School of History Seminar Series

Wednesday 2 March 2011, 4.15-5.30pm, Seminar Room A, Coombs Building, ANU

“It brings the War so much closer to us”:
Private sentiment in Australia during 1915
Dr Bart Ziino, Deakin University

This paper examines changing private sentiments among Australians on the First World War homefront during 1915. Rather than simply a study of Australian reactions to the Gallipoli campaign, it argues that 1915 was a critical year in Australians’ relationships with the war. It exposes a close understanding of the war among individual Australians, fed not only by a press more accurate in its reporting than we have allowed, but by contact with soldiers, and exposure to the anxiety and grief occasioned by the Australian Imperial Force’s entry into the war at Gallipoli.

The paper seeks to explain the extraordinary levels of popular commitment to the war evidenced in mid-1915, as well as the recriminations that were part of that mobilisation, and traces growing resignation to a long war as it continued to expand in its scale, its demands and its costs.

Dr Bart Ziino is an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow at Deakin University. He is the author of A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War (UWA Press, 2007) and the winner of the 2005 Serle Award for best thesis in Australian history.