

Editorial

The editors of *Queensland Review* and members of the wider Queensland studies community are deeply saddened by the premature death earlier this year of Dr Ross Laurie. We extend our deepest sympathy to Ross's wife, Joanne Scott. Ross taught Australian history at the University of Queensland, and published in the areas of political and social history. *Queensland Review* subscribers will recall the article in the last issue by Ross Laurie and Joanne Scott, 'Celebrating Her First Half-Century: Queensland's Jubilee Carnival'. *Showtime: A History of the Brisbane Exhibition*, also co-authored by Ross Laurie and Joanne Scott, was published by the University of Queensland Press in 2008 to critical and popular acclaim. A retrospective of Ross Laurie's work, focusing on his contribution to Queensland studies, will appear in the next issue of *Queensland Review*.

In a sad reminder of another recent loss to the Queensland studies community, this issue opens with an overview of the contribution to Queensland studies of historian Bill Thorpe, who died in 2009. "'Contested Territory": Colonial Queensland in the Writings of the Late Bill Thorpe (1943–2009)' is written by his friend and fellow historian Denis Cryle, who situates Bill Thorpe's work in the context of the changing shape of Queensland studies, and in particular evaluates the significance of his long-standing collaborations with Raymond Evans and members of the Ipswich Aboriginal community.

The issue continues with two chapters from a recently discovered and newly published colonial novel, *Tom Hurstbourne or A Squatter's Life* by John Clavering Wood. Completed in 1865, just six years after the Separation, the manuscript was unearthed by the author's great-great-grandson, Gerard Benjamin. With Gloria Grant, Benjamin has now edited the novel for publication by Boolarong Press, allowing it to take its place as Queensland's earliest novel. We are grateful to the editors for agreeing to the publication of two chapters from the novel in this issue of *Queensland Review*. Patrick Buckridge's introduction to the excerpts places the novel in its literary context, suggesting the various genres and literary debates upon which it draws.

Buckridge suggests that there is a homosexual sub-text in the *Tom Hurstbourne* novel, and the next article in this issue looks at a shameful period of Queensland's recent history, when homosexual Queenslanders were denied the rights enjoyed by other citizens and targeted by discriminatory laws. In her article 'Homophobia as Party Politics', Shirleene Robinson argues that Joh Bjelke-Petersen and his government 'defined homosexuality as morally deviant in order to gain electoral advantage, thereby incorporating the politics of homophobia into governance'. This article is especially timely, as it coincides with the twentieth anniversary of

the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Queensland. It also nicely complements the exhibition *Prejudice and Pride: Recognising the Contribution of the LGBT Communities to Brisbane* at the Museum of Brisbane.

Regional television – an important but under-researched phenomenon of the two decades following the introduction of television in Queensland – is the subject of an article by Denis Cryle, Christina Hunt and Ross Quinn. Using a case study of ABC Rockhampton TV from 1963 to 1985, the authors trace the development of local programs for regional viewers and the abrupt end of the experiment in 1985 as a result of aggregation and networking. The article is based on research in the ABC archives, newspaper reports, interviews with ABC TV Rockhampton staff and documentary evidence, including still photographs and television footage.

The final article in the issue, ‘Holding Australia to Ransom: The Colston Affair 1996–2003’, by Malcolm Saunders and Neil Lloyd, reconsiders the controversial Queensland Senator Mal Colston. Colston first came to public attention in 1975 when Joh Bjelke-Petersen refused to endorse him as Labor’s nominee for a casual Senate vacancy. Swept into office on a wave of sympathy, Colston’s parliamentary career ended several decades later with him maligned by all sides of politics, and with the Pyrrhic victory of having charges of fraud against him withdrawn only because he was too ill to stand trial. Saunders and Lloyd’s paper re-examines the role of this complex and flawed Senator, who held the balance of power in federal parliament for three years.

Finally, this issue of *Queensland Review* offers reviews of six important new publications, including a website devoted to the history of German missionaries in Queensland.

– **Belinda McKay**