

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2025

Library Theatre and online, Thursday 27 November, 5.00pm

1. Welcome & Apologies

Co-Chair Catherine Anderson welcomed members and opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country. Apologies were noted.

Attendees

Friends Members:

Joyce O'Brien
Gemma Black
Arnis Stonis
Nancy Clarke
Thomas Higgins
Ian Primrose
Rosemary Laing
Di Chalmers
Douglas Crawford
Margaret May
Barbara Gleeson
Garrett Purtill
Judy Pearce
Margaret Nichols
Margaret Dent

Irene Wilson
Larissa Karpish
Deb Stonis
Sue Gage
Ana Penteado
Kay Blue
Alan Duff
Margaret Pender
Christine Crawford
Susan Ford
Marita Bradshaw
Diane Bell
Terry Craig
Shobha Varkey
Patricia Boylan

Michael Falk
Catherine Anderson
Michalina Stawyskyj
Peggy Horn
Sue White
Karen Downing
Kim Loadsman
Andrew Sergeant
Liz Nelson
Helen Bull
Anne Davis
Michael McKernan
Roberta McRae
Jo Maples

Library Staff:

Sharon Bulkeley
Luke Hickey

Lisa DeSantis

Belinda Jessup

Apologies:

Joanne Schumann
Honor Auchinleck
Kevin Judah White

Maureen Blackmore
Kerrie Nelson
Janet Hayes

Ray Blackmore
Doris Amesbury
Juliet Bunning

Lorna Buining
Sally Deves
Richard Blavins
Sally Joseph
David Teather
Max Bourke
Silvia Xavier
Sally Deves
Mark Jackson
Caroline Polak Scowcroft
David Middldeton
Penelope Wensley
Damaris Wilson
Penny Moyes

Debra Cunningham
Mariona Newman
Thomas Mautner
Gabrielle Hyslop
Liz Wilson
Margaret Bourke
Annette Lock
Margo Geering
Julie Beashel
Joan Adler
Penny Moyes
Mary Pollard
Gary Kent

Ingrid Moses
Mike Newman
Helen Catchatoor
Elizabeth Teather
Mary Anne Whiting
Sue Chambers
Judith Robertson
Colin Steele
Robyn Duncan
Ann Poole
Dianne Williams
Dallas Stow
Sarah Scott

2. Address from Luke Hickey, Assistant Director General, Engagement

Luke thanked Friends members for being an integral part of the Library community, congratulated them on 35 years and noted the contributions of departing committee members.

3. Acceptance of the Previous Minutes

The previous minutes were circulated with the meeting papers and were found to be an accurate record of the 2024 AGM.

Moved to accept: Nancy Clarke
Seconded: Sue Gage

4. Co-Chair's Report

Michalina Stawyskyj spoke first about Friends events in 2025.

2025 has been a very busy and productive year for the Events Sub-Committee providing an interesting and varied program that enticed member participation in the post COVID times and even in the depths of Canberra's very cold winter.

The Committee worked hard to ensure that the 2025 Program offerings and format reflected the diverse nature of the Friends membership which pleasingly continues to grow.

A highlight for the year was a party to celebrate and acknowledge the Friends' 35th Birthday. It was a happy event which provided an opportunity to reflect on the history of the Friends and on the many ways the Friends have supported and continue to support and promote community awareness of the NLA.

This year members were offered 15 events - up from 9 in the previous year.

These ranged from Exhibition Previews, a workshop, new members morning teas, coffee with the curators, conversations with authors and exclusive Friends collection viewings sponsored for us by the Library.

We will end the year with two popular events. Following this AGM, The Craft of Historical Fiction and on 12 December the exclusive Preview for Friends of the Treasurers Gallery.

The exclusive exhibition previews have been hits with members, Fit for Print with Mike Bowers and 1975 with Guy Hanson and Denise Drysdale certainly captured your interest.

The success of the 2025 Program is in no small measure due to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Events Sub-Committee chaired by the remarkable Nancy Clarke and long term members Peggy Horn and Sue Gage. The support the NLA provided to the Committee in the delivery of the Events Program cannot be underestimated. Particular thanks go to Daniel Gleeson and Sharon Bulkeley and the Events and Exhibition team and curators. Congratulations to all for helping to make the great events offered in 2025 so successful. We do not underestimate the effort that goes into making these events a success.

The Membership and Communication Sub-Committee chaired in 2025 by Arnis Stonis and Margaret Nichols, and strongly supported by Larissa Karpish, was active and creative in negotiating new offerings for members and finding new ways to publicise the benefits of Friends' membership and events.

Friends' membership provides a rich array of generous benefits and discounts. These include the current 20% discount at the bookshop and Bookplate, reciprocal rights to discounted exhibition entry and Friend's lounges with participating cultural institutions, links to the Canberra Writers Festival and ArtsNational, just to mention a few. A list of benefits can be found on the Friends section of the Library's website. I encourage you to take advantage of these and to encourage others to become Friends of the NLA.

My term as Committee member, limited to 4 years by the Articles of Association, has come to an end. I would like to acknowledge the hard work and contribution of all Committee members, Friends membership officer Belinda Jessup and the 2025 executive officers - Lauren, Isabella and Lisa in advancing the interests of the Friends. I thank the Director General for the strong support provided to the Friends. Finally, I would like to thank my co-chair, Catherine Anderson. It has been an opportunity I have enjoyed immensely. I look forward to the continued growth and success of the Friends.

Catherine spoke about activities of the Friends in 2025.

In the 2025-26 year, the Friends donated \$7500 to the Library for the digitisation of:

- *Julie Rapke's short biographies of prominent Australian women*
- *war correspondent Marjorie McDonald's scrapbook of her newspaper articles, both part of the Women Leaders project*
- *and the Wisenet journals,*

giving Friends a small part in Trove's continued success and improvement.

Early in 2026, your committee will review options to fund further digitisation projects in line with the Library's Treasured Voices priorities.

I would like to thank Max Burke for his editorship of the newsletter and welcome Margaret Nichols and George Nichols who have succeeded him.

The newsletter would not be possible without the excellent articles from many friends, Library staff members, speakers and others.

I would like to sincerely thank Belinda Jessup, our membership officer, who contributes both her experience and creativity to her role, and our three executive officers over the year - Lauren Conron, Isabella Simonovski and Lisa DeSantis. Lauren was the Friends' steady hand for many years, and Isabella and Lisa quickly picked up the many facets of the position.

The Friends have had so much support from Library staff including Director-General Dr Marie- Louise Ayres, Luke Hickey, Assistant Director General, Engagement, and his team, in particular Sharon Bulkeley and Daniel Gleeson.

But these are only a subset of the Library staff who have worked collaboratively with the Friends. Philanthropy, Marketing and Media, the bookshop, the outstanding curators and others, including the security guards, have all worked to include and inform the Friends, enabling the delivery of better outcomes.

*It is a joy to work with people who like their jobs.
I would like to move a vote of thanks to them.*

Moved: Irene Wilson

Seconded: Karen Downey

5. Financial Report

Michalina presented the Financial Report on behalf of Jo Schumann.

*Asst. Director General Luke Hickey, Friends of NLA - I am pleased to present the Financial Statement for 2024-25. The Financial Statement is attached to documents you have received.
The Statements have been prepared by Anthony Wilson of Accountability (ACT) Pty Ltd following an audit of the accounts in accordance with the provisions of the ACT Associations Incorporations Act 1991 and other mandatory reporting requirements.
Pleasingly, the auditor has issued an unqualified report.*

The total cash reserves at 30 June were \$193,023 compared to \$163,809 in the previous year. We hold \$100,000 in a term deposit and the remainder in the day-to-day operating account.

Other points to note

- 1. Income from memberships has increased, with the dollar value reflected in the 2024-25 financial year because a large number of new members elected for a one-year membership.*
- 2. The reduction in postage and printing costs continues to contribute significantly to the organization's financial year's profit.*
- 3. Strong attendance at most events has had a positive impact on finances*
- 4. Membership fees for 2026 remain unchanged*

Congratulations to the committee and relevant NLA staff (particularly Belinda, Lauren, Isabella and Lisa) for the decisions that have led to this year's outcome.

The Committee thanks the Director General and NLA Management for their ongoing support, including through the funding of an Executive Officer. The Executive Officers have done an outstanding job, in conjunction with the committee.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Belinda Jessup and NLA staff in supporting our efforts and thank the members of the Finance subcommittee for their assistance throughout the year.

Lastly, from Jo, I would like to thank our co-chairs Michalina and Catherine- our inspiring Committee Chairs and leaders who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Friends and NLA and provided sound and wise guidance throughout the year to all subcommittees.

Are there any questions on the report?

Michalina recommended that the financial statements for 2024-2025 be approved.

Moved: Larissa Karpish

Seconded: Michael Falk

6. Other Business

No other business was raised from the floor.

Catherine thanked the departing members of the committee, noting their contributions:

Michalina Stawyskyj (co-Chair)

Nancy Clarke (Chair Events subcommittee)

Sue Gage (Events subcommittee)

Peggy Horn (Events subcommittee)

Arnis Stonis (Communications & Memberships subcommittee)

7. Election of the Friends Committee for 2026

Catherine advised that ten nominations were received. All nominees have been confirmed as financial members of the Friends and have submitted the required documentation in support of their nomination.

The nominees are Catherine Anderson, Roberta McCrae, Gemma Black, Irene Wilson, Joyce O'Brien, Larissa Karpish, Margaret Nichols, Josephine Schumann, Michael Falk, Patricia Boylan.

Catherine noted that members may be co-opted to the Committee in accordance with the Rules of Association. There were no objections to these nominees.

The Committee was unanimously elected.

Moved: Sue Gage

Seconded: Michalina Stawyskyj

Michalina provided thanks and closed the meeting, with no further business to discuss.

Meeting closed at 5.25pm