

Barry John McGowan OAM (1945–2018)

Elaine Lewis

Barry McGowan died on 1 September 2018 in Canberra. His article ‘Convicts and Communards: French-Australian Relations in the South Pacific, 1800–1900’ appeared in *The French Australian Review*, number 64, Winter 2018. His enthusiasm and generosity were always evident and he will be missed.

Barry’s first career was in economics—after gaining a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Adelaide in 1967, he spent two years as ‘Assistant to the Economist’, South Pacific Commission, Noumea, under the Australian Volunteers Abroad scheme. He maintained his interest in the colonial history of the Pacific. From 1970 to 1996 he worked in the Commonwealth Departments of Health, Territories, Trade and Industry, Prime Minister and Cabinet, and finally as a Director in the Department of Industrial Relations.

His friend and colleague Michael Pearson wrote that Barry had ‘a deep interest in how people, individually and as communities, negotiated life in mining areas, and went about the physical activities of mining’. He became an expert on the history of mining in Australia and his work on the New South Wales Estates Grants Program (NGEP) produced two books, *Lost Mines* and *Bungonia to Braidwood*—the former was revised and republished as *Lost Mines Revisited*.

Barry eventually left the public service and, after completing a Bachelor of Arts at the Australian National University (ANU) in 1995, he began his life as a ‘historian and heritage consultant’.

Numerous publications followed and Barry became a Research Associate at the ANU College of Asia and Pacific. In 2011 he was awarded a PhD from the ANU for his thesis ‘Dust and Dreams: a regional history of mining and community in south-east New South Wales 1850–1914’, which consolidated his work on mining and community over the previous years. He became a passionate advocate for increasing public awareness of the pioneering role of Chinese people in the pastoral and agricultural development of Australia. Barry was a prodigious researcher who published sixteen books, fifteen heritage reports, dozens of journal articles and more than seventy conference papers.

Shortly before his death, at his hospital bedside, Barry McGowan was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his services to community history.

Melbourne



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