

GEOFFREY BOLTON

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Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton is one of Australia's most eminent historians and can be viewed as the "father" of historical writing on north Queensland. He is author of thirty books and more than 100 articles, chapters and biographical entries, and his career has spanned Australia, Britain and the British Empire. One of the earliest researchers to work on north Queensland history, his *A Thousand Miles Away* in 1963, is considered a classic text on Queensland and one of the nation's best Australian regional histories. His other Queensland monograph studies are a photographic memoir of Richard Daintree (1965), *Planters and Pacific Islanders* (1968), and his jointly authored biography of A.C. Gregory (1972). A number of Professor Bolton's other articles and chapters are also concerned with Queensland's history, including aspects of history of Cairns, Charters Towers and the 1891 Shearers' Strike. To this can be added eighteen *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entries on personalities of great importance to the history of Queensland, including Governor Normanby, H.M. Chester, John Hamilton, William and Frank Hann, and Christie Palmerston. Professor Bolton has also written studies on Robert Philp and Samuel Griffith and the 1891 Shearers' Strike leaders, with Queensland also an important feature within his Australia-wide writing such as *Spoils and Spoilers* (1981), and, *The Middle Way, 1942-1995* (1996).

Over the last forty years Professor Bolton has consistently demonstrated excellence in writing Queensland regional, biographic and urban history, as well as broader Australian or British histories; and currently, his endeavours continue and see him working on a biography of Paul Hasluck. His use of research materials is appropriate and deep – using a wide range of primary and secondary sources. And of note, his work on Queensland primary sources dates back to the years when the Queensland State Archives was a far less organised than is found today, and newspapers were actually that, newspapers, and not microfilm or digital copies.

For much of his lengthy career, Professor Bolton has been practising as a professional university-based historian. For several years he taught in the History Department at the University of Queensland, as well as being a regular visitor to the History Department (later the History and Politics Department) at James Cook University. He is an objective historian of high standing in academia, and his prolific writings have informed and shaped many a professional historians' careers, apart from its ongoing influence on university students and the broader historical readership both here in Queensland and elsewhere throughout Australia. Professor Geoffrey Bolton is clearly a most deserving recipient of the 2011 John Douglas Kerr Medal of Distinction.