

Eric Fuss – Burra's Local Historian

Eric Fuss (1945–2020) was a passionate local historian in Burra, South Australia, devoted to preserving and sharing the town's rich heritage. A long-time resident of Burra, he spent his retirement years tirelessly documenting the region's history and making it accessible to the community ¹. Eric was a founding member of the Burra History Group (established 2006) and served as its secretary for many years, often acting as the driving force behind the group's projects ². In recognition of his outstanding contributions, he received the History Council of South Australia's Regional Historian Award in 2020 ³. (He was unable to attend the award ceremony due to illness and sadly passed away later that year ³.)

Key Contributions:

- **Heritage Projects:** Together with fellow historian Meredith Satchell, Eric researched and installed **65 heritage plaques** around Burra, highlighting historical sites and stories for visitors ¹. They also developed **self-guided walking tours** of the town and its cemetery, helping people explore Burra's history on their own ⁴.
- **Historical Publications:** Eric co-authored several books and booklets on Burra's history. Notable works include ***Burra: A Photographic Journey*** (with Meredith Satchell) – a pictorial history of the town ⁴, ***The Works of Frank Treloar: Burra's First Historian*** – a compilation of writings by an early Burra historian ⁴, and ***Burra Show 1877–2016*** – a comprehensive history of the local agricultural show. He also helped document the **First World War enlistees of Mt Bryan and District**, preserving the stories of local soldiers ⁴. Many of these publications were produced under the Burra History Group and are used as valuable resources by researchers and residents alike.
- **Archival Research:** One of Eric's most significant achievements was the **indexing and summarization of Burra's historical newspapers**. He painstakingly reviewed every local newspaper from 1876 to the present (and even relevant articles from earlier South Australian papers back to 1845), producing over **7,000 pages of summaries and indexes** ⁵. This massive archive of Burra news – spanning some 168 years – has been made available to the public and augments the digitized newspapers on Trove (the National Library's online archive) ⁵. Eric's work means anyone can easily search Burra's local news and events across the decades, a boon for historians and genealogists.
- **Community and Online Outreach:** Eric compiled indexes of all the men and women from the Burra district who served in **World War I and II**, as well as an index of almost 100 years of **local government elections** in Burra ⁶. He freely shared this knowledge to honor those individuals and to assist future researchers. As the Burra History Group's secretary, he also contributed extensively to the group's website and online archives, ensuring that historical information was available beyond the walls of museums ². (His meticulous research was even acknowledged in efforts to nominate Burra's mining sites for World Heritage status ⁷.)

Eric Fuss's dedication and enthusiasm have left a lasting legacy in Burra. Through his books, plaques, and archives, he helped transform local history into a resource that anyone can explore and appreciate. His work not only preserved Burra's past but also inspired a stronger community connection to the

town's heritage. The **"About Eric"** section on this website is a tribute to his lifelong commitment to history – a commitment that continues to benefit Burra and all who value its story.

Sources:

1. History Council of South Australia – 2020 Historian Awards (Eric Fuss, Regional Historian winner) ¹
⁸ ²
2. Google Books – Eric Fuss (biographical summary, 2023) ³
3. National Library of Australia – Catalogue entry for *The Works of Frank Treloar: Burra's first historian*** (compiled by Eric Fuss & Meredith Satchell, 2011) ⁹
4. Burra & Moonta World Heritage Bid – *Acknowledgment of research by Eric Fuss and Burra History Group* ¹⁰
5. ABC News (Rural) – *Interview with Eric Fuss on Burra's Merino ram photo collection (2014)* ¹¹ ¹²

¹ ² ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁸ HCSA Historian Awards 2020 Winners - History Council SA
<https://historycouncilsa.org.au/hcsa-historian-awards-2020-winners/>

³ Eric Fuss - Google Books
https://books.google.com/books/about/Eric_Fuss.html?id=sCch0AEACAAJ

⁷ ¹⁰ Burra Cornish Mining History | Burra Moonta Cornish Mining Sites
<https://burramoontaworldheritage.com.au/australian-cornish-mining-story/burra-history/>

⁹ The works of Frank Treloar : Burra's first historian / compiled by Eric Fuss & Meredith Satchell for... | Catalogue | National Library of Australia
<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/5333851>

¹¹ ¹² Merino photo collection displaying 100 years of history - ABC News
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2014-10-10/merino-photos/5803746>