

Professional Historians Association (NSW)

Annual Report 2005-2006

Objectives of Professional Historians Association (NSW)

PHA (NSW) was formed in 1985 as a professional association for practising qualified historians. It is a member of the national body - **Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations Inc. (ACPHA)**

The objectives of PHA (NSW) are:

- To set and maintain standards of professional practice
- To ensure observance of the Australian Council of Professional Historians' Associations Inc. Code of Ethics and Professional Standards for Professional Historians in Australia
- To pursue common objectives and maintain links with other Australian professional historians' associations through membership of the Australian Council of Professional Historians' Associations Inc.
- To maintain links with other similar organisations
- To promote the concept of professional history and the status of professional historians in the community
- To represent its members in contractual and employment matters
- To inform its members and prospective employers of acceptable standards of employment
- To encourage its members' continuing professional development
- To collect and disseminate information of interest to professional historians

Executive Committee 2005-2006

The committee met nine times since it was elected in August 2005

President	Pauline Curby
Vice President	Peter Tyler
Secretary	Virginia Macleod
Treasurer	Rosemary Kerr
Member	Ron Ringer
Member	Michael Tyquin
Member	Kate Waters/ David Lewis

President's Report

This is my final report as president of PHA (NSW). Although much remains to be done to put this Association at the forefront of history in NSW, we have made some small gains.

The work done during this most enjoyable and productive three years has been a team effort. The PHA has never – and should never be - a one-man/woman band. Members of the executive have all worked hard and I would especially like to thank Peter Tyler, Virginia Macleod and Rosemary Kerr, the members who have been with me on the executive for the whole of this three-year period. It can be onerous being president of an organisation in which all work is done on a voluntary basis, but when the burden is shared it is manageable. There are areas of PHA administration that I have little to do with because these are in the hands of a reliable member of the executive. It's good to know that a job is being well done because members of the team are hard working and reliable.

I am also most appreciative of other PHA members who regularly come forward when volunteers are called upon. They undertake numerous tasks such as representing the PHA on committees, compiling *Phanfare*, administering the website, looking after the library, and conducting workshops. Thank you to all these stalwart members. As usual we are most appreciative of the support of the Royal Australian Historical Society in allowing us to house our filing cabinet at History House and making this beautiful venue available to us for meetings and functions.

This year there have been several initiatives within the PHA. We were able to submit an appropriate response to the Productivity Commission's draft report, *Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places* due to the work of PHA member Christa Ludlow. She undertook a small consultancy for the PHA so that our submission could adequately deal with a range of complex issues relating to the proposed changes to heritage legislation and management. (see separate report)

The PHA decided that the consultants' register should have a fresh new look to help us maintain a contemporary image. It is hoped that these changes will help us market ourselves more effectively as professionals with valuable services to offer. Unfortunately only some members took advantage of the opportunity to submit their register entry in the new format.

Another important initiative has been the establishment of a PHA committee to investigate updating and enlarging the Register of Historic Places and Objects (ROHPO), established some years ago. This was created with funding from the NSW Heritage Office's Heritage Incentives Program, and a consultancy managed by the PHA (NSW). A committee to undertake a 'gatekeeping' role in relation to this register has been set up and has been conducting lively email discussions. (see separate report)

Continuing professional development (see separate report) remained a priority for the Association and Peter Tyler and I have organised a varied program of activities. While there are small attendances at some workshops, generally these activities are well supported. Our most successful event this year has been the 'History in July' networking evening held at History House on 19 July.

As usual members of the executive continue to examine consultancy briefs and discuss issues with commissioning bodies to try and ensure that the best interests of the history profession are served. It is disappointing when we don't hear from many of these again. We can only reiterate

that it costs time and money to produce a quality professional publication and historians cannot be expected to work for 'peanuts'. It is not known if the ACPHA scale of fees frightens some away but it should be noted that these are modest professional fees that have not been updated for some years.

There are several issues of concern that the executive feels will need to be addressed and/or monitored in the future. Some members, for example have expressed the opinion that ACPHA needs to become more dynamic. Members are looking forward to its website update soon.

The reduction in opening hours at Mitchell Library earlier this year has caused concern to a number of members especially those with nine to five jobs. We wrote to both the former and the new State Librarian to convey our concern. Representation has also been made to Minister for the Arts, Bob Debus. Three members of the executive have an appointment to see the new state librarian the day before our AGM so we will be able to report to you on the outcome of this at the meeting.

As a result of a special meeting held in June to discuss future directions for the PHA it was decided that we should:

- have a presence at the biennial AHA conferences
- work more closely with the History Council
- establish links with the Heritage Advisors' Network
- advertise our 'wares' in business and architectural publications
- use the PHA website creatively to showcase members' work
- organise CPD workshops on how to undertake and budget for scoping studies.
- organise training workshops for professionals/community groups involved in heritage studies on the elements of good historical investigation and writing.

Discussions are already under way with the History Council and the NSW Heritage Office. Hopefully your next president will be able to report to you more fully on the results of these initiatives next year.

Thank you all for your support and the encouragement you have given me since taking on the honoured office of PHA president.

Pauline Curby President

Secretary's Report

Potential jobs, events, electronic literature, articles and newsletters have been regularly forwarded to all members by email. We have also received a diminishing number of inquiries by phone and letters, as most people contact us electronically now. We have added some extras to the website to make our fees and list of members more accessible

This year membership has held steady just under the hundred mark. We have 66 full members, 21 associates and 8 graduates. There have been eight new full members this year, one associate and two graduates.

This my last year as Secretary and I shall miss the electronic contact with so many members. I have enjoyed working with my fellow committee members who have been supportive, imaginative and congenial. Thank you.

Virginia Macleod Secretary

Professional Development

This has been another busy year of Continuing Professional Development activities, as this list shows. We have tried to cater for a variety of interests, but it is inevitable that not every event will appeal to all members, although there has been a hard core of regular participants. A couple of the events were booked out in advance, which is encouraging for the organising committee, yet one or two events only attracted small numbers. We are always anxious to meet members' real needs, so please suggest topics for future activities. Like other professionals, it is important that historians maintain their competency in the areas where they practice, and that they can demonstrate their current knowledge to clients.

Saturday 3 September 2005 – “Making History Pay” workshop at History House (Panel of PHA members).

Friday 23 September 2005 – History Week event: “An Island in Transformation” - guided tour of Cockatoo Island.

Saturday 12 November 2005 – “Researching Land Titles Records” at History House (Terry Kass).

Wednesday 14 December 2005 – Annual PHA Christmas Party History House.

Wednesday 15 February 2006 – “Show and Tell” (Panel of PHA members).

Saturday 29 April 2006 – Workshop on maps, at History House (Terry Kass).

Saturday 27 May 2006 – Copyright workshop, at History House (Zoë Rodriguez).

Wednesday 19 July 2006 – “History in July”, networking social function History House (Guest speaker – Professor Ann Curthoys, ANU).

Our History Week event for 2006 will be “Lavender Bay to Homebush Bay”, on Wednesday, 20th September. It will be a 3-hour ferry trip along the Parramatta River with a local historian to explore some of the bays and inlets that were significant for early settlers. A walk around historic Lavender Bay will follow.

Pauline Curby and Peter Tyler

***Phanfare* Co-ordinator's Report**

For yet another year, *Phanfare* has provided a range of articles, reports and reviews of an excellent standard. The members of the collectives have remained much the same as last year and have worked long and hard to provide members with a quality newsletter. Rosemary Broomham has continued the task of downloading, printing and posting the hard copies required mainly for institutions.

We are always looking for new ‘blood’, either as members of the collectives or as writers of material for *Phanfare*. All volunteers are very welcome. Should you have suggestions for improvements, bring them with you to the AGM.

Annette Salt ***Phanfare*** Co-ordinator

ROHPO Report

The sub-Committee was convened in February 2006 in response to concern about the lack of growth and development of the PHA's Register of Historic Places and Objects (ROHPO) since its creation in 2001, and to review the relevance of the ROHPO for the PHA. The membership of the sub-Committee is as follows: Bruce Baskerville, Margaret Blundell, Emma Dortins, Jodie Frawley, Ian Jack, Susan McClean, Nicole Secomb, Anne Smith.

The sub-Committee met once in late February, before resolving to conduct the review through online discussions. The sub-Committee sought input from PHA members through *Phanfare*, and through the ROHPO web-page. Some input was received, as well as a nomination to the Register.

The sub-Committee reaffirms the importance of the ROHPO, and finds that ongoing support for the register in the form of a dedicated sub-Committee is necessary for its viability. A more detailed account of the sub-Committee's findings will be presented at the AGM.

Emma Dortins

Library Report

The main function of the Honorary Librarian is to receive and store library material and to report on items of interest in regular Library Reports in *Phanfare*, the newsletter of the Professional Historians Association of NSW. The majority of items received are newsletters and journals from other historical organisations and societies. The Library Reports keep local members informed of interstate activities, events and publications of historical relevance and connect them to other corporate members of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations (ACPHA).

As in the previous year, the material received by the PHA Librarian from 2005 to 2006 was transferred to the Royal Australian Historical Society for storage. RAHS Librarian Kathy Curran accessions the material, culling duplicates in the process. Most of the unduplicated material consists of newsletters from interstate and New Zealand Professional Historians Associations. These publications are available to RAHS and PHA members.

During the financial year 2005 to 2006, the PHA Librarian compiled five library reports appearing in *Phanfare* in July-August 2005, Sept-Oct, Jan-Feb, Mar-April, and July-August 2006. While ACPHA represents professional historians' interests at a national level, PHA newsletters from the various states provide information at a local level. It is the Librarian's role to alert NSW members to what is happening elsewhere and to provide details about recent publications and reviews, historical events and activities, and archival and library matters. This gives us parameters enabling us to evaluate the status of our own organisation. As well, many of the projects undertaken by historians in New South Wales extend beyond state borders. It is particularly useful to inform our members about new resources identified by members of other associations and to direct them to websites which might assist their own research and professional development.

Terri McCormack Honorary Librarian

ACPHA Report

During the past year, ACPHA has continued to work on fine-tuning the ethics and appeals procedures to produce a workable system that also meets all legal requirements. Advice has been provided to member PHAs on a range of issues, in particular relating to tax status and the application of accreditation standards to new members. The issue of obtaining affordable insurance for PHA members has continued to exercise ACPHA. After considerable negotiation, ACPHA was able to organise a new group insurance policy, again through Ambro Insurance Brokers in Victoria, at a much more affordable rate than individual policies. ACPHA continues working on a common constitution, acceptable to all PHAs and in line with ongoing legal advice.

Kate Waters resigned as ACPHA Treasurer and delegate for NSW this year. The NSW delegate is now David Lewis. ACPHA's AGM was held at the State Library of Victoria on 5-6 August 2006. This coincided with the launch of the new logo.

Kate Waters & David Lewis

Response to Productivity Commission's final report, Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places

The Productivity Commission's final report, *Conservation of Australia's Historic Heritage Places* was released in July 2006. Regrettably this contains a number of instances where weaknesses in the arguments and conclusions evident in the draft report - as pointed out by the PHA and other participants - have been effectively ignored. This would seem to be because it does not suit the Productivity Commission's thesis that government involvement in heritage conservation should be reduced. The Productivity Commission itself failed to recognise the validity of the submissions, stating that,

There was a very strong reaction to the Draft Report ... centred on the key recommendation [that heritage listing be dependent upon a conservation agreement] ... there was significant misinterpretation and misunderstanding by many heritage industry participants of the intent of this and other associated recommendations.

Nevertheless the response by participants led to the Productivity Commission modifying its key recommendation that statutory heritage listing of private property should only occur on the basis of a negotiated conservation agreement with the owner and that the listing would only remain while the agreement was in force. The Productivity Commission now recommends only that listing authorities have the power to negotiate such agreements and that authorities be required to be more thorough and fair in the listing process. However it has produced a new recommendation, not discussed in the draft report, that private owners be able to appeal listing on the basis of 'unreasonable cost'.

It appears that the Productivity Commission inquiry has been a lost opportunity to take a thorough and creative approach to improving heritage conservation.

1. One of the PHA's criticisms was that the Productivity Commission's draft report lacked rigour, was based on anecdotal evidence and made sweeping unsupported generalisations. For example, it was claimed that participants argued there was an incentive to list 'too much' heritage. The PHA pointed out that the submissions cited as evidence for this in fact said nothing of the sort. While the final report quotes some of those submissions in

more detail, the quotations cited do not support this contention, and yet the contention remains, still without support.

2. The PHA also criticised the statement that there was 'little doubt' among participants in the inquiry that conservation agreements would result in more beneficial outcomes, where there was no citation of those participants and no evidence that they had been asked that question. It was pointed out that no evidence of such outcomes existed as conservation agreements were rarely used in Australia and even the Commonwealth scheme which focussed on such agreements had not implemented any.

Regrettably this statement remains in place and the Productivity Commission gives uncritical support to the untried Commonwealth system, stating unequivocally that,

The new Australian Government system, which has the potential to focus on 'conservation by agreement', should result on greater conservation outcomes than 'conservation by force'.

It is clear that the Australian Government system is favoured by the Productivity Commission before it has even completed its examination of the other systems.

3. The Productivity Commission has taken on board the argument in many submissions that it had failed to address some of its terms of reference, including that it has not used its expertise in the economic arena to suggest new modes of funding and management or to examine those in use overseas. It has addressed funding in more detail, and given examples of overseas models, but it has not made any recommendations about funding models. This seems a patent abrogation of its functions.
4. The Productivity Commission made a recommendation which was not contained in the draft report. This involves giving owners a right to appeal against heritage listing on the basis of unreasonable cost. The Productivity Commission's sympathy towards developers is evident in its view of what would be taken into account in determining unreasonable costs - development opportunities lost, decrease in capital value, and consequences of foregone options to increase 'liveability'. But none of these are actual costs. These are possible opportunities to make money. The actual 'costs' of owning a heritage property - maintenance and conservation - are tacked on as an afterthought (p. 240).
5. The PHA pointed out that the Productivity Commission's draft report lacked a historical perspective on the development of heritage listing and conservation activity in Australia. The Productivity Commission recognised this contribution by the PHA in a footnote, but did not alter its perspective, which was that conservation activity has really only occurred since 1945 and has largely been conducted by private organisations such as the National Trust, until the 1970s when green bans led to political pressure. This supports its view that heritage conservation is best left to 'the market'.

Christa Ludlow

History Council Report

The History Council of NSW functions as the peak body representing history and historians in NSW. In addition to PHA NSW members, the History Council of NSW includes representatives from State Records Authority, State Library, Heritage Office, Society of Australian Genealogists, City of Sydney, university history departments, museums and professional and community history groups. The PHA NSW is represented by Mark Dunn, a professional historian working in the heritage industry, who took over the role at the start of 2006 from Laila Ellmoos..

In September 2005 the History Council organised a successful History Week festival based around the theme of Transformation, with upwards of 150 events throughout the state. The week was launched with the tenth Annual History Lecture presented by Dr Bruce Scates on the Ghosts of Gallipoli, which examined the intersection between personal and collective memory about Gallipoli, ninety years after the battle. History Week 2005 was also the launch year of Off the Beaten Track, which involved a lecture series in regional NSW. Professor Richard Waterhouse visited Orange, Kempsey and Wagga with a lecture titled 'Agrarian Ideals, Pastoral Realities: the Use & Misuse of Land in Rural Australia 1788-2004'.

In 2006 History Week is exploring dual themes under the one banner 'Find Yourself in History' which addresses the 400th anniversary of the first documented European Map of Australia and the 150 Year anniversary of the election of the first Parliament in NSW. Following 2005's success, the Off the Beaten Track lecture series is also being restaged with four new regional centres hosting. At the close of entries for events more than 180 had been registered, from exhibitions, walks, tours, lectures and demonstrations. As an associated event this year, the History Council is also hosting a Max Kelly forum to discuss the modern city, Sydney since the 1960s. A number of noted historians and commentators will talk on Sydney since the 1960s, changes and challenges.

During 2005-2006 the History Council made a submission to the Conservation of Historic Heritage Places public inquiry conducted by the Productivity Commission. The History Council's submission emphasised the important role of historians in the assessment of our heritage and how the identification and conservation of historic heritage places is a way in which our history can be interpreted and presented to the community. The History Council also made a submission to the State Library of NSW regarding the change of opening hours for the library and what effect these changes will have on researchers. The History Council also supports the Vote Yes campaign for the 2006 census in regards the retention of the census records for future researchers.

Laila Ellmoos & Mark Dunn PHA Representatives

Community Advisory Committee of the State Records of NSW Report

The PHA continues to be represented on the Community Advisory Committee of State Records NSW which met four times. Reports on two meetings were published in *Phanfare*.

Members are also advised by email when State Records' publications (such as *For the Record, Now and Then* and *Vital Signs*) are available on its website.

Roslyn Burge

NAA Consultative Forum Report

The Forum met a total of three times in the last financial year. Terry Kass had earlier raised the issue of the privatisation of the plan collection of the Department of Housing and Construction, which bypassed the normal assessment process for archival sentencing. NAA pursued that matter. This occurred before NAA had been informed of the sale, so it was not possible to retrieve these records. However, as a result of this lapse in procedures, the archival assessment and sentencing of records by the Department of Administrative Services, which was responsible for this, has been brought under tighter control.

Terry Kass was invited to participate in a meeting at Chester Hill to provide input from archival staff and users about the appraisal and sentencing schedule, which was being devised for the Department of Housing and Construction. He was the only person invited to this meeting from a non-archival background. Terry Kass has also liaised with NAA about the macro-appraisal programme, which NAA is currently preparing for more recent records. He sought clarification of the project, in order to allay concerns from some PHA members about the project.

The NAA is now making lists of record series that had recently been cleared for access available to members of the Forum at each meeting. The meetings also provide data about recent NAA exhibitions and outreach activities as well as serving as general forums to provide user input into NAA operations. The Director-General of the NAA, Ross Gibbs, attended the May meeting to observe the operations of the NSW Forum.

Terry Kass, PHA Representative

History Advisory Panel to NSW Heritage Office Report

Due to the re-casting of government departments during the year, the NSW Heritage Office was abolished and then re-established as part of the NSW Department of Planning. As a result, there were fewer meetings of the Panel than in the previous year. In the midst of this, the Chair of the Panel, Ian Jack, retired after having served the maximum number of terms in the post. His input and guidance over that period was warmly acknowledged by Susan Macdonald, Assistant Director of the Heritage Office, at his last meeting as Chair on 24 November 2005. Rosemary Annable replaced him as Chair.

During the year, the Panel devised a set of strategic priorities for the next few years, and provided advice and input to the Heritage Office on a number of matters. Its main project, after the successful framing and implementation of the Guidelines for Assessing Historical Value, is to draw up Guidelines for 'Social Value' an element that few have attempted to formalize. It is devouring a considerable quantity of time and effort for the Panel. The Panel added new members with expertise in heraldry due to the addition of heraldry to its duties. In consequence, there has been considerable activity for the Panel following up matters of concern particularly with courts administration.

As always, Bruce Baskerville has ably and exhaustively served the Panel as its secretary and as the in-house member.

Terry Kass, PHA Representative

Treasurer's Report for the Year Ending 30 June 2006

The PHA's financial position remains healthy at the close of the 2006 year, with funds totaling \$10,585.69. While the Income and Expenditure Statement shows that expenses exceeded income by \$9,550.36, this was primarily due to the one-off payment of \$8,800 to the History Council of NSW. That amount represented a refund / transfer of unused grants from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for the publication of *Public History Review*. As explained in last year's Treasurer's Report, the PHA has ended its association with *PHR*, which is now published independently by UTS in electronic format. As instructed by the Ministry, the PHA forwarded the unused grant money to the History Council in July 2005. The History Council used the funds for a successful series of traveling lectures in regional New South Wales.

Other major items of expenditure during the year included advertising and promotion, on which just over \$650 was spent on developing a brochure to promote the PHA and its activities to be distributed at appropriate events. This is part of a campaign to raise the PHA's profile with potential members and commissioning bodies.

In April, the PHA commissioned member, Christa Ludlow, to prepare a submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into the Conservation of Australia's Heritage Places, following the release of a draft report in April 2006. The conclusions and recommendations of this Inquiry, if implemented, will have serious implications for the management and practice of heritage in Australia, and, therefore, many of our members who work in this field. The Management Committee felt it was important that the PHA present a formal submission to the Inquiry and we thank Christa for her work on this.

The other major area of expenditure has been in providing regular Continuing Professional Development activities. Throughout the 2005-6 year, the CPD sub-committee has organized a range of events, including a well-attended excursion to Cockatoo Island during History Week 2005. Other highlights were a series of workshops including; "Making History Pay"; "Copyright"; and "Land Titles" and "Maps", in which Terry Kass shared his vast knowledge of these topics. As the financial statements show, the expenditure on these events exceeds the fees charged by approximately \$550 so that the PHA is subsidising these activities to some extent. However, the Committee feels that this is the most appropriate use of members' funds.

The PHA's funds are represented by its St. George Bank Business Cheque Account of \$5,125.34 and a St. George Bank Term Deposit of \$5,460.35. The term deposit is due to mature on 25 September and we will then consider amalgamating our funds into one new "Society" Cheque account with St. George Bank that will not attract fees.

I'd like to thank the other members of the executive for their support, and particularly, Secretary, Virginia Macleod, whose hard work and efficiency has helped to make the Treasurer's role a smooth one.

Rosemary Kerr Treasurer