



**MESSAGES FROM THE FAHS PRESIDENT  
TO ALL HISTORICAL AND HERITAGE SOCIETIES AND MEMBERS**

There are many important developments occurring in the area of community history and heritage to which we wish to draw your attention, and in some cases to seek your assistance.

Please distribute this message widely.

**PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

Following a suggestion by the FAHS, the Commonwealth Minister responsible for Heritage, the Hon Greg Hunt, initiated the promotion of a Parliamentary Friends of History and Heritage group within federal Members of Parliament. It has now been established, with Eric Hutchinson (Liberal, Tasmania) as Convenor and Laurie Ferguson (Labor, NSW) as Co-Convenor.

The purpose of the group is to make Members of Parliament aware of the issues and challenges facing heritage protection and promotion in Australia.

**The FAHS requests that history and heritage society members draw the existence of the group to the attention of their local Federal MP's and Senators and urge them to join.**

**COMMONWEALTH FUNDING OF HISTORY AND HERITAGE**

Members may not be aware that the Commonwealth has now effectively withdrawn from the funding of Historic Heritage except for sites considered of national significance. The final nail in the coffin was the so-called Chaplains case (Williams v Commonwealth)

The Environment Department provided operational funding through Grants to Voluntary Environment, Sustainability and Heritage Organisations until 2014. This was discontinued and replaced in the 2014 Budget with the Community Heritage and Icons Grants. However, such distributions to community bodies ran foul of the Chaplains case, after which small community grants were abandoned and the Icons programme is essentially limited to supporting sites on the National Heritage List.

**CONSEQUENTLY, THERE IS NO CURRENT NATIONAL FUNDING SCHEME TO PROVIDE GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS OR A CLEAR PATH TO ASSIST COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE OWNERS OF HERITAGE PROPERTIES.**

The FAHS has approached both the Government and the Opposition to urge them to find a way to solve this legal issue and to reintroduce Commonwealth community heritage support.

The FAHS requests that history and heritage society members draw this problem to the attention of their local Federal MP's and Senators and encourage them to urge all parties to unite in working towards a solution.

### **A NATIONAL LOTTERY TO SUPPORT HERITAGE**

Minister Greg Hunt has initiated a move towards examining the possible establishment of a National Lottery whose profits would be used to support heritage and the arts, including making grants available for the community history and heritage movement.

The details are not yet clear, but it is expected to operate along the lines of the UK National Lottery which makes large sums available for heritage and arts projects.

The FAHS supports this scheme and requests that members draw the proposal to the attention of their local Federal MP's and Senators and urge their support.

### **COMMUNITY HERITAGE PORTAL**

The FAHS supported the establishment of the Australia's Community Heritage online portal and continues to promote it.

Please read the following document provided by the Heritage Branch of the Department of the Environment. The FAHS requests that all societies assist to 'populate the portal' and use it to promote their own society and the history and heritage of their region.



Australia's Community Heritage website  
[www.communityheritage.net.au](http://www.communityheritage.net.au)

*Do you have an interest in Australian heritage?*

*Are you interested in your family's history and the places your ancestors may have lived and worked in?*

*Do you have a story to tell about a person, place or event in Australian history?*

*If your group, organisation or society wants a web presence but has not been able to develop one, then this may be the website for you.*

The Community Heritage website is a place where individuals and groups can share information and stories about Australia's heritage. The purpose of the website is to



encourage the collection and sharing of information, stories and anecdotes related to people, places and events that have contributed to Australia's heritage.

The website allows you to create an individual profile or a group identity so you can enter information about places, people and historical events in Australia. For example, you may like to tell the story of where your forebears first stayed when migrating to Australia, as has been done with the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre feature (<http://www.communityheritage.net.au/bonegilla-migrant-experience>), or individuals who have made a significant contribution to the wider community, such as Aboriginal elder and respected teacher, Elsie Rose Jones (<http://www.communityheritage.net.au/elsie-rose-jones>).

While this is not a family history website, there are many Australians who have made a difference to this country and telling their story through Australia's Community Heritage website is a way to get this known. You can also comment on stories and post notices about upcoming events related to your group's activities.

All heritage organisations and individuals are encouraged to participate in the website. This is an excellent opportunity for you to promote your group to the wider community and also share with other groups and individuals information that you are interested in.

The website is an initiative of the Australian Government department with responsibility for heritage (the Department of the Environment) to engage people in heritage more widely across Australian communities. The website is supported by the National Trusts of Australia and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies.



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