

# THE BAPTIST RECORDER

No. 143, April 2019

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Mr Ronald Cardwell

## The Baptist Historical Society of NSW Incorporated

Morling College

122 Herring Road

Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Telephone: 9878 0201

Email: Hon Secretary

cardwell@mcks.com.au

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## NEXT MEETING

**Date:** Saturday 11 May, 2019

**Time:** 2.30pm [afternoon tea to be served with meeting commencing at 2.45pm]

**Where:** Morling College

**Guest:** Dr Clifford Hughes, A Life in Medicine – Clifford Hughes and other Baptist Medical Practitioners

## The Editors and Ministry of *The Australian Baptist*

RONALD CARDWELL\*

Baptist ministry from the early days of the colony was, to say the least, a difficult mission field. Whilst Rev John Saunders was able to gain traction in the community with his strong stand on Aboriginal rights and the evils of alcohol, the colonists were not altogether certain as to who and what were ‘Baptists’.

Saunders was able to reach out into the community with his Sunday sermons printed and available for purchase. These sermons were in effect the first communication in printed form by Baptists in New South Wales. Unfortunately, only a few of the sermons survive.

Following the formation of the Baptist Union of NSW in 1868, it took two years before a journal detailing the life and ministries of the Baptist Union was available. For a period until 1913 there were several publications, two to be precise, that waved the flag of the Baptist denomination. One of the publications, *The Australian Christian Messenger*, whilst given tacit approval for its publication by the Baptist Union, was a paper produced and in part funded by the Rev Alan Webb and Rev James Greenwood.

This paper does not propose to look at the publications prior to 1913 but will look at the editors and ministry of *The Australian Baptist* which hit the church pews on 1 January 1913. As both a PK and an EK, I can in some way open the doors into the editor’s office until the closure of the AB, as it was known in December 1991. Ostensibly the AB was an NSW journal aimed at NSW Baptists and published from offices in New South Wales. There was, however, input into each issue by correspondents and ‘reporters’ in the other states of Australia. For many years of its life, it sought to be the voice of Baptists in Australia.

At the First Australasian Baptist Congress held in October 1908 a paper was presented by JA Packer on the need for a ‘Baptist Paper’. A resolution was passed noting that

At the last meeting a paper was presented on the eight editors of *The Australian Baptist*. This is the first part of the paper that considers the first three editors, Dr JA Packer, Rev FJ Dunkley and Mr HJ Morton. The last editor of *The Australian Baptist*, Rev Peter Green (1989-1991), was present and made some interesting and thoughtful contributions.

**The rest of the Baptist Recorder is available by contacting the secretary [cardwell@mcks.com.au](mailto:cardwell@mcks.com.au)**