

THE MAKING OF
AUSTRALIANS: A HISTORICAL LIBRARY
A PERSONAL RETROSPECT

OLIVER MACDONAGH

WHEN I BECAME head of the Department of History at the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University in 1976, my first task seemed to be to find some major undertaking which our department—as the only ‘national’ department in Australia, and the only department primarily devoted to research—could promote and nurture. Our existing offspring, or at least stepchild, the *Australian dictionary of biography*, already well into its second decade of distinguished work, offered an encouraging precedent.

The 1970s as well as the 1980s were an epoch of centenaries in Australia, and I had come fresh from serving on the executive committee of the multivolumed project for *A new history of Ireland*. Given this combination of circumstances, it is not surprising that my first idea for the department should have been an Australian equivalent to the *New history*, to be published in 1988 to mark the Bicentenary of the European settlement of that continent.

Even my small experience of the *A new history of Ireland* suggested to me, first, that even a decade’s preparation would not be too long for any similar venture; secondly, that some mechanisms for eliminating laggard authors and replacing them in time would have to be devised and enforced; thirdly, that a considerable annual budget (\$100 000 per annum for ten years was the figure plucked from the air) was indispensable; and fourthly, that auxiliary or reference volumes would form a more important element in an Australian than in an Irish scheme, because of the relative paucity, then, of source work in Australian history, and the relatively short period of time which would be covered by the history proper.

Specifically, the initial sketch plan was for eight volumes in all, four covering Australian history between 1788 and, say, 1970, with four reference books, a chronology, a historical atlas, a bibliography and a collection of historical statistics. In form, this first back-of-an-envelope scribble came remarkably close to the final outcome. But in substance the project was to change profoundly in several ways.

At this point I discovered that some sort of commemorative history for the Bicentenary had been mooted earlier at the ANU by John Molony, head of the Department of History in the Arts Faculty, but without evoking much response. Nonetheless, we tried again and on 8 October 1976 half-a-dozen of the senior historians at the university met to consider the new proposal. The crucial happening of this meeting—for the absence of a decision to smother the infant at birth can scarcely be termed a happening—was Ken Inglis's proposal that, instead of four narrative volumes, the histories should be four 'slices' of particular years: 1788, 1838, 1888 and 1938. The project was not to be an attempted summation of current scholarship, but a revolutionary type of historiography. I have a lifetime of academic meetings to remember, but this was the only occasion that I can recall when a daring, original idea was accepted with excited acclamation within thirty seconds of its being set out.

The crucial problem, as it seemed at this initial meeting, was to prevent the project being, or even being seen as, an exclusively ANU undertaking. We wished to be truly national. We feared that people in the state universities might resent our taking so bold and universal an initiative. But in the end we bit the bullet, and decided that while the editorial work should be devolved and distributed as widely as possible among the states, and while we should try to entice contributions from every part of Australia, the Research School would have to remain the controller of, and headquarters for, the project—'with', as the minutes of that first meeting ran, 'all the odium but also all the advantages which this would involve'. Perhaps I might add here the final item of those minutes (which I wrote myself): 'It was accepted that the author of these notes was, in effect, the pin in the grenade, to be discarded shortly before explosion'. For good or ill, I failed to carry this point later, and became instead the chairman of the Management Committee.

There followed some eighteen months of wooing the historical profession, stumping the country for support, attempting to appease opponents and counter critics, and lobbying the federal government for grants. To deal with the last first, despite years of soliciting and the painful preparation of an untold number of financial estimates and submissions, we never secured a penny from any state or federal department. The basic difficulty was not ill-will or scepticism about the value of the project but simply that government ministers and bureaucrats think, at most, two or three years ahead, and our time-span fitted no official budget. Had we begun in 1984 or 1985 there is no doubt whatever—in my mind at least—that we would have received the government million-dollar grant which we had counted on originally. But if we had begun in 1984 or 1985 there would have been no project ready in time for the Bicentenary.

It also seemed at first that we had been over-sanguine in expecting even substantial support and commitment from the Australian historical profession. True, our initial step—inviting, in February 1977, the head of every history department in the country to Canberra in order to consider and (they and God willing!) endorse the project—was smoothly taken. The atmosphere was genial. The scheme itself was warmly approved, as well as usefully elaborated, and the body turned itself into an interim Management Committee.

But the appearance of enthusiastic unanimity was deceptive. One or two of the departmental heads sang very different tunes when they returned to their constituents—not unlike nineteenth-century Irish MPs when they had left behind the blandishments of London and Westminster and faced the public in Clare or Mayo. In one or two other cases, departments soon made it clear that *they* by no means agreed with their respective heads. There were, besides, protests from particular interests, such as women's history, against their having no voice, and

perhaps no sympathisers, in the interim Management Committee. Marxist, Foucaultist and other radical historians considered the project vitiated by the likely predominance of liberal pragmatists—‘mindless empiricists’ was the phrase then in vogue. Again, how *could* the project avoid being celebratory, and what was there to celebrate in the establishment of a penal settlement and the destruction of an indigenous culture?

There was moreover a powerful school of ‘senior’ and conservative criticism. The very senior historians had already been excluded—not greatly to their satisfaction—by one of the first decisions which we took—namely to recruit no-one as a contributor who had already passed the age of fifty-five. But even some less venerable seniors decried the project as monopolistic—one deploring it as ‘the sole scholarly focus of an enormous investment, both of professional energy and government money’. It was also decried as eccentric or idiosyncratic in concentrating on arbitrarily selected segments of time at the expense of the historian’s proper procedures, which were the use of the narrative method and a linear time perspective. Finally, even some who wished us well thought that the dream of harnessing teams of historians to work to the same end by absolutely immutable dates was madness.

Although painful at the time, this gallimaufry of opposition, misunderstanding, wrong-headedness, right-headedness, penetrating and obtuse criticism proved of the utmost value in the end. Late in 1977 Ken Inglis returned to Canberra from a tour of most universities quite daunted, and even dismayed, by the various receptions which our scheme had met. But in fact several of the most doubting Thomases turned out to be crucial supporters of the project later on. We were fortunate to have been baptised by fire. We were fortunate to have been taught salutary lessons in time. More precisely, the scepticism, questioning and hostility focused our attention on points already mooted but in danger of being lost to sight in the multitude of early considerations.

First, the testing of the waters brought home to us the necessity—in Australia, at any rate—of a much more democratic structure and procedure than was customary in large-scale historical undertakings. The volumes—and especially the slice volumes, which were now termed Section A—would have to grow from below rather than be imposed from above. This meant that, within the general, overarching principles of the operation, there might be considerable variety of emphasis and very different forms of teamwork.

Later on, I shall discuss this heterogeneity. But let me give a single example of unanticipated developments immediately. The volume *Australians 1838* was in effect, bid for, some time on, by two young historians then in Perth, Alan Atkinson and Marian Aveling: their bid was eventually successful. They had been excited by the prospect which Ken Inglis had opened up when he visited Western Australia during his 1977 tour; they felt that it offered much hope for the sort of history that appealed to their generation. They were deeply interested in the possibilities of the new ‘history from below’, fervently anti-authoritarian by instinct, and much attracted by collective forms of work. In fact, they set up an *1838* collective in 1980, open to everyone who contributed anything to the journal for 1838 studies which they had established, with the wryly pointed title, *The push from the bush*. This ethos and this *modus operandi* were maintained throughout the composition of their book, with much consultation, exchange of drafts, conferences and co-operative writing. Most of the chapters ended up with several authors, one with no fewer than eight contributors, all loyal to the collective’s initial resolution (I quote from the volume’s introduction) ‘to present the minds of people living in Australia in 1838 as far as possible from inside, by recounting the language and

behaviour of day-to-day situations ... going *beyond* the records of the elite so as to recreate the minds of the inarticulate and powerless'. I think readers will agree that Atkinson and Aveling have succeeded brilliantly in their purpose.

The second benefit of the douches of cold and tepid water with which we were showered in 1977 was that they confirmed the importance of devolving as much of the project as possible to other universities, and throughout the country. This was not—could not have been—as much a matter of strategic planning as of seizing opportunities as they arose. And in fact the requisite opportunities appeared. The obvious centre for 1838, in its early years, was Perth. The ideal editors for 1888 emerged in Melbourne, and for 1938 in Adelaide and Sydney. The most important devolution of all was the appointment of Frank Crowley as general editor of the whole series of reference volumes, now termed Section B. Not only did this create another headquarters (or at least sub-headquarters) in Sydney but also it meant that Crowley's university, New South Wales, would henceforth support the project financially, on a very considerable scale. Of course, this successful dispersion of the undertaking owed much to luck; but I should like to think that the Founding Fathers of Canberra did something to help luck along, or at least that they recognised her when they met her in the street.

So—we were democratised and judiciously scattered about the continent long before anyone had put pen to paper. But I should also make it clear that three centralising and controlling elements were retained: not for nothing had I served, however humbly, on the *New history of Ireland*. First, the ultimate authority, the Management Committee, remained substantially in the hands of our History department in Canberra: the head of department was chairman *ex officio*. Secondly, we set absolute deadlines, not only for completion but also for each major stage in the production: we were, in one sense (though only one!), fortunate in having a ready-made date by which, come hell or highwater, the books would have to appear before the public. And thirdly, we decided to use the various production stages as tests for the punctuality of our contributors and to eliminate all who failed to produce whatever was required by the specified time, and to search for replacements as soon as the malingerers (however eminent) were identified and disposed of. I cannot claim that we quite lived up to this stern resolution, but we certainly went a fair way down the audacious path.

On 28 March 1978 the interim Management Committee wound itself up, and the Management Committee proper took its place. By now, general editors—Inglis and Crowley—had been appointed for sections A and B respectively, as well as convenors (who were really proto-editors) for 1788, 1838, 1888 and 1938. Besides, the ANU had appointed a special assistant general editor for Section A, and the UNSW a similar officer for Section B: these were full-time appointments, essentially managerial and executive in design.

All these people, with some later additions, constituted a newly formed Editorial Board, which would govern the content, style and method of the books, independently. The general title *Australians* was proposed by Bill Gammage at an early meeting of this board and accepted at once as a simple inspiration. Meanwhile a fifth volume, *Australians from 1939*, had been added to Section A; and although the *Atlas* and the *Guide to sources* and *Historical statistics* had been confirmed in Section B, its fourth volume, the *Handbook*, was to remain an uncertainty. Eventually it was partitioned into a *Historical dictionary* and the chronology-cum-gazetteer *Events and places*, the latter an unanticipated addition to the collection. Final decisions on editors, contributors and all else were due to be made by 1981, but in the interim the working parties for each volume would be laying the foundations with an eye to completion by 1985 and 1986.

In short, we had hit ourselves over the head with a bottle of champagne, glided down the slipway, and recruited many of the artificers who would labour in the still-empty hull.



For a fair while we counted on public funding, and we lived from hand to mouth for the day when the Australian Bicentennial Authority would be constituted. When the authority was at last set up in 1980, we lived for the day when it would receive federal monies for distribution. Then we lived for the day when the authority would determine its support policies and its criteria for patronage. Then—we simply ran out of days. Meanwhile, universities, in particular the ANU and University of New South Wales, kept us alive from year to year, diverting to us scraps of savings and pieces of unfilled posts. The Division of National Mapping, a federal government agency, helped us generously in the creation of the *Atlas*. The Australian Research Grants Committee gave indispensable grants towards the making of particular volumes. Finally, we received cash transfusions from our publishers in the form of advances on royalties.

In our early days we had discussed publishers in a more or less desultory way, not thinking the matter urgent and assuming that we would be sure to find a victim or band of victims. But when in 1980 we invited tenders and received submissions, it became clear that the scale, technical sophistication, unknown market prospects and concentrated publication program daunted most Australian publishers. At this point Inglis happened to meet Kevin Weldon, an entrepreneur who published high quality books for the mass market. Weldon was immediately seized by the idea of our national scheme. So it was no surprise that he responded with great enthusiasm when approached by the David Syme group, publishers of the *Melbourne Age*, and John Fairfax & Sons, publishers of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, to co-publish *Australians: a historical library*. Weldon's interest proved the turning point. We were about to enter a bigger league than we had originally contemplated.

We were now History Project Incorporated, so constituted as a legal entity under the Australian Capital Territory Associations Incorporation Ordinance. I shall pass quickly over the protracted courtship and early lovers' quarrels between HPI and FSW, as the new partnership of Fairfax, Syme and Weldon came to be known. In 1982, the contract between us was finally signed and we were a married couple—at least in the sense in which Robert Louis Stevenson defined marriage, as a sort of friendship recognised by the police.

The project had been originally expected to emerge as a conventional type of multivolume academic publication, such as the *Oxford history of England* or the *New Cambridge modern history*. It is true that we had hoped, from the beginning, to write for a more general public than such series were aimed at. It was also true that—partly for this reason and partly because the book of the future would (we thought) contain much more than the printed word—we intended that the volumes should be (I quote again from early minutes) 'richly illustrated'. But FSW's vision of potential sales for the series, so much grander than any other publisher we had spoken with, provoked us to bolder thinking about both words and pictures.

It became imperative that the volumes should be written in plain (which is far from meaning inelegant) English, and as free as practicable from the argot and jargon of the various disciplines which the project would embrace. Later, Alan

Gilbert, who joined Inglis as general editor of Section A late in 1981, made this a special study. Drawing particularly upon American syntactical and grammatical research, he prepared a paper of great interest and importance for contributors. Effective presentation was another corollary of aiming at a mass market. It quickly became clear that FSW contemplated illustration upon a scale, and of a degree of sophistication, far beyond what we had had originally in mind. Our volumes have ended up with some three thousand illustrations, most of them in colour: the ratio of illustration to text is roughly one to three. Moreover, illustration was not treated as mere decoration. It was carefully interwoven with text wherever possible. These changes of emphasis added enormously to our load, and did much to make our relationship with the publisher both more complex and more intimate than we had imagined. FSW set up editorial and design systems from the start, so that from 1982 on we were working not in a vacuum but in continuous communication with our partner. At last, in November 1986, arrived the joint meeting at which we could all leaf through the first two finished books, artefacts of our common purpose.



In the heady days in 1976 and 1977 we imagined that we would end in some immense thunderclap of achievement. Instead, we have seemed to dwindle gradually into annihilation. Exhaustion has overlaid and smothered jubilation. In W. B. Yeats's words:

Too long a sacrifice
Can make a stone of the heart.

Was it all worth while? Were those critics right who argued at the start that such a prodigious mustering and spending of intellectual resources was a mistaken, indeed a most wasteful strategy?

I can answer only for myself. I see many reasons for concluding that the game has after all been worth the candle; and I shall offer the five which seem to me most powerful.

First, in the reference books, deep foundations have been laid for Australian historiography in general. Virtually *de novo*, the project has created a series of historical statistics, a historical chronology and gazetteer, a historical atlas, a historical dictionary and a major guide to sources. This was achieved under the general editorship of Frank Crowley to 1985, and of Peter Spearritt from 1985 to the finishing line. No-one would pretend to perfection or finality for any of these volumes or part-volumes. But at least a solid basis has been laid over the entire range of reference works.

Secondly, the project has, I believe, integrated Aboriginal with what we may loosely term European Australian history, as never before. The planned *1788* ended up as *To 1788*, with four-fifths of its content devoted to pre-European Australia. This brilliant survey of the Aboriginal era, itself a *tour de force*, is thoroughly knit into the doom of traditional Aboriginal life, as signalled by the arrival of the British fleet in 1788. In addition—and of no less importance, I should say—each of the volumes set in later years takes up other Aboriginal themes and interweaves them with the expansion of white Australia. Again, the historiographical map seems to have been changed significantly. Already, the old virtually automatic identification of Australian history with the settlements of the past two

centuries looks *passé*. The project itself has fiercely eschewed the celebratory note: 1988 is treated throughout as the anniversary of a revolutionary happening, not as the starting point of a neo-whig interpretation, or glorification, of a short stretch of time.

Thirdly, the project has had a striking effect upon the historical profession in Australia. It is even arguable that it created this profession, in the sense that the enterprise has forced a multitude of Australian historians into collective activity and co-operative interaction upon a hitherto undreamt-of scale. There were working parties of up to thirty people on particular volumes and constant traffic between one volume and another: commonly, the interchanges proceeded for several years. Paradoxically, the inevitable—indeed desirable—differences in historical presuppositions and general philosophy had—all in all—a centripetal rather than a centrifugal effect upon the participants. The *esprit de corps* growing out of the common commitment tended to bring a corps itself into being, over time. Moreover, by a further paradox, the historians themselves have been not only enriched but also stung into a greater self-awareness, by all the close and constant work with people from other disciplines, which the project practically enjoined. Among these disciplines, I would stress particularly geography and anthropology, as well as prehistory and economic history. In short, it seems to me that history in Australia has emerged from the experience immensely strengthened, structurally as well as intellectually.

Fourthly, the project dragged at least those of us who needed to be dragged into the late twentieth century. In saying this, I refer, in part, to our technical education. Without the word processor and the disc our task would have been impossible. Our colour and design requirements called for the newest processes. All this experience of modern publishing has filtered downwards. Even if only at second or third hand, our academics should have received useful glimpses of the future.

This is perhaps also true of some more fundamental matters. As we have seen the project's objective has been to reach a very wide and varied public without the sacrifice of any principle of scholarship. This high ambition did not stop at windy rhetoric and exhortation. Gilbert's work on words reached and—we trust—exercised some degree of influence, small or great, upon our hundreds of contributors. Correspondingly, the systematic collection of non-literary forms of evidence, and the attempt to render text and illustration mutually supporting and cross-reflective, have surely made an enduring impression on our trade.

Few words have been more overworked by historians during the past twenty years than 'modernisation'. But rarely if ever do we think of it in relation to ourselves. Yet the mechanics of composition, the economics of publishing and the potentiality of readership—not to add, listenership and spectatorship—have been changing rapidly and profoundly. I do not want to exaggerate the importance of the *forms* of communication. The substance of what is to be communicated is, and always will be, absolutely paramount. Nonetheless, we should know what we are about in the times in which we write; and the project has proved a technical school, or forcing-house, for many of the rising as well as the declining generation of Australian historians.

The fifth, final and (to my mind) most important reverberations of the project will, I believe, follow from the slice approach. The exclusive study of a single year is not of course without precedent. At least one distinguished book is based upon this method, and the *New history of Ireland* itself employs it. But never has it been attempted on such a scale, or by such large numbers of historians, or with such single-minded rigour. I think that one can fairly claim that, as deployed in *Australians: a historical library*, it is a truly revolutionary device.

Each volume group interpreted its task, and dealt with its cross-sectional layer, in a different fashion. *Australians from 1939* was practically by definition barred from slicing its half-century assignment, although its editors were also to eschew conventional narrative structures. But all the other books took individual approaches. *To 1788*, charged with 40 000 years of pre-white Australian history, could obviously not adhere to slicing proper. Even so, it was deeply influenced by the general method. In the final portion of the book, 'Sydney 1788' lent itself to and duly received an orthodox cross-sectional treatment. But what is really interesting is the manner in which much of the remainder of *To 1788* is shaped or coloured by the principle of slicing, as authors depict Aboriginal life in an actual or metaphorical 1788—the eve of European settlement whenever that moment happened in different parts of the continent.

Australians 1838 was, as I have said, the most closely collaborative volume of all. Like coalmining, history from below lent itself to collective effort. The book has taken, as its introduction proclaims, 'a critical stance towards the social values of the past', and tried to reconstruct the Australia of its particular year in terms of so-called ordinary events in the lives of so-called ordinary people, their weddings, church-going, funerals, groupings, legal and business dealings and the like. The very roll-call of titles of the middle chapters of *1838*—Families, Work, Markets, Meetings, People confined—is practically a manifesto of the history of the unsung and long-forgotten—men, women and children, too.

The *1888* volume was *organised* upon more conventional lines, and subject to more authoritative editorial direction, than any of the others. The editors selected their own team of contributors and drove them systematically through exchanges of drafts and discussion meetings. Yet their interpretation of the slices was far from commonplace. One of the editors, Graeme Davison, has noted the influence of French historiography as embodied in the journal *Annales*. He observes of *1888*:

insofar as we have a specific model it is perhaps the kind of fully textured detailed portrait of environment, economy, society and politics that one finds in Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II*. We aim to portray, more fully than hitherto, the regional and social diversity of Australia in 1888 and the ways in which different environments and regional economies were mediated in family structures and class relations.

Moreover, the *1888* editors were bold in selecting chapter topics. These were often quite out of the ordinary; Distance, Death, Capitals and Energy are examples. In fact, the Energy chapter provides an excellent illustration of what the slice approach can yield. In conventional narrative historiography the emphasis would almost certainly be placed upon the extraordinary growth in the newer forms of energy, coal, oil and electricity, during the 1880s. This is the normal patterning of the narrative. But the slice view, across the entire spectrum and at a fixed point in time, shows that horse power, in the ancient and literal sense, still easily predominated in the Australia of 1888; that the next most important source of energy was the oldest of all, human muscle; and that the rate of innovation varied widely from region to region and between the various sectors of the economy. Energy, in another sense, might well be taken as the emblem of this volume. One emerges—or at least I emerged—from reading it, dazzled by the new perspectives and tingling with intellectual excitement or liberation.

The *1938* editors took as their starting point the fact that the year itself was within the living memory of many Australians. One of the basic resources developed immediately was a collection of interviews with a sample of people who were growing up during the 1930s. In all, nearly four hundred interviews were

taped. In length they varied from 45 minutes to nine hours, and they concentrated so far as practicable on the year to which the volume was dedicated. In a sense therefore it was *recollection* itself which was sliced in this particular exercise. The immediate value of the interviews in the composition of the book varied of course from topic to topic, and according to author's inclination. But they have also a lasting value as a source, which quite transcends the specific purpose for which they were assembled. *Australians 1938* was also able to apply the slice precisely in its section entitled 'Pioneers on parade', which deals with the Australian sesquicentennial celebrations and anti-celebrations. In neither case—one profoundly hopes—do they constitute a dress rehearsal for 1988, but are rather two flies in amber fixed forever in their antique confrontation.

Even this lightning sketch should have made clear that the slice, as deployed in these books, is not a formula, not a new scholasticism, not an orthodoxy, not even a taking of sides in any great methodological debate. Its makers do not assert that the slice is the only, or the best, or even an always practicable or an always desirable mode of composing history. They accept that in *Clio's*, as well as in a more transcendental house, there are many mansions. They even refrain from throwing the occasional ideological brick—deliberately, at least—into any other dwelling. But, I would argue, the method has its own special value, which renders it the crown and glory of our project. I know of no more eloquent or telling elaboration of this claim than that put forward by Davison in his paper, 'Slicing Australian history'. 'In constructing his narrative', he writes,

the historian has the immense advantage of hindsight: he selects those facts or events which appear to favour that known outcome and he ignores those which are irrelevant to it, whether or not they seemed important to contemporaries. By focusing upon an arbitrarily chosen moment of time the slice approach acts as a corrective to the inbuilt teleological bias of narrative history. It implies that we *temporarily* abstain from the search for 'the most significant years, or the busiest or the epochal' and concentrate instead upon the routine, the ordinary and mundane. Instead of assigning significance to events in terms of a known outcome or *telos* it gently subverts the 'received notions of the rhythms or contours of Australian history'. Instead of exalting the established heroes of Australian history, it aims to rescue the struggling selector, the suburban housewife, even perhaps the landboomer's clerk, from the 'appalling condescension of posterity'.

But it would be quite out of kilter with the project to end on too celebratory or even congratulatory a note. Our authors tend to see the project as a living thing, not a dead achievement, a seeding rather than a harvest cut and garnered. Nonetheless, I, who have neither written nor edited a line in any of the volumes, may perhaps be allowed to boast on behalf of the many who spent years in this grinding work, now completed in good time to help readers throughout and beyond Australia to understand the experience of humanity in this continent from its beginnings to 1988.



ABBREVIATIONS

%	per cent	AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs	<i>Aust geog stud</i>	<i>Australian geographical studies</i>
£	pound(s)	AIM	Australian Inland Mission	<i>Aust j polit & hist</i>	<i>Australian journal of politics and history</i>
A & R	Angus & Robertson, Publishers, Sydney	AIS	Australian Iron and Steel	AWA	Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Ltd
AA	Australian Archives	AJCP	Australian Joint Copying Project	AWAS	Australian Women's Army Service
AACOBS	Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographic Services	AK	Knight of the Order of Australia	AWGC	Australian Woolgrowers Council
AA Co	Australian Agricultural Company	ALCOA	Aluminium Company of Australia	AWU	Australian Workers' Union
AAL	Australian Aborigine League <i>or</i> Aboriginal Advancement League	ALP	Australian Labor Party	BA	Bachelor of Arts
AAP	Australian Associated Press	AM	Member of the Order of Australia <i>or</i> amplitude modulation	Bart	Baronet
AAPA	Australian Aborigines Progressive Association	AMA	Australian Medical Association	BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission (now Corporation)	AMIA	Australian Meat Industries Association	BE (Aero)	Bachelor of Engineering (Aerodynamics)
Aborig(s)	Aborigine(s), Aboriginal	AMP	Australian Mutual Provident	BHP	Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	AMS	Aboriginal Medical Service	BIG	Basic Industry Group
AC	Companion of the Order of Australia	AMWU	Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union	BLF	Builders' Labourers' Federation
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, Victoria	ANA	Australian National Airways	B Litt	Bachelor of Letters
ACF	Australian Conservation Foundation	Anon	Anonymous	BOAC	British Overseas Airways Corporation
ACI	Australian Consolidated Industries	ANOP	Australian National Opinion Poll	Br	British
ACSPA	Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations	ANU	Australian National University	Brev-Maj	Brevet-Major
ACT	Australian Capital Territory	ANUP	Australian National University Press, Canberra, ACT	BrPP	British <i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions	ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Army Corps	Bt	Baronet
AD	Australian Democrats	ANZUS	Australia–New Zealand–United States Treaty	<i>Bus archives & hist</i>	<i>Business archives and history</i>
ADB	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>	AO	Officer of the Order of Australia	BWIU	Building Workers' Industrial Union
ADC	Aboriginal Development Corporation	AONSW	Archives Office of New South Wales	<i>c</i>	<i>circa</i>
add ms	additional manuscript	AOTas	Archives Office of Tasmania	°C	degrees Centigrade
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union	AP	Australia Party	C	Commonwealth
AFC	Australian Flying Corps <i>or</i> Australian Film Commission	app	appendix	CAAMA	Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association
AFDA	Australian Funeral Directors' Association	approx	approximately	CAD	Commission for Aboriginal Development
AGPS	Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, ACT	ARU	Australian Railways Union	CAGEO	Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations
agric	agriculture (= al)	ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations	CAI	Confederation of Australian Industry
AHQ	Army Headquarters	ASIC	Australian standard industrial classification	CBA	Commonwealth Bank of Australia
AIDC	Australian Industry Development Corporation	ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organization	CBCS	Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	Assoc	Association	CEP	Community Employment Programme
AIF	Australian Imperial Force	ATC	Air Training Corps	Capt(s)	Captain(s)
		Aust	Australia(n)		
		Aust Agric Co	Australian Agricultural Company		
		<i>Aust econ hist rev</i>	<i>Australian economic history review</i>		
		<i>Aust 1888</i>	<i>Australia 1888</i>		

ABBREVIATIONS

CB	Companion of the Bath	DBE	Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire	FRCOG	Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire	DEIR	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations	FRCS	Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons
ch(s)	chapter(s)	dept	department	g	gram(s)
Cdr	Commander	DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross	gals	gallons
CH	Companion of Honour	DGCBE	Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire	GBE	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting	discover	discovered	GCB	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Bath
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	DLP	Democratic Labor Party	GCIE	Knight Grand Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire
CIB	Criminal Investigation Bureau	DM	Deutschmark	GCMG	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George
CIE	Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire	DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>	GCSI	Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India
CIF	cost, insurance, freight	Doc	Document	GCVD	Knight or Dame Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order
cm	centimetre	DP	displaced persons	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CM	Master of Surgery	Dr	Doctor	Gen	General
CMF	Citizens' Military Forces	DSC	Distinguished Service Cross	GG	<i>Government Gazette</i>
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George	DSO	Companion of the Distinguished Service Order	GMH	General Motors – Holden
CMS	Church Missionary Society	DSS	Department of Social Security	GNP	Gross National Product
co, Co	company, Company	DT	<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	Gov	Governor
CO (followed by class and piece number)	Colonial office records in the Public Record Office, London	Econ record	<i>Economic record</i>	Gov-gen	Governor-general
Col	Colonel	ECT	electroconvulsive therapy	govt	government
col sec	colonial secretary	ED	Efficiency Decoration	GPO	General Post Office
Com	Commonwealth	ed(s)	editor(s)/edited by	GW	gigawatt
Com bur met bull	<i>Commonwealth bureau of meteorology bulletin</i>	edn	edition	GWh	gigawatthour
comp	compiler/compiled	EEC	European Economic Community	ha	hectare(s)
Corp	Corporation	EPA	Environment Protection Authority	H of C	British House of Commons
CP/CPA	Communist Party of Australia	esp	especially	Hist stud	<i>Historical studies</i>
CPI	Consumer Price Index	est	estimated	HO (followed by class and piece number)	Home Office records in the Public Record Office, London
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union	estab	established	HQ	headquarters
CRA	Conzinc Riotinto of Australia Limited	etal	<i>and others</i>	hr	hour
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization	EVAO	Estimated Value of Agricultural Operations	HRA	<i>Historical Records of Australia,</i>
CSO	Colonial Secretary's Office	EYL	Eureka Youth League	HRNSW	<i>Historical Records of New South Wales</i>
CSR	Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited	fac	facsimile	HRV	<i>Historical Records of Victoria</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Vic. CUP publications issued in Cambridge are shown as Cambridge, CUP	FCAA	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines	IAC	Industries Assistance Commission
CVO	Companion of the Royal Victorian Order	FCAATSI	Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders	ibid	in the same work
CYB	<i>Commonwealth year book</i>	f(ff)	folio (folios) or following page(s)	IBM	International Business Machines
d	defeated	FHP	Family History Project, University of Melbourne Archives	Inst	Institute
d	penny/pence	FIA	Federated Ironworkers' Association	IPEC	Interstate Parcel Express Company
DAA	Department of Aboriginal Affairs	fig	figure	IRO	International Refugee Organisation
		FM	Frequency modulation		
		FOB	free on board		
		Fr	Father		
		FRAeS	Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society		

Is	Island	MCG	Melbourne Cricket Ground	NSW	New South Wales
IUP	Irish University Press, Dublin, Ireland	MD	Doctor of Medicine	NSWC	New South Wales Coalition
IWW	International Workers of the World	mfm	microfilm	NT	Northern Territory
J	Journal	mg	milligram(s)	NTFL	Northern Territory Football League
<i>J Aust hist soc</i>	<i>Journal of the Australian historical society</i>	MGP	Morgan Gallup Poll	NY	New York
<i>J Aust Stud</i>	<i>Journal of Australian studies</i>	MHR	Member of the House of Representatives	NZ	New Zealand
JP	Justice of the Peace	MIA	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area	OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
jr	junior	MIM	Mount Isa Mines Company	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<i>JRAust Hist Soc</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</i>	MJA	<i>Medical Journal of Australia</i>	OHC	Oral History Collection, Faculty of Education, Monash University
KBE	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire	ML	Mitchell Library	OHP	Oral History Project, Department of Politics, Macquarie University
KC	King's Counsel	MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly	OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath	MLC	Member of the Legislative Council	OTC	Overseas Telecommunications Commission
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George	MLitt	Master of Letters	OUP	Oxford University Press, Melbourne. OUP publications issued in London are shown as London, OUP
KCVO	Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order	MP	Member of Parliament	P	page
KG	Knight of the Garter	ms(s)	manuscript(s)	P & C	Parents and Citizens Association
KH	Knight of Hanover	MS	Master of Surgery; Master of Science (USA)	P & O	The Peninsula and Oriental Steam Navigation Company
km	kilometre(s)	MTEA	Metal Trades Employers' Association	PC	Privy Councillor
km/h	kilometres per hour	MTIA	Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia	PD	<i>Parliamentary Debates</i> (followed by volume, year and page number)
KP	Knight of St Patrick	Mt(s)	Mount (Mountains)	PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
KSTJ	Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem	MUP	Melbourne University Press, Parkville, Victoria	PIB	Papuan Infantry Battalion
KT	Knight of the Thistle	MVO	Member Royal Victorian Order	PJ	petajoule
<i>Labour hist</i>	<i>Labour history</i>	n	note	Pl	Place
La TL	La Trobe Library	na	not available	PMG	Postmaster General
lb(s)	pound(s)	NAC	National Aboriginal Conference	pm pa	per million per annum
LBSA	Library Board of South Australia	NACC	National Aboriginal Consultative Committee	PNG	Papua New Guinea
LC	Legislative Council	NAOU	North Australia Observer Unit	popn	population
Lieut	Lieutenant	NASA	National Aeronautical and Space Administration	POW	Prisoner(s) of War
Lieut-Col	Lieutenant-Colonel	Nat Pk (s)	National Park (s)	PP	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i> (followed by volume, year and page number)
Lieut-Gen	Lieutenant-General	Nat T	National Trust	pprs	papers
Lieut-Gov	Lieutenant-Governor	NAWU	North Australian Workers Union	PRO	Public Record Office, London
LLB	Bachelor of Laws	NCC	National Civic Council	pseud	pseudonym
L-NP	Liberal-National Party	nd	no date	PT	Point or Port
m	metre(s)	NEF	New Education Fellowship	<i>Push</i>	<i>Push from the bush</i>
m/mill	million	NFF	National Farmers' Federation	QC	Queen's Counsel
M ³	cubic metre(s)	NGWO(s)	Non-government welfare organization(s)	Qld	Queensland
MA	Master of Arts	NH & MRC	National Health and Medical Research Council	R	River
Maj	Major	NIDA	National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney	Ra	Range
Maj-Gen	Major-General	NLA	National Library of Australia	RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
MB	Bachelor of Medicine	no(s)	number(s)	RAF	Royal Air Force
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire	NRMA	National Roads and Motorists' Association of New South Wales		
MC	Military Cross				

ABBREVIATIONS

RAN	Royal Australian Navy	sq km	square kilometre(s)	UQP	University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia	Sr	Sister	US/USA	United States of America
RBT	random breath testing	SRC	Swan River Colony	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Rd	Road	SRD	statutory reserve deposit	UWAP	University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, WA
repr	reprint (ed)	St	Street <i>or</i> Saint	v	versus
rev	revised	STD	Subscriber Trunk Dialling	V&P	Votes and Proceedings
Rev	Reverend	SUP	Sydney University Press, Sydney, NSW	VC	Victoria Cross
Rm	Reichsmark	supp	supplementary	VDC	Volunteer Defence Corps
RN	Royal Navy	Supt	Superintendent	VDL	Van Diemen's Land
RNE	Register of the National Estate	TAA	Trans-Australia Airlines	VFA	Victorian Football Association
Roy	Royal Commission	TAB	Totalisator Agency Board	VFL	Victorian Football League
Comm		Tas	Tasmania	Vic	Victoria
RSI	repetition strain injury	TB	Tuberculosis	vol(s)	volume(s)
RSL	Returned Services League	Tb(s)	table(s)	VSL	Victorian State Library
rlwy(s)	railway(s)	Tce	Terrace	WA	Western Australia
s	shilling(s)	TCJ	<i>Town and Country Journal</i>	WAAAF	Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force
SA	South Australia	TLC	Trades and Labour Council	WEA	Workers Educational Association
SAA	South Australian Archives	ThD	Doctor of Theology	WEB	Women's Employment Board
SANFL	South Australian National Football League	TNT	Thomas Nationwide Transport	WEL	Women's Electoral Lobby
SBS	Special Broadcasting Service	trans	translator/translated by	WPI	wholesale price index
SCEGGS	Sydney Church of England Girls' Grammar School	TWU	Transport Workers' Union	WRANS	Women's Royal Australian Naval Service
SCG	Sydney Cricket Ground	UAP	United Australia Party	WWF	Waterside Workers Federation
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organization	UK	United Kingdom	YCL	Young Communist League
SG	<i>Sydney Gazette</i>	UN	United Nations	YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
SH	<i>Sydney Herald</i>	uncat	uncatalogued	YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
SLSA	State Library of South Australia	UNE	University of New England	yr(s)	year(s)
SMH	<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization		
Soc	Society	UNSWP	University of New South Wales Press, Kensington, NSW		
sp	species <i>or</i> starting price				

