



# Heidelberg Historical Society Inc.

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We are pleased to nominate Graeme Speers for an Award of Merit from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Graeme joined the Heidelberg Historical Society [HHS] in 2003 and was elected president the following year. Using his skills developed from 27 years of managing information services at senior levels within college and University libraries, he set about re-organising the collections to make them more accessible to the public. He showed foresight in the procurement and use of computers for information management.

From the beginning he recognised that the role of President should become that of a CEO where all committee members were responsible for and contributed to the management of the Society. Through consultation with committee members, Graeme became familiar with the Society's history and achievements, alongside current financial and collections status. From then on with a committee supported five-year plan, his clear thinking transformed HHS into a forward-looking Society with enthusiastic volunteers, improved collection management systems, membership growth and community relevance.

Besides effectively chairing committee and speaker meetings, Graeme's ability to recruit and keep volunteers was through acknowledging their skills and then matching them to a task for the life of that task. He understood how individual ownership would improve the quality of the work completed by each volunteer. He also recognised that our volunteers were a community that supported each other with training, care and concern, and camaraderie. His mediator and mentor roles continue today.

Creating a positive work environment was also important. With enthusiastic help from others, Graeme used his handy man skills to implement physical changes at our museum headquarters. He changed the way we use the working space in our publicly accessible Research Room and for maximising storage in other courthouse rooms. Grants which he obtained from local organisations funded many of these changes.

Graeme also accepted the invitation to work with Liz Pidgeon [Local and Family History Librarian for Yarra Plenty Regional Library] in establishing the Banyule Local Heritage Group in 2006, where history focussed groups met quarterly to

share information. Over time this forum has morphed into the current but expanded Yarra Plenty Heritage Group.

Historical Societies often do not document their own history very well, and after becoming Vice President in 2016, Graeme began to collate and shape a narrative history of HHS from 2004 through to 2016. The digital file was completed last year.

Graeme continues to be a resolute and innovative member where for these past 20 years his other roles as a Weekday and Sunday roster volunteer, tradesman, colleague, and mentor have added to his key role of President. The reputation of Heidelberg Historical Society within the wider community has been enhanced by his commitment.

He would be a worthy recipient of an Award of Merit.

Nominator: Jenn Burgess, President

On behalf of HHS Committee of Management