

*We Built This Country* is a broad-brush look at builders' labourers and their unions since the convict era.

'It'll have to be an unofficial history because no two officials would agree about anything.'

The late John Cummins, Victorian BLF secretary

Builders' labourers build this country socially and culturally as well as with concrete. McQueen pictures them as 'improvising nomads' who contributed to the Australian legend. We follow the membership as it shifts between 'Weird Mobs' of Irish and Italians.

Led by Norm Gallagher and Jack Munday, the BLF became the most controversial union to erupt out of the rebellious Sixties. Builders' labourers rocked Australian cities with green bans and worker control.

Their struggles are retold by digging into campaigns from each State. The stories are pitched against the demands of Messrs Construction Capital. The experiences of the builders' labourers thus open a window into the making of the Australian working class.

*We Built This Country* is a companion to *Framework of Flesh, Builders' Labourers Battle for Health & Safety* (Ginninderra Press, 2009).

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**BUILDERS' LABOURERS  
AND THEIR UNIONS**

**Humphrey McQueen**