



HOTHAM HISTORY PROJECT Inc.

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Estab. 1995
ABN: 89 919 256 977

Chair's Report 2016-2017

On the land of Wurundjeri our deepest respect to their elders, past, present and to come and to any other elders who are with us today.

Thank you to the members of the Hotham History Committee and to the membership for your continuing support.

Being a history project we are watchful of the world around us and of its beginnings and endings. Yet HHP's 2017 has been a bower bird year - that is we have recognised stories and facts from different directions and sources and put them carefully in our collection of treasures.

To some extent our own work is going through a period of consolidation. We have a number of projects and putative projects that are still underway including a joint publication with the Flagstaff Bowls Club, stories of life in West Melbourne, the possible publication of walks we have conducted in the past and additional uses of parts of our oral history collection.

At the same time we know - we can see – that we are entering into a period where great change is happening all around us – especially to the nature of industry and patterns of employment that particularly affect us as a former industrial area.

As building projects are planned or under construction to house double our present population, tsunamis of social change clear the way for a new identity and a new population. Beyond the development of new housing and an increased population is the gentrification that accompanies them.

So as we meet here this afternoon, our North and West Melbourne is becoming a thing of the past and what we preserve and record of that past, how we will explain ourselves to our own future is a matter for deliberation.

That will be, is, the task of the year to come.

Meanwhile some of our 2017 ventures are new to us and some familiar.

Among this financial year's new ventures was a guided excursion to the Pioneer section of the Fawcner Cemetery where we visited the graves of some of the C19th locals who have been reinterred there after the move from the car park area of the Queen Victoria Market.

A growing stream of activity has been our joining various community events to spread stories from our store of history: for example tributes to Ruth Crow at the Arts House REFUGE, a phone

guided walk in the area near the PROV and a program of talks for small audiences about iconic local people and events at the Spring Fling .

In the same spirit of sharing what we can where we can, we provided financial support for the publication of a work of local interest *Nicholas O Donnell's Autobiography* edited by Val Noone

The partnership with the library where photos and paper documents are stored and where we hold most of our public events is crucial to our activities. During this year it also resulted in a joint presentation during the National Heritage Month of *Voices of North Melbourne*, eye witness accounts of life in some of the early established streets

Particular thanks to Heather McKay who has done so much to make the resources of the North Melbourne Library accessible to researchers; to Bill Hannan who writes articles for *The North and West Melbourne News*, to those who tend the website and retiring committee members Lyn Martin and Marlene Shanahan who are moving away from the district.

Other elements of the year's program were the Australian premiere screening of *Laurette 1942* , introduced by Laurette's daughter Veronique Haverstock, and talks by Ian Jenkins, member of the Australian Railway Association on the *Introduction of rail to North and West Melbourne* and Frank Golding, author of *An orphan's escape* with an account including autobiographical detail of local institutions that have cared for children whose families did not, could not, or were prevented from doing so.

NOTE Thank you all for the support you have given to our program during 2017 and we look forward to seeing you at various events during the coming year. If you think you might be interested in working on one of our projects or if you have one of your own that you would like to bring to us, please leave your name and contact details with myself or our deputy chair Rae Nicholls

Lorna Hannan

26 August 2017