



## ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

### RHSV Fellowship

#### Nomination of Emeritus Professor Charles (Chips) Sowerwine

Chips Sowerwine has made an outstanding contribution to the work and reputation of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, most notably first as editor of *History News*, and more recently as inaugural and ongoing Chair of its Heritage Committee.

Chips has served on the RHSV Council since 2013 and he is a long-time member of the Fitzroy History Society. Soon after his appointment to Council, Chips took on the editorship of *History News* and thus became a member of the Publications Committee. As *HN* editor, he converted what had been an amateur newsheet into a professional publication and sought out short articles and striking images as well as news. However, when Council decided to set up a working party on heritage issues in 2015, Chips took on the chairmanship of what became a formal committee of the RHSV the following year and handed over responsibility for *History News* to others.

As Heritage Committee Chair, he has been responsible for the RHSV taking a leading role in a number of important heritage protection and policy issues. These include the Melbourne City Council's proposed modernisation of the Queen Victoria Market, which has involved numerous submissions to Heritage Victoria as well as membership of the Peoples Panel set up to deliberate on a range of options for the market's future. Other major areas of heritage protection activity led by Professor Sowerwine include: protection of heritage buildings threatened by St Vincent's Hospital (Private and Public) proposed developments; the Corkman Hotel scandal; protection of the Quarantine Station and other sites in Point Nepean National Park; opposition to the proposed Apple Store at Federation Square, and submission in support of heritage registration for the square; protection of strip shopping centres (especially Queen Street and Swan Street); protection of the Sarah Sands Hotel in Brunswick; opposition to the proposed tower on the corner of Sydney Road and Park Street, Brunswick; submission to the Parliamentary Committee investigating Rio Tinto's destruction of Juukan Gorge rock shelters; opposition to proposed developments in the Exhibition and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Environs Area; representations with respect to the removal of trees of heritage significance for the Western Highway re-routing; opposition to proposed tourist accommodation in the form of giant wine barrels on Mt Buninyong; opposition to subdivision and development of the grounds of the former North Park mansion, Essendon; protection of the gates to the Olderfleet Building; opposition to the Fishermans Bend GMH development proposal; and support for the proposed Mission to Seafarers Maritime Centre. There have been successes, small achievements and failures, but Chips has never given up fighting.

Among the policy issues on which Professor Sowerwine has led the Heritage Committee are: submission to revision of the *Heritage Act 1995*; submission and support for the City of Melbourne's Hoddle Grid Heritage Study; major report and submission to the Heritage Council State of Heritage Review in relation to historical societies' views about local heritage protection; representations to the Heritage Council Victoria on the conflict between DDOs and Heritage Overlays in local heritage protection; submission to the Heritage Council with respect to the 'social value' criterion for registration; recommendations to the Planning and Building Approvals Process Review; reviewing the RHSV's policy concerning statues and monuments that no longer represent a diverse and inclusive Australian history; submission to the review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; submission in response to discussion paper for protection and extension of

the Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens World Heritage Environs Area, as well as the Heritage Management Plan concerning governance of the UNESCO-listed site; and submission to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council for review of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Professor Sowerwine has also made a major contribution to the teaching of history, primarily at the University of Melbourne, and he continues to engage in teaching through occasional lectures on heritage issues for U3A. His primary research and publication have been focused on French history, but he has also taught in comparative history subjects on women and social history and has supervised Australian history postgraduate students' dissertations. He taught at the University of Paris before taking up a lectureship at the University of Melbourne in 1974. His *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1870* (Cambridge, 1982, 2008) was the first work of an Anglophone author published by the Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (1978). With Claude Maignien, he wrote a biography of the pioneering socialist feminist, Dr Madeleine Pelletier (Paris, 1992). Recent publications include, with Susan Foley, *A Political Romance: Léon Gambetta, Léonie Léon and the Making of the French Republic, 1872–1882* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and the third edition of *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). In addition to his position as Emeritus Professor at the University of Melbourne, he is Adjunct Professor of History, La Trobe University, and Professeur des universités, Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. His scholarly achievements led to his appointment as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2003. He has been a member of a number of scholarly societies including the Australian Historical Association, the American Historical Association and Institut français d'histoire sociale (Member, Comité d'honneur), and he was also a founder and board member of the Australasian Association of European Historians.

Professor Sowerwine has been active in Melbourne's community history and heritage movements since he arrived here in the 1970s, using his historical knowledge and expertise in the interest of preserving the heritage of his adopted city. He has a longstanding interest in urbanism, transport and heritage issues and has been a member of the National Trust since 1973. Recently, on behalf of the RHSV, he collaborated in the development of the National Trust's Advocacy Toolkit. His *Wandering Scholar's Guide to Melbourne*, published by the University of Melbourne, went through seven editions. He was President of the Public Transport Users' Association from 1975 through 1984, in which his greatest achievement was saving the clocks at Flinders Street Station and leading the campaign against the 1980 Lonie Report, which recommended closing eight tram lines, six suburban rail lines and all regional rail except Geelong. He was later Vice-President of the Bicycle Institute of Victoria. He was involved in the first heritage study of Fitzroy in 1979 and was appointed Fitzroy citizen of the year in 1988 after he came up with a bicentennial proposal for streetlamps using the moulds of 19<sup>th</sup>-century gas lamps, having discovered the foundry that had made them.

Undoubtedly Chips has enhanced the standing of the RHSV through his advocacy on heritage issues and his public representations in the press, other media outlets and government bodies. His work has made the RHSV a key player in matters of heritage protection and policy.

Judith Smart AM, FRHSV,  
Adjunct Professor RMIT University  
19 March 2021



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