

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History:

President's Report, 2017-18

The branch has been active since the last AGM, either hosting or jointly hosting the following events:

- 4 November 2017; '1917: Year of War and Revolution' symposium. Papers from interstate speakers as well as local Labour History members such as Humphrey McQueen and Peter Ellett, and Senior Archivist at the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Sarah Lethbridge. It was very well attended. We are grateful to have partnered with the Noel Butlin Archives Centre which mounted an exhibition on the 1917 strike from its own collections as well as hosting a travelling exhibition from Unions NSW.
- 9 November 2017; Paper from Geraldine Fela on 'Blood Politics: Nursing Unionism and HIV/AIDS.' Geraldine did her Honours at the ANU and was a recipient of the Eric Fry Research Grant. It was gratifying to see some of the research that the grant has supported. Geraldine subsequently won the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives' annual thesis prize.
- 22 February 2018; Paper from Bob Crawshaw on 'Banks in Battledress.' Bob's paper dealt with the PR campaign against bank nationalisation waged from 1947. It offered a novel and interesting approach to a familiar subject. Bob subsequently joined Canberra Labour History.
- 2 May 2018; Labour History Dinner at Bistro Nguyen's.
- 10 August 2018; Canberra Labour History and the ANU School of History co-sponsored the launch of Merridee Bailey, Tania Colwell and Julie Hotchin's edited book *Women and Work in Premodern Europe: Experiences, Relationships and Cultural Representations c. 1100 – 1800*.
- 30 August; Paper from ACU PhD student Michael Pearson on 'Who are the Mechanics? Historically Defining Australia's Automotive Repair Trade.' Talk on the history of mechanics as a trade inspired considerable interest among members. Michael subsequently joined Canberra Labour History.
- 27 September; Third Canberra Labour History Society Emerging Scholars Seminar. Built on previous successful Emerging Scholars events. Featured six papers from a mixture of new and previous contributors.

On an unhappy note, the year saw the loss of a number of historians who have been members of the Society and/or supporters of it over the years. We mourn the passing of Barry McGowan, Patrick Troy, Bruce Kent and John Molony. In particular, some members will recall with great fondness Barry's guided tours of the region's gold mines.

I would like to thank all of the committee members for their efforts during the year to make the Society a success. In particular, we value the many great contributions of Maggie Shapley to the Society in her years as University Archivist and head of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre. Our relationship with the Archives is most important to the Society. We look forward to welcoming the new University Archivist, Kathryn Dan, on to the committee.

Frank Bongiorno, 14 November 2018