

## Seeking South Australia's history of social innovation

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Three periods in South Australia's history are often associated with innovative social policy – the 1850s, the 1880s and nineties, and the 1960s and seventies. This paper examines, from an historical perspective, the social and political context of change in these periods and argues that in each case a complex mix of factors combined to create a climate supportive of social change.

The paper also considers the enduring and apparently conflicting images of Adelaide and South Australia as either 'city of churches' or 'laboratory of social change' and suggests that innovative social practice may have some surprising origins.

**Mandy Paul** joined the History Trust as Curator in the Community History Unit in late 2005. She has postgraduate qualifications in History and Museum Studies, and has worked as a curator and professional historian for over 15 years, both as a consultant and as an employee of statutory bodies and local government.

**Margaret Anderson** is Director of the History Trust of South Australia, a position she has held since 2000. In a career spanning 30 years she has worked as a public historian in museums in Western Australia and South Australia and taught history and Australian Studies at Monash University. Her research interests have focused on women's history and demography, but she has also written more generally about South Australian history and the practice of public history.