

CONVICTION POLITICS

THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY AND TRADE UNIONISM ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA SHACKLED IN CHAINS



MONASH
University

Welcome to the Conviction Politics newsletter.

The first bi-monthly update of this unique ARC Linkage international research collaboration.

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Conviction Politics website

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, Deakin University, University
of Tasmania, University of NSW,
University College Dublin and University
of South Wales

Partner Organisations:

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



News to date:

- In September of 2019, Associate Professor Tony Moore and Professor Michael Quinlan were interviewed about the Conviction Politics project by Philip Adams on ABC Radio's *Late Night Live*. You can listen to the interview [here](#). Public feedback led to a follow up [article](#) featured on ABC News online.
- 2019 ended with the first annual workshop held in December and was attended by all academic investigators, Australian Partner Organisations as well as Partner Investigator Dr Julie Brooks from the University of Dublin and project UK engagement consultant Paul Smith. The workshop was successful in generating valuable feedback, ideas and suggestions garnered from all POs.
- The project officially commenced February 12, 2020 when all sign offs occurred on the Final Agreement with the Partner Organisations and Universities.
- A second workshop was held on May 5th this year, where progress on research and media outputs were shared by academic investigators and Australian Partner Organisations via Zoom.
- The *PhD Scholarship in a Multimedia Digital History Project - Investigating the impacts of convicts on Australian democracy* has been awarded to Daisy Bailey. We welcome Daisy and look forward to her commencement in June.

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- The Monash team is developing a practice-based interdisciplinary PhD scholarship to research new approaches in Augmented and Virtual Reality to enhance the exhibition, online and documentary interactive experiences of Conviction Politics audiences. The successful PhD applicant will be jointly supervised by scholars from the School of Media, Film and Journalism and SensiLab.
- Conviction Politics has hired its principal project personnel including; at Monash University Dr Monika Schwarz - Research Assistant, Monash SensiLab and Keisha Clements as Senior Project Coordinator. At the University of Tasmania Trudy Cowley, Research Assistant. We thank Research Assistant Dr Kyle Harvey for providing invaluable logistic support during the project's establishment phase.
- The operational plan has been amended in line with Covid-19 restrictions, most notably the planned UK workshop with British/Irish Partner Organisations, Dublin meetings, and UK/Irish field research have been postponed until travel bans are lifted. Academics are conducting online research of catalogues and digitised online accessible archives in the meantime. Roar Film is working with academic researchers, Monash SensiLab and Partner Organisations to advance the multimedia outputs.
- Roar Film have made changes to their production schedule and will now focus on completing in Year One: 15 documentaries, 50 production ready scripts (for shooting and editing in 2021); 6 production ready animation scripts and animatics; as well as 10 new original songs and 10 reworks of traditional songs.
- Discussions with Partner Organisations Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, National Museum of Australia, and NSW Teachers Federation regarding exhibition scoping is set to occur via Zoom over the next few months while social distancing. Elspeth Wishart, Senior Curator at Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery has locked in the exhibition opening in February and continuing until May 2024. Chief Investigators have begun compiling exhibition theme ideas as well as lists of objects, images, media and music to explore and Elspeth Wishart will begin organising according to themes.
- Transmedia Hub discussions are well underway with early designs presented at the May workshop to great enthusiasm. We are progressing the technical set up of the Hub and purchase of cloud space with the build due to commence in the next few weeks.
- With almost 7,500 records maintained by the University of Tasmania team in the Founders & Survivor database the project has hit the ground running in terms of available data sources. Roar Film, University of Tasmania and SensiLab have begun to work on strategies to create access to the F&S database on various levels including: full access for technically sophisticated collaborators; and for the less tech savvy collaborators easier to use solutions for data access and sharing; and for the public a smaller suite of curated data sources to entice engagement. SensiLab and University of Tasmania have also begun to add new content by geo-referencing records, starting with convict absconding events. This effort includes various approaches, like sourcing data from an external data Application Programming Interface for historical geolocations Time Layered Cultural Map, geo-referencing historical maps using Geographic Information System software.

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- The Research Assistant at SensiLab, Dr Monika Schwarz has also commenced creating visualisations from various datasets shared by University of Tasmania. This includes static visualisations on convict transports and sick bay admissions and an interactive map-based visualisation of absconding events. Both visualisation types will play a role in the Transmedia Hub, either as part of long read sections or explorative tools. In the context of data accessibility Roar Film's Matt Daniels has also started experimenting with on-the-fly visualisations connected to specific datasets .
- Chief Investigators Professor Hamish Maxwell-Stewart (University of Tasmania) and Professor Michael Quinlan (University of NSW) are in the midst of writing a new book titled, *Convict Resisters: The Forgotten History of Unfree Worker Organisation in Australia 1788-1860*. Following on from Quinlan's book titled *The Origins of Worker Mobilisation: Australia 1788-1850*, this new book details the ways in which labour exploitation worked in convict Australia and how that was resisted. Explicitly linking what happened in Australia to other unfree labour systems across the colonial world, particularly systems of slave management. That carries on a tradition in the convict historiography and it will give an international flavour to the book.
- In order to ensure that the project provides the best educational and training resources possible we have provided Partner Organisations NSW Teachers Federation, The Union Education Foundation and the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union with a brief and questionnaire around kit content. The aim is to help clearly identify union target audiences, important messaging, tone and style for the kit, and to determine their aspirations for the exhibition element of the project. In tracing the origins of unionism to the convict combinations and collective bargaining occurring from 1820s, the project has asked union partners to identify key characters and struggles of their movements and twenty-first century resonances of colonial exploitation and resistance. This will focus further discussion and provide collaborative direction for these vital resources.
- Chief Investigators Dr Julie Brooks and Associate Professor Tony Moore are invited to present a paper and panel proposal introducing Conviction Politics to a UK/Ireland Australian Studies symposium organised by the Menzies Australia Institute, Kings College London. The aim of the event is to rebuild an Australian studies network in the UK and Ireland. It has been postponed to the end of the year/early next year when international travel resumes.