



1975: LIVING IN THE SEVENTIES

1975 was a year to remember. *Jaws* and *The Rocky Horror Show* filled cinemas and *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Sunday too Far Away* proved that Australians wanted to see their own stories on the big screen. Australia's favourite television show *Countdown* provided a soundtrack for suburban life with glam rockers *Skyhooks* and the infectious pop of Swedish Eurovision champions *Abba*. Flared Jeans, platform shoes, and burnt orange dominated fashion, all gloriously rendered on brand-new colour television sets.

Overseas the war in Vietnam finally ended, Papua New Guinea became independent, and conflict erupted in East Timor. At home Prime Minister Gough Whitlam struggled with rising energy prices, unemployment, and economic stagnation while also introducing major social reforms including universal health care and no-fault divorce. The year ended dramatically when Governor-General Sir John Kerr dismissed Whitlam's government on 11 November, quickly followed by an election in December ushering in Malcom Fraser as Australia's new prime minister.

Now, 50 years on, the National Library of Australia is looking back on this amazing year through the lens of its collections. And what amazing stories the collections tell! Photographs and posters remind us of how we dressed, how we cut our hair, what movies we saw, what we drank and what we smoked. (Winfield if you were working class, Dunhill if you had higher aspirations).

The Library's sheet music collection remind us of what songs were on top of the charts. Bands like *Skyhooks*, *Sherbet* and *Hush*, and singers John Paul Young, Daryl Braithwaite, Olivia Newton-John and Marcia Hines, were all on the way to becoming household names. An appearance on *Countdown*, and an endorsement from the program's host 'Molly' Meldrum, ensured a hit would follow. Live appearances — often lip-synced — or music videos were the show's staple. This helped create a soundtrack for a generation which can still be heard today on AM radio.

The Library's collections of books and magazines prompt our memory of what we were reading. Whether it was the *Australian Women's Weekly*, *Cleo*, or *Wheels*, there was something for everyone's taste. TV Week also had a ubiquitous presence in family lounge rooms, a necessary



prerequisite for planning your weekly must watch television. You had to watch your favourite show when it was aired or miss it entirely!

The collections also tell a story about the political debates and social issues that dominated the seventies. Works like Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* and Anne Summers *Damned Whores and God's Police*, both published in 1975, helped define major social movements which are still shaping Australian society today.

When we look back to 1975 it is tempting to view Australia through a haze of nostalgia. You can still hear classic 'hits of the seventies' on AM radio, watch the iconic TV shows on YouTube and laugh at pictures of outrageous moustaches, white silk shirts and flared jeans. But is there more to this year than a dose of boomer nostalgia? Looking at the collections held by the National Library of Australia reveals a much more complex story.

1975 was a year when Australia was in transition. Its economy was undergoing fundamental change, with increasing reliance on the mining sector. The flow of migrants

Continued on page 3 ►

1975 exhibition gallery space

FRIENDS EVENTS

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

18 September

The Archaeology of Water

Archaeologist Chris Carter will describe ways people managed water. Uncover a world-wide perspective and complex history on water management, how humans gained access to and control of water, and how that has impacted on lifeways.

1 October

Coffee with the Curator – Remembering the War

Join Allister Mills, Exhibition Coordinator, on an exclusive tour of the temporary showcase exhibition, *Remembering the War*, in the Treasures Gallery. This is followed by morning tea.

29 October

Collection viewing: *A Treasure Trove of Tales for Children*

This year's collection viewing event centres on children's literature and storytelling. Discover stories that have captivated imaginations, the individuals who created whimsy, and the ways children have expressed themselves through play. Join us for a special viewing and guest talk by renowned Australian children's author, Stephanie Owen Reeder, followed by refreshments in the foyer.

27 November

Annual General Meeting

The Friends of the National Library's Annual General Meeting.

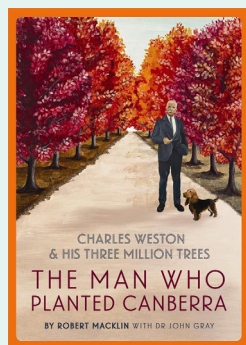
The Craft of Historical Fiction: Alison Goodman and Sue Williams

Join authors Alison Goodman and Sue Williams as they discuss the makings of an Historical Fiction novel. Explore why the Regency period captivates us 200 years later, and how authors blend historical accuracy with creativity to form a compelling tale.

NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP OFFER FOR FRIENDS

Friends will receive a 25% discount on copies of *The Man who Planted Canberra*, by NLA Publishing when purchased before 4 November 2025, online and in-store.

To claim your **25% discount**, use the promotional code **PLANTED25** at checkout.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS

There was a lovely spirit in the room where we celebrated the Friends 35th Birthday Party. A real sense of engagement with the mission of the Friends and the Library and a great deal of, well, friendship.

But we don't rest on our laurels. This issue of the *Newsletter* looks at what is coming up. Of major interest will be the Library's new exhibition, *1975*, opened with a special Friends viewing on 13 August.

Many of the Friends will recall, vividly, some of the events of that turbulent year, peaking in the Dismissal. Many visitors to the exhibition will be entering a period largely unknown to them.

The task the Library staff responsible for *1975* set themselves was challenging and, no doubt, at times fraught. Friends first viewing of this exhibition will be a nostalgic trip through time. It is pleasing to report that there was a large attendance of Friends at the opening event.

The Friends program for the remainder of the year – we are well over the half-way point! – will inform, delight and excite. Please do come to as many of the events as possible and as always, if you can, bring one of your friends. Widely anticipated will be 'The Collection Viewing: *A Treasure Trove of Tales for Children*'. A truly major event in our calendar, with a great deal of input from many parts of the Library.

Please note the date of the Friends Annual General Meeting is 27 November. Do consider joining the Committee in 2026. As an added incentive to attend the AGM we are holding a special event directly afterwards, *The Craft of Historical Fiction*, featuring two successful Australian novelists, Alison Goodman and Sue Williams.

Alison writes Young Adult Fiction and historical fiction and Sue Williams, who has also written non-fiction, have both lately specialised in the period of the 1800s in London and Australia. Both have been honoured for their work.

As many of us read historical fiction (it is one of the top fiction genres in Australia), this session should prove to be deeply engaging for many of our Friends. Mark the date of this special event.

In this issue of the *Newsletter* we celebrate 1975, and a review by Max Bourke of a new book on Charles Weston, *The Man who Planted Canberra*. The Friends Committee members would like to express their appreciation and thanks to Max Bourke for his editorship of the past four *Newsletters* and honour him for his contribution.

And there is plenty more news and information for you. Enjoy!

Catherine Anderson and Michalina Stawyskyj | Co-Chairs

► Continued from page 1

coming to Australia had begun to shift from Europe to Asia. The White Australia policy, which had been slowly dismantled over the previous decade, was finally gone, replaced with a commitment to multiculturalism by both the Whitlam and Fraser governments. The Women's Liberation Movement had challenged many long-held assumptions about the role of women in Australian society. The establishment of women's refuges and no-fault divorce were important first steps in addressing deep injustices in Australian society. Our colonial legacy, and particularly the dispossession of Indigenous Australians, was now firmly on the political agenda. While the year ended with the dismissal of the Whitlam government, reforms would continue through the late seventies and into the eighties.

Change was not limited to politics and economics. Australian popular culture was also reinventing itself. By the mid-1970s there was an increasingly confident cohort of performers, writers, filmmakers, television producers and artists producing a distinctly Australian take on the world. The nation had begun to tell its own stories. The cultural cringe, which had defined our attitude to the world in the 1950s and 1960s, was beginning to fade. Australia was now a much prouder and more assertive nation. *Skyhooks* captured this new cultural confidence with their second hit album for 1975: *Ego Is Not a Dirty Word*. Like the band, Australia had begun to embrace its own distinct style and celebrate its place in the sun.

1975: Living in the Seventies opens at the National Library of Australia on 14 August 2025.

Dr Guy Hansen | Director, Exhibitions, National Library of Australia



1975 exhibition gallery space



This week we welcome Lisa DeSantis to the Friends Executive Officer role. Lisa has a background in museums, galleries and heritage, having worked in a range of positions across education, public programs, admin, heritage management and gallery management. Lisa spent her early career at Canberra Museum & Gallery, Lanyon Homestead and Calthorpes' House, then moved to Department of Environment to manage and assess historic places for inclusion on Australia's National Heritage List. Lisa also manages COX Gallery, a philanthropic initiative providing a fee-free space for Canberra artists to exhibit their work.

Lisa is a mother of three who always has a book and a pot of tea close by. After years of practise she has mastered the art of procrastinating, the diversion of time and attention to baking whilst other [arguably more urgent] tasks lay waiting. Lisa is delighted to join the NLA Engagement team and looks forward to getting to know the Friends. She will work Mon – Thu, 9am – 4pm.

CANBERRA WRITER'S FESTIVAL 2025

The Friends of the National Library have always supported the National Library of Australia. In turn, the Library has looked for ways to include and consider the Friends.

The National Library of Australia is happy to announce a three-year partnership with the Canberra Writers Festival. Friends of the National Library have not been forgotten in this arrangement. Friends members will receive 10% off all ticketed events for this year's festival onsite at the National Library of Australia. In addition, the Friends will be offered 50 tickets for festival events. More details to come in the weekly e-News.

The Canberra Writer's Festival will take place between Wednesday 22 October to Sunday 26 October. Look out for updates on the Canberra Writer's Festival [website](#) and the National Library of Australia's [What's On page](#).

Isabella Simonovski | Friends Executive Officer

Lisa DeSantis, Friends Executive Officer

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY MAKE A FLYING START

Thanks to the great kindness of Debbie Campbell (Friends number 17!), Library staff member, an early member of the Friends Committee, and later a consultant, I have finally had access to the Committee papers of the first years of the Friends. I now have the complete list of the members of the first elected committee. Sincere apologies to those I previously overlooked.

So the full committee was (in alphabetical order): Ruth Bradbury, Ian Castles, Roy Cameron, Vanessa Fanning, Peter Graves, Marion Halligan, Carol Hunt, Bill Mandle, Peter Sekules and Frank Thompson.

Ruth Bradbury had been a voluntary guide at the Australian War Memorial for nine years and the president for two. She was actively involved in family history research. Also interested in family history was Roy Cameron, Commonwealth Statistician from 1977 to 1985. Peter Graves was also a public servant who saw the Library as a Centre of Excellence for literature.

Carol Hunt was a librarian and English teacher. Along with the others, senior public servant, current Commonwealth statistician, academic, highly regarded novelist, soon to chair the Literature Board of the Australia Council, and public relations consultant we might be inclined to say what a bunch!

The papers give me another key insight. The Committee was highly ambitious in its thinking about the Friends and the Library, highly productive and activist. Whether it was in organising weekend trips away, or day tours more locally, there was a buzz about the Friends then, as now!

Kevin Bradley, from the Library's Sound Preservation and Technical Services Section (what a mouthful!) was working up a proposal for two series of taped interviews for sale by the Friends to be called *Self Portraits* and *Artists Portraits*. For *Self Portraits* interviews with fifteen writers would be included. *Artist Portraits* was less certain at the time of the proposal.

There was close Library staff involvement; Kevin was working collaboratively with Mark Cranfield from the Oral History section. Committee members had a large involvement. Marion Halligan shaped the project, suggesting varying the length of the interviews based on audience interest. Frank Thompson took on the marketing, suggesting a possible retail price of \$49.95 on a unit cost of production of \$20.

The point of this account is that Library staff and Committee members worked closely together and that Committee members had a variety of experience and knowledge to bring to the discussions. The ambition of the project is impressive. With such a strong start the Friends were assured of success. We are still building on that, to serve the National Library of Australia.

Dr Michael McKernan | Historian

THE MAN WHO PLANTED CANBERRA

Visitors to Canberra, and far too many residents, are unaware of what makes Canberra such a beautiful place to live, especially in spring and autumn. Certainly, a general understanding of the role of the Griffins in the city's design is well known but there is, in my view, a more important and neglected 'hero' in the Canberra story whose work is very visible.

Thomas Charles Weston, known as Charles, was the 'man who planted three million trees' and gave the capital its superb 'tree structure'. Some years ago, the ACT Environment Commissioner found that the Capital has more trees per hectare than any other capital city in Australia.

So, I am personally very excited to see that the forthcoming book by Rob Macklin, published by the NLA, will redress in a very attractive way this lacuna in public knowledge.

Rob's book is a great read, and so it should be from someone with such a fine writing background; over 30 books, plus films and decades in the media as a journalist. He has written a number of distinguished biographies including, to name a few, on Hamilton Hume, Morrison of Peking, Kevin Rudd, and a recent superb biography of Donald Thomson, the tough 20th century anthropologist who stood up to mighty powers to declare and defend the rights of indigenous people.

The new book, *The Man who Planted Canberra, Charles Weston and Three Million Trees*, will be published by NLA Publishing in September. Rob was able to call on, and acknowledges, the major contribution to this project by the late Dr John Gray. John, who died before it was published but read the text in virtually final form, had written a PhD thesis in 1999 on Weston, and especially his role in the ACT's story. Rob has enriched that work with much background on the origins of Weston's ideas and the complexity of his working relationships with not only the Griffins but also other players in the administration of the new Federal Capital. Weston's life illustrates that of a remarkable autodidact and great botanist who was also a very good land and people manager, indeed celebrated for this in a poem by Canberra's Geoff Page.

The NLA Publishing edition will contain a great number of both historical and more contemporary photographs drawn not only from the NLA but also the National Archives, the National Capital Authority and the ACT Heritage Library along with some recent additions to these collections from Weston's descendants.

Max Bourke | Former Editor

Full disclosure, Max was involved in supporting and doing some research for this book.



FRIENDS 35TH BIRTHDAY PARTY WRAP-UP

The 2nd of July was a momentous celebration for the Friends of the National Library. We celebrated 35 years of ongoing support to the National Library of Australia. The event involved speeches from Friends and Library staff, followed by a lunchtime gathering with cake.

Mary-Louise Ayres – Director-General of the National Library of Australia

Our first guest speaker was none other than the Director-General herself. Marie-Louise spoke about the ongoing commitment of the Friends, as people who encourage support, educate the community about our collections, activities and functions, and assist the Library in its endeavours.

Dr Michael McKernan – Friend of the National Library

As an avid historian, there was no one better to speak about the history of the Friends than Michael McKernan. He highlighted the Friends impact in changing the Library. The Library began as an impenetrable building where visitors were restricted to the Foyer, but the Friends helped pave the way to create an inviting space, organising welcome days, behind-the-scenes access, and large-scale events.

Anne-Marie Schwirtlich – Former Director General of the National Library of Australia and Friend of the National Library

Anne-Marie spoke of libraries and Friends organisations in terms of memory and meaning. She emphasised the importance of cultural institutions, acting as stewards for our collective identity. Friends, as advocates of the cause, work to share this identity with community by building opportunities for discovery and understanding, lifelong engagement, and places for inclusivity.

Margaret Nichols – Former Chair of the Friends of the National Library committee and current committee member

Margaret had a humorous take on her experience as a Friends member and volunteer. Margaret recalled many enjoyments, from exclusive collection viewing events, fascinating lectures, hands-on workshops and even the odd poetry reciting or two. She described the awe and wonder from visitors exploring the Library on one of her tours. These reactions cement that while the Library may be known to us, there is a whole community waiting to be welcomed and pleasantly surprised.

How about every Friend making a birthday “gift” to Friends by introducing one new member this year!

Isabella Simonovski | Friends Executive Officer



YOUR FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP HELPS THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

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

When reminded, please **renew your membership online** and encourage others to join.

Nancy Clarke, Image of cake cutting ceremony at Friends 35th Birthday Party, 2025



Bookseller Labels from 19th to 20th century: ephemera material collected by the National Library of Australia , 1955.

UNCOVERING THE EVERYDAY: EPHEMERA COLLECTIONS AT THE LIBRARY

Why we collect Ephemera

Ephemera is material intended for short-term use, designed to be temporary and often discarded after its initial purpose has been served.

The term originates from the Greek word *ephēmeros*, meaning “lasting only one day.” The use of *ephemeron* has been dated back to the writings of Aristotle, where it was used to describe insects and flowers with a short lifespan, such as the mayfly (scientific name *Ephemeroptera*).

Defining ephemera can be challenging and comprises items that do not fit neatly into other established formats. This includes advertising materials, booklets, brochures, postcards, programs, stickers, badges, flyers, business cards, vouchers, invitations, menus, tickets, and many other everyday objects.

Collecting ephemera is important as it offers a different view into social, cultural, and historical moments that is not otherwise captured in official records. As a primary source, ephemera complements documented history by capturing the nuances of everyday life, reflecting societal shifts and revealing political and cultural change. It provides useful context and detail that contribute to a deeper understanding of the past.

Newly Acquired Ephemera Items

Ephemera description is managed by a small, dedicated team within Collection Management. We work closely with our colleagues in Curatorial & Collection Research to support the growth and development of the collection. Our work involves enriching catalogue records, housing and labelling material, and creating finding aids that support discovery and use of the material.

Recent additions to the collection we would like to share include:

Bookseller Labels from 19th to 20th century

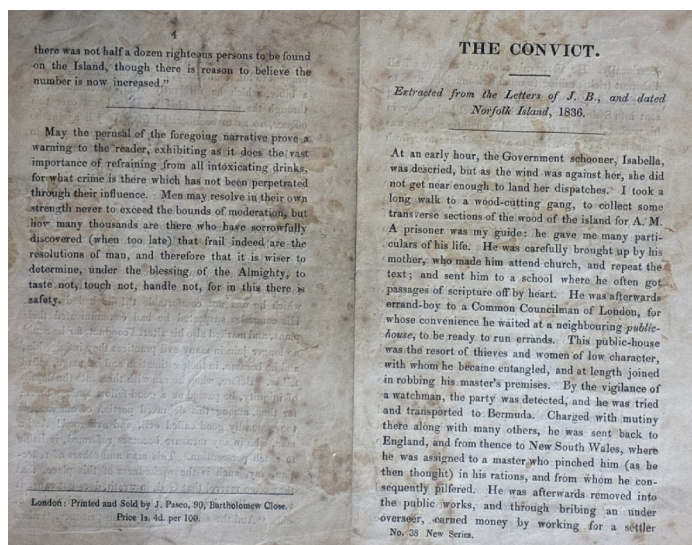
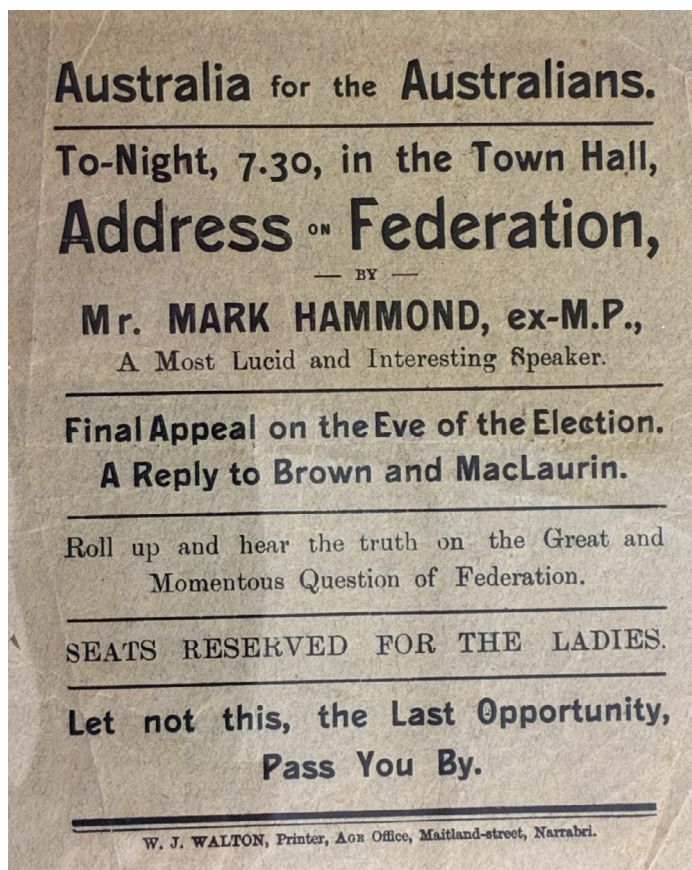
This new collection contains mostly Australian bookseller labels and flyers, including some from overseas, along with labels from businesses outside of book selling. The collection was arranged in alphabetical order by David McPhee, with a date on the inside cover of 24th June 1955. It offers insight into booksellers operating in Australia in the mid-20th century, providing details on a bookseller's address, logo and their specialisations.

Temperance

This collection documents the temperance movement in Australia, seeking to curb the drinking of alcohol. This leaflet added to the collection titled “The Convict” was taken from publications by James Backhouse’s “A Narrative of a visit to the Australian colonies” (Norfolk Island, 1836). It was distributed as a temperance pamphlet and describes an encounter with an Australian convict as an anecdote to promote temperance and abstinence from alcohol.

Australian National Federation: ephemera material collected by the National Library of Australia, n.d., nla.obj-185182249.

Temperance: ephemera material collected by the National Library of Australia.



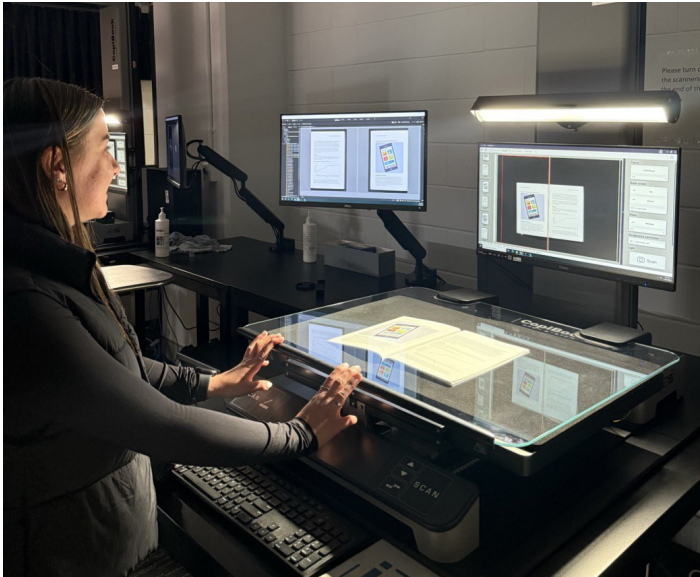
Australian National Federation

This collection highlights material relating to Federation in Australia, the process by which the self-governing colonies agreed to unite and become the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. This item selected from the collection titled “Australia for the Australians” is a flyer advertising a town hall meeting by Mr. Mark Hammond, a goldminer and politician, who played a prominent role in the Australian federal campaign.

Find out more

Discover more about ephemera collecting in the National Library by visiting: [What we collect – Ephemera](#).

Colleen Hayes | Program Manager, Projects, Collection Management



DIGITISING OUR COLLECTIONS – WISENET JOURNALS

This year, through a donation from the Friends of the Library, Digitisation Projects section digitised the WISENET journals.

WISENET (Women in Science Enquiry Network), formed in 1984, established a journal aiming to increase women's participation at all levels in science where they were under-represented. It explored linkages between science disciplines and promoted science education and careers for girls and young women. The journals provide a significant social history of women in science in the 1980s and 1990s and the activism they carried out to increase women in the participation of STEM in that period and beyond. The articles included many stories and interviews detailing the careers of women in science. The Library now holds a nearly complete set of WISENET journals from 1985 – 2010.

In terms of the Library's digitisation projects, this project was luckily quite straightforward. Given the manageable amount of easily scannable printed material, permission from the copyright holder and the expert skills of our imaging team, this project progressed quickly and smoothly. Ultimately, 1,424 images (from 52 journals) were created, quality checked and uploaded to Trove. This took about 2 weeks, and the project finished ahead of schedule.

The project was completed in May 2025 and can be accessed via Trove ([Wisenet: journal of the Women in Science Enquiry Network](#). & [Wisenet journal](#)) or the Library's catalogue records.

This was not the first Friends of the Library's digitisation project. In 2023 the Friends generously funded the digitisation of eight notebooks of plant listings compiled by Marion Mahony Griffin. These can be accessed via the collection's finding aid: [Papers of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony collected by Eric Nicholls](#).

The Friends is currently funding a digitisation project that will include material from what the Library describes as 'Women Leaders' collections. This project will focus on the digitisation of the [Scrapbook of Marjorie McDonald](#) and the [Julia Rapke collection of papers on various Australian women](#). This project is due to begin in late 2025.

Kelly Torrens | Senior Library Officer, Reader Services

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

Ever wondered what went on behind the closed doors in the National Library? Now is your chance to find out.

A team of well-trained Volunteers of the National Library conduct tours every day at 11 am. They last for approximately 45 minutes.

What will you see and learn? Your friendly guide will explain about the Library's history as an institution and the making of the 60-year-old building. Bespoke artworks are shown and commented on. Become familiar with the Library layout.

Hear about where the collections come from, where they are stored and then see parts of the collection on the lower ground floors – the legal deposit shelves containing books received under this scheme, hundreds of microfilms, serials, robots and a now defunct but working Tube system.

It's another world. Come and see it.

Bookings for large groups essential – please see the [NLA website](#).

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

As this is the Friends' Newsletter we are hoping that some of you will have some thoughts you would like to share.

We are asking for contributions of up to 400 words on any topic that you think might be worth sharing especially about the Library, matters bibliographic or any of the topics inspired by the Newsletter.

Please address your thoughts to: **The editor** via friends@nla.gov.au. We are very keen to hear from you!

Image of the digitisation lab, National Library of Australia



**NATIONAL
LIBRARY
OF AUSTRALIA**

*Friends
of the Library*

Friends of the National Library of Australia Inc.
National Library of Australia

Canberra ACT 2600 | Telephone: 02 6262 1698 | Email: friends@nla.gov.au

The Friends of the National Library of Australia acknowledges First Australians as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and pays respect to Elders – past and present – and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.