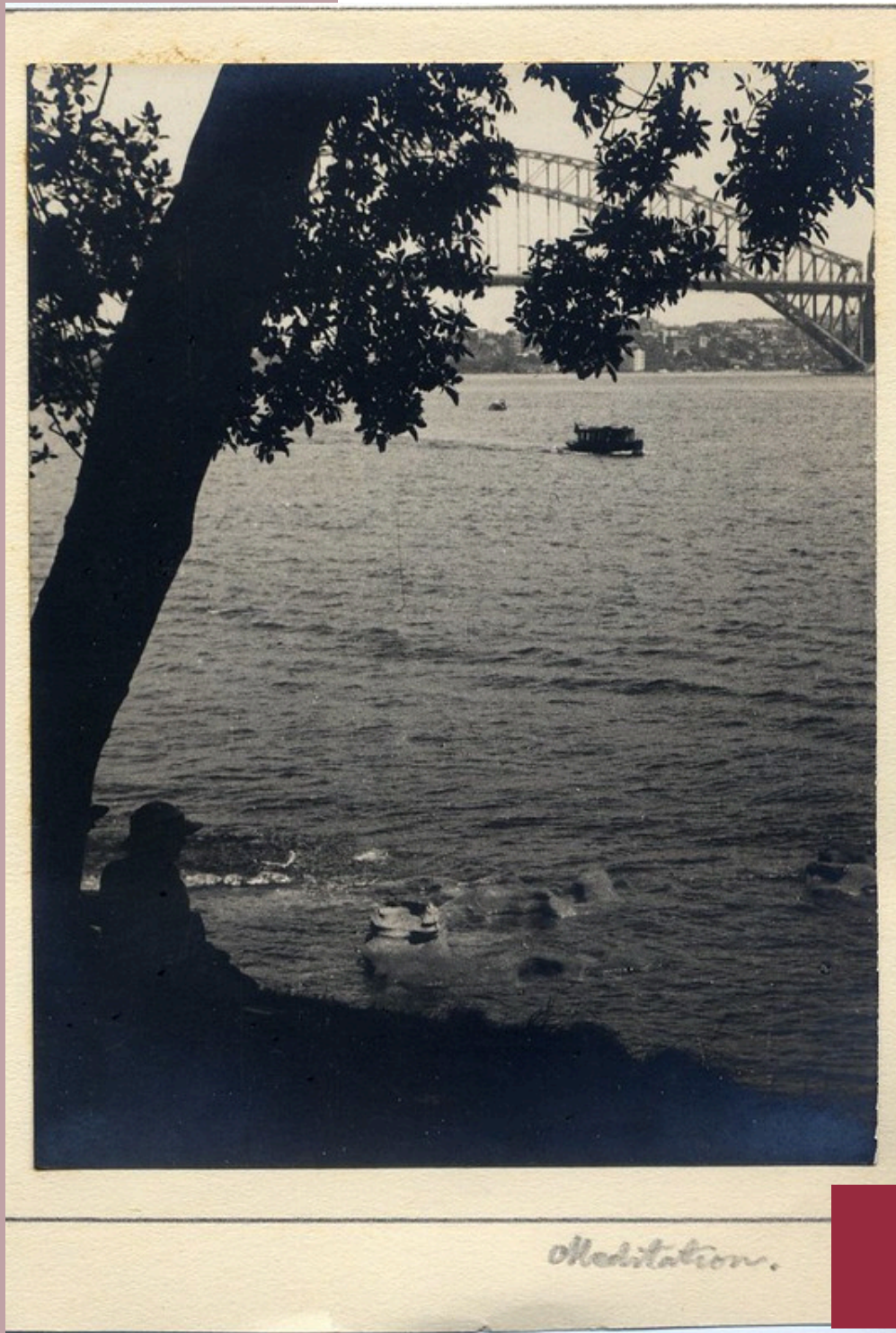


RAHS GOVERNANCE CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY



‘Meditations’

Image: RAHS Osborne Collection c.1920



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Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Purpose of Policy

The Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) is committed to maintaining transparency, accountability, and integrity. This policy ensures that RAHS Councillors, RAHS Committee Members, RAHS Volunteers and RAHS employees effectively identify, disclose, and manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all RAHS Councillors, Committee Members, Employees, and Volunteers and aligns with:

- ACNC Governance Standard 5, which requires disclosure of conflicts of interest for 'responsible persons'
- Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), which outlines director responsibilities.

3. Definition of Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when personal interests (financial or non-financial) could compromise, or be seen to compromise, a person's duty to act in the best interests of RAHS. Personal interests include direct interests as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as shareholder or committee member)

Conflicts may be:

- **Actual Conflict of Interest:** A situation where a person's private interests directly interfere with their duties at RAHS.
- **Potential Conflict of Interest:** A situation where a person's private interests may interfere in the future, depending on circumstances.
- **Perceived Conflict of Interest:** A situation where a reasonable observer may believe that a person's private interests could improperly influence their decisions, even if no improper influence exists

Examples of conflicts of interest:

- **Actual Conflict of Interest:** A Councillor owns a publishing business and submits a tender to print RAHS publications. Since they stand to benefit financially, they must disclose the conflict and remove themselves from decision-making.
- **Potential Conflict of Interest:** A RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee Member is on the board of another historical society that may apply for RAHS grants. While no immediate conflict exists, they should disclose this relationship as it could lead to future bias in grant decisions.
- **Perceived Conflict of Interest:** A RAHS employee is responsible for managing vendor selection for a project. One of the bidders is owned by a close family friend. Even if an

employee acts impartially, others may perceive favouritism, requiring disclosure and recusal from the selection process.

4. Managing Conflicts of Interest

RAHS expects all individuals to:

1. **Avoid conflicts where possible.**
2. **Identify and disclose conflicts promptly.**
3. **Manage conflicts appropriately.**
4. **Follow this policy and report breaches.**

4.1 Disclosure of Conflicts

1. **Declare conflicts** at RAHS Council meetings, RAHS Committee meetings or RAHS Administered grants assessment meetings (Conflict of Interest is a standing agenda item).
2. **Register the conflict** in the **RAHS Register of Interests** (Appendix 1) by emailing executive@rahs.org.au
3. **Seek guidance** from the RAHS Company Secretary if uncertain

4.2 Decision-Making on Conflicts

Conflicted individuals must be excluded from any decision-making process where a conflict exists. This applies across all **RAHS governance and operational settings**, including:

- **RAHS Council meetings.**
- **RAHS Committee and Working Party meetings.**
- **RAHS-administered grant assessment meetings.**
- **During work duties where an employee or volunteer identifies a conflict.**

The relevant decision-making body (e.g., RAHS Council, Committee, or Working Party) will determine appropriate steps, which may include:

- **Exclusion from voting** on the matter (minimum requirement).
- **Refraining from discussion or leaving the room** during deliberations.
- **Reassignment of duties** if an employee or volunteer has a conflict related to their work responsibilities.
- **Resignation from a role** if the conflict is severe and ongoing.

If a conflict arises during **daily work or volunteer duties**, employees and volunteers must immediately report it to the **RAHS General Manager** who will escalate it to the RAHS Executive if necessary. The employee and volunteer will be excluded from any related decision-making process related to that duty and allocated different work.

If a conflict arises for the RAHS General manager, then it will be reported to the RAHS Executive.

4.3 Confidentiality

- The **RAHS Register of Interests** is accessible only to the RAHS Council and the Company Secretary.
- The RAHS auditor may access financial disclosures for transparency.

5. Compliance and Breaches

If a person fails to disclose a conflict of interest:

1. The RAHS Council will investigate.
2. Consequences will be determined based on severity (e.g., warning, removal from decision-making, or further action).
3. If someone suspects non-disclosure, they should report it to the RAHS Company Secretary and/or RAHS Executive

6. Document Review

This document will be reviewed annually in May by the RAHS Company Secretary, with updates made as required to reflect any changes to roles, responsibilities, or governance requirements.

In addition to the scheduled annual review, updates will be made as needed in response to:

- Legislative changes affecting charities or companies limited by guarantee
- New governance standards or updates introduced by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC).
- Other regulatory or compliance requirements that impact the RAHS governance framework

Ensuring this document remains current and aligned with best practices supports the RAHS in maintaining strong governance, compliance, and operational efficiency.

Appendix 1 – Royal Australian Historical Society – Register of Interests

Name	Role	Description of interest	Has the RAHS Council been notified of the interest?	Date of disclosure	Steps taken by RAHS Council for dealing with the conflict	Actions taken by the RAHS Council to address the conflict



Dawn over the Harbour.

‘Dawn over the Harbour’

Image: RAHS Osborne Collection c.1920