

## CONGRATULATIONS, MICHAEL ORGAN

Since our previous issue, one of our members has been elected to the Federal House of Representatives for the local Wollongong seat of Cunningham. I am sure that all members of the Illawarra Historical Society will join in congratulating Michael on his success.

Since Joining the Illawarra Historical Society in 1984, Michael has made an enormous contribution to local history. At that time he was working on A History of the Family of ELIAS ORGAN in conjunction with Robert Hardy, which was the first indication of Michael's ability as a researcher.

At first in partnership with his good friend, the late Peter Doyle, and later on his own, trading under the name of Illawarra Publications, Michael then produced a number of edited reprints of important contributions to the early history of Illawarra:

- The Reminiscences of Illawarra, by Alexander Stewart. (1987)
- The Illawarra Diary of Lady Jane Franklin, May 1839, (1988)
- Old Pioneer's Reminiscences of Illawarra, (1989)

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His major work, Illawarra and South Coast Aborigines 1770-1850, published through the University of Wollongong in 1990, filled a huge gap in our knowledge of the first Australians. This book will continue to be an important reference work in Aboriginal Studies for years to come. It also provides important insights into the early years of white settlement in Illawarra, such as the visit by a military unit to Five Islands in 1816, which disclosed the presence of David Allan's stockman.

Michael assisted in the final editing of Edgar Beale's Backhouse and Walker, Illawarra and Shoalhaven 1836 when it was published in 1991 after Edgar's death.

Michael was also the prime mover in the publication of a reprint of Arthur Cousins' The Garden of New South Wales, published by the Society in 1994 and wrote with Carol Speechley the chapter 'Illawarra Aborigines' for A History of Wollongong, first published by The University of Wollongong Press in 1997.

Michael has served a number of terms on the Board of Management of the Society, was largely responsible for the Society's move to Incorporation, and was our representative on the City Council's Heritage Advisory Committee for several years.

During these years Michael has advanced his powers as a public speaker and shown that he is a highly skilled and energetic researcher. We trust that these attributes will serve him well in his new sphere.