

HISTORY COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE HISTORY COUNCIL

The History Council of Western Australia has now been in operation for almost nine months. In that time your Committee has been extremely active. We have met ten times at the Constitutional Centre of WA for formal monthly meetings, and have held a number of sub-committee meetings to discuss particular issues. The range of our activities to date are detailed below.

Administration

The Council has gained incorporation, set up financial and banking systems, appointed an honorary auditor, established a mailing list and formulated a privacy policy. We have also made a submission to the WA History Foundation for a grant to enable us to appoint a part time administrative officer, develop a logo for use on stationery, a brochure and newsletter, and establish a web site.

Representing History

The Committee has gained press coverage of the establishment of the History Council in the *West Australian*, sent press releases to the media on significant issues and set up a system for regular media monitoring to gauge the level of historical discussion in the media. We have also

- Lobbied the State Government in support of the proposal to establish a History Centre in 2004 to house community history organisations. The government has announced that \$50,000 has been allocated for a feasibility study.
- Lobbied the Federal Government to request the retention of local census data in perpetuity.
- Provided support to the Historical Records Rescue Consortium in their push to gain funding for digital preservation of the State's documentary heritage.
- Offered assistance to the committee organising the 400th anniversary of Dutch contact with Australia in 2006.
- Supported the relocation of the statue of Governor Stirling to its original site in Barrack Street.

- Offered assistance to the State Government's Working Group, headed by Mark McGowan MP, to advise on an appropriate Anzac Day service for schools and relevant learning materials.
- Met with relevant government officials and begun the development of a process that will encourage the appointment of historians to government boards
- Successfully nominated historians to the State Records Advisory Committee
- Agreed to develop a questionnaire that would be sent to candidates for local, state and federal elections to gauge their interest in history and raise historical awareness

Issues to be addressed in the New Year following a Strategic Planning Session in February will be the teaching of history in schools and the paucity of funding for the State's Cultural institutions, the crisis in school archives, and the preservation, storage and management of archives generated by native title claim research.

History Forum

A forum 'Proclaiming History' was held on 21 October 2003 at the Constitutional Centre of WA during Proclamation Week. A panel of three speakers, Professor Norman Etherington (History UWA), Professor David Black (Curtin) and Mr Peter Johnston (Law UWA) gave excellent addresses on the background and the results of the proclamation of the Western Australian Constitution. The papers will be printed and circulated to members in the New Year.

2004 Journeys Conference

At the request of the Premier, the History Council Committee has agreed to facilitate the History stream of a major conference to be held on 17 to 19th November 2004 at the new Convention Centre. A sub-committee of the History Council Committee has been established to take this forward.

The conference will have four streams — History, Heritage, Indigenous Issues and Science — and is expected to attract international speakers and many hundreds of delegates. We hope that as many historians as possible will be available to take part in this important event. With your support it has the potential to raise the profile of history in this state considerably. A call for expressions of interest is attached.

The Committee of the History Council is looking forward to an exciting year for History in 2004 as we commemorate the 175th anniversary of white settlement at the Swan River Colony.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

Jenny Gregory
President

17 December 2003