

## Manning Clark Now

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ABSTRACT: At the time of his death, Manning Clark enjoyed a celebrity status as an historian and, for many, for his prophet-like role as the country's conscience. His work has subsequently declined in appreciation—partly affected by right-wing attacks, but largely because a new generation of scholars had moved on to more sectional and identity interests. Interest in the life, rather than the work, has continued somewhat, with three scholarly biographies in the same period. This article traces that process of decline, and revision, and arrives at a sense of the continuing place for Manning Clark.

As I sat at the bar now I pulled out my one-volume history of *Australia* by Manning Clark and dutifully ploughed into it. I had only about thirty pages left and I would be less than candid if I didn't tell you that I couldn't wait to have Mr Clark and his extravagant dronings out of my life for ever.<sup>1</sup>

Bill Bryson, the British travel-writer quoted here, found Manning Clark 'a most exasperating historian'.<sup>2</sup> While travelling through Australia in the late 1990s, he was reading Michael Cathcart's one-volume abridgement of *A History of Australia*. Bryson was under the impression that the book was 'the standard, current, one-volume history of Australia—the one to which you will be directed in every bookshop in the land'.<sup>3</sup> If this was the case in the late 1990s—and the book did apparently sell nicely—it would not be so for long; Clark's status as the great historian of Australia—the one to whom you turned for the first word, if not the last, on the country's history—was already in decline.

The signs of this eclipse are, if anything, even easier to find today. In 2014 Colin Steele, formerly University Librarian at the Australian National University (ANU), was organising a major 'meet the author' event at the ANU. In an email conversation about the event with the

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Bryson, *Down Under*, Black Swan, London, 2001, pp. 239-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

publicist from a major Australian publishing house, he indicated that he would ‘book Manning Clark’, naming one of the lecture theatres at the university where the historian had been professor for 25 years. The publicist asked whether he would want to speak at the event, revealing in a subsequent telephone conversation that she did not know who Manning Clark was, nor that he was deceased.

It is easy enough to sympathise with the publicist in failing to realise that Steele was referring to a venue and not a person. Clark’s celebrity status has only barely survived the passage of a quarter of a century since his death in May 1991. Initially, it was kept afloat by a couple of big media controversies; these followed the familiar pattern of a public figure’s reputation being traduced soon after death.<sup>4</sup> More recently, the appearance of two substantial biographies has seen Clark move from current controversy to cultural history. But there has been just a trickle of media interest in Clark in recent years, most of it provoked by the biographies—a far cry from his ubiquity in the 1970s and 1980s and the posthumous explosions of the 1990s.

When the former director of Melbourne University Press, Peter Ryan, Clark’s publisher, wrote an article for the conservative monthly, *Quadrant*, in September 1993—a vicious hatchet-job which Ryan represented as a confession of his own shame in having published Clark’s work—there was frenzied media attention. Ryan called his article ‘an overdue axe laid to the stalk of a tall poppy’; Clark’s six-volume *A History of Australia* was ‘a fraud’, its author ‘partly a mountebank’.<sup>5</sup> There was envy lurking behind Ryan’s demolition job; not necessarily personal envy, but the political right’s jealousy of Clark’s success in transforming himself into a prophet, a man recognised for having some special insight into the state of the national soul.<sup>6</sup> Ryan complained bitterly: ‘In later years he grew to regard himself as “Mr Australia”, almost as his country’s conscience’.<sup>7</sup> In the cultural wars that were gathering momentum during the 1980s and early 1990s, that was something the right could not abide. In particular, Clark’s skilful creation of an image for himself as a media identity, and his ability to provide journalists with a quotable quote for every occasion, were continuing sources of anxiety and resentment among those who decided to become his political enemies. One of these, the conservative sociologist John Carroll, predicted in 1982 that the Bicentenary of 1988 was sure to be ‘a

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Bolton made this point in 1993. See Peter Craven, ‘The Ryan Affair’, in Carl Bridge (ed.), *Manning Clark: Essays on His Place in History*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1994, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Ryan, ‘Manning Clark’, *Quadrant*, Vol. 37, No. 299, September 1993, pp. 9, 17. The point is made by Peter Craven: ‘Ryan Affair’, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Stuart Macintyre, ‘Manning Clark’s Critics’, *Meanjin*, Vol. 41, No. 4, December 1982, pp. 442-452.

<sup>7</sup> Ryan, ‘Manning Clark’, p. 13.

complete flop, at best attracting half a dozen puzzled Japanese and American tourists, and our own clucking media, recycling yet again the mumbo-jumbo of Professor Manning Clark'.<sup>8</sup>

Three years after the Ryan controversy, in August 1996, there was an even more unhinged assault on Clark's reputation; this time, based on the Brisbane *Courier-Mail's* spurious claim, originating with the poet Les Murray, that Clark had been awarded an Order of Lenin, that he was an 'agent of influence' for the Soviet Union, and that and ranked among the world's Communist elite.<sup>9</sup> The claims—supposedly based on careful investigative reporting—were risible and quickly fell apart, although not before attracting massive media attention. The particular allegation against Clark on this occasion was a great encouragement to superannuated cold warriors looking for an outlet for their talents, as well as to anyone else with a political axe to grind. Hal Colebatch, a former editor of *Debrett's Handbook of Australia*, called for Clark to be stripped of his Order of Australia, reporting proudly that he had already removed him from *Debrett's* in the late 1980s on account of Clark's pro-Soviet and (even more astoundingly) pro-fascist views, which made him 'an unfit companion for the many worthy men and women in the volume'.<sup>10</sup> While the *Courier-Mail's* attack, like Ryan's, was hurtful to Clark's widow Dymphna and his family, a correspondent with the *Australian* immediately recognised the ludicrous nature of the campaign:

I saw Manning Clark some years 20 years ago in a restaurant. He had just received an order of fries. I know quite a bit about potatoes, and this was definitely an order of fries. Obviously he was an agent of influence for McDonalds.<sup>11</sup>

The Press Council made an adverse finding against the *Courier-Mail's* reporting, which still refused to issue a retraction, but none of this seemed to do Chris Mitchell, its editor, any harm. He was soon elevated by Clark's former student at Geelong Grammar, Rupert Murdoch, to edit the *Australian*, from where he was still allowing one of his original bloodhounds, Peter Kelly, to repeat the original Order of Lenin furphy as fact in 2008.<sup>12</sup>

By this time, few seemed to care except Kelly. There was similarly little public reaction in 2007 when Mark McKenna, who was researching

<sup>8</sup> John Carroll, 'National Identity', in Carroll (ed.), *Intruders in the Bush: The Australian Quest for Identity*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1982, p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> *Courier-Mail*, 24 August 1996, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Weekend Australian*, 31 August-1 September 1996, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Peter Kelly, 'Clark wore Order of Lenin with pride', *Australian*, 6 December 2008, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/opinion/clark-wore-order-of-lenin-with-pride/story-e6fzg6zo-1111118236601>

a biography of Clark, had revealed that the historian lied on numerous occasions about being in Bonn the morning after *Kristallnacht*. It was his wife Dymphna who had been there, Clark arriving some time afterwards and then years later, appropriating her experience as if it were his own. McKenna wished to make a point about the way Clark had artfully reshaped his autobiography ‘for dramatic effect’, to create a myth about himself, just as he had sometimes manipulated his primary sources in the *History* to reveal ‘higher truths’ than could be disclosed by more conventional historical methods. McKenna believed that the deception did not diminish Clark so much as reveal him.<sup>13</sup> Possibly: although it was still easy enough to see how the revelation might have been used by Clark’s old enemies. But there was no stoush to rival those of 1993 and 1996; the world, and especially the political right, had moved on. Crusaders old and new had other enemies to conquer.

Peter Ryan was mistaken in 1993 when he predicted that in future ‘younger scholars will found careers on the re-examination of the former master’.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, if he had had a better understanding of the historical profession, he might have seen the writing on the wall and hesitated before offering such a prediction. For Clark’s work was already attracting minimal interest from a younger generation of historians as early as the 1970s. Clark wrote of madness in the human heart; the new historians were interested in the history of the asylum. The new histories claimed to be analytical and were often thematic; Clark’s was a grand narrative in the style of Thomas Carlyle and other popular historians of the nineteenth century. Younger scholars were interested in the history of the state, of gender, race, sexuality and, at least up to the 1980s, of class; Clark’s work offered them a story populated by individuals, predominantly (although not exclusively) white men. In his early work, he treated Australian history as a clash of European belief systems, Catholic, Protestant and Enlightenment, and which he saw as embodied in his major characters; yet religion was a matter of declining interest to the Vietnam War generation and intellectual history unfashionable. Later, as Clark’s original vision broke down, he offered a radical-nationalist vision of Australian history that younger Australian historians found no less anomalous than his earlier preoccupation with competing faiths. A renovated Marxism, a new feminism and the rise of social history were offering new ways to see the Australian past. Yet Clark’s work remained driven by a preoccupation with the prominent rather than

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<sup>13</sup> Mark McKenna, ‘Being There: The Strange History of Manning Clark’, *Monthly*, March 2007, pp. 22-37. See also McKenna, ‘Once More With Feeling: The Personal Voice of Manning Clark’, in Stuart Macintyre and Sheila Fitzpatrick (eds), *Against the Grain: Brian Fitzpatrick and Manning Clark in Australian History and Politics*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2007, p. 218.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Ryan, ‘A Reply to my Critics’, *Quadrant*, Vol., 37, No. 300, p. 14.

the obscure, with the powerful more than those on the margins, with biography and personality, not identity or structure.

The differences between Clark and a younger generation of scholars moving into academia in the late 1960s and 1970s were best revealed in a particularly acute critique of his work by Raewyn Connell. It was published in *Meanjin* in July 1978 as a review of Volume IV but it was much more than that; in reality, a penetrating analysis of Clark's methods from the point of view of a brilliant scholar trained in history, steeped in social theory, and familiar with the methods of a range of social science disciplines. While seeing merit in Clark's achievement, especially in his recognition of exploitation and violence in Australia's past, Connell thought Clark practised what R.G. Collingwood called 'scissors-and-paste history': 'Clark reproduces in his prose, normally without quotation marks, much of the text of the documents he is working from'. Indeed, Connell reckoned that when she first encountered the first volume of Clark's *History* as a student at Clark's alma mater, the University of Melbourne, she had written on the title page of it: 'Select Documents Vol. III'. (Clark had edited two volumes of historical documents in the 1950s). Connell, like much of his generation of scholars working on Australian history and society, was looking for the application of a skilled surgeon's knife to the structures and ideologies of Australian society. What Clark provided was history as 'psychological drama', and the reproduction of the hegemonic values of the past in the prose of the present. Connell thought his method 'pre-scientific'. Even those (like Connell) who could see that Clark had something valuable to offer could not accept that his *History* was all that it might have been; not, at least, from the perspective of a new left radical of the 1970s.<sup>15</sup>

In his attack on Clark, Ryan had reprised a theme that has been used since the time of Socrates: that Clark's history was likely to corrupt the minds of the young. But few young people were reading Clark's work in 1993. Even fewer encounter it today. The only courses of my own in which I can recall his work having figured were on historiography (the history of history). It is notable that the Australian historiographer, Marnie Hughes-Warrington, included Clark in the first edition of her *Fifty Key Thinkers on History*, published in 2000, although it seems unlikely that he would have been there if the book had not been written by an Australian.<sup>16</sup> But by the time the second edition appeared in 2008, Clark was gone. It has been Hughes-Warrington's practice to refresh each new edition by replacing four historians (and there are now three editions). Yet Clark was among the first to go; hardly a surprising decision in a

<sup>15</sup> R.W. Connell, 'Manning Clark and the Science of History', *Meanjin*, Vol. 37, No. 2, July 1978, pp. 264-266.

<sup>16</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, pp. 31-40.

book produced by an international publisher for a global audience of students, yet also, surely, a measure of Clark's declining profile and reputation in the 1990s.<sup>17</sup>

So where does this leave Clark today? Is there a Clark legacy? It was noticed long ago that he had founded no school and had few imitators (The few postgraduate students who, over the years, sought to emulate his prose were usually set right by their supervisors long before matters were allowed to get out of hand).<sup>18</sup> The idea of the big multi-volume history of Australia is certainly not dead. Alan Atkinson recently completed the third and final volume of his *The Europeans in Australia* trilogy, taking the story up to the First World War. It is notable that Atkinson also produced one of the most eloquent and persuasive appreciations of Clark's historical practice, pointing out that his approach was unusual among Australian historians in its sensitivity to the multiple voices and stories of the past, and in its attempt to capture and convey this variety in a manner that prefigured postmodernism.<sup>19</sup> Atkinson's own stress on multivocality, his conception and execution of an ambitious multi-volume project, and his location of the Australian experience in its wider European context, each surely owe something to Clark's example. There are, of course, major stylistic differences between them, as well as distinctions in method and focus. In particular, Atkinson is too much a product of the social history movement to embrace completely the idea of grand narrative.

There is another multi-volume history of Australia in progress – that of Thomas Keneally – but it seems to owe little to Clark except in being a big project intended for a general readership produced by a nationally famous and instantly recognisable author.<sup>20</sup> Keneally's work has attracted little interest among professional historians; if we read his histories, we know that we are reading a work of non-fiction written by a man who is better known and more widely honoured for his novels. Clark's writing, however, was never intended only for the kind of lay audience that Keneally and his publishers have in view; his *History* was published by the country's most distinguished university press, by a senior academic located in the national university. Even while Clark worked hard to distinguish his *History* from what he regarded as dry-as-dust academic scholarship, the *History*'s authority derived in part from Clark's status as an academic and a professor; a clever sleight of hand that was

<sup>17</sup> Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *Fifty Key Thinkers on History*, Second Edition, Routledge, London and New York, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Connell, 'Manning Clark and the Science of History', p. 262; Rob Pascoe, *The Manufacture of Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1979, pp. 82-83.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Atkinson, 'A Great Historian?', in Bridge (ed.), *Manning Clark*, pp. 122-135.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Keneally, *Australians*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 3 volumes, 2009, 2011 and 2014 (There is a further volume in progress).

fundamental to his self-image and the tensions inherent in it.<sup>21</sup> What those in his profession had to say about Clark's work mattered to him, a point that emerges clearly enough in McKenna's biography. Clark in some cases unceremoniously cut, or threatened to cut, those who produced even mildly unfavourable assessments of his work, and McKenna tells the story of Clark seeking to have an unfavourable review of Volume I suppressed, eventually bullying the culprit into a public apology.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps a better comparison with Clark than either Atkinson's or Keneally's multi-volume histories is provided by Peter FitzSimons, the most commercially successful of the current historians of Australia. There is more to the resemblance than eccentric taste in headwear, with Clark's big hat having given way to FitzSimons' red bandana. Both authors are essentially nationalist storytellers, each seeking a popular audience (FitzSimons achieving one in much greater numbers and, we can be sure, with greater commercial success). FitzSimons had apparently called himself a 'storian', presumably as a means of keeping a decent distance between what he does, and what he understands conventional historians as doing.<sup>23</sup> Both men cultivated an eccentric public image and became larger-than-life figures, 'characters'. But there has surely been a constriction in the range of stories being told once we get to FitzSimons, who emphasises military themes and other forms of heroic male endeavour. His books are more frankly commercial and, much more than Clark's, obviously designed mainly for male readers. That is also, to some extent, an indication of the extraordinary prominence that war has now acquired as the source of the most quintessential Australian stories, and possibly of 'the militarisation of Australian history';<sup>24</sup> although the subject of war, almost invariably the work of male historians, is similarly successful in other national book markets.<sup>25</sup>

There is another difference; like Keneally but unlike Clark, FitzSimons writes from outside the academy, essentially as an adjunct of his work as a journalist and public speaker. His books, in fact, are regarded with considerable hostility by many within universities, especially in the field of professional military history. All the same, Clark was also a media star whose work aroused the scepticism and

<sup>21</sup> Mark McKenna, *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark*, Miegunyah Press, Carlton, 2011, p. 499.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 447-448, 450.

<sup>23</sup> David Stephens, 'Peter FitzSimons: Poltergeist with Two Brains', *Inside Story*, 25 March 2015, <http://insidestory.org.au/peter-fitzsimons-poltergeist-with-two-brains>

<sup>24</sup> Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds with Mark McKenna and Joy Damousi, *What's Wrong with Anzac? The Militarisation of Australian History*, NewSouth, Sydney, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, 'Big books by blokes about battles': Why is history still written mainly by men?', *Guardian*, 6 February, 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/feb/06/books-blokes-battles-history-written-by-men>

hostility of many academic colleagues and it is often forgotten that he wrote three of the six volumes of his *History* in retirement. It is hard to accept that he would have flourished in the modern enterprise university, any more than one could imagine FitzSimons supervising a doctoral candidate, examining a thesis, or leading an honours class on historical theory and method. Modern deans and vice-chancellors would have admired Clark's skill as a teacher and his public impact, but they would also have worried about an academic—a professor, no less—who produced no monograph until his mid-40s, failed to write articles for international journals, and preferred a local academic press over the more prestigious imprints of Oxbridge and the Ivy League.

In this respect and others, Clark was of his time; that is, a time when universities were gradually overcoming the cultural cringe rather than, as in our own times, re-erecting it. It has been little noticed that his career as a public intellectual coincided almost precisely with the key era in the decolonisation (or, if you prefer, de-dominionisation) of Australia.<sup>26</sup> The first volume of the history appeared in 1962, in the interregnum between Britain having applied to join the European Economic Community (1961) and Charles de Gaulle blocking its entry (1963). Historians have increasingly recognised the early 1960s as a critical moment in the foundation of modern Australia; the end of 'the British embrace', as Stuart Ward has called it.<sup>27</sup> By the mid-1960s, a vigorous debate about national identity was in full swing, as was the search for new symbols, rituals and heroes to epitomise what would soon be called 'the new nationalism'.<sup>28</sup> In many ways, the next thirty years can be understood as a working out of what a post-imperial, post-colonial Australia might look like. We are perhaps still to work it out yet.

Clark's *History*, indeed Clark himself, had a significant role to play in this transition. Even if Australians did no more than see them on the shelves of a library or bookshop, the six volumes of the *History* helped to reassure them that they had a history that was something more than a mere chapter in the story of the British Empire. Clark himself offered a similar reassurance: he was the wise old keeper of the nation's stories and increasingly—so it seemed—of the nation's soul and conscience. With his broad-brimmed hat, he cultivated an identity as an independent Australian, even a boy from the bush, but his accent was refined, his bearing dignified, and he was very obviously a man of learning and culture. There is good reason to think that supposedly larrikin Australians have a greater taste for this kind of persona than they like to

<sup>26</sup> Jim Davidson, 'The De-dominionisation of Australia', *Meanjin*, Vol. 38, No. 2, July 1979, pp. 139-153.

<sup>27</sup> Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace: The Demise of the Imperial Ideal*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2001.

<sup>28</sup> James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia After Empire*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2010.



pretend, especially when seeking to define a national culture for a post-imperial age. Clark brought a gravity to the media round that no mere journalist, and no other public figure of his time, could muster (Patrick White was really his only rival in this regard).

As he and Australia moved into the 1980s, his often emotional public performances turned out to be surprisingly in tune with the times; that is, times in which it became acceptable even for the prime minister, on occasion, to weep in public.<sup>29</sup> In the years leading up to the Bicentenary, when Australian history probably reached the peak of its authority and prestige, Clark also reached his apogee as a public figure. Not even the flop of a 1988 musical based on his *History* did very much to dent his prestige. I recall him being interviewed in the media about his views on the first Gulf War (1990-91); it was as if there was no topic on which he could not be relied to say something, even if it was frequently so gnomic that one struggled to see its pertinence to the issue at hand.

Clark should be taken seriously as a major Australian intellectual of the twentieth century. His *History* can still be enjoyed by the casual reader; I offered a chapter of it—that on the Burke and Wills expedition in volume IV—to a small group of my first-year students at a leading British university as an example of ‘narrative history’ and was surprised at how warmly most of them reacted to it. Already a little jaded by the sometimes arcane academic debates they were encountering in their other studies, they recognised a good yarn when they saw one. When I went to work in London for a few years in 2007, I had left my six volumes of Clark’s *History* in Australia in storage. But I found myself needing to borrow it from the library more often than I had expected and recently, after almost a decade in oblivion, I retrieved them from our garage, dusted them off, and restored them to my bookshelf. There is my contribution to the Manning Clark renaissance, if there is to be one.

Such a revival is surely not out of the question: Peter Craven, in discussing Clark’s reputation, has reminded us that there is frequently an interregnum between the death of an author and the elevation of their work to classic status in which their star fails to shine brightly.<sup>30</sup> It is yet to be seen whether this will happen with Clark, although it is odd that professional scholars caught up in the mania for transnational history have failed to register the essentially transnational vision with which Clark set out on his intellectual journey, with his idea of exploring the fate of European systems of belief in a new land. Similarly, if we live in a post-secular age, one might expect a degree of interest in an intellectual whose vision was always essentially religious, whatever doubts he harboured about conventional Christian observance.

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<sup>29</sup> Frank Bongiorno, *The Eighties: The Decade That Transformed Australia*, Black Inc., Collingwood, 2015, pp. 105, 109-110.

<sup>30</sup> Craven, ‘Ryan Affair’, pp. 186-187.

Clark has been well served since the late 1990s by three scholarly biographies—by Stephen Holt, Brian Matthews and Mark McKenna—each repaying the reader’s effort and attention, all accessible to a general reader in a manner Clark might have admired, none of them lapsing into hagiography.<sup>31</sup> The third of them, by McKenna, is arguably one of the most accomplished of all Australian examples of the biographical genre. In telling the story of his life and work, he made a persuasive case for treating Clark’s *History* as a distinctive creative endeavour in its own right, one that had more in common with the literary and artistic activity of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan than with orthodox historical scholarship.<sup>32</sup>

Such biographers have been well-served by the Clark family itself, in which academics, teachers, scholars and authors have been and remain prominent. In particular, Manning’s eldest son, Sebastian, has done much to encourage many flowers to bloom. Meanwhile, the enormous collection of Clark’s papers in the National Library of Australia, opened to researchers since 2000 (and well used by Matthews and McKenna), are likely to be consulted for as long as anyone is interested in the ideas that excited Australia’s most creative minds in the twentieth century, and the relationships that shaped the country’s cultural life. Manning Clark House—the Robin Boyd-designed Clark family home in the Canberra suburb of Forrest—is still a lively cultural centre, animated by a sense of continuing the kinds of conversations that Manning and Dymphna so valued in their home and the wider world. Happily, it is not a shrine to a dead historian.

All the same, it is still possible to climb the ladder into that famous study in which he wrote the *History* and to be feel a sense of having intruded on a very private and intimate place. It seems much as Clark might have left it in May 1991; as if he had been rudely interrupted by death in his quest to understand life’s meaning through the stories and characters of the Australian past. No one before or since ever invested such dignity and grandeur in this country’s history. For that achievement alone, it is possible to forgive a great deal.

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<sup>31</sup> Stephen Holt, *A Short History of Manning Clark*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999; Brian Matthews, *Manning Clark: A Life*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2008; McKenna, *An Eye For Eternity*, 2011.

<sup>32</sup> McKenna, *An Eye for Eternity*, pp. 475–488.

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In 2016 to celebrate 50 National Folk Festivals we will feature ALL our States and Territories. A bold plan! Our target is \$50,000. That's \$1000 for every year. ALL money raised will support the cost of bringing Acts from right around Australia. We've set up a gauge on the website to let you track the funds raised. Find out more <http://folkfestival.org.au/donate/>

**5 days in a perfect world ...there's nothing quite like it!**

Looking forward to seeing you all in 2016. Important Folk Festival dates:  
Stalls Applications OPEN 1 August 2015  
Folk Fellowship Applications CLOSE 5pm Friday 21 August 2015  
Instrument Makers Applications OPEN 1 September 2015 (for 6 weeks)  
Volunteer Applications OPEN 1 November 2015

Stay connected for all the latest news:

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