

Queensland's political history – a review of the literature

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*Queensland is still a place that is much talked about but little understood. We have a history that is exciting, complex, surprising, nuanced and more than a little shocking. It does not lend itself easily to simplification. It still dances like a shimmering heat-haze at the edge of our present perceptions.*¹

Owing to a recent decline in state-focused academic analysis and publication, the body of literature covering Queensland's political history is not as substantial nor as current as was once the case. Contextual accounts are somewhat threadbare, being comprised largely of standard (and some now dated) texts in the field of Australian political history as well as contemporary journalistic coverage. Despite Queensland boasting a proud record of expertise in this field – names such as Colin Hughes, Paul Reynolds and Ross Fitzgerald come readily to mind – specifically state-based historical analysis of politics and government has lately suffered from a dearth of scholarly attention, not unlike other formerly prominent fields within the humanities and social sciences. Indeed, after something of a surge of publications on state political history during the middle to latter parts of the twentieth century – appearing, perhaps not coincidentally, at around the same time as the incumbency of Queensland's longest-serving premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen – interest and activity in state-based political analysis has since waned to an unsettling degree.² It seems that as print media and television news coverage of local politics has steadily overwhelmed academic discussion around the field, and according to some even surpassed the state opposition in the role of chief scrutineer,³ public attention has increasingly been drawn to political happenings at the supposedly more compelling national level – especially when many news services are run from distant national offices interstate, exacerbating the decline or demise of state-produced current affairs programs.⁴

This preponderance of media reportage over scholarly discourse could possibly be an unintended consequence of Phil Dickie's skilful investigative journalism for the *Courier-Mail* in the late 1980s helping to bring about the 'Fitzgerald Inquiry' in Queensland. The Inquiry's public hearings provided a constant stream of lewd and scandalous news headlines, dished up daily by local media outlets to an incredulous but voracious public audience.⁵ Since, it has fallen as much to the media, almost by

¹ Raymond Evans, quoted in Annette Burns, ed., *Selected lectures on Queensland history from the Lectures in Queensland History Series, 30 November 2009 – 27 February 2012* (Townsville, QLD: Townsville City Council, 2013), 5. This series has historians offering contemporary analyses on, particularly, northern Queensland.

² See Stuart Macintyre, "Political history," in *The Australian study of politics*, ed. R. A. W. Rhodes (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 87-90.

³ See Greg Chamberlin, "Media: an uneasy relationship," *Queensland Review* 18, no. 2 (2011) ['Labor in Queensland, 1989-2011']: 105-111.

⁴ See Sally Young, "Politics and the media in Australia today," Senate Occasional Lecture (Canberra: Australian Parliament, 11 July 2008): 5-6.

⁵ See Phil Dickie, *The road to Fitzgerald and beyond*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1989), for the journalist's account of events surrounding and in the aftermath of the Fitzgerald Inquiry into official corruption, as portrayed in his and other print media columns of that time. See also Andrew Hede, Scott Prasser and Mark Neylan, eds., *Keeping them honest: democratic reform in Queensland* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1992); and Scott Prasser, Rae Wear and John Nethercote, eds., *Corruption and reform: the Fitzgerald vision* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1990). For concise, more

dint of public expectation, to provide much of the scrutiny and analysis of the state's political figures and events that once was largely the domain of academic observers and only the most senior print news writers, such as Tony Koch of the *Courier-Mail* and later *The Australian*.⁶ Bearing all of the above in mind, there is an apparent gap in long-form academic analysis of Queensland's recent political history, particularly in the contemporary 'modern Labor' era.⁷

As diminished as this scholarly field of enquiry might have become recently, there is a long and robust track record of critical academic analysis surrounding Queensland's history, and in particular its political history. From the media-based and largely internet-driven scrutiny of more recent times to past scholarly analysis and serialised reportage of the state's and the nation's heritage, Queensland's historical background and seemingly distinct political culture have encouraged several eminent local observers to pen a long line of esteemed works in the field. John Wanna, at the Australian National University and now again at Griffith University, a long-time keen observer of Queensland politics, depicted this considerable output in positive terms as "a long revolution" of recorded historiography.⁸ This tradition stretches back as far as the earliest chroniclers of the colony's foundation in 1859, from which time there began to appear serialised publications such as *Pugh's Almanac* and *The Queenslander* – the latter of which in December 1899 broke news of the world's first Labour government in Queensland with the 'measured' headline, "POLITICAL CRISIS."⁹ Following later in the nineteenth century came monthly journals representing sectional, and increasingly politically active, interests of Queensland's developing society – *The Shearer's Record* and *The Worker* being prime examples – and then early in the twentieth century appeared Queensland's longest established serial, the *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*. This august publication's somewhat conservative editorial perspective has evolved over time – and with it a change of name in 2008 to the *Queensland History Journal* – extending beyond heroic pioneering accounts of 'taming the land' to include the broader social and political context of Queensland's development.¹⁰

contemporary retrospectives on this turbulent period, see Peter Beattie, "A line through Queensland history: reflections on the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald Inquiry," *The Proctor* 27, no. 5 (2007): 25; and Chris Salisbury, "Thirty years on, the Fitzgerald Inquiry still looms large over Queensland politics," *The Conversation*, 1 July 2019, <https://theconversation.com/thirty-years-on-the-fitzgerald-inquiry-still-looms-large-over-queensland-politics-119167>.

⁶ See Koch's comments regarding decreasing interest in state government affairs and the media's role, in Australasian Study of Parliament Group, "Forum on love/hate relationship between media and parliamentarians," ASPG Forum series (Brisbane: ASPG QLD Chapter, 2000), 16.

⁷ Not to ignore some recent scholarly journal attempts to redress this 'imbalance'. See Paul D. Williams, "Editorial," *Queensland Review* 18, no. 2 (2011) ['Labor in Queensland, 1989-2011']: v-viii. See also Bradley Bowden, "Modern Labor in Queensland: its rise and failings, 1978-98," *Labour History* 105 (November 2013): 1-26, for another fine entry in the 'modern Labor' overview style.

⁸ John Wanna, "A long revolution: writing the political history of Queensland regimes," *Australian Journal of Political Science* 25, no. 1 (1990): 139-143. See W. Ross Johnston and Margaret Zerner, *A guide to the history of Queensland: a bibliographic survey of selected resources in Queensland history* (Brisbane: Library Board of Queensland, 1985); and Bill Metcalf, "Histories of Queensland: a bibliographic survey," *Queensland History Journal* 21, no. 3 (2010): 162-180, for broad coverage of more generalised historiography relating to Queensland's post-colonisation development, including some of the earliest monographs in this field.

⁹ *The Queenslander*, 2 December 1899. See Ross Fitzgerald, *Seven days to remember: the world's first Labor government – Queensland, 1-7 December 1899* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1999).

¹⁰ See 'Editorial', "Australia's land of tomorrow," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 7, no. 1 (1963): 201; and Judith Rechner, "The Queensland workers' dwelling, 1910-1940," *Journal of the Royal*

Critical scholarly treatment of local historical and political themes increased noticeably between the mid-1950s and early 1960s, perhaps stimulated by the government-endorsed hoopla surrounding Queensland's 1959 centenary of separation from New South Wales – an event worth celebrating 'triumphantly', according to the book produced to officially mark the occasion.¹¹ The earlier founding of the University of Queensland Press (UQP) in 1948 also contributed to this increase in locally-focused, scholarly publications as well. Additionally, one cannot dismiss the impact that a change in government – a relatively infrequent occurrence in Queensland – can have upon the production of political commentary and enquiry; this was observed happening around the time of the Labor Party's split and the Country Party's ascendancy in 1957, and then the National Party's demise 32 years later, as well as either side of the one-term Newman LNP government from 2012 to 2015.¹²

From 1955, extensive coverage and analysis of important events and significant issues of the day appeared in new journals such as the then UQP-published *Australian Journal of Politics and History* (*AJPH*), including its excellent biannual series of 'Political Chronicles' providing expert summation of recently transpired happenings in the state and federal spheres (a disclaimer: I am now an Associate Editor for the *AJPH*, responsible for editing Political Chronicles entries). In 1964 came *Queensland Heritage*, later renamed the *John Oxley Journal* and produced by the State Library of Queensland. The most substantial and perhaps influential of the mid-century monographs emerged in 1960 when Solomon Davis, a Reader in Political Science at the University of Queensland (UQ), edited a collection of fine scholarly essays about government in each of the Australian states.¹³ From that time, the field of politically-themed historical enquiry generated significant interest and a growing following. In Australia, the *AJPH* represents the best sustained intellectual interaction between historians and

Historical Society of Queensland 15, no. 6 (1994): 265-278, for accounts thirty years and poles apart in their contextual scope. See also Charles Bernays, *Queensland politics during sixty (1859-1919) years* (Brisbane: A.J. Cumming, Government Printer, 1920); and Centre for the Government of Queensland, *Text Queensland*, University of Queensland, www.textqueensland.com.au, last updated April 2015, for digitised copies of these and other early print publications detailing Queensland history and events.

¹¹ See Sir Raphael Cilento, with Clem Lack, eds., *Triumph in the tropics: an historical sketch of Queensland* (Brisbane: Smith & Patterson, 1959); Clem Lack, ed., *Queensland, daughter of the sun: a record of a century of responsible government* (Brisbane: Jacaranda Press, 1959); and Clem Lack, ed., *Three decades of Queensland political history, 1929-1960* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1962), for exhaustive, if rather subjective and 'triumphalist', coverage of Queensland's first hundred years of separation, each of which received support and patronage from the Queensland Government.

¹² Wanna, "A long revolution," 139. See Esmonde M. Higgins, "Queensland Labor: trade unionists versus premiers," *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 9, no. 34 (1960): 140-155; Susan Yarrow, "Split, intervention, renewal: the ALP in Queensland 1957 - 1989," MPhil Thesis (School of Historical and Philosophical Inquiry, The University of Queensland, 2015); Rosemary Whip and Colin A. Hughes, eds., *Political crossroads: the 1989 Queensland election* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1991); Paul Reynolds, "The 1989 Queensland state election: the end of an era," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 36, no. 1 (1990): 94-103; Scott Prasser, "What went wrong? The Queensland election," *Viewpoint* 9 (June 2012): 29-33; and Paul D. Williams, "Leadership or policy? Explaining the 2015 Queensland election result," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 64, no. 2 (2018): 260-276. As a rule, elections of course provide regular opportunity for political and (sometimes) historically contextual analysis; see, for instance, Ann Scott, ed., *The Newman years: rise, decline and fall* (Brisbane: TJ Ryan Foundation, 2016); Chris Salisbury, "A tale of two parties: contrasting performances of Anastacia Palaszczuk's Labor and the post-Newman LNP in Queensland," *Queensland Review* 25, no. 1 (2018): 50-61; Paul D. Williams, "Back from the brink: Labor's re-election at the 2017 Queensland state election," *Queensland Review* 25, no. 1 (2018): 6-26; and Paul D. Williams, "One, two or many Queensland? Disaggregating the regional vote at the 2017 Queensland state election," *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 33, no. 2 (2018): 57-79.

¹³ Solomon R. Davis, ed., *The government of the Australian states* (Melbourne: Longmans, 1960).

political scientists; apart from this forum, these disciplines have in recent times gone their separate ways in terms of publication avenues. Since then, taking up this line of state-based enquiry – and applying it especially to Queensland’s example – have been some of the state’s and the nation’s most eminent scholars and prolific historical writers of succeeding generations.

In 1968 Colin Hughes, who took up residence as a leading academic in UQ’s School of Government, co-produced the first issue of his much-utilised, ongoing series analysing the governments, politics and elections of the state and national jurisdictions, spanning events from before federation up to the mid-1960s.¹⁴ Subsequent volumes cover periods of a decade or longer until, by the time of the final instalment in 2002, the minutiae of the nation’s electoral and political history throughout the twentieth century had been compiled and studied in impressive detail. Among other works, Hughes also added one of the most definitive assessments of governance and parliamentary representation in Queensland’s political past, standing equal amid a conclusive series, of which he was the general editor, analysing the governments of each Australian state and territory.¹⁵ This theme of ‘state by state’ examination was adopted and given further impetus by academic writers in other corners of the nation, such as John Rorke at the University of Sydney and Brian Galligan, a Queenslander by birth and education, at Latrobe University.¹⁶ Hughes’ efforts are still standouts, though, and retain the perceptive insights of works written close at hand to events; for this, they are of enduring value.

Perhaps inspired by Hughes’ example, the field of political history in Queensland has been bolstered subsequently by the works of, among others, Paul Reynolds, Margaret Cribb, Denis Murphy, Ray Evans and Ross Fitzgerald – all having held senior academic posts at UQ and other Queensland

¹⁴ Colin A. Hughes and Bruce D. Graham, eds., *A handbook of Australian government and politics 1890-1964* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968); see later issues produced in 1977, 1986 and 2002.

¹⁵ Colin A. Hughes, *The government of Queensland* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980).

¹⁶ Brian J. Galligan, ed., *Australian state politics* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1986); John Rorke, ed., *Politics at the state level: Australia* (Sydney: University of Sydney Press, 1970); see also Richard Eccleston, “Political economy,” in *The Australian study of politics*, 234-236. For a standout account of the coal-driven political economy of 1960s-70s Queensland, see Brian J. Galligan, *Utah and Queensland coal: A study in the micro political economy of modern capitalism and the state* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1989). For a selection of astute analyses of industrial relations, political activism, racial exploitation and wartime state intervention in Queensland’s economy, see Bradley Bowden et al, eds., *Work and strife in paradise: the history of labour relations in Queensland 1859-2009* (Annandale, NSW: Federation Press, 2009); Frank Brennan, *Land rights Queensland style: the struggle for Aboriginal self-management* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1992); David Cameron, “Queensland, the state of development: the state and economic development in early twentieth century Queensland,” *Queensland Review* 4, no. 1 (1997): 39-48; Raymond Evans, *The Red Flag Riots: a study of intolerance* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1988); Raymond Evans and Carole Ferrier, eds., *Radical Brisbane: an unruly history* (Carlton North, VIC: Vulgar Press, 2004); Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race relations in colonial Queensland: a history of exclusion, exploitation and extermination* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1993); Glen Lewis, *A history of the ports of Queensland: a study in economic nationalism* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1973); Dawn May, *Aboriginal labour and the cattle industry: Queensland from white settlement to the present* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Lyndon Megarrity, *Northern dreams: the politics of northern development in Australia* (North Melbourne, VIC: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2018); Denis Murphy, “The establishment of state enterprises in Queensland, 1915-18,” *Labour History* 14 (May 1968): 13-22; Jonathan Richards, *The secret war: a true history of Queensland’s native police* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2008); Kay Saunders, *War on the homefront: state intervention in Queensland 1938-1948* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1993); Kay Saunders, *Workers in bondage: the origins and bases of unfree labour in Queensland, 1824-1916*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2011); and Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: perspectives on a frontier society* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1996).

universities over the past 40 years or more. Indeed, these last two historians have made significant contributions to the field recently, the latter with two diligent co-authors, both publishing accomplished works broadly analysing Queensland's political, social and cultural make-up.¹⁷ While Fitzgerald's effort was surrounded by some criticism, this concerned more the fact that the book had been commissioned in eyebrow-raising circumstances by Peter Beattie's Premier's Department to mark the sesquicentenary of responsible government in Queensland (presumably without any hint of irony). In any event, the work – including the efforts of Fitzgerald's co-authors – still stands as a well-researched and smartly presented examination of Queensland's history and pre-history, albeit one that delves less deeply into critical analysis than Evans' work.¹⁸ This latter piece is thoroughly researched and engagingly written, and is in many regards the standout work on Queensland's history – social, political and otherwise – from the last quarter of a century.

This esteemed cohort mentioned above and their contemporaries over time provided specialist analysis of all points of Queensland's political spectrum. Cribb was a noteworthy chronicler of the development of the Country Party (later National Party) and conservative political trends in Queensland, improving on the partisan writings of some of those before her such as Ulrich Ellis.¹⁹ Murphy was a renowned labour historian and academic who, in practical terms, notably helped reform the Queensland branch of the ALP, then represented it briefly in the state's parliament prior to his untimely death in 1984.²⁰ Fitzgerald also added his impressions of the ALP's place in Queensland's development, co-writing a noted study of a century of the state's Labor history, released just prior to the coming of the Goss Labor government in 1989.²¹ In spite of their expertise,

¹⁷ See Raymond Evans, *A history of Queensland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity and David Symons, *Made in Queensland: a new history* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2009), for complementary and almost coinciding accounts of Queensland's history.

¹⁸ In this respect the book, which builds upon the combined premises of two of Fitzgerald's earlier works, does not quite match the standards or acclaim of its predecessors. See Ross Fitzgerald, *A history of Queensland: from 1915 to the 1980s*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1985); and *A history of Queensland: from the dreaming to 1915*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1986). For further discussion of Fitzgerald et al's recent commissioned history, see Kay Saunders, "The restless energies of freedom': revisiting the celebration of Queensland history," *Queensland History Journal* 21, no. 7 (2011): 447-455.

¹⁹ Ulrich Ellis, *A history of the Australian Country Party* (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 1963); and Margaret B. Cribb and Peter J. Boyce, eds., *Politics in Queensland: 1977 and beyond* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1980). See Rae Wear, "Countrymindedness and the Nationals," in *The National Party: Prospects for the great survivors*, ed. Linda Botterill and Geoff Cockfield (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2009), 81-99; Doug Hunt, "Writing political history: Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the 1970 leadership challenge," *Queensland History Journal* 20, no. 10 (2009): 470-494; and Roger Scott and John Ford, *Queensland parties: the right in turmoil 1987-2007* (St Lucia, QLD: Centre for the Government of Queensland, 2014).

²⁰ See Brian Costar, "Denis Murphy: Labor activist, labour historian," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 34, no. 1 (1988): 93-99. See also Kay Saunders and Brian Costar, "Introduction," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 19, no. 9 (2006) ['Tropical Transformations: Denis Murphy in Queensland History']: 11-13; and Frank Bongiorno, "The importance of being practical: D. J. Murphy and Australian labour history," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 19, no. 9 (2006) ['Tropical Transformations: Denis Murphy in Queensland History']: 31-53, in a special issue devoted to Murphy's historical work and legacy.

²¹ See Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: from the 1880s to 1988* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1989); Denis Murphy and Manfred Cross, eds., *The Australian Labor Party and its leaders*, 3rd ed. (Alderley, QLD: Gem Press, 1985); Denis Murphy and Roger Joyce, eds., *Queensland political portraits, 1859-1952* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1978); and Denis Murphy et al., eds., *The premiers of Queensland* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1990). See also Cribb's and Murphy's several biographical entries on, respectively, conservative and Labor politicians in the National Centre of

however, many of these otherwise respected scholars and their peers in the political ‘commentariat’ were often regarded with suspicion and derision in certain quarters of the political arena, let alone by an at times unappreciative or disinterested public. Politicians’ scorn and their shying from critical attention long kept academic analysis of the state’s political milieu largely confined to the halls of its universities. Despite this, the practice of local scholarly political analysis did not expire.

Added to it since are the works of other notable contributors and long-time UQ academics of recent decades, including Ross Johnston, whose standout edited collection of significant documentary sources from Queensland’s past continues to be a signpost for researchers today;²² and Rae Wear, whose deft political biography of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, alongside Reynolds’ similar work on Mike Ahern, rate among the recent best of their kind in a genre that has sometimes focused more on the off-beat dimensions of the state’s political leaders.²³ In a similar style, albeit a genre which it pays to approach with a degree of circumspection, is the relatively recent preponderance (in this country) of the political memoir or autobiography. Queensland’s political leaders and even influential senior bureaucrats have not been immune to this exercise in (usually, though not in every case) post-career self-reflection; it might not surprise to learn that the notable local examples begin with Bjelke-Petersen’s aptly titled contribution.²⁴ On a related tack, Paul Davey, a former journalist and senior

Biography’s *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au>, last updated April 2019.

²² W. Ross Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1988). See W. Ross Johnston, *The call of the land: a history of Queensland to the present day* (Milton, QLD: Jacaranda Press, 1982), for a ‘landmark’ environmental study of the influence upon Queensland’s post-colonisation history.

²³ Paul Reynolds, *Lock, stock and barrel: a political biography of Mike Ahern* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2002); Rae Wear, *Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: the Lord's premier* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2002). See Peter Bastian, *Andrew Fisher: an underestimated man* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009); Denver Beanland, *The Queensland Caesar: Sir Thomas McIlwraith* (Salisbury, QLD: Boolarong Press, 2013); Ross Fitzgerald, *Red Ted: the life of E. G. Theodore* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1994); Ross Fitzgerald, *The people's champion, Fred Paterson: Australia's only Communist Party Member of Parliament* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1997); Lyndon Megarrity, “The life and times of Sir Robert Philp,” *Queensland History Journal* 23, no. 1 (2017): 328-343; Denis Murphy, *T. J. Ryan: a political biography*, 2nd ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1990); Jamie Walker, *Goss: a political biography* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1995); Patrick Weller, *Kevin Rudd: twice Prime Minister* (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2014); and Irwin Young, *Theodore: his life and times* (Sydney: Alpha Books, 1971). For biographies and studies in the ‘larger than life’ (or sometimes hagiographic) style, see Helen Cameron, *Feeding the chooks: a selection of well-known sayings of former Queensland Premier, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, in his career of almost 41 years as a politician – farmyard politics* (Kingaroy, QLD: self-published, 1998); Gavin King, *Can do: Campbell Newman and the challenge of reform* (Ballarat, VIC: Connor Court Publishing, 2015); Hugh Lunn, *Joh, the life and political adventures of Sir Johannes Bjelke-Petersen*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1987); Sean Parnell, *Clive: The story of Clive Palmer* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins, 2013); and Derek Townsend, *Jigsaw: the biography of Johannes Bjelke-Petersen – statesman, not politician* (Brisbane: Sneyd & Morley, 1983). See also Judith Brett, “The tasks of political biography,” in *History on the couch: essays in history and psychoanalysis*, ed. J. Damousi and R. Reynolds (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 73-83; and James A. Walter, “Political biography,” in *The Australian study of politics*, 97-106.

²⁴ Joh Bjelke-Petersen, *Don't you worry about that! The Joh Bjelke-Petersen memoirs* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1990). See Peter Beattie, *In the arena: memories of an A.L.P. state secretary in Queensland* (Bowen Hills, QLD: Boolarong Publications, 1990); Peter Beattie, with Angelo Loukakis, *Making a difference: reflections on life, leadership and politics* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins, 2005); Anna Bligh, *Through the wall: reflections on leadership, love and survival* (Pymble, NSW: HarperCollins, 2015); Leo Hielscher, with Joanne Holliman, *Sir Leo Hielscher: Queensland made* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2014); and Kevin Rudd, *Not for the faint-hearted: a personal reflection on life, politics and purpose* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2017).

National Party officeholder at state and federal levels, recently published his insider's memoir of the politically disruptive 'Joh for PM' campaign of 1987 and the ill-judged attempt to install Bjelke-Petersen as federal Nationals leader.²⁵ Other observers from outside Queensland, such as Swinburne University's Brian Costar, have also provided interested and enlightened commentary on the more distinctive elements of the state's political culture.²⁶ In the last two decades, this of course has incorporated several scholarly and journalistic attempts to fathom the appearance – and then later 'unlikely' revival – of the modern Queensland political phenomenon that is Pauline Hanson and the One Nation Party.²⁷ As such, there undoubtedly exists a significant and reputable body of scholarly and other literature on the longer political history of Queensland.

In fact, respected analysts and commentators such as John Wanna and, more recently, Griffith University's Paul Williams, have extended this important work by contributing to the contemporary coverage of state and national political affairs in the *AJPH's* biannual 'Political Chronicles' series, as well as in other forums.²⁸ Wanna recently supplemented these efforts with a remarkably detailed and voluble monograph, co-written with Griffith University colleague Tracey Arklay, focusing on Queensland's parliamentary history during the long period of conservative governments from the 1950s to 1980s.²⁹ This work provides a unique insight into the workings – and sometimes the failings

²⁵ Paul Davey, *Joh for PM: The inside story of an extraordinary political drama* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2015). While offering some interesting correlations with Clive Palmer's cash-heavy foray into federal politics in recent years, Davey's account doesn't reveal much in the way of new insights beyond a generally sympathetic view of Joh's federal ambitions.

²⁶ See Brian Costar, "Political leadership and Queensland nationalism," *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* 19, no. 9 (2006): 65-82; and George Megalogenis, "A tale of two elections: One Nation and political protest," *Queensland Historical Atlas 2009-10*, www.ghatlas.com.au/content/tale-two-elections-%E2%80%93-one-nation-and-political-protest, 2010. The reader can find several references to Queensland's past political figures, episodes and details in Graeme Davison, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre, eds., *The Oxford companion to Australian history*, rev. ed. (South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press, 2001); Brian J. Galligan and Winsome Roberts, eds., *The Oxford companion to Australian politics* (South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Clement Macintyre, *Political Australia: a handbook of facts* (South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁷ See Robert Manne, ed., *Two nations: the causes and effects of the rise of the One Nation Party in Australia* (Melbourne: Bookman Press, 1998); Michael Leach, Geoffrey Stokes and Ian Ward, eds., *The rise and fall of One Nation* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2000); Margo Kingston, *Off the rails: the Pauline Hanson trip* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001); Anna Broinowski, *Please explain: the rise, fall and rise again of Pauline Hanson* (Docklands, VIC: Penguin Random House Australia, 2017); and Roger Scott, with Ann Scott, *Phoenix? Pauline Hanson and Queensland politics* (Brisbane: TJ Ryan Foundation, 2017). See also Bligh Grant, Tod Moore and Tony Lynch, eds., *The rise of right-populism: Pauline Hanson's One Nation and Australian politics* (Singapore: Springer Nature, 2019).

²⁸ See John Wanna, "Political chronicles: Queensland, January to June 2004," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 4 (2004): 605-612; and Paul D. Williams, "Political chronicles: Queensland, January to June 2012," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 58, no. 4 (2012): 638-645. See also John Wanna, "Why is One Nation so keen on a 'Pre-Nup' in Queensland?," *Machinery of Government*, 3 November 2017, <https://medium.com/the-machinery-of-government/why-is-one-nation-so-keen-on-a-pre-nup-in-queensland-697492f6ca28>; John Wanna and Paul D. Williams, "Peter Beattie: the 'boy from Atherton' made good," in *Yes, Premier: Labor leadership in Australia's states and territories*, ed. J. Wanna and P. D. Williams (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2005), 61-88; Paul D. Williams, "Defying the odds: Peter Beattie and the 2006 Queensland election," *Australasian Parliamentary Review* 22, no. 2 (2007): 212-220; and Paul D. Williams, "Leaders and political culture: the development of the Queensland premiership, 1859–2009," *Queensland Review* 16, no. 1 (2009): 15-34, which presents a fine, concise arc of the progression of leadership styles in Queensland from earlier 'strongman' types to the state's first female premier.

²⁹ John Wanna and Tracey Arklay, *The ayes have it: the history of the Queensland Parliament, 1957-1989* (Canberra: Australian National University ePress, 2010).

– of Queensland’s unicameral parliamentary system as it operated under the leadership of National Party premiers. But it stops short of placing subsequent Labor administrations under a similar focus, leaving open the question of whether the state’s parliament and governance functions operated any differently or even better in later years. So this valuable scholarly output focused on government performance and political activity, as already mentioned, can still do with further addition. With more critical accounts from observers of Queensland’s governance machinery and distinctive politics in the modern era providing some foundations – notable works by Peter Charlton, Peter Coaldrake, Evan Whitton and others readily come to mind³⁰ – there is a body of pertinent, informative background material from the last few decades to draw upon and contrast with the relatively fewer recent scholarly observations in this field.

It is worth recognising that some of these earlier monographs are positioned firmly within a framework that depicts Queensland as different to the rest of the nation, particularly in its political culture and the way that it is governed – Charlton’s work obviously fits this billing, if in a somewhat superficial, almost cartoonish way, complete with caricatures by noted cartoonist Alan Moir. While there are certainly aspects of difference to Queensland, much as there are to the other states, the argument that Queensland’s difference has somehow seen it develop a peculiarly aberrant culture compared to its fellow states has been debated often and refuted by many observers, including some not born as Queenslanders.³¹ It pays to recall that many works subscribing to the ‘difference’ treatise emerged either during the time of the Bjelke-Petersen government’s excesses and the Fitzgerald Inquiry that exposed them,³² or in the reformist period of Wayne Goss’ government immediately following. Little since then has so obviously followed this line, although a very recent

³⁰ See Janice Caulfield and John Wanna, eds., *Power and politics in the city: Brisbane in transition* (South Melbourne, VIC: Macmillan Education Australia, 1995); Peter Charlton, *State of mind: why Queensland is different*, rev. ed. (North Ryde, NSW: Methuen Haynes, 1987); Peter Coaldrake, *Working the system: government in Queensland* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1989); Glyn Davis, *A government of routines: executive coordination in an Australian state* (South Melbourne, VIC: Macmillan Education Australia, 1995); Bronwyn Stevens and John Wanna, eds., *The Goss government: promise and performance of Labor in Queensland* (South Melbourne, VIC: Macmillan Education Australia, 1993); and Evan Whitton, *The hillbilly dictator: Australia’s police state*, rev. ed. (Pymble, NSW: ABC Books, 1993).

³¹ See Allan A. Morrison, “Queensland: A study in distance and isolation,” *Melbourne Studies in Education* 4, no. 1 (1960): 191-203, for an early and rather chauvinistic impression of Queensland’s ‘difference’; and Denis Murphy, “Queensland’s image and Australian nationalism,” *Australian Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (1978): 77-91, giving Morrison’s now-dated piece the rebuttal it deserved. See also Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the 1980s*, 250-252; John Harrison, *Joh Bjelke-Petersen: pietism and the political culture of Queensland* (Auchenflower, QLD: Hydrotherapy Services Australasia, 2006); Brian Head, “The Queensland difference,” *Politics* 21, no. 1 (1986): 118-122; Colin Hughes, “Political culture,” in *Australian politics: a third reader*, ed. H. Nelson and H. Mayer (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1973), 133-146; Julianne Schultz, “Disruptive influences,” *Griffith Review* 21 (2008) [‘Hidden Queensland’]: 9-41; Peter Spearritt, “Distinctiveness: how Queensland is a distinctive landscape and culture,” *Queensland Historical Atlas 2009-10*, www.ghatlas.com.au/essay/distinctiveness-how-queensland-distinctive-landscape-and-culture, 2010; and Rae Wear, “Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: straddling a barbed wire fence,” *Queensland Historical Atlas 2009-10*, www.ghatlas.com.au/content/johannes-bjelke-petersen-straddling-barbed-wire-fence, 2010.

³² See Patricia Smith, “Queensland’s political culture,” in *The Bjelke-Petersen premiership 1968-1983: issues in public policy*, ed. Allan Patience (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1985), 17-32; and Dean Wells, *The deep north* (Collingwood, VIC: Outback Press, 1979). See also Peter Coaldrake and John Wanna, “‘Not like the good old days’: the political impact of the Fitzgerald Inquiry into police corruption in Queensland,” *Australian Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (1988): 404-414; and Humphrey McQueen, “Queensland: a state of mind,” *Meanjin* 38, no. 1 (1979): 41-51, for contemporary counter-arguments.

compilation of local recollections of the Bjelke-Petersen era could revive the theme.³³ Subsequent additions, from political science exponents predominantly, focus more on broader themes of governance, political leadership or policy-making.³⁴ These works complement the Queensland-specific literature and extend analysis of the state government's performance in such areas.

Such works are supplemented by the ever-increasing output of the state government itself, which in recent times has become nearly as prolific as the academic fraternity in publishing its own reports and accounts ('unbiased', naturally) of major policy initiatives and programs in any given year. While this may be viewed as emblematic of modern government's – and allegedly Labor's – obsession with 'spin-doctoring' and 'style over substance', the practice has precedents from earlier administrations. The Bjelke-Petersen government pioneered in Queensland the brash self-promotion so readily associated with today's professional political operations, engaging former ABC journalist Allen Callaghan as press secretary in the early 1970s to assist the premier 'glad-handle' the media. To the consternation of a perpetually under-funded opposition, the government even procured with taxpayer funds its own promotional television slot – 'Queensland Unlimited' – which aired on Sunday evenings five minutes before 6pm news bulletins, beaming the premier's face into lounge rooms in little more than a public relations exercise. Bjelke-Petersen's government duly established its own media units and photographic teams (as other jurisdictions were doing, to be fair), and seconded public servants to author documents that were often little more than party propaganda or marketing merchandise; some proposed publications, sadly perhaps for later scholars, never made it past the planning stage.³⁵

Some of the more recent administrative documentation, published and slickly packaged by well-resourced 'corporate information' offices within government departments – and a till recently state-owned printing facility – can at least be cross-checked against a recent work of scholarly critique that

³³ Edwina Shaw, ed., *Bjelke blues: stories of repression and resistance in Joh Bjelke-Petersen's Queensland 1968-1987* (Brisbane: AndAlso Books, 2019). See Mark Bahnisch, *Queensland: everything you ever wanted to know, but were afraid to ask* (Sydney: NewSouth Books, 2015), for an alternative – if highly personalised and, at times, debatable – account to the 'difference' theme which posits instead that the rest of the Australian polity is becoming more like Queensland (which, thus, is no longer so different).

³⁴ Syeed Ahamed and Glyn Davis, "Public policy and administration," in *The Australian study of politics*, 217-220. See Stephen Bell and Andrew Hindmoor, *Rethinking governance: the centrality of the state in modern society* (Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Glyn Davis, "A little learning? Public policy and Australian universities," Professorial Lecture series (Nathan: Griffith University, 2002); Glyn Davis and Patrick Weller, eds., *Are you being served? State, citizens and governance* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001); John Gibney, Stuart Copeland and Alan Murie, "Toward a 'new' strategic leadership of place for the knowledge-based economy," *Leadership* 5, no. 1 (2009): 5-23; Brian Head, John Wanna and Paul D. Williams, "Leaders and the leadership challenge," in *Yes, Premier*, 253-264; Sarah Maddison and Richard Dennis, *An introduction to Australian public policy: theory and practice* (Port Melbourne, VIC: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Roderick A. W. Rhodes, ed., *The Australian study of politics* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); James A. Walter, "Political leadership," in *Government, politics, power and policy in Australia*, ed. D. Woodward, A. Parkin and J. Summers, 9th ed. (French's Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia, 2010), 318-334; and Patrick Weller, "Investigating power at the centre of government: surveying research on the Australian executive," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 64, no. 1 (2005): 35-40.

³⁵ One proposal that never saw publication was a piece to be titled, "Queensland: Australia's Superstate", originally commissioned by the Premier's Department and receiving Cabinet approval in late 1979. It aimed to build a 'corporate image' for the State Government and afford Queensland a 'newly acquired prestige'. See Chris Salisbury, "1979 Cabinet Minutes: Selected Highlights," Queensland State Archives, State of Queensland, 1 January 2010, <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/cabinet-minutes/resource/a19422e5-76f5-4532-879c-fd09be3c56de>.

draws heavily on departmental records, ministerial notes and private papers. Appealingly turned out by UQP, the weighty *Engine Room of Government* by the University of the Sunshine Coast's Joanne Scott and colleagues is a considered attempt to bring to light the past undertakings and centralised workings of Queensland's Premier's Department over the period of the state's self-administration.³⁶ Like Fitzgerald's later collaborative work mentioned previously, the book received government funding as a Centenary of Federation project and features a foreword by Premier Beattie, but is nonetheless a detailed resource of anecdotal and recorded source data. However, even a tome such as this cannot entirely do justice to, or hope to compete with, the extent of government material that has been generated over recent decades. Among these materials, none are more telling than the strategic policy documents emanating from the Premier's Department – though not neglecting the numerous publications from other Queensland or Commonwealth agencies, as well as the valued transcripts of parliamentary debates recorded in 'Hansard'.³⁷ Considered examination of this extensive stockpile of administrative publications can add considerably to the understanding of coordinated policy platforms and political agendas, especially as witnessed recently in Queensland.³⁸

In further terms of 'non-standard' resources of political and historical analysis or data, it will have escaped nobody's attention that, increasingly, such source material can be found online and in digitised format. A leading example is the large assemblage of novel research material contained in the testimonies of past political and bureaucratic leaders recorded in interviews for the 'Queensland Speaks' oral history project. These annotated recordings address issues of governance, policy making and political decision making in Queensland over the last half century; they are publicly accessible through a website produced by UQ's now sadly defunct Centre for the Government of Queensland (a disclaimer: I was a member of this project's research and interviewing team).³⁹ It should not be overlooked, however, that much worthy source material can still be gleaned from the printed word,

³⁶ Joanne Scott et al, *The engine room of government: the Queensland Premier's Department 1859-2001* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2001). An interesting, if not quite scholarly, recent addendum to this work can be found in Office of the Queensland Governor, *A portrait of a Governor* (Brisbane: State of Queensland, 2016).

³⁷ See Queensland Government, *Queensland the smart state: education and training reforms for the future*, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Brisbane: State of Queensland, 2002); and Queensland Government, *Smart Queensland: Smart State strategy 2005-2015*, Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Brisbane: State of Queensland, 2005). See also Australian Government, *Backing Australia's ability: an innovation action plan for the future*, Department of Industry, Science and Resources (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2001); Queensland Government, *Achieving a smart state economy by driving the economic development of Queensland*, Department of State Development and Innovation (Brisbane: State of Queensland, 2004); and Queensland Parliament, *Record of Proceedings (Hansard)*, State of Queensland, <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard>, last updated July 2019.

³⁸ See Gillian Sullivan Mort and Amanda Roan, "Smart State: Queensland in the knowledge economy," *Queensland Review* 10, no. 1 (2003) ['Queensland: The Smart State']: 11-28; Bradley Bowden, "How smart now? The Bligh Government and the unravelling of the 'Smart State' vision, 2007-11," *Queensland Review* 18, no. 2 (2011) ['Labor in Queensland, 1989-2011']: 134-144; and Chris Salisbury, "Farm and quarry or Smart State? Queensland's economy since 1989," *Queensland Review* 18, no. 2 (2011) ['Labor in Queensland, 1989-2011']: 145-151.

³⁹ See Centre for the Government of Queensland, *Queensland Speaks*, University of Queensland, www.queenslandspeaks.com.au, last updated April 2015. See also Centre for the Government of Queensland, *Queensland Historical Atlas*, University of Queensland, www.qhatlas.com.au, last updated April 2019, for thematic and typically map-based historical analyses of Queensland's (often political) past.

including texts situated outside strictly ‘political history’ confines but also comprising works of social and cultural history. Thankfully, there are very recent and leading examples of these sources as well.

Starting with *Three Crooked Kings*, journalist and author Matthew Condon’s best-selling trilogy on corruption in Queensland in the post-war decades tells in stark detail how closely government and law enforcement in this state became entwined.⁴⁰ Containing some stunning revelations previously unaired outside select ‘insider’ circles, Condon’s works exposed for many the tawdry extent of dishonest policing and politics in pre-Fitzgerald Inquiry Queensland, albeit in sometimes journalistic, almost lurid style. Andrew Stafford’s rightly popular and evocative account, *Pig City*, records the development of Brisbane’s (and, to some extent, Queensland’s) ‘subterranean’ popular culture – in the guise of its prolific and brash music scene – during, and partly in response to, the authoritarian bent of the Bjelke-Petersen government.⁴¹ In a comparable vein, Jackie Ryan’s award-winning and similarly evocative account of 1988’s World Expo in Brisbane reveals the behind-the-scenes political dealings of Queensland gaining the event’s hosting rights. Her book fondly recalls the months-long festival which many Queenslanders consider transformed their capital to a modern metropolis – all while the Fitzgerald Inquiry aired its damning revelations of government and police vice.⁴² Such accounts attest to Ray Evans’ assertion that Queensland’s history *and* politics is ‘exciting, complex, surprising, nuanced and more than a little shocking’.

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⁴⁰ Matthew Condon, *Three crooked kings* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2013); *Jacks and jokers* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2014); and *All fall down* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2015). See also Colin Dillon, with Tom Gilling, *Code of Silence: How one honest police officer took on Australia's most corrupt police force* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2016).

⁴¹ Andrew Stafford, *Pig city: from the Saints to Savage Garden*, rev. ed. (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2014). See also Clinton Walker, ed., *Inner city sound*, rev. ed. (Portland, OR: Verse Chorus, 2005).

⁴² Jackie Ryan, *We'll show the world: Expo 88* (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2018). See also Peter Carroll, “Organising for Expo 88: the intergovernmental dimension,” *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 50, no. 1 (1991): 74-83.