

BIGOTRY AND RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA, 1865-1950

The papers in this issue of *Humanities Research* are based on a conference convened by the Herbert and Valmae Freilich Foundation, which forms part of the Humanities Research Centre. Established in 1999, the Foundation exists to study bigotry in all its manifestations, wherever and whenever it occurs, or has occurred in the past. Being an Australian organisation the focus of the Foundation has naturally been on this country and its activities have addressed topical issues such as anti-discrimination law, contemporary xenophobia, and reconciliation. In the case of this collection of essays – and the conference that preceded it – we decided there was an opportunity to examine manifestations of bigotry on the basis of religion in the period from the latter part of the nineteenth century until the aftermath of the second world war. In this way we hoped to bring into clearer focus the situation in present-day Australian society, to trace important social changes, to provide historical contexts for current manifestations of religious prejudice, and to examine specific incidents or practices, or patterns of discrimination and prejudice, in our past.

The articles in this collection concern both prejudice directed against one religious group as in the case of anti-semitism as well as inter-religious bigotry, particularly in Australia the conflict between Protestant and Catholic Christians. They address specific incidents that took place under very particular local conditions and

patterns of discrimination over the broad sweep of time. They examine prejudice in face-to-face situations and in academic discourse. In other words, we have attempted to include as many different manifestations of the many tentacled beast that is religious bigotry as we have been able.

When planning this conference, one figure stood out as someone without whom the meeting would not be complete. That figure was Patrick O'Farrell, Professor Emeritus of the University of New South Wales, the doyen of historians of Irish Australia. Professor O'Farrell was keen to come to Canberra and wrote his presentation, 'Double Jeopardy: Catholic and Irish' for the occasion. Unfortunately, ill-health prevented him from attending but his paper was read and he graciously answered queries from those at the conference by email overnight. He was also keen to have his presentation published with others from the conference. Unfortunately he did not live to see the volume come to fruition but we are honoured to present his paper here in the form it was delivered. In addition, Malcolm Campbell of the University of Auckland kindly agreed to write an obituary for this issue of *Humanities Research* which we dedicate to Professor O'Farrell's memory.