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# Editorial

This volume of *Australian Bahá'í Studies* focuses on three subjects of enduring significance to the Australian Bahá'í Community: the role of the arts, the response of indigenous Australians to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and glimpses at the historical context in 'the present' is experienced. It also includes a stimulating fourth section addressing issues of classification and organization of Bahá'í literature.

Since its inception in Australia, the Association for Bahá'í Studies has striven to respond to Bahá'í Writings on the significance of the arts, particularly by including performance and presentation in as many of its activities as possible. From the earliest scholarship conferences at Yerrinbool, through the annual conferences held in cities and towns across Australia, the Association has sought to provide performing artists with opportunities to share their artistry.

The challenge of hosting a conference specifically on the role of the arts, however, was always a daunting prospect, and it was not until 1999 that ABS Australia felt it could provide artists with the venues that did justice to their craft. The 18th Annual ABS conference 'The Creative Inspiration: Arts and Culture in the Bahá'í Faith', held in Melbourne in September 1999, allowed more than 50 presenters and performers to show their visual and performing arts, in such appropriate venues as Melbourne University's Gryphon Gallery and Melba Concert Hall, and RMIT's Kaliede Theatre.

While the papers in the present volume cannot convey the full impact of the conference's musical performances and visual displays, it nevertheless provides one further opportunity for discussion of the role of the artist, whether visual, literary, or performing.

The present volume's second section, 'On the road to reconciliation', focuses on encounters between indigenous Australia and the Bahá'í Teachings. Walter Waia offers an autobiographical account of his quest for justice, and June Perkins pays tribute to the life of Fred Murray.

A third section brings together some historical studies, and includes rare documentation of an early visit to Australia by Mr A.Q. Faizi and Mr A.A. Furútan. Miriam Dixon, renowned Australian author and Professor of History at the University of New England, explores the life of her grand-mother Margaret Dixon, one of the early Melbourne Bahá'ís, and an inspiration for

Prof. Dixon's own life's journey. Sepehr Manuchehri's paper focuses on an aspect of Bábí history (Taqiyyih) which has hitherto been subject to little scholarly consideration. It reminds us also that insightful scholarship in Bábí and Bahá'í history using original sources is being undertaken within Australia.

Volume 2 of *Australian Bahá'í Studies* commenced under the editorship of Graham Hassall and Natalie Mobine, but its completion was only due to the additional support of Ladan Rahmani, Stephen Beale, and the members of the Committee of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.