

# ABR

AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

## ANNUAL REVIEW 2014



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AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW  
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Kate Holden  
Linda Jarvin's  
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ABR  
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Bill Gammage  
Writing the  
Australian  
Landscape

May 2014 No. 361 \$10.95  
Announcing the  
inaugural ABR Laureate  
Read the shortlisted  
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Porter Prize  
Bernadette  
Brennan  
Elizabeth  
Harrower's  
last novel  
Ann-Marie Priest  
The love song of

ABR  
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Enter the \$5,000 Calibre Prize  
Reviews • Commentary  
New writing • Theatre  
Poet of the Month  
Books of the year  
Delia Falconer  
Robert Dessaix's  
determined  
self-fashioning  
Rodney Tiffen  
How Rebekah  
Brooks won  
over the jury  
Neal Blewett  
'What happened  
to Kevin?'  
Julia Gillard's  
memoirs  
Diana Glenn  
Clive James's  
masterly  
poetic hybrid  
PLUS: Miriam Cosic • Geraldine Doogue • Gig Ryan • Kim Williams • Geordie Williamson

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Ian Lowe  
The inconvenient  
truth about  
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Coming of age  
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Enter the \$5,000  
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Reviews • Essays  
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Rush  
Bridget  
Griffen-Foley  
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Great short  
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AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW  
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# 2014 IN REVIEW

This has been a transformative year for the magazine. Never before have its publishing and programs been more diverse or more popular.

We published 289 contributors in 2014, far more than we have ever published before (cf. 222 in 2013). This is attributable to longer print issues and new online possibilities – plus the rapid and successful expansion of Arts Update.

Because of increased subscription revenue, generous support from government, and private giving, *ABR* has been able to double its standard word rate for contributors since January 2013. The magazine is committed to continuing this trend.

Through a series of talks and workshops, the Editor continued to stress the advantages of publishing with *ABR*, which offers contributors well-paid work, close editing, professional support, and access to a discerning and influential readership.

Of the 289 contributors, 32% were entirely new to the magazine – another record for us, and further evidence of our avoidance of cliques and our broad appeal to writers and critics.

Seventy-five contributors (28%) were aged thirty-five and under – another turning point. All three of our 2014 prizes were won by writers aged thirty-five and under. Fostering and rewarding younger writers – and attracting younger readers through inexpensive subscription packages – remains a priority.

Much time and expense went into the needed refurbishment of *ABR*'s website in early 2014, with a marked improvement in functionality and delivery of *ABR Online*. The benefits have been evident since mid-2014, with greater usage and satisfaction (as measured in our online survey). We will continue to make improvements to the website and to *ABR Online* in 2015. With our enhanced website and digital platform, *ABR* is in an even stronger position to expand its reach in Australia and internationally.

Arts Update, a freely available online resource for reviews of theatre, music, film, and exhibitions, is proving highly popular and is attracting a new category of reader and contributor. *ABR* – always renowned for its thoughtful, well-crafted book reviews and essays – is now widely appreciated in the cultural sector because of its attention to theatre, film, and music through substantial reviews – ones that are also paid for (not always the case in this field).

*ABR*'s home at Boyd in Southbank (Creative Spaces, City of Melbourne) continues to give us greater visibility, centrality and variety of venues for events. The new office in this community arts hub benefits readers, authors, staff, and the wider public.

An ambitious events program is planned for 2015 and we will continue to explore ways to take advantage of the opportunities to engage with readers and the general public around Australia.





*ABR* enjoys a wide range of important partnerships with key cultural and educational institutions, including Flinders University, our sponsor since 2005.

*ABR* offered three popular and prestigious literary prizes in 2014 – the *ABR* Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize, the Peter Porter Poetry Prize, and the Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay. These prizes are now open to international writers and we have noted a marked increase in entries. In all, over 2,000 creative works were entered in these prizes. There were prize winners from New Zealand and the USA. We believe that these changes will greatly increase the national and international profiles of our prizes with significant benefits for the Australian writers who enter them.

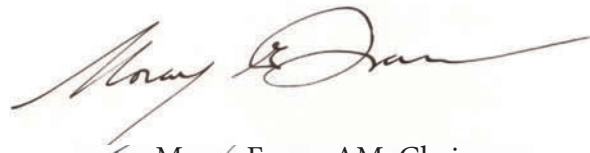
Strong philanthropy revenue continues to underwrite programs that might not otherwise be possible: *ABR Online*, three or four *ABR* Patrons' Fellowships (each worth \$5,000), the Jolley Prize, the Porter Prize, and the Calibre Prize.

In 2014, we offered the fifth of our paid editorial internships – a unique program, and a wonderful opportunity for a bright young graduate intent on a career in publishing. This internship is for twelve months, instead of six as previously. We will be offering the next one in mid-2015. Copyright Agency has contracted *ABR* to commission, edit and publish twenty essays by leading Australian writers for its Reading Australia project. These will be published in 2015.

Now we look forward to another year of keen commitment and exciting publishing, with more themed issues, greater diversity, new programs – and the odd surprise!



Peter Rose, Editor



Morag Fraser AM, Chair



The current *ABR* Board (left to right): Robert Phiddian (SA), Anne Edwards (SA), Ian Donaldson (Vic.), Peter McLennan (Treasurer, Vic.), Morag Fraser (Chair, Vic.), Ian Dickson (NSW), Colin Golvan (Vic.), Lisa Gorton (Vic.), Robert Sessions (Vic.), and Patrick Allington (SA).

# HIGHLIGHTS

Ten issues published in print and online, a record 289 writers from all states and territories (90 of them new to the magazine, and 75 of them aged 35 and under).

500 reviews, articles, essays, commentaries published.

David Malouf became the inaugural *ABR* Laureate in April.

Continuation of Flinders University's sponsorship of *ABR* – now in its tenth year.

Three prizes awarded – Jolley Prize, Porter Prize, Calibre Prize – worth a total of \$19,500.

Three new Fellowships awarded, totaling \$15,000 in payments to Fellows.

Total payments to *ABR* prize winners and *ABR* Fellows now exceed \$200,000.

Publication of our first Environment issue in November.

*ABR* contracted by Copyright Agency to commission substantial essays by leading writers for its Reading Australia project.

Major upgrade to the website, vastly improving *ABR Online*.

New features include Critic of the Month and Poet of the Month.

Rapid expansion of Arts Update, with reviews of films, plays, operas, concerts, exhibitions; and the creation of our regular Arts Update e-bulletin (8,000 subscribers).

*ABR* is now regarded as a major publisher of arts commentary – prompt, lengthy, considered, well edited – and all paid for.

Survey of readers' attitudes towards our website and online delivery platforms.

New partnership with the University of Sydney which takes the Editor to Sydney twice a year for editorial residencies.

*ABR* (and *ABR* staff) presented or co-presented nearly 30 events with a total attendance of 2,500. Venues included *ABR*'s home at Boyd, Southbank. Events were presented in partnerships with organisations such as the National Library of Australia, the University of Sydney, Melbourne Conversations (City of Melbourne), Melbourne Writers Festival, and the University of Melbourne.

*ABR* continued its paid twelve-month Editorial Internship program.

Triennial funding from the Australia Council and annual funding from six state and territory arts ministries.

Generous support from philanthropic foundations, partners, and sponsors.

Generous private support for the magazine's activities through the Patrons Program.

# ABOUT AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

## Mission Statement

*Australian Book Review (ABR)* is an independent, not-for-profit magazine, governed by an independent Board, managed by a small, highly skilled editorial and management team, and committed to the publishing and promotion of creative and critical writing of the highest standard. Through its print and digital publishing, website, prizes, editorial internships, events and partnerships, it makes a major contribution to Australia's culture of ideas.

## About Australian Book Review

Founded in 1961 in Adelaide and based in Melbourne since 1978, *ABR* has long been a vital part of Australia's cultural life. The magazine publishes in-depth literary criticism as well as new poetry, short stories, essays, commentaries and interviews with writers and literary critics. *ABR*



now offers extensive coverage of the arts, with frequent reviews of plays, films, operas, concerts, and exhibitions, along with blogs and diaries from some of Australia's liveliest cultural commentators.

*ABR* has a major commitment to the art of literary criticism. *ABR* sees literary criticism not as an extension of marketing, not as a hobby, but as a creative form essential to our understanding of literature and, by extension, place and culture. For half a century, *ABR* has helped Australian writing to flourish. For half a century, it has offered essential support to great Australian writers.

*ABR* is a powerful generator of new ideas and creative writing, and a key supporter of fresh literary and critical talent. No other Australian magazine supports writers and editors through such varied and lucrative programs. The magazine publishes contributions from both established and emerging writers. We offer young writers close editing and much encouragement – and we pay them properly. Each year *ABR* offers a paid editorial internship; in this way we help train and mentor Australia's next generation of editors. When we name a new *ABR* Laureate, we invite the Laureate to nominate a Fellow – a young writer who will be commissioned to create a substantial literary work. Thus *ABR* contributes to the long-term health and renewal of our literary and editorial talent.

*ABR* supports Australian writers through a range of prizes, fellowships, themed issues, and events. The Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay, the *ABR* Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize, and the Peter Porter Poetry Prize all reflect *ABR*'s support for major literary forms. *ABR* is an independent, not-for-profit magazine and all these prizes, fellowships, and events depend on the support of private donors and foundations. Their donations go directly to Australian writers and editors. This is one part of *ABR*'s commitment to lively cultural exchange.



*The ABR office is in a studio managed by the City of Melbourne's Creative Spaces program.*

# DAVID MALOUF INAUGURAL ABR LAUREATE

This year we named our first *ABR* Laureate, an honorary award to be given to a distinguished Australian literary figure in recognition of his or her contribution to Australia's literary culture.



David Malouf

Fittingly, David Malouf, one of our most celebrated writers, was named the inaugural *ABR* Laureate in 2014. The presentation followed 'An Evening with David Malouf', a conversation on poetry between David Malouf and *ABR* Poetry Editor Lisa Gorton, held at Deakin Edge, Melbourne, in conjunction with Melbourne Conversations on 23 April (Shakespeare's 450th birthday).

The aims of the Laureateship (which we intend to offer from time to time) are twofold: to celebrate and honour our finest writers, and to advance the work of a younger writer admired by the Laureate. Each *ABR* Laureate's Fellow will receive \$5,000 for the creation of new work for publication in *ABR*.



An Evening with David Malouf, Deakin Edge, Melbourne

*The ABR Laureate's Fellowship is supported by ABR Patrons.*

# PETER PORTER POETRY PRIZE

Jessica L. Wilkinson won the 2014 Peter Porter Poetry Prize for her poem 'Arrival Platform Humlet'. Elizabeth Allen, Nathan Curnow, and Paul Kane were also shortlisted for their poems ('Absence', 'Scenes from the Olivet Discourse' and 'VFGA' respectively). All four poems were published in the May 2014 issue of *ABR*.

*I am truly honoured that my poem 'Arrival Platform Humlet' was recognised in this way and very privileged to be associated with the good name of Peter Porter.*

Jessica L. Wilkinson

The judges – Lisa Gorton and Felicity Plunkett – who selected the shortlisted poems, and the prize-winning poem, from a field of just under 700 entries.

## Judges' report

'Judging this prize was difficult, if rewarding, because the number of poems that demanded serious consideration. The judges longlisted more than thirty poems. After much consideration, we shortlisted four of them.

They showed an inventive approach to the traditions that they were drawing on, and achieved a distinctive and memorable poetic vision.'

Lisa Gorton and Felicity Plunkett

The total prize money for the Peter Porter Poetry Prize was \$6,500. The Porter Prize, named after distinguished poet Peter Porter (1929–2010), is now in its tenth year. Apart from the acclaim awarded the winners and the shortlisted poets, it has generated thousands of new poems.



Jessica L. Wilkinson

*The Porter Prize is supported by Ms Morag Fraser AM.*



# ABR ELIZABETH JOLLEY SHORT STORY PRIZE

Jennifer Down was named the winner of the 2014 ABR Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize by Ian Dickson at The Cube, ACMI, Melbourne, on Saturday 30 August. Her prize-winning short story is entitled 'Aokigahara'. Faith Oxenbridge's story 'The Art of Life' came second and Cate Kennedy came third with 'Doisneau's Kiss'. All three stories were published in the September 2014 issue of ABR. We would like to congratulate all shortlisted entrants and thank all those who entered their stories.

The ABR Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize, established in 2010 and named after acclaimed short story writer Elizabeth Jolley (1923–2007), is one of the country's most prestigious awards for short fiction. This year it attracted nearly 1,200 entries, most of them newly written for this competition. The judges for the 2014 Jolley Prize were Cassandra Atherton, Amy Baillieu, and Patrick Allington. The total prize money awarded was \$8,000.

*ABR has also contributed to elevating  
the status of the short story with its  
annual Jolley Prize.*

Blanche Clark, *Herald Sun*



Jennifer Down (photograph by Torunn Momtazi)

*The Jolley Prize is supported by Mr Ian Dickson.*



# CALIBRE PRIZE FOR AN OUTSTANDING ESSAY

Christine Piper won the 2014 Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay for her essay 'Unearthing the Past', published in the April 2014 issue of *ABR*. The judges – Morag Fraser and *ABR* Editor Peter Rose – chose Piper's essay from a large field. Peter Rose said, 'Christine Piper's inspired essay complements Calibre's long record of highlighting essays of real quality and moment. Readers will not easily forget this bracing and important essay.'

Christine Piper writes about biological weapons and experiments on living human beings in pre-war and wartime Japan. The remains of just some of the victims (the overall death toll is estimated at 250,000 to 300,000) were discovered in Tokyo twenty-five years ago. They have never been identified. The story takes Dr Piper to Japan, where she interviews key lawyers and activists who are seeking answers.

*I am honoured to be chosen as the winner, and delighted that my essay will have a wide audience thanks to Australian Book Review and Colin Golvan. I'd like to dedicate the award to the activists who have spent years campaigning and raising awareness about this dark chapter of Japan's past.*

Christine Piper

The other shortlisted essays were: Ruth Balint, 'The Paradox of Weimar: Hitlerism and Goethe'; Martin Edmond, 'Five Towns'; Rebecca Giggs, 'Open Ground: Trespassing on the Pilbara's Mining Boom'; Ann-Marie Priest, "'Something very difficult and unusual": The Love Song of Henry and Olga'; and Stephen Wright, 'Blows upon a Bruise'.

The Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay was established in 2007 and since then has generated numerous essays on important themes. Christine Piper was awarded \$5,000 for her essay.



Christine Piper (photograph by Timothy Lee)

*The Calibre Prize is supported by Mr Colin Golvan SC.*

# ABR FELLOWSHIPS

ABR awarded three Fellowships, each worth \$5,000, in 2014. Two were funded by philanthropic foundations – The Ian Potter Foundation and the Bjarne K. Dahl Trust – and one by ABR Patrons

## **ABR Dahl Trust Fellowship**

Danielle Clode is the inaugural ABR Dahl Trust Fellow. Her essay, entitled ‘Seeing the Wood for the Trees’, was published in November 2014 and formed the centerpiece of the Environment issue.



Danielle Clode

## **ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellowship**

James McNamara was appointed the third ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellow and is preparing an essay entitled, ‘The Golden Age of Television’, for publication in early 2015.



James McNamara

## **ABR Patrons’ Fellowship**

Shannon Burns, the third ABR Patrons’ Fellow, is preparing a profile of Gerald Murnane, to be published early next year.



Shannon Burns

*The ABR Dahl Trust Fellowship is supported by the Bjarne K. Dahl Trust.  
The ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellowship is supported by The Ian Potter Foundation.  
The ABR Patrons’ Fellowship is supported by ABR Patrons.*

# ABR EVENTS

Through its partnerships *ABR* is able to present an ambitious program of events to its readers and the general public. These range from specialist workshops aimed at aspiring writers/critics to public lectures for general audiences.

*ABR* holds intimate events – poetry readings, launches, prize ceremonies – at its home at Boyd, in Melbourne’s Southbank, and large public events at prominent locations elsewhere. *ABR* co-presented major events such as ‘An Evening with David Malouf’, ‘Thomas Piketty: A Forum with Glyn Davis, Ross Garnaut, and Mark Triffitt’, and the Seymour Biography Lecture with Ray Monk. The Editor gave many talks and led workshops intended to foster greater awareness of the magazine’s programs and to encourage new contributors.

During the year *ABR* participated in twenty-six events that drew 2,500 attendees in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. *ABR*’s partners for events in 2014 were: the National Library of Australia, the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, the City of Melbourne (Melbourne Conversations), the Melbourne Writers Festival, the Melbourne Library Service, and Writers Victoria.



David Malouf in conversation with Lisa Gorton  
An Evening with David Malouf, April 2014



Peter Rose leads a Reviewing Masterclass at the  
University of Sydney, April 2014



Ray Monk presents the Seymour Biography  
Lecture, September 2014

# KEEPING UP WITH ARTS UPDATE

*Book reviewers and the editors of periodicals that commission them are used to sour assessments of their worth, but Professor John Dale's article on The Conversation is in a class of its own. What a clichéd, ungenerous and discreditable overview of book reviewing in this country.*

Peter Rose, 'In Defence of Book Reviewers in Australia'

*It is a virtuoso performance, full of fun and warmth. Joanna Murray-Smith has written a monologue that gives full rein to her own satire and wit and to Bernadette Robinson's huge talent as a singer and mimic.*

Carol Middleton reviews *Pennsylvania Avenue* (Melbourne Theatre Company)

*Daniel Keene and Ariette Taylor evoke a world on the cusp of poetry; this is not naturalism or expressionism, or any other theatrical mode: it is something quiet and enclosed, which, in its careful, truthful way points toward a new existence, an altered kind of freedom – a different kind of hope.*

Andrew Fuhrmann reviews *Dreamers* (fortyfivedownstairs)

*We are all desperate to broaden the repertoire, but unless that repertoire is adequately supported financially Opera Australia cannot afford to do it. To ignore that fact would be irresponsible.*

Lyndon Terracini responds to Peter Tregear

*The audience's overwhelmingly positive response at the final performance, which I attended and which I understand was equalled at the two previous ones, should give us hope that this ambitious collaborative work will soon be heard again.*

Ian Dickson reviews *Jandamarra* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra)

*Since first attending in 1994, come Cup weekend I have made the journey up the Hume from Melbourne every year, and I have never once been disappointed. It's a festival that broadens the mind and the ears, and one that positions jazz as critical to the broader Australian cultural landscape.*

Des Cowley reviews the 2014 Wangaratta Jazz and Blues Festival

**To subscribe to Arts Update and receive regular, comprehensive reviews of the latest performances, films, and exhibitions, visit our website and click on 'ABR newsletters' under the 'Subscribe' tab.**



# ABR PATRONS

Australian Book Review warmly thanks its Patrons and donors for their wonderful support.  
Donations help Australian writers and underwrite many of our programs.

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## AUGUSTANS (\$25,000 to \$39,999)

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Dr Barbara Wall

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Anonymous (3)

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Professor Janna Thompson

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The Hon. John Button (1932–2008)

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Arnold Bloch Leibler

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# THANKING OUR PARTNERS

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# WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

*I look forward to Australian Book Review every month. It's exciting to read, and it's looking wonderful, the best-designed magazine in the country.*

Robert Adamson

*A window into Australia's vibrant literary scene.*

Blanche Clark, *Herald Sun*

*What I love about Australian Book Review is its commitment to supporting Australian writers – especially younger ones and aspiring editors. The new focus on arts commentary is particularly welcome. I am delighted to be able to help.*

Lady Potter AC, ABR Patron since 2010

*I think it is increasingly important to support those things we value directly. Nothing matters more to a vital, intellectually rigorous society than a healthy critical culture. It is for that reason that I am delighted to personally commit annually to Australian Book Review and hope others might join me.*

Kim Williams AM, ABR Patron since 2010

*I look forward eagerly to the arrival of ABR: it's my most reliable guide to new Australian work. I particularly enjoy longer reviews, the Calibre essays and the short story finalists, and the Arts Update section is a great addition. ABR deserves congratulations on its success in attracting and keeping supporters.*

Gillian Appleton, ABR Patron since 2010

*Books are my passion, and, if there is an activity in heaven, I hope it's reading, with a good bookshop and a good library and people to talk books to. For me, ABR provides some of that heavenly activity on earth, and I feel privileged to share in sustaining such a wonderful enterprise by being a patron.*

Marion Dixon, ABR Patron since 2009

*Being a patron of Australian Book Review brings the joy of involvement, support – a feeling of belonging. We hope it encourages others to participate similarly.*

Ruth Wisniak OAM and John Miller AO, ABR Patrons since 2008

**Become an ABR Patron and support Australian writing!**

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