

History OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA Council

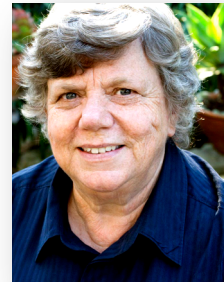
You are invited to the
2017 HISTORY COUNCIL LECTURE
by **Emeritus Professor Ann Curthoys and Dr Shino Konishi**
after the History Council AGM on
Thursday 21 September 2017, 5.30pm
Great Southern Room
4th Floor, Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre

THE 1967 REFERENDUM

'The Remarkable 1960s: reflections on history, political activism, and the 1967 Referendum'

This lecture explores Australia's politics of race leading up to the 1967 Referendum. The referendum aimed to change the Australian constitution in order to grant the Commonwealth the power for the first time to make laws specifically concerning Indigenous people and to include them in the census. It was passed by 90.77% of voters. In exploring the historical context for the Referendum, I look first at the political upheavals concerning race in the 1960s, with special attention to the Freedom Ride of 1965, in which I was involved. I trace the broader international influences on Australian racial politics. I also look further back in time to explore why it was that constitution-making in Australia, whether for self-governing colonies in the British Empire or for the new nation of Australia in 1901, so consistently involved visions of self-determination from which Indigenous people were excluded. Finally, I ask, what is the legacy of these histories for Australia today?

Ann Curthoys is an honorary professor at UWA and Emeritus Professor at ANU. She has written widely on aspects of Australian history, and on questions of historical theory and writing. Her books include *Freedom Ride: A Freedom rider Remembers* (2002); *Is History Fiction?* (with John Docker, 2005); *How to Write History that People Want to Read* (with Ann McGrath, 2009). She has edited many collections of essays. Her latest book, written jointly with Jessie Mitchell, *Taking Liberty: Indigenous Rights and Settler Self-Government*, is currently in press with Cambridge University Press.



'"After the Referendum, ... the emotional things changed": Indigenous memories'

Since the late 1990s a number of historians have argued against the 'myth' that the 1967 Referendum granted Aboriginal people the right to vote, pointing out that the Referendum only concerned enabling the Commonwealth Government to legislate for Aboriginal people, and including Indigenous people in the census. Yet, as Frances Peters-Little observes, the Referendum meant so much more for Aboriginal people, and is remembered as the time we became citizens in our own country. In this presentation, I will build on her work, exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's memories of the 1967 Referendum, and in particular, the way emotions imbue these memories.



Shino Konishi is a descendant of the Yawuru people of Broome. She is a historian based at UWA, and is a chief investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions. Her books include *The Aboriginal Male in the Enlightenment World* (2012) and the co-edited collections *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on the Exploration Archives* (2015) and *Brokers and Boundaries: Colonial Exploration in Indigenous Territory* (2016). She is now beginning a new ARC project on Indigenous biography.