



NEWSLETTER NO. 52 APRIL 2022

PRESIDENT RAY EDMONDSON'S MESSAGE:



Top of everyone's minds in the coming weeks will be the Federal election, due on 14 or 21 May.

We saw this as an opportunity to ask the major parties and other candidates to state their policy positions on several matters affecting the NFSA. The questions we asked, and the responses we received, can be read in this issue of the Newsletter.

An unusual feature of this election is the large number of high profile independent candidates who are standing. We did not approach them all, but chose a sample. We felt the views of independents would be important because it is mooted that one possible outcome of the coming contest could be a hung parliament, in which independents hold the balance of power.

We have summarised all responses received up to 6 April. Responses received after this date will be posted on the Friends website.

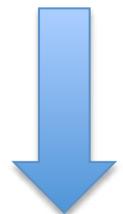
Ray Edmondson
President



**What's the next
event for the
Friends??**

Read on!

And lots of news for the
Melbourne Friends, too.



**Our next event is
SUNDAY 24th April at 2pm by ZOOM**

**'Second Guessing Future Curiosity': Interviewing for
the NFSA.**

Graham Dodsworth



Please book through TryBooking (link below)

Graham Dodsworth is a musician and oral historian, with a great deal of national and international experience. He has recorded many interviews for both the National Film and Sound Archive and the National Library of Australia.

Graham's recordings for the NFSA have mainly focused on musicians, including such cultural icons as Archie Roach, Eric Bogle, Margret Roadknight and members of various well-known bands including Sky Hooks, Australian Crawl, Men At Work and the Bee Gees.

Graham's presentation will demonstrate the many gems uncovered while interviewing Australia's most famous masters of entertainment.

Graham has a Master of Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Australian Folklife Studies. His life as a musician has involved both performing and management at many Australian folk festivals. In 2016 he was invited to coordinate the Australian program at the Festival Interceltique Lorient. In 2004 he was awarded the National Folk Fellowship by the National Library to research folk song recordings collected from the 1950s to 1970s. The result, titled 'Trawling for Rough Diamonds' produced a website and a performance at the 2005 National Folk Festival in Canberra. Graham also co-authored 'The Centre', covering 40 Years of Banyule Health Service at Heidelberg's Olympic Village. He has released a number of recordings of his own song writing and performing and he is now producing illustrations to accompany his performances on media such as YouTube.

BOOK NOW: <https://www.trybooking.com/BYLZY>

***This event is free but donations are welcomed. The Zoom link will be provided in your booking confirmation email from TryBooking.**

Then . . . a real life blockbuster!

Tuesday 10th May 2-3pm

**Join our private Friends' tour of the wonderful
'Australians & Hollywood' exhibition
at the NFSA!**



So many Australian actors have made the global stage via Hollywood: Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Naomi Watts, Hugh Jackman, Cate Blanchett, Mia Wasikowska, Margot Robbie, Eric Bana, Toni Collette - as have filmmakers George Miller, Peter Weir and Baz Luhrmann. This exhibition explores and illustrates the long list of talented Aussies who have made it in Tinsel Town.

Costume highlights include the dress worn by **Toni Collette** in *Muriel's Wedding*, the red satin dress worn by Nicole Kidman in *Moulin Rouge!* and the prison garb worn by Eric Bana in *Chopper*. Props include the famous knife and hat that **Paul Hogan** wore in *Crocodile Dundee*.

Our curator-led tour will be held from 2pm – 3pm on Tuesday 10 May. The lovely NFSA Café will be open if you'd care to join us for lunch beforehand.

Cost: \$11

Booking: Try Booking at <https://www.trybooking.com/BYRHD>

Next - Sunday 2pm 15 May - WEBINAR

The McDonagh Sister and 'The Cheaters'



*Josef Bambach tried to console Isabel McDonagh in a scene from the 1929 silent movie *The Cheaters**

Film historian **Graham Shirley** introduces us to the fabled trio - Isabel, Paulette and Phyllis McDonagh - who hold a unique place in Australian film history.

Between 1926 and 1934 they made four feature films and several short documentaries, their career coinciding with the Australian film industry's difficult transition from silent films to "talkies". Their sophisticated dramas stood out from the aggressively Australian patterns popular with other local producers. Paulette was director and principal writer; Phyllis was production manager, art director and publicist; Isabel, under the stage name of Marie Lorraine, was the lead actor.

Of their surviving work, their 1929 feature film **The Cheaters** stands out - both for its dramatic qualities and for its demonstration of how the awkward transition from silent to sound films was managed. Originally made as a silent, the film was partly re-shot and re-edited as successive talkie versions in 1930 and 1931, and Graham will explore the contrast between the extant versions of 1929 and 1931. Following his presentation, there will be a Q & A session. The whole webinar is planned to take about one hour.

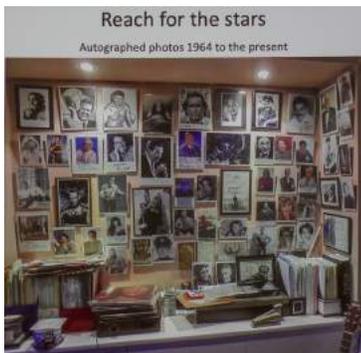
The webinar is free, but bookings are essential [FREE BOOK HERE](#)

It is strongly recommended that you see the film before the webinar. It is available free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KzVqdTHTika> This link takes you to the complete 90 minute silent version, and short excerpts from the 1931 sound version follow at the end.

Background material on the McDonagh sisters is readily available on the net. For example, there is an interview with Isabel's two sons at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4vi78Z92Ao> and an introduction to the McDonaghs by Graham Shirley on the NFSA website <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/latest/mcdonagh-sisters-australian-filmmaking-pioneers>

At our last Friends' event:

Barry Yorke and his amazing celebrity autographs!



Canberra Friends enjoyed Barry's fascinating talk about his life long passion. Pictures – Barry chatting to Friends, his autographs and the tasty nibbles at our event.

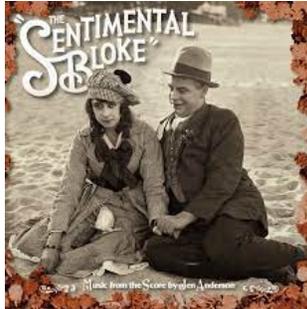


We are helping to save Ukraine's Film Archive!

We are proud to announce that the Friends of the NFSA have donated \$500 to this cause. You may wish to add your own donation:

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/vufku-100-helping-the-dovzhenko-centre-in-kyiv>

Melbourne Friends recently had a special screening of the digitally restored 'The Sentimental Bloke'. Here is an edited version of Melbourne Friends Chair Gwenda Davey's introduction to the screening.



I want to thank Gus Berger, our friend and colleague, and proprietor of the wonderful Thornbury Picture House. For nearly two years we've been trying to show today's film.

On February 15th 2020, the National Film and Sound Archive launched with great pride – and much fanfare – its latest digital restoration of the Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell film of *The Sentimental Bloke*. This restoration was created with great effort by staff at The National Film and Sound Archive, and much searching, including finding some lost footage in The George Eastman Museum in New York. The launch was held at the Westpac Open Air Cinema on Sydney Harbour, with a huge audience and the spectacular screen popping up from the harbour itself. I wish I'd been there!

It was appropriate that this latest version of *The Bloke* should have been launched in Sydney. Longford and Lyell relocated C.J.Dennis's 1915 verse novel from Melbourne to Sydney, so we miss some of the references to the Carlton Football Club, to Little Bourke Street and Little Lon – *put in the boot, I sez, put in the boot! 'Ush!' sez Doreen, 'Shame!' sez some silly coot.*

Although I'm Sydney-born and Melbourne-bred, I can't complain about the Longford-Lyell relocation to Sydney. We now have this brilliant filmic record of Sydney, more than one hundred years ago – the film is dated 1919 to be exact, and who can complain about the inclusion of the ferry to Manly and Sydney Harbour?

C.J.Dennis is described by Henry Lawson in his preface to *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* as 'my young friend', and perhaps it was its youthful exuberance, which helped to make it such a best-seller in 1915, not only in Australia, but in the terrible trenches of Europe during the First World War. The language is often described in scholarly reviews as 'exaggerated vernacular, or exaggerated idiom' and exaggerated it is. But what a repository of early twentieth century working class language and culture the book is!

I've been looking at the book again. I'm intrigued by the artist Hal Gye's strange larrikin cherubs in the publication. I confess I've never liked putti. To me, and I think to many of my fellow enthusiasts, Arthur Tauchert and Lottie Lyell have immortalised our images of the Bloke and '*is bit o'skirt*' as Bill and Doreen – '*er name's Doreen...*'

Thank you to the National Film and Sound Archive for this restoration, thank you Gus Berger, and thank you all for coming today.

Bruce Watson, from our Melbourne Friends, recently conducted a survey about the 'NFSA Restores' program.

As part of our planning for future activities, the Friends of NFSA recently conducted a survey of those on its mailing list asking them to tell us which films NFSA Restores program they would most like to see an event focusing on.

NFSA Restores aims to digitise, restore and preserve, at the highest archival standards, classic and cult Australian films. You can find details of the films and their restoration at:

<https://www.nfsa.gov.au/about/our-mission/nfsa-restores>.

The survey was open from 7-27 March 2022. There were 61 responses. 52% of the respondents live in the Canberra area, 41% in the Melbourne area, and the remainder live elsewhere. This was a very good response rate, and we greatly appreciate those who took the time to complete the survey. The distribution between Canberra/Melbourne/other is close to the proportions on our mailing list, so it appears to be a large and geographically representative sample.

Of the 33 NFSA Restores titles available at the time of the survey, the 10 most popular ones were each nominated by 1/3 or more of respondents.

- Newsfront (1978)
- Sunday Too Far Away (1975)
- My Brilliant Career (1979)
- The Sentimental Bloke (1919)
- Bliss (1985)
- Wrong Side of the Road (1981)
- Storm Boy (1976)
- The Year my Voice Broke (1987)
- The Odd Angry Shot (1979)
- Mabo - Life of an Island Man (1997)

We also received several interesting, positive and helpful responses to the question inviting other suggestions for possible events the Canberra and/or Melbourne Friends of NFSA could host, live or online. Lots of great food for thought!

Both the Melbourne and Canberra chapters of the Friends will now consider what activities they may hold, drawing on this valuable information. These will cover a range of webinars and live events on subjects relating to film, sound, and issues around archiving, as well as advocacy. Exactly which films and the nature and format of the activities will depend on a number of factors including availability of appropriate presenters.

Bruce Watson

Also from the Melbourne Friends . . .

On Sunday 27th February Peter Krausz presented a very popular Zoom session about his work. The following notes are based on the invitation sent out to members and supporters.

Peter Krausz is a Melbourne-based film critic, radio broadcaster, film judge, Q&A host and film journalist. He is no stranger to controversy, or to Marlene Dietrich! His work has taken him to Munich and Berlin, where the Studio Babelsberg is the largest and longest-running film studio in the world. Peter spoke about his extensive work both in Australia and overseas. He is a member of the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI), and has worked on three international FIPRESCI film juries.

For some time Peter hosted a series of monthly screenings at ACMI on behalf of AFCA which included panel discussions. He recently attended the Sydney Film Festival and interviewed filmmakers Claude Gonzales and Frans Vandenberg at the premiere of their film *John Farrow: Hollywood's Man in the Shadows*.

Some of Peter Krausz's controversies include his involvement in the war between Melbourne and Sydney film critics, his involvement in the protests against the banning of a film at MIFF 2020, and also one of his own film reviews in a publication.



Peter Krausz

Film Critic, Film Journalist, Film Judge, Film Festival Consultant, Q & A Host

Movie Metropolis, film show weekly on WYN FM, 88.9, and AppleFM, 98.5

Film Reviewer for J-AIR, Jewish Internet Radio, 88FM

Facebook Page: Movie Metropolis

YouTube Channel: Peter Krausz Movie Metropolis

Member, and Former Chair, of AFCA

Professional Member of AACTA

Member of the Society of Australian Cinema Pioneers

Member of FIPRESCI

. . . . and President Ray also carried out some fascinating research.

UPCOMING FEDERAL ELECTION: CANDIDATES' POLICY STANCES ON THE NFSA

With the Federal election looming in May, the Friends approached the main parties, as well as a sampling of independent members and candidates, asking them to state their policy positions in relation to their support of the National Film and Sound Archive.

This was done by email contact, including sending them a short questionnaire and inviting them to indicate their support – or otherwise – of five policy positions. These related to the composition and appointment process of the NFSA's Board; the restoration of funding and staffing levels; the rebuilding of neglected functions and the lowering of access fees. *The questionnaire can be read in full at the end of this article.*

Below is a summary of the responses received to date (i.e. by 6 April). More are anticipated and they will be posted on the Friends website.

THE PARTIES

Questionnaires were sent to the relevant spokespersons for the Liberal/National Coalition, Labor Party, The Greens, One Nation and the United Australia Party.

Labor's response came from the office of **Tony Burke MP**, Shadow Minister for the Arts:

Labor has yet to announce our arts and culture policy, and we will have more to say before the election. Unlike the government, which has subjected national institutions like the National Film and Sound Archive to a succession of cuts, Labor respects the important role our cultural institutions play in our shared history, as well as the special place they hold in our national capital.

A response was also received from the Greens' ACT candidate for the Senate, which is featured below. No response has yet been received from the other parties.

SITTING INDEPENDENTS

It was **Zali Steggall MP** who originally raised the issue of the composition of the NFSA's Board, and funding and staffing levels, in a question on notice to the minister, Paul Fletcher, in October 2021. *She supports the policy positions proposed in all five questions.*

Dr Helen Haines MP and Rebekha Sharkie have responded that *they support the policy positions proposed in all five questions.*

Andrew Wilkie MP has advised that he would *support amendments to the NFSA Act to mandate a public appointment process for members of the board* (Question 1). He supports the policy positions proposed in Questions 2,3 and 4. In response to Question 5 he says *I believe access fees to NFSA resources should be lowered and priced appropriately to ensure all researchers can afford to access archival documents and that the collection is used to its full capacity.*

THE INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES

Nicolette Boele and **Janine Kitson** are both candidates for the Sydney electorate of Bradfield (currently held by the NFSA's Minister, Paul Fletcher from whom no response to the Questionnaire has yet been received). They hold similar policy positions on NFSA:

Janine Kitson: *As someone who has been a student of history I know the work of the National Film and Sound Archive is of critical importance. I welcome the opportunity to support, strengthen and fund the National Film and Sound Archive if elected as the member for Bradfield.*

Nicolette Boele's response was provided by her husband, Jonathan Geraghty:

I have worked as a television director for over 25 years and I advise Nicolette regarding policies relevant to the Arts. I have reviewed your questionnaire and the supporting document links. Should Nicolette be elected, she would support and advocate for all of your policy points whilst in government.

We feel very strongly about transparency and integrity in government, and do not agree with "jobs for mates". The gradual erosion of budget support for all the arts in Australia has been very distressing. Particularly the short-term thinking regarding our history and the sharing of stories with an Australian voice.

Former journalist **Zoe Daniel** is standing in the Melbourne electorate of Goldstein. She has advised that due to overwhelming commitments, she is not in a position to respond to this survey right now. She would be more than happy to engage after the election, should she be successfully elected.

Professor **Kim Rubenstein** is a candidate for the Senate in the ACT. She supports *all five policy points in the Questionnaire* and draws attention to her Op Ed in the Canberra Times concerning independence, transparency and accountability in board appointments (<https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7634801/we-need-to-ensure-trust-in-government-heres-what-we-need-to-do> 1 March 2022)

A VIEW FROM THE HEART

ACT Greens candidate for the Senate **Dr Tjanara Goreng Goreng** developed a personal connection with the NFSA and its collection over several years during her doctoral research at the Australian National University. Here are some edited excerpts from her extensive response to the Questionnaire:

Question 1: *This does not surprise me! Transparency must occur in everything we do in the public sphere and non-political appointments are best for our community and country.*

Question 2: *Many of our institutions have had their funding cut over the past few years. I'm not sure that a federal budget surplus is more important than funding communities and important national business such as supporting NFSA. I'm not happy ever hearing about efficiency dividends when we choose to spend billions of dollars on nuclear submarines – just shows the priorities.*

Question 3: *If you cut staffing you lose corporate knowledge, expertise and productivity. You can't do the work you need to do without people.*

Question 4: *As a Greens candidate our platform makes it very clear that people in the creative and arts spheres must be supported - without the anxiety of not knowing where their support will be coming from.*

Question 5: *I'd make sure this is changed if I was in the Senate and I'd support any Senator or Member who would bring this forward.*

THE QUESTIONNAIRE:



POLICY STANCE ON THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE

The Friends of the NFSA is asking parties and independent candidates for the forthcoming Federal election to state their policy position in relation to the support of the National Film and Sound Archive, one of our key national collecting institutions. We invite you to respond to each of the questions below.

- 1 The NFSA's governing Board is ministerially appointed. It is important that the board contain expertise in the relevant professional and academic disciplines, and have active connections with the audiovisual communities and industries. Would you support a transparent, non-political public appointment process for members of the board? Would you support amendments to the NFSA Act to mandate such a process?
- 2 The NFSA's base budget has declined about 20% over the last decade, while its task has grown larger. To restore the budget to the previous level will require an increase of \$6 million to the base, irrespective of additional, short term project funding. Would you support such restoration?
- 3 Permanent expert staff are the backbone of the NFSA. In 2010 the approved permanent staffing level (ASL) was 220. Now it is 20% lower, at 164. Would you support restoration of staffing to 2010 levels?
- 4 Ideally the NFSA should be rebuilding functions and profile that have been wound down because of budget and staff reductions, such as scholarship and research awards and international connections. Would you support the restoration of these functions?
- 5 Should access fees for NFSA resources be lowered to encourage research and use of the collection?

Explanatory information:

Question 1: On 18 October 2021 Zali Steggall MP asked the NFSA's Minister, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, whether he would fill two current vacancies on the NFSA Governing Board by appointing experts with academic and professional credentials appropriate to audiovisual archiving, and whether he would seek to amend the NFSA's Act to ensure future appointees satisfied such criteria. On 17 December 2021 the Minister chose to appoint close relatives of former Liberal Party leaders to fill the two vacancies, and stated that he had no intention to amend the NFSA Act. Bios of all current NFSA Board members are at <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/about/corporate-information/governance/nfsa-board>. The new appointees are Ms Caroline Elliott (chair) and Mrs Lucinda Brogden.

Questions 2, 3, 4 : “Efficiency dividends” over the last decade have severely shrunk the NFSA’s capacity, activities and services and have caused a brain drain of expertise. This urgently needs to be reversed. Although the Government recently announced new project funding over 4 years to address the task of digitisation, this is a temporary band-aid and does not fix the underlying problem of growing long term career staff. There are solutions. For more detail go to <https://insidestory.org.au/time-for-another-visionary-moment-at-the-nfsa> and <https://insidestory.org.au/promises-promises>

Question 5: Fees for access to the NFSA collection, over and above fair cost reimbursement, are having a crippling effect – notably on new productions that re-use archival footage. <https://johnmenadue.com/changes-to-federal-government-film-funding-could-cripple-production-of-historical-documentaries>

Other strategic issues: On the pressing issues facing the NFSA the Friends have prepared a discussion paper for further information: <http://www.archivefriends.org.au//images/stories/2021/FRIENDS%20ADVICE%20ON%20THE%20FUTURE%202021%20November%202021.pdf>

VISIT NFSA ON YOUTUBE

Have you seen [the NFSA's YouTube page](#)? With over 600 items to choose from, there are film clips, talks, interviews and much more to explore, taking you inside the work of the Archive.

2022 Committee:

President: Ray Edmondson

Vice-President: David Kilby

Secretary: Sue Terry

Treasurer: Chris Emery

Committee Members: Jill Matthews, Tony Briscoe, and Lindy Ross

Public Officer: Sue Terry

Newsletter Editor: Lindy Ross



The Friends would like to acknowledge the support of the IT firm, Blue Packets, in hosting our website.

Find the Friends on Facebook



<http://www.facebook.com/NFSAFriends/>

or on our website www.archivefriends.org.au

Check the Friends' website and Facebook page to keep up with what's happening!

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