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To contributing editors  
supporters and friends of ABR

During my eight years as Editor of the Australian Book Review I have enjoyed an enormous amount of support from people connected with ABR as correspondents, contributors, associate editors and board members. Without this support it would not have been possible for ABR to have achieved its present level of excellence and financial stability. This network has enabled ABR to become the vehicle for an enhanced understanding of what is happening in Australian writing and to develop a general interest in Australian books of all kinds. It has also, I believe, played a significant part in furthering critical debate. Although much remains to be done before ABR will be able fully to perform its function as a comprehensive journal of record, review and comment, the slow but steady increase in its circulation and the support expressed for it by its readers indicates that together we have achieved a lot.

I am writing now, however, to tell you that, as from last Thursday, I have no connection with the journal, and to thank you for the generous support you have given me during my years as editor. The friendship and loyalty I have received has been a tremendous joy to me.

It is always invidious to single out particular people for special mention, but I must record the great debt I owe to Michael Zifcak and Barrett Reid, who as Chairman and Secretary of the NBC conceived the idea of ABR and saw it through its establishment and the time with Peter Isaacson. The original designer, Mimmo Cozzelino, and Publisher, Ken Beaver, shared responsibility for getting the journal off to a fine start. Successive chairmen of the NBC, Barrett Reid, Stephen Murray-Smith, Dennis Richardson and Bill Mason, have given staunch support, as have chairmen of the Editorial Board, Phillip Harris, Kevin Simkiss and Brian Johns. Michelle Johnson, as secretary, provided the essential basis of office support. Of central importance throughout has been the enthusiasm and hard work carried out for no remuneration by interstate editors and by the team of Melbourne contributors who have been responsible each month for preparing book-notes and recommending reviewers. I will thank each of these friends individually.

Three people have shared with me the detailed tasks of editing and producing ABR. Greg Carroll has worked unstintingly as editorial assistant, designer and production manager, giving from his array of talents whatever the situation demanded. Laurie

Clancy and John Hanrahan have both acted as editor while I have been on leave, and have made enormous and continuing contributions as -associate editors. Their contribution is a substantial part of what the journal now is.

The Editorial Board has terminated my appointment as editor on the grounds that fresh thought is needed and that it is time for a change. I declined an invitation to resign, as my health is good, the journal is prospering, and I believe its present direction is correct. A motion that I be asked to resign was moved and defeated at the Editorial Board last year on the grounds that the journal was facing a financial crisis. This proved to be, as I argued at the time, an unfounded fear, and we finished 1985 inside budget. However, the Board have agreed that my appointment should cease. I was asked to remain as consulting editor and a member of the Board, but I feel in the circumstances it is preferable to sever my connection entirely.

I can look back on eight busy, successful and enjoyable years with ABR, and I want to thank you for your part in giving me this pleasure.

Yours sincerely,

John McLaren.