

Alex Buzo

1944–2006

Australian author and playwright

Alex Buzo lived a few blocks away from Waverley Library where he spent countless hours researching his varied body of work until he passed away in 2006.

He was educated at The Armidale School, the International School in Geneva and the University of New South Wales. In 2005 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of New South Wales for his contribution to Australian literature.

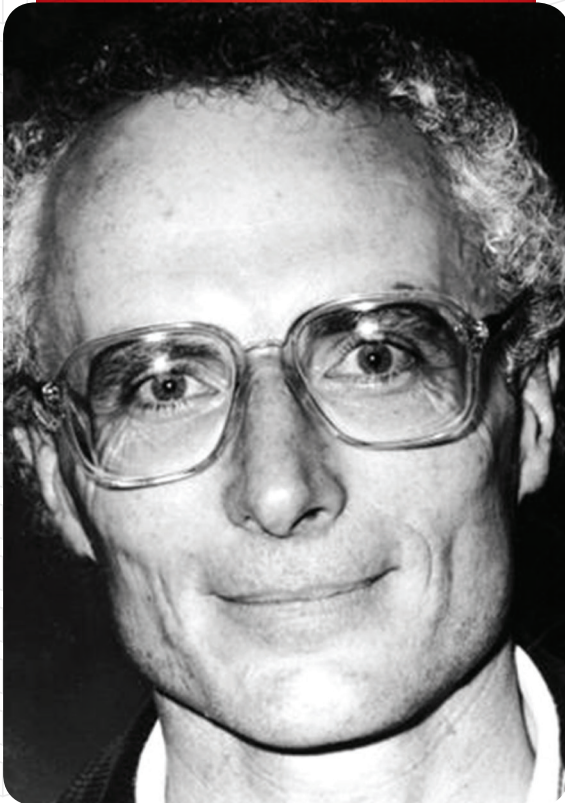
In 1968, Buzo's infamous first play *Norm and Ahmed* was among the first to find a truly Australian voice and gained national attention primarily through a prosecution for obscenity. The exploration of alienation in the play remained a common theme in his work, often delivered with clever and stylish use of the Australian idiom and a tireless commitment to reflecting the true nature of Australian society.

In 1972, Buzo was awarded the Australian Literature Society's Gold Medal for his play *Macquarie*. His other plays include *Rooted* (1969), *The*

Front Room Boys (1969), *Coralie Lansdowne says No* (1974), *Martello Towers* (1976), *Makassar Reef* (1978), *Big River* (1980), *The Marginal Farm* (1983), *Shellcove Road* (1989) and *Pacific Union* (1995) His plays have been produced around the world including the USA, the UK and South East Asia. He was also writer-in-residence and at many theatre companies, schools and universities.

The Buzo canon spans almost all literary genres and includes novels, film scripts, reviews, radio plays, travel writing and several books on sport, language and theatre. His opinions on a wide range of subjects were much sought after by all the major Australian newspapers, magazines and radio stations. His popular books *Tautology* (1981), *Meet the New Class* (1981),

Glancing Blows (1987), *The Young Persons Guide to the Theatre* (1988), *Kiwese* (1994) and *A Dictionary of the Almost Obvious* (1998) reflect his standing in the Australian arts as the astute and witty observer of Australian life and language.



Alex had a long-standing association with and appreciation for his local library at Waverley.

He was a passionate advocate of the writer's craft and the crucial role of research which led him to become a founding committee member of Waverley Library's Award for Literature in 2002. He proposed the judging criteria, and was the lead judge in the early years of the award.

The Alex Buzo Shortlist Prize was established in 2006, honouring his significant contribution to the award's success and is a practical demonstration of his strong belief that there should be a wider recognition and rewarding of the worth of deserving Australian writers.