



Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

The Australian History Summit

Transcript of Proceedings

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AUSTRALIAN HISTORY SUMMIT

SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

The Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Honourable Julie Bishop MP, convened the Australian History Summit in Canberra on 17 August 2006 and invited twenty-three leading Australian historians, public figures who promote the study of history, and educational leaders. The participants were:

Mr Andrew BARNETT – Year 12 Level Co-ordinator and Senior Teacher of History, Economics, and Politics at Ruyton Girls' School, Kew. He has taught for over 30 years in a range of Victorian schools. As well as History, Economics and Politics, he has taught Social Studies, Asian Studies and Philosophy. He has also served as Year 9/10 Social Sciences Co-ordinator, Co-ordinator of Asian/Australian Studies, and Head of Economics/Politics Department.

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey BLAINEY, AC – Ernest Scott Professor of History, University of Melbourne (1977–1988), Chancellor, University of Ballarat (1994–1998). He has published over 30 books on Australian history and world history. Professor Blainey pioneered the field of business history in Australia, and his book, *The Tyranny of Distance*, introduced a new phrase to Australian life. Professor Blainey's interests range from sports and local histories, to the broad sweep he considers in *The Causes of War* and *A Short History of the World*.

Emeritus Professor Geoffrey BOLTON, AO – Chancellor of Murdoch University. He is the 2006 Western Australian of the Year. He has held chairs of history at four Australian universities and was foundation professor of Australian Studies at the University of London. Professor Bolton has been writing on Australian history since 1952, and is the

author of 13 books, including *Edmund Barton: The One Man for the Job* (New South Wales Premier's Centenary of Federation award winner, 2001).

Mr David BOON – Teacher, Illawarra Primary School (Blackman's Bay, Tasmania). He has been the Commonwealth History Project professional learning officer in Tasmania since February 2005. In that role, he provides information and support to schools and teachers on pedagogical and curricular aspects of history. He has developed professional learning packages for teachers.

The Honourable Bob CARR – Premier of New South Wales (1995–2005), was known as “the History Premier” for his promotion of history. He was also Minister for Planning and Environment (1984–1988), Consumer Affairs (1986), Heritage (1986–1988), Ethnic Affairs (1995–1999), the Arts (1995–2005) and Citizenship (1999–2005). The Hon Mr Carr is the author of *Thoughtlines: Reflections of a Public Man* and *What Australia Means to Me*.

Dr Inga CLENDINNEN, AO – Emeritus Scholar, La Trobe University. Her award-winning *Dancing with Strangers* tells the story of life in New South Wales following the arrival of the First Fleet (including an impromptu dance party between the men of the First Fleet and a dozen local men who left their spears in their canoes). Dr Clend-

innen's other books include *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570*, the personal narrative *Tiger's Eye*, the 1999 Boyer Lectures, *True Stories and Reading the Holocaust*.

Professor Kate DARIAN-SMITH – Professor of Australian Studies, University of Melbourne. She is researching a social and cultural history of agricultural shows in Australia, and has co-authored *Agricultural Shows in Australia: A Survey*. Her publications include: *Stirring Australian Speeches: A Definitive Collection from Botany to Bali* (co-edited, with Michael Cathcart), and *On the Home Front: Melbourne in wartime 1939–1945*. Professor Darian-Smith is president of the International Australian Studies Association.

Mr Nick EWBANK – President of the History Teachers' Association of Australia. He was vice-president of the Council of ACT Education Associations and he has represented the Australian Joint Council of Professional Teaching Associations. Mr Ewbank is the Executive Teacher of History, English, Media and Languages at Hawker College, ACT. He has been teaching for more than 16 years in a range of subjects. As well as History, he has taught Studies of Society and the Environment, English, Economics, IT and Accounting.

Professor John GASCOIGNE – Professor of History, University of New South Wales. He has research interests in Modern Britain, Colonial Australia, History of Science and Ideas and European-Pacific Contact, 1763–1842. His books include *The Enlightenment and the Origins of European Australia* and *Cambridge in the Age of the*

Enlightenment: Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution. Professor Gascoigne has also written a two volumed study of Joseph Banks.

Associate Professor Jenny GREGORY – Associate Professor of History, University of Western Australia. She has research interests in Australian history, urban history and heritage studies. Her books include *City of Light: a history of Perth since the fifties*, *Claremont: a history* (with Geoffrey Bolton), and *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*. Associate Professor Jenny Gregory is President of the History Council of WA.

Dr Gerard HENDERSON – Executive Director, The Sydney Institute. He is one of Australia's leading political and social commentators. Dr Henderson writes a weekly column for *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The West Australian*, comments each week on ABC Radio National Breakfast show and appears regularly on *Insiders* on ABC TV. His books include *Menzies Child: The Liberal Party of Australia 1944–94*, *Australian Answers*, and *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops*.

Dr John HIRST – Reader in History, La Trobe University. He has written a range of books including *Convict Society and its Enemies*, *The Strange Birth of Colonial Democracy*, *The Sentimental Nation: The making of the Australian Commonwealth*, and *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History*. He chaired the Australian Government's Civics Education Group (1997–2004), and (in 1993) was a member of the Prime Minister's Republic Advisory Committee.

Ms Jackie HUGGINS, AM – Deputy Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, University of Queensland. She is of the Bidjara (Central Queensland) and Birri-Gubba Juru (North Queensland) peoples. Ms Huggins has an Honours degree in history and women’s studies, and is Co-Chair of Reconciliation Australia. She has published widely on Australian Indigenous issues, including *Sistergirl* and *Auntie Rita* (with Rita Huggins), and is editor of the *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

Mr Paul KELLY – Editor-at-Large, The Australian, and Adjunct Professor of Journalism, University of Queensland. He writes on Australian and international issues and is a regular commentator on television. Mr Kelly’s books include *Paradise Divided, November 1975*, *The End of Certainty*, *The Hawke Ascendancy* and *The Unmaking of Gough* (later titled *The Dismissal*). He presented the 2001 five-part television documentary for the ABC on Australian history and character *100 Years – The Australian Story*.

Ms Jennifer LAWLESS – Inspector for Human Society and Its Environment (History), New South Wales Board of Studies. She has lectured in History teaching method at various universities, and taught History for over 20 years in NSW public schools. Ms Lawless is a member of the History Council of NSW, and has won a number of awards, most recently an Endeavour Research Fellowship to Turkey to undertake research on Australian Prisoners of War captured at Gallipoli.

Dr Mark LOPEZ – the author of *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945–1975*, which is based on his PhD thesis. *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics* is a systematic study of the historical origins of multiculturalism in Australian politics, focusing on what multiculturalism is; how it originated; and how it became a basis for the Australian government ethnic affairs policy.

Associate Professor Gregory MEL-LEUSH – Associate Professor of History and Politics, University of Wollongong. He has research interests in Australian political culture, Australian intellectual history (especially political, cultural and religious ideas) and world history (in particular the role of the state, war and commercial activity). His publications include *Cultural Liberalism in Australia* and *The Packaging of Australia*. In April 2000 he became President of the Asia Pacific Affiliate Branch of the World History Association.

Ms Margo NEALE – Principal Advisor to the Director (Indigenous), National Museum of Australia and Adjunct Professor, Australian Centre for Indigenous History, Australian National University. She has worked across art galleries, museums and universities and has held positions as art curator, author and editor for leading institutions in Australia and the Pacific. She was co-editor of the *Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture*. She is researching Indigenous modes of historic discourse in non-text based genres.

Dr Geoffrey PARTINGTON – was a teacher, headmaster and Inspector of Schools in England and has taught in the School of Education of Flinders University, South Australia. His books include *Teacher Education in England and Wales*, *Teacher Education and Training in New Zealand*, *Hasluck versus Coombs: White politics and Australia's Aborigines*, *The Australian Nation: Its British and Irish Roots* and *The Idea of an Historical Education* (1980).

Ms Lisa PAUL, PSM – Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST), since October 2004. She has more than 20 years' public sector experience, including three Deputy CEO roles. Her work has focussed on human services, and she has held senior positions in education, welfare, community services, health and housing, in State and Commonwealth Governments, and in central and line agencies.

Dr Peter STANLEY – Principal Historian, Australian War Memorial and Adjunct Professor in Cultural Heritage Management, University of Canberra. He has been the Memorial's chief historian since 1987. He has a particular interest in Australian and British military history. His 17 books include *Borneo, 1945*; *Quinn's Post*, *Anzac Gal-*

lipoli; *Whyalla at War 1939–45*; *For Fear of Pain: British Surgery 1790–1850* and *White Mutiny: British Military Culture in India, 1825–75*.

Professor Tom STANNAGE, AM – Executive Dean, Division of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology. He received the inaugural Prime Minister's Award as Australian University Teacher of the Year in 1997. His research interests include Australian and British History and museology. His books include *Sir Paul Hasluck in Australian History*, *Embellishing the Landscape: the images of Amy Heap and Fred Flood 1920–1940* and *The People of Perth: a social history of Western Australia's Capital City*.

Associate Professor Tony TAYLOR – Associate Professor of Education, Monash University. He has been Director of the National Centre for History Education since 2001. He conducted the Australian Government's National Inquiry into the Teaching and Learning of History and wrote the resultant report, *The Future of the Past*. Associate Professor Taylor is a leading national and international figure in the field of history education.

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The meeting commenced at 10.25 am.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Ms BISHOP: Prime Minister and participants or summiteers, as I should call you, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you all to the Australian History Summit. I want to thank the participants for taking the time to be part of this event. The Australian History Summit is bringing together some great thinkers and some experts in this field. I have faith that this distinguished group will be able to provide excellent advice on how we can take the teaching of Australian history to a new level.

Perhaps future historians of Australian education will look back and see this as the starting point of a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history. The Australian Government's aim is clear. We want Australian history to be a key part of the school curriculum in every school across this land and we want to re-establish a narrative structure in the teaching of history. The summit has two objectives: we want to canvass ideas that will strengthen the teaching of history in our schools; and we want to identify the key historical events, facts, dates and details that should be part of this structured narrative.

With a gathering of such eminent historians, public commentators, teachers and curriculum developers, I am sure there are going to be some very diverse and wide-ranging views. I have labelled you the sensible centre of the history debates. Some have said that means this is a group of those with differing views who can sit in the same room without killing each other.

I would like to introduce the Prime Minister, for it was the Prime Minister who said

in a National Press Club address on 25 January this year that he wanted to see a root and branch renewal of the teaching of Australian history in terms of the number of students learning Australian history and how it is being taught.

Mr HOWARD: Thank you very much, Julie. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to express my pleasure that so many of you have come. This is a very broad group. It is a very talented group. I'm sure that it is a group that believes very strongly in the quality teaching and understanding of Australian history. The Government's purpose is, as the Minister said, very, very plain. We do want to bring about a renaissance of both interest in, and understanding of, Australian history. That must involve a greater focus on the disciplined teaching and understanding of history in Australian schools. My assessment is that it varies enormously around the country. In some parts of Australia in the school curriculum, it has a welcome emphasis. In others parts, I don't believe it does.

I want to make it very clear that we are not seeking some kind of official version of Australian history. We are not seeking some kind of nostalgic return to a particular version of Australian history, although I do not believe, and the Government does not believe, that you can have any sensible understanding and, therefore, any sensible debate about different opinions of Australian history unless you have some narrative and method in the comprehension and understanding of history. How you can just teach issues and study moods and fashions in history rather than comprehend and have a narrative has always escaped me. I don't think you can have a proper teaching and comprehension

of Australian history without having a proper understanding of Indigenous history and the contribution of the Indigenous experience to Australia's development and the Australian story. Equally, I don't believe that you can have a proper understanding of Australian history without some understanding of those movements, attitudes, values and traditions of other countries that had an influence on the formation of Australia. Obviously we need an understanding of those institutions we inherited from the British and the other European influences on Australia. We need to understand the influence of religion in the formation of attitudes and development in Australia. We obviously have to see Australia as heavily influenced by the Western intellectual tradition—the Enlightenment and all that is associated with it. I think we also have to appreciate the impact on Australia of the various economic developments and the changes in economic history, the influence of the industrial revolution and various broad economic theories that have shaped the modern Australia.

I don't think that amounts for a moment to any kind of authorised version of Australian history. I think it amounts to, in the Government's view, a commonsense belief that we need to understand all of those things to have a proper understanding of what did occur and what influences have shaped the modern day Australia.

I thank all of you, and I thank the Minister for her energy. I really am very, very pleased indeed that we have such a wide range of people here today. I think that indicates that there is a lot of interest in the subject. There are some things that have a bit of resonance when you say something about them. On

some things Prime Ministers don't have any resonance at all, but occasionally you say things that have a bit of a resonance. There is a bit of a feeling that we ought to know more. I do not want to give *The Australian* newspaper a free plug, but I know Julie in her speech last night quoted the article by Roy Eccleston about the experience of his daughter having been taught in the American school system and been taught a little about some of the formative events in American history. Whilst I don't necessarily suggest we pick that up root and branch and transplant it—obviously we have our own way of doing it—I thought it made a good point. To have knowledge of some of the key things that shaped the modern Australia is not to automatically endorse everything that took place in Australia in the years that preceded the year in which we live. Nor is it to indicate a particular view. I don't know how we can intelligently argue our different points of view about what the modern Australia is or what the future Australia should be without having a proper orthodox understanding, in the sense of being properly instructed and according to some kind of coherent narrative. Unless we have that, I don't think we can have a proper understanding of our present.

Finally, as an earnest of the great commitment that the Government has to this, I intend to establish a Prime Minister's prize for Australian history, which will be awarded annually. It will be worth \$100,000 to the recipient. I will be providing some more details of the criteria. Broadly speaking, it will be for a substantial written work. It could include a film or a documentary as well. I will invite a panel of eminent historians, separate and apart from the Government, to assess

submissions to this. It will be awarded on an annual basis. I think it will be another earnest of the importance that this Government does attach. I think it is something that will attract not only the interest of obviously people involved in the teaching and comprehension of history but also the broader community. We need to demonstrate in different ways the seriousness of our commitment. I want to see the teaching of history be a stand-alone subject in our school system.

I stress the bipartisan nature of this gathering. I welcome Bob Carr's presence, if I may be permitted to do so. I know from my previous discussions with him the interest he has in Australian history and history generally. I know that he made a significant contribution to the cause when he was Premier of New South Wales. I would like to see the total cooperation and involvement of the state governments in this exercise. It is not a partisan political exercise. It is designed to give young Australians a better understanding than the products of our education system of the last 10 or 20 years plainly have of Australian and world history. I hope this group can make a contribution. That is enough from me. I will hand over to the Minister. Thank you again, all of you, for being so willing participants in what I hope will be a great enterprise. Thank you.

[Acclamation]

Ms BISHOP: That was a very welcome announcement by the Prime Minister to encourage us in our endeavours to ensure that we live up to the objectives that have been set for this committee. Ladies and gentlemen, as I indicated, I have convened today's summit with two objectives in mind.

I would like to see the summit canvass as many ideas as we've got for the strengthening of the teaching of Australian history in our schools and to draw on your expert advice to identify the key historical narrative that every Australian school student should learn as part of a well-rounded schooling experience. I have asked each of you to this summit to take part in your personal capacities and on the basis of the expertise and experience you will bring to this gathering. I am expecting there to be a range of competing views, strongly felt, strongly articulated. I ask for all views to be heard respectfully. I am sure they will be. As I said, I have identified you as the sensible centre, but I have been very keen to see a great deal of debate and discussion about this.

There certainly has been great interest in this summit. Wherever I have gone in the past few weeks I have been asked about Australian history, or in fact I have been asked to respond to questions about Australian history to test my knowledge. Doubtless, too, you have seen all the articles in the press and the speculation in the blogosphere. Today's proceedings are being audio recorded so that the proceeding can be published on the department's website to ensure that your deliberations are widely available.

As you will see in the programme, I will shortly be asking Lisa Paul, the secretary of my department, to chair the first session. She will seek your views on the practical steps that the Australian Government could take to strengthen the teaching of history in schools. At the start of that session, Tony Taylor will present some key points from his paper, which you will have had a copy of. We have copies here. It is entitled 'An overview of

the teaching and learning of Australian history in schools'. Tony's paper has identified some key issues, such as the curriculum coherence of Australian history in primary and secondary schools, the adequacy of teacher training and the danger of topic repetition. I was particularly struck, Tony, by your comment that:

...there is no guarantee that the vast majority of students in Australian schools will have progressed through a systematic study of Australian history by the end of Year 10. Indeed, the opposite is almost certainly the case. By the time they reach leaving age, most students in Australian schools will have experienced a fragmented, repetitive and incomplete picture of their national story.

I want to hear your views on what can be done to ensure Australian students pass through a systematic study of Australian history by the end of year 10. I am keen to hear your advice on how Australian history could be made a critical part of the syllabus in all the states and territories and the extent to which it needs to be supported by coherent resource materials, teacher professional development and national promotion. How can we make it interesting for students?

After we have looked at initiatives the Government might take, the second and third sessions after lunch will focus on the key narrative issues and on what every child should know. The second session will be chaired by Dr John Hirst and the final session by the honourable Bob Carr. Gregory Melleuish will open the second session with some reflections on his paper. We also have a copy of his paper—there are spare copies available—entitled 'The teaching of Australian history in Australian schools: A norma-

tive view', which was commissioned to help focus discussion on the key narrative issues. As Gregory reminds us, for most students, what they learn at school is their only significant contact with the study of history during their lives. With this in mind, it is crucial that Australian history is taught well at school. I was also fascinated by Gregory's observation that one of the things that struck him preparing the paper was the lack of debate and discussion regarding the structure of a narrative of Australian history and of such things as the periods of Australian history. Recent debates in Australian history have been concerned with other matters, such as the history wars, perhaps. However, I am sure there will be no lack of debate on the structure of the narrative today as we flesh out the stories our children need to know to ensure they are, as Gregory suggests they need to be, literate in Australian history. In addition, as he points out, the study of Australian history should prepare students for exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens, which will help them evaluate evidence and make judgments. It should foster their powers of imagination and empathy.

After the summit, I will be asking my department to develop a number of initiatives for the Government's consideration. I have also been seeking submissions from interested organisations and individuals on how the work of the summit can be advanced. The proceedings of the summit will obviously be particularly useful to people wanting to make submissions. Before inviting Lisa to take the chair, can I say that due to parliamentary commitments, I will be popping in and out of the summit during the course of the day. Please forgive me. There are some

other things that I couldn't avoid today, like question time. And the green bells, it being a Thursday, are likely to be quite insistent. But first I want to thank Tony and Gregory for their thoughtful and stimulating papers. I also want to thank Lisa, John and Bob for agreeing to chair a session. So I wish you well in your deliberations. I am looking forward to the conclusions. I will make some final remarks at the end of the session because we will be concluding and will close the summit at 5:00 pm. Any questions before we start the first session? If not, we will begin.

SESSION 1

Chair (Ms PAUL): Thank you very much. First of all, Minister, thank you very much for the privilege of being able to chair this session, which I appreciate greatly. It is a very important event. Welcome, summiteers. The phrase has been coined. I am afraid it may stick. Before we get underway, I thought I might take this opportunity very briefly to thank those people behind the scenes who put on the dinner last night and today's summit. This is because I know who they are. First of all, of course, not at all behind the scenes is the Minister, who has been a great driving force for this event. But in her office too is Stan Piperoglou, her chief of staff, and Ryan Haddrick, her adviser. They are very important drivers of this. There is also Murray Hansen, her media adviser. In my own department we have had many people working on this, including Bill Burmester, our deputy secretary, and Noel Simpson, our branch manager, and in particular Declan O'Connell, the Irishman out the back who has spoken to all of you and has a place in

your hearts. There is also our events manager, Maureen Cummunsky.

This is a very important day. That is, you as distinguished and eminent Australians interested in history in this country, offer government a sense of priority. Indeed, I am hoping that by the end of this session we will have a sense of the components of a framework for Australian history. This will be a tremendous achievement and will give the department, Minister and Government a great action plan to take up from. This is an action oriented session. The session should run as follows. I will hand over to Tony in a minute. After Tony's presentation, which will be about 10 minutes, I will seek some comments or questions of Tony on his paper. After that, the longer part of the session will be actually going through the questions which you have in front of you on the agenda, seeking your views on these issues and, of course, any related issues you wish to put in. With such a large group and a distinguished group, I think it is terribly important that you all be heard. What I suggest when we get the discussion underway is that I handle it in the normal way. If you give me an indication that you want to say something, I will do a speaking order. We will go around. It means you can relax and not feel you have to hop in. There may be times when I say to people, 'Do people have a comment on the view that has just been had?' The Minister, of course, may speak at any time.

Ms BISHOP: I reserve the right.

Chair: In particular, you may, Minister, want to say something at the beginning of each of these areas or at the end in terms of how this resonates with you. Does that

sound like a fair way to proceed? It makes it easier because you know you are in an order. Is that okay? Fantastic. I would like now to hand over to Tony Taylor. Tony is, as we know, the Director of the National Centre for History Education and a leading national and international figure in this field. He has been the director since 2001. He has many distinguished titles, positions and events to his name. I thank you for this paper, Tony. I am sure we all join in thanking Tony for the paper and for the attachments, which were fantastic doorstoppers but I must say completely revealing in terms of the variability across the states and territories. I think that is an important issue for us to focus on too. If you could speak for five or 10 minutes, Tony.

Prof. TAYLOR: Thank you, Lisa. I thank the Minister for allowing me to participate on this occasion. I am very pleased to be here. I thank Lisa and her department for making arrangements on this day, which is a very important day. There must be common agreement around this table that it is a very important day in the story of the teaching and learning of history in Australia. I think that is the first point to make. I must thank Anna Clark for the outstanding work she did on our project in setting this paper and Declan O'Connell, already mentioned, who is a very knowledgeable historian in his own right. He has always been, over the six or seven years I have known him, a great support in his departmental position.

What I really want to do, in a way, is start with the good news rather than the bad news. The good news is in the final paragraph. Tom Stannage reminded me of this before the session began. It is a redeeming feature

that all over Australia teachers of history at both the primary and secondary school levels are making a wonderful contribution to the education system by teaching their subject enthusiastically and in a highly skilled fashion. They are turning out future historians and future members of society who have a real interest in history that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Having dealt with the good news, I now want to turn to the bad news. When you got the email from Declan, your hearts probably sank at the thought of getting a 200-page appendix A. There is a story to this, which is that this represents roughly one-fifth of the curriculum documentation available. It was included in your papers as an illustration of the kinds of approaches used in the different states and territories. The language used is sometimes of an obscurantist nature. In that context, we have given the Polonius award for brevity to South Australia for its 920-page curriculum documentation stem to stern, infant to year 12. The National Centre for History Education mumbo-jumbo award goes to my home state of Victoria. Queensland nearly got it for 'productive pedagogies', but Victoria wins by a short nose with 'powerful learning'. That is the scenario we are painting here, which is that there is a huge variation across the nation.

When we did the national inquiry a few years ago, as a migrant to this country, two things astonished me. One was that Australian history wasn't an assumed part of the curriculum in all states and territories. The other thing that astonished me is that I felt I was looking at eight states who all spoke roughly the same language and that seemed to be on the same continent but which had

huge variations in opinion. One of the phrases I came across a lot—Bob Carr will be interested in this—was ‘We don’t do that in New South Wales.’

Moving to the purpose of the brief talk, I do not think there is any point me giving an overview of an overview. I want to extrapolate from the documentation put in front of you and come up with three important points. It occurred to me that the function of this paper was to present a picture but out of that picture there had to come some fairly clear thoughts about where we should move from here. The first thought, in a way, was that whatever is decided today and whatever the consequences of further debate and discussions and submissions that follow today’s summit, whatever we decide, it has to be teachable. There is no way we can get away from that beginning foundation. The survey tells us that there are problems in two areas. There is an accretionary resistance amongst students to studying Australian history, which by the time they reach year 10 is at a pretty high level. That feeds over into senior school history as well, but senior school history isn’t the point of today’s session. That is the first point to make. The second point to make is that there is a lack of enthusiasm and a lack of skill amongst many teachers in primary and lower secondary school when it comes to teaching Australian history, where and when it might be available.

The implication of these two points is that we must have a programme that engages the students, but it has to engage the students across the whole ability range. There will be people in this room who are familiar with what I mean when I say that. I will be quite specific. We are talking about teaching stu-

dents with a measured IQ range from 85 to about 140 plus. That is what your teacher faces in a high school and a primary school when they walk through the door. The other aspect of engagement of students has to do with disposition. New South Wales has introduced under Premier Iemma these behaviours for students causing problems in mainstream schools. When I mean disposition, what I am talking about is the range of dispositions amongst students which go from the disaffected and the uninterested right through to the highly socialised, sometimes exasperatingly so, students at the other end of the scale. They are the two serious issues that, whatever milestones are arrived at, they will have to deal with.

The engagement of students is the cornerstone of a successful programme of renewal or renaissance that will assist the teaching and learning of history in Australian schools. I point you to the appendix where I briefly outlined findings. Engagement in the teaching and learning of history in schools is at its most successful when there is depth as well as breadth. So it is not simply a matter of a chronological sequence, what I call a chronological way. There has to be some pause, some study in there. These considerations have to be taken into the deliberations at a later stage today, in my view.

The other thing that I would like to point you to is the appendix that deals with historical literacy. This is the national centre’s approach to, roughly speaking, what students should know by the time they leave school at year 10. It is a 12-step programme, when you think about it. It is a 12-point programme which starts with the basics, which are events and moves through narrative. It

then deals with how we assess narratives. Finally, it comes up with an explanation. It is quite a complex set of procedures. Some, not necessarily all, of those attributes will be acquired by many students when they leave school. In my view, whatever comes out of these proceedings today and later I think has to be measured against the notion of historical literacy as expressed in the statement.

In terms of teachability, the second aspect is engaging teachers. We must be in a position to construct a programme that teachers are happy to work with. If you have disaffected students and disaffected teachers, it is not a good combination. It is not a good look. This is where we are at a crucial stage in this process of working to improve the teaching and learning in Australian schools. Margaret Thatcher said this in April 1989 when they were doing the beginning negotiations for the national curriculum. We are not talking about a national curriculum. She said, 'If you are doing a national curriculum, you have to get it right first time because if you don't, you're in a lot of trouble.' If we can't engage the students and we can't engage the teachers, then we might do more damage to the teaching and learning of Australian history than has happened in the last 20 years. That is where some of the problems have arisen.

The second point I want to make is it must be do-able. When I say do-able, I mean there has to be a way that we can arrange Australian history within the primary school curriculum in a progressive and satisfactory manner that takes into account an integrated curriculum. In my view, an integrated curriculum is here to stay. We have to look at that and say, 'How does this work? How can we, as

a collection of luminaries, make that kind of arrangement?' In the secondary school area, when I was asked to do this spiel, it was indicated to me that I was putting forward a personal point of view. I will put forward a personal point of view. In the secondary school, history has to be core. I don't think it has to be compulsory, because compulsory gets people's backs up. I do not think it has to be prescriptive because that gets people's backs up. I do not think it has to be mandatory because mandatory gets people's backs up. It is core to the teaching and learning of all students in Australia. If it becomes core, in my view—I accept it more readily than any other designation for this kind of approach—there will have to be a specific timetable allocation in schools. Otherwise it will get rubbed out. There is a lot of politicking in the high school area when it comes to timetable allocation and resource allocation.

If it is core, there will have to be some form of national assessment. This is a personal view. I am not in favour of a national examination for a variety of reasons. I would be more in favour of the assessment of Australian history in schools working through the current national assessment programme that the department runs along with, for example, civics education. That is what I mean by do-able. It has to have a fixed position in the school culture and have some form of status that is permanent. We are talking permanent. It has to have some form of assessment.

The third element is sustainability. I have my three; they all work rather nicely—teachable, do-able and sustainable. It is the rule of three. This is a long-term project and there are several key issues that need to be

addressed in implementing it. One issue is primary teacher training. In a four-year programme, most primary teachers in Australia will only spend about three hours learning how to teach history. Very few of them will have done any history at all. We know everybody in this room knows that history is a highly complex and very specialised activity. I think that is a real problem. In the primary and secondary teacher training area, there is an issue of dealing with history being not seen as a central teaching method in many faculties of education. What this means is that we have a large number of graduates coming out of teacher training programmes who are unfamiliar with the complexities of history at the school level and at a more general level. It occurs to me that the simplest and most effective way to deal with this is to have a sustained—this is where the word ‘sustainable’ comes in—programme of professional development which combines online and face-to-face development. This is like the Heineken ad. We have to reach the parts other parts don’t reach. We have to reach primary school teachers who we rarely get through. We have to reach rural and regional secondary school teachers, who are suffering from a lack of effective information. They are my three points. I think my time is up.

Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate it. Tony has raised issues which go directly to each of these seven leading questions, which are on your agenda. I think rather than split the rest of the session, given we are running behind time, perhaps we might pick up your comments on Tony’s paper as well as your comments against each of these questions for the next hour until I

need to wrap it up. Tony has raised points that go directly to these things in particular. He has talked about making it a critical part of the syllabus. He has called it core. Let’s start with this first one. How can Australian history be made a critical part of the syllabus in schools? First, I invite the Minister, if she wants to say anything.

Ms BISHOP: I am interested in Tony’s comment about it being core, not mandatory or compulsory, and being sustainable. That is where we started from, I suspect. I suspect Australian history has been downgraded from a core subject and now it is interwoven, if at all, with other subjects. We can’t say it’s core or sustainable. I would be interested in hearing the views of the participants on that specific aspect. It obviously will play into the way the summit takes this issue forward. Perhaps that is something I could invite you to comment on to start off with.

Mr CARR: I want to ask a question of Tony. What is the difference between it being core and being mandatory?

Prof. TAYLOR: In my view, you are in a unique position in New South Wales because history and geography were never subsumed at the secondary school level into the generic social studies curriculum and framework. I am looking at the politics of this. If you talk to the other jurisdictions and you say, ‘We’re going to mandate history’, in my view, I think that will get people’s backs up. If you say it is core, it is a different issue. You are saying it is an essential part of the whole curriculum framework for everybody in Australia, for all states and territories. It is lifting from one position to another, which is from a non-coercive, fragmented position

to this mandated position. We will solve this problem by mandating history. It is not the same, in my view, as simply designating it as core. Civics education is effectively core. There was very little in the way of dispute amongst the states and territories on what it means.

Mr CARR: We say it is core but we mean it is compulsory.

Dr STANLEY: A mandatory timetable allocation?

Prof. TAYLOR: I am saying there should be a specific timetable order, yes.

Chair: I have a speaking order. We have already revealed this tension. This is absolutely central to today's debate. What does core mean and what do compulsory and mandatory mean? Given the variability that you and Tony show in this fantastic brick of an attachment on the issue of core, I will start with you, John Hirst.

Dr HIRST: I take it that 'core' is a more compelling term than 'mandatory'. Everybody will do it. My particular question was: does the Minister have in mind that Australian history will be core, or will history be core? If we're being so bold, I think it is much better to make history core. Then students will come to Australian history—I pre-empt some of the discussion this afternoon—with some knowledge of the histories of other parts of the world, which I think is much to be desired.

Dr PARTINGTON: The main problem about a compulsory curriculum in history is that the number of things which have tremendous intrinsic value and of great relevance both to students and the nation is infinitely beyond what can be caught in schools.

We have to make a selection. Some of you would have looked at the note I circulated. I suggested five criteria by which we can discern the importance. I will remind you of them: means of livelihood and means of production; ideas about the nature of the world and the place of humankind; degrees of freedom; security and safety; relationships with roots.

The point I want to make now is that a structured narrative is the end of our deliberations, not the beginning. Whether it is at the primary school or in the high school, what we need to do is to start with questions to make students realise that what appears in a textbook or what the teachers have to say are responses to questions which they in themselves can engage with. I want to give one example. I have composed the most difficult one, in a sense—1788 itself. If we are going to have a core, it seems to me to be an inescapable part of it. I suggest that we approach it through putting these sorts of questions to students. How many people lived in the continent we now call Australia in 1788? Had that number changed significantly over the centuries? How many groups were they divided into? How many languages did they speak? What were their occupations? Have these changed over the centuries? What were their main beliefs about the origin of humanity and its place in the general scheme of things? What responses did Indigenous Australians and the newcoming colonialists have to each other in 1788 and the immediate years afterwards? Particularly, how do we know what the likely or possible answers are to these questions? So indeed, we start engaging students with things that they have to make a response to. They will make a dif-

ferent response if they are aged nine or if they are aged 14. It is extremely important to avoid repetition so that we do some sorts of Aboriginal history four times over or do Gallipoli three times and the gold rushes three times and large parts of significant events in society are left out.

But we certainly, I think, need questions before answers. I think many of the people who raised some concerns about what we are doing today are fearful that we will impose answers on schools or teacher educators or whoever rather than, in a sense, have open-ended questions. Because they are open-ended, it doesn't mean that anything goes. There are some sorts of evidence which are real, material and significant and there are some things which are mere supposition. Take the first one I mentioned—how many people lived in Australia in 1788? Well, it is no bad thing for school children to realise that the people who studied that most intensely, even the great Geoffrey Blainey himself, and I am very privileged to be in any conference with him, don't have a definitive answer. Even then, students must realise we don't have a definitive answer. But there are some answers that are sensible answers. In a sense, they get both knowledge and the incentive to do something for themselves afterwards.

Ms HUGGINS: 'Core' is a much blighted term. We have had various degrees of success making, for instance, Indigenous studies compulsory and mandatory because that implies a sense of force and that you must do it. I particularly think of teachers who are going out into schools that sometimes do not have Indigenous populations. Nevertheless, a component of Indigenous studies is required. I think it has worked quite well

where we have had journalism students at university come and do compulsory 'Indigenous studies', for want of a better term. They have turned out to be journalists who give very positive stories now and again. But I probably agree that 'core' is a word that is not politically laden or exclusively laden in the sense that it is part of the foundation by which people will learn and people will study it.

Ms BISHOP: Should any subject be mandatory?

Ms HUGGINS: English. To get to university, of course, one requires English. I think English is certainly a mandatory subject.

Ms BISHOP: The only one?

Ms HUGGINS: For me as a person who works on left brain stuff—

Ms BISHOP: I want to get a real sense of this. The reason we have called you here today is because of the downgrading of Australian history or the fact that it has become an optional extra at best. So I really want to get a clear understanding of this. If it is a question of language, sure, I can handle that in the discussion at this stage. At the end of the day, people will say, 'What do you mean by core?'

Chair: And in a crowded curriculum, how do you make it stick?

Ms BISHOP: You are asking us to make judgments. We have other things we want to teach. You haven't made it mandatory, so there goes Australian history again.

Chair: It is a very crowded curriculum.

Mr KELLY: My query is the same. I would like to understand better what you

mean by 'core'. On page two of this excellent document, we have history established as a discipline based subject in New South Wales and Victoria and in the rest of the country taught in terms of society and the environment. When you talk about core, I wonder how that relates to that dichotomy. What precise change are we talking about here in terms of core?

Prof. TAYLOR: It is both a semantic issue and a political issue, I think. It comes back to Bob's original question—the difference between core and mandatory. There are core areas in the curriculum which are generally accepted and which are nationally assessed and Australian history is not one of them. If it were to become one of them—in my view, I don't see why it should not become one of them—it would necessarily have to take over a huge part of the curriculum. In my view, it might as a core area be targeted in grades five and six and years nine and 10. I think that would get over some of the resistance that might be encountered both at the ministerial level and at the system level over using such terms as 'mandatory', 'prescriptive' and 'compulsory'.

Chair: I will put a point of view myself. I will go to what Bob Carr started with, which is that if we want a renaissance of Australian history, the way the Commonwealth-state relations work is that the minister will take a strong position to the states and possibly offer some incentive or otherwise to pick up a higher profile for history. So here we are. This is what we will do arising from this meeting. The consideration before us is: what sort of levers should government use? Should the Minister be going with a strong message? In a way, I would not like us to be

bogged in a discussion of core or mandatory. But I would like, and it would be very important, to get a sense of the depth of feeling because it is a very crowded curriculum. You can see the enormous variability. It would make it serious and make it real. Rather than have a debate about nomenclature, I think it will be very useful for us to express the importance of putting this at the centre of a curriculum, if that makes sense. I will move to Inga.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I will move right away from core and those issues to how history might work dynamically within the schools. Not for the first time I find myself in complete disagreement with John Hirst on the issue of what ought to happen in primary school. Given that a lot of the kids are going to leave school at 14, primary school matters a lot. It also seems to me that, at primary school, teachers have to have as much liberty as possible because they are the ones doing it. They can operate beautifully with stories and through encasing people in contexts. I would actually, I think—I keep changing my mind on all these things—like to see in primary school a run through of Australian history, if you like, so that at the end of primary school kids have certain—a word Greg used—milestones in Australian history. I love the word because it is not 'narrative', which is a word which alarms me. I think there would be a dazzling beginning with how Aborigines have lived on this driest of continents and how they contrived to live. It is a brilliant and glamorous problem. And kids know the Australian bush, so you can imagine what it is like to be turned loose in it and to be told to survive within it. In other words, if teachers were permitted to focus

on Australian history and that how-people-lived dimension, I don't see how they wouldn't be fascinated. Then, if we get to 1788, there is the glamour of the tall ships and the astonishing fact that in the course of three decades or four decades this convict colony had achieved so much of what the French revolution had aimed at simultaneously and failed to achieve. There seems to me a dramatic story there that little kids would love.

Chair: Can I pop in here and say thank you for that. This session—we have about 40 minutes left—is about what you would think governments should do. It is not about the content, which we will come to this afternoon. Sorry to be directive in that way, but we need to focus. It is your opportunity to tell the Minister directly what the Government should do. So perhaps each of us might think of one thing, as I go around, in addition to what everyone else has been seeking to say. You might think of one thing that you personally would ask the Minister and Government to do to achieve this renaissance of Australian history.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: I will say more than just one thing, if I may. I want to make a couple of points here that have been picked up. I think there is a distinction between teaching at primary and secondary levels. I myself like the idea of core over something compulsory because, in his report, what Tony has sketched out is resistance. There is resistance to students doing Australian history and—I do not think we can use the word in the same way—under-resourced teachers and a crowded curriculum. I think that if we think about how to turn that around in a productive and positive

way so that it is absorbed into the curriculum, we need to think about a whole range of things which Tony touched on and I am sure others will be thinking of—professional development, teacher training and resources. Resources are important, because for teachers with a crowded curriculum, unless they have the resources—and I mean a rich range of resources—it is difficult to teach. I also think that we may talk about the status of history in our society more broadly. We are talking about schools, but they are part of wider communities and society. We need to think about how we link up much more generally and say that history is important to our community and that history at university level is important. There should be some links, stronger than they are now, between tertiary level educators and schools.

Chair: You are asking the Government to pick up teacher training and resources in the states.

Mr BOON: I want to pick up on the idea of the crowded curriculum. It is something we have been looking at for a long time. That term has been around since the 1890s in Australian education. Looking at our history of education, it is an important thing we do. Look at why the essential learning movements have come about and the fact that we have an American example given. The essential learnings movement comes out of the United States and was developed by a history teacher. It gets back to Gregory's point of how much we can look at knowledge compared to understanding and the questions we ask students. We need to be encouraging them to look at something and develop understanding, not just knowledge about it. What someone is taught in a curriculum

doesn't tell you what they actually learn. Teachers are notorious for doing what they want once they close the classroom door. It is important that we look at what is going on in each of the states, in classrooms, not what is written on curriculum documents. The teaching of Australian history in Tasmania would be at its highest point in the 20 years I have been teaching. There are issues of content and coverage. The inquiry going on in classrooms is at a really high level. That is one thing I want to say. We need to focus on pedagogy as well as curriculum.

Another thing is that we talk about core. As a primary teacher, we have so many cores coming out both federally and at a state level, someone needs to sit down and add up the hours that all these cores take up.

Ms BISHOP: Priority cores and non-priority cores.

Mr BOON: Segregating historical inquiry or history is not going to solve the problem. History is about literacy and numeracy and using ICT. It is about civics and citizenship and values. If we have all these different programmes being thrown at people without any sense of coherence, people will look at them in boxes. If we going to look at coherent approaches, we have to address how we do it in a holistic way, not how we separate subjects off. But history as a discipline is understood by teachers and students.

Chair: Are you talking about government, David, looking at pedagogy as well as curriculum?

Mr BOON: Yes.

Chair: And looking at the breadth of curriculum and having it basically integrated in a way for teachers and students.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: I would like to push further John Hirst's remarks about the extent to which we are talking about a syllabus in history or Australian history. I hope we are trying to enable the younger generation of this country to understand themselves in historical terms. That will mean to a very large extent focusing on what happens in this wide brown land. In the spirit of the Prime Minister's remarks, it will also mean having a sense of the range of influences that have shaped Australia—the Indigenous, the European and so forth. One of the real goals will be to convey a sense to Australian students of the ultimate relevance of things that happened offshore but nonetheless are essential to understanding what made Australia. I think our goal obviously is to produce good Australian citizens. But our goal is also to produce good global citizens, and a sense of the connectedness of Australia to the larger history addresses the issue of making it interesting to students. It is not just about Australia but also the forces in the modern world and the Indigenous world.

Chair: What would be your one thing for the Minister?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: My one thing would be to try to put Australian history in a global perspective, to convey a sense that we are connected with other parts of this globe.

Prof. GREGORY: I will pick up John's point. I think it is essential that students get a sense of the context in which Australian history is operating, the external influences which have had such a huge impact on the history of this content. That is to pick up the points of both Johns. I want to return to the notion of core. What we are tripping over

here is an issue of language. I have noticed over the past six months or so when I have been paying attention to what is being taught in schools and looking at curriculum or lack thereof that, just as historians have a particular language, I suspect each discipline has a language. Educators have a language, a jargon, if you like. That is writ clear in the brick that Tony has provided us with. So from that point of view, we need to be able to engage with those who are constructing curriculums. Therefore, I support the notion of talking in terms of core. This is what they understand. I think that would work in terms of our cores.

In terms of the one thing that I believe is essential, it has to be something related to an old-fashioned word, and that is syllabus and syllabus development by people with training in histories. Hand in hand with that, there is the enabling of teachers to run history. This is one of the huge problems. Many of our teachers have no training in history. There needs to be not only resources but also the ability for teachers to be lifted out of schools and put into professional development, perhaps even being given scholarships to have a semester off or half a semester off, to learn more about history. I think this is a real problem.

Chair: You are one that is focusing on teachers and their own development.

Mr EWBANK: I would really like to emphasise the three big points Tony made about teachable, do-able and sustainable. If it is not teachable, it won't be taught; if it is not do-able, it won't be taught; and if it is not sustainable, there is no point in us being here. People have been talking about

a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history. There could be a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history. It could also be the start of a wake. If we get this wrong, we will stuff it up for 20 years.

That said, on the core issue, I think 'core' is a word that is a lot easier to sell to teachers than 'mandatory'. Teachers like to think that they close the classroom door and that they are independent islands. That is obviously not true. If you tell them they have to do something which is core, they might just do it. If you tell them it is mandatory, they will kick up and resist.

Coming to David's point about integrated studies, I would beg to differ from my colleague here. It is a difference between a primary teacher and a secondary school teacher. I personally believe that having history as a stand-alone subject in the secondary schools is the way to go. I agree with Tony there. My one thing for the Minister is quality PD, because that is the single most cost effective way of changing what happens in the classroom.

Dr STANLEY: I am impressed with the Minister's research skills because I was a shambolic student history teacher and I assume that's why I'm here today. My question arising out of Tony's paper is how we got into the situation he sketched out. I do not want an answer to that now. It is a question that ought to disturb us. One way to find answers and solutions to it is to address these excellent questions, which we won't go through in detail today, to two groups not well-represented here. One is state education authorities. They are all critical. The second group is practical teachers themselves, of

whom we have all too few representatives. Lisa and Julie know better than most that state-federal relations are critical, both past and present. I would be wary of an adversarial relationship between the federal authorities and those responsible for the education systems. So my one thing is to urge us to put these questions to those critical groups. State education authorities and teachers ought to be urged and invited to share the aspirations that we are espousing today.

Ms BISHOP: On that point, I intend to collaborate with state and territory governments, education ministers and education authorities. I wanted to be armed with some expert advice when I went into those discussions, hence the reason for this summit and the composition of the people here. There will be many opportunities for me to meet, and for the department to negotiate and collaborate in the least adversarial way with, education authorities. So I appreciate your points. That is precisely what I am intending to do, armed with the excellent advice that I will receive from this group.

Prof. STANNAGE: I want to comment on your comments, Minister, after I say something. I want to process this slightly differently but pick up Inga's approach to this. It is old-fashioned, but at the History Teachers' Association in 1950, it was said that the school's task was to teach a child to love history. Universities had to teach them something. The teaching of love or affection for a subject relates to that enthusiasm which Tony has talked about eloquently in his excellent paper and in his very thoughtful and thought-provoking comments today, which almost close the door, in a way, to everything except core versus mandatory. I want

to return to this question of love and how that is inculcated. I will quote from the great Gwen Harwood:

We cannot identify our own cultural baggage nor understand the joys nor sorrows, the tendencies and violence of our social life until we have achieved a better grasp of what we have made in this country of the nature and names of love.

It could be love of the hour of the day. It could be love of country. It could be all those things that enter those debates about belonging in some meaningful way. It sits apart from but relates to the point the two Johns have raised and Inga and others have begun to debate. But it is a very important thing about teachers and teaching with love both the students and the subjects they have to.

How does that relate to mandatory versus core? You can't mandate love in teaching. But it is a very central issue, it seems to me, about the way we approach teachers and then, coming back from that, the Minister's challenge of what she takes to ministers in the states. Minister, there are a range of issues there. We've talked about the curriculum and how crowded it is. David has reminded us that education is crowded. But we haven't talked about the relationship with the humanities and social sciences, to science and technology and the place there. We probably need to do that. Australian history has a part to play in the history of science et cetera. But that place of the humanities and social sciences itself is a larger issue than where Australian history is. We are here to talk about Australian history, but we should be cognisant of that issue. We know that science is in deep trouble; there are ill-qualified staff in physics, maths and chemistry et cetera. What we are discussing today is part of that broad-

er concern, particularly about teacher education. Some people have begun to discuss it already, which I think is quite crucial.

Within that, another issue for the ministers of the state—this is a more controversial one—is the question of gender in teaching. I mean by that the small number of men moving into the teaching profession as against the large number of women. There are others in this room better qualified than me to comment on that. It may or may not be meaningful in any way to the sort of history we want to see taught by school teachers. I merely raise it as an issue in terms of the demography of the teaching profession.

The last point I would like to make—I guess it is directed very much to your central concern, Minister—is, whether you go in for mandatory or core in your wish to see more Australian history taught, however it is defined, much will hinge, I imagine, on the current High Court case of the Commonwealth in relation to industrial relations and the outcome of that High Court case. If the Commonwealth wins, I imagine Corporations Law and what Greg Craven and others have been saying will extend to a range of areas, including education and health. The power of the Commonwealth to direct what happens will be greater. Whether you meet with them before or after the High Court decision might affect how you handle this. On a personal note, I have very sadly come to the view that Australian history at some point in between years three and 12 needs to be mandated in some form or another. Thank you.

Chair: I will intervene and ask a question. What did you have to do in New South

Wales to get history in the state it is in years nine and 10, because it is mandatory? In coming to this debate, I struggle to understand in my mind whether it is semantic or real or whatever. I would be interested in what you as a government had to do to achieve what you achieved there.

Mr CARR: It was an implementation of our party's policy by the Board of Studies. It is mandatory along with geography and two other subjects and subject to a statewide external examination at the end of year 10. But I don't want to hold it up as an unqualified ideal because it is clear it wasn't taught in an interesting way. There was a test of that when I went to year nine and 10 history classes and I said, 'How many of you will be do history for the HSC?', and not too many hands went up. The history teachers came to me and said, 'We've made the big mistake of testing them at the end of year 10 what they had to know over the previous two years. It's too big a burden.' They had other criticisms. We revised it. It is something the Board of Studies was able to do. It is there—core, mandatory and subject to a statewide external examination. Greatly appreciated by the history teachers was the fact that it was modified. There is still the challenge of rendering it interesting and compelling, I think. But it is history as a discipline, not some boiled down, soggy Human Beings and their Environment course.

Chair: It was government that made it mandatory?

Mr CARR: Yes. Absolutely. As a policy.

Dr HENDERSON: Both papers were good. I will focus on Tony and Anna Clark's paper. How did it come to this in so many of

the states and territories with the exception of New South Wales? We are here because we think it is a problem. I tend to use the word ‘problem’ rather than ‘issue’. It seems to me that if the minister doesn’t go to the states and territories with a very clear message, which I think should be a mandatory message, if the Minister goes to the states and territories with anything less than that, there is not much to bargain with. I would have thought the message should be quite unequivocal. If it comes in discussions that there is a move away from the mandatory position to somewhere else, at least you are moving from somewhere that is very clear and unequivocal. I do not know that we wouldn’t end up back where we are with Tony and Anna Clark, which is what it was over time.

Chair: Your one thing is that it be mandatory?

Dr HENDERSON: Yes.

Ms LAWLESS: I refer to the mandatory element of the New South Wales syllabus. I was the overseer of that revision of our syllabus recently. One of the problems was the mandated 100 hours. With the first syllabus we had, there was too much content. It is something we have to look very, very carefully at. It is not a mad steam train drive through facts and events et cetera. Kids have to stop.

Chair: A chronological dash.

Ms LAWLESS: Absolutely. They need some time to stop at the historical roses on the way and gain the skills generally acquired only by looking at a period in depth. If we are talking about a mandatory curriculum, ours is 100 hours over years nine and 10.

It is not enough. History teachers would love more time. That, of course, impacts on the crowded curriculum. History was very strong as an independent subject before our changes. I started teaching in 1974 and history was alive and very much well and kicking then. We have to be very, very careful that, looking at a mandatory curriculum, it can be taught—coming back to Tony’s excellent three points—and that schools that are doing very well in history, if it is elective, won’t lose out as well. Many schools in New South Wales did actually lose hours by having to meet those mandated 100 hours. If you had a dynamic department, you had kids coming and screaming to basically join your history classes. We have to be very careful of that. In David’s position, perhaps, and in other schools where history is taught well, we have to make sure that that is not steamrolled and that is lost. I would like to point out that generally in New South Wales history is taught extremely well. Bob, I will take you to some other classes. Your opinion will be raised.

Chair: What would be your one thing?

Ms LAWLESS: My one thing? If we’re looking at core or mandatory, we have to look very carefully at the sequencing of the history that is taught—what will be in primary and what will be in secondary—and be very, very careful about those mandatory hours. Too few and we can’t do much. Too many and we’re in strife with the other curriculum areas.

Chair: Thank you very much.

Prof. BLAINEY: It is most interesting to hear the discussion and to read the paper by Tony. It is rather sad to see how boring the

subject is seen by many students and many teachers. That really is something we have to worry about. The overlap obviously is one of the causes of the boredom. The fact that they are going to Gallipoli three times in the space of eight years really is sad. I know they should go once.

Dr STANLEY: I wouldn't go three times.

Prof. BLAINEY: I do not think we should be too ambitious. As Tom Stannage said, people must be interested. We are not in the race unless they are interested. My view—it may be out of touch—is that in primary school they should be doing social history. Political history is not possible. It would be both Aboriginal history and post-1788 social history. You can bring in films very easily to that. Parents and grandparents can be part of it. You can bring in sport, which I think may help in the present environment of boredom. And women are the main teachers. Women probably can teach social history better than male teachers. Leave the political and economic history until secondary school. Some of it will have to come in. I think social history is where you will win.

Chair: Your one issue to make that link?

Prof. BLAINEY: I think, mandatory or core, they lose unless you win this battle for them.

Chair: For the hearts and minds. Thank you very much.

Ms NEALE: I think the concept of being teachable and do-able is an interesting one because it is very relative. Very good teachers can teach that which is unteachable by others. And sustainability and useability and all those concepts are very tied into the

quality of the teacher. Even a good teacher can make a so-called boring subject very interesting, because it really is methodology. Any content can be interesting if the webs have been tangled and you can go back far into history and project into the 'if' category as they go forward. We need to look at what those terms really mean.

In a previous life, I was a teacher and went through teacher training in the '70s. I do not want to be retrograde. There was a lot of effort put into, first, the profession of teaching as a highly valued one for a whole range of reasons. We know the circumstances of that. Some of that should be reviewed. What is it that makes teaching a highly valued profession? History is a branch off that stem. It is not only about history teachers. It is about teaching and the quality of teachers and teacher training. The idea of having a history award is fabulous. How about a national history week and a whole lot of other incentives and money to revamp and revise history books and the way it is told? You could have history books that actually draw on the fabulous material that is in archaeology, anthropology and geomorphology and all the other sciences to enrich the content area.

Going back to teachers, it seems to me there has been an extraordinary decline in who can qualify to go into teaching at university. There are very low TERs. You are wasting your time if you are dealing with people who on the one hand are looking for a job that has reasonable hours or looking at it vocationally. The quality of the teaching and the teachers and enriching those currently in the force has to be looked at as well. There are other things about interest and boredom. We can probably get into that in the next session.

Chair: I feel that there are several things. They are all very good and practical. Your one thing or your key things? I certainly picked up on raising the status of the profession and the quality of teaching. I have picked up on the quality of resources and curriculum resources.

Ms BISHOP: I like the national promotion. You talk about a national history week with the Prime Minister's new announcement about a \$100,000 prize for history as a centrepiece. We have done a lot with National Science Week and taking it out to regional, rural and remote areas as well as the metropolitan ones.

Ms NEALE: It is a multipronged attack. When you looking at the symptoms of any malaise, you have to look at the causes. They are all related. It is a multipronged attack. In that vain, totally out of character for me, I will say that, to get us over that interim hump, there probably does have to be some element of compulsion, be it in some areas or subjects in some years for a period of time. It can't be thrown out. But it has to be looked at carefully because the stick and carrot have to work together. There has to be a lot of incentive. Otherwise people will drop it.

Ms BISHOP: There is a lot of posturing. I am reading transcripts of my education colleagues around the states anticipating what we are and are not going to suggest. A lot of posturing goes on. At the end of the day when you are sitting around the table, every education minister across Australia would agree that Australian history is an essential part of a child's learning. It is a question of how we get to that point.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I want to tell a story. My younger daughter, who is this year doing year 10 compulsory history in New South Wales, has a compulsory assessment task due this week with a partner. It is a biography of an Australian Prime Minister. She chose Robert Menzies. She asked if I had any books. I brought home a biography of Robert Menzies. She took it into her room. A few days later she said, 'I really like the book of yours that I got. I said, 'Did you like that biography, did you?' She said, 'I didn't like that.' She liked the basic year 10 textbook that she could simply cut and paste the stuff from into her assignment. The thing is that we live in a world of Wikipedia. Despite all the stuff about how we are going to have discussions about this, when I read these year 10 textbooks, there doesn't seem too much doubt about the narrative. The narrative is straightforward. Kids like that it allows them to get the compulsory assessment tasks out of the way with a nice cut and dried, nice and simple approach. We can talk all this stuff about resources, all this and all that, but I suspect a large number of students simply want to get the assessment task done in their compulsory history crowded curriculum. They take a rather more easy way out to do it. So maybe there is something there. I do not know what the point is except to say that they are like university students. We have this at universities. They like nice simple things they can go and get. That is a part of life.

Chair: Is your one thing for government something about quality assurance or making it interesting and exciting?

Prof. MELLEUSH: I suppose it is something about taking account of how real students out there actually operate.

Chair: Actually like to learn.

Ms BISHOP: How they absorb information.

Chair: Is there anyone who hasn't spoken who would like to add themselves to the list? We will have to close soon.

Prof. BOLTON: I would like to reinforce what Geoffrey Blainey has said about starting in primary school with social history. I have always been a bit worried about dropping a nine-year-old back in the unfamiliar territory of 1788 and enabling them to walk their way back to 2006 because they are proceeding from an unfamiliar starting point. I like John Gascoigne's view and the view Gregory has made about bringing 1788 into an international context. For a start, I suspect that the young, the eight- and nine-year-olds, will respond more to episodes such as the two world wars and the 1930s Depression, where they can talk to their grandparents and get some sort of first-hand response about what they remember about it and what it was like. Recently I had a nine-year-old great-nephew ask me, 'What did you watch on television when you were a boy?' I said, 'I didn't. There wasn't any.' This was an astonishing point. It took some digesting. I agree about politics and, dare I say it, the explorers—it used to get taught—in Australia since 1606. I also couldn't have given a damn where the Darling finished up. I was a town boy. I didn't know that environment. We can reinforce that. We start with that. We then move out to the wider and broader issues as the young person grows up.

Secondly, I want to ask a rather basic, dirty question. I agree with many who have spoken that one of the most important things

we can do is professional development. I want to see that extended so that it includes coherent approaches to teaching the course and not the repetition which is certainly rampant in Western Australia and seems to have happened elsewhere. But that will cost money. The states will say, 'What are the federal people going to do about it and what strings are attached?' Is it fair to look to Canberra to put more money into professional development and devising good course materials? It is never an easy thing to ask of any government. I am not saying we approach this conference in the view that Julie Bishop will find a bit bag of money and start scattering it. I would like guidance on how the practical steps we agree upon are translated into reality.

Mr EWBANK: I want to reflect on a couple of things that have been said in the ebb and flow of discussion. I agree with Tom Stannage that history teaching should be about inculcating a love of history. I am not sure you would have the view of all students. I take up Jenny's and Margo's points about the nature of teaching. If you have a mandatory or core or compulsory curriculum and you have too few hours, you prevent teachers doing what they do best. Teaching is by its nature an imaginative, responsive and creative activity. Good teaching captures the moment. It responds to manifested student interest. It mediates between the syllabus requirements and student interest. It varies content and approaches. It values and emphasises higher order thinking. It is open to the problematic nature of knowledge. Most importantly, it creates a past or a set of pasts as opposed to a visit, which is populated by real people and real life and which is really

interesting. The idea of a national history week is an idea that a few of us in Canberra have started thinking about recently. I would be interested in talking to the Minister once we have had a chance to flesh it out in consultation with some of the institutions in Canberra. We could look at that in the future.

I turn to a point that Greg made about the Google generation. The way they do their assignment is go to Google and Wikipedia more commonly. That is down to poor assessment design. It also emphasises that what is important about history is the skills and political analysis that history develops. We talk about wanting to develop our students as citizens of the future. If they go to Google and find the right information, that is a skill in itself. But how do they know that it is the right information? That is the critical thing. On the question of depth of resources, one of the things which a number of my colleagues really wanted me to say today was that the Commonwealth has put millions of dollars into resources in the past. Discovering Democracy was a project that Noel and others around would be familiar with. It had great materials. Too frequently they sat in the library or the principal's office and weren't used. Good teachers had no need for them. Bad teachers didn't know they existed.

Ms BISHOP: How do you get around that?

Mr EWBANK: That is a very different question. You mentioned last night that you were going to say something about the publishing industry in this country. One issue that I as a history teacher have with the publishing industry is this drive in many textbooks for the two-page colour spread.

You have the facing pages with the colour spread showing 'The Crusades' or whatever. Bad teachers photocopy that and then they have done the Crusades. If we are going to develop resources, they have to develop deep knowledge and deep understanding. We can't just skim.

Dr LOPEZ: Seeing that Tony raised the issue of core, I'm going to raise a hardcore issue—the issue of ideology and the issue of teacher quality. As I looked through this glorious appendix, I noticed that the curriculums in all but New South Wales and Victoria were outrageous in their degree of politicisation. It was as if they didn't really have to worry about tact. It was like the purpose of a lot of these curriculums was to create cohorts of political activists. It would be endearing to everyone if their parents were in Greenpeace or the International Socialists, but they are not. It happens to be incredibly alienating to a large number of students and their families. I think part of the reason for the exodus from history studies and Australian history studies is its incredible politicisation. That is part of the alarm that has gone through the community. That is one of the main reasons why we are here. That is something that I wanted to talk about. It is something I hope everyone else will be talking about at a certain stage. That is something I know was talked about a lot last night unofficially. I thought I would bring it here officially.

I also want to talk about teacher quality. Tony made some terrific points. But if we take what Tony said at face value, we sit back and say, 'It is too difficult. The status quo.' There's going to be incredible resistance to this. This is only one little battle in an overall campaign. Renaissance or en-

lightenment, whatever we want, it doesn't happen overnight. It is a struggle fought on many fronts. There will be bitter resistance from the establishment, who are pretty happy with the way things are because those pay cheques roll in every fortnight whether they do a good job, a bad job or no job at all. There is very little accountability. To be frank, I was absolutely astonished with the quality of Gregory's paper. I thought that was absolutely superb. I hope it is supported and endorsed in full without each of us trying to pick away at little bits of it because we've all got such noble agendas. I think it is a superb job and it should be fully supported. That is certainly something that the Minister can go to the states with, with her tied grants power in her back pocket, because it's going to be a real bunfight once this gets out.

If you have been following the little hints of what is going on in the press and the media, that is always the tip of the iceberg. The real stuff is said around kitchen tables and across bars and stuff like that. This is a struggle for free thought. It is a struggle for reason in the place of prescribed ideology. It is a struggle for diversity and inclusiveness. I go beyond ethnicity to mean inclusiveness of families with conservative views, with liberal views or with nationalist views who aren't just put into this as villains of the story.

Dr HENDERSON: Or social democratic views.

Dr LOPEZ: Absolutely.

Ms NEALE: Or Indigenous views.

Dr CLENDINNEN: Can I get the page reference to this stuff. I missed it.

Dr LOPEZ: The New South Wales document was very good. The Victorian docu-

ment was pretty good. WA was interesting. No wonder the Minister is interested in this issue because it is her home state. You can start from 278 and 279 onwards. It is almost explicit:

Students develop positions on social and environmental issues and evaluate these as a consequence of their interactions with others.

What is that code for?

Ms LAWLESS: It is saying positions. It is not saying one position.

Chair: Don't forget that you will get another chance for all this afternoon. It is exactly the nature of the debate. I hope I am not stepping on toes to say that. The Minister has to go, unfortunately. Thank you, Mark.

Mr BARNETT: As a secondary teacher, I would like to make an observation about core and mandatory. Firstly, in relation to students, I sometimes wonder whether if you make something mandatory, students will do it just in order to get it done. They will then adopt a very minimalist approach to it and it won't be considered important. As a history teacher, I would think it really disappointing. I think choice motivates students. I would also like to talk about mandatory in relation to teaching. I sometimes wonder whether when we make things mandatory, people also lose the passion and the enthusiasm for delivering it. History teachers have a love of their discipline. I think that needs to be acknowledged and supported. Finally, if there is one thing I may say, it is that teachers in the last few years have been inundated with all sorts of programmes—core, mandatory, elective, essential learning standards. It goes on. I think sometimes they are just overwhelmed with all of these changes. I

really beg for time and funding for proper professional development for staff, not just something thrown at them with half a day off to learn and go off and deliver. I don't think they can be enthusiastic about that. If they aren't, the students won't be.

Chair: Lots of nods around the room on that. We get a big sense of support for that.

Mr KELLY: I have a couple of core points, if you like. My take on the documents is that the present situation is grossly inadequate. I don't see any other conclusion to be drawn from this documentation. I think it is an overwhelming and irresistible conclusion in terms of looking at the way history is being taught. It seems to me that what we are on about here is attempting to elevate history and re-establish history as a discipline. If we go about that the right way, presumably there should be at least a reasonable degree of support from teachers, if in fact the objective is to reinvest in history and to elevate history. The final point I would make is that we need to explicitly put down any outside polemical impression that this is about imposing a single historical narrative. Nobody is on about that. Everyone recognises that there are multiple narratives. That is a firm position which should be enshrined in terms of the way we go forward attempting to bring people with us.

Chair: Thank you very much. I am starting to get hands on a second round. I am conscious we are over time. I would like to sum up. I would like to ask a couple of big questions to get a bit of a flavour of where people think we are heading here. I will cover off on a few things that have not been discussed. The first people I have to leave off the list.

Perhaps we can pick up over lunch. First of all, let me get a sense of this in the room in a really quick way. Perhaps we will assume it or I should too. It seems to me that one of the messages from Tony's work is that we might like, of course, not a single narrative in terms of content, as many of you have said and Paul just said very nicely a minute ago. Perhaps we would like to look at a more consistent standard for the curriculum offerings. If you think of the attachments, it would be a higher or more consistent standard with less variability. I am not talking about the narrative but the curriculum offerings. Do I get a sense of that?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: What is so concerning is the muck that history is being reduced to.

Chair: Is that a general view? Thank you. We had not picked that up. I wanted to bring it out. A couple of people focused on secondary school. I imagine that on the whole we are talking about years nine and 10 in particular. That seems to be a focus.

Mr CARR: And in primary school.

Mr EWBANK: And in primary school.

Chair: Yes.

Prof. GREGORY: There is a concern about things being adequately sequenced as well. You can't just talk about nine and 10. You have to be aware of what is going on in the primary school. At the moment, of course, we have inconsistency, duplication and repetition. That is really important.

Chair: Thank you for that. I get a sense that people are interested in the focus at years nine and 10. We did not talk about assessment. This may be too difficult in such a

fast way, as I am going now. I imagine there is a mix of views on assessment, but Tony raised it. Are people generally interested in the notion of a more standardised sort of assessment process? Are people for the New South Wales approach, or is that a matter for the states?

Mr EWBANK: Opposed to the New South Wales approach.

Chair: I thought it might be the case.

Mr EWBANK: Nothing personal, Bob.

Chair: On the core and mandatory debate, whatever it might mean, I get a sense some people are going to this notion of core and some are saying mandatory. Were there any other people who were interested in a compulsory or mandatory approach? You're keen on that.

Dr PARTINGTON: I want to make one point. Several people have suggested that if something is made mandatory, some teachers will teach only the minimum possible. That may be true. But if something is not mandatory, a large number of teachers will teach nothing at all. I see no reason at all why we should regard historical knowledge as being significantly different, say, from the ability to read or the ability to do maths. I have known a very large number of teachers whose own mathematics is hopeless and who do feel extremely annoyed and overchallenged by having to teach maths, but we rightly at the moment ask that of them. I do not go to the question of whether there should be more specialisation in primary education, which is another matter. Certainly whether we call it core or mandatory, we have to say, 'Well, these are some questions that we want our students to have looked at seriously and to

be aware of what the possible answers are.'

Dr STANLEY: Some of us are unqualified to comment on core or mandatory. Ask me a question about history but not about secondary history teaching.

Prof. GREGORY: On the core and mandatory, we are actually talking about the same thing. I seek Tony's expertise with this. Core is a more palatable version.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It is almost a cosmetic thing. It is the same thing. They have to do it.

Chair: Beautifully said, John. You are saying you want them to do it. It is how it is presented—made exciting, the whole joy of teaching and all the rest of it. We really think it must be done.

Ms NEALE: Even for a period. Even for a final period. So it is a combination of core and mandatory.

Chair: I am pleased you made that intervention, John, because I had a sense that we were not having a real debate but rather talking about wanting it done and how it is presented.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It comes at years 11 and 12.

Dr HENDERSON: The Minister has a very clear position. It needs discussion. Without that, you will not get anywhere.

Mr CARR: The Minister won't be able to get away with it. She will be asked whether core means mandatory. The people at the press conference won't let that drop.

Chair: What I am hearing is that it does—

Mr CARR: I agree that core is the nicer way of putting it.

Chair: I am hearing it is mandatory.

Prof. MELLEUSH: Won't all the state education people have read these proceedings?

Chair: We hope so. They will certainly be paying close attention to your views, which is one reason why I really want to elucidate this. This forum has high status and profile. If I get that right and do a summary, we are saying it should be mandatory but the presentation of it needs to offer students choices and needs to be presented well and all those things which go to good quality teaching.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I feel a little more trepidation than anyone else seems to. I do not want to say something is mandatory when I do not have the least idea what it is that will be mandated.

Chair: The question here was a very general one, which was the notion similar to New South Wales, although each state does its own curriculum and so on. That is the notion of delivering Australian history—and I think most people seem to be coming to years nine and 10—as a stand-alone requirement of the curriculum in some ways. How that happens and the hours and curriculum, the pedagogy and what happens in the classroom of course will differ, I am sure, quite widely from school to school and state to state.

Prof. BOLTON: We are saying Australian history contextualised?

Chair: Yes, we are. Many people made the point.

Dr STANLEY: One comment which bears on mandatory is: mandatory for what? We can move across portfolios and come to Andrew Robb and his portfolio in multi-

culturalism. He has very clear views about identity and citizenship requirements and so forth. We would like a statement like the one experimented with in Britain about the 10 things needed before you get picked to be a citizen. If we mandate Australian history, to come back to Inga's point, are we actually mandating the capacity of government to say who will or won't be a citizen according to a historical test on the nature of Australia et cetera?

Chair: I can cut straight in here and say the Minister has been clear that this is not about coming to a single narrative. We are talking about simply placing history in its rightful place of importance.

Dr HENDERSON: Teaching history and, therefore, society.

Chair: Which narratives and so on, that will be another discussion.

Prof. TAYLOR: I will go back to the point that Bob brought up a few minutes ago, which is precisely what I was hoping would be the case. This difference is about mandatory as a word. 'Core' is a word that is less confronting as a political statement. It might be more or less acceptable within a professional debate.

Chair: It is up to the Minister how she chooses to operationalise it and present it. What I am reading from the group is that the notion of looking at history as a stand-alone subject, particularly in years nine and 10, as a requirement is something which draws support. Thank you very much. I will offer Bob Carr one opportunity. What is the one thing you would ask Government to do?

Mr CARR: I have said it.

Chair: Let me summarise. I will do so quickly. I will draw this to a close and then we will go to lunch. I will do it in reverse order of the three things Tony identified, which people have responded to positively. What you are saying by way of sustainable is in terms of what government should be doing. There is a large theme from our discussions—and I thank you very much this morning—about the quality of teaching. There is a big message about the quality of teaching. Indeed, our research backs this up completely, which is that the largest variability within schools and between schools is explained by the quality of teaching, not socioeconomic background. Quality of teaching leads us to ask: how do we raise it? I will come to that in a minute. It links to raising the status of the profession. It was quite a theme, anything we can do, government can do, you can do and the states can do to raise the status of the profession. ‘Make teaching a valued profession’ were some of the words used. I appreciate that is in terms of being sustainable too.

We had some discussion about what curriculum size would be sustainable. Is it 100 hours or more? What does it take to make the teaching of Australian history in schools sustainable? Geoffrey Bolton talked about setting the teaching of Australian history in its global context. Several speakers talked about Australian history and the teaching of history more broadly and its links to the global context. This helps make it sustainable and more interesting for students and so on. We talked about linking it to other subjects and other areas of endeavour so that the teaching of Australian history is more exciting for Australian students. I put this

under ‘sustainability’ because how else can you sustain what we want to achieve here. It is about making it exciting for our students. We need to think about novel but tried and true ways of achieving it.

For do-able, we talked about the fact that we must look at pedagogy, not just curriculum. This links to the sustainability point about the quality of teaching. We must teach an understanding of history, not just the knowledge of it. We must look at the type of resources that we offer our teachers in schools and our schooling systems to make the teaching of history do-able. Several people talked about the quality of resources and the need to revise resources. There was a theme under this heading about integrating the curriculum better. It is more do-able for a teacher faced with a crowded curriculum if the elements of the curriculum are linked more smoothly. I would probably put the core and mandatory discussion under this heading. It needs to be do-able. Teachers need back-up to have the freedom and permission and so on to actually go and do it.

We need to look at the sequencing of the curriculum. That is a very important point. In large part, we focused our discussion in an implicit way perhaps on looking at primary school through to year 10. Hopefully there is the excitement of young people continuing to study Australian history.

Under ‘teachable’, the quality of professional development is terribly important. There was a point made that there must be the time and funding for proper professional development. We start with preservice teacher education. Many people made points about the importance of preservice

teacher education engendering an interest in the teaching of history and the school in the teaching of history. So we need to look as a government right back to our university system. Somebody suggested—Margo, I think it was—that scholarships help it be teachable. Perhaps this is do-able. Teachers may enjoy the opportunity to take scholarships, to go off and learn more about the teaching of history. What other things can be done to stimulate a love of the teaching of history? ‘Teachable’ probably also covers understanding how students like to learn. Several points were made about really needing to engage with where students are coming from these days. They are all texting each other and we need to tap into that. That links down to the sustainability point about making it exciting, having quality assurance in teaching and the materials students use to learn. It comes back to Wikipedia and so on. An important role for teachers in making sure this is teachable and efficient is the role of teachers to quality assure the material.

That is a modest summary after a very, very complex and rich discussion. Let me thank you for your contribution. From my point of view in terms of advice to government, there is a real wealth and a deep richness here in terms of ideas. We can now pick up and work with state and territory ministers and non-government school systems and so on to operationalise your ideas and to make them real. I thank you very much. With that being said, I invite you to join us for lunch, which is probably out this door. We shall reconvene at 12.45 or 12.50 pm.

*Proceedings suspended from
12.23 pm to 12.54 pm.*

SESSION 2

Chair (Dr HIRST): Welcome back. We now get down to the nitty-gritty, as it were. The Minister’s words, as in other pronouncements, were that we should be talking about what every school child should know. Greg was given the task of sketching out what that might be. As you will have heard, people have been reacting very positively to your paper. It is very wide-ranging and very comprehensive. We will be asking people to be more particular about that. First of all, we invite you to speak to it. One of the pleasing things about Greg—this is evident in his presentation—is that he is not only a historian of Australia but a historian of Europe, Britain and the world.

Dr HENDERSON: And Wollongong.

Prof. MELLEUSH: No. I am not a historian of Wollongong.

Chair: That is a perspective I like. You would have heard me this morning. I started teaching Australian history. One day a student in class said, ‘A man said X’. I thought it was crazy. This is when I was doing British history. People would ask, ‘What is the Enlightenment?’ I ended up teaching European history. So I think that is the broad context that Australia needs. As you see, Greg is concerned with that as well. I now invite him to discuss his paper.

Prof. MELLEUSH: Thanks, John. I was given the brief of a personal view on what students should know. I sat down at a computer for a couple of weeks. I didn’t have to do any work like Tony in terms of going through scores and scores of documents. What I decided was that if we’re talk-

ing about students and what students need to know, they are students who will become citizens of a democratic society, members of a nation state. That nation state is Australia. But they are also going to be members of a globalised community as well. One of the things I thought of is what Australian history, in a sense, comprises within that context of both the nation state and the wider world.

As I was writing the notes out, it took me back to the original two historians of Greece—Herodotus and Thucydides—and their difference in approach. Thucydides, of course, had the tight political narrative and Herodotus explained the Persian Wars. How does Herodotus explain them? He doesn't start with the Persian wars until book seven or thereabouts. He goes back to what was happening in Lydia. He talks about Persia, customs and Egypt, all sorts of things. In a way, Herodotus gives us a good model. If you are going to talk about Australian history, there is a tangled network that goes outside as well as inside, so you need to have a context.

The other thing I thought of, in speaking to the paper, is that when you think about Australian historians, most people think of historians who have been historians of the national story in Australia. Yet a lot of people aren't really aware that Australia has produced a large number of big historians as well, starting with people like Gordon Child—an obvious one—Grafton Elliott Smith, Griffith Taylor through, of course, to Geoffrey Blainey's history of the world and someone like David Christian today. There is that tradition. Part of that is because people in the Australian context have explained their story both in terms of what goes on in

Australia and wanting to understand how Australia fits into the wider world.

In constructing a narrative out of historical facts, I thought about historical facts. I thought, 'When my father was at school in the 1930s, he had a teacher who used to stand out the front of the class, bang a thing on the ground and say something like "Snapper won the battle of what?" in whatever it was.' They banged on the ground and learnt dates that way. I do not think that is what we mean by historical facts today. I think we mean processes or wider things. They are facts as well. I don't think we can be just limited to discrete events and having to know a list of discrete events. I took the three-pronged approach I did after thinking about what a globalised citizen in a modern nation state such as Australia should know about Australian history. We need to know the global context, not just the European context. Some of you probably know that I dabble in world history and a bit more. You have to know the global context. You have to know China and the Islamic world and various other places as well. You need to know public events in Australia.

Another thing about facts, or part of the narrative, is everyday life. It has to be macro, middle and micro in that sense. That is the approach I took. When I looked at doing something that put it all together, I tried at each level to look at what students should know in terms of background, what they should know in terms of perhaps public events and what we can do about this thing called everyday life in a particular period. What I tried to do in every period was to take a different aspect of everyday life. I took work at one stage, I took migrant experience at another.

You wouldn't be able to cover the whole lot, but you would get a taste. I wanted to do that because looking, at the micro level, you get a sense of historical empathy. That comes back to understanding versus—what is it? They're good 19th century terms.

Ms PAUL: Knowledge.

Prof. MELLEUSH: Understanding and knowledge. That's good. It's Coleridge. But I think of it in terms of John Henry Newman between giving notional and real assent to propositions, which has a similar sense. You know something simply because you know it is a logical state or you actually know it in the sense of having a fuller sense of understanding.

Another thing I was interested in was restoring what I see as some of the neglected dimensions in Australian history. The three that have a bit of prominence are economic history, religious history and, to a certain extent, political history. One reason I tend to emphasise economics is, again, it goes back to the global issue. Australia has always been a society, since the Europeans came here at least, that has sold goods to the rest of the world. And, unlike India or America, it hasn't had a large internal market. It has always been a global society in terms of its dependence on the world economically. If you don't appreciate economics, you don't understand. As Benjamin Constant put it in the 19th century, Australia is a product of the age of commerce rather than the age of war. It doesn't mean we don't have wars. It means when we have war, as Constant said, wars in an age of commerce can be nastier than they would have been in an age of warfare. Utilitarianism and those commercial values have been very important.

In terms of political history, one thing that struck me—I mentioned this the other day—when I was looking through the New South Wales syllabus and textbooks, anyway, was that there seemed to be nothing on the reforms of the 1980s. It was about the Whitlam reforms and social reforms but there was nothing on the reforms of the 1980s. Yet for our kids at school, if anything has gone to creating the sort of world they live in, it is things that have come since 1983, since the reforms of both the Hawke-Keating government and the subsequent Howard government. This is something that doesn't seem to have been important enough to have made it into the history books. In the same way, I have emphasised the Australian Settlement because, again, it is something that, strangely enough, historians don't tend to emphasise enough, I think. It is something historians could learn from political scientists.

We need to make room for competing accounts. As we said before, no-one is talking about single narratives. We also need within that to problematise certain things, such as democracy and what it means and fairness. What does fairness mean? I will finish soon. There has been a lot of stuff about postmodernism. But the first postmodernists were the sophists in ancient Greece. There is something about democratic societies and competing views. That is what part of the democratic view is about; you have competing views. You don't have a single view. In a democracy, perhaps, there is a tendency towards relativism because there are so many different views being held. Students, then, can recognise that their account will differ from their neighbour's account and all sorts

of accounts. What we need to do is recognise that there will be different accounts. That is part of what a democratic society is about. There is ever only going to be the most broad account given as an argument. There are no absolute accounts. There can be no absolute narrative. But there can be various accounts. Part of what we are doing with students, I hope, given that democratic society and democratic history, is showing that that is part of what they have to do in everyday life. I suggest in the paper that this isn't all that different from what people in jury rooms do. They have to evaluate the evidence and arguments. They have to do it watching TV. They do it all the time. Skills of history in a democratic society are about that sort of ambiguity. They are the sort of things we need to teach about the narratives of history. We have to be teaching those things as part of their everyday life in a democratic society.

That left me with primary school. I know we have had views about social history. I believe national history would be dealt with at the secondary level. Primary school could be the place where you start with local and state history. There has to be a place for state history somewhere. I didn't make an account. I also like the idea of biographical approaches. Thinking back to my primary school experience, we used to study moral exemplars. Maybe we would not cover moral exemplars these days, but perhaps people who illuminate things about a society. I emphasise that I don't like the idea of doing Australian history in primary school and then revisiting the same stuff. What struck me is how to get something separate in primary school. It seemed that perhaps a way we could do things differently was not so much focus on

the narrative histories they will get later but on things that will prepare them for secondary school and encourage their enthusiasm. When they get to secondary school, the primary stuff will have built some enthusiasm for what they want to learn at secondary level. So that is why I suggested things like real people or generic people, as I think I put in there. I called them unknown Australians. They are still people, but you can't put a name to them. That is what I did. It was a personal view. Having done it, I will leave it open to the rest of you.

Chair: Thanks very much, Greg. We should proceed through Greg's broad principles, his preambles and get to the detail. My feeling is that we would do better going the other way. He has risked his arm with a list of topics and events to study. I think first of all we should consider that. As we do that, we will inevitably be raising broader issues. First, I am inviting comment on the character of the list—what is in it and what is not in it. Very soon we have to come to the question which Tony and Nick raised so firmly this morning; that is, whatever we agree to endorse, it must be teachable. That is where I would like the discussion to begin. We will play by the same rules as this morning except that, coming at this stage in the proceedings, I have had a chance to talk to many of you and hear your views on certain matters. I may actually invite comment when I know that there are views that are pertinent to the discussion we are having. First of all, I see Jennifer wishes to speak. It is appropriate that we hear from the teachers.

Ms LAWLESS: First of all, I want to say, Greg, you obviously put a lot of thought into your paper. I think it is certainly very

comprehensive. But from a curriculum development point of view, I think we have to keep some practicalities in mind. In recent years—we have done over this several years—we have been reviewing the syllabus in New South Wales. From a curriculum perspective, it seems to me that this would take approximately 500 hours to teach. If we cut back somewhat, you would still be looking at an enormous amount of content over perhaps a two-year period. If we are looking at years nine and 10, it is a hell of a lot to cover. Obviously we have to look very clearly at what would we suggest for primary school. I think for primary school we tend to underestimate what kids are capable of, particularly in classes five and six. There are some wonderful examples of some of the fabulous work kids are doing at that level. You have to think very carefully about what we can do in primary.

Chair: I should have made this clear in our running instructions. This session is notionally—we will try to hold to it—to deal with secondary schools and 19th century history. The second session that Bob will be chairing has as its brief the second half of Greg's paper, which is 20th century history for secondaries and primary. So perhaps we could stick to that.

Ms LAWLESS: I didn't realise we had divided it up between the 19th century and the 20th?

Chair: We have. We can have a discussion about this.

Mr EWBANK: When did you decide that?

Chair: The people running the show decided this. That is the notional way the

session has been divided. I do not want to inhibit discussion about the broad points. I interrupted when you got to primary. I wouldn't want to inhibit discussion over the character of Greg's contribution, which has a similar form for the 19th and 20th centuries. But perhaps we can leave primary apart. We will talk about primary later.

Ms LAWLESS: We can, but we still have to keep it in mind. If we are still talking about the sequencing of events and historical narrative, we have to keep it in mind. Generally, then, if we are looking at the 19th or 20th, whatever, we have to look at good teaching practice and keep it in mind because good teaching practice will take more time as well. When you have site studies, visiting speakers and engaging, exciting activities, it is much more time consuming. We have to keep in mind the practicalities of what we are looking at. I am sorry. I wasn't aware we had divided up the 19th and 20th centuries.

Chair: It is my fault for not announcing it first. I have already departed from my running instructions. I am open to depart further rather than introduce an artificiality to the discussion. Is this on the point of order?

Prof. GREGORY: I want to pose a question. It is fairly fundamental to the nuts and bolts of all this. How many hours, if you like, have we got to play with in any one year?

Chair: I suppose the New South Wales standard of 100, which is resented by all those who aren't history teachers—

Ms LAWLESS: Over two years. It is not enough.

Dr HENDERSON: I interpreted Greg's paper as being, in the old industrial relations parlance, an ambit claim. You are not expecting everybody to study all of this, are you?

Prof. MELLEUSH: No. There are two points. You could cut it down to a mandatory thing or you could cut it down and pick and choose amongst them. I wasn't given a brief that were so many hours involved.

Chair: Jennifer has given us an estimate.

Ms LAWLESS: I thought about 500 hours would do it justice.

Mr EWBANK: I have some fairly wide-ranging comments. I agree with Jennifer that Greg has done a lot of work on this and thought long and hard about it. I think pre-arrival into Indigenous society is missing. Greg talked very passionately about the economic reforms of the 1980s. It begs the question: why aren't the 1990s there as well? We are dealing with kids who are in the 21st century. One of our eminent historians was talking today about grandparents before the Second World War. This generation won't be talking to grandparents from that era. We live with kids who send text messages and pull up Wikipedia. That is how they do their assignments. They are on the mobile phone and MSN at the same time. We have to make this—this is unpopular in education circles—have meaning for them.

Prof. MELLEUSH: With the brief I was given, we sat around and said, 'Where does Australian history end?' It was decided 1990.

Mr EWBANK: That is an argument that we could have. I agree with Jennifer that we underestimate primary schools at peril. Good teachers in primary schools can do fantastic things with kids. One problem is that kids can have a good primary school teacher and then have a crap teacher in secondary

school. This happens occasionally. There is far too much content in this.

This is a personal opinion. It has no relation to anything else. It is not an official education position or anything like that. Greg talked about milestones in his paper. I would prefer to use the phrase 'touchstones'. We could all agree on a series of touchstones or big ideas that we would need to cover in the curriculum—pre-arrival Indigenous society, 1788 and the penal colony, various aspects of the 19th century, Federation, First World War, the Depression, Second World War, post-war immigration, the late 1960s and 1970s and then maybe the 1980s and 1990s. Within each of those touchstones you could further identify topics of interest or attach them to those touchstones.

I will take the example of the First World War, because it is the one I have thought through most thoroughly. You might have four topics attached to that touchstone, and they would be the home front, Gallipoli, the Western Front and women or another topic. All four topics could be covered, but three of them could be covered in a skim and one could be studied in depth. That way, the teachers and students could follow their interest. But you can also guarantee that all students will have some knowledge about the First World War, all students will have some knowledge about World War II and all students will have knowledge about post-war immigration and so forth. If people want to see students do exactly the same thing across the country in terms of a national history, that will have problems. Saying that all the year nine students on Friday afternoon will do the Dismissal is pretty pointless. If you had 10 teachers doing the Dismissal,

they would do it about seven different ways. The understanding and learning that came out of those seven different ways would be comical. Some would be slightly better than others. I return to the point I made earlier, which is that teaching is an imaginative, responsive and creative activity. You have to allow students and teachers the flexibility to do what is meaningful to them.

Dr PARTINGTON: I want to say a word on relevance. It worries me indeed that a distinction hasn't been adequately made between what students already consider to be relevant and interesting and the duty of the capable and conscientious teacher to make them interested in what they haven't been interested in before. If we confine ourselves to what a large number of students are already interested in, we simply increase the dumbing down which I think is taking place sufficiently already.

My main worry about Greg's paper is that it doesn't seem to me to differentiate adequately between Australian history and the history of the rest of the world. I am not too sure when things will be dealt with in an Australian history course and whether they will be dealt with somewhere else, even as far as the world wars are concerned. I am not too sure whether students will look at causes and results in general or whether they will look at the participation and contribution of Australians. Obviously they are two different things. Certainly if we are talking about things being core or mandatory—I do not think there is too much difference between the two—I think it is very unwise to have the multiplicity of material that Greg has included. He has nothing there which isn't of interest and value. As I tried to argue ear-

lier, we have to select from that fantastically wide range of things that are valuable and interesting because we have a finite amount of time.

I will give one example. On page nine, section one is about Australia as a free society. Then a survey of the world would follow the United States, democracy and the coming of the Civil War, European nationalism, including Germany, Italy and Greece, and liberalism, the dominance of the West and its impact on the Islamic world and China. I am a fast talker, but it would take me quite a time to say very much to students about those within that context of Australia if a comparable treatment were being given elsewhere. The width is so extensive that one fears very little depth will be possible. So I think we have to separate between those questions that we want students to consider which are part of the core. As a second session we can say to teachers, 'These are also things that are of considerable value and interest which, if you have the time, please look at.' In asking too much, we may indeed produce a fatalism among teachers. I have to say from my knowledge of history students at Flinders, including those who took honours, they would find it difficult after four years of a university degree to satisfy Greg's requirements. I think we have to turn to that.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I had a concern when I was doing this that if you have a mandated or core Australian history course, one consequence may be that other forms of history would be squeezed out of the curriculum. That is one of the reasons why I have tried to put some of this stuff in. I thought, 'Well, the attitude might be we'll have this but other things will go as well.'

Ms HUGGINS: Gregory, you mentioned that you had a brief about where this ends. I have a question for you: where does it start? As the world or global historian that you have described yourself as, surely you would know that Australia has, if not the oldest, one of the oldest living surviving cultures on the planet. I think every Australian should be very proud of that. Your document does not show Indigenous stories or how they are included. It is quite a normative view of Australian history, where Aboriginal history is excluded. That is probably due in part to a lack of Indigenous history teachers, but surely that should not be an excuse, because we are certainly not in the majority here. The participants here were asked to discuss the date of 1788 as the starting point of history. That is according to the summit document. This really does exclude Aboriginal people from even being classed as Australians. It says the people of Australia did not come until 1901. That is a political perspective.

It also talks about themes of land and the environment. If we discussing our history as a landmass, 1788 will not be pivotal. For example, Mungo Woman or the ice ages will give an exciting narrative. You can connect the environment with a timescale people can conceptualise. For example, there is iron ore from 300 million years ago in the Hamersley ranges. Economic history ties in with Australia's rich resource history. That connects deep in time in a very accessible and direct way. And perhaps the sense of the changing landscape could be introduced in primary schools. You talk about underdeveloped strategies in learning history in primary schools and how using this knowledge might be beneficial to history. One final point is

that the damage done to Indigenous people in our communities has been widely spread in this country. When the Indigenous story is told in a way that intentionally and inaccurately denigrates our people, it is extremely, extremely harmful to Indigenous people and negatively influences the attitudes of mainstream Australia. I am not saying that that has been included here because nothing has. In terms of resources, there are many resources out there I would like to note, particularly Macquarie Net, which has a very rich tapestry of the history of our country from go to woe. Thank you.

Chair: Do you want to reply, Greg, on how you have treated Indigenous issues? Do you want to reserve your replies?

Prof. MELLEUISH: You will notice the various things I discuss under 1788 are not actually about 1788; they are 18th century and backwards. That includes pre-contact Indigenous society. It was just a way of organising the paper. I could just have easily put pre-1788. There is no issue about that. It was a question of how I would organise the paper in terms of making it amenable for reading and discussion. I could have organised it in a slightly different way. That is fine. It is not a big issue.

Dr HENDERSON: You are referring to the point on page seven, where you talk about pre-contact Indigenous societies.

Chair: It is also relevant in the context, though I was trying to rule it out, of what happens in primary school. I think in primary school one of the things that would be developing is a good sense of Aboriginal people and culture and the long time they have been here so that maybe students come

with some understanding of that before they reach this stage.

Ms PAUL: It is very clear that both the Minister and Prime Minister, as they have said on the record, look forward to such a narrative including first Australians and going back as far as we can to achieve the right note.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: A lot of what I want to say really has been said by Nick already. First of all, I commend Greg for the outline, which is very rich and covers in an interesting way many subjects. On my hobby horse, it provides a global perspective, which Jackie said could be taken further. A big problem—it is not Greg's problem; it is not his brief—is to translate it into classroom reality. My thoughts run parallel to what Nick said. Can we distil out of this a bare skeleton that everyone should cover but then provide options that provide that experience of depth that Geoffrey Partington mentioned? There are also the mandatory and core aspects and the sense that people have some control over it. There is the elected element within a larger mandatory whole and, in a sense, that we are not imposing one narrative. It meets a number of those goals. What we have to do, I think, is find ways to get down to the bare bones and then leave the option of pursuing some of these things in depth. We have been told—the opening paper said it a number of times—that education has to give an experience of breadth and depth, where students can really get their teeth into something and develop some research skills.

Prof. STANNAGE: I was ruminating. Each of us has tried to do what you have done, Greg. Without committing it to pa-

per, we all have done what you have bravely done. There is nothing too surprising in the paper, it seems to me. It looks like it is a result of an immersion in probably what has been thought and published over a long period of time overlaid with one or two of Greg's personal interests, given the brief to him. So there is nothing wildly surprising in it. My difficulty with it was the wider difficulty of years nine and 10 versus years 11 and 12, which we are not formally discussing at this summit but which clearly must relate to what is done at years nine and 10. We are dealing with the primary area later this afternoon. When I look at this, I think of some university courses a few years ago that were like this. I can see that it is all very good.

I have some specific comments. They might be of some interest. The attempt to use slices, in a way, without calling them slices, on the 1988 bicentennial history mode is a good and interesting device. It is one that students can move around. We used to do that with university students a bit. I don't doubt it can be carried back effectively as a before and after but using a date. You have chosen five in accordance with the brief. I want to comment on 1990. It is not simply the end of Australian history. Of course, Francis Fukuyama proclaimed the end of history about that date and he has had a change of mind about it. History has gone on a bit. It is an interesting issue. Mrs Thatcher also decreed that nothing of the last 20 years would enter through the Hillgate Group and nothing of the last 20 years would be taught. There may be some reasons for that I am entering a note of caution not to Greg but more widely. Closing off things is a bit problematic and difficult for teachers.

More generally, I am a little surprised that some words are missing. Japan is missing both in your economic development side and obviously in World War II and so forth. I think Japan is still our largest trading partner. I am working within Greg's mode of thinking. It is not present, for instance. The British Empire seems to have gone without you actually having a line on it. This would be of some moment to those who teach on the collapse of empire. Britain turned its back on Australia, and we are having this debate in Australia today because we no longer work within the frame of the British Empire mindset. We are still working our way through as carefully as we can. There is some debate about those matters.

I will run a hobby horse for a moment. I am puzzled about Australian historians' infinite capacity to write Australian history without reference to banks or other financial institutions. I have just completed writing a history of Australia that I hope to publish next year which has a major section on financing Australia. It is very unpopular. Unfortunately, it's very important. Banking, insurance and a whole range of these topics, currently, whether you move to the left or the right, with some honourable exceptions, a lot of that is missing. I want to be confirmatory on the economic development side of things. Let's make available to our students much more of that thing. To take the subject holistically today, someone shops and engages somehow in economic life. I won't bore you with it. It needs drawing out.

My final point—there is so much more; this is terrific seminar stuff—is: where did the history of ideas fall? I have taken the view that we at university have an obliga-

tion to explore with our students the history of really significant ideas and writers and possibly in years 11 and 12. I hesitate to say, for instance, that the 18th century makes sense if you refer to Adam Smith or Blackstone. Coming through to the Empire period, Bryce's comments on the civilised nations of the world may be of interest to students et cetera. And coming through to the modern period, surely the post-1980s is notable for the power of Freidman. Where do we let our Australian students know about, for an earlier generation, Keynes? Where in our system do we allow this? It is not simply economics. One of the worst things that happened for Australian university departments was the separation of history departments and economic departments.

I want to endorse also what Jackie Huggins has said. Jackie, as you were speaking, I remembered the wonderful words you offered to the earlier ideas for Australia seminars and those organised by the late Donald Horne. One always hopes that these ideas will be taken up and incorporated. The school teachers of Australia have been doing an excellent job in doing that. Enough from me for now. Much more can be said.

Prof. MELLEUSH: You mentioned years 11 and 12. There is something about years 11 and 12 in that it is more difficult to mandate, as opposed to years nine and 10.

Ms LAWLESS: Compulsory years of schooling.

Chair: It is a disgrace that in year 12, the year before students vote, most of them do nothing on Australian politics, history, literature or geography. I am very happy to mandate one of those for all students. That is

off the agenda for the moment. I keep raising it in the hope that I will find a minister who believes in it.

Dr STANLEY: I am a migrant and very grateful for Mr Gary Childs, who in grade five at Scott Street Primary School in Whyalla took me through what the South Australian education department called ‘the early days’. I don’t know if we still have ‘the early days’ in South Australia, but it was the beginning of my understanding of what was becoming my country. I very strongly acknowledge the value of a survey course that introduces students, including newcomers to the country, to Australia and its history. I endorse the idea of what we’re discussing. I have to say it is not just an ambit claim. It is far too ambitious for a course of the kind we are discussing. It looks more like a book synopsis. I hope Gregory gets a really good publishing contract out of it. I don’t think it’s a good course outline.

Dr HENDERSON: That comment is unfair, Peter.

Dr STANLEY: I believe it to be so.

Dr HENDERSON: I don’t think he will get a book contract out of it.

Dr STANLEY: Alright. That was flip-pant. I am sorry. But I hope he does.

Dr CLENDINNEN: He might win \$100,000 out of it.

Dr STANLEY: There you go.

Dr HENDERSON: Well, you can disagree with it without dismissing it, I think.

Dr STANLEY: I am not dismissing it. I have circulated a paper which shows that I have substantial agreement with it. I don’t believe it is a teachable course. I would be

interested in teachers’ views of it. We have heard Jennifer’s view of it. I support the intention to give substance to the concentration on Australian history, which we seem to agree about. I have reservations. I am conscious of the raft of professors on my left who are economic and political historians. I am not sure political and economic history is feasible, even in secondary school. I would like to know what people like Jennifer have to say about that.

I have to disagree with Tom. Of course banks and financial institutions are important in Australian history, but I beseech you to think of the year nine SOSE teacher on a warm Thursday afternoon. In a mixed ability class, do you seriously expect them to look at the role of 19th century banks? We have to be realistic. Teachers will look at the transcript of our deliberations. If we are not realistic, they will dismiss us. We have to be practical. I am wary of endorsing Gregory’s personal view. It has to be dramatically culled if it is to be feasible. How will the list be trimmed and on what basis? Nick and Gregory have given us the idea of milestones or touchstones. Frankly, it sounds like jargon; it sounds like periods. What we might agree on is that all the periods that Nick enumerated earlier are important and all students have at least an acquaintance with those phases of Australian history in the chronological sequence, which is how people understand the past. What they do within the periods, the amount of time they spend and the emphasis they make, that has to come out of, as Nick said eloquently, the creative contribution of teachers in collaboration with students. So I urge us not to be too prescriptive. Gregory, you have been far too ambitious and far too prescriptive in the list you have given us.

Ms NEALE: My points are partly reinforcing and supporting Jackie Huggins' point of view and expanding into other areas. I have a few other points to make in relation to teaching a little and teaching it well, which has been picked up. Not that Greg said everything has to be taught in this order and in those years. That has been suggested to some extent. I commend him on the very unenviable task, especially given what I will say.

I have to go back. Some of these points in relation to Indigenous history are pretty well known. The issue isn't that people agree on the inclusion of Indigenous history and the unification of Indigenous history into Australian history out of footnote and afterthought. It is in this paper. Gregory has obviously tried to include Indigenous history in a whole range of ways. It has come in as little bits here, there and everywhere and it is not integrated and unified in a way that many other histories in the non-Indigenous area are. That is the first point.

The second point—this picks up on Jackie's point—is that Australian history did not start in 1788 and Aboriginal history did not stop at 1788. Picking up on Herodotus's point in relation to Persian wars, if you want to talk about the arrival of the British here and all that happened and followed, you have to get the context right. We have to talk about the ancient history that existed here before and continues in various ways across the continent. We have to talk about one of the most ancient continents on earth with a plethora of histories. You don't survive 60,000 years without a fabulous economy and land use practices and so on. You don't survive without fantastic spiritual and reli-

gious beliefs, social structures and systems of governance. We can go through every aspect of this paper right through and you can integrate Indigenous history and components very, very easily.

It takes a paradigm shift. It takes a lot of money to go into, as I suggested before, resourcing material that draws on all the other disciplines currently outside history that deal with these things. Professors Blainey and Mulvaney and a number of people have talked about the time before 1788 and the need to talk about the multiple waves of migration. There is the British and the global connection. We have to talk about Indigenous contact with the Macassans and global trading partners, the Japanese and the Indonesians and the Dutch and so on. All of that has to be brought into focus so it isn't on the periphery. There is a whole heap of rich material that is as yet unmined except in a peripheral way by certain committed peoples. They are my major points.

In the words of somebody like Paddy Rowe, an elder from the Kimberley, 'Try and dig a little bit more deeply. You've been digging only white soil. Try and find the black soil inside.' That is what I am saying. I am saying it needs to be integrated, not presented as Aboriginal studies, and taught not just at primary school. I understand why it is as it is. Aboriginal history as a concept wasn't really invented until the late 1970s. It is totally understandable why the situation is as it is. But we can't keep having lots of warm sentiments that this is right and this is wrong without putting the time and energy into developing resources to create the paradigm shifts that will enable mainstream Australian history, the bloodstream, to be totally

enriched by this. I think Jackie said it is an inheritance, a really valuable part that we are just not drawing on.

It is the same old argument; I will not go on about it. We talk about history where people find themselves and identify with it. How can you identify with the history of Australia when you live in this continent and there isn't the history of this continent in there, particularly for Indigenous people? We can't identify with this history. There are no role models. The ones mentioned in here are the same old two or three. There are hundreds that need to be in here in all parts of this history, before, during and right up to the present day. I probably have said more than my fair share.

Prof. BOLTON: I want to raise a different issue, which is in Greg's paper. He states that, until 1901, Australia was not a unified, integral whole; it was a collection of colonies. This point can be developed further. First of all, during at least the first 40 or 50 years of British settlement, Britain itself was not a united place in terms of the fact that the railway and the telegraph had not unified a lot of provincial cultures. The cultural baggage that a Galway transportee would have brought with him would have been different to the baggage that a London pickpocket would have brought. It would have been different from the Scottish investor. You had a whole lot of different Britains into which the Australian settlers were coming.

Secondly—and I speak parochially here—I am very bored with the number of people who try to explain the Australian heritage in terms of the convict background when there are places like South Australia that never had

convicts. In South Australia, the cross-section of people that settled there 50 years after the first settlement was a totally different cross-section to what settled in New South Wales. It was different again to the shabby genteel colonists that came to Western Australia and different again to the enterprising early Victorians who came after gold in the 1850s. It is not one national stereotype. Still less, Western Australia didn't have much of a 19th century until about 1890. Many of the institutions, Constitutional developments, buildings and railways which were part of Victorian or New South Wales history didn't develop there. In fact, in Western Australia, until late in the 19th century, the majority of people were Aboriginal, not that they would have described themselves as Aboriginal. They would have described themselves as Bardi, Bunaba or Mirriuwung-Gadgerong. 'Aborigine' was a legal concept introduced by the settlers. One of the fascinating stories of the 20th century has been the making of Aboriginality as a result of those pressures.

These issues are far too complex, I think, to be boiled down to a year nine or year 10 level of presentation. What we will finish up with is a fairly standardised south-east narrative starting with the Gold Rush and ending with the Eureka stockade that has a good deal of resonance for the rest of the continent but not entirely. The experience Jackie described about Indigenous Australians is an extreme example of this. But there is not one size fits all for the rest of us. To me, one of the challenges is how you will present this as something which is useful to the 13-year-old.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I think I mentioned in the paper *Albion's Seed*. I don't know if

anyone has read that. It is a study of folkways in different parts of America—the South, the puritans, the Scots and Irish. I would love for that to be available in Australia, but no-one has done anything equivalent to that as far as I know. I don't know whether it works in Australia in the way that it seems to work in America. Part of the problem there is you can only teach what the research at a particular level has done. That is part of the issue. That would make a lovely book, what you are suggesting, but no-one has written it yet. It is hard to actually pass on to students.

Prof. BOLTON: I promise you I shan't feel insulted by that suggestion.

Dr CLENDINNEN: Thank you for teaching me a lot more Australian history than I knew. I love the idea of milestones because, as has been sorted out here, that gives the steady points around which can be clustered all manner of particular, may I say, things which people can pursue through different levels if they so decide to do. On this vexed question of what we do about Aboriginal history, if in primary school students were taught an understanding of this continent, Aboriginal history could play a major part of it and Geoffrey Blainey could play a major part of it. If they understand this place as the driest continent in the world, it becomes a dramatic story to see how very differently humans have managed that and how even we get quite different regional solutions. So I think what happens in primary school is indeed crucial. I hope it would be the seedbed for the development of particular interests which people would want to pursue later in secondary school.

But a very big thing happens when people move into secondary school. This is Eric Hobsbawm from *The Age of Extremes*:

The destruction of the past is one of the most eerie phenomena of the late 20th century. Most young men and women at the century's end grow up in a sort of permanent present, lacking any organic relation to the public past of the times they live in.

That seems to me absolutely reinforced by the high intensity stimulus provided everywhere which cannot possibly be matched in the teaching situation. I believe that strategies at secondary school—I defer to all teachers on this—need to be quite dramatically different. That is why I am troubled by an assumption a lot of people here are making, and that is that history is a pot of information to be inserted into people and that there are certain narratives which ought to be told. It seems we have required narratives and events. The problem with narrative is that it is an elongated answer to an unstated question.

I would think it very much more sensible if we started off with the question we are asking, which is: what makes this country so great? Because it is, actually, especially from a difficult start of aridity, guilt, convicts and so on. It is astonishing. I would like it to be linked to European history by considering, for example, the fact that in 1788 you get the establishment of a convict colony at the absolute ends of the world. Meanwhile you have the French revolution thundering on. Yet in 30 times where are civil liberties more secure? Where is egalitarianism, including gender egalitarianism, better established? It seems to me that it is an astonishing history.

I think—this is my final hobby horse—it is very difficult if a teacher has to stand up and teach a class a body of information. If students have, first, the ability to choose a

particular theme which they might choose to pursue through a couple of years very easily—Aboriginal history, what happened to them after contact and those sorts of issues—and if they work primarily from primary documents, history then ceases to be a body of information you are trying to insert into them and becomes the critical discipline it in fact is. The process of historical analysis, as Greg was suggesting in his paper, teaches people how to be good, effective citizens. That, after all, is the aim. Thank you.

Chair: After we have heard from the people on my list, we will do something entirely different. This is a discussion on the general character. This is to encourage people to make their comments as brief as possible.

Prof. BLAINEY: Mr Chairman, I am not sure what to say, but I am determined to say it. I think Greg's was a good paper. We would all do it quite differently, but it is a very good paper. We will all read it differently because he doesn't give every sentence equal weight. I see far more Aboriginal history than Jackie, but I perfectly understand Jackie's criticisms. Every point made since lunchtime I would agree with either in spirit or in fact.

The difficulty we face is that at five o'clock something has to be done. The more I see it, there has to be a steering committee or a committee that does some more work. It would be terrible if an attempt hasn't been made to find compromises which can be found between all these points of view. What is envisaged? I myself think that five or six people should do more work, taking out from Tony's paper the essences so that it can be given as a statement. They would

get more agreement on Greg's paper and add some statements on why we believe history is so important so there doesn't come out of this conference something that is easily shot down. I really think at some time in your session or Bob's session a decision should be made to get this into a bit more shape. There are too many of us here to do it tonight. That is my point.

Chair: That is a very useful comment. The problem must have occurred to us all. It has certainly occurred to me in the chair. That is why we will do something very different in a minute. The other thing that will happen is that I understand the Minister will point out, when she comes to her summing up, how she sees the matter going forward. I don't think she is of the view that everything will be determined by this group. The judgments of this group will feed into the ongoing process which she envisages.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: I want to make a few quick comments. Thank you, Greg, for your paper, which has certainly started us all discussing it. It has many rich ideas in it. I want to make a couple of comments more generally. One is about sequencing. This is an absolutely crucial area. I know we're not talking about primary school. But if we're looking at years nine and 10, we are all assuming that we deal with the 19th century first. There might be a conceptual way in which we could start from closer to the present. I am not sure how to really think about that, but I think we are working on a very conventional chronological assumption. It might need more thought.

The other thing is that, as we have all agreed, Greg's curriculum is too deep and too

broad. We have talked about depth, breadth and selection within that to cover what has been suggested is 100 hours at this level. If we are thinking about making selections of milestones and touchstones or whatever we want to call them, we also have to think about the purpose of teaching that information. Do we want to pour in this body of knowledge? Do we want to think a bit more broadly about some of the points raised in Tony Taylor's paper? What is historical literacy? It is shifting a little from what we are doing into the notion of historical literacy. Not everything can be done. That is the choice we have to think about.

I think there are plural stories and certainly localised stories. In Victoria, the penal system is always fairly dull and remote for students. It is important to know there was a penal system somewhere. I am talking about the university level. It is not a good story for us because it happened somewhere else. I think it would be a terrific if we thought more about those local differences. But one thing we want to impart to students is that there are differences. Students in New South Wales should know perhaps what happened in Western Australia. That is just one point.

Finally, in terms of resources, ideas and concepts, I was very pleased to see, Greg, that you included some literary references to Henry Lawson, for example, in learning about our culture. Our history is one of creativity, ideas and cultural output. While I recognise economics and banks are important, I personally would like students to learn a little about some of the fantastic writing and images. I am arguing a bit more for a cultural history. If we teach them to love history, they may love a short story—this is me

hoping—more than they will love details of a bank. I am just hoping. That is a very personal view.

Ms NEALE: Except when the details of a bank are made into a short story.

Mr CARR: It has never been done.

Prof. TAYLOR: I will be quick. I want to be positive about this because I think Greg's paper has good areas. The first section was splendid. I read it with a feeling of enjoyment and agreement. The other section, the outline for the secondary programme, has serious issues. I approach this as a high school teacher with fairly recent experience. On a nuts and bolts issue, I agree with my colleagues that there is a serious overloading issue in terms of the numbers of events, topics and themes to be studied during years nine and 10 in secondary school. There are other issues, too, about pedagogy. I know people find it exasperating, but it is the one commonly used in these circles. There is a high level of abstraction. Most effective teachers start with the particular and move to the general. Abstraction comes through inference, not through initial statement. That needs to be addressed in whatever comes out of these discussions. I also think that there are serious issues of timing, which are to do with going back to the amount of time allocated. Most teachers teach, as you may have experienced yourselves when you were at school—for some of us, it will be a long time ago—not in steady four-four time. They teach four-four, three-four. The ambitious ones go into five-eight time. Then there is a bit of rubato. There is this rhythm that teachers work to. There are gaps when they don't want to teach a particular issue because it has no appeal to

them. There are emphases where they feel strongly about going down. The managerial term is 'drilling down' these days. It sounds very uncomfortable. That is what we are told we are supposed to be doing.

They are what I envisage to be the problems. I applaud your courage in taking this task on. I knew when this came up, Greg, I got the easier job. For you to be locked in a room with some of Australia's serious historians and do this job was pretty damned brave, actually. Coming back to John's point as the Chair, my view is: where do we go from here? Do we sit for the rest of the afternoon and have an historiographic argument, which is a heap of fun, or do we wander around notions of significance? What do we do? We need to nail it down and work out a subsidiary and secondary process, which has already been suggested by Geoffrey Blainey, as a way of coming up with some milestones which might be consensual.

Mr BARNETT: I agree. I am very impressed by reading this. I hope there would be hundreds of thousands of students who, at the end of their secondary education, would know this material and follow it into tertiary learning. I would have enormous difficulty delivering this in a year nine or 10 classroom with the range of students I have. I am fortunate enough to be in a relatively privileged school, if I might say that. I am not sure how a lot of my colleagues would actually manage this, not just in terms of conceptualisation but in terms of depth. I don't know how.

I also wonder about the differences between narrative sequence, chronology, milestones, touchstones and principles. There are

so many words used. I think we need to work out what the differences are. Are we talking about the same things or different things? More importantly, I think we have to engage the students where they are. After 30 years in schools, I am absolutely amazed with the speed with which new technologies are taking over both at school and out of school and the way in which students interact with each other and the world. I think we need to look very carefully at addressing how children learn. I think that is vitally important. I am not sure what the answers are. People say, 'You should know. You're a teacher.' But I only have my view. There are a lot of views. As I said earlier in another context, choice, selection, passion and enthusiasm to me are much more important than the content.

Prof. GREGORY: It has been a fascinating discussion. I would like to thank Greg for his paper, which has been such a fantastic starting point for us all. I echo other views—how brave he was to put it all up there to get the critique et cetera. I think everyone has been through that. I do not really want to enter into that debate at the moment. What I suppose I want to think about is the special nature of history as a discipline. I guess this is partly because of my background, which is largely as an urban historian. In urban history, we borrow from everywhere. We are very eclectic. I had a background of sociology as an undergraduate before I saw the light and chose history. I keep thinking about the great sociological themes that should be underpinning any understanding of the past. I am not suggesting a course be structured around these things, but I am suggesting they should underpin whatever is developed. I am thinking of things like class,

gender, race and ethnicity. We would have to add the environment and the differences between urban and rural societies. As Geoff and others have pointed out, there is the importance of a sense of regionalism. That has to be incredibly important in Australia because that is one of the remarkable things about this society—the fact that we did federate and we do operate as a nation despite our quite differing backgrounds.

Lastly, I want to report to you on a very interesting exercise we had at the University of Western Australia earlier this year. We were asked by the *West Australian* newspaper to construct a series of articles about Australian history. They wanted us to call it Great Moments in Australian History. We preferred to think of it as turning points in Australian history. I don't propose to go through all of them, but it means I am engaged with this thinking and have written a couple of pieces. The interesting thing was what we eventually determined depended on the number we were given. We had 26 weeks. There was one each week. That was very good at pulling things together and making us make these hard choices. With that, I return to some of those practicalities, like the fact that we have two years here—years nine and 10. In an earlier conversation with Tony, I think he said as a core subject history would get 90 hours a year. That is 180 hours over two years. We have to think, perhaps in the next session, in a very succinct way what we can fit, what we can actually do, bearing in mind all the interesting and innovative ideas we have been talking about over the past hour.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I want to make one point. The New South Wales curriculum,

which is years nine and 10, is basically 20th century with a glance at the 19th century. We decided to include both the 19th and 20th centuries in this session. So the blow-out in topics is because of the fact that an extra 100 years have been put in.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Why are years seven and eight off the table? We talk about primary and years nine and 10. Why are years seven and eight off the table?

Chair: I am not sure they are.

Ms NEALE: They are not on the table yet.

Ms PAUL: They are not off the table.

Chair: To do Australian history or something else?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: I would say to do history. Perhaps I could hear from our former chair. I think you did focus in maybe for political reasons, which are very real and compelling, on nine and 10.

Ms PAUL: I focused on nine and 10 because that is where a lot of debate has been held. It is where the differences in curriculum occur between—when you look at the analyses, including the analysis Tony did—New South Wales and some of the other states. It is also about how the way they offer it, as Bob Carr laid out, is most felt. No, it was just an emphasis. Of course the other years are not off the table.

Ms LAWLESS: In years seven and eight in New South Wales, we look at basically an introduction to history—what is history, how we know, what are the roles of historians and the skills of history. We go into the ancient world and the medieval world. It is much broader. There is international history.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: You need a sense of span and breadth.

Chair: Is it something quick, because I want to move on to something else?

Mr KELLY: I was going to make a few comments on the discussion. I am happy to wait until the next session.

Chair: What the discussion raises, I think, is the issue of whether this group or what follows this group would be committed to producing something like Greg has produced or some variation of it or whether it would be committed to setting out some principles, very broadly stated, which the Commonwealth might endorse and which states and schools could pursue in any way they like. I will start discussion at that level. I have taken up the invitation which came both from Geoff Partington and from Inga. The first thing is to ask a question. Geoff's point was that you don't start with narrative. Narrative might be what you reach. But you start with some question, which is the way of engaging and structuring what you are going to do.

As an exercise—you might want to jot these down as I say them—I put to myself the question: what are the questions that Greg's paper was answering, as it were? This material that Greg has produced would be answers to what sort of questions? I have a list of five. They encompass all that is in the paper. My suggestion would be that we could indicate to those who actually are going to do the teaching that, say, three of these main questions would be what you would have to do. There might be five or seven of them, but you do three. I take up Nick's idea, which is excellent, between skimming and

depth. There is a lot of in-depth stuff done well. You do the Vietnam War, but you don't do World War I to Vietnam. The comparison can be very revealing about Vietnam. There are wars that unite societies and wars that divide societies, for instance.

Here are my questions. How did our convict society change into a free one? What were the relations between settlers and Aborigines? Why did Australia become so prosperous? Within that, of course—I will not go into subquestions—but how was that prosperity distributed? The relations between men and women. Here I am doing something that Greg signalled. I am hoping that ordinary life can be incorporated into some of what Greg called main events and developments. Relations between men and women would start off in convict times with one woman to six men and then there is what happened subsequently. Some of these are public events—the encouragement of marriage, Caroline Chisholm, South Australia and the equal number of sexes, the Gold Rush pushing the imbalance again and then urban life creating a balance at the end of the 19th century but the bush still being male territory. It might be the place where you do Lawson and Paterson. What plans and dreams did people have for Australian society? How did the English, Irish and Scots live together? That is very interesting. There is great interest in the United Kingdom and what sort of creature that was. There are these cousins' wars—the English, Irish and Scots fighting over different times. This is taking up Inga's point. It is amazing that the English, Irish and Scots lived harmoniously here. That is where you would reveal the growth of some sense of Australianness, which Greg put into

the 20th century. I think it is strong in the 1880s and 1890s.

What is the generic thing behind this? The generic thing is that we want students to answer questions which have a span for the whole period. Kate may well be right. Some of these questions would be best pursued by beginning in the 20th century and then going back. But we would want students to be answering questions which would lead them to an understanding of the broad character of Australian society or the social, political and economic character of Australian society. That is the first part of my contribution.

The second—it takes up what Andrew said—is that it there has been a lot of talk about narrative. If we go by problems and questions, we are not in the first place looking at narrative. What we are doing is proceeding through Australian history with different questions in mind at different stages. As you do that, of course, you will be touching what some people have called milestones or touchstones. In a minute, it might be worth Nick listing six—

Mr EWBANK: Off the top of my head?

Chair: For the 20th century. It seems that the Minister and the Government are committed to somehow anchoring this in facts and developments. I take it from around the table that there is not a full endorsement for that approach. On the other hand, I hope that this group would endorse something which would indicate our desire to end the scrappiness, the lack of coherence and the lack of balance which comes from doing one thing in depth and not doing anything else. While you do that, you would be hitting and learning not by rote, because you

do the gold rushes when you do prosperity and when you do men and women. By then you would know they happened in the 1850s after convict times. Then there would be, say for the 19th century, six anchor points you could reasonably expect people to know and that the themes would touch them in various ways. I wonder if that approach is something that the group would be interested in pursuing.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: I think that is a very fruitful way forward. It offers the possibility of pluralism. Going forward with Kate's point, I point out that in New South Wales modern world studies classically begin with the current problem and then go backwards. Where did we go? One way of capturing students' attention would be conflict. There is plenty of that. It will always be there. One question we ask to shape our study of history this way—it relates to a lot of points you made there—is conflict and resolution. There has been conflict and the frontier but a deal of resolution of conflict and rather more than in most places. That is the question to ask.

Mr KELLY: I was going to propose something a little like that. It seems to me that Greg's paper is tremendous. Given it was a thankless task, of course, I think he has done a very good paper. I agree very much with what Jackie said. I guess the question is: what is the spirit of Greg's paper? What are the problems he is trying to address? What are the problems? It seems to me that the problems are pretty serious. My son does year 10 in New South Wales. The students are unhappy. They are unhappy with the course. They see through the course. They don't want the course. I think some of

the problems are that the course is far too fragmented. I think the fragmentation is a fragmentation which loses meaning. There is not sufficient context. There is a strand of postmodernist philosophy which pretends that everything is as good as everything else. Kids know that is bullshit and we need to address that and we need to confront this sort of thing.

One issue here is I think the question of underlying narrative, making the story more meaningful. I think some of the questions posed by John a few minutes ago help to address that. Such questions create a sense of a stream of history, which can be taught in various ways—hopefully imaginative ways. Perhaps the real point here is that it may well be a mistake for us to try and authorise or sanction the very elaborate paper that Greg has produced. Earlier in his paper, at pages four and five, he enunciates three principles. It may well be that it is far more intelligent for us to start looking at some of the underlying principles here. Of course that is not to say we won't have a debate about the principles. I think this may well be a better approach. The principles he talks about are highlighting major events and developments that have taken place within a framework or narrative and recognising that there are multiple narratives. The second principle is that Australian history is set against global history. The third principle is everyday experience. There may well be a couple of other principles that we would like to add to that in terms of reference—which has been made already in the discussion over the past hour—to ideas and this issue of milestones. Or perhaps we could encompass in an overarching principle some of the specific, broad themes and stories raised by John.

It seems to me that we have to be a bit careful about being too prescriptive because we can't agree if we start getting too prescriptive. Therefore, it is sensible to take a step back along the lines of the principal approach of pages four and five, incorporating what John has suggested.

Chair: Any other comments on this issue?

Ms LAWLESS: I will respond quickly for the New South Wales history syllabus. I think it meets some of those principles. I am quite surprised at Paul's comments and hope he has read the syllabus, particularly in relation to the comment on postmodernism and the bullshit. I think it is far wide of the mark.

Mr KELLY: I do not think it is at all. This is widespread. I have had discussions with a number of kids doing year 10. I've gone through the textbook very clearly.

Ms LAWLESS: Textbook or syllabus? It is a different element.

Mr KELLY: I have gone through the textbook. I think the evidence frankly is overwhelming. I think it is an issue which this group can't ignore. I think also there is a question of accountability here. If parents were aware of the true aspects of the history course, they would be more alarmed about it. There is an accountability problem.

Ms LAWLESS: I would like to discuss that with you later. It is amazing.

Chair: We will leave that there.

Dr HENDERSON: I agree with what Paul is saying. You can look at these principles. Broadly I support what Paul is saying.

Dr STANLEY: I thought the questions you identified, John, were really productive. One large chunk of Australian history is how Australians engage with the world. It enables us to look at the cause and consequences of war in Australia.

Chair: I agree. War is a good way in to a whole course of 20th century Australian history.

Dr HENDERSON: It is how people came to the world and how we came from the world. It is how we interact.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I put in a vote for John's anchor points. It seems to me a very nice idea.

Dr STANLEY: We are venting a lot of jargon. I used to call them questions. I have to call them anchor points now?

Dr CLENDINNEN: Milestones.

Chair: Questions or milestones?

Dr CLENDINNEN: We have a chronological sequence, not narrative. Narrative begs a hell of a lot of questions. If we say chronological sequence and certain points, we can make sure that all students have a grip on them. What I liked about your anchor point idea is that it allows there to be a cloud of small topics around it, out of which students can choose and can interact with other students on because they are held in the same territory. They have the same anchor.

Chair: There may be a nomenclature problem here as there was this morning. That is, I was proposing questions that would be pursued throughout the whole period but in different depths at different times. I said there might be half a dozen. This is partly

Nick's list and partly my own. You might say these are the things that in sequence students would know. Either 40,000 or 60,000 years ago, whatever we think best, humans arrived. In 1788, our British convicts settle. In 1829, the British claimed the whole continent. That is a very significant date, and not because I am a Western Australian—I am not. In 1840, transportation to this part of the world stopped. In 1851, there were gold rushes. In 1856-57, self-government and responsible government emerged. In the 1890s—there are no surprises in this—there was the end of the long boom, a bank crash and changes in politics with the Labor Party. In 1901, there was federation. Would it be asking too much that every student, by doing a very open-ended series of inquiries of the sort I outlined, would at the end of it know that?

Ms NEALE: There is a big gap between 40,000 to 60,000 years ago and 1788. Perhaps consider our earlier comments and this information, as I said before, that is accessible. There is a Dutch account in 1606. There were the Macassans for 400 years. There are other dates. It is where we decide to give value. This summit is the time to revisit some of this.

Chair: I don't want a long list.

Ms NEALE: You haven't got an exclusive list either.

Prof. BOLTON: Might this not be the moment to raise the list of 100 significant turning points?

Chair: Yes. It went through my mind. The museum is taking up an idea that began with Michael Kirby, I think. The museum here is identifying 100 defining moments in

Australian history. Both Geoff's have been involved in it. It is reaching—

Mr EWBANK: A hundred points and 180 hours maximum is a hell of a gap.

Chair: It is another way of proceeding. I do not know if Margo has seen the list. In the list of 100, there are about four or five events, more probably, that predate 1788. The invention of the boomerang is one. There is also the rising of the seas, the coming of the dingo and the Dutch exploration, all of which have claims. I was doing a minimalist list.

Mr CARR: One way of editing what goes on in a minimalist list is to ask: did these events have consequences? When the Dutch royal family came here in 1988 for the bicentennial celebrations, I, as Opposition Leader, had to compose a speech of welcome. It was nice to talk about the Dutch explorers, but you couldn't say it led to anything. The point is it led to nothing. It was a contact. It is worth noting, but it led precisely nowhere. You had to pick up the story with the Dutch post-war immigration. Then it got closer to having some context. It is the same with the Macassans.

Ms NEALE: I disagree on the Macassans. Within Aboriginal society it had an enormous impact on architecture, language, culture—400 years of contact—trade, diplomacy and negotiation. So that point I would dispute.

Chair: Post-1788, people would have lots of things they would suggest. The question is whether you want a short list or long list or no list.

Ms PAUL: The list is fine. The list is right.

Prof. BOLTON: I have the list of 100 defining moments. Would it be helpful to have it photocopied and circulated to the group?

Chair: I am not sure which version you have.

Prof. BOLTON: It finishes up with the free trade agreement with the US.

Chair: This is the latest version, but it is not official yet. If it were circulated, it should stay in the room, I think, because it has yet to go to the Minister and the council of the museum and so on.

Dr STANLEY: What is its purpose?

Chair: It's an alternative way of thinking about it.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: We have to come up with something manageable.

Prof. BOLTON: We need to give a basis for a reduction to a manageable course.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: There is a difference between a list of 100, 20 or whatever number of—whatever we are calling them—anchor points and a series of questions. I would not like to lose the questions in this. The questions are the—

Chair: We have both.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: We have a matrix, latitude and longitude.

Dr STANLEY: What is an anchor point? What are you calling anchor points?

Chair: My terminology is this. Perhaps we will all follow this. There is a question and there is a short list of dates and major events. Inevitably, you will come in contact with them if you pursue any question.

Dr STANLEY: Where are the anchor points?

Chair: There are dates and there are questions. It is finished.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: I want to make sure the questions don't die.

Prof. GREGORY: I want to go through some of the points that we ended up in our discussions of all this. They were published as articles. They certainly came from a lot of questioning. I can't remember exactly what the questions were now. I certainly remember the outcomes we got.

Chair: On what?

Prof. GREGORY: It was a series of articles for the *West Australian* on turning points in Australian history. I will read out the 19th century ones because they also encompass the issues of regionalism. While I was interested in your dates and anchor points et cetera, I was a bit worried that the 1890s was the end of the long boom and the Depression. It wasn't in Western Australia. It was happy times and golden typhoid really. There are sort of regional differences. We kind of tried to encompass them. I will go through them quickly. There is 1788, with apologies. We called that 'Sails of exile, sails of doom' to try to encompass what it meant for Indigenous people as well as convicts sent here. Then the second one was 'Bond or free: the Rise and Fall of Convictism'. It encompassed a whole range of convictism both on the east and west coasts. The third one was about the gold rushes in the east. The fourth one was about the campaign for the eight-hour day. That led us into a whole lot of labour issues which were so important in the late 19th century in Australia.

The fifth one took an environmental view. It was called 'Unleashing the Rabbit'. So it

was the impact of all those things that were brought in. The sixth one was about environmental limits again. It was about wheat and about Goyder's line and everything that flowed from that. The next one was 'Education for all' on the notion of free secular and compulsory education. The 10th one—this was in a sense a prelude to Federation—was the invention of telegraphy and what it meant for the continent as a whole and our relationship with the outside world. The 11th one was on the achievement of the vote for women in South Australia and the flow-on from all that. The second last one was the 1890s. It is the 1890s as a crucial decade where you have the formation of political parties and the beginning of a cultural Australianism with Lawson and painters in the Heidelberg school et cetera. You also have these poles of depression and gold, so it is a really interesting period. The last one for the 19th century was Federation. I kind of mention it.

Chair: Is that a list you would expect all students to know, even if they were not doing the rabbit in any other situation? They would have to do the rabbit?

Prof. GREGORY: It is not just about the rabbit but the acclimatisation of societies and the impact of exotic flora and fauna on this country, which has been dramatic, you would have to agree. Then you move into issues of aridity and those sorts of points.

Chair: If you allow choice in what students do and if they happen not to do the environment, because we do not want to mandate the environment, you cannot put rabbits or anything else on the list of things people must know. It must be a short list.

Greg talked about periodisation. It is the standard periodisation of Australian history which has stood the test of time. That is what I am after.

Dr PARTINGTON: Obviously, John, I support your notion of the question based approach. The narrative emerges from the answers and the diverse ones in some cases. From my point of view, you have reached the next stage of trying to define what the questions should be. I want to make one caveat, particularly, about the point about wars. It is staggering from crisis to crisis. Students do not get a notion of normality. It is like thinking that the six o'clock news will give you an adequate representation of the life that most Australians have led during the day, that most of them have had their house burnt down, have been victims of an aircraft crash or some other terrible tragedy or that their granny has been raped.

As far as that, if you take 19th century Australia, the basis for its expanding prosperity was, despite frontier conflicts and Aboriginal resistance, the number of people who were involved in warfare on the soil of the continent was small. Let's put it this way. The number of people killed in any one week in the wars between Paraguay and its neighbours in the middle of the 19th century was greater than the total number of Australians killed in any wars in the 19th century. The danger is that when we leap, in a sense, from one crisis to another, quite a lot of what we might regard as normality is lost. One of the great strengths of what Geoffrey Blainey has done is to show what life has been like as it was being led in the country or city at various points. We do not want to lose that when we are dealing with the Australian past.

Chair: It is a reclusive history. Perhaps public events and developments, which is a mirror of other histories, isn't the way you capture Australia. Even at this level, perhaps you capture it more by biography and story and the feel of life.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Another way to go is to have key biographies which could correspond to milestones.

Chair: We are getting close to the end of time. We will hear what the department thinks about what we are doing. My other thought is that this discussion can go on after afternoon tea. It is a broad principle which applies equally, as people said at the beginning. It is artificial to divide the 20th century and the 19th. I do not think we want after tea to hear again that people think there is too much in Greg's paper for the 20th century. We have to think of what useful advice we can give on how we can encompass a good deal of what Greg sketched out, allowing for more choice and taking one step at least to actualising it as a document we might begin to make a curriculum from. Do you think it is reasonable?

Mr CARR: We will have to get people to concentrate on the platform we use from here on. Otherwise we will leave someone—the department, I guess—to go through the transcript of this discussion. None of us would live happily with whatever summary they produced. Should there be an emphasis on ideas for taking this mass of material and refining it? We won't be able to present the Minister at the end of this afternoon with lucid recommendations for the bare bones of this curriculum, will we?

Chair: We might begin to use the language of chronology rather than narrative. We may move to suggestions that students should explore rather than know all this.

Prof. BLAINEY: I want to foreshadow a motion. I do not want any further part of it, having foreshadowed it. I will read it out. I suggest one or two others should decide what to do with it. I think we should make a strong affirmation of the importance of Australian history in simple terms. This is the first draft. You may not have a bar of it:

This summit affirms the importance of the study of Australian history in schools. Australia's human history is longer than that of most European countries and is in many ways unique.

That is beyond dispute because of the ice age. It continues:

Australia is one of the world's oldest continuous democracies and, moreover, it compels people to vote. A knowledge of our history is therefore vital. Nearly all of the crucial public and parliamentary debates embody an appeal to history. We are convinced that a nationwide revival in the teaching of Australian history is urgently needed and that steps be taken to enlist all states or all relevant authorities in the task.

It is only a draft but I believe we must put one forward.

Chair: That is very helpful. I propose that after we have heard from Lisa, we break for tea. That will give us the opportunity to discuss informally what Geoff has proposed. We will be happy to make it the subject of discussion afterwards. Then this discussion could more or less continue. It might reach a point not only to affirm in broad terms what Geoff has said but to do something, as I said previously, about signalling an approach to history which we think would be useful for us to define.

Ms PAUL: I agree with the point you made a minute ago, Bob. It depends on how Bob wants to handle the next session. It might be useful if there is any possibility of affirming or expanding on the three principles in terms of global and environmental events and everyday experience that Greg used, whether people want to or not. At least it would be helpful for people to be clear about it. It would be probably helpful to have a sense of the questions. The list was useful, albeit incomplete; it did not deal with Indigenous history pre 1788 and so on. Nevertheless, if there is a series of questions people find useful or at least find potentially useful or a useful approach, that is good.

With the chronology, I think people were getting close. A medium list is fine. It doesn't have to be a short or long list. The Minister isn't asking for, as she said on a number of occasions, an official history, but a sense of some of the keys is good. I pick up on Geoffrey coming up with a form of words for people to potentially sign up to. That is a great idea. That is fantastic. The Minister would welcome such an affirming statement and support for Australian history. If participants want to think of future involvement or processes, that is fine too. Perhaps we can discuss that a bit over afternoon tea. That is me wanting to offer some indications of what areas might be of interest purely arising from the discussion we have just had.

Chair: Thank you. We have a sort of agenda for afternoon tea and afterwards. As Lisa reminded me, Paul's suggestion was a useful one. Maybe in some form we can agree on Greg's three principles. There is Geoff's general statement. There is my suggestion that we, taking up what Lisa just

said, move to a chronology and key events and dates. We may not agree what they are. Maybe a short list of these would be a very useful thing for students to hang whatever inquiry they are undertaking upon. It may be that we indicate that we are not committing ourselves to a list of topics necessarily but to a list of what would be revealing questions.

Ms PAUL: Topics are fine too.

Mr CARR: It is not a bad idea for people to think about the statement to clarify the debate. That is a good concept. I call somebody to call a move a motion on Greg's three principles and Geoff's motion. Maybe you, as the advocate of the chronology approach of key events and dates, or Inga would think of a motion commending us to those principles. That is the only way we will clarify things in a group of this size, in my view.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: A chronology in conjunction with questions.

Chair: Thank you very much. We will return a little after three o'clock.

Short suspension

SESSION 3

Chair (Mr CARR): Officers of the department advise me that they are doing what they do best, which is preparing a draft communiqué. That will give us a piece of paper with a bold attempt at a summary for us to pick over and debate. Perhaps that rather than a succession of resolutions is the way to proceed. I understand that the communiqué will incorporate your words, Geoffrey, and the three principles Greg underlined. That understanding is correct?

Ms PAUL: Absolutely.

Chair: If that is satisfactory, we will proceed with absorbing the comments from the participants as we move down this agenda. We will begin with a federated Australia on this list, having completed our examination of some of the other things. I invite people to think about the editing process here. The contributions will be about what we can safely leave out, what we edit out, to create space for those things we deem essential. That will be a really valuable contribution. What can we focus on now, for example, in the New South Wales course and other courses that is really redundant that can be set aside for other things? On a federated Australia, are we right to focus on the political events and to insist that Australian students know the names of their early Prime Ministers? Have we got that wrong? Where do we start? Around the table, who wants to begin?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: I wonder if we can go a little further. A fruitful approach that emerged towards the end of the last session was we were suggesting you could marry together a list of key questions with key chronological events. Out of that, you could develop a matrix, which is a guide but not a highly prescriptive guide. John Hirst said he has more questions on the 20th century. I liked his ones on the 19th. I invite him to bring them forward if he has them in his back pocket.

Dr HIRST: I had three. They are: who is an Australian? If you ask that question from 1900 to the present, you encompass a lot of Australian history. How far should government support and protect its people, which does what Greg Melleuish wanted us to do in part; that is, to show that there has been a

real debate about that. We are more conscious now in this world of those free traders who lost out in 1903 or whenever they finished. So the free trade protection issue, which is very hard to do, would be encompassed by such a question. Should government protect jobs or should we buy T-shirts cheaply from China? That is how the question could be formulated for modern times. You can also go from old age pensions to full employment and unemployment benefits to debates now about how long governments should allow people to stay on welfare. That question encompasses quite a lot.

How should a small western nation on the edge of Asia defend itself? That takes you into whether you do it by yourself, which some people have argued for and still argue for, or do you have a great power alliance? If you do that, you get involved in the great power zone wars, which was realised very early on in Australian history as a problem. There was a push in the 1860s and '70s for a neutral position regarding Great Britain's wars. Do you engage with Asia, which is the other way? You stop thinking of it as a place of threat and so engage in and mesh with it. There will not be an Asian threat. So that encompasses quite a lot.

Who are Australians? How far should governments support and protect the people? It has a citizenship element to it. These are questions which are debated now and which citizens will make judgments about—defence, and the government's role in the economy and the composition of the population. It takes up Kate's point that we do well by starting with the present and looking at how these questions have been argued and resolved through the past.

Dr HENDERSON: Another question is protecting people.

Dr HIRST: That is another one. It used to be a closed question but it is now an open question.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: The other side of the coin, going back to what is emerging out of the last session, is some sort of chronological framework to mesh with that.

Prof. BOLTON: We want that. The one question which Greg raised a lot which I haven't heard in either the 19th or 20th century context is the religious faith of Australians, either non-Indigenous or Indigenous. We have had a sea change in belief systems over the last 30 or 40 years. Forty years ago, over 90 per cent of us would have described ourselves as some sort of Christian. That is certainly not the case now. Does it matter? Is it important? Can it be brought out to a level we can talk about?

Mr EWBANK: The question of religion is very tricky. Even students who are notionally Christian or come from a different religious tradition have, generally speaking, a very skimpy knowledge of religion. That is a problem. I teach a unit, for example, which has Christ as a central historical figure. I have to retell the Bible story because there is total lack of background and knowledge about Christ as a figure. I will make a couple of comments on what has been said so far or what hasn't been said so far. I liked John's questions, but maybe there will be other questions that emerge after today when people leave here and think about this. We should make sure we capture them. A second point is that Greg has pointed out that he was briefed to 1990. We are talking about the

20th century. Shouldn't we make the 20th century complete and do the last 10 years?

Dr PARTINGTON: I have one worry about those questions, and it is the use of 'should'. I would much prefer if we were asked what Australians thought about proposals to protect agricultural industry or what the views were about government support for the sick and the elderly et cetera. What did Australians think about intervening in extra territory affairs, whether it was a little later as far as Hitler in Germany was concerned? Was it completely irrelevant to Australia's interests? You see my point? The 'should' is there. It does imply some immediate judgmental view. One would want the judgment to come well after in the sense of the information about the historical points.

Chair: Do you agree?

Dr HIRST: Yes. I framed it that way because I had the sense that this is an ongoing issue that people have now decided. I am perfectly happy—

Mr EWBANK: I am more comfortable with the large questions being framed as 'should' because they lead to an open-ended judgment based on historical evidence.

Dr CLENDINNEN: That would mean you wouldn't appreciate the changing circumstances. One would get quite different answers to that question depending on which decade you asked about.

Mr EWBANK: That is important too.

Dr CLENDINNEN: You need to get that across.

Ms NEALE: There was a question in relation to religion. Was that a question to be added to the list? It finished. It didn't go anywhere?

Prof. BOLTON: On that one, it's been a very important shaping influence. I don't speak as someone who says we have to be converting kids or anything like that. It is a bit hard to judge the conduct of people who lived before 1970 without realising that for many of them churches were of importance. I take Nick's point that it might be too contentious and it might have to stay in the too-hard basket. But I don't think we should ignore it.

Ms NEALE: Belief systems. You don't have to call them religion.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: How you frame your life.

Ms NEALE: The effect of it on the life of Australians in institutions.

Mr EWBANK: What Australians believed and how it affects them.

Dr HENDERSON: I agree with Geoffrey. It goes beyond belief. If you look at the education, hospital and charity systems, so many religious faiths were involved in all of them through most of the 20th century. Some still are. There is a social side to this theological position.

Dr STANLEY: It goes beyond religious or ethical dimensions to the political. Politics is a belief. It could be encompassed under that.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It has been said we could add to the list of questions. We invite people to choose a certain number of questions and focus the curriculum. There is no problem in having a number of questions that in some cases people may not decide is appropriate for their circumstances.

Chair: The religious issue becomes interesting in 1917. How would you engage the attention of students with the fact that X percentage of the population in 1900 went to such churches and X per cent went to other churches and they believed the following? It is a very dull subject until you get to 1917, when two parts of Australia spectacularly diverged over the issue of conscription for overseas service. A Catholic archbishop was about to lead the flock against conscription. Australians broadly of Presbyterian and Anglican background took a different viewpoint. At that point, the different belief systems become lively and Australians get engaged. Until that point it is a boring story. You will not engage youngsters with the story of the churches before that time.

Prof. STANNAGE: You are wrong about that. It is a wider issue. We are aware that the teaching of religion was taken out of the curriculum for 100 years in Australian history. That is in the state schools. As they grew in importance through the 20th century to the late 20th century, when their influence began to decline again, that whole question of faith was suppressed, basically, in the state education system. Several generations of students got their religious education via Sunday school and a whole range of things outside the education system. What I am saying is that it is a tough call. It is a major national decision to reinject, it seems to me, religion back into the state schools in a non-controversial, open, inclusive sort of way. It is a challenge.

Chair: It is about history, not about injecting religion back into the curriculum.

Mr EWBANK: Does it mean we don't do it?

Prof. STANNAGE: It is a big issue. I am intrigued by the museum's 100 defining moments. One is the federal government's decision to start financing private schools, church schools, in 1975. It was one of the most significant decisions taken in the 20th century. The consequences of it now for state education et cetera historically are massive. It foreshadowed a whole lot of other interventions in the 1980s and 1990s. I was interested in the question of protection. John, you mention the protection of the people in some sort of way. But it really is about a movement in the 20th century from governmental capitalism to private enterprise capitalism being very dominant. In 1910, according to Merrett, Fleming and Ville and their analysis of this, the biggest companies in Australia were the public utilities of the government's, such as the post office et cetera. Today if you look at the 100 top companies, there are no government utilities of any consequence apart from Telstra. That is the big move that you are talking about. The 20th century has witnessed this massive shift. Should students know about that? I suspect they should.

Dr HIRST: I was trying to actualise that issue by saying governments protecting people. One way to protect them is to run them by governments, trams and water, and not let private companies do it. I think it would be encompassed by it. I was trying to get it into a question that could be understandable to year nine or 10 students. Tony can tell me whether it is understandable.

Prof. BLAINEY: I will follow up an earlier point. It is very difficult to know how you bring in religion. If you don't, so much of the society cannot be explained. Many of the great statements and parliamentary de-

bates, be it about Judas, 13 pieces of silver or touching the hem of government, mean nothing now. Yet to that generation they were made more powerful because they were metaphors chosen from the Bible. Somehow you have to bring back this knowledge irrespective of the vehicle you use.

Dr PARTINGTON: I am amazed you should say before 1917 there were no major public issues in which religion took the main part. I approach this as a forum of professional educators. I thought the greatest rift within mainstream society in Australia was that between the Roman Catholics in particular and some others who pay taxes but whose schools weren't provided with any public support and, of course, most of the Protestants, who were quite happy with the sort of instruction that the state schools provided. The question of why in the 1860s state aid—

Chair: We started this in 1900.

Dr PARTINGTON: This ties in. Why afterwards was state aid reintroduced? In particular, was this because there was an increase in religious belief in the Australian population? It is one of those ironical things. State aid was given to the Catholic and other independent schools at a time when church attendance was falling and the number of people attending mass on Sunday, even on Easter Sunday, was dropping very, very sharply. There are interesting questions there of the relationship between religion and culture. Indeed, you can ask: why is it that in the last 25 or 30 years the percentage of Australian students in government schools has gone down every single year since 1967 and is at an historically low level at the moment?

That is a question that a lot of children are interested in. Why are there more kids in this school rather than the school our parents were in?

Prof. GREGORY: Apart from education, there is the issue of the role of religion in Indigenous society. I think particularly of missions, for example, and their vital role in taking out a people.

Ms NEALE: While on Indigenous issues, Australian culture today draws heavily on Indigenous religious and cultural beliefs. Take, for example, the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games and Bangarra.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Dreamtime.

Ms NEALE: I am not talking about the Dreamtime. Whether or not you want to give it a time, that is a manufactured construction that was imposed. It is about the interface. Non-Indigenous people are most comfortable with it. There are also other events like festivals. There is the issue of the relationship to land. That is based on Indigenous spiritual and religious points. There are clashing points all over. There are points of triumph and the celebration of cultural survival. It is all based on spiritual and religious beliefs.

Dr STANLEY: That is all to the good. I certainly endorse treating belief as an historical phenomena and studying and learning about it. I will focus on what we have been asked to venture a view on. We have been asked to venture a view on what students should know. I want to ask what that means, not in a philosophical and semantic way. There are different types of knowing. Jenny talked about the rabbit plague and

John asked what students would learn. I mention the contribution I made before the summit began. The Memorial talks about recognition knowledge. You may not be able to describe the Siege of Tobruk but you know it happened in North Africa in 1941 and that eventually the Axis forces were defeated. You can recognise and nod your head when someone mentions it but you couldn't lecture about it. A lot of the topics we have touched upon fit into that category. We may not be able to describe the drastic changes to Australia's culture in the 19th century but we all know it did change and students ought it to know that it changed drastically and that rabbits are a symbol of it. That might be all they know about that subject unless they go into more detail.

A teacher with a special interest in that takes them into the rabbit plague and they become experts on the rabbit plague. But not all students will. We need to, in discussing the matrix that John has identified, be clear about whether they will touch upon that point in the matrix in a detailed way and will explore it and truly understand it or whether they will merely become familiar with it. At the end, however many hours it takes, the course will give them a greater command of the nation's history than they presently enjoy. We know it from Tony's work. We need to know what we are asking them to know and the nature of the understanding.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: We should select the range of questions.

Dr STANLEY: I agree.

Prof. TAYLOR: John asked me a two-pronged question. As far as the teaching of religion is concerned as an issue rather than

as a matter of faith, it is already in most jurisdictional syllabuses as systems of belief of various forms. It ought to be included. It won't make a difference one way or the other. You may find large numbers of teachers wouldn't necessarily be attracted to teaching it because they might have feelings about it.

On the issue of large corporations and utilities in Australia, that could be taught within another of the questions—how did the government protect the citizens of Australia. I can't remember the exact question. It would have a particular resonance in certain parts of Australia—for example, the La Trobe Valley with the closing down of the SEC. Those kinds of topics can be taught. I return to the religious issue. You could start in a school toilet block in Goulburn and go right through that whole issue of state aid for non-government schools. You could do that reasonably well with middle secondary schools.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I am concerned at one of the statements you made there, which is that we can't recommend things because teachers, in their own ideological preferences, may not like the topic. That seems to me a very worrying statement.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It wasn't in the context that there would be a range of questions and the teacher would have the option of choosing questions most suitable related to their interests and style of students.

Prof. MELLEUSH: Why should teachers evade things simply because they don't like the question? I find that very worrying. There are things the students may need to know and discuss but because the teachers have specific ideological or other emotional

preferences, students don't get to discuss them.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: Aren't we establishing here a series of big questions that can be focused on? It is the latitude and then some of the knowledge which might be the chronology.

Prof. MELLEUISH: They may not like some of the big questions either. The whole idea is 'I'm having a hissy fit today. I don't like it. Bad luck. The students won't get to learn it.'

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: That is dismissing teachers a little. Aren't we saying we are trying to give them choice with the big questions? Wasn't the agreement that there would be better teaching and better learning outcomes with some choice, whether it is three questions or 10 questions? They have to do some, presumably.

Prof. MELLEUISH: Pick the ones they like.

Mr EWBANK: If this group is defining the questions and we are all happy about the 10 questions and we can live with the fact that we have choice within the 10 questions, then the premises we set are effectively being covered. We can't fit everything into 180 hours. Another thing which is being lost in the current discussion is how important knowledge is and how important skills are. There has been a lot of noise that one of the reasons we are here is to make our students better citizens. They are not necessarily better citizens because they know that state aid came back in 1975. They are better citizens because they can deal with the bullshit factor that is evident in all historical sources.

Mr KELLY: There are a couple of things. The economic question—how far governments should support and protect their people—maybe should be broadened a little to encompass how far they should go to deliver prosperity. Essentially we are looking at a range of things under that umbrella. It is not just protection, free trade, enterprise and so on. It is essentially a transition from a protected to a market based economy, so maybe a slightly broader formulation would help.

On religion, I am puzzled. I would have thought it fundamental to Australian history. I can't understand why we are suggesting this would not be one of the questions. In terms of contemporary history, it is an issue which is on the rise. The international debate about religion is taking place now. It is more in our face and it will continue to be in our face over the next few decades. Any suggestion that this is yesterday's issue is, of course, completely wrong. It is today's issue. It will be tomorrow's issue in our society as well as other societies. I would have thought, looking at the historical debate about religion, which has been very important in this country, it is certainly worthwhile in its own right. But it is also of immediate relevance.

Ms LAWLESS: When we are looking at our questions, it is not clear. Are we going to be suggesting content under each question? Are we leaving those questions as just very broad general questions for each state basically to address as they see fit? What is the overall structure here? I think that unpacks a lot of those questions that we are now discussing. The interpretation of some of these questions is very variable. Are we looking at content underneath each of these?

Dr HIRST: When I framed them, I thought not. I thought the prescription would be that you ask questions of this generality and you pursue them over a wide range of years.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: The chronology suggests a certain content as well.

Chair: What precedes the list of questions? What guide do we give to the people writing the communiqué?

Dr HIRST: As it stands now, this is the form of words:

Students will be led to an understanding—

I don't know whether that will be the right verb—

of the political, economic and social character of Australia by pursuing over a wide range of years questions such as—

And then follows the list. It continues:

From such a list, states or teachers would make a choice.

Mr EWBANK: Curriculum authorities.

Dr HIRST: And:

These inquiries will be anchored to a chronology of key events and developments.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: That is what we have to insert before the end of today.

Dr HIRST: I took the discussion that we had before afternoon tea as indicating we wouldn't come to an agreement.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: On the chronology?

Dr HIRST: On what might be in the short chronology. But if you say otherwise.

Ms PAUL: We are pretty close.

Dr HIRST: We might pursue a short list.

Chair: We are clear on the way to get to the questions—that sentence John has read introducing the list of questions and a sentence about chronology. The note-takers have that framework clear. You are comfortable with that going into the draft?

Mr EWBANK: I have a quibble about the sentence. The 'led to' has the learner as being passive in the process. 'Construct' is the obvious way to replace 'led to'. The verb is that students will be led to.

Chair: What verb do you want?

Mr EWBANK: I would suggest 'construct'.

Dr HIRST: Or 'come to an understanding'.

Mr EWBANK: That is probably better again.

Dr STANLEY: The social, political and economic dimensions need to be broadened. I would like to see social and cultural. Clearly there is the whole ambit of Australia's experience over the last 200 years, and that would encompass other aspects.

Dr HIRST: Cultural should replace social?

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: No. Cultural and social.

Prof. GREGORY: I would like to see environmental as well.

Chair: Is there an alternative to running off this list? What bores a lot of students about history is when they hear people rattle off 'social, political and economic'. It is old-fashioned classroom history from the 1950s.

Ms NEALE: It is the teachers' mission statement.

Dr HIRST: I can drop all the adjectives and say ‘students will come to an understanding of the character of Australian society by pursuing over a wide range of years questions such as’ et cetera.

Mr EWBANK: A better understanding?

Dr HIRST: Yes.

Dr PARTINGTON: There should be a question—not a ‘should’ question but a ‘did’ question—as far as immigration is concerned. That links very much with the religion question. It would be a question such as: in which circumstances did different immigrant groups wish to come to Australia?

Chair: That is covered in John’s first one: who is an Australian? What is wrong with the simplicity of that?

Dr PARTINGTON: There has to be some specificity about the things regarded as significant. To what extent does it change the balance of religious belief? Obviously this is important as far as Islam is concerned, intermarriage and jobs et cetera. We want the guidelines to be as concrete as possible.

Ms NEALE: In addition to the questions?

Dr PARTINGTON: What difference did immigration make in Australia?

Chair: There is a simplicity about the question of who is an Australian.

Mr EWBANK: It opens it up beautifully. It is a question with a lot of virtues.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: We might go further on environmental. There is the question of attitudes to the land or Australia and the land. There is a lot you could put up—the Snowy Mountains, the big irrigation schemes, the Ord River and now the

desalination problems with the Murray and the Murrumbidgee, attitudes to protecting the land and moulding the land. It would be the land and something.

Prof. GREGORY: How Australians responded to the nature of the land in which they live.

Dr CLENDINNEN: Australia’s use of the land.

Dr HIRST: What sort of land is it and how is it being used and abused?

Prof. STANNAGE: A time ago I was playing around with a structure for a book on Australian history. We developed titles that went easily across time. Some included ‘Financing Australia’—forgive me for dropping that in again—‘Developing Australia’, ‘Injuring Australia’, ‘Loving Australia’, ‘Saving Australia’ and ‘Interpreting Australia’; I hadn’t forgotten about the artists or the writers. Within those titles of financing, developing, injuring—which takes in the wars, presumably—is inside and outside Australia, domestic violence and a whole range of things. Loving Australia—the people who sang of all things bright and beautiful in Australian history were not necessarily crass. We need to capture that as well. Saving Australia? Well, three great challenges for the planet, as I see them at the moment, are managing the world’s population, managing the planet itself and managing the things that make us human, including religious beliefs. We have been very gifted in this country historically in interpreting and representing all those things.

That is a different way of finding words to describe it. All those things I have said could be put into questions. How was Australia

financed and developed? What is meant by 'injuring Australia'? What is meant by 'loving Australia' et cetera? A lot can be done on that in an ideologically neutral way because they are fairly central to the Australian experience. Governing Australia is probably left out.

Ms NEALE: Except I must say I like the land. Australia is extraordinarily broad because it means more than the land and the country. Maybe that is what you want. That is fine.

Prof. STANNAGE: It is loving one another. Come back to the Icehouse song. This is why we are all here today, I am sure. 'Great Southern Land, you walk alone.' No-one will love us like we can love one another. Forgive me for using that word again. It is fairly important that we somehow or other do that.

Dr HENDERSON: These topics are fine for a book, but I am not sure they are suitable for a curriculum.

Dr LOPEZ: I want to bring the discussion back to Gregory's superb paper. I think it hasn't been given its due. I think he did a superb job in dealing with the questions that he was presented with. He provided a kind of an outline that could satisfy many different perspectives and interests. It was focused on a narrative. It brought back an emphasis on the empirical in history. With politeness, I want to suggest that perhaps this questions direction that we have gone into in the last 20 minutes or so isn't necessarily as productive as what we have already got down on paper. There are so many fine minds in this room that I think we would all have wanted to produce something like this and we would

all have a different version. But this is the version being discussed. I really think there is a lot to commend it. I could come up with things from my own historical interests that I would want to add, but I won't because I don't think it will be particularly constructive to the purposes of this summit. Again, I just want to express how impressed I was by Gregory's contribution and my support for it.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I think it is a marvellous paper to have done and I think we have moved on from the proposal in terms of the time it would take. I think the questions are productive, open and interesting. I want to make own little pitch. I want to be sure we have moved well away from the notion of learning history to doing history. We need analysis of some primary material, because you learn from doing history, not by being taught it. It is a critical discipline. Historians need to cultivate minds and they need to be curious about how other people think and act and to know that it is often hard to find out. There is every chance of those things being covered in the project John has in mind. Of course, that doesn't mean minds empty of values. It certainly doesn't mean accepting all values as equally to be respected.

I worked on Aztecs for a decade. It moves you a long way from cultural relativism. It means you have a chance of developing questions which will let you understand why other people are different from you. I think that is an extraordinarily important thing to do. At the end of it, we want to be producing students who will want to go and do history. It isn't about history until year 10. We are hoping it will fire people up to go and do further history. To do that, we have to help

them cultivate minds capable of casting a cool eye on their own, as on others', social arrangements and moral assumptions. That is why I don't like the emphasis on loving. I want something much more withdrawn than that. It is about coming to possess shared values, not being taught them. They are hard to teach. It is about having chosen them. I know that adds another huge dimension to your agenda. But what I like about John's proposal is that there is space for all that. If someone wants to use primary documents, they can.

Prof. MELLEUSH: I think what Inga said is fine if you are training a postgraduate historian who will become a professional historian. But when I look at my daughter and her friends, quite frankly, that is up in cloud-cuckoo land.

Dr CLENDINNEN: My grandson wrote an essay that was so good that I sent it to John Hirst. He was coming out of a state school. They can handle it.

Prof. MELLEUSH: Tony Taylor told us about students of all stages and all different abilities and so on. I think there is a real tendency for even historians at university level to forget that they are not training historians. They are engaged in something else. These people have history as a part of their education. With undergraduate students it is the case. It is even more the case with students in years nine and 10.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I want to train them to be citizens, which are understood to be a general group. That means the capacity to assess information critically.

Prof. MELLEUSH: You can't have critiques of information unless you have some information to critique.

Prof. GREGORY: It is very easy to present students with a set of documents about a particular event which gives different viewpoints and then give them the opportunity to analyse, to look at the evidence and come to a conclusion. I support Inga in that. It is a crucial thing students need to learn, especially in a world where they are bombarded with information from all over the place.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: This is getting down to a level we don't have to get. We can leave it to teachers to determine the best way of pushing ahead. We raise the issues. The pedagogical practice will have to be adapted to particular students in a particular place at a particular time.

Prof. BOLTON: Why not concentrate our minds in the way John Hirst was taking us? That is, first of all, to try to devise three or four multifaceted questions which allow for a certain amount of teacher initiative and diversity. Secondly, if you are able to, John, I wouldn't mind having a series of 20th century staging posts akin to the ones you did in the 19th century.

Dr HIRST: Like the dates.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: That is the central other axis of what we're on.

Prof. GREGORY: Have we finished the questions?

Dr HIRST: I have 10 questions. Students will come to an understanding of the character of Australian society by pursuing over a wide range of years questions such as how convict society changed into a free society. What were the relationships between settlers and Aborigines? Why did Australia become so prosperous? What were the relations be-

tween men and women? What were the plans and dreams for Australian society? How did the English, Irish and Scots live together? Who was an Australian? I hope all this meets your objection. What role did government have in supporting and protecting the livelihoods of the people? 'Livelihoods' I thought was more about economy. What role did government have in supporting and protecting the livelihoods of the people? How did a small western nation on the edge of Asia plan to defend itself? What sort of land is it? How has it been used and abused? I didn't pick up the religious questions.

Dr STANLEY: What do Australians believe? How do Australians engage with the world? That will enable us to look at other ideas.

Dr HIRST: I was envisaging that under protection. Why have foreign policy? It is part of protection.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: There are other engagements from protection, for example, through migration and family stories.

Dr HIRST: What have Australians believed? They believed in free trade and protection sometimes.

Dr STANLEY: It could be helpful.

Dr HIRST: I want to signal not clearly a religious—

Dr STANLEY: No. I want it as broad as possible.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Maybe a question like: how have Australians made sense of their social and moral world, or something like that?

Chair: What did Australians believe? That is a simple choice.

Prof. BOLTON: Then we start with Marcus Clarke: Presbyterianism tempered by the rate of exchange.

Mr BARNETT: It is important to get the questions to be as historical in language as possible. If we go down the religious-political interpretation with some of the questions, we may well be back in the mishmash we started with. People will interpret them with their own prejudices and value bases. They won't necessarily teach history.

Mr EWBANK: An example would be: what has it meant to be Australian?

Ms LAWLESS: What sort of land is it? That is getting into geography.

Dr HIRST: Your point relates to the religion question?

Mr BARNETT: It does. I take the geography one as well. There is lots of historical context there. It is excellent. I wouldn't want to confuse teachers and suggest they broaden from history into society all over again. The questions are broadly interpreted.

Prof. GREGORY: History utilises other disciplines as well.

Ms NEALE: Relationship to land might get over geography. Somehow it could be inserted in that sentence. Use and abuse is pretty good.

Prof. GREGORY: What relationship have Australians had with the land?

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: Isn't the framing statement about history? You could say it is historical and changes over time rather than each question.

Prof. GREGORY: I like that. Changes over time.

Dr STANLEY: It is about a list. Something as specific as how the English, Irish and Scots lived together can be subsumed into the question of what an Australian is.

Ms PAUL: Would you like us to join them up a bit?

Ms NEALE: Definitely. It is very artificial.

Chair: We agree the 19th and 20th century lists should be married?

Ms PAUL: We can try to join them up and come up with a few.

Dr HIRST: I was picking up Greg's point. The English, Irish and Scots are the foundation population of the place. They were enemies elsewhere or they had a history of being enemies. Historians don't talk about it much. They talk about sectarian outbursts.

Ms NEALE: You need to include Aboriginal people in there. It is relating to the Scots, English, Irish and the Aborigines. Most of us have heaps of—

Chair: Not to engage in special pleading, but if you talk about the first decades, you have to acknowledge relations with the Chinese, which became an issue in the 1850s.

Dr HIRST: We have to drop the English, Irish and Scots.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It could be subsumed under the question of what an Australian is.

Dr HENDERSON: It is very difficult for a committee like this to work out 20 questions. You need a smaller group to do it.

Ms PAUL: Funnily enough, we have been trying to do that. Maybe it is crude. This always happens in these forums. You

have to try to write it as it is happening. That means it is never properly representative. If you like—

Chair: As you draft it, edit it.

Ms PAUL: Yes. We can do that. If you would like us to copy this now for everyone to look at it—

Chair: Yes.

Ms PAUL: We may have done some injury to your questions by trying to join them up. If that is so, then we need to know to go back to all the questions. We will try to make them fewer and more joined up. We will go and do that if you are happy, Bob.

Chair: I think everyone is happy with that. They will be worked on now.

Ms HUGGINS: In chronological order?

Chair: Of the questions?

Ms HUGGINS: Of the questions.

Dr HIRST: Broadly.

Ms NEALE: They are not really chronological.

Chair: John, you can work with the record-keepers in addressing that question.

Ms PAUL: Chronological for the issues will be quite difficult. If you would like to look at the list first, John, it would be great.

Chair: If the questions begin with a reference to convict Australia, that will be a thunderclap to distract attention from everything else. We must address that.

Dr PARTINGTON: Questions of what is an Australian or what it means to be an Australian are the very sorts of questions I wouldn't want. At any moment there have been definitions of what an Australian is legally. Once you go beyond that, of course,

it is like saying ‘Who is a member of the people?’ The implication is that some people are non-people. Therefore, it would have that definition. Whatever definition you are giving of what an Australian is, presumably there are some people in Australia who are not Australians. It is a political debate. This is ‘not Australian’. It means you are not behaving in the way I think would be appropriate for Australians to behave. We want more specific questions. Once you go down that path of what an Australian is, you might as well be in the agony aunt column, quite frankly.

Dr CLENDINNEN: The concern is how to define an Australian popularly, if you like, within a particular decade or two-decade-long period. As you are pointing out, the concept of what constitutes being an Australian changes. So it is extremely interesting that Aborigines were excluded for a very long time. They were not Australians for a long time. For a long time the Irish weren’t doing too well in the ‘being Australian’ stakes. So it seems to me the question of what are Australians is different each time you touch down.

Chair: Therefore, it is interesting.

Dr CLENDINNEN: Very interesting.

Ms NEALE: In your book, *Dancing with Strangers*, Inga, the Aboriginal people are Australians and the British are British and not Australians. It opens up all that interpretation and critical analysis we are talking about in the process.

Chair: I think ‘Who is an Australian?’ in its simplicity is a fascinating question. Flinders in South Australia, looking over a sand hill noted in his journal that he saw a

party of Australians around a campfire. If I am not to be contradicted, it was the first use of the term ‘the Australians’. It was a white person noting Aborigines.

Dr CLENDINNEN: It was Matthew Flinders in 1814.

Chair: Noticing a party of Aborigines and saying, ‘We spied a group of Australians.’

Ms NEALE: The history of the legal definition applied to Aboriginal people as being not Australians and then reverting to being Australians is inclusive.

Dr PARTINGTON: We need a different question. We need the question: what has it meant in different times and places in Australia?

Chair: The question says that.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: That is why we have to marry the whole thing to these chronological milestones. I see that as our next task.

Prof. BOLTON: We should do this. I am unhappy to see anybody trying to do fine-tuning and drafting. We have a fairly high degree of consensus about the model. I think we need to try to give a little attention to the stepping stones. I put in a plea for my hobby horse of allowing for some provincial variety in the thing. Aside from that, let us get our 20th century in some order. I am with those who say the 20th century ended at December 2000 and not a day before. Then let’s take it from there.

Chair: How possible will it be to produce an agreed list of 20th century milestones in the time left to us now?

Ms NEALE: If it is a short list or a medium list.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: On the 19th century one we came close.

Chair: Who wants to start?

Mr EWBANK: 1901.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: 1914, 1915.

Prof. BOLTON: Let us take it as 1901, with Federation. With all the reforms and that of the first decade, really 1914 is the next one and 1915, if you want to tell us that was Gallipoli. Certainly the First World War is a defining moment. 1929 was the Depression. This is not exclusive. 1929 we agree on. 1942 is next. Somebody picked up on the state aid thing. Should it be 1975, or Menzies first breaching the laws in about 1963 or 1964?

Chair: It was Menzies in 1963.

Prof. BOLTON: That is one.

Ms LAWLESS: Do we want specific dates?

Prof. BOLTON: 1947, when Calwell brings in the immigration policy. That is certainly a different one. I guess the Dismissal in 1975. Although the longer it is—

Chair: Australia in 1967.

Ms NEALE: The vote.

Chair: The end of White Australia in 1966.

Dr HENDERSON: A statement by Holt in the House of Representatives in 1966.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: And then 1967 the referendum.

Mr EWBANK: When was the equal pay case?

Dr HENDERSON: There were three cases in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Ms NEALE: This is a minimum knowledge that students should have in relation to that.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: All these questions are given content and chronological sweep via these. The two have to go together.

Dr CLENDINNEN: It is a basic map.

Ms NEALE: 1938. That is the Day of Mourning. Using Bob's definition of what matters, it was an event that has had ongoing effects through to NAIDOC Week.

Chair: 1938 is extremely important because of what was the officially authorised grand, official celebration of Australia. A party of Aborigines stood there with placards saying 'You edited us out. We are not in the procession.' It was a very significant moment in Australia's history.

Prof. GREGORY: Are we ignoring the '60s? We talked about the Aboriginal referendum, but the '60s was a defining epoch for many of us.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: It is true but can we get a single milestone.

Chair: I think the '60s are overrated.

Mr KELLY: This is important and it is no doubt interesting. What we really need to do is to authorise what I think is envisaged; that is, a form of words. That is the main thing we have to try and do before we all finish.

Chair: The form of words is being worked on. It is being worked on now for submission to us.

Dr STANLEY: Does it include the principles that Gregory outlined? We haven't discussed them.

Ms PAUL: Yes, it does.

Dr HENDERSON: I agree with Mark. We have to go back to Gregory's paper.

Prof. STANNAGE: We have moved beyond 1947 or 1948 and Frank Driscoll's version of Australia. The dates given, with a couple of exceptions, need to be added to. We haven't gone very far—in 50 years—in terms of what we are actually going to put forward to the nation's school children. I may be wrong about that. There may be more flexibility behind the questions. I don't know whether Frank Driscoll taught John Howard; he certainly was a history teacher at Canterbury Boys High School at the time. I do not know whether we have moved too far beyond that. It might be a good thing. I am not necessarily saying it is a bad thing. Let's be clear about what we are achieving.

Dr STANLEY: What we are proposing is an inquiry based model that takes a chronological framework as its basis but explores within it. That is different to the textbook approach that was prevalent 50 years ago. I am optimistic.

Mr BOON: The inquiry based approach goes across any level. You are not restricting any one grade or dictating content for a particular grade level in the primary school necessarily.

Dr LOPEZ: I want to again express a dissenting voice. I would like to get back to a discussion of Tony Taylor's paper and Gregory Melleuish's paper. I didn't get an opportunity to praise Tony. He did a superb job. Really, 'An overview for the teaching and learning of Australian history in schools' points out that there's something rotten in the state of Denmark and then Gregory's 'The teaching of Australian history in Australian schools: a normative view' tells us that King

Claudius has to go. I want to remind everyone that Hamlet's flaw was indecisiveness. I am not too happy with this question's direction of the debate. I just want to bring it back to these two polarities, which I thought did an excellent job in setting the territory on which we would explore.

Prof. BOLTON: Looking at the list that the museum got together, two other dates that might have some salience would be the launch of the Holden car in 1948 and currency deregulation in Australia in 1983.

Dr STANLEY: We could all add our own particular interests.

Chair: We will be here until midnight if we do that.

Ms NEALE: We have consensus on what we have so far.

Prof. GREGORY: We need to do something about the second wave of feminism and the opportunities for women to work that only emerged in the '70s. That is important.

Chair: Let's draw our attention to the draft in front of us. That raises the question of whether we need those dates at all.

Ms PAUL: That is the next stage of work, possibly.

Chair: It is unlikely to be completed by even the contribution of minds like these. Let's look at the draft.

Mr EWBANK: Will you go through the text?

Chair: That is what I propose we do.

Mr EWBANK: I agree that Greg's points are great. They are a good guide to content, but there is no mention of skills in here whatsoever.

Mr BOON: That has to be put in.

Chair: That is the first observation. Skills as well as knowledge.

Ms LAWLESS: Maybe a question, too, on what is history, simply put, because that also raises the whole issue of research.

Chair: Didn't we consider earlier that that is something to be addressed in junior secondary school?

Ms NEALE: Someone said it is addressed in the first year of high school.

Ms LAWLESS: It was me.

Dr PARTINGTON: Surely the question is: what should be taught? If we are going to put in something about pedagogy, what should be the skills? We need another document. You can't do that in a couple of sentences. If it can't be done, it is better to leave it out. We have an open-ended question based system. The notion that you can just offer a series of meaningless generalisations and feel-good statements on what sort of pedagogy you want will not help very much as far as our decision as to what should be taught.

Mr EWBANK: My question is not about pedagogy but about what skills we develop in the kids.

Ms NEALE: Not how to teach it.

Ms PAUL: When you have a comment—time will pass and it is important to acknowledge the comments if there is consensus—could you perhaps say where in the document you are thinking about adding something.

Chair: We will have to do that. Let's start with the first paragraph of the first dot point. Does anyone propose an amendment?

Dr HENDERSON: We think the communiqué should acknowledge the two papers. They have been widely praised at the conference. We are concerned about the time they have taken and the implications of them.

Chair: Do you agree?

Dr CLENDINNEN: That is your evaluation of both papers. Is it a majority thing? It is one thing to—

Dr HENDERSON: I mean—

Chair: You are proposing that it acknowledge them?

Ms PAUL: Each of these is a dot. The header is 'History Summit Participants'. The first one is a big dot. The last one would be to acknowledge the contribution of the papers by title name et cetera.

Chair: The opening sentence and the first dot point draw on Geoffrey Blainey's proposed motion. Are there any additions or deletions proposed? The second dot point?

Mr EWBANK: We're on to the third dot point. Is it directly relevant to students?

Dr STANLEY: It is about value.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Is this communiqué the place for it? It is a very generous prize, \$100,000, but the winner-takes-all model is not the way to go. I am not sure. The winner gets a stash. If it could be spread around in different categories, as in the state of New South Wales, I think that might be better use of taxpayers' money.

Dr HENDERSON: The Government regards it as important. They have a Prime Minister's science prize and history prize. It is a symbolic statement.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: The money could be better used if it were put over a number of categories.

Dr CLENDINNEN: It would stimulate the study and writing of Australian history much more effectively than the winner-takes-all model.

Chair: One amendment is an annual Australian history prize.

Prof. GREGORY: A number of suggestions we had this morning related to resources to be put into syllabus development, scholarships or whatever for teachers. They seem to be missing here.

Prof. BOLTON: I want to come back to that at a later stage. We should perhaps get the memorandum through first. I want us to pick up Jenny Gregory's point.

Chair: We will continue to address the wording of the communiqué so it can go off to be redrafted and then returned.

Ms PAUL: On the Prime Minister's prize, I am advised from the Prime Minister's office that the correct wording is something like—it was the Prime Minister's announcement—the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History. That is the title.

Prof. STANNAGE: It must have 'Australian history'. It would seem in some of the states that a whole lot of other histories rather than Australian history are walking away with \$20,000. Its original intent was to foster Australian history.

Chair: Continuing to press on, the next dot point is teachable, do-able and sustainable. We are agreed on that.

Prof. BOLTON: Is this where we brought in skills?

Mr EWBank: I would have thought skills is on the dot point.

Chair: The next dot point is on endorsing the three key principles. Your agreement on those?

Ms NEALE: I would like to add another one to that. Is this the place to do it?

Chair: Yes. What would you add?

Ms NEALE: It would be something like cultural unity and diversity, or unity and diversity—the concept of unity and diversity, or cultural diversity. We are talking about public events and the environment globally and everyday living experience. I would like to maintain this whole thing about diversity. It could be unity and diversity.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: I think that would be good because it is picked up in the questions as well.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Except that the second dot point in a way has already said it. The study of history encompasses multiple perspectives.

Chair: Let's not try to overload every paragraph.

Prof. GREGORY: What about experience and diversity?

Chair: Dot point two is that the summit acknowledges that Australian history is not a single narrative but encompasses multiple perspectives. We can labour every paragraph and load on the cheer words if we want to. We have acknowledged that point there. We don't want to end up with an ungainly document.

Ms NEALE: It was suggested that you could have the everyday experience and diversity of people living in Australia. Diver-

sity has to be in there somewhere as a principle.

Dr HENDERSON: If you are talking about experience, you are talking about diversity because that is what it is. It is a very diverse society.

Chair: It is implicit. We will press on. We will look at the next paragraph. ‘The summit agreed the most useful approach is to be firmly based on a clear chronological sequence of key events spanning Indigenous presence to recent decades.’

Dr HIRST: This reverses the order of my formulation. What we are coming to here, Bob, is the attempt to collapse the questions that follow. Some of these I am happy with. My own feeling is that a longer list of sharper, more concrete questions is better than rolling in as the language becomes more abstract. We now have before you the 11 questions that still don’t have the belief question. Sorry, they do. The question is whether people want a longer list of questions, or do they want them rolled as we have given in the other draft? Do you want the questions first? After question 11, it should read ‘A choice of such questions would be made. The inquiries would be anchored in the chronology of key events and developments.’ I prefer the chronology to come after the questions.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: You are right. The whole drift of the discussion was the questions come first. Then comes the chronology, given the shape and direction. That paragraph needs redrafting. We are agreeing that open-ended questions incorporate a range of possible approaches and whatever.

Chair: You agree to that being shifted down?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Yes. That comes after. We need a paragraph saying insofar as we have agreed to anything, it is that the curriculum should be shaped by some leading questions which enable a range of points of view or some such. The questions come first.

Mr EWBANK: Before we get to the questions—I harp on about skills—we need to get the skills in there.

Ms PAUL: Where are you?

Mr EWBANK: Somewhere after the last dot point. As another dot point after the last dot point. ‘That the following skills should be developed’ or ‘History curricula should develop the following skills—analysis, synthesis, critical skills, empathy’.

Ms PAUL: Noel, being a history teacher, has tried this one on, and it might work. What about putting at the very end a dot point that says ‘This would lead to the development of a model curriculum for the study of Australian history based on sound historical literacy principles’. Do you want me to go on? ‘Such a curriculum needs to be supported by quality curriculum resources, professional learning for teachers, a national profile and events such as an Australian History Week in schools.’ I do not know if that goes to it.

Mr EWBANK: We still don’t have the skills. I see. Okay.

Ms PAUL: It is a summary.

Ms NEALE: It is in. In order to answer these questions, you need to develop skills to deal with the inquiries.

Chair: Let’s focus on the document in front of us. What other changes do you propose?

Dr HIRST: Do we go with 11 questions or do we try to collapse them?

Chair: The basic rule is no-one reads 11 questions. If you put them in, you might go away feeling happy and inclusive. But former editor Kelly will confirm that no-one will read 11 questions. Get it to half a dozen.

Prof. GREGORY: The summary doesn't encompass the questions.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: The 11 questions are more pointed. They give more direction to teachers and students.

Ms PAUL: I note we started to debate them quite significantly—the Irish et cetera. We were attempting to build possibly an easier consensus, when one reflects on the debate on the questions. Unless people are happy to sign up to the questions as they are.

Dr HIRST: They are example questions only.

Dr STANLEY: Are they example questions, or are we stuck with the ones we choose today?

Dr HIRST: No.

Prof. STANNAGE: That needs to be made clear. John, I wonder about eight. The first time we mention Asia and our location there, we talk about defence, as if they are all lined up. Historically, the Colombo plan had a very important impact. I suspect teachers do teach about the Colombo plan.

Dr HIRST: Interact.

Prof. STANNAGE: Yes. I would like for a more modest, unprovocative word.

Dr HIRST: I have 11 to cover that.

Prof. STANNAGE: I stand by my original comment about the reference to Asia and the only thing Australians had to worry about is defending themselves.

Chair: The difficulty with a couple of the questions is that they were framed when we were considering the Australian story that began with the 20th century. Because we have merged the 19th and 20th century lists, some things look a bit puzzling. For example, the question about who is an Australian is stuck in the middle of it. It made sense when we were considering what happened in Australia post-1901.

Dr HIRST: On number eight, I would be happy to drop 'how did a small western nation'.

Mr KELLY: We could say: how did Australia plan to defend itself?

Chair: Yes. How did Australia plan to defend itself? How do we deal with the puzzling abruptness of number six: who was an Australian? It is stuck in the middle of this.

Dr HIRST: It should go to number one.

Dr CLENDINNEN: That is a great question.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: What did being an Australian mean?

Dr HIRST: It is more than that. It is who's going to compose the population as well; who you're going to let in to be whatever it is. I have in my mind the misgiving over here about whether this is an ultimate list of questions. I tried to signal that by saying 'such as'. The wording at the end would be 'a choice of such questions'.

Mr KELLY: We have to change the order.

Ms NEALE: The ordering, word-smithing and getting clarity is another job.

Mr EWBANK: This is genuinely an open question; it is not rhetorical. Have we forgotten primary schools?

Prof. GREGORY: We are only talking about years nine and 10 with this.

Mr BOON: A lot of stuff with primary schools has probably been covered. You have the issue of the stand-alone subject at the top.

Mr EWBANK: You have the articulation of coherence between primary and secondary school.

Prof. GREGORY: The sequencing.

Ms PAUL: I have two points. On the last point, the way I summarised the first session was that it should be a stand-alone subject in years nine and 10. Do people want to get that specific?

Chair: That should be added.

Ms PAUL: On the 11—

Prof. BOLTON: I want to pick up on the stand-alone subject. Do you want to add a phrase like ‘sequentially planned through primary and lower secondary school’?

Ms PAUL: Yes.

Ms NEALE: It is important because everyone says they get sick of learning the same topic. In some areas they learn about history—

Chair: Sequentially planned or compatible with?

Ms LAWLESS: We are doing the 19th and 20th centuries in years nine and 10. What is left? What are we saying now is going to be taught in primary?

Ms PAUL: With the 11 points, these issues will be covered extensively in the media. This is a communiqué that will be covered extensively. It is important to be comfortable with the breadth of it. I think they are great. Perhaps we are only focusing on the 19th and 20th centuries. The one gap that stands out for me, which we tried to deal with in the rolled-up version, is about features of Indigenous culture, history and beliefs more broadly. The only coverage here is at two, which is about the relationships with the settlers. We may think it is covered elsewhere, like the previous paragraph to these dot points.

Mr KELLY: I think it is not.

Ms PAUL: The media will pay attention to this.

Mr KELLY: That is exactly right. The problem with the questions is that the media will say, ‘Indigenous Australians are not there.’ You are right. We need to reinforce this point explicitly.

Dr HIRST: I immediately accept the point. I wasn’t opposed to having ‘How did Australian democratic traditions emerge?’ as a question either. We have 11. People are saying it is too many. I propose now that question one be: what have been the features of Indigenous Australians’ culture, history and beliefs and what was the relationship between the settlers and Indigenous Australians? That is question one.

Ms PAUL: Taking the second one from our previous draft. That is number one.

Dr HIRST: Yes. Question two is: who was to be an Australian, and what did it mean to be an Australian?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: How was an Australian defined?

Ms PAUL: Is that instead of 'convict society' or in addition?

Dr HIRST: That is: who is an Australian?

Ms NEALE: It is number six, in other words.

Dr HIRST: What was number six is now question number two: who was to be an Australian and what did it mean to be an Australian? Question three: how did convict society change into free society?

Ms NEALE: There was a free society here before there was a convict society.

Mr EWBANK: Would you rather have 'democratic' rather than 'free'?

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Perhaps put the word 'democratic'. There is not a lot on constitutional history here.

Ms BISHOP: As I listen to you going around the table, I am not sure whether there was an analysis of the six questions on the original draft from the department. I have listened to John's 11. I keep coming back to the six you have here and think maybe they should be refashioned. You have number one now being the second dot point on the DEST list. Number two is how Australian democratic traditions emerged. It covers a broad range of things. Three is the underpinning of our prosperity and the role of government. Number four is the main social dimensions. That can cover everything that you want to put in there. The plans and dreams is from John's anyway. How did Australia interact with the rest of the world? That could take it up. I am wondering whether this is worth-

while and we should focus on this. I find your question about who was an Australian extraordinarily obtuse, coming in from outside and seeing it. If I were a journalist, I would wonder. It is not clear.

Dr HENDERSON: I agree. You are rewriting the questions on the draft paper. They are easier to conceive. The more specific you get, the more you will be accused of leaving something out. The more general you are, you can say it is included.

Ms PAUL: The vulnerability for this group is being reported as leaving things out.

Chair: One option for us, despite the hard work that has gone into drafting the questions, is to leave out a list of questions because of the sheer impossibility of satisfying everyone out there that we have addressed their concerns.

Prof. BOLTON: Will we say it can be done better by a group of curriculum committees over the next 12 months?

Ms PAUL: It could be a next piece of work.

Chair: This summit will be harshly criticised by people, who will go down the list of questions and say, 'So many important things have been overlooked.' We will have more comfort from wrapping this up elegantly with a reference to the skills and knowledge acquired as students pursue a clear chronology of events and conclude our communiqué there. A shorter communiqué is better.

Ms BISHOP: Why not make a recommendation to me about the next stage and what should be done from now on.

Ms PAUL: In that regard, Minister, there really are two next pieces of work that I hear from this group. One is settling on the possible issues. The second one is settling on a possible chronology or the key elements of the report.

Prof. BOLTON: That is where I want to bring in the third point Jenny Gregory raised. I imagine all the rest of you had the same experience I did; you had a good deal of lobbying from bodies like the Australian Society of Archivists, the museums and the Australian Dictionary of Biography Online pointing out the quite impressive collection of aids to historical work that schools need to be enabled to draw upon. As well as the two first questions, we need to have a third question about where the sinews of peace are coming from, which is the mobilisation of the resources already out there.

Dr HIRST: I am not committed to the questions or any questions being listed. I thought it would misrepresent the feeling at this meeting if we were to conclude only with thinking it should be firmly based on a chronological sequence. We don't—

Ms PAUL: Your step is better. 'Students will come to an understanding of the character of Australian society by pursuing over a range of years a range of issues', or whatever that stem would need to be.

Dr HIRST: I suggest that it be firmly based on a series of open-ended questions about the character of Australian society based on a clear chronology. You may want to run with the questions. I am happy to take advice from those who know.

Chair: What is the view around the table? Do we stick with a list of questions that

is sure to invite a lot of criticism that something has been left off or not been included, or do we round it up and keep it short?

Prof. BOLTON: Provision is made for the identification of the questions. That is the next step.

Mr EWBANK: Leave the questions off.

Chair: A show of hands. The second alternative is avoiding the long list of questions but saying there will be further work on them. Who favours that option? The other option is continuing to debate the wording of the 11 questions. Who wants to continue with the debate on the wording of the 11 questions? Who wants to do that? Will we stay here and debate the 11 questions? Is that your wish?

Ms LAWLESS: No.

Chair: There is agreement we can avoid that?

Dr PARTINGTON: The 11 points are so indeterminate that they would be guidance to nothing. For instance, numbers five and six and 11 say no content is included.

Chair: We have agreed to avoid the questions for the time being.

Dr HIRST: I want to get clarity. Lisa read out a draft. Where is the commitment to a series of open questions about the character of Australian society?

Ms PAUL: Each of them is a dot point. 'History Summit participants consider the study of Australian history should be a stand-alone subject'—

Dr STANLEY: Something other than 'stand-alone'. It is not an Australian word. 'Separate' is.

Ms PAUL: Separate? Distinct? ‘Distinct’ it is. ‘Consider that the study of Australian history should be a distinct subject in years nine and 10 which would be planned sequentially through primary and secondary school’.

Mr EWBANK: That doesn’t make sense.

Ms PAUL: No. It doesn’t. Okay. Start again.

Ms BISHOP: Put a comma after ‘years nine and 10’.

Mr EWBANK: Start with the sequential and then mention nine and 10. Put ‘sequential’ in ordering stuff. Then mention nine and 10 at the end.

Ms PAUL: ‘Consider that the study of Australian history should be sequentially planned through primary and secondary school and should be a distinct subject in years nine and 10, which would be an essential and required core part’ et cetera. ‘The summit welcomes the Prime Minister’s announcement of a Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History.’

Ms BISHOP: Add ‘annual’.

Ms PAUL: ‘Annual Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History. Agree that the approach to Australian history teaching should be teachable, do-able and sustainable’—

Ms BISHOP: And respell ‘do-able’.

Ms PAUL: ‘Do’ hyphen.

Prof. GREGORY: When we finalise this draft, it would be good if we could all see a printout of it before we sign off. I know that is tricky.

Ms BISHOP: You will.

Chair: That is the intention.

Ms PAUL: I am helping the drafters on the one hand and I am helping people who have to leave on time do so. ‘Endorse the three key principles’ et cetera. ‘The everyday experience’—that stayed the same. ‘Students will come to an understanding of the character of Australian society by pursuing over a wide range of years a series of open-ended questions about the character of Australian society based on a clear chronology of the events’. Dot—‘agreed that, in addition to pursuing a range of open-ended questions, the development of history study needs to be firmly based on a clear, chronological sequence of key events spanning Indigenous presence to recent decades. These approaches would lead to the development of a model curriculum for the study of Australian history based on sound historical literacy principles. Such a curriculum would need to be supported by quality curriculum resources, professional learning for teachers and national profile events such as an Australian History Week in schools.’ Dot—‘acknowledged the contribution’; I should put that at the end. ‘Acknowledged the contributions of the papers’—title, full name—and, dot, ‘asked that further work be undertaken on developing a series of open-ended questions’.

Ms BISHOP: ‘A programme of study for years three to 10’.

Ms PAUL: ‘Developing a programme of study for years three to 10.’

Dr HIRST: The questions would help define it. It could be defined in different ways.

Ms BISHOP: You are asking me to do something. What is it that you want me to do?

Ms PAUL: It would lead to the development of a model curriculum. Is that enough?

Ms NEALE: When you talk about sequential through to year 10, that is where that would come.

Ms PAUL: We will link it all together. ‘This would lead to the development of a model curriculum for the study of Australian history based on sound historical literacy principles. Such a curriculum needs to be supported by quality curriculum resources’ blah, blah, blah. ‘The development of a model curriculum will, in the first instance, be progressed’—that is not quite elegant enough—‘by two further tasks. One is the development of a series of open-ended questions.’

Mr EWBANK: ‘For what purpose?’, the media might ask. To guide further curriculum development.

Ms PAUL: ‘To guide further curriculum development and, secondly, the development of a chronological sequence of events.’

Mr EWBANK: Acknowledge the framework.

Ms PAUL: The ‘development of a chronological framework of key events’.

Mr EWBANK: Yes.

Prof. GREGORY: Can’t you just leave it at ‘framework’?

Ms PAUL: Personally, I think it is about events.

Prof. GREGORY: We have that in the three principles.

Mr EWBANK: We want to make it as clear as possible for the media. ‘Chronological framework’? What, dates? It is events.

Mr KELLY: There is one point we need to have in it we don’t have. That is that we request the Commonwealth and state education ministers to pursue the goals set out in this communiqué. We want to specifically request that the Commonwealth and the states work on this.

Dr STANLEY: Invite?

Mr KELLY: Invite or request, whatever. ‘We ask’.

Ms BISHOP: Urge.

Mr KELLY: We urge.

Prof. MELLEUISH: Humbly implore.

Ms PAUL: That might come at the bottom. ‘Urge Commonwealth and state education ministers to pursue the goals set out in this communiqué.’

Chair: Does that include suggestions? Time presses.

Mr BARNETT: There is a reference there to historical literacy principles, which is good. Does it subsume the idea that we as educators are mindful of how children learn? I think we need to somehow indicate that we are aware of that.

Prof. TAYLOR: I will respond. The issue of historical literacy is dealt with in the national centre website. It is fully explored in theory and in practice. Those 12 points were presented to the forum on the paper I did. There is an implication that it is done and dusted.

Dr HIRST: It is do-able.

Prof. BOLTON: I am harping on an old

theme. We are not going to lay ourselves open to the accusation that we are trying to impose a one-size-fits-all on all the regions of Australia. There is still room for diversity. I think that is implicit in the text. I want to be sure that is how it will be understood by the media.

Ms NEALE: We should have it in if we want it understood by the media.

Prof. GREGORY: In question four, where it has the relationship between men and women and bush and city—

Mr EWBANK: We have dumped them.

Prof. DARIAN-SMITH: We have a question that it covers multiple perspectives, including regional ones. That is the second point.

Prof. BOLTON: I do not want to pick up the West Australian and read that they are screaming that Canberra is trying to impose this on us all.

Ms PAUL: What about this—‘Endorse three key principles by which the approach should be developed: An emphasis on significant public events and developments that have taken place in Australia and its regions or that concern Australia.’

Prof. BOLTON: That is fine.

Prof. STANNAGE: Has the Prime Minister’s office actually announced the prize?

Ms BISHOP: I announced it in question time.

Prof. STANNAGE: Have you taken out ‘welcomed’ and put ‘welcome’? You have ‘participants’ up the top.

Ms PAUL: Yes.

Chair: We will let that be dealt with.

Dr PARTINGTON: The heading says ‘students will come to an understanding’. I can assure you some students will not come to an understanding. I think it should be more modest.

Chair: That is it. It is the ultimate draft. It is on its way down.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Can we be informed on the mechanism by which these questions—we have come close to finalising them—will be finally nailed down? And the chronology; we came pretty close to that.

Chair: It is up to the government representatives. We will ask them what they wish to do when we have ticked off here.

Ms NEALE: We can do the mechanisms next. We should push that. They are very good questions.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: I can see the argument. We need to spend time refining them. We are very close. They will not disappear into the ether. Could they be emailed to members of the committee? Then we delegate.

Chair: Minister, do you have some ideas on how we can progress these matters, given that the participants are close to getting agreement on those questions? What suits your agenda from here? What role can this body have?

Ms BISHOP: I suggest that once the communiqué has been agreed upon, I can then consider the two suggested pieces of work that still need to be done. That is the chronology and the series of open-ended questions. They could form the basis of a study that we can undertake for the model curriculum. We could work in broad consul-

tation with the states, with history teachers and the education authorities, based on the suggestions that come from the participants, with a view to achieving those objectives. So the Commonwealth can continue to take the lead by consulting on the chronology and the open-ended questions.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: Once they have been refined, would they be circulated to members of this group, and then we can report back? At this point, can we delegate?

Ms BISHOP: I was going to ask you: what is the continuing role? Is there a role for this group beyond today? If you give us the tasks, which will give me the task, of getting a model curriculum developed in consultation with the stakeholders along the lines you have suggested, I would be interested to know if any participants want to be involved in that or act as an advisory group to that whole process, the study that would have to be undertaken, if you like.

Prof. GREGORY: A number of us probably feel we have gone a fair way in the development of both the questions and the chronology. It would be nice to be involved in completing that task rather than completely handing it over.

Dr CLENDINNEN: Geoff Blainey suggested a subcommittee. That might be the way to go.

Ms BISHOP: If that is the view of the participants, if you would like to complete that work as a subgroup and then there can be agreement amongst the other participants, we can then use that as the basis of the study that we would undertake with the stakeholders—being the History Teachers' Association, the education authorities and

everybody else who has a say in curriculum development. We could use that as the basis for it. The working group, if you like, the smaller group, would be a part of the overall consultation.

Ms NEALE: That is a good idea. Everybody is feeling that they have almost got there. Our thinking is behind it. For pragmatic and other reasons, if we put it aside, we all know what we mean. We didn't quite get there. It is probably important that we do that completion before it goes out further.

Ms BISHOP: We could do it this way. I suggest that at the conclusion of the event today when you have signed off on the communiqué, we put it out to the media. We will do a press conference on it and say what we are seeking to do. Then I can announce that further work will be undertaken based on the work that a subgroup of this summit will do. Much was achieved but it is not yet in a form upon which you would base a curriculum. The Government will undertake to fund a study or consultation with the relevant stakeholders with a view to agreeing on a model curriculum with the states and territories.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: A lot of it could be done by email. It wouldn't take long.

Ms BISHOP: If you want a smaller group to do the nuts and bolts of tidying it up—I wasn't present through all the sessions—I guess you know who you would like to be on that committee. Probably the smaller, the better. Communicate with the rest of the participants for an agreed sign-off. Once I have that, I can get a study or consultation underway with the states and territories.

Dr CLENDINNEN: I nominate John Hirst.

Dr HIRST: Greg, do you want to be on it?

Prof. BOLTON: We need Tony Taylor on it. And Jackie. It would be important to have the Indigenous voice.

Prof. STANNAGE: And Nick. You represent history teachers. You may be uneasy about it.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: If Nick is willing to do it, that would be good.

Mr EWBank: Yes.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: A lot of it can be done through email.

Ms BISHOP: That is John Hirst, Tony Taylor, Jackie Huggins and Nick Ewbank. Everybody is happy with that? Nobody else has a burning desire to be on a subcommittee? And John Gascoigne. That's five. That sounds about right.

Prof. GASCOIGNE: The drafts will be sent to the committee of five. We will get in touch by email and tidy it up and send it around. It is not a big job.

Ms BISHOP: The Prime Minister has just put out a press release. It says:

The Australian Government is committed to a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history in our schools. Marking today's Australian History Summit, I am pleased to announce the establishment of the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History. The prize will be the nation's pre-eminent award for excellence in Australian history. It is intended to raise the profile of Australian history. It will be a conspicuous reward for the long and often painstaking process of good historical research. The prize will be awarded annually and be worth \$100,000 in recognition of an outstanding publication or body of work that contributes significantly to an understanding of Australian history. Eligible nominations can in-

clude a published book, a documentary film, a documentary for radio or television, CD-ROM, DVD or other form of multimedia. The nomination could include a series of these works. I will invite a panel of eminent historians to assess nominations. Nominations will be sought for any work first published, produced or performed in the last two years.

There you go. It continues:

The first award will be made later this year following a public call for nominations.

Further details et cetera will be announced by the Department of Education, Science and Training. The shadow minister for education has essentially said, 'We should have a nationally consistent framework of significant events or turning points. Australians should know the stories of our nation. Training and professional development of history teachers.' That sounds like we're heading in the right direction. The Democrats think it is an 'open inquiry for young minds'. So far, so good.

As we are waiting for the communiqué to be delivered, I thank you all for giving up your very precious time to be involved in this Australian History Summit. When I contacted you—in most cases I spoke to each of you unless we left messages and weren't able to touch base personally—I was very encouraged by the enthusiasm that you showed for this summit and where it could lead. I think that it has been very productive. We have certainly achieved a great deal. We have signed off on a communiqué. That is the ultimate for any summit—to have an agreed position at the end of the day. I hope that future historians of Australian education and Australian history will see this as a milestone and that the results of today will most

certainly bear fruit in years to come.

I thank Lisa Paul for her role as chair and John Hirst and Bob Carr. Your handling of the matters has obviously led to the position we are in. That is the agreement on a communiqué. I think the continuation of the work of this summit is essential. The idea of agreeing on a chronology and the open-ended questions as the basis for consultations with the states and territories is a very good one and will stand me in pretty good stead to go forward to meet with the states and territories on that basis. I hope that we will be in a position to have a model curriculum for introduction across Australia. I will make sure that this is part of the education ministers meeting. Hopefully we can meet by the end of the year. I will consult with the History Teachers' Association, the state and territory and non-government education authorities, parents, principals and teacher educators.

I will commission the study to ensure that we can take forward your work today. I will announce at the press conference that we will continue with your work. I am also going to announce that, in addition to the Prime Minister's announcement today, I have also approved another year's funding for two student competitions—for the 2007 National History Challenge, which is \$102,000, and the 2008 Simpson Prize on the Anzac tradition, which is \$170,000. Both are run by the History Teachers' Association on behalf of the department.

Thank you very much for your involvement in today's proceedings. I know that your valued advice will go a long way in ensuring that Australian history does take

its rightful place in Australian schools. So thank you. Peter. Those who have to leave for planes, I understand. The communiqué will be released to the media this afternoon.

The Summit adopted the following communiqué:

The Australian History Summit participants:

- consider the study of Australian History should be sequentially planned through primary and secondary schooling and should be a distinct subject in Years 9 and 10. This would be an essential and required core part of all students' learning experience to prepare them for the 21st Century;
 - welcome the Prime Minister's announcement of an annual Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History;
 - affirm the importance of the study of Australian History in schools. Australia's history is longer than that of many European countries, and is in many ways unique. Australia is one of the world's oldest, continuous democracies. A knowledge of our history is therefore vital. Nearly all of the crucial public debates embody and appeal to history. We are convinced of the urgent need for a nation wide revival in the teaching of Australian History and its global, environmental and social contexts. We urge that steps be taken to enlist all States and Territories and relevant authorities in the task;
 - recognise that there is no intention to create a single "official" history, but rather to ensure students learn that the study of history encompasses multiple perspectives;
 - agree that the approach to Australian History in schools needs to be:
 - Teachable**, in that it engages students and teachers;
 - Do-able**, with a specific and appropriate allocation of time within the school curricu-
-

lum; and

Sustainable, addressing the range of interest and circumstances in the education systems of Australia.

- endorse three key principles by which the approach should be developed:
 - an emphasis on the significant public events and developments that have taken place in Australia and its regions, or that concern Australia;
 - recognition of the global environment in which the development of Australia has taken place; and
 - focus on the everyday experience of people living in Australia 50 or 100 or 200 or 20,000 years ago.
- agree that students should come to an understanding of the character of Australian society by pursuing over a range of years, a series of open-ended questions about the character of Australia's society based on a clear chronology of events;
- agree that in addition to pursuing a range of open-ended questions, development of history study needs to be firmly based on a clear chronological sequence of key events spanning Indigenous presence to recent decades;
- agree that this would lead to the development of a model curriculum for the study of Australian History based on sound principles of historical literacy. Such a curriculum needs to be supported by quality curriculum resources, professional learning for teachers and national profile events such as Australian History Week in schools;
- acknowledge the contribution by the authors of the papers prepared for the Summit;
- ask that two further tasks be undertaken:
 - The development of a series of open-ended questions to guide further curriculum developments
 - The development of a chronological framework of key events.

- Urge Commonwealth and State Education Ministers to pursue the goals set out in this communiqué.

Chair: I have been asked to make sure everyone has signed this release form that governs the production of audiovisual material. It does not have to be witnessed. The summit is closed.

The meeting closed at 5.08 pm.