



President's Report

Prof Deborah Gare

27 October 2021

Committee Membership

The Committee of the History Council of WA has met formally on six occasions in the past year, and the executive twice. Its members have included the following people in 2020-2021:

| Member | Office | Representation |
|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| Deborah Gare | President | The University of Notre Dame Australia |
| Bruce Baskerville | Vice President | Centre for WA History Local and regional history/heritage |
| Lucy Hair | Secretary | Local history and government Heritage |
| Nick Drew | Treasurer | Royal Historical Society of WA |
| Pam Harris | Membership Secretary | Fremantle History Society |
| Toni Church | Committee Member | Old Court House Law Museum |
| Lorraine Clarke | Committee Member | Western Australia Genealogy Society Friends of Battyé |
| Kyra Edwards | Committee Member | Local government Indigenous communities |
| Jenny Gregory | Committee Member | The University of Western Australia National Trust of WA |
| Vanessa Kirkham | Committee Member | History Teachers Association of WA |
| Bri McKenzie | Committee Member | Curtin University Gender and inclusivity |
| Geoff Moor | Committee Member | Local history and government |
| Helen Munt | Committee Member | Professional Historians Association Heritage City of Perth Cultural Advisory Committee |
| Bobbie Oliver | Committee Member | The University of Western Australia Labour History Society State Records Office of WA NAA Perth Consultative Forum |
| Samantha Owen | Committee Member | Curtin University Chamber of Arts and Culture |
| Justin Owen | Committee Member | Curtin University Heritage and built materials |
| Cindy Solonec | Committee Member | Indigenous communities |
| John Toohey | Committee Member | Local and community history |

It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve with my colleagues, and I thank them sincerely for their impact, enthusiasm and dedication to the History Council.

I particularly thank several colleagues who have declared their intent to retire from the committee at the 2021 AGM, following significant service to the History Council (and other organisations in the history and heritage sectors): **Nick Drew, Pam Harris, Vanessa Kirkham and Geoff Moor.**

We have received an exceptional number of **nominations for committee in 2021-2022**, which, for the first time, will include representation from regional communities in Albany, the Kimberley and the state's Mid-West. The History Council's constitution no longer sets limits on the number of committee members. Given the significant tasks ahead for the following year, we welcome the contribution that each existing and new member will make.

Preparing for 2029

Western Australia will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Swan River Colony in 2029, in addition to the 200th anniversary of Britain's settlement at Albany in 2026. The anniversary presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to interpret, reflect upon, commemorate, and teach others about the origins of our community.

Most importantly, it will provide momentum in the reappraisal of Western Australia's past, including that of the frontier, in which Indigenous voices will shape our understandings.

Advocacy and influence in preparing for 2029 was the most significant issue to occupy the History Council in the past year, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

The committee has worked hard to influence policy and preparations of the state government, and continues to be in conversation with representatives of the Premier and Minister for Heritage and the Arts.

I am delighted that we have made new friends with Danjoo Koorliny, a Noongar advocacy organisation situated within UWA's Centre for Social Impact that is led by Indigenous elders Richard Walley, Noel Nannup, Colleen Hayward and Carol Innes. The History Council shares similar values and intent with Danjoo Koorliny, which are principally to encourage collaborative, inclusive and impactful outcomes from the state's bicentenary.

In a major contribution to the design of and momentum for 2029, the History Council has been working with colleagues at Reconciliation WA, Notre Dame, UWA and Curtin to convene a public lecture by **Henry Reynolds on 'Truth Telling'**.

This event, proposed for May 2022, will be followed by a **History Summit**, at which we hope to gather participants and stakeholders in Western Australian history and heritage to establish strategic principles for research, commemoration, interpretation, community engagement and other activities that will shape the 200th anniversary.

We hope the event will be partnered by government and Indigenous groups, and inclusive of regional participants, and have been negotiating with key stakeholders to this effect throughout 2021.

History Council of WA: Annual Public Lecture, 27 October 2021

To begin the conversation regarding truth-telling, collaboration and preparing for 2029, the **2021 public lecture** (delivered on 27 October, at the conclusion of the AGM) will feature several voices: ATAR history students from Lakeland Senior High School, Lenore Layman, Simon Forrest and Danjoo Koorliny colleagues. We have asked them to consider two key questions:

- What does truth in the past mean to you?
- What do you hope will be achieved in 2029?

History Council of Western Australia, Inaugural Awards

I am delighted that, in 2021, the History Council will present its inaugural **History Awards** to individuals and organisations who have made outstanding contributions to advocacy for and/or understandings of Western Australian history.

This year we received more than 20 nominations from individuals, students, museums, local government organisations, community associations, professional associations, and journals. Nominations were assessed by an experienced panel of judges and ratified by the History Council Committee. Awards will be presented for the following categories at the 2021 AGM:

- an outstanding and enduring contribution to understandings, impact and advocacy in Western Australian history;
- a significant contribution to understandings of Indigenous history in Western Australia;
- a significant contribution to understandings of local history in Western Australia;
- a significant contribution to the teaching of Western Australian history;
- an innovative student contribution to understandings of Western Australian history; and
- an innovative project, published or unpublished work by an emerging historian.

In 2021, we are also delighted to present a special award to the newly completed Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip, in recognition of the outstanding contribution to public history and cultural heritage that the project has achieved and will continue to achieve.

Advocacy

The History Council's work in advocacy for history and heritage has continued in the past year. We have made **submissions to local, state and federal governments** on matters relating to social, material and Indigenous history and heritage. These have included:

- City of Fremantle proposed changes to planning in the heritage-listed West End, including in-person representation;
- Minister for Heritage and the Arts, the Hon David Templeman, regarding operations of the Heritage Council and review of the Windsor Hotel (Nedlands) application for entry to the state's register of heritage places;
- Minister for Water, the Hon Dave Kelly and the Minister for Environmental Protection, the Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson, regarding water management schemes in Marturwarra-Fitzroy River, a significant Indigenous heritage site;
- Commonwealth Government, following the Tune Review of the National Archives of Australia, submitted jointly by the History Councils of Australia, advocating for preservation of archives and continuing access to local researchers in Western Australia; and

- Town of Bassendean, encouraging them to retain the Pensioner Guard Cottage in public hands.

In 2020 we signed a Memo of Understanding with the History Council of New South Wales, History Council of Victoria, and History Council of South Australia to form the **History Councils of Australia**. Its intent is to (i) maintain and develop the Value of History Statement; and (ii) advocate for the discipline of history, the work of historians, and history in the broader public sphere. In 2021, the HCA is being chaired by colleagues in New South Wales, which will be rotated to other states in future years.

Communications

The History Council has continued to issue quarterly newsletters to its members in 2020 and 2021, disseminating important information regarding activities, policy and advocacy in the history and heritage sectors. I thank the editors who have coordinated the newsletters of the past year: John Toohey, Helen Munt, Bri McKenzie and Bruce Baskerville, and Grace Kaspe from Flametree for her work in disseminating those to members.

However, we recognise that emailed newsletters aren't always the most agile form of communication for members, and in 2022 we intend to conduct a review of our communications strategy. Feedback from members about the platform and regularity with which they prefer to receive information is welcomed.

Events

In September 2020 the AGM was followed by an excellent public lecture offered by Prof Andrea Gaynor, from The University of Western Australia.

In December 2020 the History Council's annual Christmas event commenced with a tour of the newly-opened Boola Bardip museum by Alec Coles, CEO; and followed by a shared meal at the PICA bar in Northbridge.

Important dates

Please note the following important dates in the next year. Confirmation and further details will follow closer to each event:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 6:30pm, Tuesday 7 December 2021 | HCWA Christmas event (TBC) |
| 5:30pm, Thursday 19 May 2022 | Henry Reynolds, 'Truth Telling', public lecture |
| 10:00am – 4:00pm, Friday 20 May 2022 | 2029: History summit |
| 1 July 2022 | History Awards, nominations close |