

Human Rights in Twentieth-Century Australia

This groundbreaking study understands the “long history” of human rights in Australia from the moment of their supposed invention in the 1940s to official incorporation into the Australian government bureaucracy in the 1980s. To do so, a wide cast of individuals, institutions and publics from across the political spectrum are surveyed who translated global ideas into local settings and changed meanings of a foreign discourse to suit local concerns and predilections. These individuals created new organisations to spread the message of human rights or found older institutions amenable to their newfound concerns, adopting rights language with a mixture of enthusiasm and opportunism. Governments, on the other hand, engaged with or ignored human rights as its shifting meanings, international currency and domestic reception ebbed and flowed. Finally, individuals understood and (re-)translated human rights ideas throughout this period: writing letters, books or poems and sympathising in new, global ways.

Jon Piccini is a historian at Australian Catholic University. He wrote *Global Radicals: Transnational Protest, Australia and the 1960s* (2016), which looks at Australian protest movements in the transnational “Sixties”, and edited a collection of essays entitled *The Far Left in Australia since 1945* (2018).

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For Teena

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page viii</i>
Introduction: Bereft of Words	1
1 Inventing Rights	21
2 Cold War Rights	53
3 Experimental Rights	86
4 Whose Rights?	119
5 Implementing Rights	153
Epilogue: Cascade or Trickle?	188
<i>Index</i>	203

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