

Citation: David Kent, Emeritus Professor

For over forty years David Kent has been one of the most accomplished, innovative and versatile social and cultural historians practicing in Australia. His ground breaking scholarship has appeared in many internationally ranked and peer-reviewed journals and has attracted wide notice and consistent positive reference. His contributions to issues of the Anzacs, popular radicalism, the social and cultural histories of Britain and Australia have been singular and significant.

Professor Kent has undertaken, developed, and facilitated the study of popular custom into the centre of modern British and Australian social history. Historically, this was often relegated to the purview of folklore studies and in consequence minimized or ignored. David Kent has changed all of that. His published work is extensively and consistently cited in the international scholarly literature stimulating continuing impact and widening engagement. Professor Kent's scholarship has proven to be a trigger for renewed scholarly discourse and has in consequence become widely used in teaching. Both factors are indicative of his continuing impact on historical research while his contributions have been widely acclaimed in the fields of British and Australian social history. A careful consideration of his published work reveals the unarguable fact that Professor Kent has for many years stood at the forefront of social and cultural history in Australia and can be regarded as a leader in this area.

Professor David Kent's academic eminence is nowhere more apparent than in the pages of his highly acclaimed 2002 monograph *The Convicts of the Eleanor: Protest in Rural England, New Lives in Australia*. Described as a masterpiece of historical research and writing, this book was the winner of the prestigious and highly competitive NSW Premier's History Prize in 2003. The book features sophistication, detail, vivid argument and lavish documentation. The narrative has broad relevance and applicability across many aspects of historical research. This well-crafted book has been widely cited internationally ever since publication and noted for its convincing, authoritative and sometimes moving arguments. Superbly researched and well-written, it remains a monument to the academic eminence achieved by Professor Kent.

Professor Kent has significantly raised the awareness of historical records and knowledge among many Australian academics especially in his original and innovative work on the Anzac Legend. In his careful research and delineation of this topic, Professor Kent has refined and refreshed what the Australian government characterizes as "Australia's most important national occasion." What can be said without qualification is that Professor Kent has contributed meaningfully to one of the most enduring aspects of Australian culture and national identity.

Professor Kent has left a significant imprint on Australian historiography, and elevated the historical consciousness of Australians both in the public and academic arenas. He has pioneered new pathways in historical research and must be recognized as a key figure not only in the History Discipline at the University of New England but in the field of historical studies in Australia with continuing influence on an international stage.