

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES INC

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Website: <http://www.history.org.au/>

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Hon Editor, Dr Ruth S. Kerr

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1) Consider joining the Australian Historical Societies Support Group

The online **Australian Historical Societies Support Group**, through an arrangement between the Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS) and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, is one of the *My Connected Community* (mc²) groups initiated and funded by the Victorian Government's Connecting Communities policy.

The Australian Historical Societies Support Group offers participating historical societies, like-minded bodies and their members a variety of free, easy to use Web-based services which they can use to communicate with each other across the nation and the world on any topic that is of interest or concern to their organisations.

The mc² website provides easy access to online technologies now available for communicating between group members. Features of mc2 include a forum, an events list, space for sharing files, space for sharing photos, a links page and a chat room.

Details on how to join the Group are available at the FAHS website at: <http://www.history.org.au>. Follow the "Support" and "Support Group" links from the home page.

(Source: FAHS Council)

2) Museums – responsibilities on acceptance of gifts

Michael Rush lecture on Wednesday, 24th February 2010, 5pm, Bradley Forum, Hawke building, University of South Australia.

‘What are the responsibilities of museums and art galleries when they accept gifts?’

Michael Rush, former director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Boston, Massachusetts, will examine the responsibilities of museums and galleries as the custodians of our cultural heritage, in light of Brandeis' decision to shut down the Museum and sell off their extremely valuable and important collection of contemporary art to help solve a university budget crisis.

Michael Rush is a contributor to The New York Times and Art in America, and has written three books – New Media in Art, New Media in late 20th-Century Art, and Video Art.

Free entry and refreshments included

RSVP samstagnmuseum@unisa.edu.au

3) Heritage listing of Wollongong Harbour Precinct

Recently a formal notification of the proposed listing of the Wollongong Harbour Precinct on the State Heritage Register has been sent out.

"Heritage Council of NSW resolved at its meeting of 2 December 2009, to give notice of its intention to consider listing Wollongong Harbour Precinct on the State Heritage Register in acknowledgement of its heritages significance to the people of New South Wales.

Any members of the community, owners, managers or organisations other interested parties are invited to make a written submission regarding the proposed listing and significance of Wollongong Harbour Precinct.

Submissions should be posted or emailed to the Heritage Council of NSW at the following address during the public submission Period commencing 20 January 2010 and closing on 25 February 2010"

Heritage Council of NSW, Locked Bag 5020, Parramatta NSW 2124
heritage@planning.nsw.gov.au

The Industrial Heritage Advisory Committee of the National Trust along with members of the Illawarra Branch of the National Trust inspected the site in 2007 and resolved to upgrade and consolidate the National Trust's listing for the area, so this proposal is generally supported and interested members should look at the proposed listing at

http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/07_subnav_02_2.cfm?itemid=5056349

(Source: ticcih-in-oz@googlegroups.com – 27 January 2010)

4) Article in “Weekend Australian” on National Archives closures

The weekend *Australian* newspaper OF 20-21 February 2010 had quite an extensive write-up of the pending closures, focusing on Darwin. It's by Nicolas Rothwell, and entitled "Budget cuts put recorded history of the nation under siege", p 13 of the Focus section. See

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/budget-cuts-put-recorded-history-of-the-nation-under-siege/story-e6frg6nf-1225832363511>

Several years ago there was an interesting and relevant article by Ian Sutherland on the reduction of holdings and relocation of the South Australian office of the National Archives of Australia published in *Archives and Manuscripts* - "A Move too Far? The relocation of the Adelaide Office of the National Archives of Australia", pp 60-65 in the vol 30 (no 1) May 2002 issue.

(Sources: Weekend *Australian* 20-21 February 2010 Focus p.6; aus-archivists-bounces@archivists.org.au List 22 February 2010)

5) Minister's announcement: National Archives to retain a presence in Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart

On 22 February Senator Ludwig MP announced changes to the National Archives of Australia (NAA) closure decisions. This involves co-location with state or territory collections.

Senator Ludwig Ministerial Statement late on 22 February:

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansards%2F2010-02-23%2F0086%22>

Senator Ronaldson (Vic, Liberal) in reply

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansards%2F2010-02-23%2F0087%22>

Senator Hanson-Young (SA, Greens) in reply

<http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansards%2F2010-02-23%2F0088%22>

Debate was interrupted, and remains on the Senate Notice Paper for future continuation.

While there will be some savings through co-locations - and there's now sufficient motivation to make that happen - these are unlikely to be enough to meet the budget (MYEFO) cuts that were announced in November. The detail of the proposal needs to be examined carefully. A more positive approach would be a radical rethink and consultation widely with stakeholders about what future directions NAA will take.

(Source: Ausarchivists Listservs 23-24 February 2010)

6) National Archives funding in the United States

<http://archives.gov/press/press-releases/2010/nr10-55.html>

The link above describes the increased funding by the Obama administration to the National Archives of the United States in the coming budget.

“Washington, DC...President Barack Obama today [1 February 2010] sent to Congress a proposed Fiscal Year 2011 budget request for the Federal Government that calls for \$460,287,000 for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

The requested amount for NARA is a two percent decrease from the FY 2010 appropriated funding levels of \$469,870,000.

“Given the tight fiscal constraints the Federal Government is under, we are pleased that the President recognizes our vital mission to preserve the nation’s most important records and to make them accessible to the public as soon as possible,” said Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero.

“This funding will allow us to hire additional personnel to monitor the security of our holdings, speed the processing of classified and other sensitive records, help ensure a new generation of archivists for the future, and improve the research environment and the visitor experience for those who come to the National Archives Building to view the Charters of Freedom and related exhibits,” he added.

Although the President is requesting decreased overall funding for NARA, he is seeking increased Operating Expenses (OE) funding of \$348,689,000, up from this year’s appropriated level of \$339,770,000, or a 2.6 percent increase. The OE base increase will fund the increased costs for staff, energy, security, building operations, and information technology requirements.

The OE increase will also allow NARA to hire 57 new full-time staff members to support a variety of programs. Resources have been provided to staff and operate the new National Declassification Center (NDC). The President established the NDC within NARA to overhaul the government’s system of declassifying material. A new “holdings protection team” has been created to protect NARA holdings from internal and external threats. This team will develop loss prevention training and conduct compliance inspections. ...”

(Source: A Mailing List for Australian Archivists – 2 February 2010)

7) Newspaper use in research libraries

A feature article on the Klondike in the Higher Education section of the *Australian* newspaper of 27 January 2010 provided the opportunity for Ms Jerelynn Brown, the Manager of Collection Services in State Library of New South Wales to comment that newspapers are ‘probably the heaviest used source in our library. ... by historians, novelists, reporters and students.’

The focus of the article, ‘Familiar accents in the Klondike’, was the discovery of 20 copies of *The Klondike Miner and Yukon Advertiser* newspaper established by three Australians, John Meiklejohn, William V. Somerville and John L. Rees, from the Western Australian goldfields in September 1898 in the Yukon’s Dawson City. Dr Robin McLachlan of Charles Sturt University, had located a reference to the newspaper in the State Library’s electronic catalogue. A microfilmed copy of the 20 issues of the *The Klondike Miner and Yukon Advertiser* has been sent to the National Library of Canada.

Dr McLachlan and Mr Andrew Pike (of Robins Films) have made a docudrama, *The Letter*, expected to be shown in Dawson City’s international film festival at Easter. They are also proposing to publish a book of Klondike field letters.

(Source: *Australian* 27 January 2010 p.25)

8) Blue Shield Australia – Mayday Disaster Preparedness Campaign

The Federation of Australian Historical Societies has become an Associate Member of Blue Shield Australia which is the Australian branch of an international organisation which describes itself as the cultural equivalent of Red Cross. Its concern is with the conservation and protection of cultural heritage from man-made and natural disasters, and with the capacity to move into a region when there has been such a catastrophe to offer advice and assistance.

A focal point of BSA's activities is its Mayday campaign which focuses on 1 May but lasts for the month. BSA asks, and is supported in this by FAHS, that this May you and/or your organisation take at least one of the following steps to prepare for emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

- Dust off or prepare your counter-disaster plan. See the FAHS website http://www.history.org.au/Disaster_planning.html or *Be Prepared: Guidelines for writing a disaster preparedness plan*: http://www.collectionsaustralia.net/sector_info_item/2
- Identify and prioritise your important collection items and heritage sites
- Identify the three biggest risks to your collection or heritage site
- Get to know your local firefighters, police and SES – invite them to tour your organisation to give you pointers on safety and preparedness
- Find a 'partner' heritage organisation to work with in case of an emergency. A model for collaboration is DISACT: <http://www.anbg.gov.au/disact>
- Consider the protection offered by your storage facilities, and seek safer repositories and/or renew your efforts to digitize your paper-based collections.
- Familiarise yourself with Blue Shield Australia's webpages – particularly the one providing 'Useful links' regarding emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. The Blue Shield Australia website is at <http://www.blueshieldaustralia.org.au/> though for the time being it may redirect you to the Collections Council of Australia website.

NB there a conference in Canberra in May - *DISACT Symposium 2010* on matters relating to emergency-preparedness for cultural heritage. This will be held at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, on Thursday 6 May 2010. For further details, contact info@blueshieldaustralia.org.au

(Source: FAHS President Report)