

AUSTRALASIAN LIVING HISTORY FEDERATION (ALHF) PRINCIPLES of AUTHENTICITY in LIVING HISTORY & HISTORICAL REENACTMENT - V2.0

Introduction

These **ALHF Authenticity Principles** have been compiled for the benefit of members to clarify the presentation of 'core activities' of the Federation; *Living History and Historical Reenactment*, as outlined in the ALHF constitution and amendments.

These general principles of authenticity must be followed at any event or activity organised or undertaken by a member group of ALHF that is a *Living History or Historical Reenactment event*. They are (will be – awaiting development 2/2008) accompanied by a more detailed set of **Guidelines** designed to further assist members in practical questions of authenticity in display and performance.

ALHF does not have a formalized appraisal system of member groups' authenticity standards. However ALHF does assess whether a member group meets standards of authenticity at time of application, as well as considers any reports on a group's relationship to these principles. Failure to comply with or strive towards these principles may mean member application refusal or review of membership.

The related ALHF Authenticity Guidelines document is available to member groups for assistance in interpreting and meeting the requirements of the following principles (TBP).

ALHF Authenticity Principles

- 1) **Historical Accuracy:** Historical accuracy is *paramount* in Living History and Historical Reenactment. Within the bounds of safety (see related ALHF Safety Principles and Safety Guidelines documents), all steps possible should be taken to present displays and information that is firmly based on historical evidence. Sources and references should be quoted in printed or visual materials, and where possible referred to in displays or performances.
- 2) **Historical Interpretation:** Interpretation is the written, verbal or performed explanation of history. It must be firmly based in relevant, researched historical evidence. It may occasionally be conjectural, if based in well-researched, current historical information. It may be delivered 'in character' (see Performance below) or as signage, handouts, narration etc.
- 3) **Historical Performance:** Performances in re-enactments or living history displays may vary between first, second and third person. All performances should endeavour to present historical characters (real or generic) to the best standards of current historical knowledge of how individuals would have interacted and spoken, and how they would have dressed or used historical artefacts.
- 4) **Educational and Public Display:** Displays and 'shows' should present informative and educational historical information. They may be entertaining, whilst retaining the presentation of historical insight. They should foster historical understanding among audiences. They should be professionally conducted. For schools, they must follow any relevant Education Department legislation regarding the conduct of performances in schools and should be relevant to schools curricula or educational outcomes.
- 5) **Living History:** Living History is the setting up and activating of props, people and costume in a display or activity, either for the public or for members only, of the daily life of an historical period. This may take the form of a 'living history village' or 'encampment' or such activities as a 'route march'. It usually requires an agreed area where all modern or anachronistic items are dispensed with or completely hidden.
- 6) **Historical Reenactment:** A reenactment differs from living history in that it undertakes to recreate a specific historical event. However it is acknowledged that the term 'reenactment' has a wider accepted currency that is often interchangeable with 'living history'.
- 7) **Costume & Artefacts:** Costume and artifacts, objects or props should be authentic, from the time period portrayed, and not misleading. Where possible they should be constructed as close to the historical original as possible in terms of materials and construction methods, or based on original items.
- 8) **Combat activities:** Combat, skirmish or other military reenactment 'battles' should be conducted with the intent of creating a display for audiences, and/or 'effect' for participants that is as historically accurate as possible, considering safety for participants and audiences (See ALHF Safety Principles & Guidelines).

- 9) **Professionalism:** ALHF members will conduct reenactment and living history activities in a professional manner and not bring ALHF into disrepute. ALHF member groups will keep a portfolio of their public presentation, be it in the form of a document, website, etc., that describes the historical methodologies of their activities and impressions (as per principles 1.0-7.0) and can be provided to ALHF on application for membership, or on request.
- 10) **Contemporary Interpretation:** No ALHF member will espouse contemporary political views and not use their historical period to engage in contemporary politics. Members should make all efforts to be aware of, and sensitive to, racial, gender and cultural issues - particularly in representing various cultures through time.