

Retired Teachers Association news

September 18, 2019

Sydney Town Hall tour

On Wednesday, 21 August, a group of RTA members visited Sydney Town Hall. The impressive building was constructed between 1868 and 1889 and is made of sandstone quarried in nearby Pyrmont. Our organised tour included inspections of Centennial Hall, the Vestibule, Council Chambers, the Lady Mayoress Suite and the Lord Mayor's Reception Room. The Vestibule is regarded as one of the most significant Victorian interiors in Australia and is a combination of detailed plasterwork inspired by Neo-classical and Moorish architecture. One of the highlights of the tour was the collection of portraits of mayors and lord mayors who have served the city. It was as much a study of the changing nature of portraiture as it was the identifying of key figures in Sydney's civic history.



More news on Warragamba Dam

The August meeting of the Retired Teachers Association expressed disappointment at the NSW Government's response to concerns our Association held regarding the proposed raising of the wall on Warragamba Dam. A raised dam wall will not protect houses built on the flood plain, below the dam, from flooding. However, a raised dam wall will destroy endangered species' habitats and cause inundation of significant Aboriginal sites. The Berejiklian Government must reconsider its position immediately. John Inshaw's motion was carried unanimously.

Australian Free Trade and Investment Network

Ian Massingham has sought endorsement for two submissions to be prepared for the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties. The first submission will focus on the free trade agreement between Australia and Hong Kong, which still allows transnational companies the opportunity to sue the Australian Government should their interests not be met. The second submission relates to the Indonesia and Australia Comprehensive Partnership Agreement where irregularities occur. The preparation of both submissions was fully supported by members at the August meeting.

Female pioneers

The Royal Australian Historical Society's Judith Dunn addressed members in August. Judith prefaced her talk by mentioning that women in the new colony had a poor quality of life. They certainly weren't considered the equals of men and were often traded for livestock and crops. Rather than highlighting Australia's famous female pioneers, Judith focused on some lesser known women. These included Rosie Jurd from Wollombi, who provided security at the inn her husband owned; Elizabeth Peisley, who as a free woman, successfully applied

to have her convict husband become her servant; and Deborah Ellam, who became the first woman to report domestic violence in the fledgling settlement.

CRUMA report

Ron Denham reported that the Combined Retired Union Members Association (CRUMA) has written to the Prime Minister requesting that the Aged Care portfolio be a dedicated one and not attached to other portfolio areas. Discussions also centred on the 'Ensuring Integrity' bill, introduced by Christian Porter, that CRUMA believes will lead to the demise of industrial democracy. CRUMA noted that the recent sale of the Sirius building by the NSW Government for \$150 million attracted little publicity. Finally, there are allegations that speculators from overseas are bidding for water rights in the Murray-Darling River systems which places them in direct competition with Australian farmers.

Upcoming events

Our next two meetings will be held at Federation House on Friday, 11 October, and Friday, 8 November. Both meetings commence with lunch at noon and conclude with a general meeting starting at 2pm. The October meeting will feature a guest speaker commencing at 12.45pm. Members should note that the November meeting will incorporate the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

An excursion to the ANZAC Memorial in Sydney's Hyde Park will occur on Wednesday, 23 October, while a tour of the HARS Air Museum at Albion Park is scheduled for Wednesday, 20 November.

The Club York luncheons are happening on Wednesday, 16 October, and Wednesday, 13 November. Members should meet at noon for both events.

For more information visit rtansw.blogspot.com.

— Paul Regan, Administrative Secretary, NSW Retired Teachers Association