

Dr Neville Buch
MPHA (Qld)
Historian



Understanding history is philosophy in practice

(images: left, Dr Neville Buch, working at University of Melbourne in a past life; right, Hans Buch, author's grandfather, Brisbane, 1st Generation Danish Immigrant)

ABN 86703686642

6 May 2021

Councillor Krista Adams
Acting Lord Mayor
Brisbane City Council
GPO Box 1434
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Councillor Adams, Acting Lord Mayor,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter on behalf of the Lord Mayor. I am grateful that my concerns have been noted, however, there were misleading remarks in the reply I wish to address. Local governments can no longer expect to play on the misleading rhetoric to minimize concerns, albeit noted. A fair portion of the Brisbane population has an education in themes of governance and urbanisation, framed as urban and local history.

These are complex matters, and the shallow response of the reply insults our intelligence. I was noticeably clear on what I was seeking, and a reply which was directly on the subject at hand would be what normally is expected of efficient governance.

Perhaps I need to repeat what I communicated to Councillor Howard, on 14 April 2021. The Council has never had a public education area to properly introduce Brisbane residents to the widest scope of the city's history. The Brisbane Greeters program just does not cut it as education, even as informal history on Brisbane. This is not a concern of mine alone. Indeed, if you would only understand how our education on the history of the City of Brisbane has become so reductive, you would understand the alarm of many artists, scholars, and other practitioners across the City. Council supports very poorly community organisations who undertake research projects relating to the history of Brisbane. I know, I work with many of them. Publications focusing on specific suburbs are thin, and, anyway, it does not deliver the comprehensive history of Brisbane which we are expecting. Public relations and promotion of heritage trails is not the high level of informative education which you would get in Sydney and Melbourne. I am sorry that you think so little of our city's history, that you go to speak of areas of educative thinness. You must think that the Brisbane population is so easily satisfied.

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What I am petitioning is a public education area to properly introduce Brisbane residents to the widest scope of the city's history. The City and State has had significantly funded community education programs well into the past. Often, they came to an end for partisan reasons.

I hope the current Council does not make a similar mistake and fail to grasp the opportunity.

Kind regards,

Neville Buch (Dr)
Professional Historian, MPHA (Qld)

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Q ANZAC 100 Fellow, 2014-2015, State Library of Queensland

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