

CONVICTION

POLITICS



MONASH
University

Welcome to the Conviction Politics newsletter.

The fourth update of ARC Linkage international research collaboration.

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[Conviction Politics Website](#)

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School of Media, Film & Journalism,
Monash Faculty of Arts in
collaboration with [SensiLab](#), Faculty
of Information Technology.

In partnership with:

Australian Catholic University, Griffith
University, University of New England,
University of NSW, University College
Dublin and University of South Wales

Partner Organisations:

Roar Film, Tasmanian Museum & Art
Gallery, Libraries Tasmania, NSW
Teachers Federation, National Museum
of Australia, Australian Council of Trades
Unions, The Union Education
Foundation, Australian Manufacturing
Workers' Union, Trades Union Congress,
People's History Museum, National
Records of Scotland & Gwent Archives,
Wales.



Sections of the Newport Chartist mural commemorating the Newport Rising of 1839, which was destroyed in 2013. Courtesy of Newport City Council.

- **In this Issue:**
- **Project Selected for UK/Australia Season**
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- **Convict Life Lines & Data Embroidery**
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Conviction Politics Selected for

British Council's Season 2021-2022

Conviction Politics was selected in 2021 to be part of the [UK/Australia Season](#), a prestigious cultural, artistic and educational exchange between the UK and Australia running September 2021 to March 2022.

It is a joint initiative between the British Council and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Season's theme 'Who Are We Now?' reflects on the shared history between both nations, and Conviction Politics highlights the shared commitment of both Australia and the UK – born of past struggles and sacrifice – to liberal and social democracy, self-determination, trade unionism, egalitarianism, and human, labour, religious, civil and indigenous rights.

- The project's inclusion in the Season's Higher Education category encompasses two significant events – one at [Monash University's Caulfield Campus in Melbourne](#) and one at the [People's History Museum in Manchester](#) hosted by the School of Media, Film and Journalism – that will launch Stage One of the Conviction Politics Transmedia Hub and content.
- The Hub, produced by media production partner Roar Film in tandem with the Chief Investigators, is the centrepiece of the project's digital outputs, and features a wealth of archive images, short and long reads, innovative data visualisations, documentary films, animations, music, an interactive atlas, and additional content revealing the histories of individual convicts, sites of resistance, and themes of protest and solidarity.
- In Melbourne, the Hub will be launched by ACTU Secretary [Sally McManus](#), and will feature documentary screenings, a musical performance, and a panel discussion from project researchers Tony Moore, Steve Thomas, Monika Schwarz, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Alison Pennington.
- In Manchester, the Hub will be launched by Trades Union Congress South West Regional Secretary [Nigel Costley](#), and will feature documentary screenings, a panel discussion chaired by PHM Director Katy Ashton with Tony Moore, Steve Thomas, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, and a short presentation from Erin Garratt and Joanna Mapp, students at the University of South Wales.
- Attendance at both events is subject to social distancing, but both will be livestreamed. Registration is essential for attendance and viewing the livestream.
- Register to attend People's History Museum launch (11 Nov 2021) [here](#) and Monash launch (2 Dec 2021) [here](#).
- For a detailed account of the UK/Australia Season, check out Jane Cornwall's [article](#) in *The Australian* (paywall applies). For more information and updates, please connect with [Conviction Politics Twitter Account](#).

SensiLab Data Visualisations & Ideation

Since the last Newsletter #3 (Dec 2020) the SensiLab team has worked up a first version of the Female Convict Lifelines visualisation. Bringing together information from various digitised and transcribed sources like the conduct records, marriage registers, trial records or freedom certificates, it aims to present a convict's life course in one visualisation. The lifelines, together with the [Absconder Map](#), the [Colonial Backdrop Visualisation](#) and the [Female Offences Visualisation](#) all featured in a talk on Female Convict Resistance delivered (virtually) by Dr Monika Schwarz at the Family Historian Down

In close collaboration with historians Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and Lucy Frost we also endeavour a completely new take on collective resistance in Female Factories (prisons where women convicts both laboured and lived together) by using network analysis. Looking carefully through the records, we can identify repeated collaborative action in the factories, but treating these incidents and their participants as a social network we are able to connect them to a larger network of resistance. Treated this way, the records kept by the colonial bureaucracy inadvertently reveal how the women were organising themselves against the system.



The SensiLab team is also making progress in the area of data textualization of female convict resistance in machine embroidery, which requires familiarity with drawing and digitizing software as well as the technical details of the Husqvarna Viking machine available in the Lab. The intent here is to create a different access point to data visualisations like the lifelines, bringing them off the screen and onto textiles. Textiles featured large in everyday life of convict women, who were often sentenced specifically to work at the wash tub (see left photo).

New book on Convict Resisters

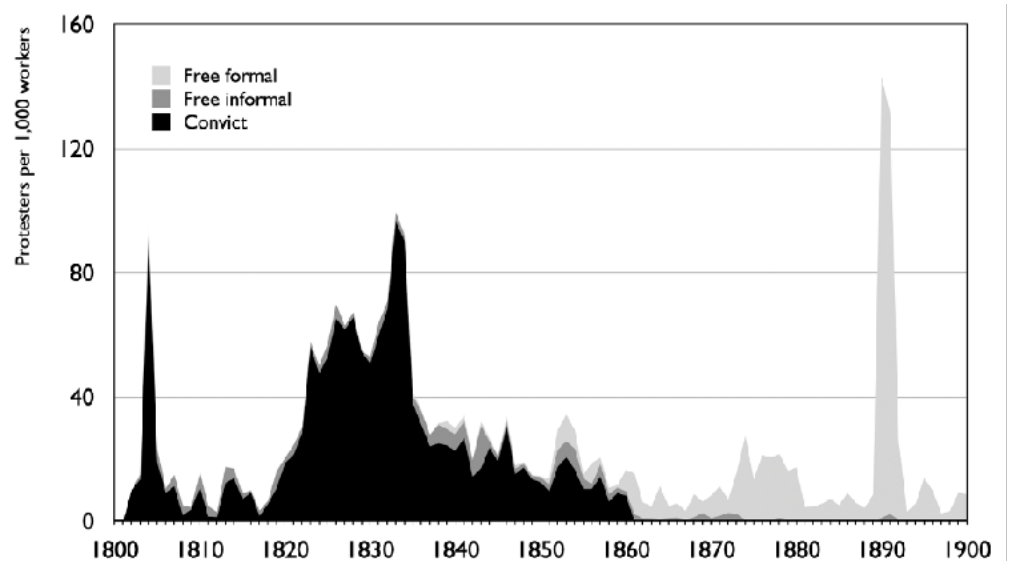
Chief Investigators Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (University of New England) and Emeritus Professor Michael Quinlan (University of NSW) have completed a book that engages a key focus of Conviction Politics: [*Unfree Workers: Insubordination and Resistance in Convict Australia 1788-1860*](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming). Following on from Quinlan's 2018 book [*The Origins of Worker Mobilisation: Australia 1788-1850*](#), this new work explores the role that penal transportation played in the development of capitalism in Australia as well as exploring the many ways in which the active resistance of convicts shaped both workplace relations and institutions. Drawing on two unique 'big datasets', the book provides both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of convict-worker resistance from the moment of their embarkation on ships bound for the Australian colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land to their arrival and deployment into various categories of state and private employment.

A particular achievement of *Unfree Workers* is the way in which it reveals the terrain and scale of resistance by convicts. Between 1788 and 1860 there is evidence of over 11,000 collective protests (including strikes, mass absconding, go-slows and riots). Michael and Hamish conservatively estimate that in excess 43,000 convicts participated in these actions.

Using data for the entire

nineteenth-century, the book places the scale of dissent by convicts, in the context of later non-union and union organised industrial action by free workers. It demonstrates that convicts dominated workplace dissent prior to 1850. This included the 1804 Castle Hill rebellion in which nearly 10 percent of the transported workforce participated. The book also reveals a marked prolonged crisis of dissent that occurred between 1822 and 1834. The latter was a direct response to the abolition of convict wages and the introduction of more intense work regimes in road gangs and on rural estates. The book argues that this wave of resistance eroded the cost-savings that accrued to those who sought to hire unfree labour over free, contributing to the demise of convict transportation. Michael and Hamish also show the extent to which convict actions informed subsequent struggles over working hours and other conditions of employment by free workers. As the illustration below shows — nothing in Australian history comes close to matching this crisis until the titanic maritime and pastoral strikes of the early 1890s.

Rates of Convict Participation in Collective Action (per 1,000 under Sentence) and Rates of Free Worker Participation in Informal and Formal Collective Action (per 1,000 in the free workforce).



PhD Scholarship Updates

Daisy Bailey has recently passed her confirmation of candidature with overwhelmingly positive feedback on her report titled, *Chartism and the Young Ireland Movement: The Emotions of Activism and Exile of Political Prisoners, and their Impacts on Democracy in Colonial Australia*. She is now beginning to write her first and second chapters on the emotions of activism and exile, while producing an emotional lexicon from digitised and published primary sources, owing to the inaccessibility of archives during the past Melbourne lockdown. Daisy is also involved in the political prisoner team tracing the movements and connections of political prisoners in the Australian colonies.

The Monash team has been advertising the practice-based interdisciplinary PhD position to investigate how virtual and augmented reality and enhanced data visualizations can be used to understand the impact of transported convicts on Australian democracy. The applicant will be jointly supervised by scholars from the School of Media, Film and Journalism and SensiLab: Assoc. Prof Tony Moore, and Professors Jon McCormack, Kim Marriott and Mark Andrejevic. We invite our partners to share this wonderful opportunity through their networks. International candidates are welcome. Further information can be accessed [here](#).

Tasmanian Convict Heritage Hub and Digital Memorial

The [Tasmanian State Government](#) committed 1.25 million towards establishing a Convict Heritage Hub in the [Penitentiary Chapel in Hobart](#). This facility will be a central hub for Tasmania's fascinating convict trails and our existing attractions including Port Arthur Maria Island and Sarah Island. The virtual presentation of the vast records of convict history will provide an immersive opportunity for local and international visitors to trace convict movements across the globe and learn the stories of their ancestors. Names of all Tasmanian convicts and their information will be searchable through this new interactive digital memorial, with which Conviction Politics team members are involved as past of the project's researcher. This establishment will add to the marketing and branding of Conviction Politics, to which it will link via the transmedia Hub, ensuring the longevity of project by popularising and commemorating Tasmania's convict heritage.

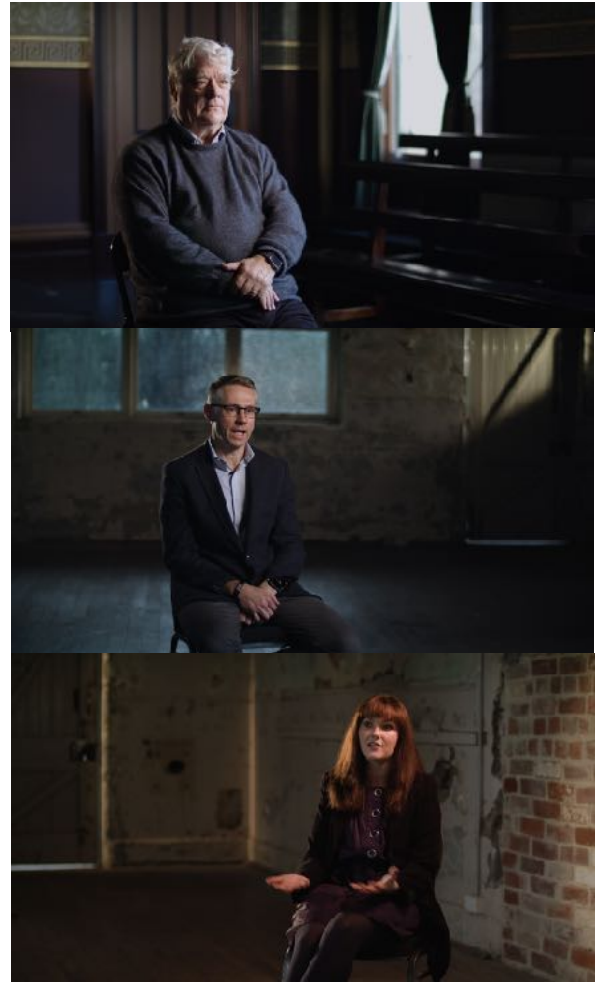
Jarrow Martyrs Identified

Conviction Politics researchers have identified a crucial link in the story of the 'Seven Men of Jarrow' within the unfree NSW convict workforce. In 1832, seven activists in the Northumberland Colliers Union were transported to NSW and assigned to the AA Coal Mine in the Hunter Valley. They joined collective action by convict coalminers most notably an 1836 go-slow in protest when monetary incentives were removed in favour of vouchers for goods in local shops. One of the men, Isaac Ecclestone, was befriended after gaining his freedom by James Fletcher, a progressive MLA who helped found both the Hunter Valley coalminers union in 1870 and the *Newcastle Morning Herald*. Fletcher held Ecclestone in such high regard that he paid him a pension after he was unable to work, and Ecclestone's life and reflections were published by both the *Newcastle Chronicle* (UK 1891) and the *Newcastle Morning Herald* (1892).

Roar Film Update

So far, Roar Film has completed:

- 3 film shoots (two in Hobart and one in Melbourne), and 25 interviews undertaken for use in digital content, especially documentaries.
- 8 original songs written and recorded have now been mixed, produced and completed by Musical Director Mick Thomas for further structuring 8 animated documentaries.
- 84 out of 100 short documentaries are currently in various stages of editing and post-production.
- In March, a functional and designed draft of the Conviction Politics Hub was demonstrated to the project Management Committee and Liam Byrne at ACTU for feedback. It was demonstrated to Kate Ambrose, Margaret Vos and Jo Kowalczyk of the NSW Teachers Federation in September.
- Stage One of the Hub, containing a selection of documentaries, images, music interactive data visualisations including lifelines and atlas, is planned to go live in November 2021.
- Roar Film continues a steady production despite Australian pandemic lockdowns and border closure. In April 2021, Roar's 4-day shoot in Melbourne included filming at Victorian Trades Hall; Abbotsford Convent; Monash Sensilab; and the Merri Creek Tavern in Northcote. The interviews included: Australian media personality Steve Vizard and Professor of Veterinary Science Andrew Vizard on their Irish political convict ancestor; Tony Moore on Marcus Clarke, author of *For the Term of His Natural Life*; Labour historian Andrew Reeves on histories of union banners, and pamphlets; historian Jennie Jeppesen on the comparisons between the slave trade to Virginia 1614-1776 and convict transportation to Australia 1800-1840; economist Allison Pennington on the links between the convict system and modern labour exploitation; ACTU Assistant Secretary Scott Connolly on convict and labour history - including the Tolpuddle Martyrs - and this history's connections with today's union movement; Monash-based PhD candidate Daisy Bailey and Dr Monika Schwarz from SensiLab.
- A planned July film shoot in Sydney, including interviews and location filming at Cockatoo Island, Sydney Trades Hall, the Hyde Park Barracks, Parramatta Gaol, the Australian National Maritime Museum and the NSW Teachers Federation, was postponed till February 2022 due to evolving lockdowns across Australia.
- Launch of Stage One of the Conviction Politics Project's media content will be held at Monash University's Caulfield Campus on 2 December 2021. It will include online Hub demonstration, screenings of a selection of documentaries, a panel discussion, music and catering. All Partner Organisations will be invited. The event will be livestreamed and recorded for remote catchup.



Interviews screen grabs: Andrew Reeves, Scott Connolly & Allison Pennington. Credit: Roar Film

Documentary *Land of A Thousand Sorrows: Revisited*

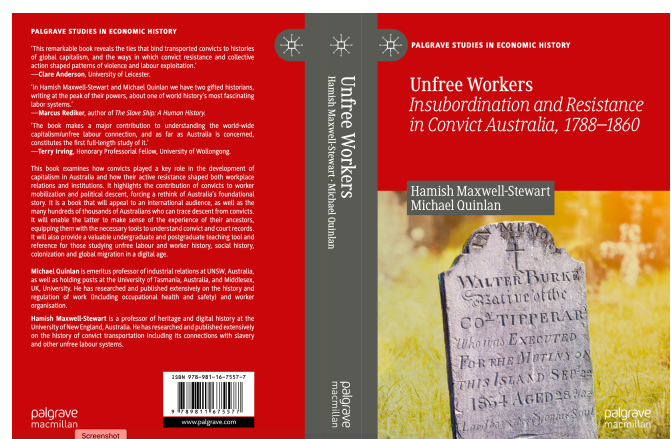
The Canadian documentary *Land of a Thousand Sorrows Revisited* tells the story of the 58 Canadian patriots from Lower Canada exiled to the penal colony of Australia from 1840-48. Written, produced and directed by Canadian filmmaker Deke Richards and narrated by Quebec actor Luc Picard, the documentary uses interviews, news stories, photographs and illustrations to bring the dramatic stories of these political prisoners to life. Conviction Politics CI Tony Moore visits the graves of Joseph and Mary Marceau, one of the French-Canadian revolutionaries, in their hometown of Dapto in NSW to explain the contribution of the Canadian revolutionaries to the achievement of responsible and representative government in both Canada and the Australian colonies. View the [Trailer](#) here, and read more about the documentary [here](#)

University of South Wales Student Involvement

With limited access to the physical archives, the students have been working with online sources about the transported Welsh Chartist, principally in the digitised newspaper archives and the collections uploaded to People's Collection Wales. They have begun to use wikis to collate the information they have collected as a group. Going forward as archives and other sites open, the following activities are likely to be conducted by the students: a prosopography of the convicts and their 'home' environment; an audit of the artefacts and memorialisation associated with the Chartist convicts' activities in Wales; and an investigation into how much people in Wales know about 19-century convict history.

Project Publications

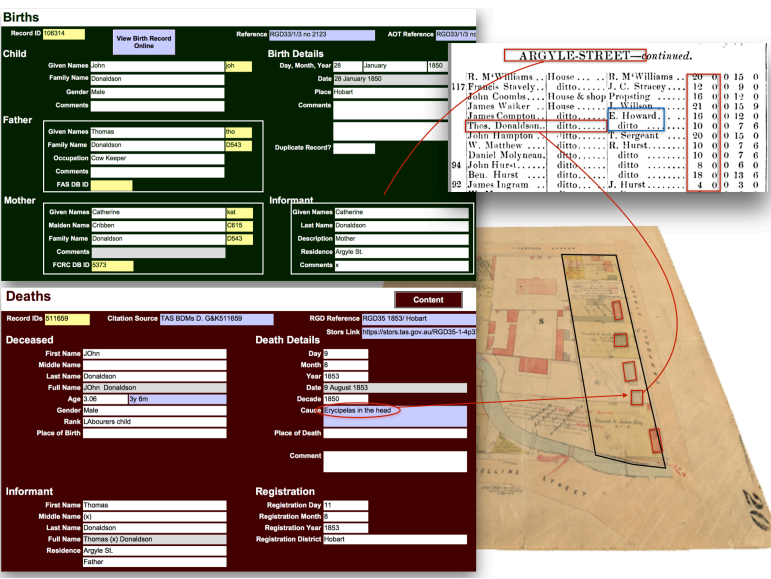
- Quinlan, M. G. (2020). [Contesting Inequality and Worker Mobilisation: Australia 1851-1880](#). Routledge.
- Tuffin, R., Maxwell-Stewart, H., & Quinlan, M. (2020). [Integrating historical records through digital data linking: Convicts prosecuted for collective action in Van Diemen's Land](#). *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 22, 49-84.
- Causer, T. (2021). [The Norfolk Island Penal Station, the Panopticon, and Alexander Maconochie's and Jeremy Bentham's Theories of Punishment](#). *Revue d'études benthamiennes* 19.
- Cowley, T., Frost, L., Inwood, K., Kippen, R., Maxwell-Stewart, H., Schwarz, M., ...& Wilson, P. (2021). [Reconstructing a Longitudinal Dataset for Tasmania](#). *Historical Life Course Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs10912>.
- Chief Investigators Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (University of Tasmania) and Emeritus Professor Michael Quinlan (University of NSW) completed a new book entitled [Unfree Workers: Insubordination and Resistance in Convict Australia, 1788-1860](#) with Palgrave Macmillan (*forthcoming*).
- Moore, T. (2017). [Citizens of the world: Paine and the political prisoners transported to Australia](#). In *The Legacy of Thomas Paine in the Transatlantic World* (pp. 151-170). Routledge.
- Moore, T & Davis, M. I have broken my chains: The escape of Thomas Muir and the challenge to authority in colonial Australia. Targeting *Australian Historical Studies* (in progress).



Courtesy: Palgrave Macmillan

New Grants and Fundings

- Conviction Politics CI Hamish Maxwell-Stewart has recently been successful with another ARC Linkage Project grant application *Putting Death in its Place*. The new grant is led by Rebecca Kippen an associate professor in demography at Monash University’s School of Rural Health and includes researchers at the University of New England and the University of South Australia. It also continues the relationship with the Tasmanian Archives, an industry partner of both projects [ck]. The aim of *Putting Death in its Place* is to link the annual Tasmanian property valuation rolls to births deaths and marriages in order to see if a person’s place of birth impacts upon subsequent life course outcomes. The grant will also provide an opportunity to explore the lives of former convicts in more detail. A hope is that this work will aid future attempts to link emancipists to unions benefit societies and other workplace organisations by locating the addresses of the houses that they owned or rented. Conviction Politics’Monika Schwarz will work with the Putting Death in its place team continuing her pioneering work plotting complex life course data.
- Conviction Politics CI’s Jon McCormack and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart have just successfully applied for a [Whyte Fund Research Grant](#). The project, *A Stitch in Time*, will turn abstract data into stitched outlines of human faces, based on the records of thousands of convict women who interacted with needlework and textiles in their daily lives. The results will form the centrepiece of an exhibition hosted by the National Trust Tasmania. It will enable Monika Schwarz to continue creating novel access points to Australia’s convict records, using data embroidery. While digital reconstructions of convict life courses are leading to advances in archival interfaces and academic research, access to Australia’s unique collection of convict records has so far been limited to paper and screen. The emerging field of data physicalisation enables new ways to visualise data by mapping it onto tangible forms. Data embroidery, a technique that stitches digital information onto textiles, has particular potential.

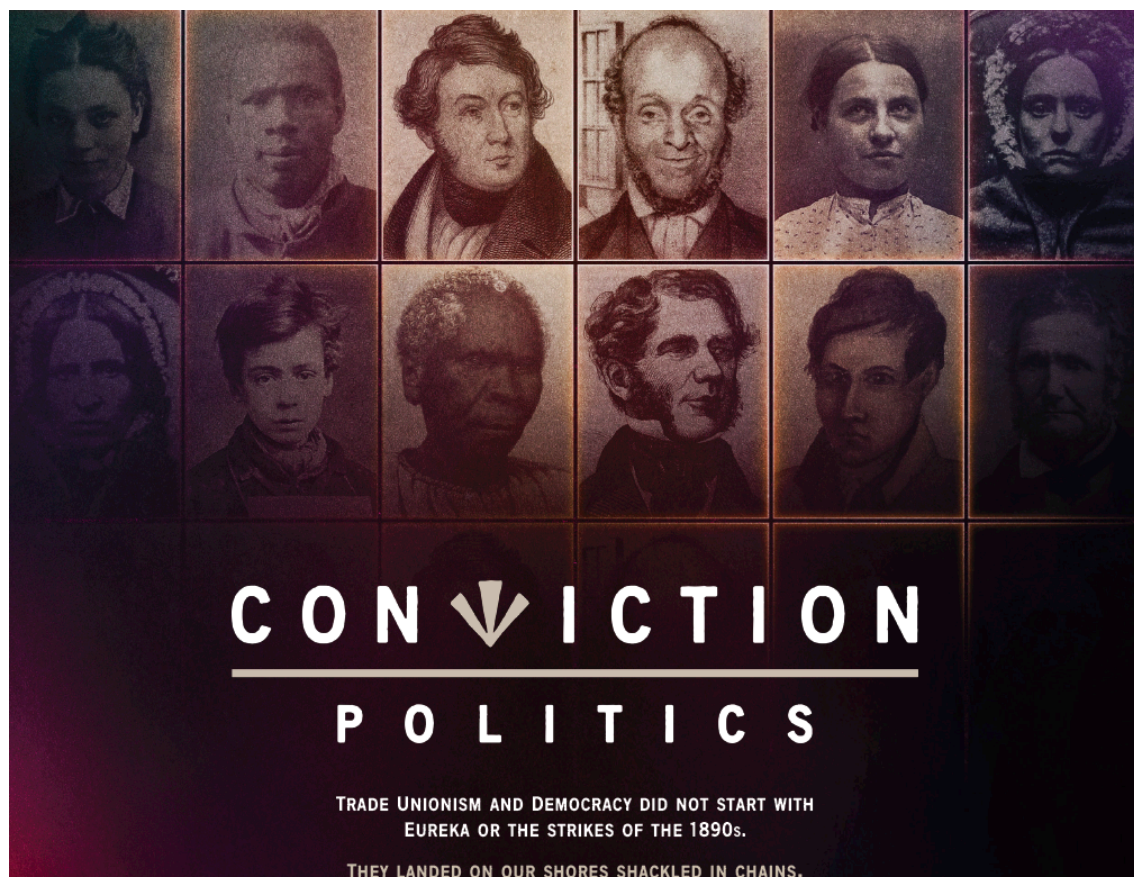


- Roar Film has been successful in their application to [RISE Fund](#) with the musical, *Unshackled* - a joyous digital and aural exploration of Tasmania’s convict diaspora performed by a cast of eminent storytellers, digital artists, songwriters and musicians. In close collaboration with Conviction Politics, *Unshackled* will be delivered online and also as a series of augmented reality sequences leading up to a live performance in 2023.

Left: Illustration of a Tasmanian birth and death certificate linked to a Valuation Roll entry for former convict John Donaldson.

2021/2022 Next Steps

- Due to the evolving pandemic situations and travel restrictions in Australia, the Hobart Workshop with Australian Partner Organisations and stakeholders is postponed till travel to Tasmania is permitted, likely early 2022. Having conducted last year's workshop via Zoom, the team is keen that this event take place in person rather virtually.
- In the meantime, Partner Organisations will be invited to individual update meeting regarding Conviction Politics progress and their personalised hub pathways and other deliverables.
- Roar Film plans to shoot further interviews in Sydney once travel between the eastern states is possible.
- Conviction Politics teams will attend the coming Australia History Association conference (29 Nov - 2 Dec 2021). The team will host two panel discussions on the work of the political prisoners team and collective resistance team. Attendees are Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, RA Dr Monika Schwarz, Associate Professor Tony Moore and PhD student Daisy Bailey. Further details will be updated in next newsletter.



Conviction Politics Launch Flyer. Courtesy Roar Film.