

WINTER/SPRING 2025

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Celebrating a Great Partnership of Friends

LBW TRUST
LEARNING
FOR A BETTER WORLD



Bolinda
audio

**FINDING SHARED PURPOSE — STANDING
SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH
FRIENDS GROUPS ACROSS AUSTRALIA**

The national voice for 15 million Public Library Members

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Executive Director

CELEBRATING A GREAT PARTNERSHIP OF FRIENDS



FOLA has been greatly blessed with some generous donors to our organisation over more than 30 years. None more so, than our founding and continuing sponsor – **Bolinda**. From our inception in 1994, Phil and Lyn Walshe of Bolinda have been our major sponsor, and continues to this day with daughter Rebecca and her husband Jan who manage the business. Without this valued support over more than 30 years FOLA would not be in existence. And one of the many contributions has been Bolinda's funding of the production and distribution of our newsletter – *NewsUpdate*.

In more recent years, a major corporate donor to FOLA has been – **The LBW Trust**. In the last few years, more than \$400,000 has been donated to funding of Country Public Libraries through *The LBW Trust and FOLA Country Libraries Program*. This most generous gift has made a significant difference to Australia's under-funded and under-valued country public libraries.

Unlike the United States with Friends, Australia does not have the legacy of philanthropic support for its public library system. Therefore, the support FOLA receives from our corporate philanthropy is much valued.

Also of unique value to FOLA has been our foundation president who officiated at our launch at the State Library of Victoria on the 9th December 1994.



This remarkable woman, the Honorable Mrs Margaret (Peg) Lusink AM recently celebrated her 103rd birthday in Melbourne. It was my great pleasure to visit Peg and wish her both a happy birthday and continued health on behalf of FOLA. Surely another remarkable achievement in her distinguished career as a Family Court judge and Dean of Law School.



This has been a great partnership for FOLA.

Sponsors who help maintain our vital work as the national voice for 15 million public library members, and our remarkable foundation president, who still maintains her interest in the work of FOLA.

The University of Sydney recently celebrated 175 years. As part of the celebrations was an address on 28th August given by Richard Ovenden, the 25th Bodley Librarian at the University of Oxford. The address was titled: *Endangered knowledge: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever*. And of his concluding remarks – **Libraries are the infrastructure of democracy**.

<https://shorturl.at/kDrRd>

And so, Bolinda and The LBW Trust are FOLA partners in helping Libraries to maintain the infrastructure of democracy.

Daniel Ferguson

"From our inception in 1994, Phil and Lyn Walshe of Bolinda have been our major sponsor, and continues to this day with daughter Rebecca and her husband Jan."

"It was my great pleasure to visit Peg and wish her both a happy birthday and continued health on behalf of FOLA."

Dear Friends

OF LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA

“a strong friendship was formed that became the foundation of our shared mission: to enrich communities, empower libraries, and celebrate the transformative power of storytelling.”

It is with deep gratitude and pride that we write to you on behalf of Bolinda. Our journey with FOLA has been one of the most enduring and meaningful partnerships in our history. From the very beginning, when our founders Phil and Lyn Walshe first joined hands with Daniel Ferguson, a strong friendship was formed that became the foundation of our shared mission: to enrich communities, empower libraries, and celebrate the transformative power of storytelling.

Over the decades, that friendship has grown into something much greater—a partnership grounded in shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to the role libraries play as vital, democratic, and welcoming spaces for all Australians. Today, as Bolinda continues under the leadership of Phil and Lyn’s daughter Rebecca and her husband Jan, the founders of Bolinda Audio, Bolinda Originals, and BorrowBox—our “library in one app”—we are both proud and humbled to continue this legacy alongside you.

“Over the decades, that friendship has grown into something much greater—a partnership grounded in shared values, mutual respect, and a commitment to the role libraries play as vital, democratic, and welcoming spaces for all Australians.”

Bolinda has always believed that libraries are the beating heart of our communities. They are sanctuaries of learning, discovery, and belonging. They are places where stories are not only borrowed but lived, where ideas are exchanged freely, and where access is equal for everyone, regardless of circumstance. In this, our mission and yours are deeply aligned.

Our support for FOLA has never been about sponsorship alone. It has always been about shared purpose—about standing shoulder to shoulder with Friends groups across Australia who give their time, energy, and passion to

“Libraries are the beating heart of our communities. They are sanctuaries of learning, discovery, and belonging.”



Lyn and Phil Walshe



Rebecca and Jan Hermann

Dear Friends

OF LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA

(CONTINUED)

ensuring libraries thrive. We know that the work you do—advocating, fundraising, building awareness—is what gives our libraries their strength and resilience. It is what keeps them relevant, innovative, and accessible for generations to come.

As Bolinda has grown, so too has our ability to serve libraries in new and exciting ways. With BorrowBox- your library in one app, we've made it possible for libraries to offer their communities a world of eAudiobooks, eBooks, eNewspapers and eMagazines. With Bolinda audio and Originals, we've created inspiring content that reaches new audiences and amplifies new voices. Yet, at the heart of everything we do remains a deep respect for libraries, their Friends, and the communities they serve.

We are especially proud to have been a foundation and continuing sponsor of FOLA. To us, this partnership is not just a chapter in our story, but a defining thread that ties together our past, present, and future. It is a reminder that while technology, publishing, and media may evolve, the importance of libraries—and of those who champion them—remains timeless.

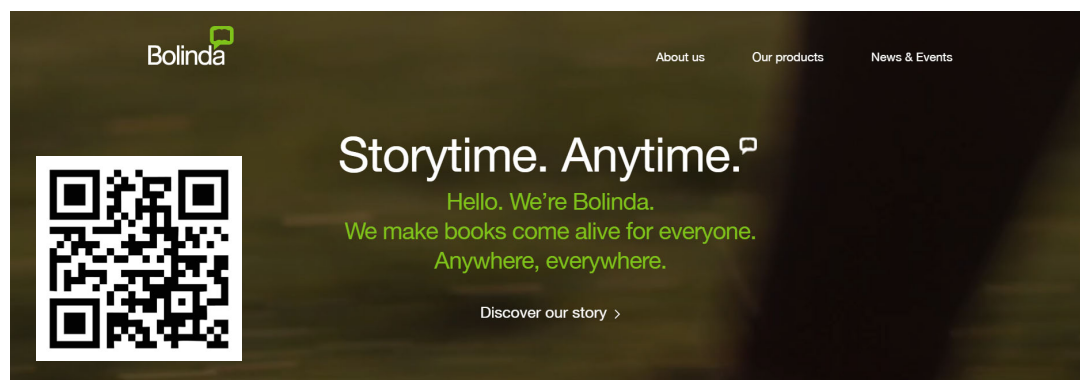
On behalf of everyone at Bolinda, thank you for allowing us the honour of walking this journey with you. Together, we are not only supporting libraries as they exist today—we are shaping what they will become tomorrow: vibrant, inclusive, innovative spaces that inspire, connect, and transform lives.

With heartfelt thanks and enduring friendship,
Rebecca & Jan Herrmann Bolinda / BorrowBox

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LBW Trust

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FOLA

LBW TRUST
LEARNING
FOR A BETTER WORLD



*The LBW Trust (Learning for a Better World)
believes education is the pathway to a better future.*

*“Together, we are
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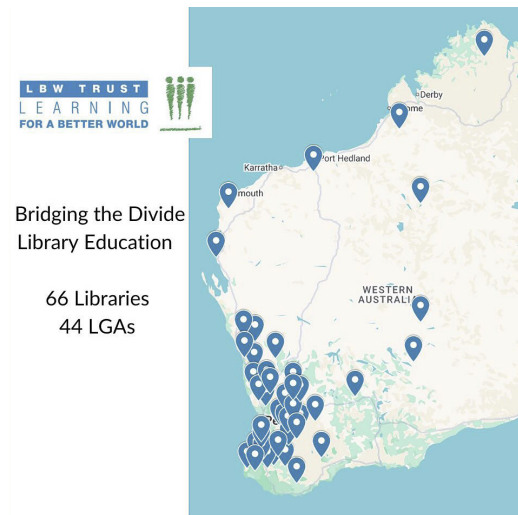
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In Australia The LBW Trust supports learning opportunities for young people in regional and remote communities. They do this by funding programs and educational equipment in community libraries.

The current focus is on Western Australia. With support from Telethon7 Perth, the Stand Perron Charitable Foundation, Wesfarmers Resources Limited and Friends of Libraries Australia, by supporting 66 libraries in 44 LGAs. This includes 16 LGAs with populations of 1,000 or less.

Funds have supported: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) initiatives; physical resources and technology; education programs with a focus on literacy, and hands-on learning, science workshops, robotics activities, mobile learning, and community led initiatives.

FOLA thanks our partners and supporters for helping bridge the divide, ensuring children in regional and remote Western Australia have equitable access to education resources.

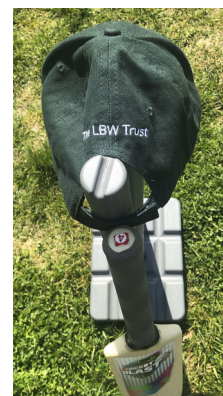


LBW HIGHLIGHT

In 2024, The LBW Trust in partnership with Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA), continued to make a meaningful impact by supporting 79 country libraries across rural and remote Australia.

These libraries serve as vital community hubs, offering more than just books—they bridge educational gaps and create spaces for connection, resilience and growth.

#thelbwtrust #learningforabetterworld
#friendsoflibraryaustralia



FOLA & the LBW Trust

A SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE COUNTRY LIBRARIES

By Jack Goodman

If you are reading this article, and especially if you are holding a physical copy of this newsletter, then you already know who FOLA is and why we exist. For the past 30 years our mission has been to advocate for Australia's public libraries, especially by encouraging the establishment and development of local friends groups.

More recently, and especially during the last five years, we have refocused our efforts on the sub-group of Australia's 1,700 public libraries that face the greatest systemic disadvantages. Without doubt these libraries are located in isolated, rural and remote communities, serving populations of 10,000 or fewer residents, upwards of 100 or more kilometres from the nearest regional centre.

Why do we worry so much about "country libraries"? Simply because they have the greatest need, in terms of their facilities, resources, and staffing, and also because they have the greatest potential to materially impact community learning outcomes and opportunities. As has been well documented over the decades, there's an enormous educational outcomes gap between metro communities and those even 100 kilometres from a major urban centre. In New South Wales, for example, Higher School Certificate results for students in regional areas are up to 30 percent lower than students across metropolitan Sydney. That's a huge gap, and it's one that a well-funded, resourced and staffed public library can help mitigate.

It also goes some distance to explaining our increasingly close relationship with the charitable foundation the LBW Trust. You might think LBW stands for Leg Before Wicket, and of course there's that, but in this case it also stands for the Learning for a Better World Trust. The LBW Trust is a cricket-themed foundation that was founded by a group of retiring professional



cricketers and sports professionals. Its mission was and remains to improve educational outcomes for young people in disadvantaged communities in cricket-playing nations.

Historically the LBW Trust's work has largely focused on scholarships for young women and men in India, Nepal, Kenya, and elsewhere. Five years ago, FOLA was approached by the LBW Trust's then chair to inquire about ways the Trust could pursue its mission in Australia, acknowledging that the challenges here are nowhere as pervasive or extreme as in the countries in Africa and Asia where they still do the vast majority of their work.

From a series of lengthy discussions, an innovative idea emerged: To provide small grants to country libraries to support educational initiatives in the smallest, most isolated and economically disadvantaged communities. There were several reasons why this approach appealed to the LBW Trust, and also why FOLA turned out to be an ideal partner.

First, public libraries are amongst the most trusted institutions in Australia. They are run by local government, staffed (usually) by trained professionals, and always by reliable, honest staff who care deeply about their mission and purpose.

Second, public libraries are incredibly efficiently run, they waste nothing, and can make extraordinary things happen with very modest budgets. In the hands of a country librarian, a small grant can have a significant impact in a rural community.

Third, public libraries are in general overlooked institutions, and none more so than country libraries. Funding for public libraries comes largely from local government (except in

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“By relying on the passion and capability of library staff, we have provided more than \$400,000 of funding to more than 350 libraries.”

“What turned out to be a huge success was the concept of soliciting proposals from country libraries for “micro grants” of between \$500 and \$1,500 to purchase equipment, materials, or deliver educational experiences.”

Tasmania and the Northern Territory) and they rarely receive donations or grants, apart from some earmarked funds from state governments. This was particularly important to the LBW Trust, which is itself a relatively small foundation. The Trust was looking for a way to make a meaningful difference in Australia where it could operate without competing with larger foundations that were already focused on solving a known problem.

The relationship that emerged between FOLA and the LBW Trust thus began in 2020, in the middle of COVID, with a vision of raising funds to support educational initiatives in rural libraries. We had no idea if it would work, and there was only one way to find out. Fundraising that year, and for the next few, involved an initiative called National Backyard Cricket (NBYC), the idea being that local cricket clubs, schools and community organisations would hold their own games and raise funds to support the Trust.

NBYC proved a difficult event to launch, simply because, as straight-forward as it sounds, getting people to combine a sporting event with a fundraiser is much harder than it looks. (The model that was pursued was the Cancer Council’s “World’s Biggest Morning Tea,” which turns out to be a success for reasons that NBYC couldn’t replicate.)

What turned out to be a huge success was the concept of soliciting proposals from country libraries for “micro grants” of between \$500 and \$1,500 to purchase equipment, materials, or deliver educational experiences to their communities. By relying on the passion and capability of library staff, we have provided more than \$400,000 of funding to more than 350 libraries across every state and the Northern Territory to deliver on their missions as community learning hubs.

Among the projects that libraries have pursued have been seed libraries and cooking classes in rural Victoria, astronomy and star-gazing in outback Western Australia, computers, laptops, tablets, and data projectors, sensitive story time materials for children with autism, science shows with exploding volcanoes in western Queensland, puppet shows, and much, much more.

We’ve also developed a close relationship with Children’s Discovery, a registered charity that delivers STEM-based learning programs for children and their families. Children’s Discovery specialises in assembling science kits and providing training - both in person and online - that is tailored to the needs of country libraries. They have been invaluable in helping us assist remote libraries to deliver science learning experiences in communities that often have no science teachers in their local schools. Without our work and valuable partners like Children’s Discovery, these children would be missing out on the excitement and joy of seeing - and doing - actual science. And that is something that every child who grows up in Australia should experience.

If you would like to learn more about our Country Libraries program, please contact me at jack@fola.org.au. If you would like to make a donation to support country libraries, you can do so at LBWtrust.com.au and click on the “donate” button at the top right corner of the screen.



New Friends of FOLA

INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG'S LIBRARY INITIATIVES

Dr Lauren A. Weber and Professor Lisa Kervin AM



We love libraries. As researchers and teachers of English language, literacy and literature, we are dedicated to supporting and enriching our communities through textual engagement. We know how and why language matters for children, young people, and adults, and that meaningful exposure to rich texts can foster empathy, agency, critical thinking and creativity. The public library is emblematic of our belief in access to quality texts for all.

Some of our recent work at The University of Wollongong has advocated for the role of the public library in the lives of children, young people, and their educators. On 14 December 2023, we connected Bulli High School with the State Library of NSW's bus subsidy program, accompanying students to the 'For All Time' Shakespeare exhibition. Students viewed the SLNSW's remarkable (and exclusive) Folio collection comprising all four Folio editions and a diverse set of Shakespeare-related collection items spanning centuries. The Learning at the Library team provided a bespoke experience for the students in attendance, inviting them to draw on digital technologies to make sense of the rationale behind the exhibition's title and respond to the perennial question, why is

Shakespeare 'for all time'? Many of the students in attendance had never visited the State Library of NSW, let alone have the chance to view and reflect on such remarkable material culture.

Over the last two years, we have cultivated a relationship with the SLNSW Learning at the Library team, offering digital excursions to our initial-teacher-education students enrolled in our English and literacy subjects. To date, close to 100 of our students have been exposed to the library's offerings specifically designed for educators including digital incursions and on-site excursions, innovative teaching and learning materials inspired by the library's collections, and the thousands of texts accessible to library members. Our students have expressed their newfound love of the library and its value in their professional lives as soon-to-be teachers. We find it incredible that all it takes to re/introduce young people to the value of the public library is a single opportunity for engagement.

On September 21, 2024, Lauren lectured on Beatrix Potter for a special event hosted by Shellharbour City Council Library. Our Early Start Research colleagues have subsequently been involved in providing workshops about crucial life-skills for the Shellharbour City Council Library initiative 'Skillscape'. However, we know that not every library is as spatially magnificent and well-resourced as the SLNSW or Shellharbour CCL. We have read [FOLA's 2024 Report](#) about the lack of funding and subsequent quality of country libraries. As a regional university we are committed to our regional and rural communities. A natural next step for our work with the library network is to advocate for those who do not have access to the material, intellectual, and social value libraries provide. We hope to work with FOLA, its members, and our own networks to drive collaborative learning experiences rooted in our knowledge of text and its value for local children, young people, and the adults who make invaluable contributions to their lives.

If you are interested in learning more about our work and/or collaborating with us, please reach out at: lweber@uow.edu.au.

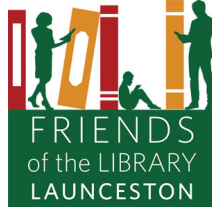
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'Live at the Library' IN LAUNCESTON

"It also has the added benefit of encouraging people to come to the library where they discover, and can take advantage of, other library services."

Live at the Library is an initiative of Friends of the Library Launceston (FoLL). The idea came from a long-serving FoLL member who was concerned that performers of various disciplines had no income during the COVID pandemic. From this arose the concept that became 'Live at the Library' with a focus on music, initially to attract adults and young people, as the Library itself offered many events aimed at children. It also has the added benefit of encouraging people to come to the library where they discover, and can take advantage of, other library services.



The program has now been running since November 2022. On the first and third Saturdays of each month, musicians play for an hour in the café area of the library which is open and adjacent to the main ground floor lending area. Musicians are paid by FoLL from money raised in our annual Book Sale.

"The occasion is a good opportunity to promote FoLL and new members have joined our group to help with the program."

The performances are free and welcoming to everyone. We regularly see parents and grandparents with their families, people with disabilities and their carers, elderly people and inter-state visitors as well as passers-by who are intrigued to hear live music playing in a library.

Because of the layout of the Launceston Library building, the music can be heard throughout all three floors of the building.

We encourage emerging and established musicians playing a variety of instruments including saxophones, keyboards, violins, clarinets, harp, guitars, double bass, flute, pipes, drums, ukeleles and cellos. Usually there are just one or two musicians but when a ukelele jamboree was held in Launceston recently we had a whole orchestra of ukeleles. We also have had choirs at Christmas time.



Tom Booth playing acoustic guitar for Live at the Library in October 2025



The Verandah Folk treated Launceston Library patrons to a delightful foot-tapping performance this morning with folk music from hundreds of years ago

We actively encourage both amateurs and professional talent of all ages and genres. The library provides a safe friendly venue for someone needing confidence to perform or to try out a new composition or repertoire. Those who may not have the confidence to perform a three-hour gig are reassured by the one-hour commitment and smaller audience.

Taking place in the café means it is a social venue with comfortable chairs, tables, reading materials and refreshments.

The occasion is a good opportunity to promote FoLL and new members have joined our group to help with the program. It has become an established event in Launceston, with many benefits to all involved!

Heather Crosbie and Prue McCausland



Focus on Friends

VICTOR HARBOR (SA)



The Friends of the Victor Harbor Library was formed in 1992 with the aim being to raise funds to support the activities and programmes of the library and assist promoting the library services in the community.

The Friends recently held their A.G.M. and the new committee is enthusiastically planning for the year ahead. In the past financial year the Friends raised over \$13,000 with this money directly benefitting the library. Their quarterly book sales enable them to assist the library with purchasing extra equipment and provide funding for additional programmes especially in the school holidays. They also assist by sponsoring prizes for book competitions and have recently purchased new book bags which are for sale in the library. A bookcase just inside the library with \$1 books is also proving to be a steady contributor to funds. The Friends are very lucky to be assisted at their book sales by a great band of "Book sale" volunteers – each book sale goes for a week so the extra help is very much appreciated.

A Street Library installed by the Friends just behind a busy shopping area is very popular with passers-by and a lovely way to keep readers young and old reading. The Friends were privileged to have Sue McKay as a guest speaker at their A.G.M. Sue spoke about her experience working as a Stoma Therapy Registered Nurse at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital in Ethiopia and the lifechanging effect their work has on the young mothers – a very interesting and at times confronting subject.



Sue McKay and Pauline Rattray (Friends Secretary)

"The Friends recently held their A.G.M. and the new committee is enthusiastically planning for the year ahead.."



Jane Peters and Sally St George
(Committee members)

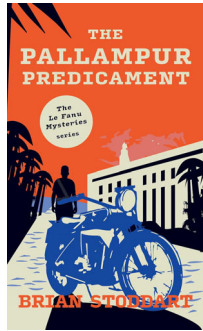
"A Street Library installed by the Friends just behind a busy shopping area is very popular with passers-by and a lovely way to keep readers young and old reading."

Friends Around Australia



WINGECARRIBEE (NSW)

An author event: *The Pallampur Predicament* is the second of Brian's compelling detective mystery novels based on true crimes in India during the 1920s and featuring British Superintendent Le Fanu. In *Playing the Game*, Brian explores the historic role of cricket in Barbados, including how it has been used as a tool of social control and a symbol of cultural identity.



Emeritus Professor Brian Stoddart is a multi award-winning historian, novelist, screenwriter and commentator who has written 25 books on a diverse range of subjects.

10am Tuesday 16 September 2025. Henrietta Rose Room, next to the Bowral Library. Morning tea will follow the talk

\$15 FOWL members \$20 non-members

WAGGA WAGGA (NSW)

Helping out the library on Facebook:

You may have noticed the colourful display of entries on Level 0 for our Book Week colouring competition! Thank you to everyone who participated, our winners have now been contacted.

And a big thank you to Friends of the Wagga Wagga City Library for donating each age category winner, a new book from the CBCA Book of the Year Awards shortlist



MOUNT GAMBIER (SA)

Friends of the Library Mount Gambier will hold their annual Big Book Sale on Saturday 26 July 2025, from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Mount Gambier Library. Donations of books and other items are currently being sought to support the event. Proceeds from the sale will be reinvested into library resources, as part of the Friends' major annual fundraising effort.

LAUNCESTON (TAS)



Free live music performances at Launceston Library, come along at 10:30 am - no booking required!

DCT 4 Tom Booth
Bringing guitar and vocals from Hobart

DCT 18 Ian Chia
Austrian neo-romantic project 'Scray Luxury'

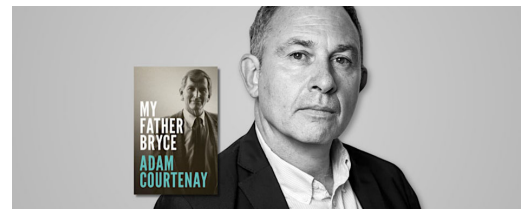
NOV 1 Frances Cameron
Composer and pianist

NOV 15 Marguerite and Calum
Combining violin, guitars and octave mandolin

DEC 6 Karlin Love
Christmas themed clarinet and guitar

DEC 20 Joanne Mitchelson with Hamish
Harp and fiddle

WOLLONGONG (NSW)



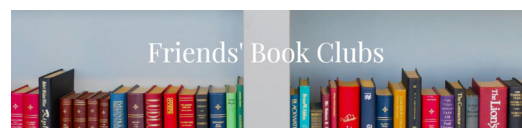
An author event: Join The Friends of Wollongong City Library for a literary lunch with Adam Courtenay!

We hope you can join us on Friday 31 October to welcome Adam to the Function Room on Level 9 of the Wollongong City Council administration building. The bestselling author of *The Ship That Never Was* will discuss his latest book, *My Father Bryce - a memoir* about the complex, driven, and dynamic man that Adam called father, best-selling author Bryce Courtenay.

Books will be available for purchase at the event. If you would like to take part in the raffle, please bring along coins or notes.

Tickets cost \$35 for Friends of the Library members, or \$40 for non-members.

STATE LIBRARY (SA)



Friends' Book Clubs. Friends Crime Book Club. Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month, 2pm to 3pm. Review of a pre-chosen book.

Enquiries: 08 7424 6310

"And a big thank you to Friends of the Wagga Wagga City Library for donating each age category winner."

"Proceeds from the sale will be reinvested into library resources, as part of the Friends' major annual fundraising effort."

Membership Application

CATEGORIES

Membership fee incorporating
News Update

Individual	\$15	☐
FOL Group— 0-25 Members	\$25	☐
FOL Group— 25+ Members	\$50	☐
Libraries	\$105	☐
Institutions incl. Libraries with multiple Friends groups	\$105	☐
Corporations	\$105	☐
Extra copies of News Update	\$10 per annum	☐

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