LABOR’S PART IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY: A LAMENT

Dr John Hirst
La Trobe University

Tuesday 9 May, 5.30pm
Coombs Lecture Theatre, Fellows Road, ANU

For most of his life John Hirst has voted for the Australian Labor Party — and he may do so again.

In this lecture he will reflect on his unease with some of the Labor traditions. For instance, he does not think that Labor parliamentarians should be compelled to vote as Caucus directs. He does not think that Billy Hughes and Joseph Lyons were 'rats', or that Labor was right in refusing to join national governments in both world wars. And he believes that Labor's elevation of anti-conscription into a shibboleth was damaging to the party and the nation. In this lecture he will lament these and other aspects of Labor history.

Dr John Hirst is Reader in History at La Trobe University, Melbourne. He has written widely on Australian history and the republic, as well as a guide to government and law in Australia, which was distributed to each school in the country. His most recent books are Australia's Democracy: a short history, and Sense and Nonsense in Australian History. He writes regularly for The Australian and Quadrant.

Dr Hirst was founding Convenor of the Australian Republican Movement in Victoria and a member of Prime Minister Keating’s Republic Advisory Committee. He was the chair of the Howard Government’s Civics Education Group, and is currently a board member of Film Australia and deputy chair of the Council of the National Museum of Australia.