



29 March 2023

Bernadette Wells **AWARD OF MERIT NOMINATION**

Bernadette Wells has made enormous and meaningful contributions to many facets of the Merbein District Historical Society's activities and has been a passionate member since joining the MDHS in 1998 in its second year. She is a born leader, able to inspire and motivate Society members to work together to get things done.

Bernadette leads a vibrant, growing society (54 members) whose volunteers open MDHS rooms weekly. She is also involved in documenting Merbein's history, cataloguing our collection and recently, facilitated our shift to large, refurbished premises where she facilitated and collaborated with 3 teams of members to create amazing themed displays. She has also compiled MDHS Policy & Collection Guide Manual (87p. 2021).

Executive Positions held by Bernadette

- **2001:** Elected to the MDHS Committee **2008:** Vice President of the MDHS
- **2012:** President of the MDHS (Current) **2018:** President/Secretary (Current)

Specific Input to MDHS Tasks/Activities

- Member of a team who commenced cataloguing the Society's Collection using Excel in 2000. Bernadette now leads a small team which has adopted Victorian Collections cataloguing system.
- Facilitated excursions, short term displays and compiled several PP Presentations focussed on Merbein History for Public Events/Aged Care Facilities.
- Liaised with Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) in the unveiling of a cairn/plaque event to mark 1857 local encampment of zoologist William Blandowski.
- Initiated collaboration with MRCC to write/produce The Blandowski Walkway Pamphlet; Written text for several 'historic' plaques and interpretative signage boards; Presented and participated in workshops for historical inclusions in the Mosaic Cluster Box Project in collaboration with Lower Murray Water (LMW).
- Voluntarily compiled 8 Books for the MDHS and since 2014 has been Editor of the quarterly, Merbein Historian (16p.–150 copies). Book sales generate revenue for the society. Titles include: Merbein A Self Drive Tour of Historic Sites, Buildings and Places of Interest (55 entries (2010); Merbein Blockies and the Evolving Mechanization of Horticultural Implements and Practices, (254p. (2012); The 80th Anniversary of the Merbein Country Women's Association 1939 – 2019 (146p. 2019); A Collection of Early Merbein Houses and Their Residents (228p. 2021).
- Joined the Merbein Centenary Committee (2009) to actively assist in the organisation/presentation of events over 10 days of celebration. Narrated a professionally produced video of Merbein Centenary Street Parade (244 entries)
- Presented monthly 'historical' talks on ABC Radio over 2 years; co-constructed and now maintains MDHS Website and Facebook.
- Initiated MDHS Historical Plaques Program for building/sites.
- Negotiated, successfully, with the Victorian Department of Education to save from demolition, the domed-shaped Merbein Primary School Shelter Sheds.
- Participating member of MRCC Mildura Heritage Study Part B Ref Group/Mallee Heritage Group.
- Ongoing collaboration with MRCC/LMW to establish an Historic Items area at Chaffey Park Merbein

Nominated by Jennifer Bennett
Merbein and District Historical Society