

Preface

2018 was marked by many echoes of Australia's past history in contemporary life. The *Uluru Statement from the Heart*, abruptly dismissed by the Turnbull government in late 2017, sustained attention as Australians engaged with its modest calls for a Makarrata Commission, the establishment of truth-telling processes about our past and a First Nations voice to federal parliament. Historians embraced the idea of deep time and the deep Aboriginal history of Australia, rising to the challenges this deep history poses to historians trying to understand and represent this past. The announcement by Scott Morrison of a \$50m redevelopment of Sydney's Meeting Place precinct in Botany Bay to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Cook's arrival in Australia prompted debates over the appropriate memorialisation of Australia's colonial past, highlighting the importance of history in our understanding of ourselves as a nation. These are some of the themes and issues picked up for consideration by the contributors to this issue of *NEW*.

This journal presents a selection of the best work submitted by students who elected to undertake the subject Aboriginal Political History: Ideas, Action and Agency in Autumn semester, 2018 at UTS. We are privileged to teach on this subject, which was developed by our colleague Professor Heidi Norman. One of the many wonderful aspects of teaching Aboriginal History to a diverse student group is the range of perspectives our students bring to bear on Indigenous issues. This edition features reflections and commentary on issues such as constitutional recognition and learning about challenging histories, by European and American as well as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australian emerging scholars, who remind us that the past does not lead inevitably to the present and that other approaches and possibilities exist.

The Reviews and site visit reports extend an invitation to readers to join our scholarly practice, offering new ways of seeing both the familiar and the as-yet-unknown. The site visits encourage students to think about their own relationships to place and time, while the Reviews continue to draw on both classic and contemporary productions of relevance to the field of Aboriginal history.

We acknowledge the dedicated work of our student copy editor, Jaimee Cachia, who undertook the enormous task of sub-editing the student contributions to this issue of *NEW* as part of her Professional Pathways Placement in 2018 – thank you Jaimee!

We acknowledge and express our thanks to curator Emily McDaniel and photographer Jaime Williams for their permission to use the beautiful photograph of the thought-provoking public art installation, *Four Thousand Fish*, which features on the cover and is reviewed in this issue.

Arguably there has never been a more important time to have a knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal History. We hope you enjoy our students' reflections on these deep issues of ongoing relevance to our present and future.

Jennifer Newman and Anne Maree Payne