



ROWAN CAHILL: HISTORY TEACHER. WRITER.

Longtime local Rowan Cahill has worked over 5 decades as a teacher, freelance writer, agricultural labourer, and for the trade union movement as a journalist, historian, and rank and file activist. Currently an Honorary Fellow with the Faculty of Law, Humanities & the Arts, Wollongong University (NSW), he teaches on its Moss Vale campus. His most recent book is *Radical Sydney* (co-authored with Terry Irving) and blogs with Irving at 'Radical Sydney/ Radical History'. Visit <http://radicalsydney.blogspot.com.au>

ROWAN'S FOUR WORDS OF MEANING:

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1854)

"I first read H. D. Thoreau (1817-1862) in the mid-1960s when studying American history. Walden demonstrated how the close identification with a geographical location and space (Walden Pond) could lead to deep thinking about life, society, politics, and morality; his essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" (1849) helped shape my politics."

"Resist much, obey little." - Walt Whitman, *To the States* (1860)

"I have been reading American poet Walt Whitman (1819-1892) since I was 16. This line, italicised in the original, is in a small poem concerning the conditions under which liberty might perish in a democracy when the interests of the State take precedence."

"I am a pessimist because of intelligence but an optimist because of will."

- Gramsci, *Letter from Prison* (19 December 1929)

*"The line by Italian Marxist political philosopher and activist Antoni Gramsci (1891-1937) is from one of his letters. His most famous work, *Prison Notebooks*, was published posthumously and written while imprisoned by Mussolini's Fascist regime. Gramsci knew a thing or two about maintaining hope in the face of overwhelming odds."*

"Who built the seven gates of Thebes?" - Bertolt Brecht, *A Worker Reads History* (1936).

"The rhetorical question posed by German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) begins his poem about 'history', challenging the reader to recognise the huge masses of unheralded ordinary people who actually make society, history, and the 'great events', as distinct from the famous personalities who are traditionally given credit. Brecht's poem helped shape my 'bottom up' approach to the researching, writing, and teaching of history."



Ward Lane Art precinct would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land: the Gundungurra people, their nation and their Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their continuing cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land of mittagong, which continues to be important to the Gundungurra people living today. We acknowledge and pay respects the contribution they make to the life of this town, Mittagong, and to the wider Southern Highlands region.

WARD LANE ART PRECINCT

@wardlaneart



facebook.com/wardlaneart/



Ward Lane Art Precinct's Four Words Project is an outdoor public street art experience for the Mittagong community. Proudly supported by

