



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

RHSV Barbara Nixon Award Nomination of Dr Zoë Henderson 7 April 2020

Zoë Henderson first connected with the RHSV in 2017 when she approached us with an idea for an exhibition based on the 1970s in Melbourne. We accepted this idea with alacrity and Zoë became a firm and constant fixture at the RHSV for the next 18 months as she curated what became, *Putting it Out There! Melbourne in the 1970s*.

Zoë is well qualified with a BA with honours, University Stellenbosch, South Africa 1985, a Master of Arts, University Stellenbosch, 1990, a Master of Philosophy, Cambridge University, England, 1991 and a Doctor of Philosophy, Cambridge University, 2002. Before leaving South Africa for Australia in 2008, Zoë was head of the archaeology and anthropology department, South African Museum. Her PhD thesis, *Spatial patterning at southern African middle Pleistocene open-air sites: Florisbad, Duinefontein 2/2 and Mwanganda's Village*, seems a long way from *Putting it out there! Melbourne in the 1970s*.

Putting it out there! Melbourne in the 1970s turned out to be a huge undertaking. Zoë put a call out to our members to borrow objects and documents as our own collection is not strong in the more recent decades of the twentieth century. Zoë then spent the next few months travelling across Melbourne picking up precious items and listening to people's stories. Meanwhile she was doing a prodigious amount of detailed and rigorous research into Melbourne and the 1970s without the benefit of having lived in Melbourne during that decade. Zoë quickly won the respect of everyone she dealt with including academics, historians, archivists both professional and amateur and our members. Zoë was absolutely meticulous in her documentation and handling of the borrowed objects. For months after the exhibition closed Zoë was busy returning treasured objects to their owners. Zoë also rolled up her sleeves and helped paint the entire gallery and all the display cases for the exhibition. She brought fresh eyes and ideas to the RHSV and these were reflected in the scope and presentation of the exhibition.

Zoë's exhibition created many new partnerships and brought a refreshingly new audience to the RHSV. The more contemporary aspects of the project were commended in our subsequent 2019 Museums Re-accreditation Report. The images from *Putting it out there! Melbourne in the 1970s* formed the motif for the 2019 RHSV Annual Report which was also commended in the Re-accreditation Report. The exhibition also sparked new donations of more contemporary material to the RHSV and linked strongly to our 2018 conference on the 50th anniversary of 1968.

Since the exhibition has finished Zoë has continued to volunteer at the RHSV despite a heavy academic teaching load. She is still intent on expanding her knowledge. She has been working to clear up the backlog of image cataloguing and learning about our new cataloguing systems.

We have much pleasure in nominating Zoë Henderson for a Barbara Nixon Award in 2020.

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