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The recent QUT students' allotted project enquiries issue.

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To: Dr Neville Buch <director@bshn.org>

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Hi Dr Buch

Here are my experiences, with the recent events.

Beginning on Easter Thursday 1 April 2021, I began to receive numerous email enquiries from individuals, who identified themselves only as "a student", who were seeking my acknowledged, professional expertise on WWII Brisbane, to assist them with an allocated project. I have subsequently discovered that these are all QUT students' enquiries and are associated with a lecturer requiring details on a variety of Brisbane sites during 1939-1945. By today 7 April, I had received numerous emails from 4 such students. As I operate a professional history consultancy service, I felt that I should reply to all of these enquiries but, as these clients were students, I would not request any payment for the research assistance that I provided. BUT I did insist that these students formally acknowledge any of the information that I had supplied, through bibliographical referencing, in their project documents submitted to QUT.

This recent and sudden workload imposition has raised two issues for me, as a professional historian. In this role, I have gained 26 years of professional experience, including 13 years employment as a historian at the Brisbane City Council's Heritage Unit.

The first issue is **professional courtesy**. It would appear that I was denoted as a potential research source for a set project that centred upon Brisbane's history during the Second World War. My identification, as such a contactable history source, came from the lecturer involved, directing her students to the "QUEENSLAND WWII HISTORIC PLACES" website: <https://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/> of which I am noted as one of the two authors of the Brisbane places entries. It would have been an act of normal, professional courtesy, if that lecturer, had contacted me and her other recommended sources, letting us know that we were about to be contacted by her students, rather than just being overrun with such enquiries over Easter. Certainly, when I worked for the Brisbane City Council, it was considered the norm, to forewarn organisations, such as local history societies, or individual historians, before Council gave out these history researchers' contact details to the general public. This act of professional courtesy ensured that they were agreeable and prepared for such public enquiries, rather than finding themselves having to cease current projects, to deal with the immediacy of such public enquiries.

The second issue is **intellectual property**. As mentioned, in answering these QUT students' enquiries, I specifically detailed how to properly reference any of the reference material that I had emailed to them. For example, I spent a number of hours, of my own time, searching and finding information on the Australian Army Heavy A.A. battery emplacement and its attached U.S. Army searchlight unit, sited at Balmoral, on Brisbane's south-side. Over the course of that day (5 April), I emailed 8 documents (including WWII aerial photographs) to QUT student [REDACTED]. Neither [REDACTED] nor any of the other QUT students, who I have assisted, with my professional expertise, have bothered to reply, after I helped them, thus not even having the manners to offer a thank-you. This now makes me very suspicious that these students will claim the research information that I provided to them as "all their own work". This would be a clear breach of intellectual property and, sadly, it has been my past experience that the theft of professional historians' intellectual property, by the public or large organisations, is rampant, across Australia.

This sense of 'being used' by this QUT Project can have a negative impact. It may make historians, such as myself, together with our representative bodies (such as the Professional Historians' Association) reconsider any future, unpaid assistance to QUT staff or students

Yours sincerely

Dr. Jonathan (Jack) Ford



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