

THE FINAL CHAPTER:

**PURPOSE, ENDURANCE, AND
LEGACY 1961-1966 AND BEYOND**

KEYNOTE TO BE DELIVERED BY TBD

When

23 November (9:00am - 5:00pm) &
24 November (9:00am - 5:00pm) 2023

Location

The Library, Old Quad,
The University of Melbourne

Cost

Day 1 - \$125.00 | Day 2 - \$125.00
Day 1 & 2 - \$200.00 | Members - Free

Tickets

www.robertmenziesinstitute.org.au/events
or contact christina@robertmenziesinstitute.org.au



OVERVIEW

The period from 1961–66 was the final phase of the Menzies era, yet in some respects it was the most remarkable. After a near defeat at the 1961 election, Menzies held a razor thin majority and many assumed that he would ride off into the political sunset. However, if anything the near miss reinvigorated him, spurring a new wave of policy innovation in the introduction of State Aid for independent schools, major investments in science education and the space race, and laying the groundwork for the decimal currency. On the geopolitical front, it was a time of heightened danger in which a full-scale war with Indonesia loomed as a very real possibility, prompting a major overhaul of the Australian Defence Force and a controversial commitment to Vietnam.

As an unprecedented term in office reached its sixteenth year, it was also a time when Menzies's long-term policy investments were starting to bear fruit. Homeownership and university enrolments were ballooning, while Australian exports expanded and diversified – in the process a new and remarkably modern Australia was emerging. When Menzies finally retired of his own choosing in January 1966, the full effects of his legacy were still playing out. It is only now, with the benefit of nearly 60 years of perspective, that we can appreciate their magnitude.

PAPERS TO BE PRESENTED

SATURDAY 23 November

David Lee, Menzies and the Dual Economy, 1961–66
Selwyn Cornish, RG Menzies and the Introduction of Decimal Currency

Jim Walter, Robert Menzies and Allen Brown: The odd couple?

John Hawkins, Menzies and Vernon

Nicholas Brown, 'A risky enterprise': Menzies, Sir John Crawford and the Vernon Committee

Anne Henderson, The Menzies Government, B A Santamaria and the Beginning of State Aid

Jennifer Clark, Science and Science Education

Michael de Percy, From the bottom of the sea to the moon: Menzies and Australia's communications golden age

James Waghorne & Gwilym Croucher, University unlimited: Commonwealth Scholarships in Australian universities, 1951–1974

Lyndon Megarrity, Menzies and Liberal Education



SUNDAY 24 NOVEMBER

James Curran, Menzies and the Great Republic: Divergence and Convergence 1961–66 and Beyond

Lucas McLennan, Australian anti-Communist organisations in the Vietnam War debate

Andrew Carr & Peter Dean, The ADF Menzies Built

Tom Lewis, The Menzies defence legacy: wise, brave, and enduring

Damien Freeman & Dean Smith, Recommending an Appointment to the Sovereign

Will Stoltz, Managed Decolonisation

Sean Jacobs, Relaxed and Comfortable: Menzies and the fall of Empire (1961–66)

David Furse-Roberts, Homes Material, Homes Human and Homes Spiritual: The Menzies Government and Housing Policy

Christopher Beer, The frontier of property-owning democracy: Housing, the reform of Australian liberal urbanism, and electoral politics in Western Sydney, 1961–1966

Josh Woodward, 'A cure for prejudice': Robert Menzies, Travel and Nationalism in the 1960s

Frank Bongiorno, 'one of the world's masterpieces'? Australian reaction to Menzies's retirement, January 1966

Charles Richardson, Menzies's Philosophical Legacy to his party

Zachary Gorman, Closing Remarks