
Editorial

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This issue begins with a collection of essays reflecting on last year's Queensland election, which saw Anastacia Palaszczuk returned as Premier. Ms Palaszczuk had become Queensland's opposition leader after Anna Bligh's government was routed at the polls when Campbell Newman made the move from Brisbane mayor to extra-parliamentary leader of the Liberal National Party in 2011. The LNP's landslide win in 2012 saw Labor reduced to seven seats. Newman's 'can do' style did not translate from municipal to state government. He was the Energiser Bunny who set about sacking public servants and conducting 'community consultations' about the sale of state owned assets. His unpopularity was manifest, yet Palaszczuk's success at the 2015 election caught the commentariat by surprise. She led a minority government, and in 2016 held on to achieve a narrow majority. The essays in this issue examine the electoral politics, campaign strategies and media (mis)management that cemented her hold on power.

One of the major issues that divides the Queensland electorate is the environment. The Great Barrier Reef is under threat, and coal mining in the Galilee Basin and coal seam gas (CSG) in the south-west are contentious issues that played a role in the election campaign. Land clearing in Queensland accounts for more than half of the native forest lost each year in Australia. Nathan Laurent and Lee Duffield have examined media reporting of this issue, comparing how the regional and metropolitan press frame the problem. Legislation to address the issue will be introduced in the current parliament.

The environmental movement has seen the rise of the citizen scientist. Amateur naturalists record bird migrations; amateur astronomers have joined the search for previously unknown planets. Family history and genealogy are burgeoning leisure pursuits. Mark Finnane and Yorick Smaal report on the Prosecution Project, an ambitious enterprise that will document all criminal prosecutions in Australia since colonisation. This project has actively recruited citizen historians, demonstrating that the boundaries that professional historians built over much of the twentieth century are now being dismantled as technology enables the collaborative work required to realise the potential of big data.

In colonial Queensland, which began as a convict settlement, citizens led by the artist Godfrey Rivers pushed for the establishment of an art gallery. They hoped that the civic symbolism of this institution would counter the imagery of penal violence that attached to the new colony. Among the paintings collected by the nascent gallery was Rivers' now iconic *Under the Jacaranda* (1903). It is prominently displayed in the Queensland Art Gallery, where each year at jacaranda time — around October and November — blossoms are strewn on the floor beneath it.

Kerry Heckenberg writes of a less celebrated collection of pictures that were bequeathed to the gallery by the pastoralist and politician Thomas Murray Prior. The Murray Prior bequest is now all but forgotten; some pictures have been deaccessioned and others are rarely shown. Heckenberg argues that they tell us a great deal about collectors and collecting, about the taste for art and about the inception of the gallery.

The Queensland Art Gallery and the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) are now landmarks that draw locals and tourists to exhibitions such as the Asia Pacific Triennial. Peter Roennfeldt writes of another building at the opposite end of Southbank, the South Brisbane Municipal Chambers. His biography of this building charts the history of its symbolic and practical uses, from its beginnings as a town hall to its adaptation as accommodation and its later life as a centre for music education.

The three essays in the final cluster are concerned with Queensland literature. Christopher Spicer places Thea Astley's *A Boat Load of Home Folk* (1968) in an international context of narratives about extreme weather. Although this novel has been critically dismissed, Spicer argues that Astley uses the trope of the cyclone to shape a narrative of despair and redemption. Kelly Palmer is also concerned with environmental narratives. Her discussion of recent novels set on the Gold Coast shows how this liminal space has figured in contemporary culture as a site of trials of masculinity, and she also uncovers its conflicted colonial history. Ameer Furaih writes about the poetries of Oodgeroo Noonuccal (whose Stradbroke Island home adjoins the Gold Coast) and Sonia Sanchez. By placing the work of these two poets — who were prominent in the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Australia and the United States respectively — side by side, Furaih highlights the way each used language to shape the realities they experienced and to create a new reality for their peoples.