



Newsletter of Canberra's University of the Third Age

www.u3acanberra.org.au

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October 2025

Volume 39 Number 5

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From the President

Volunteering at U3A Canberra – A Key to Our Success

Like many community organisations, U3A Canberra relies heavily on volunteers for its effective functioning. With over 4,000 members and more than 200 courses offered annually, the demand for volunteers is significant — spanning:

- Course administration
- Membership services
- Communications
- IT
- Volunteer coordination
- Facilities and general administration

And, of course, we must highlight the contribution of our volunteer course leaders — the cornerstone of our success and offerings. Supporting and attracting volunteers is a central focus of our revised Strategic Plan, now nearing completion. Like many organisations, we face significant shifts in volunteering trends. A recent ANU study reported that:

- Volunteer participation has not returned to pre-COVID levels
- Average hours contributed per volunteer have declined
- The age profile of volunteers is increasing

Many of our members also manage time constraints such as grandparenting, medical appointments, and travel, making it harder to commit to regular roles. In some cases, volunteer burnout is a risk, as fewer people take on more responsibilities.

In cases where we cannot secure volunteers for valued member activities, the Committee may explore external support options — with costs passed to participants, as seen with some walks and tours. In a resource constrained world it's essential to prioritise activities that members consider most important.

We also benefit from a dedicated core of long-term volunteers, whose passion and commitment have been crucial to U3A's success. Research supports our experience — people with higher educational levels (like many of our members) are more likely to volunteer.

Looking ahead, we are committed to:

- Providing support and training for volunteer managers and leaders
- Strengthening volunteer retention and recognition strategies
- Ensuring succession planning for key roles
- Offering flexible, short-term roles to meet modern time constraints
- Increasing use of digital tools for recruitment and coordination

A critical element of our future success is recruiting new members in the 50–60 age group. These individuals will form the next wave of course leaders and volunteers. We are also seeking volunteers to assist in development work around courses and membership. By embracing flexibility, using smart digital tools, and focusing on member-driven priorities, we can ensure the continuing growth of U3A Canberra

Alex Gosman, President



From the Editor

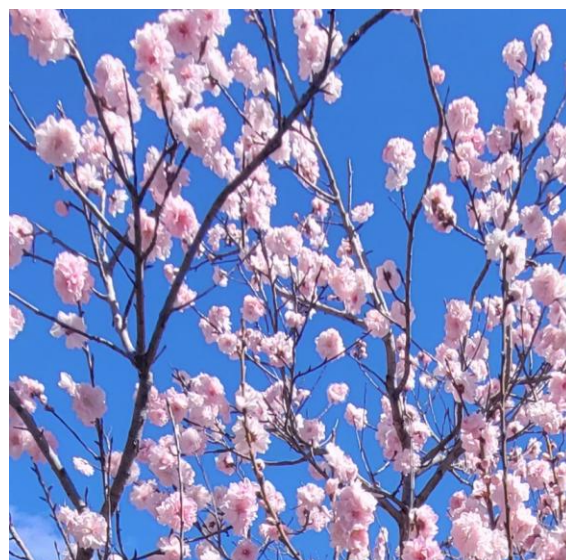
Public Facebook – members of U3A Canberra who are on community Facebook groups might care to post a promotion of our new public page.

Spring theme – my small contribution. The Friends of Black Mountain have also gotten into the theme. Our poets and photographers have risen to the challenge. We also appreciate the art from the Curtin Artists – we received so many works we'll spread them over this and our next edition.

Lots of articles here in members conducting courses within U3A Canberra – get on the bandwagon and share your knowledge.

Continuing a theme from a few issues ago, we've received some articles from our longer term Canberrans.

Finally there's quite a number of external bodies.



Bill Blair

October Newsletter Sub-Editor

Newsletter Timetable for 2025

Please observe the deadline for each edition — it makes our job much easier.

Newsletter Edition	Deadline for copy	Newsletter placed on U3A Website
December 2025	24 November 2025	1 December 2025

Alex Gosman

newsletter@u3acanberra.org.au

Office Contact Details

U3A Canberra Office at Hughes (ph. 6281 6998) is in the Hughes Community Centre at 2 Wisdom Street, Hughes, ACT 2605, and is usually open Monday to Friday from 9.30 to 4.30. All general enquiries should be directed to this Office.

Our Cook facility (ph. 6251 8005) is in the Cook Community Hub at 41 Templeton Street, Cook, ACT, 2614, and has the same opening hours.

Our Flynn Teaching Rooms (Course activities only; NO public or member enquiry services) are at Flynn Community Hub at 21 Bingle St, Flynn, ACT, 2615. **Please note:** Access to U3A at the Flynn Community Hub is from Hedland Circuit. For more information on holding a course at Flynn please contact the course coordinator for Flynn at flynn@u3acanberra.org.au.

Our mail address is now: U3A ACT Inc.
 Hughes Community Centre
 2 Wisdom Street
 Hughes ACT 2605

Members' Calendar 2025

UC = University of Canberra, Bruce Updated 22 May 2025

OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Wed 1	Membership renewals for 2026 open	Monday 3	Committee meeting	Monday 1	Newsletter published online
Wed 1	Newsletter published online	Wed 5	Nominations for Committee positions close	Monday 8	Committee meeting
Monday 6	Labour Day Offices closed	Wed 12	AGM (Hughes)	Friday 12	Offices close for Christmas-New Year break
Monday 13	Committee meeting	Monday 24	Deadline for December Newsletter	Monday 12 Jan 2026	Office reopens

Committee Matters

U3A Membership Renewal and Equipment Fund Donations

U3A's membership year runs from January to December. Members need to be financial to enrol and attend 2026 courses, activities and receive the eBulletin. The Committee has decided that membership fees for 2026 will remain the same as for 2025, namely Single \$40 / Joint \$70 / and a new member linked to a financial member living at the same address \$30.

Renewal notices detailing payment options will be emailed to members from 1 October 2025. To renew your membership online, go to the website: <https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/eway/renew.html>

Members do not need to use their password to renew their membership online. Just have your 2025 membership number, surname and credit card on hand and choose 'Renew with Online Payment'. Members who renew online via the U3A website with their credit card will receive their 2026 membership card and associated information via email.

New payment method: In addition to being able to renew by credit card online, members are now able to renew their membership via direct deposit. The details of the bank account will be available online if you choose 'Renew by Bank Transfer' at the following link: <https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/eway/renew.html>. Members who renew via this method will receive their 2026 membership card and associated information via email from the Membership Secretary once the payment has been confirmed.

Members can also renew in person or over the phone at either the Hughes or Cook offices.

Joint Memberships – Important – members who wish to renew only one membership from an existing Joint Membership must initially contact the Membership Secretary at the email address below to have their Joint Membership cancelled.

Equipment Fund – over the last four years U3A has purchased over \$73,000 in new and replacement equipment - laptops, printers, chairs, tables - for the three offices, plus for some specific and specialised equipment such as a defibrillator for Flynn, risers for the orchestra, an additional TV for Flynn and a drum kit for music groups meeting in Hughes.

Generous member contributions to the Equipment Fund of more than \$44,000 has supported this equipment program, to the benefit of all members and groups. We encourage all groups to examine their equipment requirements, and if something would facilitate course conduct and management, submit a proposal to the Treasurer.

When renewing your membership this year you might like to consider including a donation to this fund. Donations can be made at the same time as you renew your membership online or in person at the Hughes or Cook offices.

Mary Bermingham
Membership Secretary

membership@u3acanberra.org.au



Course Proposals for 2026 – an Invitation to Submit Course Proposals

U3A Canberra is always thankful for those members who use their knowledge and skills developed through training, working, hobbies or passions to present courses to the membership.

Course leaders, both prospective and current, who would like to present a course next year are invited to submit proposals for their courses now. While acceptable at any time, these proposals will form the basis for the initial allocation of rooms for courses in U3A venues being undertaken in November.

Lodging proposals can be efficiently undertaken through logging on to the U3A-ACT website and filling out the online form utilising this link:

<https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/members/my-courses.html>

When completed and submitted, it is automatically registered in the database and a notification is sent to the Course Administration Team at courses@u3acanberra.org.au. If you need to discuss a possible course or require assistance or advice, please contact the Course Leader Assistance Team at courseleaderassistance@u3acanberra.org.au

Please note that the Course Leader Assistance Team can help you in submitting online proposals.

While a course proposal can be submitted using the MS Word document form, this approach creates substantial work for our Courses Administration volunteers. It is also treated as lower priority in completing our 2026 course listings.

We are looking forward to your proposals for all and any courses.

Courses Sub-Committee



New Online Course Proposal System Now in Use

Since April 2023, course leaders have been using a new online system to submit their course proposals—and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

Previously, submitting a proposal involved completing a Word form and emailing it to the Courses Administration Team (CAT). Thence, it would be manually forwarded to either the Room Bookings Team (RBT) (for U3A venue courses) or the Courses Data Team (CDT) (for community venues), and the Data Team would laboriously enter everything into the system manually which was slow and often took several days.

Now, proposals can be submitted quickly and easily through the Course Leader page of our website. The new system even displays a history of past courses, allowing leaders to re-offer previous courses with just a few edits. Once submitted, proposals go straight into the system and are automatically routed to the relevant teams after approval by CAT.

Course Leaders can save drafts and return to them later, and a confirmation email is sent upon submission.

This streamlined process not only saves time but has also made life much easier for the CSC teams. Many course leaders have praised the system's ease of use—we're delighted to see it making such a positive impact!

The Courses Sub-Committee strongly recommends that course proposals be submitted online.

This will ensure that your course proposal is processed a lot quicker than one using the Word form.

If anyone needs help with lodging a course proposal, they can contact the Course Leader Assistance Team at courseleaderassistance@u3acanberra.org.au.

Some testimonials from course leaders.

I have been a course co-leader and course leader with U3A for the past 8 years (and am now in my 80s). I submitted my first online course proposal last year and used it again this year. I found it very easy to use. It also saved me a lot of time compared to completing the previous form. I would recommend it unreservedly.

Sharon O'Brien, Course Leader, The Play's the Thing

I am the course coordinator for four U3A courses ranging from a book club to an AFL group. I am an enthusiastic supporter and user of the online proposal form as it minimises the effort in submitting course proposals. It enables you to simply modify past entries to account for any changes to the course as offered into the future. It is a simple matter to update such features as start date, venue, etc. I would strongly recommend the use of the online proposal form to any course leader for the efficiencies and time savings it provides.

Alex Gosman, Course Leader

I used the online process to submit my course proposals late last year, and it worked smoothly. It avoided the introduction of editing errors which I had experienced previously, when my email address had been 'reconfigured'.

Judith Johnson, Course Leader, Melanesia, Micronesia, & Polynesia: our Pacific Neighbours

Courses Sub-Committee



Why not become a course leader at U3A?

Are you interested in running a course with U3A but not sure what to do? Or maybe you checked the U3A website and don't know where to start?

Good news! The Course Leader Assistance Team (CLAT) is here to support you!

To help people get started, we held a free two-hour session at Hughes in September to give an overview of what a course leader does and to show you how easy it is to do it. The topics ranged from creating the course, all the way to managing it once it's up and running.

Your course can be on any topic you are interested in, can be as short as one session or much longer, and can start any time during the year. So no matter how big or small your ideas are, contact us to explore the possibilities!

And in October, there are two Saturday morning sessions on 'How to create and present a course on anything' presented by U3A member and course leader David Whitbread.

The first session is about 'Creating your course' and the next one is on 'Presenting your course'. They will be at our Flynn rooms on Saturdays 4 and 11 October from 10am to 1pm. There will be handouts provided.

If you have ever thought you might be able to lead a study group, or ever thought why doesn't



*David Whitbread
wants you to enjoy
running courses for
U3A Canberra too*

someone teach [insert topic]? Maybe you should. These two weekend workshops will dispel any fears you may have about how to do it. They will give you the confidence to put your course out there and enjoy the process.

Course leader David Whitbread has been teaching for 40 years at all levels, from infants, primary and secondary students to TAFE and university students, to conferences, workshops, seminars and workplace training.

David said, 'The most fun I've had teaching is in the last 5 years when I've taught a 10-week course at U3A.'

That course is 'How to write, edit, design and print your own book' and more than 75 members have passed through it over the three times it's been run – and at least 7 books have been published by them since! He is also running 'Storytime for Seniors' at Hughes this term.

He wants to share some tips and tricks with you about:

- How to organise your content into course-size chunks
- What teaching techniques can work to vary your presentation
- How to encourage discussion and connection
- Why you want it to be a great social experience
- How to speak clearly and confidently in public
- When to use Powerpoints, white boards and other visual aids
- How to write succinct handouts that summarise your content
- Why telling stories helps people feel comfortable
- Why inviting outside people can be fun too.

This course doesn't just help you present at U3A, its techniques work for any presentation you might be asked to do at office, club, committee or church.

Contact: Course Leader Assistance Team (CLAT) at U3A Canberra

courseleaderassistance@u3acanberra.org.au

Or to register for David's two Saturdays: david@TheDesignManual.com



Barry Ridgway



David Wilson

Language course leaders and conversation group convenors needed for 2026

Are you a language teacher or willing to run a conversation group? Will you volunteer for 2026, please?

U3A Canberra has waiting lists for most of our language courses and conversation groups. We are currently recruiting language teachers and convenors of conversation groups. You may be a native speaker, a language teacher in your professional life or you may be willing to convene a group in a language you know. We hope you will join U3A Canberra's 36 language Course Leaders/Conversation Convenors to help us meet our members' demand for more language groups in 2026.

We will support new volunteer Leaders/Convenors with mentoring to get you started and Communities of Practice will be available to optionally help you with ideas, resources and methods.

Willing to give it a go? Contact Carol Flynn on development@u3acanberra.org.au



Judy Wilson



Yvonne Kilgour

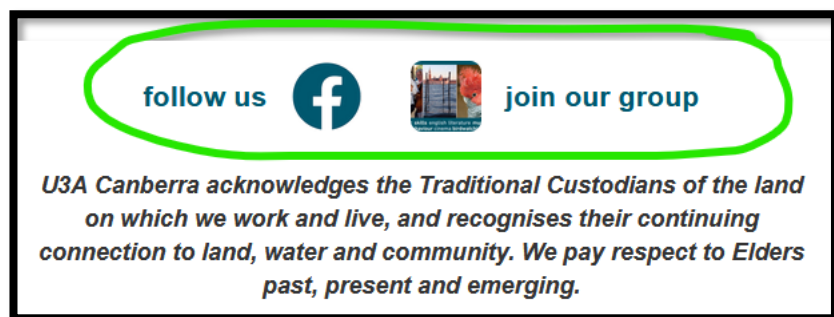
U3A Canberra Member Liaison Person

U3A Canberra has a Member Liaison Person (MLP) available to help members. They can help with information and explanations about our Principles, Code of Conduct, Policies, and related procedures.

The MLP can also help members with any concerns or complaints. They aim to get an informal resolution of the issue whenever possible. If needed, the MLP can help prepare formal complaint documentation and assist with the processes.

Members can contact the Member Liaison Person by emailing memberliaison@u3acanberra.org.au

Facebook



Did you know that U3A Canberra has both a public facebook page and a private members' group?

To join the private members group, you just need to state your membership number when asking to join.

You will find the facebook icons at the bottom of our website members' page.

Julie P

Facebook Manager

facebook@u3acanberra.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/U3ACanberra>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/u3a.act/>

U3A Canberra at the COTA Seniors and Better Ageing Expo 2025



On a brisk and windy but fine Wednesday, U3A volunteers set up a stall at the COTA Seniors and Better Ageing Expo at the Old Bus Depot Building at Kingston.

In the lead up to the day, the Committee had agreed to some new marketing material being developed, so new banners were made, along with some other merchandise including business cards.

A call had been made for volunteers to 'man' the site across the day and we were overwhelmed

with the generous spirit of our members to promote U3A Canberra with a smile on their face.

Many thousands came through the doors of the Expo, and quite a few of those came past our site to have a chat – some out of curiosity and to pick up a handout, and some with a genuine interest in who we are and what we do.

Many thanks to the many volunteers who assisted on the day, and to other members who called in to say hello. All up a very valuable day.

Mary Bermingham
membership@u3acanberra.org.au



Course News

Recorder News

Three older recorders



These are 3 recorders which have been taken apart to be oiled.

One treble and two tenor recorders were recently given to me. They are older German models, from around 1960, and as they haven't been played for many years, the wood has dried out, and the tone might not be as good as it could be..

I have carefully oiled the insides, and this photo shows them on oiling racks, allowing the oil to be absorbed. I use almond oil, and after a few days, I shall see how they sound.

If there are recorder players who would like to try a different size, please contact me.

Recorders for a school in Fiji

U3A members are great travellers.

During a chat in our tea break with a member of our Canberra Recorder Orchestra (U3A), I learnt that Jeanette often visits Fiji for extended periods of time, and works in a school there.

Because I have quite a collection of recorders, especially plastic that can stand the hot climate, I asked if she would like to take a bag full to the school.

She was delighted, and here she is with the collection, prior to their relocation to Fiji.



We wish Jeanette a happy stay there, and that the the children will have fun as they learn to play them.

Sarabande ..things that happen!

The Sarabande Recorder Ensemble was booked to give a concert on Tuesday, 2nd September, at Calvary Retirement Village where the 100 year-old mother of one of our members lives.

However, just to prove that 'things' don't always go to plan, we had to cancel it.

We all know that we in U3A have many reasons for missing classes, such as illness, travel, accidents and caring duties. This time it was the leader, Margaret, who was disabled.

She slid on very wet slippery tiles while rushing to deliver chocolates to a sick neighbour and fell flat backwards, bruising head and back. Scans and x-rays showed no drastic damage, but there was enough to keep her out of action for several weeks.

On Tuesday 16th, she felt able to face the class, but had been forbidden to conduct with her right arm. So we all met, as usual, and one of our members, Kathryn, very ably conducted us through the program, and Margaret enjoyed playing in the tenor section for a change. We played some well-known folk songs from the British Isles, and some lovely pieces by Telemann, Haydn and Handel.

All being well, Sarabande Recorder Ensemble will present its concert on Tuesday 30th September!

Margaret Wright
recorderteacher@hotmail.com

The Poetry Appreciation Group



Only Two Lips
who do you think you are
standing so pert and penal
asserting yourself in rich colour
arrogant, obvious
demanding my attention

well, I'm not falling for it!
such a brazen showing
with your closed-mouth talk
I will give you what you deserve –
lip service, and just you wait

your day will come
believe me, you will bend
becoming quite dishevelled
falling to kiss the ground
in total disarray

Richard Scutter
U3A Poetry Appreciation group

Majura Café Poets and also U3A writing group 'Just Writing'



People are Petals

People are petals
some long-lived, some short,
some cling to their stems,

some fall to the ground.

After life's winter bleakness,
the bareness has gone,
tiny buds break forth,
fresh hope is here.

Petals are bright
or petals are pale,
petals are large
or petals are small.
Petals are fragrant
such as a rose,
petals are odorous
as in photinea
and so in our world.

Some weep,
some stand proud.
Deep pink
and dark purple,
crisp white, ruby red,
yellow & brown,
diverse in their beauty,
yet linked
by their transience.
They can't last forever,
give pleasure,
then drop

Jenny Burgess.



An Invitation to Warrani Chorale's November Concert

Before the Christmas rush engulfs you, give yourself a treat and enjoy a morning of music with Warrani Chorale at their concert at Weston Creek Uniting Church on Wednesday, 26 November at 10.30 am. You will be delighted with the lovely selection of songs made by our Musical Director and Conductor, Helen Swan, which includes favourites such as *"You'll Never Walk Alone"* by Rogers and Hammerstein and *"Think of Me"* by Andrew Lloyd Webber from Phantom of the Opera. As well, the choir will sing some very enjoyable Christmas music including *"Christmas Kum Baya"* arranged by Jay Althouse, and *"Do You Hear What I Hear"* by Noel Begney and Gloria Shayne. The audience sing-a-long of favourite Christmas songs is guaranteed to lift your spirits and prepare you for a very happy Christmas season.

Admission is by gold coin donation. We look forward to your company on November 26.



Helen Swan conducting Warrani Chorale at their concert in June of this year.

Woden Weston Creek Current Affairs Course

The Woden Weston Creek Current Affairs course recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. Its first meeting was on 8 August 2000. For 25 years, the course has been a discussion group on Current Affairs, with the occasional guest speaker.

It has met at the following locations:

- The old Pearce Primary school site
- The old Deakin Bowling Club
- Hughes Baptist Church rooms
- The old Serbian Club in Mawson
- And for the last 17 years, the Weston Raiders Club

At the morning tea, current members recognized Shirley Kral (still a member) who was instrumental in starting the course as well as other original and early members in attendance: Joan Westaway, Dorothy Anderson and Pat Moffat. Original members Val and Daryl Cupitt, who are still course members, were also recognized. Gwen and Bill Hartigan who also were instrumental in its early organization were recognized.



Original members of the course: Shirley Kral, Joan Westaway, Dorothy Anderson

Over the years, the course has been fortunate to have had many volunteers who moderated the meetings including Reece Grey, Joan Westaway, John Leonart as well as current moderator, Lyndall Young, who has done the job for fifteen years.

Mick Collins, who for many years managed the course's records and the relationship with the Raiders Club, was also thanked.

Also thanks were expressed to those who have worked on the Speaker Committee, ensuring the group continues to have interesting guest speakers. Also thanked were those who have acted as course treasurers and those who have facilitated morning tea and Christmas lunches. And the many, many interesting and knowledgeable members were recognized.

The Woden Weston Creek Current Affairs course continues to meet each Tuesday morning at 10am at The Raiders Weston Club during school terms.



Members of the Woden Weston Creek Current Affairs course who recently celebrated the course's 25th anniversary

Brian Kensey



U3A Course – the Write Stuff

Spring

Bruce flipped over the page on the desk calendar to September 1st. He peered through his multifocals and read the quote for the day. It was from Alfred, Lord Tennyson: In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

"So, it's slow and making funny whooshing sounds, is it?" Vinnie, the young tech-nerd from IT upstairs inclined his head towards Bruce's computer. Bruce pushed back in his ergonomic swivel chair to make room for Vinnie. "Yeah, that's right, mate." He neglected to mention that he seemed to have lost all the current stock take records as well.

Bruce had never really come to terms with office technology. He fiercely fought off any attempts by his supervisor, Emma to enroll him in computing courses. (It was a real headache for her during Covid restrictions with work-from-home decisions). "It was much better when all the files were in manila folders in the filing cabinets," Bruce frequently declared to anyone who would listen. And this AI palaver was the devil's work, in Bruce's opinion. He was counting the days until his retirement in November. His colleagues rolled their eyes and ignored his regular Luddite rantings. They too could hardly wait for his retirement day to come around.

A waft of sweet perfume suddenly permeated the air. Vinnie ceased his rapid keyboard tapping. He gazed dreamily at the willowy young woman who had entered the room – the Director's Personal Assistant, Daisy, dressed for Spring in a chic floral dress. "Hey, Daisy," said Vinnie, his voice hoarse and his dark brown eyes staring.

Hang on, what's this, thought Bruce, sitting upright. Glancing at Vinnie, he recognized the signs of the love-struck – that glassy look in Vinnie's eyes and his slightly trembling hands. He thought he could hear Vinnie's heart pounding in his chest.

Bruce raised his eyebrows in surprise. Well, well, Spring has sprung and this young man's fancy is definitely turning to thoughts of love, lightly or otherwise.

Flicking back her long toffee-coloured hair, Daisy turned her cool green gaze to Vinnie momentarily. A brief pained smile was all she allowed him before continuing on her way. "Nice perfume, Daisy," said Vinnie eagerly, "Is that Paris in Spring? My sister wears it."

But the object of his desire was already on the far side of the room, out of earshot. Daisy had perched her slender rump on the edge of Emma's desk and was swinging her elegant tan-booted foot back and forth.

"Smells a bit like the air freshener the wife sprays about when Biggles, our old Labrador has a long-winded outbreak of flatulence," said Bruce to Vinnie as he sniffed the air. Anticipating a sneeze, Bruce retrieved a large handkerchief from his back pocket.

Bruce had always considered Daisy to be a stuck-up cow. He recalled his attempt to start up a conversation with her at last year's office Christmas party – she had looked at him as if he was an alien from Outer Space. He thought Vinnie, whom he liked, could do a lot better than Daisy. Emma for instance. Intelligent, hard-working, and exceedingly pleasant to everyone despite being the supervisor in the section. He was surprised by the friendship that seemed to have developed between the vacuous Daisy and nice sensible Emma.

At that moment Emma and Daisy, heads together, were whispering and giggling. A glass vase of daffodils sat on Emma's desk. "A bit of Spring for the office," Emma had announced cheerfully that morning, cradling the bright yellow bouquet to her chest when she had come in. Bruce had sneezed repeatedly and then blinked his bleary reddened eyes at everyone.

Nevertheless, he had brushed aside Emma's concern for his delicate nasal passages and insisted that she leave the flowers on her desk. Secretly he thought that his occasional dramatic sneezing would be a good excuse to skive off to the staff tearoom and make himself a cup of instant coffee; and while there, snaffle a couple of Daisy's gourmet chocolate biscuits. They sat invitingly on the shelf above the microwave oven in a Tupperware container neatly labelled with her name and the warning hands off.

"Bruce, you need to get rid of your old emails – there are some here dating back ten years." Vinnie raked his fingers through his dark curly hair in exasperation. He had already restored the stock take files which had been hovering nervously above the delete bin.

"No point doing it now, mate," Bruce said with a dismissive wave of his hand, "When I leave in a month or so you can zap the whole bloody lot."

Later that morning Bruce ducked off to the tearoom for an early coffee break. He was out of milk and wanted to pinch some from the fridge before anyone else got there. Of course, that low-fat organic muck of Daisy's would be spared.

Two people sat at a small table in the corner of the tearoom. They leaned towards each other holding hands and whispering softly. One had a daffodil tucked into her hair. Bruce sneezed and the loving couple turned towards him: Daisy in annoyance and Emma smiling.

"Strewth," muttered Bruce to himself as he abruptly turned on his heel and hurried back to his desk, "Spring has sprung alright and love is in the air, but I reckon that old toff Lord Tennyson'd be as gob smacked as I am."

Judy La Porte

The Spring of Knowing

Jane was a woman of precision. In her world, there was no room for frivolity: every question demanded an answer, every observation required notation, and every living thing, from the grass at her feet to the towering plane tree in the park, was catalogued by its Latin name. To Jane, beauty was not subjective wonder but a matter of cellular structure, evolutionary adaptation, taxonomy.

It was the season when light lengthened and the world quickened, grasses lifting their blades toward the tentative sun, air rinsed clean with the scent of damp earth. In such a season, Jane moved through the days

on a path worn smooth by habit: lecture hall, glasshouse, library, garden, as ordered and contained as the specimens pressed between archival paper in her office drawer.

She wore her intelligence as a shield. Conversations were brief and efficient. Jokes, if offered, met with a blank stare, then continued as if nothing had happened. She had no family left to speak of, only plants. Plants did not judge. Her colleagues in the university's botany department described her as "brilliant, if a touch humourless." She had overheard them discussing her, but the words rolled off her like water from a lotus leaf, *Nelumbo nucifera*.

Jane kept a meticulous notebook, each entry dated and cross-referenced, each plant labelled in its ancient tongue: *Taraxacum officinale* for dandelion, *Digitalis purpurea* for foxglove, *Eucalyptus haemastoma* for scribbly gum. What others called a garden, she called a testbed; what they called a flower, she called an inflorescence. A rose was not beautiful, it was *Rosa rubiginosa*, a member of the Rosaceae family with distinct sepals, petals, and stamens, and a propensity for hybridization.

Spring arrived with a riot of green and gold spilling over embankments and lighting up highways, pink and white blossom adorning bare branches. Jane observed the transformation with clinical detachment. "Anthocyanins intensify," she noted. "Chlorophyll content increases. Pollinators emerge in correlation with rising temperatures." Her lunches were spent in the Botanic Garden, notebook in hand, eyes narrowed in concentration.

It was on such a day, as cherry blossoms fell like pale confetti, that Jane met Mrs. Margaret Bell.

Mrs. Bell was a fixture in the garden, though not in any official capacity. She was older—her hair a silvered cap clipped close to her scalp, her eyes bright behind thick glasses. She wore cardigans in hues of lemon and mint with swishing skirts, and moved with a gentle deliberateness, as if every step were an act of appreciation.

"Good morning," Mrs. Bell said, settling herself on the bench beside Jane. Jane, deep in annotating the morphology of *Daphne odora aureomarginata*, barely acknowledged her.

"Daphne," Mrs. Bell said, following Jane's gaze to the delicate blooms. "My mother used to grow them. The scent always takes me back to childhood."

Jane made a small, noncommittal sound. "*Daphne odora aureomarginata* belongs to the Thymelaeaceae family," she said. "The fragrance is the result of volatile organic compounds, primarily linalool and hexanal."

Mrs. Bell smiled. "Is that so? It smells like happiness to me."

Jane frowned. She had no patience for sentiment. "The perception of scent is a neurological response to molecular stimuli," she said stiffly.

Mrs. Bell only nodded, as if Jane had agreed with her. "And yet, you don't look like you're enjoying it."

Jane bristled. "Enjoyment is not the objective. Knowledge is."

Mrs. Bell considered this. "Sometimes," she said softly, "the two can be the same."

For three days, Mrs. Bell appeared at the same bench. She asked Jane what she was studying, listened to the impassive recitation of facts, and then interjected with a memory, a story, or a question that seemed to have little to do with botany. "Why do you suppose roses are given as tokens of affection?" she mused once. "Is there a plant you remember from childhood?" Jane answered with Latin names and chemical processes. Mrs. Bell simply listened, her silence gentle and unjudging.

On the fourth day, Mrs. Bell arrived holding a single rose, its petals the colour of blushing dawn. She held it out to Jane, who took it with awkward reluctance.

"*Rosa rubiginosa*," Jane said, turning the flower this way and that. "Deciduous shrub, native to Europe and western Asia, characterized by—"

"Don't name it," Mrs. Bell interrupted softly.

Jane stopped, startled.

"Just smell it."

Jane hesitated. She had catalogued the fragrances of hundreds of plants, always as data: pungent, sweet, musky, acrid. She brought the rose to her nose and inhaled.

The scent was rich, layered—impossible to capture in a table of compounds. It was velvet and sunlight and something she could not quantify.

Mrs. Bell watched her with a small, knowing smile. "Sometimes," she said, "it's enough to be here. To let the world in, just as it is."

Jane felt something uneasy and unfamiliar loosen inside her—a tension she hadn't known she carried.

They sat together in silence. For the first time, Jane noticed the breeze, the sun warming her hands, the distant chime of laughter from the children picnicking on the lawn. The Latin names flickered at the edge of her mind, but something softer pushed through: the colour of the petals, the music of laughter, the gentle pulse of spring.

Jane did not change overnight. She still carried her notebook, still delighted in the elegance of classification. But she began, tentatively, to leave space between her entries—not every page filled with data, but with sketches, impressions, fragments: "Smell of lilac—unexpected sweetness," or "Sun on iris petals—almost translucent." She found herself smiling when Mrs. Bell appeared beside her, and once, even laughed at a story about a dog who had eaten a tulip bulb by mistake.

By the time the magnolias flowered, Jane found she was not only observing spring's return—she was living it. She did not abandon her love for taxonomy, nor her hunger for knowledge. But she learned, through the gentle persistence of Mrs. Bell, that there was knowledge to be found beyond the page: a world that could be named and, at the same time, simply enjoyed.

For the first time in years, Jane sent a postcard—not to a family member, for she had none, but to herself. She wrote only three words: "Smell the roses."

And so, as spring awakened the world, Jane let the world in. The scientific names remained, sharp and clear, but now, beneath them bloomed something wilder, wordless, and sweet as the scent of a rose caught on the October breeze.

Anne Handberg

Flynn Poetry Group

I did enjoy my introduction to Muriel Spark's poetry, so thanks to the group. I haven't written poetry for decades and had forgotten how much I enjoy it. I've left it behind for more social pursuits. So now I can have both. Here are a couple of haiku to welcome Spring.

Out without my coat
among the winter roses
I'm counting jonquils

Spring has this to say,
"When winter burns bone deepest
I'm not far away"

Glenda Naughten



Stories from Long Term Canberrans

Seasons of a Canberra Childhood

I am very grateful to have been born and raised in Canberra in the late 1940s and 1950s – a baby boomer! My family lived in a newly- built government house in the suburb of Turner, which at that time was on the outskirts of the “city”.

I was happy in all the seasons, but winter was very hard in an inadequately heated house. There was only an open wood fire in the lounge room, a fuel stove in the kitchen, a chip heater in the bathroom for hot water, a copper in the laundry and a small bar radiator which could be moved around. I remember running down the freezing hallway from my icy bedroom each morning to get dressed in front of the fuel stove. The lawn outside would be covered in thick white frost and any clothes left on the line overnight would be as hard as a board.

Riding my bike to school was brutal, dressed in a serge uniform, a woollen jumper, a blazer and itchy stockings. I felt sorry for the boys in their school shorts! Classrooms were unheated and we kept our gloves on in class until recess. Eventually the sun would come out, leading to a beautiful blue sky and crisp air. We would go outside and play games that involved running, jumping and skipping, just to warm up.

The highlight of winter was Empire Day or as we children preferred to call it - “Cracker Night”. We would prepare for days, collecting old boxes, newspapers, tyres and branches to build up a bonfire pile on a vacant piece of land at the end of our street near Haig Park, where the Turner tennis courts are now located. We earned extra pocket money with odd jobs to buy our stash of crackers at the O’Connor newsagency – tom thumbs, bungers, jumping jacks, catherine wheels, roman candles and skyrockets. Being risk averse, my favourites were always the sparklers. On the night itself, with the bonfire alight, spitting and crackling and putting out good heat, we would dress in our warmest clothes and the whole community would head to the bonfire for the exciting evening of celebration. Then it was home to a steaming cup of cocoa and to bed with a hot water bottle.

The advent of spring was a whole different experience and awaited with much anticipation and joy. Once we saw the Cootamundra Wattle near the letter-box start to bloom, we knew that spring had sprung! It was wonderful to put away the woollies and to run around barefoot in shorts and T shirts. My parents would be outside in the garden – my father in the backyard, planting vegetables and tending his many fruit trees. The front garden was my mother's pride and joy and I remember her dahlias, snapdragons, poppies, gladioli, forget-me-nots and always, always roses.

For us children the garden was a great playground, where we played lots of games and used our imagination. The front lawn was separated from the public footpath by a hedge, where we would find a space to become a cubby house, and we pretended to be mothers with our dolls as babies and we made mud pies after rain. The boys constructed bilycars with the help of their Dads and raced them down the footpath. As the weather grew warmer, we would run around under the sprinkler. Our street was unsealed so we could draw squares with a stick for hopscotch and so few families owned cars, that it was quite safe, with little traffic.

As summer approached, the children of all ages in the neighbourhood roamed together more widely, with a great deal of freedom. The rule was that we had to be home when the streetlights came on. We were out in the fresh air, engaging with each other for hours. The only screen time was the occasional treat of a matinee at the Civic picture theatre. In all seasons, we used our imagination to create our own world, which prepared us for the adult world of our future. We were children in a city that was itself in its infancy and we all grew up together to contribute to the nation's capital.

Merran Martin

How many Argonauts are still with us?

During lockdown, I wrote an article about the Argonauts' Session, the brilliant, daily early evening ABC radio session for children up to the age of 17, which ran from 1939 until 1969.



There were about 70,000 children Australia-wide, who were given a Greek name to represent the ship on which they were 'rowing with Jason' in search of the Golden Fleece, with a number to represent the position where we sat as 'rowers'. Children were encouraged to send in contributions to be looked at and discussed on radio by experts in the various fields. For example, artworks were assessed by 'Phidias' (Jeffrey Smart) writings by A.D. Hope and Dame Leonie Kramer, music by Mr. Melody Man (pianist Lindley Evans), science with Tom The Naturalist (Tom Colefax, lecturer in Zoology at Sydney University).

The anonymity enabled us to write and paint happily, knowing that no one but the author would know to whom the public discussions and kind criticisms were directed. We were allocated certificates and points, and these added up to allow the award of the prestigious Golden Fleece and Bar to be attached to your badge. I never got that far; I just loved listening to everyone else's contributions.

A number of U3A members wrote to me at the time, sharing memories.

I mentioned that in 1982, a reunion of Argonauts was organised at the AN Staff Centre. We wore our old badges (a brass ship) and laughed at our old names (mine, forever engraved on my memory, was Eleusis 5. When I travelled in Greece as a 23-year-old, I had to visit Eleusis, the home of some Mysteries..well worth googling, and my sister was Hylas 41.) People who had forgotten were given the name Amnesia and a number.

Now, in 2025, how many of us are left?

I'd love to hear from 'old' Argonauts, and perhaps we could have a sociable cuppa somewhere (Woden Seniors' Club is a perfect place!), perhaps on a Saturday afternoon.

Just let me know, and I'll organise it.

Margaret Clingan Wright: Eleusis 5.
recorderteacher@hotmail.com

U3A Thursday Art Group in Yass

The Gift of Art

A vibrant collection from the U3A Thursday Art Group in Yass will be on exhibition at **Kyeema Art Gallery, 13 Gladstone Street, Hall, from Friday 17 October to Sunday 16 November 2025.**

This special showcase brings together 15 accomplished artists from the Yass Valley and Canberra regions—creative minds who gather each Thursday in Yass to share ideas, inspiration, and their love of making art. The result is a stunning display of over 40 original works, rich in style, story, and spirit.

We're delighted that Andrea Hope, Vice-President of U3A, will officially open the exhibition on Friday 17 October, with a welcoming event from 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

We warmly invite you to join us for this celebration of community and creativity.

Bookings are essential via Capital Wines Table Reservations – Obee <https://obee.com.au/capitalwines/>

Please RSVP by Wednesday 15 October.

We hope you can come and experience it for yourself—the joy, the colour, the gift of art.

Like-Minded & Joint Programs

54th Black Mountain spring wildflower ramble

Saturday 11 October 2025 – 9.30am sharp to 12noon or later

Celebrate the spring flowering on beautiful Black Mountain with a social ramble appreciating wildflowers in the tradition established by Nancy Burbidge, continued by George Chippendale, and then Jean Geue. (Dr Nancy Burbidge was a botanist and conservationist, the Curator Herbarium Australiense and a Senior Research Scientist, CSIRO. She was a keen leader of numerous weekend walks and initiated the Spring Wildflower Rambles on Black Mountain. After Nancy became ill, George Chippendale, a eucalyptus enthusiast, continued that tradition for many years. When he retired from guiding the walks, he handed over to Jean Geue).



Discover the surprising diversity of tiny orchids, bush peas, wattles and billy buttons on easy bush tracks with experienced guides and good company. All springs are not the same. The pattern remains but timing and abundance vary with the weather; after the weather we have had this year we are anticipating a special display of flowers. Friends of Black Mountain welcomes everyone, be they experts or those who have never slowed down to see the somewhat cryptic diversity. We plan several guides, with helpers, who will take different directions.

Please allow time to park and walk to the meeting point.

There will be some books for cash sale, including Black Mountain a natural history of a Canberra icon by Ian Fraser and Rosemary Purdie.

Meet at Belconnen Way entry just before Caswell Drive turnoff – watch for balloons or banners

BYO morning tea, water, hat, sunblock and stout shoes.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL to ensure we have enough guides. Please use this booking link:

<https://www.trybooking.com/DEWYB>

This will help us to contact you if changes are needed at short notice (e.g. bad weather).

If you have problems with that link, email names, addresses, and mobile phone numbers of each person you book to friendsofblackmountain@gmail.com

Research Participants Sought

ANU Research Project – The role of Proprioceptive Sensations in Processing Visual Stimuli

Over the past several years the ANU School of Medicine and Psychology has benefited from the generosity of U3A members who have participated in a number of its studies. Les Andrews is a PhD student at the School and seeking further participation by members in the study set out below. The study has ethics approval.

This study investigates how proprioceptive sensations, in this case the awareness of the position of the hands, combined with visual stimuli can influence the perception of spatial awareness. Where the processing of these stimuli is disrupted such as from a stroke it can distort such perception and lead to a condition called visuospatial neglect where the left side of space is unconsciously ignored.

This study aims to identify the underlying processes of such cognitive processing in healthy adults. A short screening test will be completed followed by two questionnaires and then a computer-based task undertaken. Participants will be asked to respond to the presentation of objects on a computer screen using a touch pad. Participants will undertake this task while wearing a commercially available wrist vibrator. The study will take approximately 2 hours.

Participants need to be 60+ with normal vision (including with glasses and/or contact lenses) and no past neurological conditions. Participants in this study will receive \$20 per hour and access to free parking.

Contact: Leslie.Andrews@anu.edu.au or 0477654146.



Anne Peters

School Volunteer Program ACT



The School Volunteer Program ACT provides adult mentors to assist students who would benefit from extra help and guidance.

In the past we have been able to recruit many U3A members to join the School Volunteer Program ACT as volunteer mentors. This time we are not targeting volunteers who want to assist struggling readers.



We are looking for people who would enjoy the meccano program and the challenges involved in helping students to build meccano models. They need to be patient and have an eye for details. Each kit has a manual with full instructions and illustrations. Meccano delivers a hands-on building experience that develops creativity, problem-solving, and technical skills using bespoke tools. Each volunteer works with one student and a Meccano kit and together they strive to build a model, that has been selected by the student.

There are usually several volunteers working in a group with their students in a quiet location at the

school – often in the school library.

The construction process requires patience and perseverance as they read the instructions, find the necessary pieces and put them together to build a car, a crane or helicopter etc.

The student and the volunteer work together at the school for one hour per week for at least ten weeks.

Many of our mentors have been volunteering in the meccano program for many years. They enjoy seeing the skill development and the growth in self confidence in the students and they enjoy working in a small group with other volunteers.

If you would like to find out more about mentoring through Meccano, please come along to our workshop on Monday 20 October in meeting room 11 at the Hedley Beare Centre in Fremantle Drive Stirling.

You can find out more at <http://svpact.org.au/>

Contact Nola on 0434 537 555 if you would like to attend or if you require further information.

ACT Legal Aid – the Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS)

ACT Legal Aid have a dedicated service for Older Persons – the Older Persons ACT Legal Service (OPALS) – it provides a free 1 hour appointment for those aged 65+. They can provide advice, and/or referrals for a range of services including advanced care planning, elder abuse, retirement villages, etc, etc.

We have a copy of a presentation given to the Justice of the Peace members meeting. The presentation also gives a high level summary of Wills, General Power of Attorney, Enduring Power of Attorney, Health Direction, Statement of Choices, and Advanced Care Directions for Mental Health – these vary by state/territory – so getting something relevant to the ACT is important. The overall theme of the presentation was identifying and preventing elder abuse.

Presentation is available here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AupPa-Hmcu9PQCxHcTZXVJr6tIsxaskO/view?usp=sharing>

Legal Aid ACT

What will we discuss

This presentation covers:

- What is OPALS
- How to access OPALS
- Legal issues that commonly affect OPALS clients
- Abuse and mistreatment of older people– what is it and what can be done



Queanbeyan Players bring high-energy fun to '9 to 5 the Musical' Spotlight on a musical comedy of ambition, laughter, and empowerment

Queanbeyan Players are gearing up to lift the curtain on '9 to 5 the Musical,' offering local audiences an electric, uplifting celebration centred squarely on the empowering story of workplace equality. Dates are 31 October – 9 November 2025. As opening night approaches, Queanbeyan Players (QP) promise to entertain audiences with a musical full of catchy tunes, dynamic choreography, and beloved characters brought to life with passion and flair.

Spotlight on a musical comedy of ambition, laughter, and empowerment



Queanbeyan Players are gearing up to lift the curtain on '9 to 5 the Musical,' offering local audiences an electric, uplifting celebration centred squarely on the empowering story of workplace equality. As opening night approaches, Queanbeyan Players (QP) promise to entertain audiences with a musical full of catchy tunes, dynamic choreography, and beloved characters brought to life with passion and flair.

Set in a bustling corporate office in the late 1970s, '9 to 5' follows the hilarious and heartfelt journey of three women - Violet, Doralee, and Judy - who, fed up with their overbearing boss, Franklin Hart Jr., hatch an outrageous plan to turn the tables and reclaim control of their workplace. Their escapades highlight themes of friendship, resilience, and equality, all wrapped in a witty and playful narrative that keeps audiences laughing and rooting for the underdogs.



What truly sets '9 to 5' apart is its unforgettable soundtrack. With music and lyrics by legendary country star Dolly Parton, the show pulses to the rhythm of iconic numbers like '9 to 5,' 'Shine Like the Sun,' and 'Backwoods Barbie.' Each song is a celebration of optimism and determination, combining elements of pop, country, and Broadway style into toe-tapping, sing-along moments that linger long after the performance ends. At the heart of the musical are three vivid, relatable characters, and one not-so-relatable:

- Violet Newstead – The wise, quick-witted office supervisor whose leadership and humour anchor her team.
- Doralee Rhodes – The vivacious secretary with a big heart and bigger dreams, determined to prove she's more than meets the eye.
- Judy Bernly – The newcomer who finds her voice and confidence as she navigates office politics and personal transformation.
- Franklin Hart Jr. – The comically egotistical boss whose outdated attitudes provide the perfect foil for the trio's spirited rebellion.

Supported by a lively ensemble, these characters ignite the stage with their chemistry, comedic timing, and emotional moments, making every scene unforgettable.

'9 to 5 The Musical' isn't just entertainment - it's a musical with a message. Through laughter and song, it champions the strength of friendship and the courage to challenge the status quo. The musical's blend of comedy, heart, and memorable music makes it an ideal outing for groups, families, and anyone who loves a story of triumph set to a brilliant score.

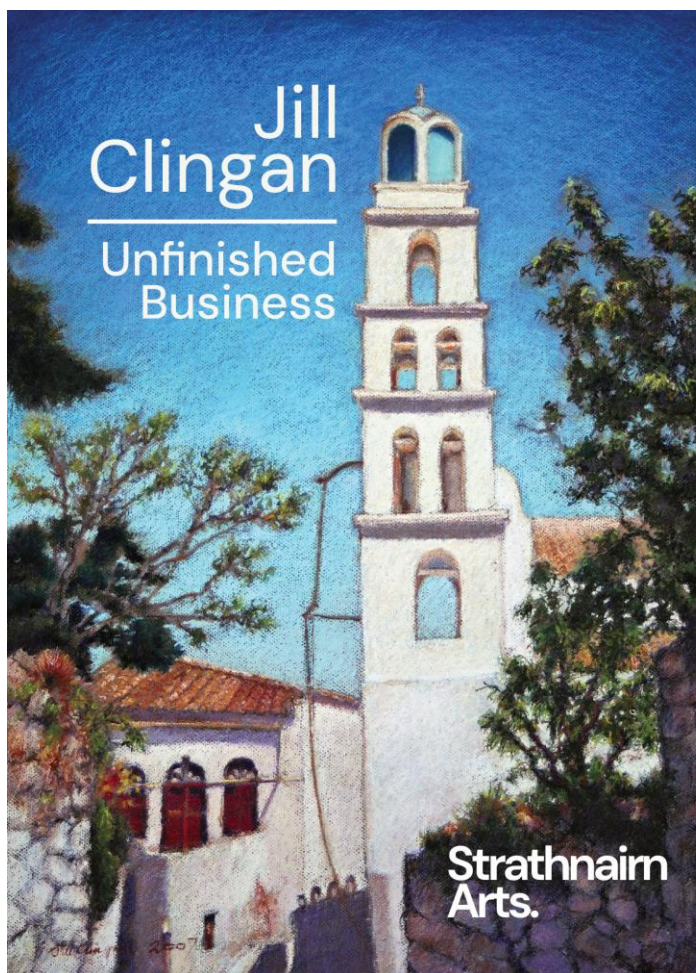
With tickets now available for matinee and evening performances, '9 to 5 The Musical' offers a must-see experience for musical theatre fans. Secure your seats for a night of toe-tapping fun, memorable music, and a story that's just as relevant—and exhilarating—today as it ever was. Tickets available at

<https://theq.net.au/whats-on/9-to-5/> Box Office: 02 6285 6290 and start from just \$30

Jill Clingan's 65+ year retrospective art exhibition

I shall be holding the opening to my exhibition at 2pm on Saturday 18th October at the Woolshed, Strathnairn Arts, 90 Stockdill Drive Holt. I taught small classes for short 6 week courses in my own outside studio in Flynn in the early 2000s. My specialty was oil pastel. I then discontinued teaching because I needed to prepare for exhibitions.

Jill Clingan



Jill Clingan

Unfinished Business a 65+ year retrospective



Opening 2 pm, Saturday 18 October,
Strathnairn Woolshed Gallery

To be opened by Nancy Tingy OAM, with Recorder Consort – Judith Clingan AM, Jordan London and friends.

An exhibition of Jill's life of art from the late 1950s to the present, and featuring drawing, oil painting, printmaking and pastel. The works are inspired by the beauty Jill sees in the natural, built and cultural environments both at home and in her travels.

Strathnairn Woolshed Gallery
18 October – 9 November

Strathnairn Arts.

90 STOCKDILL DRIVE, HOLT
WWW.STRATHNAIRN.COM.AU
INFO@STRATHNAIRN.COM.AU

WOOLSHED HOURS

WED – SUN 11 AM – 3 PM

SHOP

WED – SUN 10 AM – 4 PM

CAFE

WED-FRI 9 AM – 3:30 PM

SAT & SUN 8 AM – 4 PM

Front: Bell tower on Tinos,
Jill Clingan

Back: Boy on Buffalo,
Bangladesh, Jill Clingan
Images supplied by the artist



Margaret Simons Speaks on 'Public Broadcasting and the End of Television'

Walkley award winning journalist and ABC historian Dr Margaret Simons will deliver the 2025 Rod Wallace Memorial Lecture for the Friends of the NFSA, 7 pm on Monday 20 October at the NFSA. She will discuss the predicted end of terrestrial television, review the recent history of the public broadcaster and why it is still needed, and what publicly funded "broadcasting" means for Australian film and sound, now and in the future.

Hosted by the Friends, the lecture is open to the public and the Arc Cinema venue is generously provided by the NFSA. The event will commence with a welcoming reception at 6.30 pm followed by the lecture at 7 pm. Bookings are essential.

Dr Margaret Simons is an award-winning freelance journalist and Honorary Principal Fellow at the Centre for Advancing Journalism, University of Melbourne. Since 2022 she has been a board member of the British-based Scott Trust, owner of The Guardian worldwide. Her most recent work (2023) is a biography of Labor minister Tanya Plibersek, and an updated edition of her biography of Foreign Minister Penny Wong was released last year. She has written extensively for The Monthly, Quarterly Essay, Inside Story, Crikey and The Age on political, environmental and media issues. She is also a novelist and gardening writer.

The Friends of the NFSA established the annual Rod Wallace Memorial lecture to commemorate the pioneering achievement of Roderick Wallace AM. During 32 years of service at the National Library of

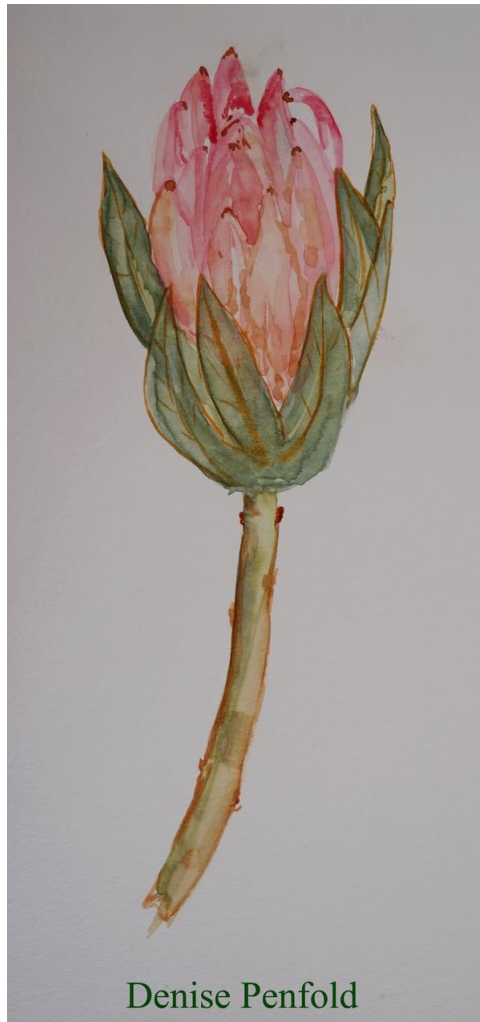
Australia (1945-1977) as an innovator, advocate and mentor, he oversaw the development of its special collections, including film, music and sound recordings, and laid the foundations for the creation of the NFSA in 1984 as a separate institution. The lecture series aims to reflect aspects of the preservation, accessibility and dissemination of the audiovisual heritage.

Further information:

Contact Friends' President, Dr Ray Edmondson at ray@archival.au (phone 0413 486 849)

Bookings <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1466680>

Website: <https://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/events-news/rod-wallace-lectures>



Denise Penfold



David Wilson

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