

Society of Architectural Hoistorians of Australia and New Zealand
President's Report 2009/10

Robin Skinner

2 July 2010

Since the 2009 AGM, the committee has met on 18 December 2009, 23 June 2010 and 2 July 2010.

ERA grades

The ERA research assessment exercise has recognised the quality of the work of the society's members, awarding A grades to both the journal *Fabrications* and the annual conference. This is the highest grade awarded to an architecture conference in the exercise. These grades publically acknowledge the excellence of members' research; and would not have been possible without tremendous effort on the part of successive conference organisers, editors, reviewers, members of conference committees and editorial boards. These members have contributed at a very high sustained level to make the society's endeavours achieve such high standards. To all these people, on behalf of the society, I give very appreciative thanks.

Saunders Founders Grant

The Saunders Grant attracted unprecedented interest this year with eleven applications being received. This was largely due to the superlative effort by Nicole Sully in publicising the grant internationally across many electronic lists. The committee met last month and awarded this year's grant to Susan Holden and Jared Bird for their project 'Animated Nets: Trajectories of Post-war European Urbanism: Two Brisbane Case Studies.'

The terms of reference of the Saunders Grant have been reviewed and amended. It will now invite applications from those who are either: resident in Australia or New Zealand; or who are based abroad and are proposing a project relevant to the architectural history of Australasia. Selection criteria will be base upon the demonstrated ability of the applicant, the likely significance of the research, evidence that the proposed project is achievable with the grant (and that it is not dependent on securing additional funds) and on the likely quality and impact of the proposed published outcomes. Preference will be given to emergent or early career researchers, including postgraduate students, recent graduates and those in their first full-time academic position.

A pro forma is to be developed for the Saunders Grant awardees to report on their project outcomes.

International links and corresponding societies

The society website now includes a lengthy listing of organisations with which we share disciplinary and subject connection. These include DoCoMoMo, the National Trust of Australia, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust and ICOMOS Australia. In addition, architectural history societies of the United States, Britain, Canada and Bengal have all responded very favourably to inclusion on our website. The committee is keen to strengthen society links and recommend that we formalise our relationships with parallel organisations by creating the status of Corresponding Society. These

organisations would have a similar mission to our own and would maintain similar levels of research quality and scholarly activity.

Constitution

The committee is to review the Constitution, operating rules and processes of the society in light of its status as an Incorporated Society in New Zealand and with respect to succession planning. The committee also foreshadows amending the Constitution at next year's AGM to require an annual financial audit and a revision of membership categories.

Membership categories

At present there are four categories of membership to the society: Regular, Student, Benefactor and Honorary. Although there is no formal 'Life membership' category; this is the title that is usually applied to the honorary memberships. The committee propose amending the constitution to further define these memberships, and have included this as a separate item on the agenda.

I also remind members that the constitution allows for 'body corporates' such as architectural practices and conservation consultants to join. The committee have decided that such a membership would result journal subscription and a nominated staff member being able to attend the annual conference at the member's rate.

Institutional Membership

There are a significant numbers of our institutions who do not hold membership, so presumably they are not receiving the journal or proceedings for their collections. Members of these institutions will be approached over coming weeks. Several State Libraries do not hold subscriptions either.

Membership payment

The society has amended its membership form this year and method of paying subscriptions. A two-year membership is now available and payment can be made with credit card through a secure server. This is a significant advance, because operating across two currencies was often fraught and resulted in members missing an annual payment and drifting off the society's list. The membership form is to be amended to include a donations option. I thank Nicole and Leonie for their dedicated efforts on these issues.

Website

The website is often our primary interface with the world, and it is imperative that it is up-to-date. Proposed initiatives for the website include listing life members and identifying the status of the society's activity on the ERA exercise. We also propose to link keynote speakers papers to the website with the speakers' concurrence. If members have further suggestions please forward them to me or to the committee members.

Trilingual name for the society

From time to time it has been suggested that the society have a name in three languages: in Maori, an Australian aboriginal language and English. I have initiated informal discussion on this issue with

external parties responsible for the use of these languages and this is reported as a separate item on the agenda.

Conference reports

We have received the 2009 Conference Report from Julia Gatley. We thank all involved with the success of that conference.

Editorial Board

Following the resignation of Ian Lochhead, the longest serving member of the Editorial Board, the committee has appointed Karen Burns to its membership. We thank Ian for his impressive record of service.

The committee is keen to strengthen the society's publications. In order to expedite journal production, the Editorial Board has been requested to indicate the costs for assistance for production layout. Depending upon available funds, the committee members are also in favour of supporting further volumes of edited past papers.

Future Financial Planning

The committee will prepare a long term financial plan in light of the society's current and expected future cash flow. We welcome members' suggestions on this issue.

Special thanks

The committee have undertaken a good deal of work this year and I thank them for all they have done. In particular, special thanks goes to Nicole Sully (Secretary) and to Leonie Matthews (Treasurer) for their work on our behalf.