



## **CEW Bean Prize Citation - 2013**

**Mr Eric Endacott**

**‘Inventing to Win the War: Amateur Inventors and the Australian Home Front, 1914-1918’**

**Honours, Deakin University**

In the immediate aftermath of the Great War, John Treloar, a founding father of the Australian War Memorial, called for an exhibition of inventions. Both he and CEW Bean believed that Australians had contributed ‘some of the most brilliant inventions ever made’ and that these may well have hastened the end of the conflict. The exhibition never took place and an acknowledgement of the role played by amateur inventors on the home front and the vital aid they offered the First AIF is long overdue. Eric Endocott’s thesis is just such an acknowledgement.

Eric Endacott alerts us to the enormous innovation and creative energy shown by Australian inventors. He explores their diverse motivations in fielding their many and varied suggestions to government; examines the way they grappled with the realities of modern warfare and suggests that the boundaries between the home front and the battlefield were much more porous than many previous historians have thought. Inventors strove to meet the battlefield challenges which they knew the First A.I.F. was facing. He traces what he calls ‘the development of an Australian total war mentality’, a willingness to wage war on entire societies at odds with a military establishment raised in older, more limited and more ‘gentlemanly’ conventions of warfare. His thesis is extensively researched, compellingly argued and shows an originality and insight more common in a postgraduate thesis than an undergraduate dissertation. The work is a pleasure to read, and is expressed with the same flair and imagination shown by many of his subjects. Mr Endacott's work reminds us that the home front played a critical role in the prosecution of the war and that there was a concerted attempt to escape Australia’s overwhelming technological reliance on Great Britain. Increasingly, modern warfare is a matter of technological innovation and adaptation. Understanding this innovation and how it occurs will be of ongoing importance to Army in the future. Eric Endacott has made a path-breaking contribution to this field.