

Janette (Jan) Lewis, Apollo Bay and District Historical Society (ABDHS) – Award of Merit

Jan joined as an active member of ABDHS approximately ten years ago and quickly proved both her commitment and ability in taking on the role of Secretary in 2013; a position she has held with distinction ever since. One of her greatest strengths is her willingness to navigate change. Her diplomacy and management skills have been invaluable during the most challenging period of our history. This includes the addition of Covid restrictions whilst navigating the tricky process of establishing a five-year Strategic Plan for our future.

As a talented researcher, Jan is at the forefront of ABDHS research which involves responding to the many and varied enquires regarding family, local and, in recent times, our natural history. In 2015 Jan initiated our quarterly newsletter, Cable Calls (now in its 28th edition), adopting the responsibilities of author, researcher, and publisher for every edition to date. In each edition Jan's story-telling shines, as she brings to life a different aspect and element from our past. Collectively, Cable Calls has now become a rich archival resource for ABDHS and the local and wider community.

These abilities were also recognised by the Australian Maritime Museum Council in 2017. Jan's (ABDHS) submission (City of Rayville) was one of the fourteen stories accepted into their (National) touring exhibition *Submerged*. ABDHS was able to host the exhibition for our Seafood Festival in February 2020 just prior to the Covid restrictions.

ABDHS also operates the Apollo Bay Cable Station Museum where Jan has taken leadership roles in governance and exhibition renewal. One of her many outstanding achievements was the indigenous display, where Jan led a small team to fill in a gap in our exhibits. This required time and patience to build a working relationship with local indigenous contacts. Jan and her team created an environment of kindness, understanding and respect which both benefited and enlightened all concerned.

During the Covid shutdown, Jan used her writing and research skills to produce self-guided tours (booklets) covering our local cemetery and township. These have proved to be very popular, leading the way for ABDHS to introduce guided tours, a new income stream during these difficult times.

Recently, Jan has actively worked on progressing an important goal of our Strategic Plan, heritage listing for the Cable Station and its residence. This, to date, has required dealings with ABDHS members and a variety of external stakeholders. Always a champion of heritage, Jan has now helped formulate plans that should see this goal achieved (over time) with our site gaining the recognition it rightly deserves.

Pauline Nolle
President, ABDHS
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