

FAHS Newsletter

GPO Box 1440
Canberra ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6295 2837

Email: fahs@jedav.net
Web: www.history.org.au

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Annual Report of the President 2005-06



It is with pleasure that I present my report on the activities and achievements of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies (Inc.) (FAHS) for the year 2005/2006.

Apart from the Annual General Meeting for 2005/2006, which was held on Sunday 30 October 2005 at 102 Nelson Road, Mt Nelson on 12 September 2004, Mt Nelson, Hobart, Tasmania, the Committee held three ordinary meetings, one immediately following the AGM and three teleconferences (August, 2005 February and June, 2006). Once again the business agenda of each of these meetings was formidable but, as a result, considerable advances have been made in addressing and progressing the objectives of the Federation's *Triennial Operational Plan for the years 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07*. In between meetings the Committee conducted much business via email.

The position of Vice-President fell vacant when Mr David Lewis, Royal Australian Historical Society, ceased to be a delegate. The position of Senior Vice-President also fell vacant when, Dr Alison Alexander, resigned as an office-bearer. Mr Nigel Ridgway, History Council of South Australia and Professor Ian Jack, Royal Australian Historical Society, were elected at the AGM as Senior Vice-President and Vice-President respectively.

I wish to thank both the outgoing Vice-Presidents for all their support and input throughout their terms of office.

Finance and administration

With the resignation of Mr Gerard Hogan as Administrative Officer at the last AGM, Ms Kellie Bennett was appointed to the position and commenced on 1 November 2005. Fortunately, Mr Hogan agreed to maintain the Federation's presence in Canberra and acted as our Public Officer. Ms Bennett resigned in May 2005 for personal reasons but kindly agreed to assist with the handover to the new appointee and the preparation of the July Newsletter. At Mr Hogan's suggestion the positions of Administrative Officer and Public Officer were recombined and the Committee accepted Mr Hogan's resignation. He, too, agreed to assist with the handover to Mr John Davies who was appointed to the recombined position and took up the position on 1 June 2006.

The Federation has received a satisfactory report on its 2005/2006 accounts from its auditors, Pender Holdings Pty Ltd.

Efforts have been made to obtain additional funding by providing opportunities for interested individuals or companies to advertise their services/goods on our website and in our newsletter. So far there have been no responses to these advertisements.

Fellowship Awards

A FAHS Fellowship was awarded to Dr Lorna McDonald of Rockhampton, Queensland. I presented Dr McDonald's award at an event at the Royal Historical Society of Queensland's headquarters on 3 March 2006 following a citation prepared and read by Dr Ruth Kerr. At the same meeting I also presented the late John Kerr's Fellowship award to Dr Kerr. Mr Kerr was awarded this honour in 2003 but the presentation was held over until end of Dr Kerr's term as President. Unfortunately, Mr Kerr died before the presentation could be made to him personally.

I wish to thank the Royal Historical Society of Queensland for its generosity in arranging the event at which the presentations were made.

Merit Award

No nominations for this award were received.

Raising the profile of the FAHS

During the year individual delegates promoted the FAHS in a variety of ways. They addressed meetings of local societies and networked with members of government agencies and other organisations. I have had meetings with the Dr Patricia Sabine, President, and Ms Bernice Murphy, CEO, Museums Australia, Ms Marie Wood, National Conservation Manager and Marie Treadwell, Research Officer, Australian Council of National Trusts, Ms Perry McIntyre, the President, History Council of New South Wales, Professor Adrian Jones, President, History Council of Victoria, and Associate Professor Jenny Gregory, the President, History Council of Western Australia. At each of these meetings I outlined the role of the Federation and we agreed to support each others' endeavours in areas of mutual interest and within the limits of our resources.

FAHS Newsletter Editor, Ms Esther Davies, has produced three issues of the *FAHS Newsletter* during 2005/2006 with assistance from the Administrative Officer, Ms Bennett. Each issue was distributed to approximately 950 historical societies nationwide by post or email. The *Newsletter* was also sent to other State/Territory and national bodies with whom we have reciprocal arrangements.

The periodical inclusion of brief notes on FAHS activities in member organisations' newsletters continued this year. This was done with the object of bolstering the interest of a wider audience of historical society members in the Federation than can be achieved through the distribution of the *FAHS Newsletter*.

Eight issues of the Federation's *E-bulletin* have been produced by Dr Kerr during the reporting year and distributed electronically to other cultural groups. This is an important communication that is designed to grow our professional networks and hopefully increase the interest of community historical society members, who have access to the Internet, in national and international history and heritage issues and developments.

The Federation's National Impact Strategy, drafted by Mr Nigel Ridgway (SA) with input from Mr David Lewis (NSW), continued to be implemented. Actions taken during the year included the wide distribution of a new FAHS information brochure, and the finalisation and distribution to delegates of the Powerpoint presentation which are being used as opportunities arise to promote the Federation at meetings of other organisations. The Committee also agreed upon a Vision Statement which is currently being publicised in the brochure and Powerpoint presentation.

Advocacy

1. Advocacy delegate:

Normally the President represents the Federation on national forums such as the NCHF. However, because I live in Western Australia and would not be in a position to attend all the meetings I requested, with the Committee's agreement, Dr Kerr to deputise for me. During the year the Committee agreed that the position of Advocacy delegate would be an elected office but that the incumbent would only attend meetings in the event of the President being unable to do so.

2. Regional Cultural Alliance:

The Federation has continued to be represented on the Regional Cultural Alliance by Dr Ruth Kerr. The RCA has still not gained any funding and because of this does not yet have a formal governance structure. In the main, its aims are maintained and advanced through contact by email and teleconferences but Dr Kerr attended a meeting of the Alliance in Canberra on 30 March 2006 arranged by Museums Australia. It continues to provide an important role in preventing duplication, mutually supporting each others' endeavours where appropriate and in opening up lines of communication. Dr Kerr's contribution to the Alliance has been valuable and is much appreciated.

3. The National Cultural Heritage Forum:

NCHF delegate: Dr Ruth Kerr continued as the Federation's representative on the Forum and on behalf of the Committee I thank her for her commitment and all the work she had done in connection with this position.

NCHF meeting. Dr Kerr attended an NCHF meeting on 29 November 2005 in Canberra. Our Public Officer, Mr Gerard Hogan, also attended as an observer. The significant topics discussed and outcomes of the meeting with the Minister for Environment and Heritage, which occupied part of the NCHF meeting, were that the Minister::

- emphasised that the NCHF is a very useful and effective forum for him;
- supported the holding of a workshop to update the Forum's Vision Statement to which he agreed to provide attendance finance;
- agreed to a small group of the Forum to consult with the Department on the amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999;
- expressed interest in the Forum's proposals relating to the implementation of a Heritage Care Program.
- Announced that the GVEHO grants are being expanded to provide for more grants to cultural heritage bodies.

A wide range of other topics were discussed after the Minister left the meeting.

NCHF/HCOANZ break-out session: Dr Dianne Snowden, Tasmanian Historical Research Association, represented the Federation at the NCHF/HCOANZ break-out session on 20 April 2006 in Hobart. The session was chaired by Michael Collins. It was attended by representatives of the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand meeting with Sharon Sullivan, as NCHF Chair; Kristal Buckley (Australian ICOMOS); Simon Molesworth and Marie Wood (Australian Council of National Trusts); Bruce Cole (Engineering Heritage Australia); and Dianne Snowden (Federation of Australian Historical Societies). Dr Snowden reported at length on the meeting at which a range of issues were discussed. Some of the topics were:

- Issues arising from the Productivity Commission's report on its review of built heritage and subsequent submissions covering national roles, national leadership and a comparison between cultural heritage and natural heritage, the latter being felt to be better articulated.
- The role of the NCHF;
- The need for a comprehensive and integrated national heritage system, with a clearly articulated vision and policy, incorporating the Burra Charter, and prioritising the protection of cultural heritage was stressed.

4. Teaching history in schools

For sometime now the Federation has been much concerned about the lack of importance accorded history in primary and junior secondary school curricula in all the States and Territories except New South Wales and have made a number of submissions relating to the issue. Through our meetings with other organisations it is gratifying to find that there is widespread concern about this situation and that we are not the only body lobbying for change. The Federation wrote to the Prime Minister commending him on speaking out and advocating Australian history in schools. We also wrote to the Curriculum Council of Western Australia expressing concern about the new Years 11 and 12 outcomes based curriculum History Ancient and Modern. It is pleasing to note that agitation by many groups has had some positive outcomes

At its June 2006 teleconference, the Federation agreed upon its position on the teaching of history in Australian schools and decided to convey this to the Federal Minister for Education and Science.

5. Productivity Commission's Review of Built Heritage

In response to the draft of Productivity Commission's Review of Built Heritage the Federation made a supplementary submission in which among other matters, it rejected the Commission's recommendation of voluntary negotiated conservation agreements and presented a relevant economic analysis and cultural value statement to support its position. Our original and supplementary submissions have been placed on the FAHS's website. I wish to thank all delegates for their contributions to this submission but most particularly to Dr Marilyn

Truscott and Dr Ruth Kerr for preparing the document and to Mr Nigel Ridgway for his criticism of the economic rationalist approach taken by the Commission.

6. Facilitating input from constituency regarding history & heritage issues

A strategy is currently being negotiated with the Council's of our member bodies relating to facilitating input regarding history and heritage issues with which they wish to obtain advocacy support from the Federation.

Training and support for historical societies

1. Museums Australia – proposed national collections training program.

As far as I am aware there has been little progress on this matter.

2. Guides to support the work of historical societies

Publishing History: A Guide for Historical Societies: The manuscript was submitted for printing during the year but the printer did a print-run without providing page proofs for final vetting. Following proof-reading by the authors and the Editorial Committee it became apparent that the printing would need to be re-done. An agreement was reached with the printer for the second print-run to be done again with considerable financial concessions to us. Corrections have been completed and the re-run is now being undertaken.

History and Tourism: A Guide for Historical Societies: Efforts have been made this year to obtain funds for this publication. As yet, we have not been successful.

Lobbying and Public Relations: a Guide for Historical Societies: The partial draft, prepared by Mr Gerard Hogan, is currently under the review of the Committee pending further action.

Continuous Cultures and Ongoing Responsibilities – A Guide for Historical Societies in Engaging Indigenous Communities in the Care and Management of Indigenous Cultural Items Held by those Societies.

Following lengthy discussions with Museum Australia representatives on this proposal, this project is in abeyance until Museums Australia develops its national strategy for implementing its Continuous Cultures and Ongoing

3. My Connected Community

As a result of representations from the Historical Society of the Northern Territory, the Federation explored ways and means of assisting historical societies in remote areas to obtain advice/support with their various projects. One option that we have taken up is the decision to participate in Vicnet's *My Connected Community(mc2)* project through the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's Project Partnership facility. This encourages local history groups and local history networks across the country to participate in online mc2groups which provide additional communication opportunities among group members and also to promote local history. This service will be promoted to historical societies across the country early in 2006/2007 at which time access directions will be provided. I wish to thank Ms Vicki Court, IT Collections Manager, Royal Historical Society of Victoria and Mr Don Gibb for making this service to our constituents possible.

In conclusion, much has been achieved by the Federation over the past year and I hope the Committee will maintain its momentum in advocacy and in supporting the work of historical societies in the coming year. The members of the Committee are to be congratulated on the level of their commitment to the historical society movement and to the Federation itself. I thank them all for the generous way they have given of their time and expertise to the work of the Federation and for all the support they have afforded me in this my second year as President. I am especially grateful to the members of the Executive, Senior Vice-President, Mr Nigel Ridgway, Vice-President, Professor Ian Jack, Immediate Past President, Dr Ruth Kerr, Hon. Secretary, Ms Lennie McCall (RWAHS), and Hon. Treasurer, Dr Bev Phelts (HSNT), who have assisted me so ably in ensuring the continued smooth-running of the organisation. Thanks too, to Mr Hogan, Ms Bennett and Mr Davies for their services to the organisation during the year.

Dr. Helen Henderson
PRESIDENT

20 August 2006

Reports from the States and Territories

All the FAHS member societies have been busy this year with much being achieved in the way of researching, recording and promoting history in their respective States and Territories. Here are just a few of their achievements:

Australian Capital Territory

'Women in Settler Society' is this year's database project for the Canberra and Districts Historical Society. Members are searching the Society's resources for material on women settlers in the Canberra district before 1908, the year that the site was chosen for the future National Capital. Using a format developed by a professional librarian the information is entered on the electronic database of the Society's resources. Many of these settler women were 'hidden from history' and the Society is pleased to fill these gaps in the records.

Recently, the CDHS Council expressed its concern about planned landscaping changes outside the National Library of Australia which it regarded as being contrary to the Griffin Plan. Letters were sent to the head of the National Capital Authority, the head of Heritage division, the Federal Department of the Environment and Heritage, and Senator Ian Campbell, Minister for the Environment and Heritage. CDHS is pleased to announce that these proposed landscape changes have now been dropped and it would like to think that its lobbying contributed to this outcome.

New South Wales

As part of its Outreach Service the RAHS held its State Local History Conference on 5 & 6 November 2005. Paper topics were wide-ranging and included 'Why historians make good managers', 'Taking your Society towards "best practice"', 'Primary Application Packets', 'Demystifying heritage', 'Reinventing boundaries: preservation and promotion of surveying and mapping history', 'Women in wartime', 'Women and divorce', 'Children raised outside the family', 'Web publishing or blogging', 'The Dictionary of Sydney: collaboration and the opening of urban history', 'Historical societies and their websites'.

The Society continued to distribute small grants on behalf of the NSW State Government, namely \$17,430 from the NSW Ministry for the Arts Literature and History Program and \$45,000 from the NSW Heritage Office Small Grants Program for local history and archives. Details of the grant recipients were published in the December 2005 No. 86 issue of *History Magazine*.

Northern Territory

In November 2005 the Historical Society of the Northern Territory (HSNT) supported the History Colloquium held in conjunction with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory and Charles Darwin University. Subjects were wide ranging from sport and leisure, through missionary activity in Australia, archaeology of the Dutch East Indies survivors in Broome and the British interregnum in West Timor 1812-1816. Speakers were students from the Charles Darwin University and the Australian National University.

Following the most successful trip to the Roper River Region in 2005, this year the HSNT's intrepid explorers 'went west' to the Keep River region of the Northern Territory. Some 19 members and friends visited lonely graves, the ruins of old stations, saw the memorial to the Nackeroos (also known as Curtin's Cowboys), looked at Aboriginal art and walked through sections of the Keep River National Parks. The trip was organised by Ms Wendy Carter, an HSNT member and Honorary Secretary of the Kununurra Historical Society.

Queensland

Four issues of the *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland* were published during 2005/06. Nearly half the articles were peer reviewed at the discretion of their authors. The establishment of the peer review board has enhanced the quality of the *Journal*.

Work is proceeding steadily on the preparation of the material from the Post Office Museum for inclusion in the Society's collection. It comprises many items relating to towns throughout Queensland and many photographs of people and places.

Prints have been made of many photographs in the *Brisbane Centenary Official Historical Souvenir* of August 1924 and *The Week* paper. These last included approximately 500 prints of old houses, buildings, streetscapes, mines, factories, industries and transport images.

South Australia

After reviewing the state of history teaching, both nationally and in South Australia, a History Council of South Australia working party drafted a set of policy recommendations for comment. They recommended that Australian history should be taught as an identifiable course in the compulsory years of secondary education and beyond and that teachers of Australian history in secondary schools must be adequately trained and able to implement current pedagogy. They also recommended that resources should be provided to the History Trust of South Australia to establish community links between historical societies and local schools.

The HCSA Hon Treasurer, Ms Beth Robertson, 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 2006.

Tasmania

Due to a generous donation of \$10,000 from long-term member Lindsay Whitham, we compiled and published the third volume of indexes to our *Papers and Proceedings*. We now have fifty volumes indexed, up to 2003. We considered publishing online, but the donor, aged 86, insisted on hard copy. One letter of appreciation said the writer was so interested in the Index that he could not put it down.

We also published: *Letter of an Irish Patriot: the letters of William Paul Dowling*, edited by Margaret Glover (Tasmania) and Alf MacLochlainn (Ireland). Dowling was an artist, and the volume is illustrated by his paintings. His letters give an interesting picture of an Irishman's views about Tasmania in the 1840s.

The Burnie Historical Society hosted the 7th Biennial Tasmanian History Societies Conference. The theme was "*Individuals who have made a Difference*" and there were ten papers on a variety of people. The Burnie Historical Society is active and dynamic with a large membership, and the conference was, stimulating and well-attended. Members from about a dozen historical societies around the state attended. The Coal River Valley Historical Society is hosting the eighth conference in 2008. The theme will be military activity.

Victoria

The Royal Australian Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) has benefited from the re-roofing of its building. This has meant that the danger to the collections from water damage has been largely removed. The dust-proofing and soundproofing of the building remain as major aims of the Society.

In the run up to the Society's centenary in 2009, it is hoped that we will have gained permanent premises where the future of the collections will be safeguarded and there a semi-permanent Melbourne historical exhibition can be established. It is also hoped that, in future, there will be a larger, more diverse and active membership with less reliance on haphazard grants to sustain activities. As a small step towards the realisation of these hopes, a panel of distinguished advisers is being appointed.

Western Australia

The Historical Records Rescue Consortium, on which the Royal Western Australian Historical Society is represented, was successful in obtaining a Lotterywest grant of \$3 million dollars to save at risk historic print, photographic and film records in the J S Battye Library of West Australian History. Further information about this project can be obtained at <http://www.fobl.org.au/hrrc>.

The RWAHS organised a preview of its Museum's exhibition showcases which include large cases for the display of large items such as costumes mounted on mannequins. There are also mobile modules that combine secure top and drawer displays of small items. This project was made possible by a Lotterywest grant of \$79,000. The exhibition, which features a range of items from the Society's collection, with a particular emphasis on costume and costume accessories, will be launched in the near future. Another Lotterywest grant of \$7,854 enabled two training workshops for affiliated societies on workplace safety, first aid and risk assessment. Safe manual handling of museum artefacts was filmed and a video sent to 70 affiliated societies around the State.

AGM – Alice Springs, 3 September 2006

Each year, the Federation of Australian Historical Societies holds its Annual General Meeting in a different place to enable members from each State and Territory to host the AGM, and to meet and converse with members of interstate historical societies. The 2006 AGM was hosted by the Historical Society of the Northern Territory in Alice Springs. The HSNT combined forces with Heritage Alice Springs to provide a well planned and interesting program.

.On our arrival in Alice Springs, we were met at the airport by HSNT members and, in the evening, the Committee was welcomed to the Territory at a reception hosted by Mayor Fran Kilgariff. The next day, the group, led by Professor Ian Jack, visited Arltunga Historical Reserve, the site of Central Australia's first town, a former goldmining settlement complete with the remains of mines, mining camps and stone buildings. That evening, we were guests of the Mbantua Gallery, where we were able to view a comprehensive collection of artworks by the famous Utopia artists. Our second full-day excursion was to historic Hermmansburg, the first Aboriginal Mission in the Territory, established by the Lutheran missionaries in 1877. This heritage precinct is particularly impressive; restoration of its beautiful buildings having commenced in 1987 with the aid of grants from Australian Government and the Bicentennial Commemorative Program. On Saturday 2nd September the group was especially privileged to be given a guided walking tour of Alice Springs by Josie Petrick, author of *“Street Names of Alice Springs”* and that evening, following a tour of the Old Telegraph Station, we had an open-air barbecue beside the Todd River.

The 2006 AGM all-day meeting was held in the Residency, briefly the home of the first Central Australian Government Resident, John Charles Cawood. This house, now operated by the Museum and Art Galleries Board of the Northern Territory, has catered for many guests including her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The AGM received the President's Report (included in this Newsletter), and reports from each of the States and Territories. These reports were followed by the election of office bearers. After four years as Treasurer, Dr. Bev Phelts did not seek re-election and Dr Lyn Reid of the Northern Territory has been elected as Honorary Treasurer for a period of one year. The meeting also finalised discussions and made decisions on the FAHS Fellowship and Merit Awards for 2006.

The AGM was followed by a general meeting where issues discussed included the teaching of history in Australian schools and the status of history in the nation's universities, the promotion of communication between the Federation's constituent bodies, and heritage matters such as the status of the Burrup Peninsula Rock Art site. Reports of discussions with Museums Australia, the Australian Council of National Trusts and the Collections Council of Australia and from the Productivity Commission and the National Cultural Heritage Forum were also received. In closing the meeting, Dr Henderson proposed a vote of thanks to Ms Mignon Williams, Administration Officer, Heritage Alice Springs and to Mr Dom Pecorari, President, Heritage Alice Springs, for their generous hospitality.

The AGM was very successful. At the end of the week, we had not only made progress in forward planning history and heritage issues for 2007, but all delegates had an increased awareness of the wonderful heritage of Alice Springs. The HSNT & FAHS thank Heritage Alice Springs for making the AGM such a memorable occasion.



The FAHS Committee outside the Residency

‘Genres of History’

Snippets from Professor David Carment’s Report on the ‘Genres of History’, the Australian Historical Association (AHA) Biennial Conference 3-7 July 2006, held at The Australian National University in Canberra.

The Australian Defence Force Academy and The Australian National University (ANU) hosted the conference. On the first day I took part in a ‘Heads of History’ meeting. The meeting discussed the teaching of History at undergraduate level, the AHA Honours and Postgraduate Curricula Review, standards/criteria in the examination of higher degree by research theses in History, the relationship between historical research and human ethics committees and the draft Australian Code of Responsible Conduct of Research. For the full program and other information see <http://histrsss.anu.edu.au/aha>

I also attended an AHA Executive meeting, the AHA Annual General Meeting, the conference dinner, the inaugural award of the Minoru Hokari Memorial Scholarship and the Governor General’s launch of the on-line *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. The following is a selection ‘some rather random notes and impressions’ –

- Margot Neale (National Museum of Australia) argued that Indigenous visual narratives are essential tools for those involved in Aboriginal history.
- Ann McGrath (ANU) pointed to some confronting issues in the making of ‘A Frontier Conversation’ (see above): timing, historians’ resistance to the camera, the death of a key participant and ‘biased’ criticisms.
- John Lynn (Illinois) presented a spirited analysis of military history which, he argued, in spite of many impressive achievements is struggling for survival as a separate genre. In the discussion that followed several people questioned this argument and suggested that his definition of military history was too narrow.
- Darrell Lewis (ANU) speculated that on the basis of evidence from an Aboriginal source the explorers Burke and Wills may have been murdered by another member of their party and its sole survivor, King.
- Ann Curthoys and John Docker (both ANU) engaged in discussion with others about their influential new book *Is History Fiction?* The continuing importance of Herodotus and Thucydides loomed large.
- Ingereth Macfarlane outlined the first thirty years of the important journal *Aboriginal History*, explaining that there was quite considerable opposition to such a journal when it was first proposed.
- As the outgoing AHA Immediate Past President, I attended my last AHA Executive meeting. Among other matters, it looked at plans to re-vamp the AHA web site. The new AHA President is Desley Deacon (ANU).
- At the conference dinner, Tony Roberts, a freelance historian with long Northern Territory experience whom I have known for many years, was awarded the prestigious W K Hancock Prize for his path-breaking book *Frontier Justice: A History of the Gulf Country to 1900*. My review of it is in the latest issue of *Aboriginal History*.
- The Governor General’s launch of the on-line *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) was a great occasion. The on-line ADB, which can be used without any charge, is an invaluable resource. It can be viewed at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/adbonline>

Professor Carment is a Fellow of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies

Australian Historical Societies Support Group

AN ONLINE SUPPORT GROUP FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETIES ACROSS THE NATION

Background

At a meeting with the Council of the Historical Society of the Northern Territory, concern was expressed at the isolation experienced by historical societies in remote areas. The Federation addressed this issue and the outcome has been an agreement with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria for the establishment of the online **Australian Historical Societies Support Group** as one of the *My Connected Community* (mc2) groups under its ownership. This facility will enable you to communicate with other historical society members across Australia, who belong to the group, on any topic that is of concern to you or your society. If a great deal of interest arises in one particular topic (eg. conservation of farm machinery or funding agencies) then it will be possible for specific topic/issue Australian Historical Societies Support Groups to be formed. You can join it to communicate with other members of your society or with people in other societies.

An initiative of the Victorian Government's [Connecting Communities](#) policy, mc2 is funded by the Victorian Government, through [Multimedia Victoria](#), and coordinated by [Vicnet](#). The main objective of mc2 is to encourage community groups located in Victoria (Australia) to create their own online communities, although there is provision for individuals residing outside Victoria to establish and participate in Australia-wide groups. *My Connected Community* offers participating groups/individuals a variety of free, Web-based services which they can use to communicate with existing members & like-minded communities across the world.

The mc2 website is designed for ordinary people (not computer "experts") to use online technologies to communicate between groups and, in some cases between members of groups, and the wider community. In order to use the features of mc2, a member needs to be able to type information in a box and click a box or a link. Features of mc2 include a forum, an events list, space for sharing files, space for sharing photos, a links page and a chat room. There is also a website generator to help group members create a website without the need for learning html coding.

How to join the Australian Historical Societies Support Group

1. Go to <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>
2. On the left of the screen there is a link to join *My Connected Community*
3. Fill in the online form making sure to note user name and password for later then click button to join *My Connected Community*.
4. An email is sent to confirm that you really want to join *My Connected Community*. Click the link in the email which then takes you to mc2.
5. Type in the user name and password then click the button
6. Once in *My Connected Community* you can search for **Australian Historical Societies Support Group**.
7. In the Search *My Connected Community* Communities box type Australian Historical - Click Go
8. Click the title of the group to enter.
9. Then become a member of the group by clicking the link - Join this Group - on the left of the screen then clicking YES.

Members can then use all the features and we invite you to take advantage of this magnificent service.

Online manuals for using the features of mc2 are available under the Training link in the toolbar at the top of each mc2 page. However mc2 is easy to use provided that the user can type in a box and click a button.

Helen Henderson
PRESIDENT

25 September 2006

Collections Council of Australia – Update

Collections can be brought together under different names, such as archives, galleries, libraries and knowledge centres, museums, indigenous cultural resource centres and keeping places, historical societies, visitor centres and heritage places. The Collections Council of Australia Ltd, launched in September 2005, has been established to provide nation-wide co-ordination for collections. In November 2005, Collections Council CEO Margaret Birtley and Development Officer Veronica Bullock welcomed Dr Ruth Kerr and Dr Helen Henderson of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies to our Adelaide office.

Following is a summary of some Collections Council projects. All are reported further at our website: <http://www.collectionscouncil.com.au>. Please visit our website for more information, to tell us about your organisation or to sign up for our e-Bulletin.

Collections Council charged with co-ordinating an Australian Framework for Digital Heritage Collections

A Digital Collections Summit, convened by the Collections Council of Australia in Adelaide on 16 and 17 August 2006, attracted 190 participants. The collections sector was represented by delegates from every state and territory of Australia and from each of the four major collecting domains – archives, galleries, libraries and museums. Delegates also came from New Zealand, and from Australia's education and government sectors. The Summit provided an unprecedented formal gathering of specialists from the entire collections sector. The keynote speaker was David Dawson, Head of Digital Futures at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in the UK. Plenary sessions included 21 papers presenting the state of current activity and addressing critical issues associated with digital collections in Australia. Additionally, three 'Showcase' sessions introduced 15 projects involving digital collections. A feature of the Summit was the three workshops facilitated by Dr Michael Henry of the Strategy Shop. The Summit identified priority issues shared across the collections sector including capture and preservation of digital material, resourcing, target audiences, coordination and cooperation, skills and capability building, access, and government policy and legislation. It is timely for the collections sector to co-ordinate its content and standards when important government initiatives are receiving strong backing (e.g., the Digital Content Industry Action Agenda and the National Broadband Strategy). Benefits to the community of such co-ordination include improved research and educational outputs, increased economic activity and innovative solutions.

Regional Hubs Project

In other news, the Council recently appointed Anne Dunn of M.I. Murren Enterprises as Regional Hubs Project Adviser. Through the Regional Hubs project, the Collections Council plans to co-ordinate support for archive, gallery, library, keeping place and museum collections through a network of Regional Collections Advisers. This system will complement existing services and will include on-the-ground delivery of collection management, conservation and computing skills. Over the coming months, Ms Dunn will liaise with all levels of government, in each state and territory, to determine what is currently being done to identify all the existing and potential funding sources and relationships. She will also liaise with all the stakeholders (including Cultural Ministers Council, and the Ministers), and with potential partners in the project.

Ms Dunn proposed three rounds of consultation and the first of these has already taken place. Delegates from over twenty collections sector peak bodies, including the Federation of Australian Historical Societies, were invited to workshop the Regional Hubs concept in Canberra on 6 September 2006. Delegates were also invited to suggest contacts for the second round of consultation, when Ms Dunn will travel to each state and territory for grass roots knowledge and experience in regional collections servicing. The final consultations will be with potential funders for the project. It is hoped that a Regional Hub will be established with at least one Regional Collection Adviser in each state and territory from 2007.

The Collections Council Secretariat and Ms Dunn have planned an active web presence for this project. Please check the Collections Council website regularly for updates and please contact Ms Dunn with any input at: projects@collectionscouncil.com.au.

Conservation Survey

The report for **Conservation Survey 2006**, the Collections Council's first survey, has been lodged on our website. This survey of conservation and preservation education and employment needs in Australia sampled collecting organisations of many types and sizes, as well as some conservation businesses and collections sector servicing organisations. The report provides good baseline data (with domain breakdowns in many instances) and makes several strong recommendations. The Collections Council plans to monitor progress in this area, and to conduct follow up surveys in future years.

FAHS Awards - 2006

The Federation is pleased to announce that at its Annual General Meeting, held in Alice Springs on 3 September 2006, it unanimously resolved to offer two awards in recognition of significant contribution to the historical society movement and the promotion and study of Australian history.

Fellowship – Dr Lionel Gilbert (New South Wales)

Dr Gilbert's award recognises his outstanding contribution to the history movement at a national level. Dr Gilbert was the Principal Lecturer in History at the Armidale College of Advanced Education. He was the founder of the a prominent national centre in the training of local and regional historians. Other distinctions include the award of an OAM for services to regional and community history and Fellowships of the Society of Genealogists and the Royal Australian Historical Society. Dr Gilbert's research and publications extend nationally and address botanical history, studies of Australian cemeteries and methodological approaches to local history.

Merit Award – Ms Pearl Ogden (Northern Territory)

Ms Ogden's award recognises significant voluntary service and history research contribution. She has published numerous books and articles which not only address the Northern Territory's history but extend right across the 'Top End'. Ms Ogden has been very active in the history and heritage movement for many years in a voluntary capacity.

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