was to weaken simultaneously both the remnants of an organised working class and the agencies of the state which helped sustain it. In the process a new set of relationships would be established in which neo-liberal principles would deliver infinitely flexible and disposable labour to a market society with minimalist government.

This paper charts some theoretical and public policy mile posts on the road to Webb Dock, from the early resistance to the post-war Keynesian-social democratic settlement in works like Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom*, through the economic counter-revolution of the 1970s to the *Workplace Relations Act* of 1996 and the subsequent ambush of organised labour on the Australian waterfront in 1997-98. The paper argues that this process involved much more than an attempt to displace the Maritime Union of Australia from the waterfront. Ultimately it was an attempt to displace the tattered doctrine of government by the people with rule by the market. It suggests, moreover, that the ambitions which drove that strategy have not been deterred by the popular resistance encountered on the docks in 1998.