
Editorial

Patrick Buckridge

p.buckridge@griffith.edu.au

This issue marks the twentieth anniversary of *Queensland Review*. It therefore seems appropriate to spend a few moments looking back over our two decades of continuous existence — something of a rarity among Australian scholarly journals. We do this not in a spirit of nostalgia (well, perhaps a little of that!), still less in a spirit of self-congratulation, but in a spirit of sober stocktaking and realistic appraisal.

Queensland Review was originally conceived as the ‘house journal’ of the newly established Queensland Studies Centre at Griffith University in 1993. This was a moment when, for the first time in many years, living in Queensland was no longer a cause for jokes or commiseration from enlightened southerners: four years earlier, the corrupt and reactionary Bjelke-Petersen regime had been consigned to history, and the reformist Labor government of Wayne Goss had just been re-elected with an unchanged and comfortable majority. The state of Queensland — its past, present and future — looked interesting, felt dynamic and for the first time in decades seemed to be inviting rather than discouraging close scrutiny of its traditions, institutions and cultures. The *Review* was seen as just one of the ways in which the Centre could contribute to a broader, deeper, more intellectually rigorous understanding of this unique historical entity called Queensland. Other Centre initiatives included a series of Occasional Publications, annual ‘Queensland Studies’ conferences, single-themed one-day seminars — often on topics of current social or political interest — and a series of public addresses by well-known speakers on Queensland topics.

For ten years the Centre prospered, and the *Queensland Review* was able to draw sustenance — in the form of scholarly contributions and individual and institutional subscriptions — from the interest, loyalty and goodwill that had been fostered by the Centre’s activities all around the state, and further afield. A series of editors, mostly in pairs, articulated and implemented its vision throughout that period. All of us, as it happens, are still at Griffith: Jock Macleod, Mark Finnane, Belinda McKay and myself — quite an anomaly given the generally rather high mobility of Australian academics.

Then, in the early 2000s, came the first of a series of moves — none of them very wise in retrospect, to put it mildly — that culminated in the final disestablishment of the Centre in about 2003. At that point, the *Review* could well have died too. It had, after all, lost its primary host and caregiver — almost, one might say, its *raison d’être*. But it didn’t. Against the odds, it survived — and survived, moreover, in its original form, as a refereed journal unashamedly dedicated to the serious study of Queensland in all its historical and contemporary dimensions. The credit

for this remarkable result has to be shared around a bit. A fair slice of it should go to my current co-editor and Griffith colleague, Belinda McKay, who has been editor since 1993, who has seemed at times to be the last True Believer, and who has certainly worked harder and longer than any other individual to keep the enterprise afloat. Also high on the list has to be the University of Queensland Press. Laurie Muller, University of Queensland Press Publisher and Managing Director, committed the Press to generous and ongoing support for the *Review* from its inception — for no reason other than his devotion to Queensland culture in its broadest sense. His successor, Greg Bain, maintained that same level of support through our difficult second decade, and Rosie Chay at UQP shepherded every issue through to publication with patience, tact and unfailing good humour. Without that support, the *Queensland Review* would almost certainly have followed the Queensland Studies Centre to the bottom of Moreton Bay. And when the time came, in 2010, when UQP finally had to bow to commercial pressures of its own, the separation could not have been more amicable, or more attentive to our future needs and aspirations.

But a publisher, however generous, cannot provide a journal with copy. For the fact that we were able to continue publishing good material, we happily give credit and thanks to a core of loyal and reliable contributors: Mark Finnane, Clive Moore, Cheryl Taylor, Rae Wear, Glenn R. Cooke, Peter Roennfeldt, Raymond Evans, Denis Cryle, Kelly McWilliam, Joanne Scott, Jonathan Richards, Kerry Heckenburg, Jessica Gildersleeve, Louise Denoon, Bill Metcalf, Libby Connors, Louise Curtis, Yorick Smaal and others have all provided us with excellent scholarly articles and reviews across a wide spectrum of Queensland topics and academic disciplines in recent years. Just as important have been our continuing good relations with particular Queensland organisations and institutions: the Brisbane City Council, the Queensland Art Gallery, the Museum of Brisbane, Global Arts Link and the Garden History Society, all of which have collaborated effectively with the *Queensland Review* editorial team in the production of a number of specially themed, often guest-edited issues. One unfortunate effect of the disappearance of the Queensland Studies Centre in 2003 was a loss of momentum in multiplying those collaborative institutional networks throughout the state. Our gratitude to those organisations with which the *Queensland Review* on its own did manage to preserve or forge cooperative links knows no bounds, but rekindling the former Centre's expansive networking ambitions must and will be a future priority for the *Queensland Review* team.

Following a brief intermission with Australian Academic Press in 2010–11, the journal is now securely and satisfactorily positioned within the Cambridge University Press periodical publishing program. Some streamlining and modernising of the submission, refereeing and editing procedures has already taken place, and a major campaign is now underway, in close consultation with the Cambridge team here and in the United Kingdom, to enlarge and diversify our subscription base, increase the pool of potential contributors and explore a whole host of new ideas and initiatives for the journal. Watch this space! It is great to report that the School of Humanities, through the good offices of its Head, Jock Macleod (himself the first Director of the Centre and one of the first editors of the *Review*), has been prepared to make a significant financial contribution to the journal's ongoing viability. The future is looking brighter for the *Review* than it has for a decade, but there is a lot of work to be done.

In the meantime, we have the current issue in hand, in which — appropriately enough on this occasion — a number of ‘old stagers’ have made their voices heard again. Mark Finnane, an early *Queensland Review* editor, has written on the endlessly fascinating (and at times alarming) life and work of Sir Raphael Cilento. (In a pleasing coincidence, Sir Raphael’s daughter, the remarkable Diane, was one of the two public speakers at the launch of the Queensland Study Centre in 1993 — the other was Barry Maranta. Her recent sad death was a great shock, and we take this opportunity to extend our condolences to her family.) Clive Moore examines the environmental record of the sugar industry in North Queensland since the mid-nineteenth century, and Paul Norton extends the ecological theme with a sharply focused analysis of environmental politics and policy under the Beattie and Bligh governments. Robert Mason sheds light on a little-known aspect of Queensland’s radical history (another article in the category of ‘discovering world history in Queensland’ in which the *Queensland Review* has excelled over the years), and Belinda McKay and I consider a more mainstream instance of ethnic culture in Queensland with our piece on the Irish component of early Queensland literature. Peter Roennfeldt has added a twentieth century sequel to the finely detailed and intimate history of chamber music in nineteenth-century Queensland that we published in the last issue. Kelly McWilliam offers a timely investigation of the uses of social media during the 2011 floods in south-east Queensland, and Cheryl Taylor highlights the regional strain in Queensland culture with her skilful comparative analysis of no fewer than eight novels about Mt Isa.

The current issue, then, offers a blend of older and younger researchers, and covers history, politics, classical music, popular media and literature. We think it augurs well for another twenty years of serious reflection and incisive analysis about the state of Queensland. If you are reading this, you probably already share our belief that, all things considered, the *Queensland Review* is an unambiguously Good Thing. If it is to continue to be that, we need your help in spreading the word. It remains, as far as we know, the only journal of its type in Australia, and we think it deserves to be more widely read.