



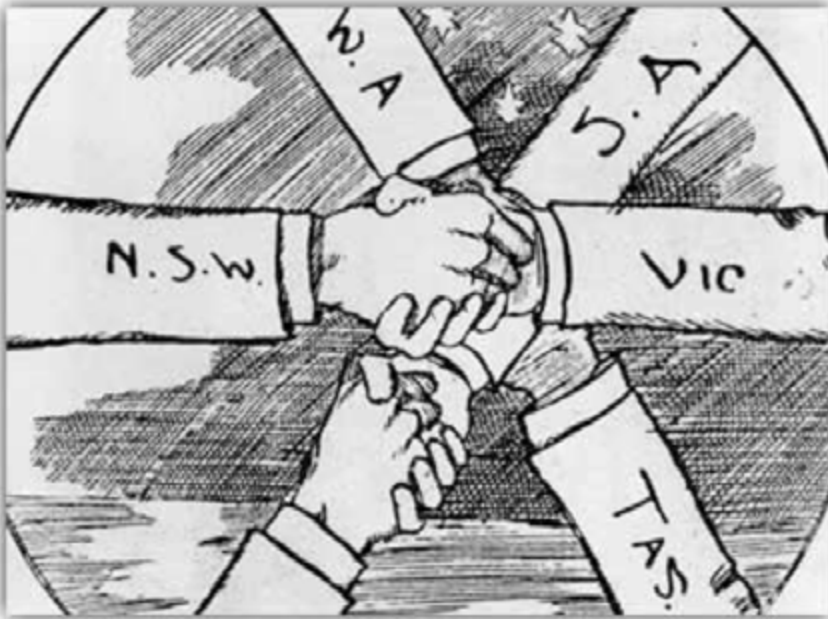
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PUBLIC LECTURE

# The Unsentimental Nation?

Early Commemoration of  
the Australian Commonwealth

**Wednesday 5 February 2020 5.30pm – 6.30pm**



## Speakers

**Carolyn Holbrook**

Deakin University

## Location

**Allan Barton Forum**

ANU College of Business  
& Economics LT3  
CBE Building 26C,  
Kingsley St Acton A.C.T

## Register online

Attendees must register -  
<http://bit.ly/unsentimental-nation>

Presented by

School of  
Politics and  
International Relations

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Arts & Social  
Sciences

Scholars have disagreed about the degree of sentiment that propelled the creation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. Was Federation a cynical deal designed to further the economic interests of the wealthy and privileged, at the expense of the working classes, women, Indigenous people and other non-white Australians? Or was it the achievement of idealistic founders who were pursuing a sacred ideal of nationhood, as John Hirst argued in *The Sentimental Nation*?

This talk examines the nature of early debates about commemoration of the anniversary of Federation. I will argue that the lack of sentimental attachment to the Federation is evident in widespread indifference towards its anniversary from the very earliest years after 1901. It suggests that Australians' longstanding resistance to reform of the Federation is linked to their historic lack of attachment to it.

**Carolyn Holbrook** is an Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow in the Contemporary Histories Research Group at Deakin University. She is the author of *Anzac: The Unauthorised Biography* (NewSouth, 2014), and the co-editor with Keir Reeves of *The Great War: Aftermath and Commemoration* (UNSW Press, 2019). Carolyn is the director of Australian Policy and History and co-editor of the *Journal of Australian Studies*. She is currently writing a history of Australians' attitudes towards their federation.

Light refreshments and soft drinks will be available from 6.30pm.