

National Cultural Policy Submission

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Public

Organisation

Historical Society of South Australia



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

National Cultural Policy

Submission from the Historical Society of South Australia

The Historical Society of South Australia Inc (HSSA) is a non-academia-based, volunteer-managed, association that has promoted and supported histories of South Australia and Australia since 1974. It strongly supports community engagement with history in its several forms. The HSSA supports the submissions of the History Council of South Australia, of which it is a member, and that of Writers SA (for Books and Reading).

Like other national, local and community groups, the HSSA provides a platform for storytelling, a key mechanism for disseminating historical information. The HSSA's work is connected in several ways to the wider history community including the work of genealogy, industrial design and invention, architectural studies, heritage assessments, local museum development, visual exhibitions/displays of history. These associations show that history interconnects with a wide spectrum of knowledge, creative skills and cultural expressions.

HSSA members are engaged with digital technology in recording and presenting the society's ten monthly talks throughout the year and uploading sound and video recordings to nationally publicly available sites, making them more readily available within national history. The publication of the HSSA's annual journal (and of occasional history papers when finances permit) is an essential vehicle for understanding historians' work. The society shares this objective with Australia-wide history associations. The HSSA's journal, like the society's monthly talks and its Newsletter, have presented new histories by both experienced and emerging historians. Its place within this aspect of history is significant and stands well against more ephemeral 'publications'.

A recognition of the importance of history and historical associations like the HSSA in the new National Cultural Policy is critical to ensure the continuance and enhancement of national storytelling. Recognition and support would enable broader engagement through mechanisms such as advising and collaborating with history film-making (e.g., with the South Australian Film Corporation), offering scholarships to promote interest in historical storytelling, organising conferences and web-based seminars (e.g., in collaboration with university history departments), and developing touring exhibitions (e.g., with Creative Australia support). The future of history needs to be assured. Understanding the past is essential to informing the future.