6. The Di Langmore Era, and Going Online, 2002–2008

Darryl Bennet

The stroke suffered in August 2001 by the general editor, John Ritchie, marked the beginning of a time of turbulence and transformation for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. There had been pressure to trim the budget in the 1990s and, as recounted in the previous chapter, the first signs were appearing that the *ADB* might be called upon to justify its existence in the new century. Nevertheless, in 2001 the organisation that had evolved over four decades was intact and apparently under no immediate threat.

Three factors foreshadowed a dramatic change in the *ADB*'s fortunes. First, the sudden incapacity of its head created an opportunity for some people in the Research School of Social Sciences to question openly the cost and relevance to the school of a project with a large establishment of general staff. Second, the dictionary would experience its share of scrutiny as the ANU responded to reductions in government funding and embarked on a major reorganisation. Third, the *ADB*'s sole venture in the new electronic media had been the publication in 1996 by Melbourne University Press of Volumes 1–12 on CD-ROM; this situation was soon to change.

In 2001 the *ADB* was staffed at the minimum level to meet its needs. Only the general editor held an academic post. The positions of the deputy general editor, four research editors, two full-time-equivalent research assistants, a biographical register officer, part-time bibliographer and two administrators in Canberra, and seven part-time research assistants in the State capitals and in England were all general staff. The Canberra office was the hub of a national network of people who contributed to the dictionary on a voluntary basis: some 4000 authors had written for it; eight external section editors peer-reviewed draft articles within their spheres of interest; the same number of regional and specialist working parties, with a total membership of about 100 historians and experts in various fields, nominated subjects and authors for each new period of the *ADB*; the policymaking Editorial Board comprised 15 senior academics and managers from the ANU and universities throughout the country.

Di Langmore, 2009

Photographer: Darren Boyd, *ADB* archives

A permanent successor to John Ritchie would not be appointed for almost three years. It was fortunate for the *ADB* that the deputy general editor, and the person who would have to carry the load in the meantime, was a leader of great capability. Di Langmore had been educated at Firbank Church of England Girls' School, Brighton, Melbourne (General Exhibition on Matriculation, 1958), the University of Melbourne (BA Hons, 1963; DipEd, 1964), the University of Papua New Guinea (MA, 1973) and the ANU (PhD, 1982). After employment as a tutor and research assistant (1969–75) in the history department of the University of Papua New Guinea and as a part-time tutor in history in the Faculties at ANU (1982–83), she joined the *ADB*'s staff in 1982 and worked for 15 years as the research editor responsible for articles on subjects from Victoria. She was herself the author, by 2001, of 41 *ADB* articles. In addition, while at the *ADB*, she published three books: *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874–1914* (1989); *Prime Ministers' Wives: The Public and Private Lives of Ten Australian Women* (1992); and *Glittering Surfaces: A Life of Maie Casey* (1997).¹

As deputy general editor from 1997, she revealed herself to be an able manager and had reached out to the community with engaging public addresses and a series of radio talks. The position of general editor was finally advertised late in 2003. Langmore was the successful candidate in the competitive selection process and in May 2004 she received her substantive appointment.² She was unique among the general editors in having risen from the ranks. I was appointed to the vacant post of deputy general editor.

The first challenge for Langmore, as acting general editor, had been to complete Volume 16 for publication. This volume was the last in a series of four on individuals who died in the period 1940–80. It was about 60 per cent finished when Ritchie was incapacitated. Langmore threw herself into the work. Maintaining the *ADB*'s high standards of checking and editing, she kept to the schedule, and the volume was finished on time and launched in Adelaide in 2002. Production of Volume 17, the first of two volumes covering the period 1981–90, began immediately. As a result of progressive reductions in staff and the necessity of diverting resources to the *ADB* online project (of which more later), there was no possibility of completing this volume in the normal time of two or three years, without compromising the quality of the editing or the effort needed to check articles for factual accuracy and historical judgment. The volume was launched in Melbourne in 2007. Langmore then edited about one-quarter of Volume 18 before she retired in May 2008.³

1 Diane Langmore, *Missionary Lives: Papua, 1874–1914* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989); *Prime Ministers' Wives: The Public and Private Lives of Ten Australian Women* (Ringwood, Vic.: McPhee Gribble, 1992); *Glittering Surfaces: A Life of Maie Casey* (Ringwood, Vic.: McPhee Gribble, 1997).

2 This paragraph paraphrases the citation for the award of the *ADB* Medal to Dr Di Langmore AM, presented in March 2009.

3 John Ritchie and Diane Langmore (gen. eds), *ADB*, vol. 16. Diane Langmore (gen. ed.), *ADB*, vol. 17. Personal knowledge.

Di Langmore, 1985

By courtesy of Sue Edgar

Rosemary Jennings was a research assistant, based in Canberra, from 1999 to 2007

Photographer: Natalie Azzopardi, 2012, *ADB* archives

Readers of the *ADB* did not experience a gap between Volumes 16 and 17, as the supplementary volume, edited by Chris Cunneen in association with Jill Roe, Stephen Garton and Beverley Kingston, was published in 2005.⁴ The genesis of this work, funded by an ARC grant, and its production in Sydney are described in the previous chapter. Work on it continued during Langmore's general editorship and involved support from her and other members of the Canberra staff. Later, its biographical-subject files were integrated with the *ADB*'s records in Canberra.

⁴ Christopher Cunneen with Jill Roe, Beverley Kingston and Stephen Garton (eds), *Australian Dictionary of Biography, Supplement 1580–1980* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2005).

During Langmore's term as acting and substantive head of the *ADB*, approximately 1000 concise biographies of past Australians, from all walks of life, were added to the inventory of the dictionary's principal series. Volume 17, alone, contains more than 600 articles chronicling and evaluating the lives of important and representative figures in the nation's history, such as Dame Kate Campbell, a pioneering medical specialist in neonatal intensive care, who saw 'pre-term babies as fascinating fellow human beings';⁵ Sir Reginald Ansett, who did not 'think that private enterprise should be allowed to go mad—some government control is necessary';⁶ and the 'will-o'-the-wisp with a sting', the diminutive but tough and elusive rugby league footballer Clive Churchill.⁷ There is, in addition, an article on George Abdullah, an Indigenous community leader from Western Australia who exhorted his people, 'don't be ashamed. Be proud of being an Aboriginal'.⁸

Firm in her conviction that the core function of the *ADB* is the creation of accurate, authoritative, enlightening and interesting knowledge about individuals in Australian history, Langmore ensured that the dictionary remained an exemplar of the best biographical research and writing. Under her, as under her predecessors, the *ADB* fulfilled the vision of historical biography that prime minister Kevin Rudd articulated at the launch in 2009 of Tom Keneally's book, *Australians: Origins to Eureka*, a work that drew extensively on the *ADB*:

Biography is the fulfilment of a duty owed by every generation to those who have gone before us, and able to be claimed against those yet to be born. A duty to capture, to preserve and to transmit the stories—the legacy of each generation. Because a human voice—a human life—retains its validity, its power and its relevance beyond its physical demise. As we build on the work done in our name and on our behalf by our forebears, we honour them best by listening to their voices from the past.⁹

5 J. McCalman, 'Campbell, Dame Kate Isabel (1899–1986)', in *ADB*, vol. 17, pp. 185–6.

6 C. Fahey, 'Ansett, Sir Reginald Myles (1909–1981)', in *ADB*, vol. 17, pp. 25–7.

7 B. Nairn, 'Churchill, Clive Bernard (1927–1985)', in *ADB*, vol. 17, pp. 213–14.

8 Y. J. Abdullah, 'Abdullah, George Cyril (1919–1984)', in *ADB*, vol. 17, p. 1.

9 Speech by Kevin Rudd at the launch of T. Keneally, *Australians: Origins to Eureka*, National Library of Australia, Canberra (27 August 2009), <<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6152>> (accessed 21 December 2009).

Challenging times, calls for structural change

ADB staff, 2006. Left to right: Barbara Dawson, Rosemary Jennings, Gail Clements, Brian Wimborne, Jolyon Horner (seated), Anthea Bundock, Darryl Bennet, Di Langmore (seated), Pam Crichton, Nick Brown, Christine Fernon, Edna Kauffman, Karen Ciuffetelli

Photographer: Darren Boyd, *ADB* archives

While managing the affairs of the *ADB*, Langmore had to cope with the distraction of no fewer than three organisational reviews in five years. The director of RSSS, Ian McAllister, had commissioned the first of these in 2002, immediately it became known that John Ritchie would be unable to resume his post as general editor. It was probably at this point that the continued existence of the *ADB* was most in doubt. Fortunately, it was blessed with the backing of a wise and understanding Editorial Board. The successive chairs, Jill Roe (to 2006) and Tom Griffiths, were forceful and effective fighters for the dictionary. At McAllister's request in 2002, Roe (as chair), Geoffrey Bolton and Stephen Garton formed an ad-hoc subcommittee of the board to report on the long-term future of the *ADB*. They submitted their report in November that year. The reviewers recognised that, in a research environment increasingly reliant on external sources of funds, the relevance of the *ADB* 'to the changing mission of RSSS' had to be considered. Their report argued that 'to survive in the long run', the *ADB* 'must embrace both continuity and change', through commitments to the production of new volumes, the publication of an online

edition and 'participation in the modern research culture'. Having selected the five-year period 2003–07 as 'an appropriate and manageable time frame', the subcommittee examined four options for the future of the *ADB*.¹⁰

Three of the four alternative approaches arose from ill-disposed or ill-informed suggestions to the subcommittee. Option one was for the ANU to wind down the *ADB* after the publication of Volume 18. Roe, Bolton and Garton noted that, if the ANU vacated the field, other institutions could confidently be expected to take it up and gain the associated credit. If they did not, important figures in twentieth-century Australian history who had died in the 1990s would 'lack a definitive account' of their contributions. Ending the production of volumes of the *ADB* 'would also mean the enforced loss of highly skilled staff, not to mention the loss of research capability and reputation to the ANU'.

Option two was for an immediate merger of the *ADB* with the History Program in RSSS. The subcommittee advised that this approach was unwanted by both parties and would benefit neither. There would be insurmountable difficulties in integrating the *ADB*'s general staff into the 'current formulation of general staff entitlements' for research assistance to academics within RSSS. Option three was to redefine the *ADB* as a 'data-collecting' project and to transfer it to the university library. Describing this proposal as 'a fundamental misconception' of the nature of the *ADB*, the subcommittee explained that its business was 'not to be understood as data collection and dissemination, but rather as involving detailed research into the location and value of discrete evidence and its possible utilisation' in the production of historical biography. Strong academic leadership was required.¹¹

Option four, the subcommittee's preferred approach, envisaged 'a closer alignment with the History Program' and the *ADB*'s later designation as 'a special research area' that would be a component of a National Life History Project within the program. The subcommittee proposed a two-stage process. In the first stage (2003–04), it recommended that three joint *ADB*/History Program positions be created and filled: general editor/professor of Australian history; deputy general editor, as an academic appointment; and an information technology (IT) officer to support the planned *ADB* online project and other future electronic research. It further recommended that the *ADB*'s general staff, required for the timely completion of Volumes 17 and 18, should be 'quarantined from current RSSS quotas'. In the second stage (2005–07), the subcommittee recommended that work begin on two new volumes, 19 and 20, covering the period 1991–2000. It

10 Jill Roe, Geoffrey Bolton and Stephen Garton, 'Long Term Futures for the Australian Dictionary of Biography 2003–2007. A report with recommendations from an ad hoc sub-committee of the Editorial Board to Professor Ian McAllister' (21 November 2002), *ADB* file, *ADB*, pp. 2, 3.

11 Roe, Bolton and Garton, 'Long Term Futures for the Australian Dictionary of Biography 2003–2007', pp. 3, 4, 6.

considered that a slower rate of production was feasible and desirable for these volumes, the implication being that general staff numbers would decline over time. To implement the suggested closer association between the *ADB* and the History Program, the subcommittee recommended that the proposed National Life History Project be implemented and that the parties negotiate a formal collaborative agreement.¹²

Roe, Bolton and Garton affirmed the national importance of the *ADB*. They proposed a future course that they believed would preserve as much as possible of its traditional structure, while adapting it to survive in a changing research environment. Their recommendations were only partially implemented but their strong and persuasive support for the *ADB* ended 15 months of uncertainty. In October 2003 the ANU's vice-chancellor, Ian Chubb, approved the appointment of a new general editor and, as noted earlier, Langmore assumed the role substantively in May 2004. Her appointment was duly made in both the *ADB* and the History Program. The deputy general editor remained a general staff position; when I filled it, the research editor post I had occupied was left vacant. A new joint *ADB*/History Program academic position, established later that year, was filled by Nicholas Brown, who also became chair of the Commonwealth Working Party. He was required to perform in an academic role for half of the time and as an *ADB* research editor for the other half. An IT officer position was not created, although the *ADB* online project had been funded from 2004. By 2007 two full-time members of the staff (a research editor and an administrator) and one half-time research assistant had retired and not been replaced. Budgetary constraints were at the heart of these cutbacks in the *ADB*'s staffing requirements. As the Federal Government continued its practice of not fully indexing the funds it provided to universities, RSSH had to make savings to cover salary and general cost increases.¹³

In 2006 RSSH was itself subjected to a major review. The report was brief in its treatment of the *ADB*.¹⁴ It rejected suggestions that the dictionary might be more conveniently located outside the school. More controversially, it reached the remarkable conclusion that the *ADB* 'should be financially self-sufficient within five years'. The reviewers offered no argument to support this contention (no major dictionary project has been funded this way), merely observing that 'it is clear to us that revenue can be generated by the on-line *ADB* in ways that do not diminish its character as free at point of delivery'.¹⁵ Although there may

12 Roe, Bolton and Garton, 'Long Term Futures for the Australian Dictionary of Biography 2003–2007', pp. 4–5.

13 Personal knowledge and views.

14 Colin Lucas, Margaret Levi, Gilles Paquet and Derek Volker, 'The Research School of Social Sciences, Report of 2006 Review to Ian Chubb and Frank Jackson' (Canberra: ANU, September 2006), pp. 9, 16–17, 21, 23.

15 Lucas et al., 'The Research School of Social Sciences', pp. 9, 16–17.

be methods by which a modest income could be obtained from the *ADB* online, the suggestion that the total operations of the *ADB* should cease to be a charge to RSSS's budget in five years was impracticable. The *ADB* responded to the report with efforts to solicit additional donations to its endowment fund but to no avail.¹⁶

Following a major restructure of the ANU, the College of Arts and Social Sciences was established in 2007. This change in the organisation of the university led to widespread discussions about the *ADB*'s future relationships with RSSS, the History Program, and a projected research school of the humanities. At the end of Langmore's editorship, the *ADB* was still part of RSSS and linked to the History Program while retaining its own budget. A consensus about the most appropriate arrangements in the future had not been achieved, however, and the debate would continue in later years.

Meanwhile, the annual reductions in RSSS's real funding and the recommendations of the 2006 review prompted the director, Rod Rhodes, to commission another review of the *ADB*, in 2007. A working party, chaired by Bob Gregory, was appointed to 'investigate the priorities, current staffing level and funding of the *ADB* and advise on future strategy, staffing and sources of finance'. In the introduction to its report, the working party gave a firm endorsement of the *ADB*: 'In our conversations with individuals, from our reading of the submissions, and from past reviews of the *ADB* a clear and uniform picture emerges—the *ADB* is widely regarded as a considerable asset for the ANU and people think highly of it'. The report went on to pay generous tributes to the general editor, her staff and the people throughout the country whose voluntary contributions were vital to the success of the *ADB*.¹⁷

In considering the question of future strategy, the working party held the strong view that the *ADB* must build on its past achievements and adapt to a rapidly changing environment. It should integrate more with biographical scholarship in other parts of the university and with national institutions that have a direct interest in its work. To this end, the working party proposed the establishment of a National Centre for Biography in RSSS. The working party listed a number of aims for the centre, both within and outside the ANU. In summary, these were for it to act as a focus for, and to develop proficiency in, the study and writing of biography in Australia; to coordinate the activities of biographers throughout the ANU; to conduct public lectures, seminars, symposia and other forms of academic and scholarly exchange in the field; to attract outstanding scholars on visiting scholarships and short-term appointments; to train the next

¹⁶ 'External sources of funds', NCB/*ADB* files.

¹⁷ R. G. Gregory, Tom Griffiths, Ann Curthoys, Linda Boterill and Daniel Stoljar, 'Australian Dictionary of Biography Working Party Report to the Director, Research School of Social Sciences Review' [hereinafter 'Gregory Report'] (2007), NCB/*ADB* files, p. 1.

generation of biographers through postgraduate and summer school programs; to produce new volumes of the *ADB* up to Volume 20; to continue to develop the *ADB* online; and to work more closely with, and conduct joint research and exhibitions with, the national cultural institutions.¹⁸

On the subject of staffing, the working party recommended that the position of head of the new organisation be redesignated as director of the National Centre for Biography and general editor of the *ADB* with responsibility for the aims outlined above. Oversight of the *ADB* and editing functions should take no more than 20 per cent of the director's time. A new general staff position of managing editor would take over the functions of the deputy general editor, including supervision of the *ADB* online, and assume the responsibilities no longer discharged by the general editor. A new academic post of deputy director would be created, the occupant of which would have no specific editorial role in relation to the *ADB*. The existing research editor, research assistant and administrative positions would be 'maintained at the level possible within the funding allocated'. As with Roe, Bolton and Garton, the working party seemed to assume that the number of these positions would be fewer in future. Noting that 'in the medium and longer term, there will be a reduced school funded resource base', the working party suggested that the production time for each volume could be increased to five years.¹⁹

As might be expected, financial issues dominated the working party's deliberations. Its members considered that the recommendation of the 2006 review of RSSS that the *ADB* become self-supporting was unrealistic in any time frame, let alone five years. Moreover, it was no less reasonable for RSSS to continue supporting the *ADB* than it was for the school to fund its other respected 'departmental groups'. Yet the working party thought it inevitable that RSSS would scale down its funding for the dictionary in the future. The *ADB* would have to devote more effort to raising money from endowments, ARC grants, commercial activities in collaboration with Melbourne University Publishing and direct Commonwealth Government funding. Seeking money 'on a wide range of fronts' was a crucial role that must absorb much of the energy of the new director/general editor.²⁰ The Gregory review's broad approach was approved and the National Centre of Biography, headed by Melanie Nolan, was established in June 2008, following Di Langmore's retirement.

The old structure of the *ADB* had served it well for half a century. Its strength was the stability of the research, editing and administrative workforce. The research editors and research assistants tended to remain in their posts for

18 'Gregory Report', pp. 3–4.

19 'Gregory Report', pp. 5–6, 8.

20 'Gregory Report', pp. 2, 6–8.

many years, building up large funds of knowledge. For example, Martha Campbell, the doyen of research editors, served the *ADB* for 35 years, until 2002; she was also the author of 161 articles. Biographical research is complex and painstaking. Sources for the lives of individuals in Australian history are scattered throughout the country and the world—in the collections of libraries, government archives, museums and other institutions; in the records of societies and professional bodies; and in documents held privately. Editing the *ADB* to achieve an even style, tone and standard is skilled work. The knowledge of sources, style conventions and historical context required of an *ADB* research editor is not acquired quickly, although research is becoming easier with the expansion of the Internet and the development of digital technology generally.

It is relevant that the *ADB* had relied on the labours of people—mainly women—few of whom had the prospect of further promotion. The new structure reflected the realities of the research environment in the twenty-first century and provided opportunities for research and editing personnel to advance their careers. Its challenge would be to preserve the level of corporate knowledge that sustained the dictionary in its first 50 years.

The online project

The impetus for a project to publish an online edition of the *ADB* began in the NSW Working Party. As early as 2000, on the initiative of Alan Ventress, the working party had discussed the desirability of publishing the *ADB* on the Internet. In a paper prepared for the working party, Ventress noted that the British '*Dictionary of National Biography* has moved away from print to electronic access'.²¹ Oxford University Press had published the *American National Biography* online and the forthcoming *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* would also have an online edition. Ventress recommended that the *ADB* and MUP collaborate with the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (Austehc; later the eScholarship Research Centre) at the University of Melbourne with a view to making the complete text of the *ADB* available on the web.²² Roe, a member of the working party as well as chair of the *ADB*'s Editorial Board, attended the launch of the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (*DNZB*) online in Christchurch in December 2001. Impressed by what she saw,

21 'Options for the Future of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2000', email, Alan Ventress to Darryl Bennet (21 December 2009).

22 See Note 21.

she arranged for the general editor of the *DNZB*, Claudia Orange, and key staff members to travel to Australia in 2002 and give a series of presentations on their work.²³

At its biennial meeting on 7 June 2002, the Editorial Board unanimously approved preparation of an ARC Linkage—Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF)—grant application, as soon as possible, ‘with a view to ensuring that the *ADB* is available online to schools and to communities nationwide by 2005’.²⁴ Without ever losing her preference for the feel of a book in her hands, Langmore embraced the potential of information technology to communicate and educate, and set about implementing the board’s decision. A member of the board, Janet McCalman, recommended Austehc, a leader in the new field of informatics, as an ideal partner in the project, adding weight to Ventress’s earlier suggestion. *ADB* staff judged that a LIEF application that could demonstrate a major collaboration between universities—principally ANU and Melbourne at the working level—and national cultural institutions should meet the ARC’s criteria for funding. Negotiations with potential partners and the drafting of the application began without delay. Because of the ARC’s schedule, the earliest that an application could be submitted was at the beginning of 2003, for funding in 2004. It soon emerged that a three-year project would be required. Although the project team hoped to meet the Editorial Board’s goal of having an online edition of the *ADB* publicly available in 2005, the actual launch took place in 2006.²⁵

It was apparent from the outset that implementation of the *ADB* online would require a virtually full-time project manager. While the general editor retained responsibility for the project’s higher direction, involving meetings, consultations and decision making, I became project manager, responsible for its organisation, planning and day-to-day running. My key duties included liaising with partners and other external authorities, writing the three grant applications and their associated reports, recruiting and supervising the Canberra-based project staff, controlling the budget, and leading the discussions that determined the final design and functionality of the web site.

There were two difficulties with obtaining funds through the LIEF scheme, especially for a multi-year project. The first was that an application had to be submitted every year and each application had to be prepared nearly 12 months in advance. Thus the application for funding in 2004 was begun in late 2002 and completed early in 2003. Immediately the project staff learned in late 2003 that funding was approved for 2004, work had to start on the application for funding in 2005. An interval of the same length would occur between the

23 Jill Roe to Darryl Bennet, email (21 December 2009). Seminar on *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, Coombs Building, ANU (6 June 2002).

24 Minutes, *ADB* Editorial Board meeting (7 June 2002), NCB/*ADB* files.

25 Personal knowledge.

application and the funding for 2006. Writing the application for 2005 involved dealing with a particularly thorny problem, because the 2004 project had scarcely commenced before the 2005 application was due at the ARC. The results of almost a whole year of technical development and data analysis and entry had to be anticipated, based on minimal experience. It was possible to report that a working web site would be established, however, because a pilot site—set up with ‘seeding’ money supportively provided by the director of RSSS—had existed from 2003 and its transformation into the first version of a restricted-access web site, for use by the project staff and the chief investigators, would be complete before the end of 2004.²⁶

Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery launched the online version of the *ADB* in the Great Hall, University House, ANU, in July 2006

ADB archives

The second difficulty was that the participating institutions had to provide at least 25 per cent of the cash required for the project. At a time of financial stringency, there were limits to how much money the participants could make available. Moreover, even if they contributed more than 25 per cent of the cost, records showed that the ARC normally did not give all the money that applicants sought. The project, therefore, was never likely to have enough money to meet all of its objectives.

26 Personal knowledge.

It was a measure of the *ADB*'s standing among historians that six members of the Editorial Board and six additional senior historians supported the initiative, agreeing to be the chief investigators for the 2004 project and to seek the backing of their universities. The chief investigators for the first year were Tom Griffiths, David Horner and Patricia Jalland, all from ANU; Stuart Macintyre and Janet McCalman, both from the University of Melbourne; David Carment from the Northern Territory (later Charles Darwin) University; Stephen Garton from the University of Sydney; Patrick Buckridge from Griffith University; Jill Roe from Macquarie University; Alison Mackinnon from the University of South Australia; Graeme Davison from Monash University; and Tom Stannage from Curtin University of Technology. As was to be expected, the ANU and the University of Melbourne provided most of the cash and in-kind support, but the other seven universities contributed significantly. The National Library of Australia provided both cash and in-kind support.

For the 2005 project, the chief investigators and participating institutions were the same. Two universities—Curtin University of Technology and Charles Darwin University—were unable to commit money for 2006 and the chief investigators from the two institutions were replaced with Langmore and Nicholas Brown from the ANU and Gavan McCarthy from the University of Melbourne. Two additional cultural institutions joined the project in its last year: the National Museum of Australia, which contributed cash, and the National Archives of Australia, which gave in-kind support in the form of free digitisation of biographical sources in its collection. Over the three years of the project's duration, \$583 000 was raised by the project's participants, \$1 261 409 was sought from the ARC and \$986 000 was granted, leaving a shortfall of \$275 409.²⁷ This shortfall was to be a significant obstacle, preventing the project from achieving its full aims.

It was fundamental to the project's vision that the *ADB* online should be an open resource, available without cost to every person and institution with a computer connected to the Internet. The online editions of the New Zealand and Canadian dictionaries of national biography were established on this principle. Conversely, those of the United Kingdom and the United States charged

27 The project cost a total of \$1 569 000. For the 2004 project \$217 000 was raised from the participants, \$450 965 was sought from the ARC and \$376 000 was granted: Australian Research Council, Linkage—Infrastructure Equipment & Facilities—Application for Funding in 2004, Project LE0452798, 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography Online: A Database of National Biography Facilitating Research into Australian History'. For the 2005 project, \$198 500 was raised from the participants, \$407 599 was sought from the ARC and \$260 000 was granted: Australian Research Council, Linkage—Infrastructure Equipment & Facilities—Application for Funding in 2005, Project LE0560774, 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Enhancement Project'. For the 2006 project, \$167 500 was raised from the participants, \$402 845 was sought from the ARC and \$350 000 was granted: Australian Research Council, Linkage—Infrastructure Equipment & Facilities—Application for Funding in 2006, Project LE0668026, 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography Online and Emerging National Information Systems: Networking Research Capability'. The ARC contributed \$986 000 of \$1 569 000, being 63 per cent of total funds.

subscriptions for access to them. The *ADB* online project considered that, in Australia's relatively small market—more akin to the markets of Canada and New Zealand than those of the more populous countries—revenue gained from charging for access was likely to be small compared with the cost of creating and maintaining the resource. The project also believed that the web site having been produced with taxpayers' money, it should be made freely available to all Australians. In this way, it could be used by people living in remote areas who lacked the amenity of public libraries—an important consideration in a country as large as Australia. More broadly, teachers and pupils in schools, researchers and students in tertiary institutions, librarians, journalists, genealogists, the general public and the citizens of other countries would have, literally at their fingertips, knowledge about individuals in Australian history previously found only in public and private libraries.

Before the project could publish the *ADB* online, it was necessary to clarify the ANU's relationship with Melbourne University Publishing (now hosting MUP), which had been producing handsome volumes of the *ADB* since 1966. An amendment to the longstanding contract between the two institutions—signed in the 1990s before MUP published the edition on CD-ROM mentioned earlier—had vested in MUP the rights to all forms of electronic publication. The parties negotiated a new contract that gave the electronic rights to the ANU and created opportunities for MUP to publish and sell new print-based products derived from the ANU's online edition. As with the traditional print volumes, MUP would pay an advance to the *ADB* for each volume and, for the first time, royalties as a percentage of sales based on the publisher's net receipts.²⁸ The sales have never generated sufficient income, however, to pay royalties.

Later, the publisher expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of progress in the commercial exploitation of the *ADB* online.²⁹ The first priority, however, was to establish the online database and to resolve the problems that the project encountered in the process, including a major one inherited from MUP. Before the project began, MUP had obligingly handed over the only electronic version in existence of the volumes produced before computerisation. This text had been scanned by the publisher from the pages of the print volumes for the CD-ROM edition. In 2005 the project discovered that the scanned text contained hundreds of errors. Cleansing these data became a lengthy and expensive operation, involving the whole *ADB* staff and a team of casual researchers, working in pairs, one person reading from the page and the other from the screen, and recording discrepancies for investigation and correction of the electronic text.³⁰

28 'Publishing Agreement between MUP and ANU' (3 August 2005), NCB/*ADB* files, section 7, p. 8.

29 'Publishing Agreement between MUP and ANU'. 'Gregory Report', p. 8.

30 Personal knowledge.

Vijoleta Braach-Maksvytis, deputy vice-chancellor, Innovation and Development, University of Melbourne; Jill Roe, chair, *ADB* Editorial Board; Di Langmore, *ADB* general editor; Michael Jeffery, governor-general; and Ian Chubb, ANU vice-chancellor, at the launch of the online version of the *ADB*, July 2006

ADB archives

At the University of Melbourne, Austehc provided the technical management of the project. Gavan McCarthy, Joanne Evans, Helen Morgan, Rachel Tropea, Alan van den Bosch, Peter Neish, James Williams, Rosemary Francis, Davis McCarthy, Fabian Parker, Annette Alafaci and Ailie Smith contributed their knowledge and skills. Bruce Smith gave advice. Russ Weakley (design) and Jonathan O'Donnell (testing) were contracted for specialist assistance. At the ANU in Canberra the *ADB* staff collaborated with Austehc in determining the design and functionality of the web site. Christine Fernon was the assistant project manager. Four part-time researchers—Margaret Park, Ruth McConnell, Andrew Newman-Martin and Barry McGowan—and a volunteer, Margaret Lee, read each article, analysed the text and entered details in the data fields to facilitate searches by name, gender, lifespan, date and place of birth and death, cultural heritage, religious influence, occupation, place of occupation, and year or range of years of occupation.³¹

³¹ This paragraph and those that follow about the *ADB* Online Project are based primarily on personal knowledge. See also ARC Final Report—Linkage—Infrastructure, Project LE0668026, 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography Online and Emerging National Information Systems: Networking Research Capability' (2006).

Future users of the *ADB* online would be able to search the database using each of the fielded categories or a combination of them to identify the biographical subjects relevant to a research project. Moreover, it would be possible to explore the interactions and relationships between factors such as class, ethnicity, religion, region and period in Australian history. The word and phrase search function would enable a researcher to investigate historical events, developments and issues through the lives of people involved in them. It would be possible to find articles on individuals associated with major historical themes.

An essential feature of the *ADB* online—as conceived by the director of Austehc and enthusiastically endorsed by *ADB* staff—was that it would not duplicate existing library and information infrastructure but would be capable of being linked with other web sites, thus contributing to the formation of a network of resources for research in the humanities and social sciences. An early application of this principle was the project's association with the National Library's image search facility, Picture Australia, which provided a single access point to the pictorial collections of the nation's major cultural institutions.³² Staff spent two years searching Picture Australia for images of the *ADB*'s 11 000 subjects. The project obtained permission from the holders of the images and the owners of copyright in them to utilise them to illustrate the *ADB* online. All waived their fees on condition that users would have cost-free access to the *ADB* online. The images were then linked back to Picture Australia, using a permanent identifier created by the National Library, enabling researchers to read the associated catalogue record. The *ADB* online was the first project to make use of this new technology offered by the library. The benefit was mutual. The *ADB* avoided the cost of acquiring and curating its own collection of images, and the publicly funded web sites of Picture Australia participants gained greater exposure of their holdings.

Within the constraints of its budget, the project forged additional links with resources in the collections of its partner cultural institutions. Chief among these was the National Library, the support of which was of immeasurable importance to the project. The library's executive officers were unfailingly encouraging, none more so than the assistant director-general, Australian collections and reader services, Margy Burn, who had been a member of the *ADB*'s NSW Working Party in the late 1990s. Regular discussions were held with library staff to formulate a plan for collaboration in its proposed People Australia project.³³ Meanwhile, links were created from articles in the *ADB* online to relevant digital sources in the library's collection. In 2006 the *ADB* online became one of the first internet-based scholarly works to register the new persistent

32 Picture Australia was subsumed into the NLA's Trove search facility in 2012.

33 The NLA later abandoned the People Australia project. In 2012 the NCB decided to create its own version of the service.

identifiers of library catalogue items in the Australian National Bibliographic Database (ANBD), thus linking published sources in the bibliographies of *ADB* articles directly to the Libraries Australia service. A number of links were also established with digitised records held by the National Archives of Australia.

The *ADB* online was awarded the Manning Clark House National Cultural Award (Group Category) for 2006. Di Langmore and Darryl Bennet accepted the award

ADB archives

For the *ADB* online articles to function as nodes in a network, it was essential that linking to them from other online resources would also be possible. This was facilitated by providing each article with its own web page and persistent identifier. Thus, for example, the Libraries Australia service could create sustainable back-links to *ADB* articles from materials in its database, permitting a person viewing an item in the ANBD to see its prior use as a source for an *ADB* article. There was potential for future interconnections and interoperability between the *ADB* online and other systems, such as Trove.

The *ADB* online project was the crowning achievement of the Langmore years. Its launch on 6 July 2006 at University House by the governor-general, Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC (Rtd), was a grand occasion, timed to coincide with that year's conference of the Australian Historical Association, held at the ANU. The event generated considerable media interest, with outlets as far away as Darwin seeking interviews and publishing reports and reviews. Within 16 months of going 'live', the site was receiving 40 million 'hits' a year,³⁴ which rose to a phenomenal 70 million annual 'hits' by 2009.³⁵ Members of the general public find it accessible and usable. Researchers have mentioned the gains in productivity that the resource has brought to their work. Others have reported being able to undertake studies that previously were not feasible. It is not surprising that the site won the Manning Clark House National Cultural Award (Group Category) for 2006.

Conclusion

The *ADB* was a productive and cohesive organisation in the Langmore era. At various times in 2001–08, Wendy Birman, Nicholas Brown, Anthea Bundock, Martha Campbell, Karen Ciuffetelli, Gail Clements, Pam Crichton, Barbara Dawson, Christine Fernon, Joyce Gibberd, Rachel Grahame, Jennifer Harrison, Jolyon Horner, Rosemary Jennings, Edna Kauffman, Judith Nissen, Charlene Ogilvie, Anne Rand, Margaret Robertson, Patricia Stretton, Kim Torney and Brian Wimborne were members of the staff; and Ken Inglis, Ian Hancock and John Molony were visiting fellows.

Ensuring the *ADB*'s efficiency and internal tranquillity, while it was being buffeted from without and experiencing significant change within, was the personality of the general editor, Di Langmore. She was thoroughly professional in her relations with staff and external authorities, and she set a compelling example of hard work and selfless commitment to the *ADB*. Her achievements received public recognition through the award of an ANU Council Medal for General Staff Excellence in 2002 and her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in 2008.

Darryl Bennet was the deputy general editor of the ADB from 2001 to 2008. He has been a member of the Queensland Working Party since 2008 and a member of the Editorial Board since 2011.

34 Diane Langmore talk to the Sydney Institute (13 November 2007), published as 'The Australian Dictionary of Biography: A National Asset', *The Sydney Papers*, 20, no. 1 (Summer 2008), pp. 22–30.

35 Ian Chubb, 'The ADB: Honouring its Foundational Culture', *Biography Footnotes*, no. 4 (December 2009).

Profile

Darryl Bennet (b. 1948)

Darryl Bennet began his career with the *ADB* in 1989 as a casual research assistant helping Chris Cunneen to compile the NSW list of possible inclusions in volumes covering the period 1940–80. A former naval officer, he had undertaken a degree in arts at the ANU (BA, 1987), winning the history medal in the same year, and a diploma of education in 1988. His knowledge of the military and his familiarity with computer technology characterised his contribution to the *ADB* during the next two decades. He ‘rose through the ranks’: during the 1990s his employment became permanent and he worked as research editor on the Commonwealth, armed forces and Victorian desks. John Ritchie described him as ‘diligent, conscientious, highly intelligent, a gifted editor and a superb colleague’. In 2001 he became deputy general editor; Di Langmore reckons that it was ‘impossible to imagine a more perfect deputy’.

When in 2002 the Editorial Board decided that the *ADB* should go online, Bennet was given the responsibility for making it happen. He planned the project and defined its goals, wrote three successful submissions for LIEF (infrastructure) grants to the ARC, established and maintained close collaboration with IT experts at the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre at the University of Melbourne and established partnerships with national cultural institutions with a shared interest in enhancing the application of IT to their services. For his efforts, in 2006, he won an ANU staff award for innovative IT application.

Although he worked with new technology, Bennet was always most comfortable as a ‘solier and heeler of paragraphs’. His knowledge of Australian history and his ability to write clear English were highly regarded in the *ADB*. He was the author of 20 entries before his retirement in 2008. Having moved to Brisbane, he is now a key member of the Queensland Working Party and also an editorial fellow, checking all completed entries before publication to ensure that they conform with *ADB* ‘style’.

Sources: Darryl Bennet, personal file, NCB/*ADB* files. Chris Cunneen, Suzanne Edgar and Darryl Bennet, “‘Solers and heelers of paragraphs’: Editing the Australian Dictionary of Biography”, in Iain McCalman, with Jodi Parvey and Misty Cork (eds), *National Biographies and National Identity* (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, 1996), pp. 149–61.

Darryl Bennet, 2012

Photographer: Brian Wimborne, *ADB* archives

Profile

Gavan McCarthy (b. 1956)

Gavan McCarthy, as a part-time archivist (1978–85) at the University of Melbourne, first began to consider the use of computerised databases for archives in the early 1980s. In 1985 he became inaugural archivist-in-charge, later director, of the Australian Science Archives Project and pioneered the development of national information services and infrastructure to support the history of Australian science, technology, medicine and engineering through the utilisation of the emerging digital technologies. This resulted, in 1993, in the creation of the Bright Sparcs web site, with its customised underpinning technology that later was transformed into the generalised software system known as the Online Heritage Resource Manager (OHRM). Appointed, in 1999, director of the Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre (Austehc), at the University of Melbourne, he continued to develop the OHRM in association with a number of historical projects and became well known internationally for his innovative approach to archival information and digital information management.

In 2003 Austehc was engaged to look after the technological aspects of the *ADB* online project. McCarthy and Darryl Bennet formed a formidable partnership, working closely together and managing, at the project's peak, a team of some 20 people devoting at least some of their time to the undertaking. The online version of the *ADB* was launched on 6 July 2006. From 2007 McCarthy has run the University of Melbourne's eScholarship Research Centre. He has been working with other groups and individuals, including the former deputy director of the National Centre of Biography, Paul Arthur, on building new digital networks and paradigms, including the Humanities Networked Infrastructure (HuNI), which will be the first national, cross-disciplinary, virtual laboratory for the humanities to be established anywhere in the world.

Sources: Darryl Bennet, Tom Griffiths and Gavan McCarthy.

The ADB's Story

Gavan McCarthy and Darryl Bennet check out the *ADB* online, July 2006

Photographer: Richard Briggs, by courtesy of *The Canberra Times*

Profile

John Molony (b. 1927)

John Molony studied theology and canon law at the Pontifical Urban College of Propaganda Fide in Rome. Ordained a priest in 1950, he served in Rome, Boston (USA) and Ballarat. Leaving the priesthood in 1963, he applied for a position in the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, as a translator of medieval Latin texts. Encouraged by Bede Nairn, Laurie Fitzhardinge and Manning Clark, he enrolled as a graduate student (MA, 1967; PhD, 1971). A two-month job as a research assistant at the *ADB* developed into a strong association with the dictionary for more than half a century. First employed as a tutor in 1966, he was appointed a lecturer in the Department of History, School of General Studies, in 1968, senior lecturer in 1974 and was promoted to professor in 1975. Two years later he became Manning Clark professor and head of department. Author of a number of scholarly works on Australian history, he is considered an expert on Ned Kelly. He became the ‘safe hands’ which the *ADB* called upon to sit on its selection and review committees; and he was on the team for the important 1986 review that recommended continuation of the *ADB* following completion of Volumes 1–12. Molony resigned from his position at the ANU in 1990 to take up a three-year appointment as Professor of Australian Studies at University College, Dublin. On his return to Canberra, he became a visiting fellow in the *ADB* and later an editorial fellow; his encyclopedic knowledge of the Catholic Church and of the Australian and Democratic Labor parties has been of great help to research editors. In 1999, with Barry Ninham, he founded the ANU Emeritus Faculty; chairman until 2012, he took responsibility for having the life stories of its members recorded and for developing an oral history program.

Sources: John Molony, interviewed by Peter Stewart (3 and 9 April and 20 May 2008), Emeritus Faculty Oral History Project, <http://www.anu.edu.au/emergitus/ohp/interviews/john_molony.html> Series 7, ‘Australian National University, 1964–90’, Papers of John Molony, MS 6634, NLA.

John Molony, 1985

ANU Archives, ANUA225-868

Profiles

Ivy Meere (1927–2005), Edna Kauffman (b. 1948) and Karen Ciuffetelli (b. 1968)

John Ritchie liked to describe the *ADB*'s administrators' office as its 'engine-room'. Two administrators overlapped and managed the office for more than 30 years: Ivy Meere (1975–92) and Edna Kauffman (1985–2007). They were responsible for ensuring that the 'production line' involved in creating *ADB* volumes ran smoothly. They prepared files for the subject of each entry, in manila folders—about 700 for each volume—and handed them to the research editors; they sent reminders to tardy authors; they liaised with section editors. In pre-computer days, they typed and retyped articles several times before the final edits were dispatched as proofs to the publisher. Editing is now undertaken electronically and very little typing of entries is required. Karen Manning, now Karen Ciuffetelli, joined the *ADB* as Kauffman's assistant in 1992 and is now the sole office administrator. She has taken on other duties, including management of the budget.

Ivy Meere, 1980s

By courtesy of Sue Edgar

Sources: Edna Kaufmann, interviewed by Niki Francis (20 June 2012), NCB/*ADB* files. 'A Job Whose Future Depends on the Past', *Canberra Times* (22 December 1971). *ADB Newsletter*, no. 3 (August 1983), p. 2. *ANU Reporter* (8 April 1988), p. 4. *Biography Footnotes*, no. 7 (2010), p. 7.

The *ADB's* Workflow Board

In the days before computers, the *ADB's* office administrators used a whiteboard and magnetic tiles to chart the various stages of the editing cycle.

At the beginning of each volume the names of all entries—about 700 in total—were written on individual tiles and placed in the first column of the whiteboard. When an entry came in from an author, its marker moved to the next column, then on to the next one when it was edited, to the next one when it came back from its author and so on until it reached the final column—when the entry was ready to send to MUP for publication.

Different background colours were used to distinguish entries. Armed services entries had a pink background, Commonwealth entries were purple, SA green, WA yellow, Tasmanian blue; Victorian entries had a white background and were written in black text, while Queensland entries had a white background and were written using a brown text.

Undoubtedly labour-intensive, the old system nevertheless allowed staff to quickly gauge a volume's progress.

The board remained in use until 2008.

The *ADB's* workflow board

ADB Files

Every entry in the *ADB* has its own file. It contains the subject's birth, death and marriage certificates, photocopies of biographical material such as academic records, personal files, army records, obituaries and items about the person found in newspapers, magazines and journals, as well as correspondence with the author and others about the subject. The file also contains multiple copies of the subject's *ADB* entry, starting with the original version submitted by the author, all the edited versions and the final version sent to MUP for publication.

On the front cover of the file is a worksheet, developed by Nan Phillips in the early 1960s, to monitor the editing cycle. It shows the many stages involved in the editing process. The files are, themselves, a valuable reference source and are held in the ANU Archives.

AUSTRALIAN DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY

DESK & PERIOD: 64...
VOLUME: 15...
WORDS: 6000

AUTHOR: JAC. ALLAN M. MARTIN.....

SUBJECT: MENZIES, SIR, ROBERT, GODDON.....

DATE: 1899-1978

OCCUPATION: Politician and Barrister.....

MS received: 9/7/96 R.R. checked: ☒

Acknowledged: 9/7/96 List marked: ☒ Author Card: ☒ Acceptance: ☒

SECTION EDITOR: To 26/7/96 From 31/8/1996

EDITING

1 D/ General Editor 10.7.96	11 From author 16/6/98
2 Research Editor 21/5/98	12 G.E. 16.6.98
13a) Bibliographer 23.4.98	13 R.E. 16/6/98
b) Checked KM 28.4.98	14 G.E. 16.6.98
4 G.E. 22.5.98	15a) Bibliography changes Nil
5 R.E. 16/6/98	b) D.G.E. 22.5.98
6 D.G.E. 22.5.98	16a) W.P.O. (interim edit) 17.6.98
	b) Checked EBC & KM 17.6.98
7 Typing 9.6.98	
8 Proof-reading EK & KM 9.6.98	
9 G.E. 10.6.98	
10a) To author 10/6/98	
b) Note re bibliography ☐	

ADB files

ADB archives

The *ADB's* Corrigenda Ruler

The *ADB* prides itself on correcting factual errors. Prior to 2012, new volumes of the *ADB* included a 'Corrigenda' insert, listing mistakes (and their corrections) that had been discovered in earlier volumes since the publication of the last volume. The page, column and line numbers of corrigenda were given to assist those who wanted to handwrite the corrections into their volumes.

A 'corrigenda ruler', which gave the line numbers of entries in the *ADB*, was created in the 1960s to assist *ADB* staff in calculating line numbers. Corrigenda are now corrected online. Footnotes are used to indicate where text has been changed.

The *ADB's* corrigenda ruler

ADB archives