

ABR

AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

ANNUAL REVIEW 2015



AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

Mission

ABR is an independent, not-for-profit monthly magazine, governed by an independent Board, managed by a small, experienced 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 revived in Melbourne since 1978, *ABR* is published ten times a year (in print and online) with double issues in summer and winter. It is sold via subscription, online, as well as in bookshops and newsagencies. It has an Australian and international readership. Through its website and online platforms, *ABR* offers a rich and growing educational archive, Arts Update, and States of Poetry. *ABR* also runs a national events program.



ABR has long been a vital part of Australia's cultural life. The magazine publishes in-depth literary reviews as well as new poetry and fiction, essays and commentaries, interviews, diaries, and travel writing. *ABR* now offers extensive arts commentary through Arts Update, with frequent reviews of plays, films, music, dance, and exhibitions.

ABR is a champion of the art of criticism and regards it not as a marketing tool or personal hobby, but as a creative form essential to our understanding of place, literature, and culture – one that deserves to be celebrated and well paid. *ABR* is a strong advocate of proper support and remuneration for freelance reviewers. For half a century, *ABR* has helped Australian writing to flourish.

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 integrates contributions from both established and emerging writers. We offer young writers national workshops, close editing, professional mentoring – and we pay them all, from the outset. Each year *ABR* offers a fully paid one-year 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. 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.



YEAR IN REVIEW

This has been another year of change and consolidation for the magazine, as the list of highlights on page 5 makes clear.

In our ten issues and Arts Update we published 303 writers and critics – far more than in previous years. (We list, and thank, all of them on the back page.) More than 100 of these contributors were new to the magazine – a measure of our appeal to arts journalists of all kinds and of our unusual openness to new talent, including younger writers.

Throughout the year we published five themed issues: Film and Television; Indigenous; Fiction; Environment; and Performing Arts. We introduced new features, including our first podcasts.

Our three international literary prizes – the *ABR* Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize, the Peter Porter Poetry Prize, and the Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay – generated thousands of new literary works, and advanced the careers of our three winners: Rob Magnuson Smith, Judith Beveridge, and Sophie Cunningham respectively.

In May 2015 we launched a campaign to increase our payments to contributors and to highlight the low or non-payment of freelance writers elsewhere. This campaign was galvanising for *ABR*, and edifying for many readers and supporters. Because of increased subscription revenue, generous support from government, and a record year for private donations, *ABR* has increased its base rate from \$20 per 100 words to \$45. The magazine is committed to continuing this trend.

Arts Update – our most significant new program since the creation of the digital edition – is now a major generator of stylish and substantial arts commentary. New support from The Ian Potter Foundation will enable us to extend our coverage of film and television, theatre, film, music, opera, dance, and the visual arts. Thus *ABR* now engages with the broad culture, not just literature.

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

In March 2015 we farewelled our long-serving and distinguished Chair, Morag Fraser AM (2006–15). Colin Golvan QC was elected Chair at the AGM.

Now, collectively, we look forward to another year of innovation. We will introduce new programs and bring Australian readers some of the finest arts journalism available in this country.



Peter Rose, Editor



Colin Golvan QC, Chair

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HIGHLIGHTS

Ten issues in print and online



More than 300 writers from all states and territories (100-plus of them new to the magazine)



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



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



Four new Fellowships, totalling \$20,000 in payments to Fellows



Major campaign to raise *ABR* payments to writers



Record year for private donations



Rapid expansion of Arts Update



Recognition of *ABR* as a comprehensive arts magazine



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



First overseas winner of an *ABR* prize – Rob Magnuson Smith (Jolley Prize)



Announcement of our first overseas cultural tour – to the United States in September 2016



New features include 'Future Tense' and 'Poem of the Week'



Editor leads publishing workshops at several universities



Nearly 30 national events with a total attendance of 2,500



Our second fully paid twelve-month Editorial Internship



Triennial funding from the Australia Council



Annual funding from six state and territory arts ministries

ABR FELLOWSHIPS

ABR published four Fellowship essays, each worth \$5,000, in 2015. Three were funded by philanthropic foundations – The Ian Potter Foundation, the Sidney Myer Fund, and the Bjarne K. Dahl Trust – and one by ABR Patrons.



Ashley Hay

ABR Dahl Trust Fellowship

Ashley Hay was the second ABR Dahl Trust Fellow. Her essay, entitled ‘The Forest at the Edge of Time’, was published in October 2015 and formed the centrepiece of the Environment issue.

ABR Patrons’ Fellowship

Shannon Burns was the third ABR Patrons’ Fellow. His essay, entitled ‘The Scientist of His Own Experience: A Profile of Gerald Murnane’, was published in the August 2015 issue.



Shannon Burns



James McNamara

ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellowship

James McNamara was the third ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellow. His essay, entitled ‘The Golden Age of Television?’ was the main feature in our inaugural Film and Television issue in April 2015.

ABR Sidney Myer Fund Fellowship

Felicity Plunkett was the second ABR Sidney Myer Fund Fellow. Her essay, entitled ‘Sound Bridges: A Profile of Gurru-mul’, was published in the June–July 2015 Indigenous issue.



Felicity Plunkett

*The ABR Dahl Trust Fellowship was supported by the Bjarne K. Dahl Trust.
The ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellowship was supported by The Ian Potter Foundation.
The ABR Sidney Myer Fund Fellowship was supported by the Sidney Myer Fund.
The ABR Patrons’ Fellowship was supported by ABR Patrons.*

KEEPING UP WITH ARTS UPDATE

Australian Book Review is now a comprehensive arts magazine, with a wide range of arts journalists around the country. We review film, theatre, music, opera, dance, and art exhibitions. Our reviews are lengthy, timely, and considered. They all appear on open access throughout the week. Some later appear in the print edition.

'This is a production which demonstrates what can be achieved with traditional theatrical skills and simple stage effects. We are allowed to hear the play's poetry and come to our own conclusions about its meaning.'

Susan Lever on *The Tempest* (Bell Shakespeare Company)

'Weaving's Hamm is wonderfully fantastical ... This is a great performance and a pinnacle of Weaving's distinguished career.'

Ian Dickson on *Endgame* (Sydney Theatre Company)

'Benjamin Britten, for all the poetic interpolations and innovation of his War Requiem, writes in that profoundly human tradition of vulnerability. That is what gives his extraordinary work its universal and enduring appeal.'

Morag Fraser on *War Requiem* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra)

'First nights can be edgy affairs, but on this occasion there was no sign of nervousness or unreadiness. Opera Australia can't have staged many more successful opening nights than this one. It was a sensational occasion.'

Peter Rose on *Faust* (Opera Australia)

'Her finely developed dramatic instincts are very much on show – the ability to shape and mould the music à la Sinatra or Fitzgerald, and to extract the maximum subtlety and nuance possible from a single phrase to a complete song. All of this was revealed in her magnetic performance at the Sydney Opera House.'

Michael Halliwell on *Audra McDonald sings Broadway* (Sydney Symphony Orchestra)

'Once the hunt begins, Fury Road becomes a frantic two-hour chase sequence with little in common with the twisting road narrative and ambivalent violence of the earlier films'

Kim Wilkins on *Mad Max: Fury Road*

'It never descends into farce. Even with its keen comic edge, this adaptation embraces every bit of its gun-toting intrigue.'

Doug Wallen on *North by Northwest* (Melbourne Theatre Company)

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. Arts Update is generously supported by The Ian Potter Foundation.

PETER PORTER POETRY PRIZE

Judith Beveridge won the 2015 Peter Porter Poetry Prize for her poem 'As Wasps Fly Upwards'. Morag Fraser named Judith as the overall winner at a ceremony at Collected Works Bookshop in Melbourne. Judith received \$5,000 for her poem.

'I am deeply honoured to have won the Peter Porter Poetry Prize, not only because of the high regard I have for Peter Porter's poetry and for Australian Book Review, but also because of the very strong 2015 shortlist. I loved all the poems and was truly surprised to hear I'd won. My sincere thanks to ABR for continuing this prestigious prize, which is a great support for poets.'

Judith Beveridge

The judges – Lisa Gorton, Paul Kane, and Peter Rose – selected the shortlisted poems, and the prize-winning poem, from a field of around 600 entries.

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 eleventh year. Apart from the acclaim awarded the winners and the shortlisted poets, it has generated thousands of new poems.



Judith Beveridge

The Porter Prize is supported by Ms Morag Fraser AM.

ABR ELIZABETH JOLLEY SHORT STORY PRIZE

Rob Magnuson Smith was named the winner of the 2015 ABR Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize by Steven Carroll at an event at the Brisbane Writers Festival in September. His prize-winning short story is entitled 'The Elector of Nossnearly'. Michelle Cahill's story 'Borges and I' came second and Harriet McKnight came third with 'Crest'. All three stories were published in the September 2015 issue of ABR.

'I am thrilled to be this year's winner of the ABR Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize. This important prize encourages all international writers of fiction who want their work to be judged as it should be – on its own merits and strictly anonymously. I am very grateful to Australian Book Review and the judges.'

Rob Magnuson Smith

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 over 1,200 entries, most of them newly written for this competition. The judges for the 2015 Jolley Prize were Amy Baillieu, Paddy O'Reilly and Sarah Holland-Batt. The total prize money awarded was \$8,000.



Rob Magnuson Smith

The Jolley Prize is supported by Mr Ian Dickson.

CALIBRE PRIZE FOR AN OUTSTANDING ESSAY

Sophie Cunningham was the winner of the ninth Calibre Prize, worth \$5,000. The judges – Delia Falconer and *ABR* Editor Peter Rose – chose Cunningham’s essay from a large field. ‘Staying with the trouble’ describes an epic walk up Broadway in New York, and others like it. The tone is self-deprecating, conversational, and ‘gloriously social’, but all sorts of themes arise along the way: Alzheimer’s, Horseshoe Crabs, history, writers, violence against women, racism, Selma, and climate change. It is a celebration of ‘randomness’, but also testifies to Sophie Cunningham’s belief in the importance of ‘staying with the trouble’.

‘I wrote this essay with no expectations, from a concern with how one narrates the personal and fragmented while chronicling issues as broad as climate change and mass extinction. I had become obsessed with walking and needed a deadline. The Calibre Prize has rewarded a rich variety of writers who have tackled an extraordinary range of topics. Each year I’ve read the winner and been inspired. I feel incredibly honoured to now be among these winners’ number.’

Sophie Cunningham

The Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay was established in 2007 and since then has generated numerous essays on important themes.



Sophie Cunningham

The Calibre Prize is supported by Mr Colin Golvan QC.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

'Australia's foremost literary magazine'

Michael Cathcart, Radio National

'I look forward to Australian Book Review every month, and the first article I turn to is the last one: the Open Page column in which a writer answers a set series of questions, starting with: Why do you write?'

Stephen Romei, *The Weekend Australian*

'Australian Book Review has long been a champion of Australian writers and Australian literature. Now, with enthusiastic support from an increasing number of generous donors, the magazine has spread its wings and become a forum for ideas – authoritative in print and responsive online.'

Morag Fraser, *Australian Book Review Patron*

'There's no magazine more committed to Australian writing than Australian Book Review, which makes it an obvious partner in spreading what we believe is the most exciting adventure in celebrating Australian stories.'

Brian Johns

'Given the large number of Australians who earn more than a million dollars a year but, according to the ATO, give absolutely nothing to the arts or charity I guess it's up to the rest of us to help where we can.'

Noel Turnbull, *Australian Book Review Patron*

'For those of us who live in exile on the rocky shores of Connecticut, Australian Book Review is consumed as Antipodean Samizdat. The cross-section of Australian culture it offers every month is irreplaceable and invaluable. How delighted we are to be a tiny cog in this exciting and imaginative enterprise.'

Donna Curran and Patrick McCaughey, *Australian Book Review Patrons*

'I admire the way Australian Book Review, as well as fostering a critical culture of review, encourages essays, stories, and poetry through its prizes, fellowships, and special issues. I'm impressed by its commitment to emerging writers. It is a privilege to be able to support such a dynamic part of Australian cultural life.'

Tom Griffiths, *Australian Book Review Patron*

'We love reading across a wide range of areas – it's as simple as that. We support Australian Book Review as it promotes great writing and, equally, the writers who do so much to nourish our society and the minds and souls of its citizens.'

Dr Steve and Mrs TJ Christie, *Australian Book Review Patrons*

Become an ABR Patron and support Australian writing!

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

Arts commentary with stage presence
Critics and arts professionals on the Highlights of the Year

Susan Lever
Christos Tsiolkas's severely confined literary art

Jessica Au
Annabel Crabb on the wife drought

Martin Thomas
A new lens to understand Albert Namatjira

Clive James in his airy element
Poetry as necessary as oxygen
Geordie Williamson

PLUS: Clive James's new poems, A silent speech by Julia Gillard

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

March 2015 No. 308 \$11.95

Enter the \$8,000
ABR Elizabeth Jolley
Short Story Prize
Reviews • Theatre
Music • Poet of the Month

Kerryn Goldsworthy
Revisiting *Terra* by the River

Felicity Plunkett
Amanda Lohrey's new novel

Andrea Goldsmith
Seeking Susan Sontag

Reading Modern Australia
War history and medicine
Joan Beaumont
Luke Slattery
Geoffrey Blainey

PLUS: Nigel Rigger • Clyn Davis • Fiona Graham • Valerie Lawson • Patrick McCaughey

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

August 2015 No. 317 \$11.95

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Porter Prize
Arts Update –
The conversation we needed

Peter Goldsworthy
Death and regret in Clive James's poetry

Rachel Buchanan
Fifty years after thalidomide

Scott McCulloch
Letter from Athens

Gerald Murnane in Goroke
A profile of the novelist
Shannon Burns

PLUS: Alan Akhavan • Alison Croggon • Sofia Laguna • John Rickard • Simon Torrey

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

Read the shortlisted poems in the
2015 Peter Porter
Poetry Prize

Staying with the trouble
by Sophie Cunningham
Winner of the 2015 Calibre Prize

Ruth A. Morgan
The long shadow of Gunna

Stephen Edgar
Les Murray and the creeds of language

We survey leading reviewers and editors
What would most improve our critical culture?

PLUS: Danielle Clode • Ian Donaldson • Penny Gay • Luke Slattery • Maria Takalander

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

April 2015 No. 320 \$11.95

Enter the \$8,000
ABR Elizabeth Jolley
Short Story Prize
Our critics nominate their favourite drama series

FILM & TV ISSUE

Ben Saul
David Hicks
and a spectacular miscarriage of justice

Bernadette Brennan
Kate Grenville tells her mother's story

Mad, bad, and wired
The golden age of television? James McNamara

Tim Colebatch
Paul Keating's contested legacy

Philippa Hawker
Who was John Wayne?

PLUS: Toby Fitch • Peter Goldsworthy • Jennifer Maiden • Brenda Walker • Kim Williams

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

December 2015 No. 327 \$11.95

ABR Writers' Fellowships
Now worth \$7,500
Two currently available

BOOKS | NEW WRITING | THE ARTS | SURVEYS | INTERVIEWS

Books of the year

Varun Ghosh
A prompt biography of the new prime minister

Judith Beveridge
Late poems from Martin Harrison

PLUS: Neal Blewett • Stephen Edgar • Felicity Plunkett • Don Watson

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

June-July 2015 No. 312 \$11.95

Arts Update –
The conversation we needed
Reviews • Music
Theatre • Film • Poetry

INDIGENOUS ISSUE

Sound bridges
A profile of Gurrumul
Felicity Plunkett

Tony Birch
A fresh look at *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*

Samuel Wagan Watson
A new poem: 'Monster (0.2 Reloaded)'

Kerryn Goldsworthy
Steven Carroll's new novel

PLUS: Maxine Bernba Clark • Peter Craven • Desley Deacon • Ellen van Nieuven

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

September 2015 No. 316 \$11.95

Enter the \$5,000
Calibre Prize
Reviews • Poetry
Theatre • Film • Stories

The Jolley Prize
Our three shortlisted stories

Michelle de Kretser
Revisiting Randolph Stow

The missing novels
Our critics nominate some overlooked classics

The Fiction Issue

PLUS: Susan Lever • James Ley • Patrick McCaughey • James McNamara • Charlotte Wood

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

October 2015 No. 319 \$11.95

Enter the \$7,500
Peter Porter Poetry Prize
Reviews • Poetry
Film • Opera • Ballet

ENVIRONMENT ISSUE

Special survey
19 experts on environmental reform

David Schlosberg
The governments attack on renewables

The forest at the edge of time
Ashley Hay

PLUS: Sheila Fitzpatrick • Tim Flannery • Elizabeth Horwath • Michael Hofmann

ABR AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

November 2015 No. 321 \$11.95

ABR Writers' Fellowships
Now worth \$7,500
Full details inside

BOOKS | NEW WRITING | THE ARTS | SURVEYS | INTERVIEWS

Should we support the arts?
Robyn Archer responds to Peter Singer

'The engine is idling'
ABR meets Elizabeth Harrower

ARTS HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

PLUS: Bernadette Brennan • Hilary McPhee • Ann Moyal • Tim Colebatch • Mark Edle

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 the Ray Mathew Lecture with Andrea Goldsmith and the Seymour Biography Lecture with Robert Drewe. 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 30 events that drew over 2,500 attendees. *ABR*’s partners for events in 2015 were: the National Library of Australia, the University of Sydney, the University of Melbourne, the South Australian Writers Centre, the Brisbane Writers Festival, the Melbourne Writers Festival, Collected Works Bookshop, WinterARTS in Perth, Writers Victoria and the Australia and New Zealand Festival of Literature and Arts in London.



Sophie Cunningham and Will Self in conversation at Boyd



Rob Magnuson Smith wins the 2015 *ABR* Elizabeth Jolley Short Story Prize

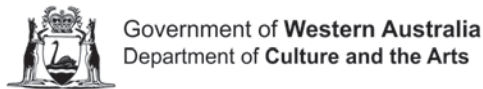
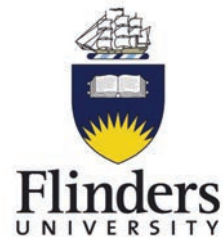


ABR Ian Potter Foundation Fellow James McNamara, Lady Potter AC, Colin Golvan QC, and Peter Rose at Boyd

THANKING OUR PARTNERS

Australian Book Review is supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body. *ABR* is also supported by: the NSW Government through Arts NSW; the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria; the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland; the Western Australian Government through the Department of Culture and the Arts; the South Australian Government through Arts SA; and the Australian Capital Territory Government through Arts ACT.

We also acknowledge the generous support of our sponsor, Flinders University; and we are grateful for the support of Copyright Agency; The Ian Potter Foundation; the Bjarne K. Dahl Trust; RAFT; Voiceless, the animal protection institute; the City of Melbourne; and Arnold Bloch Leibler.



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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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