



The Hon Julie Bishop MP

Minister for Education, Science and Training
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women's Issues



Media Centre

Media Release

Australian History Summit

18 July 2006

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, today announced that she will host a summit to research ways of strengthening the place and maintaining the integrity of Australian history in the school curriculum.

“It is time for a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history in our schools. The Australian Government is committed to strengthening this vitally important subject in primary and secondary schools,” said Minister Bishop.

“It is essential that we put a structured narrative back into the teaching of Australian history so that by the time students finish secondary schooling, they have a thorough understanding of their nation's past, and how we have become a modern liberal democracy.

“Young Australians should study the past to understand the present, so that they can make informed decisions for the future.”

Minister Bishop said that to progress this important discussion, she will be inviting some leading Australian historians, public figures who promote the study of history, and educational leaders, to participate in the summit in Canberra, on 17 August.

“The summit will focus on ways in which the teaching of Australian History can be strengthened in our schools. Participants will consider two papers: one on what is currently set to be taught in primary and secondary schools, and one on the rationale for, and outline of, a narrative approach to Australian History in schools,” she said.

“I am looking forward to the gathering of minds at this summit. The Government is keen to work with States and Territories; non-government education authorities and History teachers to promote this renaissance of Australian History.

“I will also be encouraging state education authorities to make the teaching of Australian history a critical part of the syllabus.

“I will also seek feedback from interested bodies on the teaching of Australian history in order to advance the work of the summit.”

A list of Australian History Summit participants is attached.

Media Contacts:

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Attachment

Australian History Summit participants:

Mr Andrew Barnett - Year 12 Level Co-ordinator and Senior Teacher of History, Economics, and Politics at Ruyton Girls' School, Kew. He has taught for over 30 years in a range of Victorian schools. As well as History, Economics and Politics, he has taught Social Studies, Asian Studies and Philosophy. He has also served as Year 9/10 Social Sciences Co-ordinator, Co-ordinator of Asian/Australian Studies, and Head of Economics/Politics Department.

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC - Ernest Scott Professor of History, University of Melbourne (1977-1988), Chancellor, University of Ballarat (1994-1998). He has published over 30 books on Australian history and world history. Professor Blainey pioneered the field of business history in Australia, and his book, *The Tyranny of Distance*, introduced a new phrase to Australian life. Professor Blainey's interests range from sports and local histories, to the broad sweep he considers in *The Causes of War* and *A Short History of the World*.

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton, AO – Chancellor of Murdoch University. He is the 2006 Western Australian of the Year. He has held chairs of history at four Australian universities and was foundation professor of Australian Studies at the University of London. Professor Bolton has been writing on Australian history since 1952, and is the author of 13 books, including *Edmund Barton: The One Man for the Job* (New South Wales Premier's Centenary of Federation award winner, 2001).

Mr David Boon* - Teacher, Illawarra Primary School (Blackman's Bay, Tasmania). He has been the Commonwealth History Project professional learning officer in Tasmania since February 2005. In that role, he provides information and support to schools and teachers on pedagogical and curricular aspects of history. He has developed professional learning packages for teachers.

The Honourable Bob Carr - Premier of New South Wales (1995-2005), was known as "the History Premier" for his promotion of history. He was also Minister for Planning and Environment (1984-1988), Consumer Affairs (1986), Heritage (1986-1988), Ethnic Affairs (1995-1999), the Arts (1995-2005) and Citizenship (1999-2005). The Hon Mr Carr is the author of *Thoughtlines: Reflections of a Public Man* and *What Australia Means to Me*.

Dr Inge Clendinnen, AO - Emeritus Scholar, La Trobe University. Her award-winning *Dancing with Strangers* tells the story of life in New South Wales following the arrival of the First Fleet (including an impromptu dance party between the men

of the First Fleet and a dozen local men who left their spears in their canoes). Dr Clendinnen's other books include *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570*, the personal narrative *Tiger's Eye*, the 1999 Boyer Lectures, *True Stories* and *Reading the Holocaust*.

Professor Kate Darian-Smith - Professor of Australian Studies, University of Melbourne. She is researching a social and cultural history of agricultural shows in Australia, and has co-authored *Agricultural Shows in Australia: A Survey*. Her publications include: *Stirring Australian Speeches: A Definitive Collection from Botany to Bali* (co-edited, with Michael Cathcart), and *On the Home Front: Melbourne in wartime 1939-1945*. Professor Darian-Smith is president of the International Australian Studies Association.

Mr Nick Ewbank - President of the History Teachers' Association of Australia. He was vice-president of the Council of ACT Education Associations and he has represented the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations. Mr Ewbank is the Executive Teacher of History, English, Media and Languages at Hawker College, ACT. He has been teaching for more than 16 years in a range of subjects. As well as History, he has taught Studies of Society and the Environment, English, Economics, IT and Accounting.

Professor John Gascoigne – Professor of History, University of New South Wales. He has research interests in Modern Britain, Colonial Australia, History of Science and Ideas and European-Pacific Contact, 1763-1842. His books include *The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia* and *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution*. Professor Gascoigne has also written a two volumed study of Joseph Banks.

Associate Professor Jenny Gregory – Associate Professor of History, University of Western Australia. She has research interests in Australian history, urban history and heritage studies. Her books include *City of Light: a history of Perth since the fifties*, *Claremont: a history* (with Geoffrey Bolton), and *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*. Associate Professor Jenny Gregory is President of the History Council of WA.

Dr Gerard Henderson – Executive Director, The Sydney Institute. He is one of Australia's leading political and social commentators. Dr Henderson writes a weekly column for [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) and *The West Australian*, comments each week on ABC *Radio National Breakfast* show and appears regularly *Insiders* on ABC TV. His books include [Menzies Child: The Liberal Party of Australia 1944-94](#), *Australian Answers*, and *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*.

Dr John Hirst - Reader in History, La Trobe University. He has written a range of books including *Convict Society and its Enemies*, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy*, *The Sentimental Nation: The making of the Australian Commonwealth*, and *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History*. He chaired the Australian Government's Civics Education Group (1997-2004), and (in 1993) was a member of the Prime Minister's Republic Advisory Committee.

Ms Jackie Huggins, AM - Deputy Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland. She is of the Bidjara (Central Queensland) and Birri-Gubba Juru (North Queensland) peoples. Ms Huggins has an Honours degree in history and women's studies, and is Co-Chair of [Reconciliation Australia](#). She has published widely on Australian Indigenous issues, including *Sistergirl* and *Auntie Rita* (with Rita Huggins), and is editor of the [Australian Journal of Indigenous Education](#).

Mr Paul Kelly - Editor-at-Large, *The Australian*, and Adjunct Professor of Journalism, University of Queensland. He writes on Australian and international issues and is a regular commentator on television. Mr Kelly's books include *Paradise Divided*, *November 1975*, *The End of Certainty*, *The Hawke Ascendancy* and *The Unmaking of Gough* (later titled *The Dismissal*). He presented the 2001 five-part television documentary for the ABC on Australian history and character *100 Years – The Australian Story*.

Ms Jennifer Lawless - Inspector for Human Society and Its Environment (History), New South Wales Board of Studies. She has lectured in History teaching method at various universities, and taught History for over 20 years in NSW public schools. Ms Lawless is a member of the History Council of NSW, and has won a number of awards, most recently an Endeavour Research Fellowship to Turkey to undertake research on Australian Prisoners of War captured at Gallipoli.

Dr Mark Lopez - the author of *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-1975*, which is based on his PhD thesis. *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics* is a systematic study of the historical origins of multiculturalism in Australian politics, focusing on what multiculturalism is; how it originated; and how it became a basis for the Australian government ethnic affairs policy.

Associate Professor Gregory Melleuish – Associate Professor of History and Politics, University of Wollongong. He has research interests in Australian political culture, Australian intellectual history (especially political, cultural and religious ideas) and world history (in particular the role of the state, war and commercial activity). His publications include *Cultural Liberalism in Australia* and *The Packaging of Australia*. In April 2000 he became President of the Asia Pacific Affiliate Branch of the World History Association.

Ms Margo Neale - Principal Advisor to the Director (Indigenous), National Museum of Australia and Adjunct Professor, Australian Centre for Indigenous History, Australian National University. She has worked across art galleries, museums and universities and has held positions as art curator, author and editor for leading institutions in Australian and the Pacific. She was co-editor of the Oxford Companion to *Aboriginal Art and Culture*. She is researching Indigenous modes of historic discourse in non-text based genres.

Dr Geoffrey Partington - was a teacher, headmaster and Inspector of Schools in England and has taught in the School of Education of Flinders University, South Australia. His books include *Teacher Education in England and Wales*, *Teacher*

Education and Training in New Zealand, Hasluck versus Coombs: White politics and Australia's Aborigines, The Australian Nation: Its British and Irish Roots and The Idea of an Historical Education (1980).

Ms Lisa Paul, PSM - Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), since October 2004. She has more than 20 years' public sector experience, including three Deputy CEO roles. Her work has focussed on human services, and she has held senior positions in education, welfare, community services, health and housing, in State and Commonwealth Governments, and in central and line agencies.

Dr Peter Stanley - Principal Historian, Australian War Memorial and Adjunct Professor in Cultural Heritage Management, University of Canberra. He has been the Memorial's chief historian since 1987. He has a particular interest in Australian and British military history. His 17 books include *Borneo, 1945*; [Quinn's Post](#), [Anzac Gallipoli](#); *Whyalla at War 1939-45*; *For Fear of Pain: British Surgery 1790-1850* and *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825-75*.

Professor Tom Stannage, AM - Executive Dean, Division of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology. He received the inaugural Prime Minister's Award as Australian University Teacher of the Year in 1997. His research interests include Australian and British History and museology. His books include *Sir Paul Hasluck in Australian History*, *Embellishing the Landscape: the images of Amy Heap and FredFlood 1920-1940* and *The People of Perth: a social history of Western Australia's Capital City*.

Associate Professor Tony Taylor – Associate Professor of Education, Monash University. He has been Director of the National Centre for History Education since 2001. He conducted the Australian Government's National Inquiry into the Teaching and Learning of History and wrote the resultant report, *The Future of the Past*. Associate Professor Taylor is a leading national and international figure in the field of history education.

*Mr Boon accepted the Minister's invitation to attend the summit on 31 July 2006.

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