

FAHS Newsletter

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No. 27/2007
December 2007

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Annual Report of the President – 2006/2007

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 2006/2007.

Apart from the Annual General Meeting for 2006, which was held on Sunday 2 September 2006 at the Residency, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, the Committee held four ordinary meetings, one immediately following the AGM and three teleconferences (November 2006, February and May, 2007). 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 office bearers for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 are President: Dr Helen Henderson (Royal Western Australian Historical Society); Senior Vice-President: Professor Ian Jack (Royal Australian Historical Society); Vice-President: Dr Bev Phelts (Historical Society of the Northern Territory); Immediate Past-President: Dr Ruth Kerr (Royal Historical Society of Queensland); Hon. Secretary: Ms Lennie McCall (Royal Western Australian Historical Society). In the absence of a nomination from among the delegates for the position of Hon Treasurer, Dr Lyn Reid, a member of the Historical Society of Northern Territory, agreed to fill the position.¹ Dr Ruth Kerr was elected Advocacy Delegate. The remaining members of the Committee were: Ms Diana Chessell (History Council of South Australia); Ms Yvonne Forrest (Historical Society of the Northern Territory); Associate Professor Donald Garden and Mr Don Gibb (Royal Historical Society of Victoria); Ms Jan Barkley-Jack (Royal Australian Historical Society); Ms Jean Stewart (Royal Historical Society of Queensland); Mr Ian Terry (Tasmanian Historical Research Association); Ms Esther Davies and Ms Marilyn Truscott (Canberra and District Historical Society).

Finance and administration

The end of this financial year marks the completion of the 2004/2005 – 2006/2007 round of the Federation's triennial funding under the Australian Government's Grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations Program (GVEHO). This grant has made it possible for the Federation to continue and grow its leadership role in promoting history and supporting historical societies across the nation. I acknowledge with gratitude the confidence that the Australian Government has shown in the Federation by providing this funding and look forward to continued financial support through the GVEHO Program for the next three years.

The Administrative Officer, Mr John Davies, has been engaged on a part-time basis for 6 hours a week. It was hoped that we might be in a position to extend his hours but unfortunately we were unable to do this because of financial limitations.

The Federation has received a satisfactory report on its 2006/2007 accounts from its auditors, Pender Holdings Pty Ltd.

Once again 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 two responses to these advertisements with one providing a sponsorship of \$100.

¹ This is in accordance with Section 11(i) of the FAHS Constitution.

Fellowship Award

A FAHS Fellowship was awarded to Dr Lionel Gilbert. Professor Ian Jack (Vice-President and Royal Australian Historical Society) presented Dr Gilbert with his FAHS Fellowship at a special function held at the Armidale Folk Museum on 14 March 2007. Professor Jack paid tribute to Dr Gilbert's outstanding contribution to the history movement at both the local and national level. Mrs Jean Stewart (Royal Historical Society of Queensland) was present and reported that it was a very well attended and pleasant occasion. At the invitation of the President of the Armidale and District Historical Society, Ms Judith Grieve, Mrs Stewart spoke about her association with Dr Gilbert and the Society in the 1970s and 1980s when she served two separate terms as its President.

I wish to thank the Armidale Folk Museum for its generosity in arranging the event at which the presentation was made.

Merit Award

I presented Ms Pearl Ogden with her FAHS Merit Award at the Annual General Meeting and annual dinner of the Historical Society of the Northern Territory held on 28 March 2007. The citation outlined Ms Ogden's significant contribution to the understanding and promotion of the history of the 'Top End' and to the community history movement in the Northern Territory. This was the Federation's first Merit Award.

The Federation thanks the Historical Society of the Northern Territory for the opportunity to present this Award at its Annual General Meeting and for the warm way in which it extended hospitality for the visit to Darwin.

Training and support for historical societies

1. Facilitating input from historical societies regarding history & heritage issues

A strategy designed to facilitate the flow of information to the Federation regarding history and heritage issues of concern to our constituent members and their affiliated societies was implemented early in the year. As a result the issue of the high cost of public liability insurance is currently under investigation. The Federation hopes to identify companies who are willing to provide insurance to societies at affordable cost. A further issue is storage space for artifacts held by historical societies.

2 Guides to support the work of historical societies

Publishing History: A Guide for Historical Societies: This book was published early in 2007 and distributed free-of-charge to historical societies across the nation. The publication has been received favourably and there has been a strong demand for copies (on sale for \$11.00 including GST) from individuals.

History, Heritage and Tourism: A Guide for Historical Societies: It is pleasing to report that the Federation was successful in its application to the New South Wales Heritage Office for a grant to produce an online publication of a guide for historical societies to the use and development of local heritage in the promotion of tourism, and in the use of tourism to promote heritage. The Federation engaged Dr Dianne Snowden, a heritage consultant of Richmond, Tasmania to write the guide.

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.

This project is in abeyance until Museums Australia develops its national strategy for implementing its *Continuous Cultures and Ongoing Responsibilities* guide.

3. My Connected Community

The Federation-initiated online Australian Historical Societies Support Group has grown in membership over the past year. This service to historical societies across the nation has been made possible by Vicnet's *My Connected Community (mc2)* project through the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's Project Partnership facility. It encourages local history groups and local history networks across the country to participate in online mc2 groups which provide additional communication opportunities among group members and also to promote local history. This Federation has continued to promote the service to historical societies across the country during 2006/2007. I wish to thank Ms Vicki Court, IT Collections Manager, Royal Historical Society of Victoria for the support she has given to members of the online group during the year.

Raising the profile of the FAHS

Individual delegates have promoted the FAHS in a variety of ways during the year. They addressed meetings of local societies and networked with members of government agencies and other organisations. Unfortunately, I have not been able to meet in person with representatives of federal organisations with similar aims but I have maintained email correspondence with several of these bodies, including the Collections Council of Australia and the Australian Council of National Trusts. However, Immediate Past-President, Dr Ruth Kerr, has met with a variety of historical societies in north and central Queensland and on the Sunshine Coast, and met with professional historians in several states to advance the role of local history and heritage organisations. Some of these opportunities have arisen from meetings with public service staff and academic historians related to the history teaching and heritage care issues. I addressed the State History Conference of affiliated societies of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society which was held in Cunderdin in September 2006. I have also provided several articles on the activities of the Federation for inclusion in constituent members' newsletters.

The *FAHS Newsletter* Editor, Ms Esther Davies, has produced two issues of the *FAHS Newsletter* during 2006/2007 with assistance from the Administrative Officer, Mr Davies. 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.

Twelve issues of the Federation's *E-bulletin* have been produced by Dr Kerr during the reporting year and distributed electronically to cultural groups across the nation. 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.

Advocacy

1. Advocacy delegate:

Under these arrangements, the President retains the right to represent the Federation on national bodies such as the National Cultural Heritage Forum (NCHF). However, when for any reason, the President is unable to attend such meetings, the Advocacy Delegate attends. Since I live in Western Australia and was not able to attend any of these meetings during 2006/2007, the Advocacy Delegate, Dr Kerr, has represented the Federation.

2. Regional Cultural Alliance:

The Federation has continued to be represented on the Regional Cultural Alliance (RCA) by Dr 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 continue to be maintained and advanced through contact by email and teleconferences. It continues to provide an important role in preventing duplication, mutually supporting each others' endeavours where appropriate and in opening up lines of communication. One face-to-face meeting was held in 2007 in March in Canberra where FAHS advocated issues on preservation of

documents in private hands and government reports. Dr Kerr's contribution to the Alliance has been valuable and is much appreciated.

3. The National Cultural Heritage Forum:

NCHF members met with Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH) officials in Canberra on 21 and 22 November 2006 to review the Forum's Vision Statement. Dr Ruth Kerr attended on the 21st and Ms Marilyn Truscott and John Davies attended on behalf of the FAHS on both days. The meeting commenced with a briefing from Mr Peter Burnett, head of the Division of Heritage, Department of Environment and Water Resource. He addressed the issue of 'What is the immediate and long term horizon for heritage in Australia from the Department's perspective?' This was followed by the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia and New Zealand (HCOANZ) review of the submissions made to the Productivity Commissions on Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places led by Ms Marie Wood, consultant to the HCOANZ. Issues raised in submissions related to concerns about the governance structure of the heritage system nationally, education, policy and guidelines, tensions between planning and heritage and funding. The NCHF members then brainstormed major issues for the next ten years in relation to Australian heritage and then reviewed the existing Vision Statement. Dr Kerr committed to participate on the Heritage Care and the Teaching History Working Parties. Heritage Division has accepted the thrust of the revised Vision Statement and does not believe that it requires Ministerial approval. It will be revisited and refined after the federal election.

NCHF/HCOANZ break-out session: Mr Don Gibb represented the Federation at the NCHF/HCOANZ break-out session in Melbourne on 13 April 2007. The issues of grant funding and the different perspectives between government and non-government attendees were discussed energetically by state officials without any firm resolution.

Budget briefing: Dr Kerr attended a briefing on 11 May 2007 for the NCHF by the Heritage Division within Department of Environment & Water Resources on the Australian Government's Heritage Budget for 2007-08. Following this a detailed analysis of the heritage budget was prepared by the NCHF. Even though the discussion with public servants was expansive and assisted the NCHF to understand the government's intentions, the NCHF considered the expenditure insufficient, lacking vision and impetus. Dr Kerr reported that the NCHF will continue its advocacy with the federal government.

3. Teaching history in schools

The Federation has continued to be actively involved in issues relating to the teaching of history in schools within the NCHF and in direct representations to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Science, Education and Training. On 7 March 2007 Ms Esther Davies and Ms Julie Ryan (Canberra and District Historical Society) and Dr Kerr met with Mr Declan O'Connor and Ms Emily Cunningham, senior operations staff in Department of Education, Science and Training who are likely to be implementing the History Summit outcomes and government policy. The Federation has been particularly concerned with promoting the use of local history societies in the teaching of history in primary and secondary schools and in teacher development and is also pushing for appropriate funding to support the work.

Late in 2006/2007, a summit called by Museums Australia in association with the FAHS, the Australian Heritage Council together with staff of the major institutions in Victoria with the History Trust of South Australia and the National Museum and Old Parliament House in Canberra was planned to be held at the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne on 2 July 2007. The agenda included a briefing on the History Summit and progress towards implementing the outcomes and priorities of the History Summit, and discussions towards an action plan to advance history teaching in Australian schools. The outcomes of the summit will be reported in my 2007/08 annual report.

4. Submissions relating to heritage

The Federation made a number of submissions to State and Federal governments during the year on matters relating to the protection and preservation of heritage sites, namely the Burrup Peninsula Aboriginal rock art, Cossack town, the Old Treasury Building in Perth, and the North Bank, Brisbane development proposal. Other submissions were to the Chief Minister (Australian Capital Territory) expressing concern over the housing of the Canberra and District Historical Society's collections; to the Minister for Natural Resources, the Environment & Heritage (Northern Territory) regarding the review of the Northern Territory Heritage Act and a supplementary submission to the Productivity Commission on its *Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places Draft Report*.

The Federation has also responded to invitations from the Collections Council of Australia (CCA) to comment on the CCA's Conservation Survey 2006 Report; National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries – Exposure Draft; Survey regarding the *Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections* (2001) and to participate in its Proposed Regional Hubs workshops.

In conclusion, the Federation has achieved much over the past year and I hope the Committee will maintain its momentum in supporting the work of historical societies and advocacy 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 third year as President. I am especially grateful to the members of the Executive who have assisted me so ably in ensuring the continued smooth-running of the organisation. Thanks too, to Ms Esther Davies for editing the *Newsletter*, Dr Ruth Kerr for producing the *E-bulletin* and for her work as Advocacy Delegate. I am also grateful to Mr John Davies for the way he has so ably administered the affairs of the Federation.

Helen Henderson
11 September 2007

Note from the Editor: The President's Annual Report was presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation held at the rooms of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria on Sunday 14 October, 2007

REPORTS FROM THE STATES AND TERRITORIES

Please note that these reports are summaries of the reports presented at the Annual General Meeting and any loss of original detail is unintended. ED

Canberra and District Historical Society

The Society's new premises in Curtin were unveiled on 5th May. In spite of the difficulties associated with the move, the work of the Society went on as usual: the bi-monthly newsletter appeared without fail, as did two issues of the Society's prestigious journal. The monthly meetings continued with a variety of interesting speakers. In March, the Society held its annual Canberra Day Oration at the National Library of Australia with guest speaker Paul Perkins AM, the current adjunct professor at the Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, who spoke on the role of water in the history and planning of Canberra the Garden City. This year, for the first time, the Society presented a course of six lectures in Canberra history at the Centre for Continuing Education at the Australian National University. The Society also had a stall at the Family Day at the National Archives of Australia and a very successful spring fair at the new premises. While financial difficulties still loom, some very generous donations, a substantial bequest and

an ACT Heritage Grant have all helped to ease the situation. In particular, Canberra and District Historical Society would like to acknowledge the very generous donation of \$500 from the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

HSNT continues to be a very active organisation, participating in events such as the Government House Open Day in July and in the Northern Territory Heritage week, where members were able to sell books and promote the work of the Society. Lectures continued, with Professor David Carment speaking about regional museums in the Northern Territory at the August lecture and Janie Mason, HSNT Secretary, speaking at the annual Patrons' Dinner. A very successful camping trip to Point Stuart, with three interstate participants, was held during the year. Following the success of the Society's first three Occasional Papers, HSNT has published a fourth, titled "*Tourism and Rock Art in Kakadu*" by Judy Optiz.

Royal Historical Society of Queensland

It has been a very successful year for the Society. Membership numbers have increased and the public profile of the Society has risen considerably. A total of 5,280 visitors were welcomed at the Commissariat Store, which the Society has now nominated for the National Heritage List. Two new exhibitions, one on the theme of Aboriginal breast-plates, were curated at the Commissariat, which also hosted exhibitions by the Journalism Department of the University of Queensland and the Dozen Weavers Group. The Society continues to produce its "*Journal*" and the "*Bulletin*" with a special edition of the Journal in 2006. A group of papers, from a conference on the History of Women's Roles in Queensland, is being prepared for publication. During the year, Honorary Research Officers provided 1,200 hours of volunteer time each Thursday, answering a wide variety of queries from members and the wider public. The monthly lecture program has been of a high standard with stimulating topics, and has included lunch-time talks. Several successful functions were held during the year, including the Queensland Day Dinner and the presentation of the John Douglas Kerr Medal to Dr. Lorna McDonald OAM. The Society's AGM was held at Government House where the Patron, HE the Governor of Queensland, welcomed members and addressed a meeting of 135 people. In May 2007, a bus tour group of members travelled through the Brisbane River Valley and up to the South Burnett. They visited three historic homesteads as well as historical societies at Woodford and Kirby. The Society has continued to have an active role in advocacy and public representation.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

RHSV continues to provide a full program of activities (eg lectures, seminars, excursions and exhibitions) for the benefit of members and the general public. The Society publishes a monthly newsletter, a reviewed journal, the *Victorian Historical Journal*, and books of historical interest. The History Victoria Support Group, a very active group led by Joan Hunt, RHSV Vice-President based in Ballarat, has strengthened the links between RHSV and member societies. The battle to secure funding for the essential operations of the RHSV continued to preoccupy the Society. The annual book sale, excursions and recently, meeting entries and a slight increase in membership have contributed to funds. In the run up to the Society's centenary in 2009, the Society hopes that it will have gained permanent premises where the future of the collections is safeguarded and where there will be a semi-permanent Melbourne historical exhibition. Planning is advancing for a series of events and publications to celebrate the RHSV Centenary in 2009. This year the Society hosted the Annual General Meeting of the Federation of Australian Historical Society. Credit is due to all who assisted with this, especially the full-time Executive Officer, Kate Prinsley.

Royal Western Australian Historical Society

Thanks to the work of the Society's volunteers, RWAHS has experienced a very successful year of activities and a gain in membership numbers. Over \$10,000 was raised from the second-hand book sale, the success of which was, again, due to the hundreds of hours of voluntary effort contributed by members and a generous bequest was also received. These funds, together with the annual State Government administrative grant, covered the costs of opening the office until 5pm weekdays. The Society's monthly

meetings have been well attended with topics chosen by speakers ranging from Australian Rules football, fashion and clothing, to the life and contribution made by a World War 1 chaplain. The Pioneer Memorial address, at which the Strickland family's contribution to the State's history was presented, was followed a week later by Dr Philip Playford's Foundation Day address. Among the Society's ongoing activities has been concern over the possible deleterious impact of economic development on the Burrup peninsula. It has supported National Trust initiatives to preserve and protect the unique cultural heritage of rock art that is clearly in danger from the development process. The Society has also been involved in discussions regarding the so-called Treasury Site in Perth. The RWAHS has obtained a Lotterywest grant to conduct a feasibility study on its property to consider options for a community history house. Lotterywest was also a major supporter of the Society's Exhibition Showcases programme, RWAHS has continue to publish its journal *Early Days* and the newsletter, *History West*.

The Tasmanian Historical Research Association

The Tasmanian Historical Research Association, which has 420 members, conducts monthly lectures and has four excursions annually. This year, the weekend excursion was to Queenstown, an historic mining town on the island's west coast. Places visited included sites associated with 110 years of mining, transportation and power generation, and an artist's studio. Participants also attended a fascinating lecture on Mt Lyell mine manager and collector, Robert Carl Sticht. The Association publishes a quarterly newsletter and a journal *THRA Papers and Proceedings*, which also appears quarterly. After recent years of major publishing activity, the Association has not published any books for the past twelve months. There have been a several changes to the Association's committee this year following the retirement of a number of long-term members, including the Treasurer and the Editors of the *Papers and Proceedings*. The 8th Biennial Tasmanian History Societies Conference, hosted by the Coal River Valley Historical Society was held on the 4th November this year. The theme was "*Defending the Colony*": the Military in Tasmania 1803 to the present.

Editors Note: Due to the absence of delegates from the Royal Australian Historical Society and the withdrawal of the History Council of South Australia as a constituent member there are reports from only six states or territories. ED



**THE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14 OCTOBER 2007** at the rooms of the Royal
Historical Society of Victoria



This year the AGM was hosted by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) and was preceded optional attendance at the annual RHSV Dinner and an historical field trip to the Mornington Peninsula on Saturday 13 October. The trip began with a visit to the site of Lt David Collin's failed 1802-3 settlement, at Sullivan Bay near Sorrento. The group also visited the Nepean Historical Society Museum and the former Quarantine Station at Portsea.

The Annual General Meeting, held at the RHSV premises in the city, was attended by the following: Dr Helen Henderson (President and Royal Western Australian Historical Society & delegate); Mrs Esther Davies (Canberra and District Historical Society & delegate); Ms Yvonne Forrest (Historical Society of the Northern Territory & delegate); Associate Professor Don Garden (Royal Historical Society of Victoria & delegate); Mr Don Gibb (Royal Historical Society of Victoria & delegate), Dr Ruth Kerr (Immediate Past President and Royal Historical Society of Queensland & delegate); Ms Lennie McCall (Hon. Secretary and Royal Western Australian Historical Society & delegate); Dr Bev Phelts (Vice President and Historical Society of the Northern Territory & delegate); Dr Lyn Reid (Hon. Treasurer and Historical Society of the Northern Territory); Mr Ian Terry (Tasmanian Historical Research Association & delegate); the Administrative Officer, Mr John Davies and Ms Kate Prinsley (RHSV Executive Officer). Apologies were received from Mr Manfred Cross (Royal Historical Society of Queensland); Professor Ian Jack (Snr Vice-President and Royal Australian Historical Society); Ms Marilyn Truscott (Canberra and District Historical Society); Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker (Royal Australian Historical Society and delegate).

The meeting received State and Territory reports and annual reports from the President and the Treasurer of the Federation. The two major items discussed were Fellowship and Merit Awards, and the withdrawal of the History Council of South Australia from the Federation. Dr Alison Alexander of Hobart Tasmania was elected as a Fellow of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies. The reason given for the withdrawal of the History Council of South Australia was that, although they valued their association with the Federation, their very limited personnel, financial and other resources and the pressure of other commitments, particularly the early planning for the 175th Jubilee of South Australia's European settlement in 2011, precluded their continued membership of the Federation. **The meeting agreed to consider other options with the object of obtaining a constituent South Australian member.** The matter of the location of the next AGM was deferred until the first teleconference in 2008. Dr Henderson closed the AGM at 11.27am. The AGM was then followed by a general meeting which closed at 3.30pm.

The Federation delegates would, once more, like to thank the RHSV, in particular Kate Prinsley, the Executive Officer of that society, for their very generous hospitality and the excellent organisation of the weekend. It would also like to express thanks to the Nepean Historical Society for their hospitality.

FAHS FELLOWSHIP AWARD

The Federation is pleased to announce that an FAHS Fellowship was awarded, at the Annual General Meeting, to Dr Alison Alexander of Hobart, Tasmania. Dr Alexander's contribution to the study and promotion of history both in Tasmania and at the national level has been outstanding. She has been actively involved in the Tasmanian Historical Research Association for twenty five years and has served six years as its Chairman/President, a position which she currently holds. She was Honorary Secretary for six years, Editor for four years and a member of the Committee for seven years. During this time she has given numerous talks to THRA members and to various community groups. She is also Co-Convenor of the Female Factory Research Group, which is campaigning to restore this site, and has been Patron of the Tasmanian Family History Society. She has published many well-researched books and articles on a wide range of topics. Although these mainly relate to Tasmanian history the work with co-author P Torney-Parlicki, *A Wealth of Women: Australian Women's Lives from 1788 to the Present* (Duffy & Snellgrove, Potts Point, NSW, 2002) cast a wider net. The Royal Society of Tasmania awarded Dr Alexander the Clive Lord Memorial Medal for her contribution to Tasmanian history.

She joined the Federation as a THRA delegate in 1990 and served in that capacity until early 2007. During her time with the Federation, she was Vice-President from 2002 until 2005 and during 2002 combined that office with the position of Hon. Secretary. For a time she was one of the *FAHS Newsletter* Editors. She took a keen interest in the issues being considered by the Federation and contributed her time and expertise generously at all levels of decision-making. As President of THRA, she continues to support the work of the Federation by promoting it to historical societies in Tasmania.

Helen Henderson

ONLINE AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETIES SUPPORT GROUP

If you want information or ideas on matters connected with running your society, researching and publishing history or you want to promote your society why not consider joining the online Australian Historical Societies Support Group, it won't cost a cent to belong. The membership is growing apace. The Forum is active. Issues that have been discussed recently include legal deposit, copyright in connection with reprinting histories, increasing societies' memberships and collection policy.

Beside the forum, there is much else on offer to members. Visit the Federation's website at www.history.org.au and follow the link for more information and details on how to join the group.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT BOOSTS FUNDING FOR THE STATE'S MOVABLE HERITAGE

In a media statement issued on 30 November this year, Hon Sheila McHale, MLA, Western Australian State Minister for Culture and the Arts, announced new initiatives and a funding package of more than \$500,000 from the State Government to make artefacts that tell the story of Western Australia more accessible to the public.

“In the past the focus has been towards Government institutions and their permanent collections but WA has a rich diversity of material cultural heritage, much of which is held in community-based and volunteer-run collections,” Ms McHale said. “Extra support for this sector will include an increased commitment of \$60,000 to the Collections Council of Australia, \$120,000 over three years to pilot a Regional Hub Collections Care project and \$20,000 for publications that showcase industry best practice.

“There will also be increased support of up to \$55,000 for the repatriation of indigenous cultural property through the Cultural Ministers Council. A sum of \$70,000 will be invested through existing Department of Culture and the Arts grants programs, in particular the Emerging Curators and Short Term Artist in Residence programs. In 2008, \$80,000 in new funding will be introduced for innovative development projects across the sector.

“Continued funding for the Royal WA Historical Society and Museums Australia WA to a total of \$270,000 over three years has also been included as part of the package. These changes have been implemented based on the recommendations of a review by the Museum Policy Reference Group. The State Government is committed to helping protect these collections which tell Western Australians so much about who they are and where they've come from. “It is essential we ensure our cultural heritage is not lost.”

Extra information is available from the Department of Culture and the Arts website www.dca.wa.gov.au.

“PUBLISHING HISTORY – A GUIDE FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETIES”

Authors: Helen Doyle and Katya Johanson. Published by FAHS, 2006

Reviewed by Dr. Peter Stanbury

This is a straightforward small book of 76 pages, A5 in size with paper covers. It offers much practical advice and information. It also acts as a check list for anyone in the throes of publishing.

The chapter on “How to publish” discusses the many new forms of publishing now available and will be invaluable to many. “The components of a history book” should also rescue some when they come to make the necessary decisions on the preliminary pages. “Identification and access requirements” explains the mysteries of the ISBN, ISSN and EAN.

Sales and distribution are covered, including the margins you will need to allow in calculating your recommended price, but storage is not, and the storage of 500 or 1,000 books needs to be considered in the overall decision making process. There are some useful “Further reading” sections including examples of publications and a list of useful websites. There is no index, which could have been useful even in a small book like this.

This book is highly recommended for societies or individuals thinking of publishing or writing a modest book on more subjects than history alone.

Copies of “Publishing History” are available by sending a cheque or money order for \$12 (postage within Australia included) to FAHS, GPO Box 1440, Canberra ACT 2601.

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