

# The Queensland Journal Of Labour History

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# Editorial

It is easy to take for granted the work that happens behind the scenes, and so it is with this journal. For many years it has been edited and developed by Ross Gwyther, Howard Guille and Bob Russell. For both the BLHA Executive and the wider labour history community, it came out twice a year, on time, without fuss. Now Ross, Howard and Bob have decided to move on and passed the responsibility to others, and we take a moment to acknowledge their great contribution.

This issue has been edited by Greg Mallory, James Morris and Phil Griffiths, but we do not regard the editorial board as settled yet. In particular, we seek to find young labour activists and in particular, women comrades, willing to keep moving the journal forward and shaping its agenda.

The labour movement has had to constantly challenge itself to be a movement of all working class and ordinary people; that is a challenge that labour history also faces.

The major articles in this issue of the journal also remind us that working class struggle is so often a struggle for the most basic human rights.

John Maynard's article, "The men only worked when necessary, we called no man master and we had no King," shows us the importance of experience in the labour movement for the fledgling Aboriginal rights movement in Australia.

Professor Maynard is s a Worimi Aboriginal man from the Port Stephens region of New South Wales. He is currently a Director at the Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle and Chair of Indigenous History. He has held several major positions and served on numerous prominent organizations and committees including as Deputy Chairperson of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Australian Historical Association.

John's article is the keynote he presented to last year's "Workers of the World" conference, which the BLHA hosted at Emmanuel College. It traces the activism that led to the founding of the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association, whose leaders included his grandfather, wharfie activist Fred Maynard. The AAPA was influenced

by the Marcus Garvey movement in the United States, yet another example of the importance of internationalism in shaping our own movements against oppression and exploitation.

Stuart MacDonald is a retired organiser with the Queensland Teachers Union. For this issue he has written an account of the union's longest strike, in 1979, by teachers at the Hopevale Community School in far north Queensland. Hopevale was a strike to support a teacher who was forcibly transferred and punished for campaigning for the rights of Aboriginal people in a community under the thumb of the Lutheran Church and the Bjelke-Petersen government.

John McCollow, another retired organiser from the QTU, has given us a blow-by-blow account of the attempt by the Newman regime to destroy all that was valuable in Queensland TAFE, and the campaign of resistance waged by the union. He also reminds us that there is more that needs to be done to undo Newman's wrecking operation.

We have reports of two substantial conferences held in the last six months: the 15th Biennial National Labour History Conference, "Workers of the World", hosted by the Brisbane Labour History Association last September; and the "Fifty Years of Direct Action" conference, also held last September, to remember the start of the great civil liberties campaign that began by

defying Bjelke's ban on street marches, and grew into a much wider movement against oppression at the time.

Finally, we remember three stalwarts of the Queensland labour movement: Lindsay Jones, George Britten and Jim Sharp.

### **Hughie Williams**

Hughie Williams passed away in October 2017. Hughie was a giant of the labour movement and held a variety of positions during his life. He was Secretary of the Transport Workers Union, a Vice-President of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Labor Party and an Olympic Wrestler. He was also Patron of the Brisbane Labour History Association for nearly 10 years, and a founder of the Paddington Workers Club (now known as the Brisbane Workers and Community Club). In the September edition of the journal we will publish a reflection on his life and contribution.