NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

In Volume 46 of the Melbourne Historical Journal we asked authors to speak to the themes of 'Boundaries and Bodies'. Recent global trends in historiography, as well as wider political shifts, have raised provoking questions surrounding subjectivity, the self and belonging across (and within) boundaries. The works included in this Volume offer new perspectives on these questions. They both challenge what notions of 'bodies' and of 'boundaries' might mean, and examine how these two perennially contested sites of meaning have been experienced across continents, and across centuries.

In this edition of the Melbourne Historical Journal, we have compiled an excellent array of insightful articles and book reviews from graduate students and early career researchers, each of whom have brought a unique perspective to the Volume.

In 'Contingent Women: Gender rearticulation and the Australian Victory Contingent, 1946' Anton Donohoe-Marques offers a literal approach to the topics of bodies, belonging and boundaries. The article explores the experience of the women in Australia's World War Two Victory Contingent, in particular their journey to Allied victory celebrations in Britain. Crystalised in the episode of the 'Crossing the Line' ceremony, the article suggests that this journey became a site where post-war gender identities began to be negotiated and enforced.

Ingrid Schreiber interrogates the concept of the body in seventeenth century England, asking what it meant to inhabit, experience and perform one's body in an early modern context. She explores this question through a novel and rich source, the recipes used to mix household medicines. This examination of the malleable boundaries between medicine and the home, and between the body and its environment, tells us much about early modern understandings of the body and of lived experience in the past.

Natasha Birimac explores the nature of colonialism in French Algeria during the War for Independence through the life of the native Algerian soldier and French loyalist Bachaga Boualam. She examines his rationale for collaboration and the insight his experiences during the breakdown of French rule in Algeria provide into the nature of colonial hierarchies.

In 'Turks, Moors, Deys and Kingdoms: North African Diversity in English news before 1700', Nat Cutter examines the usefulness of the English-language press as a window onto early modern British perceptions of North Africa. The exhaustively researched article provides fascinating evidence to suggest that robust and detailed information was made available to thousands of Britons about the diversity of ethnic, political and religious boundaries and identities of North Africa in this time period.

The Book Reviews submitted to MHJ this issue each explore the ways in which Australian history may be understood through the lens of 'boundaries and bodies'. Books reviewed cover a range of perennial questions in Australian history, surrounding place and identity, as well as signalling newer challenges raised by the pressures of natural disasters and changing climate. Taken together they offer an exciting insight into recent Australian history writing, which is both bold and diverse.

Beth Marsden reviews Ashley Mallett's *The Boys From St Francis: Stories of the remarkable Aboriginal activists, artists and athletes who grew up in one seaside home* (2018). Mallett 'draws on the experiences of the former residents to create a loose narrative around the thirteen years that St Francis' was operational, and the lives of residents after they left'. The review surveys the range of themes and questions which Mallett explores, and raises its own about where this text sits within Australian Indigenous history.

Published on the fiftieth anniversary of the Gurindji Walk-off, Nicole Davis reviews Charlie Ward's *A Handful of Sand: The Gurindji Struggle, After the Walk-off* (2016). Davis writes, 'Ward has explored this longer story of entanglement, dispossession and Indigenous agency on Gurindji country, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century and continues to this day. His work is a vital contribution to both the history of this region and the events that took place there, and broader understandings of Australia's history post-European colonisation'. *A Handful of Sand* is a thoughtful reflection on the origins and legacy of this significant event in Australian Indigenous history.

Jack Kirne reviews *Sunburnt Country* by Joëlle Gergis, in which Gergis constructs a climate history for the past thousand years of Australia, and further predicts how the same climate will change in the next

hundred years. As suggested by the title, the Australia Gergis depicts is a volatile and dangerous one, characterised by 'droughts and flooding rains'. Kirne describes the book as 'effective and timely' with 'valuable insight into Australia's climate from a scientific standpoint,' but with a troublingly Eurocentric standpoint that 'will disappoint those expecting a deeper cultural awareness of Australia's climate history'.

Brendan Tam reviews a collection of essays celebrating the myriad contributions of the late Geoffrey Bolton to the Australian historiographical canon. *A Historian for All Seasons: Essays for Geoffrey Bolton* (2017), Tam writes, is 'a fitting tribute to Geoffrey Bolton … a historian who, as the title suggests, was never confined to a single specialty or historical methodology'.

In a timely and provocative discussion Rebecca Jones' *Slow Catastrophes: Living with Drought in Australia* (2017) explores the ways in which Australians have variously contended with drought conditions. In her review, Gretel Evans finds that *Slow Catastrophes* 'provides voice to past and present droughts', and 'demonstrates the value of sustained engagement and deep listening to archival sources, and provides fresh insights into Australia's drought history'.

Thank you for your continued support of postgraduate and early career scholarship, and of the Melbourne Historical Journal. We hope you enjoy this collection.

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