

The John Barrett Award for Australian Studies

Background

Dr John Barrett (1931-1997) established this award by way of a bequest to La Trobe University in 1987. Dr Barrett was a lecturer and reader at La Trobe University from 1969 until his retirement in 1990. His research specialisation was twentieth-century Australian history, particularly national involvement in the world wars. Dr Barrett was a member of the *Journal of Australian Studies* editorial board from 1979-1990. The John Barrett Award for Australian Studies is awarded annually for the best-written article published by the *Journal of Australian Studies (JAS)*. The prize has been dormant since 1996 but has recently been revived.

From 2008 there will be two prizes awarded each year:

- the best article by a scholar (open)
- the best article by a scholar (postgraduate).

The award comprises a cash prize of AUD\$500 plus a year's membership to InASA (including a subscription to *Journal of Australian Studies*).

A prize committee established by the International Australian Studies Association (InASA) executive will make the award each year.

John Barrett Award for Australian Studies – Winners 2008

The prize committee for 2008 comprised:

- Professor Marilyn Lake (LaTrobe University)
- Dr Mitchell Rolls (University of Tasmania)
- Assoc. Professor Katherine Gelber (UNSW)

Postgraduate category

Agnieksza Sobcinska, 'Australian fellow-travellers to China: devotion and deceit in the People's Republic', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2008, pp. 323-34.

"A lucid, thoroughly researched and original analysis of the motivations, compromises and conceits characteristic of utopian movements, applied in this instance to those many Australians who travelled to China from the 1940s to the 1950s. The article is particularly well-written in fresh and sprightly prose. China's escalating significance in global affairs, and in Australian estimation, makes an understanding of this particular type of travel to China both timely and of general significance. The article offers fresh insights into these particular travellers, and compares them with earlier 'fellow travellers' to Russia and extends that relatively small body of literature dealing with this issue."

Open category

Melissa Bellanta, 'A man of civic sentiment: the case of William Guthrie Spence', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 32, no.1, 2008, pp. 63-76.

"Through a case study of one man, this article contributes to recent conceptualisations of Australian manliness, in ways that extend and challenge the dominant representations of bush mateship. It is eloquently written and the argument both rigorous and lucid. The idea of 'civic sentiment' has more often been applied to women and women's groups at this time, but the use of a feminist framework of analysis to analyse men's experience was particularly interesting and added to the article's originality. The article is well located within relevant literature, and the argument that manliness found expression in civic sentiment is a valuable contribution to debates about Australian history and culture."

Honourable mentions

The panel also recommend that the following two contributors be formally noted for Honourable Mention.

Catherine Dewhirst, 'Collaborating on whiteness: representing Italians in early white Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol.32, no.1, 2008, pp. 33-49.

"This article's interrogation of the strategy adopted by one particular group on the edge of 'whiteness' (Italian immigrants) is a lucid, interesting account of the political strategies adopted by Italians in the pre the World War I period in Australia. The issues analysed continue to resonate today. Further, with 'whiteness studies' gaining momentum in Australia, this article is of considerable contemporary significance. The research is fresh, and the manner of presentation illuminating."

Amanda Nettelbeck, 'Practices of violence/myths of creation: Mounted Constable Willshire and the cultural logic of settler nationalism', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2008, pp. 5-17.

"There has been much written about Constable Willshire and his exploits in Central Australia in the late nineteenth century. This article makes an original contribution to this literature by pointing to Willshire's simultaneous roles of self-styled nation-builder and brutal dispossessor. It points to the influence of the literary genres in which Willshire constructed his accounts and situates this analysis within an engagement with contemporary studies of settler-nationalism."