

Foreword

Baden Offord

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In my youth I was fortunate to undertake several bushwalking adventures in the Blue Gum Forest, a conservationist's heaven located in the Grose Valley of the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. What is noteworthy is that this extraordinary forest can only be accessed on foot and is within a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You take the train to Mount Victoria (or for some, the other route that goes from Blackheath) and descend into a valley of wondrous rivers and magnificently tall Mountain Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus deanei*) trees. On one occasion, while setting camp underneath a towering cathedral of these trees in that gloaming light of nature's dusk, I remember vividly how a mob of Wild Brumbies suddenly appeared, galloping through the forest in absolute concert. The cool silence that comes with the last of daylight was transformed by their raw presence, and I can still see their hot breath and flying manes on that winter's eve. The forest was alive!

This collection of articles, poems, essays and illustrated ethnological explorations offers the reader the opportunity of going somewhere original and perhaps remarkable, to see something *other*, and to understand much more of our travels and discoveries and musings than hitherto supposed. The pleasure of reading such an eclectic and broad range of academic enquiry and curiosity is entirely beguiling! And I say this in the most respectful way, as a beguilement of wonder appears to animate this issue of *Blue Gum*. It is wonderful to see such an innovative journal that caters for early career academics, students as well as established scholars.

The Centre for Australian Studies at the University of Barcelona is a remarkable hub of creative and scholarly energy. Through Dr. Susan Ballyn and her team (which includes the editors of this issue of *Blue Gum*), the Centre has become a place of immense luminosity in the field of Australian Studies in Europe. One of its more creative outputs, *Blue Gum*, contributes to a generous, expansive, interdisciplinary and importantly nourishing home for Australian Studies scholarship.

Born in Aotearoa/NZ of Maori and Pakeha heritage, **Baden Offord** will take up the position as Director and Professor, Centre for Human Rights Education in the Faculty of Humanities at Curtin University from 22 January 2015. Previously, he was Professor of Cultural Studies and Human Rights in the School of Arts and Social Sciences and Co-Director of the Centre for Peace and Social Justice at Southern Cross University. He is an internationally recognized specialist in human rights, sexuality and culture. His latest co-authored book is *Inside Australian Culture: Legacies of Enlightenment Values* (Anthem, London, 2014).