

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC.

**Triennial Strategic Plan
for the years 2022 – 2025**

**Adopted by Council
23 May 2022**

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Executive Summary

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies is the national peak body for Australia's community history and heritage movement. It comprises the peak bodies or other leading groups from each State and Territory, and works towards goals in four Key Result Areas (KRAs), namely:

- Representation and promotion of history and heritage at the national level through advocacy and networking, with particular emphasis on the provision of independent, high-level strategic advice to governments, corporations and the public on matters relevant to history and heritage;
- Promotion of Australia's historical society movement;
- Provision of services and programs to support the work of historical societies and other organisations with similar aims; and
- Organisational sustainability

Particular priorities within each of these Key Result Areas are:

- advocating to government and the wider community of the importance of Australian history and heritage in such policy matters as the National Curriculum, the National Heritage listing process, the management of World Heritage, tourism and protection and promotion of our built and cultural heritage, including Indigenous heritage;
- advocating on behalf of historical societies and the wider community as the need arises for greater national state and local government recognition of and support for:
 - a) greater financial and professional resource distribution for historical research, static and movable heritage management, display and interpretation and for improved history education and teacher training and development etc; and
 - b) legislative amendment to further protect Local, State, National and World Heritage.
- Providing independent, high-level strategic advice to the Australian Government and state governments on history and heritage issues as the need arises.
- raising awareness of and promoting the value of historical societies and other organisations with similar aims within the cultural fabric of Australia by engaging with Commonwealth government ministers, other politicians, public servants and agencies as appropriate;
- maintaining productive collaborative relationships with like-minded organisations (including the National Trust of Australia, International Council on Monuments and Sites Australia, Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums Peak and to governments at all levels, and pursuing joint strategies where appropriate;
- providing specialist advice and publications, including guides on relevant topics;
- keeping members of the historical society movement abreast of developments and issues which have a bearing on history and movable and static heritage

In order to achieve these outcomes, the FAHS will need to increase its funding base to strengthen its management and systems infrastructure. Given the very limited opportunities

available to the organisation to raise general funds, the FAHS has valued the previous federal government grant. This has enabled the Federation to expand its current level of services and support to historical societies and to achieve the results outlined in this Triennial Operational Plan.

1. Background

1.1 Mission statement

To achieve community appreciation and understanding of history and heritage in the federal sphere.

To promote and support the role of historical societies, their collections, publications and achievements throughout Australia.

1.2 Objects of the FAHS

The objects of the Federation are:

- to encourage the study of Australian history, the preservation and publication of historical material and, for those objects, to encourage public access to historical material;
- to promote communication and mutual assistance within the historical society movement;
- to assist the work of constituents;
- to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on Australian history matters throughout Australia;
- to promote the views of constituents and give a national focus to matters of general concern to constituents especially with regard to major issues of historic and cultural heritage.
- To promote the value of history and heritage to tourism.

These objectives cover a wide range of issues, including recognition and support of the importance of Australian history and heritage in history education, the National Curriculum, the National Heritage process and the management of World Heritage.

1.3 Values and guiding principles

The values and guiding principles of the Federation are:

- *Understanding and preserving Australia's unique history and heritage*
 - (a) we recognise and value Australia's unique history and heritage as a vital part of Australian culture and will work to promote and understand these important aspects of our socio-cultural background; and
 - (b) the preservation of our distributed movable and static heritage.
- *Creativity and innovation*
We value creativity and innovation in the study and presentation of Australia's history and heritage and will encourage a range of approaches to ensure an intellectually vibrant and dynamic program.
- *Integrity*
We value honesty, trust, respect and openness and we will act ethically and lawfully in all relationships and dealings.
- *Respect for diverse cultural groups in Australian society*

We respect and support the endeavours of Indigenous and other cultural groups to study, preserve and promote their history and static and moveable heritage. To that end the FAHS supports the Cultural Diversity Statement that is appended. (see Appendix 1).

- *Excellence*
We strive to achieve the best results in all we do. We value professionalism and encourage critical engagement by all with the matters under our consideration.
- *Consultation and co-operation*
We value our delegates, staff, historical societies and other like-minded community history and heritage groups and commit to undertaking consultation and achieving co-operation with them in the development of relevant policies and projects.

1.4. Business history:

The Federation was formed in 1977 to provide a means of interaction between the leading history and heritage groups in the States and Territories, and to advance the work of historical and heritage societies across the nation. Today across Australia, there are approximately 1,000 historical societies with a combined membership of about 100,000 members. Over the years, the Federation has expanded its sphere of influence through actively promoting itself and its services to the historical society movement by engaging in advocacy on historical and heritage issues, including supporting historical societies' history and heritage advocacy, through written submissions to the federal government, participation on advisory bodies and networking with likeminded bodies at the federal and state levels.

2. Business and management personnel details

1.1 Business Name:			
Federation of Australian Historical Societies Inc (FAHS)			
Also known as:	"FAHS"	A.B.N.	89 217 386 291
Addresses:			
Street: Postal:			
GPO Box 1440		CANBERRA ACT 2601	
Ph:		Ph:	
Fax:		Email:	fahs@history.org.au
		Website	www.history.org.au

1.2 Business structure re: ownership, entities and management			
Owners – the constituent members:		Canberra & District Historical Society Inc; Historical Society of the Northern Territory Inc; History Trust of South Australia; Royal Australian Historical Society Inc; The Royal Historical Society of Queensland; Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc; Royal Western Australian Historical Society Inc; Tasmanian Historical Research Association Inc.	
Office Bearers & Council members			
		Ms Christine Yeats	President (RAHS)
		Associate Professor Don Garden	Immediate Past President (RHSV)
		Dr Ruth Kerr	Senior Vice-President (RHSQ)
		Mr Nick Swain	Vice-President (CDHS)
		Mr Nick Drew	Hon. Treasurer (RWAHS-co-opted)
		Dr Helen Henderson	Hon. Secretary (RWAHS)
		Mr Ian Anderson	Delegate (HSNT)
		Ms Margaret Anderson	Delegate (RHSV)
		Ms Esther Davies	Delegate (CDHS)
		Ms Judith Dunn	Delegate (RAHS)
		Ms Caroline Homer	Delegate (THRA)
		Ms Amanda James	Delegate (HistorySA)
		The Hon Robert Nicholson	Delegate (RWAHS)
		Mr Stephen Sheaffe	Delegate (RHSQ)
		Mr Nick Swain	Delegate (CDHS)
		Dr Rosalie Triolo	Delegate (RHSV)
		Mr Paul Dalglish	Public Officer & Administrative Officer
1.3 Service Providers:			
Banker:		ANZ Bank	
Auditor		R. O'Meagher, PO Box 350, Subiaco, WA 6008	

3. Important developments 2018- 2022:

The Federation attended to all the strategies under each of the Key Result Areas in the 2018-2022 Operational Plan with most of the actions associated with those strategies being implemented successfully. The Federation did not have the resources to gather the statistics that are necessary to undertake planned quantitative evaluation measures.

The federal government withdrew its triennial funding (\$80,000 per annum) for operational purposes in 2018 but through the ACT government the Federation was able to obtain annual grants of \$12,000 and \$11,926 for 2019 and 2020 respectively. Since then we have received no further funds to cover operational expenditure.

It was agreed at the 2019 AGM that, given the inability of FAHS to raise sufficient funds to maintain its full level of services to our sector, there would be some winding down of activities. Instead the FAHS would focus more on representation, recognition and support at the federal level. In an unfortunate and unexpected turn of historical events, this was exactly what FAHS was forced to do by the onset of the COVID pandemic at the start of 2020. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of submissions being made by the Federation. Fortunately in 2020 the President was residing in Canberra which meant that he was much closer to where the main meetings having a bearing on the community history and heritage movement take place that he was able to keep up with related federal government developments.

Despite the necessary winding down of services to the community history movement (particularly its outreach services) the Federation has maintained its status as a representative federal peak body through Councillors agreeing take on greater responsibilities than would normally be expected of them. These included upgrading the website, the compilation and publishing of the regular e-Bulletin and the twice yearly Newsletter distributed electronically to historical societies and others across the nation promoting the Federation and providing information on current history and heritage issues, including via the social media. At each of its general meetings and online conferences quarterly reports of the activities of each constituent organisation were presented and issues arising therefrom discussed and where appropriate acted upon.

We could no longer afford to employ our Executive Officer and this has meant the fundraising and specific project aspects of its operations have had to be significantly curtailed. However, it has been possible to employ a part-time Administrative Officer on very much reduced hours per week to provide a central office for the organisation and undertake basic administrative services including filing, mail-outs, and receive and distribute correspondence. The Federation has also been fortunate to have the services *pro bono* of a designer and editor to produce the e-Bulletin and Newsletter.

FAHS financial circumstances remain very tight and to date despite overtures to the federal government and other funding agencies the Federation has been unable to find sustained new sources of income. Our appeal for Supporters has resulted in some subscriptions and donations, and these will help the organisation through the coming year. Beyond that, the future looks grim. In the middle of the year the organisation applied for tax deductible status and if that is eventually awarded it may make it easier for FAHS to attract donations. Funds enabling the Federation to provide positive support for historical societies were derived for several specific projects, for example the *BeConnected* Project and , and we will continue to pursue such grants. Following the Be Connected Manager's resignation this project was carried to its conclusion by President Associate Professor Don Garden.

4. Key Result Areas for 2022-2025

KRA 1: Representation and promotion of history and heritage at the national level through advocacy and networking, with particular emphasis on the provision of independent, high-level strategic advice to governments, corporations and the public on matters relevant to history and heritage. This includes:

- representing historical society interests to and working with politicians from all major parties and with relevant public servants.
- maintaining productive collaborative relationships with other organisations in the sector to work together to advance specific issues of joint concern.
- Promoting to Governments the importance of History and Heritage to Tourism across Australia.

KRA 2: Promotion of Australia's historical society movement This embraces:

- maximising opportunities to promote issues relevant to Australian history and heritage and the historical society movement and its achievements;
- keeping the FAHS constituent organisations (made up of State and Territory peak and other leading bodies) and other historical societies across the nation informed of what the FAHS is doing and achieving; and
- seeking active partnerships to promote the profile of historical societies, and generally being proactive on new and emerging issues.

KRA 3: Provide services and programs to support the work of historical societies and other organisations with similar aims

- consult widely to ensure that these programs meet their needs and are in accordance with best practice; and
- provide opportunities for historical societies to obtain the support of the Federation in dealing with their issues of concern relating to the protection of moveable and static heritage and the promotion of history;
- Provide online training courses/workshops for historical societies.

KRA 4: Raise the necessary funds to enable it to maintain and/or expand its services to historical societies and its role as an effective advocate for history and heritage.

Steps to be taken:

- target the federal government, foundations, philanthropic entities and individuals and in doing so the campaign message will stress the importance of history and heritage to the nation.
- endeavour to obtain professional *pro bono* marketing advice relating to the message and marketing methodologies;
- Obtain the services *pro bono* of a member of Council, or through co-option, who would be willing and able to co-ordinate the marketing campaign.
- Promote the message through the Federation's Newsletter, e-Bulletin, website and on social media

KRA 5: Ensure organisational sustainability

This is to be achieved by:

- ensuring that the Federation's business practices are in accordance with Commonwealth and ACT legislation and the FAHS Constitution;
- achieving income generation from a diversity of sources, including: administration grant, membership fees, project specific grants and sponsorships that ensure there is sufficient funding to enable the organisation to meet its planned objective (refer KRA4); and
- continuous improvement of infrastructure systems and management by reviewing and as required modifying business planning practices, procedures and policies.

5. Evaluation

Given the difficulty of obtaining funding for administrative purposes the Federation's first priority must be maximizing our ability to provide services and advocacy through grants. A quantitative evaluation will not be possible under our current financial situation since we do not have the resources to collect and analyse statistical data. However, it is the intention of the organisation to address each of the KRAs and report on activities undertaken under each of them.