

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History Canberra Region Branch

Annual Report 2018-2019

The Canberra Branch ended 2018 with the election of a significantly changed executive; Carol Corless, Kathryn Dan, and Bob Crawshaw were all welcomed as new members. The executive oversaw a programme of well-attended talks during 2019, with many contributions coming from students and featuring new research.

Two papers in February dealt with transnational aspects of labour history. Melbourne University PhD student Jimmy Yan presented *'Amritsar in Dublin:' Australian Political Travellers and Post-War Imaginaries in Revolutionary Ireland, 1919-21* on 6 February. Stanley Schwartz, a Fulbright Postgraduate Researcher from the United States, presented *Australian Labor and American Fleets: Defence and Diplomacy in Press and Party* on 26 February. This paper compared labour responses to the American fleet visits of 1908 and 1925.

Our third paper of the year examined the advent of the stay-in strike in Australia. *1937 Castlemaine Brewery Dispute: Valour Among the Vats*, was presented by MA student and branch executive member Carol Corless on 26 March. This was followed, on 30 May, with a paper highlighting more recent history. *'Our Side of the Story:' The Political Memoirs of the Rudd - Gillard Labor Cabinet*, was presented by Josh Black, a PhD Student in the National Centre for Biography at the ANU.

Papers are usually the mainstay of the Canberra Branch's activities, and 2019 was no exception in this regard. But we also contribute to the study of labour history through the annual Eric Fry Research Grant. The grant, which is jointly sponsored by the branch and the ANU's Australian Studies Institute, provides Honours and PhD students with \$1000 to assist in the completion of theses that make use of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre's collections. Several years of effort to improve the promotion of the grant bore fruit in 2019, with a record seven applications being received. The grant was awarded to ANU PhD student Rhys Williams, for his research on British Socialism and Australia 1880-1914.

Labour History Lab, an event where Labour History members and friends came together to discuss their research in a casual setting, represented a successful effort to vary the usual format of branch events. Thanks are owed to Bob Crawshaw for his role in both suggesting and chairing the event, which was held on 17 June.

The Canberra branch AGM, to be held on 27 September, will feature two papers from ANU students. Freya Willis' *'Don't Be Too Polite Girls!': Changing Patterns of Female Participation in the Meatworkers' and Clerks' Unions in the 1970s,* and Jacob Thornton's *Profits, Priests, and the Six-Penny Pint: Unions and the Brisbane Beer Strike, 1918* should provide a varied and interesting agenda for the evening.

This has been a successful year for our branch, which maintains a healthy membership of 49. It would not have been possible without the work and ideas of our executive members, to whom I offer my sincere thanks.

Chris Monnox

Secretary

18 September 2019