



**AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION INC.**

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**Draft History Standards Paper  
Consultation Paper July 2010  
AHA submission 27 September 2010**

**Attention: Professor Iain Hay and Ms Jill Rashleigh**

At its meeting on 17 September 2010, the national Executive of the Australian Historical Association discussed the Draft History Standards Paper at length and agreed on a number of recommendations for amendment.

First, we offer the following general observations:

1. The History Standards Statement seemed very event-focussed in its definition of History: we wondered whether there might not also be reference to historical processes and relationships.
2. The meaning of the final sentence of the paragraph headed 'Nature and extent of History' was unclear: 'A knowledge of history is the foundation of all that we make as humans'.
3. There was not much reference to 'research'.
4. There needed to be a clearer distinction made between 'the past' and the 'representations' of it that constitute 'history'.
5. There should be some reference to processes of change and continuity.
6. There was no reference to the desirability that students learn about different cultures and their interaction and thus enhance their cross-cultural understanding.

We make the following specific recommendations for amendment:

Nature and extent of History

p. 6 line 2: add 'written' before 'documents'

p. 6 line 4: add 'and processes' after 'events'

Graduate Careers

p. 6 line 1: change to 'assess evidence, events and processes in the past'

List of possible occupations

Add:

Advertising

Arts administration

Replace 'Cultural heritage' with 'Curatorship'.

Foreign affairs: add 'and Intelligence'

Heritage research: add 'and management'

Add: Law

Media: Add 'Journalism and'

Museums: add 'curatorship'.

Add: Politics

Public service: Add 'NGOs'

Delete: 'social mobilisation'

Threshold Learning Outcomes

p. 7

Suggested amendments:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of **different cultures and societies** from one or more periods of the past.
2. Leave as is.
3. Identify, analyse, contextualise, synthesise and reflect critically upon historical scholarship **and changing representations of the past.**
4. Formulate **historical questions in an independent manner and design appropriate research methods for their investigation.**
5. Construct an **evidence-based argument** in oral and written form...
6. Demonstrate knowledge of the varieties of approaches to understanding and **interpreting change and continuity in the past.**
7. Demonstrate understanding of how historical phenomena – and historians – inform and **shape** the present.
8. Identify and reflect critically upon the capabilities **and skills** developed in the study of history.

In general we agree that the History Standards Statement, incorporating the amendments suggested, offers a complete and accurate representation of the nature and extent of the discipline as it would be understood by most history graduates.

We think that the threshold learning outcomes should be understood as the minimum expectation for a BA graduate in history. We think they can be measured and demonstrated. We see real potential in using the statement to promote the value and usefulness of history to students, parents and employers.

Professor Marilyn Lake,  
President,  
Australian Historical Association