

HISTORY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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President's Letter

14.7. 2006

Dear Colleagues

What is the History Council of SA all about? That question has been raised recently in two contexts: at the last Council meeting on 20 June and at the HCSA Roundtable at the State History Conference on 28 May. This clearly needs some response and I hope to begin here a conversation that we can continue over time, perhaps in these pages, perhaps on our website when it springs into action (soon!). For we are a relatively new organisation and are still finding our place. Indeed, we are still trying to determine whether there is a place for a History Council in South Australia.

There seems to be some misunderstanding among members and the broader historical community: some wonder if we are 'taking over' the role of existing organisations, others are sitting back and watching to see what 'we' are going to do. Let us remember to begin with that the impulse to form a History Council sprang from the long initiative of the History Alliance which many of you contributed to in the past. The decision was made to form a Council which would gain strength *through unity* and be a powerful voice to lobby and advocate for history in this State. Before my time on the Council, a group of dedicated volunteers, led by Peter Price, spent a very long time drawing up a constitution and making sure we were on firm footing.

This is an organisation of volunteers: all on the Executive and the Council give their time willingly and freely in your service. We are all busy people. We have no paid secretaries, public relations arm or lobbyists. We are doing this for you – and we need you to feed to us the issues you want us to take up and *together* we will do so. Obviously we cannot 'take over' any organisation's brief, nor do we have the slightest intention of doing so. The organisations which are our members – corporate members in particular – have considerable resources at their disposal but are often not in a position to take up some of the issues that we as a consolidated, independent body can do.

And I use the term 'we' advisedly. It refers to all of us. There seems to be an expectation that the hard-working Executive will do everything and others will sit back and wait to 'see what happens', whether 'we are delivering'. The Council will not work unless Council members and other volunteers offer to join working parties, to write copy, to help with the website, to undertake the myriad number of jobs we need to do to be effective. Most of all they must bring to the quarterly Council meetings the issues that are important to them and be prepared to work with us to carry them forward. Several Council members have done just that and I thank them for it, but others come to watch, not to ask what they can do for history in this State. I urge you all to become more involved in the exciting work of the Council. Perhaps you would like to be nominated for a position on the Executive and to contribute? Nominations will be called for soon and positions will be decided at the AGM on 31 October.

The state of history teaching

On a more positive note our working party on the state of history teaching, prompted by the PM's Australia Day address, has been given greater urgency by Federal Minister Julie Bishop's announcement that more Australian history should be taught. We welcome this initiative but with some cautions. We agree that history should be a stand-alone subject during the compulsory years (although others may argue that it is best taught in the context of a wider study) but the working party rejects the notion that there can be any one narrative of Australian history, much less one that constitutes us as a particular nation with a narrow imperial national identity. History teachers in our membership (and, of course, we include the History Teachers Association and several university history teachers) are offended too at the notion that the history they teach is ideological and/or political. We have produced a draft working paper, which we will circulate to Council members for comment and a series of draft recommendations which I include below. We would be interested in your comments and thoughts on the matter. We hope to take the final version of the working paper and recommendations to the State Minister of Education, Jane Lomax-Smith, to let her know of our concerns.

Alison Mackinnon



News about our members

Our Treasurer Beth Robertson has received the inaugural Hazel de Berg Award for Excellence in Oral History, presented at the International Oral History Association Conference in Sydney on 15 July. The award recognises members of the Oral History Association of Australia who have made an outstanding contribution to the cause of oral history in Australia over a considerable period of time. Congratulations Beth – this is very well deserved.

Professor Susan Magarey, elected last year as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, has been further honoured for her work as an historian and as a feminist academic. She was awarded an AM, a Member of the Order of Australia, in the recent Queen's Birthday honours. Congratulations Susan.

Please send us more news about members' activities!

British White Australia in Perspective

DON'T FORGET: The third annual HCSA public lecture will be presented by Professor Eric Richards at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 25 July at the SLSA Lecture Theatre on 'British White Australia in Perspective'. We look forward to seeing you at the lecture and for light refreshments and discussion afterwards.



The History Council's website

Progress has continued on developing a website for the History Council. The test pages are nearing completion and it is anticipated that the website will be launched at the HCSA public lecture. When operational, the address will be <www.historycouncilsa.org.au>. The website is intended to be member-driven, so it will become an important means of communication

between the Council and the broader historical community. Features include a readily updated ‘What’s On’ calendar, and links to member organisations and other useful websites. We have appointed a temporary website mistress, but intend to establish this as a vital administrative position for the Council. We are very pleased that the Historical Society of SA will be joining us in this venture.



Invaluable New Resource for Australian History

More than 10 000 articles on 11 000 people who have played a significant role in Australia’s history are now available free online – making a valuable national treasure easily accessible to librarians, teachers, schoolchildren, university students, academics, researchers, genealogists, journalists, speech-writers, diplomats and any one else needing concise, accurate accounts of the lives of important people in Australia’s history.

The *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online*, based in the Research School of Social Sciences at The Australian National University, was recently officially launched by the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, His Excellency Major-General Michael Jeffery AC, CVO, MC.

The Australian Dictionary of Biography is a national, co-operative enterprise in Australian historical scholarship that began in the late 1950s and has been described as ‘arguably the nation’s most substantial and significant publishing venture’. The *ADB Online*, a project which took three years, will publish the text of the printed volumes on the Internet as a database with links to other resources. Its establishment has been made possible by funding from the Australian Research Council, nine Australian universities (including the University of South Australia) and three national cultural institutions. Alison Mackinnon was one of the Chief Investigators on the project.

The General Editor Dr Di Langmore says that the *ADB Online* will unlock an eight-million word treasure: ‘The hardcopy version of the ADB, now up to its 17th volume, has long been an essential and vital resource for anyone studying history in Australia. Now that it’s online, anyone with an interest in Australian history – from school children through to academic historians will be able to search, free, for information on historical figures. The *ADB Online* has a range of search options from a simple text search right through to some very sophisticated structured searches by categories such as occupation, cultural heritage and religious influences. The 10,000 articles range between 500 and 6000 words each and each entry contains pointers to further information. Australian history now really is at everyone’s fingertips’.

To access *ADB Online*, go to <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm>.



State History Conference

The 15th State History Conference was held in Adelaide over the weekend of 26–28 May 2006. The conference was held in Union House at the University of Adelaide. Titled, *In History We Trust*, the conference celebrated the 25th anniversary of the History Trust. Close to 200 delegates attended to hear papers reflecting on history writing over the last few decades, from local, State, national and global perspectives. One popular session was by the Channel 9 *Postcards* team, Keith Conlon and Ron Kandelaars, who challenged us to think about ways of conveying key messages about our history succinctly and simply to a wide audience. The Sunday workshops offered new ways of discovering and presenting history – through archives, GIS technology, audio devices and architectural drawings and records. The History Council’s discussion group pondered the issue of increasing the presence of history teaching in schools.

The 2006 conference was made possible by the financial and in-kind support of sponsors and partners. The History Trust thanks Albox Australia, Heritage Branch (Department of Environment and Heritage), State Records, Disk-Edits and the History Council of South Australia. Future conferences will continue to rely on such support in order to keep fees at an affordable level.

Keynote speaker Marian Quartly inspired the conference organisers to base the 2007 regional get-together, probably in the Barossa Valley, around the concept of modernity and its impact on South Australia’s country life, with a special focus on the 20th century. Watch out for the Call for Papers in the forthcoming issue of *History Matters* and on the History Trust website.

Kate Walsh

HCSA sponsored the morning tea on Saturday and conducted a Roundtable on Council matters on the Sunday – thank you Simon Kelly and Ruth Carter for chairing the Roundtable (ed).



Draft HCSA Recommendations on the Teaching of History

After reviewing the state of history teaching both nationally and in SA, a HCSA working party has drafted these recommendations for comment. We would be interested in your views – please discuss these in your organisations and let us know your opinions via our website (when operational <www.historycouncilsa.org.au>), post or through your delegate.:

Policy Recommendations

A In school settings

- Australian history should be taught as an identifiable course in the compulsory years of secondary education and beyond.
- Teachers of Australian history in secondary schools must be adequately trained and able to implement current pedagogy.
- Before leaving primary school all students should be introduced to notions of history/heritage issues in South Australia.

- Before leaving compulsory education all students should undertake studies related to indigenous people of SA, particularly in relation to the group/s who occupy or have occupied the land on which their school is located.
- Students in South Australia should understand the unique contributions that SA has made to the Australian political process, e.g. to federation, to suffrage, to wider social reform more generally within the broader context of the nation.

B Links with communities and regions

- Resources should be provided to the History Trust to establish community linkages between local historical societies and the schools in local areas.
- Government look to engaging more education officers in educational facilities (museums, State Library, State Records etc.).
- Resources should be provided to local councils (or local councils be encouraged to allocate resources) to support local historical societies in contact with schools.
- Through the History Trust historical societies be encouraged to develop programs through their schools and access funds on competitive application
- That by 2011 – SA’s 175th anniversary of white settlement – a Museum of South Australia be opened – one which the History Trust and related organisations be commissioned now to develop.
- Federal and State government funds be directed to the provision of history curriculum and pedagogy expertise and support via the education systems and SSABSA.
- Federal funds be directed to the universities to develop further expertise in history teaching pedagogy and to apply it in teacher training courses.

C Links with State Strategic Plan

- That SA consider developing distinctive *South Australian perspectives*, those distinctive values linked with progressive political ideals (as demonstrated through Federation, women’s suffrage, early indigenous land rights).
- Such distinctive SA values should be promoted through a range of agencies, including SA Tourism, and linked with activities and places of specific heritage/historical interest

Simon Kelly, Peter Price and Alison Mackinnon (HCSA Working Party on the Teaching of History)



Keeping Census Records: Our Future History

From the Australasian Federation of Family History Organizations, AFFHO (per the Professional Historians Association [SA] Inc.) comes this important reminder

TELL 10 OF YOUR FRIENDS TO TELL 10 OF THEIR FRIENDS TO TICK 'YES' TO Q. 60 ON CENSUS NIGHT 8 AUGUST 2006.

The next Australian census will be conducted on the night of Tuesday 8 August 2006 and will cost in the order of \$300 million. It will contain 61 questions, of which all will be compulsory except the ones on religion and census retention. The retention question (Q60) reads: 'Does each person in this household agree to his/her name and address and other information on this form being kept by the National Archives of Australia and then made publicly available after 99 years?'.

If this question is ignored, it will be treated as a NO. We want this information kept for future historians.

For further information on this issue refer to our last newsletter or to Nick Vine Hall, Chairman, AFFHO Census Working Party <nick@vinehall.com.au>

Reminders

A balancing act: past - present - future

Adelaide Parklands Symposium

University of South Australia

Friday 10 November 2006

Basil Hetzel Building: Mutual Community Theatre H2-02, UniSA City East Campus

The Centre for Settlement Studies in the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design at the University of South Australia, the Hawke Centre at the University of South Australia, and the Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association are co-presenting a symposium on the Adelaide Parklands in November 2006. The public symposium will open a three-day event that will also include Parklands tours on Saturday 11 November and a public lecture and forum on Sunday 12 November. Information may be found on the Hawke Centre website at: <www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au> or contact: Dr Christine Garnaut <christine.garnaut@unisa.edu.au>, p: 8302 0204, f: 8302 0211

Current Executive and Council members

Executive (6 members)

President	Alison Mackinnon, Hawke Research Institute, University of SA < alison.mackinnon@unisa.edu.au > (08) 8302 4370
Vice President	Bernie O'Neil, Professional Historians Association < bernard.oneil@adelaide.edu.au > (08) 8261 0077
Secretary	Annette Mills, State Library of South Australia < mills.annette@slsa.sa.gov.au > (08) 8207 7347
Treasurer	Beth Robertson, Professional Historians Association < beemar@ozemail.com.au > (08) 8278 4045
Members	Nigel Ridgway, Engineers Australia

<Nigel.Ridgway@weirwarman.com> (08) 8346 7731
Karen Agutter, Individual member
<Karen.Agutter@flinders.edu.au> (08) 8201 5553

Council (14 members)

June Edwards	Australian Society of Archivists (SA Branch)
Samantha Farnsworth	State Records of South Australia
Enid Woodley	National Archives of Australia
Alan Graham	National Trust, SA
Kate Walsh	History Trust of South Australia
Simon Kelly	History Teachers Association of South Australia
Greg Slattery*	Rocky River Historic and Arts Society
Kay Merry*	History Department, Flinders University
Peter Adamson	Historical Society of SA
Robert Swarbrick*	Barossa Goldfields Historical Society
Kevin Kaeding*	Heritage Preservation Association
Ruth Carter*	Individual member

* = Co-optees

Forthcoming Executive and Council meetings

Meetings of the History Council are held in the State Library at 5.30 p.m., generally on the first Tuesday of the month (any changes to the dates, venues or times will be advised):

- Executive – August 1
- Council – Tuesday September 5
- AGM – Tuesday 31 October – Ira Raymond Room, Barr Smith Library.

Please remember to recruit new members to the History Council.

And your organisation needs to be a financial member of the HCSA in order to participate in HCSA activities.