

Biography Workshop

Karen Fox

Fame, Reputation, Significance, and Biography

Date: Thursday 26 October 2017

Venue: Jean Martin Room, Beryl Rawson Building, ANU

Time: 12 midday until about 1.30 p.m.

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Fame, reputation, and significance are at the heart of the biographical enterprise. Whether writing a new account of a much-biographed person, the first biography of a well-known individual, or a life of a significant yet forgotten figure, biographers are likely to find themselves engaging with questions about reputation, renown, and remembrance. Reputations – and historians' assessments of the significance of a life – may change over time, and can be the subject of intense conflict, as demonstrated by a range of recent controversies around the world over statues, portraits, and other modes of memorialisation. In this Biography Workshop I will explore some of these recent controversies, and reflect on the concepts of fame, reputation, and significance in biographical writing and in my own research journey.



Dr Karen Fox is a research editor with the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and a research fellow at the National Centre of Biography, School of History, Australian National University. Educated at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, and at the ANU, she has taught Australian and imperial history and biography at the ANU. Karen's research interests include Australian and New Zealand history, imperial and colonial history, gender and feminist history, the history of fame and celebrity, and biography and life writing. Her book, *Māori and Aboriginal Women in the Public Eye: Representing Difference, 1950-2000*, was published by ANU E Press in 2011.