South Australian Digihistory Project: outline
Prepared by Susan Marsden, Marsden Szwarcbord Foundation, October 2021

Summary Marsden Szwarcbord Foundation (MSzF), a registered charity set up to support historical literature, is supporting a collaborative project to select and digitise significant SA history books not available in digital form. MSzF set up the 'SA Digihistory Group', including Libraries SA, State Library, History Trust and Wakefield Press, to invite public nominations of significant SA histories for digitisation to introduce them as e-books to a new generation of borrowers and purchasers.

Step 1 MSzF co-founder and director, Dr Susan Marsden, had noted there were few SA histories available for loan as e-books from Libraries SA (Public Library Services). MSzF's first step in the 'SA Digihistory Project' involved nominating SA histories to 'Untapped: the Australian Literary Heritage Project' (https://untapped.org.au), University of Melbourne. A list of 10 significant SA books was prepared by Marsden and MSzF Intern/Early career Historian, Sandra Kearney, in consultation with other historians including Andrew Peake, who also donated funds to this work. MSzF made a donation to 'Untapped'. Three books were accepted for the final 'Untapped' list of 214 titles, and are now in preparation as e-books.

Step 2 Dr Marsden hosted a meeting of a 'SA Digihistory' group on 18 June 2021 to discuss how to collaborate on actions to select and digitise a larger number of SA histories no longer in print, to make them accessible for a new generation of library borrowers and purchasers as e-books and print-on-demand. The meeting was also attended by: Hanlie Erasmus – Associate Director, Public Library Services; Helen Kwaka – Manager, Collections and Content (PLS); Sandra Kearney – MSzF History Intern and PhD Candidate Flinders University; Kristy Kokegei – Director, Public Engagement, and Greg Mackie – CEO, History Trust of South Australia (HTSA); and Michael Bollen – Publisher and Director, Wakefield Press. Apologies were received from Geoff Strempel, CEO, State Library of South Australia.

The group agreed to seek community engagement in drawing up a list of 'Top 50' SA history books for digitisation. Preference would be given to books published before c2005, as those produced since are in digital format, and so are easily provided as e-books, although they do need different formats for different outlets. The group also discussed costs, which will include time spent proof-reading and getting permissions, estimated to be around $1,000 per book. The HTSA agreed to include a 'launch' and call for book nominations at its symposium to be held on 19-20 November 2021.

Step 3 The Group agreed to publicise this 'SA Digihistory Project', and engage with staff and community networks to compile a list of top 50 SA history books. The end date for nominations is 31 December 2021. Nominators were asked to give preference to hard copy books published before digitisation (c2005), and provide the following information (adapted from 'Untapped'):
- Author
- Title
- Place and year of publication
- Publisher
- Comment (why it is important)
- Nominator's name.

MSzF prepared a series of posts about the project and new nominations to *Marsden Szwarcbord Foundation – Make history* on Facebook. An example is given below:

> *More history book favourites for 'SA Digihistory'*
> *[Posted 21 September 2021]*
> *Historian, Brian Samuels says, 'Regarding the books to digitise, so much depends on the target*
> *audience'. In reply, we say that we want out-of-print books recommended for SA Digihistory that*

are solidly-researched and well-written; both good to read and useful sources for students and everyone interested in SA history. Brian's earlier compilation, 'Good Reading in South Australian History' (final edition, 1992) includes many titles. Several have been nominated to SA Digihistory, as you can see in earlier posts. Here are Brian's nominations and comments:

· 'Michael Williams, The Making of the South Australian Landscape (1974) was seminal in its day.

· W Vamplew et al, South Australian Historical Statistics (1984) is very useful and I suspect often overlooked and is rarely seen in bookshops or libraries (and only two SA local public libraries).

· Paul Depasquale, A Critical History of South Australian Literature (1978) was also seminal.

· C.R. Twidale, M.J. Tyler and M. Davies (eds), Ideas and Endeavours - The natural sciences in South Australia (Royal Society of SA, 1986) is another work that I suspect is often overlooked.

· R.M. Gibbs, A history of South Australia: from colonial days to the present (1969). Ron Gibbs' school text is certainly significant.' There were several editions of this readable secondary school textbook. Brian suggests that 'the revised '1984 edition (with 20 pages more than the 1969 original) is the one to have'.

New nominations can be posted directly to the MSzF facebook page, or emailed to smarsden@mszfhistory.org.au, together with your permission to post your name and nominations to that facebook site.

Step 4 MSzF is compiling all nominations (including those gathered by other Digihistory members) into a combined list of titles, to be considered at the group's next meeting in December 2021.

A final decision on titles (and the total number) will be made early in 2022, as well as the next steps in the project – including gaining funding – in a five-year program of digitisation and book production.