

PREFACE

The first volume of an annual series marks a significant step in the history of the Australasian Victorian Studies Association. Since its inception in the early 1970s, the Association has published papers by its members in the form of unrefereed conference proceedings, but this volume heralds a new era of peer-reviewed publication. As well as recognising the scholarly excellence and changing professional needs of AVSA members, the upgraded *Annual* is also a sign of growing interest in Victorian studies in this part of the world, particularly as formalist literary approaches increasingly intermingle with contextual, cultural and political methodologies. Initially, the *Annual* will publish papers related to the conference themes, but it is expected that offerings will eventually be unrestricted, either by topic or membership.

I wish to thank all who have assisted with the new venture, particularly the editors, without whom the project would not exist, and members of the Advisory Board who have generously provided their time and expertise. The Association looks forward to a sustained and challenging series of publications.

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