



*Professional Historians
Association (Vic & Tas) Inc*

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PHA (Vic & Tas) Committee of Management Statement

The Professional Historians Association (Vic & Tas) thanks the Victorian Government for its advocacy in favour of an education curriculum that encourages an appreciation of history. Australian culture and identity is underpinned by an awareness of our nation's history. History is multi-layered, sometimes conflicting, and essential to the understanding of our society today.

Our organisation is allied with the History Teachers Association of Victoria, the History Council of Victoria and the Royal Historical Association of Victoria, and collectively we share the same vision and concerns on this debate. PHA (Vic & Tas) members are employed in education, museums, universities, libraries, archives, heritage and as freelance history consultants. Although many of our members do not have direct contact with school children, as a profession we are invested in the education of young people who will contribute to our profession and our society in the future.

Professional historians are particularly concerned that teaching about past lives and events, including social changes related to First Nations people, colonisation, patterns of migration, war, environmental issues and gender divisions – many of which are difficult concepts – be explored without prejudice in history teaching. We appreciate that teachers are coping with a very full curriculum and can only touch on many aspects of Australia's history and its relationship to the wider world, but students need to be given a framework for making sense of the world and questioning why things are as they are.

We endorse the view of the History Teachers Association of Victoria that it is not a teacher's role to tell students what they should believe in or value, their role is to train students in a discipline that asks questions and examines evidence and that contested interpretations of events are central to historical practice. Indeed, we concur with the Government's view that the curriculum should be 'balanced' and have a 'diverse history offering that covers both the inspiring and challenging parts of our nation's history.'

The PHA (Vic & Tas) values and advocates for a considered approach to the teaching of history and seeks a similar consensus from the forthcoming meeting of Education Ministers.


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