

4 August 2020

Dear AHA members,

What a year 2020 has turned out to be and it is not over yet. We commenced the year with bushfires and now Covid-19 wreaks havoc on the world. In Australia, one sector hit hard has been higher education. The drop in international students and the Commonwealth Government's obstinate refusal to provide financial support has created a perfect storm. This has accelerated and exposed what we already knew: the higher education work force, especially those in casual and precarious roles, are now facing uncertain futures, along with many contract and continuing positions.

I am sending this email to all members to encourage you, when your membership expires, to renew it. We have been taking steps to make membership more affordable, such as re-classifying casually employed historians in the 'low income' rate. We also created a category of 'international' membership.

Membership is vital for the AHA's viability. Membership fees contribute to financing:

- a part-time executive officer who manages all AHA correspondence (including the weekly newsletter), website, social media, prize applications, reporting requirements and provides general assistance to Executive members who volunteer their time
- fees to the publisher of *History Australia*, ensuring that it is globally accessible and professionally produced
- the administration of prizes offered annually and biennially
- seed funding for the annual conference, as well as subsidy schemes to support postgraduate and ECR attendance

Among the benefits of being an AHA member are:

- The weekly email newsletter with details of upcoming conferences, events, new publications and other important announcements
- A subscription to the journal *History Australia*
- Membership is a prerequisite to present at the annual AHA conference
- Access to the AHA's Facebook pages, which include other announcements and discussions of importance to ECRs, postgraduates and other members
- Eligibility to participate in presentation opportunities, serve on the Executive and raise matters (e.g. the recent Casualisation Survey was a response to members' concerns, as was our recent change in the membership rate for casuals)

The AHA is currently examining other options to make membership more cost-effective, such as obtaining charity status and seeking opportunities for those with means to cross-subsidise postgraduate and ECR membership rates. We welcome ideas from you, the members, of other ways to support the AHA.

Please take care and stay safe,

Melanie Oppenheimer



AHA President.