

Parliamentary Library Lecture

PUZZLES OF A PRIME MINISTER ALFRED DEAKIN REVEALED

Presented by David Headon

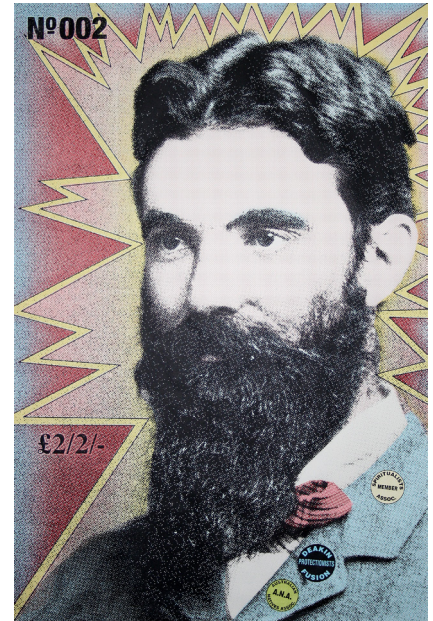
Monday 14 October 2019

Time 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Parliament House, Main Committee Room

When summing up the career of Australia's second Prime Minister, Australian novelist and social commentator, Vance Palmer, concluded that Alfred Deakin was 'the ideal Australian statesman'.

It was a description at odds with the hostile labels used by some of Deakin's more prominent political opponents. Yet neither opinion does him justice. Deakin was different. He lived an extraordinary life that often transcended politics, the machinations of political colleagues and, on occasion, even his family.



Artwork: Alison Alder

He nurtured matters of the spirit and he always wanted to be a writer, a lone creative writer. In the midst of his ground-breaking (second) stint as Prime Minister (1905-8), he considered leaving politics altogether. With Deakin, widely regarded today as one of Australia's most significant Prime Ministers, intriguing contradictions abound.

David Headon is a cultural consultant and historian. Formerly Director of the Centre for Australian Cultural Studies, Cultural Adviser to the National Capital Authority and History and Heritage Adviser for the Centenary of Canberra, he is now a Foundation Fellow at the Australian Studies Institute (ANU), a Parliamentary Library Associate and the Canberra Raiders club historian.

The First Eight Project is a collaborative project between the Australian Parliamentary Library, Australian Studies Institute (ANU), National Archives of Australia, National Museum of Australia, and Victorian Parliamentary Library.



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