FOREWORD

By

Her Excellency the Honourable Dame Roma Mitchell, AC, DBE Governor of South Australia

Reading this fascinating volume is rather like eaves-dropping in a public place. All around us are the voices of women of diverse backgrounds and interests, some from our own time, others from the near or distant past. One common experience brings them within earshot: a link with South Australia.

No two voices are the same. There are quiet, self-absorbed voices, and voices which are clearly meant to be heard. There are bold declarations and dramatic exchanges, whimsical asides to amuse passers-by and lyrical out-pourings of tenderness and caring.

Aboriginal voices mourn the loss of children and, lament the collision of cultures. Lady Tennyson comments candidly on South Australians at the turn of the century, from the sympathetic, if detached, viewpoint of a colonial Governor's wife. Catherine Helen Spence counts the milestones in a long and active life, and Rosemary Wighton reminisces about perfect childhood happiness at Yelki. Some, like Ruth Hawker and Ninette Dutton, are discussing the animals, and others find poetry even in flies and cicadas, moths and millipedes. Mem Fox is here, her very name casting its spell on young Australians. Other voices, like that of Anne Summers, argue the cause of the modern women's movement.
I doubt if any other collection of writings could present a clearer picture of the preoccupations of South Australians over a long period. That it does so through the eyes and experiences of women makes it a fitting tribute to everything that we celebrate in this centenary year.

Government House Adelaide

October, 1994

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