AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

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EDITORIAL

The last photo in the meme about historians in the Just for Fun page may have an unnerving effect on those of us getting into our so-called Golden Years. What would our heirs do with all those filing cabinets and boxes stuffed with notes and photocopies? I'm helping an elderly friend in poor health to go through the masses of paper he's accumulated in a lifetime of research with the aim of giving the greatly slimmed-down collection to our local historical society. It's making me think guiltily about 4 filing cabinets and 3 large plastic boxes in my office…time to get sorting! Either that, or do something notorious enough that I get really famous and a collecting institution will take the lot!

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Broken Hill Conference

Registrations for our 29th Annual Conference in Broken Hill in early September are rolling in. Over the three days, the presentations will include the major themes of the Broken Hill Mines, Technological Developments and Human Resources. Presenters include prominent current and past mining industry practitioners giving their life experiences in this World class mining district. Presenters include Leigh Clifford reviewing 50 years of mining industry transformation, Jeff Nixon on the shafts of the Broken Hill Line of Lode, Rob McLean on the heyday of Broken Hill-1950-70, Rob Williamson on electronics in mining, Matt Churchward on installing electricity into early Victorian mines, Ross Both on the 1909 BHP Strike/Lockout, and Peter McCarthy reviewing mine manager training at ZC/NBHC in the 1970s, and many more.

Broken Hill is Australia's first Heritage City and there are historic buildings, museums, art galleries and numerous other attractions for the historically minded. In addition, there are two field trips covering the Line of Lode and the near region including Silverton and the Desert National Park.

The AMHA Annual Conferences are a highlight of our year and together with the Journal and Newsletter provide great value for mining history buffs. These activities, of course, require the involvement of volunteers who take on roles on committees and specific projects. We have a proud history over the last 30 years of bringing together a diverse range of people to share their knowledge and experience, but we do need more people to put their hand up. It is very rewarding to participate, and we would welcome your involvement. Looking forward to Broken Hill.

Best wishes
Geoff Hudson
President AMHA

MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Ross Barnett has contributed some NZ mining history – thanks, Ross:

120th Anniversary of the Birthday Reef discovery, Reefton, New Zealand

120 years ago on 9 November, 1905 an important gold find was made near Reefton in New Zealand. As the discovery coincided with the birthday of King Edward VII, it was named the Birthday Reef. Over the next 46 years, the Blackwater Mine, as it became known, produced 740,403oz, making it, after Waihi's Martha Mine, New Zealand's second largest gold producer.

Although the Blackwater Mine at Waiuta closed in 1951, with historic mine workings reaching a depth of 879m, recent exploration by the Australian company, Federation Mining, has revealed that gold mineralisation occurs below the old workings to at least 1350m and appears to be open with depth. Exploration has also revealed the existence of a parallel reef 50m to the west of the Birthday Reef. The Birthday Reef is relatively unique on the Reefton Goldfield where most historic mines targeted rich, but limited, gold shoots that seldom persisted with depth and were often truncated by faults.

Subject to further exploration, plans are underway to develop a new underground mine. This will use the twin declines, located to the west of the original mine, initially constructed by Federation Mining to facilitate underground exploration. The development presents an exciting opportunity for the future expansion of gold mining on New Zealand's West Coast.

To celebrate the 120th Anniversary, a function will take place on Sunday 9 November. This will be a Federation Mining event, in conjunction with the heritage group, Friends of Waiuta, and the Government agency, the Department of Conservation. At the Prohibition Shaft location new interpretation panels will be placed over the shaft, the location of which was no longer evident due to recent environmental "remediation" of the site.

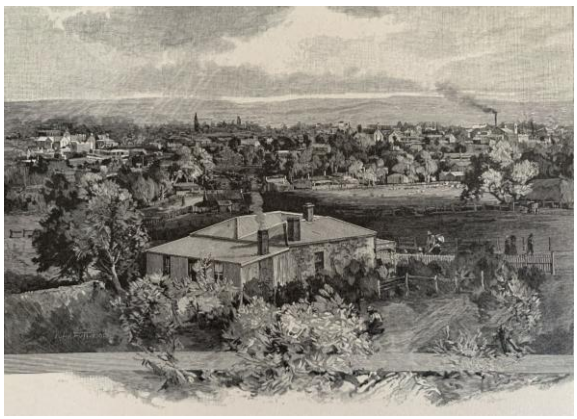
The promising outlook for Federation Mining stands in contrast to the experience of the original discoverers of the Birthday Reef. The four prospectors who made the discovery, William Meates, Ernest Bannan, David Ross and James Martin, sold their find for a pittance to a speculator, Percy Kingswell, who then made a considerable profit by on-selling mining rights to the largest company on the Reefton Goldfield. This was the London-based Consolidated Goldfields of New Zealand, which then floated Blackwater Mines Ltd to work the mine. Although the prospectors sold their find for a fraction of its value, so too did Kingswell in view of the work he did to prove the reef. While these pioneers barely benefitted from their efforts, it is nevertheless important to remember the contribution they made to the development of one of New Zealand's most important gold mines.

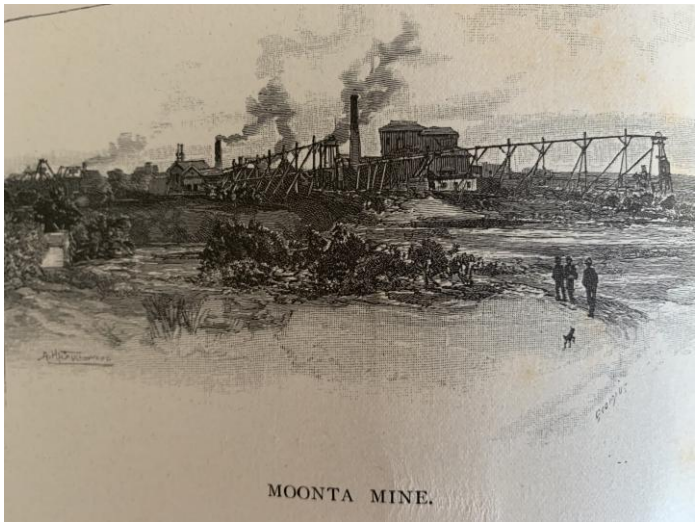
https://federationmining.com.au/
https://waiuta.org.nz/

Single boom jumbo accessing the Birthday Reef in ore drive
Snowy River Project Update, Federation Mining, September, 2024

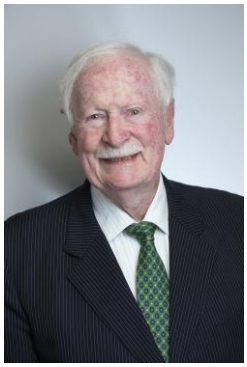
Visible gold in quartz in the Birthday Reef
Source: Snowy River Project Update, Federation Mining, February, 2025
(Permission to publish photographs kindly granted by Federation Mining)

Illustrations of SA's Historic Copper Mines
Jon Attwater sent in these engravings from *The Picturesque Atlas of Australia*, Vol. II (published 1888). He notes that attendees at last year's conference in Burra might be interested:


Kapunda from Brewster's Hill



EULOGY



Tribute to Mr Keith Yates AM: A Quiet Giant of South Australia's Minerals Sector

Today I pay tribute to Mr Keith Yates AM, whose extraordinary contribution to Australia's minerals and energy sector over more than six decades helped shape not only our industry, but also the many

professionals fortunate to work alongside him.

Keith's career reads like a chronicle of Australia's post-war mining renaissance: from mapping the remote terrains of Northern Australia and Papua New Guinea with the Commonwealth Bureau of Mineral Resources (now Geoscience Australia), to holding leadership roles with Poseidon and Aberfoyle, and serving as the Founding Managing Director of Adelaide Resources. He combined technical rigour with entrepreneurial flair—and managed to enjoy himself along the way.

In 1994, Keith conceived the NewGenGold conference to provide a platform for geologists to learn from detailed case histories of recent gold discoveries. The inaugural event, "New Generation Gold Mines," was held in Perth in 1995 and featured 16 in-depth presentations exploring the "where, why, and how" behind major discoveries. Nearly 600 delegates attended—an early sign of its enduring success. By 2001, the event became known as NewGenGold and expanded to include international discoveries, reflecting the global nature of modern exploration. Since 2003, it has been jointly organised by Paydirt Media Pty Ltd and Keith Yates & Associates and is now firmly established as a cornerstone of the global gold exploration calendar.

Keith's legacy extends far beyond technical achievements. As Chair of the Minerals and Energy Advisory Council, he helped guide South Australian policy at the highest levels. Through leadership roles with the AusIMM, the Geological Society of Australia, the University of New England Alumni Association, and the Playford Trust, he mentored generations of geologists and executives, instilling a culture of integrity, scientific curiosity, and public service.

Keith never sought the spotlight, but his peers recognised his profound influence. He was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2021, received the UNE Distinguished Alumni Award in 2019, and was honoured with the AusIMM Service Award for 60 years of sustained contribution. These accolades reflect not just the length of his service, but the depth and breadth of his impact.

On a personal note, Keith exemplified the best of our profession: a quiet confidence, relentless curiosity, and a readiness to "have a go." He reminded us that mining is not merely about extraction—it is about discovery, stewardship, and creating intergenerational value. He was a tireless advocate for mineral exploration as the essential front-end of Australia's future prosperity.

Rest well, Keith. Your maps may have charted landscapes, but your true legacy lies in the people, the institutions, and the enduring sense of purpose you inspired in our industry.

Paul Heithersay, Principal Advisor, SA Department of Energy and Mining (thanks to Jon Attwater for sending this in)

BITS & PIECES

Rio Tinto mining trees

The mining industry's push for renewable energy has led Rio Tinto to investigate biofuel using *Pongamia pinnata* syn. *Millettia pinnata* (Poonga Oil Tree) beans. Pongamia is a small tree native to tropical Australia and south-east Asia, where it has long been used as an oil producer. It is a tough tree which grows in poor, thin and saline soils and degraded land, including previously mined land, though it does need more rain than you get in most of inland north Australia. The seed meal left after pressing for oil can be treated and sold for cattle feed. Rio Tinto has grown 8000 of the trees at Gove and is in the process of growing another 750,000 in Townsville.

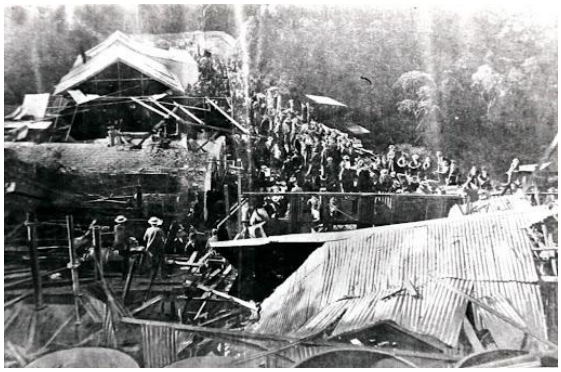
Mining historians and archaeologists of the future will have fun with that plantation!

New mining method for Kapunda

Kapunda, 1875 (State Library of SA)

Kapunda has the distinction of being the first commercially viable mine, and the first mining town, in Australia. Over its relatively short history (1844-1879), the mine has seen underground and open cut mining, but now EnviroCopper is about to begin a site environmental lixiviant trial (SELT) to test copper extraction via in-situ recovery (ISR). ISR has been used for a number of uranium mines in Australia but if the trial succeeds, this will be the first major use for copper – another first for Kapunda. In essence, an acidic leach solution is injected into the orebody, sometimes requiring fracturing of the rock, where it dissolves copper oxide and is then recovered and treated. There is an aquifer which will be contaminated by the solution but it is very saline and the lixiviant is highly biodegradable, so investigations and modelling suggests it will not be a problem for the nearby Light River. Funding for the trial is being contributed by partner BHP and CSIRO.

Mt Kembla Disaster heritage site



After the accident,
http://www.mineaccidents.com.au/mine-accident/184/mt-kembla-1902

The Mount Kembla Mine Disaster Site Ruins and Setting has been added to the NSW Heritage Register. Mt Kembla was a mainstay of NSW coal mining over its life, 1883-1970. It was also the scene of the worst mining disaster in Australian history in 1902 when 96 miners died. A large roof fall pushed methane gas into the main adit and stirred up coal dust, where both were ignited and caused a tremendous explosion. The heritage listing recognises the significance of the mine and the tragedy.

Old mines never die…again

The Geological Survey of New South Wales has been testing the dumps of 28 historic mines in the state for critical minerals, finding elevated levels of 11 minerals, including copper, cobalt, silver and antimony. As many former managers of historic mines considered critical minerals to be either irrelevant (if they were able to identify them) or a nuisance, this could lead to more activity in old mines such as the Great Cobar.

More uses for old mines: pumped hydro for Mt Arthur coal mine

Mt Arthur coal mine is the biggest in NSW. Closure of the mine is planned by BHP for 2030 and the mine is up for sale. BHP is proposing a pumped hydro scheme for part of the mine, planned to supply 500,000 homes. It joins 4 other mine rehabilitation pumped hydro projects, of which former gold mine Kidston in north Queensland is the most advanced. The others are Mt Rawdon (gold, Qld), Muswellbrook (coal, NSW), and Stratford (NSW, coal). Other pumped hydro projects use dams and lakes.

For heaps more 'bits and pieces', check our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/720189911426071/ . If you're not a Facebook fan but want to post mining related stuff, contact Robert Barnes barnesrg112@hotmail.com .

CONFERENCE

In case you've just come back from a long spell in the Antarctic or on the International Space Station, our conference this year is at the Broken Hill Civic Centre Sunday 31 August to Saturday 6 September. For details of the conference, tours, accommodation and travel to and from Broken Hill, see https://amha.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/71224-29th-annual-conference-broken-hill

JOURNAL

Lyndon is hard at work, editing this year's Journal. He has enough papers, but would like to have more book reviews and documentary reviews. Of course, articles are always wanted for the next journal.

The Journal welcomes the submission of all kinds of articles related to mining history, including biographical portraits, industrial archaeology, folklore, race relations, tourism, gender, company investment, geology, mining towns and social history. For more details about the submission process, please consult the web page for the journal: https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/journal-2/ or contact Lyndon Megarrity at drlyndon@bigpond.net.au . Book and film reviews are also welcome.

PUBLICATIONS

Let the Newsletter Editor know if you'd like to notify members of a forthcoming book.

New book notifications are also on the AMHA website https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/books/.

Anyone want to write a review of one for the website, the Journal, or the Newsletter?

Don't forget to also let Mel Davies know about new publications so he can keep up to date the AMHA's *Bibliography of the Mining History of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea*. Email Mel at mel.davies@uwa.edu.au

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

A reminder that there is a new way of paying for membership, via https://amha.tidyhq.com/

The Membership year will be on a rolling 12 month basis not tied to ending on the 31 December as previously.

Notices for the renewal of membership will automatically be sent out prior to the 12 month anniversary of the joining or last renewal date of membership.

Membership Fees:

Full memberships $50

Joint Family Membership $60

Unwaged Student $15

Institutions: $65

Overseas members:

Please add $A10 to the above to cover journal postage costs and an additional $15 if paying by overseas cheque so we can cover bank charges.
Note: a copy of the annual volume of JAMH is included in the fee for all memberships.
Please only pay the current year's fee as subscription rates may change.
To renew or become a new Member go to https://amha.tidyhq.com/ and follow the instructions below.

Renewing Members:

Click on the green 'Log On' box at the top right of the page to log in with email and password.
If you have not logged in previously, enter your email and the system will ask you to create a password.
Once logged in you will see "Memberships" at the top of the page. Click this and you will be taken to your personal membership information page.
Here you will be able to renew online using the secure credit card payment system. You can also correct or add to your personal details.
If you wish to pay by EFT or cheque, fill out the form towards the end of this newsletter and email it to treasurer.amha@mail.tidyhq.com for further information.

New Members:

When you arrive at https://amha.tidyhq.com/ scroll down to the Membership page and chose your Membership type.
Follow the prompts and complete the Membership information and pay using the secure credit card payment system and you will be automatically joined.

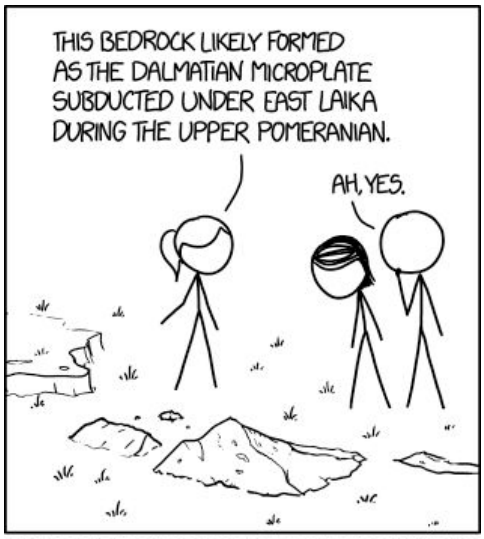
If paying by direct bank transfer please make sure you enter your given name and surname as a reference, and also email or mail your membership/registration form showing your preferences for type of membership etc. You can access the membership form at the end of this newsletter and send that to AMHATreasurer23@gmail.com. For account details for direct bank transfer or mailing address for cheques, contact the Treasurer at the email address provided above.
Member subscription payments from outside Australia should be by credit card to avoid excessive bank fees.

CURRENT AMHA COMMITTEE

President: Geoff Hudson
Vice President: Wendy Carter
Hon Secretary: Geoff Anderson
Hon Treasurer: Ross Both
Membership secretary: Bev Phelts
State Representatives:
ACT Jeff Nixon.
SA Ross Both, Jim Jago
NSW Stephen Shortis and Jon Attwater
NT David Carment and Bev Phelts.
QLD Ruth Kerr OAM and Jan Wegner.
VIC Matthew Churchward and Geoff Anderson
TAS Greg Dickens, Nic Haygarth
WA Wendy Carter and Mel Davis
NZ Philip Hart and John Barry
International: VACANT
Journal Editor: Lyndon Megarrity
Website administration: Stephen Imrie, Jenny Scott
Newsletter editor: Jan Wegner
Facebook co-ordinator: Robert Barnes
Early Career representative: VACANT

JUST FOR FUN

The usual dreadful geology puns and jokes



GEOLOGY TIP: THERE ARE SO MANY MICROPLATES AND AGES THAT NO ONE REMEMBERS THEM ALL, SO IN A PINCH YOU CAN BLUFF WITH DOG BREEDS.

If you don't get this one, ask a Baby Boomer:

Can't neglect the 'historian' part of 'mining history'. The last pic here resonates!

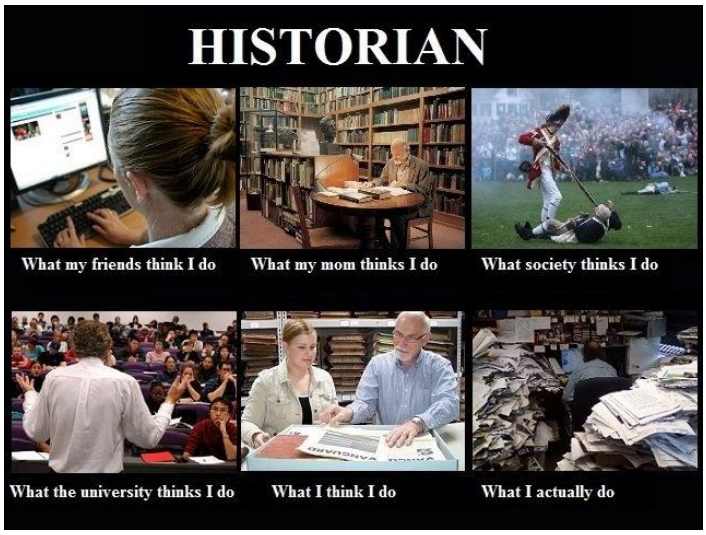


PHOTO TIME

Donkey team with BHP's mine in the background, 1888. State Library of South Australia

In keeping with the conference location, we have a Broken Hill photo this time. An article in the *Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* (10 March 1888 p. 521) says:

> Probably the donkey team shown in our illustration is the only one of it size in Australia…the donkey team is regarded as part and parcel of the Barrier trade. The team is owned by William Rashleigh, and plies between Silverton and Broken Hill. Two or three times a week the old man and his little boy assistant, with their string of donkeys, are to be seen in Broken Hill. The team moves slowly, but surely, from one business place to another, thoroughly oblivious of the sensation their presence causes to the horses passing them with a frightened snort at every moment. There are 13 donkeys (two being stallions) in the team, and a couple of foals. One, a gray or white gelding, is said to be 63 years of age, and was for over 30 years worked on one of Sir Thomas Elder's stations in South Australia.

Lots more great mining and mining town photos on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/720189911426071/ !

AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION Inc.

ABN 96 220 329 754

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL 2025 – payment by cheque or bank transfer

This form is a tax invoice. No GST is applicable.

Membership Fees:

Full memberships	$50	**Please only pay the current year's fee**
Joint Family Membership	$60	as subscription rates may change.
Unwaged Student	$15	**Note**: a copy of the annual volume of JAMH is included in the
Institutions:	$65	fee for all memberships.

Overseas members: Please **add** $A10 to the above to cover journal postage costs and an additional $15 if paying by overseas cheque to cover bank charges.

Title (Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr., Prof. etc.) .....

Surname.....….....First Name.....

Address for correspondence..... Post Code.....

Telephone .....… Email: …….

Distribution of the newsletters by email results in significant savings in printing and postage costs as well as reducing the Editor's workload. Note that current and past newsletters are available on the website at https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/newsletters/

AMHA Privacy Policy:

AMHA members' contact details are securely maintained and used for AMHA business. The Association may use email to communicate with members so please ensure you print it clearly on this form. Please indicate any contact details you do not wish to be used by AMHA officials.

Signed ..... date .....

My Mining History interests are: ……..

Annual Membership fee $.....…

Voluntary donation $.....…

Please send me copies of:

1) Patrick Bertola & Karen Miller (eds), *Proceedings of the Australian Mining History Association Conferences 1997*-2000 (AMHA, Crawley, WA, 2001). $…….

2) *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, **V.2** 2004; **V. 3** 2005; **V. 4** 2006; **V 5,** 2007; **V. 6**, 2008; **V. 7** 2009; **V. 8** 2010; **V. 9** 2011, **V. 10** 2012, **V. 11** 2013; **V. 12** 2014; **V. 13** 2015; **V. 14** 2016; **V. 15** 2017; **V. 16** 2018; **V. 17** 2019; **V. 18** 2020; **V.19** 2021; **V.20** 2022; **V.21** 2023; **V.22** 2024 Please Circle choices: $…….

Price per copy for items in 1 & 2: Aus $20; NZ $27: Elsewhere $30. (includes postage) Special offer: any 2 volumes of the Journal $25 plus postage; any 5 volumes $40 plus postage

3) Mel Davies (Compiler), *Bibliography of the Mining History of Australia, New Zealand & Papua New Guinea ,2002, updated to 2020* (**In CD only)**. Copies including postage: Aus $11; NZ $12; Elsewhere $13 $…….

Total **$.....**

I would like digital access to the For Members page of the AMHA Website (included in fee) ….. (tick)
Send me: A. a print copy of the JAMH ….; B. A digital copy only ….. Both A & B …... (tick applicable)

NEW MEMBERS – For our records, please advise how you learned of the AMHA: (a) through the AMHA webpage; (b) through a member of the AMHA; (c) through attending an AMHA conference; d) through other source (please provide detail) [please circle answer]

Return form to:
treasurer.amha@mail.tidyhq.com

Payment by Cheque: Cheques should be made payable to AMHA. Contact the email above for a postal address. If sending a **personal** cheque, **overseas members** should add the equivalent of **A$15** to cover bank charges (note: if you send a bank cheque or draft made out in Australian dollars then only send the relevant fee).

Australasian Mining History Association Privacy Policy

The Australasian Mining History Association (AMHA) respects the privacy of its members and is committed to protecting their personal information. This privacy policy details how AMHA manages members' personal information and safeguards their privacy.

The National Privacy Principles

From 21 December 2001 it has been obligatory for private sector organisations to manage personal information relating to individuals in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (*Commonwealth*) and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs). AMHA has chosen to implement a privacy policy that is reflective of the National Privacy Policy Principles (NPPs) as a form of best practice in the management of membership information.

Collection of personal information

AMHA only collects personal information which is necessary to perform the objectives of the Association, namely to:

- promote and co-ordinate national activities and programmes related to mining history;
- encourage the study, discussion, writing and publication of mining history;
- encourage the identification and preservation of records, sites, relics and materials relevant to Australasian mining;
- act as a focus for correspondence between those persons within Australasia and elsewhere interested in mining history; and
- disseminate information of interest to members through a website, newsletter and/or journal.

The Association receives information including name, address, telephone, email and facsimile contact details from members and non-members on membership applications, membership renewal forms and conference registrations. AMHA maintains and uses this information in written and/or electronic form.

Website

The AMHA may collect some information from you when you use our website www.mininghistory.asn.au. Your use of the facilities and services available through our website will determine the amount and type of information which we collect about you. The only personal information the AMHA collects about you when you use our website is what you tell us about yourself, for example, by completing an online form when you complete a questionnaire. As with most websites we do track usage. Each time you visit our website a web server makes a record of your visit. It records your date of visit and the pages accessed and documents downloaded.

Use of personal information

Personal information collected by AMHA is essential to its organisational activities and is used for:

- managing membership and membership renewals
- fulfilling subscription requests and member services
- registrations for conference
- organising conferences
- distribution of publications
- notifying AMHA members via the website, regular mail or email about important news and announcements.

Normal communication with members will be conducted using the email address provided in the membership application/renewal form, unless a request is made to use a different email address.

Disclosure of personal information

Information collected by AMHA will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected or to provide members with additional information about the Associations services. AMHA does not share or sell membership information to third parties.

Access to personal information

Members may request access to their personal information held by AMHA. Requests will be responded to as quickly as possible. Members may request to be removed from the mailing list at any time. Members wishing to access their personal information or to raise a query or make a complaint about AMHA's use of their personal information should contact the Secretary.