licence which have been 'reused' by Wikipedia with their equivalents on ADB, those of Norman Selfe and Florence Violet McKenzie.

Norman Selfe, was an engineer. Here's a comparison of how two aspects of his biography are described by the ADB and Wikipedia:

**Sydney Harbour Bridge competition**

**ADB**: ...in 1903 he largely designed a cantilever harbour bridge from Dawes Point to McMahon's Point; the plans were accepted but not proceeded with owing to a change of government.

**Wikipedia**: After the outcome of the competition had become mired in controversy, in 1902 Selfe won a second competition outright, with a design for a steel cantilever bridge stretching from Dawes Point to McMahons Point. The selection board were unanimous, commenting that 'The structural lines are correct and in true proportion, and ... the outline is graceful'.

Construction of Selfe's version of the Sydney harbour bridge never started due to an economic slowdown and a change of government at the 1904 state election. Much to Selfe's outrage, the Department of Public Works kept his calculations and drawings, and also copied and printed them. Eventually in 1907, the department contacted Selfe and asked him to collect his drawings, but refused to return the calculations. Selfe was never given the £1,100 prize, nor was he paid for his subsequent work which he estimated to be worth more than £20,000.

**Selfe's Death**

**ADB**: Selfe died of heart failure at Normanhurst, the suburb named after him, on 15 October 1911 and was buried in the Gore Hill cemetery.

**Wikipedia**: Selfe died suddenly on 15 October 1911. His death certificate states the cause of death as 'heart failure brought on by exertion'. His daughter Norma offered some context to a journalist in 1957. She said: ‘On the day of his death he climbed trees in the church grounds to lop branches, as the gardener was too nervous to climb so high. That night he died in his sleep.’

Norma reported that her father had been sanguine to the end, playful with his nephews and learning to play the oboe. However, other reports suggest that Selfe was concealing a bitter sense of disappointment at the end of his life, most particularly over the Harbour Bridge affair. His obituary in the journal Building concluded...

Just as the ADB's Seekamp article brilliantly describes his rise and decline, the Wikipedia version of Selfe, largely written by historian Catherine Freyne, demonstrates the ability of great biographical writing to summarise and contextualise a life.

Florence Violet McKenzie was Australia's first female electrical engineer. Her 700-word ADB biography contains one image and a bibliography of just four, non-hyperlinked items. Her Wikipedia biography of almost 3000 words contains seven images and 48 references and external links, most of which are hyperlinked to facilitate deeper research. Furthermore, the Wikipedia 'talk' page documents the discussion around the writing and updating of this biography.

Such 'meta' background can be invaluable to both the scholar and interested amateur trying to interpret an article. For example, the ADB biography of Wilfred Burchett pays little attention to the allegations of Soviet defector Yuri Krotkov that Burchett was in the pay of the KGB, and makes no mention at all of the material obtained and published by Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky in 1999 which support Krotkov's assertions. However, Burchett's Wikipedia biography does discuss this material and the use made of it by Robert Manne, and the associated voluminous 'talk' pages discuss the pros and cons of the decision to reference it in his biographical entry.

Roy Rosenzweig essay, Can History be Open Source? Wikipedia and the Future of the Past, (http://chnm.gmu.edu/essays-on-history-new-media/essays/?essayid=42) outlines the challenges of collective writing of history in general and of using Wikipedia as a platform in particular but concludes with this warning:

Still, Wikipedia and Linux show that there are alternative models to producing encyclopedias and software than the hierarchical, commercial model represented by Bill Gates and Microsoft. And whether or not historians consider alternative models for producing their own work, they should pay closer attention to their erstwhile competitors at Wikipedia than Microsoft devoted to worrying about an obscure free and open-source operating system called Linux.

In his 1946 essay, 'Why I Write', George Orwell described the four motivations of writers as wanting to impress others with their cleverness, as enjoying the pleasure of writing well, as recording insights for posterity and most of all, as writing for 'political purpose': to educate, convince and change behaviour. A writer without readers and a national dictionary...
without an audience is like a school without students or a hospital without patients: a manifestation and reminder of impotence, ineffectiveness and, ultimately, wasted opportunity.

Wikipedia’s ascendency has continued in the ten years since Rosenzweig’s comments and its sheer prominence and size challenges the influence of competing resources such as the ADB. This challenge must be faced if the ultimate goal of the ADB’s authors, editors and custodians is to produce a body of work which, in Orwell’s words, has the ability ‘to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other peoples’ idea of the kind of society that they should strive after’.

One way to do this is, as I have argued, to license as much ADB content as possible as ‘Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike’, and to follow the Dictionary of Sydney’s example in working with Wikimedians to incorporate ADB entries into the world largest and most referenced encyclopedia. By sharing their content with Wikipedia, dictionaries of biography such as the ADB can reach more readers with better content, and continue to influence scholars and general readers with perceptive descriptions – sometimes cautionary but mostly inspiring – of the lives of the great, the good and the ordinary.

Thanks to Christine Fernon and Melanie Nolan for their invitation and encouragement to speak at the conference, and to Liam Wyatt for information about the Creative Commons licencing he nurtured at the Dictionary of Sydney project.

* You can find all of the graphs and other slides used by Kent during his presentation at: https://prezi.com/mymrtvpsogfs/national-dictionaries-in-the-age-of-wikipedia.

His full conference speech can be downloaded at https://soundcloud.com/nationallibraryaustralia/sets/conference-true-biographies-of (Day 1, session 3)

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L-R Standing: Darryl Bennet, Geoff Hunt, Jenny Higgins, Sam Furphy, Scott Yeadon, Nicole McLennan, Karen Ciuffetelli, Karen Fox

Sitting: Kylie Carman-Brown, Malcolm Allbrock, Melanie Nolan (general editor), Brian Wimborne, Christine Fernon
The Biographical Database of Australia (http://www.bda-online.org.au/) went online in 2013 and holds over one million records relating to colonial Australia, making it a valuable research tool for historians, genealogists and school students. Michael Flynn describes the BDA’s content, history, and plans for the future.

The Biographical Database of Australia contains a wealth of material relating to colonial Australia. In it you will find transcripts of convict, census, muster, shipping, birth, marriage, death and other records for most of the early New South Wales (1788-1828), Norfolk Island and Tasmanian (1802-1811) population. It also has details about 36,000 free immigrants who arrived in NSW between 1826-1837, the 1837 muster of all serving convicts in NSW, and full-text short biographies of over 11,000 residents of most colonies/states published in 1881-1907.

Of particular interest to many researchers will be the transcripts of a large number of pre-civil registration Catholic and Protestant parish registers which are normally only accessible in scrawled manuscripts on microfilm. For example the following transcript, available in the BDA, records First Fleet convict William Douglas signing his ‘X’ mark as a witness to his stepdaughter’s wedding:

Thomas Jones, Abode: Hawkesbury [NSW AUS], Signed; & Elizabeth Dailey, Abode: Sydney [NSW AUS], Signed X; married 08 Mar 1807, registered St Philips Church of England Sydney [NSW AUS] by Banns by Henry Fulton; Witness: William Douglas, Signed X; Witness: Mary Adams, Signed

All the names of the people who were involved in the wedding, including the witnesses, have been indexed in the BDA. The records are transcribed by volunteers and checked by experts to ensure their accuracy.

In 2014 abstracts of 160,000 Colonial Secretary records (1788-1825) from State Records New South Wales were added to the BDA as well as over 2,000 brief biographies of Australian and New Zealand clergy published in 1878. 7,000 colonial biographies (written by descendants) from the Australian Biographical and Genealogical Record and biographical summaries of the more than 1,440 people who escorted Mary Ann Johnson. The February 2015 update saw the BDA almost double in size with the addition of twenty new datasets containing 400,000 entries. The new records included over 15,000 full-text mini-biographies, published between 1879-1905, of professionals, farmers and small businessmen in town and rural communities in all states – nearly 10,000 of them in Victoria.

The February 2015 update saw another 25,000 records added to the site including:

— Land & Stock returns taken with the Census of NSW 1828. The returns record the details of owners and lessors of land in NSW, including, for example, John Macarthur’s Elizabeth Farm at Parramatta (850 acres) with its 24 horses, 24 cattle and 40 sheep.

— Biographical profiles of soldiers and officers in regiments stationed in NSW, Tasmania, Moreton Bay, Melville Island and Norfolk Island during the periods listed below:
  • 46th Regiment (South Devonshire) 1814-1818
  • 48th Regiment (Northamptonshire) 1817-1824
  • 3rd Regiment (Buffa) 1822-1827
  • 40th Regiment (2nd Sometsetshire) 1824-1829
  • NSW Corps Casualty List 1799-1817

— Land Grants in NSW between 1792-1809 giving details of 2753 grants and leases, 1265 (45%) of which are linked to biographical profiles already in the BDA.

— Richard Harrison’s ‘University Graduates in Australian Universities’ data set which lists the degree, institution and graduation year of Australians who completed university courses in the 19th century.

— A small number of Births & Deaths recorded in Norfolk Island and Sydney Hospital in 1802, 1803 and 1811.

From its inception the database listed all members of the NSW Corps. The soldiers were joined in 2015 by the records of the First Fleet marines and the 73rd Regiment serving in NSW and Tasmania (1809-1815). In February 2016 biographical details were added of nearly all British soldiers serving in Australia (1816-1829).
The BDA features a free searchable index which gives basic details about the person being searched and a modest subscription option for full access to record transcripts and Biographical Reports.

Subscribers to the BDA can open any index entry, which may be:
— the transcript of a single unlinked record for an individual, or
— a series of linked records forming a Biographical Report for an individual.

A unique feature of the BDA is its aim of linking records to form a fully referenced timeline, or Biographical Report, for each individual. Many thousands of such reports have already been created.

An individual’s timeline will often be linked to others in a complex web of relationships: to a legal or de facto spouse, a parent or child, an employer or employee, a marriage witness or godparent at a baptism who might be a friend or relative. Problematic spelling variants of names are linked and marriage transcripts indicate whether a person was able to write their name or not.

The BDA’s ambitious aim is to identify every Australian who lived during the colonial period by means of original manuscript and published biographical sources. The records about them will be included in the database in full transcript or index form and will be progressively linked to create a Biographical Report for each individual.

The BDA’s status as a relative newcomer among online databases belies the depth of knowledge, experience and data behind its creation, which is the culmination of a visionary series of publishing projects initiated by its creators Malcolm Sainty and Keith Johnson. Their work began in the late 1970s when they established a small publishing firm, Library of Australian History. In 1980 the pair edited and published the 1828 Census (giving details of more than 36,000 people then living in NSW). From 1981-2009 they published the annual Genealogical Research Directory. In 1982 they set up, and largely funded, the Australian Biographical & Genealogical Record (ABGR) as an independent non-profit association, with the aim of using newly available computer technology to build a Biographical Database of every deceased person born in or arriving in colonial Australia. In association with the Society of Australian Genealogists, they then led a team of employees and volunteers engaged in transcribing the early muster records and convict indents of NSW and published four volumes of ABGR biographies submitted by descendants. Much of the pioneering work that they have done has found its way into the BDA.

But, like most online databases the BDA is a work in progress. Much linking remains to be done. A more sophisticated search feature is being trialled. A fourth update, scheduled for later this year, will see the addition of numerous datasets including:
— 39th Regiment pay lists 1826-1833 (NSW, including Moreton Bay).
— Royal Veteran Company pay lists, NSW 1810-1814.
— Certificates of Freedom, NSW 1823-1869.
— Tickets of Leave, NSW 1849-1875.
— Assisted Immigrants to NSW, Port Phillip & Moreton Bay 1839-1896 giving details of 191,934 immigrants to Sydney and Newcastle (1844-1896), Moreton Bay Qld (1844-1896) & Port Phillip (Vic) 1839-1851. The arrivals included 978 children aged under six. An additional 2,132 passengers died on the voyages (580 infants and the oldest aged 76).
— General Post Office - Unclaimed Letters NSW 1836-1852.
— Camperdown CofE Cemetery (Sydney, NSW) Interment Register 1849-1853.
— Railway Passes NSW 1880-1892 index with some data extracted.

You can try out the BDA at www.bda-online.org.au.

Subscription is $30 a year for an individual with varying rates for societies and libraries.

* Michael Flynn is a Sydney historian and genealogist and the author of The Second Fleet: Britain’s Grim Convict Armada of 1790 (1993). Since 2006 he has assisted the editors of BDA as honorary research officer, as a board member of BDA and as editor of its newsletter the Biographical Telegraph.

NCB Masters Students

Five students have enrolled in this year’s masters courses in biographical research and writing offered by the NCB.

Shown in the photograph are Professor Melanie Nolan, Director, NCB (standing), with students (L-R) Honey Dower, Anuradha Sen and Sarah Guiver who are studying HIST 8013 ‘ADB Internship’. The other course being offered is HIST 8004 ‘Biographical Research Project’.

The NCB also offers a PhD program.
On 9 June at a function in Adelaide attended by the ADB chair Tom Griffiths, general editor Melanie Nolan, and members of the SA Working Party, Peter Howell was awarded an ADB Medal for his long and distinguished service to the Australian Dictionary of Biography. Here is his citation:

Dr Peter Howell’s contribution to the South Australia Working Party of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* spans more than four decades. He has written thirty-nine ADB articles: the first on educationalist Thomas Arnold was commissioned in 1961 and appeared in volume 1, and his most recent, on clergyman and bioethicist Daniel Overduin, was published in 2016 on the day of the 70th ADB Editorial Board meeting. He has a number of commissions ongoing. Peter has had a special interest in the successive holders of the vice-regal office in South Australia and has written entries on nine governors and two vice-regal wives. His lengthy entry on Sir Thomas Playford, premier of South Australia from 1938 to 1965, is a magisterial survey. Some of his entries in the ADB have led to longer articles, published mostly in the *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*. His third book, *The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, 1833-1876*, published in 1979, is still acknowledged as a ‘classic’, and his latest book *South Australia and Federation*, published in 2002, is a lively account of the history of the state from Federation to the outbreak of the First World War. Peter’s articles are meticulously researched, insightful and written in his crisp and vigorous style.

When Peter arrived in Adelaide to take up a lectureship at the recently founded Flinders University in 1968, he already knew a great deal about South Australia’s constitutional, legal and political history from research for his MA thesis at the University of Tasmania on the Boothby Case. In 1974 he was appointed to the South Australia Working Party of the ADB. He proved to be a valuable addition. In 1996, following the resignation of John Playford, Peter was appointed chair of the working party, state Section Editor and a member of the Editorial Board of the ADB. He thus became the public face of the ADB in South Australia. In this role he has played an important part in the selection of South Australian subjects and the nomination of authors. His wide knowledge of that state’s history has enabled him to see through an author’s whitewash and any tendency to write a reverent obituary notice that omits less creditable information. Often this concern for accuracy and honesty has led him to undertake time-consuming additional research to correct errors, and obtain information which authors might have ignored. Dozens of entries on South Australians have benefited from his editing.

Both as chair of the South Australian Working Party, and Section Editor and as a contributor over fifty years, Peter Howell has shown exceptional loyalty and dedication to the Australian Dictionary of Biography which makes him a worthy recipient of the ADB Medal.
Test your knowledge of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* with this crossword devised by research editor Brian Wimborne.

Across
1. Born in China, the son of Baptist missionaries, he later became a schoolteacher, station-worker, clergyman, historian, and the ADB’s first general editor.
3. Australia’s first woman law graduate. It was to take nearly twenty years for her to be admitted to the NSW Bar.
6. Our first home-grown governor-general; his capacity for work was legendary. While holding office as attorney-general in the Deakin ministry he still ran the biggest practice at the Victorian Bar.
7. Soldier and medical practitioner; he was killed in action near Ypres in 1917. He was described by military historian Charles Bean as one of the youngest and most capable commanding officers.
8. NSW public servant; one of the first permanent heads to have accounting qualifications. During the Great Depression he was in charge of developing projects to encourage employment, such as the Wyangala Dam.
9. Expatriate novelist and short-story writer who held a short-term visiting fellowship at the Australian National University.
10. Last woman in Australia to be hanged for murder. Echoing public and media sentiment, the minority Country Party government rejected Labor Party calls for clemency.
13. Poet who worked for Angus & Robertson in its heyday. She was described as ‘the best book editor in Australia’.
16. Key figure in court battle for native title land rights.

Down
1. Estate manager, horse-trader, artist, and civil servant in WA who supported Aboriginal welfare and founded the Wilgie Sketching Club (later the WA Society of Artists).
2. WA builder, civil engineer and Legislative Council member. He constructed the Midland–Perth railway line, Perth cathedral, and Fremantle Town Hall. His residence at Peppermint Grove became the headquarters for the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club.
3. Father and son drapers. They co-founded one of Brisbane’s major retail stores—the only one which remained independent until the late 20th century.
4. Brisbane lawyer, farmer, and State politician. Secretary for mines and public works, and home secretary in William Kidston’s ministry (1909-15), he died from drinking tainted water at his property at Surfers Paradise.
5. NSW merchant and politician who owned wharves, warehouses and a large fleet of steamships. He was colonial treasurer and minister for railways in Dibbs’ government in 1891, and premier (1901-04), but was judged to have made no lasting impact on the history of the State.
11. One of four Scottish-born brothers who were successful businessmen in SA. He was a member of the Legislative Council (1863-69, 1871-78), and a camel breeder, patron of exploration, and a leading philanthropist. At his home he grew grapes for wine, built a signal tower for his yachts, a gas plant for lighting, and a zoo.
12. Aboriginal landowner. Her marriage was the first officially sanctioned union between a convict and an Aboriginal woman. She gained land in Liverpool and Blacktown in NSW. Dozens of familiestrace their descent through her to Yarramundi and to his father Gomebeeree of the Darug people.
14. Victorian State (1894-1900) and Federal (1901-10) protectionist politician. He later wrote books of Australian fairy tales and patriotic poetry.
15. NSW-born artist famed for black and white pictures published in the Bulletin and Sydney Mail, and for his oil paintings. In 1935 he won the Wynne Prize for his painting, ‘Winter Morning’.

Turn to page 20 for the answers