

# Preface

We are pleased to present Volume 36 of *Aboriginal History*.

The volume is made up of a mix of papers, reflecting again the rich interdisciplinary project that is Aboriginal history. What that project is and has been, how it developed and was defined (or indeed not defined), and the role the journal played in shaping it, is the subject of the final article in this volume. Depending on how you look at it, it's either a long essay or a short history. In it, Bain Attwood details the personalities and the politics surrounding the foundation and early years of the journal and the intellectual stakes involved in the various disputes that emerged and at times erupted. The history of the journal is, then, also a history of the field. Attwood has drawn extensively on the journal's archives, as well as interviewed many of the players involved, including some members of the Aboriginal History Board who were there from the outset, such as Niel Gunson, Isabel McBryde and Luise Hercus. For the important historical record it provides, the current Board, chaired by Peter Read, was keen for the piece to be published. As the journal editors, we were pleased to endorse this and to bring about its publication. We acknowledge and appreciate the two referees who willingly reviewed the article for us.

The five articles that precede it cover a range of topics, disciplines and approaches. There is only one obvious commonality, which is that two of the five are about Cape Bedford Mission (or Hopevale) in Cape York. But that is where the similarity ends. Jonathan Richards' article explores the evacuation of the Cape Bedford mission during the Second World War, providing an alternative account to the conventional interpretation. Muriel Swijghuisen Reigersberg is an ethnomusicologist. Her article examines the contemporary uses of church music and song to tell local histories and to express belonging to place at Hopevale. Amanda Nettelbeck and Robert Foster provide a history of rationing on the nineteenth-century settler frontiers in Australia and North West Canada. Their article is a model of the value of a comparative approach. Jennifer Jones' piece about the editing of Ella Simon's autobiographical text, *Through My Eyes*, provides original insights into the complicated politics and meanings of assimilation. Anne Scrimgeour's article on the Pindan mob's challenge to the restrictive leper line in Western Australia illuminates an important event in the twentieth-century history of Aboriginal politics.

As usual the volume includes an impressive number of reviews of books across many topics and the fields. We hope you enjoy them, and thank our review editor Luise Hercus for the work she does in commissioning them.

For this volume we also acknowledge Professor Adam Graycar, Director of the Research School of Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Social Science at ANU, for a small grant that allowed us to employ an editorial assistant. Laura

Rademaker, a doctoral student in the Australian Centre for Indigenous History, where the journal is based, undertook this role with efficiency and aplomb. We are grateful to her.

Finally, as we were preparing this volume for publication we heard the sad news that Dick Barwick, a longstanding supporter of *Aboriginal History*, had passed away. An appreciation of him and his contribution follows.

Shino Konishi and Maria Nugent