AUSTRALIAN DICTIONARY
OF BIOGRAPHY

General Editor
DOUGLAS PIKE
PREFACE

This volume of the Australian Dictionary of Biography is the second of two for the period 1788-1850. Four volumes are planned for the period 1851-1890 and probably six for the period 1891-1939. The chronological division was designed to simplify production, for some six thousand articles are likely to be included. A general index volume will be prepared when the three sections are completed. Meanwhile a provisional list of names proposed for inclusion in the 1851-1890 period has been prepared; free copies of this temporary guide are available from the Dictionary office.

The placing of each individual’s name in the appropriate section has been generally determined by when he did his most important work (floruit). For articles that overlap the chronological division, preference has usually been given to the earlier period, although all the important Federationists will appear in the third section.

The selection of names for inclusion in the first two volumes was the result of much consultation and co-operation. After quotas were estimated, Working Parties in each State prepared provisional lists, which were widely circulated and carefully amended. Many of the names were obviously significant and worthy of inclusion. Others, less notable, were chosen simply as samples of the Australian experience. Some had to be omitted through lack of material, and thereby joined the great anonymous mass whose members richly deserve a more honoured place; however, many thousands of these names are accumulating in a ‘Biographical Register’ at Dictionary headquarters in the Australian National University, and copies of this register are circulated at intervals to Australian libraries.

Most authors were nominated by the Working Parties, and nearly all contributed their entries without payment. The burden of writing has been shared almost equally by university historians and by members of Historical and Genealogical Societies and other specialists. Most of the unsigned entries were prepared by Dictionary staff.

The Dictionary is an all-Australian, Commonwealth-wide venture based on consultation and co-operation. The Australian National University has borne the cost of the small headquarters staff and much research, while other Australian Universities have supported the project in various ways. Each year its policies have been determined by the National Committee of representatives from the Departments of History in each Australian University. At Canberra the Editorial Board has kept in touch with all these representatives and, through them, with the Working Parties. In turn the editorial work has called for much consultation with the Working Parties, librarians, archivists and other local experts, as well as overseas correspondents and research assistants in each Australian capital. With such varied support the Australian Dictionary of Biography can truly be called a national project.

Canberra
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D.P.
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