

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 29 November 2016

Bulldogs, barbequed ducks and wildcats – look back at 2016 and laugh

Behind the Lines 2016: The year's best political cartoons, on show at the Museum of Australian Democracy (MOAD) at Old Parliament House, celebrates the role of political cartoonists in Australia and highlights the power that their drawings have in contributing to our daily political and social discourse.

And what material was on offer in 2016! From double-dissolution election, senate voting reforms, same sex marriage plebiscite and the census here at home, to the Brexit referendum and the US election, Australia's cartoonists have created thousands of cartoons pillorying, satirising, commentating and providing their own unique insights

"Political cartoonists take their art seriously. They get to the heart of issues that are impacting the community, make us laugh, think and question what we hear from our political leaders – all in the space of a single cartoon," says exhibition curator Tania Cleary.

The exhibition features a range of masters of cartoon art including Alan Moir, Chris 'ROY' Taylor, Chris Downes, David Rowe, David Pope First Dog on the Moon, Mark Knight, Matt Golding, John Spooner and more from all our major news outlets.

Author and political cartoonist Cathy Wilcox claimed the coveted Political Cartoonist of the Year award as a part of ***Behind the Lines 2016***, making her the first female cartoonist to win the award. An editorial cartoonist for the Sydney Morning Herald, Cathy has been inspiring readers with her daily insights into political life since 1989.

"As each day throws up another feast of political folly to be chewed over and un-spun, it can seem as if the cartoons fleet by like so much daily news ephemera, to be forgotten the next day.

For this reason, it's especially gratifying to have my work recognised by the Museum of Australian Democracy for its value over a period of time, and given a life beyond the daily cycle, said Ms Cathy Wilcox.

Ms Daryl Karp, Director of the Museum of Australian Democracy, says that the work of political cartoonists is an inspiring reminder and celebration of Australian democracy.

"Political cartoonists get to push the boundaries and turn our leaders into caricatures that bring to life the questions that most of us should be asking of those that represent us. There are many countries where similar actions would see you censored, jailed or worse."

Ms Karp says that political cartooning in Australia is changing: "Political cartooning has not been immune to the shift in the media landscape, as print newspapers reduce staff and the way that we consume news changes.

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“In a landscape where information is distilled to 140 characters, viral photos and memes, our political cartoonists are well equipped to meet the needs of this change and ensure they remain an essential part of celebrating Australia’s democracy.”

“This is reflected in the work of the cartooning community like Fiona Katauskas, John Spooner, Pat Campbell, Rod Clement and Rocco Fazzari. This year’s exhibition also confirms the growing trend of ‘pocket’ cartoons placed within stories now replacing the larger editorial page cartoons,” says Ms Cleary.

“This year’s *Behind the Lines* takes visitors on a political journey of 2016 through this impressive and engaging medium. The exhibition is not just a chronicle and commentary of the political events of 2016, it is also a tribute to the artists who have asked some tough questions and helped us get through it all with good humour,” says Ms Cleary.

Behind the Lines 2016: The year’s best political cartoons will be open to the public from Wednesday 30 November 2016. A travelling version of the exhibition will also tour the following regional institutions:

- Gosford Regional Art Gallery
- Grafton Regional Gallery
- Parramatta Riverside Theatre
- Old Treasury Building Melbourne
- Warrnambool Art Gallery
- State Library of South Australia

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House celebrates the spirit of Australian democracy and the power of your voice within it. Website: www.moadoph.gov.au

Ends

For further information, images or interview opportunities please contact: Nicolle Keyes, 02 6270 8135, 0411 520 938 or Nicolle.keyes@moadoph.gov.au

Interview opportunities

- Cathy Wilcox, 2016 Cartoonist of the Year
- Tania Cleary, Curator for Behind the Lines 2016
- Michael Evans, Executive Producer, Commissioning Editor for Behind the Lines
- Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House

Accompanying material

- Thumbnails of all cartoons attached, including Tania Cleary’s top 5 cartoons
- Higher res images of cartoons can be supplied