

Nomination of Dr John Pardy for an RHSV Award of Merit

John Pardy has been President of Sunshine & District Historical Society since 2013. Since that time, he has played a leading role in relation to local and State heritage, liaising with Brimbank Council officers and State bodies regarding heritage issues and events. He has also chaired meetings, organised excursions to places of historic interest, and represented our society on the Brimbank Heritage Advisory Committee. His contribution has been in an honorary capacity while working full-time for Monash University and later the Victorian Education Department.

In June 2022 he gave a talk to our society on 150 years of public education in Victoria. Later he presented the same talk at the RHSV conference, 'Free, Secular, Compulsory'.

In 2021 his action proved decisive in preventing the Victorian Education Department from demolishing a beautiful pair of buildings in Streamlined Moderne style, the former Sunshine Technical School Girls' Section (1940) and Boys' Section and Trade Wing (1947). When Dr Pardy heard of the Education Department's plans to demolish the buildings, he produced (within ten days) a solid 25-page study of the school's history to support a nomination to the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) and organised support from Brimbank Council and the RHSV. Now in 2024 he is leading efforts to reinstate that nomination after Heritage Victoria unfortunately rejected it.

He led the Sunshine & District Historical Society during a challenging time (2022) when it took on new responsibilities, especially in relation to promoting and interpreting the Black Powder Mill, a small munitions production building of national significance, near Deer Park and the last remnant of the vast Albion Explosives Factory which is now the suburb of Cairnlea. He spoke about the Mill at its annual Open Day in 2023 and will be talking about the Mill at St Albans Library on 28 March 2024.

John has been generous in taking things on and has always been willing to have a go. This has meant that he has had to work tremendously hard behind the scenes, researching, writing and getting in touch with people. His calmness, an important quality in a leader, is remarkable.

John Pardy has always been available to give advice, for example in relation to a transcription service for tape recordings of interviews. He has liaised effectively with local Council (Brimbank) officers and has put time into keeping in touch with individual committee members.

Dr Pardy has been a real asset to Sunshine & District Historical Society and to the broader history-heritage scene, especially regarding the history of technical education in Victoria and its place within Victoria's heritage. I believe he would be a most worthy recipient of an Award of Merit.

Olwen Ford
19/3/2024