

PREFACE

This special issue publishes revised versions of some of the 19 papers delivered at the Ninth annual Law in History Conference,¹ which was held at Macquarie University in April 1990. The papers dealt with a diversity of subject matters (from the novels of Rolph Boldrewood to an intellectual history of environmental law) and geographical settings (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa). Most of the participants were academics, from faculties of law, history, economic history, political science and English. There were common themes in their papers though, most of which examined law in ex-British colonial societies. Many were explicitly or implicitly concerned with the degree of independence from British control achieved by local law makers. This theme of the transplantation of legal ideas is evident in the collection of articles published here.

In one important sense, this collection gives a false picture of the conference. It began with a lengthy session on the interaction between Aboriginal people and European law. None of those papers are published here, either because they are being published elsewhere or because they were not delivered in a written form. The work of Reynolds and others forms a central part of the study of law's history in Australia and New Zealand.

As Duncanson's article and the review of the collection of Canadian legal history essays show, interdisciplinary legal history is now well established in the common law world. We are pleased to make a permanent record of the 1990 conference.

1 The exception is the article by Dr Ranki, which was not presented at the Conference.