



History Council of Victoria Incorporated

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Association Registration Number: A0045117K  
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9 March 2015

The Hon. Gavin Jennings MLC  
Special Minister for State  
Level 1, 1 Treasury Place  
**EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

Dear Minister,

#### **STATE BUDGET PLANNING FOR LOCAL AND COMMUNITY HISTORY**

The History Council of Victoria (HCV) is the peak advocacy body for history in Victoria.<sup>1</sup>

We have recently heard that you may be planning some changes to the arrangement for financial support that has been provided by the Victoria Government (through Public Record Office Victoria (PROV)) to the long-running **Local History Grants Program** and the **Victorian Community History Awards**.

We write to urge you to maintain the Government's support for these significant and influential programs, whether through PROV, through another government agency (perhaps under the Creative Industries portfolio), or by outsourcing to a responsible and relevant community organisation such as the History Council of Victoria or the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

The **Local History Grants Program** is consistently oversubscribed – in other words, it is a competitive program that is hotly contested by community organisations in Victoria. Success in gaining a grant is greatly valued. The Program has run for approximately twelve years. During that time, its grants have assisted hundreds of organisations by supporting the cost of projects that preserve, record or publish Victorian local history. Funded projects have included book publishing, recording oral histories, digitising collections, the creation of websites and apps, microfilming, training and education, heritage trails, exhibitions, catalogues and historical collection preservation. Its success can be observed through improvements in the storage and display of heritage collections, in the digitisation of information and heritage items to make them more accessible to a world-wide audience, and in the writing and publication of historical research. We draw your attention to the fact that print publications are a significant source of income for many historical societies: the Local History Grants have helped to raise the quality of these publications and thus have helped generate independent income for community organisations.

past

present

future

Importantly, the **Local History Grants Program** is the only Victorian Government grants program that directly targets the historical and heritage activities of community organisations, most of which are heavily dependent on voluntary input. (Last year, neither Arts Victoria nor Heritage Victoria targeted this sector through their grants programs.)

The **Victorian Community History Awards** were first offered in 1999 as an initiative of Information Victoria. Now managed by PROV in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Awards recognise excellence in historical method. The range of Award categories acknowledges that history can be told in a variety of formats with the aim of reaching and enriching all Victorians. Recipients appear to value the recognition of their peers as much as the cash prizes!

Both the **Local History Grants Program** and the **Victorian Community History Awards** generate excellent promotional benefits for their recipients, whether these be organisations or individuals. By demonstrating capacity to work to high standards, they also generate support for the further development of community organisations through media coverage, increased membership, sales of publications, visits to websites, and heightened confidence in writing applications to sponsors and other funding bodies.

Investment in the **Local History Grants Program** and the **Victorian Community History Awards** demonstrates the Victorian Government's commitment to community and local history and to those who devote countless voluntary hours to the pursuit of excellence in these fields. The investment has also supported PROV in developing an experienced and dedicated team of administrators; their expertise is highly regarded by all in the history sector.

As you consider PROV's contribution to the first budget of the Andrews government, we urge you to give your serious and prompt attention to ensuring the continuation of the much appreciated and beneficial **Local History Grants Program** and **Victorian Community History Awards**.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have about the matters raised in this letter. My mobile number is 0488 583 484. I would also be pleased to meet you to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr Judith Smart**  
ACTING CHAIR

**Copies to:**

The Hon. Martin Foley MP, Minister for Creative Industries	GPO Box 4057, Melbourne Vic 3000
Ms Justine Heazlewood, Keeper and Director, Public Record Office Victoria	PO Box 2100, North Melbourne Vic 3051
Dr Don Garden, President, Royal Historical Society of Victoria	239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne Vic 3000

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<sup>1</sup> The History Council of Victoria was initiated in 2001 by Mary Delahunty when Minister for Education. Our membership includes representatives of the Department of Education and Training, the Heritage Council of Victoria, the History Teachers' Association of Victoria Ltd, Museum Victoria, Museums Australia (Victoria), the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), the Professional Historians Association (Vic) Inc, Public Record Office Victoria, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc, the State Library of Victoria, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and the Women's Heritage Centre. Our Constitution requires the Board to appoint as members at least three historians employed by Victorian universities.