



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **TARRKARRI, TRUTH-TELLING AND 2036 PLANNING TOP HISTORY SECTOR WISHLIST FOR MARCH STATE POLL**

Tarrkarri, truth-telling and a clear commitment to planning for South Australia's 2036 Bicentenary top the history sector's wishlist ahead of the March state election.

The History Council of South Australia – the state's peak history body – is calling on all parties and candidates to commit to a properly funded, long-term plan to ensure the bicentenary is inclusive, ambitious and provides a lasting legacy for all South Australians.

History Council president Prof. Matthew Fitzpatrick said the 200th anniversary of colonial settlement was a significant milestone that would shape how future generations understood South Australia's past.

"If we want this milestone to be meaningful and inclusive, particularly in recognising First Nations histories, the work must begin now – not in the final years before 2036," he said.

Also topping the history council's election wishlist is a commitment to complete the Tarrkarri Centre for First Nations Cultures before the bicentenary.

"Tarrkarri is central to telling the full story of our state," Prof Fitzpatrick said. "Its absence from recent arts and cultural policy commitments is deeply concerning. Completing it before 2036 must be a priority."

The council is also calling for funding for grassroots and community truth-telling initiatives in every South Australian city, town and region.

"Truth-telling is not a symbolic gesture – it is an essential part of acknowledging and healing historical injustices to advance meaningful change. The approaching bicentenary offers an unparalleled opportunity to make it happen, but we need to start now."

Beyond these top three priorities, the History Council is seeking commitments to:

- A community and regional bicentenary fund for local history groups and museums to grow our understanding of the past and boost tourism opportunities.
- Better support cultural institutions including the State Library of South Australia, the South Australian Museum and State Records. Despite their crucial role in preserving the state's history, these institutions have suffered funding cuts by successive governments.

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- Support the long-term sustainability of SA-focused publishers with ongoing funding. Local publishers such as Wakefield Press play a critical role in telling South Australian stories and histories in a commercial climate heavily focussed on the eastern states.
- Ensure that all student teachers destined for early childhood and primary school education have studied at least one unit of history as part of their university training. Only trained teachers can offer their students the tools to understanding and valuing history.
- Continue urgent school history curriculum review and renewal aimed at fostering enhanced classroom engagement and student knowledge. Our children require a sound historical understanding of their society to equip them for 21<sup>st</sup> century life and citizenship.
- Offer incentives for young people to volunteer with community history, heritage and cultural groups. Intergenerational renewal is key to the survival of these groups.

Professor Fitzpatrick said the approaching bicentenary offered a huge opportunity for truth-telling and uniting all South Australians.

“This is about how we see ourselves as a state,” he said. “With voters heading to the polls in March, we are asking all parties and independent candidates to clearly state how they will support the preservation, documentation and honest telling of South Australia’s history.”

**Ends.**

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