

FAHS Newsletter

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From the President

Greetings to you all.

Many of you will be concerned about the current very low status of history teaching in Australian primary and lower secondary schools. This issue has become one of major importance to those community and professional organisations across the nation with history as their major focus. Over the past few years, the Federation has responded to opportunities provided by the Federal Government to comment on matters connected with the teaching of history in Australian schools. However, little progress has been made. Recently the Prime Minister added his voice to the growing tide of dissent, particularly indicating his disappointment with the lack of attention being paid to the teaching of Australian history. The Federation wrote to the Prime Minister applauding his call for the teaching of history. At its recent teleconference the Federation agreed to approach the Federal Minister for Education directly to inform her of the concerns being expressed by its member bodies and within its wider constituency. We shall also submit for her consideration the Federation's agreed position on what it considers needs to be done to remedy the situation. These views are as follow:

1. There is a need for a clearer focus on history as a valuable part of lifelong learning which will allow all students to appreciate more fully their heritage and their environment, History should therefore be identified as a field of study early in the school curriculum and should take a central place, in all Australian schools, Year 1 to Year 10
2. There is a need for a clearer focus on the relationship between school history and Australia's heritage. The history curriculum for Years 1 -10 should provide students with a basic understanding of Australian history as well as developing the appropriate historical skills.
3. At all levels, history should be taught by teachers trained in history and historical method. In primary schools, the best learning occurs when qualified and/or enthusiastic teachers develop a school-based specialism in the teaching and learning of history within an integrated curriculum framework. In the secondary school SOSE framework, unless school history is clearly identified and taught by knowledgeable specialist teachers, the unique historical attributes are rarely fully developed in school students.

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4. In order to encourage excellence in history teaching, State and Commonwealth governments should support more effective, locally delivered, sustained and affordable professional development specifically aimed at history teachers. Incentives should be given for professional associations and local historical societies to assist with the provision of professional development.

5. That State and Commonwealth Governments should continue to implement the recommendations of the National Inquiry into School History, 2000 and support for the National Centre for History Education be continued and enhanced.

I will be seeking a meeting with the Minister in the near future.

Helen Henderson
PRESIDENT

Reports from States and Territories

Royal Australian Historical Society

The Annual General Meeting re-elected three retiring councillors for a term of three years and the Council coopted Felicity Barry of the NSW Heritage Office to fill the vacant position on Council for 2006-7. Ian Jack was re-elected President, Anne-Maree Whitaker Senior Vice-President and Alan Ventress Vice-President. Following the resignation of the Secretary to the Council, Tessa Milne, the position was redefined as Administrative Officer and has been filled by Leann Richards. The office is now back to its full complement of five people, all female as it happens, and happy productivity has resumed.

Concern has been expressed about the costs of auditing the annual accounts. In common, we understand, with other societies coming under the purview of the Companies Act, our audit for 2005 had to be conducted under the new international accounting standards. This resulted in a bill from the auditors 50% greater than in recent years. The Society is actively pursuing avenues to limit this unreasonable amount in the future

A successful meeting was held recently, at the Sydney Mechanics' Institute rooms, to discuss the history of Schools of Arts and we anticipate that this association will be renewed next year.

Evening lectures, either by the RAHS alone or in conjunction with the Australian Society for Engineering and Technology, continue to be well attended. Saturday lunchtime talks held over food are also well patronized.

Royal Western Australian Historical Society

The Council has adopted a five Year Operational Plan 2006-2010, and a Property sub committee has been appointed to examine management of the Society's current property and future building requirements

The Society was opened to the public for a fundraising Second hand Book sale, held in April, which raised \$9,000 for the Society. An Open Day was also held in May on International Museum's Day for the community to view the Museum's new Lotterywest funded Exhibition showcases and contents.

Volunteers were invited to Morning Tea to recognise their work during WA Volunteers Week in May.

Lectures have included *Rica Erickson's History of the RWAHS: Selections* read by Mr Jack Honniball, *The Mystical, Magical 80 Mile Beach* by Dr Nan Broad, *Architecture and Education: the history behind the Guildford Grammar School Chapel 1913* by Prof David Dolan and Ms Leigh O'Brien, and *Islands of Western Australia: Changing human use over time* by Dr Ian Abbott.

A tour 'Behind the scenes at the JS Battye Library of WA History' was held in March.

Canberra & District Historical Society

Recently, the CDHS Council was involved in *Canberra 100*: the launch of a proposed series of celebrations marking the centenaries of milestones associated with the 'birth of Canberra'. These events include the selection of the site of Canberra, the design by Walter Burley Griffin, and the naming as 'Canberra' on 12 March 1913. At the launch, it was announced that CDHS would be involved in the writing of the '*Canberra Story*' a history of Canberra.

The Society is delighted to report that it has received a small "one-off" grant from the DEH Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (*GVEHO*). These grants support administrative funds, which ACT Heritage Grants no longer do

Special Events and Presentations

On the 12th March, Professor Ken Taylor delivered the annual Canberra Day Oration, to an audience of almost 140 people, at the National Library of Australia. His topic was “*Utopian Visions, Civics and Town Planning - Canberra: City in the Landscape*”

Lectures

February 14 – *Michelago and the Monaro in the '30s and '40s* – Marie Coleman

March 12 – Canberra Day Oration

April 11– *Australian Women's Archive Project* – Anne Buttsworth

May 9– *The Woden Valley Youth Choir*- Don Whitbread

June – *The Reverence Pierce Galliard Smith*- John Cope

Publications this quarter have included: Newsletters Feb/March, April/May, June/July 2006

Lobbying

CDHS has noted the final report on the *Conservation of Historic Places*, in April, by the Productivity Commission. It has expressed concern about the move of the annual Heritage Festival from April to November and the cut from 10 to 2 days length CDHS has also had discussions with ACT government, after the *Canberra 100* launch, regarding future accommodation in a planned ‘Griffin Centre’ a history and heritage hub

Recently, the CDHS Council expressed its concern about planned landscaping changes outside the National Library of Australia which it regarded as being contrary to the Griffin Plan. Letters were sent to the head of National Capital Authority, the head of Heritage Division, the Federal Department of the Environment and Heritage, and Senator Ian Campbell, Minister for the Environment and Heritage. CDHS is pleased to announce that these proposed landscape changes have now been dropped and it would like to think that its lobbying contributed to this outcome.

Royal Historical Society of Queensland

The first event for this period was the presentation evening held when Helen Henderson visited to present fellowships of FAHS to Dr Lorna McDonald OAM and to Dr Ruth Kerr OAM for John Kerr awarded to him before his untimely death. Certificates for fifty years membership of the Society were presented

to four members. This was a very successful function.

A successful rare book auction was held in April. The 150 lots included books of general interest as well as Australian publications. All were donated from various sources and from the collection of the recently closed Queensland Post Office Museum. The money raised will be used to maintain the Society's library and to conserve important books.

The lectures in the Wednesday daytime series were “*Katharina Benfer*” – *early German settler at Mt Cotton*” by Jasmine Sommer in March; “*Rockhampton 1875 and the labour ship Flora*” by Carol Gistitin in April; “*Queensland Masonic Halls*” by Wayne Budgen in May. In the Thursday evening series, now held at the earlier time of 6pm, (and attracting very good attendances so far) the following lectures were presented: “*Nineteenth Century St Lucia*” by Peter Brown in March; “*Robert Cribb of Brisbane – his many-faceted life*” by Beth Johnson; “*Dr William Hobbs and his folly*” by John Mackenzie-Smith in May. The last was a special event because John Mackenzie-Smith was presented with an Award *Duine Urramach (D Urr)*, Scots Gaelic for “Honoured Person” for his contribution to the writing of the history of Scots in Queensland. The Society was chosen by the Celtic Council of Australia (Queensland Division) for the presentation function partly because he had delivered many papers to RHSQ on his Scottish research.

History Council of South Australia

A forum on history issues was conducted by HCSA at the History Conference in May. Feedback on this will be received at the coming HCSA exec meeting.

A major speaker event on immigration policy is planned for 25th July at the State Library.

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

This year we introduced Saturday morning excursions once a month during the dry. We have been getting a good turnout. The event is also well attended by tourists.

In April, the Museum Curator, Dr Mickey Dewar led a tour of the Fannie Bay Gaol which has been closed since the late 1970s.

In May, we visited the Taminin Library, Humpty Doo which is in the Darwin rural area. We were shown around the library and the Litchfield collection. This collection is named after Fred Litchfield, an early explorer and one of the founders of Escape Cliffs - the 4th attempt

at establishing a permanent settlement in the Territory)

Our four day camping trip at the end of July has been organised and will be led by Wendy Carter, a dynamo of the Kununurra Historical Society. The trip will centre on the Timber Creek and Kununurra region. The Society is looking forward to meeting up again with members of the Kununurra and Wyndham Societies.

David Carment's book *Northern Australia Capital* is a favourite with Darwin visitors, so another 200 have been reprinted to take advantage of the tourist season. Also we are on our 3rd reprint of *Southport* by Marg Duminiski. Southport is located in Darwin's rural area and was an early gold mining town.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The exhibition space is again being used to mount exhibitions drawing on the Society's collection and curated by the executive officer and volunteers. The current exhibition is on military enlistment.

Plans are being laid for a conference in November focusing on '1856', using the slogan '1856-Victoria on the Move'; a nice play on a recent slogan used on car number plates. The conference will include the launch of the next issue of the *Journal* which focuses on 'responsible government' and which has been funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The '1856' theme includes not only responsible government but also the Eight Hour Day movement, and significant institutional developments such as the opening of the University of Melbourne, the Women's Hospital and the Public Library.

The usual monthly lecture series have been better attended so far. Speakers: Peter Love on the Eight Hour Day; Janet McCalman on the fascinating project in which she is engaged with epidemiologists using birth weights and

associated data from Women's Hospital records and Peter Yule on writing the biography of Ian Potter. A few lunchtime lectures are planned and also a special series at the Royal Society focusing on historical geography.

The visit of the Duyfken is also being marked by a lecture and visit.

Tasmanian Historical Research Association

The June 2006 edition of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association's *Papers and Proceedings* comprises papers from the biennial local history conference held in Burnie and hosted by the Burnie Historical Society. Planning has already begun for the publication of papers from the next local history conference to be held in Richmond under the auspices of the Coal River Valley Historical Society. Since the last meeting of the Federation, THRA has published Margaret Glover and Alf MacLochlainn (eds) *Letters of an Irish Patriot: William Paul Dowling in Tasmania*. Thanks to a generous donation by benefactor Lindsay Whitham, we have ready for publication an index to volumes 41-50 of *Papers and Proceedings*. We have also agreed to another print run of Lindsay Whitham's very popular publication *Railways, Mines, Pubs and People*. The newsletter, informing members of our activities, is also regularly published.

In February, a postgraduate student at the University of Tasmania, Jo Richardson, presented a paper based on her doctoral research, an annotated edition of the Tasmanian journals of Mary Morton Allport. In March, public historian and THRA Committee member, Ian Terry, presented a paper: "*The Transformation of A Wilderness*": Tarraleah' – based on a recent commission. In April, Dr Nic Haygarth spoke about '*Wilderness Photographers*'. In May, Dr Andrew Richardson presented a paper based on his doctorate, '*Repatriation in Tasmania after World War 1*'.

News Items of Interest

From the Kimberley

Catherine Clement may have worked in mapping for 11 years but as a mature-age university student in the mid-1970's she had no idea of the path that lay ahead. "I went to university to do something interesting and just drifted into history", she said. The subject still holds Dr Clement's interest thirty years on and the doctor of history today received a Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the community in preserving the history and heritage of the Kimberley.

Dr Catherine Clement of Mt Lawley, Western Australia, works as a history consultant and sees the award as recognition of the value of historical research rather than a personal honour.

Her work centres on the people and places of the Kimberley, ranging from 17th century visitors to contemporary history. "History gives people a better understanding of the past and can lead to better

decisions in the future,” she said. “Personally it provides a challenge and an interest that never runs out.””

Extract from an article by Christiana Jones, *The West Australian Monday 12 June 2006 p 8.*

From the South Coast of New South Wales

The Milton Ulladulla Historical Society on the south coast of New South Wales has recently opened the oldest house in Ulladulla as a tourist attraction. They have taken an innovative approach leasing the building for the purpose of the operation there of a tea house entitled, Something’s Brewing. Two internationally experienced tourist operators, Joseph and Georgia, have leased the building and have received some government funding to support the start-up. They provide tea tasting and sell tea and coffee accessories. They offer more than 41 varieties of tea and eight coffees.

The building built in the 1850s was restored by the Shoalhaven Shire Council and the Milton Ulladulla Historical Society and is located at 275 Green Street, opposite the shopping centre. It is an original worker’s cottage with turpentine stumps, blackbutt slab walls and iron roof. Historical photos and information boards on the Milton Ulladulla area are presented in the building together with a furnished bedroom of the period. (See: www.miltonulladullahistoricalsociety.com.au)

Staff changes

Ms Kellie Bennett, who has been the Federation’s Administrative Officer since November 2005, has resigned for personal reasons. Although in the position for only a few months, Ms Bennett has made a sound contribution to the work of the Federation. The Committee extends its best wishes to her and every success in her future career.

Mr Gerard Hogan, who as Public Officer since November 2005 has fulfilled the Federation’s requirements under the ACT Incorporations Act which included including maintaining an office presence in the ACT. With the resignation of Ms Bennett, Mr Hogan indicated that he would be happy to resign if an ACT resident was appointed so that the two positions could be recombined. The Executive agreed with Mr Hogan’s suggestion. The appointment of the new Administrative Officer has made it possible to recombine the two positions and accordingly, Mr Hogan has resigned. Prior to November 2005, Mr Hogan had occupied the combined position of Public Officer and Administrative Officer since 1999. During his seven years with the Federation Mr Hogan has put his public service experience to good effect both in connection with the organisation’s administration and its advocacy work. His sound advice and pleasant manner was much appreciated by the Committee who wish him well in all his future endeavours.

Our new Administrative Officer, **Mr John Davies**, is a resident of the ACT and has agreed to provide the Federation’s office presence in Canberra. Mr Davies is a retired Commonwealth Public Servant who for most of his working career was an Information Technology officer with the Australian Government. He is an Associate of the Australian Librarians Association and has a BA and BSc (Hons) from the University of Tasmania where he worked as a Librarian prior going into the Commonwealth Civil Service. He has a Dip. F. H. S. (Society of Australian Genealogists). He is currently a part-time Library Administrator with the Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra, a position which he has held for three years. As a member of a number of history-related organisations for many years he has demonstrated a long-time interest in history and the historical society movement.

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC. SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

Introduction

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies Inc (Federation) made an initial submission to this Inquiry in 2005 outlining the role of the Federation as the peak organisation for historical societies in Australia.

Following the release of the Productivity Commission's draft report, two members of the Federation’s Council met with the Commissioners in Canberra on 25 January 2006 along with other National Cultural Heritage Forum members for an informal discussion. We appreciated the wide ranging discussion which we hope was mutually beneficial. We would like to make some further points in a supplementary submission.

This was an inquiry which we sought with other members of the cultural heritage community, and see the draft as holding important information about the current heritage conservation processes within Australia. It has however been limited in some of its scope and emphasis and we therefore have raised certain points in this supplementary submission to contribute to a more comprehensive final report. The FAHS rejects the recommendation of voluntary negotiated conservation agreements on the basis of relevant economic analysis and cultural value presented below.

Public and private interest:

The Federation notes the Commission's attention to owners' investment in conservation of their properties, but desires that the Commission focus more attention on the public interest. Whilst the Federation recognises the value that individual owners of heritage listed properties (buildings and sites) place on their heritage properties, and the extent of the commitment and contribution of volunteers to the preservation of cultural heritage in Australia, the need for this refocus is amply supported by a survey quoted by the Productivity Commission itself that there is near universal public support (92%) for valuing heritage as part of our national identity.

We agree that all benefits and costs of heritage listing should be estimated at the time of listing. Also cultural heritage significance assessment should be undertaken for all nominations so that frivolous nominations are not encouraged. Nomination and listing should not be discouraged because like places are already on the heritage register. Registration of similar places in different regions or towns and also groups of properties add to the community heritage value eg. streetscapes.

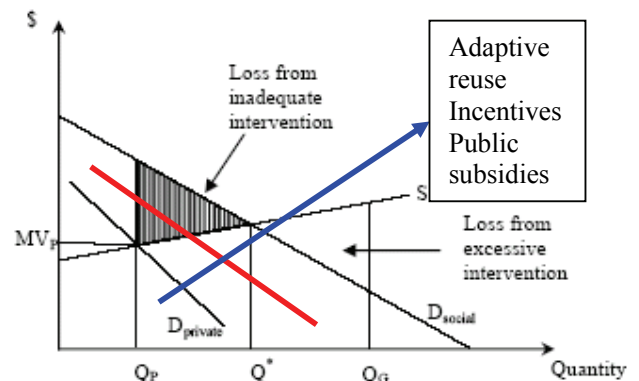
The Productivity Commission report states "Government intervention can be warranted in the presence of market failure (where private benefits or costs of an activity do not fully reflect the social benefits or costs)". There is no model in the report of life cycle cost modelling. The Federation has considered this and developed an economic model to illustrate Adaptive Reuse Incentives Public Subsidies.

In the model where there is no safety net the quantity of heritage will reduce from Q^* to Q_p and the social benefits reduce. The economic model does not adequately present the value of the intergenerational externality that exists. Heritage assets may have a life cycle greater than 100 years and are not renewable. Hence comparison with forests is invalid because

unique heritage assets cannot be replicated. The asset includes memories, feelings, stories and history that are unique and belong to the asset.

In addition the model reflects the willingness to pay at the time of a hypothetical market transaction and does not account for the value over the life cycle of the heritage asset. Conventional professional maintenance and project decisions require the welfare economics to be considered over the life cycle of the asset.

The government needs to provide more incentives for heritage so that the opportunity costs of private ownership are reduced which would push the private willingness to pay (demand) curve to the right and approach a more optimal level of heritage Q^* .



(Ref Fig 6.2 Productivity Commission Draft report)

It is recognised that any subsidies for heritage would have some influence on the market equilibrium for other Government services. Opportunity costs can be significantly reduced from the owner/developers perspective if heritage regulations are relaxed and the adaptive reuse of places encouraged and increased. A good example is the Adelaide Treasury building.

Justifying the Government intervention based on data will always be difficult as the benefits are not easily quantified and the discount rate for an asset with life greater than 100 years needs to be selected (marginal cost of private capital as worst case). The report also acknowledges that intangible benefits are difficult to quantify eg. value of personal experiences, mood, feelings, memories and future vision impacted by interaction with heritage places. The key is that a sensitivity analysis be encouraged for any listing of the range of benefits and costs that may be relevant with the statement of significance which is better than doing nothing. The report recommends that Governments purchase good public heritage which is to be commended. Given past experience this is

unlikely, given budget constraints of government heritage bodies.

Current heritage legislation at national, state and local level provides for the listing and protection of cultural heritage in Australia, without the owner's consent, yet with due objection processes and after consideration of the balance between heritage, social and economic issues. This ensures a balance between the community's overall public benefit and the owner's interests. We therefore do not agree that it is necessary to adopt the Commission's recommendation to Draft Finding 7.2 and other associated Findings.

Breadth of historic heritage places

The Federation notes that the Commission's draft report concentrates more on buildings and houses than on physically created landscapes. Industrial places and mine sites are very significant and valued by the community. Many have been listed on heritage registers. It is important to note that no further mining heritage can be created in Australia as all current mining sites will be rehabilitated under environmental legislation.

Similarly historic heritage includes the patterns from the past seen in city plans, entire suburbs and streetscapes and as well as rural cultural landscapes. The protection of such historic heritage obliges individual properties to be conserved in a way that is sensitive to the integrity of the whole, requiring certain constraints for example on height, shape, colour of any additions.

The emphasis in the Commission's draft report not only concentrates on individual buildings, but appears to have a notion that it is merely the built form that is of heritage significance. Heritage significance criteria clearly demonstrate that other aspects of a place may be why a place is listed beyond its aesthetic or technical design importance, including that it is part of a landscape, but also that it represent key historic events, is typical of a type of place and activity, often no longer in use, its association with key individuals and their achievements, or its cultural or spiritual meaning to a community. Such significance is often held widely in the community but may not be held by any individual owner. However, the owner is custodian of such significance on behalf of a wider public.

Essential associated heritage and information sources

For most people, heritage does not consist of any separation between place, object or story.

The system in Australia is an administrative construct, where heritage places are protected and managed under separate legislation from the heritage that is an essential part of those places. This applies to information, such as documents, maps, photographs, diaries or newspaper records, and oral histories, about any building. Community groups and individuals have association with a structure, or a place has special meaning to them. Such information and meanings are an essential part of the significance of a place. Documents establishing, for example, its historic or technical significance and community association, establish its social significance.

The Federation desires that the Commission refine its report to emphasise the value of historical research work undertaken by historical societies and which provide a foundation for the heritage conservation work in the Australian community. Detailed research of the documentary heritage held by historical societies, libraries and archives by owners on their properties and their environment will enhance and provide legitimacy for the reports and covenants under Heritage and Nature Conservation legislation.

Without the promotion of and the adoption of the role of historical societies, libraries and archives in cultural heritage management of the built environment, the result will be a narrowly defined and described heritage without contextual support.

Recommendations

Accordingly, the Federation seeks that the Commission refine and amend its view on the methods of the conservation of cultural heritage places in Australia. To achieve this, the Federation believes, that in the Commission's report, greater attention should be paid to the leadership role which the Commonwealth heritage legislation provides for the national government in heritage identification and protection in Australia. This will enable the sensitivities and controversies raised in the local government arena to be dissipated.

An opportunity to dissipate heritage controversies such as outlined in the Commission's draft report, is not to restrict what heritage can be listed, but rather to celebrate the public's interest in heritage through greater public education and funding programs promoting heritage preservation locally. The alternative outcome is a narrow vision informed only by private property interest. It should be recognised that overall much of Australia's heritage has been preserved by co-operation

between Governments and individuals based on heritage legislation developed since 1975.

The following key issues illustrate opportunities for significant attention by government and business interests in promoting and valuing Australia's cultural heritage.

- the value that the Australian public places on our cultural heritage;
- the need for commitment by the property industry to heritage protection in line with the public interest;
- the provision of resources to undertake heritage studies, including the vast and unique records which record local history held by. Historical societies and local libraries and in individual memories;
- the amount of income derived in regional Australia from cultural tourism, when the integrity of the natural heritage sites are actually dwindling through property development decisions;
- the economic value of the work of volunteers in historical societies in Australia. Historical societies undertake hundreds of thousands of hours per year of voluntary work promoting our region to Australian and international tourists;
- the cultural value of heritage in Australia, including the types of significance, the types of places – historic, Indigenous and natural and that they are interwoven, and that all places are associated with objects and records of the past of that places, and intangible values that includes story, song, ceremony and other associations and meanings;
- the social capital held in local communities invested in by volunteers at Historical Societies. This role is extremely valuable in uplifting cultural values locally and the health of the community;

Such programs in celebrating our heritage and achievements in protecting and conserving it, would inform and educate the reasons for the current reliance on regulation.

Other positive initiatives that the Federation recommends are related to incentives and publicly funded programs to enhance the protection and conservation of our heritage:

- greater funding for conservation of historical sites and buildings. There should be financial incentives for owners, both private and public, and of heritage buildings to maintain them to high standards.
- funding for a Heritage Care Program across Australia, complementing the Landcare and Bushcare programs, by inputting the historical and heritage context of all the local environmental management and rehabilitation. A Heritage Care program would be an incentive scheme to preserve cultural heritage at the same time that Landcare programs are being undertaken on the land. The Federation urges the Productivity Commission to recommend to the Australian Government the concept of a Heritage Care program to improve heritage conservation and provide assistance to private owners of heritage properties as a result of volunteers' involvement, particularly in rural areas.

The fact that the cultural heritage community sought the Productivity Commission Inquiry points to the high level of expectation of the community for a positive report protecting cultural heritage at its highest levels and broadest sense.

Dr Helen Henderson
President

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