



STATE LIBRARY  
VICTORIA

State Library Victoria

# 2025 DONOR IMPACT REPORT

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY AND PEOPLE



State Library Victoria acknowledges the traditional lands of all the Victorian Aboriginal clans, and their cultural practices and knowledge systems.

We recognise that our collections hold traditional cultural knowledge belonging to Indigenous communities in Victoria and around the country. We support communities to protect the integrity of this information, gathered from their Ancestors in the colonial period.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, who have handed down these systems of practice to each new generation for millennia.

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Front cover image: Linnett and David Turner at the *Creative Acts: Artists and their inspirations* Cultural Members exclusive event 2025. Photo by Eva Gorobets.

# THANK YOU FROM THE CHAIR OF FOUNDATION COUNCIL, ALEX CARTEL



As Chair of the Library's Foundation Council, I am honoured to share these stories of extraordinary philanthropy that have helped shape State Library Victoria over the past year. I am continually inspired by the generosity of our donor community, whose contributions are enriching the State Collection and ensuring the Library remains a vital part of our nation's cultural fabric.

Since it first opened in 1856 – 170 years ago – the Library has not only evolved, but truly flourished. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, its story has been one of continuous growth, marked by new creative spaces, magnificent reading rooms and inspiring galleries.

As a result, it now welcomes an ever-increasing number of visitors. Last financial year, over 2.8 million people visited the Library, including a significant number of people aged under 35. These numbers reflect the Library's well-deserved reputation as a beacon of knowledge and a 'must see' Melbourne destination.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the donors whose generosity enabled the Library's transformative Vision 2020 redevelopment and the reimagination of a modern Library – particularly The Ian Potter Foundation, the John and Myriam Wylie Foundation, the Hansen Little Foundation, Allan Myers KC AC and Maria Myers AC, and Christine Christian AO.

The Library is proud to recognise the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM, Helen Sykes and other significant donors for enabling the acquisition of stunning and rare works for the Women Writers Fund.

Over the past five years the Lisa Ring and Family Scholarships have enabled new and early-stage start-ups to build, grow and succeed. The scholarship program plays a significant role in Victoria's start-up ecosystem and is a testament to the vision and transformative nature of this initiative.

To all our donors, thank you. Your continued generosity ensures the Library remains a living, breathing hub of knowledge, creativity and community – for this generation and the many to come.

## **Alex Cartel**

Chair, Foundation Council

Photo by Abigail Varney.

# WELCOME FROM ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER JOHN WICKS



Over the past year, State Library Victoria has been a vibrant hub of ideas and inspiration, bringing communities together through culture, knowledge, and unforgettable experiences. With the support of our donors, we've reached milestones that affirm our place as a world-class library and a cherished Victorian institution. From record-breaking attendance and award-winning exhibitions to innovative digital experiences that introduce new audiences to the Library and extraordinary State Collection, this has been a year of growth, engagement, and vision. The Library has strengthened its role in fostering knowledge, creativity, and culture, while laying bold plans for the future.

We are now not only the third busiest in the world, but also ranked third 'best' library in the world by Preply's annual library rankings. State Library Victoria is also listed in the 1000 Libraries Award's top 10 most beautiful libraries in the world to visit. This is a testament to our appeal and relevance, and our status as a Victorian icon, as well as a powerful reminder of the public's deep connection to this institution.

Soon, we will launch a major capital campaign. Dome 2030 is a bold and ambitious project to breathe new life and energy into the Dome and its ascending galleries, preserving their heritage and timeless grandeur while opening long-unused spaces for new experiences, new knowledge, and new stories. The magnificent State Library Victoria Dome is

an architectural icon, a beacon of learning, cultural advancement and civic pride, and we must preserve its enduring legacy, not only for the 3 million visitors we now welcome each year, but for the millions of visitors of the future. I hope you'll be part of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to bring this next chapter to life.

I also want to highlight the success of our *beruk* and *Treaty* Indigenous exhibitions. *beruk* received a total of 169,508 visitors during its exhibition period while *Treaty* has received over 350,000 visitors so far. The ongoing interest in *Treaty*, which remains open until August 2026, shows that a significant number of Victorians are taking part in this important conversation on the journey to genuine treaty in Victoria.

Thank you once again for your loyal support for building and conserving our collection and making it accessible through programs and exhibitions. It has been especially moving to see many of you engage with the Women Writers Fund, family history records, newspaper digitisation, children's books and chess this year.

I offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you for your continued efforts.

**John Wicks**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.

# BUILDING THE STATE COLLECTION

## EMMA.

### CHAP. I.

EMMA Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

She was the youngest of the two daughters of a most affectionate, indulgent father, and had, in consequence of her sister's marriage, been mistress of his house from a very early period. Her mother had died too long ago for her to have more than an indistinct remembrance of her caresses, and her place had been supplied by an excellent woman as governess, who

vol. 1.

## The Women Writers Fund

With the support of passionate and generous donors, and a significant donation from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, the Women Writers Fund seeks to enhance the Library's collection of women's voices from the past.

The fund was created with the support of two founding donors: Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM, and Helen Sykes, both are keenly interested in fostering access to historical texts by women to inspire the young women of today. It seeks to redress the historical gender bias in State Library Victoria's collection by acquiring works by under-represented women writers. The fund is endowed by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

The work of the fund will give future generations access to more diverse and representative voices from different times, cultures and disciplines. It also supports the creation of an ongoing program of events associated with the Women Writers Fund initiative, which inspires its themes, content and much-loved collection viewings.

Since 2021, the fund has enabled the Library to add over 170 rare titles by women authors to the State Collection. We are delighted that donors continue to contribute to this exciting initiative!

## Acquisitions

First edition of *Emma* by Jane Austen

We are incredibly grateful for the support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM, Helen Sykes, Graham and Anita Anderson OAM, Professor Emeritus Chris Browne and Dr Vivien Santer, The Brenda Shanahan Foundation, and Peter Griffin AM and Terry Swann who have enabled us to acquire a first edition of Jane Austen's *Emma*, published in 1816. This three-volume copy is remarkable, both for its fine contemporary Regency binding and for its astonishing provenance – having come from the collection of Austen's grand-nephew Edward Knatchbull-Hugessen (1829–1893).

First editions of Austen's works with family provenance are extremely rare, which makes this acquisition especially meaningful. Until the recent additions of *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* in 2022, State Library Victoria had somewhat famously never held first editions of Jane Austen's novels.

Thanks to the generosity of donors with a passion and interest in Austen, we've been able to expand our collection of her novels with this exciting acquisition. It is particularly poignant that this purchase coincides with Austen's 250th birthday, a perfect way to celebrate.

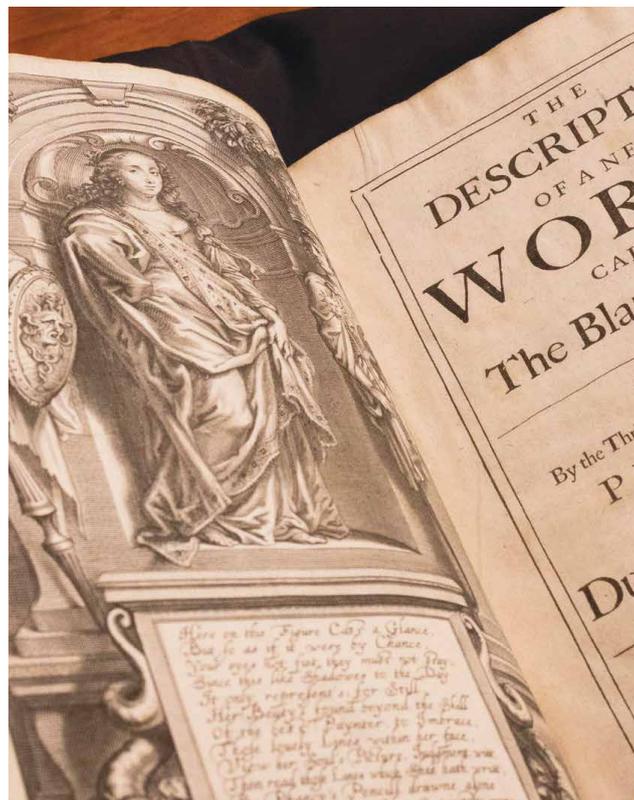
## ***The Blazing-World* by Margaret Cavendish**

With the support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM, Helen Sykes, and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, we've been able to add Margaret Cavendish's *The Blazing-World* to our collection. This novel is one of the earliest works of science fiction and Cavendish's rarest printed work.

Margaret Cavendish (c.1623–1673) was a playwright, philosopher, poet and scientist who published under her own name at a time when many women couldn't. As a maid of honour for Queen Henrietta Maria, she followed the queen into exile in Paris after the execution of Charles I in 1649. There she met and married another royalist: William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle.

An extraordinary, groundbreaking figure, Cavendish published works in the fields of atomic theory, natural philosophy, sex and gender, military leadership, poetry and plays to much acclaim. *The Blazing-World* blends fantasy, science, philosophy, theology and utopianism in a single play, following the adventures of an unnamed woman in a utopia of anthropomorphic beings. The narrative serves as a satire of the scientific scene in the British Isles in Cavendish's lifetime.

*The Blazing-World* was first published as a fictional companion to Cavendish's works of scientific enquiry in 1666 and 1668, with a preface addressed to the general 'Reader'. In this very scarce edition, the preface is directed to 'all Noble and Worthy Ladies'.



Cavendish M (1668) *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing-World*, Anne Maxwell, London.  
Photo by Jim Arneman.

**Gartside M (1808) *Ornamental Groups, Descriptive of Flowers, Birds, Shells, Fruit, Insects, &c. and Illustrative of a New Theory of Colouring, from Designs and Paintings*, William Miller, London.**

*Ornamental Groups, Descriptive of Flowers, Birds, Shells, Fruit, Insects, &c. and Illustrative of a New Theory of Colouring, from Designs and Paintings* (1808) was compiled by English colour theorist and artist, Mary Gartside. Gartside worked as an artist for several decades before she published her theoretical texts. She exhibited paintings in Liverpool and London, taught watercolour to young women, and provided illustrations for the third volume of Drury's *Illustrations of Natural History* (1782). Her scientific approach drew on the works of Joshua Reynolds, Samuel, Tertius Galton and Moses Harris.

In 2022, State Library Victoria acquired her 1808 *An Essay on a New Theory of Colours* through the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust in support of the Women Writers Fund. *Ornamental Groups* is a 'proof of concept' portfolio that formally puts her theory into practice through multiple artists and formats.

In *Ornamental Groups*, her third and final work, Gartside (c.1755–1819) aimed to recalibrate Isaac Newton's widely accepted conception of the spectrum of colours, in order to create a model that was better suited to the practicalities of mixing pigments on a palette. Gartside personally oversaw the illustration process to ensure that her ideas were conveyed accurately. Her works predated Goethe's celebrated treatise *Theory of Colours* (1810).

*Ornamental Groups* contains a list of 193 subscribers (the majority of whom are women), with the list headed by Queen Charlotte and the Princess of Wales, demonstrating interest in Gartside's work at the highest levels.

This is a scarce first edition and the only known copy in Australia.



Photo by Jim Arneman.

## Other acquisitions

### Redmond Barry's bookcase

*'Some 175 years on, the State Library Victoria continues to owe Sir Redmond Barry a great deal. Many of the values of the institution (freedom of, and equality of, access) and its collecting ambitions bear Barry's imprint. He was the inaugural chair of the Library's Trustees (from 1856–1880) and was an energetic and indomitable one. The admirable foundations Barry established for the Library were one of my touchstones. I am honoured to have played a part in the purchase of Barry's recently auctioned bookcase because it should join the Library's collection about which he cared so much.'*

Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, former CEO and State Librarian from 2003–2011

Thanks to the generous support of donors Anne-Marie Schwirtlich AM, Frances Awcock AM, Dianne Reilly Drury AM, Graham Anderson and Anita Anderson OAM, John Arnold and Ellie Dargaville, we've been able to strengthen our collection of Victorian furniture with this important acquisition.

This remarkable bookcase once belonged to Sir Redmond Barry (1813–1880). It housed his extensive personal collection of books and journals which, from the early 1840s, Barry generously opened to the public.

Crafted from Australian cedar, the secretaire bookcase features beautifully carved lamb's tongue corbels and fall front, and an interior fitter with a writing slope, drawers and compartments. It was crafted for Barry by George Thwaites and Son, Melbourne's leading cabinet maker of the time.

The piece is significant not only for its exquisite craftsmanship but also for its provenance. Sir Redmond Barry was a towering figure in early colonial Victoria – widely considered the founder of the Melbourne Public Library (now State Library Victoria) and a driving force behind the establishment of the University of Melbourne. He also presided over the Eureka Rebellion trials and, most famously, the Ned Kelly trial, which earned him the nickname 'the hanging judge'.

This is one of a series of known bookcases made for Barry, matching the one described and illustrated in *Australian Furniture Pictorial History and Dictionary 1788–1939* by Kevin Fahy and Andrew Simpson. It will undergo conservation treatment, and we plan to display it as part of the Library's 170th anniversary celebrations.

We are deeply grateful to our donors for helping us secure this important piece of Victoria's cultural history.



## ***Anatomia in Quat Tota Humani Corporis Fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius**

The acquisition of this rare book by Andreas Vesalius would not have been possible without the incredible support of generous donor Jan MacDonald. Jan previously supported the acquisition of an important early printed work on astronomy and has indicated a desire to continue to support acquisitions in the areas of the history of science, geography and exploration.

*Anatomia in Quat Tota Humani Corporis Fabrica*, by Brussels-born anatomist and physician Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), is considered the most significant anatomical work produced in early modern Europe. It was first published in 1543, and first editions now sell for upwards of \$350,000 USD.

This acquisition is bound in full contemporary calfskin leather, and features gilt titles and elaborate gilt tooling to the spine, a red spine label, raised tooled bands, marbled endpapers, and an engraved pictorial title page. It contains 39 full-page anatomically illustrated plates, woodcut headpieces and initials, and a portrait of Vesalius.

Until now, the lack of any edition of Vesalius's masterpiece had been a notable gap in the Library's strong history of science collections and one that curators had been keen to address. This is an exciting acquisition with extremely strong research and engagement outcomes for the Library. We are grateful for Jan's generous support in acquiring it.



Vesalius A & Geminus T (1617) *Anatomia in Quat Tota Humani Corporis Fabrica* (*Anatomy in Total of the Fabric of the Human Body*), Joannes Janssonius, Amsterdam. Photo by Jim Arneman.

## Acquisitions through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program

### ***The Old Ferry, Studley Park, Kew, by Henry Rielly***

We are grateful to Library donors Nigel and Sheena Broughton for the generous gift of this historic painting by artist Henry Rielly (b.1845). Rielly, a London-born artist who came to Australia at the age of seven, remains a somewhat enigmatic figure. While little is known of his early training, it is believed he was a founding member of the Victorian Academy of the Arts which began in 1870 to promote the work of Melbourne-based artists. He later served on the Academy's council, and both of his sisters were also artists.

The painting is interesting from both an environmental and historical perspective, as it offers a comparison of the area between the time it was painted and today. It has also been postulated that Rielly was influenced by the novelist Marcus Clarke's views on the Australian landscape:

***'Henry Rielly was the last of Melbourne artists active in the 1870s whose paintings express a view of the landscape similar to Marcus Clarke's and who may have been influenced by the novelist's ideas.'***

Bonyhady T (1985) *Images in Opposition: Australian Landscape Painting 1801-1890*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, p.133.



Henry Rielly (1875) *The Old Ferry, Studley Park, Kew*, oil on canvas.  
Photo by Jim Arneman.

## Colin Tynan, historical cookbooks

This collection, generously gifted to the Library by Colin Tynan, comprises 52 rare and historical cookbooks from around the world. It is important both for the information it provides on cooking and food, as well as its reflections on social history and gender roles in the 18th and 19th centuries.

These books add to the previous cultural gift made by John Hoyle, an eminent collector of cookbooks who is known for his work *An Annotated Bibliography of Australian Domestic Cookery Books, 1860s to 1950* (2010). The collection also complements the Dr Beverley Wood AM Collection which comprises resources on the topics of food, nutrition and dietetics from 1900 to 1990, largely from Australia and New Zealand.

The addition of this collection makes State Library Victoria a favourable destination for those interested in cookbooks and the history of cookery and nutrition – both here and internationally.



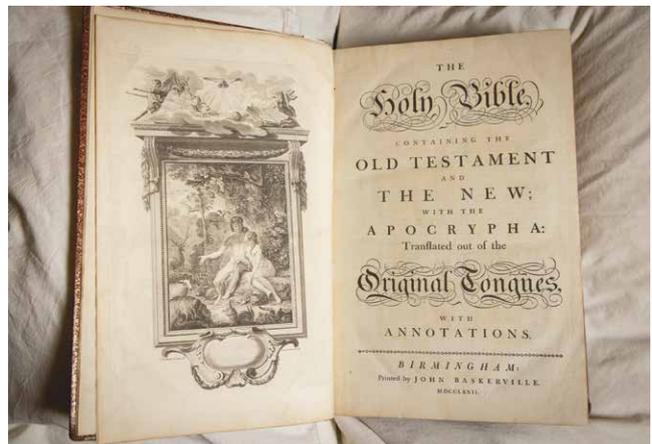
An item from the collection of Colin Tynan. Photo by Jim Arneman.

## Dr Brian Norman Gerrard, 18th-century British books

This collection of 819 titles of rare 18th-century British books, formed by Dr Brian Norman Gerrard (1939–2022), was donated as a cultural gift by his sons Hew Gerrard and Howard Gerrard. The collection reflects Gerrard's interest in 18th-century British printing history, and specifically in the issue of variant editions.

Key highlights of the collection are its representations of the work of British printer and typographer John Baskerville (1707–1775) and of the Foulis Press, founded by brothers Robert (1707–1776) and Andrew (1712–1775) Foulis. Gerrard's collection includes the sole surviving variant copies of some titles, which are cited in the major bibliography of Baskerville's work by Phillip Gaskell (1959, revised edition 1973) and that of the Foulis Press, also by Phillip Gaskell (1964, revised edition 1986).

In both its contents and focus, the Dr Brian Gerrard Collection neatly complements the John Emerson Collection (predominantly 17th-century British material) and the Wallace Kirsop Collection (predominantly 17th- and 18th-century French material). Gerrard, Emerson (also deceased) and Kirsop were contemporaries and colleagues, as book collectors and scholars.



An item from the collection of Dr Brian Norman Gerrard. Photo by Jim Arneman.

# CARING FOR THE COLLECTION

With support from our generous donors, we seek to ensure the longevity of the State Collection for future generations.



Detail of Melbourne Townhall and Swanston St (1889).  
Photo by Catherine Nunn.

## Marquill Foundation: painting conservation

The Marquill Foundation has continued its generous support of painting restoration, contributing to the conservation of *Melbourne Townhall and Swanston St* by Jacques Carabain (1834–1933).

In its original state, the painting needed cleaning and the varnish had yellowed over time. There was also staining in the sky from an old lining, remnants of earlier overpainting and several large scratches in the foreground.

External paintings conservator Catherine Nunn cleaned both the surface and the reverse of the canvas, removing discoloured varnish, old overpaint and surface scratches, most of which were confined to the varnish layer. She also reduced staining, filled in areas of loss and applied a new conservation-grade varnish.

Once conservation work on the frame is complete, the painting will be rehoused with protective glazing to help prevent future damage.



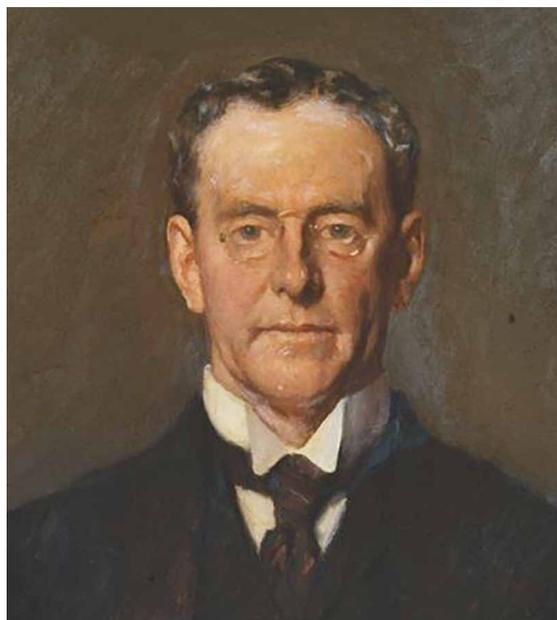
Detail of Jacques Carabain (1889) *Melbourne Townhall and Swanston St*, oil on canvas in decorative gilt frame. Photo by Catherine Nunn.

## Future conservation work: Armstrong portrait

We look forward to updating our generous donor community about work to restore the *Portrait of Edmund La Touche Armstrong* by Lindsay Bernard Hall, c.1925, an oil on canvas in its original frame.

Armstrong was a prominent figure in Melbourne's cultural history. He served as the fifth Chief Librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery of Victoria (1896–1925), and from 1900 onwards was a longstanding member of the Wallaby Club, Victoria's oldest walking club. The portrait was painted by acclaimed artist Lindsay Bernard Hall, who was appointed as Director of the National Gallery of Victoria and Master of the School of Arts in 1891.

Funds raised will support cleaning the painting, removing the degraded varnish and applying a clear conservation-grade varnish to enhance and protect the image. They will also assist with cleaning and repairing the frame, and rehousing the work with glazing and a backboard to conservation standards.



Lindsay Bernard Hall (c.1925) *E. La Touche Armstrong*, oil on canvas; Pictures Collection, State Library Victoria.

## Completed conservation work: Butterfield Collection

In late 2022, the Library launched a significant conservation initiative to preserve 154 original architectural drawings by esteemed Gothic Revival English architect William Butterfield. Created from 1878 for the construction of Melbourne's iconic St Paul's Cathedral, these detailed plans – some extending up to five metres in length – form a rare and fragile visual record of one of Victoria's most significant architectural landmarks.

Recognising the collection's cultural and historical value, the Library centred its 2022 End of Financial Year Appeal on securing funds for its preservation. With generous support from donors, the Library's Conservation team undertook a rigorous treatment process, including cleaning, flattening, repairing and stabilising each drawing to ensure its long-term preservation. We are deeply grateful to donors for making it possible to safeguard this valuable collection for future generations.

Conservation and rehousing of the architectural drawings will enable the Library to digitise them in future for broader access. Digitised copies of the smaller plans are now findable on the Library catalogue, with more images to be made available progressively, as more plans are digitised.

Through this project, the Library is not only protecting a vital component of Victoria's architectural heritage but also advancing its commitment to education, cultural enrichment and the global dissemination of knowledge – ensuring that this remarkable legacy continues to inspire for years to come.



Conservator Albertine Hamilton surveying architectural drawings by William Butterfield.  
Photo by Marika Kocsis.

# SUPPORTING THE LIBRARY'S PROGRAMS

**State Library Victoria's programs foster literacy, learning and equal access to knowledge – enriching the lives of people across our community.**

## **Programming supported by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust**

In addition to providing significant funds to acquire works for the Women Writers Fund, the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust gift also enables delivery of the successful *Salon After d'Arc* program series, and an annual lecture *For Future Reference: Helen Macpherson Smith Trust Signature Lecture*.

On the eve of International Women's Day, New York Times bestselling author Dava Sobel joined us for the *2025 For Future Reference* lecture, endowed by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, to reflect on some of Marie Curie's – and her contemporaries' – lesser-known contributions to science.



Lawrence Leung with audience members at Salon After d'Arc: Divination, ritual and the occult, 8 October 2025. Photo by Eva Gorobets.



## 2025 Fellowships

The State Library Victoria fellowships are among the most substantial of their kind in Australia, supporting artists, writers, creatives and scholars to undertake projects that open up the State Collection and produce career-defining work. They are a cornerstone of the Library's commitment to supporting research, creativity and cultural innovation – ensuring the stories in our collection continue to inspire, challenge and connect us.

In 2025, 18 creatives and scholars were awarded a share of \$195,000 in funding, along with dedicated office space at the Library for 12 months and one-on-one support from a specialist librarian. Among the projects are plans to unearth treasures of Australian poetry from our Rare Books Collection, an art project to connect Yorta Yorta people with the history and culture of their ancestors, and a research initiative highlighting the legacy of performing artists in regional Victoria.

Australian musician Mojo Ruiz de Luzuriaga, known professionally as Mo'Ju, was awarded a Creative Fellowship (\$15,000) for their project KAPWA. They plan to access books and audio recordings in the State Collection to create a new piece of work celebrating 'Kapwa', a philosophy central to Filipino culture and identity.

*'I'm thrilled and excited for this opportunity to deepen my own knowledge of pre-colonial practices and beliefs in the Philippines. The fellowship will benefit not only my own cultural development as a member of the Filipinx diaspora, but also lay the foundations for my next major artistic project – one that explores the themes of mysticism, spirit and gender fluidity, through an indigenous lens in a modern world.'*

2025 fellow, Mojo Ruiz de Luzuriaga

Every fellowship is an opportunity to learn more about Victoria's culture and history; we're so excited to see what our participants will discover!

*'For more than two decades, State Library Victoria's Fellowships Program has supported more than 300 creative practitioners and scholars to make significant and enduring contributions to Victoria's culture and history. Congratulations to the 2025 fellows, whose projects will bring the State Collection to life in new and imaginative ways, bolstering Victoria's vibrant creative sector and generating new artworks, books, performances and research.'*

The Hon. Colin Brooks, Minister for Creative Industries

Image: 2025 State Library Victoria fellows and former CEO Paul Duldig in The Ian Potter Queen's Hall. Photo by Jarrod Barnes

**Thank you to the supporters who made the Fellowships Program possible:**

- Prof. Em. Dr Robert Shanks and Mrs Josephine Shanks
- Rick Amor and Meg Williams (Amor Residency at Baldessin Studio)
- Morag Fraser AM (Tate Adams Memorial Residency at Baldessin Studio)
- Anonymous
- Georges Mora Fellowship
- CJ La Trobe Society
- Asian Australian Foundation



Prof. Em. Dr Robert Shanks and Ms Josephine Shanks at the 2025 fellowship announcement afternoon tea. Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.



L to R – Joel McGuinness, Anne Pang, Barry Pang, Walter Lee, Darcy Vescio, Noel Leung and Jonathan Pau. Photo by Michael Lye.



Dianne Reilly Drury AM and Clive Scott AM at the 2025 fellowship announcement afternoon tea. Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.



L to R – Chris Kong, Kim Tran, Noel Leung, Cheri Ong, Karen Kong, Mitos Gloudemans and Gary Cheung. Photo by Michael Lye.

## **Inaugural Asian Australian Foundation Fellowship**

This new fellowship will support innovative projects that celebrate the history, stories and voices of Asian Australians. Funded by the community through the Asian Australian Foundation's public ancillary fund, the fellowship will provide \$45,000 over three years, playing a vital role in enriching the Library's longstanding Fellowships Program. It will also create valuable opportunities for researchers and creatives, encourage fresh perspectives on the Library's collections related to Asian Australians, and foster meaningful community engagement.

Founded in 2015 by Cheri Ong and a group of dedicated Asian Australians, the Asian Australian Foundation is a philanthropic community trust that connects Asian Australians – pooling resources and knowledge for public good and helping to shape a dynamic Asian philanthropic presence in Australia.

Coinciding with the Library's 170th anniversary, the inaugural Asian Australian Foundation Fellowship reflects our shared commitment to celebrating and strengthening Victoria's diverse communities.

***'One of the purposes of the Asian Australian Foundation is to encourage and strengthen greater participation and inclusion of Asian Australian voices in Australian society, including at cultural institutions where the voices and stories of Asian Australians in the history of Victoria have not always been surfaced or told as they should.'***

***It is hoped that the Asian Australian Foundation Fellowship... will promote engagement and understanding amongst the Victorian community.'***

Cheri Ong, founder of Asian Australian Foundation

## **Collier Charitable Fund – Let's Go to the Library!**

*The Let's Go to the Library!* program, funded by the Collier Charitable Fund, provided disadvantaged children and families across Victoria with access to a bespoke State Library Victoria early years educational experience. The program offered 90-minute sessions for children aged 0–5 from kindergartens, early learning centres and supported playgroups in communities that, had not previously visited the Library.

We specifically reached out to families experiencing barriers such as language, cost of travel and limited awareness of the Library's programs and services. Through the generous support of the Collier Charitable Fund, we were able to cover transport costs, and provide a morning tea and a tailored Library experience for each visiting group.

Each group enjoyed a dedicated storytime session featuring stories and songs, a 'make your own binoculars' craft activity and a guided tour of the Library. Every child received a Library pack containing craft materials, a State Library Victoria songbook, board books and stickers. The packs also included complimentary family membership (valued at \$96), helping families continue their connection with the Library beyond the visit.

All participating groups were composed primarily of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families, including those from migrant, asylum seeker and refugee communities. We partnered with not-for-profit organisation VICSEG New Futures to engage these families. Languages spoken by participants included Karenni, Kayah, Nepali, Swiss German, Tagalog, Visaya, Bisaya, Arabic, Assyrian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Chinese and Serbian.

We received wonderful feedback from all groups involved, and are immensely grateful to the Collier Charitable Fund for making this special initiative possible.

***'I am very grateful for the opportunity to get to visit the State Library. This was my first visit to (the) State Library; my kids and I enjoyed it a lot.'***

Anonymous parent/caregiver, VICSEG  
New Futures Karenni Playgroup

***'Thank you so much for giving us this valuable opportunity for our families to come and visit the State Library and learn more about the history of it.'***

Lulu De Rose, Playgroup Facilitator, VICSEG  
New Futures

***'Thank you for supporting schools with low ICSEA. Our kids have never been here. Without the additional funding we could not have brought our students. What a brilliant day!'***

Gladesville Primary School, Access Education group, November 2025



Sunshine Harvester Primary School at Big Ideas for Young Minds. Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.

## **Access Education**

Thanks to the generosity of the Datt Family Foundation, Helen Imber through the Silver Gold Fund (a sub-fund of Australian Communities Foundation), Asian Australian Foundation and other supporters, 2349 students from 48 schools were able to take part in our education programs this year, both onsite and online. For many schools in regional and remote areas, transport costs can make excursions to the Library feel out of reach. Support for the Access Education program helps remove that barrier, ensuring every child has the opportunity to learn, explore and be inspired at the Library.

***'In the 1950s my mother, Carolina, would take me by tram to the Library every Saturday morning (it was a lending library until 1971). She would borrow seven books to read during the week. I borrowed as well. Her love of reading and the access to the wonders of State Library Victoria have stayed with me my whole life.'***

***'Now in the 21st century State Library Victoria continues to weave its magic. I want every child, no matter where they go to school, to have that same transformational experience, to feel the excitement of learning and joy of discovery that can change a life.'***

***'The Library's Access Education program provides schools that are financially, socially and geographically disadvantaged with a bursary. Directing my support to this initiative fulfils my desire to make it possible for students who need it most, to participate in the Library's enriching educational programs.'***

Helen Imber, State Library Victoria Foundation Council Member

## Lisa Ring and Family Scholarships

Lisa Ring and Family are passionate about supporting new entrepreneurs and enabling their growth. The Lisa Ring and Family Scholarships, offered through the Library's StartSpace program, provide vital support for founders in the early stages of building their businesses.

Each recipient receives \$10,000 in seed funding, bespoke business coaching and a 12-month StartSpace Loft membership – offering access to coworking spaces and a network of like-minded entrepreneurs.

Now in its fifth year, the Lisa Ring and Family Scholarships program empowers early-stage startups to develop their ideas, build confidence and take the next steps toward future success.



StartSpace Lisa Ring and Family celebration breakfast on 30 October 2025. Photo by Carmen Zammit.

The 2025 scholarship recipients:

- Josh Farrington, who is developing a patient-centric mobile application to educate and support hospital patients navigating long or complex healthcare journeys.
- Ruwini Cooray, who is developing an advanced cell-based brain implant solution for treating neurological diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

In October 2025, we were pleased to announce the 2026 Lisa Ring and Family Scholars:

- **Aliet Bior, founder of Umbrellus**, designers of modular, regenerative infrastructure that protects livestock and vineyards from climate extremes, while restoring soil health and reducing waste.
- **Abhijeet Waykar and Justin Yeung, co-founders of PredicTx Health**, which uses AI to personalise chemotherapy dosing from routine CT scans, reducing toxicity, improving outcomes and making cancer treatment safer.

*'My family and I are extremely proud of this year's scholarship winners, who are using leading edge technologies to tackle complex modern issues. Aliet, Abhijeet and Justin are inspiring founders, who have the vision, talent and determination to turn their business ideas into thriving ventures. We are excited to see their ideas become reality, and we hope that the scholarship empowers them to even greater success.'*

Lisa Ring

# VICTORIAN INDIGENOUS GALLERY

The Victorian Indigenous Gallery, which opened its doors in late 2023, is dedicated to telling the stories of Victoria's Aboriginal communities.

State Library Victoria is grateful for the extraordinary generosity of the Hansen Little Foundation, whose \$1.25 million grant has made this landmark initiative possible – creating a gallery dedicated to presenting Victoria's Indigenous voices.



## ***beruk* exhibition**

The inaugural exhibition, *beruk*, was presented by State Library Victoria through the Victorian Indigenous Research Centre, with the generous support of the Hansen Little Foundation.

Developed in partnership with the Victorian Indigenous Research Centre and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Corporation, *beruk* celebrated the legacy of Wurundjeri Ngurungaeta and artist William Barak (Beruk). Running from 13 December 2023 to 21 July 2024, the exhibit welcomed a total of 169,508 visitors.

## ***Treaty* exhibition**

*Treaty* is an exhibition about the past, present and future, featuring historic manuscripts, colonial artefacts and interviews about what treaty, voice and truth-telling means to Victoria's Aboriginal people today. This exhibition invites visitors to explore a unique collection of items related to Australia's first and only known treaty claim – the Batman Treaty – and to hear directly from Victorian Aboriginal community members about the importance and meaning of treaty.

The purpose of this exhibition is to bring the original treaty manuscripts out of the Library's collections store and make them accessible to the community. These treaties are a vital part of Victoria's history, presented to encourage reflection and conversation about the significance of truth-telling and treaties in the present day. Since opening on 27 October 2024, the exhibition has welcomed over 350,000 visitors.

## **Yoorrook Justice Commission – Official Public Record**

The Yoorrook Official Public Record is now held by State Library Victoria as a caretaker in trust. Drawing on evidence presented to the Yoorrook Justice Commission – the first formal truth-telling process into the historical and ongoing injustices experienced by First Nations peoples in Victoria – alongside secondary sources, the Record provides a detailed account of Victoria's history from the beginning of colonisation.

The Library's role as caretaker will remain in place until a dedicated Indigenous Records body is established, affirming First Peoples' leadership, cultural sovereignty and rights over their stories. This marks the first time records created by and for First Peoples have been held outside the State Collection – a significant recognition of cultural authority and an important step on the roadmap toward justice and systemic reform in Victoria.

The Record, comprising both a digital repository and physical artefacts, is cared for under the guidance of the Victorian Indigenous Research Centre (VIRC), based at the Library, and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

# YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Updates on the success of our  
past fundraising appeals.



## Make a Move for Victorians appeal 2023

Thanks to generous donors who helped raise \$63,000 through the 2023 End of Year Appeal, the Library's iconic chessboards have received a major upgrade. The former vinyl decals – once at the mercy of weather and wear – have been replaced with not one, but two permanent inlaid stone chessboards. The white squares are crafted from exfoliated Harcourt granite from Mount Alexander, while the black squares are Australian bluestone from Port Fairy. (Fun fact: the same materials were used to build the tram stops outside the Library and along Swanston Street.)

Among those who supported this project was the family of Magnus Victor (MV) Anderson, an art and chess aficionado who donated some 6700 volumes of chess materials to the Library between 1959 and 1966. The now renowned MV Anderson Chess Collection has grown to become the third largest chess collection in the world, with more than 13,000 volumes of books, magazines, tournament reports and more.

For Rhys Watson, Anderson's great-grandnephew, contributing to the appeal and the new outdoor sets was about more than preserving his great-granduncle's legacy.

***'It's about the relevance of chess for the next generation,' he says. 'There are not many games that offer that sort of opportunity for engagement. When you sit down at a chessboard, everyone's equal... For me, that has a wonderful appeal.'***

Rhys Watson, great grandnephew of MV Anderson who started the Library's MV Anderson Chess Collection

## Maps that Made Melbourne appeal 2024

Following generous donor support for the Maps that Made Melbourne appeal, our teams will be enabled to carefully archive and catalogue a large collection of Melbourne survey maps.

We are exploring new ways to make the maps collection even more engaging through the work of Tim Sherratt, a 2025 SLV LAB Creative Technologist-in-Residence. Tim is a historian and hacker who investigates the possibilities and politics of digital cultural collections. With a long career across the cultural heritage sector, he has been developing online resources related to libraries, archives, museums and history since 1993.

During his 12-week hybrid residency, Tim engaged deeply with the Library's maps collection, focusing on geo-referencing (the process of aligning historical maps to real-world coordinates) and the use of map collections data. His research examined how geo-metadata (information about geographic data) can be used to create compelling digital experiences, what hacking can reveal about the Library's digital collections data model, and how digital tools can enable new forms of research using Library materials.

As part of his residency, Tim developed innovative ways to explore the Library's maps and related collections – overlaying historic map series on interactive platforms and linking photographs and directories to the places they depict. By connecting maps, photos and records to real-world locations, Tim's work opens up exciting new ways for Library users to trace change over time, uncover local histories and explore Victoria's past in context.

## A World of Stories appeal 2024

This appeal focused on raising funds for the Library to purchase and catalogue books in a number of community languages for children aged 0–8. The goal was to expand the collection in the Pauline Gandel Children’s Quarter, enabling families to read together in the language they speak at home.

Thanks to generous donations, and funding from Perpetual Foundation, the Library acquired more than 200 books in languages including Arabic, Bosnian, Tamil, Turkish Urdu, Tagalog, Sinhala, Indonesian, Hindi and Bengali with a selection of titles also overlaid with braille text labels. These books have already proven to be in high demand, with data from just the last seven months showing they have been used over 4,075 times.

Thank you to our generous donors for supporting this project and helping the Library to celebrate and better reflect the many languages spoken in Victoria.



Parent and child reading a book in Sinhala in the Pauline Gandel Children’s Quarter. Photo by Eva Gorobets.

## Stories of Us appeal 2025

Generous supporters helped raise more than \$245,000 for the Stories of Us appeal which aims to digitise some of our most fragile and most requested family history manuscript records. Among the most at-risk collections are the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum registers – an essential record of early migrants and those who sought refuge in one of Melbourne’s first social welfare institutions.

Funds raised will enable State Library Victoria to preserve and digitise critical volumes of the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum registers, ensuring they can be easily accessed both in the physical Library and online. The appeal will also fund an upgrade to our ScanPro 3500 equipment, allowing for clearer images, faster searches and higher-quality scans.

Thank you to everyone who supported this appeal to help preserve stories for future generations.



Guests at the Donor Morning Tea on 5 August 2025. Photo by Peter Foster.

# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR DONORS

**We are sincerely grateful to our supporters, whose generosity enables the Library to remain a welcoming community space and a vital resource for all.**

## Mary Kehoe

For Mary Kehoe, the State Library has always held a special place in her heart.

*'I loved my time working at the Library – the magnificent building, the wonderful collection, the fascinating enquiries and the people I worked with. It is one of the first places I take visitors to Melbourne.'*

Originally from Queensland, Mary moved to Melbourne to complete a Graduate Diploma in Librarianship at RMIT, after having already completed a Bachelor of Arts in history and Australiana. Following her studies she secured a role in the Library's La Trobe Collection, allowing her to pursue her passion for Australian history – a passion that would later resurface in an unexpected way.

After marrying and moving to North Melbourne, Mary discovered her street was once the northern boundary of the 10 acre (4 hectare) site that housed the original Melbourne Benevolent Asylum, built in 1851 to house the homeless in early colonial Victoria. Intrigued, she joined the newly formed Hotham History Project in 1995 and researched the asylum for its first publication.

*'Almost 15,000 people were provided with care by the Victoria Benevolent Society in the 60 years the Benevolent Asylum operated in North Melbourne,' she says. 'There are now many descendants... in Victoria, interstate and overseas who are interested in researching their ancestors and learning more about the institution where they ended their days. The records are old and fragile and it is imperative that they be preserved for posterity... it is (also) crucial that relevant records be digitised so that the information can be made accessible to all.'*

Mary's support for the digitisation of these records through the Stories of Us appeal ensures that this history, and the stories of those once housed there, will continue to be accessible for generations to come.



Mary Kehoe at the donor morning tea for the Stories of Us appeal, 5 August 2025, with the Library's Head of Visitor and Information Services Carolyn Long. Photo by Peter Foster.

## The Wallaby Club

Established in June 1894 the Wallaby Club, based in Melbourne, is Victoria's oldest walking club. The club's motto, '*à votre santé*' ('to your health'), perfectly reflects its spirit and purpose – fostering friendship, lively conversation and shared enjoyment of walking, while appreciating both the natural and built environments.

The Wallaby Club has donated towards the conservation of the portrait of Edmund LaTouche Armstrong (c.1925), who was a longstanding member of The Wallaby Club from 1900.

***'State Librarian Edmund LaTouche Armstrong (1864–1946) was a member of the Wallaby Club from 1900 until his death in 1946. He was President in 1918.***

***On his retirement in 1925, his family presented the Library with an oil painting, by prominent Melbourne artist Lindsay Bernard Hall. Armstrong never married and has no direct descendants. It has been our privilege, as his Wallaby Club family, to raise funds for the restoration of the painting.'***

Alan K Chuck, President 2024–2025, the Wallaby Club Inc.

## Hew and Howard Gerrard

When brothers Hew and Howard Gerrard donated their late father's collection of rare British books to State Library Victoria, they knew they were honouring both his scholarship and his lifelong love of the printed word.

***'For thirty years our father, Dr Brian Gerrard, painstakingly collected hundreds of books from the 17th century.'***

Dr Brian Norman Gerrard (1939–2022) worked in the 1980s as a researcher for the Australia and New Zealand Early Imprints Project, cataloguing books published before 1801. '*Our father spent over a year recording the relevant holdings of State Library Victoria, becoming very familiar with the Library and its staff of the time,*' his sons report.

Later he returned to the Library while completing his PhD at Monash University on post-impression correction in British books printed during the 18th century, a pursuit that also took him to the USA and UK in search of examples for his thesis.

The brothers say it feels fitting that their father's collection has found its home in the place he once studied. '*We are thrilled that our father's collection will be securely stowed in the custody of State Library Victoria, as well as being available for viewing by other literary enthusiasts.'*

The installation of a plaque in Brian's honour, they add, '*provides an ongoing physical acknowledgement of our father's decades-long generation of a rare book collection... a physical memento for current friends, his extended family both here and in the UK, as well as other scholars of similar mind to himself.'*



Hew and Howard Gerrard in the La Trobe Reading Room on 26 November 2025. Photo by Suzie Gasper.

## Wikimedians-in-Residence and WikiFest

Radical Acts was a partnership between Wikimedia Australia and State Library Victoria, which began in February 2025 and ran until July 2025. Funding of \$10,000 from Wikimedia Australia enabled the Library to host two Wikimedians-in-Residence, Kerrie Burn and Ellie Watts. Their project, Radical Acts, aimed to address gender bias on Wikipedia and within the Library's own records by improving the representation of Australian feminist activists, organisations and movements.

Kerrie and Ellie created 52 new articles, edited and improved 179 existing articles, and added 41 images to Wikimedia Commons – an online, wiki-based repository of freely usable images, videos, sounds and other media files. By the end of July, their edited Wikipedia articles had been viewed more than 135,000 times.

On Wednesday 27 August SLV LAB, in partnership with Wikimedia Australia, hosted WikiFest 2025. This collaborative event brought together Library staff, members of the Wikimedia community and colleagues from the GLAM sector (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) across Victoria to explore the potential of open knowledge through hands-on wiki-work and creative problem-solving.

The goal of the event was to develop applications and documentation that make Wikidata and Wikimedia platforms more accessible and useful – bridging the gap between technical and non-technical contributors. The 'hack'-style event was led by facilitators Tim Sherratt, historian, hacker and 2025 SLV LAB Creative Technologist-in-Residence; and Paul Duchesne, film archivist and developer at the National Film and Sound Archive.



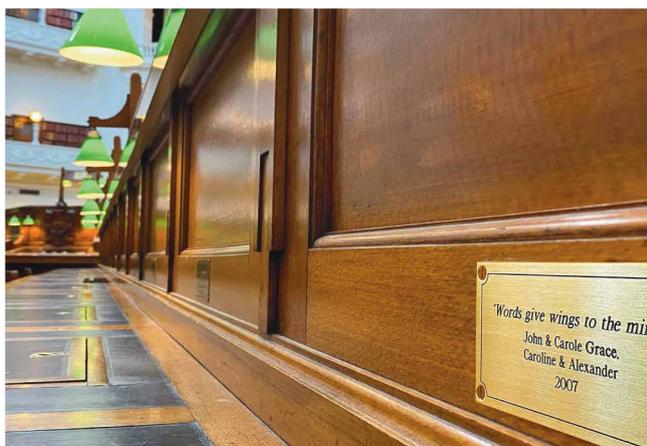
Tim Sherratt, 2025 SLV LAB Creative Technologist-in-Residence, speaking at WikiFest on 27 August 2025. Photo by Yeoseop Yoon.



WikiFest participants at State Library Victoria on 27 August 2025. Photo by Yeoseop Yoon.

# BOOKPLATES AND PLAQUES

Bookplates and plaques offer a lasting symbol of your support for State Library Victoria, and your commitment to safeguarding our shared stories.



## Plaques

Bronze dedication plates are secured above the heritage desks in the Library's magnificent La Trobe Reading Room. They not only carry a name but a story lived, and they play an incredibly important role in supporting and maintaining the Library.

## Lynne Saunder

Lynne Saunder donated a La Trobe Reading Room plaque in memory of her late father, Maxwell Maurice Saunder (1935–2023). Following his retirement, Max visited the reading room every Friday for 25 years to research his family history and others. Max's daughter Lynne said her father was 'surprisingly good on computers' and sat with a group of other retirees who often asked for his help to get online or find records for their own research.

*'We were delighted to be able to have a plaque installed on a desk in the reading room, near where Dad and his friends sat, as a permanent reminder of his time in the Library over all those years. It means a great deal to our family to have this connection with the Library.'*

Lynne Saunder



*‘State Library Victoria is the most amazing resource of knowledge with its superb collections; it serves a busy community of scholars; in a world leading building; it is my second space. My wife Jo and I are pleased to support the Library through various donation types – and bookplates provide association with particular books.’*

Prof. Em. Dr Robert Shanks, State Library Victoria donor



## Irene Lorraine Jones and Russell Jones

Russell Jones has requested his own plaque be placed beside the plaque of his late wife, Irene Lorraine Jones, in the La Trobe Reading Room. Russell, a long-standing supporter of the Library, provided a formal letter of wishes to ensure this request is carried out.

*‘Russell Jones approached the Philanthropy team in early 2025 and prearranged the purchase of a plaque to be positioned in the La Trobe Reading room at the desk next to his late wife, Irene Lorraine Jones. We were moved by this beautiful gesture and a formal letter of wishes was drawn up and signed to assist with arrangements.’*

Emily Wade, Donor and Member Relations Manager

Image: La Trobe Reading Room. Photo by Cameron Murray.

## Bookplates

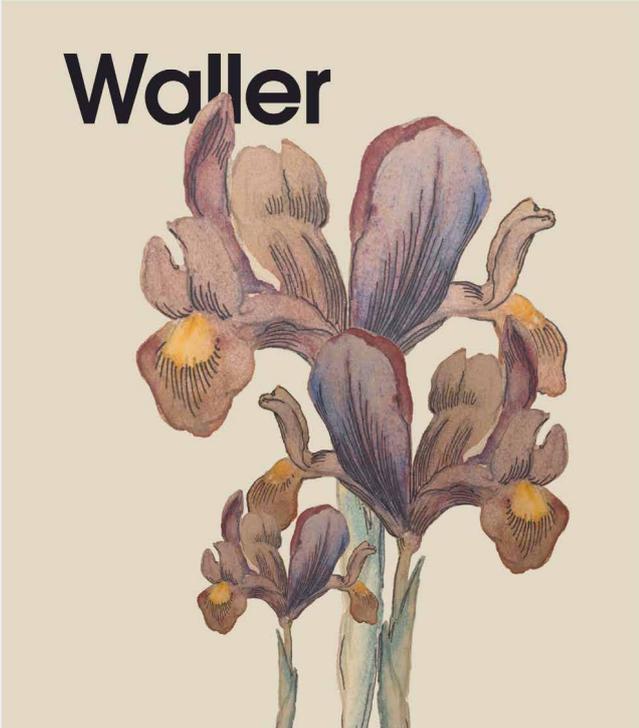
Bookplates are personalised dedications placed inside new books entering the State Collection, and offer a meaningful and lasting way to show your support for State Library Victoria.

This year’s series of bookplates features stunning botanical works by three female artists who contributed to Victoria’s artistic legacy:

- Purple iris by Christian Waller (née Yandell) (1894–1954) – \$175 donation
- Brunonia australis by Fanny Anne Charsley (1828–1915) – \$500 donation
- Flower arrangement by Caroline Peebles (1826–1911) – \$1,000 donation

# About the illustrators

## Waller

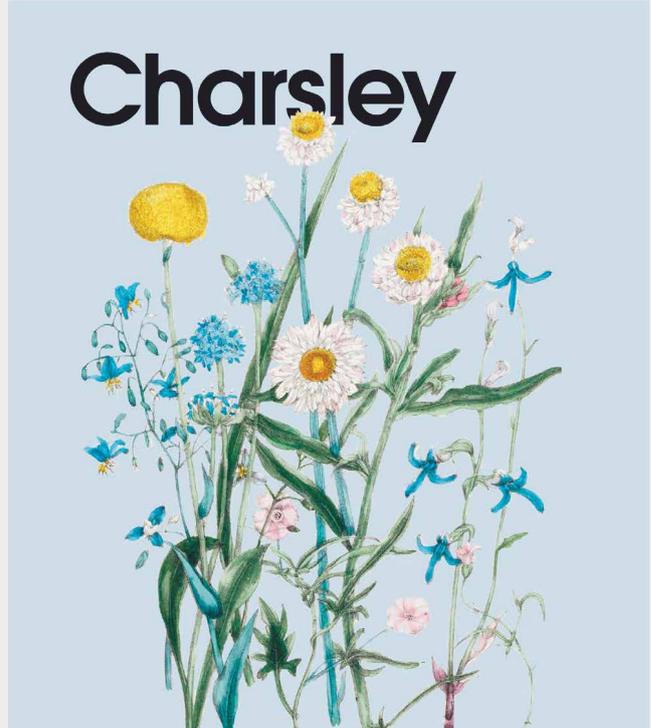


### Waller (1894–1954)

Christian Waller (née Yandell) was an Australian printmaker, illustrator, muralist and stained-glass artist. In 1909, at the age of 15, she moved to Melbourne, where she studied at the National Gallery School under Frederick McCubbin, a prominent member of the Heidelberg School art movement.

Waller was one of the few recognised professional female stained-glass artists of her time and a leading book illustrator. During the 1920s, she gained acclaim as the first Australian artist to illustrate *Alice in Wonderland*. Her stained-glass works still adorn more than 20 churches across Victoria and New South Wales.

## Charsley



### Charsley (1828–1915)

Fanny Anne Charsley was a botanical artist and collector. Born in Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom, she travelled to Australia with her family, settling in Melbourne, where she lived for ten years before returning home. During her time in Australia, she painted the local flora and studied under Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, the Victorian Government Botanist who later became Director of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens.

Charsley collected plant specimens for von Mueller, who honoured her contribution by naming a species of Australian paper daisy *Helipterum charsleyae* (now reclassified as *Rhodanthe charsleyae*).

# Peebles



## **Peebles (1826–1911)**

Caroline Peebles was born in England, where her father is reputed to have been a painter to Queen Victoria, before migrating to Australia in 1855. Between 1870 and 1910, the talented artist created a remarkable series of watercolours depicting flowers, vegetables and fruit. This collection has since been acquired into the State Collection, thanks to a generous gift from Ms Eileen Dillon-Smith.

Peebles also has another special connection to State Library Victoria – her son, Norman Peebles, was an architect with the firm Bates, Peebles and Smart, which designed the Library’s iconic domed reading room.

You too can create a lasting tribute within the Library’s walls. To learn more about donating a bookplate or plaque, please call our Philanthropic Programs team on (03) 8664 7589 or email [bequests@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:bequests@slv.vic.gov.au)

# REDMOND BARRY SOCIETY

**The Redmond Barry Society recognises those whose generous bequests or living legacies help the Library preserve and develop its collections, and support exhibitions and programs.**

**In honour of our generous Redmond Barry Society members, a luncheon was held with guest speakers the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull AC in conversation with the Hon. Barry Jones AC.**

The event on 29 May 2025 was held in the magnificent Ian Potter Queen's Hall at State Library Victoria, honouring society members who have made a commitment to support the Library through a gift in their will. The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull AC and the Hon. Barry Jones AC engaged in an entertaining and erudite conversation over a three-course lunch, with Maxine McKew AM as Master of Ceremonies.

The discussion centred on the 10th edition of Barry's book *Dictionary of World Biography*, published in January 2025, but quickly turned to a fascinating discussion of politics, family and religion. A highlight was Barry flipping the script

entirely and, in a nod to his talkback radio days, commandeering the microphone to interview the interviewer.

## **About the Redmond Barry Society**

We are profoundly grateful for the commitment of our Redmond Barry Society members. It is through the generosity of our donors and bequestors that we can continue to preserve and grow the State Collection, upholding the vision of the Library's founder, Sir Redmond Barry, to be a great emporium of learning: free to access and open to all.

Named in honour of Sir Redmond Barry, the society was established to recognise and celebrate our community of bequestors through special invitations to exclusive events. Everyone who advises us of their intention to make a bequest is honoured with membership in the Redmond Barry Society.



You can leave a legacy that inspires generations to come. To discover how to include the Library in your will and become part of the Redmond Barry Society, please contact our Philanthropic Programs team.

Email: [bequests@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:bequests@slv.vic.gov.au)  
Phone: 03 8664 7589

# KEITH MURDOCH ORATION

**Established in 2001, the Keith Murdoch Oration, is State Library Victoria's premier signature event that raises funds to support the Library's work while celebrating its role as a leading centre for ideas, knowledge, and culture.**

On Wednesday 24 September, Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria hosted the 2025 Keith Murdoch Oration, where world-renowned composer and festival director Sir Jonathan Mills AC delivered a powerful address on the impact of artificial intelligence on society and the arts. In her opening speech, Christine Christian AO gave significant recognition to the important role that Sir Keith Murdoch played as a philanthropic supporter of the arts, a legacy that is continued by his family today.

Sir Jonathan Mills AC challenged the assumption that intelligence can be separated from feeling and that creativity can be mimicked by machines. He called for a renewed commitment to the arts, reminding us that human memory, imagination, and emotional depth are essential to creative inspiration and originality.

*'In an age defined by algorithms and acceleration, disruption and digitised experiences, synthetic personalities and simulations, it is both timely and necessary to pause and reflect on what it means to be human.'* Sir Jonathan Mills AC

The speech reflected the spirit of the Keith Murdoch Oration, a platform that has brought together global leaders across media, politics, science, sport, and humanitarianism to share insights on the defining issues of our time. Thank you to all our guests and Sir Jonathan Mills AC for honouring the Oration and Sir Keith Murdoch's memory with a thought-provoking address.

Sir Keith Murdoch (1885-1952) made an outstanding contribution as Trustee (1933-39) and President (1939-45) of the Public Library (now State Library Victoria), Museum and National Gallery of Victoria. He brought sound judgement, tireless energy, and a deep love of literature and the arts, helping shape the Library into the cultural icon it is today.



Sir Jonathan Mills AC delivering the Keith Murdoch Oration. Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.



L to R – Christine Christian AO, Sir Jonathan Mills AC and Penny Fowler AM. Photo by Jarrod Barnes Photography.

# A LASTING LEGACY



**Leaving a gift to the Library in your will helps ensure our collections continue to grow, and that we can keep hosting exhibitions and programs to inspire visitors of all ages. Your generosity empowers us to plan confidently for the future and invest in new ideas that will engage and delight generations to come.**

## **Living legacy: Q&A with Roger Chao**

### **Q: Tell us about yourself.**

A: I grew up in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, fortunate to be surrounded by libraries that became both companions and gateways. As a child, I was something of an outsider; I never quite managed to kick a football with any confidence, so books became my refuge. Many of my lunchtimes were spent tucked away in the school library, lost in other worlds. Reading was not simply an escape; it was a way of learning how to think, how to ask questions and how to imagine possibilities beyond the ordinary.

At school, I was most alive when grappling with ideas. The humanities drew me first – literature, history, languages – but I found equal fascination in the precision of mathematics and the elegance of scientific reasoning. I went on to study philosophy at university, completing my honours in ethics. Today, I am privileged to sit on a range of boards across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. I teach courses in corporate governance, strategy and risk, and I also run my own company, engaged in some of the most challenging and exciting questions of our age through cutting-edge research in artificial intelligence.

### **Q: How did your connection with State Library Victoria begin?**

A: As a young student, I was drawn through its grand doors by curiosity. At first, the Library was simply a resource, a supplement to university study, a place to chase down references or prepare for examinations. Yet over time, it became something more. It became a sanctuary, an antidote to the noise and distraction of ordinary life. Whenever I entered, I felt part of a lineage of scholars, dreamers and ordinary citizens bound by the pursuit of understanding.

Over the years, I have returned in many guises: as a student intent on proving myself, as a parent introducing my family to its treasures, and as a citizen simply grateful for a space where knowledge belongs to everyone. What I most admire is that the Library is not just an archive but a living organism, hosting exhibitions, conversations and programs that invite the curious child, the solitary reader and the lifelong resident alike. In a world that too often measures value in private accumulation, here is a space where value is measured in shared abundance.

**Q: Do you have any special memories of State Library Victoria?**

A: I have many memories of State Library Victoria, each representing a different stage of life, almost like chapters in a book. As a student, I was struck by the wonder of reading books and newspapers long out of print. For a young mind eager to see beyond the narrow confines of suburb and school, these encounters were transformative; they reminded me I was part of a much larger human conversation that stretched across generations.

Later, I brought my children to exhibitions. Their eyes lit up at rare and curious objects, and I saw in them the same spark I once felt. It was deeply moving to realise the Library could serve not only as my own refuge, but as a bridge across generations. Watching them wander among the exhibits, I felt a sense of gratitude that they too could inherit the wonder and inspiration that had shaped me.

And then there are the quieter memories: a brief exchange with a fellow reader over a book, the sight of someone sketching in the light of a window, the sound of pages turning together like a collective heartbeat. These are not grand

moments, but profoundly human ones, and they remind me why the Library is more than a building; it is a living community of seekers.

**Q: Why did you decide to leave State Library Victoria a gift in your will and what are you hoping the impact of that might be?**

A: When I considered the legacy I might leave behind, I asked myself what would endure beyond the span of my own life. The Library does not simply preserve books, it preserves possibility. It ensures that a young student, perhaps decades from now, can find the same spark of inspiration I once did. It ensures that scholars and artists can continue to draw upon our shared heritage. It ensures that families can wander through exhibitions and discover that learning can be not only useful, but joyous.

**Q: What would you say to someone else if they were considering doing the same?**

A: When one contributes to the Library, one joins a centuries-long chain of stewardship. You are not simply giving money, you are helping lay a foundation that will outlast you, nourishing minds and imaginations long after you are gone.

We would like to honour the following donors who have remembered State Library Victoria in their estate over the past 12 months. We thank them for their generosity, which will ensure the Library can continue to serve our community for generations to come.

- Estate of Frank Van Straten
- Estate of Imants Arvids Berzins (final donation for original bequest granted in 2022)

# EVENTS



## 2024 End of Year Celebration

On Tuesday 3 December 2024, Library supporters gathered in The Ian Potter Queen's Hall for State Library Victoria's annual End of Year Celebration Party. Hosted by Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria, and Alex Cartel, Chair of the Foundation Council, the event was an opportunity to thank donors for their generous support throughout the year.

Guests heard from Paula Bray, Chief Digital Officer, who introduced *Mouthful of Dust* – a cinematic web experience that blends history, art and technology to reimagine Ned Kelly's story through detailed 3D scans of his armour and related objects. Attendees enjoyed an exclusive preview of the work, which has since gone on to win a Heritage in Motion Award at the European Museum Academy Annual Conference.

Accompanied by a performance from string quartet Vivid Strings, the evening celebrated a year of creativity, collaboration and the ongoing generosity of our donor community.

Image: Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria at the 2024 End of Year Celebration. Photo by Francine Schaepper.



## 2025 End of Year Celebration

Thanks to everyone who joined us on Thursday 4 December 2025 for a memorable end of year celebration in the elegant Cowen Gallery and magnificent La Trobe Reading Room.

The evening opened with a moving Welcome to Country by Uncle Bill Nicholson and was hosted by Alex Cartel, Chair of the Foundation Council and Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria.

It was wonderful to see Library supporters enjoying cocktails, canapes, conversation and music from Senes Flamenco and DJ Edd Fisher, as well as exploring Yoyo Munk's *In Memory | Of Being*, a mixed reality experience, in La Trobe Reading Room.

We were excited to announce the launch of the Dome 2030 campaign, an ambitious project that will reimagine the La Trobe Reading Room and its galleries for future generations.

It was a joy to celebrate a year of significant achievements and to show our appreciation for the commitment and generosity of our donors and supporters.

Image: Prof. Adrienne Clarke AC and Kimba Thomson at the 2025 End of year Celebration. Photo by Francine Schaepper.



## Donor morning teas

Our donor morning teas are one of the ways we thank our supporters and strengthen our relationships within the donor community. These gatherings also give supporters of State Library Victoria the opportunity to see the impact of their contributions firsthand.

This year, we hosted two morning teas. On Tuesday 25 February 2025, a donor morning tea was held in the Isabella Fraser Room to thank supporters of the Bookplates Program and the World of Stories appeal. Guests viewed a selection of bookplates placed in newly acquired books and heard updates on the appeal's success.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, more than \$91,000 was raised through the World of Stories appeal, allowing us to double our collection of books in languages other than English and enabling more families to read together in the Pauline Gandel Children's Quarter.

In August we celebrated the success of our Stories of Us appeal, which raised an incredible \$245,000, exceeding our target of \$200,000. Donors heard from Carolyn Long, Head of Visitor and Information Services, and enjoyed a presentation by Carmen Quick, Senior Librarian from the Digital Access and Family History team. Attendees also had the rare opportunity to view volumes from the Melbourne Benevolent Asylum records.

There are many meaningful ways you can help keep State Library Victoria accessible for all. Every gift, large or small, helps preserve our history, spark new ideas and inspire future generations.

### **Leave a legacy**

Create a lasting impact by including a gift in your will and joining the Redmond Barry Society. Our Philanthropic Programs team can provide guidance and information – please contact us via the details below.

### **Celebrate someone special**

Honour a loved one with a plaque in the La Trobe Reading Room or a bookplate placed inside a new book from the Library's collection. It's a beautiful way to connect a personal story to the Library's legacy.

### **Support our next chapter**

The Library holds a rich collection of oral histories that capture the memories of Victorians. Our 2026 oral history appeal will raise much-needed funds to digitise and help make the collection accessible to all. To learn more, contact our team at [donations@slv.vic.gov.au](mailto:donations@slv.vic.gov.au).

### **Dome 2030**

Our magnificent Library Dome is an architectural icon and beacon of learning, cultural advancement and civic pride. We need your help to preserve its enduring legacy and reimagine what it can be in the new world – not only for 3 million visitors we welcome today but for the millions of visitors in the future.

### **Donate today**

Online: [slv.vic.gov.au/donate](https://slv.vic.gov.au/donate)

Call: (03) 8664 7589 to obtain our bank account details or speak with our Philanthropic Programs team about ways to support the Library's programs.

Your generosity helps us keep knowledge and learning open to all. Thank you for being part of the Library's story.

# REIMAGINING THE DOME: A LEGACY FOR GENERATIONS



## Join us in preserving Victoria's crown jewel

State Library Victoria is entering an extraordinary new chapter. Following our 170th anniversary milestone, we need you to help shape the future of one of Australia's most cherished cultural icons – and the stories it will inspire for generations to come.

Spearheaded by the Library Board of Victoria's first female president, Christine Christian AO, Dome 2030 is a bold \$45 million renewal planned to commence in 2027. It's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to preserve and revitalise this architectural masterpiece. For 170 years, State Library Victoria has stood as a beacon of knowledge, culture and civic pride. Today, it is more essential than ever. With record visitation of 3 million people annually and global recognition as one of the world's most beautiful libraries, the Library is not only a destination for learning but a symbol of Victoria's identity.

Now, we have the extraordinary opportunity to imagine what the next century of learning could look like. Together, we can ensure the Dome continues to invigorate the hearts and minds of those to come.

**'The Dome is our crown jewel: an architectural masterpiece, a cultural icon and a symbol of knowledge and societal advancement. This is a necessary and ambitious renewal that will open a new world under the Dome.'**

**Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria**



Christine Christian AO, President of the Library Board of Victoria in the La Trobe Reading Room.  
Photo by Susan Gordon-Brown.

## A vision to transform – while honouring the past

More than 112 years ago, the glorious dome and its four gallery levels were officially opened.

The then President of Trustees, Henry Gyles Turner, described this moment as an event of import, a red-letter day in the annals of Victoria, another milestone on the road of intellectual progress.

Then Governor-General, Lord Denman, is said to have greatly admired the beautiful proportions of the Dome and the splendid La Trobe Reading Room, which, to his mind, made it one of the finest – perhaps the finest – buildings of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

And so it is today. But it can be so much more tomorrow – and this is where we need your help.

The Dome is more than a building: it is the beating heart of Victoria’s cultural identity, a place where generations have looked up and felt possibility. The 6-storey octagonal reading room’s lofty galleries and timeless grandeur have welcomed millions of visitors, scholars and dreamers since that day in 1913. A prime example of Edwardian splendour, its design was inspired by the British Museum in London and Washington’s Library of Congress.

To safeguard this icon and reimagine its potential, we need visionary partners to join a movement that sees knowledge as a public good and the treasured Dome as a symbol of learning and cultural advancement. With your generous help we can preserve its enduring legacy and breathe new life into its soaring arches.

This bold and ambitious renewal project will protect the Dome’s heritage fabric while unlocking the extraordinary public value of its upper levels, reopening spaces that have been dormant for decades. With plans in place and a clear timeline to 2030, we’re ready to start the next chapter.

The once-in-a-generation transformation will open doors, literally and figuratively, across the Library. We will create a world-class research hub and reimagine cultural experiences so more people can access more knowledge, more of the time. As announced by Chrisine Christian AO at our end-of-year celebration, Dome 2030 will:

- protect the Dome’s heritage architecture through specialist conservation works
- open the ascending galleries, closed for decades, to public life again
- establish a world-class research hub to support scholarly excellence



46 Design for Members' Lounge.  
Architect's impression by Kerstin Thompson Architects.



Reimagined *World of the Book* exhibition.  
Architect's impression by Kerstin Thompson Architects.

- reimagine the *World of the Book* experience for today's audiences
- introduce a Members Lounge and Scholars Reading Room to foster connection and collaboration
- create new opportunities for cultural experiences that reimagine what a library of the future can be.

We saw what was possible with Vision 2020, which through public and philanthropic partnership expanded public spaces by 40% and elevated State Library Victoria onto the global stage as a destination for beauty, knowledge and innovation. Now we're ready to deliver again, with the chance to dream even bigger – and we cannot do it without you.

Your generosity will make this transformation possible. Every contribution helps preserve the Dome's historic heart and create new experiences that will enrich the lives of millions. This is more than a restoration – it is an investment in Victoria's future.

Imagine the impact: scholars uncovering new ideas in revitalised research spaces, families wandering through galleries reawakened with stories that have shaped our state, and visitors discovering moments of inspiration that connect

us all and linger with them long after they leave. By supporting Dome 2030, you join a community of donors who understand that cultural landmarks endure only through collective stewardship.

Looking ahead, our vision is bold. We aim to deepen our impact, broaden our reach, and continue building programs that deliver lasting change. With your help, we can turn these ambitions into reality.

**'This is a rare moment to shape the next century of Victoria's most beloved public place.'** Christine Christian AO

As Board President since May 2021, Christine Christian AO has set a clear direction to enhance the Library's standing as a world-class institution and a true must-do destination. Her leadership is grounded in Sir Redmond Barry's founding vision and driven by a commitment to keep the Library evolving in step with the Victorian community. By embracing an inspired future for our treasured Dome, we honour the visionaries who conceived State Library Victoria and cement our standing among the world's greatest libraries. Your support today shapes the future of Victoria's cultural heart and the lives it will touch tomorrow.

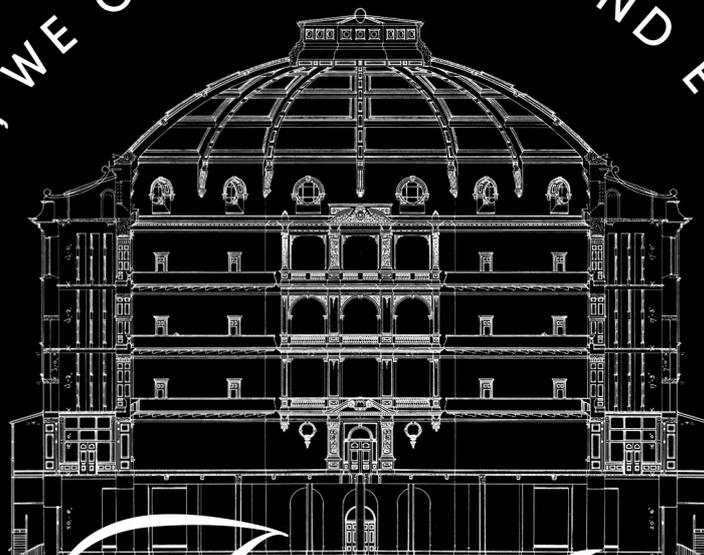


Revitalised gallery space.  
Architect's impression by Kerstin Thompson Architects.

**Join us. Preserve the Dome.  
Create a legacy that will last  
forever.**

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TOGETHER, WE CAN PRESERVE AND ENRICH OUR



# *Jewel in the Crown*

FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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CREATIVE  
VICTORIA