

The History Council of NSW

is pleased to award the



• ANNUAL HISTORY CITATION •

for

2009

to

Bruce Pennay

In recognition of his contribution to history as
an historian and practising heritage consultant,
in particular his service to heritage and community
history in regional New South Wales and Victoria.

Awarded 4 September 2009



historycouncilnsw

by:

E/Prof David Carment AM Vice President

History Council of NSW



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Bruce Pennay

In the 14th year of its foundation, the History Council of New South Wales marks the contribution to history of Dr Bruce Pennay OAM, historian and practising heritage consultant, who has been a significant advocate for heritage and community history in regional New South Wales and Victoria and served with academic distinction.

Born in Goulburn in 1938 as the youngest of three children, Bruce Pennay spent his childhood in Wollongong. At the University of Sydney from 1955 to 1959, he trained as an English and History teacher. In 1968 whilst teaching at Broken Hill, he graduated with a Master of Arts with a thesis on industrial disputes in Broken Hill. This, and subsequent, experiences were to generate his interest in the history of country and regional areas. After teaching for eleven years in secondary schools, Bruce returned to his birthplace with an appointment to the Wollongong Institute of Education in 1970. His interest in post-war immigration, fostered during his childhood years, developed into the preparation of teaching materials about the impact of post-war immigration.

In 1974, he graduated with a Master of Arts (Honours) from Macquarie University with his thesis based on Bathurst, where he had taught. Promoted in 1976 to Senior Lecturer at the Goulburn College of Advanced Education, he came to Goulburn at a time when teacher training colleges were upgraded into colleges of advanced education with Bruce serving on the committee that reviewed the merger of the Goulburn and Riverina institutions. In 1983, Bruce moved to Albury as Campus Director (Principal Lecturer) at the Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education and was appointed as Associate Professor of Charles Sturt University at Albury in 1989. During the 1980s, he was inspired by the prospect of helping the Albury-Wodonga growth centre project to succeed, later writing a commissioned history on the project. In 1988, Bruce served on secondment on a board that unsuccessfully tried to establish a university at Albury-Wodonga. He completed his doctorate on Albury through Deakin University in 1993.

Starting out as a local historian who flirted with labour history and urban history, Bruce's professional interests developed into those of a heritage historian undertaking broad thematic studies of places whilst aiming to explain late twentieth century development. Working in regional settings, he attempted to make sense of the character of the local community, looking at development patterns for explanations and reading the local community from the built environment.

After retiring from Charles Sturt University in 1998, Bruce continued there as an honorary Adjunct Associate Professor, undertaking historical research, writing and advocacy. He pursued public history commissions, including a number of heritage histories for the New South Wales State Rail Authority. His largest project and perhaps his most outstanding contribution to the practice and study of history was the research, explanation and promotion of the migrant experience in the post-war years, focusing on the former Bonegilla Reception and Training Centre

near Albury-Wodonga as a public memory place. Successful in getting funding, Bruce wrote and published eight interpretative thematic guides to Bonegilla, served on the Bonegilla Steering Committee and authored the successful nomination of the site to be placed on the National Heritage List in 2007.

In all his work, Bruce Pennay examined the lives of ordinary people, their family history and how they and their experiences contributed to the fabric of modern Australia and the importance of history in the building of the future.

His significant commitment to advancing the interests of history and heritage within the community saw him working as the historian on the heritage studies of a number of local government areas including Deniliquin Shire, Murray Shire, Goulburn City and Albury City in New South Wales and for Indigo Shire and Wodonga City in northeastern Victoria. He is also well-known for his histories of Wollongong, Bathurst, Broken Hill and Albury. In addition, he completed heritage histories and heritage impact statements on specific sites in the Albury-Wodonga region. His most recent work, a history of the three shires of Culcairn, Holbrook and Hume was published in 2006. His 2005 publication *Making a City in the Country: The Albury-Wodonga Growth Centre Project, 1973-2003* won the Award for Excellence (teaching and research) in the Annual Awards of the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria Division) and the Commendation Award in the New South Wales Division.

His published record includes histories, heritage studies and co-authoring the catalogue for the Centenary of Federation exhibition for the Museums and Galleries Foundation of New South Wales in 2001. Bruce was awarded a Centenary Medal for his contribution to the celebration of the Centenary of Federation and is a life member of the History Council of New South Wales. He was a member of the Council of the Royal Australian Historical Society and of the Management Committee of the History Council of New South Wales, serving on the judging panel of the New South Wales Premier's History Awards in 2003. He was recently made a Fellow of the Federation of Historical Societies. Since 2004, Bruce has served as a member of the History Advisory Panel of the Heritage Office, New South Wales Department of Planning. In June 2009, he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in recognition of his service to the community of the Albury-Wodonga Region, particularly through the establishment of the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre Heritage Park. His service to history and his local community, continuing long after his formal retirement from academia, exemplifies a life-time commitment of excellence to the study, practice and incorporation of history into the life of local communities.

