

## Nomination of Helen Curkpatrick for an RHSV Award of Merit

Originally from Stawell, now of Horsham, Helen Curkpatrick is a long-standing member of both locations' historical societies and well-known for her commitment to documenting and promoting their histories. Yet, while most local historians focus on their immediate area, Helen is committed to preserving and promoting local history wherever opportunities lie. Her success and 'reach' support this nomination.

Helen has written many articles for the *Wimmera Mail Times* and numerous books including *Norton Nostalgia: a history of the Lower Norton district* (2012) and *Days of Drung: a history of the Drung district* (2014). Helen also leads walking tours of historic Horsham sites, and one on Church Hill in 2016, resulted in collaboration on a book of its history. Another walk in 2019 was of historic hotels and, in 2024, Helen will lead a tour of Horsham's 'forgotten' laneways.

Helen has chronicled the history of Horsham's Agricultural Society; a video of her recounting some of it is on the Society's Facebook page. She is frequently asked to speak at heritage events. She is a gifted storyteller who caters to audiences of different ages and, while many local historians are content with being approached to address students, Helen actively canvasses opportunities, well-aware that future local historians are in today's younger generation.

Since 2010, Helen has served as National Trust (Wimmera and Region Branch) Secretary and Treasurer. She regularly organises Open Days at historic Longerenong Homestead. The owners rely on her to oversee all aspects of these events, including catering and transportation.

Coinciding with assuming her National Trust roles, Helen assumed the same with the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies (WVAHS), to-date serving both for 14 years. Her organisational and networking skills are enviable. For WVAHS, Helen liaises with society representatives to host the AGM and its three Zone meetings annually, organising groups from the coast to the Murray, from the South Australia border to the central highlands.

For WVAHS, Helen, has delegated newsletter production to others but is meticulous in proofing and editing every issue before distribution.

Former WVAHS President, Judith Kershaw, recalls: "Helen was unknown to the organisation but quickly familiarised herself with communicating with member societies across Western and North-Western Victoria. With her delightful personality and dogged persistence, Helen chased up lapsed member societies and recruited new, organised functions, and kept people well informed."

For four years, Helen hosted a weekly historical segment on ABC Wimmera radio. Topics included local band history, cemeteries, genealogy, local historical societies, railways, the National Trust, volunteering with heritage bodies, and the region's buildings, including churches.

The above is testimony to Helen's commitment to engendering knowledge of local history in its broadest possible definition and with the widest possible reach.

**Craige Proctor: WVAHS Committee Member**

**Rosalie Triolo: Chair, HSSC**