



**From the Executive Director's Desk**



Oxford-educated and the possessor of considerable charm, Michael Massey Robinson was also a cad and a bounder. Convicted of extortion in London in 1798, he was transported to New South Wales where he worked in the law. It did not take long for his old habits to reassert themselves, and Robinson was transported again, this time to Norfolk Island.

When he returned to Sydney, Robinson's erudition, courtly manners and knowledge of literature found favour with Governor Lachlan Macquarie. In 1810, Macquarie appointed Robinson Australia's first poet laureate. For the next decade, Robinson composed poems for royal birthdays and state occasions. The job did not attract a salary, but Macquarie awarded him two cows for his services.

Perhaps it was his awkward metre or peculiar rhymes, but Macquarie's successor, Thomas Brisbane, was not impressed with Robinson's poems. One of his first acts was to sack Robinson. Nevertheless, his place in history was assured. Robinson was not only Australia's first poet laureate, but he was also our last. The office has remained unfilled for 200 years.

Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, Germany, Iran, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the UK and other countries have poet laureates. The USA has hundreds—one for the country, 44 state poets and numerous city and county laureates. There is even a Pike's Peak poet laureate.

Should Australia resurrect its long vacant position of poet laureate? Some say no. "Official" poetry is an oxymoron, stilted, boring and politically correct. Others feel that poetry elevates public life.

Les Murray has brought Australia to the world: a "whipcrack country of white cedar / and ruined tennis courts," home to "passionflower and beige-bellied wonga vine."

Murray is widely loved, but an official laureate can do much more than an unofficial one. American poet laureate, Joseph Brodsky placed poetry in airports, supermarkets and hotel rooms. Another American laureate, Maxine Kumin, ran poetry workshops for politicians. It might not help them get elected, but it certainly would not hurt Australian politicians to read Shelly's Ozymandias; they may gain a little humility.

It seems out of place in this age of money to advocate for an unpaid role for a poet laureate, but that is precisely why the position is so important. To quote Robert Graves, "There's no money in poetry, but there's no poetry in money, either."

This year's CHASS National Forum and CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner feature two of Australia's most famous poets: Les Murray and David Malouf. Why not come along, enjoy the performances, get involved in the discussion and give your opinion on whether Australia needs a poet laureate.

Emeritus Professor Steven Schwartz AM

## 2014 CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner - 8 October 2014



The 2014 CHASS Australia Prizes Dinner will be held at Queen's Hall, Parliament of Victoria, Melbourne. **Keynote speakers:** Senator Dean Smith, Liberal Party of Australia and Rupert Myer AM, Chair, Australia Council for the Arts. The evening will also include poetry reading by Les Murray AO, one of Australia's most well regarded poets.

General and student/concession tickets are available, please [click here](#) for more information. Tables of 10 are also available. Seats are limited, please book early to avoid disappointment.

The Australia Prizes are designed to honour distinguished achievements by Australians working, studying or training in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) areas, including academics, practitioners, philanthropists, policy makers and students. This year, four prizes will be given out. Two cash prizes of **\$3,500** each are sponsored by Routledge: one for a **Book** and the second for **Distinctive Work**. A cash prize of **\$2,000** sponsored by Future Leaders is for a **Future Leader**. The Co-Op has sponsored the fourth prize valued at **\$500** for a **Student**.

## 2014 CHASS National Forum Registrations

Registrations for Day 1 and the Australia Prizes Dinner are open for a limited time only. Don't miss out!

[Book now](#)

Delegates have the option of booking via [Eventbrite](#) (additional fees apply) or using the [CHASS National Forum website](#) and paying via EFT/Cheque/Credit Card (only credit card fees apply).

Venue details including special access information is available [here](#). For more information, please call us on (03) 9925 3935.

## Get Social!

For regular updates about the 2014 CHASS National Forum and the Australia Prizes Dinner, please follow us:



Feel free to take part in the discussion and share the updates with your social media networks.

## Membership Renewal

This is a gentle reminder to pay your organisation's annual membership subscription for 2014-15, if not done so already. Should you have any queries or would like to discuss your membership status, please contact us on (03) 9925 3935.

## 11th CHASS Annual General Meeting, 9 October 2014, Melbourne

The 11th CHASS Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Thursday, 9 October 2014 at Law Boardroom, Level 10, Law Building, The University of Melbourne, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton, Melbourne VIC 3053.

All members of CHASS are invited to attend the AGM. Participants are requested to arrive at 8.15am for 8.30am start. At the conclusion of the AGM at 9.15am, all are invited to stay for refreshments at the same venue.

The agenda for the meeting includes the following items:

- Report from the CHASS President on activities of CHASS during the financial year 2013-14
- Statement of accounts and auditor's report for financial year 2013-14
- Board for 2014-15

[Read more](#)

## New: Job listing

**Position:** Head of Student Experience and Educational Enhancement, NMIT

**Closing date:** Friday, 27 September 2014

NMIT is seeking to appoint an innovative, qualified and motivated individual to fill the position of Head of Student Experience and Educational Enhancement. A key role of the position is to provide academic leadership and assure academic quality and integrity of learning and teaching of the Institute's Higher Education and VET programs.

[Read more](#)

## Member and Sector Updates

### [Free public lecture by TASA: Apocalypse now? The global antibiotic crisis, resistant 'superbugs' and promoting cultural change in infection management in Australia, 17 September, Sydney](#)

Join Australia's leading sociologists and experts in infection management and health services research to explore the threat of antibiotic resistance to Australia. The public lecture will be delivered by Associate Professor Alex Broom, and will outline the threat of antibiotic resistance to Australia, the reasons why antibiotics continue to be misused, and discuss potential solutions for protecting antibiotics for future generations. A discussion panel that will include experts in infection management and health services research, including Professor Nick Graves, Dr Tom Gottlieb, Dr Jennifer Broom and Associate Professor Karin Thursky, will follow the public lecture. [Click here](#) or contact [TASA](#) to register.

### [EXPONIDA 2014, 15 October – 21 November, Sydney](#)

The National Institute of Dramatic Art presents EXPONIDA 2014. We invite you to explore a world of props, costumes, audio-visual work, renderings and model boxes in our annual exhibition that celebrates the work of our graduating students. Get a behind the scenes look at the achievements of 2014's graduating Costume, Design, Production and Properties students as well as Master of Fine Arts students in Directing and Writing for Performance.

### [Registrations open: ACHRC 2014 Meeting - Alliances and Impacts: Sustaining Humanities Research in the 21st Century, Melbourne](#)

Registration is now open for the ACHRC 2014 Annual Meeting "Alliances and Impacts: Sustaining Humanities Research in the 21st Century" to be hosted at the University of Melbourne, with a regional roadshow event in Ballarat, in October. The annual meeting is scheduled for Monday 13 October and Tuesday 14 October at the University of Melbourne. We will host pre-meetings on the afternoon of 12 October for centre directors and ECRs. For the first time, the ACHRC is co-hosting a regional roadshow one-day event held to bring some of the meeting's discussion to regional researchers. This year the event will be hosted at Federation University Australia (Ballarat campus) on Wednesday 15 October.

### [Australia Council for the Arts Emerging Leaders Development Program 2015: Applications close 07 November](#)

The Australia Council for the Arts invites applications for the 2015 Emerging Leaders Development Program. The Australia Council previously identified a gap in leadership development aimed at

supporting arts leaders through specialised training, mentoring and coaching. The program, which piloted in 2011, is now in its fifth iteration. We are now looking for a new cohort of leaders to start the program in April 2015. The program is a five-day residential workshop followed by an ongoing period of mentoring and coaching with respected senior executives that will continue over the year. The program is designed to cover a broad range of topics that will stimulate discussion with other like-minded high performing arts leaders, and enhance your knowledge and skills to face the challenges of your future career.

**[The ASSA Annual Symposium and Cunningham Lecture, 11 November, Canberra](#)**

The theme for this year's Annual Symposium is Population Ageing and Australia's Future. The Symposium provides an opportunity for the Academy, in collaboration with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR), to lead national thinking on current and emerging challenges and opportunities of an ageing Australia. This multi-disciplinary symposium aims to make a contribution to how the government, the health and ageing industry can best manage to provide for the future. The Symposium is convened by Professor Hal Kendig FASSA, Professor John Piggott FASSA, Professor Peter McDonald AM FASSA, Professor Kaarin Anstey FASSA and Professor Jan Pakulski FASSA. Speakers this year include The Hon Susan Ryan AO and International Speaker Professor Naohiro Ogawa from Japan, amongst others. The Cunningham Lecture will be presented by Professor Bruce Chapman AO on 'The case of the income contingent loan - Government as banker; investing in Australians for a progressive and fairer future.'

**[Registrations open: The 36th Conference of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies, 28-30 January 2015, Adelaide](#)**

ASCS 36 will be held at the University of Adelaide from Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th January 2015. The conference conveners are [Professor Han Baltussen](#) and [Dr Jacqueline Clarke](#).

**[AEF Study programmes 2015: Indonesia, India and China](#)**

AEF's study programmes to Asia provide you with opportunities to build your intercultural understanding of our nearest neighbours, develop your knowledge and understanding of the countries of Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, link your in-country experience with learning areas of the Australian Curriculum, and strengthen your professional networks amongst colleagues to support Asia literacy in schools. Register now for one of the three programmes on offer in January 2015: Indonesia: A Diverse Culture – 4 to 14 January 2015, India: Hands on Science – 4 to 15 January 2015, and China: Language and Culture Immersion – 5 to 17 January 2015.