

ANNUAL REVIEW

2025-2026

Robert
Menzies
INSTITUTE

Robert
Menzies
INSTITUTE



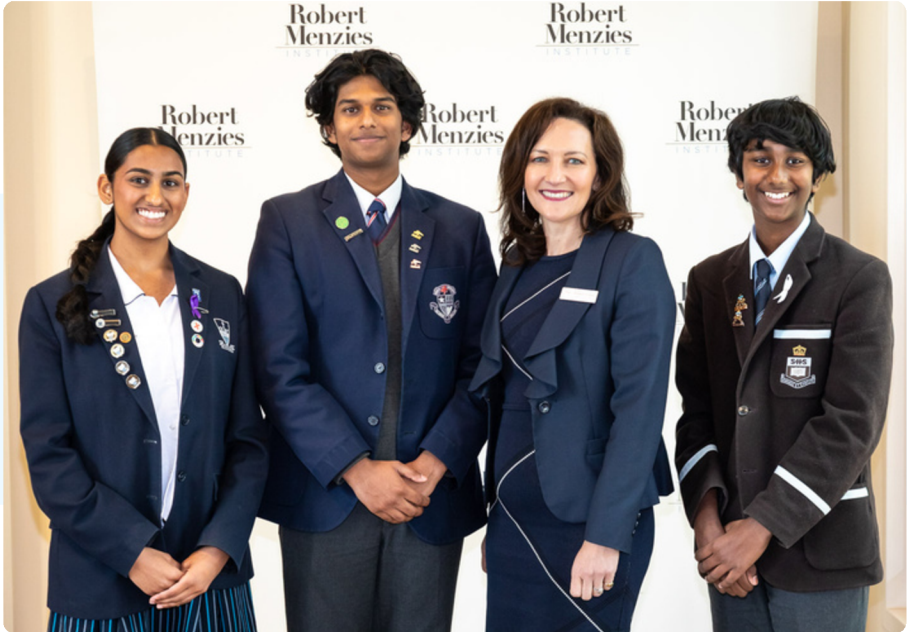
The Robert Menzies Institute at the University of Melbourne is a prime ministerial library and museum established by the University of Melbourne and the Menzies Research Centre in 2021 to promote the success of Australia's liberal democracy and its values through the legacy of Australia's longest-serving prime minister, Robert Menzies. The Institute is independent and non-partisan, and has been registered as a charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Photography credits: Annual Conference by Simon Milder, Annual Oration & Dinner by James Grant, additional photography by Aaron Francis, Angus Gillies, Artem Kuznetsov, Federico Moschietto & Shixin Wang.

Cover image: Toby Young, Lord Young of Acton, speaking at the Institute's 2025 Annual Oration & Dinner.

CONTENTS

Foreword by the Chief Executive	1
Thank You For Your Support	3
Engagement	5
Advancing Liberal Ideas	7
Engaging the Next Gen	13
Preserving Liberal Heritage	17
Our People	24
Ways to Support	25
Accounts	27



Georgina Downer with Menzies Speech Competition winners Ananya Karthik, Abel Ebi Joseph & Guru Thanabalasingam

FOREWORD | CHIEF EXECUTIVE

At the Robert Menzies Institute, we remain relentlessly curious. Curious about ideas, about our country, and, importantly, about ourselves. But curiosity alone is not enough. We ask harder questions. Are we making a difference? Are we reaching beyond our immediate circles? Are we strengthening, not merely describing, Australia's liberal democracy and the values that sustain it?

These are not always comfortable questions, but they are necessary. So last year, in that spirit, I invited a group of leaders from academia, museums, philanthropy and history education to offer an honest assessment of our work, to me and to our Board.

What they told us was both encouraging and meaningful. They saw the Institute as a welcome addition to Australia's intellectual landscape, one that brings energy and seriousness to the study of history and politics, and that does so in a way that invites **debate rather than discord**. In an increasingly polarised world, that felt like something worth celebrating.

This has been a year of expansion — of reach, ambition, and intellectual influence. We hosted events in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, welcomed leading thinkers from around the world, released 52 weekly podcast episodes, wrote 15 op-eds in major broadsheets, engaged with more than 160 teachers, launched a new trilogy of annual conferences, and opened a major exhibition on Robert Menzies — **one of the most important figures in our national story**.

But what has given me the greatest sense of optimism is our work with young Australians. Through the Menzies Speech Competition, the Menzies Early Career Network, and our growing suite of curriculum resources, **we have seen remarkable growth** — tripled submissions, quadrupled applications, and a surge of teacher engagement across the country.



Georgina Downer at the Institute's Christmas Drinks

“But what has given me the greatest sense of optimism is our work with **young Australians.**”

What differentiates our programs from the plethora of youth programs available is their seriousness.

I call it the Greta Thunberg effect. Too many youth programs these days treat young people as prefabricated change makers, ready to lead adults, without first equipping them with the knowledge and skills to unpick complex issues, examine sources to distinguish truth from falsehoods, and to deal with multiple perspectives. Our programs ask that rhetoric follows research and analysis, not the other way round. And in doing so, we are helping to cultivate the habits of mind that a liberal democracy depends upon: **intellectual humility, respect for evidence, and a willingness to engage with difference.**

It has been heartening to hear this recognised by teachers. **Deb Hull**, Executive Officer of the History Teachers' Association of Victoria, told us she valued our commitment to deep scholarship over empty slogans. That is exactly what we aim to offer.

That same spirit guided our 2025 Policy Dialogue on the Conditions for a Successful Democracy. We brought together 30 thinkers from across the political spectrum for a day of thoughtful, respectful exchange. At a time when disagreement can so easily

turn into division, the Dialogue found much common ground. Kate Griffiths from the Grattan Institute, reflected on how surprising it was to see people with such different perspectives arrive at shared conclusions. It showed that what unites

“What unites us is often deeper than what divides us”



Guru Thanabalasingam, Menzies Speech Competition winner (Year 7/8)

us is often deeper than what divides us, despite what social media echo chambers may suggest.

I am delighted that the **Scanlon Foundation** will support our 2026 Policy Dialogue on the conditions for a successful immigration policy in Australia, an issue that goes to the heart of our national story.

This year also marked a significant milestone in our work to keep Robert Menzies's legacy alive in our national memory.

Our new exhibition, *Robert Menzies: The Man who Made Modern Australia*, tells the story of a leader who shaped the peace,

prosperity and liberal democratic settlement we still benefit from today.

I would like to thank **Charles Kiefel AM** whose generosity made this exhibition possible.

Finally, I want to thank you. Your support – your belief in what we are building – makes all of this possible. We never take your support for granted.

I hope you enjoy this year's Annual Review.

Georgina Downer
Chief Executive Officer

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

A NOTE OF THANKS FROM THE INSTITUTE

Everything we have achieved has been made possible by those who believe in the enduring power of liberal democratic ideas — and who are prepared to invest in them. This is not passive support; it is active, meaningful participation in the intellectual life of the nation.

With your support, we hosted 24 events across Australia, opened a major new exhibition, published three books and a policy paper, released 52 podcast episodes,

and engaged more than 160 teachers and hundreds of students nationwide. We presented at four conferences and numerous forums, and reached a digital audience of more than 1.5 million people.

We extend our deepest thanks to the **University of Melbourne, Charles Kiefel AM, the Cormack Foundation, the Scanlon Foundation, the Menzies Research Centre** and our **Jeparit Club** members for their generosity and belief in our mission.



Stephen Minns & Nicola Charlston



*Cormack Foundation Chairman
Charles Goode AC*



Charles Kiefel AM



Heather Henderson AM



Neville Bertalli & Angie Scanlon



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Melbourne
Charles Kiefel AM
Cormack Foundation
Scanlon Foundation

PLATINUM

Heather Henderson AM
Angie Scanlon

GOLD

Alan Archibald KC
Peter Cooper
John Cordukes
Paul Espie AO
Peter Hansen OAM & Neroli Hansen
Shaun Kenny
Ian Leckie
Fiona MacLachlan OAM
Stewart McArthur AM
Hugh Morgan AC
Ian Paterson
Allan Pidgeon AM
Laurence Pole
Ezekiel Solomon AM
Dianne Weidner AM

CORPORATE

Deloitte Australia
Mallesons

JEPARIT CLUB

Philip Bacon AO
Neville Bertalli & Diana Bertalli
Leigh Clifford AC & Sue Clifford
Alexander Downer AC & Nicky Downer AM
John Downer AM & Rose Downer AM
Rob Fildes & Sandy Fildes
Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann
Steve McCready
Tony McLellan & Rae McLellan
Stephen Minns

SILVER

Donald Chandler
Craig Cooper
Paul Coughlin
Christine Fleer
June Gordon
James Guest
Ian Harper AO
Will Heath
Geoff Hone AM
Brian Hurlock
Susan Knopfelmacher
Christopher Koch
Norma Leslie
John McBain AO
Catherine Murphy
David Orford
Sunil Prakash
Margaret Reid AO
John Thornton
David Windsor

Acknowledgement of our other incredible donors continues on page 26

ENGAGEMENT | KEY FIGURES

SOCIAL & DIGITAL

With billions of users across social platforms, we are working hard to expand our reach and build our follower base. We achieved the following milestones over the past year:



30.1k
PODCAST
DOWNLOADS

↑ 60%



977k
LINKEDIN
IMPRESSIONS

↑ 507%



4840
NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS

↑ 66%



382k
VIDEO
VIEWS

↑ 784%

OUR GOAL

Our events and digital resources are designed to foster meaningful connections between students, teachers, patrons, academics and members of the public.



1375
EVENT
ATTENDEES

↑ 73%



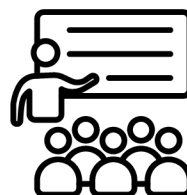
297
TOTAL
YEARLY
MEMBERS

↑ 55%



55.5k
WEBSITE
VISITORS

↑ 123%



163
TEACHERS
ENGAGED

↑ 171%



Philip Crutchfield KC, Georgina Downer & Professor Michelle Foster



Julian Leaser MP, Georgina Downer & Dr Damien Freeman



Steve Wilson AM, Dr Jane Wilson AO, Georgina Downer & Philip Bacon AO



HTAV Teacher Workshop hosted by the Institute



Georgina Downer & Troy Bramston on Afternoon Light Live



Georgina Downer & Michael Gawenda AM on Afternoon Light Live



Student volunteers during O-Week at the University of Melbourne

ADVANCING LIBERAL IDEAS

MODELLING CIVIL DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

Robert Menzies's most enduring achievement was not merely electoral success — it was the cultivation of a liberal democratic culture.

That transformation did not occur by accident. It was built deliberately, through argument, persuasion, and the disciplined practice of democratic politics. This is the inheritance the Institute seeks not merely to commemorate, but to practise and activate.

Over the past year, with your support, we have created spaces across the country where these habits can be exercised, where ideas are tested, not shouted down; where disagreement is engaged with, not avoided.

In 2025-26, we convened **24 public events**, bringing together Australians from across intellectual and political traditions to participate in precisely the kind of exchange Menzies believed essential to a free society. At the centre of this work was our **2025 Policy Dialogue** on the 'Conditions for a Successful Democracy'.



Georgina Downer & The Hon Tony Abbott AC on *Afternoon Light Live*

Thirty leading thinkers, historians, policymakers, and public figures gathered together, not to perform agreement, but to interrogate it. The result was not uniformity, but a clearer understanding of Australia's democratic strengths and the pressures now bearing upon it.

From our **Annual Oration**, delivered by **Toby Young** on free speech and the courage to disagree, to discussions on the **Scottish Enlightenment's** influence on Australia's political culture, the Institute consistently returned to first principles: what sustains a democratic society, and how to renew it?

*“We have created spaces where ideas are **tested**; not shouted down.”*

Whether examining liberal education with Shadow Minister for Education **Julian Leeser MP**, exploring home ownership with Queensland Deputy Premier **Jarrod Bleijie** and NSW Opposition Leader **Kellie Sloane**, or reflecting on national history and identity with former Prime Minister **Tony Abbott AC** and former Foreign Minister **Alexander Downer AC**, these were not isolated events, but part of a coherent intellectual project.

Even in moments of national tragedy, as with our launch of *The Life and Times of Alexander Downer* held a day after the Bondi terror attack, the Institute provided a forum to reflect, anchored in the values of a resilient democracy.

This work continued in 2026. Our ANZAC Oration, delivered by **Andrew Hastie MP**, reflected on the inheritance of sacrifice and its role in shaping the Alliance at a time of global uncertainty. The launch of *Menzies Rediscovered* in Canberra by Opposition Leader **Angus Taylor MP**, and our *Afternoon Light Live* series, have further extended these conversations to broader audiences — bringing together voices as varied as **Troy Bramston**, **Jackie French**, **Lydia Khalil**, **Michael Gawenda AM** and **Peter Kurti**.



Kate Griffiths (Grattan Institute) & John Roskam (Institute of Public Affairs)



The Hon Rachel Merton MLC



Dr Peter Collins & Alexander Downer AC



Jon Faine, AHRC Commissioner Lorraine Finlay & Dr Jeremiah Brown



Queensland Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie MP



Andrew Maynes (Mallesons), Kellie Sloane MP, Georgina Downer & Dr Zac Gorman

TIMELINE

JUNE 2025

2025 Policy Dialogue: Conditions for a Successful Democracy

SEPTEMBER 2025

Toby Young, Lord Young of Acton

Annual Oration & Dinner, *Truth Emerges Through Debate*

NOVEMBER 2025

Dr Martin Farr, Dr Zac Gorman and Professor Tim Lynch,

'Who was the Greatest Leader of All Time: Menzies, Thatcher or Trump' Debate

Dr Martin Farr

Annual Conference dinner address on Margaret Thatcher

JANUARY 2026

The Hon Tony Abbott AC

Afternoon Light Live on *Australia: A History*

MARCH 2026

Michael Gawenda AM

Afternoon Light Live on Being Jewish in Australia Today

Professor Leila Brammer

Afternoon Light Live on the Art of Disagreement

MAY 2026

Professor Glyn Davis AC, Interim Vice Chancellor of the University of Melbourne

Menzies and the expansion of education, *The Menzies Legacy* book launch

The Hon Angus Taylor MP

Menzies Rediscovered book launch

JULY 2025

Professor Chris Berg and Dr David Kemp AC

Scottish Enlightenment event as part of the Melbourne Tartan Festival

Jackie French & Kate O'Donnell

Afternoon Light Live on the 80 year history of Children's Book Week

OCTOBER 2025

Shadow Minister for Education Julian Leeser MP

Liberal approach to education, *Fancies I Dare Not Speak* book launch

Reverend Peter Kurti

Afternoon Light Live on Immigration & Social Cohesion

Troy Bramston

Afternoon Light Live on *Gough Whitlam: The Vista of the New*

DECEMBER 2025

The Hon Alexander Downer AC, The Hon Josh Frydenberg and Tony Parkinson

Launch of *A Step To The Right: The Life and Times of Alexander Downer*

FEBRUARY 2026

The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP, Deputy Premier of Queensland

Liberal approach to home ownership, *The Menzies Legacy* book launch

Kellie Sloane MP, NSW Opposition Leader

Liberal approach to home ownership, *The Menzies Legacy* book launch

Dr Lydia Khalil

Afternoon Light Live on the Conditions for a Successful Democracy

APRIL 2026

Dr Kylie Moore-Gilbert

Afternoon Light Live on Unpacking the Iranian Conflict

The Hon Andrew Hastie MP

2026 ANZAC Oration, *ANZUS at 75*

The Hon Tony Abbott AC

Exhibition opening of *Robert Menzies: The Man who Made Modern Australia*



ADVANCING LIBERAL IDEAS

POLICY DIALOGUE ON THE CONDITIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL DEMOCRACY

In 2025, the Institute brought together 30 of Australia’s leading historians, political scientists, public figures and policy thinkers, drawn deliberately from across the political spectrum, for a day-long Policy Dialogue on the conditions necessary for a successful democracy.

Generously hosted by **Queen’s College** under the Chatham House Rule, the Dialogue was rigorous, candid, and at times contested, precisely as it should be in a healthy democracy.

What emerged was striking. Not unanimity, but something more valuable: a convergence of insight. Participants identified both the strengths of Australia’s democracy as well as a set of critical emerging risks that cannot be ignored.

As **Grattan Institute Chief of Staff Kate Griffiths** observed, “Could 40 or so thought-leaders with different – often opposing – perspectives reach consensus on anything? ... yes we could!”

“Democracy is a living spirit, sustained by civic virtue, equality and a sense of shared responsibility.”



Georgina Downer, Master of Queen’s College
Dr Michael Stepniak & Professor Michael Wesley

These insights formed the basis of a major Policy Paper released on Australia Day 2026, which argued that “democracy is not merely a structure of government but a living spirit, sustained by civic virtue, equality, and a sense of shared responsibility.”



Dr Zac Gorman, Georgina Downer & Dr Lydia Khalil

The paper represents a serious contribution to the national conversation, grounded in liberal democratic values, history, and informed debate.

The conversation did not end there. The Policy Paper was launched through an *Afternoon Light Live* discussion in February 2026, bringing these ideas to a wider audience in dialogue with Dialogue Participant **Lydia Khalil**.

And this work continues. In July 2026, the Institute’s next Policy Dialogue will turn to one of the defining questions of our time: what are the conditions for a successful immigration policy. We are proud to partner with the **Scanlon Foundation** in advancing this vital national conversation.

ADVANCING LIBERAL IDEAS

IN THE PUBLIC DEBATE



FINANCIAL REVIEW



Over the past year, the Robert Menzies Institute has emerged as one of Australia's most credible and influential contributors to the national conversation, bringing historical depth to some of the most pressing questions of our time.

Our staff and fellows are increasingly shaping national debates — contributing to major publications such as **The Australian** and **The Australian Financial Review**, ensuring that debates about Australia's past and future are informed by intellectual rigour rather than fleeting fashion. Institute Board Member **Professor Tim Lynch** has likewise remained a prominent and consistent contributor to *The Australian*.

The Institute's work featured in former Prime Minister Tony Abbott's Sky News documentary **Australia: A History**, with contributions from Georgina Downer, Dr Zac Gorman and Alex McDermott. Georgina Downer also appeared in Chris Uhlmann's documentary **The Dismissal: 50 Years On**, bringing historical perspective to one of the defining constitutional moments in Australian history.

Across the country, Institute staff have been in demand as speakers — engaging audiences in public forums, lectures, and debates that advance a more informed, confident understanding of Australia's liberal democratic inheritance.



4 RADIO APPEARANCES



TWICE FEATURED IN DOCUMENTARIES



13 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS



15 OP-EDS



ANNUAL ORATION & DINNER

On 24 September 2025, the Institute held its Annual Oration & Dinner in the magnificent Ormond College Dining Hall.

The Oration was delivered by **Toby Young, Lord Young of Acton**, who spoke powerfully on 'Truth Emerges Through Debate: Menzies, free speech and the courage to disagree'. As founder and General Secretary of the Free Speech Union, Toby is one of the world's staunchest defenders of free speech.

As Toby said in his powerful and provocative Oration:

Free speech is not a luxury of stable democracies but their lifeblood — because only through the fearless clash of ideas can truth emerge, power be held to account, and liberty endure.

We thank **Peter Cooper** for his support in bringing Toby Young to Australia.



Toby Young, Lord Young of Acton



The Hon Josh Frydenberg, Leigh Clifford AC & Stephen Minns



Carlene Wilson



Caroline Inge, Bev McArthur MLC & Nick Cater



Guests in the Ormond College Dining Hall

ENGAGING THE NEXT GEN

BRINGING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC IDEAS TO YOUNG AUSTRALIANS

Fewer than half of Australians aged 18–24 now believe democracy is “always preferable” to other forms of government — a finding that should concern anyone committed to the future of our nation. This challenge demands action. In 2025-26, the Robert Menzies Institute intensified its efforts to inspire young Australians to understand, value and defend our liberal democratic tradition.

Over the last year, the Robert Menzies Institute consolidated its position as a national leader in Australia in civic and historical education, engaging hundreds of students and teachers through competitions, curriculum resources, museum programs and professional development across multiple states.

Demand for the Institute’s flagship student programs grew dramatically, reflecting renewed interest among young Australians in history, ideas and public debate. Thanks to the generosity of **Neville Bertalli**, **Angie Scanlon**, and **John Thornton**, we were able to offer attractive cash prizes for the 2025 **Menzies Speech Competition**, leading to a tripling in entries. In addition applications to the competitive **Menzies Early Career Network** rose by 150%.

Teachers are important multipliers of civic understanding. If liberal democracy is to



Deb Hull, Executive Officer of HTAV and history teachers with Dr Zac Gorman & Georgina Downer



Ananya Karthik, Winner of 2025 Menzies Speech Competition (Year 9/10)

endure, it must be taught, debated, and lived — not assumed.

In 2025-26, the Institute engaged more than **160 history teachers** through curriculum resources, workshops, museum visits and conferences, extending our reach to hundreds of classrooms across Australia. We presented at history teachers’ conferences across Australia, and hosted the History Teachers’ Association of Victoria’s new teacher training.

A collection of essays by Menzies Early Career Network students entitled *Menzies Rediscovered* was launched by the Federal Opposition Leader **The Hon Angus Taylor MP** in May 2026, marking a significant milestone in the Institute’s mission to cultivate the next generation of Australian scholars and public thinkers.

ENGAGING THE NEXT GEN



Abel Ebi Joseph, Year 12, Salesian College Chadstone

"The Robert Menzies speech competition gave me a valuable opportunity to deepen my understanding of Australian history and politics. I was immersed within ideas and policies discussed all those decades ago. It encouraged me to delve into the positives and negatives of issues and ultimately understand how important respectful dialogue is to the flourishing of a nation."



Lainey Nieva, Humanities Domain Leader, Nossal High School

"We really enjoyed the lecture, the presentation on Australian involvement during the Cold War, the museum visits, as well as the Cold War activity. It was inspiring and supplemented our own curriculum. There are not many places that offer specific Cold War excursions. I'm so glad you were at HTAV [conference] in Melbourne where I got the flyer."



Pablo Avaria, Monash University

"The Menzies Early Career Network provided a rare platform to engage deeply with Australia's strategic history while developing a sharper lens on contemporary trade and policy challenges. It strengthened both my analytical thinking and my confidence to contribute meaningfully to national and international conversations."

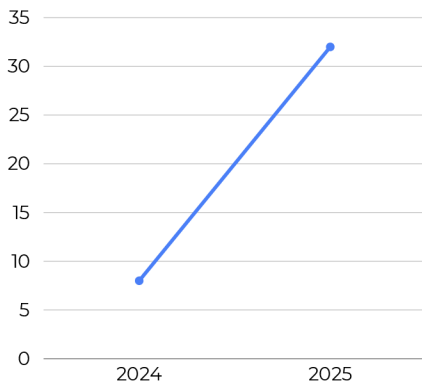


Ebony Freestone, University of Melbourne

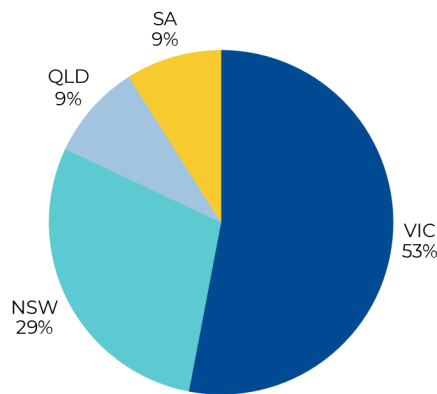
"As a student of art history, I am conscious of the importance of preserving our history through narratives and artefacts. As a volunteer at the Robert Menzies Museum, not only am I gaining practical skills in curation and conservation, but I am also learning the socio-political context of our country Australia during his prime ministership."

ENGAGING THE NEXT GEN

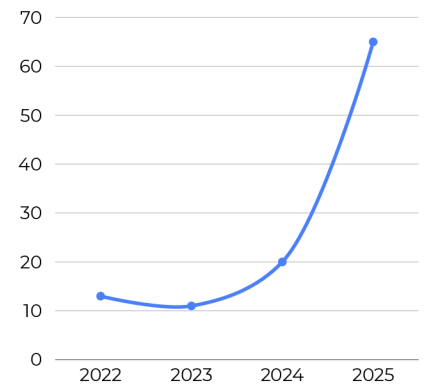
Menzies Early Career Network
Number of Applicants



Menzies Speech Competition
Entries by State



Menzies Speech Competition
Number of entries



MENZIES REDISCOVERED

A new generation's inspiration for political philosophy, domestic challenges and foreign affairs

Edited by Institute Fellow Dr Damien Freeman, *Menzies Rediscovered* is a product of research undertaken by university students who participated in the 2025 Menzies Early Career Network (MECN). MECN is the Institute's flagship program for university students, designed to identify, nurture, and connect a new generation of emerging leaders with a deep understanding of Australia's national story.

The essays by the 15 MECN scholars examine the development of Cabinet Government, adherence to the rule of law, the gathering of secret intelligence, and the banning of Soviet-aligned organisations during the Menzies era. They ask how Robert Menzies approached questions of changing social values, support for the family unit, the rise of the technological age, and the challenges of embracing immigrants who were not Anglo-Celtic.





History teachers at RMI-hosted HTAV Teacher workshop



Student volunteers at O-Week



MECN Scholars at a workshop in Sydney



Student volunteers in front of the Institute's museum, Old Quadrangle, University of Melbourne



Dr Zac Gorman presenting at the HTAV conference, August 2025



School excursion to the Institute's museum

PRESERVING LIBERAL HERITAGE

SCHOLARSHIP, CURATION & ENGAGEMENT

Australia's liberal inheritance was not inevitable and it is not guaranteed. What a nation chooses to remember determines what it values; what it forgets gradually disappears from its civic life.



Dr Zac Gorman at the Brisbane launch of The Menzies Legacy

Sir Robert Menzies, Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister, shaped the modern nation through a liberal philosophy grounded in freedom, opportunity, and responsibility. His ideas transformed Australia socially and economically, and remain central to our democratic character.

Yet this legacy is increasingly at risk – vulnerable to amnesia, misinterpretation, and neglect.

The Robert Menzies Institute exists to meet that challenge. Through **scholarship, curation, and public engagement**, the Institute restores Australia's liberal heritage to its rightful place not as nostalgia, but as a living tradition for future generations.

In pursuit of this mission, the Institute delivers major national exhibitions, publishes original scholarship, convenes historians and public thinkers, and preserves irreplaceable historical artefacts.

In April 2026, the Institute opened a major new exhibition, **Robert Menzies: The Man who Made Modern Australia**.

Curated by **Alex McDermott**, it tells the story of Australia's dramatic transformation during Robert Menzies's 18 years as the nation's prime minister.

The Institute warmly thanks **Charles Kiefel AM**, who generously sponsored this important exhibition.

The Institute also thanks **Philip Crutchfield KC** who, in 2025, donated his valuable collection of Sir Robert Menzies's Commonwealth Law Reports.

The Institute's **fifth Annual Conference** focused on *Menzies and the British Commonwealth of Nations*. It marked the beginning of a new trilogy on the theme *Forging Australia: The Global Forces that Shaped a Nation*, with future conferences on *Menzies and America* (2026) and *Menzies and Asia* (2027).

“This legacy is increasingly at risk”

In February 2026, we launched **The Menzies Legacy**, the fourth and final book in our four-book series on Robert Menzies's life and impact on Australia. Edited by Institute historian **Dr Zac Gorman** and published by Melbourne University Press, it brings together essays by Australian historians and public intellectuals on Menzies's policies and their impact from 1961 and beyond.

The Institute's weekly history podcast, **Afternoon Light**, hosted by CEO **Georgina Downer**, marked its 250th episode in February 2026. It is now the largest digital archive of long-form conversations on Australian history. Since its launch, the podcast has attracted more than 30,000 downloads, making it one of the most popular Australian history podcasts.



Georgina Downer, host of *Afternoon Light* podcast

*“When we launched *Afternoon Light*, people asked: do we really need another podcast? The answer is yes – because Australians consume everyone else’s history but neglect our own. With over 250 long-form conversations on 19th and 20th century Australia with historians, prime ministers, biographers, and public thinkers, the episodes present Australian history as a shared, thoughtful democratic story.”*



Dr Zac Gorman on our Annual Conference and scholarship

“The Institute’s annual conference and book series have become a beacon for serious historians who want to break beyond niche interests and explore topics that have made a real impact on our national story. The premise of our new ‘Forging Australia’ conference and book series is to look beyond Menzies to the global forces that have shaped our nation.”



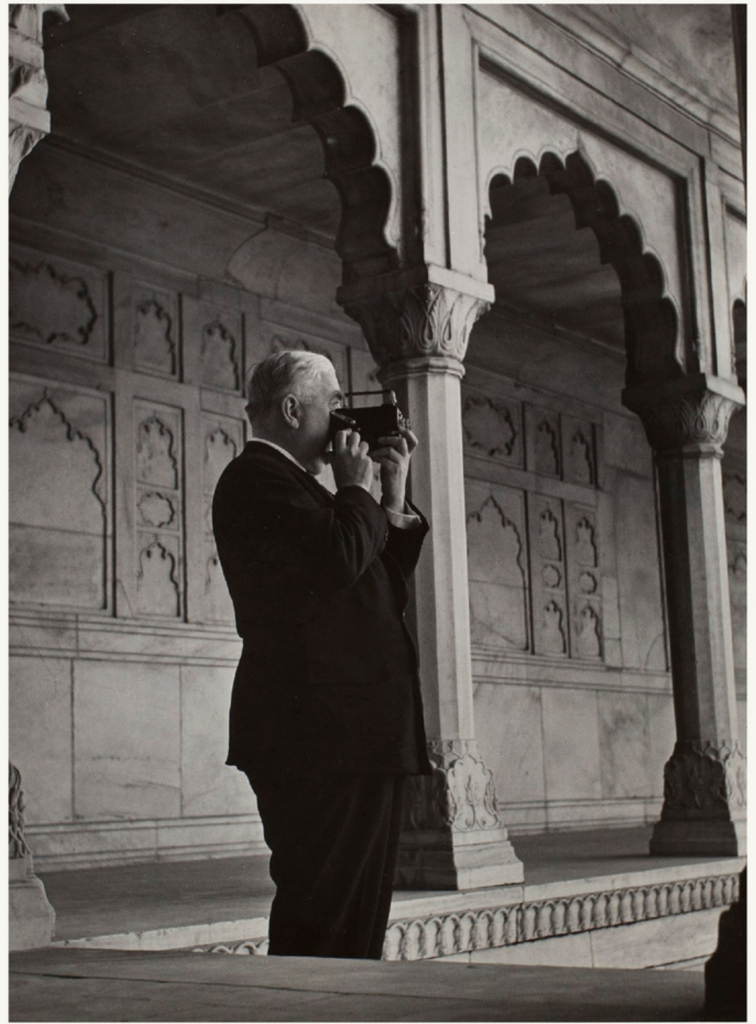
Alex McDermott, Curator of *Robert Menzies: The Man who Made Modern Australia* exhibition

“This exhibition performs the vital work of anchoring the Australian story in the lived experience of our longest-serving Prime Minister. By showcasing personal artefacts such as Churchill’s inscribed speeches – we reveal the values of home, education, and civic duty that Menzies championed. It preserves the era which gave birth to modern Australia, and the liberal philosophy of the era’s signal architect.”



Dr Damien Freeman, Editor, *Menzies Rediscovered*

“Menzies Rediscovered is a valuable resource for helping connect young people with Australian history. It consists of 15 essays in which university students present original research on Menzies era history exploring the development of our political philosophy, international relations and domestic policies.”



ROBERT MENZIES

The Man Who Made Modern Australia

Robert Menzies Institute
The University of Melbourne
Parkville

Free exhibition
Open Monday–Thursday
10am – 2pm

THANK YOU

CHARLES PETER HUNT KIEFEL AM

The Institute thanks Australian corporate leader and philanthropist Charles Kiefel AM for his significant support of our new exhibition, *Robert Menzies: The Man who Made Modern Australia*.

Mr Kiefel has been a long-standing champion of Sir Robert Menzies's legacy.

He was an honorary trustee of the original Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Trust from 1978-79 and was the non-executive director of the Menzies Foundation for 28 years (1986-2014).

The Robert Menzies Institute is privileged to count Mr Kiefel among its principal supporters.

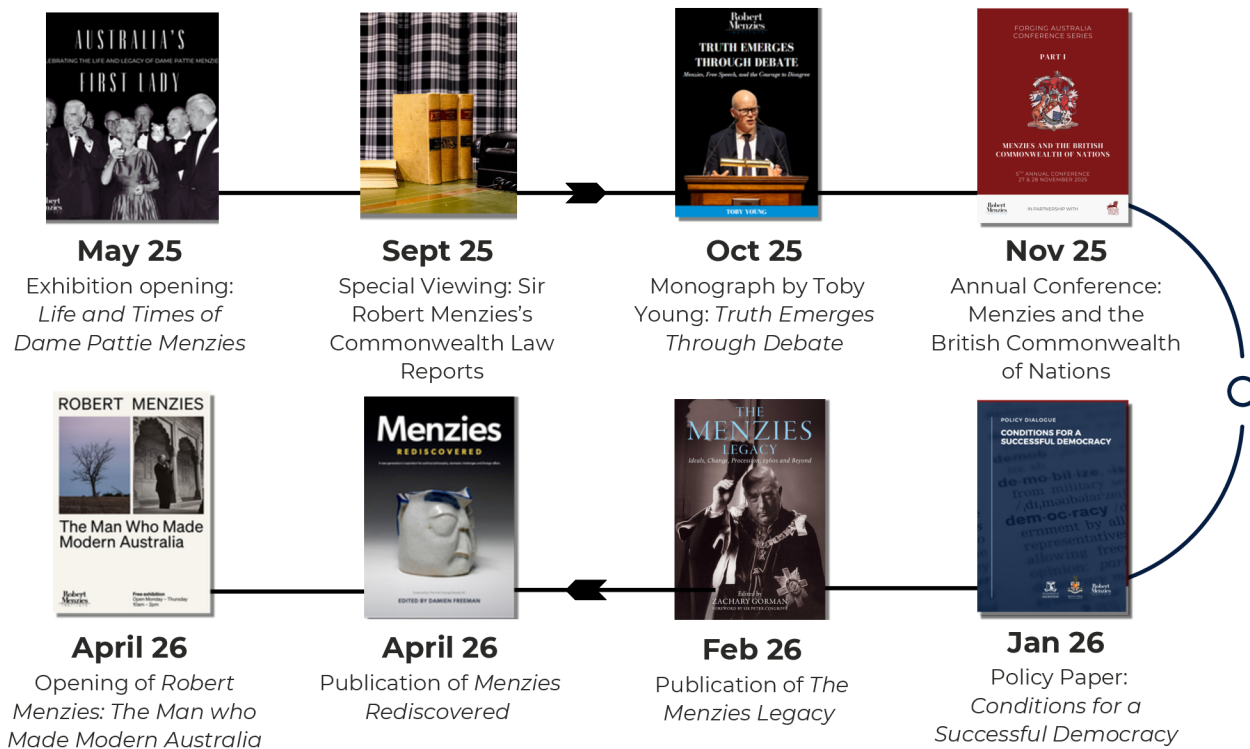


“The redevelopment of the exhibition hall is a fitting tribute to the legacy of one of Australia's most esteemed leaders and seeks to encourage new audiences to better understand the impact of his era.”

Charles Peter Hunt Kiefel AM

PRESERVING LIBERAL HERITAGE

TIMELINE



ON THIS DAY

Our *On This Day* series highlights the most important episodes in the Menzies story, making the latest insights from historical scholarship accessible to a broad audience. It provides a reliable and accurate resource on Australian history for teachers and students, at a time when information online is abundant, but not always dependable or authoritative.



MENZIES COLLECTION

The *Menzies Collection* is Sir Robert Menzies's personal library of over 4,500 books, housed at the University of Melbourne. The Collection reveals the intellectual influences shaping Australia's longest-serving prime minister, offering a time capsule of the ideas that shaped Australian debate and culture.



BOOK OF THE WEEK

The *Book of the Week* series highlights the unique historical value of the Menzies Collection. Each instalment explores what a particular book reveals about Menzies - his personal interests, the people he met, and key moments in his life. Since its launch in 2021, the project has yielded a number of original discoveries that deepen our understanding of Menzies and his world.



2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On 27–28 November 2025, the Institute convened its fifth Annual Conference on ***Menzies and the British Commonwealth of Nations***, in partnership with ***Britain and the World***. The conference examined how Commonwealth ties shaped Menzies’s outlook and Australia’s place in the world,

highlighting the influence of British institutions and thought. **Martin Farr’s** opening keynote on “Conservative Homes: Robert Menzies, postwar Britain, and the ends of the Commonwealth” set a clear intellectual direction for this first conference in the *Forging Australia* trilogy.



Martin Farr, President of Britain and the World



Diana Menzies with Georgina Downer



Andrew Kemp & David Kemp AC



Professor Kim Rubenstein, Professor Joy Damousi & Eli Rubenstein Sturgess



Dr Teesta Prakash



Richard Ye & guests



Dr Lee Rippon, Georgina Downer



Reverend Peter Kurti



Chantal Moore (MECN Scholar 2025)



Geoff Hone AM



Alex Melkonian, Aryan Ilkhani (MECN Scholars 2025)



Colin Milner and Dr Sue Thompson



OUR PEOPLE

BOARD



**Leigh Clifford
AC**
Chair



**Don
Chandler**
Deputy Chair



**Peta Credlin
AO**



**Professor
Timothy Lynch**
Deputy Chair



**Stephen
Minns**



**Carlene
Wilson**

STAFF



**Georgina
Downer**
Chief Executive
Officer



**Dr Zac
Gorman**
Historian &
Research Manager



**Chetna
Mahadik**
General Manager

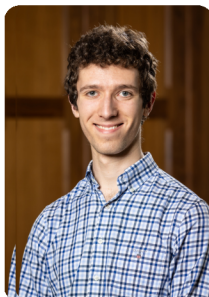


**Matthew
Allanby**



**Dr William
Stoltz**

FELLOWS



**Benjamin
Cromer**
Education
Officer



**Angus
Gillies**
Digital
Communication
& Events Officer



**Alex
McDermott**
Curator



**Victoria
Hronas**
Assistant Curator
& Exhibition
Coordinator



**Dr Damien
Freeman**



**Professor Greg
Melleuish**

WAYS TO SUPPORT

The Robert Menzies Institute is an independent, non-partisan charity, receiving no government funding. Our work to uphold and advance Australia's liberal democratic tradition is made possible entirely through the generosity, conviction, and support of those who believe in its enduring importance.

1 MAKE A DONATION

You can make a **tax deductible donation** to the Institute by:

1. Visiting robertmenziesinstitute.org.au/support and making an online donation.
2. Making a bank transfer to the Robert Menzies Institute (BSB: 083-004 ACC: 88-084-8770). Write your name in the 'description' and contact us for a receipt.
3. Calling the Institute on 03 8344 3411 between Monday to Thursday during business hours and making a donation over the phone.



2 BECOME A JEPARIT CLUB MEMBER

The Jeparit Club is an exclusive group of long-term supporters of the Institute. They commit to support the Institute with a \$4500 tax deductible donation and \$500 membership fee annually to advance the Institute's core mission.

The Institute honours their support through complimentary tickets to all of the Institute's events and by hosting exclusive gatherings for them with significant Australian and international guests around the country. The club is named after Robert Menzies's birthplace, Jeparit, in regional Victoria.



3 SPONSOR A PROGRAM

If you are particularly passionate about a specific area of our work – our history podcast, Afternoon Light Lives, our student or teacher engagement, our books, publications and exhibitions – and would like to support them, please contact the Institute's CEO Georgina Downer to discuss the nature of your support, and suitable acknowledgements.

Email address: georgina@robertmenziesinstitute.org.au



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Continued from page 4

THE INSTITUTE THANKS THE FOLLOWING DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN 2025-26

Sue a'Beckett
Ann Adams
Jonathan Adler
Philip Aiken AM
Bob Allen
John Armfield
Chris Ashton
David Bellair
Cheryl Bellman
Katharine Betts
Stephen Brain
Geoffrey Browne
Sandy Clark AO
Ross Congleton
Anna Dominguez Smith
Michael Dowling
Stella Downer
Cina Fairfax AC
Stewart Gill OAM
Fred Gordon
Anthony Gray
Ian Hancock
Trent Harron
Diana Harvey
Robyne Head
Nicholas Heath
Senator the Hon Jane Hume
The Hon Gary Humphries
Maria Jockel
Margaret Kelly
The Hon David Kemp AC
Peter Killin
Henry Krichauff
Russell Lawrance
Allan Lawton
John Lloyd PSM
Andrew Long
Sharon Macaulay

Chetna Mahadik
Mirrie Masnjak
Paul McSweeney
Diana Menzies
John Menzies
Peter Middleton
Nick Minchin AO
Andrew Monotti
Richard Morgan AM
Deanne Morrison
Damian Murphy
Ruth Murphy
Graham Nicholson
Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP
John Parr
Alison Parsons
Jon Peacock
David Petersen
Cate Pickett
Peter Rae
Michael Rawlinson
John Rickard
Isabelle Robertson
Dale Ross
John Rush KC
Peter Scullin
Tony Shepherd AO
Colin Shipard
Philip Solomon KC
Charles Such
Artem Suetin
Bill Thompson
Erik Velins
Carol Walters
Daryn Warnes
Lorraine Weiner
Philip Widmer
Andrew Williamson
Anthony Wilson

ACCOUNTS

Robert Menzies Institute Ltd
ABN 68 649 685 352

Income & Expenditure Statement
Annual records for years ending 31/12/2025, 31/12/2024, and 31/12/2023

Income	2025	2024	2023
Grants, donations, gifts, and contributions	\$399,962	\$698,815	\$611,580
Interest	\$29,526	\$19,263	\$8,498
Bequests and endowments	\$196,534	\$158,869	\$175,687
Other	\$123,122	\$169,512	\$107,818
Total	\$749,144	\$1,046,458	\$903,583

Expenses	2025	2024	2023
Employee benefits expense	\$637,868	\$622,798.81	\$480,452
Rental expense	\$1	\$1	\$1
Legal and consultancy fees	\$75,967	\$67,086.99	\$37,324
Event and fundraising expenses	\$125,083	\$113,265	\$91,715
Sundry expenses	\$174,266	\$170,996.18	\$177,750
Total	\$1,013,184	\$974,147.98	\$787,242

Net Surplus*	(\$264,039)**	\$72,309.88	\$116,341
---------------------	----------------------	--------------------	------------------

*excluding depreciation

**Due to a change in accounting treatment under General Purpose Financial Report accounting standards, the annual grant from the University of Melbourne of \$289,000 which would normally have been included in the 2025 accounts, will be recognised in the 2026 accounts.



Page left intentionally blank



“It’s only when we realise that we are part of a great procession, that we’re not just here today and gone tomorrow, that we draw strength from the past and we may transmit some strength to the future.”

Sir Robert Menzies speaking at the setting of the foundation stone at the National Library, Canberra, 31 March 1966



East Wing, Old Quad
The University of Melbourne, Parkville VIC 3052
(03) 8344 3411 | info@robertmenziesinstitute.org.au

www.robertmenziesinstitute.org.au