

# AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK

On behalf of the Australian Women's History Network (AWHN) we write to express our dismay at the proposed cuts and redundancies impacting researchers in the humanities and social sciences at the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

The Australian Women's History Network promotes research and writing in the fields of gender and women's history and is affiliated with the International Federation for Research in Women's History (IFRWH). The AWHN counts among its members ACU historians and our State Convenor for Victoria is among those impacted by the proposal. Earlier this year, ACU hosted our network's annual symposium as a stream within the Australian Historical Association's 50th anniversary conference. Later this month, ACU's Gender and Women's History Research Centre will host and co-sponsor a symposium organised by the AWHN's journal, *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal*.

The ACU proposal disestablishes the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (IHSS) and the Medieval and Early Modern Studies (MEMS) program and offers no clear sense of commitment on the part of ACU to ongoing engagement with gender history and women's history. ACU's Gender and Women's History Research Centre is unique in Australia in its express dedication to gender history. The centre has successfully delivered on its promise to offer "new research energy and critical visibility to the University's commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility, wellbeing and sustainability, by signalling the importance of gender research," and the ongoing success of its scholars is a testament to the dynamism, importance, and relevance of gender and women's history in the 21st century.

Despite ACU's avowed commitment to the pursuit of not only knowledge, but also the dignity of the human person and the common good, members of our community are callously being asked to compete among themselves for a reduced number of positions with many standing to lose their careers. Some of these colleagues are recent international recruits who uprooted their families to participate in building ACU as a world class research institute, while others have given years of exemplary service in teaching, research and community engagement, establishing the university as a leading centre for the study of History in this country.

ACU historians combine groundbreaking internationally recognised research and education with exemplary professional service. On that basis, we share the position articulated by our colleagues in the Australian Historical Association that the decision "can only be interpreted as an attack on the Australian historical profession, and the humanities, as a whole". The Australian Women's History Network expresses unwavering solidarity with all scholars at the ACU and implores the university to reverse its decision.

Australian Women's History Network Co-Convenors

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The Australian Women's History Network (AWHN) is convened by Chelsea Barnett, Kate Laing, Micaela Pattison, Michelle Staff and Ana Stevenson. We are advised by Sharon Crozier de Rosa and Dianne Hall. The AWHN is affiliated with the International Federation for Research in Women's History <http://www.ifrwh.com/index.html>

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The Network's journal is *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* [www.auswhn.org.au/lilith/](http://www.auswhn.org.au/lilith/) | Lilith on Twitter @LilithJournal