



History Council of South Australia (HCSA)

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17 March 2015

Hon Jack Snelling, Minister for The Arts

Dear Minister

I am writing on behalf of South Australia's historical sector to ask you as Minister for The Arts to consider reinstating the grant to Wakefield Press, and to request a meeting on this and other important Arts-related historical matters.

Our peak body, the History Council of South Australia (HCSA), views with great concern the decision to cut this year's government grant to the publisher Wakefield Press (as reported in the *Advertiser* on 14 March). Wakefield Press is our State's main independent publisher, and the only substantial publisher of SA historical works, and of works by SA-based history writers. The reported funding cut of \$110,000 pa will mean that fewer history works will be published, and that invaluable professional support by way of design, editing and marketing, as well as sponsorship, will be lost to the whole history sector. If the publisher goes out of business, this will have an even more serious impact on an already poorly funded area of arts activity in SA.

Wakefield Press also provides commissioned publishing for organisations, including government departments and cultural institutions. This crucial role may also be lost to the State if Wakefield Press is wound down. This will undermine the *Open Government* strategy, as public decision-making will not be transparent to the community if the context is not understood by means of well-researched and well-presented histories.

As a publisher of significant historical works Wakefield Press will always require some level of public support because the market is small and profits are low. However, the inestimable value of these publications to the SA community as a whole, as well as to the Arts and Education sectors, cannot be underestimated. The HCSA asks you as Minister to reinstate ongoing public funding for a major contributor to SA's culture.

We also request a meeting with you soon to discuss this matter further and to canvass other Arts-related issues in the history sector, including the Government's plans. We understand that the Conservation Council of SA, our counterpart in the natural environment sector, holds a regular roundtable meeting with the Minister for the Environment, and we ask to do the same with you and your history advisors in Arts.

Yours sincerely

**Susan Marsden BA (Hons) PhD MPHA
President**

cc Hon Jay Weatherill; Mr Michael Bollen; Ms Annmarie Reid