

The National Portrait Gallery

The NLA is to establish this new institution at old Parliament House

The Federal Government has now put its seal on a National Portrait Gallery with the announcement in the Budget that funds have been allocated to

The Federal Government has invited the National Library to establish this new national institution and the Library has accepted the Government's invitation



William Strutt's charming 1856 portrait of John Pascoe Fawkner (baker, convict, land-owner and city councillor) in the NLA's collection will be an early candidate for hanging in the National Portrait Gallery (Photo NLA Photographics)

establish the Gallery at Old Parliament House.

The idea that Australia should have its own Portrait Gallery was initiated by Gordon and Marilyn Darling, and this announcement is the culmination of the Darlings' five year campaign. Gordon Darling, previously Chairman of the National Gallery of Australia and a generous sponsor of the arts, together with his wife, was the driving force behind the touring exhibition 'Uncommon Australians—Towards a National Portrait Gallery'. Through its rich collection of documentary portraits, the National Library was the greatest institutional lender to this important touring exhibition.

to take responsibility for its operation.

The NLA will not be looking to build up a new collection but rather to utilise its own extensive holdings of Australian portraits, and to borrow from existing collections in institutions and in private hands. It will arrange three to four exhibitions a year at Old Parliament House, presenting works in a range of mediums to explore different ways of looking at Australians and the Australian experience. Oral history interviews and manuscripts will add variety and context to each exhibition, and from time to time these exhibitions will be included in the NLA's national touring program. ■

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*Lyn Hawkins, Chief Librarian
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