

NLA celebrations attract big crowds

Capacity audiences at celebration lectures and thousands of visitors marked the National Library of Australia's week of celebrations to mark the 25th Anniversary of the opening of the NLA building.

The week-long celebration was launched by the Governor General on 8 August and concluded with an Open Day on the following Sunday which attracted over four thousand people.

Australia's leading political and literary figures joined in the celebration along with musicians and performers. The Prime Minister told guests at a dinner that it was the National Library collections that would allow historians of the future to analyse the Mabo debate; the Minister for the Arts and Administrative Services, Bob McMullan, talked about the Library's key role in understanding Australia and Australians. The Governor General Bill Hayden revealed that he was using the Library's resources in writing his autobiography and former Prime Minister John Gorton, who opened the library building in 1968, noted the importance of preserving an Australian history of ideas at the Library.

The program included lectures and presentations each day on literary and social issues; a film festival; book readings and discussions; music performances ranging from classical to folk; exhibitions and 'behind the scenes' tours of the Library.

The events during the week focused on the Li-

brary's role in understanding Australia's culture.

Celebration lectures were presented by Nicholas Hasluck, Marion Halligan, David Marr, Cassandra Pybus, Katharine Brisbane, Diane Fahey and Henry Reynolds. Their themes ranged from analysis of Australian literary criticism and the work of Australian authors to the difficulties encountered in researching biographies.

Elizabeth Reid delivered the Kenneth Myer Lecture to an overflow crowd of about 700 on Thursday 12 August. Other highlights of the week included:

- book readings by David Malouf;
- Aboriginal writers Phillip McLaren, Keith Saunders and Iris Clayton reading from and talking about their works;
- discussions on children's literature and book readings for children by authors Victor Kelleher and Melina Marchetta;
- a film festival which drew large audiences with a program which included everything from silent movie classics to television soap operas;
- music performances by local and visiting groups (including the Canberra Wind Soloists and the Crooked Corner Band) performing classical, jazz and Australian folk music—many from the Library's music collection;
- discussions and presentations and performances of oral history and folklore by Wendy Lowenstein and Peter Read.

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