
AUSTRALIAN DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY

VOLUME 18 1981-1990

L-Z



GENERAL EDITOR

MELANIE NOLAN

AUSTRALIAN DICTIONARY
OF BIOGRAPHY

18
1981–
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MELBOURNE
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MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS
An imprint of Melbourne University Publishing Limited
187 Grattan Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia
mup-info@unimelb.edu.au
www.mup.com.au

First published 2012
Text © Melbourne University Publishing, 2012
Design and typography © Melbourne University Publishing, 2012

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Typeset by Cannon Typesetting
Printed in China through Australian Book Connection

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Nolan, Melanie. Australian dictionary of biography:
Volume 18. 1981–1990, L–Z/Melanie Nolan.

9780522861310 (hbk.: v. 18)

Biography.

Australia—Biography—Dictionaries.

994.00992

PREFACE

Charles Blackman's painting, 'Suite 1' (1960), reproduced on the cover, is particularly appropriate for this volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB).¹ Chosen by the Queensland Working Party, and following the tradition that ADB working parties take it in turn to choose the artwork, the painting 'suggests a gallery of timeless individuals'.² It captures, too, the diversity of subjects in the volume; the people considered to be significant to Australian history. Our long-serving publisher, Melbourne University Press, has once again produced a publication of outstanding quality.

The ADB is a national collaborative project, the largest and longest-running of its kind in the social sciences and humanities in Australia. The ADB's first General Editor, Douglas Pike, emphasised this in 1966, in the preface to volume 1, stating that the project is an 'all-Australia, Commonwealth-wide venture based on consultation and co-operation'. Over 4000 authors, together with the members of between seven and nine working parties, national committees and editorial boards, have given freely of their time over the years to the project. The working parties represent Australians geographically (by state) and thematically (armed services and Commonwealth). Each state is allocated a quota of articles based on its population. The choice of names for inclusion requires prolonged discussion. Lack of space or lack of sources meant that some of those initially chosen could not be included. The working parties also nominated the authors and the word-length of articles.

The National Centre of Biography, a research centre at the Australian National University (ANU), hosts the ADB and co-ordinates the commissioning and editing of the articles. The ADB has enjoyed considerable stability and has been led by five General Editors: Douglas Pike (1962-1974), Bede Nairn (1974-1984), Geoffrey Serle (1975-1987), John Ritchie (1988-2002) and Diane Langmore (2001-2008); I took up my position in June 2008. The Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU has provided the funding for ADB staff and operations, including much of the research. In 1998 an endowment fund was established. This is supplementing recurring income, and building an important new income stream for the future, as well as encouraging the wider public to become involved in supporting the project.

Over the last five decades, the complex collaboration between the ANU, working parties, editorial board and authors has generated 18 volumes, two volumes of the biographical register of notes of subjects, a supplementary volume of 'missing persons', an index to the first twelve volumes, a series of biographical registers of parliamentarians and some 'spin-off' collective biographies on 'diggers' and sportsmen. The project is ongoing. Working parties have already selected subjects, who died between 1991 and 2000, for inclusion in the next period; those articles are being commissioned and edited now.

There are any number of questions to be asked of biography. We might ask questions about the role of the individual in history and about individual human agency as opposed to social structure. We might ask what details are appropriate

to be included in a biography. We might ask if it is possible to know the inner life of another and if that ought to be the goal of good concise biography. We might ask if biography is an art. These are questions that Samuel Johnson asked, in the eighteenth century, in his two famous essays on biography. Some of these questions have been broached in discussion and controversy over particular ADB articles. However any 'controversies' over specific articles and issues pale into insignificance in the face of the main question asked of dictionaries of biography: are they representative? And, related to this, 'who deserves to have a biography written of them'? About nine million Australians died between 1788 and 1990; just over 11,000 of them are in the ADB. More specifically, 1.16 million Australians died between 1981 and 1990; just over 1300 (or 0.1 per cent) are included in volumes 17 and 18.³ Like other dictionaries of national biography, the ADB is a generally representative, rather than directly representative, biographical project.⁴

Working Party Allocations for Volumes 17-18, 1981-1990

State or theme	Quota of articles	Proportion of total
Armed Services	130	9.7
Commonwealth	195	14.6
New South Wales	345	26.8
Queensland	155	11.6
South Australia	90	6.7
Tasmania	34	2.5
Victoria	260	19.0
Western Australia	91	6.7
General Editor	39	2.9
Total	1339	100.0

Volume 18, a companion to volume 17, completes the period 1981-1990 of the ADB and includes articles on 669 individuals with surnames from L to Z, who died during that decade. In it you will find explorers, farmers, stockmen, trade union officials, business people, educators, criminals, judges, political activists, librarians, ballet dancers, cameleers, musicians and opera directors, speedway riders, polymaths, philanthropists and professional wrestlers and boxers. The volume includes: authors Patrick White, Alan Marshall, Stephen Murray-Smith, Christina Stead and Kylie Tennant; politicians William McMahon, Billy Sneddon, Enid Lyons, Dorothy Tangney, Lionel Murphy, Thomas Playford, as well as political journalist Alan Reid; artists Fred Williams and Clifton Pugh and patrons of the arts John and Sunday Reed; academics Julius Stone and William Stanner; physicists Leslie Martin, Harry Massey and Ernest Titterton; military leaders Frederick Scherger, John Wilton, John McCauley, the first Aboriginal commissioned officer Reg Saunders and war historian Alan Moorehead; feminist

Ruby Rich and country women's leader Bertha Smith; surgeon Harry Windsor; Director-General of Education Harold Wyndham; ABC General Manager Charles Moses; and a raft of diplomats – John Ryan, Dudley McCarthy, James Plimsoll, Laurence McIntyre, Annabelle Rankin, Alfred Stirling, Mick Shann, Marjorie Smart, Percy Spender and Alan Watt, some of whom became state governors. There are 26 Indigenous Australians (3.8 per cent of the total) and 132 women (20 per cent). 560 people wrote the 669 articles. The longest articles are on Thomas Playford (5248 words) and Patrick White (3026 words); Florence Willie (401) and Mary White (431) have the shortest articles. The average article is 766 words.

There are over 70 Queenslanders in the volume, ranging from Aboriginal community leader Larry Lanley to church leader Mervyn Zischke. The list also includes: cricketers 'Slasher' Mackay and Donald Tallon, and tennis player Maud 'Mall' Molesworth; artists Lillian Mayo, Lloyd Rees and Dick Roughsey; physiologist Walter MacFarlane, professor of dentistry Sidney Lumb and orthopedic surgeon Thomas Stubbs Brown; religious leaders Ian Shevill, Owen Steele and Phillip Strong; feminist Mary White; writers Jack Lindsay and Margaret Trist, poet and musicologist John Manifold and journalist and newspaper editor Reginald Leonard; engineer and businessman Joseph Pinter and mining entrepreneurs James and William Murphy; public servants David Muir and James Slaughter; flying doctor Timothy O'Leary; teachers Kathleen Sheehy and Harriet Marks, and headmistress Louise McDonald. Place and achievement is what these diverse Queenslanders have in common.

The ADB is a reference work for many purposes but is not itself a narrative, and it is only implicitly social history. As others have noted, 'To try to write a nation's history from their brief biographies would be to draw one's evidence only from the unusual; moreover, it must be remembered that it is only the decade in which they died which brings them here'.⁵

In 1986 the ADB abandoned its foundational 'floruit principle' whereby individuals were placed in the period covering the time in which they did their most important work.⁶ For instance, most of the federationists are in period three (volumes 3-6), having flourished between 1851 and 1890. The artist responsible for volume 18's front cover, Charles Blackman, was a member of the 'Antipodeans': seven Melbourne artists (Blackman, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Brack, John de Burgh Perceval, Clifton Pugh and Robert Dickerson) who came together with art historian, Bernard Smith, to present the 'Antipodean' exhibition in August 1959. They sought 'to defend' figurative art and champion ... the place of image in art' in protest against what they considered was foreign abstract expressionism.⁷ They flourished between 1940 and 1980 but, because subjects are now included in the ADB volume covering the decade in which they died, these artists are not all in the one period. Owing to the 'accident of death' they will be dispersed over many volumes and several periods. Robert Dickerson and Blackman are still living. Pugh (1924-1990) is a subject in this volume together with John (1901-1981) and Sunday Reed (1905-1981), art critics and patrons who warmly supported the 'Antipodeans'. Arthur Boyd (1920-1999), John Brack (1920-1999) and John de Burgh Perceval (1923-2000) are in the period that the ADB is now working on. David Boyd (1924-2011) and Bernard Smith (1916-2011) only recently died and will be in the period after the next. Some 'Antipodeans' – de Burgh Perceval, Arthur Boyd, John and Sunday Reed, together with Sidney Nolan, Joy Hester and Albert Tucker – had been members

of an earlier group known as the Angry Penguins who redefined Australian art in the 1940s. Others had been members of the Heide Circle and the Melbourne Branch of the Contemporary Art Society. The 'Antipodean' kinship and network group flourished in the postwar period and influenced Australian culture in diverse ways; without doubt eventually they will all be subjects of ADB articles.

Our vision for the future is to rewrite the ADB, starting with the earliest volumes, in a way that will ensure that all contemporary members of the same kinship and associational group are collected in a cluster – as has been done in the last two decades in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* and the *American Dictionary of Biography*. In the rewriting process we will also be able to reflect the latest scholarship and include more 'missing' people. As it is we will be able to reunite the Antipodeans, and reassert the floruit principle, in the online version of the ADB. Launched in 2006 with the support of a number of universities and the Australian Research Council, the ADB Online is a free illustrated and searchable electronic database that contains all 11,500 articles, covering 12,500 individuals from the printed volumes. According to our agreement with Melbourne University Publishing, entries from this volume will be added to ADB Online simultaneously with the release of the hardcopy publication. The work of the ADB and the discipline of concise biographies will be more important than ever in the digital future as people face the task of navigating masses of information to find relevant and authoritative research.

ADB Online, together with the other databases that the National Centre of Biography is developing under its umbrella website, People Australia, can reveal all kinds of relations and connections between subjects, such as the 'Antipodeans'. National affiliation is a case in point. The 'Antipodeans' argued that contemporary Australian painting had a well-founded national identity.

[T]he image, the recognisable shape, the meaningful symbol, is the basic unit of [the artist's] language ... It is born of past experience and refers back to past experience – and it communicates. It communicates because it has the capacity to refer to experiences that the artist shares with his audience.⁸

The 'Antipodeans' were not stridently nationalistic however. The same can be said of the ADB. It has been argued that dictionary projects, like the ADB, were and remain, 'remarkably unideological and timeless' productions 'which actually subvert ... many of our stereotypes'.⁹

The nation, moreover, has always had some pliability. Blackman and Boyd, de Burgh Perceval and others all moved to London; some never returned. Their artwork is widely represented in overseas as much as Australian collections. Blackman's experience mirrors that of many other expatriate Australians. By the same token the Australian population was becoming more diverse in the 1980s. 8.8 per cent of Australians had been born in the United Kingdom, Eire and New Zealand at the end of the 1980s; 13 per cent had been born in other countries. The percentage of Australians whose parents were born here was also dropping. The country was becoming more multicultural. That, too, is reflected in this volume. The first entry, Maurice Lachberg, was born in London and the last, Mervyn Zischke, was the grandson of emigrants; 21 per cent of the total were born overseas. Another significant demographic change is that subjects are, in

general, living longer. Three subjects in the volume lived to more than 100, with Ethel Punshon (1882-1989), living to 107.

The ADB is perilously close to the present in its subject matter. Writing contemporary biography has a range of problems. Families and friends of more recently deceased subjects care about, and sometimes feel moved to defend, reputations. We do not have a policy of consulting families and friends although we encourage our authors to do so. The editorial process has to remain independent. Authors of entries are given room to say what they feel about the worth and substance of their biographical subject. Sometimes the interpretation is mixed. Blackman's words are relevant:

'I am a romantic painter, (but not sweet) – oh no. That's wrong. Dreams are what you're made of, and very often nightmares, too'.¹⁰

There will always be family members and others who disagree and are unhappy with the portrait presented of their forebear or colleague in the ADB. That is the nature of biography. The ADB seeks to be a source of record and to ensure that all clearly factual claims are accurate. But interpretation is a matter of authors' judgments; their reading of a life.

And here again Blackman's 'Suite 1' is apposite. Blackman's work is expressionistic, using the brushstroke and paint in a gestural way. It has a symbolist dimension too, using his own personal symbolic language. Blackman's painting is figurative rather than photo-realistic. It conveys the difficulty of capturing a life and a person's character. Sometimes heads are turned, hands obscure the biographer's vision and what is shadowed is greater than what is lit up. That, too, is the nature of biography.

Melanie Nolan
July 2012

NOTES

- 1 Charles Blackman, '*Suite I*' (1960). Oil on composition board 120.7 × 182.2 cm, CBE Collection: Queensland Art Gallery Acc. 1988, 024. Purchased 1988 with funds from the Russell Cuppaidge Bequest as a memorial to Russell Cuppaidge.
- 2 Pat Buckridge to Melanie Nolan, 12 March 2012.
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia*, 1983-1993, 'Demography' statistics; and *Australian Historical Population Statistics*, 2008, 3105.065.001, Data Cubes, 6: 'Deaths'.
- 4 Melanie Nolan, 'Who Deserves to be in the Australian Dictionary of Biography?', *The Conversation* (7 April 2011), <http://theconversation.edu.au/profiles/melanielenolan-183>.
- 5 L. G. Wickham Legg and E. T. Williams (eds.), *The Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. v.
- 6 Floruit principle: Period 1: 1788-1850, volumes 1 and 2; Period 2: 1851-1890, volumes 3 to 6; Period 3: 1851-1890, volumes 7 to 12. Date of death principle: Period 4: 1940-1980, volumes 13 to 16; Period 5: 1891-1990, volumes 17 and 18; Period 6: 1991-2000, volumes 19 and 20.
- 7 Thomas Shapcott, *Focus on Charles Blackman* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1967). Ray Mathew, *Charles Blackman* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1965). Barry Dickins and Ken McGregor, *Charles Blackman* (South Yarra, Melbourne: Macmillan Art, 2010).

PREFACE

- 8 Bernard Smith, et. al., *The antipodean manifesto* 1959, reprinted in Smith, *The antipodean manifesto: essays in art and history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 166.
- 9 Lawrence Goldman, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in the Dictionaries of National Biography 1882–2004', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring 2006), pp. 111–132.
- 10 Charles Blackman interviewed by Sue Smith, *Courier-Mail* (6 March 1999).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Australian Dictionary of Biography (ADB) is a project that the Research School of Social Sciences (RSSH) at the Australian National University (ANU) has supported since the late 1950s. The ANU was founded in 1946 with a specific nation-building charter to 'encourage, and provide facilities for, research and postgraduate study, both generally and in relation to subjects of national importance to Australia'. The ADB is an ANU-led national history project and, as such, it is an important realisation of the ANU's charter. Special thanks are due to the Vice-Chancellors, Professor Ian Young and his predecessor, Professor Ian Chubb who, before retiring in 2011, contributed a significant sum to the ADB's Endowment Fund which supplements the ADB's recurrent university income. The Dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Toni Makkai, as well the previous and current Directors of RSSH, Professors Dave Marsh and Adam Graycar, have spoken publicly about their commitment to continuing to support the ADB project in the college.

The ADB is now hosted by the National Centre of Biography, within the School of History in the RSSH. The ADB distinguishes the ANU's School of History from other Australian history departments. Those who helped in planning the shape of ADB over half a century have been acknowledged in earlier volumes. Most recently Dr Diane Langmore co-edited volume 16 (2002) with Professor John Ritchie, edited volume 17 (2007) and began work on volume 18 before retiring as General Editor in May 2008 after 26 years service. Deputy General Editor, Darryl Bennet, retired in 2007 after nearly 20 years service; Administrator Edna Kauffman retired in 2007 after 22 years service; Biographical Register Officer Anthea Bundock retired in 2009; followed by Research Editors Drs. Gail Clements in 2010, Janet Doust and Barbara Dawson in 2011; and Pam Crichton in early 2012. The ADB is now in the hands of a new generation of staff. At the same time, neither Dr Chris Cunneen, who retired in 1996, nor more recently Bennet, has allowed retirement to pause his contribution, providing some intergenerational overlap.

We acknowledge the Australian historical community's ongoing support of the ADB. The ADB's success has rested for the last half century on the voluntary contribution of a number of networks throughout Australia. We would like to place on record our appreciation of Professor Tom Griffiths, the ADB's Editorial Board chair, who has guided this national collaboration. Thanks are due, too, to each and every one of the members of the Editorial Board and to the working party members listed elsewhere. The ADB Editorial Fellows who act as final readers – Darryl Bennet, Dr Bob Clements, Ian Hancock and Dr John Nethercote and Profs. Ann Curthoys, Ken Inglis, John Molony and Barry Smith – have been invaluable. Section editors, Profs. Geoffrey Bolton, Pat Buckridge, David Horner, Michael Roe and Drs. Nicholas Brown, Peter Howell, John Lack and Beverley Kingston, have carried out substantial editorial duties over the past five years. Bolton and Roe, who are retiring with this volume, were both first involved with the ADB in 1959.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ADB is also indebted to the wider community for its assistance with ensuring the entries are as comprehensive and accurate as possible. It is remarkable that, while the internet facilitates research editing and allows the ADB to do more with fewer staff than it has had for three decades, we have incurred increasingly more research indebtedness. Within Australia this includes many libraries and archives, schools, colleges, universities, institutes, historical and genealogical societies, and numerous other organisations. Staff and authors regularly use the National Library of Australia, the Australian War Memorial, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, National Film and Sound Archives and the National Archives of Australia. We thank the archives and public records offices in the various states and Territories, and to registrars of probates and of the Supreme and Family courts, whose co-operation has solved many problems; to various town and shire clerks; to the Australian Department of Defence, and state education departments and to our team of state research assistants who facilitate our inquiries nationwide. There is invariably someone in each institution who proves particularly useful at any one time, such as Dr David Nash at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and Dr Darrell Lewis at the National Museum of Australia. Essential assistance with birth, death and marriage certificates has been provided by the co-operation of the registrars in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory; by the General Register offices in London, Dublin and Belfast; by the registrar-general in Papua New Guinea and various embassy staff when called upon. We thank Em. Professor Bob Douglas, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, ANU, for his help to interpret death certificates.

While the bibliographies to articles acknowledge a raft of repositories and sources we have consulted, special mention for assisting our research needs must be made to: the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Australasian section of the International College of Dentists, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, Australian Academy of Science, the 'Australian', Australian Academy of Technological Science and Engineering, Australian Academy of the Humanities, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Australian College of Architects, Australian Council for the Arts; the Fellowship of Australian Composers, Australian Film Institute, Australian Institute of Librarians, Australian Institute of Management NSW & ACT Limited, Australian Medical Association, Australian Music Examinations Board, Australian Psychological Society, Australian Red Cross, Sport Australia Hall of Fame, Australian Writers' Guide, Chartered Secretaries Australia, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, CPA Australia, Gastroenterological Society of Australia, Keep Australian Beautiful Council, National Gallery of Australia, National Press Club of Australia, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Australian Society of Veterinarian Scientists, Australian Speleological Federation, Landcare Australia, National Trust of Australia, Reserve Bank of Australia, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Royal Life Saving Society, Society of Automotive Engineers Australasia and Westpac.

Our research has placed large burdens on smaller institutions and we thank: the Australian Electoral Commission Library, Australian Parliament's Parliamentary Library, College of Nursing Archives, Macquarie University Art Gallery, Newcastle Region Library, Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, University of Melbourne Archives, University of Sydney's Fisher Library; and in particular Martin Lumb and Elinor Archer. The ADB is indebted

to the keepers of the archives at: Anglican Church Grammar School (Brisbane), the Canberra and District Historical Society, St Christopher's Cathedral Parish (Canberra), the Embassy of Italy (Canberra), Fort Street High School (Sydney), Friends' School (Hobart), Launceston Church Grammar School, Melbourne Girls' Grammar School, Melbourne Grammar School, the Melbourne College of Divinity, Sydney's Northern Suburbs General Cemetery, Old Timers' Home (Alice Springs), PLC Sydney Archives, Riverview's St Ignatius' College Archives (Sydney) and St Columba's College (Melbourne).

The overseas assistance to the ADB has included: the Archive-University of Leeds, the Archives of the Hartley Institution at the University of Southampton, the archives of University College Oxford, the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (London), the Bodleian Libraries at the University of Oxford, Baker Library Historical Collections at the Harvard Business School, British Psychological Society, Cadbury Research Library at University of Birmingham, Catholic University of America (Washington DC), Central School of Speech and Drama at the University of London, Degree Conferrals Office at University of Oxford, Durham University Library, Exeter College Library (Oxford), Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians (London), Geological Society Archives (London), Harvard College Observatory at Harvard University, The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn (London), The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple in the Treasury Office (London), Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine (London), Imperial Forestry Institute at the University of Oxford, Kilbirnie School (Wellington, New Zealand), London School of Economics and Political Science, Lothian Health Services Archive at the University of Edinburgh, National University of Ireland (Galway), Newnham College Archives (Cambridge), Niels Bohr Library at the Center for History of Physics in the American Institute of Physics at the University of Minnesota, Oriel College, (Oxford), Philipps University Marburg archives, the Regional state archives - Landsarkiven (Upsalla, Sweden), Registrar of Certification & Veterans Services at the University of Texas (Austin), Repton School (Derbyshire), Royal Academy of Music Library (London), Royal College of Music Library (London), School of Psychology at University of St. Andrews (Edinburgh), Senate House Libraries at the University of London, St John's College at the University of Cambridge, Temple University's records, Trinity College London Library - incorporating Trinity Guildhall - University Archives (University of Cambridge), University Archives (Oxford University), University College Dublin Archives, University of Chicago records, University of London Archives and Manuscripts, University of Minnesota, University of St Andrews Library, Wellington College (New Zealand).

Thanks for fraternal co-operation go to the staffs of: the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, in particular Professor Lawrence Goldman and Dr Philip Carter who were visiting fellows at the ADB at the ANU; the Dictionary of Canadian Biography at the University of Toronto and Université Laval; and the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography in the Ministry of Culture and Heritage (Wellington). Locally, AusLit, the Dictionary of Sydney and the Northern Territory Dictionary of Biography have always been helpful.

We thank our long serving publisher, Melbourne University Publishing, which continues to support the production of printed volumes of the ADB even though they are hardly financial windfalls. Senior Editor, Cathy Smith, has made the production of volume 18 much more than a duty of care and has been a pleasure

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

to work with; Wendy Sutherland was a hands-on Editorial Manager at Melbourne University Press from 1978 proofreading the ADB and we are grateful that she took on this task for this volume too.

The ADB deeply regrets the deaths of such notable contributors as S. D. Bassingthwaite, Harold F. Bell, Bruce Bennet, Ysola Best, T. P. Boland, Jeffery Boyes, Creighton Burns, Clyde Cameron, Charles Campbell, George B. Cartland, Peter Charlton, Zelman Cowen, Betty Crouchley, E. Cunningham Dax, John Cornelius Dempsey, D. J. Dickson, P. T. Downie, Lawrence A. Drake, Marianne Eastgate, J. Eddy, Rica Erickson, Barbara Falk, Frank Fenner, Averill F. Fink, L. E. Fredman, Alex Freeleagus, Eric Fry, K. L. Fry, D. A. Garnsey, S. C. B. Gascoigne, Anne Gollan, Robin Gollan, Rupert Goodman, Patricia Gowland, P. J. Greville, James Griffin, I. H. Grimmett, Eric Guiler, S. G. Gunthorpe, Joy Guyatt, E. N. Halley, Sandra Harvey, Grenfell Heap, A. J. Hill, Dorothy Hill, Frank Hills, Keith D. Howard, Maxwell A. Howell, Robert Hyslop, Wallace Ironside, Chris Jeffery, J. T. F. Jordens, James Kemsley, J. F. Kendall, Bill Kent, Anthea Kerr, Gordon Keys Smith, Richard Lane, Ross Laurie, Margaret Lawrie, John A. Leckey, C. A. C. Leggett, Mark Lyons, Perdita M. McCarthy, W. G. McMinn, Dorothy McNeil, J. C. Mahoney, T. J. Marshall, Patricia Mather, Bruce Mitchell, L. L. M. Mitchell, Deirdre Morris, P. J. Mullins, H. N. Nelson, Helen Nelson, M. J. Norst, Nigel Oram, Ross Patrick, Elizabeth Perkins, Warren Perry, Neville Petersen, Nancy Phelan, Marjorie Puregger, W. S. Ramson, G. D. Richardson, R. W. Rickards, Frank K. Rickwood, Margriet Roe, Eric Rolls, Barbara Ross, Kevin Ryan, J. W. Shaw, K. (Charles) Sierakowski, P. J. Skerman, Bernard Smith, David C. Spencer, Peter Steele, E. D. J. Stewart, R. F. Stockwell, R. Sutton, John Taylor, Helen Taylor, Ruth Teale, George Tibbits, Marjorie J. Tipping, Kenneth W. Tribe, D. H. Trollope, Michael Uhr, Alf van der Poorten, Maria S. Varvaressos, John Villaume, George C. Wade, Mary Howitt Walker, Marjorie Walker, Raymond L. Whitmore, Nancy Robinson Whittle, Robin W. Winks, E. P. Wixted and Burt Zerner.

Above all we thank the authors of the articles that are published in this volume. They are conspicuous among authors of contemporary national dictionary projects in the English-speaking world, in that they do not receive, and have never received, remuneration. Our warmest thanks go to them for the free gift of their time and talents.

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John Arnold, Bain Attwood, Richard Broome, Geoff Browne (resigned), Mimi Colligan, Des Cowley, B. J. Costar (resigned), Jim Davidson (resigned), David Dunstan (chair), Charles Fahey (resigned), Margaret Fitzherbert, Nikki Henningham, F. J. Kendall*, John Lack, Peter Love, Janet McCalman (resigned), David Merrett, Robert Murray, J. R. Poynter (resigned), Carolyn Rasmussen, John Rickard (resigned), Judith Smart, John Waugh.

Western Australia

Wendy Birman (resigned), David Black, G. C. Bolton (chair), Michal Bosworth, Patrick Cornish, Dorothy Erickson, Charles Fox, Sue Graham-Taylor, Jenny Gregory, Lenore Layman, John McIlwraith, Jenny Mills (resigned), C. Mulcahy, Jan Ryan, Tom Stannage (resigned).

* deceased