

Editorial

On 13 February 2008, Kevin Rudd — the first prime minister from Queensland since Andrew Fraser — moved a motion of apology to Australia's Indigenous people in the House of Representatives. He has followed up this apology by committing his government to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in the areas of life expectancy and education. Much work remains to be done, however, in understanding the fraught history of race relations that underpins Indigenous disadvantage today. This issue of *Queensland Review* begins with a major essay by Raymond Evans which offers new insights into our early colonial history. In 'On the Utmost Verge: Race and Ethnic Relations at Moreton Bay, 1799–1842', Evans examines not only the motives, perceptions and actions on each side of the frontier, but also scrutinises ethnic relations within the penal settlement itself. Raymond Evans is also the author of *A History of Queensland*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2007, which is reviewed in this issue.

Our cover image is J.J. Hilder's water-colour, *Brisbane River* (1908), reproduced with the kind permission of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In 'J.J. Hilder and the Languages of Art', Kerry Heckenberg analyses the intertwining of local and international influences in the work of the Toowoomba-born and Brisbane-educated artist Jesse Jewhurst Hilder (1881–1916). Where other writers have stressed the lack of opportunities for artists in colonial Queensland, Heckenberg argues that 1890s Brisbane was far from a cultural wasteland and that its influence on Hilder's artistic formation needs to be reinstated into the story of his life and art.

In 'A Bohemian Wife: The Life and Death of Olga Penton', Patrick Buckridge explores the cultural world of Brisbane 30 years later. His subject, Olga Penton, lived in Brisbane during the 1920s, where she taught at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School and married Brian Penton at the beginning of his career as a journalist and novelist. Buckridge explores how an unconventional and flamboyant woman like Olga adapted to a city characterised by very vigorous and diverse, but 'establishment', cultural networks. He suggests that Olga's development of a carefully stylised *persona* based on sexual daring was a response to the absence in Brisbane of a fertile environment for alternative 'bohemian' formations.

Mike Danaher's paper, 'Managing the Environment in a Sea Change Community: Impacts and Issues on the Capricorn Coast', provides a case study of a community in central Queensland which is experiencing negative impacts from the sea change phenomenon. Using an environmental history perspective, Danaher explores demographic change on the Capricorn Coast over the past 30 years and highlights issues which affect the coast's environmental management. In particular, he questions the ecological sustainability of communities like the Capricorn Coast, and argues that a national coastal policy needs to be formulated and implemented.

Housework in interwar Queensland is the focus of Joanne Scott's paper, 'A Woman's Work is Never Done?' The history of housework is under-researched, and in particular recovering women's actual experience of housework is elusive. Scott uses a range of primary sources — including letters from women published in Australian magazines and newspapers, Census data and government reports — to identify some of the features of the work of the housewife. Her research confirms the highly gendered division of labour in interwar Queensland, but observes that the quantity and nature of housework differed according to the conditions under which it was performed: the size of a household, a husband's income, whether families lived in urban centres or rural Queensland, the presence or absence of domestic servants, and access to technology. She also finds that individual women could and did exercise a degree of autonomy as housewives.

In this issue, we also bring readers the first of a series of re-publications of significant short works of Queensland literature which have long been out of print. 'The Red Snake', a short story by the radical English writer Francis Adams, who lived in Brisbane during the 1880s, offers an intriguing depiction of colonial Queensland. Published in *The Christmas Boomerang* in 1888, the story recounts a massacre of Aborigines on Cape York by a character based on the infamous Frank Jardine. Belinda McKay introduces Adams' story with a piece entitled 'Narrating Colonial Queensland: Francis Adams, Frank Jardine and "The Red Snake"'. She outlines the history of the text, identifies the fictionalised characters and places, and explores the themes of this enigmatic tale, which holds up a mirror to colonial Queensland but is also worth resurrecting as a fine early example of the modern short story.

The next issue of *Queensland Review* will be dedicated to the memory of historian Helen Taylor (1941–2006), who — among her many other achievements in the field of public history — was instrumental in the founding of the Museum of Brisbane as a 'people's museum'.

— Belinda McKay