A History of Queensland is an exciting new account of Queensland's past, stretching from the time of earliest human habitation up to the present. It is a remarkable story of the state's Aboriginal history, the convict years, free settlement and more recent urban and rural growth. It takes the reader through the tumultuous frontier and Federation periods, the world wars, the Cold War, the controversial Bjelke-Petersen era and into the new millennium. It reveals Queensland as sprawling, harsh and diverse; a place of conflict, forged by bitter struggles of race, class, and gender, and intense political and environmental dispute. It is a colourful, surprising and at times disturbing saga, a perplexing and diverting mixture of ferocity, endurance and optimism in this unique Australian state.

Raymond Evans is Adjunct Professor with the Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, School of Arts, Media and Culture at Griffith University, and Honorary Reader with the Australian Studies Centre and the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland.
A History of Queensland

RAYMOND EVANS
For Bill Thorpe,
my colleague and friend

O when I sail from Brisbane,
I'll search each straining way
To find the flaming visions
That home-blind eyes betray.
Paul Grano, ‘Quest’
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   Courtesy of Oxley Memorial Library

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   Courtesy of Oxley Memorial Library

Pauline Hanson at Hervey Bay RSL in 2001
   Courtesy of The Courier-Mail

‘Just walkin’ the dog’: Premier Peter Beattie continues his political jog-trot, 2004
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The intrepid historian will find bits of Queensland scattered serendipitously across the globe. I have discovered that trail in so many unexpected places over the years – miscellaneous folios at the London School of Economics, missionary files at the London School of African and Oriental Studies, feminist collections at Fawcett House or obscure manuscripts and cuttings books at Rhodes House, Oxford. Queensland, in all its peculiar manifestations, is also there in the great official tomes at the Public Records Office, Kew, and in the diverting pamphlet collections of the Royal Commonwealth Society. Its unmistakable traces are detectable in Scotland and Ireland, in Europe and across the United States. Wherever I have researched I have invariably found librarians, archivists and other keepers of rare books, journals and documents to be obliging and helpful guides and facilitators. Closer to home, at the Mitchell and La Trobe libraries, the various repositories of the Australian Archives and the Archives of Business and Labour in Canberra, staff members have been welcoming, engaging and kind. In Queensland itself, I have worked extensively over the years at the State Archives, the Oxley and Fryer libraries and the thesis collections at the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland and the School of Arts, Media and Culture at Griffith University. I have sampled repositories at James Cook University Library, Griffith University Library, the holdings of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland and in the homes of private collectors. History students of mine have often brought crucial sources to my
Acknowledgements

attention. My warm thanks to all these willing institutions and people.

A concise history can only reveal and reflect upon a tiny portion of the wide substratum of data that supports it. The writer skates comfortably across thick ice, but skates very quickly. Events pass by in a blur or are, of necessity, simply passed over. The result runs the distinct risk of displeasing just about everyone – particularly the specialists. For the account cannot at any point be comprehensive or too extensively considered. There is no time for that. It cannot pretend to be definitive. It merely represents one historian’s chosen journey, finding his or her own way rapidly through complex and precarious landscapes. And there are many such ways. Most of all I have sought to avoid in this study a chronological checklist of one predictable thing after another. That well-beaten track may be followed elsewhere. Rather, I hope to have made the journey an evocative, impressionistic and consequential one, while infusing hefty thematic considerations with fugitive movement. I hope it will serve to whet readers’ appetites for more knowledge and information, and to disarm those who still may believe there is little of interest to know. For Queensland’s is a massive and compelling story, crammed here into a small book, about a place typified waggishly by one British Colonial Office official as ‘a little colony half the size of Europe.’

In one respect, I can truly say that this volume is all my own work. It was largely composed in retirement during 2004–05. Yet it is also based on decades of interaction with talented and scholarly persons and with research gathered under the privilege of tertiary employment: study leave, funded overseas trips and the odd government grant. The Department of History at the University of Queensland – a department now subsumed and mutated – generously supported my scholarship across several decades. Individual colleagues, too numerous to list, were both challenging and enlightening. Kay Saunders, in particular, was partner-in-crime in numerous publishing ventures and often selflessly helped in gathering and compiling data that has been of vital significance here. For some two decades now, I have also been a part of a loose alliance of Queensland historians that dubs itself ‘The Koala Club’ – an allusion, I believe, to persistence in the teeth of extinguishment. Among these members, Bill Thorpe, in particular, has long been a steady and encouraging influence. His fortitude, intelligence and commitment have always provided
humbling inspiration. Several others have offered sterling support during the writing process, often giving reassurance and sometimes reading drafts: Joanne Watson, Ross Laurie, Jeff Rickerd, Dirk Moses, Timothy Bottoms, Georgina Murray, Anna Haebich, Tony Roberts, Mark Copland, Jonathan Richards, Adrian Whineray, Carole Ferrier, Murray Johnson, Denver Beanland, Jacqui Donegan and Clive Moore. Joanne Scott was particularly supportive at a crucial stage of production, when everything seemed to be coming unstuck. I should also like to pay especial tribute to the numerous contemporary writers of historical theses on Queensland, many of which remain unpublished. The enormous corpus of new work produced by these industrious and intellectually intrepid people over the past three decades has, more than any other single factor, transformed the way that domestic history is locally perceived and understood. The breadth of interpretation – once so crabbed and fixated – has been prodigiously expanded by all this dedicated scholarship. The staff of Cambridge University Press, particularly Kim Armitage, Karen Hildebrandt and Kate Indigo, have been dependable, responsive guides throughout the production of this volume. Susan Keogh has been an editor nonpareil and a true joy to work with. More than anyone else, however, my partner, Jahara Rhiannon deserves my greatest thanks for all the unstinting effort she has expended upon the typing and production of this manuscript; for all the care she provided when my health gave out during the writing of it; and for all the abundant emotional support she has offered throughout: Queensland for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

I hope, finally, in this rather dismal time of dumbing down and numbing down, that this analysis may help to enliven critical debate on the structured narrative of our shared history, expand cultural awareness and perhaps shed a few more blindfolds.

Raymond Evans
March 2007
NOTE ON CURRENCY

There were 12 pennies (d) in 1 shilling (s) and 20 shillings in £1. When Australia converted to decimal currency in 1966, £1 was equal to $2.
CHRONOLOGY

50 000–60 000 years ago: Human occupation begins via the South Asian archipelago

15 000 years ago: Ice age draws to close as oceans encroach on greater land mass

6000 years ago: Queensland assumes approximately its present shape

1606: Dutch explorer, Jansz reaches Queensland mainland; first recorded encounter with Aboriginal people, western Cape York; French-born Torres sails through Torres Strait

1623: Dutch adventurers, Carstensz and van Colster on kidnapping mission to Cape York

1644: Tasman traverses Gulf of Carpentaria

1756: Gonzal and Aaschens reach western Cape York from Indonesia

1770: English explorer Cook sails along and annexes eastern Australian coast, spending 100 of the 125 days in Queensland waters

1799: Explorer Matthew Flinders enters and renames ‘Morton Bay’

1819: Philip King completes hydrographic survey of east Queensland coast; J. T. Bigge commences investigation of convictism

1823: Explorer John Oxley shown Brisbane River by stranded timber-getters and local Aboriginal people; mistakes it for entrance to inland sea

1824: First British settlement – a penal outpost – established
Chronology

at Redcliffe Point (‘Humpy Bong’); clashes with Aboriginal people sour relations

1825: Secondary punishment penal station relocated on Brisbane River at ‘meanjin’ (later ‘Edenglassie’ and then ‘Brisbane’)

1825: Commandant Patrick Logan oversees major building activity at Moreton Bay

1827: Alan Cunningham enters and names ‘the Darling Downs’

1829: Sydney press commences campaign against cruelties of Moreton Bay penal system

1830: Commandant Logan murdered while exploring near Mount Irwin (Logan Creek); Captain James Clunie becomes new commandant

1830–32: Serious racial violence erupts on Stradbroke and Moreton islands

1836: Quaker fact-finding mission to Moreton Bay

1837: Captain Foster Fyans (from Norfolk Island) succeeds Clunie as commandant

1839: Lieutenant Owen Gorman oversees disbanding of Moreton Bay Penal Station

1840: First squatters enter Darling Downs; first public execution of Aboriginal people in Brisbane

1842: Mass poisoning of Aboriginal people at Kilcoy Station exacerbates race relations

1844: First protest meetings (against squatting regulations); Indian indentured pastoral workers arrive

1846–47: First Brisbane theatre (George Croft’s) closes, due to censorship; first newspaper, Moreton Bay Courier, established

1848: First government-assisted British migrants arrive; first contingent of Chinese indentured shepherds

1849: J. D. Lang’s hand-picked ‘virtuous’ Protestant migrants arrive; Native Mounted Police commence operations in Queensland zone; arrival of convict ‘exiles’ launches anti-transportation movement

1850: Last convict ship to eastern Australia reaches Moreton Bay

1851: Public campaign for Separation from New South Wales begins; first direct overseas shipment of wool; first Australian anti-Chinese riot near Ipswich
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>German bonded pastoral workers begin arriving</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Separation movement encounters strong opposition from New South Wales government; Brisbane Labor League begins agitation for eight-hour day</td>
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<td>1858</td>
<td>Abortive gold rush to Canoona (near Rockhampton) the largest and wildest in the colonies; first goldfields race riots; stonemasons win eight-hour day</td>
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<td>1859</td>
<td>Queensland becomes a self-governing colony; arrival of first governor, George Bowen and Greek wife, Diamantina Roma</td>
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<td>1860</td>
<td>Election of first Queensland Legislative Assembly: R. G. W. Herbert first premier</td>
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<td>1861</td>
<td>Cullin-la-ringo massacre of whites by Aboriginal people the largest in mainland Australia; mass reprisals follow; Select Commission of Enquiry into Native Mounted Police</td>
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<td>1862</td>
<td>First sugar successfully produced</td>
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<td>1863</td>
<td>First consignment of Melanesians arrive, amid controversy, for work in cotton industry</td>
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<td>1865</td>
<td>First narrow gauge railway opened (Ipswich to Grandchester)</td>
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<td>1866</td>
<td>Major financial collapse; mass unemployment; food rioting in Brisbane; serious depression continues into 1871</td>
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<td>1867</td>
<td>Gold discoveries at Gympie cause tremendous excitement; race rioting at Rockhampton diggings</td>
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<td>1868</td>
<td>First legislative attempt to regulate Melanesian labour recruitment</td>
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<td>1870</td>
<td>Migrant population tops 100,000</td>
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<td>1873</td>
<td>Palmer River gold rush further increases anti-Chinese sentiment; tame-cat Aboriginal Commission established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Serious economic depression, lasting into 1880; Brisbane dock-workers the first Australian unskilled workers to win eight-hour day</td>
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<td>1878</td>
<td>Chinese mining factions in violent clashes at Lukinville</td>
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<td>1879</td>
<td>Sir Thomas McIlwraith occasions great controversy as premier</td>
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<td>1880</td>
<td>Queenslander exposes frontier excesses with ‘The Way We Civilize’ series; Mount Morgan mineral bonanza begins; colony convulsed by Steel Rails scandal</td>
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<td>1883</td>
<td>McIlwraith’s annexation of Eastern New Guinea repudiated by UK government; race rioting at Mackay</td>
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Chronology

1884: Northern and central Queensland separation movements contested by Premier Samuel Griffith; *Hopeful* blackbirding (Islander recruitment) scandal in New Guinea waters creates furore; Aboriginal evidence ruled admissible in courts

1885: Brisbane Trades and Labour Council established

1887: Radical republican *Boomerang* established by William Lane

1888: First rail connection, Brisbane to Sydney; peak of anti-Asian activity, with racial disturbances in many centres; Thomas Glassey becomes Australia’s first Labor parliamentarian

1889: Brisbane wharf labourers institute crucial international support for London dock strike

1890: Rivals, McIlwraith and Griffith, form coalition government; Labor Party organised with socialist platform; Jondaryan wool strike won on Brisbane wharves

1891: First great shearers’ strike convulses Queensland; Queensland Defence Forces engaged; mass sentencing and imprisonment of strikers

1892: Major depression spreads; mass unemployment; Griffith rescinds plan to end Melanesian labour trade

1893: Queensland National Bank scandal; nine banks collapse

1894: Second great shearers’ strike also ends in defeat, as draconic *Peace Preservation Act* passed and Labor parliamentarians revolt

1895: ‘Waltzing Matilda’ first sung publicly at Winton; Great Federation drought begins

1896: Arrival of Governor Baron Lamington (whose name reputedly inspires the lamington cake)

1897: *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* legalises enforced removals of Aboriginal peoples

1899: Queensland first in Empire to offer troops for Boer War; Anderson Dawson forms first, short-lived Labor Government in the world; referendum vote narrowly supports Federation; ‘Steele Rudd’ publishes *On Our Selection!*

1901: First Federal elections held; population approaches 500,000
Chronology

1902: Queensland conducts first prosecutions against ‘illegal coloured immigrants’ under the Immigration Restriction Act

1903: Sir Samuel Griffith becomes first chief justice of Australia

1904: Melanesian labour trade terminated

1905: White women and male itinerants enfranchised after long campaign; Aboriginal people disenfranchised by same legislation

1907: Around 7000 Melanesians deported (to 1914); William Kidston initiates first major split in Labor Party

1911: First Queensland university begins; massive sugar strike successfully waged by Amalgamated Workers’ Association

1912: Brisbane general strike touted as first ‘simultaneous’ strike in the world

1913: Brisbane free speech fight begins; several participants conduct Australia’s first political hunger strikes

1915: Queenslanders elect the first majority Labor government (of T. J. Ryan) by a landslide; major economic dislocation

1916: Queensland becomes first state to institute Anzac Day commemoration

1917: Federal censorship of Queensland Hansard; Prime Minister Hughes institutes Commonwealth Police after conflict intensifies

1918: Palm Island established as Aboriginal penitentiary

1919: Red Flag riots in Brisbane; Townsville police open fire on striking meatworkers; Ryan resigns as premier and E. G. Theodore assumes control; Chinese farmers displaced from Atherton Tableland

1920: London financial embargo brings economic disaster

1921: Queensland’s non-elective Legislative Council swamped and nullified

1922: Establishment of QANTAS at Longreach

1924: Anti-Communist pledge introduced into Queensland ALP

1925: Huge railway strike brings victory to workers

1926: Queensland already sliding into depression, with severe drought
1927: ALP Premier McCormack humbles Australian Railways Union in violent sugar strike; massive marsupial culling almost exterminates the koala
1929: McCormack’s Labor government soundly trounced; first woman parliamentarian elected
1932: A. E. Moore’s Country–National government defeated by Labor’s W. Forgan Smith; ‘Battle of Cairns’ erupts against unemployed
1935: Strikes on cane fields (due to workers contracting Weil’s disease) ultimately victorious
1936: Foundation stone of St Lucia university campus laid; Torres Strait Islanders conduct general strike in pearling industry
1938: *State Transport Act* passed, with State of Emergency provisions
1939: ‘Pineapple Rebellion’ thwarted by Ned Hanlon, the Minister for Health
1941: US servicemen start arriving
1942: Brisbane becomes garrison city and central administrative zone for Pacific War; ‘Brisbane Line’ controversy erupts; Townsville bombed; Battle of Brisbane fought; race-rioting between white and black US troops
1943: Barjai movement of creative youth begins, Brisbane
1944: Fred Paterson becomes only Communist elected to an Australian parliament
1945: Waterside boycotts in support of Indonesian independence movement
1946: State of Emergency powers first invoked in industrial dispute; Queensland meat strike fails; Catholic ‘grouper’ activity begins in unions
1947: 40-hour working week granted by Queensland parliament
1948: 23,000 workers join railways strike; second State of Emergency with increased policing powers; police attack St Patrick’s Day demonstrators
1949: Queensland Special Branch instituted to spy on industrial militants; *Electoral Districts Act* introduces disproportionate zones
1954: Uranium prospecting begins at Mary Kathleen, north-west Queensland; Brisbane population reaches
Chronology

500 000; Queensland establishes its own literary censorship

1956: World’s largest bauxite deposit discovered, Weipa; State of Emergency declared during extended shearers’ strike; Queensland Labor Government splits over three weeks’ annual leave for workers as Premier Gair expelled from party

1957: Palm Island Aboriginal peoples strike heavily suppressed; Country–Liberal Party government elected under Frank Nicklin

1959: New electoral zonal system instituted, favouring Country Party

1961: Mount Isa Mines strike broken by State of Emergency

1963: Northern missions surrendered to aluminium consortium

1964: Mount Isa dispute extends bitterly into 1965; State of Emergency invoked; student protests begin against Vietnam War; Aboriginal poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal publishes We Are Going

1967: Large civil liberties mobilisation rocks Brisbane; acrimonious Collinsville lockout

1968: Johannes Bjelke-Petersen becomes premier upon sudden death of Jack Pizzey

1971: Springbok Rugby tour induces anti-apartheid protests and renewed State of Emergency; campaign to end Fraser Island sand-mining launched; Aborigines Act begins de-institutionalisation of reserve populations

1975: Bjelke-Petersen’s unorthodox Senate manoeuvres initiate removal of federal Whitlam government

1976: Townsville workers conduct world’s first anti-uranium strike; uranium mining recommenced at Mary Kathleen; police commissioner resigns over political intervention

1977: Right to march movement contests heavy policing (until 1979) as street demonstrations banned; death duties abolished

1979: Queensland Aboriginal reserves and missions converted to government shires to thwart self-management moves; Essential Services Act intensifies State of Emergency powers; Barrier Reef saved from oil drilling
1982: Brisbane Commonwealth Games; State of Emergency powers invoked against land rights demonstrations; *Land Act* blocks freehold title for Aboriginal councils; Eddie Mabo launches legal action to overturn Crown control over Murray Island

1983: National Party rules for first time in own right, without Liberal support

1985: SEQEB electricity dispute invokes twelfth State of Emergency situation in four decades

1987: Investigative journalism initiates Fitzgerald Inquiry into political corruption; Bjelke-Petersen displaced as National Party leader and resigns premiership

1989: Fitzgerald Inquiry Report leads to gaoling of parliamentarians and police commissioner; Labor regains office after 32 years; Special Branch terminated and files destroyed

1991: Bjelke-Petersen tried for perjury (jury deadlocks); Goss government forwards massive reform agenda

1992: Mabo decision establishes native title across Australia

1994: Goss Labor government shaken by environmental protests

1996: National–Liberal coalition regains power

1997: Pauline Hanson’s One Nation Party, out of Queensland, divides nation

1998: Labor, under Peter Beattie, regains power; One Nation wins 11 state seats

1999: Queensland Parliament apologises to Aboriginal ‘stolen generation’

2000: 70 000 march in Brisbane for Aboriginal–white reconciliation

2004: Clear-felling of native vegetation curbed; Palm Island rioting over suspicious Aboriginal death in custody; State of Emergency declared

2005: Australia’s first *Wild Rivers Act* passed