The Social Justice and Social Change Research Centre
and the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy
invite you to attend a

PUBLIC SEMINAR
featuring

Professor Tim Rowse

The ‘Reconciliation Barometer’: what market research can tell us about the politics of social justice

Tuesday 26th May
1 – 3 PM
Bankstown Campus Building 23 Room 40

Afternoon tea will be provided

RSVP: sjsc@uws.edu.au

Tim Rowse is a Professorial Fellow in the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy, University of Western Sydney (Bankstown). Since the 1980s his main research interest has been the history and politics of Australia’s relationship with Indigenous Australians. His most recent book (with Murray Goot) is *Divided Nation? Indigenous Affairs and the Imagined Public* (Melbourne University Publishing 2007). In that book Goot and Rowse examined the use of public opinion and market research studies in the national political processes of Indigenous affairs – in particular the 1967 referendum, the national land rights debate in the 1980s, the native title debate in the early 1990s and the campaign for ‘Reconciliation’ in the period 1991-2000.

The ‘Reconciliation Barometer’
In February 2009, Reconciliation Australia released the results of a public opinion and public awareness study about Australians’ views on ‘reconciliation’. The study – titled Reconciliation Barometer - used two samples: a national sample and an Indigenous sample, thus making it possible, for the first time, to know ‘Indigenous public opinion’ and to compare it with ‘Australian public opinion’. The Reconciliation Barometer is interesting not only for its results but also for its method. The questions asked do not simply capture existing opinion, they implicitly advocate an understanding of what ‘reconciliation’ is. This paper will therefore not only report some of the findings of the study but also raise questions about the understanding of reconciliation that Reconciliation Australia is promoting by constructing its ‘Reconciliation Barometer’. The paper will offer some tentative conclusions and questions for discussion.