


DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES RAHS COUNCILLORS



‘Meditations’

Image: RAHS Osborne Collection c.1920

	DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RAHS COUNCILLORS	
Last review	July 2025	

Overview

Founded in 1901, the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) is Australia’s oldest historical society, with a proud legacy of preserving and sharing history while embracing innovation to support historical research, education, and community engagement. RAHS Councillors play a critical leadership role in sustaining this legacy and shaping the Society’s future. They provide strategic direction, ensure strong governance, and advocate for history and heritage. Through their leadership, the RAHS delivers valued services that support its members and more than 320 affiliated historical societies across New South Wales—advancing the study of Australian history and helping communities to research, preserve, and share their local stories.

Governance and Legal Responsibilities

As directors of a company limited by guarantee and *responsible persons* under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)* and ACNC regulations, Councillors must:

- act in good faith and for a proper purpose, always in the best interests of the RAHS
- exercise due care, skill, and diligence when making decisions
- avoid and manage conflicts of interest transparently
- not misuse their position or confidential information for personal gain
- ensure responsible financial management, including preventing insolvency
- comply with the RAHS Constitution and governance obligations
- obtain a Director Identification Number (Director ID) as required by law

Note: The following link provides information on applying for a Director ID:

<https://www.abrs.gov.au/director-identification-number/apply-director-identification-number>

Strategic and Operational Duties

Councillors are expected to:

- develop and support strategic initiatives that advance the RAHS mission and goals
- chair or become members of committees and working parties that oversee RAHS programs and activities
- actively participate in RAHS Council meetings, which are primarily held online, with no meetings scheduled in December or January

Other strategic and operational duties and responsibilities, depending on Councillors’ interests and skills, may include:

- preparing or contributing to key policy documents that guide RAHS governance and operational activities
- serving as editor or contributing content to *History* magazine
- serving on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*
- providing content for RAHS social media platforms
- representing the RAHS at external events to build partnerships and raise awareness of RAHS activities

- accepting invitations to speak at RAHS events and RAHS Affiliated Societies' events to promote historical research and engagement.
- coordinating and delivering workshops and seminars at the request of the RAHS Council and/or RAHS Events Committee
- monitoring and assessing proposed changes to government policies and legislation that could impact the study and practice of history and heritage
- supporting fundraising and sponsorship initiatives, including providing strategic input on grant applications and other funding opportunities
- engaging with members and affiliated societies to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the historical community

Key Attributes of RAHS Councillors

RAHS Councillors bring diverse skills and experiences to their role, reflecting the broad expertise required to govern a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. While a passion for history is important, Council membership is not limited to historians—strong governance, financial, legal, advocacy, and leadership skills are essential to ensuring the Society remains effective, sustainable, and influential.

As directors of the RAHS, Councillors must balance governance responsibilities with active participation in the Society's initiatives. The time commitment varies, with a minimum expectation of 5–7 hours per week to attend Council meetings, participate in committees, and contribute to the organisation's strategic and operational activities. Those elected to the RAHS Executive have additional responsibilities.



Dawn over the Harbour.

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