

Introduction

This edition of *Aboriginal History* appears late, for which the Editorial Board apologises both to authors and readers. The reasons for the delay are many, including the mounting pressures in recent years on already severely pressured academics. Staff cuts, the burden of increasing teaching, research and administrative workloads supported by fewer resources, and the increasing pressure of demonstrating productivity via publications, have all been factors.

The Editorial Board trusts that readers will agree that this volume of *Aboriginal History*, the twenty-first, proves a worthy successor to the preceding twenty. As a newcomer to the board, I find that Volume 21 evinces the wide and broadening scope of Aboriginal historical inquiry. Its contributions probe the Aboriginal past in many parts of Australia, from the Bass Strait islands of Tasmania to Beagle Bay in the far north-west of Western Australia, from Hindmarsh Island near the Murray mouth to Arnhem Land, and from the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales to the northern reaches of Cape York Peninsula. In addition to the diversity of geographical locations, Volume 21 presents readers a well-balanced mix of the disciplines comprising Aboriginal Studies. Thus, it brings together material originating in archaeological, anthropological, ethnobotanical, economic, environmental, political and community welfare studies as well as from the methodologies familiar to historians trained in a more traditional historiography.

In commending Volume 21 to its readership, I thank its joint editors, Rob Paton and Di Smith, who conceived the volume plan and brought it to fruition under in difficult circumstances, and also Ingereth McFarlane, who assisted them greatly. In addition I thank the board chair, Peter Read, for his guidance; my friend and colleague, Gordon Briscoe, for easing my way into my present position; and the Manning Clark Professor of Australian History at the Australian National University, Ann Curthoys, for finding *Aboriginal History* permanent premises within her department. Finally, our graphic designer, Tikka Wilson, must be congratulated for her diligent, expeditious effort in ensuring that Volume 21 could emerge from the chrysalis in which it had lingered far longer than anyone wanted.

Ian Howie-Willis
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