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MEDIA RELEASE

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TRIBUTE TO LITERARY GREATS ON SYDNEY WRITERS' WALK

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality, Racing and the Arts, George Souris, today officially unveiled the latest additions to the famed Sydney's Writers' Walk at Circular Quay.

Mr Souris said the lives and achievements of 11 acclaimed authors will be permanently recognised by the addition of new brass plaques to the landmark promenade.

"These literary leaders have all made a significant contribution to our national identity and cultural landscape over generations," Mr Souris said.

"Contemporary fiction writer Colleen McCullough is there, as is novelist Jessica Anderson and British born Australian authors Elizabeth Jolley and Marcus Clarke.

"The legacy of Donald Horne, Manning Clark, Patricia Wrightson, Dymphna Cusack, Watkin Tench and AB Facey also feature in Sydney's Writers' Walk.

"PL Travers – the Australian born creator of the universally popular Mary Poppins – rounds out the latest additions to the literary tribute which was first initiated 20 years ago.

"These new plaques feature in the pavement of one of the most popular areas of Sydney on the foreshore of our beautiful harbour.

"I am delighted to see the names of these authors permanently etched into Circular Quay for locals and visitors alike to see for many years to come.

"This latest extension sees a total of 60 authors feature in Sydney's Writers' Walk stretching from the forecourt at the Sydney Opera House to the Overseas Passenger Terminal."

The process for determining authors added to the Writers' Walk was coordinated by Arts NSW in conjunction with Sydney Writers' Festival Chair Sandra Yates and Artistic Director Chip Rolley, with research undertaken by author Delia Falconer.

Mr Rolley said the Sydney Writers' Festival was proud to have played a role in the project, and welcomed and appreciated the honour to writers bestowed by the NSW Government.

"The extension of the Writers' Walk in this, the historic gateway of Sydney, is strong testament to the importance of writing to Australian society and culture. Writers give us our voice and fuel our imagination," Mr Rolley said.

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Authors included in the Extension to the Writers' Walk

Jessica Anderson (1916 - 2010)

Twice winner of the Miles Franklin Award, Queensland-born Jessica Anderson lived most of her life in Sydney. *Tirra Lirra by the River*, her elegant novel about a woman whose artistic gifts were wasted by a philistine era, has become an Australian classic.

Manning Clark (1915 – 1991)

The first Professor of Australian History, Manning Clark spent 30 years completing his six-volume *A History of Australia*. Written in magisterial prose, this controversial masterpiece revolutionised Australians' understanding of their past, depicting it as epic tragedy and triumph, and deserving of study.

Marcus Clarke (1846 – 1881)

Emigrating from London when his family's fortunes failed, Marcus Clarke became a journalist and librarian in Melbourne. In his classic novel *For the Term of His Natural Life*, he set out to show 'the working and the results of an English system of transportation'.

Dymphna Cusack (1902 – 1981)

An internationally best-selling author of plays, novels, and non-fiction. Her writing was distinguished by a strong social conscience, and a deep interest in the lives of modern women, especially those living in the bohemian enclaves of inner city Sydney.

AB Facey (1894 – 1982)

Sent out at eight years of age to work in rural Western Australia, Bert Facey taught himself to read and write as an adult. He fought at Gallipoli, became a soldier settler and drove trams. Published in the last year of his life, his understated autobiography became an instant bestseller.

Donald Horne (1921 – 2005)

The Lucky Country caused a sensation by criticising Australia's insularity, philistinism and cultural cringe. A committed secular humanist, Horne advanced debate as a writer, social critic, editor, academic, and chair of cultural organisations.

Elizabeth Jolley (1923 – 2007)

Born in Birmingham, Elizabeth Jolley trained as a nurse in London during the Second World War, and immigrated to Western Australia in 1959. Her first novel was accepted when she was almost 60 years old. She went on to produce 22 more acclaimed and often blackly comic works, including her best-known, *The Well*.

Colleen McCullough (Born 1937)

Born in western NSW, Colleen McCullough worked as a neuroscientist before becoming an internationally bestselling author. Her most famous novel is *The Thorn Birds*, the story of a doomed Catholic-Australian rural dynasty.

Watkin Tench (c1758 – 1833)

Marine officer Watkin Tench served in Port Jackson from 1788-1791. Among eyewitness accounts of the colony's first years, his two published books are the liveliest, most literary, and most acute. The diary he kept here appears to have been lost.

PL Travers (1899 – 1996)

Pamela Lyndon Travers is best known as the creator of Mary Poppins. Born in Queensland, she relocated to London in 1924 and rarely wrote about Australia. In Travers' opinion, she did not write 'children's literature', believing instead in Yeats's idea of radical innocence.

Patricia Wrightson (1921 – 2010)

A pioneer of post war children's fiction, Patricia Wrightson introduced many young readers to Australia's long history by reimagining Aboriginal spirits in her novels, which was progressive for its time. In 1986 she received the Hans Christian Andersen Medal, the highest international honour for children's literature.