

FIRST Friends for 2004

Welcome to the New Year,
new Friends and old

On Sunday 23 November, the Friends of the National Library's annual Celebration recognised the achievements of David Williamson, Australia's renowned and most widely performed playwright. Incessant rain didn't prevent 200 people from turning up to hear the great man speak, and they were not disappointed. Jenny Gleeson, Acting Chair of the Friends, presided over the event, introducing the afternoon's surprise guest speaker, veteran of stage and screen, Angela Punch McGregor. A consummate professional, Angela delivered a testimony to David's career that was moving, thought-provoking and hilarious. David then took the stage and it was inspiring to listen to someone of his stature speak with such humility. He responded to some challenging questions from the audience with the vigour, humour and social conscience for which his work is famous. This was indeed a wonderful afternoon.

Members who could not attend on the day will have received by mail their complimentary copy of the beautiful commemorative volume *David Williamson: A Celebration*. Hold on to this one: it will become a collector's item.

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As the membership would be aware, the Friends Committee is committed to ensuring that the Friends of the National Library of Australia continues to make a significant material contribution to the Library. Last year, a significant sum of money was directed to the Library's Acquisition Trust Fund. This enabled the Library to acquire several important items that were specifically designated as a gift of the Friends. This initial gift of three items was on

display to members at the Annual General Meeting in December.

For those who were unable to attend the AGM, the three items include a work by one of Australia's leading portraitists, Hugh Ramsay, who continues to have an enduring influence on many Australian artists. In this striking charcoal self-portrait he depicts himself as a young and confident artist on the verge of embarking on what was to be a successful international career. Sadly, Ramsay's life was cut short by tuberculosis; he returned to Australia in 1906, and died at the young age of 28. No portraits of Ramsay were previously held, so this acquisition fills a significant gap in the Library's Collection. As well as being of documentary significance, the portrait has considerable visual appeal and is very suitable for exhibition.

The second item is a Spanish map of the Pacific Ocean, published by the geographer Isidoro de Antillon y Marzo during the time of Flinders' circumnavigation of the Australian continent. While the heyday of Spanish exploration was during the sixteenth century, the Spaniards continued to produce some superb maps of the Pacific Ocean through to the early part of the nineteenth century. This map is an exceptionally rare example of their craft and is accompanied by a booklet that discusses the geography of the region.

For bookings, details of membership and subscriptions, contact:
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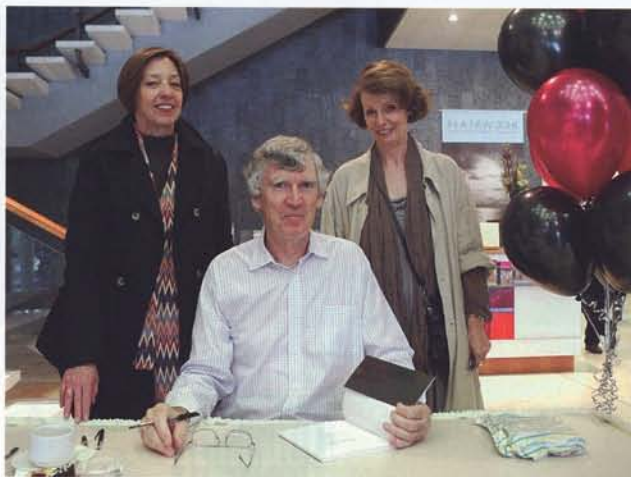
The final item, *Affectionate Transports* (produced between 1856 and 1876), is a very rare broadsheet about transportation to Western Australia, and is the Library's first transportation broadsheet on this subject.

These items constitute a tangible and significant donation to the Library's Collection, one with which the entire membership can feel proud to be associated. Jan Fullerton, Director-General of the National Library, thanked the Friends for their generous gift which had enabled the Library to purchase these important items.

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Stay tuned next month for upcoming events and an introduction to your new committee.

JAMES HALLIGAN
Executive Officer



Director-General
Jan Fullerton,
David Williamson
and Angela Punch
McGregor at the
David Williamson
Celebration