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## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **2004/2005**

The 2004/05 committee was as follows:

A/Prof Jenny Gregory (President), Dr Sue Graham-Taylor (Vice President), Ms Moira Mulligan (Secretary), Mr. Robert Mitchell (Treasurer) and Committee Members; Ms Gail Barrow, Ms Kris Bizzaca, A/Prof Peggy Brock, Ms Jennie Carter, Ms Jenny Edgecombe, Dr Neville Green, Mr Damian Hassan, Dr Helen Henderson, Mr Blaze Kwaymullina, A/Prof Lenore Layman, Ms Ruth Marchant James, Ms Lennie McCall. During the year the resignations of Ms Lynley Forgione and Ms Kris Bizzaca were accepted with regret. Ms Margaret Hamilton joined the Committee replacing Ms Bizzaca as a representative of the PHA (WA).

At the end of June 2005 membership stood at 118.

Following the development of the History Council's Strategic Plan in 2003/04, a new meeting structure was put in place to reflect the Strategic Objectives of the Council. As a result, since November 2004, the Committee has met on a bimonthly basis with sub-committees and working parties meeting on alternate months. As well as the Executive, sub-committees include Communications, Community Liaison, History Advocacy, Professional, Membership, and Indigenous History and Events Working Parties. Membership of each sub-committee includes members of the History Council who have expressed interest in committee work, as well as members of the History Council Committee. The convenor of each sub-committee is a member of the main committee. Each sub-committee provides a written report to the bimonthly main committee meetings.

The appointment of Ms Julia Ball as Executive Officer (0.2) in January 2005 has made a considerable difference to the smooth working of the History Council; with more efficient responses to correspondence; a consolidated control over record keeping, including maintenance of the membership database; maintenance of the web site; a single point of contact for membership enquiries; and, most importantly, minute taking for the main committee and providing support for the committee and sub-committees.

We are grateful for the support of the WA History Foundation whose seeding grant to the History Council has made possible the engagement of the Executive Officer and the purchase of a computer, printer, and stationery.

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Reports of the Sub-committees follow:

### **Executive**

Following contact with the History Councils of NSW and SA in previous years, a working relationship has now been established with the History Councils of Australia. The President, a Committee member (Margaret Hamilton) and the Executive Officer attended the inaugural meeting of the History Councils of Australia held at the Australian History Association Conference, University of New South Wales in July 2005. Representatives from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia attended. Each representative gave a brief summary of their Council and its activities. The discussion that followed was extremely useful with ideas generated that will be of benefit to our Council and its future directions. Newsletters are being regularly exchanged. Like other History Councils, the History Council of WA has become an Associate Member of the Australian Historical Association.

Work has commenced on the development of an annual History Week. From 2006 onwards it will be regularly held during the week that includes Foundation Day 4 June.

The President and Vice President have attended meetings with Margaret Allen, new CEO State Library, and Barbara Scott MLA Shadow Minister for Arts, to alert them to the function of the History Council as the state's peak history body.

### **Advocacy**

The History Council has undertaken considerable lobbying for members on a number of issues. Submissions were made on the following topics

- Relocation of the WA Museum's collection to Welshpool, and plans for a new museum
- Future of the Museum of Childhood
- Future of the Certificate of Museum Studies
- The Wand Report
- The preservation of records generated in the Native Title process
- Proposed high-rise commercial development for Cinema City Complex, Perth
- Inadequate funding for state's cultural institutions
- Future status of Batty Library
- Proposed closure of the State Library Bookshop
- Crisis in storage of records held by State Records Office and Batty Library
- Heritage Council — resignation of Chairman
- East Perth Power station Draft Masterplan
- State Government's Tourism and Heritage Strategy

- Federal Government's Productivity Commission on Conservation of Australia's Heritage Places

### **Communication**

The Council has been concerned to develop a regular means of communicating its activities to members and receiving feedback from members. To this end the Communications subcommittee has produced an informative and attractive newsletter. The first of our quarterly Newsletters was sent to members in hard copy and posted on the History Council website in Autumn 2005. An email database of members is being developed to facilitate rapid inexpensive communication. More information has been made available on the website this year, including the keynote address and some papers from the 'WA 2029: A Shared Journey' conference.

### **Events**

- AGM 2004

Following the last AGM Professor Geoffrey Bolton gave a paper 'The Next Assignment' in which he laid down a challenge for future historians of Western Australia.

- 2029 Conference

The History Council organised the History streams of the 'WA 2029: A Shared Journey', a conference convened by the Premier to mark the 175th anniversary of white settlement in Western Australia, and held 17-19 November 2004 at the State Convention Centre. Keynote speakers included Dr Peter Read, Professors Geoffrey Bolton, Brian de Garis, Tom Stannage and David Black. Particular thanks are due to the 2004 Conference Working Party, especially to Jennie Woodroffe and Moira Mulligan for their work in organising the extremely successful History stream, and to Betty O'Rourke Director of the Constitutional Centre and her team, for their work in developing the infrastructure for the conference as a whole.

- Sundowner

A Sundowner was held for members on Thursday 14 June 2005 at the new University Club of Western Australia to celebrate the institution of a separate History Award in the WA Premier's Book Award and to provide members with the opportunity of meeting the inaugural winner of the award, Tony Barker. We were delighted that the Premier attended the Sundowner.

### **Indigenous History**

The Indigenous History sub committee and the Native Title Working Party have been amalgamated. Lobbying has taken place to request mapping the disposal of expert witness history, anthropology and genealogy reports filed for Native Title cases with the Federal Court. A Welcome to Country for use at all public forums organised by History Council has been developed.

### **Professional**

Lobbying to introduce a separate History Award in the WA Premier's Literary Awards and to ensure the inclusion of an historian on the Judging Panel was successful. The WA Premier's Book Award for History was awarded in March 2005 and the State Library accepted both the History Council's judging criteria and the recommendation of an historian to sit on the Judging Panel.

In line with our objective of gaining representation of relevant government boards, a comprehensive list has been compiled. The History Council continues to be represented on the State Records Advisory Committee and the Perth Consultative Committee of the National Archives. Lobbying to recommend historians as board members of other relevant bodies has commenced with the following organisations targeted:

- the Technical Panel for the Lotterywest Community Histories Grant programme
- ArtsWA Peer Assessment Panels
- Library Board of Western Australia

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I thank all retiring members for their work on the committee; A/Professor Peggy Brock, Dr Neville Green, Mr Damian Hassan, A/Professor Lenore Layman and Ms Lennie McCall. I pay particular tribute to Lenore Layman and Lennie McCall. Lenore played a pivotal role in the establishment of the History Council serving on the Working Party investigating its foundation, the subsequent Steering Committee that developed the Constitution for the incorporation of the Council, and the 2003/04 and 2004/05 Committees. Lennie also played an important role serving on the Steering Committee and the 2003/04 and 2004/05 Committees.

A/Professor Jenny Gregory  
President