

ACI Media Release – 1 February 2023
YCW Centenary History Project 1925-2025

To mark the forthcoming centenary of the foundation of the the Young Christian Workers (YCW) movement in Belgium, the Australian Cardijn Institute is launching a project to record and publish a history of the movement in Australia and other countries of the Oceania region.

Leading the project will be Latrobe University academic, Anthony O'Donnell, Professor Katharine Massam of Pilgrim College and the University of Divinity and Dr Stefan Gigacz, honorary researcher at Yarra Theological Union and the University of Divinity.

“Thirteen years after Joseph Cardijn and his collaborators launched their first experimental study circles with teenage girl needleworkers in the Brussels suburb of Laeken, the Young Christian Worker Movement was founded formally in 1925,” the project leaders write.

“It spread quickly across the globe. The method of ‘see-judge-act’ enabled a lay apostolate that saw faith as inextricably and powerfully connected to the whole of life. By 1966 the outward and public focus of YCW formation involved 4 million young people in 100 countries with a dozen allied movements, each committed to transforming the social context through shared reflection.

“The method impacted 10 of the 16 major documents of the Second Vatican Council and resourced ‘liberation theologies’ globally, not least through countless ‘mundane’ actions in the daily lives of members,” they say.

The aim of the project is to workshop and publish an edited collection of academic contributions on the YCW in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific.

Topics to be covered include the foundation stories of the YCW / National Catholic Girls Movement in different regions, contextual studies by decade, sporting competitions, migration initiatives, colonial and post-colonial realities, biographies, trajectories of members after the movement, co-operatives, credit unions and housing initiatives, changes in the theological climate, wccounts of major actions – (e.g. Springbok tour, Adelaide’s freeway campaign, Walton’s campaign, Fitzroy Legal Service, apprentices).

“We are interested to hear from writers across the academic disciplines to explore the variety of the YCW movement across time and the in diverse locations of Oceania in chapters of 4,000 – 7,000 words,” the project leaders say.





CALL FOR PAPERS
YCW CENTENARY 2025

Perspectives from Oceania

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Call for Contributors

The YCW Centenary 2025 Perspectives from Oceania

Thirteen years after Joseph Cardijn and his collaborators launched their first experimental study circles with teenage girl needleworkers in the Brussels suburb of Laeken, the Young Christian Worker Movement was founded formally in 1925. It spread quickly across the globe. The method of 'see-judge-act' enabled a lay apostolate that saw faith as inextricably and powerfully connected to the whole of life. By 1966 the outward and public focus of YCW formation involved 4 million young people in 100 countries with a dozen allied movements, each committed to transforming the social context through shared reflection. The method impacted 10 of the 16 major documents of the Second Vatican Council and resourced 'liberation theologies' globally, not least through countless 'mundane' actions in the daily lives of members.

To mark the centenary of the foundation of the YCW, we aim to workshop and publish an edited collection of academic contributions on the YCW in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. We are interested to hear from writers across the academic disciplines (including, but not limited to business and labour history, education, gender studies, history, law, literature, sociology, theology and religious studies) to explore the variety of the YCW movement across time and the in diverse locations of Oceania in chapters of 4,000 – 7,000 words.

Topics to be explored include but, again, are not limited to:

Foundation stories of the YCW / NCGM in different regions

Contextual studies by decade and era: e.g. post-Second World War, into the 1960s, post Vatican II, through Vietnam War, into the 1980s

Sporting competitions

Migration initiatives

Colonial and post-colonial realities

Biographies

Trajectories of members after the movement

Co-operatives, credit unions and housing initiatives

Changes in the theological climate

Accounts of major actions – (e.g. Springbok tour, Adelaide's freeway campaign, Walton's campaign, Fitzroy Legal Service, apprentices)

YCW Extension Workers

YCW Chaplains

Formation programmes and conceptions of leadership

Transnational collaborations

For an overview of original sources, biographical material and existing studies, please see:

Joseph Cardijn Digital Library: <https://www.josephcardijn.com>

History of the Cardijn Movements in Australia: <http://history.australiancardijninstitute.org/>

Trove Timeline Cardijn Movements in the Media: <https://timeline.austtaliancardijninstitute.org/>

Please send a short abstract of up to 250 words and a biographical statement of up to 100 words to Anthony O'Donnell odonnellanthony21@gmail.com by 15 May 2023.

Acceptance will be advised by 31 May 2023.

Presentation at a hybrid workshop 27 October 2023

Revision of manuscripts for publication by 31 March 2024.

About the project team

Anthony O'Donnell is an adjunct senior lecturer in the School of Law, La Trobe University. He researches and publishes in labour law, labour history and social policy. His most recent books are a biography of Moss Cass and a history of Australian unemployment policy. He was a member of TYCS in the 1980s.

Stefan Gigacz is an honorary post-doctoral researcher with Yarra Theological Union within the University of Divinity and secretary of the Australian Cardijn Institute. Previously, he worked for the YCW in Australia and internationally. His doctorate, and forthcoming book, *The Leaven in the Council* identifies the key role of Joseph Cardijn at the Second Vatican Council.

Katharine Massam is professor of history at Pilgrim Theological College within the University of Divinity. She has published extensively on the history of Catholicism in Australia, most recently *A Bridge Between: Spanish Benedictine Missionary Women in Australia*, with a particular interest in the spirituality of work.. She is a member of the board of the Australian Cardijn Institute.