

# Newsflash

No 35

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March 2010

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The principal concern for AFFHO over the past three months has been the proposed closure of the National Archives of Australia branch offices in Adelaide, Darwin and Hobart. This had particular concern to me living in Adelaide.

AFFHO sought to reverse the situation using a number of strategies. Firstly we circulated the petition which had been prepared by Ann Picot of the University of Sydney Archives. This was circulated as an attachment to Newsflash. Unfortunately by the time the petition got out, most societies were closing down for Christmas/New Year. However, societies did their best in making the petition available in their library and at the few meetings that were held at this time of the year. Petitions had to be returned by the 22nd January. In all less than 7000 signatures were gathered, and this includes signatures from the broader historical community and not just those interested in family history. Unfortunately this number of petitioners was going to have little impact on the Federal Government, when translated nationally into possible votes at an election.

We also encouraged individuals and societies to write to their local Member of the House of Representatives and State Senator and I know that many did so. AFFHO also wrote a letter expressing concern to the Minister concerned, Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary, Joe Ludwig of Queensland, with copies to the Prime Minister and the Director General of National Archives. To date we have not had an acknowledgement to our letter, let alone a reply.

The third approach has been in joining forces with

Australasian Federation of  
Family History Organisations  
PO Box 3012, Weston Creek ACT 2611  
Ph: (Secretary) 0400 913 866  
[www.affho.org](http://www.affho.org)

### AFFHO Council

Andrew Peake	SA	President
Jeanette Hahn	ACT	Vice President
Allan Murrin	NSW	Secretary/Treasurer
David Bryant	NZ	Councillor
vacant	NT	Councillor
Rosemary Kopittke	QLD	Councillor
Alan Fincher	VIC	Councillor
vacant	TAS	Councillor
Margaret Hickey	WA	Councillor
Pam Valentine	NSW	Assoc Rep
Marionne Diggles	QLD	Assoc Rep
Di Christensen	VIC	Assoc Rep

### AFFHO Officers

June Penny	Public Officer
Peter Applebee	Web site: <a href="mailto:webmaster@affho.org">webmaster@affho.org</a>
Peter Applebee	2012 Congress (SAGHS)
Lesle Berry	Coord Nat Family History Week
Graham Jaunay	Editor: <a href="mailto:graham@jaunay.com">graham@jaunay.com</a>
Barry Weeden	Auditor

### Current Projects

Save the Census  
Australasian Strays Index  
Index of Indexes  
National Family History Week (AUS)  
National Family History Month (NZ)

### Membership

Full membership is open to any organisation based in Australasia, which satisfies the Council that it is primarily concerned with family history, genealogy, heraldry or allied subjects. Associate membership is open to any organisation which satisfies the Council that it is interested in family history, genealogy, heraldry or allied subjects.

Current members are listed at: [www.affho.org](http://www.affho.org)

Together we can achieve much more!

other organisations in lobbying the Government. On the 20th January the Federal Cabinet held a Community Cabinet Meeting in Adelaide. Members of the public were able to seek a ten minute meeting with Ministers. AFFHO joined forces with the Friends of SA Archives and the History Council of SA in supporting the Honourable John Bannon, President of the History Council, who had gained a meeting with Senator Joe Ludwig. He received a poor reception from the Minister who simply reiterated his reasons for closing the three branch offices, low visitor numbers and costs. The other three who waited on the Minister received a similar reception.

However, the combined approaches by all concerned led to a change of heart by the Government. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, National Archives organised a 'Shake Your Family Tree' open day on 23 February and the Government decided to issue a press release on that day, reversing the decision. The Press Release left many questions unanswered, but the Ministerial Statement in Parliament fills in some of the details. Most of this speech will be found elsewhere in Newsflash as its content is

important for family history and access to National Archives.

The major issue in the Ministerial Statement are the visitor statistics provided by the Minister supporting his proposal to close these three branch offices. I know that in 2001 the former Liberal Government re-located 90% of the records then located at the Adelaide branch office and sold off its purpose built archive facility (which still stands empty). As a result, if you want to search bankruptcy records for South Australia after 1928 you have to travel to Perth, National Railway records are in Sydney and Army pay roll records for both World Wars are in Melbourne. That is if they haven't been culled and destroyed (and we know that some have been destroyed). No wonder visitor numbers are quite low at the Adelaide branch office. AFFHO has written a further letter to the Minister regarding the issue of low numbers and the reason that this is the case in Adelaide – we await his reply, together with a reply to the earlier letter!

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*Protesters outside the NAA  
Adelaide Office 23 Feb 2010*

## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 23 February 2010  
**Page** 58  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Ludwig, Sen Joe

**Source** Senate  
**Proof** Yes  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Senator LUDWIG** (Queensland—Special Minister of State and Cabinet Secretary) (6.42 pm)—by leave—I make a ministerial statement on ensuring access to the National Archives of Australia. The Rudd Labor government is committed to assisting individuals in their search for information about themselves, their families and their country. The vast holdings of the National Archives of Australia provide a rich resource for academics, researchers and other interested groups, whether they are searching for information on the dramatic events that shaped our nation's history or the decisions that touched individual lives. Each family's history forms part of the fabric of our national story. That is why the National Archives is today hosting Shake Your Family Tree Day to encourage more Australians to see what information they can unearth about their own family.

Today I can announce that the government has responded to community concerns about the closure of the National Archives of Australia's Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart offices and will guarantee that a physical National Archives presence will be maintained in every state and territory. The stand-alone National Archives offices in Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart will remain open in each instance until a permanent solution involving co-location with a local organisation has been found.

This solution aims to remove the operational inefficiencies inherent in running stand-alone offices of the National Archives in each jurisdiction. It will also reflect the changing reality, which is that people overwhelmingly access records online today, while ensuring a National Archives presence in every jurisdiction and maintaining local access to the services provided by the National Archives.

The November 2009 decision to close these National Archives offices was a fiscally responsible decision. The offices in Hobart, Adelaide and Darwin are the National Archives' smallest offices, with the lowest visitor numbers. Each of these offices costs over \$800,000 per year to operate, with the Darwin office costing around \$1 million. Yet visitor numbers to these offices are low: in 2008-09 they totalled just 337 in Darwin, 720 in Adelaide and 635 in Hobart, compared with 22,290 nationally. This equates to an average cost to the Australian taxpayer of over \$1,000 to \$3,000 per

visit—a cost which is simply unsustainable in today's fiscal environment.

I do understand the importance of maintaining a National Archives presence at a state and territory level—after all, that is where Australia's history emerged. The Rudd government has listened to the concerns of the local community, academics, researchers and other interested groups over the proposed closure of National Archives offices. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of the statement in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

*The remainder of the statement read as follows—*

I would like to acknowledge the work done by my colleagues including the Member for Solomon, Damian Hale, the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, Senator Trish Crossin, the Member for Lyons, Dick Adams, the Member for Hindmarsh, Steve Georganas, the Member for Franklin, Julie Collins, the Member for Port Adelaide, Mark Butler, and the Minister for Sport and Youth, Kate Ellis, in representing constituents' concerns over the closures. I also acknowledge the work of all of the individuals and members of historians' and archivists' societies who have highlighted the significance of the local offices of the National Archives, and I thank them for their contribution. I also recognise the petition on the office closures tabled in the House of Representatives earlier this month by Julia Irwin, the Member for Fowler.

National Archives repositories around the country hold many records containing important information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their history. I would like to particularly emphasise the fact that the Government will not change existing access arrangements for records relating to the separation policies imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; these access arrangements were strengthened in response to the landmark 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report on the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

The reality is that fewer people are visiting the National Archives in person to access their records. Instead, the country has moved to an online environment: in 2008-09 more than 1.9 million records were accessed online compared to 57,000 records accessed in reading rooms nationally. Demand for online access to records is expected to continue to increase apace, and the National Archives is developing plans to provide digital access to ever more of its records, including those currently held by the National Archives in Darwin, Adelaide and Hobart.

In today's society, we need to explore other ways of ensuring access to archives other than a fully functioning National Archives office at a cost to the taxpayer of up to \$3,000 per visit. In what is a very successful partnership, the National Archives already co-locates with the state institution in Victoria. The National Archives will be required to work with local cultural heritage institutions and other organisations in pursuit of further co-located reading rooms and record storage facilities. In this way, the Government can ensure that the National Archives maintains face-to-face services in all jurisdictions, while shaping its operations in a way which will meet the needs of future generations.

The Rudd Government is committed to ensuring continued public access to records documenting Australia's history. This is part of our broader aim of restoring trust and integrity in the use of government information through improved transparency and accountability. The Rudd Government is committed to promoting a pro-disclosure culture across government, and ensuring that Australians can realise their right to access government information.

...from page 2

Recent advice is that the basic issue is the 'Efficiency Dividend' introduced in the 1987/88 budget requiring a 1.25% reduction of agencies' departmental funding.

*In 2008, the new Government applied a one-off 2% efficiency dividend on top of the ongoing efficiency dividend. This was part of its election commitment to responsible economic management. ... After 20 years of the efficiency dividend, however, many small agencies report that they are no longer able to find genuine efficiency savings. To meet the efficiency dividend requirement, many small agencies have resorted to reducing or discontinuing activities that they consider to be lower priority or discretionary.<sup>16</sup> For some agencies, their ability to deliver on core functions has been restricted.*

[www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/committee/jpaa/effic-div/report/chapter1.pdf](http://www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/committee/jpaa/effic-div/report/chapter1.pdf)

So the time for self congratulation has passed.

The need now is for Australians—particularly those in the small states—to argue against the impacts of the 'efficiency dividend' on small agencies, states, and territories. These are the agencies and the populations that are most likely to feel the greatest

negative impacts of 'efficiency dividend' budgets in the near future.

The Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit Inquiry into the effects of the ongoing efficiency dividend on smaller public sector agencies provides the best basis from which to begin the campaign against the effects of the efficiency dividend.

*Therefore, the Committee concludes that there is a definable group of agencies that are being placed in financial difficulty by the combined effect of the efficiency dividend, the indexation measures and the NPP process. This group is defined by their smaller size and their technical, well-defined roles.*

[/www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/committee/jpaa/effic-div/report.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/HOUSE/committee/jpaa/effic-div/report.htm)

The AFFHO Council has also been grappling with a number of other issues:

- Triennial AFFHO Congress—rather than having an expression of interest process, establishing a rotation which will give some certainty as to where the Congress will probably be held. The proposed rotation appears later.
- National Family History Week—This will be held as usual in the first week of August. However, Lesle Berry, who coordinates the Week, will be needing support and assistance if it is going to be a success.
- Inverell District Family History Group lost its library through a major fire in the shopping arcade where they had their library. While they had made plans for flood, this had not included other natural disasters. While some material was backed-up elsewhere and they were insured, books and paper based records were lost and are not easily replaced.

The next meeting of Council will be the Annual General Meeting, so nomination forms will be forwarded shortly.

Subscriptions are also due!

*Andrew Peake  
President*

## CONGRESS ROTATION

In the past AFFHO has sought expressions of interest from member societies to organise the AFFHO Congress which is held every three years in Australia and New Zealand. At time we have had more

than one expression of interest, sometimes only a single expression and at other times, AFFHO has had to approach a member society to organise the Congress. Since the first Congress in 1977 congresses have been held in all states and territories and New Zealand.

By having a fixed rotation all states, territories and New Zealand would have an equitable chance of organising a congress. It would still be possible for one of the states/territories to opt out, in which case the next place would move forward. The figure in brackets represents the number of years since that region would have sponsored a Congress:

- 2012 South Australia (32))
- 2015 Australian Capital Territory (29)
- 2018 New South Wales (30)
- 2012 Tasmania (30)
- 2024 Queensland (30)
- 2027 Western Australia (27)
- 2030 Victoria (27)
- 2033 Northern Territory (27)
- 2036 New Zealand (27)

While traditionally congresses have been held in capital cities, but there is no reason why the congress could not be held in a regional centre. There is also no reason why a congress could not be hosted by a consortium of societies, and not just a single society.

## **VALE**

### **DR RICA ERICKSON AM (1908–2009)**

Dr Rica Erickson, who was a Life Member of the Western Australia Genealogical Society passed away on the 8th September 2009, aged 101.

Rica was an early member of WAGS. Her most significant achievement was acting as editor of The Dictionary of West Australians which appeared in four volumes and was published for the State's sesquicentennial in 1979, with a fifth volume in 1987. Volume 1 was for Early Settlers 1829–1850; Volume 2, Bond 1850–1868; Volume 3, Free 1850–1868; Volume 4, The Challenging Years 1869–1888; and Volume 5, The Golden Years, 1889–1914. These volumes were 'working copies' designed to encourage public participation in the collection and correction of family records. An updated edition of four volumes, The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians, pre-1829–1888, was published

for the Bicentenary in 1988. These volumes were a significant contribution to Western Australian and Australian family history. They later inspired a similar series in South Australia, the Biographical Index of South Australians 1836–1886, and South Australians 1836–1888. While the Dictionary has not been repeated in other states and territories, many local communities have prepared Pioneer Registers and the like, often prepared and published by local family history societies.

Rica was born Frederica Lucy Sandilands 10 August 1908 in Boulder and was the eldest of eight children of Christopher and Phoebe Sandilands. Rica became a teacher and taught in many WA country schools.

In 1934 Rica moved to Bolgart to teach and this is where she met her future husband, Sydney Erickson (1908–1987). They were married in Fremantle in June 1936. The couple bought land at Bolgart in 1938, which they cleared and named Fairlea. They raised four children: Dorothy, John, Bethel and Robin. Rica and Syd retired from farming and moved to Nedlands in 1965.

Over the years Rica has received countless awards, honours and accolades. Apart from being a Life Member of WAGS, she was named Western Australian Citizen of the Year in 1980 in the category of the Arts, Culture and Entertainment. In 1987 Rica was made a Member of the Order of Australia 'in recognition to the arts, particularly as an author and illustrator'. In May 1987 she was awarded the Heritage Council of Western Australia individual award for life long contribution to heritage in Western Australia.

*Western Ancestor, December 2009*

## **NEWS FROM MEMBER SOCIETIES**

### **NSW & ACT ASSOCIATION OF FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETIES 2010 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*A Most Suitable Place* 17–19 September 3010 Bomaderry Bowling Club

Hosted by Shoalhaven Family History Society.

*A Most Suitable Place* was how Alexander Berry,

the first land holder of the Shoalhaven described the area when he first sighted this beautiful region.

The application details and information is available at: [www.shoalhaven.net.au/fhsconference2010](http://www.shoalhaven.net.au/fhsconference2010)

## **INVERELL DISTRICT FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**

In order to manage all the kind offers of books etc, we are asking people to fill in a donation registration form which is on the web site [www.inverellfamilyhistory.org.au](http://www.inverellfamilyhistory.org.au) or we can post one if necessary. After our insurance is sorted out and we are able to take donations, we will contact people. Forms can then be sent to us at PO Box 367 Inverell 2360. Please ask people not to send anything yet.

We have been overwhelmed by the wonderful support of so many people throughout the family history world and are so grateful for this— it certainly helps when we feel a bit down. I can't thank everyone enough. The loss of our collection and so many thousands of hours of voluntary work over more than thirty years is devastating.

There may be some confusion about web site and emails as we had just altered our address and when the fire occurred, had not advised everyone as we were still testing everything to make sure it was working. People may contact us by email at [infor@inverellfamilyhistory.org.au](mailto:infor@inverellfamilyhistory.org.au) or [family-history@northnet.com.au](mailto:family-history@northnet.com.au) or the secretary Muriel Resta home phone [02] 6722 1893, mobile 042 822 1893 or Ann Hodgens home phone [02] 6721 1487 or mobile 042 721 1485. The mail address is IDFHG Inc PO Box 367, Inverell NSW 2360.

Whilst we have much to do, and managing each day is sometimes hard, we are getting there slowly.

Thank you again to everyone.

## **7TH VICTORIAN FAMILY HISTORY STATE CONFERENCE**

*The border and beyond* 28–30 May 2010  
Clubmulwala Yarawonga VIC

Presented by the Victorian Association of Family History Organisations in conjunction with the

Yarrawonga Family History Group.

The application form and information booklet is available at: [www.vafho.org.au](http://www.vafho.org.au)

Contact the convenor for more information and expressions of interest: PO Box 10 Glen Waverley VIC 3150 [mullum36@bigpond.com](mailto:mullum36@bigpond.com)

## **NEWS AND NOTICES**

### **29TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE GENEALOGICAL AND HERALDIC SCIENCE**

This Congress, with the theme *Identity in Genealogy and Heraldry*, will be held in Stuttgart, Germany from the 12th to 17th September, 2010. The Congress is supported by *Pro Heraldica*, Stuttgart and *Wappen-HEROLD*, of Nürtingen under the general auspice of the *Confederation Internationale Genealogie et Heraldique*. The Lecture site will be the Le Meridien Hotel and the opening reception at the Neues Schloss. There is an extensive supporting program and a number of excursions to several neighbouring castles. Further details on their web site at [www.congress2010.info](http://www.congress2010.info)

### **GENERAL REGISTRY OFFICE – ENGLAND AND WALES**

Certificates will increase in price from £7.00 to £9.25 as from 7 April 2010.

## **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

*Parliamentary Papers for the Colony of Victoria: An Index of 'Ordinary People'*, Volume 3.

This exciting index on CD follows the publication of volumes 1 and 2, and helps:

- Family historians can search the name index for occurrences of a family name and flesh out the skeletons in the family closet.
- Academics and researchers can locate less frequently used primary sources.
- Local historians can refer to the list of Parliamentary Reports and using the 'find' feature on their browser, search for their locality. A Report covers work on the Campaspie Bridge, another the purchase of Hobson's Bay Railway. This has resulted in a wealth of information for the local history and family researcher.
- Social historians, students of aboriginal studies and behavioural scientists will also find a

variety of reports offering unique and creative sources.

Used in association with Volumes 1 and 2, these three volumes cover the first 30 years of the colony's early history.

Available from AIGS Librarian, PO Box 339 Blackburn VIC 3130 or can be ordered by email: [bookshop@aigs.org.au](mailto:bookshop@aigs.org.au) Volumes 1 and 2 can be purchased for \$40.00 or three volumes \$60.00 or Volume 3 \$25.00.

*Aliens registered in the Northern Territory 1916–1921*

The index on CD of 93 pages covers 1768 names. The index not only contains people who eventually settled in the Northern Territory, but also those who transferred to other places. In some cases there is a date of death and other notations. The Register contains the following information: (not all entries have complete information) – Registered Number, Full Name of Alien (alphabetical) Registered at (location), Transferred to or from, Date (of Registration), Remarks (mainly nationality). Some entries have additional information.

*World War II Evacuation List from the Top End of the Northern Territory 1941–1942*

This index on CD, contains 2497 names, including reference of original record, surname, given name, age, sex, nationality, occupation, placement, remarks, evacuated from, destination, departure, placement. Not all evacuees returned after the War to live in the Territory, some stayed in the area they were evacuated to.

*Aliens* costs \$30.00 including postage and *Evacuations* costs \$25.00 including postage. Both CDs available from the Genealogical Society of the Northern Territory, PO Box 37212, Winnellie NT 0821, email: [gsntinc@bigpond.net.au](mailto:gsntinc@bigpond.net.au)

*Queensland Founding Families*

Biographies of families living in Queensland prior to separation from New South Wales

This set of books released 12 December 2009 produced by Queensland Family History Society as a Q150 project was supported by the Queensland Government through its Q150 Community Funding Program, presents 753 contributed stories of family  
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lies living in Queensland before its separation from New South Wales in December 1859. The collection, produced in a 2 volume set, includes an introduction with a brief history of the Moreton Bay region 1824–1859 and a comprehensive index of people's names (approx 16,000). It greatly extends the QFHS earlier book of 50 such stories published to celebrate Australia's bicentenary in 1988 and complements the QFHS pre-separation name index, produced at the same time, to 75 primary research sources and now available.

This collection of stories will be released in 2 formats—a soft cover set and a numbered case bound set (50 sets only Nos 1–50).

Soft cover: \$110.00 inc GST, QFHS personal members or contributors to the book \$94.00 incl. GST. Case bound: \$170.00 inc GST, QFHS personal members or contributors to the book \$145.00 incl. GST. P&P Rates: QLD \$12.50, NSW \$15.60, VIC \$17.50, SA \$19.20, NT \$22.10, WA \$22.70, TAS \$21.90.

For postage of multiple sets contact the secretary by email: [secretary@qfhs.org.au](mailto:secretary@qfhs.org.au) or by mail.

CD Version (2nd edition) – published by the Queensland Family History Society, released January 2010

Available from: The Secretary, QFHS, PO Box 171, Indooroopilly QLD 4068.

*National Burial Index*

*The National Burial Index* version 3 (NBI3) has recently been released by the Federation of Family History Societies. The NBI3 covers England and Wales and this update is a nearly 40% increase on NBI2 with 18.4 million entries. Cost is £30 or £15 for an upgrade from NBI2. More details on their web site: [www.ffhs.org](http://www.ffhs.org)

## **NICK VINE HALL AWARD**

The Award Package has been changed for the Nick Vine Hall Award from 2010. Prizes will now be:

First Prize \$300.00 and plaque  
Second Prize \$100 and certificate  
Editors: Certificate

Please check the AFFHO web site for details: [www.affho.org/affho/NVHEntry.pdf](http://www.affho.org/affho/NVHEntry.pdf)



*Protestors outside the Adelaide NAA Office 23 Feb 2010*

