

ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY VICTORIA

2019 AWARDS OF MERIT

Nomination of Russ Haines, President, Ringwood and District Historical Society

Russ Haines joined the Society in about 2002. The then President, Richard Carter, remembers that “he was just there and seemed [to have] been a member forever ... he fitted in so easily.”

According to Richard, it was obvious soon after Russ joined the Society that, on Richard’s retirement, Russ would succeed him. This Russ did in 2007. Richard continues:

To his credit, Russ did not feel constrained by the thought he had to run the Society the way I had. He doubled the meeting cycle to once a month. Crucially he set about making the Society financially self-sufficient and not reliant on sponsorship or donations. Importantly he reached out to other kindred groups, notably Heathmont History Group.

Perhaps Russ’ greatest legacy will be in how he harnessed his information technology knowledge to make the Society accessible literally to anybody. ... Whilst we had had a website, it was clunky, not interactive, and rarely updated. Russ put the Society on Facebook and, most importantly, became a valued source of answers to the myriad of followers (over 3,300).

Russ has clocked up over ten years as President of RDHS and I am sure members wish him to carry on forever.

We, the present committee of the Society, take this opportunity in the absence of Russ to unanimously agree. Russ personifies all that is best about local historical societies. He is inspirational. He is immersed in Ringwood’s past. He is a devoted and highly competent archivist. He is a communicator of extraordinary power. Over the last several years, Russ has given talks about "old" Ringwood to local primary schools, and made presentations to many other groups on facets of Ringwood's history. Between 2006 and 2017, he was the monthly presenter of the historical program on Eastern FM radio. When last year the Society reached its 60th anniversary, Russ was instrumental in organising the anniversary commemoration. The result was an outstanding success, typifying both his leadership and his commitment to making the Ringwood story known to the widest possible audience. Russ’ achievement was appropriately acknowledged when the commemoration was recognised as The Maroondah Council Community Event of the Year at the Jan 2019 Australia Day awards.

Russ’ pre-eminence in Melbourne’s involvement with local history is also evidenced by the fact that since 2007 he has been secretary of, and Ringwood’s representative on, the regional historical committee of the Association of Eastern Historical Societies (AOEHS).

In the opinion of his colleagues on the committee of the Ringwood and District Historical Society, Russ Haines would be a very worthy recipient of a Royal Historical Society of Victoria Award of Merit.

David Harper AM, Vice President

Peter Fry, Treasurer

Jeff Leipold, Secretary

Pamela O'Connor, Member

Robin Carter, Member

Ken Briscoe, Member

Michael Anderson, Member

