

Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* recognised by UNESCO

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The 125-year-old story that gave young Australian readers their first female hero will be honoured by UNESCO at the State Library of NSW **TODAY [Wednesday 27 February 2019]**, when Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* is officially included on the Australian Memory of the World register.

Turner's original handwritten draft of her first novel, *Seven Little Australians*, was penned on scraps of paper. It has not been out of print since it was first published in 1894!

According to State Librarian John Vallance, "Ethel Turner gave many young readers a first authentic portrayal of everyday urban life in Australia from first-hand experience, and is credited with championing girls' literature in this country."

"We are delighted that UNESCO has decided to recognise this important piece of our literary history in such an imaginative way," says Dr Vallance.

A total of 11 collections of national cultural significance will be recognised by UNESCO today including *Migration Voices*, a diverse collection of oral histories in Australia held by the State Library of NSW and numerous other institutions.

The State Library acquired the original manuscript for *Seven Little Australians* from Philippa Poole (Ethel Turner's granddaughter) in 2000. It is the seventh Library item or collection to be inscribed by UNESCO – all of which are currently on display in the Library's new galleries.

State Library curator Sarah Morley says, "Turner's manuscript is rich with annotations in the author's own hand, and what's exciting is we get to see her creative process, beginning with her development of the title: 'Six Pickles', 'Seven Pickles', 'Seven Little Australians'."

Turner wrote her story over 10 months, often using reverse pages from *Parthenon*, the literary magazine she founded and edited with her sister, Lilian. She sent the manuscript to the Melbourne office of the British firm, Ward, Lock & Bowden, in late 1893.

Media Release



“It was accepted within a week, which is a testament to the quality of Turner’s incredible storytelling, and became an instant success,” says Ms Morley. “*Seven Little Australians* has since sold over two million copies and is translated in 11 languages.”

Ethel Turner’s *Seven Little Australians* manuscript is now on display at the State Library as part of its special *UNESCO Six* exhibition, until the 5 May 2019. A digitised version of the book is also available on the Library’s website.

Sarah Morley is available for interviews

For more information, interviews and images, please contact:
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