Shaping Canberra conference abstracts

Alison Alder

Shaping Canberra – a narrative in posters

The screen printed posters held in the Megalo Print Studio archives tell a compelling story of life in Canberra.

The concerns and interests of Australians and the Canberra community from 1980 to 2013 are told through the raw colour and dynamic designs of posters – stories not often associated with Canberra. Yet the posters are both about Canberra and Canberra made – the birth of the Aboriginal Treaty movement spearheaded by Nugget Coombs, Judith Wright and Stewart Harris, the biting wit aimed at the rampant royalism associated with the wedding of Charles and Di, public health concerns regarding AIDS, incest and rape, the list goes on.

The posters demonstrate, in a sometime brutal and often humorous manner, the local community's role in shaping the planned city, in representing local life and concerns, as well as the Canberra experience of national policies and events.

There are over 600 posters held in the Megalo archive. They form a large part of what is a broader print archive which contains over 2,000 prints. The studios have seen artists, both well known and from around the corner, use the studios to make work in a variety of print media. International artists visiting the studios have made work responding to Canberra as both a physical and conceptual location.

In 2013 Megalo published a full-colour book, Megalomania: 33 years of posters made at Megalo Print Studio 1980–2013, including essays by Chris Wallace, Robyn Archer, Kate Ross and Emily Sykes, excerpts of interviews and colour reproductions of over 120 posters.

Jeannette A. Bastian

Cultural Memory and the Archives of Place

‘A sense of place encompasses more than just recorded history. It’s not just that “something happened”; it’s that “something happened here” — in this particular location.’*

‘Things are at the heart of the process of constructing an archive of a place.’**

From mapping traditional archives through GIS systems, embracing landscape relationships through archival provenance, or understanding heritage through geography, place and landscape play central roles in establishing community coherence and collective memory. Man-made memorials, monuments and green spaces as well as natural markers such as mountains or bodies of water can be read as texts or traces that both explicate the community to itself and contribute to common understandings of identity.

At the same time, while the landscape may be understood in archival terms, archives themselves influence the ways that the landscape itself is read. For example, to what extent does the presence of the National Archives, in Washington, D.C. – or in Canberra – and the national narrative that this
institution promotes, affect perceptions of the city as a site of national power and significance?

This presentation examines place and landscape in the construction of cultural memory. Linking archives, memory and place, it considers a series of questions around these issues: In what ways can place be considered archival? If a place or landscape is also archival, how are those archival relationships expressed and what do they signify for the people in that space? What are the implications of the symbiosis between place, archives and community and how do traditional archives themselves influence perceptions of the landscape? Engaging both the formal and the informal archive, I examine these and similar questions from multiple perspectives.


**Tim Cresswell, Value, gleaning and the archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, (2011):165

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**Francesca Beddie

*Shaping public policy in the bush capital*

I grew up in Canberra in the 1960s and 1970s. My father was an academic, with friends in the public service. They congregated regularly in his study at the back of the garden or in the living room to talk politics and philosophy. My sense was of a fluidity between university life and policy making; there were lines not to be over-stepped but a common interest in building the nation. The paper will explore how social contact between officials and academics and journalists in the small bush capital affected policy formulation. It will take as a starting point interviews conducted through the oral history unit of the National Library of Australia (NLA) Collection with, inter alia, Alan Renouf, David Anderson, John Stone and James Jupp. (Please note that while the NLA has advised that I will be able to use items from this collection, it may be necessary to acquire permission from the rights holder for some material.) This source gives the paper a second purpose: to highlight an important collection in the National Library of Australia, one of Canberra’s foremost institutions.

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**Susan Boden**

*A Tale of Two Cities – Canberra and the photography of Robert Boden, and Andrée Lawrey and Barb Smith*

Canberra is a curious city - curious in the sense that is preoccupies itself with inquiry into policy, government and law and curious in the sense that it is a beautiful city that often feels oddly unloved and defensive about itself. Both types of ‘curious’ encourage questioning by many of its citizens who are fortunate to have access to Canberra's abundance of generous cultural institutions that provide spaces to show, discuss and reflect. This presentation looks at two recent exhibitions ‘Fyshwick’ (2011) by Barb Smith and Andrée Lawrey and ‘Freefall’ – glimpses of the life of Robert Boden (2013). Both exhibitions were held at PhotoAccess - a generous space, where people learn, experiment, make and show digital media.
'Practical, utilitarian and definitely not beautiful' – as Andrée Lawrey says - Fyshwick is Canberra’s first industrial suburb but is changing as warehouse development and hyper-malls replace courts of small businesses and workshops. Working in parallel, these two mature women walked through ‘drive-only’ Fyshwick (a radical act itself) photographing stolid buildings changed instantly by ephemeral light, scudding cloud or machinery on the move. They are playful images from playful photographers, made with curious eyes.

In contrast, my father, Robert Boden (1935 – 2009) came to Canberra as a young forester in 1954 and spent his early years planting the corridors of trees that softened the dominant axes of Canberra’s plan. Robert’s scientific training compelled him to record his experiments using 35 mm slide film, a medium that could be stored easily and used for the talks, lectures and articles that were an obligation of a ‘professional’ life in the emerging planned city. His carefully catalogued collection of over 2000 slides was scientific data but after his death seems as much a touching devotion to trees.

Robert often spoke about the ‘magnificence’ of trees. In his, Barb's and Andrée's photography there is another 'magnificence' that aligns with the Greek meaning behind the direct Latin origin of magnificent - ‘making something great that is fitting to the circumstance’. These 'curious' Canberrans use photography as a way of framing, filtering and capturing parts of their town which is also a capital city that has troubled its nation. Their work embraces inquiry and curiosity - not qualities unique to Canberra, but very representative of it.

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Shane Breynard

Outside In – social media and place in the regional museum

Recent decades have seen a shift in the imagery being exchanged through web-based social media. Once it was dominated by shots of beaches, birthdays and babies and usually shared amongst small circles of family and ‘friends’, primarily through Facebook. More recently the trend is to share different types of imagery amongst much broader ‘communities of interest’, usually through Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and Tumblr. This shift is not only affecting how we perceive ourselves as social beings, but it is also transforming our relationship to place.

Critics of web-based social media, and web-enabled games such as World of Warcraft, have long catastrophised that the ‘online community’ is a poison to traditional ‘place-based’ communities and is disengaging us from our day-to-day social and family relationships. The fear is that it deposits us in a virtual ‘placelessness’, where eccentricities flourish, private languages are the norm and nobody lives on any particular street.

But as our relationships with the web grow in sophistication, we are not being beamed up and out of our local communities. Rather we are inoculating the placelessness of the web with richly personal and place-based content. Indeed, as we engage socially online, a new form of collaged connection to place and community is emerging. Multichannel and near real-time, we blend images of where we are right now with mini-blogs on our encounters, quips on current issues and links to favourite websites. It seems that we need to communicate something of how we see the place we are in if we are to convey ourselves genuinely to another.
Regional museums are storehouses for and way finders to a community’s experience and its values, and should respond to any significant shift in the way we are talking to each other. Otherwise they may fail to collect the right touchstones to our shared experience, and fail to accurately reflect the community that exists beyond our walls.

Canberra Museum and Gallery has recently installed a ‘live window’ of Canberra images on the museum wall exhibited in near real time as they are shared via social media and photo-sharing websites. The experience of the window will provide a basis for discussing the regional museum’s use of social media.

Nicholas Brown

*Community, Government, Environment: The lived experience of Canberra*

Canberra has always existed, as an ideal and a reality, at the intersection of prevailing ideas of community, government, and environment: it has been held accountable to them, seen as a laboratory for them, and has also shaped them in ways both distinctive to the city and influential beyond it. This paper will consider the dynamic nature of this intersection over the 100 years of Canberra’s existence, drawing out the ways in which these themes can assist in understanding the significance of Canberra, and in articulating the experience of its inhabitants. An autobiographical dimension – reaching back before 1913 – will inform this account, and its particular emphasis on the city and district as experienced, and on the diverse, often parallel narratives that run beneath Canberra’s essential homogeneity. *For a city preoccupied by its own becoming – its destiny as a peerless national capital – Canberra sits in a landscape of layered, often lost histories. My concern will be to recover some of those narratives, and to make their case also in the terms of community, government and environment.*

Sandra Burr

*Ride On: an interrogation of Canberra’s Government Horse Holding Paddocks*

Horses are usually associated with rural areas and, horse racing industries aside, horses and urban environments are generally regarded as an incongruous mix. This is not the case in Canberra where there is a thriving horse population, and where recreational riding is a popular leisure activity. Horses can be seen grazing within five kilometres of Parliament House on Canberra’s unique, yet little known system of government horse holding paddocks which are interwoven through the city’s green spaces.

At a time of increasing demand for suburban densification and urban expansion the continuing reservation of quite significant areas of suburban land for private horse ownership might be considered to be no longer viable. Indeed there is increasing pressure to develop Canberra’s horse holding paddocks for alternate uses. This paper explores these and other issues connected to this unusual interface between the urban and the rural by referencing the origins of the horse holding paddocks and their special significance not simply for equestrians but for the broader Canberra community. In doing so it makes a case for the preservation of this distinctive feature of the Bush Capital.
Ann Cleary

A place of discovery: insights into Canberra’s scales of encounter

Seeing Canberra ‘through the lens’ of its essential and enduring qualities in a series of visual spatial studies focused on the lived experience of Canberra as a place.

Canberra is a place that reveals itself to those who connect in to it, who take the time to find the nuances and divergences that make it different. It is a city premised on the notions of creating a lived ideal, a place conceived as a focal point for the exchange of ideas and debate, a place where exploratory thinking underpins the efforts and outcomes of its pursuits. It is a place where ideas are pursued and tested, where many small laboratories of initiative coexist to create an urban fabric accessible through discovery.

A city young and still in the making, Canberra’s palimpsest layers are still being laid down. Its framework is reliant on an innate appreciation of what is of value – embedded in an intuitive understanding of what it is that makes this place ‘like no other’. Seeing Canberra ‘through the lens’ of its essential and enduring qualities draws out an understanding of the inherent spatial attributes and lived qualities that define it, as insights into the places and spaces of most significance to our community, places of cultural and creative engagement. A focus on the architectural, urban and landscape exemplars that contribute to this rich framework, reveal a place of bold and experimental initiative. Canberra is in this sense a design laboratory, pursuing innovative propositions and design contributions as catalysts for the city’s future thinking and creative dialogues. The effort of this search manifests in a contemporary outlook and enduring modern heritage. Its innate responsiveness is in direct proportion to its role and standing as an essential place. In its vast scales and fragile sensibilities Canberra is a place of insight, poetic and enduring, and it is this that ensures the poignancy of its lived calibration.

Lenore Colheart

Australia from the Albert Hall

This paper traces relationships between place, story and document to sketch an historical view of the national capital from its Albert Hall. This view provides a critical examination of theory and practice in the interpretation of intangible values and their expression in heritage places.

Prime Minister Stanley Melbourne Bruce’s announcement of the name he chose for Canberra’s ‘assembly hall’ was attended with similar anticipation and flourish as in the naming of the city itself fifteen years before. The crowd he addressed at the opening on 10 March 1928 was the infant city’s largest gathering since the opening of Parliament House in May 1927. Intended as part of that ceremonial transfer of the seat of government to the new capital, completion of Canberra’s provisional ‘city hall’ was postponed in the controversy over the cost of creating the national capital. The city never did get the city hall intended for a site on City Hill and its Albert Hall performs this service still.
The Albert Hall’s architecture, materials, interior design, and landscaped setting have a unique story to tell about Canberra. The locus of civic, cultural and community development for the city’s first half-century, the Albert Hall heritage precinct records the creation of the city from within. It is thus a key to reading documentary records for their potential to give shape to the historiography of the national capital through the intricate connections between everyday experiences and national events.

But the place is ‘unread’ too, in its capacity to reveal the ideals and hopes elusively expressed in its form and fabric. Just as Canberra was intended to symbolise Australia, the Albert Hall was to reflect the city and in the words of Prime Minister Bruce ‘all those aspirations that are truly national’. This reading of Canberra’s Albert Hall heritage precinct concludes by considering clues to those aspirations, past, present and future.

Kate Darian-Smith
*Childhood, Community and Place in Canberra*

Growing up in the federal capital has, according to memoirs and oral histories, given the Canberra childhood a distinctive edge. At the same time, however, the lives of children in Canberra have had much in common with those of children around Australia. This paper takes an historical perspective on childhood in Canberra in the postwar decades, as the capital underwent rapid population growth and suburban expansion. Drawing on research studies of Australian children’s play from the 1950s, it will trace the play activities of some Canberra children as they experienced the very localised place of school and the playground. It will also examine how children in Canberra negotiated the more expansive places of the street and the neighbourhood and their wider community. The focus here is on the development of municipal services and buildings — such as baby health centres, community centres, and sporting facilities — and how these were to support the needs of children and their parents as Canberra matured into a modern and well-equipped city.

Peter Dowling
*The real heritage of Canberra*

Canberra is known to Australians as the national capital, the city purposely built in the twentieth century as a place specifically for the Federal Parliament and the place where Government decisions are made. In fact a common and continuing euphemism for the Australian government is ‘Canberra’. It is often known as a peculiar city populated by politicians but only for a few weeks each year. But Canberra is much more than this. It is a city in a landscape that has developed over millions of years, has a human history of at least 25,000 years, was settled in the 1820s and had a developing rural industry before European exploration of Victoria and South Australia. This paper will present the physical evidence for the natural and cultural landscapes of Canberra and the long human history that existed before the ‘political city’. It will argue that this evidence seen in the cultural landscapes and built heritage existing all around the city is unrecognised by many and undervalued by government authorities.
Bob Eckhardt, Annie Kavanagh, Jill Lang

*Hard Times: Unemployment in Canberra in the Seventies*

In the second half of the seventies, unemployment in Canberra rose to levels that this relatively prosperous community did not believe possible – from 3,500 in 1976 to 10,000 by the end of the decade. Over half were under 25 years old. Canberra’s teenage unemployment was around 30%, much higher than the national average.

It was a period of recession throughout Australia, from which Canberra had always considered itself immune. Suddenly, another side to Canberra became visible. Poverty had always been there, but never in such numbers and never affecting so many young people.

This paper will provide a perspective on what life was like for these young people and others experiencing poverty in Canberra during this time. It is told through the eyes of three people who helped respond in an organisation called Jobless Action.

Jobless Action had an ambitious and far-reaching agenda. It worked alongside unemployed people to establish a range of self-help schemes, predominantly job generation projects. They were started with little or no private capital or public investment. An underground community was being built. By the early eighties, thirty job-generation projects had been attempted with only five of them receiving any financial assistance from government. Some had a strong commitment to worker cooperative and social objectives; some attempted small business structures; while others were driven by a philosophical objective to be an alternative to the capitalist system. The network involved thousands, including committed employed people eager to contribute their skills and resources, as well as those out of work.

This paper will explore some of these projects – Megalo International Screenprint Collective, Village Press/Pandemonium Press, the Hard Times Newspaper Collective, the Hard Times Cafe, Revolve and the Canberra Work Cooperative.

Jobless Action was about empowering people. It was so successful because people were not treated as “clients” or “customers”. This was perhaps most evident in the establishment and management of Ainslie Village with resident board members contributing their strength and unique wisdom to transform the Ainslie Hostel from “Hostel” into “Village”. Was all this activity a uniquely Canberra “thing”? Certainly “alternative” self-help communities were being built elsewhere in Australia at this time, the best known example being Nimbin on the north coast of New South Wales. But the authors know of none other that was built in an urban setting with such a strong focus on empowering the disempowered.
**Gavin Findlay**  
*Massive Love of Risk: Reconstructing Canberra’s Splinters Theatre of Spectacle*

For a few dazzling years in the 1990s, many eyes in the Australian theatre and dance worlds were turning to Canberra. The centre of attention was a brash young company called Splinters. Renowned for large outdoor spectacles, site-specific performance and transgressive, cutting edge theatre, between 1985 and 1998 Splinters produced more than 20 works that played at theatres and festivals around the country and provided a springboard for successful companies including Snuff Puppets, Red Cabbage Collective and Mikelangelo and the Black Sea Gentlemen.

The company’s meteoric rise and remarkable history and works deserve to be documented and shared with the community that nurtured it, as well as made available for overdue critical analysis. Splinters’ trademark style—seducing and overwhelming the audience through bravado, trickery, enticement and sheer audio-visual power—earned a commission from Robyn Archer for the first National Festival of Australian Theatre in 1993, climaxing with thousands of shoppers and passers-by having gouts of flame shot over their heads from a giant motorised flamethrower. Although the company’s influence can still clearly be discerned, the legacy of its work was in danger of being lost after the tragic death of co-founder David Branson in 2001. An archive, the David Branson Papers, was created at the ACT Heritage Library in 2010 and the Splinters archive project was born.

The paper will describe the innovative approach to presenting the Splinters material for the Centenary of Canberra. The project engages with the need to supplement tangible documentation of theatre practice and history with intangible memories and meanings in order to locate performance in cultural history and memory. It includes reunion performances, an exhibition and an interactive archive website to source and analyse participant and audience responses, to create an enhanced methodology for theatre archives and reinvigorate a vital part of Canberra’s living heritage.

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**Jennifer Gall and Samuel Smith**  
*An Orchestral Voice for Canberra*

Now considered by many as one of the highlights of Canberra’s cultural landscape, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) dates back to 1950 when it was established as a community organisation, with the simple intention of filling a space in the developing culture of the city. Then known as the Canberra Orchestral Society, the group was comprised entirely of amateur enthusiasts. In 1965 Ernest Llewellyn, already regarded as one of Australia’s finest musicians, arrived to establish the Canberra School of Music and assumed the position of principal conductor of the Orchestral Society. Llewellyn’s vision for the orchestra privileged community and amateur involvement. For the duration of his appointment, the orchestra was made up of 75% amateur players to 25% professionals and students from the School of Music. The repertoire choices also reflect the unique, local outlook of the orchestra, programming many works by Canberra composers such as Larry Sitsky and Don Banks.

This history is comprehensively documented by a collection of live performances (now held by the National Film and Sound Archive) recorded in Canberra between 1966 and 1975. The collection
highlights the humble origins of musical practice in Canberra and anticipates the inclusive model of musical education and participation upon which the city’s culture is now based. With audio examples from the collection, this paper will provide a social and aesthetic history of the CSO and, more broadly, music making in the ACT. In particular, we will focus on the significant contribution of Professor Larry Sitsky to the repertoire of the CSO, drawing on oral history interviews, and musical analysis of selected works to analyse the developing relationship between the composer and the orchestra over time.

Michal Glikson

*dear safia... from Canberra... and other ideas*

The film *dear safia... from Canberra and other ideas* comes out of my PhD project: *Travelling story: cross cultural experience examined through painting, sound and installation*.

The subject of the work is Canberra and identity in the context of ideas and observations of environment, people and ideology and experience across cultures of Australia and the Indian subcontinent. For the first six months of 2012 I lived in Canberra. During this time the work was much informed by processes of adjusting to life in a city that felt young, austere and naïve in comparison to the resonance of ancient cities of the Indian subcontinent, such as Lahore where I had been living. The Lake, Burley Griffin, became a place of solace and companion; I walked around it, drawing and recording sound. I squinted at its features, refamiliarising myself but through eyes now coloured by ideas about colonial links between Australia, India and England. I acquainted myself with its denizens. This is how I came to notice its moods and divergent cultures. Its foreshore and nearby Civic became spaces in which I pondered and grounded feelings of loneliness, alienation and senses of solidarity with people I encountered.

Later in the year I began spending periods of time in regional Queensland. The act of coming and going from Sunshine state to National Capital enabled me to experience states of immersion and separation from Canberra as well as a sense that the city symbolises a gamut of ideas depending from where it’s viewed in the country. Together the activities of painting, sound recording and writing over the year gave me the material for *dear safia* which was subsequently completed in April 2013.

Philip Goad

*Shaping and Shaped by Ideals: Robin Boyd and Canberra*

Melbourne architect and critic Robin Boyd was Australia’s foremost public intellectual in the post-WWII decades on matters relating to architecture and the urban environment. As such, it is not surprising then that Canberra featured regularly in his acerbic critiques of Australian cities and landscapes in books, journal and newspaper articles. But in these writings, Canberra was largely not a target for Boyd but instead a hopeful ideal. Boyd was a champion of Canberra’s potential, and by implication, the hopes and aims of the Griffins – to create an ideal democratic capital city. He was also deeply embedded in its post-war development. From 1951 until his death in 1971, Boyd designed, amongst others in Canberra, houses for figures like Manning Clark and Frank Fenner, professors at the new Australian National University and also its Zoology Building. He was a key figure
in John Overall’s National Capital Development Commission and in its moves to determine a specific architectural aesthetic for the major buildings of the Parliamentary Triangle. Boyd’s last major building commission, Churchill House, was in Canberra. In writing on the future of Australian suburbia, Boyd focused on Swinger Hill in Canberra as a possible ideal. And as part of a proposal for a World Expo site in Melbourne in 1970, Boyd used the Canberra plan as the conceptual basis for an ‘ideal city’ beneath a clear glazed dome.

This paper will examine Boyd’s role in shaping Canberra and also importantly, how Canberra shaped Boyd’s own ideas on what constituted an ideal Australian urbanism, an ideal suburbia, and an ideal capital for the nation.

Sasha Grishin
The book artists in Canberra 1972-1996

When Alec Bolton and Rosemary Dobson returned to Australia and settled in Canberra in 1971, the following year they established the Brindabella Press which became a creative hub for poets and artists from Canberra and nationally. The press continued its operations until Bolton’s death in 1996 by which time some thirty-one publications had been completed. By the end of the 1970s, with the arrival of several European trained printmakers and book artists in Canberra, especially Petr Herel from Czechoslovakia and France, and Jörg Schmeisser and Udo Sellbach, both from Germany, the national capital had become the national centre for book artists and printmakers. Literally dozens of private printing presses appeared in Canberra by the 1980s.

The paper explores the mechanisms behind the creation of a cultural centre, examines the internal dynamics of this centre and questions the establishment of a critical mass of artists, consumers, supporting institutions and of a supporting society. It also explores the reasons for the erosion of a cultural centre and suggests possible paths for its regeneration. Although framed within a broad understanding of Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field and location, it also touches on theories of cultural exhaustion and cultural fatigue.

Kirsty Guster
Calling Canberra Home: Cultivating connection, community and context

In a landscape of national institutions, collections, archives, galleries, and monuments of important and impressive ‘places’, this paper considers the question of what it takes to feel at home in Canberra: The spaces of engagement that help shape our sense of self in place.

Through reflecting on her own journey, and the Acton Walkways Program, of which she is the founder, Kirsty Guster will discuss the more personal – yet arguably universal - factors that contribute to a meaningful and positive lived experience of place: connection, community and context.

Established in 2009, Acton Walkways aims to promote awareness, public engagement and community spirit in Acton, highlighting the ‘bush and cultural’ capital, local heritage and history, arts
and culture, natural landscapes, gardens, sustainability initiatives, intellectual endeavours, tourist attractions, and local cafes and restaurants.

The program encourages and enhances access to Acton through regular guided walking tours, and a comprehensive website featuring updated information about attractions and events. The ongoing series of guided walks vary each month across a wide variety of themes, and are led by a mixture of professional tour guides, experts in arts, heritage and the environment, and passionate community members. In the past 3 years, over 3,000 people have participated in over 250 guided walks.

While practically speaking the Walkways program appears - and appeals - as a tour guide and local promotion enterprise, the underlying vision is to connect people to place, and individuals to their community, through providing experiences that are personal, social, cultural, educational, and inspirational.

Guy Hansen

*When the Raiders came to town*

On 24 September 1989 the Canberra Raiders claimed their first premiership by defeating the Balmain Tigers in the Grand Final of the New South Wales Rugby League competition. This was a remarkable achievement given that the team had only joined the competition in 1982. Canberrans took great pride in the victory of the ‘green machine’ over a traditional Sydney club and, in the days following the win, Canberra was flooded in a sea of green celebration.

In this paper I will argue that the Raiders’ grand final victory was an important moment in the evolution of the city’s identity. I will explore how the emergence of the Raiders as a successful sporting team influenced Canberra’s identity. Personalities such as Mal Meninga, Ricky Stuart and Laurie Daley provided a set of archetypal heroes to populate the city’s collective imagination. More recently the off field behaviour of players such as Todd Carney, Joel Monaghan and Josh Dugan has provided a set of villains for community opprobrium. Thirty years after the Raiders arrived in Canberra they continue to help shape Canberra’s identity.

Erin Hinton and Craig Bremner

*Imaginary Patterns: Tracing the lived experience of Canberra*

Canberra is a curious creation. It is a perfect example of design decisions made outside its geography, socio-economic structures, and specific reality. And by its reliance on its design legacy, it has not considered its patterns of usage.

However, Canberra is by now sufficiently well used to be able to create a detailed map of its patterns of usage. In this paper we explore the tracing of the urban experience as essential to the construction of the ‘urban imaginary’ and present, as evidence, a project completed as a collaborative effort of 180 students from the University of Canberra. Students of several different disciplines were involved:
Graphic Design, Architecture, Design Education, Industrial Design, and Landscape Architecture. They set out to bring back the news of the useful, the useless and the well-used dimensions of living in Canberra. It was an unusual, highly challenging project, and required a coalition of young designers to reveal the experience of living in Canberra.

Tracing the patterns of usage (the lived experience) does not aim to discover a specific truth, nor is it specific to any design discipline. The process of this research is based on the theory that the world we live in has become a single, designed entity, and through our own usage we have fashioned the world to our own necessities, whether consciously or not. We shape our world so that it best suits our patterns of usage — often very different to the way it was originally designed. Therefore, interpreting patterns of usage becomes an essential part of the decision-making process within design. By opening these information flows from the community, designers can venture beyond the boundaries of current trends and widespread information flows.

Cathy Hope and Bethaney Turner
The Capital Region Farmers Market: forging connections between rural and urban Canberra

Fears raised about future food security have increasingly politicised the food system and challenged traditional notions of an urban/rural divide across the local, national and international scale. In Canberra, the issue of food has spawned both national policy responses as seen in the development of a National Food Policy as well as new personal engagements most overtly expressed in a ‘turn to the local’ through growing one’s own food, purchasing it at farmers’ retail outlets and, perhaps most significantly, shopping at one of two weekly farmers’ markets.

The Capital Region Farmers Market (CRFM) at Exhibition Park in Canberra is arguably the largest and one of the most successful farmers’ markets in Australia, and a key site through which the city’s urban-rural nexus is constructed, staged and experienced. From its inception in 2004, the Market has grown to attract over 8,000 people and 100 stallholders each week.

The CRFM is built on two key principles: produce should come from local sources, and it should be sold at the market direct from producer to consumer. The CRFM thus provides opportunities for small and mid-scale ‘local’ producers to bypass the heavily mediated and abstracted commercial food chain and instead undertake an alternative form of economic engagement that enables producers and consumers from the region to forge connections through food-based exchange.

Through analysis of ethnographic and organisational data, this paper examines the multiple ways in which the staging of this food-based exchange constructs and facilitates negotiation with spatial imaginings of Canberra and its surrounding regions. It thus offers reflections on the ways in which a sense of place is brought into being through this very popular local weekly event. It also articulates the role of the CRFM in enabling an experience in which connections between urban and rural Canberra are forged and its relationship to a broader regional identity formed.
Jennifer Horsfield

Building a City: C.S. Daley and the creation of Canberra

‘The building of the National Capital always attracted me ... my imagination was fired with the idea of being associated with the city’.

Charles Daley was widely regarded as one of the most brilliant of the new crop of public servants serving the young Commonwealth. He joined the Department of Home Affairs in Melbourne in 1905 and as secretary to the departmental head, Colonel P T Owen, was closely involved with the new capital city project and the awarding of the winning design to Walter Burley Griffin. Daley’s diligence and experience were eventually to see him appointed as secretary of the new Federal Capital Advisory Committee, and then of the Federal Capital Commission under Chief Commissioner John Butters. With the Commission’s abolition in 1930, Daley retained his central role in the city with his appointment as Civic Administrator, charged with executive responsibility for all matters of local policy and services in connection with the Federal Capital Territory. During this time he remained a staunch and articulate defender of the Griffin plan at a time when many sectional or commercial interests threatened to undermine it.

Daley himself was an intellectual, a gifted musician, a man who cultivated a wide-ranging interest in the arts, science and education. He founded the Canberra Musical Society, was deeply involved with Canberra Rotary, the YMCA, and the Canberra and District Historical Society, and for 28 years was on the council of the Canberra University College.

My talk will span the fifty plus years that Daley was involved with the Commonwealth’s new capital city, and express his affection for it and his pride in what it had achieved.

Subhash Jaireth

At Home and Yet Homeless: Memoir-Essay about Living and Writing in Canberra

I arrived in Canberra in 1986 to do research in geology. Here after a gap of nearly sixteen years I wrote my first poem in Hindi. I was surprised by its arrival and felt blessed because I had, it seemed then, begun to glimpse a little track out of the literary/linguistic homelessness in which I had found myself stranded. Before coming to Canberra I had spent nine long and wonderful years in Moscow, where I also unfortunately lost touch with Hindi, English and my mother-tongue Punjabi. As a compulsive scribbler I did write a few pieces in Russian but they always sounded contrived.

I remember a dome-shaped bus shelter on Constitution Avenue where waiting for a late-evening Action bus I would pace up and down reading and walking the rhythm of my yet-to-be-born poems. The moments were magical as well as magnificent. Within a year I had enough poems for a collection which was published in Delhi in 1994.

Marco Polo in Italo Calvino’s Invisible Cities confesses that ‘every time I describe a city I am saying something about Venice’. It appears I too carry the imprint of two cities in me: Delhi and Moscow.
Shaping Canberra Conference Abstracts

Canberra is quite different from these two capital cities, although historians have found some similarities between Edwin Lutyens’ New Delhi and Walter and Marion Griffins’ Canberra.

As a writer what matters most to me is the difference in the imagined cultural geographies of the cities I carry inside me and the city I live in now. Perhaps this is why Canberra only appears like a proxy of a literary homeland to me. I still feel unsettled about my place, my language and my literary practice.

In this memoir-essay I want to examine the nature of this unsettledness hoping that this unease will somehow seep into my literary imagination and open doors for new poems and stories.

Chris Johnston
Where we dwell: Canberra, communities and connections to place

Dwelling is the essence of connection. In dwelling – we stay, connect, linger. Dwelling evokes the notion of relationship and being within.

This paper will explore the nature of the different relationships that Canberra people have revealed about their connections to key places – some within the nation’s psyche and others being local places. Examples will include – ‘the lake’, Parliament House Vista, the central parklands, Weston Park (with its controversial SIEV X memorial), and Anzac Parade. Canberra people feel a deep connection with many of these places, enriched with their sense that they are the guardians of the ‘national capital’. The paper will contrast these connections with those of Australians who visit the national capital. An interesting aspect that will be revealed is how Canberrans have become the principal defenders of some of the nation’s iconic places.

This paper will draw on a number of projects undertaken by the author over the last ten years.

Martyn Jolly
Art from Archives

Books like Sven Spieker’s The Big Archive: Art from Bureaucracy and Charles Merewether’s The Archive from the popular Documents of Contemporary Art series have established the archive as one of the main tropes of contemporary art internationally. How does Australian art that engages with archives, in particular national archives, fit into these international trends? I will explore this question using the work of Australian contemporary artists plus my own work. The archive will be defined very broadly, from massive national collections with associated metadata and sophisticated interfaces, to small personal collections. The artists discussed may include Indigenous artists, who have a long history over several years politicising the historical archive, as well as public artists who are increasingly using archival images in place-making works like memorials. My own work includes an exhibition 1963: News and Information derived from the Australian News and Information Bureau collection in the National Archives of Australia, the ACT Bushfire Memorial columns derived from a collection of photographs contributed from the community, and a work in the ANU School of Art Shaping Canberra exhibition.
Lesley Lebkowicz  
**Writing The Petrov Poems**

In 1954 the Petrov Affair tore into the small capital of Canberra like a hurricane. My family lived not far from the Petrovs and one of Petrova’s haunts was Sylvia Parson’s dress shop in Kingston, into whose windows my mother gazed with yearning.

The Petrov Affair took place at the height of the Cold War. Vladimir Petrov, and soon afterwards his wife, Evdokia, officials at the Russian Embassy, defected to Australia. Petrov brought with him material which revealed Soviet infiltration of Western espionage. There was uproar around the world.

Prime Minister Menzies used the defection to great political advantage, claiming that ‘Doc’ Evatt, the leader of the Labor opposition, was (indirectly) implicated in Petrov’s network. One outcome was The Royal Commission into Espionage (RCE), whose first hearings were held in Canberra’s Albert Hall. In an atmosphere of fear, the Australian Labor Party split, shaping Australian politics for generations.

My paper is about my verse novel, *The Petrov Poems*, and about the multiplicity of influences and resources I drew on. I tell of the high drama of the defections and the RCE from the points of view of both Petrovs (Volodya and Dusya). I follow them to ASIO safe houses and after that to their drab jobs in Melbourne under their new identities. I will read from the novel.

As part of my research, I listened to oral histories held in the National Library of Australia and read ASIO files in the National Archives. There is one on Petrova which contains a sealed folder – documents deposited by her sister, Tamara, after Petrova’s death. The folder isn’t gummed down but is constructed so that, if you gently squeeze the edges, you can look in. You can’t read what’s inside. I tried.

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Margo Neale  
**Black to the future: Unmasking Canberra - Re-writing the Aboriginal history of the Limestone Plains**

Australia’s fixation with 1788 as the beginning of Australia’s history parallels Canberra’s fixation with 1913 as the beginning of Canberra’s history. In both cases, millennia of Aboriginal occupation was relegated to the dustbin of pre-history and, in the case of Canberra, lived on in name only. The derivation of the name Canberra, from a local Aboriginal group whose name - Ngambri - was heard as Kamberri(y), is still little known to most Canberrans and even less well known nationally, as is the original history of this place.

I will explore the impact of this erasure on contemporary circumstances. How has this neglect shaped the experience of Canberra’s settler culture, government and community alike? More significantly, how has the lived experience of local Aboriginal groups with cultural connections to this place been dominated by on-going struggles to assert their respective historic claims? What are their claims?
How has the status of their home becoming the capital city and seat of Government, conflicted the landscape?

Local Indigenous history has become highly politicised, as issues of cultural and political identity between local Aboriginal groups conflate and collide to fill the void. They draw selectively on historic evidence that best supports their story, rejecting the rest, and passing into history new versions of the truth. However the overwhelming majority of Canberra’s Indigenous population, including those with ancestral connections, grew up elsewhere - as did some 75% of the wider population. Place is not static. We have all carried other places with us to Canberra and transfused it with our memories and histories. From an Indigenous perspective we can only know Canberra through our stories.

Just as the invisible thread of the Molonglo River continues to meander along its ancient course beneath a lake superimposed by the settlers, so does the Aboriginal presence endure despite the overlay of a designed city.

Jakob Parby

Moving museums into the streets? Or the streets into the museum?

In recent decades there has been a push for museums to reform themselves into something new, something different. While they should not completely abandon their role as keepers of the cultural heritage of a nation, a technology, or a city, policy makers, museum workers, museologists and, once in a while, even regular visitors are asking them to be more. By ‘more’, they mean more inclusive, more involving of users, more open and reaching out to more people in order to become the truly democratic institutions they were always thought to be.

Although far from all of the transformative efforts that have been the outcome of this push for change have been successful, I believe we need to maintain a critical appreciation of the ideals behind it. In my talk I will present the transformative efforts of the Museum of Copenhagen, particularly the projects Vaeggen/the Wall and the exhibition Becoming a Copenhagenener, that have both been at the core of rethinking the museum and making it more relevant to more people in contemporary Copenhagen and beyond. My talk will focus particularly on user involvement and the political consequences of this approach to museum work, and on the courage and compromise involved in the realisation of the projects.
Shaping Canberra Conference Abstracts

Susan Parham

Shaping sustainable urbanism: are garden cities the answer?

Canberra’s planning is famously informed by ‘city beautiful’ ideas reflecting approaches found in Hertfordshire’s ‘garden city’ settlement history, heritage and contemporary lived experience; but can these design and planning ideas work to deliver ‘sustainable urbanism’ in future - in Australia or elsewhere?

In the United Kingdom, with the advent of the new Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework, and a shortage of politically acceptable responses to pressing needs for new urban development and revitalisation, there is renewed interest at both the level of theory and practice in the capacity of garden cities to contribute to making sustainable places and communities. Britain’s Prime Minister, David Cameron, has promised to "apply the principles of garden cities" as part of his government’s overhaul of planning in England while the Town and Country Planning Association, founded by Ebenezer Howard, argues that the vision of combining the advantages of “the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country” has again gained momentum in housing and urban development sectors.

Building on research and analysis undertaken at the University of Hertfordshire, this presentation and paper will compare British and Australian experience of garden city and city beautiful geographies, designs and architectures in shaping - and now ‘retrofitting’ and building anew - the planned city. It will explore whether these ideas can be situated as part of the perceived problem of low density sprawl – or an aspect of a space shaping solution argued to require more walkable, compact, fine-grained, mixed-use, intensively-used and diverse cities that will be resilient in the face of climate change.

Julie Rickwood

Five Senses: The creation of a labyrinth community in the capital

On the winter solstice of 2006 I completed a classical labyrinth built from the branches of the surrounding eucalypts laid upon the rough ground of a small flat on the Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve. As an ephemeral art work and thought to be but a fleeting construction, the labyrinth nevertheless remains, despite the changing seasons, the scavenging visits of local fauna, and some deliberate destruction by human hands. It is called “Five Senses: The Mt Ainslie Community Labyrinth” in honour of Judith Wright’s poem and is listed on the world wide labyrinth locator. “Five Senses” continues to exist because of the community of walkers and maintainers who visit it regularly; to seek solace, to create art, to play, and to care for it.

Some little while after the initial branches traced its intriguing path, the diverse hands of the labyrinth community placed rocks gathered from the surrounding bush to parallel the branches, to strengthen the circuit, to enrich the space. I included a visitor’s book in the ‘goal’ of the labyrinth from the beginning. We are approaching the fourteenth book. The labyrinth community has filled the pages with poems, prose, artistic works, and music. I have taken photographs of the labyrinth on or
about every equinox and solstice. I have collected all the visitor’s books, and together with the photographs, they form a textual as well as visual archive of the way in which “Five Senses” is continually regenerated both in its physical form and through community expression.

This paper will explore “Five Senses” as a cultural landscape, considering how it might generate an awareness of community by providing a local sense of connection and place in the city of Canberra.

Maggie Shapley

Collecting Canberra: Issues in collecting the documentary heritage of Canberra

At least fifteen cultural institutions located in Canberra accept archives into their collections. ‘Collecting Canberra’ involves a complex web of legislative responsibilities and institutional collecting policies which overlap and evolve. Where the archives of particular Canberra people or organisations might be found depends on when those archives became available for collection, the prevailing policies at the time, and the judgement, if not the whim, of individuals.

Canberra’s national cultural institutions [National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, National Film and Sound Archive, National Museum of Australia, National Gallery of Australia, Australian War Memorial, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Museum of Australian Democracy], whether primarily archives, libraries or museums, all include archives in their collecting policies Canberra is also home to national collections of business and labour archives and literary, scientific and religious archives [Noel Butlin Archive Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, Basser, St Marks]. Territory institutions, in particular the ACT Archives and the ACT Heritage Library, are responsible for the management of ACT official and non-official records, and then there are institutional archives such as those of the Australian National University and the Canberra Church of England Girls Grammar School whose collecting focus is narrowed to those particular places in Canberra.

It is not uncommon for Canberra people with ‘many hats’ to be represented in a number of archives as a result of their multi-faceted roles and the overlapping collecting policies of institutions, but of more concern are the gaps between those collecting policies. I will draw on recent work documenting women connected to the Australian National University for the online exhibition ‘From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women’s Contributions to Canberra’ and research for Prime Ministers at the Australian National University: An archival guide (ANU eView, 2011) to discuss these issues.
Laurajane Smith

*Canberra Theatres of Memory: identity and memory work at Lanyon Homestead*

The paper argues that visitors to heritage places are engaged in an affective embodied performance of heritage making. Sites and places that have been traditionally defined as ‘heritage’ are more usefully understood as theatres of memory, where heritage processes and performances are enacted. Thus, sites and places become sites of heritage not for any innate historical value, but because of the way they are used as theatres or cultural tools in the processes of remembering and forgetting. Drawing on interviews with visitors to Lanyon Historic Homestead, this paper explores the affective memory and identity work that Canberra residents undertook while visiting this house museum. It examines how the site is used to re/construct and negotiate sense of place and community, belonging and identity. It also identifies the tensions and uncertainties that some Canberra residents expressed about this process. The memory and identity work undertaken at Lanyon is compared to similar work undertaken at house museums in Australia, England and the US.

Nicholas Smith

*On (not) writing about Canberra ...*

I will always remember when, many years ago, a foreign-born writing instructor laughed out loud when one of her students included a Canberra suburb name in his story. ‘It just sounds so weird to hear a name like that in a story’, she said. And since then I have tended to internalise the notion that other Australians (and God forbid, other nationalities) are not interested in Canberra and its public-service company town dynamics. But while I have sometimes consciously excluded explicit Canberra references from my stories (and sometimes not), my writing has never ceased to be shaped by this town and those dynamics. I have slowly come round to the view that this place is not any less ‘writable’ (or any less interesting) than anywhere else. While there is obviously more to Canberra than the public service, it forms the central strands of our collective DNA and is a large part of what makes Canberra different from everywhere else in Australia. I suspect I will always be finding ways to write about the public service while possibly never actually using the words ‘public’ or ‘service’...

Carolyn Strange

*Heart of Whiteness: Griffith Taylor's Canberra*

The white heart of Civic, the *Beaux-Arts* low-rise buildings at Canberra's central node, is familiar to every Canberran and most visitors. Modelled on the white city, an urban confection constructed for the World’s Columbian Exhibition of 1893, it embodies the ideals of the City Beautiful movement. When Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony concocted their urban design plans for the new capital of Australia they tapped into this modernist fantasy, laying it out on a pastoral landscape, transformed through a century of grazing and tens of thousands of years of adaptive use by Aboriginal peoples. Griffith Taylor's inspiration was seemingly different, as it probed even further into the past, to geological time. Hired to scope out possible sites for the new capital the geologist...
traversed the Federal Capital Territory in 1910, largely on foot. Later, as he tabulated the region's temperature, rainfall and terrain he pronounced the site suitable according to Nature's plan. Taylor's role in the capital's selection was less glamorous than the famous Chicago couple's role but he was equally interested in constructing whiteness at the heart of the new nation. Trained as a geologist, Taylor (1880-1963) proudly proclaimed himself a modernist. What could be more efficient than to plan a nation on the basis of scientific principles? A new nation's leaders could work most effectively only if they were situated in an appropriate physical environment, which Canberra provided in his estimation. Although Taylor would later court controversy by pouring wowsersh water on nationalists' bloated dreams of white settlement across the arid nation, his geological and meteorological expertise identified and authorised the Canberra region best endowed to foster the 'brain power' white 'Britishers' required to govern. Thus, Taylor's grounded modernism, steeped in environmental determinism, underpins the built environment that retains the legacy of White Australia.

Ken Taylor

Canberra, city in the landscape. Can it remain a city not like any other?

Canberra, Australia’s national capital, had its genesis in ideals of the Australian landscape. Site choice in 1909, the Griffin winning design in the 1911 international competition with its city beautiful basis, and subsequent developments such as John Sulman’s change to garden city planning through the Federal Capital Advisory Committee and the thirty years of NCDC planning have focused on the concept of the city in the landscape. Symbolically fundamental to the city’s image is its overall landscape setting and how the surrounding landscape flows into the city to create a green skeleton which articulates the city’s form. It is the city’s landscape setting from the surrounding hills through the open space system of the city right down to individual street-tree plantings that form a tangible physical framework. But it is a framework that has distinctive intangible values where culture and nature meet.

As the city grows and demographics change how can the setting of the city in landscape image and its associated symbolic values be maintained whilst accommodating urban consolidation and increasing densities in contrast to the traditional suburban mode. Is it possible to maintain the leafy city character and its social values? The city continues to fulfill a national role and local community role. But tensions are apparent as the city examines ways in which sustainable growth can be achieved and have the potential to question the very landscape basis of the city where culture and nature meet.

The paper will look at the values of the setting of this unique city, critically review their formation, look at the proposed National Heritage Listing and possible World Heritage nomination, and critically address the current planning dogma of urban infill and increased residential densities where special characteristics of the city in the landscape are being abandoned.
Christie Thompson  
*Writing Canberra: The Challenges of Fictionalising Place*

The city and the written word both possess textuality; they can be ‘read’ and they contain levels of meaning, metaphor and symbolism that are representative of humanity and social order. In creating place in literature, the author verbalises the tangible world, re-creating that which can be sensed or physically experienced. The responsive vocabulary used to describe the urban environment charges it with meaning; the city itself becomes a form of text, something that can be interpreted and read. Thus the symbiotic relationship between place and language is forged.

Writing any city presents challenges, but there are some challenges particular to writing Canberra, a relatively young city and a place that has a preconceived cultural image in the minds of most Australians. In my paper, I address the difference in writing ‘planned’ conurbations, as opposed to more organically ‘grown’ cities, and the impact this has on the historical and fictional narratives of cities. I argue that that there exists an outdated modernist vocabulary which is often superimposed upon the contemporary urban environment, particularly intentionally constructed and planned conurbations such as Canberra, imbuing them with artificial symbolism, historicism and romanticism.

I will attempt a critique of several local authors who have chosen to set their fiction in Canberra, as well as discussing my own novel, *Snake Bite*, and examine the effectiveness of current approaches to articulating Canberra and the complexities of faithfully representing it in language.

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Ron van Oers  
*Canberra as an historic urban landscape*

In *The Spirit of Cities: Why the Identity of a City Matters in a Global Age* authors Daniel Bell and Avner de-Shalit make a sound argument that the city, by expressing its own distinctive ethos or values, shapes the lives and outlooks of its residents. If offered a choice, these values and identity of the city are often among the main reasons why people decide to settle and live in that place. In the current environment of cut throat competition between cities on a globalised stage this identity is becoming a powerful tool to attract capital, businesses and a talented workforce and should therefore be cherished and enhanced, not overlooked or squandered.

A city’s identity resides in the multitude of meanings expressed through its built fabric as well as its traditions and attitudes that have been deposited over time by successions of resident communities. This complex layering of natural, cultural and intangible heritage, superimposed on and interacting with each other, is what has been labelled as the historic urban landscape of a city and what constitutes its DNA. Tinkering with the DNA without a proper understanding of it can be disastrous for the city’s identity, and thus its future prospects in the global race for survival and prosperity.

The paper aims to put forward the rationale for working towards a deep understanding and recognition of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) of the city in order to develop proper policies and action for its conservation and development, which after all are two sides of the same coin. Through comprehensive mapping and planning exercises, including stakeholder participation, support can be
provided to urban conservation in a way that is sensitive to cultural differences as well as to different stages of socio-economic transition, and that will allow a break-away from the compartmentalised approaches of today’s urban heritage management, thereby creating mutually beneficial partnerships, enlarging constituencies and reducing conflicts.

Margaret White

*Imagining Futures: Shaping Lives and Environments*

The story of the Association for Modern Education (AME) School in Canberra tells of the growth of a diverse and imaginative community for whom the education of children involved the creation of an innovative architectural setting in Weston, an evolving philosophy and practice of education and a vibrant and frequently contested learning environment for students, teachers and parents.

While precursors of the AME can be traced to early twentieth century international progressive education philosophies, the climate of social, political and economic change that led to the development of the AME School occurred within the burgeoning alternative school movement in Australia during the 1960-70s.

At this time, education in the ACT was administered through the NSW Department of Education. Many parents found this unsatisfactory and felt the centralised Department in Sydney unresponsive to the particular circumstances of the ACT. In 1969, in response to these circumstances, a group of parents, teachers and academics formed the Association for Modern Education. Their primary goal was to start a secular, co-educational school.

In 2012, the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the AME School in 1972 provided an opportunity to initiate an archival and oral history project to explore the experiences and memories of the AME community and to consider the contribution that the AME School made to progressive and alternative education in Australia.

Engagement with sources, including a considerable archival collection of photographs and documents and recently recorded audio and video material, has shown many layers and degrees of individual and shared understanding. Diverse memories reveal spaces between public statement and private experience as participants recall some of the conflicts and paradoxes that resonated through the lived experience of creating and maintaining the school community.

To reflect the nature of the AME community and the circulation of ideas and practices in a local, national and international context, this paper will include examples of visual and audio sources.
Graham Willett

*Camp-berra: Towards a homosexual history*

Canberra occupies an almost unique location in the history of homosexual Australia. It is both a small town – a reality which has always operated as a constraint on the emergence of homosexual subcultures – and the national capital, where many of the great battles for and against gay rights have been fought out it. Canberra might, then, be thought of as having two histories – a secretive camp/gay scene (which has rarely been written about), where those in the know socialised in relative safety; and a rarefied bureaucratic world where Ministers and Mandarins debated ‘the homosexual problem’ and took steps to manage it. But this paper draws upon archival research, oral histories, mainstream and community media, to explore these worlds, and in so doing examines how these worlds intersected and overlapped and how, despite all their ostensible indifference to each other, they actually shaped what Canberra, and the nation that it governed, looked like for homosexual people.

The paper is intended to throw light upon the themes: development of local senses of identity and place and the Canberra experience of national policies, events etc.

David Williams

*Canberra’s Public Art and Sculpture Collections*

Canberra’s public art, and sculpture in all its forms, have always featured prominently in the city’s development and its cultural landscape.

Public sculpture projects, site specific commissions, sculpture parks and gardens, public and private collections have been integral to all phases of Canberra’s urban ‘garden city’ development ideals.

In the 1930s, with the establishment of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) came the initiative to develop ANZAC Parade with its series of large scale commissioned sculptures commemorating major theatres of war. In the early 1950s, the Australian National University (ANU) established a building policy to integrate architecture, landscape design and site specific sculpture into campus development. In 1958, the National Capital Development Commission (NCDC) was set up and established programs to provide art and sculptural work as an integral part of its public buildings and urban development plans, a policy continued by the ACT government until 2010 when it was abandoned due to public and political pressures. In 1983, the new National Gallery of Australia (NGA) opened incorporating an impressive lake-side International Sculpture Park, and in 1988 the New Parliament House opened showcasing its public art and sculpture collections in and around the extensive buildings and grounds.

During the last decade the corporate and private sector has become involved in commissioning art works and sculpture accessible to the public as part of their developments and concern to contribute to the general amenity of the city. Sculpture and public art collections have contributed to a sense of
confidence, life and pride in the city and become an attraction for tourists visiting the national capital.

However, Canberra’s public art and sculpture collections have not been without controversy. This paper traces the phases of development of public art and acquisition policies, highlights successful projects, canvases the implications of the controversies and the way public art and sculpture collections have helped shape the lived experienced of Canberra and perceptions of Australia’s national capital city.

Susan Mary Withycombe

Gemeinschaft at Westridge:
The Formation of a community in early Canberra

In the later 19\textsuperscript{th} Century, at the same time as Ebenezer Howard was developing his concept of the Garden City, the German scholar Ferdinand Tönnies published a ground-breaking study of social organisation: \textit{Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft}, (Community and Civil Society), in which he contrasted the “small-scale, ‘organic’, close-knit Community” with “large-scale, impersonal, civil and commercial Society”. His concepts of traditional community and civil society help to explain the human relationships that developed in Canberra in its early decades as it was being planned and built as a Garden City.

The traditional community as Tönnies understood it had developed in Europe over several centuries. There was no possibility of this gradual process occurring in Canberra, where the Indigenous community had been disastrously affected by European invasion and the white settlers who replaced it had begun to arrive less than one century before the city was named. Nevertheless, some kind of Gemeinschaft began to develop among the white people in parts of this very new city, as individual immigrants formed relationships with other new arrivals and with people who were already living there.

This paper examines the community that developed at Westridge, now part of the suburb of Yarralumla. Some descendants of the original Westridge residents are living there still. This is remarkable, because such continuity was not planned. Westridge was not intended to be a permanent suburb; but it grew into one, and its community was perhaps the stronger because its growth was more natural than that of the planned "garden city" suburbs of Ainslie and Blandfordia which were being built and rapidly inhabited at the same time.