
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

ABN 91 000 027 654

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr Iain Stuart

I would like to begin by acknowledging all the hard work undertaken by the RAHS employees, notably our General Manager, Suzanne Holohan, as well as Phillip Jaworski, Donna Newton, and Maryanne Byrne.

I would like to thank the efforts of all our Councillors and members of our dedicated committees in providing services to our members – the Events Committee, Affiliated Societies Committee, Publications Committee, and Library and Archives Working Party. I note retiring Councillors Pauline Curby, Linda Emery, and Peter Hobbins and thank them for their commitment to the RAHS. I also welcome Samuel White, who joined the Council this year.

The RAHS provided several opportunities for members and emerging professionals to undertake volunteer work. As President, I would like to thank all its volunteers for their incredible contribution. Our 2023 volunteers included Rebell Barnes, Jessica Buckton, Kevin Dudeney, Brei Dwyer, Elizabeth Heffernan, Shaani Hutto, Elaine Phillips, Maximilian Reid, Margaret Scott and Bron Stepowski.

In 2023, a RAHS Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Jessica Buckton for her contribution to the RAHS website and for supporting RAHS operational activities. Jessica initially joined the RAHS as a Macquarie University intern. She worked with RAHS employees and Councillors to deliver the website page *Competition, Community and Country: Agricultural Shows in NSW*.

In 2023, the Council unanimously awarded a RAHS Fellowship to Christine Yeats in recognition of her contribution to Australian History through her work as an archivist, researcher, historian, and an active committee member of several history organisations. Christine has and continues to make a significant contribution as chair of the Events Committee and the Library and Archives Working Party. As President, Christine has been a tower of strength to me personally and to other Councillors.

As the RAHS President, it is truly an honour to acknowledge the unwavering commitment and tireless work of each Councillor and committee member who

has contributed to our collective mission of promoting the understanding of Australian History.

The RAHS has also received support from Create NSW, which has provided grants to help the society continue promoting the study of Australian History in the community. The RAHS thanks Create NSW for its continuing financial support.

HISTORY HOUSE

Members will be aware of the History House project which aimed to use the need to upgrade the lift as a focus for upgrading and renovating the modern area of History House to provide better services for members and rental space to provide income to maintain the older sections of History House.

At the start of 2022 we had the funding in place to commence construction, but it took over six months to get the documentation associated with the construction certificate in place. Our preferred builders, A.J. Bristow, had to revise their tender pricing to take account of a 47% increase in building costs across the industry (roughly 3% per month). This left the RAHS with a funding shortfall, and we spent some time in late 2022 working on strategies to deal with this.

This year, the building costs have been rising at about 1% per month. That means for every month of delay, the cost has gone up. Delays have been inevitable as necessary professional services, such as fire engineering and certifiers, have been in short supply, and smaller projects such as ours have received less service. In contrast, the RAHS has not been able to raise funds at a similar rate to building costs. We have reviewed revised quotes from A.J. Bristow, and our Project Manager, Paul McNamara, robustly tested their tender costs.

As well, the RAHS obtained new assessments of the project's cost from a quantity surveyor, which were required for us to submit to the City of Sydney to obtain our construction certificate. The quantity surveyor included contingencies and came up with a cost of \$6.4 million. A.J. Bristow's quote was a little less but allowed less for contingencies. We examined the costs and there was some opportunity for cost savings. However, this was not going to be enough to match the RAHS financial resources we had at hand.

In short, the RAHS did not have the funds to complete the proposed works.

The RAHS examined the alternative of obtaining the construction certificate, commencing the development, and then putting it on hold until funds were available. This would have preserved the existing development application, which expired on 3 January 2024. However, the cost of doing this would have been about \$80,000 (\$64,000 of which would have been a fee to the City of Sydney). The Council thought deeply about this and decided that this would be throwing good money after bad because we would still have to reorganise the History House project to meet our budget, which would require a new or altered development application.

In December 2023, the RAHS Council made the difficult decision to let the development application lapse in January 2024. The RAHS could not fund the building project as envisaged in the 2016 development application due to the increase in construction costs post-COVID and the challenges of raising finances in the current economic environment. As President, I felt deeply disappointed about coming to this decision, but it would have been reckless to launch into construction without the funds to complete the work.

On the positive side, the RAHS can devote more attention to the heritage section of History House and to reopening the building, which has been closed since 2020. In the first half of 2024, we will review the project goals, focusing on the heritage section of the building and the existing fabric. The History House Conservation Management Plan contains a schedule of works that will provide the framework for this component of the revised project. We also need to undertake urgent maintenance work deferred because of the larger building project and decide on a solution to our accessibility and lift issues.

We will be hosting our first events since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in History House in April 2024. History House will also be available for venue hire, with discounted rates for our members and affiliated organisations. We will also continue our commitment to online events and will be upgrading the technology in the auditorium so the RAHS can host hybrid events.

We want to thank all our members for their support and patience. Your building donations are invaluable to us and will be used to ensure that History House remains part of our living heritage and a place for local and community history.

I would like to thank my fellow 2023 History House Committee members – Christine Yeats, Craig McPherson, Carol Liston, Kathrine Reynolds and Suzanne Holohan

– for their support during these tumultuous times. The committee regularly met with Robert Gasparini from our architects, Design 5, and Paul McNamara, our project manager. In particular, Carol, Kathrine and Christine have an encyclopedia knowledge of the fabric of History House, which has proven exceptionally useful. They also have been long-term members of the committee and provided critical continuity.

SERVICES TO MEMBERS

The annual report contains details of our services to members. I would like to highlight the return of the RAHS Annual Conference in 2023 at Wagga Wagga after a three-year hiatus due to COVID. This was my first time attending an in-person RAHS Conference. As well as enjoying the speaker program and tours, the opportunities to network and hear members talk about their local and community history projects were invaluable. I had a good time and feedback from members was that they enjoyed the Conference and meeting in person.

CHANGES TO PUBLICATIONS

I would also like to thank my fellow RAHS Councillor Carol Liston for her twenty-year contribution as editor of the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*. RAHS Senior Vice President Christine Yeats edited the June 2023 *JRAHS* and co-edited the December 2023 edition with Dr Samuel White, who was appointed RAHS Councillor and *JRAHS* Editor in September 2023. Samuel has launched a new podcast initiative to promote the *JRAHS* to a wider audience. Listeners can now hear him interview contributors about what inspired them to select their research topic, the sources they used and future research areas.

RAHS IN THE COMMUNITY

As of 31 December 2023, the RAHS membership includes 372 affiliated organisations and, therefore, has a reach of over 45,000 people involved in local and community history across New South Wales. In 2023, we administered two grant programs that supported history and heritage projects across the state – the Cultural Grants Program and the Transport Heritage Program.

The RAHS Heritage Committee wrote letters of support for ten new items under consideration for listing on the NSW State Heritage Register. The RAHS recognises the importance of preserving the state's cultural identity and protecting a diverse range of historically significant sites. The RAHS also advocates for researchers to have access to historical records and libraries.

In February 2023, I wrote to the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister of Arts, to express the RAHS' profound

concerns for Trove's ongoing funding. Trove and its partners have created the most significant collection of Australian stories and cultural heritage and the need for adequate and ongoing funding. I also took part in ABC Radio interviews to discuss the importance of Trove as a research tool for local and family history and the need for sustainable funding to maintain Trove's digital infrastructure. In April 2023, the Federal government announced it would provide \$33 million to the National Library over four years. The government also committed to providing \$9.2 million in indexed ongoing funding for Trove from July 2027. The RAHS thanked the Federal government for providing sustainable funding to Trove. We also congratulated members of the history and heritage community who advocated for this outcome.

Christine Yeats was critical in ensuring that New South Wales local and family history researchers could search the expanded Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV) for documents recorded in the Miscellaneous Register and Indexes. Christine has worked with NSW Land Registry Services to ensure HLRV delivers an improved research experience, including updated search and image viewing functionality, tools and prompts. As a frequent user of the HLRV in my work as a historical archaeologist, I welcome this enhanced functionality.

LOOKING FORWARD

I am looking forward to 2024 with the ability to meet more members in person at History House and at the 2024 RAHS Conference, which will take place in Campbelltown. The RAHS is working on the conference program with the Campbelltown & Airs Historical Society.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Dr Kathrine M. Reynolds FRHistS

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the 2023 year, I present my Treasurer's report to the members of the RAHS with great pleasure. The small number of staff employed by the RAHS have again managed to keep the RAHS running throughout 2023, and to them, I publicly offer my sincere thanks and attest to their generosity in working from home as well as coming into the office. In doing so, they display their complete dedication to the RAHS. Like the previous year, 2023 has been a difficult year for employees and Councillors as well as members, with our efforts directed to accomplishing the building project. However, as fast as we raised money, based on the generosity of our members, between COVID and inflation, the projected building costs continued to

out-strip our fundraising ability, with the final cost estimates being in the vicinity of \$6.8 million, way beyond our capacity. Sadly, we have decided on repairs.

All is not grim as our fundraising has put the RAHS in a very favourable financial position for the future. We can afford our repairs and have money to generate income going forward. While Councillors were sad to accept the financial reality of our building project, none of us wish to jeopardise the RAHS financially, and I can report we are currently in a sound financial position, despite closing History House, COVID and inflationary pressures. The RAHS will remain an important part of our living heritage and a place for community and local history. Again, our online activities have been important, and we continue to reach a more diverse group of members including those from our rural areas. We plan to reopen History House in April which should see a return of income from rental, venue hire and events.

GENERAL POSITION

In 2023, the Society recorded a loss of \$116,755 up from \$42,283 in 2022, after transfers of dedicated money of \$392,132 to its various funds. This is an extraordinary result and a tribute to our employees and Councillors following another year of History House being shut in anticipation of the building work beginning. There was no more government support based on COVID.

I sincerely thank Ms Christine Yeats, Chair of the Events Committee and RAHS Senior Vice President, who enthusiastically and successfully ran an assortment of events for members remotely by Zoom or off-site, thereby assisting our financial position and contributing \$3,805 to our income. The RAHS conference, held in Wagga Wagga, contributed \$17,657, including \$750 from the raffle sales. Expenses increased by \$25,080 primarily due to higher costs in insurance, employment, utilities, publications and postage. History House costs were \$93,605 which is usually offset by our tenancies. On the brighter side, dividend and bank interest were up 13% to \$85,953, and a further \$444,917 was received in donations, with \$392,132 transferred to the building fund account.

We are grateful, as always, to our members and government, as so many of our projects are funded by grants or donations.

Member subscriptions have declined since the pandemic and the shutting of History House from \$105,153 (2022) to \$94,768 (2023). We expect this to reverse as History House reopens and more events are held on-site.

GRANTS AND BEQUESTS

We are very grateful to The Hon. John Graham, MLC, NSW Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism, for providing funding to regional community and history projects through the 2023 Cultural Grants Programme. Eighteen projects received financial support totalling \$55,000 (ex GST) under this programme.

This is the ninth year the RAHS has run the Transport Heritage Grants Programme managed by Transport NSW and Transport Heritage NSW. In 2023, fourteen transport heritage projects received a total of \$184,833 in grant funding.

In 2023, we received a \$20,000 bequest from Mavis Wheeler (See *Mavis Wheeler: Cipher, Signals Corp, Australian Women's Auxiliary Air Force (1921–2022)* in the September 2022 edition of *History* magazine) for which we are most grateful. We also received an additional \$1,220 from the Robert (Bob) Pauling bequest due to the sale of overseas shares.

We are especially grateful to Mr Geoffrey White OAM and Mrs Sally White OAM for their ongoing commitment and support of the RAHS during these difficult times.

BUILDING PROJECT

Sadly, as discussed earlier, we have had to rationalise this project and be content with repairing the older heritage front part of the building.

SINCERE THANKS

I would like to especially thank Ms Suzanne Holohan, our General Manager, and her team at History House for their hard work. The RAHS Annual Report is always an opportunity to express gratitude to fellow Councillors, volunteers and members and employees who, with very limited financial resources, help the RAHS achieve so much. I would also like to thank all who help us at the RAHS, and especially affiliated society members who work with dedication in their local communities, saving history.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

INCOME	2023	2022
Dividend and Interest received	83,953	76,210
Bequests made in 2023	21,220	77,709
Bequests Drawdown	45,000	45,000
History House Donations	392,132	132,503
Other Donations	52,785	69,714
Grants Received: Create NSW	122,739	85,000
Other Income	77,583	65,286

Rental Income	0	22,069
Subscriptions Received	94,768	105,153
COVID-19 Support: JobKeeper, Cashflow boost, JobSaver	0	3,297
TOTAL INCOME	892,180	681,941

EXPENDITURE

Accounting and Audit Services	44,967	49,528
Depreciation	5,702	6,998
Employee Related Expenses	296,048	280,748
Grants expended: Create NSW	80,000	85,000
History House Expenses	93,605	78,650
IT, Internet and Phone expenses	25,959	22,083
Insurance	27,471	24,383
<i>JRAHS</i> and <i>History</i> Magazine	32,185	29,030
Other Expenses	16,583	11,470
Postage, Printing and Stationery	18,333	15,630
Offset: Expenses funded by grants	-24,052	-11,710
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	616,801	591,721
SURPLUS BEFORE TRANSFERS	275,379	90,221

TRANSFER TO OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

History House Build Project Donations	392,132	132,503
DEFICIT	-116,753	-42,283

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2022
Cash	1,467,559	2,663,796
Receivable and other current assets	164,532	30,683
Financial assets	2,408,210	782,893
Property, plant and equipment	17,244,909	17,156,269
Intangible assets – Website	14,146	6,171
TOTAL ASSETS	21,299,357	20,633,641

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and other liabilities	373,175	111,174
Provisions	64,220	63,327
TOTAL LIABILITIES	437,395	174,501

NET ASSETS	20,861,962	20,459,140
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EQUITY

Reserves	19,807,997	19,633,947
Retained Surplus	1,053,965	825,194
TOTAL EQUITY	20,861,962	20,459,140

A full copy of the financial statements is available on request to members. The financial statements will also be included in the 2024 Annual General Meeting papers.

SERVICES TO OUR MEMBERS

Events and Outreach

Ms Christine Yeats, Chair of the Events Committee

The RAHS delivered a full calendar of events in 2023, including lectures, skills-based workshops, seminars, and excursions. Presenting our online lectures has provided the RAHS with the opportunity to engage with our regional and interstate members and reach a broader audience.

In addition to the Day Lectures on the first Wednesday of the month, our Special Lecture series was also part of the 2023 events and outreach program. This series was introduced during the COVID lockdown to complement the popular Day Lectures. Together they provide people from across Australia with the opportunity to listen to research findings from emerging and established historians.

Regional and Western Sydney seminars were offered by the RAHS in 2023. These focus on developing historical expertise in the community. For the first time since the easing of the COVID restrictions they were delivered in-person. On 4 March the RAHS, in conjunction with the Central Coast Family History Society, presented a one-day seminar *Land Records, Convict Crimes and Convicts Transported from Ireland: A Treasure Trove of Research Possibilities*.

The RAHS always welcomes partnership opportunities with like-minded organisations and in 2023 it established a new partnership with Museums of History NSW (MHNSW). On 18 November the Western Sydney Seminar *Unveiling the Untold: Crafting Compelling Local Histories* was presented at the MHNSW facility at Kingswood.

The ongoing partnership with the WEA and National Archaeology Week to deliver events throughout the year provided the RAHS with the opportunity to engage with those outside its circle of members and supporters and to further the knowledge and understanding of the historical practice.

RAHS New Members' Evenings were traditionally held as in-person events. In abeyance since COVID, New Members Evenings were reintroduced with an online event. Featuring a series of short, light-hearted talks on scandals from the past, it was an opportunity to meet members and learn about their interests.

Event Type	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Seminars and Workshops	5	5	18	12	11
Lectures – Day, Evening, Joint, Special	18	17	19	8	26
Excursions and Tours	3	6	1	2	5
Other	3	1	1	3	5
TOTAL	29	29	39	25	47

REGIONAL AND WESTERN SYDNEY SEMINARS FUNDED BY CREATE NSW

The Regional and Western Sydney Seminars are an important part of the RAHS outreach program. Seminar programs include skills-based training and local history research components, which are designed around the training needs of local historical societies and community groups.

The RAHS wants to thank Create NSW for its continuing support of this program. The funding they provided was critical in ensuring that the RAHS could continue to support local and community history across the state.

Central Coast Regional Seminar – *Land Records, Convict Crimes and Convicts Transported from Ireland: A Treasure Trove of Research Possibilities*

Saturday 4 March 2023 at Gosford Lions Community Hall.

The RAHS, in conjunction with the Central Coast Family History Society, presented this one-day seminar. It included the following sessions: *Land Records in the Early Colony (Historical Land Records Viewer, Primary Applications and Court of Claims)* by Carol Liston AO; *Convicts and their crimes, with a focus on women convicted in the English courts* by Kathrine Reynolds; *Convicts Transported from Ireland: Rediscovering resources hidden in plain sight* by Christine Yeats.

Western Sydney Seminar – *Unveiling the Untold: Crafting Compelling Local Histories*

Saturday 18 November 2023 at the Western Sydney Records Centre.

The RAHS, in conjunction with the Museums of History NSW, presented this one-day seminar. It included the following sessions: *The value and importance of local history* by RAHS President Iain Stuart; *Publishing local and community history* by Judith Dunn OAM; *Whose local history? Negotiating narratives with descendants while getting into print* by Matthew Stephens; *Finding Your Place: Researching local history using the State Archives Collection* by Emily Hanna. The seminar concluded with a panel discussion on strategies for making the most of the resources to craft a local history.

2023 WORKSHOPS

Wednesday 15 March 2023 – *How to Research Your House's History*

RAHS workshop via Zoom in conjunction with the WEA.
Presented by Carol Liston AO and Christine Yeats.

This workshop discussed ways to research the history of your house, including how to find out who the previous owners were and how it might have been furnished.

Wednesday 9 August 2023 – *Using Trove to discover the Australia of Yesteryear*

RAHS workshop via Zoom in conjunction with the WEA.
Presented by Christine Yeats.

This workshop explored how to learn about the Australia of yesteryear using resources available on the National Library of Australia's Trove database.

Thursday 9 November 2023 – *Preserving Treasured Legacies: A Workshop on Gathering Family Memories*

RAHS workshop via Zoom in conjunction with the WEA.
Presented by Christine Yeats, Pauline Curby and Heather Garnsey.

This workshop guided participants through ways to discover, collect and preserve family memories, including cataloguing techniques and conducting meaningful interviews.

2023 DAY LECTURES

Wednesday 1 February 2023 via Zoom – *Reviving a Settler Colonial World: Landscape Photography in Australia and California*

Presented by Jarrod Hore.

Wednesday 1 March 2023 via Zoom – *Spies and Sparrows: ASIO and the Cold War*

Presented by Phillip Deery.

Wednesday 5 April 2023 via Zoom – *Trailblazing Women of Australian Public Broadcasting, 1945–1975*

Presented by Kylie Andrews.

Wednesday 3 May 2023 via Zoom – *Case Re-Opened: Revisiting the Forensic Archive*

Presented by Peter Doyle.

Wednesday 7 June 2023 via Zoom – *Early Escapes from Sydney by Sea: The unknown routes from Port Jackson to the Spanish Americas, 1788–1820*

Presented by Chris Maxworthy.

Wednesday 5 July 2023 via Zoom – *Forgetting Women in the History of Australian Science*

Presented by Jane Carey.

Wednesday 2 August 2023 via Zoom – *Connecting Oceans: Barbadians in Australia*

Presented by Roslyn Russell.

Wednesday 6 September 2023 via Zoom – *My Grandfather's Clock: Four Centuries of a British-Australian Family*

Presented by Graeme Davison.

Wednesday 4 October 2023 via Zoom – *The 'Girls' Who Made Australia Laugh*

Presented by Sharon Connolly.

Wednesday 1 November 2023 via Zoom – *The Shipwreck: The True Story of the Dunbar*

Presented by Larry Writer.

Wednesday 6 December 2023 via Zoom – *The Convict Orphans of Van Diemen's Land*

Presented by Lucy Frost.

2023 JOINT AND EVENING LECTURES

Tuesday 21 March 2023 via Zoom – *Reimagining the Bushranging Legend*

Presented by Meg Foster while in the United Kingdom.

Wednesday 24 May 2023 via Zoom – *Sludge: An Environmental History of Water and the Gold Rush*

RAHS in conjunction with National Archaeology Week.
Presented by Susan Lawrence.

2023 SPECIAL LECTURES

Wednesday 17 May 2023 via Zoom – *Stories of Love from the Archives of Law*

Presented by Alecia Simmonds.

Wednesday 21 June 2023 via Zoom – *More than a Glass and a Half: A History of Cadbury in Australia*

Presented by Robert Crawford.

Wednesday 19 July 2023 via Zoom – *English Bigamists and their Australian Travels*

Presented by Rebecca Probert.

Wednesday 26 July 2023 via Zoom – *Hanged for Bigamy? Alexander Wilson Smart's Love Stories*

Presented by Melanie Methot.

Wednesday 20 September 2023 via Zoom – *Garden Design Using Australian Native Plants: A History*

Presented by Stuart Read.

2023 EXCURSIONS

Wednesday 10 May 2023 – *Q Station*

Coordinated by Donna Newton.

Tuesday 23 May 2023 – *Edina Estate*

Coordinated by Michael Waterhouse.

Sunday 27 August 2023 – *Edina Estate*

Coordinated by Michael Waterhouse.

2023 OTHER EVENTS

Friday 10 February 2023 via Zoom – *Introductory session on the new Museums of History NSW website.*

Presented by Martyn Killion.

Tuesday 18 April 2023 via Zoom – RAHS Annual General Meeting.

Wednesday 11 October 2023 via Zoom – *RAHS New Members' Evening – Scandals From Our Past*

This online event consisted of a series of short, light-hearted talks on scandals from the past. It included the following talks: *The Curious Case of the Amorous Dentist* by Judith Dunn OAM; *Eliza Ashton's 'Radical' Views on Marriage* by Christine Yeats; and *Counterfeit Fivers* by Sue Tracey. The talks were followed by a Q and A session between RAHS members, councillors and employees.

RAHS Library

Donna Newton, RAHS Librarian

The National Library of Australia recognises the RAHS Library as holding a culturally significant collection. Our library is a key research resource for RAHS members and the broader history community, with over 60,000 items on Australian history.

The following tables provide an overview of the items currently catalogued in a database or an Excel spreadsheet. We also have over 10,000 scanned photographs, which have yet to be catalogued.

Approximately 11,000 records relating to photographs in an Excel spreadsheet need to be verified and updated to meet the cataloguing standards of our new library software, Liberty. There are also over 10,000+ photographs scanned with no metadata.

Collection Items	2023	2022
Books*	23,624	23,530
Journal/History/Conference	4,336	4,295
Serials and selected contents index	4,182	3,689
Photograph Collection	11,432	11,432
Glass Slide Collection	7,614	7,614
Walker Glass Slides	1,939	1,939
Manuscripts	1,058	1,058
Press Clippings Collection	7,255	7,255
Total	61,440	60,815

*Items contained in the Books database include items held in our Rare Books room, the reference collection,

directories and yearbooks, bibles, maps and audio/visual materials. This database also contains items held in vertical files.

This year's focus was cleaning up the current catalogue data for upload into the new online Liberty catalogue. The new online catalogue highlighted data inconsistencies and quality issues with the current catalogues, especially around subject headings. I attended an online *ALIA PD Classification: Library of Congress subject headings* course in partnership with TAFE NSW to gain more knowledge of the tools, methods and library practices to assist in cataloguing collections in our new online library system.

Given the data quality issues, we have decided to have a staged approach to the roll-out of the online catalogue. In 2024, we will ensure that users can search the new online catalogue to find 25,000 collection items including books, serials, maps, audio-visual materials and items available in our vertical files. There will also be 500 photographs catalogued and available to download. We will run a separate project to upload our press clippings, photographs and glass slide collections into Liberty. In the interim, Excel spreadsheets containing information on these library items are available on the RAHS website. We also have an additional 10,000 scanned photographs that are not included in these spreadsheets.

In 2023, researchers could visit the library by appointment. We also managed online queries from researchers, who requested *JRAHS* articles and items from our image collection for family history research, theses, publications, exhibitions, articles, website entries and media releases. We will be reopening History House and the RAHS Library in April 2024. In 2024, we will organise several events to reintroduce the library and its collections and guide our members and the history community on using the new catalogue. We are also looking forward to welcoming library volunteers back and hope to recruit more library volunteers to support a number of projects connected to the online catalogue and to help us promote our library collections.

We want to thank the NSW government, members, and volunteers for supporting the RAHS Library and helping ensure it remains an important educational and research resource. We hope to see you at the library soon.

Publications, Website and Digital Media

Phillip Jaworski, Membership Services and Digital Media

The RAHS produced six publications in 2023. This included two editions of the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)* and four editions of *History* magazine.

The *JRAHS* is the oldest journal of Australian history – first published in 1906. It contains original, unpublished articles and reviews by professional and community historians. In 2023, Christine Yeats took over as interim journal editor while the RAHS advertised for a replacement for Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, who stepped down at the end of 2022. The RAHS acknowledges Professor Liston’s stewardship over the past two decades. In September, the RAHS Council appointed Dr Samuel White as the new editor. Keep an eye on the journal website to learn about the journal’s new direction in 2024.

The journal continues to be a great outlet for publishing new research and writing from members and the history community. We received twelve new submissions and published eight articles and seventeen book reviews. Topics included a re-evaluation of 1920s War Service Homes in NSW, Thomas Wilson Esq and the natural history collections of First Fleet Surgeon John White, businessman Quong Tart’s use of popular sport to influence anti-Chinese public opinion, and the supporting cast of the Chungking Legation. We encourage members to consider making a submission to the journal in 2024.

History magazine provides articles of general historical interest, developments in research, book notes, forthcoming events, and other relevant news. Each issue is produced with a guest editor who is responsible for sourcing articles from a range of contributors. The editors for 2023 were Graham Shirley (March), Christine Yeats (June), Phillip Jaworski (September), and Richard White and Alison Wishart (December). Topics included a reassessment of Penelope Lucas, the scattered archives of the Sydney Opera House, the near-fatal collision of two jet airliners at Mascot in 1971, and the *Sydney Morning Herald’s* apology for Myall Creek.

The RAHS eNewsletter continues to serve as an effective way to communicate news and events to members and friends. Over 3,000 people are subscribed to the eNewsletter, with fifteen issues circulated in 2023, including a special issue on the launch of the RAHS’s inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan during National Reconciliation Week. Some of our other top stories included the RAHS’s campaign to secure funding for Trove, the bicentenary of the Supreme Court of NSW, and an update on the campaign to preserve the Roxy Theatre in Parramatta. The RAHS is very grateful for the news stories and events from members and affiliates, which ensures our content covers a diverse range of interests.

The RAHS continues to have an active social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. We now have over 6,600 followers on Facebook, 2,000 on Twitter, and 1,800 on Instagram. Our biggest

increase in followers was on Instagram, where we made a greater effort to engage with new users. We also saw an increase in our followers on YouTube, which received over 6,000 views in 2023. Our most watched video was *Secret and Special: The Untold Story of the Z Special Unit in the Second World War*.

The RAHS website is an important resource for supporting our educational, research and advocacy work. The website features a blog, history webpages, an events calendar, a shop, and a members’ area with exclusive content. In July, we launched a new-look website and an updated members’ area on a new platform to help manage the increasing number of visitors and the site’s growing complexity. We also introduced new features to improve accessibility for visually impaired visitors. We thank volunteers Rebell Barnes AO and Elaine Phillips for helping us test the members’ area. Rebell also provided descriptive text for our blog post images using guidelines from Vision Australia. We always look forward to hearing about ways we can improve the website. Please get in touch if you have specific feedback about the website’s layout and accessibility.

The website was accessed by 51,020 users throughout 2023 (down from 61,419 in 2022) – a 17% decrease. The decrease may be explained by an interval between June and July when Google Analytics stopped collecting website data. It could also be explained by our anti-spam measures, which protect the site from malicious bots. Website users were predominantly from Australia (83%), with others from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. Some of the most visited pages on the website included *Exciting New World: Australia in the 1920s*, *Women’s History Month*, *Finding Your Ancestors: Researching Aboriginal Family History in NSW*, and the 2023 RAHS Conference in Wagga Wagga.

We look forward to new opportunities in 2024 to increase our presence online and inform our members and friends of the latest news and events from the history community.

RAHS Affiliated Societies

Lynne Allen, Chair of the Affiliated Societies Committee

With great excitement and anticipation, we were able to host our first on-site conference since 2019. And we weren’t disappointed. Thanks to Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society who, under the leadership of Geoff Burch, worked tirelessly to restore the magic, the 2023 Annual Conference was a roaring success. There was such a buzz in the air as participants relished the

opportunity to once again renew acquaintances, form new friendships and benefit from first class presentations on a wide variety of topics. Attendees could indulge their passion for local and community history in the company of like-minded people. The conference afforded a wonderful opportunity to network, forging connections that will support their quest to explore and preserve our fascinating and sometimes quirky history.

The pre-conference reception was held in the 1881 Riverina Council Chambers with impressive architectural features. It was obvious the conference would be a success, judging by the positive vibe that permeated the gathering. Aunty Mary Atkinson, a proud Wiradyuri/Ngunnawal woman, opened the conference on Saturday morning with a passionate, heartfelt Welcome to Country. Bruce Pennay OAM delivered the Lesley Muir Address, focusing on how local historians are embracing new technologies to further the process of uncovering and recording the history and heritage of their area. Over the two days of the conference, attendees were informed and stimulated by various speakers who addressed the theme *The Way Ahead: Local and Community Histories for our Future*.

Always a highlight of the RAHS conference is the session where we honour members of affiliated societies who have given of their time, energy and expertise, often over many years, to their local society. The testimonials offered in support of the nominations for the Certificates of Achievement highlights the extraordinary selfless contribution these people make to their local communities. It is indeed humbling to be in their presence. The conference also offers an opportunity to recognise the tireless work of volunteers who assist the RAHS employees at History House. Please take the opportunity in 2024 to nominate volunteers who over the years have been integral to the smooth running and success of your organisation.

I am pleased to announce that the 2024 RAHS Annual Conference will take place at Campbelltown and we are already working with the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society to ensure another blockbuster event. Keep watching your RAHS eNews and *History* magazine for more details.

In 2023, there were twenty-five applications for the Create NSW Cultural Grants program, which provides \$60,000 for local and community history projects. A total of \$98,060 of funding was requested, making it a very competitive process. Eighteen applicants were successful, and details about their projects were published in *History* magazine.

If you intend to apply for the 2024 program, start planning by drawing up an action plan. Be clear about the project for which you intend to pursue funding, scope the work needed to bring the project to a conclusion and seek out a formal quote for the work. Don't hesitate to contact the RAHS employees and discuss your proposal with them. The team at History House are very knowledgeable and will provide sage advice. It is vital that you complete the grant application carefully, especially when completing the budget and project timeline sections, to avoid having your application rejected.

In 2023, two members of the Affiliated Societies Committee, Peter Hobbins and Samantha Friend, stepped down due to pressure from other commitments. We were very sad to lose such energetic and enthusiastic people who served with such passion and dedication. Their knowledge and contacts were invaluable to the committee, especially during the planning for the RAHS Annual Conference. We thank them both for their vital input and professionalism.

Remember the Affiliated Societies Committee is your committee, established to support your society in its valuable role as preserver and protector of the heritage of NSW. In co-operation with the wonderful History House employees, we are hoping to offer affiliates improved access to advice and communication in 2024. If you have any suggestions which might enhance the success and experience of your society, please don't hesitate to contact us.

RAHS Membership Data

This year there was a ten percent decline in individual and pair memberships. We believe the reopening of History House in 2024 will mean that the RAHS can attract previous and new members who primarily join to access the library and enjoy in-person events at History House.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
AFFILIATED SOCIETIES					
Societies with fewer than 15 members	61	62	64	60	56
Between 16-30	61	64	58	64	69
Between 31 - 50	54	58	55	58	55
Between 51-100	109	101	106	97	95
Between 101-200	61	64	67	69	73
Between 201-300	8	9	9	16	15
More than 300	15	14	14	13	13
TOTAL	369	372	373	377	376

INDIVIDUAL AND PAIRS

Individual Members	262	307	312	319	310
Household Pairs (x2)	25	32	35	38	46
Students	8	17	11	11	6
Senior Members	431	462	430	451	442
Senior Pairs (x2)	65	64	74	92	96
TOTAL	791	882	862	911	900

CORPORATE	1	6	5	5	6
LIBRARIES	74	78	79	91	115
Honorary Fellows	4	4	4	4	5
Life Members	13	13	17	17	17
Members 50 years	5	6	6	6	6
Free and Exchange	33	31	31	32	36

TOTAL NON-SUBSCRIBERS	55	54	58	59	64
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TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS	1,235	1,338	1,319	1,384	1,397
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OVERALL TOTAL	1,290	1,392	1,377	1,443	1,461
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RAHS PEOPLE

The RAHS Council

In 2023 the RAHS Council comprised of the following members:

President

Dr Iain Stuart, BA (Hons), M Env Sci, PhD

Senior Vice President

Ms Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin

Vice President

Mr Graham Shirley

Treasurer

*Dr Kathrine Reynolds, BA, BCrim, MSc, PhD, FRHistS

Executive Member

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, AO, BA (Hons), PhD, FRAHS from 18/04/2023

Councillors

Mrs Lynnette Allen, MA, DipEd, Grad Dip Local, Family & Applied History

Ms Pauline Curby, MA, DipEd to 18/04/2023

Mrs Judith Dunn, OAM, FPDHS

Dr Peter Hobbins, BA, BSc (Hons), M Medical Hum, PhD to 18/04/2023

Mr Craig McPherson, B.Des (Arch), M.HeritCons, M.ICOMOS

Dr Mark St Leon, BEc, GCertTQM, MBus, MA (Hons), PhD, CA

Associate Professor Richard White, BA (Hons), DipEd

Dr Samuel White, BA/LLB, LLM (Hons I), M War Studies, PhD from 29/09/2023

Ms Alison Wishart, BA (Hons), MCultHeritage, GradDipInfMgmt

* At their first meeting after the 2022 RAHS AGM, the elected Councillors appointed Dr Kathrine Reynolds as Treasurer, a role which need not be filled by an elected Councillor (as per Clause 34, RAHS Constitution). From 18/04/2023, Dr Kathrine Reynolds became a RAHS Councillor and was renominated as RAHS Treasurer.

In 2023, the RAHS Council held ten online meetings.

RAHS Committees and RAHS Working Parties

The Society's committees bring together a wide range of people who have a shared interest in supporting the key activities of the Society. The RAHS committees develop draft policies for consideration of the Council as well as supporting employees with core activities. The RAHS also forms working parties that are dedicated to delivering a specific project.

Below is a list of the committees and their members as at 31 December 2023.

Affiliated Societies Committee

Ms Lynne Allen (Chair), Mrs Judith Dunn (Vice-Chair), Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston (Specialist, Teaching), Ms Lorraine Neate (Wollongong), Ms Angela Phippen (Specialist), Mr Graham Shirley (Vice-Chair).

Events Committee

Ms Christine Yeats (Chair), Emeritus Professor David Carment, Mrs Judith Dunn, Dr Kathrine Reynolds, Mr Graham Shirley, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Associate Professor Richard White.

Executive Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President), Ms Christine Yeats (Senior Vice President), Mr Graham Shirley (Vice President), Dr Kathrine Reynolds (Treasurer), Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston (Council Representative).

Fellowship and Medals Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston (Fellow), Mr Keith Johnson (Fellow), Professor Geoffrey Sherington (Fellow), Associate Professor Richard White (Historian/Councillor).

Heritage Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Mr Craig McPherson, Ms Elaine Phillips, Mr Graham Shirley, Dr Mark St Leon.

History House Working Party

The President Dr Iain Stuart, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Mr Craig McPherson, Dr Kathrine Reynolds, Ms Christine Yeats.

Library and Archives Working Party

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Ms Shaani Hutto, Ms Donna Newton, Dr Louise Trott, Ms Alison Wishart, Ms Christine Yeats.

Publications Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (Chair), Ms Linda Emery, Mr Phillip Jaworski, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Dr Mark St Leon, Dr Samuel White, Ms Christine Yeats

Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Committee

The President Dr Iain Stuart, Dr Michael Bennett, Dr Peter Hobbins, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Mr Craig McPherson, Mr Graham Shirley, Dr Shayne Williams.

Strategic Review Working Party

The President Dr Iain Stuart, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston AO, Mr Craig McPherson, Dr Mark St Leon.

RAHS Volunteers

The RAHS would like to thank all its volunteers for the incredible contribution that they make. Our 2023 volunteers included: Rebell Barnes, Jessica Buckton, Kevin Dudeney, Brei Dwyer, Elizabeth Heffernan, Shaani Hutto, Elaine Phillips, Maximilian Reid, Margaret Scott and Bron Stepowski.

RAHS Certificate of Appreciation

In 2023, a RAHS Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Jessica Buckton for her contribution to the RAHS website and for supporting RAHS operational activities. Jessica initially joined the RAHS as a Macquarie University intern. She worked with RAHS employees and Councillors to deliver the website page Competition, Community and Country: Agricultural Shows in NSW, which contains resources that highlight the social, cultural and educational significance of agricultural shows in NSW. Jessica then became a volunteer and has supported online events, contributed content for Women's History Month and continues to develop online resources that promote the understanding of NSW History.

RAHS Interns and RAHS Student Placements

In July and August 2023, Charles Stuart University placement students Tomika Maher and James Fahey undertook their work placement in the RAHS library.

Tomika helped define the process of cataloguing images for the new RAHS online catalogue, researched and wrote a proposal for managing subject headings, prepared metadata and images, successfully uploaded a sample set of Aadastra Aerial image records to the online catalogue and prepared a guide on this process for future library volunteers.

James assisted the RAHS library's Vertical File project by creating a document analysing the 7,200 items housed in 25 drawers of the six filing cabinet files. He also successfully uploaded a small set of images into the online catalogue.

RAHS Employees

Full-time

General Manager: Suzanne Holohan, FGIA, BA (Hons), BComm (Hons), Dip TAE

Librarian: Donna Newton, Dip Lib Inf, ALIA (Tec)

Membership Services/Digital Media: Phillip Jaworski, BA (Hons)

Part-time

Finance/Grants/Insurance Administrator: Maryanne Byrne, BBus MMgt AOS

The Society also paid professional fees for book-keeping services and legal advice concerning the History House Building Project.

SOCIETY HONOURS

The RAHS Council recognises contributions to the advancement of education in the field of Australian history in three categories, namely Fellow, Honorary Fellow and Medalist.

RAHS Fellows

Members of the Society who, in the judgment of the Council, have rendered service in advancing the knowledge of Australian history and in furtherance of the objects of the Society, shall be eligible for appointment as Fellows. Under the Society's regulations, the number of Fellows shall not exceed twenty-five and not more than three Fellows may be appointed in a calendar year.

Dr Rosemary Annable, MA, DPhil, FFAHS

Emeritus Professor David Carment, AM

Professor Stephen Garton, BA (Hons), PhD, FAHA, FASSA

Robert Irving, OAM, ARMTC, FRAIA
Alfred Brian Maxwell James, OAM, MA, Dip Arts,
Dip FHS
Keith A. Johnson, AM, FSG, FSAG
Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, AO, BA
(Hons), PhD, DipFHS
Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Sherington, MA, PhD
Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRAHS
Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin, FRAHS

RAHS Honorary Fellows

Persons who, in the judgment of the Council, have rendered valuable service in advancing the knowledge of Australian history, shall be eligible for appointment as Honorary Fellows. Under the Society's Regulations, the number of Honorary Fellows shall not exceed ten

and not more than one Honorary Fellow may be appointed in a calendar year.

Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson, FAHA
Dr Shirley Fitzgerald
Dr Beverley Kingston, FASSA

RAHS Medallists

The awards of Medallist for Distinguished Service are made by the RAHS Council to those members of the Society who, in its judgment, have made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of the work of the Society.

Margaret Coleman, OAM
Richard d'Apice, AM, LL.B, FSAG
Margaret Scott

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Tuesday, 16 April 2024, 6 pm | Online via Zoom

RAHS members are invited to attend our AGM. If you wish to attend, please email admin@rahs.org.au, and you will be sent a link to the Zoom meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies.
2. Confirmation of the previous AGM minutes held on Tuesday, 18 April 2023.
3. Consideration and, if deemed fit, adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023 (as printed in the March 2024 issue of *History* magazine).
4. Consideration and, if deemed fit, adoption of the Financial Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 (summary of Financial Statements printed in *History* magazine. A full statement of accounts is available to members on request).
5. Declaration by the Returning Officer of the Council for the current year.
6. Presidential Address.
7. General Business.

All financial members are eligible to attend and vote at the AGM. They are also entitled to appoint a proxy to vote in their stead. A proxy must also be a financial member of the Society at the time of voting. Proxy forms addressed to the Returning Officer must be received at History House by no later than Tuesday, 9 April 2024 at 5 pm. Members who are not currently financial but renew their subscriptions before the AGM are eligible to attend the AGM and hold proxies for other financial members.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

At the close of nominations at 4 pm, Monday, 12 February 2024, four nominations were received for four positions. The nominations were from Mark Dunn, Judith Godden, Iain Stuart and Alison Wishart. Under Regulation 28 of the RAHS Constitution, a postal ballot does not need to be held to determine the four positions on the twelve-member Council.