

My wife Gail Pearson and I are the joint owners of 8 Highfield Road Lindfield. I became a joint owner of this property in early 1969 with my late sister Diana. The residence has two sections, each with a separate kitchen, bedrooms, bathrooms and living areas etc. My wife and I live in the front section which was built in about 1907. My son Harold and his wife Claire Lehmann, with their two school-age children live in the back section which was built in about 1955. The house is subject to a restrictive covenant held by Ku-ring-gai Council as to its use, as when the back section was built, dual occupancies were only permitted if certain conditions were satisfied.

Please refer to the submission by BBC planning on our behalf regarding Significant State Development Application SSDA 85974227. See also the submissions from Stephen Palmer and Father Colin Blayney. These submissions express better than I can my more general objections to SSDA 85974227 and describe the many defects in the proposed development itself and the damage it would cause: environmental damage (in particular to a wildlife corridor) and traffic problems. I concur with these objections.

To avoid repetition of matters dealt with in other objections, my objection here focuses on the *heritage value* of what shall be referred to as "*the Precinct*" being the area bounded by Balfour Street, the Pacific Highway, Highfield Road and Wallace Parade. Although not strictly part of the Precinct, the interests of pupils, staff and parents of Highfields Preparatory School should also be considered for heritage value purposes, as Highfields School is directly contiguous to the Precinct.

When determining the appropriateness of SSDA 85974227 the heritage value of the Precinct as a whole needs to be considered, not just the heritage value of the houses at 9-17 Balfour Street which would be demolished. The reason for this is fairly self-evident.

*If the SSDA for 9-17 Balfour Street proceeds, then the houses at 6-10 Highfield Road will be so severely impacted by loss of amenity that they will have demolition value only.*

I have not discussed SSDA 85974227 with the owners of 6 Highfield Road, and I cannot speak for them. But it is apparent from discussions among the owners of 8 to 14 Highfield Road, that we shall all sell, if SSDA 85974227 proceeds. We shall no longer wish to live here. In which event three houses (or possibly four, if 6 Highfield Road is included) which have been family residences for more than a century will be demolished and their gardens destroyed, and these valuable heritage items lost. This would be in addition to the loss of the heritage items in Balfour Street which are the subjects of SSDA 85974227 and SSDA 82709458.

## **Heritage values and criteria**

New South Wales legislation requires four values to be considered for a significance assessment of heritage value:

1. Historical significance (evolution and association)
2. Aesthetic significance (scenic/architectural qualities and creative accomplishment)
3. Scientific significance . . .
4. Social significance (contemporary community esteem)

These are the criteria for determining heritage value:

- (a) An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area)
- (b) An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history
- (c) An item is important in demonstrating the aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area)
- (d) An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons
- (e) An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history . . .
- (f) An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history . . .
- (g) An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural or natural places . .

## **Why the Precinct has heritage value as a whole and merits consideration as a heritage item**

The Precinct has, I understand, *already* been recognised as a “heritage area” by Ku-ring-gai Council, although only one house – 6 Highfield Road – has been identified by the Council as a “heritage item”. The Council is therefore aware of the heritage value of the Precinct. That the Precinct is overall a heritage item is an established fact. Whether its heritage status should be sacrificed to address urgent housing needs, or whether other areas with less heritage value should be sacrificed is the issue to be determined.

An important consideration is that Holy Family Catholic Church, Holy Family School and Highfields Preparatory School are on comparatively small sites for a church or school. Some nearby schools, for example, Pymble Ladies' College, Sydney Grammar School St Ives Preparatory School and Roseville College, all have extensive grounds, playing fields and swimming pools and can continue to

function effectively as microcosms which are largely independent of their surroundings. This is not the case with the two schools and church that are part of, or contiguous to, the Precinct. Their sites are quite confined and the destruction of the beautiful houses and their gardens currently located in the Precinct will severely impact the ethos and ambience of both schools and the church for a wide community. Father Colin Blayney is correct in his concern that children playing will not enjoy being overlooked by a 9 to 10 storey apartment block. This is addition to the danger to small children from increased and more frustrated vehicular traffic which would result if SSDA 85974227 and SSDA 82709458 proceed.

The houses in the Precinct therefore come within Heritage Value 4 (“Social significance (contemporary community esteem”) as they are important for the continuing ethos and ambience of places of education and worship, and they satisfy Criterion (d) (“strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons”).

The houses in the Precinct also satisfy Criteria (a) (“important in the course, or pattern, of . . .the cultural or natural history of the local area”), (f) (“possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW’s cultural or natural history”) and (g) (“important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW’s cultural or natural places”). With few exceptions almost all of the Federation/Queen Anne/Californian bungalows within the Ku-ring-gai municipality were built either on the Pacific Highway or close to the municipality’s railway stations. Few of this class of residences were built at considerable distances from the railway or highway. Many of houses of this class have already been sacrificed for apartment buildings on the Pacific Highway or close to railway stations – for example in Lindfield, in Lindfield Avenue a delightful, small cottage which hosted the obscure “Lindfield Club” (apparently a bridge club) and numerous older cottages in Tryon Road. Inevitably more of this class of houses will be demolished to make way for housing needs. The issue is which houses of this class should be preserved.

There is a strong case for preserving the houses in the Precinct *as they are still intact and are a significant group*, rather than preserving just a few isolated houses of this class located here and there. *In addition they provide an attractive and useful setting for two schools and a church.*

### **The historical importance of specific houses in the Precinct**

Criterion (b) refers to an item having “strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW’s cultural or natural history”. I shall now list persons who might come within this category who have lived in houses in the Precinct of whom I am aware. There may be others of whom I am unaware.

*9 Balfour Street*

**Charlotte Mortlock** grew up in this house. She recently resigned from the Liberal Party, when Sussan Ley, the first female leader of the Federal Liberal Party was replaced. Her CV as it appears on Women National In Media Conference states:

Charlotte Mortlock is a former Sky News journalist and political advisor who founded Hilma’s Network – a national movement encouraging more women to join and shape the Liberal Party. With 12 years in newsrooms from Sydney to New York, she now combines media expertise and political advocacy to drive female representation. Charlotte also hosts The Clock podcast, highlighting the many paths women take in their 30s and beyond.

*11 Balfour Street*

For about a decade from the 1980s to the 1990s **Greg Paramor AO** and his wife Kerrie lived in this house with their children. As well as being a pioneer in Australia of certain forms of mutual ownership and a business leader, Greg has also been active in charities and sport. In October 2025 the Property Council of Australia described Greg in these terms:

Greg is the Chairman of the Leftfield Group, a multi-disciplinary investment manager with a portfolio spanning real estate, private equity, listed equities, venture capital and social impact. Currently, Greg is the Executive Chair of Inclusive Housing Australia Pty Ltd, an innovative provider of specialist disability accommodation. . .

Greg was the co-founder of Growth Equities Mutual, Paladin Australia, and the James Fielding Group and CEO of Mirvac Group between 2004 and 2008. He is a past president of the Property Council of Australia and Investment Funds Association. Greg is the current Chair of BackTrack, an organisation assisting vulnerable young people, a board member of the Sydney Swans and Sydney Swans Foundation and Director of the Garvan Research Foundation.

*13 Balfour Street*

**Antony Jeffrey AM** and his wife Heather lived in this house from the 1970s. Antony later separated from his wife. Antony has published two novels. His CV on his website provides the following details:

Antony Jeffrey has been an arts professional for over 40 years. His career in the arts started as the first Director of the Australia Council's Music Board. Long stints as marketing director of The Australian Opera (now Opera Australia), as general manager of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and subsequently the Song Company, have been interspersed with many consulting assignments. He has recorded over a hundred interviews with artists and leading figures in the arts, many of which formed the basis for his 2010 book *Many Faces of Inspiration*, published by Wakefield Press. In 2008, he was awarded an AM for his services to the arts.

### *6 Highfield Road*

This house is a listed heritage item. For some decades, perhaps from the late 1940s to the early 1970s, **Maurice Bertram Jeffery** (differently spelled surname from Antony) lived in this house with his family. Maurice was famous as the founder of Perkins Paste "a cultural icon". The following are some extracts from the Wikipedia page on "Perkins Paste":

**Perkins Paste** was an Australian brand of adhesive. Although not designed specifically for children, its quick drying, non-toxic formula made it safe for school use. The glue was sold commonly in small, 60-gram, fuchsia-coloured, cylindrical plastic tubs with white plastic lids that incorporated the flat, spatula-like applicator. The paste was a thick white solid paste, made from boiled potato dextrin.

Perkins Paste was owned and started by Maurice Bertram Jeffery, a commercial artist who found himself unemployed during the /great ? Depression . Production began in 1934 in Albion Street Surry Hills and ceased during the 1980s. It became a cultural icon , akin to Vegemite or the Tim Tam biscuit. Many users of the product recall eating Perkins Paste during their primary school years.<sup>[1]</sup>

A track called Perkins Paste has been recorded by the band Bleeding Jelly Eyes.

On 11 March 1993, Perkins Paste was mentioned in the NSW Legislative Assembly during debate on the 'State Environmental Planning Policy No. 3 - Castlereagh Liquid Waste Disposal Depot'. The then Member for Ermington implied that the then Member for Blacktown had rearranged

information contained in Water Board memoranda: "out with the scissors, out with the Perkins Paste, and out with the truth".<sup>[2]</sup>

In 2003, Perkin's Paste was mentioned in a newspaper report concerning the youth creative arts festival 'Noise' in Melbourne. The digital revolution was likened to Perkins Paste as a form of creativity (of DIY, cutting and pasting) available to everyone.<sup>[3]</sup>

Travel writer Susan Kurosawa recalled, in a 2007 newspaper article her mother's use of Perkins Paste . . .

A t-shirt showing the Perkins Paste label was previously available from REMO.

Australian Urban Culture side-note: Eating small amounts of Perkin's Paste was a "rite of passage" in most Australian Primary Schools during the 1970s.

From about 1972, for a year or couple of years, the poet and novelist **Rodney Hall** AM lived with his wife and three daughters in this house. Extracts from his Wikipedia page state:

. . . [Hall] worked as an actor, and was often engaged by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in Brisbane. Between 1967 and 1978 he was the Poetry Editor of *The Australian*. He began publishing poetry in the 1970s and has since published fourteen novels, including *Just Relations* and *The Island in the Mind*. . . . From 1991 to 1994, he served as chair of the Australia Council . . .

In addition to a number of literary awards such as twice winning the Miles Franklin Award he was appointed a Member of Order for Australia for "service to the Arts, particularly in the field of literature" in 1990.

### *10-12 Highfield Road*

For probably about four decades, perhaps starting in the early 1940s the concert pianist **Eunice Gardiner** lived in this house which is in the Californian bungalow style. When she died in 2009, Ken Healey published this obituary in the Sydney Morning Herald on 24 August 2009 under a heading "A musical career honed in the laundry":

EUNICE GARDINER was given a generous span of 91 years to prove that Renaissance Man could be reborn as Sydney Woman. She was a child prodigy, concert pianist, teacher, mother of seven, music critic, radio and

television presenter and, not least, wife to a Sydney dentist, Robert Curtin .

..

She was four years old when she so impressed the pianist and composer Frank Hutchens that he became her champion and mentor.

At 15 she won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, travelling to London with her mother two years later, in 1935. They were fortified by the fruits of Hutchens's fund-raising efforts in the aftermath of the Great Depression.

A prize-winner at the Royal Academy, of which she was to become a fellow in 1983, Gardiner made her London debut in the presence of the Australian prime minister Joe Lyons at the Wigmore Hall in 1937.

She was hailed as Melba of the piano by Baronne Marchesi, daughter of Dame Nellie's teacher. She performed regularly on stage and for BBC radio and television while in London, represented by the legendary impresario Harold Holt. He first heard her play at a society function attended by Queen Elizabeth (mother of the present Queen).

Personal loss came before professional good fortune - her father died suddenly while at sea in 1936. Three years later the threat of war caused Myra Hess to withdraw from a planned tour of Australia with Sir Thomas Beecham. Gardiner became engaged to Robert Curtin and returned home as Beecham's soloist in 1940. Despite published assertions that she would never let marriage interfere with her career, she was married in December that year.

With the war and motherhood forming a dual barrier to an overseas career, Gardiner played concerts and radio broadcasts for the ABC, the nation's only employer of solo pianists. Highlights included the ABC's first Beethoven Festival in 1942, concerts with Eugene Ormandy and Maurice Abravanel in 1944, and a tour with Eugene Goossens in 1947.

When she performed the Australian premiere of Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* in Melbourne in 1947, the orchestral parts arrived from London barely in time for rehearsal, and had to be returned immediately after the performance.

Gardiner spent 1948 in North America, her musical sabbatical year away from the daily demands of three young children. At home she escaped the din of kiddie chaos by stationing a second piano downstairs and practising

there. Asked "Is it true you have a piano in the laundry?" she replied: "Doesn't everyone?"

Refreshed as a pianist, she was on her way to an auxiliary career as the classical music critic for Frank Packer's *Daily Telegraph*, a post she filled with distinction for seven years from 1951. At that time commercial radio also gave classical music the time of day. Gardiner hosted a weekly half-hour program of interviews with guests about their musical interests, *Behind the Scenes*, on 2UE.

On television Gardiner played as well as interviewing guests during her weekly program on Channel Nine in 1958. In his eulogy at her Requiem Mass, her son, Gerald, pronounced his birth untimely because it ended his mother's television career after only six months.

In 1961, with two children not yet in kindergarten, Gardiner decided on her final career change, joining the teaching staff of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. She taught for 25 years at the institution where Frank Hutchens, in the interests of her broader education, had determined that she was not to be a student.

Gardiner was not bashful about her gift of perfect pitch. Driving behind a truck that revved ever faster on a hill, she said to granddaughter Rowena, sitting beside her: "Good heavens, that truck has just driven straight through D major."

Robert Curtin's death in 1982 set Gardiner thinking about retirement. Her chosen destination for two grand pianos, a succession of cats each called Puss, and her memories was Hyams Beach at Jervis Bay. She lived alone while she could, returning to care in Sydney as her health declined gently. Paul, her second son, recalled her "leaving us little by little over the past few years". Sometimes dementia shows its kinder face.

Bach's *Great Fugue in A minor* was the organ recessional at her funeral. She had played its piano transcription at her London debut in 1937. . .

Eunice's husband Robert Curtin was an avid bibliophile and had a library of about 6,000 or so books. Three priests officiated at his requiem mass at Holy Family Church. One of these priests was Father Gerald Jones. Robert Hughes in his memoir *Things I Didn't Know* recalled Father Jones fondly: "Nobody could have done more to bring the classics alive . . ." In his eulogy for Bob Curtin,

Father Jones mentioned that when they were young men they studied the poetry of St John of the Cross together.

### *8 Highfield Road*

The historian Peter Read lived in this house in his youth, which belonged to his parents who sold it to my sister and me. I later became a friend of Peter and his wife Jay. He again lived in the back section of the house for several weeks early in 1977 with Jay and their small children. Peter's Wikipedia entry states:

**Peter John Read AM FASSA** (born 1945) is an Australian historian specialising in the history of Indigenous Australians. Read worked as a teacher and civil servant before co-founding Link-Up. Link-Up was an organisation that reunited Aboriginal families who had undergone forcible separation of children from their families through government intervention. Read coined the term "[Stolen Generations](#)" to refer to the children subject to these interventions in a 1981 study. After graduating with a doctorate, Read worked as an academic for the rest of his career, primarily working on Australian Indigenous history. He has also published work on the relationship between non-indigenous Australians and the land. In 2019, Read was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his work on Indigenous history . . .

As well as listing three books which he co-edited, Wikipedia lists the following published books written by Peter:

- *A Hundred Years War: The Wiradjuri people and the state* (1988)
- *Charles Perkins; a biography* (1990)
- *Long Time, Olden Time: Aboriginal accounts of Northern Territory history*, co-author Jay Read (1991)
- *Returning to Nothing: The meaning of lost places* (1996)
- *A Rape of the Soul So Profound; The return of the stolen generations* (1999)
- *Belonging; Australians, place and Aboriginal ownership* (2000)
- *Haunted Earth* (2003)
- *Narrow But Endlessly Deep: The struggle for memorialisation in Chile since the transition to democracy* (2016)
- *What the Colonists Never Knew: A History of Aboriginal Sydney*, co-author Dennis Foley (2020)

Claire Lehmann has lived in this house since 2013 with her husband Harold Lehmann and now with their two children. Her Wikipedia page states:

**Claire Lehmann** (*née Jensen*) . . . is an Australian journalist, publisher, and the founding editor of *Quillette*. . . Lehmann founded the online magazine

*Quillette* in October 2015.<sup>[6]</sup> According to the newspaper *The Australian*, Lehmann's story about the controversy surrounding Google engineer James Damore precipitated the venture's success. ...

Lehmann has contributed to publications including *The Guardian*, *Scientific American*, *Tablet* and *ABC News*. She is a columnist at *The Australian* and is a contributing writer at *The Dispatch* . ...

[Bari Weiss](#) regards Lehmann as one of the leaders of the so-called "intellectual dark web" (IDW). Lehmann is seen as part of the IDW due to publishing *Quillette* which *Politico* has referred to as "the unofficial digest of the IDW" which "prides itself on publishing 'dangerous' ideas other outlets won't touch", and criticising "what they see as left-wing orthodoxy".

*The Sydney Morning Herald* named Lehmann in their "Ten Aussies who shook the world in tech and media in 2018" citing that her online magazine, *Quillette*, has "attracted as many as 2 million followers a month, [and] is starting to gain significant traction in tech and libertarian circles in the US".<sup>1</sup>

Lehmann co-edited the anthology of essays *Panics and Persecutions: 20 Quillette Tales of Excommunication in the Digital Age* in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

Lehmann received the 2025 [Constance Holden Memorial Award](#) for Distinguished Journalism from the [International Society for Intelligence Research](#) at its annual conference held at [Northwestern University](#), where she delivered the Constance Holden Memorial Address titled *A Heterodox Education*, later published in *Quillette*.

My wife Gail Pearson, who began her academic life as a historian of India, has lived in this house since 1980. An undated CV from the website of the International Association of Consumer Law (written before she retired from her professorial chair of business law at the University of Sydney) states:

**Gail Pearson** is Professor of Business Law at the University of Sydney where she Chairs the PHDASC and is Deputy Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of Academic Board. She was Chair of the Discipline of Business Law. She is a Member of the Code Compliance Committee for Customer Owned Banks. Her books and articles are on financial services and credit and other aspects of commercial and consumer law. She has been a Member of the Fair Trading Tribunal of New South Wales, the consultative committee to the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal, and the Business Law Specialist Accreditation Committee of the Law Society

of New South Wales. With others from the IACL she was a member of the International Law Association Committee on the International Protection of Consumers. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies at JNU [Jawaharlal Nehru University – India’s premier public central university] and of the Australia India Institute. With Nicola Howell of QUT, she founded the Australasian Consumer Law Roundtable.

My first wife **Sally McInerney** lived in this house from 1969 until early 1977. Her mother Olive Cotton was one of Australia’s most celebrated photographers, and photographed aspects of the house and garden.

Photo Review has published an exhibition notice accompanied by photographs regarding Sally and her mother: “Olive Cotton & Sally McInerney, Mother & Daughter: A Conversation 13-24 May 2014, Curated by Sandy Edwards of Arthere, Damien Minton Gallery, 583 Elizabeth Street, Redfern”. The notice comments:

Olive Cotton’s confident sense of design and balance was expressed across a wide range of subject types. Her images are on show in conjunction with works by her daughter, Sally McInerney. As you’ll see, McInerney is a superb photographer in her own right and it’s interesting to see the echoes of her mother’s aesthetic sensibilities showing up in some of the images . . .

This is a historic exhibition of two notable Australian women photographers – Olive Cotton and Sally McInerney, mother and daughter exhibiting for the first time . .

Sally McInerney was the winner of Sydney Life in 2012; winner of the Head On Photo Prize in 2006; and winner at age 16 of the Sydney Morning Herald Prize for best black and white print . . .

Sally McInerney is an established and highly accomplished exhibiting photographic artist with seven solo exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions and publications to her credit.

Sally is also a gifted line artist. Her undated etching, printed in black ink on white wove paper “Zebras” is held by the Art Gallery of New South Wales and is listed as “Bequest of Patrick White 1991”.

My daughter, the author and singer and songwriter **Lucy Lehmann** lived in the house from her birth in 1974, and then from 1977 until about 1990 on a part time basis as a child of joint custody. Lucy’s novel *The Showgirl and the Brumby* was

published by Random House in 2002. It was reviewed by Gillian Dooley for Writers' Radio, Radio Adelaide on 14 December 2002. Some excerpts from the review:

Lucy Lehmann's novel *The Showgirl and the Brumby* was runner up in the Vogel literary awards in 2000. I have read the winning novel, and I believe this one is better. I would have given it first prize.

Lehmann spent six years writing her book, and the time and care she has taken is obvious. It is stylishly written, full of stunning figurative language but also at times delightfully down to earth. It might have lost out in the prize-winning stakes because its setting is not topical or currently fashionable. It is a story of family rivalry across three generations set in the New South Wales country town of Cowra. Nothing extraordinary in that. It is the writing that is exceptional, and the characters are drawn with unusual perception and sympathy. At first I thought this novel was merely a clever satire, but then characters began to develop . . .

Lehmann trained as a film-maker and has won awards for some of her short films. A strong visual imagination is evident in this book. Often the writing is cinematic, the perspective of one character standing in for the camera . . .

The perceptiveness is always more than just visual. There is a wonderful scene where Grace, the rich girl, sees her despised rival Donna's drab home for the first time . . .

*The Showgirl and the Brumby* is a funny, perceptive, moving, beautifully written novel. It shows a generous, clear-sighted understanding of all the characters, who we all grow to like at least a little. Although it starts as satire, it develops into much more. It is one of the best novels I have read this year.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Coodabeens has this note regarding Lucy as a singer and songwriter:

Lucy Lehmann - We're Living The Way We Like It

An award winning author, Lucy Lehmann came to music late but made up for lost time by recording her debut album with ease and aplomb. A confederate of Sydney indie godfather/stalwart/journeyman Nic Dalton, her songs bear the trademarks of the unpretentious inner-city sound but with a considered, imaginative and, at times, playful viewpoint borne of the

outsider looking in. One would expect an author to be an accomplished lyricist but Lehmann also excels at memorable, uncomplicated melodies which linger long after the needle has lifted from the turntable - this title track is a perfect example.

I have lived at 8 Highfield Road since early 1969 – more than 55 years. Excerpts from my Wikipedia page state:

**Geoffrey Lehmann** (born 28 June 1940) is an Australian poet, children's writer, and tax lawyer . . .

Lehmann was the first Australian poet to be published by the London publishing house [Faber & Faber](#). . . .

#### Awards

[Grace Leven Prize for Poetry](#), winner 1965 for *The Ilex Tree* with [Les Murray](#)<sup>†</sup>

Grace Leven Prize for Poetry, winner 1981 for *Nero's Poems*<sup>†</sup>

Grace Leven Prize for Poetry, winner 1997 for *Collected Poems*

[Prime Minister's Literary Awards](#) – Poetry, winner 2015 for *Poems 1957–2013*

#### Bibliography

##### Poetry

- *The Ilex Tree* with [Les Murray](#) (1965)
- Lehmann, Geoffrey (1968). *A Voyage of Lions and Other Poems*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- *Comic Australian Verse* (1972) Editor
- *Conversation with a Rider* (1972)
- *Selected Poems* (1976)
- *Ross' Poems* (1978)
- *Nero's Poems: Translations of the public and private poems of the Emperor Nero* (1981)
- *Children's Games* (1990)
- *Spring Forest* (1992)
- *Collected Poems* (1997)
- *Baking at Night and Other Poems* (2003)
- *Poems 1957–2013* (2014)
- *Fifty Poems* (2025), translation of poems from [Rainer Maria Rilke's](#) collection *New Poems*

##### Novels

- *A Spring Day in Autumn* (1974)

#### Children's fiction

- *The Balloon Farmer* (1994) with Betty Greenhatch
- *Sky Boy* (2001) with Caroline Magerl

#### Non-fiction

- *Australian Primitive Painters* (1974) editor, art
- Lehmann, Geoffrey (January–February 2016). "Music and language, cultural identity and fame". *Quadrant*. **60** (1–2): 92–98.
- Lehmann, Geoffrey (2018). *Leeward: A Memoir*. NewSouth Books. ISBN 978-1-74223-613-1.

#### Edited

- *Hermes* (1962)
- *Comic Australian Verse* (1972)
- *The Younger Australian Poets* (1983) editor with Robert Gray
- *The Flight of the Emu* (1990)
- *Australian Poetry in the Twentieth Century* (1991) editor with Robert Gray
- *Australian Poetry Since 1788* (2011) editor with Robert Gray

I was one of the funders of the publication of *Australian Poetry Since 1788* by the University of New South Wales Press, as this 1090 page anthology of which I was the lead editor was very expensive to produce. It was rated by *The Economist* as one of the best books of 2011, an unusual accolade for an anthology of Australian poetry. Not included in the Wikipedia bibliography are five editions of an approximately 1,000 page text *Taxation Law in Australia* which I co-authored with Cynthia Coleman and was published by Butterworths then Thomson.

My rhymed translations of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke *Fifty Poems* were published by New York Review of Books in 2025. This was favourably reviewed in the United States and in Australia by Peter Craven on 4 January 2026 in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* where he wrote:

This book is a masterpiece, and it is made out of someone else's set of masterpieces. It is the translation by the octogenarian Australian poet Geoffrey Lehmann of a group of poems by Rilke, by common consent one of the very greatest poets of the high modern period, the figure in German poetry we might put alongside Yeats for grandeur and formal intensity and range . . .

Lehmann's Rilke is a thing of wonder. It's something we're compelled to believe, never mind its impossibility . . . But read this book and give it to everyone you know who has a feeling for poetry.

It is a staggering achievement, and it somehow captures the voice of a great poet, newly minted.

In addition to the many individuals who have contributed to NSW's social and cultural history and who have lived for extended periods in the houses in Balfour street and Highfield Road, many famous Australian writers, painters, journalists and actors have either stayed at or come to functions or dinner parties at 8 Highfield Road. These include: the celebrated painters John Olsen, John Coburn, Lloyd Rees, Tom Carment, Charles Blackman, Keith Looby, Paul Delprat, John Firth-Smith, Kerry Gregan, Pixie O'Harris, Salvatore Zofrea. Famous writers who have stayed at or attended functions at 8 Highfield Road include David Malouf, Elizabeth Harrower, Judith Wright, John Blight, David Campbell, Robert Gray, Les Murray, Rodney Hall, Tom Shapcott, Judith Rodriguez, Dom Moraes, Michael Dransfield, John Edwards, Bruce Beaver, John Manifold, Frank Hardy, Douglas Stewart, Ronald McCuaig, the Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel, Les Murray, William Dalrymple, Peter Porter (who stayed with his two daughters) and the actors John Bell and Anna Volska. The writers and artists associated with 8 Highfield Road represent a wide spectrum of styles and political opinions ranging from the Left (John Manifold was a loyal Communist Party then Socialist Party of Australia for almost his entire life) to the politically conservative Right, although most, as artists are, have been on the Left.

Depictions of aspects of 8 Highfield Road and its garden appear in paintings of Salvatore Zofrea, who has had solo exhibitions in NSW State Parliament House and Macquarie University and is a three times winner of the Sulman Prize. One of these Sulman Prize winners, "The Water Trap" was inspired by a poem I wrote entitled "Gardens". Les Murray's well-known poem "Towards the Imminent Days" is partly about the house, which Les described as "your abundant house", This poem indirectly refers to Salvatore, who was born in Calabria in the line "your shovelled cake rich as the history of Calabria".

The house is a presence also in dozens of my own poems, most particularly in "Parenthood", a poem about shared parenting, which has been anthologised many times, including an international anthology of major 20th century poems *The 20th Century in Poetry*. This poem is also read on the 1992 Fred Hollows audio CD "The Man From Snowy River & More Poems, Yarns & Ballads".

**Heritage value of the gardens at 6 to 14 Highfield Road Lindfield**

The four gardens of the houses from 6 Highfield Road to 14 Highfield Road all have very different characters and have unique heritage value. In particular the large indigenous trees in Father Colin Blayney's house at 10-12 Highfield Road – it is about 2/3rds of an acre – and at Steve and Donna Palmer's house at 14 Highfield, Road are beautiful, varied and spectacular. They provide the lungs of the wildlife corridor.

I shall discuss the garden at 8 Highfield Road as it is the garden I have maintained and developed over more than 55 years at a cost of probably a hundred thousand dollars or more, involving my own labour, gardeners and having the lawns mowed regularly. It has many mature camellias japonica, which flower very irregularly, depending on whether the numerous possums living in the house decide to eat the blossoms. Many indigenous plants have evolved leaves that are indigestible for possums. The garden has two self-sown Illawara Flame trees, including one large one which planted itself shortly after I arrived on the border between Father Colin's house and 8 Highfield Road. It has a large *Backhousia citriodora* (Australian lemon myrtle) planted about 70 years ago, I believe, by June Read, Peter's mother, who was a keen gardener. She extensively remodelled the garden at that time creating many rockeries as the land slopes. She also planted a ginko, which is native to China, which is now a very large tree. Owls have sometimes nested in this tree during the day as its distinctive mottled grey bark provides an ideal camouflage for them. The garden has many roses, some antique and species, some modern. These include two roses bred by Australians – one planted by June ("Lorraine Lee" bred by Alister Clark) – and one planted by me, "Titian" (bred by Frank Riethmuller). I planted a very large and rampant species rose known as the Cherokee Rose (*Sinica alba*) whose brilliant green leaves are immune to black spot and provide food for possums in winter, despite its vicious thorns. Some years, when its buds have not eaten the buds, it flowers spectacularly for a few days as an almost continuous sheet of large single white scentless flowers with yellow stamens. A large and very beautiful native tree, *Angophora costata* (smooth barked apple), perhaps about 150 years old collapsed a few years ago and I have since replaced it, next to the dead stump, with another *Angophora costata*. Passers by often comment on the beauty of this garden.

### **Overall summary of heritage value of the Highfield Road and Balfour Street houses and gardens**

If the two SSDAs proposed for Balfour Street proceed, the loss of light and privacy caused by these two massive and anonymous-looking apartment blocks will make the houses which they will overshadow, look down on and back onto in Highfield Road completely unsuitable for occupation as family homes. The Highfield Road houses will have demolition value only. Their inevitable

demolition would involve an enormous loss of heritage associated with the distinctive houses, their beautiful gardens, both of which are enjoyed by many people from the wider neighbourhood who are parishioners of the church or whose children attend the school, as well as a loss for the children themselves. This is in addition to the significant heritage value of the houses and gardens of the Balfour Street houses which would make way for these large, anonymous and featureless apartment blocks.

With the demolition of the houses in Balfour Street and the inevitable consequent demolition of the four houses in Highfield Road, there will also be a significant loss of important social and cultural history associated with the many historically interesting individuals who have been lived in and visited these houses and their gardens.