

## Introduction

With this volume, number 26, the journal enters its second quarter century of publishing in the rich cross-cultural, inter-disciplinary, interactive field of 'Aboriginal history'. We have also entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the establishment of our web page at [www.aboriginalhistory.org](http://www.aboriginalhistory.org)

The papers which have been submitted to the journal over the past year share several broad features. In a number of them there is a concern with forms of representation of Indigenous people by self and by others. This is a theme which is to be explored further in volume 27 of the journal.

Jane Lydon provides a valuable contribution to the literature of representation in her detailed study of the social construction and reception of the photographic works of Charles Walter at Coranderrk, by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. She writes an ethnography of the local dynamics and looks at its interplay with a global 'visual economy'.

Melinda Hinkson considers the presentation of the Aboriginal past in public places of contemporary Sydney. She finds evidence for an emerging shift away from previously common interpretative narratives that saw these places as 'pure products'<sup>1</sup> to more complex inter-cultural presentations of the past.

Peter Read, a key participant in the Stolen Generations debates, sets out examples from his experiences as an expert historical witness in courts of law which make clear the frustrations and complexities which arise when attempting to represent past social contexts in a legal framework.

Geoff Gray looks at the policies and politics of anthropological practice, focussed through the lens of Phyllis Kaberry's experiences in the 1930s. This involves trying to understand what was allowable or desirable for anthropologists to record at that time, and why, with 'traditional custom' constructed in opposition to the contemporary dynamics of 'actual life-conditions'.

Laurent Dousset considers a case study of Indigenous people's responses to the installation of the Giles meteorological station in the western desert in the 1950s, and considers their choices within the incoherencies of assimilation era government policy and practice. Corrine Manning's study of governance and policy in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Victoria also reviews vacillations in government policy between segregation and assimilation.

Kevin Blackburn takes the changing usage of the term 'nation' by nineteenth century anthropologists such as RH Mathews and Howitt as a way into the history of understandings, or mis-understandings, of Indigenous social structure and sovereignty, especially in southeastern Australia.

Continuing the studies of nineteenth century Victoria, Barry Blake and Julie Reid's paper makes accessible the word lists collected by RH Mathews and others from the language spoken by the people of northwestern Victoria, and their analysis of the lan-

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<sup>1</sup> Byrne, Denis 1996-7, 'The Archaeology of disaster', *Public History Review*, Vol 5/6.

guage. Niel Gunson provides an informed review of Ian Clark's massive six volume undertaking of publishing the journals of George Augustus Robinson, Chief Protector in Victoria.

We are also pleased to present the text of a speech given by Sir William Deane, former Governor General, recently described as 'a natural champion of values and causes he saw as essentially decent and essentially Australian' who 'in addition to holding up a mirror to the nation, challenged the nation to live up to its self image'<sup>2</sup> He displayed all of these qualities in launching Volume I of Weereewaa, a local community history of Aboriginal families in the ACT region by Ann Jackson-Nakano. He suggests the recognition of this history in the reassertion of Weereewaa, the prior name of the locale that is now referred to as Lake George. In addition, we provide the expanded texts of the speeches made by Ann Jackson-Nakano and Grant Austin to launch volume II of Weereewaa in September 2002.

The third monograph published this year by Aboriginal History Inc was *The Aboriginal population revisited*, edited by Gordon Briscoe, a Board member, and Len Smith, and containing amongst others a paper by Elsbeth Young.

This year we were deeply saddened by the loss of a long-standing member of the Board, Elspeth Young. Her informed, good humoured and energetic contribution to the journal was part of that same flavour that she brought to all aspects of her life. An obituary for Elsbeth will be included in the next volume of the journal, and a future volume is being planned that will commission papers celebrating and developing the research themes which she fostered.

This journal is made possible by the work of Tikka Wilson, Trish Boekel, Jenny Jefferies and Dick Barwick, as well as the members of the Board of Management.

This volume of the journal is dedicated to the life and work of Caroll Kendall, a woman who contributed so much to our capacity to understand the traumatic aspects of Australian history associated with policies of child removal, and ways for us all to begin to remedy those traumas.

Ingereth Macfarlane  
Managing Editor  
Canberra, December 2002

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<sup>2</sup> Stevens, Tony 2002, *Sir William Deane: the things that matter* Hodder, Sydney.