



# JUDGING HISTORY

The John and Patricia Ward History Prize has been established by State Records in memory of historian John Manning Ward and his wife Patricia. The award recognises the use of original materials (rather than secondary sources) in the research and writing of history. While the works needed to recount historical events, the judges also looked for challenging and engaging works that would capture readers' interest and attention.

And the winner is ...

***A Dumping Ground: A History of the Cherbourg Settlement* by Thom Blake; University of Queensland Press**

Following is an edited extract from the book's foreword by Ruth Elizabeth Hegarty, 'a Cherbourg dormitory girl' and author of *Is that you Ruthie?*

'In this critical examination of the purpose and rationale of the reserve system, Thom Blake brings to the surface the absolutely inhuman treatment of Aboriginal people. Faced with dispossession, the once free-thinking and free-moving peoples from as far north of Queensland as you can get, and as far south, became a people who lost both their identity and their culture ...

Thom Blake worked in the Paddington Uniting Church as

Pastor to Indigenous peoples and in this role has won their trust and love. I believe he could not have produced such fine work had he not had that trust. His interviews go back to the early 1980s and many of the people he spoke with are now deceased. They disclosed (some for the first time) matters of deep concern, hurt and frustration, directed at "those who were specially appointed to guide and control".

In Thom Blake's words: "Despite the oppressive nature of the settlement regime and concerted efforts to destroy the value systems and beliefs of the so-called inmates ... ironically, the system promoted a cultural resilience and strength within its peoples which it was meant to destroy."

I hope this book is kept in every ex-Cherbourg (Barambah) resident's home. It is indeed a true record in writing of what went on in this place, to be handed down as a document of truth. When your grandchildren's children enquire about the old days, give them a copy of *A Dumping Ground*.'

## Other short-listed works

***Visions of a Republic: the Work of Lucien Henry* edited by Ann Stephen; Powerhouse Publishing**

*Visions of a Republic* examines Lucien Henry's political and artistic life in France, New Caledonia and Australia, his contributions to art and architecture and the legacy of his vision. In the process it makes an innovative contribution to the cultural history of Australia in the 19th century, challenging stereotypes of an Australian national culture embedded in bush ethos.

***Chifley* by David Day; HarperCollinsPublishers (Australia) Pty Ltd**

This well-researched and scholarly work makes a valuable contribution to the political and social history of the first half of the 20th century – five of the most tempestuous and challenging decades of Australian political life. The author's research and sensitive investigation into former Labor prime minister Ben Chifley has extended well beyond the official records to include highly personalised accounts of the man.

***Milk and Honey – But No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia between 1945 and 1964* by Dr Nonja Peters; University of Western Australia Press**

This moving account of postwar immigration is an engaging and well-crafted history, which makes careful use of oral testimony, blended with a range of archival research. *Milk and Honey* reminds us of the many ways immigration has enriched Australian culture and of the debt we owe Australia's postwar settlers.

