

Editorial

This issue of *Queensland Review* coincides with the death of Queensland's longest serving and most controversial Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. For many Queenslanders, this event provided an opportunity to reflect on the 'Joh era', and to consider how Queensland has changed since it came to an end in 1987. As Sandy McCutcheon's *Australia Talks Back* program on the legacy of Sir Joh demonstrated, the former Premier continues to divide Queenslanders.¹ The post-mortem reflections on Sir Joh have, however, brought into sharp relief a change in perceptions of the state of Queensland from within as well as without. The dismissive characterisation of Queensland as Australia's 'cultural desert' has been replaced by a new interest in the state's distinctive history and its future directions. The work published here exemplifies the way in which research into Queensland's local and regional specificities and histories now engages robustly with broader national and international debates.

The issue opens with a selection of papers from the recent 'Cities and Museums' symposium, held at Griffith University's South Bank campus in 2004. These papers, which are introduced by Kay Ferres, not only situate Brisbane and its museums in a global cultural policy context, but also demonstrate the affective and imaginative power of cultural heritage in a globalising world. They also suggest the power of the museum to provide a community with a point of mediation between past and future identities, a role which has been taken on with great success by the new Museum of Brisbane, which is located in that iconic Brisbane building, the City Hall. Our cover image of the internal mechanism of the Brisbane City Hall clock offers a visual reflection on this issue's theme of mediation between the past and the future.

The remaining papers present recent research on various aspects of Queensland culture and society. Three of the papers have a literary focus. In "'It's all Migloo Crap to Me": Identity Politics in Contemporary Indigenous Writing in Queensland', Maggie Nolan presents, for the first time, an historical overview of Queensland Indigenous life writing and fiction. In 'Hitting Home', Lara Cain explores the use of Brisbane as a setting by the internationally renowned novelist Nick Earls. My article, 'Imagining the Hinterland', explores the changing literary representations since colonial times of Brisbane's vast hinterland, with its dramatic landscape of mountains and waterways.

Queensland's political institutions and history come under scrutiny in the final two papers. In 2004, Tereza Smejkalová, a research student from Poland, undertook an internship at the Queensland Parliament. Smejkalová's paper, 'The Queensland Electoral System and Indigenous Representation', reports the findings of her study into how to achieve better parliamentary representation of Indigenous people and

other minorities. Finally, Libby Connors and Drew Hutton reflect on Brisbane's radical past, in a review essay of *Radical Brisbane: An Unruly Past* (edited by Raymond Evans and Carole Ferrier, Vulgar Press, 2004). Connors and Hutton's paper, 'Who Owns Brisbane's Radical Past?', argues that greater attention needs to be given to radical groups beyond the traditional left: radical Christians, eco-anarchists, gay rights activists and communitarian non-violence advocates — among many others — have all contributed significantly to Brisbane's dynamic culture of progressive dissent.

This year, 2005, marks the centenary of women's suffrage in Queensland, and the next issue of *Queensland Review* will be dedicated to that topic.

— *Belinda McKay*

Note

- ¹ *Australia Talks Back*, ABC Radio National, 27 April 2005.