Reflections on the centenary of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-14

Wednesday 21 March 2012 4:15-5:30pm

School of History Seminar Series
Professor Tom Griffiths, School of History, ANU

McDonald Room Menzies Library, ANU

In January this year I was invited to participate in the Australian Antarctic Division’s commemorative voyage to Commonwealth Bay, Antarctica, a century after Douglas Mawson’s Australasian Antarctic Expedition landed there.

What did the experience of commemoration teach us about the original expedition and its legacy?

I will report on the centennial pilgrimage and reflect on the challenges and delights of doing public history on the Southern Ocean and on an international continent. I will also talk about the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-14 and why questions about its character and achievements remain relevant today.

Professor Tom Griffiths is the W.K. Hancock Professor of History and a Professor of History in the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU and Director of the Centre for Environmental History at ANU. His research, writing and teaching are in the fields of Australian social, cultural and environmental history, the comparative environmental history of settler societies, the writing of non-fiction, and the history of Antarctica. Tom’s books and essays have won prizes in history, science, literature, politics and journalism. His publications include Hunters and Collectors (1996), Forests of Ash: An Environmental History (2001) and Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica (2007).