

Mudanjiang Normal University  
July 11-14, 2014

Ed. by

梁中贤 (Liang Zhongxian)

[澳] 戴维·卡特 (David Carter)

韩锋 (Han Feng)

Australian Studies  
— Proceedings of the 14th International  
Conference of Australian Studies in China

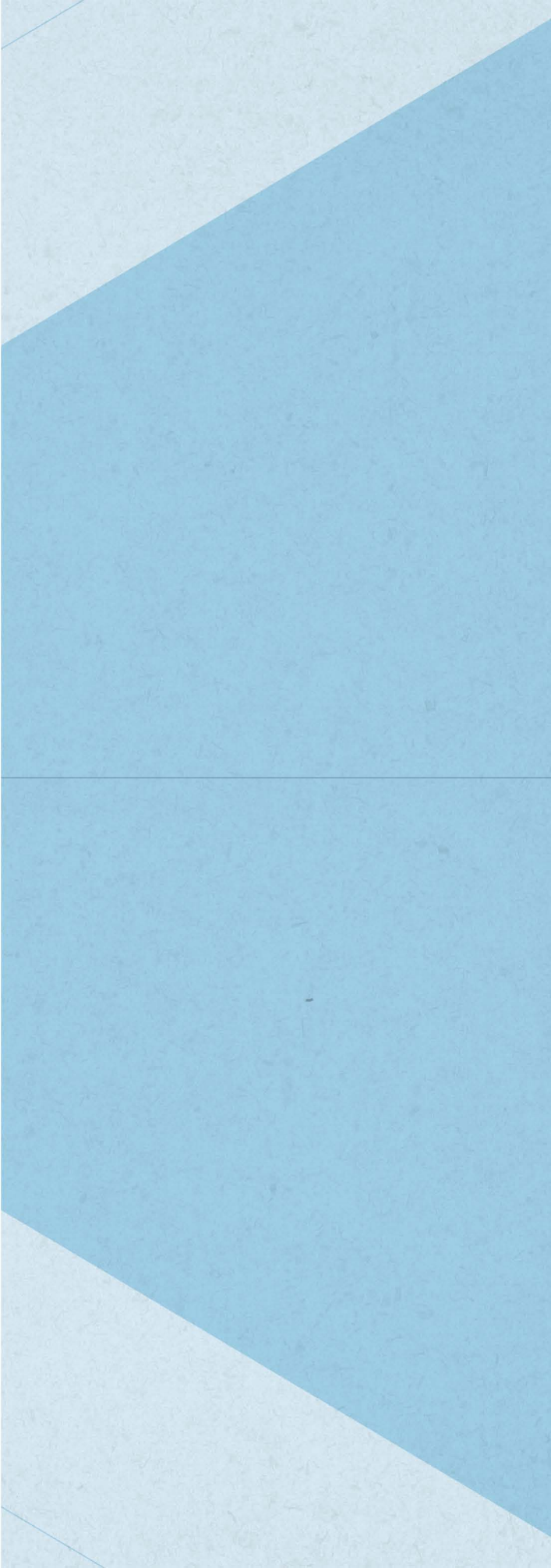
# 澳大利亚研究

——第十四届中国澳大利亚研究  
国际学术研讨会文集

(英文版)



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## 内 容 提 要

本书为第十四届中国澳大利亚研究国际学术研讨会论文集。该研讨会于2014年7月11日~14日在牡丹江师范学院召开,研讨会每两年举办一届,由中国澳大利亚研究会、澳中理事会和牡丹江师范学院主办。本届研讨会的主题定位“创新与发展”。共征集到来自北京大学、北京外国语大学、中国人民大学、华东师范大学、上海交通大学、苏州大学、厦门大学等国内知名学府的专家来稿百余篇。经严格评审,最终选定26篇论文收入本书。本书内容涉及中澳文化、教育、文学、经济、政治等方面,代表了中澳两国各个研究领域的最新成果,总体反映了中澳国际学术研讨会的发展趋势和规律。

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## Foreword

The support and promotion of Australian Studies in China is an important part of Australia's public and educational diplomacy. This year, 2014, represents my twentieth year of engagement with Australian Studies in China, since my first semester at Beijing Foreign Studies University in 1994. From this point in time my own impression is that the teaching of Australian Studies in Chinese universities remains strong—and the Australian Studies in China Program of the Australia-China Council (ACC) is always keen to support academic teachers seeking to extend and upgrade their knowledge of Australia in their particular discipline and to discuss pedagogy with their Australian colleagues. In many ways, the area of research presents us with greater challenges—in providing access to resources, distributing up-to-date information and academic “news” from Australia, supporting meetings where dialogue can occur and new research be presented, and, in general, in making as strong and innovative as possible the research work that is being done on Australian topics. While the network of Australian Studies Centres continues to prosper, Australian Studies can still be a difficult field of study to promote within your own universities. Indeed, given some of these difficulties, the size and success of the Australian Studies network in China is remarkable.

Australian Studies in China is continuing to grow both in size and in the sophistication and significance of the research scholars in the Australian Studies network are producing. Publication, however, remains a difficult challenge for us all, so we are especially grateful for both the original works of scholarship and the works in translation that are published by Chinese “Australianists” every year. I would particularly like to thank and congratulate the winners of the ACC Book Prizes for 2013-2014: Professor Zhang Wei for *The W. H. Donald Files: Adventures of an Australian in Modern China* (Tsinghua University Press), Zhu Xiaoyong for *Helen Garner: A Critical Study* (Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press) and Ouyang Yu for his translation of Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore* (Nanjing University Press). We hope soon to be able to begin work on a Bibliography of such publications, and to support the establishment of a Journal of Australian Studies for China in the near future.

The difficulties of publication and having our works distributed and read widely by other scholars make the Australian Studies conferences especially valuable events. Scanning the Contents of the present volume, the range of different disciplinary areas is especially notable—historical studies, economics and diplomacy, literature, the Chinese in Australia (indeed in Australasia), linguistics, cinema studies, environmental studies, and urban studies, to mention only the most obvious. Congratulations to all the authors and to the conference organisers.



Australian Studies in China is now in a new phase, with such developments as the formation of the Foundation for Australian Studies in China (FASIC) to support the work of the ACC, the establishment of the Chair in Australian Studies at Peking University, the increasing use of online resources such as AustLit and Informit's Australian Humanities and Social Sciences database, and the establishment of an Australian Studies in China website (which everyone should be using—reading and contributing information). The ACC's programs, especially the Competitive Projects and Output Award, continue to support individual scholars, graduate students, and Australian Studies Centres, and we look forward to receiving your applications.

It is worth re-reading the Vision Statement and the program objectives for the ACC's Australian Studies in China Program:

*The Australian Studies in China Program aims to build a vibrant, linked-up community of lecturers, researchers and students participating in the study and research of Australian literature, economy, culture and other facets of Australian society. Australian Studies Centres at participating universities are the focal point for such activities, and endeavour to provide relevant teaching, resources and contacts to students, produce high-quality research in their chosen Australian-related fields, and arrange other Australian-related activities and events. The Australian Studies Centres network is supported by the Australia-China Council, Foundation for Australian Studies in China and BHP Billiton Chair of Australian Studies, Australian Embassy and Consulates-General in China, and the broader Australian education community.*

**Australian Studies Program objectives**

- *Enhance the range, volume, quality and value of research on Australia in China, and promote the dissemination of research outcomes through publishing, conferences and other means*
- *Encourage quality content on and learning outcomes as well as Australia-related subject diversity across the Chinese tertiary education system*
- *Promote linkages between Australian universities and the Australian Studies Centres at Chinese universities*

The program thus participates in Australia's efforts in public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and educational diplomacy—all “buzz words” today but no less critical, both for Australia itself and for Australia-China relations.

I hope the present collection of essays is read widely and inspires new research from within the Australian Studies network and from new scholars who are yet to be converted to Australian Studies!

David Carter

Professor of Australian Literature and Cultural History  
The University of Queensland  
Manager, Australian Studies in China Program

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# The Great War: Anzac Legacies and Memories and the Making of National Identity

Stephen Garton  
University of Sydney

**Abstract:** This article explores the ways Australia's participation in the Great War (1914-1918) shaped Australian national identity and how that in turn was incorporated into Australia's collective memory. Australia is widely seen as emerging as a nation as a consequence of its participation in the Great War and Gallipoli has become an iconic touchstone for the national identity. This article explores the history and debates around these developments, situating them in a broader transnational context through the idea of Empire nationalism. It also charts the post war struggles to shape and define the merging Anzac legend and how post war discontents, particularly amongst veteran groups, helped fuel the Anzac legend as a comforting discourse.

**Key words:** Great War; Anzac legend; national identity; nationalism; mateship; memory; Gallipoli; British Empire; commemoration

In 2014 the Australian Government, aware that the numbers of Australians desperate to be on the Gallipoli peninsular in April 2015 would far outstrip places allocated by the Turkish Government for the centenary celebrations of the Anzac landing, established a public ballot for the allocation of the mere 3,800 double passes available. Their concerns, and those of the Turkish Government, were not unfounded. For the last twenty years or more, vast armies of Australian backpackers and tourists have descended on this barren, hilly, seaside site every April to celebrate Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day, propping up the local economy as this annual pilgrimage to commemorate, in the words of young Australians, politicians and public commentators alike, the founding of the nation.<sup>①</sup>

So concerned was the Australian government to manage the demand and the politics of public expectation, that they designated categories within the ballot—descendants of WWI veterans had first priority, veterans, and descendants of veterans, of other conflicts had second priority and only then would other Australians be considered. Despite these evident restrictions over 40,000 Australians threw their hat in the ring, ranging in age from 16 to 99 years. The results were widely publicised in the media and many of the successful applicants were profiled in newspapers and interviewed on television. As we approach the centenary of the World War I, it is timely to reflect again on its impact in Australia and for Australia.

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<sup>①</sup> Scates, Bruce, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the Battlefields of the Great War*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Gallipoli is an iconic place for many Australians. On 25 April 1915 waves of Australian servicemen stormed ashore at this rocky cove in the Dardanelles facing fierce Turkish opposition. Nearly 8000 died over the next 9 months as the campaign reached a stalemate: the Anzacs unable to overwhelm Turkish defences, the Turks reluctant to attack Australian defences. In the end the Anzac forces withdrew from the peninsular.<sup>①</sup> Why does the centenary of this minor conflagration in the Great War, essentially a defeat for Australian forces and the allies more generally, and in hindsight irrelevant to the outcome of the war itself, assume such extraordinary significance in Australian culture? Anzac commemoration has become, as Ken Inglis has argued, a secular religion in Australia and the site itself a place of pilgrimage.<sup>②</sup>

Forty years ago one of the founding debates in Australian Studies concerned the most appropriate day to celebrate Australian national identity. Of course there was already an official day—Australia Day 26 January—commemorating the landing of Arthur Phillip in Sydney Cove in 1788 and planting the flag making New South Wales (and the continent more generally) a British possession. But this was a controversial day. Indigenous Australians were offended by this choice, seeing it instead as a day of mourning, invasion and dispossession. Others felt that it was too much a New South Wales event; other States and territories had different founding moments, so how could it stand for the nation? Finally, for others it lacked emotional resonance. It failed, until recently, to inspire patriotism and national feeling. There were alternatives. Some favoured 1 January, to commemorate the federation of the six Australian colonies into one nation in 1901. In a narrow political sense this was probably the most appropriate day but for many it again lacked wider emotional resonance for ordinary Australians—it was a day that appealed to political elites rather than the populace. The third was Anzac Day, 25 April, a day that did have popular appeal, and an abundance of emotional baggage. What was the best day to encapsulate Australian virtues and bring the nation together? Historians, sociologists and political scientists spilt much ink for and against each option and, in better hands, on what the debate itself might say about the confused and ambivalent relationship of Australians to the nation more generally?<sup>③</sup>

I'm not going to resolve that debate here. But I would like to understand Anzac Day a little more by looking at the ways Australians have “made” the Anzac legend something national, sacred and emblematic and the difficult cultural work that was required to turn an event so painful into a national myth. What were the mechanisms of experience and memory that transformed trauma, conflict and bitterness into a form of social cohesion that operates powerfully to this day, long after the last original Anzacs have passed into

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① See, for example, Adam-Smith, Patsy, *The Anzacs*, Melbourne, Penguin, 1991; Carlyon, Les, *Gallipoli*, Melbourne, Random House, 2001; Beaumont, Joan, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2014.

② Inglis, K.S., *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, Melbourne, Meigunyah Press, 1998.

③ Inglis, K.S. “Australia Day”, *Historical Studies*, 13/49, 1967, 20-41; Ely, Richard, “Secularisation and the Sacred in Australian History”, *Historical Studies*, 19/77, 1981, 553-566.

history. I'm not going to offer a coherent theory or narrative about the making of the Anzac legend, nor deconstruct its content, but instead lay out some of the puzzling elements in its making. It is the complex dissonances that might give us some insight into the dynamics of nation making in the context of Australia's participation in the Great War and its aftermath.

The first puzzle is that this was not a war for Australia but for the British Empire. Of course many at the time saw them as one and the same thing but they aren't and as the war progressed some Australians came to the same conclusion. Australia was a British dominion, politically independent, except that it did not control foreign policy, as it was still a formal part of the Empire. Britain did not consult Australia before declaring war on 4 August and everyone rightly assumed that if Britain declared then Australia was also at war. Australian forces until late 1917 fought as part of the British Expeditionary Force, and its generals reported to British Generals in the high command. Australians, for much of the war, fought under the flag of Britain with state and other flags of Australian significance (but rarely the national flag) subsidiary to the Union Jack.<sup>①</sup>

Another puzzle is why Gallipoli? Many Australians don't realise that it was not Australia's first military engagement of the Great War, let alone the scene of our first military casualties. Indeed the first servicemen in the Australian forces fell on 11 September 1914, possibly the first casualty was from my University, Brian Pockley, who had just graduated in Medicine from Sydney University, and was killed rushing to the aid of a wounded seamen as Australian forces attacked a communications outpost in German New Guinea.<sup>②</sup> Gallipoli was not a military triumph, it was at best a stalemate, that led to, for some, ignominious withdrawal. If we were looking for early glory, a more potent symbol would have been the sailors on the HMAS Sydney, which sank the German cruiser the Emden off the Cocos Islands on 9 November 1914, after the Emden had destroyed around 30 merchant ships and attacked Penang and Madras, causing significant damage and loss of life. This was a major military victory, early in the war, and one that helped focus the war in Europe rather than Asia and the Pacific. In terms of overall significance, both in terms of loss of life and military significance, the Western front was far more important for Australia and yet it has always ranked below Gallipoli in the iconography of Anzac.<sup>③</sup>

All of this serves to highlight the peculiarity of the Australian obsession with the Anzac landing at Gallipoli, and the experience of the Great War more generally, in framing our national consciousness. Let me then suggest some of the factors in play in attempting to explain the deep emotional undercurrents and public sentiments inscribed

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① Garton, Stephen and Stanley, Peter, "The Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-22" in Bashford, Alison and Macintyre, Stuart, eds. *The Cambridge History of Australia Volume 2*, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 2013, 39-40.

② University of Sydney, *Book of Remembrance 1914—1918*, Sydney, University of Sydney, 1939.

③ Garton and Stanley, "The Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-22", 40-48.

through this cultural work of national identity making.

The Great War was the first major military campaign for the newly Federated Australian nation. The earlier Boer War, which had involved Australian troops, had begun as colonial contingents from different colonies. In the Great War Australia entered as a nation for the first time, even if as one small part of the British Expeditionary Forces.

While Gallipoli was not Australia's first military engagement of the Great War, it was the first as part of a larger British Empire and allied campaign — 20,000 soldiers in all these forces stormed ashore at various points on the peninsula on the first day of this conflict. I will return to the potential significance of this later. It was also the first engagement of the war involving major loss of life. In the first few days of combat over 800 Australians lay dead and a further 2000 were wounded, a shocking loss of life only eclipsed later on the bloody battlefields of the Western Front. This was a profoundly shocking event for families and friends back in Australia.<sup>①</sup>

Ironically this loss of life and the failure to achieve success became an iconic story of glorious sacrifice. English reporters, such as Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett wrote in the London papers of the courage and skill of the Australian troops in the early days of the Gallipoli campaign, bravery that put them in the league of military heroes stretching back to those of Ancient Greece. The British affirmation of Australia's contribution played to provincial chauvinism, far more than if it had come solely from Australian commentators. And Australian politicians were quick to grab hold of this praise to promote national pride at a time of grief for many Australians. Anzac courage became a consoling discourse but one that was turned towards national myth making. Australians became braver than anyone else, especially feared warriors because of their egalitarian, mateship ethos, lack of respect for military hierarchy, contempt for officers but when the fighting was fiercest the bravest soldiers of all. It is a myth that has been questioned by historians like Peter Stanley but it was one cemented in the minds of politicians and the population more generally almost from the beginning.<sup>②</sup>

In time, sacrifice, or what in Australia became known as the “blood sacrifice”, became one of the hallmarks of Australia's Anzac legend.<sup>③</sup> At Gallipoli, on the Western front and in the Middle East Australian casualties were horrendous. In all Australia sent around 330,000 service personnel overseas, 60,000 were killed and 150,000 wounded, a casualty rate of around 64% the highest of any allied force in the war, a badge of honour

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① Williams, P.D., *The Battle of Anzac Ridge 25 April 1915*, Sydney, Australian Military History Publications, 2006.

② Stanley, Peter, *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny, Murder and the Australian Imperial Force*, Sydney, Murdoch Books, 2010.

③ McLachlan, Noel, *Waiting for the Revolution: A History of Australian Nationalism*, Ringwood, Penguin, 1989, 197-8.

that Australians both wore with pride but one that in the post war period became a weapon to press for special privileges. In reality a higher proportion of the British male population was killed in the war but many British soldiers were in supply, logistics and other support services, while Australians were almost all in the front line combat units, a reason for their proportionally high casualty rate as a force.<sup>①</sup>

In the popular mind, however, Australians had made the “blood sacrifice”, one seen as justifying the high regard for the bravery and contribution of Australian forces overseas. But it was a double-edged sword. For some returning men the idea that they had suffered more than any other force symbolised neglect, disregard and lack of support at home. Worse many returning servicemen expected very special treatment on return and when this was not forthcoming, or forthcoming enough, they carried a sense of bitterness and grievance against those Australians who hadn’t fought and died.<sup>②</sup>

The loss of life more generally in the Great War was staggering. Historians have suggested that around 10 million military personnel were killed in the war, and a further 7 million civilians. The quantum of grief was staggering. In France, Belgium, the Middle East and in Turkey there are vast cemeteries for the fallen as well as memorials for those who died but whose body could not be found. At least 22 countries around the world acknowledge the war dead on Remembrance Day, 11 November, the day the armistice was declared in 1918. These are sombre ceremonies acknowledging the sacrifice of so many and the desire at the time that this should be the war that ends all wars. And in many countries there are vast numbers of war memorials to acknowledge the sacrifice of those in this terrible war. Many of these memorials list the war dead, from towns, communities and cities, who died during the war.<sup>③</sup>

Australia is different. While these commemorations of war sacrifice are sombre and reflective, Anzac Day in Australia is far larger and more significant than Remembrance Day. Moreover there is something very peculiar about many of the community war memorials around the nation. The majority list not just those who died but all those who fought. Australia, even before the war was over, began to see it as a birth of a nation where those who fought made the nation. Thus commemoration in Australia is less about the dead and their sacrifice and more about those who fought and forged. Australia is unique in this focus.<sup>④</sup>

Yet this celebration of the supposed founding moment of the nation masks some fundamental conflicts that marred the nation during the course of the war and poisoned

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① Garton, Stephen, *The Cost of War: Australians Return*, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1996, 76-77.

② Garton, *The Cost of War*, 9-25.

③ See for example Shipley, Robert, *To Mark our Place: A History of Canadian War Memorials*, Toronto, NC Press, 1987 and Maclean, Chris and Phillips, Jock, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, Wellington, GP Books, 1990.

④ Inglis, *Sacred Places*. 9-100.

the immediate post war years. The most unsettling and bitter political conflict of twentieth century Australian politics is widely seen as the conscription referenda of 1916 and 1917. As the death toll mounted, the number of volunteers for the war declined and the Labour Government was under pressure from Britain to send more troops. The Prime Minister, William Morris Hughes, proposed conscription but knowing this did not have the support of a majority in his party, he put the question to the people. The campaigns for and against conscription were extensive, vociferous and bitter and the first referendum was lost by a narrow margin. Hughes crossed the floor of Parliament with some of his Labour colleagues, joined the conservative opposition and brought down the Government. Hughes was elected the head of a new conservative/nationalist Coalition government, retaining the Prime Ministership, and put the question of conscription to the people again. This time the campaigning was even more contested and the nation was bitterly divided over the question. Again it lost by a narrow margin.<sup>①</sup>

The failure of conscription had many consequences, and not just political ones. It meant that many servicemen overseas felt that their country had refused to support them. They felt betrayed by those who didn't volunteer, men they portrayed as "slackers", "shirkers" and "profiteers". They felt their government had let them down, abandoning them to their fate in a protracted and costly war. On the other hand, they also swelled with pride at the fact that they were a volunteer force, unlike most others in the war. They felt their status was enhanced even if it was because the nation failed to support them. It gave them a stronger sense of group identity and difference from civilians when they returned home.<sup>②</sup>

These feelings shaped the experience of return. While the doyen of Anzac historians C.E.W. Bean argued that the Anzacs merged quickly and quietly back into civilian life, the reality and the political response was more complex.<sup>③</sup> Indeed there were 11 major returned soldier riots in Australia in the immediate post war years, many protesting the inadequacy of compensation for their service. Others involved attacks on people they believed were disloyal—those that hadn't enlisted, trade unionists (because unions had opposed conscription), supporters of Sinn Féin, Bolshevism or other radical doctrines and anyone who expressed ambivalence about the British empire, for which Anzacs had fought and died. There is also a hidden history of violence on the streets and in the home as returned men struggled to accommodate themselves to the routines of civilian life. Alcoholism, unemployment, mental stresses and strains were evident in many returned men. Returned men clung together to support each other, in part as an escape from domestic life and as a means of reliving the close bonds of the front line. Returned services organisations had a membership of around a third of all returned servicemen even into the late 1920s, far higher than for any other armed force after the

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① Garton and Stanley, "The Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-22", 52-54.

② Garton, *The Cost of War*, 89.

③ Bean, C.E.W., *Anzac to Amiens*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1983, 98.



Great War.<sup>①</sup>

How did Australians, especially governments, respond to the anger and resentment of some returning soldiers? A critical development was an extensive system of welfare benefits for returning service personnel—pensions, employment preference, job training, medical and hospital services, cheaper home loans, a land settlement scheme and much more. This was of course common for many of the combatant nations. But Australia did not simply adopt the systems developed elsewhere but went down a different track. Many nations, including Britain, other dominions and the USA, instituted a criterion of 20% disability for entitlement to a pension. Australia alone had a much lower entry level of 5 percent. In other words the Australian government deliberately instituted a welfare system for returned soldiers that benefitted almost everyone. This was proclaimed as a manifestation of Australian egalitarianism but it also meant that many more returned service personnel were given benefits as compensation than would have been the case overseas. Many of them now had a stake in sustaining a government that supported them at a time when many were protesting at the inadequacy of support.<sup>②</sup>

Secondly, Australian governments quickly picked up the mood of nationalist praise for the Anzacs and amplified it wherever possible. Historians of the British dominions after the Great War have noted the surge of dominion nationalism after 1919. While the dominions entered the war fighting for the Empire, they came out of the war with a sense of national achievement and independence. But Australia experienced and shaped this emerging nationalism in very distinctive ways. As part of the effort of accommodating returned men back into civil society, they, unlike Britain or the other dominions, put the returned soldier, the Anzac, at the centre of national iconography. The Anzac was said to embody the spirit of the nation—its larrikin, egalitarian, mateship ethos, now valued even more highly on the basis of the exploits of these soldiers. Governments promoted Anzac Day, Governments built large public shrines of remembrance to complement and focus the numerous community memorials that had sprung up round the country. Governments turned to returned services organisations and cultivated their support by acceding to many of their demands. These returned services organisations became major political forces in national and state politics. Uniquely Australian governments and returned services organisations shaped interwar nationalism in very particular ways. They placed loyalty to Britain as a key virtue of Australian nationalism, such that criticism of Empire became criticism of the nation. Thus unlike other dominions it was not just nationalism that flowered in the interwar years but what I have called elsewhere Empire nationalism.<sup>③</sup>

I have never been much attracted to psychohistory, especially collective

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① Garton and Stanley, "The Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-22", 55-61.

② Garton, *The Cost of War*, 74-86.

③ Garton, Stephen, "The Dominions, Ireland, and India" in Gerwarth, Robert and Manela, Erez, ed., *Empires at War, 1911–1923*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014, 152-178.

psychohistory. And now that Freud is seen more as fabrication than illumination there is even less inclination to approach complex social, political and cultural developments as having psychological roots. But its tempting to see the peculiarities of Australian nationalism, especially in the interwar years, but also the valorisation of Anzac then and thereafter, as rooted in some form of collective guilt. A people that fought for an overseas Empire and died in disproportionate numbers for something other than the nation, a volunteer force that the home front refused to support through conscription, a force that made a blood sacrifice for a nation that split over supporting them through conscription, a nation that experienced angry and resentful returned men who blamed Australia for their sacrifice and the difficulties they faced on return, a force that felt Australia was ungrateful for the enormous cost they had paid.

In this emotionally charged social and cultural environment the comforting discourses of heroism, national icons, noble sacrifice, national building and a debt owed were meant to be slaves to deep wounds. These returned men needed healing and the attempts to make the unfathomable consequences of war meaningful and significant is not without merit. While these salves did not work for all, over time, as the emotions of return subsided, these myths and symbols took on a life of their own, reified as genuine attributes of the nation and celebrated thereafter.

While the emotional resonance of Anzac has waxed and waned since, it is very strong again. Again collective guilt, this time about subsequent conflicts, notably Vietnam, may have played a small part but it was the original embedding of extraordinary loss and grief into a consoling discourse of national founding that has cemented the Anzac myth at the centre of Australia's identity as a nation.

# Australian Children's Cultures of Play and Creativity: Historical, Contemporary and Cross-Cultural Perspectives

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**Abstract:** The play culture of Australian children is rich and creative, incorporating games, songs, chants, rhymes, stories, games and the lore of the playground. This paper draws upon the findings of the recent *Childhood, Traditional and Change* research project, which conducted the most detailed nationwide study of children's games and playground culture ever undertaken in Australia. The research documented over 400 different games played by Australian children today, and assembled a substantial archive of visual, oral and written data now held in national cultural collections. The study involved the comparison of contemporary children's playlore with historical records of children's play dating back to the nineteenth century, and studies carried out in the 1950s and 1970s. The research findings indicated that while there was considerable continuity in the play of Australian children across generations, there was also considerable change—with children's games, imaginative activities and language influenced by their everyday experiences of Australian society more generally, including the media. The research also explored the games played by children of different ethnic backgrounds and children's friendships and interactions in the multicultural playground. Through some brief examples from this research, the paper explores the distinctive national characteristics of Australian children's games, and the influences of popular culture and globalization on children's play.

**Key words:** history of Australian children, playlore, children's play, children's culture

## 1. Introduction

The oral and play traditions of children are rich and varied, and encompass the songs, chants, rhymes, stories, riddles, insults, games and imaginative activities of the playground. In colonial Australia, white settler children attracted attention from social commentators as representatives of the “Australian type”, and their physical and mental attributes were often compared with those of children in Britain. Their play was also under scrutiny. Writing in the nationalist *Bulletin* newspaper on 26 February 1898, the poet Victor Daley lamented that it would take up to 500 years for a distinctive Australian “child-literature” to surpass the European influences so evident in the everyday singing games of children. Daley was contradicted by a correspondent to the *Bulletin* who reported on 12 March 1898 that his daughter and her friends, pupils at a Sydney public school, accompanied their games with song that mapped the urban geography of Sydney:

Johnny and Jane and Jack and Lou,  
Butler's Stairs through Woolloomooloo;  
Woolloomooloo, and 'cross the Domain  
Round the Block, and home again!  
Heigh, ho! tipsy toe, Give us a kiss, and away we go.