

RHSV AWARD OF MERIT NOMINATION 2019

Due 5 pm Friday 12 April

Person being nominated: Helen Gobbi, Vice-President, History Monash (formerly Oakleigh and District Historical Society). Note: Helen is also the Secretary of the Oakleigh Pioneer Memorial Park Advisory Committee.

Nominator: Ann Nield, Committee Member, on behalf of History Monash Inc.

Criteria:

- a) Should have given meritorious service to an affiliated Member Society of the RHSV or to the RHSV. The service should be exceptional and go beyond the routine holding of office.
- b) The nominee should have been involved in the work of the Member Society or RHSV for a minimum of ten years.

Statement of Support

Helen Gobbi has researched, protected and promoted local history in Oakleigh for over twenty years. Her deep commitment to this is an outstanding example of meritorious service to the historical and wider community. She has actively served History Monash (HM) both on the Committee (nine terms as President) and as historian, successfully combining the roles of researcher, writer, advocate for heritage, and advisor to government and other organisations.

The continuing outstanding amenity of the Monash Federation Centre (MFC) is largely due to Helen's initial assistance with the design and the eye-catching "history windows", her work in **establishing, protecting and maintaining the archive space** in accordance with professional practice, and her compilation of a comprehensive archive catalogue. Helen's wide community networks ensure a steady stream of donated artefacts to HM. She volunteers two days per week at the MFC, to maintain the archives and make them accessible for others' research.

Helen also undertakes a huge volume of unpaid work to **research and preserve heritage**. She has conducted hundreds of oral histories and undertaken meticulous research, resulting in historical resources on the local area such as her recent research preparatory to replacement of the Clayton Avenue of Honour.

She has prepared many submissions to planning bodies and through the Oakleigh Leadership Group promotes the critical importance of heritage in local planning. Helen has also actively preserved local heritage through campaigning for, and preparing, plaques and installations including at the Oakleigh Pioneer Memorial Park.

She has assisted many groups and schools with their anniversary celebrations and researched and published histories of families buried at Oakleigh Pioneer Memorial Park.

Helen **promotes and disseminates local historical information** in many ways. She annually curates three exhibitions at the Monash Federation Centre. Her current exhibition on "Motoring in Oakleigh", for example, highlights important local issues such as motor manufacturing in Oakleigh and the development of the M1 freeway, using visually interesting artefacts plus her own well written text. Helen often speaks publicly, has led local excursions and uses the HM website to showcase historical information.

Helen **works collaboratively across heritage bodies and shares information**, eg with RHSV and the Military History Society. She recently initiated discussions with the Waverley Historical Society to reinstitute the local history forum.

Helen's publications include "Taking Its Place: A History of Oakleigh", histories of the Oakleigh Rotary Club and Hughesdale and Clayton North Primary Schools, and "Fallen Leaves" about WW1 soldiers. She edits and writes the vast majority of articles for "On Broadway", the quarterly HM journal, and contributes to other publications.

Much of Oakleigh's history would be forgotten or devalued without Helen's exceptionally dedicated and skilful preservation and promotion of local heritage. HM hopes that she will be recognised by RHSV.

Nomination supported by:

Jennifer Jaeger, President, History Monash Inc.



Dean Siriani, Secretary, History Monash Inc.

