

# Editorial

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As its name implies, *Queensland Review* is a review of Queensland: its past, present, and, where speculation is appropriate, its future. It aims to provide a forum for researchers in a wide variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences where their work can be presented and judged; and in the process, act as a springboard for new understandings of Queensland's culture and society. In so doing, *Queensland Review* wants to establish Queensland as a legitimate and important field of research, both within the academic arena and for non-academic researchers. Indeed, one of the functions of the journal is to encourage connections between academic and independent researchers and to explore links between research and policy across a range of fields.

Establishing such a journal begs two key questions. What *is* 'Queensland' in the context of Queensland studies? And in any case, why Queensland? The journal takes as its starting point one of the founding assumptions of regional studies: regions — however defined — do not possess distinct or essential characteristics in and of themselves, but are *ascribed* certain characteristics and forms of autonomy, whether political, economic, geographical or cultural. Such ascriptions of regional identity are of course relative: what may be understood as a region in one context may not in another. And they are relational: regions change as their functions in larger networks change over time. In this sense, the various smaller regional entities within the state are equally objects of Queensland studies.

Regional studies in the sense described above is not highly developed in Australia, though there is abundant evidence of a substantial and growing interest in 'local history' within the general community. The time has come to change this, to learn from the quite advanced regional work being undertaken in Canada, the USA and the UK, for example, and to develop new versions of and new approaches to the region called 'Queensland'.

This also begins to answer the question 'why Queensland?'. Queensland offers us rich resources to explore and develop, resources that have all too easily been passed over in academic research. By attending to the local, the regional, we pick up critical similarities and differences elided in the general field of Australian studies, where all too often Sydney and Melbourne are presented as 'Australia'. This is not to be jingoistic, but to make the point that just as the post-colonial moment is redrawing the relations between core and periphery on the international stage, so too we are reaching a moment in Australia's self-understanding when we need to recognise deep changes in our own core-periphery relations and in the ascriptions attributed to each. *Queensland Review* aims to be an agent in this process of decentering.

Such aims cannot all be fulfilled at once, of course, and as with any exciting new project, there has to be an element of idealism, of faith. Faith, firstly, that researchers will take the opportunity to utilise an outlet for innovative work; and secondly, that there is an informed readership, both academic and general, who are interested in and wish to better understand Queensland and its regions. We believe that the quality of research and the readership exist. So too does the University of Queensland Press whose general manager, Laurie Müller, was instrumental in encouraging us to take up the challenge of producing and editing *Queensland Review*. Its future success now depends on you as much as on us.

Jock Macleod  
Belinda McKay