



**2025
Annual
Report**

**ROYAL AUSTRALIAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Acknowledgement of Country

The Royal Australian Historical Society acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, teach and learn about Australia's past. We honour their contribution to our culture as the first storytellers on this land that we share. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



Tree on the site of Yuranigh's Grave, Molong, NSW, 2015 (Photographer: Graham Sciberras)

This photograph was taken on the site of Yuranigh's grave (d.1850) of the Wiradjuri People. Yuranigh was among three Aboriginal guides employed by Surveyor-General Sir Thomas Mitchell to accompany him on his 1845 expedition from Boree, near Molong, to central Queensland. Yuranigh's people, the Wiradjuri, carved five trees on this site with striking traditional geometric designs.

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RAHS Volunteer Zoe McPherson, early career historian, using the RAHS Library collections.



Water, Water, Everywhere!, an RAHS History Week 2025 walking tour of Sydney's historic water features, led by Judith Dunn OAM.

About Us

Who we are

The RAHS, Australia's oldest historical organisation, was founded in Sydney in 1901. A membership-based not-for-profit charity and company limited by guarantee, the Society promotes the study and understanding of Australian history, with a particular focus on the histories of the places and peoples of New South Wales. We have a strong membership base of individuals, historical societies, and history-sector organisations, and we welcome all who share our goals, from those newly curious about the past to experienced researchers and historians.

What we do

We support the study and practice of history at a local and community level across New South Wales. We organise lectures, seminars and workshops that share historical knowledge and build skills for research and projects. Our magazine, journal, newsletters and online resources engage the public with research and showcase the work of our network of affiliated, volunteer-run historical societies.

The RAHS also plays a broader role in the history sector by administering NSW Government-funded grant programs, offering work placement opportunities, providing an insurance scheme for affiliated societies, sharing practical advice on running historical and heritage organisations, and advocating for access to historical records and history research.

We care for a nationally significant library collection of more than 63,000 items and are committed to ensuring that History House, our state heritage-listed building on Macquarie Street, Sydney, is well-maintained and continues to support learning, research and connection for our members and the wider history community.

Why we do it

We believe history matters. Understanding the histories of places and peoples reveals how the past lives on in landscapes, lives and memories and shapes the present and future. Historical research begins locally. Local and community historical research into people and places provides a crucial foundation for the writing and understanding of the wider history of New South Wales and Australia.

Message from the President

Our new format annual report rejoices in the way the Royal Australian Historical Society has emerged from the COVID doldrums with renewed energy! A small organisation with 3.5 staff and 12 volunteer councillors, we have regrouped and refreshed our outreach to our members and the wider community. We are fortunate to have dedicated staff and I thank them for their commitment, often in difficult circumstances.

Our home in Macquarie Street has been the source of much anxiety in past years, but we finally have a staged plan to bring History House back to life with improved functionality. This will be a process over several years to overcome the ravishes of weather and age. The rooms have been cleaned of mould, new hybrid communication technology has been installed and a new roof will ensure that the building is now watertight. Future projects will offer improved lift access to the library and better drainage in the basement. These developments would not be possible without the generous support of our donors. Your donations have made this happen.

Our members have enthusiastically joined in our events. Create NSW through the cultural grants programme has supported our outreach to bring historical research skills to historians, librarians and heritage advocates outside Sydney. We encourage our members to ask us to provide activities in their communities or join in hybrid events from History House. We are delighted that other community organisations are sharing our auditorium and reception rooms for their functions as this enables us to promote history and heritage in a practical way.

The tasks lying ahead are to encourage the broader community to explore Australia's past, in all its complexities. We are committed to helping historians find new sources and re-examine old sources to reveal the hidden aspects of our history. Our new library system will make our collections more accessible to support research, discussion, writing and publishing to contribute to our shared understandings of our past. The Royal Australian Historical Society offers its councillors and members opportunities to enhance their professional skills and share their historical enthusiasm with like-minded others. Whether you join us to learn or to share your knowledge, it is our combined efforts that make our history more accessible to others.

Carol Liston AO
RAHS President



Associate Professor Carol Liston AO speaking at Parliament House on *Tales From a Rare Manuscript: The Settler's Muster Book 1800*. [September 2020]

1,318
Membership

367
Affiliated Societies

1,450
History House Visitors

2025
at a Glance
impact across
New South Wales

2025 Education and Events

29 Events delivered across NSW

850+ People who participated in events program

9 Organisations we partnered with to deliver events program

2025 Library and Collections

200+

Library Visitors

63,000+

Items in the RAHS Library Collection

43%

% of items currently searchable on our new online library catalogue

\$1.62 million

2025 Valuation of items in the RAHS Library Collection

2025 Publications and Research

6 Membership publications, including four magazines and two journals.

15 Number of RAHS eNewsletters circulated to members and friends.

3,265 Members, friends and organisations that subscribe to the RAHS eNewsletter.

117 Affiliated societies featured in our eNewsletter

2025 Grants and Sector Support

26 New South Wales history and heritage projects funded by New South Wales government through RAHS administered grants programs

\$191K Amount of grant funding provided by the NSW government through RAHS administered grants programs

324 Number of affiliated societies who took out affordable insurance for their activities and volunteers through our scheme.

2025 Digital Reach

48,000+ Visitors to the RAHS Website

12,000+ Social Media followers across all our platforms

250+ Social Media and blog posts covering our activities, affiliated societies news, latest history research and resources

63%

% of our 367 Affiliated Societies based in Regional New South Wales

822

Individual & Household Members

81

Library Subscribers

2025

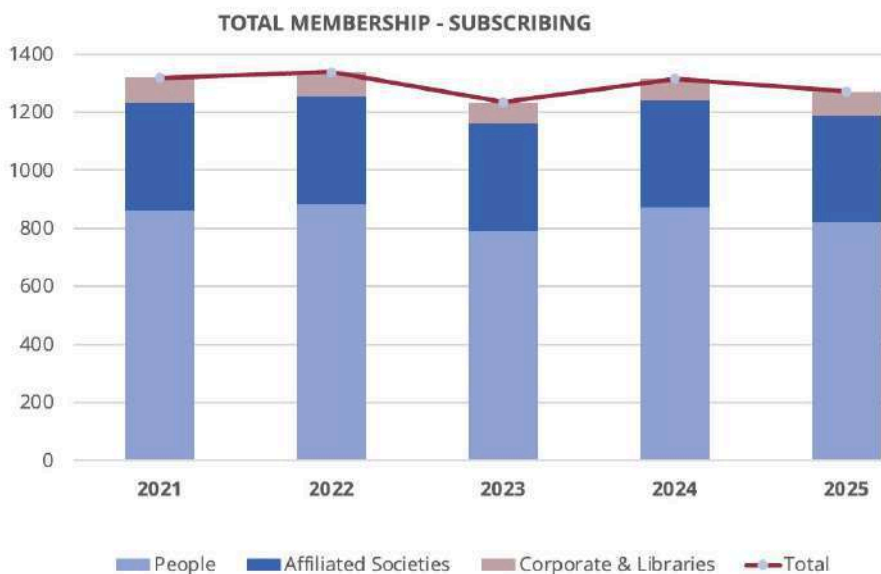
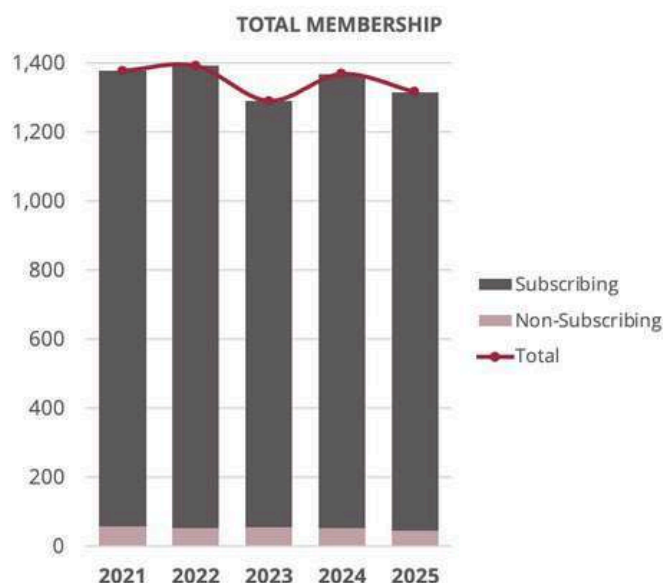
Our membership

Our members are central to the Society's work. Their subscriptions and donations support events, outreach initiatives, publications, online resources, and the care of History House and the RAHS Library. Members also contribute their time and expertise as volunteers and strengthen local and community history across New South Wales through our network of affiliated societies.

Membership Trends

Over the past five years, our total membership has remained broadly stable. 97 per cent of members are subscribing members, with the remaining small proportion made up of non-subscribing memberships. These include Honorary Fellows, Life Members and 50-year members, as well as reciprocal exchange arrangements with partner organisation

Following a decline in 2023, membership figures recovered in 2024. In 2025, subscribing members declined slightly by 3.3%.

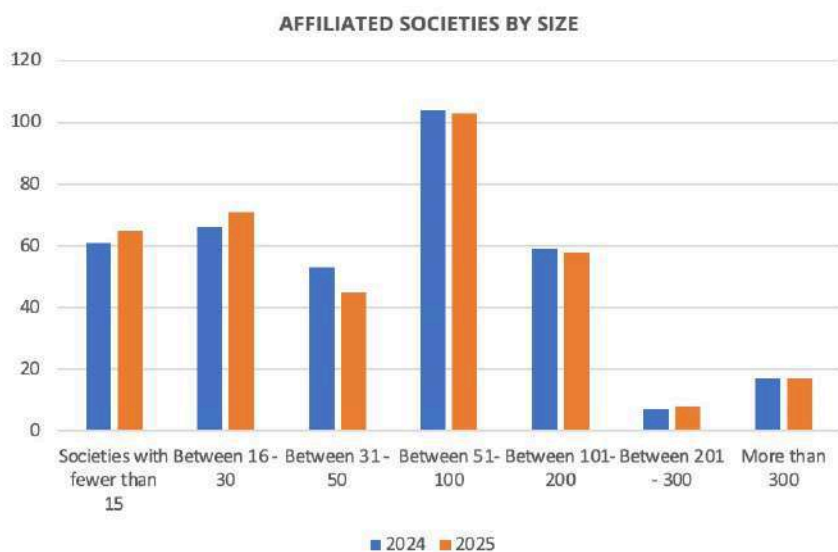
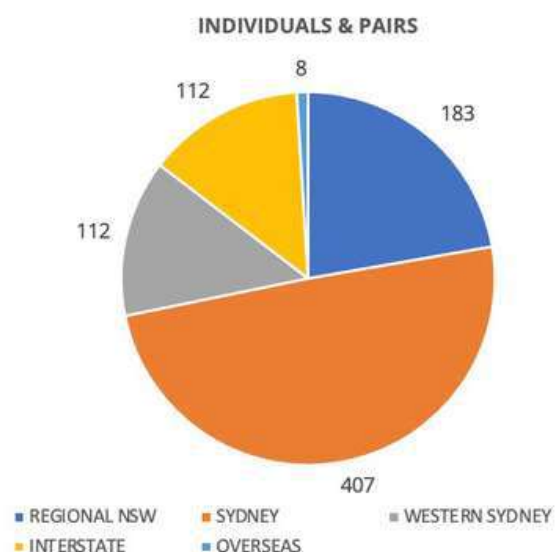
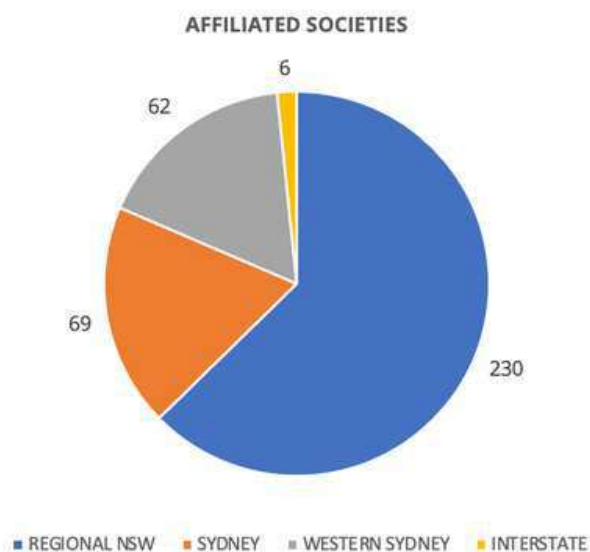


Individual and household memberships form the largest part of our membership base. Just under half (49.5%) are based in Sydney, with 22.3% in regional NSW and 13.6% in Western Sydney. This distribution reflects our strong metropolitan presence alongside a significant reach across regional New South Wales. Membership numbers declined slightly in 2025, with non-renewals most commonly attributed to cost-of-living pressures and health-related reasons.

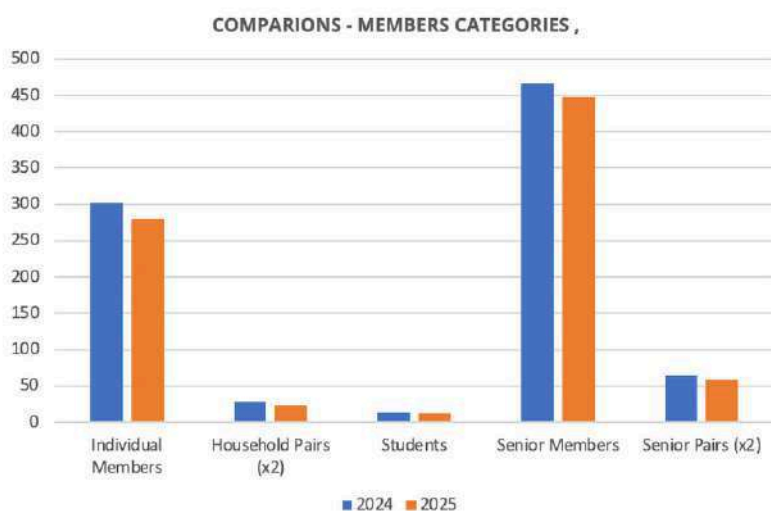
Our network of affiliated societies has remained stable over the past five years. This stability reflects the enduring strength of local and community history across New South Wales and the continued commitment of volunteers who sustain historical organisations in their communities.

Membership Location and Type

- Ninety-seven percent of our members are based in Australia. Overseas members are mainly Library Subscribers who receive the Society's publications. Most affiliated societies are based in regional New South Wales, while individual, senior, student and household memberships tend to be concentrated in Sydney.



- Although the total number of affiliated societies remained steady in 2025, some moved between size categories during the year. Societies with 51–100 members continued to form the largest group. Overall, our affiliates reflect a diverse and balanced mix of small, medium and larger organisations, with no clear trend towards overall growth or contraction in size.



- Individual and senior memberships remain the largest part of our 'people' membership. The small decline in 2025 underscores the importance of strengthening engagement with current and potential members through events, programs and Library access. In a climate of cost-of-living pressures and reduced community participation, affordability is essential to ensuring broad participation in history

Membership Survey: Key Insights

As we approach our 125th anniversary, we are reflecting on how history is practised and how the needs of our members continue to evolve. In mid-2025, we conducted two targeted surveys to inform this work: one for affiliated societies and one for individual, senior, student and household members. Together, the results provide a snapshot of our membership and are helping to guide our plans and programs. To keep members informed, we shared the findings of the survey through the RAHS eNewsletter and on our website.

Affiliated Societies

1. Practical support matters most.

Affiliated societies prioritise access to RAHS insurance schemes, grants to support local projects, and practical advice on running a historical society. These supports help them remain viable and manage risk.

2. Most are volunteer-run and small to medium in size.

Access to expertise, templates and shared sector knowledge is therefore especially important.

3. Connection matters.

Societies emphasise the importance of being part of a wider network that understands the realities of local and community history work.

4. Training and professional development are important.

Workshops and seminars help societies build skills in research, collection care and organisational sustainability.

5. The RAHS is seen as a trusted advocate.

Respondents highlighted the Society's role in representing local and community history interests to government and within the broader history sector.

Individuals, Seniors, Students, Households

1. Publications remain a core benefit.

History magazine, the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)* and the eNewsletter are seen as trusted ways to stay connected with historical research.

2. Access to the RAHS Library is important.

Both in-person access and research support, including assistance from the RAHS Librarian, are highly regarded membership benefits.

3. Events support learning and connection.

Lectures, seminars, excursions and online events help members deepen their understanding of history and maintain a sense of community.

4. Flexible participation increases access.

A mix of in-person, online and recorded options enables members across New South Wales and beyond to take part.

5. Shared purpose underpins membership.

Members recognise that their support sustains History House, the RAHS Library and the Society's broader role in preserving and sharing history, alongside the personal benefits of membership.



2025

Basement Level entrance, History House, 133 Macquarie Street.

History House is the most valuable asset on the Balance Sheet. A key strategic goal is to lease the basement, second floor and third floor to generate rental income. This revenue will strengthen our long-term financial position and our ability to support our members, affiliated societies and the understanding of New South Wales History.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Financial stewardship at the RAHS ensures that the Society's resources are carefully managed, enabling us to protect History House, support our collections, and sustain our programs.

Treasurer's Report

Dr Kathrine M. Reynolds FRHistS

OVERVIEW

I present my Treasurer's Report for the 2025 year to the members of the RAHS with great pleasure. 2025 has been an even more difficult year for the RAHS than 2024, and the staff are to be commended for their exceptional diligence and hard work. Sometimes working from home, working in the office, trying to ensure the RAHS is open as much as possible, dealing with building problems, not to mention a peripatetic lift that works... sometimes. These are all part of the challenge of working for the RAHS, and our staff give us dedication, and for this I thank them on behalf of the entire extended RAHS community.

We are all disappointed that our refurbishment of History House could not occur in the manner we had envisaged. The strange economic climate engendered by COVID and all its ramifications ultimately made us realise the project could not proceed at that time or in that manner. The staff, Councillors and wider RAHS community put an inordinate amount of time and effort into this project. Now, we have moved into a different phase where we will attempt more modest repairs, as we have the money to do so. The lift replacement is our top priority, as well as reletting some of our floorspace to bring in more income. We again thank our members and acknowledge the tremendous support of our donors.

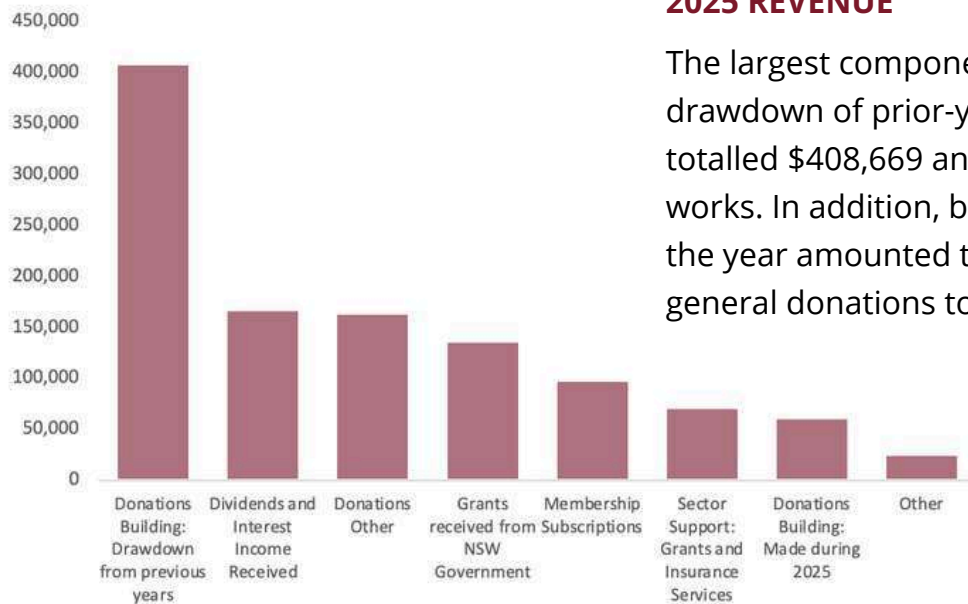
Our online activities have increased in importance, as more diverse groups of people, especially those outside Sydney, are able to enjoy RAHS activities online. With sincere thanks to Christine Yeats for her tireless efforts to engage speakers for the RAHS, we are back in business with a very full agenda of exciting talks and seminars. I also thank our speakers for their goodwill in giving their support to the RAHS.

Hector Abrahams and his firm of heritage architects continue to assist us as we move forward with our repairs to History House.

	2025	2024
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		
● Total Income	1,131,661	1,500,891
● Total Expenditure	1,098,368	1,474,600
● Surplus before Transfers	33,293	26,292
● Transfer to other comprehensive income	68,597	45,458
● Deficit after Transfers	-35,304	-19,167

The year 2025 reflects careful stewardship of the Society's resources, with continued investment in History House and the collections that sit at the heart of our work. The 2024 financial year included the write-off of costs associated with the History House Project, together with related donation adjustments, which materially affected that year's result. By contrast, the 2025 result reflects a more typical operating year, with roof works funded from existing building donations and support received under the NSW Government's Caring for State Heritage grant program.

2025 REVENUE



The largest component of revenue in 2025 was the drawdown of prior-year building donations, which totalled \$408,669 and funded approved History House works. In addition, building donations received during the year amounted to \$61,539 (2024: \$74,947), while general donations totalled \$152,433 (2024: \$189,044)

- Investment income remained an important source of support. Dividend income totalled \$160,318 (2024: \$172,979), and interest income was \$7,175 (2024: \$11,517). While dividend income was slightly lower than the previous year, the market value of the Society's share portfolio increased by \$310,939, from \$2,959,114 to \$3,270,053 as at 31 December 2025.
- Government grant income comprised \$80,000 from Create NSW (2024: \$80,000) and \$56,395 under the NSW Government's Caring for State Heritage program (2024: nil).
- Membership subscriptions increased to \$97,548 (2024: \$93,760),
- Venue hire income rose to \$10,993 (2024: \$5,966), reflecting greater use of History House during the year.
- Income generated through sector support and service activities also contributed positively. Events delivered a surplus of \$5,562, the Insurance Administration Scheme contributed \$24,919, and the administration of grant services contributed \$25,000. The Society acknowledges the leadership of Senior Vice President and Chair of the Events Committee, Christine Yeats, and the members of the Events Committee for delivering a strong program that met its objectives while generating a surplus.

2025 Grants and Donations

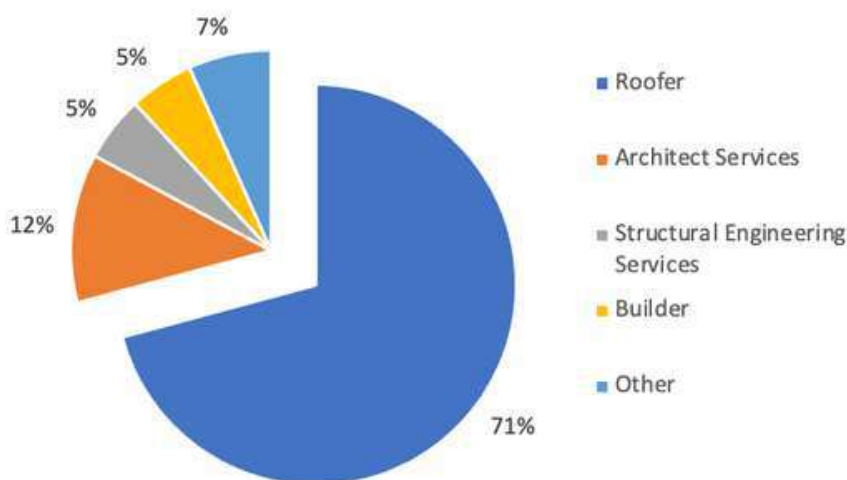
The Society gratefully acknowledges the continued support of Create NSW through its annual funding contribution of \$80,000. We thank the NSW Minister for the Arts, The Hon. John Graham MLC, Special Minister of State, Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Create NSW for their ongoing support of the Society's work for which we are most grateful. We were also pleased to receive confirmation that funding for this program will increase to \$100,000 in the coming period.

The Society was also awarded \$112,790 under the NSW Government's Caring for State Heritage program. We acknowledge the support of the The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. This grant represents a significant contribution to the installation of a new copper roof at History House, with the first instalment of \$56,395 received during the financial year.

We acknowledge with gratitude the longstanding commitment and generous support of Mr Geoffrey White OAM and Mrs Sally White OAM to the RAHS.

2025 HISTORY HOUSE PROJECT

History House Project: Breakdown of Expenditure

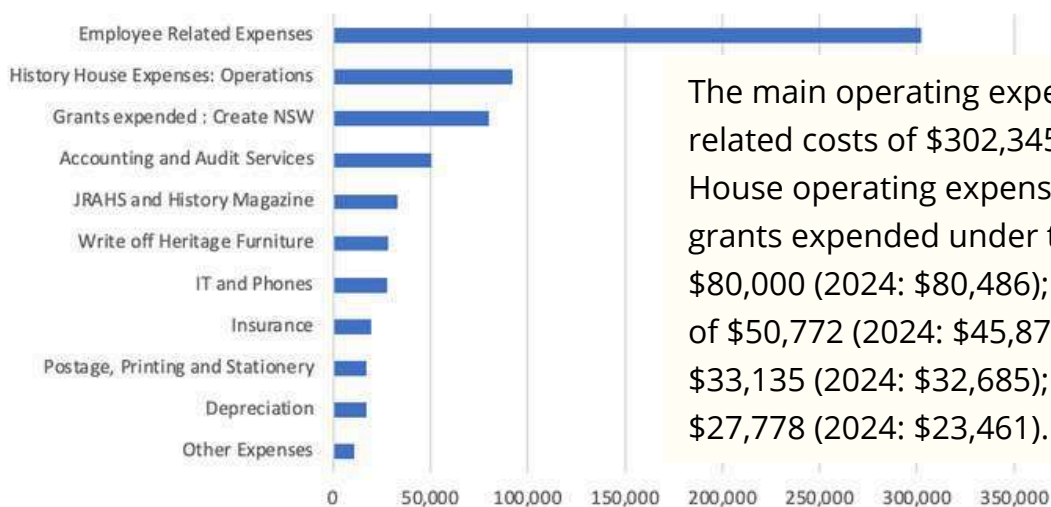


During 2025, the Society progressed essential conservation works at History House, with expenditure of \$418,515 during the year.

The principal focus was the installation of a new copper roof, together with structural strengthening and associated roof works. These works address long-standing water ingress issues and are critical to safeguarding the building and its collections.

The project also included geotechnical investigations, structural engineering assessments, drainage analysis and compliance documentation to support both the roof replacement and future building works. The Society continued to work with Hector Abrahams Architects in advancing a comprehensive master plan for History House, ensuring that future conservation, access improvements and building works are undertaken in a structured and responsible manner consistent with the building's heritage significance.

2025 OPERATING EXPENSES

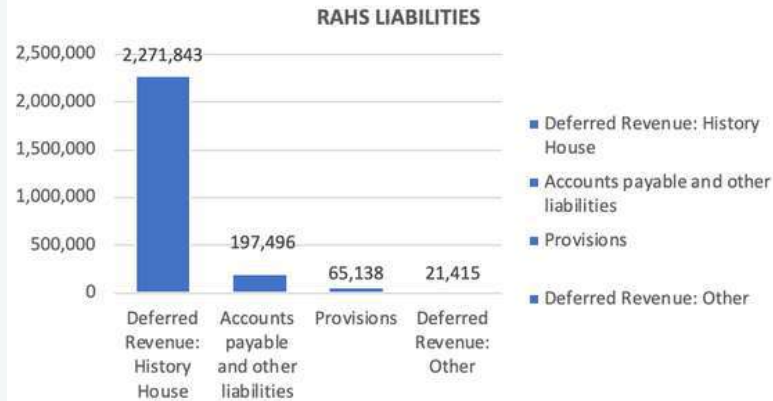
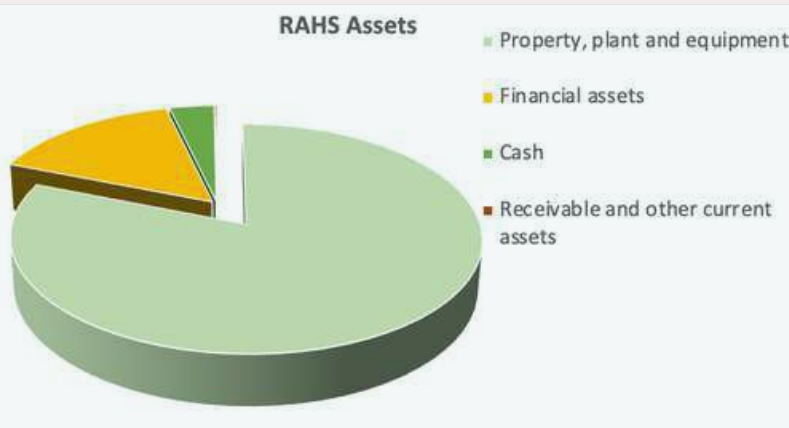


The main operating expenses in 2025 were employee-related costs of \$302,345 (2024: \$316,594); History House operating expenses of \$92,280 (2024: \$107,763); grants expended under the Create NSW program of \$80,000 (2024: \$80,486); accounting and audit services of \$50,772 (2024: \$45,877); RAHS publication costs of \$33,135 (2024: \$32,685); and IT and phone expenses of \$27,778 (2024: \$23,461).

- Employee-related costs were lower than the previous year, reflecting leave taken during the year and the corresponding reduction in accrued leave liabilities.
- History House operating expenses were reduced compared with 2024, largely due to lower maintenance and cleaning costs.
- Accounting and audit fees reflect updated professional rates, and Create NSW grants expended were in line with funding received.
- IT and phone expenses increased during the year due to the installation of a dedicated corporate internet line to support hybrid events, improvements to Wi-Fi infrastructure, and enhanced website security.
- During the year, the Heritage Furniture asset list was reviewed, and items totalling \$28,500 that had been disposed of in earlier years were formally written off.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2025	2024
Total Assets	21,356,601	20,744,667
Total Liabilities	2,555,892	2,968,498
Net Assets	18,800,708	17,776,169



Note: Deferred Revenue represents donations received in previous years for specific purposes. Accounting standards require these funds to be recorded as a liability until they are spent on that purpose.

- Property, plant and equipment increased by \$707,295, reflecting updated valuations of the RAHS Library and Artworks collections.
- Financial assets increased by \$310,939, reflecting growth in the value of the Society's share portfolio.
- Cash decreased by \$270,183, reflecting a drawdown on Building Fund reserves to part-fund repairs, partially offset by additional donations received in 2025 to support History House works.
- Deferred Revenue – History House decreased by \$340,072, as donations from previous years were used to part-fund History House roof works.
- Accounts payable and other liabilities decreased by \$52,558, reflecting fewer outstanding supplier invoices at year end.

During 2025, the RAHS commissioned independent valuations of its Library Collection and Art Collection. The Library Collection was assessed at \$1,621,300, and the Art Collection at \$308,370. The Library valuation incorporated individual assessment of significant items together with sampling across collection categories. For the Art Collection, historical and original works were valued at fair value, while items created by the RAHS were assessed at reasonable replacement value.

Sincere thanks

I would like to specially thank Ms Suzanne Holohan, our General Manager, and her staff for their hard work. Mark St Leon, also deserves credit for his tireless assistance as Assistant Treasurer. Similarly, I would like to express my gratitude to fellow Councillors, volunteers and members who, with very limited financial resources, help support the RAHS in a myriad of ways. Our Society is a volunteer-members' based society and many people play an often 'unheralded' role in supporting Australian history and the RAHS. We thank you, one and all.

A full copy of the financial statements is available on request to members. The financial statements will also be included in the papers for the 2026 RAHS Annual General Meeting



HISTORY HOUSE
This Victorian town house was designed in 1871 by the architect George Allen Mansfield for George Oliver Fairbairn, politician and publicist.
1871

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ON GADIGAL COUNTRY

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Minister Penny Sharpe at History House (Image courtesy: Heritage NSW).

In 2025, the RAHS received \$112,790 (ex GST) from the NSW Government through the *Caring for State Heritage Grants program*, part of the 2025–27 NSW Heritage Grants Program.

This generous support helped fund urgent roof repairs at History House, ensuring we can continue to protect our heritage building and the collections it houses for future generations.

2025



Hector Abrahams delivers a lecture on architect W. Hardy Wilson at History House, 30 January 2025. Hector's presentation celebrated the centenary of Wilson's publication, *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania*.

EDUCATION

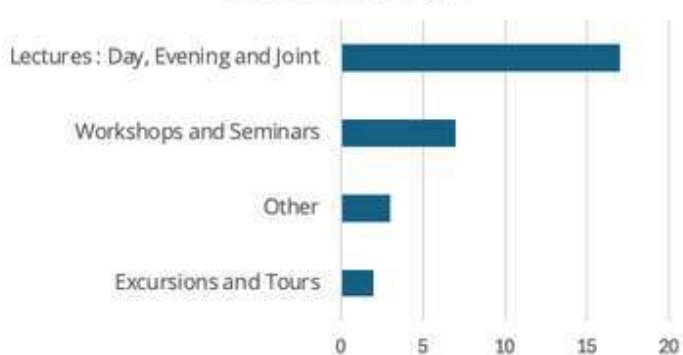
Education at the RAHS connects people with research, skills and each other — strengthening the practice of history across Australia.

EDUCATION – OUR EVENTS PROGRAM

In 2025, the RAHS delivered 29 events, including lectures, workshops, seminars and excursions, attended by more than 850 people. The program was shaped by the interests of our members and affiliated societies and covered a wide range of topics in Australian history.

Events were held at History House, online and in regional locations across New South Wales. They explored new historical research, examined archival sources and practical tools, and created space for discussion among people engaged in local and community history.

2025 Events by Type



2025 Events Program

40+

Number of speakers who were part of our program, including historians, researchers, archivists and heritage professionals

14+

Areas of historical research and practice covered in the program

2025 Areas of Research and Practice Covered

- Archives, records and research methods - land records, biographical records, business records, maps
- Australian social history - work, urban life, social conditions, social customs
- Biographical history
- Built heritage and architecture
- Colonial history
- Collection Management
- Convict History
- Cultural history - film, photography, literature, Australian symbols
- Land and landscape history
- Local and regional history
- Maritime history
- Managing historical societies
- Transport history
- Women's history

“*Our events program is one of the Society's most powerful ways of engaging the public with Australia's past. It fosters dialogue, encourages new perspectives, and ensures that history remains dynamic, relevant, and accessible to all who seek to understand it.*”

Christine Yeats
RAHS Senior Vice President
and Chair of RAHS Events
Committee

2025 EVENTS SUPPORTED BY CREATE NSW

In 2025, support from Create NSW enabled the RAHS to deliver regional seminars, workshops and public lectures across New South Wales. Working with local partners, we provided practical training to strengthen historical research skills and support community history projects, alongside lectures that encouraged discussion and reflection on Australian history. These programs were designed to be accessible and extended the reach of the Society beyond Sydney.



Central Coast Regional Seminar – *Looking Outside the Square: Exploring Business and Biographical Records in Family and Local History*

The RAHS and the Central Coast Family History Society hosted a one-day seminar at Gosford. RAHS President Associate Professor Carol Liston AO and Senior Vice President Christine Yeats led sessions on using business, land and biographical records to support family and local history research, and highlighted archival collections and digital tools useful for researchers.



Symbols of Australia – A look at the icons that shape us

This event was hosted in partnership with the Port Macquarie Historical Society, bringing regional audiences together to explore Australian identity. RAHS Councillor Richard White discussed how national symbols reflect and shape Australian identity over time, from flags and landmarks to everyday cultural icons. The event encouraged regional audiences to reflect on the familiar symbols of Australian life and the stories and debates that sit behind them.

Australian Binge, Peter Tully, 1977 (National Museum of Australia).



TROVE

Collections & Community

Trove & NSW Historical Societies

**Tuesday 11 November 2025
History House & Online**

Collections and Community: Trove and NSW Historical Societies was one of the Society's key hybrid events in 2025. Developed with input from the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee, the seminar brought together speakers and participants to share practical ideas about using Trove and supporting local historical societies.

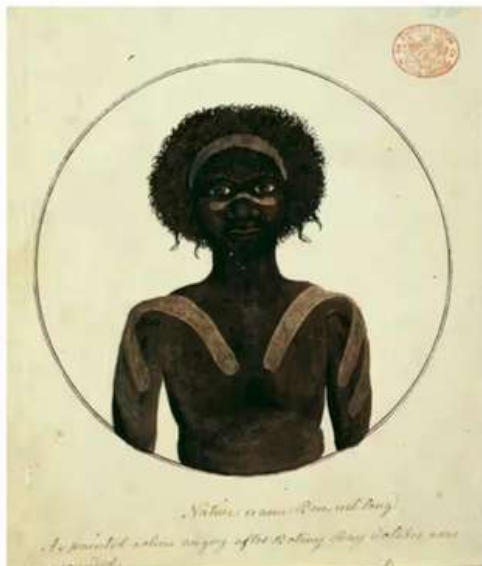
The morning session, presented in partnership with the National Library of Australia, focused on how affiliated societies can contribute catalogue records to Trove and improve the visibility of their collections.

The afternoon session focused on sustaining volunteer-run organisations. Speakers and participants shared experiences on managing collections, supporting volunteers and maintaining engagement within local communities. The seminar concluded with the presentation of the 2025 Certificates of Achievement, recognising outstanding volunteer contributions across the affiliated societies network.

JUNE 2025

JRAHS

Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society



VOLUME 111 PART 1

DECEMBER 2025

JRAHS

Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society



VOLUME 111 PART 2

2025

JRAHS Covers: June 2025 and December 2025

CONTENT CREATION

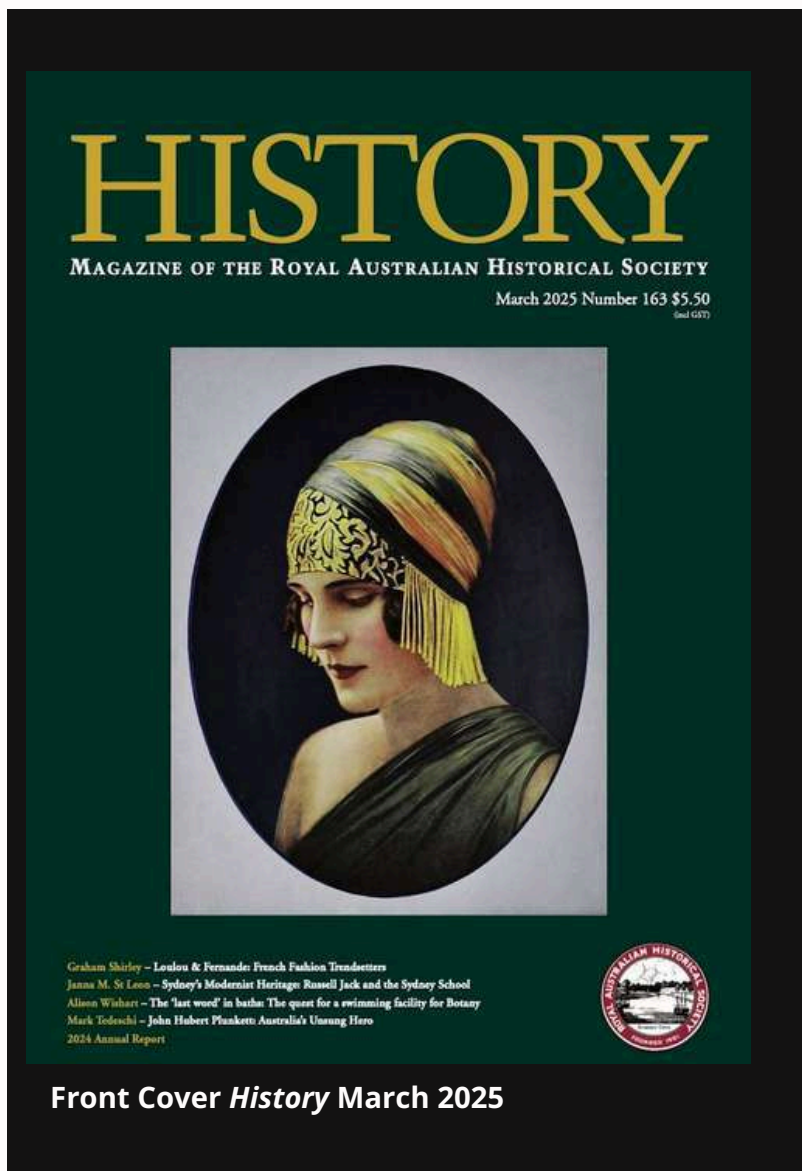
Create, curate and share high-quality historical content through publications, digital platforms and partnerships, expanding and strengthening the Society's capacity to support research, interpretation and access to historical knowledge.

CONTENT CREATION - OUR PUBLICATIONS

Publications are central to the work of the RAHS. Since the publication of the *Journal and Proceedings* in 1906, the Society has supported historical research, encouraged informed discussion, and shared knowledge about the histories of place and community across New South Wales and beyond through its journal, magazine, and eNewsletter.

The ***Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)*** continues this long-standing role by publishing double-blind refereed research by academic, early-career, independent, and community historians. Published twice yearly, the *JRAHS* features scholarly articles and reviews of recent Australian and Pacific history publications. The latest issues are available through the members' area of the website, while issues from 1906 to 1954 are freely accessible via Trove.

The June 2025 issue marked the second year of Dr Samuel White's tenure as Editor and included articles on Indigenous-European relations, regional biography and social history, academic independence, and imperial rivalry in the Pacific. The December issue featured military history, journalism, religious history, the Western Australian nuclear disarmament movement, and Indigenous artist Tommy McRae. Across both issues, the 2025 Journal included 16 book reviews.



Front Cover *History* March 2025

The RAHS also produces the quarterly magazine ***History*** for a broad readership. Each issue is shaped by a guest editor, who invites contributions from historians, researchers, and writers working across a range of fields.

In 2025, our magazine featured contributions from public, academic and early-career historians, as well as curators, local studies librarians, researchers and writers. Articles covered biographies, histories of streets, councils and suburbs, commemorative essays, and historical and family research, alongside highlights from the RAHS Library collections and affiliated societies' publications.

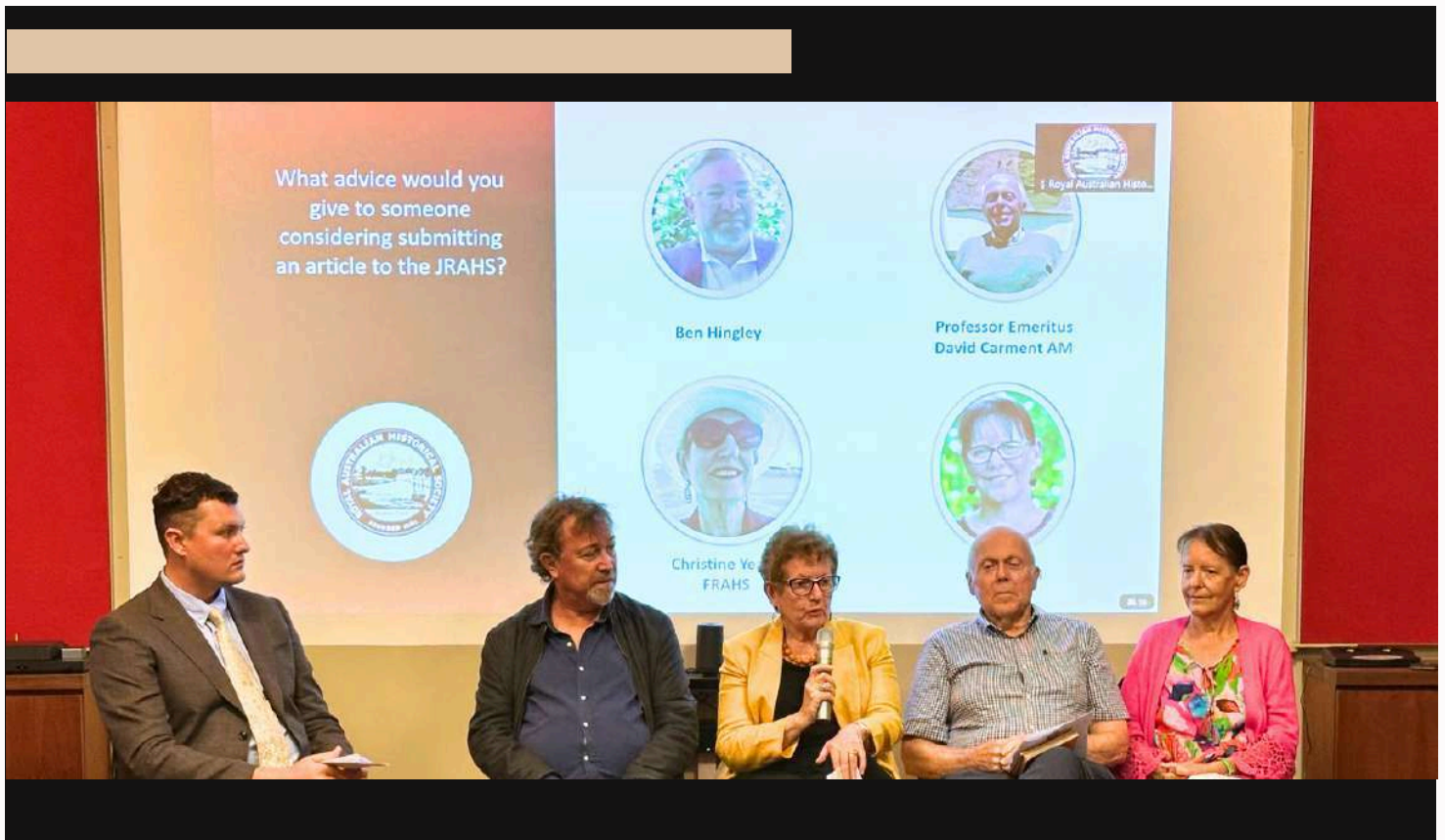
The ***RAHS eNewsletter*** provides timely updates on publications, events, advocacy and sector news. In 2025, 17 editions were circulated, featuring 117 stories from affiliated societies. A new section was introduced to share practical advice and ideas to support volunteers running historical organisations.

DIGITAL CONTENT

The RAHS also produced a wide range of digital content across its website and social media platforms, including blog posts and new episodes of the *JRAHS* Podcast. The podcast features *JRAHS* contributors discussing their published articles and research. Blog content in 2025 included news and updates from the Society and its affiliated organisations, alongside original volunteer contributions on Australia's first play performed in 1789, Sydney's historic water fountains, and the listing of Yurulbin Park and Foreshore on the State Heritage Register.

In February 2025, the RAHS hosted a special evening event at History House titled *A Legacy in Print: Honouring the Past and Embracing the Future of the JRAHS*. A recording of the event was edited and released as a series of six YouTube videos.

These activities built on the Society's publication program by presenting research and discussion in new formats, reflecting member survey feedback that RAHS publications remain highly valued and widely read, while helping reach audiences in ways that extend beyond print.



From Left to Right: *JRAHS* Editor Dr Samuel White joined past contributors Ben Hingley, Christine Yeats, David Carment AM and Leonie Bell for *A Legacy in Print* on 25 February 2025 at History House. The panel discussed the Journal's history and its ongoing role in Australian historical research. Recorded live at History House, the presentations and discussions are available on the RAHS YouTube Channel.

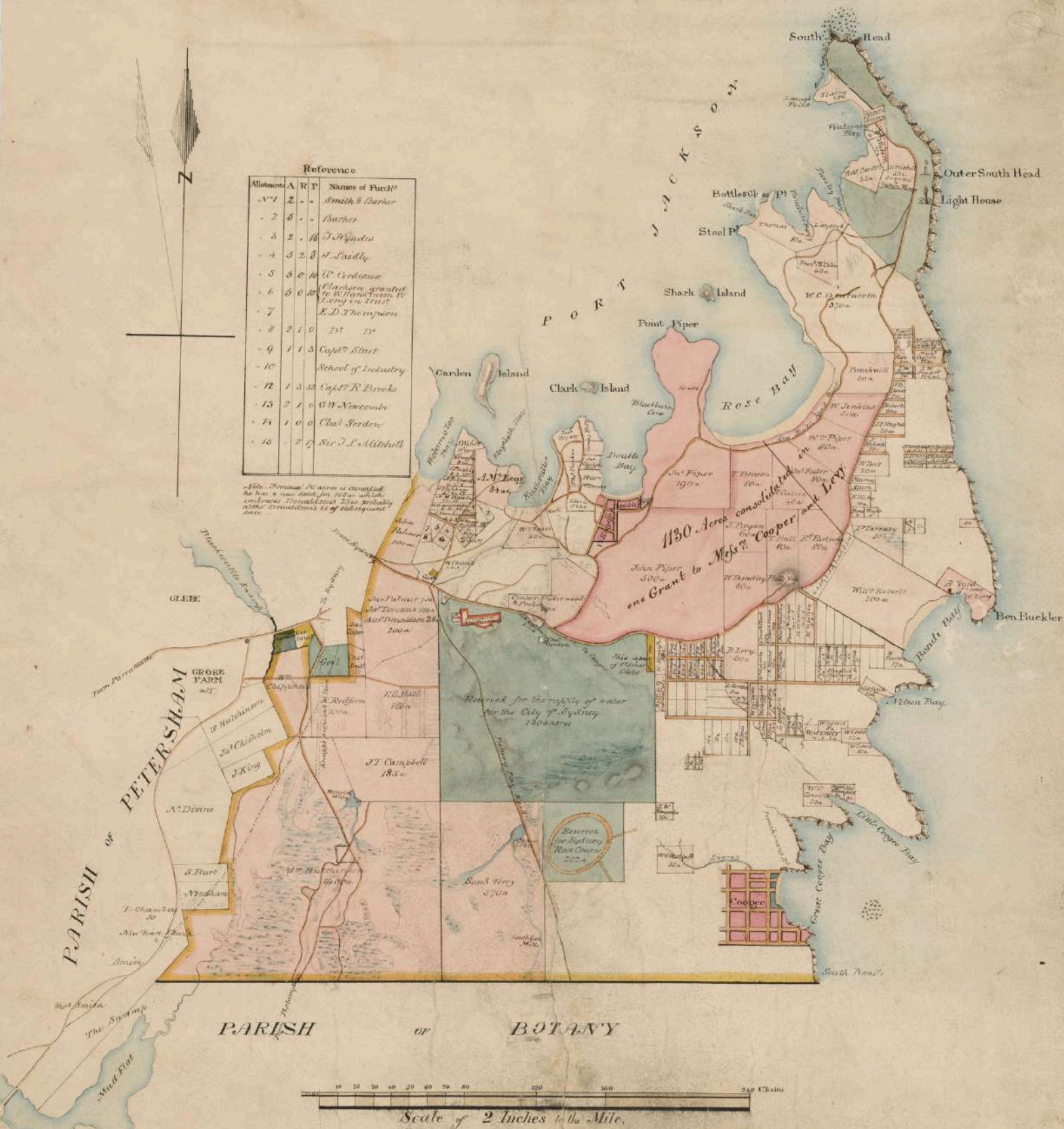
Plan 496142

Petersham

ALEXANDRIA

Parish of Alexandria, Maps/0018 (State Library of NSW)

Our most popular social media post of the year highlighted the digitisation of subdivision plans for more than 250 NSW suburbs and towns, along with parish maps, town maps and town plans, from the State Library of NSW collection.



2025

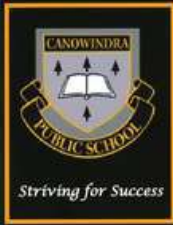
Jacky Sloan of the Lachlan

"Miyagan Bala Yambuwan"



The Past Fifty Years of Public Education in Canowindra NSW 1975 - 2025

Celebrating 150 Years
of
the Public Schools
in
Canowindra NSW
1875—2025



Published by Canowindra Historical Society and Museum, 2025.

Published by Callara Culture and Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, 2025.

These publications were supported by the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program, a devolved funding program administered by the Royal Australian Historical Society on behalf of the New South Wales Government.

SECTOR SUPPORT

Provide leadership, services and practical support to RAHS members and affiliated societies, expanding and strengthening the capacity of the local and community history sector across New South Wales.

SECTOR SUPPORT

The RAHS supports its members and communities across NSW by strengthening the organisations that research, care for and share local and community history. Central to this work is the administration of NSW Government-funded grant programs and the provision of an insurance scheme for affiliated societies. We also contribute through sector advocacy, the guidance of our Affiliated Societies Committee, work placements and accessible online resources.

RAHS ADMINISTERED GRANTS PROGRAMS



The RAHS administered the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program on behalf of the NSW Government, distributing \$53,000 to 16 local and community history projects across New South Wales. Grants of up to \$5,000 supported publications, oral histories, digitisation, exhibitions and conservation work, with a strong focus on Regional NSW and Western Sydney.

During the year, multi-year funding was secured from Create NSW to continue delivering grants and seminars across the state. This funding will support the relaunch of the devolved grants program under a new name in April 2026, alongside a renewed program of regional and Western Sydney seminars. The RAHS thanks Create NSW for its ongoing support of local and community history.

RAHS Councillor Mark Dunn (right) with author Pauline Curby (centre) and Stephanie Bailey, Executive Member of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society, at the launch of *Woolooware* by Pauline Curby. This publication was supported by Create NSW through the Cultural Grant program



We also administered the 2025 Transport Heritage Grants Program, distributing \$138,000 to support projects across NSW.

Through this grant program, the importance of transport history and heritage is recognised and shared across New South Wales. In 2025, funded projects supported restoration, conservation, digitisation and interpretation across rail, tram, bus and ferry heritage. These projects highlight how transport networks shaped the development of the state and ensure those histories remain visible today.

Kobi Shetty MP joined the authors of *Duck the Hassle* for the book's launch at the Sydney Bus Museum, 2 March 2025. (Photograph: courtesy of Kobi Shetty MP). This publication was supported by the Transport Heritage Grant program.

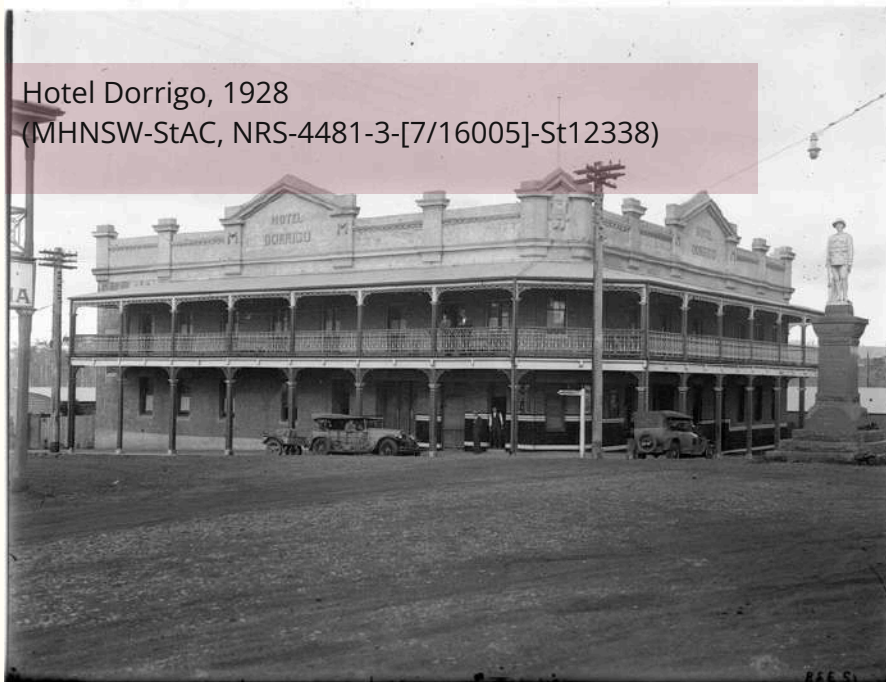
During the year, a new contract was signed with Transport for NSW and Transport Heritage NSW to continue delivering the program from 2026 to 2028.

RAHS ADVOCACY

The RAHS provides leadership on history and heritage matters, advocating for access to historical records, sustainable funding for the sector, and policies that support local and community history. The Heritage Committee also reviews proposed changes to State Heritage listings and provides expert input to help ensure significant places are appropriately recognised and protected.

Heritage Listings

During 2025, the RAHS Heritage Committee sent letters of support for nine proposed listings on the NSW State Heritage Register and also supported the listing of minimum standards for the Mount Kembla Mine Disaster Site Ruins and Setting. The RAHS also shared eNews stories on several proposed listings, including the Moree Rocket, Yurulbin Park & Foreshore, and the Heritage Hotel in Dorrigo.



Hotel Dorrigo, 1928
(MHNSW-StAC, NRS-4481-3-[7/16005]-St12338)

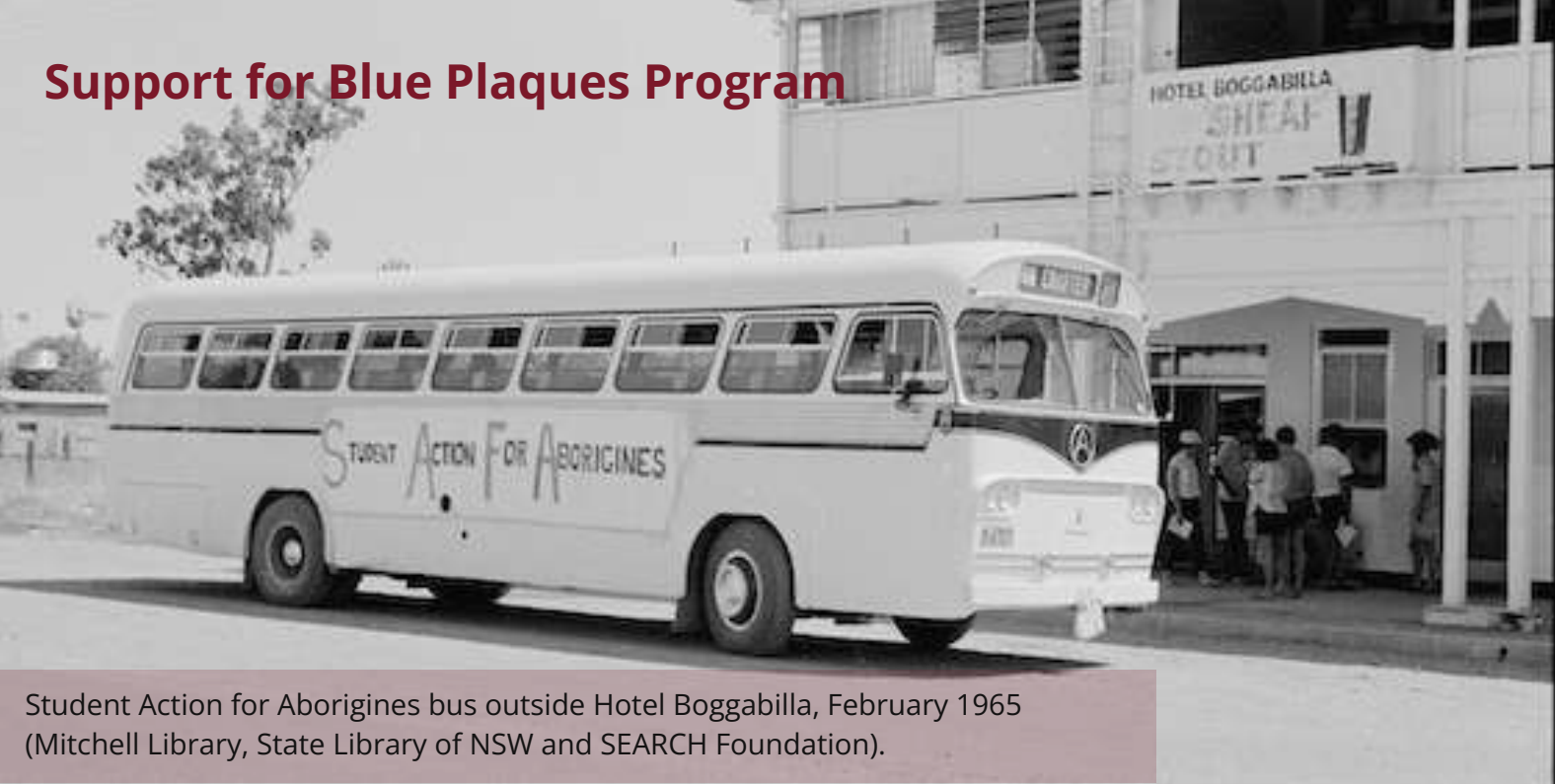
The RAHS Heritage Committee wrote to the NSW Heritage Council in support of listing the Heritage Hotel, Dorrigo, on the State Heritage Register. Established in 1925 by Greek migrant Michael Feros, the two-storey hotel was recognised for its historical significance, including its strong associations with migrant history, its role as a social and cultural hub for the town, and its contribution to the development of regional NSW.

Sue Jackson-Stepowski, RAHS member and Heritage Advisor in regional NSW, wrote a story for the RAHS eNewsletter encouraging members to support the proposed State Heritage Register listing of the Moree Rocket. The rocket-shaped playground structure reflects Cold War anxieties and the Space Race, while also linking Moree to Australia's overseas telecommunications tracking network. These playground rockets have largely disappeared across Australia but some remain as powerful markers of shared childhood memories, especially in regional towns.



Moree Rocket
(Photograph: Courtesy of Susan Jackson-Stepowski)

Support for Blue Plaques Program



Student Action for Aborigines bus outside Hotel Boggabilla, February 1965 (Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW and SEARCH Foundation).

In 2025, the RAHS supported the NSW Blue Plaques initiative marking the 60th anniversary of the 1965 Freedom Ride by sharing news of the proposed Freedom Ride Blue Plaque Trail. The Freedom Ride was a 15-day bus tour led by university students through regional NSW to challenge discrimination against Aboriginal people.

Local Heritage Matters

The RAHS made a formal submission to the NSW Government on the proposed NSW Heritage Strategy. As Australia's oldest historical organisation and the owner of a State Heritage-listed building, it emphasised that many places most valued by communities are considered as only locally significant and therefore particularly vulnerable. The submission called for stronger coordination across government, greater accountability for publicly owned heritage assets, and the inclusion of historical expertise in heritage decision-making so that places are assessed not only for their fabric, but also for the stories and meanings they hold.

“With two of the seven main criteria for heritage listing being directly related to historical significance, it is vital that a historian is guaranteed a place on the Heritage Council. This ensures decisions reflect not just physical form, but the deeper stories behind it.”

Carol Liston AO
RAHS President

Representation on key bodies

RAHS representatives participated in the Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS), the Geographical Names Board of NSW and the National Archives Consultative Forum, contributing historical expertise to policy discussions, place naming and archival access. Through this involvement, historical knowledge and community perspectives are represented in decisions that shape how Australia's history is recorded, interpreted and shared.

RAHS WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAM

The RAHS provides hands-on professional experience, strengthens sector skills, and supports the next generation of library and history professionals. In 2025, the Society hosted students from TAFE and Charles Sturt University, offering practical experience with rare books, manuscripts, archival collections, and digital cataloguing



As someone who wasn't born in Australia, I've always been curious about this country's past. Your rich collections offered me a rare opportunity to connect with that history in a deeply personal and meaningful way

Guofeng Lu (Louis)
TAFE Digital – Diploma of Library and Information Services

2025 Work placement students: Electra Aitchison, Joanna Miller-Crispe, Leigh Briar, Guofeng Lu (Louis) and Jordan Woods.

SUPPORT FOR OUR AFFILIATED SOCIETIES

Supporting affiliated historical societies across New South Wales is a core part of what we do. In 2025, this support focused on the practical measures that help volunteer-run organisations continue their work. These included insurance, clear advice, shared learning and events that are affordable and accessible.

The RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee is made up of people who are themselves involved in running local historical societies. They understand the realities of committee responsibilities, collection care, risk management and sustaining member engagement with limited time and resources. The Committee helps shape advice, events and resources so they reflect the everyday challenges faced by volunteer-run organisations.

Insurance that makes activities possible

Affordable insurance remains one of the most important services the RAHS provides. In 2025, 324 affiliated organisations accessed public liability and group personal accident insurance through the RAHS scheme. Of these, 185 operate local museums. This cover enables societies to hold meetings and events, organise tours, open their museums and premises to the public, and work with volunteers. Without affordable insurance, many societies — including those caring for community museum collections — would not be able to operate.

Practical advice when needed

The RAHS shared clear and practical guidance in response to issues raised by affiliated societies. This included advice on insurance requirements, risk management when providing historical information, governance responsibilities and protecting online activities from fraud. The aim is to support committees in making informed decisions without adding unnecessary complexity to already demanding volunteer roles.

Staying Connected and sharing ideas

The RAHS continued to share news, stories and practical advice from across the affiliated societies network through our eNewsletter, social media, and online and hybrid events. By sharing both successes and challenges, we help volunteers learn from one another and stay connected. Hybrid delivery remains especially important for regional and remote members who may otherwise work in isolation. This commitment to shared experience and accessible participation will continue in 2026.

Affordable programs with wider reach

Rising costs shaped RAHS events in 2025. Instead of an annual conference, the Society focused on smaller, affordable programs with wider reach. *Collections and Community: Connecting Community, Supporting and Sustaining Historical Societies*, held on 11 November 2025 in hybrid format at History House and online, brought together participants from across NSW to share ideas on running historical societies and managing collections.



Family History Botany Bay

@BotanyBayFHS-1 · 67 subscribers · 14 videos

Family History Botany Bay (also known as Botany Bay Family History Society) was formed ...more

Subscribe

Leonie Bell from the Botany Bay Family History Society shared practical tips on setting up a YouTube channel at our 11 November 2025 seminar.

2025



Roof works underway at History House, showing the removal of existing roof materials and preparation for the new copper covering. View looking east towards Sydney Harbour. Photographer: Brianna Jessup, Architect, Hector Abraham Architects

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Sustainably managing our key physical and digital assets to support historical research and community engagement.

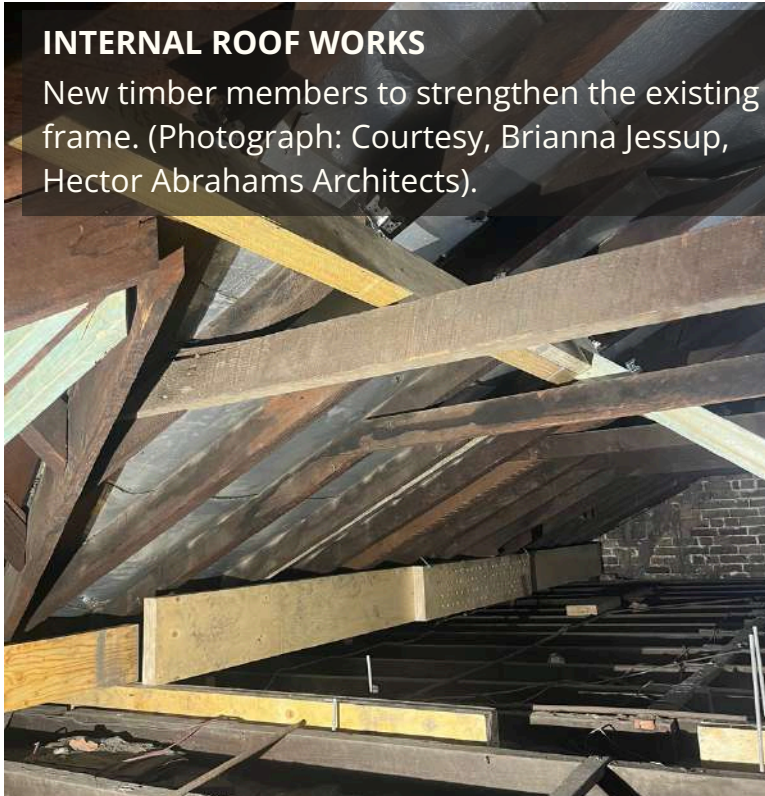
HISTORY HOUSE: A HOME FOR HISTORY

History House is more than a building. It is home to the RAHS's nationally significant collections, the Society's day-to-day operations, lectures and events, and affordable venue hire for affiliated organisations and other community groups. Members and supporters were kept informed through regular History House updates in the RAHS eNewsletter as work progressed behind the scenes.

The year marked a clear shift in approach. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Society had Development Application approval in place for major works at History House. That project was paused during COVID. In response to rising construction costs and a clearer understanding of the building's condition, the scope was revised and a staged program of works established, focused on long-term sustainability.

INTERNAL ROOF WORKS

New timber members to strengthen the existing frame. (Photograph: Courtesy, Brianna Jessup, Hector Abrahams Architects).



The roof was the first stage of work we completed this year. Ongoing leaks, including into the library during periods of heavy rain, showed that the roof needed more than short-term fixes. Internal roof works were completed first to strengthen its structure and reduce the immediate risks to the building and collections.

Planning then moved to the external roof replacement. This work was part-funded by a *Caring for State Heritage Grant* from the NSW government, together with generous donations from members and supporters. Copper was selected as the most suitable material, based on its durability and its appropriateness for our heritage building. External roof works commenced in October 2025 and were completed in time for the January 2026 storms, with no water damage at History House.

EXCAVATION SITE FOR GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Geotechnical investigations confirmed that History House sits on reactive clay soil, which expands and contracts with changes in moisture. A blocked drain near the basement stairwell, together with tree roots from London Plane trees planted along Macquarie Street in the 1980s, has contributed to ground movement and visible cracking above the front door. (Photograph: Courtesy, RAHS Librarian and Building Manager Donna Newton).



New copper roof at History House, January 2026. Image captured by Alex Thomson, Airborne Studio, using drone videography.



Planning for the basement progressed alongside the roof works. Geotechnical investigations identified damaged and blocked drainage, including issues caused by invasive tree roots and earlier alterations. Updated designs ensure that new sewer and stormwater lines will not run beneath archive storage areas, reducing future risk to the collections. Working with Hector Abrahams Architects, Project X Solutions and other specialist consultants, the RAHS prepared and lodged an application with the City of Sydney for the basement works. Subject to approval, construction is scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2026.

Sequencing the works has been critical. The next stage will focus on the basement, followed by disability access improvements, including finalising the lift solution as part of the masterplan. Once these stages are complete, planning will begin for broader conservation management work.

Specialist advice from Hector Abrahams Architects and Project X Solutions has guided this process, with building works undertaken by Combined Roofing Australia and other contractors as required. Although much of the work has taken place out of sight, progress has been shared through regular updates, photographs and drone footage captured during inspections and site visits.

The Society thanks members, donors and supporters for their patience and continued support as this important work progresses into 2026.



Participants at the UNESCO Pacific Collections workshop held at History House in October 2025

(Photograph: Courtesy, the International Centre for Documentary Heritage).

This workshop brought together archivists, librarians, heritage professionals, and community representatives from across the Pacific region and Australia to share knowledge about documentary heritage and the UNESCO Memory of the World program.

RAHS LIBRARY: SUPPORTING NSW HISTORY RESEARCH

The RAHS Library is a unique resource for the study of New South Wales history. Recognised by the National Library of Australia as a collection of national significance, it has been built up over more than a century through the collecting and donation activities of RAHS members. The Library supports professional historians, local and family historians, students and community researchers. Its holdings document the people and places that have shaped New South Wales and reflect the ways history has been researched and written over time.

New Roof: Protecting the Collection

Before the new roof was completed, heavy rain often meant Donna Newton, RAHS Librarian and Building Manager, was moving materials and putting buckets in place to keep the collection safe. The new roof has made a real difference, and Donna can now focus on her work without worrying about water damage whenever it rains.

Major Library Projects

Project: Online catalogue

In July, the RAHS launched its online library catalogue. By the end of the year, more than 27,000 records were searchable online, representing around 43 per cent of the Library's total collection of approximately 63,300 items.

Researchers can now explore the collection before visiting, and those unable to attend in person can better understand the scope of holdings and contact the RAHS to discuss access options. Online cataloguing continues, including the addition of further photographs and the manuscript collection.



BREAKDOWN OF ITEMS TO BE ADDED TO ONLINE CATALOGUE



WELCOME TO OUR CATALOGUE

Welcome to our online library catalogue. Explore more than 25,000 items from our nationally significant collection from home or on the move. New records are added regularly. We are currently focusing on expanding online access to our images and manuscripts, as well as adding the latest books, articles, and serials we have received.

Books: New additions to our Library

Images: Recently uploaded to our catalogue

Project: Library Valuation

The RAHS commissioned a new valuation of the Library to inform future management and planning. The previous valuation had been undertaken in 2004.

The work was carried out by accredited valuer Adrienne Carlson, with on-site support from RAHS Librarian and Building Manager Donna Newton. Selected higher-value and rare books were assessed individually, while the broader collection was examined using recognised sampling methods. The collection was valued at \$1.62 million, reflecting its significance and depth. The valuation provides a sound foundation for collection management priorities, including preparation for a full Library stocktake.

Project: Library Stocktake

The stocktake involved systematically checking items on shelves against catalogue records, confirming locations, identifying discrepancies and improving the accuracy of collection data. It also provided an opportunity to review shelving arrangements and storage conditions, strengthening day-to-day management of the collection.

The commitment and care of the Library's volunteers and work placement students made this project possible, and their contribution was central to its success.

While all this was happening....

Alongside these projects, the RAHS Library remained a busy and welcoming space for researchers. Library talks and tours were organised for affiliated societies, highlighting items in the collection that could support their research.

Research enquiries continued to be answered, visiting researchers were supported, new and existing material was catalogued, and a work placement program for students was maintained.

Library

120

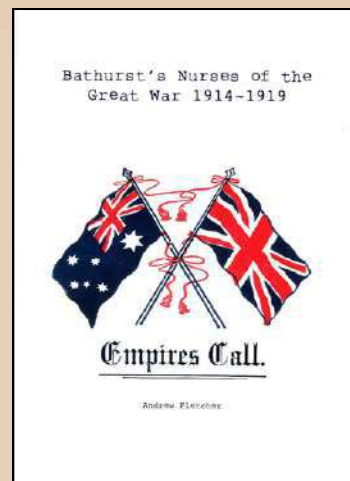
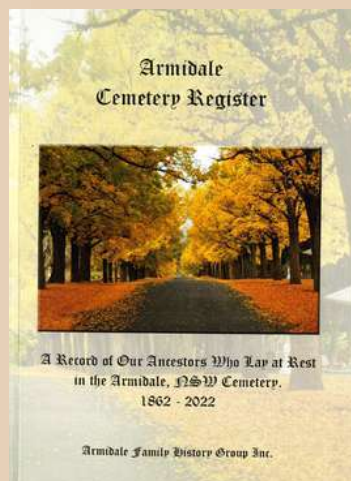
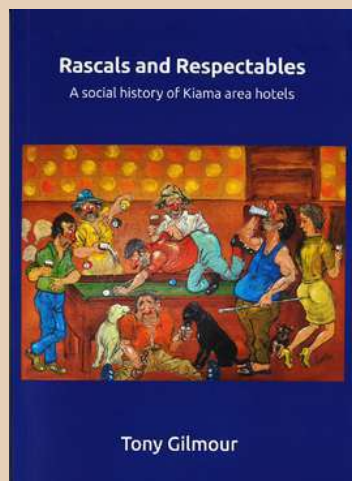
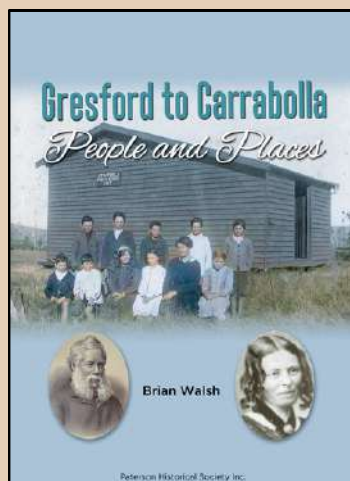
New publications added to the RAHS Collection

122

Research queries answered

435

Number of affiliated societies newsletters added to the RAHS collection



These publications, which were added to our collection in 2025, were supported by the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program, a devolved funding program administered by the RAHS on behalf of the NSW Government.

VIEWS IN AUSTRALIA
OR NEW SOUTH WALES, & VAN DIEMEN'S LAND
DELINEATED.

In Fifty Views, with descriptive Letter Press,

Dedicated by Permission, to

The Right Hon^{ble} Earl Bathurst, &c. &c.

BY J. LYCETT,

Artist to Major General Macquarie, late Governor of those Colonies.



VIEWS IN BATHURST PLAINS NEAR QUEEN CHARLOTTE'S VALLEY.

London, Published July 1st 1824, by J. Soutter, 75, St. Pauls Church-Yard.

***Views in Australia; or New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land Delineated, Joseph Lycett
London: J Soutter, 1824.***

This rare volume contains fifty illustrated views of early New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, offering valuable insight into colonial landscapes, settlements and daily life in the early nineteenth century. The book is an important example of early illustrated publications documenting Australia. It was one of a small number of items individually assessed as part of the 2025 RAHS Library valuation and remains one of the Library's most valuable holdings.



RAHS Councillors at History House for RAHS Strategy Day

Left to Right: Mark St Leon, Carol Liston AO, Tony Gilmour, Christine Yeats, Kathrine Reynolds, Bronwyn Hanna, Mark Dunn, Judith Godden, Alison Wishart, Richard White, Iain Stuart [Samuel White is also a member of Council and is pictured on page 15]. (Photograph: Courtesy of Peter Hobbins, past RAHS Councillor who was the facilitator for the RAHS Strategy Day).

FOUNDATIONS

Maintain strong governance, skilled people, effective systems and sound financial management to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Society.

In 2025, we continued strengthening the foundations that support the Society's work across New South Wales. Much of this work is not always visible, but it makes everything else possible.

Good Governance: Active oversight

The RAHS Council met regularly to review performance, set strategic priorities and oversee major projects. Decisions, particularly those relating to History House and long-term planning, were carefully considered and formally recorded. Our Constitution provides for term limits for Councillors, ensuring regular renewal while maintaining continuity of experience and expertise. Between Council meetings, the RAHS Executive worked closely with staff to support the day-to-day running of the Society and to keep projects moving during a busy year of renewal and change.

Good People: Expertise that sustains the Society

Our Councillors bring professional expertise in historical research, education, publishing, governance, finance and heritage. Our well-qualified employees uphold high professional standards and provide the operational leadership and expertise that sustains the Society's work. Volunteers support the Library, events and administration, contributing time, knowledge and care. Contributors from across the history and heritage sectors, including researchers, authors, speakers and educators, strengthen our publications, lectures and outreach programs.

Good Systems: Supporting daily operations and future growth

Good systems allow the Society to work smoothly and to respond to the needs of the many people we support. In 2025, a new online Library catalogue was launched, making it easier for historians, family researchers, affiliated societies and the wider community to explore more than 63,000 collection items. Investment in technology has enabled lectures and seminars to be delivered in hybrid format, increasing access for people across NSW and beyond. Systems supporting work placements were also strengthened, helping students at History House gain the practical experience required for their university and TAFE studies. Overall, these improvements strengthen our support for local and community history.

Good Finances: Having the resources to deliver our work

The Financial Overview and Treasurer's Report outline our income and expenditure for the year, including dividend income, subscriptions, donations, grants and revenue from events and services. This revenue funds our activities and enables us to care for History House and our Library collections. RAHS Councillors receive regular financial reports and review major expenditure throughout the year. In 2025, the audit process gave us the opportunity to review our core financial procedures. We confirmed clear separation of responsibilities and continued the practice of dual authorisation of payments by Councillors. We also reviewed our approach to fraud risk in response to increasing cyber and payment fraud affecting not-for-profit organisations and the wider community.

The RAHS is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and displays the ACNC Registered Charity Tick. The tick confirms that we are officially recognised as a charity and meet national governance and reporting standards. Our Annual Information Statement and financial reports are lodged each year with the ACNC and are publicly available on the ACNC Charity Register. We also hold Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status, which means donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible in Australia.



RAHS PEOPLE



RAHS Senior Vice President Christine Yeats and RAHS Councillor Judith Godden with recipients of the 2025 Certificates of Achievement and Appreciation.

From Left to Right: Judith Godden, John Ramsland, Geoffrey Hogan, Lesley Hughes, Annet Latham, Ann O'Connell, Christine Yeats, and Pam Lofthouse.

RAHS PATRONS

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC, KC, Governor of New South Wales
and Mr Dennis Wilson

2025 RAHS COUNCIL

Name	Role(s)	Dates
Judith Dunn, OAM, FPDHS	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
Mark Dunn, BA (Hons), MA (Applied History), PhD, M PHA	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
	Executive Member	15 April 2025 to 31 December 2025
Tony Gilmour, BA, MA, MBA, MA Arch, PhD, GAICD	Councillor	16 October 2025
Judith Godden, BA (Hons), PhD, DipEd, MPH (aeg), FACN (Hon), M PHA	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025
Bronwyn Hanna, BA (Hons) Fine Arts, MPhil, PhD, M.ICOMOS	Councillor	15 April 2025 to 31 December 2025
Carol Liston, AO, BA (Hons), PhD, FRAHS	Vice President	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
	President	15 April 2025 to 31 December 2025
Craig McPherson, B.Des (Arch), M.HeritCons, M.ICOMOS	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
Kathrine Reynolds, BA, BCrim, LLB, MSc, PhD, FRHistS	Treasurer	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025
Mark St Leon, B.Ec, GCertTQM, MBus, MA (Hons), PhD, CA	Executive Member	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
	Vice President	15 April 2025 to 31 December 2025

Name	Role(s)	Dates
Iain Stuart, BA (Hons), M Env Sci, PhD	President	1 January 2025 to 15 April 2025
	Councillor	15 April 2025 to 31 December 2025
Richard White, BA (Hons), DipEd	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025
Samuel White, BA/LLB, LLM (Hons), M War Studies, PhD, FRHistS	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025
Alison Wishart, BA (Hons), MCultHeritage, GradDipInfMgmt, M PHA, M ALIA	Councillor	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025
Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin, FRAHS	Senior Vice President	1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025

The RAHS Council held ten online meetings in 2025.

2025 RAHS COMMITTEES

The RAHS Executive Committee is elected by Councillors following the Annual General Meeting. In addition, the Society has a number of other committees and working parties that support its work and oversee specific areas of activity.

Some committees are ongoing, while others are established for a defined purpose or project. The Fellowship Committee, formed under the RAHS Constitution, is responsible for considering and awarding Fellowships and Medallists in recognition of outstanding contributions to history.

Below is a list of the non-Executive committees and working parties, along with their members, that were active in 2025. The Society thanks all committee and working party members for their time, expertise and valuable contributions during the year.

The Society's committees bring together people who share an interest in supporting the Society's core work. Committees help develop draft policies for Council consideration and support employees in delivering key activities. From time to time, the RAHS also establishes working parties focused on delivering specific projects.

The following pages provide a list of the committees that were active in 2025 and their members as of 31 December 2025.

Affiliated Societies Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair) ; Lynne Allen ; Robyn Atherton ; Judith Dunn; Stephen Coppins ; Tony Gilmour ; Judith Godden ; Samantha Friend; Lorraine Neate ; Angela Phippen

Events Committee

Christine Yeats (Chair) ; David Carment AM ; Judith Dunn OAM ; Bronwyn Hanna ; Suzanne Holohan ; Kathrine Reynolds ; Graham Shirley; Richard White

Fellowship and Medals Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair); Keith Johnson ; Geoffrey Sherington ; Iain Stuart ; Richard White ; Christine Yeats

Heritage Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair) ; Mark Dunn ; Bronwyn Hanna; Elaine Phillips ; Mark St Leon ; Iain Stuart

History House Working Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair) ; Bronwyn Hanna ; Suzanne Holohan ; Donna Newton ; Kathrine Reynolds ; Iain Stuart ; Christine Yeats

Library Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair) ; Suzanne Holohan ; Donna Newton ; Alison Wishart ; Christine Yeats

Publications Committee

Carol Liston AO (Chair) ; Phillip Jaworski ; Mark St Leon ; Iain Stuart ; Richard White; Samuel White ; Christine Yeats

Strategic Working Party

Tony Gilmour ; Carol Liston AO ; Christine Yeats

2025 RAHS EMPLOYEES

FULL TIME

General Manager/Company Secretary	Suzanne Holohan: FGIA, BA (Hons), BComm (Hons), Dip TAE
Librarian/Building Manager	Donna Newton, Dip Lib Inf, ALIA (Tec)
Membership Services/Digital Media Co-ordinator	Phillip Jaworski, BA (Hons)

PART TIME

Finance/Grants/Insurance Administrator	Maryanne Byrne, BBus MMgt AOS
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2025 RAHS WORK PLACEMENT STUDENTS

The RAHS was pleased to support students undertaking formal work placements as part of their library and information studies. These placements provided practical, hands-on experience while contributing to the work of the RAHS Library.

Charles Sturt University: Master of Education (Teacher-Librarianship), School of Information and Communication Studies.

Joanna Miller-Crispe

TAFE: Diploma of Library and Information Services

Leigh Briar; Electra Aitchison; Jordan Woods; Lu Guofeng (Louis)

2025 RAHS VOLUNTEERS

The RAHS sincerely thanks the following volunteers who supported the Society during the year through their work on digital content and by helping coordinate responses to proposed changes to NSW heritage legislation and the State Heritage Register. Their time, expertise and commitment greatly strengthened the Society's advocacy and public engagement.

Kay Abrahams; Johanna Burfitt-Williams; Susie Graham; Julie Gregory; Zoe McPherson; Ann O'Connell; Elaine Phillips; Heidi Reizer; Mary Sciberras; Margaret Scott; Julius Spencer; Bron Stepowski; Rebecca Vipond.

In early 2025, the RAHS invited volunteers through the eNewsletter to help test our new hybrid event set-up. Feedback from the session helped us refine the format before hybrid delivery became part of our regular program. Importantly, the volunteers were based in regional NSW, where remote access is especially valuable. We thank Prue Fallick, Jan Koperberg and Karen Martin for their generous time and thoughtful feedback.

2025 RAHS Certificate of Appreciation.

Ann O'Connell

This award recognises Ann's valued contribution as an RAHS volunteer. In 2025, Ann reviewed, sorted and catalogued more than 7,200 items in the RAHS Vertical File collection, greatly improving access to our research resources. A long-standing member of the Ashfield and District Historical Society, Ann's dedication and care are sincerely appreciated.

RAHS HONOURS

The RAHS Council recognises outstanding contributions to Australian history and to the work of the Society through the award of Fellow, Honorary Fellow, and Medallist honours. These honours acknowledge individuals who have made significant contributions to historical research, education and public understanding of history.

RAHS Fellows

Members who, in the judgment of Council, have rendered distinguished service in advancing knowledge of Australian history and in furthering the objects of the Society may be appointed as Fellows. Under the Society's regulations, the number of Fellows is limited to 25, with no more than three appointed in any calendar year.

- Dr Rosemary Annable, MA, DPhil, FFAHS, FRAHS
- Emeritus Professor David Carment, AM, BA (Hons), PhD, FACE, FFAHS, FRAHS
- Professor Stephen Garton, BA (Hons), PhD, FAHA, FASSA, FRAHS
- Mrs Joy Hughes, MA (Hons), MPHA, FRAHS
- Mr Robert Irving, OAM, ARMTTC, FRAIA, FRAHS
- Alfred Brian Maxwell James, OAM, MA, Dip Arts, Dip FHS, FRAHS
- Mr Keith A. Johnson, AM, FSG, FSAG, FIGRS, FRAHS
- Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, AO, BA (Hons), PhD, Dip FHS, FRAHS
- Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Sherington, MA, PhD, FRAHS
- Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker, MA, PhD, FRHistS, FRAHS
- Ms Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin, FRAHS

RAHS Honorary Fellows

Honorary Fellowship recognises individuals who, in the judgment of Council, have made a valuable contribution to advancing Australian history. Under the Society's regulations, the number of Honorary Fellows is limited to ten, with no more than one appointed in any calendar year.

- Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson, FAHA
- Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, BA (Hons), PhD, DipT
- Dr Beverley Kingston, FASSA

RAHS Medallists

The award of Medallist for Distinguished Service recognises members who have made an outstanding contribution to promoting the work and aims of the Society.

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



Joy Hughes was awarded a Fellowship in recognition of her significant contributions to Australian history and to the Royal Australian Historical Society.

A member of the RAHS since 1973 and a founding member of the Professional Historians Association NSW, Joy has had a distinguished career as a freelance historian, working with organisations including the National Trust (NSW) and the Historic Houses Trust, now Museums of History NSW. She has authored and co-authored numerous important publications on New South Wales history, including works on Francis Greenway, John Horbury Hunt and colonial Sydney.

Joy's service to the RAHS has been exceptional. She has been a long-standing member of the Library Committee, served as proofreader and reference checker for the Journal from 2012 to 2022, and contributed to major RAHS publications, including *Playing Their Part: Vice-Regal Consorts of New South Wales 1788-2019*. The Society warmly acknowledges her scholarship, dedication and enduring commitment to Australian history.

OUR PEOPLE AND EVENTS

In 2025, the RAHS delivered a diverse program of lectures, seminars, workshops and excursions, both in person and online. We are grateful to the many speakers who generously shared their research, expertise and enthusiasm with our members and the wider community. We also thank the organisations that partnered with us to present events during the year: Botany Bay Family Historical Society, Central Coast Family History Society, History Council NSW (History Week), Museums of History NSW, Port Macquarie Historical Society, the Royal Society of NSW, the National Library of Australia (Trove), the University of Sydney (Fisher Library) and WEA Sydney. Their collaboration strengthens our programs and extends our reach across New South Wales.

REGIONAL EVENTS FUNDED BY CREATE NSW

Central Coast Regional Seminar – Looking outside the square: Exploring business and biographical Records in family and local History

Saturday 29 March 2025 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: *Researching business and company records for individuals* by Christine Yeats and Carol Liston AO, which utilised the collections of the NSW State Archives, State Library of NSW, National Archives of Australia, Reserve Bank of Australia Archives, and university archives; *The Historical Land Records Viewer: Searching for individuals* by Christine Yeats; and *The Biographical Database of Australia: Searching for Convicts, Soldiers and Others* by Carol Liston AO.

Port Macquarie Regional Lecture – Symbols of Australia: A look at the icons that shape us

Saturday 19 July 2025 at MacAdams Music Centre, Port Macquarie

The RAHS, in conjunction with the Port Macquarie Historical Society, presented this lecture. RAHS Councillor Richard White, co-author of *Symbols of Australia: Imagining a Nation*, explored the familiar symbols that shape how we see ourselves as a nation. From Uluru to the Australian flag, Vegemite to the Akubra, these symbols reflect our evolving national identity – sometimes inspiring, sometimes surprising.



WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

Wednesday 9 April 2025 – Using maps in local history research

RAHS workshop at History House in conjunction with WEA Sydney.

Presented by Carol Liston AO.

Wednesday 28 May 2025 – Making home: A short history of houses, interiors and gardens in New South Wales

RAHS workshop at History House in conjunction with the Caroline Simpson Library, Museums of History NSW and WEA Sydney.

Presented by Matthew Stephens.

Majoliche per rivestimenti e decorazioni edilizie / Figli di Giuseppe Cantagalli, 1900 (Museums of History NSW – Caroline Simpson Collection).

Wednesday 27 August 2025 – *The Historical Land Records Viewer: searching for individuals*

RAHS workshop at History House in conjunction with WEA Sydney.

Presented by Christine Yeats.

Tuesday 11 November 2025 – *Collections and community: Trove and New South Wales historical societies*

RAHS seminar at History House (Hybrid) in conjunction with the National Library of Australia, Trove and the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee.

Session A: *Connecting collections: Using Trove to promote local and community history*

Presented by Elizabeth Mackenzie and Fiona Clarke.

Session B: *Connecting community: Supporting and sustaining local historical societies*

Presented by Judith Godden, Suzanne Holohan, Phillip Jaworski, Leonie Bell, and Lorraine Neate.

DAY LECTURES

Wednesday 5 February 2025 at History House – *Joy Howarth: Australia's forgotten film star*

Presented by Camille Scaysbrook.

Wednesday 2 April 2025 at History House – *The true story of the dog on the tuckerbox*

Presented by Richard White.

Wednesday 7 May 2025 at History House – *Charles Darwin in Australia*

Presented by Frank Nicholas.

Wednesday 4 June 2025 at History House – *Stimulated, exhausted or inebriated? Investigating the "Queen of Nations" shipwreck*

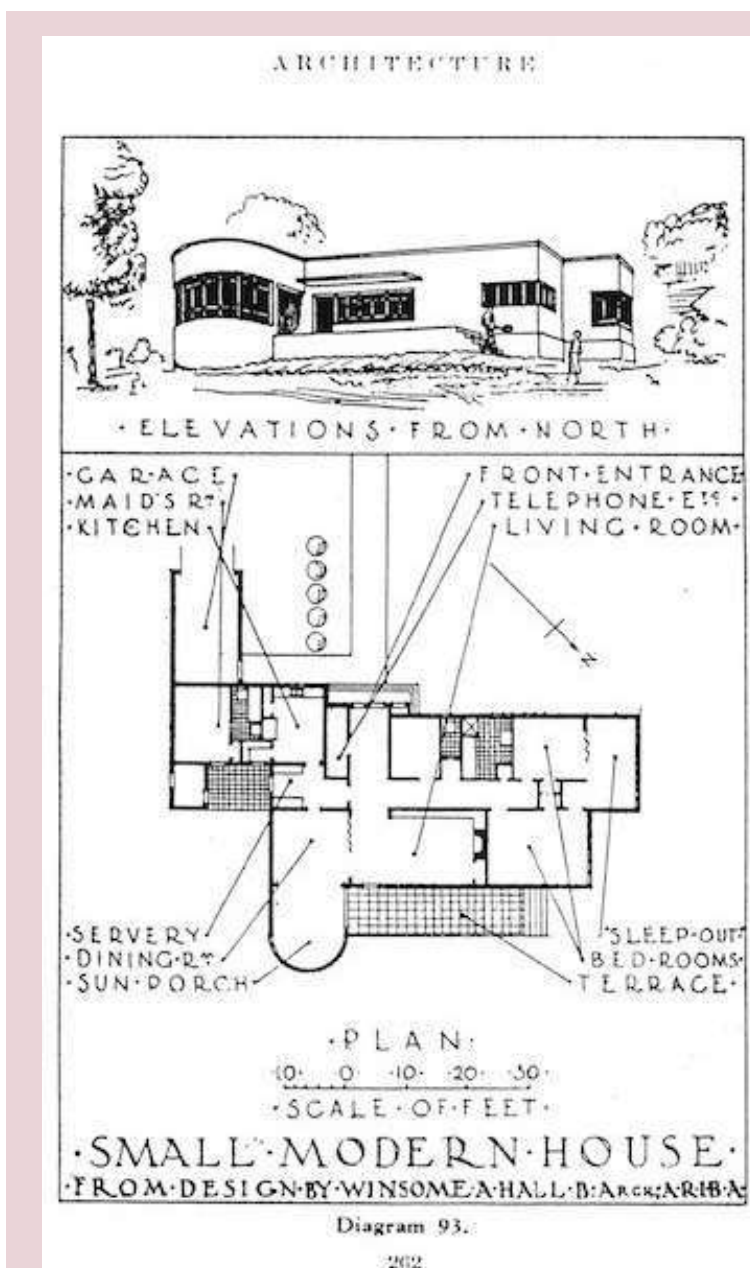
Presented by Peter Hobbins.

Wednesday 2 July 2025 at History House (Hybrid) – *Worlds of vulnerability: Vagrancy in nineteenth-century Australia and New Zealand*

Presented by Catharine Coleborne.

Wednesday 6 August 2025 at History House – *Eight early women architects in New South Wales*

Presented by Bronwyn Hanna.



Architectural design for a Small Modern House by Winsome Andrew', c1938. Published in *Rosette Edmunds, Architecture, an Introductory Survey*, p262) (Image: Courtesy of Bronwyn Hanna).

Wednesday 3 September 2025 at History House – *Finding the outrageous fortunes: Detecting the adventures of crime writer, Mary Fortune, and her criminal son*

Presented by Megan Brown.

Wednesday 1 October 2025 at History House – *A (virtual) walk around Sydney in June 1790*

Presented by Gary L. Sturgess.

Wednesday 5 November 2025 at History House – *Records and reveries: Alice Haigh's photographs of Sydney in the 1920s*

Presented by Catherine De Lorenzo.

JOINT AND EVENING LECTURES

Thursday 30 January 2025 at History House – *Hardy Wilson's Old Colonial Architecture, 1924–2024*

Presented by Hector Abrahams and Cameron Logan.

Wednesday 19 March 2025 at History House – *Aspects of Chinese-Australian heritage: Landscape traces*

Presented by Stuart Read.

Wednesday 16 July 2025 at History House – *Not just another gentlemen's club: The nineteenth-century origins and significance of the Royal Society of NSW*

Hosted in conjunction with the Royal Society of NSW.

Presented by Anne Coote.

SPECIAL LECTURES

Wednesday 18 June 2025 at History House – *On Max Dupain*

Presented by Helen Ennis.

Monday 11 August 2025 at History House (Hybrid) – *Fleeced: Unravelling the history of wool and war*

Presented by Trish FitzSimons and Madelyn Shaw.

Wednesday 10 September 2025 at History House – *Dangerous Passage: A maritime history of the Torres Strait*

Held in conjunction with History Week.

Presented by Ian Burnet.

Wednesday 15 October 2025 at History House – *Inconvenient women: Australian radical writers 1900–1970*

Presented by Jacqueline Kent.

Wednesday 19 November 2025 at History House – *Horizontal noticeboards: Chalk writing on pavements during the Great Depression*

Presented by Megan Hicks.

EXCURSIONS

Saturday 1 February 2025 at Fisher Library, University of Sydney – *Exhibition Tour: Hardy Wilson's Old Colonial Architecture, 1924–2024*

Presented by Hector Abrahams.

Friday 12 September 2025 at Hyde Park, City of Sydney – *Walking Tour: Water, Water, Everywhere!*

Held in conjunction with History Week.

Presented by Judith Dunn OAM.

OTHER EVENTS

A legacy in print: Honouring the past and embracing the future of the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society

Tuesday 25 February 2025 at History House (Hybrid - members also joined online).

Presented by Samuel White, and featuring Leonie Bell, David Carment AM, Ben Hingley and Christine Yeats.

RAHS supported research forum – Convicts

Friday 14 to Saturday 15 March 2025 at History House.

RAHS Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 15 April 2025 via Zoom.



Members of the Convict Colloquium at History House, 15 March 2025 (Photograph: Courtesy of Gary L. Sturgess).

OUR PEOPLE AND PUBLICATIONS

Our publications reflect the work and commitment of many people.

In 2025, the Society published 9 peer-reviewed research articles in the *JRAHS* and 18 feature articles in *History* magazine. The *JRAHS* also included 16 scholarly book reviews, while *History* published 14 book notes highlighting recent historical publications. Many of the works featured in the Book Notes section were produced by local historical societies and community groups, including projects supported through the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program administered by the RAHS.

This contribution to our understanding of New South Wales history is only possible because of our members, authors, editors, reviewers and volunteers, whose financial support, time and expertise sustain the Society's publications

JRAHS

2025 Editorial and Production Team

Honorary Editor — Samuel White

Book Review Editor — Christine Yeats

Production Editor — Bruce Pollock

Production Coordinators — Phillip Jaworski and Donna Newton

Proofreader — Janette Pelosi

Design, typesetting and printing — PLT Print Solutions, Graham Wye

2025 Book Reviewers

Kristen Alexander, Rowan Cahill, David Carment AM, Michael Flynn, Don Garden AO, Rena Henderson, Joy Hughes AM, Mark Leeming, Carol Liston AO, Janet McCalman AO, Bruce Pennay OAM, Angela Phippen, Jozefa Sobski, Richard Waterhouse and Judith White.

Articles Published in 2025

Volume 111, Part 1 — June

The spearing of Governor Phillip at Manly — Keith Amos

John [Milner] Clark, 1824–76: The fortunes of a fugitive — Mark St Leon

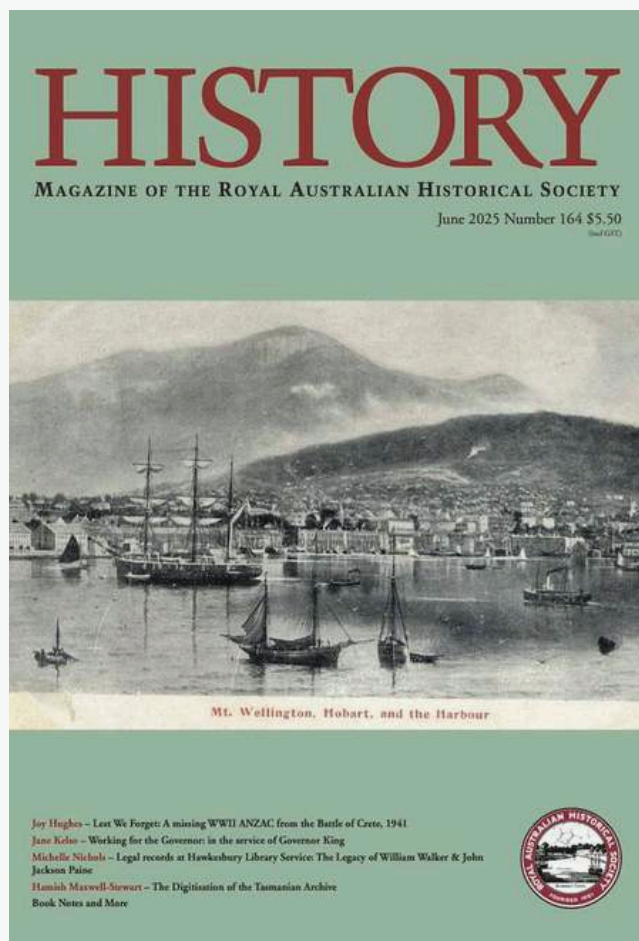
Frederick G. G. Rose, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies and academic freedom — Geoffrey Gray

Brigadier José Bustamante's 1796 plan to attack New South Wales — Chris Maxworthy

Volume 112, Part 2 — December

Guarding against the guardian: Reassessing revisionism at the Australian War Memorial — Mark Clayton
One of the few international journalists in Australia': Andrew Melville Pooley in Tokyo and Sydney — James Cotton
AIF Padre, Captain Father Thomas Joseph O'Donnell — Des Lambley
Protesting the end of the world: The WA Nuclear Disarmament Movement of the 1980s — Rhys Knapton-Lonsdale
Picturing Civilisation — Bruce Pennay and Yalmambirra

HISTORY



Front Cover, *History*, June 2025.

2025 Editorial and Production Team

March Editor — Mark St Leon

June Editor — Carol Liston AO

September Editor — Christine Yeats

December Editors — Alison Wishart and Richard White

Production — Phillip Jaworski

Design, typesetting and printing — PLT Print Solutions, Graham Wye

2025 Book Note Contributors

Kay Abrahams, Judith Godden, Suzanne Holohan, Peter Hobbins, Zoe McPherson, Donna Newton, Elaine Phillips, Mary Sciberras and Bron Stepowski.

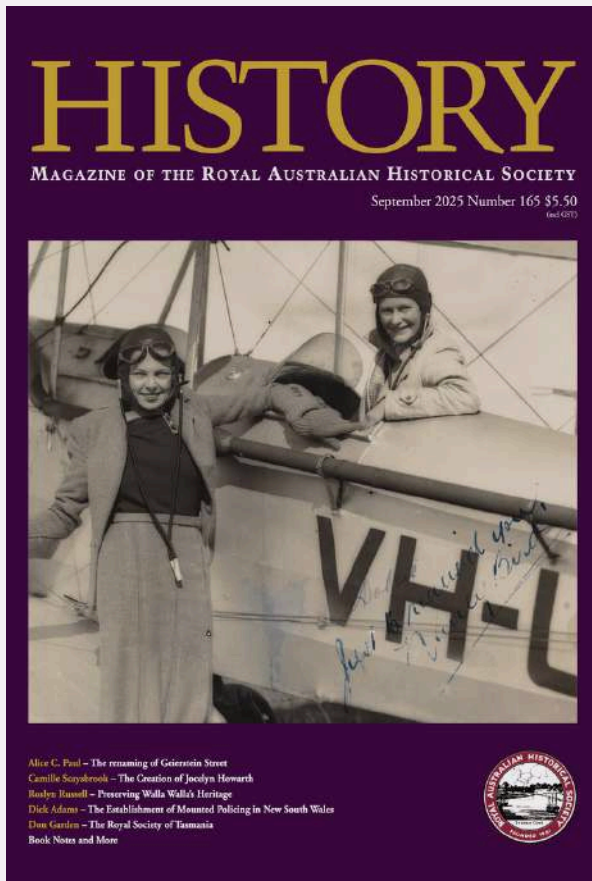
Articles Published in 2025

March — Issue 163

Loulou & Fernande: French fashion trendsetters — Graham Shirley
Sydney's modernist heritage: Russell Jack and the Sydney School — Janna M St Leon
The 'last word' in baths — Alison Wishart
John Hubert Plunkett: Australia's unsung hero — Mark Tedeschi

June — Issue 164

Lest we Forget: a missing WWII ANZAC from the Battle of Crete, 1941 — Joy Hughes
Working for the governor — Jane Kelso
Legal records at Hawkesbury Library Service — Michelle Nicholls
The digitisation of the Tasmanina Archive — Maxwell Maxwell-Stewart



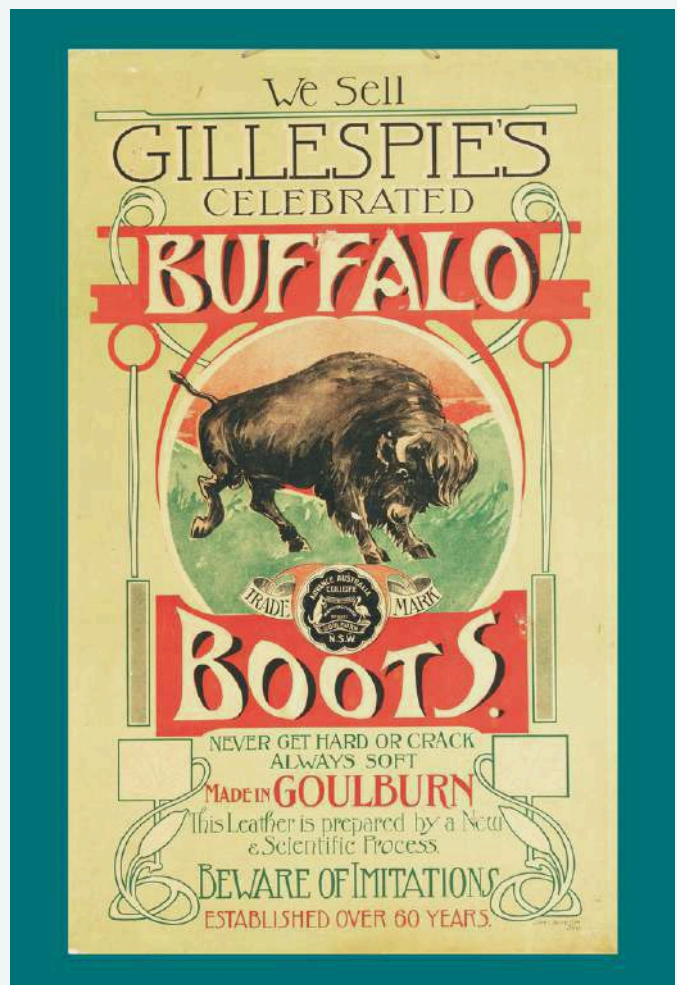
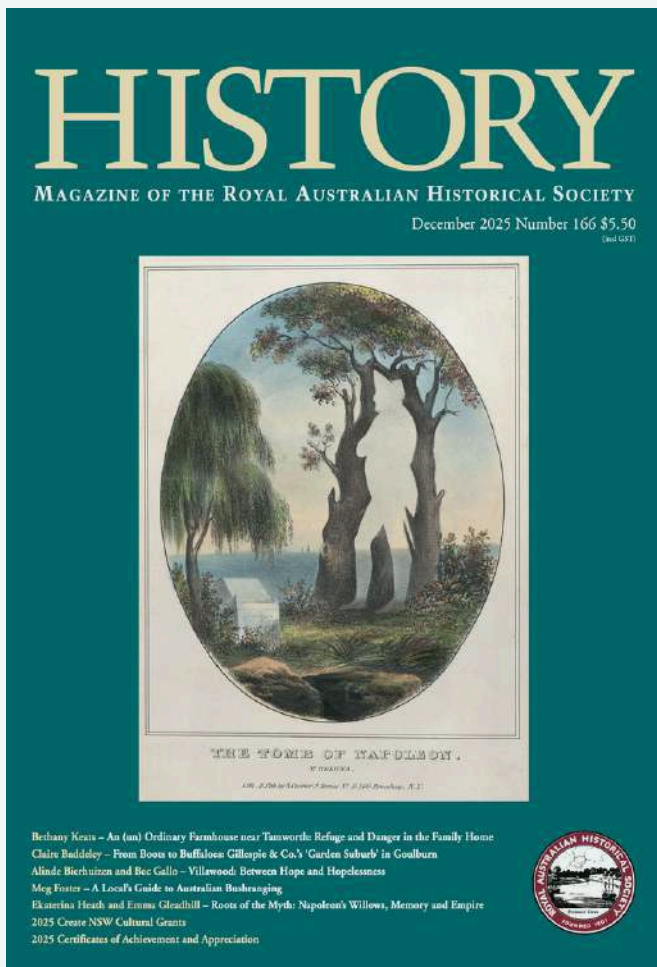
September — Issue 165

- The renaming of Geierstein Street* — Alice C Paul
- The creation of Jocelyn Howarth* — Camille Scaysbrook
- Preserving Walla Walla's heritage* — Roslyn Russell
- Establishment of mounted policing in New South Wales* — Dick Adams
- The Royal Society of Tasmania* — Don Garden

December — Issue 166

- An (un) ordinary farmhouse near Tamworth* — Bethany Leblais
- From boots to buffalos* — Claire Baddeley
- Villawood: Between hope and hopelessness* — Alinde Bierhuizen and Bec Gallo
- A local's guide to Australian bushranging* — Meg Foster
- Roots of the myth: Napoleon's willows, memory and empire* — Ekaterina Heath and Emma Gleadhill

Front Cover, *History*, September 2025.



Front and Back Covers, *History*, December 2025.



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Annual Report 2025

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Compiled and written by Suzanne Holohan
With contributions from RAHS Councillors, employees and volunteers
Design and layout: Suzanne Holohan

Unless otherwise stated, all images are from the RAHS collection or supplied by members, speakers and partners.

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Front Cover: New copper roof at History House, January 2026, marking the next chapter in safeguarding the Society's collections and future.

Back Cover: Aerial view of History House and Macquarie Street, January 2026, offering a new perspective on the Society's place in Sydney's historic precinct.

Images captured by Alex Thomson, Airborne Studio, using drone videography.

