



Alec Chisholm teaching bush boys about birds, ca.1914 (State Library of New South Wales)

## IDLING IN GREEN PLACES: OR PINNING DOWN A NATURALIST

### Biography Workshop

National Centre of Biography (ANU)  
11am - 12:30 pm, Thursday 11 March

### In Person

Seminar Room 5.72  
Level 5, RSSS Building

### Zoom Option

Meeting ID: 849 0058 9945

Password: 630803

URL: [https://anu.zoom.us/j/84900589945?](https://anu.zoom.us/j/84900589945?pwd=eHNDcTVxZmNZNlBmNnBOeEh0VW94Zz09)

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[h0VW94Zz09](https://anu.zoom.us/j/84900589945?pwd=eHNDcTVxZmNZNlBmNnBOeEh0VW94Zz09)

Alec Chisholm (1890-1977) was a self-educated polymath of a kind that has since vanished from Australia's public life. Renowned first for his lushly Romantic writings on nature, he went on to win accolades that made him a household name in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Yet today he is barely remembered. In this talk, Russell McGregor will reflect on the pleasures and challenges of retrieving the life story of this intriguing and sometimes irritating man. He'll also make some observations on biography as a window onto the past.



**Russell McGregor** is an Adjunct Professor of History at James Cook University. His publications include the award-winning books *Imagined Destinies: Aboriginal Australians and the Doomed Race Theory* (1997) and *Indifferent Inclusion: Aboriginal People and the Australian Nation* (2011). More recently he has turned to environmental history with *Environment, Race and Nationhood in Australia: Revisiting the Empty North* (2016) and *Idling in Green Places: A Life of Alec Chisholm* (2019), which was shortlisted for the National Biography Award. His current project is a history of birdwatching.