

# Newsletter #2

June 2020

Dear Members

Welcome to The Fund's Newsletter No2, keeping our Members and Supporters up to date and informed about The Fund's activities and forthcoming events.

This issue covers a wider range of The Fund's current activities and plans for the next year. We are looking forward to catching up at state and national events and activities as the impact of COVID-19 restrictions lessens. These social and cultural events for our Members and Supporters are central to the life of The Fund.

The devastating effect of the bushfires across wide tracts of eastern and south Australia, is a stark reminder of how important it is to record and preserve our cultural heritage for the future and, to share this information physically and digitally. The Fund's Collection, along with Australia's national and state collections are unique repositories of our heritage and our memories with collections' stories to be told which allow us to understand the past, so as to make sense of the present and envision our future.

The impact of COVID-19 pushed a huge rise in the use of social media. One of the most exciting developments, in an otherwise discomfiting time, is the big increase in museums and art galleries 'opening' their institutions and collections to a world of virtual visitors. A sign of the times was the prevalence of online stories about objects and images related to the Spanish flu epidemic which reached Australia in 1919 – 40% of the population fell ill and 15,000 died. These stories from our history collections help us to see the current pandemic in context.

It's been rewarding to see how The Fund's relatively small social media presence has grown. With the imminent unveiling of The Fund's Collection on Trove, we can be sure of The Fund's greater profile online. This COVID-19 upside shows the benefits of sharing our Collection, not only with our Members and Supporters, but with people across Australia and the world.

The Fund is modestly resourced and performs above expectations. We have Sonya Abbey to thank for her dedication and energy. However, the bedrock of The Fund and the key to its success and sustainability are our Members and Supporters. As you will read later in the Newsletter, The Fund is facing very difficult financial circumstances, as are many charities and fundraising bodies. Although it is a time when there are many calls for donations given the effects of bushfires, drought and pandemic, The Fund needs your support as valued, generous donors.

As The Fund's Members are its lifeblood, the Council is very committed to increasing our membership and we would love you to introduce your friends and acquaintances who may be interested in becoming a Member of The Fund.

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I do hope you will be able to provide financial support to The Fund by 30 June 2020. Any donations towards our Acquisition program, our Collection Conservation projects and, our care of the Collection will be gratefully received. All donations will help the Fund fulfil its purpose: fundraising to acquire and manage our nationally significant Collection on display and in use in Australia's Official Residences.

The Council is working with our ACT Committee to progress plans for the Annual General Meeting to be held in Canberra in July 2021. The Program will include the exhibition *Ruth Lane Poole – A Woman of Influence* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Narratives of Nations* symposium. There will also be a range of tours and visits.

As you know this year's Annual General Meeting planned for May in Tasmania was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. We all appreciate the fantastic program prepared by Victoria Cox and the Tasmanian Committee and were disappointed that the meeting couldn't take place. However, we are looking forward to when we can next visit Tassie for a Fund event.

The State Committees will continue to provide interesting activities throughout the year and several events are already being planned for members as restrictions lift and we can gather socially again.

I would especially like to thank Bruce Trethowan, retiring Councillor, for his contributions to The Fund nationally and as Chair of the Victorian Committee. We have all appreciated his involvement in Fund matters and the strength of Victorian membership. Thank you to Mimi Forwood for her representation of South Australia on Council.

A warm welcome to Council to Victoria Cox representing our growing membership in Tasmania, to Alan Smith, returning to Council to represent South Australia and to Victorian member Bill Downey, who joins as a casual vacancy to fill Bruce's place on the Board.

On behalf of the Council and your fellow members, my heartfelt thanks for your support of The Australiana Fund.

Best wishes



Jennifer Sanders  
Chair

The Australiana Fund

## Your Support is Needed Now

It is undeniable that this coming year will be challenging for The Fund. Not only are we living with the effects of Covid-19, The Fund itself is negatively impacted by the necessary curtailment of our normal fundraising program: state events, Open Days, and our AGM. Fundraising is a core activity for The Fund and we rely on the philanthropy of our Members and Supporters and, of the public. However, for the foreseeable future, we will be unable to hold these events as Council agrees that it is of the utmost importance that we take every step to minimise any risks to the health of our Members and Supporters.

After all, it is each of you who contributes to make The Australiana Fund an organisation which is valued and recognised for its contribution to the presentation of Australia's Official Residences.

The situation we face is that while the financial statements presented to the 2020 AGM report a net surplus for the year, our membership fees and government grant are not sufficient to cover operating expenses. Sonya and Julieanne have readily agreed to continue to work from home so we have ceased our office rental and consolidated our storage – an essential saving. Even with these reductions, such is The Fund's financial position we need now, more than ever, to increase the level of donations and other contributions to cover our expenses.

## Donor Opportunities

1. Acquisition of The Munro Ferguson Collection: a tangible and historic record of Australia's unique and diverse range of Australian native timbers with provenance to a former Governor-General and/or
2. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Acquisition Fund and/or
3. Conservation Projects Appeal and/or
4. Care Manual Upgrade Project.

Details of our recent acquisitions which need your support, and conservation activities are provided below.

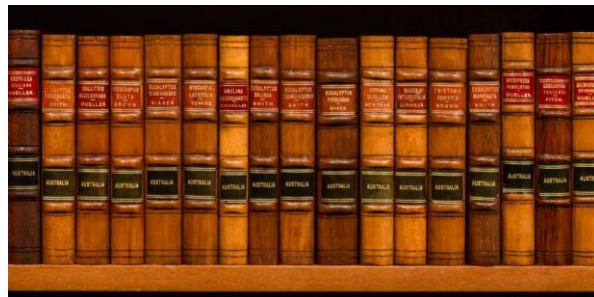
**We are currently fundraising for the acquisition of  
The Munro Ferguson Collection.**

**We need to raise another \$67,400  
Using the Donation form at the end of this Newsletter  
help us meet our target of \$145,000**

## The Australiana Fund Collection

### The Munro Ferguson Collection

This acquisition is a tangible and historic record of Australia's unique and diverse range of native timbers and, has notable provenance to a former Governor-General. The collection includes timbers in The Fund's furniture collection and represents the advocacy by leading figures to promote the use of Australian timbers for their beauty and practical qualities. We will be putting this collection online as soon as possible as a unique reference. We have now taken delivery of the collection comprising 82 timber samples carved as books by noted carver FW Tod; 11 similarly carved Queensland timber samples; a Jewellery box, c. 1920, carved as a book and inscribed to Lady Helen Munro Ferguson; and a presentation copy of *The hardwoods of Australia and their economics*, by Richard T Baker, published 1919.



Fundraising for this important acquisition has remained steady and we have reached the halfway mark of our target. Thank you to all those who have already donated to this major acquisition. We welcome new donations in 2020 to help us complete this very special acquisition.

### 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appeal

In late December 2019 we successfully bid by telephone for a rare gold medal which came up for auction in Christie's London.



Medal commemorating the opening of the First Federal Parliament 9 May 1901, [Australia], 1901, Gold, silk, enamel, 8.3 cm, 25.6gms in fitted case 10.5 x 6 x 2 cm

Provenance Princess Victoria Alexandra (1868-1935), and by gift or descent to her niece, H.R.H. The Princess Mary, Princess Royal, Countess of Harewood (1897-1965) and by descent at Harewood House, Yorkshire. 2020.1

(pictured left & below)



It is the first acquisition using money raised for our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appeal and our research to date indicates this is a rare example with only one other gold example coming to light. This was in in a 2014 Australian auction. Bronze and silver examples were also produced as well as a gilt version for schoolchildren.

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### Conservation Fund

Money raised to date for this appeal has already been allocated towards the work identified during the inspection of the Houses which began last November and has just been completed. In general, the extent of conservation required is not determined until the piece of furniture is taken apart in the conservator's workshop. It is therefore difficult to budget accurately for conservation work but since the introduction of the Care Manuals, the need for minor repairs and signs of daily wear and tear have been significantly reduced.



### Collection valuation and Collection Care

Christie's Australia Pty were engaged to update the insurance valuation of the entire collection. This takes place every 4 years. Due to changes in the market for antique furniture, a number of artworks have decreased in value since the 2016 valuation. Conversely, a number have increased due to their significance and the provenance of being in The Fund Collection. There have been 17 new acquisitions since last valuation with a total value for insurance of \$216,100.

**THE TOTAL VALUE FOR INSURANCE OF THE COLLECTION IS \$8,818,220.**

Work is continuing with TROVE in preparation for the link-up of our Collection to their online search platform. Access restrictions on each of our 373 records needs to be altered to make them accessible for public viewing.

The Collection Care Manuals have been updated to reflect the new style logo and captions and now include our professional photographs. The next step will be to update the technical care and handling information to incorporate new practices. Once complete, the entire set of manuals needs to be printed in colour (660 pages) and matched with the care information for each artwork. Then approximately 400 pages will be laminated and bound. Each House Manager receives a copy for use by the staff. Printing and laminating will cost around \$1,500, not including binding. Members who would like to donate towards this essential task can contact The Fund Office for details.

### New Acquisitions



Australian Flag, c. 2015,  
Cotton/nylon blend in presentation European  
Beechwood case, 65 x 32.5 x 6 cm  
Donated by Governor-General,  
His Excellency General the Honourable  
Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd). 2019.1  
(pictured left)



Raymond Bush, born 1970,  
Dugong (mantuwujini),  
Milikapiti, Tiwi Islands c.2017,  
natural ochres on canvas, 120 x 60 cm,  
Donated by Governor-General, His  
Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter  
Cosgrove AK MC (Retd). 2019.2 (pictured right)  
© Raymond Bush



This work was presented by the Tiwi Design Art Centre in Wurrumiyanga/Nguiu on Bathurst Island to His Excellency, on an official visit to Murrupuriyanuwu Catholic Primary School, Tiwi Islands, 27 February 2017. The school was founded in 1912 as St Therese's School, Nguiu, by the OLSH Sisters and renamed Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School in 1991.

## Annual General Meeting, 2020

Due to the restrictions affecting meetings and gatherings the Annual General Meeting took place on Friday 22 May with Jennifer Sanders, Chair of The Fund and Hon Treasurer David Murray in attendance and the Fine Art Advisor on the phone. Thank you to all Members that lodged proxies and voting forms for the meeting, and to David Murray, Jennifer Sanders and Sonya Abbey for all their preparations for the AGM.

The minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting were approved, and the Profit and Loss Account, Balance Sheet, the Reports of the Council and the Auditors Report for the year ended 31 December 2019 were also approved. A copy of this year's AGM minutes will be distributed to Members later.

As the re-election and election of Councillors was duly approved at the meeting we congratulate, Bettina (Groves) Qld, Harriet (Elvin) ACT, Caroline (Johnston) Vic and Philip (Gosse) NSW on their re-election, and congratulate and welcome our new, and well known to us all, Councillors, Victoria (Cox) Tas, and Alan (Smith) SA.

At the AGM Jennifer Sanders, Chair of The Fund, thanked retiring Councillor Bruce Trethowan on his outstanding record as Chair of the Victorian Committee and his contribution in maintaining the strength of the membership in Victoria. Under Bruce's chairmanship, the Victorian Committee has had great success in fundraising – of note is the 2016 Melbourne AGM which raised \$31,000 for The Fund. We wish Bruce well and look forward to his continuing advocacy and his company.

Retiring Councillor Mimi Forwood, Chair, South Australia was also thanked for her contribution in establishing the South Australian Committee and organising a successful launch of The Fund's book *Collecting for the Nation* at Government House, Adelaide.

Bill Downey, a Fund member from Victoria, has been nominated to Council and fills a casual vacancy until he can be formally elected to Council.

Jennifer also expressed thanks to Sonya Abbey The Fund's indefatigable Fine Arts Advisor who continues to carry out her varied role with aplomb and professionalism.

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### Membership

Membership numbers have reached 179. The Fund's target under the *Articles of Association* is 250 Members. By location members are distributed across the country as follows:

ACT	15	SA	17	NSW	75	TAS	11
NT	0	VIC	37	QLD	23	WA	1

A subscription renewal notice was sent in January 2020 and reminders have been circulated. Your subscription is an important source of funding for acquisitions, care of the Collection and, for all The Fund's activities.

### New Members are vital to The Fund's future.

To help increase our membership across all States, Members are encouraged to bring friends, family and colleagues to our events and introduce them to the work of The Fund. Our fabulous book *Collecting for the nation – The Australiana Fund* is an excellent gift as it showcases the Collection and how it is presented in the context of our nation's cultural history and the Official Residences. Copies are available now by credit card over the phone. Information flyers about The Fund are also available on request from The Fund Office.

If you have friends who are interested in being involved, please consider nominating them as Members of The Fund. Nominations will help share the work of The Fund and improve our financial sustainability. Nominations can be submitted to The Fund Office via email. All that is required is a short bio of the nominee outlining their profession, interests, and how you feel they may benefit The Fund.

### Honours

Congratulations to Fund Member, Dr Mat Trinca AM, Mrs Dallas Hayden AM, and Fund Councillor Caroline Johnston OAM, who were all recognised in the 2020 Australia Day Honours list. Congratulations also to Fund Member, Antonia Syme AM who was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

### Partners and Sponsors

Relationships with Partners and Sponsors are very important to The Fund. As highlighted throughout this Newsletter, these relationships continue to strengthen and develop, supporting a range of projects.

In 2019, The Glendonbrook Foundation sponsored a range of Conservation projects including the conservation of the Stuart Devlin candelabra used in Government House and, the construction of a bespoke plinth to support the Yarralumla cabinet by Geoffrey Hannah, one most popular works on in Government House. The uneven floor was causing problems and the plinth solves the problem.

The Canberra Museum and Art Gallery are our partner in presenting the Ruth Lane Poole exhibition which will bring to light one of the key figures in the history of the two Canberra residences.

In a new development, The Fund is undertaking as a consultancy, a pilot project to develop a database for all the objects and artworks on view and in use in Government House.

## Learning & Outreach Symposium & Exhibition

In July 2021, The Fund's AGM will be held in Canberra and will coincide with the exhibition on Ruth Lane-Poole, interior and furniture designer for Government House and The Lodge. The Fund is presenting this in partnership with the Canberra Museum and Art Gallery who have agreed to organise the exhibition and have engaged the exhibition curator, former Fund Fine Arts Advisor, Margaret Betteridge. Fund Councillor, Harriet Elvin, is CEO of the Cultural Facilities Corporation which manages CMAG.

The Fund's 3<sup>rd</sup> *Narrative of Nations* symposium will be held then to complement the exhibition and as part of the AGM's program. The overall theme will be on Design and Industry with a two key themes; Ruth and her husband Charles Lane Poole, Chief Forester for the Commonwealth; and Australian timbers, and their use in historic and contemporary interiors, cabinetmaking and furniture design.



Fig.1

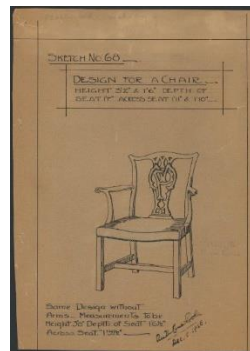


Fig. 2

Fig.1 A dining chair designed by Ruth Lane-Poole, made in Queensland maple, with the back featuring the Prime Minister's monogram. In 1981, additional chairs were made to Lane-Poole's original design.

Fig.2 Ruth Lane Poole produced detailed drawings and specifications on thin tracing paper for furniture manufacturers to use. The Chippendale-style dining chairs for The Lodge were upholstered in Australian buffalo hide and distinguished by the carving of intertwined initials 'PM' into the back splat.

Ruth Lane Poole, National Library of Australia, nla.obj-138979719

## State Events

As you will understand state events have not been held since COVID-19 restrictions came into effect in March. State Committees are keen to plan and prepare some events when circumstances might allow these to take place and there is some confidence in attending events.

## The Fund Office

The Council thanks Sonya for her ready agreement to continue to work from home permanently and, her efficient action to secure storage for The Fund's archives and files etc. and, the *Collecting for the Nation* book stocks. This change in working arrangements for both Sonya and Julieanne, who will also work from home, will result in a significant saving for The Fund. Office rent and book storage totalled \$4,048.55 per month and will now be reduced to just \$560.



## Website

The website is in urgent need of upgrade following issues with its outdated content management system. Sonya has researched using a website design company and with the help of Caroline Johnston OAM (VIC Councillor) is exploring the possibility of designing a professional looking site in-house to keep costs down.

## Social Media – Facebook Twitter Instagram

These platforms are still performing well. In terms of popularity and reach, Instagram is still producing the best results with 254 followers. Facebook continues to generate positive feedback.

## Financial Sustainability

Given the financial challenges referred to earlier, under the guidance of Treasurer David Murray, The Fund is working towards achieving Financial Sustainability in order to ensure The Fund's future in the context of the effects of Covid-19 and, the changed funding context in which The Fund is now operating.

The three strategies to achieve The Fund's goal of Financial Sustainability are:

1. Modest annual surplus: running expenses met by Member subscriptions; income from State functions and the Government Grant.
2. Designated Fundraising: Targeted acquisitions to be added to the Collection funded by bespoke fundraising.
3. Endowment Fund: Built up over time to ensure long term sustainability through bequests and dedicated contributions.

Members will be briefed more on these strategies by the Treasurer when we send out the minutes from this year's AGM in the next few weeks.

## Strategic Plan

The members of the Council and the Fund Office continue to progress the most important of the many initiatives within the strategic plan while some have been placed on hold for now due to COVID-19 restrictions. This newsletter gives you insights into the key initiatives The Fund is undertaking in the context of Covid-19 restrictions. An update on the strategic plan will be provided in the next newsletter.

However, as you are aware, the ongoing support of Members; continued activity of The Fund Office and Council members: your generous donations towards new acquisitions and/or conservation of the collection; and a vibrant & active membership are all crucial to achieving the plan.

### Contributors, June 2020

Jennifer Sanders, Chair  
David Murray, Hon. Treasurer  
Sonya Abbey, Fine Art Advisor  
Bettina Groves, Councillor  
Caroline Johnston OAM, Councillor

# Donation Opportunities

This form can be printed and returned to The Fund Office by email to [austfund@bigpond.net.au](mailto:austfund@bigpond.net.au) or completed online using the writable form which has been emailed to you with this Newsletter.  
 Payment can also be taken by phone (02) 9994 8034 before 30 June.

Since 1978, The Australiana Fund’s members and supporters have contributed more than \$10 million to support collection acquisitions and preservation as well as initiatives to promote the collection to a wider audience. The Fund’s collection continues to grow as a visual expression of our nation’s distinctive cultural and contemporary creativity. To contribute to this important endeavour, we invite you to support the following projects:

## Acquisition of the Munro Ferguson Collection

The Munro Ferguson Collection is a major acquisition for The Australiana Fund, an important part of Australia’s movable cultural heritage.

Comprising:

1. A ‘library’ of 82 Australian Timber samples carved as ‘reference books’.
2. Presentation copy of Richard Baker’s *Hardwoods of Australia and their Economics*, 1919, Technical Education Series, No 23. Inscribed and dedicated to Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson by Baker
3. A set of 11 Queensland Timber samples, in the form of individually numbered samples
4. A presentation box made in the form of a book, c1920 and inscribed:  
*Presented to Lady Helen Munro Ferguson by the Citizens of Cairns and District 1920.*

To contribute to this appeal please mark your amount here \$.....

## 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Acquisitions Appeal

This appeal is to fund the acquisition of artworks in areas that are underrepresented in the collection and that will significantly enhance the ambience of the official residences. Priority areas are Australian Contemporary Design and Craft commissions, Indigenous Australian representation, Sculpture and Works on Paper.

To contribute to this appeal please mark your amount here \$.....

## Conservation Projects

The collection must be carefully monitored to ensure objects remain fit for practical use and reflect the quality, skill and beauty of the work of the artist, maker or manufacturer. Proactive conservation is a priority so that the collection is in excellent condition and reflects the high standards of the official residences for all official public events.

To contribute to this appeal please mark your amount here \$.....

## Care Manual Upgrade Project

Following the update of the technical care and handling information the entire set of manuals needs to be printed, matched with the artwork description then laminated and bound. Each House Manager receives a copy for use by the staff. The estimated cost will be at least \$1,500

To contribute to this appeal please mark your amount here \$.....

**TOTAL DONATIONS\*\$.....**

\*Donations to The Australiana Fund of \$2 or more are tax deductible a receipt will be issued by email (or post if requested)

### TO DONATE BY VISA / MASTERCARD

Name of the Card:.....Telephone:.....

Card number: ..... Expiry:.....

### TO DONATE BY EFT

Please mark your deposit with “First Initial Surname Donate” E.g. “JSmithDonate”

NAB BSB: 083 088 a/c: 767550438 In the name of The Australiana Fund

Email address:.....