

# Donovan News

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... keeping in touch with clients and other friends ...

## History Responsibilities

**T**he psalmist in Psalm 78 highlighted the importance of a sense of history and the responsibility it imposes on those who are its custodians:

What we have heard and known for ourselves,  
and what our ancestors have told us,  
Must not be withheld from their descendants,  
but be handed on by us to the next generation.

The grandmother in John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, reflected the same concern for a sense of history. After watching her family become refugees, she lamented, 'How can we know it is us, unless we know our stories'.

Knowledge of our past gives us our sense of identity. It helps us to understand the present and our place in it. Each of us has a past and we become disoriented and alienated if we lose contact with it. This is an essential problem faced by refugees, such as those from Kosovo, who are suddenly uprooted from everything that is familiar to them. Less extreme is the sense of alienation experienced by people subjected to sudden change over which they have no control. It occurs when people suddenly lose their jobs or when their company is taken over by another.

A sense of history and identity is perhaps more necessary now than ever before because of the rapidity of change in all aspects of society. That helps explain the development of the heritage and conservation movements, with aims of ensuring the conservation of old and familiar places. Yet the preservation of the less tangible histories of companies and organisations is also important, because once the continuity it lost, the history can often be very difficult to recover, if at all.

Managers of companies and organisations should be mindful of the admonition of the psalmist and their duty to preserve and pass on the history to which they are heirs.

THE COMPANY  
LOST ITS HISTORICAL  
CONTINUITY, TODAY...  
...THEY SACKED ME.



## D&A's Scope of Work

**T**he busy people at D&A have continued to be so since the previous *News*, primarily with on-going work.

The history of ACTEW, the ACT's electricity and water corporation, is virtually complete. The manuscript has gone to the production stage, with an anticipated launch in the second half of July.

At the same time, our history of the Australian Barley Board is nearing completion. In this instance we anticipate a book launch by late August.

Meanwhile, the research and writing of the history of the De La Salle Brothers continues. We are nearing the halfway stage of the project, with the manuscript due for completion in August 2000.

Historical research for the Attorney General's Department in regards to South Australian native title claims continues to

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D&A's Scope of Work continued

be challenging. Peter Donovan attended a conference in Canberra in May 1999, organised by the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, concerned with historians and native title research.

Peter Donovan and June Donovan completed their stint as editors of the *Journal of the Oral History Association of Australia* with the publication of issue no. 20 in late 1998.

Of the new projects which have been commenced since the previous *News*, a recent commission has been our appointment as sub-consultants to Dames & Associates of Adelaide who are undertaking a strategic planning study of Murray Bridge. D&A's role is to identify relevant heritage places and to highlight the heritage issues that need to be addressed.

The Enfield General Cemetery Trust recently invited Peter Donovan to join a Reference Group to advise the Trust and consultants commissioned to develop a management plan for the West Terrace Cemetery which is now under the Trust's control. Peter was involved in the preparation of an earlier plan for the West Terrace cemetery and is familiar with the issues.

## Cooperation works

The Australian Barley Board (ABB)—soon to be a company—is identified with the nation's barley growing industry. Thus, key features of the Board's history since its formation in 1939 have been determined by the vagaries of seasons, mechanisation of the industry, the development of new strains of barley, and a scientific approach to farming.

The ABB was founded to protect the interests of barley growers and to bring order into the marketing of the Australian crop. Both it and the industry have changed much since that time. Barley was originally shipped to domestic and overseas markets in bags. Large grain stacks dominated country railway sidings and ports. Grain is now delivered in bulk to domestic customers and terminals for export overseas.

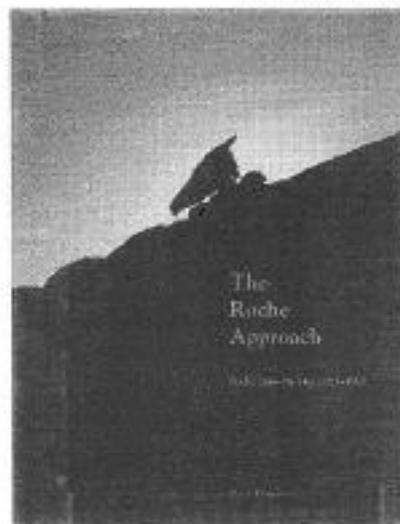
The ABB continues to hold the chief responsibility for marketing the greater part of the nation's barley crop. Some of this is sold on domestic markets—primarily for use in the brewing industry—but a great deal is exported. Thus, the ABB is one of the nation's major exporting organisations, one which plays an important role in helping to ensure a healthy balance of payments. So, the ABB's history reflects many features of Australia's international trade in primary produce since 1939, including the difficulties and hazards of shipping grain overseas during World War II. Then Europe was the major export market; current exports are primarily destined for markets in the Middle East and Asia.

The ABB is another Australian success story. It has prospered because those in charge have been alive to changing markets and the demands of the competitive environment in which it operates.

AM I ALLOWED TO SAY WE'VE BARLEY BEGUN ON THIS PROJECT?



## Published Recently



*The Roche Approach: Roche Bros Pty Ltd: 1921 - 1997* by Peter Donovan. Published by Roche Bros. The book is hardback, measures 210 mm x 295 mm, has xiv +250 pages, an index, and is illustrated in colour and black and white.

## Inside Canberra

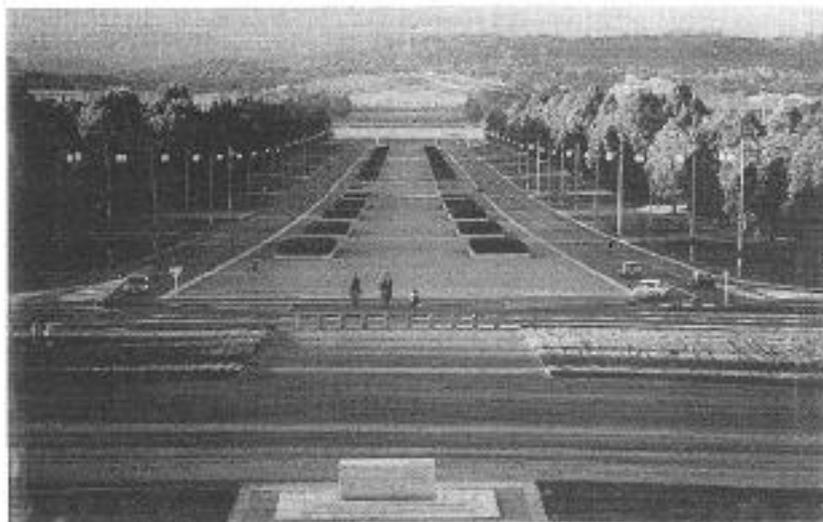
Completing our history of ACTEW Corporation, the Australian Capital Territory's electricity and water utility, concludes D&A's third project in Canberra in recent years. Readers will recall references to our history of Asset Services, *National Assets*, and that of the Australian Protective Service, *Changing the Guard*. Together these projects have allowed us to document a broad sweep of Canberra's history as well as becoming familiar with particular institutions and places in and about Canberra.

Our histories of ACTEW and Asset Services have documented much of the national capital's physical development, beginning with the choice of the site for the territory and the capital, and the provision of essential infrastructure. These agencies have been associated with the provision of electricity, water and sewerage services, along with roads, the airport, the Mugga Quarry, a government timberyard, and the construction and maintenance of many public buildings.

ACTEW has always been government-owned and passed from the federal to the ACT government with the granting of self-government to the ACT in 1989. Consequently, much of the later history of ACTEW is bound up with changes in government and government policy.

But, our histories have a broader significance because they have been involved with significant features of federal government policy. Among other responsibilities, the Australian Protective Service provided security services for intelligence gathering earth-stations and immigration detention centres and reflected features of Australia's policy towards America and immigration. *National Assets* was concerned with the rationalisation of government business enterprises and traditional government departments: ACTEW's history has been another example of the rationalisation of government businesses. Additionally, the projects have required documenting changing federal government policies towards competition policy as enunciated by Professor Fred Hilmer, and the wish of state premiers to rationalise and privatise major utilities.

These projects have given us special insights into Canberra and some of its networks.



The view from the Australian War Memorial to Parliament House

## In Review

Much of our recent work has been pitched at niche markets and rarely comes to the attention of a wide readership. So, we were delighted with the positive review of our history of Sacred Heart College, *In the Marist Tradition*, accorded by Stephanie Burley of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Adelaide. Her review appeared in the 1998 issue of the *Journal of the South Australian Historical Society*. In part she commented:

'Commissioned institutional histories can pose unique problems for the author. The expectations, implied or spelt out, of the commissioning body must be borne in mind, along with the intended audience, and the selection of themes and material. Peter Donovan and Bernard O'Neil ... appear to have dealt with these issues and produced a text which is laudatory, yet does not flinch from tackling the controversial and the occasional tainted aspects of the school's history ...

The book is a centenary history, canvassing the origins and development of the college since its foundations at Port Adelaide in 1897 ...

A real strength lies in the analysis of the years 1964-1992, a period of major social changes, and particularly for this school. The

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In Review (continued)

authors highlight the actual changes involved, the complexity of the situations, and the emotional impact of relatively fast and dramatic changes in the school community ... These and other changes are analysed sensitively, yet the authors do not shy away from grave conflicts, articulating clearly the important financial and educational considerations and the emotional and factional interests involved. So too they discuss the losses, gains and casualties along the way. These chapters also allude to the persistence of the male ethos, so that 'it still seemed like a boy's school with girls'. Finally, having traversed change and continuity in great detail, the authors look to the future, and posit the possible pathways, problems and concerns of times to come.

This book canvasses the school population broadly, women staff and students included. It has brought to bear a wide range of written, oral and visual sources ...

Whilst there is no doubt that this is a celebratory history ... there is nevertheless a most emphatic and perceptive analysis of complex and controversial educational policies and religious deliberations. An extensive bibliography is provided, and a useful index for those who wish to browse. Overall, it will be attractive to several audiences, the school community primarily, but also to historians and researchers, and those with an interest in South Australian history generally. It is indeed one of the best Australian school histories to date, with much for scholars to emulate'.



Copy editing of the *News* is by Bernard O'Neil. The cartoons are by Stephen Stanley.



## DONOVAN & ASSOCIATES

History & Historic Preservation Consultants

**Donovan & Associates** is a consulting firm which specialises in matters relating to aspects of historical research, writing and historic conservation. The firm undertakes a wide variety of tasks based upon these specialties. Major projects completed by the firm include large commissioned histories and heritage studies, recording of oral history and providing advice on records management.

**Donovan & Associates** was established in 1980 and has since undertaken work for clients throughout southeastern Australia on projects that have involved research and work in all parts of the country.

**Donovan & Associates'** services include:

- Corporate and institutional histories
- Regional and local histories
- Heritage surveys and assessments
- Land tenure research
- Oral history programs
- Advice on cultural tourism
- Advice on historical displays

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