

Editorial

Queensland Review enters its third year at a time when Australians might well wonder, with one of Janette Turner Hospital's characters, a southern journalist, 'Does Queensland actually exist?' Certainly its identity of late, both politically and climatically, has been remarkably mobile: drought has been followed by floods, and the Labor government until recently hailed as the most popular in Australia has given way to a Coalition government after a by-election in little-known Mundingburra placed the destiny of the state in the hands of an Independent from Gladstone. But if Queensland had not existed, then somebody — perhaps the Federal Coalition — would surely have insisted on inventing it; for within a month of the change of guard in Queensland, the ALP lost again, this time with a bang rather than a whimper.

An analysis of these particular events must await future editions of *Queensland Review*. This issue focuses on traditions and circumstances which have shaped Queensland's difference: in particular the political, social and cultural environment of early Queensland; relationships between Europeans and Aborigines; and the social impact of World War II. The strong regional emphasis apparent throughout reflects the decentralisation which characterises Queensland's population, economy and culture; such research on regional diversity promises to enrich Queensland and Australian studies.

Denis Cryle and Glenn Davies explore colonial journalism and regional culture through case studies of George Loyau and Thadeus O'Kane respectively, while Chris Lee discusses the fashioning of the identity of Toowoomba in accordance with Social Darwinist notions of the connection between climate and moral character. A little known episode involving a radical political stance by an Anglican priest is investigated by David Pear in his piece on the Reverend Farnham Edward Maynard, Rector of All Saints, Wickham Terrace, who actively supported the 1925 strike by British seamen in Australia.

The recovery of Aboriginal history is also a major theme of this issue. In January, Cecil Fisher initiated legal action against the Queensland Government for misuse of wages paid into the Aboriginal Welfare Fund: timely articles by Robert Hall and Prudence Law help elucidate the government policies used to control Aboriginal people's wages, property and movements. Hall brings to his piece on the effects of World War II on Aborigines and Islanders, a wealth of new archival research, while Law's piece is based on personal accounts by two Aboriginal women. Louise Butt Beckett examines the use of the paradigm of the 'tragic' in narratives of contact history, with particular reference to two recent books by Henry Reynolds.

World War II, according to Robert Hall, was a watershed in official policies towards Aborigines and Islanders, and Estelle Runcey-Pinney's personal recollections of living in Queensland through the War leads her to conclude that for women too the war marked the beginning of a new era in social relations. Melanie Oppenheimer's piece on voluntary work during the War analyses the structure and membership of voluntary organisations: she concludes that Queensland women played a much more prominent leadership role than occurred in other states. Perhaps Janette Turner Hospital's journalist should have read *Queensland Review* before writing in his southern newspaper that 'Queensland is a primitive state of mind from which most of us, mercifully, have long since evolved!'

Belinda McKay