

HISTORY COUNCIL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

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Issue no. 8

President's Letter

1.2.2006

Dear Colleagues

Happy New Year and welcome to a year of history-based activities and activism. As we start the year's work history, historians, heritage people and archivists are very much in the media. I refer particularly to the continuing issue of the so-called 'history wars' and debates about the teaching of history raised by the Prime Minister's Australia Day speech. Equally significant is the release of the Productivity Commission's draft report on *Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage places*. Here are opportunities for us to emphasise that history matters as we move towards the SA elections.

History Teaching in the news

The Prime Minister threw down the gauntlet by suggesting that we return to an emphasis on 'Judeo-Christian ethics, the progressive spirit of the Enlightenment and the institutions and values of British political culture', a wider set of influences than we have heard in the past. So far so good, but his comments about a 'fragmented stew of postmodernism' require an answer. Newspapers such as *The Australian* featured letters from a range of perspectives and comment from the President of the Australian History Teachers Association and from teacher unions some criticising current history teaching, some defending it, some arguing for more complexity. In South Australia we surely applaud the notion of seeing more history in the curriculum and on values which include more than British ones. We are not so enthusiastic, however, about one particular form of history being taught, one which tells a mainstream story at the expense of all the other stories which can be told.

HCSA member Professor Wilfred Prest came to the fore in a review published in *The Australian* of Michael Connor's recently released work which challenges the notion of 'terra nullius' – and was rebuked by columnist Christopher Pearson for his troubles. Clearly it is time to enter these debates and press for the opportunity to see more history taught in South Australia.

The Productivity Commission's draft report does not provide much joy for those concerned with Heritage preservation. It appears to propose a voluntary system of heritage listing for State and local governments whereby governments and owners may negotiate a conservation agreement. The abolition of compulsory listing, while in line with the government's notion of choice, does not bode well for the preservation of many buildings and other historic structures. Local councils do not always see heritage issues in the light we would wish them to do and with the disappearance of mandatory local listing some buildings may be lost. There is a very short time line for responses to this draft report (due by Feb 24th) but concerned members might like to send letters directly to the Productivity Commission's website (<http://www.pc.gov.au/>) or to the HCSA to be co-ordinated and forwarded by the HCSA executive as the peak body (by 21 February at the latest please).

SA Heritage issues

One of the intentions for 2006 is to have a series of informative presentations at HCSA Council meetings. At the meeting on 6 December 2005 heritage issues in relation to SA were discussed in a presentation by Sue Averay (Manager) and Peter Wells (Senior Conservation Architect, Policy), Heritage Branch of the South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage. Peter and Sue provided members with the following information:

- The revised Heritage Act, now called the Heritage Places Act, was passed on the 17 November 2005. Amended legislation was further to the present Government commissioning the discussion paper "Heritage Directions" which was circulated for consultation and received as a result 85 submissions.
- The discussion paper covered nine key objectives, one of which was legislative reform. Consequently, a Bill for the Heritage Act and the Development Act was drafted. This, however, was split into two Bills, one for the Heritage Act and one for the Development Act, after amendments to the Development Act stalled in July 2005. One of the reasons for this was the objection by the Local Government Association to independent heritage advisors being established. Local Government has also objected to mandatory registers and surveys. The Sustainable Development Act will not be considered further until after the election in 2006.
- The Heritage Places Act establishes the South Australian Heritage Council which provides advice to the Minister and confirms State Heritage Places entered onto the Register.
- The South Australian Heritage Register is also established by the Act and acts as a single point of reference for zonings, world heritage listings, national heritage listings, policy, etc. Places are assessed against criteria set out in the Act and provisionally entered onto the Register. Consultation between the community and the place owner is conducted before the SA Heritage Council confirms the entry. The Minister is able to remove an entry from the Register while it is provisional but not once it is confirmed by the Council. The Register allows for moveable items linked to a heritage place if there is an intrinsic relationship.
- The amended Act now has special provisions for the recognition of significance of archaeological, palaeontological etc sites and associated specimens. A permit (cost of \$110) is needed for any archaeological dig conducted anywhere in the state involving the dig for state significance artefacts.
- The amended Act also includes emergency protection measures.

There is, of course, much more and space does not allow further discussion. Peter Wells advised that the DEH has produced a document which compared the two Acts (the Heritage Places Act and the Development Act – 'Heritage in a Nutshell' available from the legislation page on DEH's website (www.heritage.sa.gov.au) which members may wish to discuss.

On other History Council matters we are pleased to report that the website is progressing, albeit slowly. While we are very grateful for current volunteers to our working parties we would really appreciate more, specifically for our communication and public relations working party and for our heritage and archives working party. We still have 2 vacancies on our Council: please let us know if you would like to be co-opted. Do let us know your news and issues so that we can publicize them in this letter or on our website.

This year promises to be a lively one!

Alison Mackinnon

Current Executive and Council members

Executive (6 members)

President	Alison Mackinnon, Hawke Research Institute, University of SA
Vice President	Bernie O'Neil, Professional Historians Association
Secretary	Annette Mills, State Library of South Australia
Treasurer	Beth Robertson, Professional Historians Association
Members	Nigel Ridgeway, Engineers Australia Karen Agutter, Individual member

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

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Karen Agutter	Karen.Agutter@flinders.edu.au	(08) 8201 5553

Reminders

In History We Trust

15th State History Conference

27-28 May 2006

Union Building, University of Adelaide

Victoria Drive Adelaide SA 5000

A special conference to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the History Trust. The conference will reflect on history making in South Australia over recent decades. Be there for this anniversary event and contribute to the discussion about the critical issues facing South Australia's history makers.

Watch out for the conference registration brochure in the next issue of *History Matters*. The conference program and registration form will be up on the History Trust website from the beginning of March or ring the History Trust of South Australia on 8203 9888 for your copy. Enquiries to Jan Mudge on 8203 9877 or Kate Walsh on 8203 9878.

Adelaide Parklands Symposium
A balancing act: Past - present - future

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 pleased to be 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 about the event may be found on the Hawke Centre web site at: www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au

Or contact: Dr Christine Garnaut

,Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design

University of South Australia

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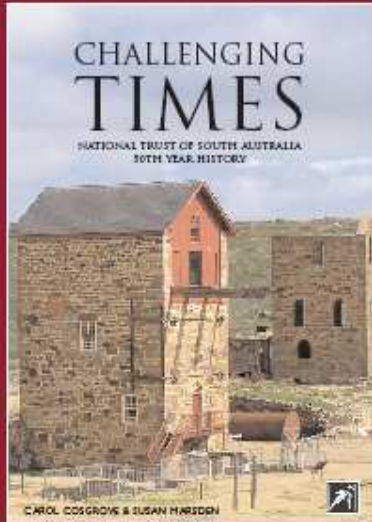
f: +61 8 8302 0211

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 – 7 February
- Council – 7 March
- AGM – 24 October – date to be confirmed

Please remember to recruit new members to the History Council.



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