
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

ABN 91 000 027 654

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr Iain Stuart

This is my final President's report as under our constitution I have to step down and welcome a new President.

I would like to begin this report by acknowledging all the hard work undertaken by RAHS employees, notably our General Manager, Suzanne Holohan, as well as Phillip Jaworski, Donna Newton, and Maryanne Byrne. I would particularly like to note Suzanne's contribution in always coming up with new ideas to help the Society achieve its goals. This continual stream of ideas has been most welcome.

As the RAHS President, it is truly an honour to acknowledge the unwavering commitment and tireless work of each Councillor and Committee member who has contributed to our collective mission of promoting the understanding of Australian history. I would like to thank the efforts of all our Councillors and members of our dedicated Committees in providing services to our members – the Events Committee, Affiliated Societies Committee, Publications Committee, and Library and Archives Working Party.

I note retiring Councillors Lynne Allen and Graham Shirley and thank them for their commitment to the RAHS. I also welcome Mark Dunn and Judith Godden, who joined the Council this year and acknowledge how well they have fitted into the Council.

The RAHS provided a number of opportunities for members and emerging professionals to undertake volunteer work. As President, I would like to thank all its volunteers for the incredible contribution that they make. Our 2024 volunteers included: Kay Abrahams, Melina Apostolidis, Susie Boyce, Jessica Buckton, Johanna Burfitt-Williams, Julie Gregory, Shaani Hutto, Evan James, Ona Maksvytis, Elaine Phillips, Emily Ruthven, Mary Sciberras, Margaret Scott, Julius Spencer, Jan Thomas, Rebecca Vipond, and Claudette Wilkinson.

In 2024, a RAHS Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Lynne Allen for her dedicated service as ASC Chair from 2014 to 2024 and her ongoing contributions, including organising the 2024 Annual Conference and

supporting affiliated societies. She has undertaken a power of work over the years, which has benefited the RAHS and its members, for which we are truly thankful.

RAHS Fellowship Award

Joy Hughes was awarded a RAHS Fellowship in 2024 for her significant contributions to Australian history and the Society's work. Her association with the RAHS began in 1973. A founding member of the Professional Historians Association NSW, she has an extensive background in historical research, including work with the National Trust (NSW) and the Historic Houses Trust (now Museums of History NSW). She has also published multiple works on Australian history.

Her RAHS contributions include serving on the Library Committee, proofreading and reference-checking for the Society's journal from 2012 to 2022, and leading the 1989 project to identify surviving local government records. She also co-authored and edited significant RAHS publications, showcasing her dedication and expertise.

History House

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

In December 2023, the RAHS Council made the difficult decision to let the development application lapse. The RAHS could not fund the building project as envisaged in the 2016 development application due to the increase in construction costs post-COVID and the challenges of raising finances in the current economic environment.

On the positive side, the RAHS was able to focus on two goals for History House. Firstly, we were able to reopen the building, which had been closed since COVID, and secondly, we set about establishing a program of works and maintenance for the building. Some of these were deferred as they would have been picked up during the original project but with that not proceeding, they urgently needed to be addressed.

Reopening History House involved a reasonable amount of work. Mould was discovered on the Ground floor and Level 3. International Conservation Services reported on the mould remediation to the foyer, hallway and stairwell to the first level, the front two historic rooms and their contents and subsequently the mould was removed and surfaces cleaned in April 2024. We appreciated the way the International Conservation Services team worked with the RAHS. We also upgraded the Wi-Fi access to History House to enable the RAHS to run hybrid events and meetings in the auditorium. We also improved security to the building entrance and the lift.

History House celebrated a major milestone by hosting its first in-person event since 2020. RAHS Councillor Judith Dunn ran a seminar on conducting guided historical tours, which was attended by many members of our affiliated societies and myself. I was there to learn from Judith's wealth of experience.

Paul McNamara (builder/project construction manager) has been assisting the RAHS in assessing the issue with the building, leading a walk-through of the building by the History House Committee to define the order/scope of improvements and maintenance.

Based on Paul's scope of works, the RAHS sought expressions of interest for a heritage architect and a heritage engineer to provide guidance on the proposed maintenance work. I am pleased that we now have onboard Hector Abrahams Architects and Project X engineers as well as the continuing services of Paul McNamara.

After inspections and assessments, it was concluded that the existing glazed terracotta roof tiles and lead flashings on the main roof are defective as roof coverings and must be replaced. The Council has accepted this conclusion, and we are currently weighing the pros and cons of alternative roof coverings, balancing cost, longevity, and heritage requirements.

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

The History House Committee consists of Suzanne Holohan and Donna Newton, Councillors Iain Stuart, Christine Yates and Craig McPherson, with Carol Liston and Katherine Reynolds to provide advice and continuity. In particular, Carol, Christine and Donna have an encyclopedia knowledge of the fabric of History House which has proven to be exceptionally useful. As President I would like to thank them for their hard work and contributing their time and knowledge.

RAHS in the Community

As of 31 December 2024, the RAHS membership includes 367 affiliated organisations, reaching over 158,000 people involved in local and community history across New South Wales.

In 2024, the RAHS administered two grant programs that supported history and heritage projects across the state – the Cultural Grants Program and the Transport Heritage Program.

Advocacy and Letters

The RAHS Heritage Committee wrote letters of support for thirteen new items under consideration for listing on the NSW State Heritage Register. From unofficial feedback we have received, the Committee is often the only community organisation to comment on proposals and our ongoing support for listings has been noted.

We now have to submit via the Have Your Say portal with the broader NSW Government's determination to make communication with them into a farce. It will be interesting to see how this works for the RAHS.

The RAHS eNewsletters provided several updates about changes to tax laws for not-for-profits and information for affiliated societies on registering as a charity. The RAHS advocated to the Australian Taxation Office and members of parliament to raise the income tax-free threshold for not-for-profits from \$416 to \$18,200 and to recognise history societies as cultural associations alongside associations that promote art, literature, and music.

The RAHS submitted feedback to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment on proposed changes to create low- and mid-rise housing. While acknowledging the need for addressing housing challenges, the RAHS expressed concerns about the 'one size fits all' approach in the proposal. Key objections included the lack of protections for heritage and environmental sites, insufficient community consultation, and the potential for poor development outcomes. The RAHS urged the government to ensure heritage and environmental protections are upheld, involve communities in shaping developments, and provide adequate amenities in higher-density areas.

The RAHS also advocates for researchers to have access to historical records and libraries through our membership on various consultative committees.

Finale

I have enjoyed most of the last three years as RAHS President. It has given me a great appreciation of how history is produced and enjoyed by our members and affiliates. To me the future of the past is exciting.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Dr Kathrine M. Reynolds FRHistS

TREASURER'S REPORT

I present my Treasurer's report for the 2024 year to the members of the RAHS with great pleasure. 2024 has been a long hard year for the RAHS, its Councillors and employees, with many difficult decisions to be made. Again, I publicly offer my sincere thanks to the employees, working under difficult conditions, with History House re-opening intermittently, and having to work from home as well as coming into the office. Their ongoing and complete dedication to the RAHS was again on display and I thank them on behalf of the entire RAHS community. For many years, the employees and Councillors, as well as members, directed much of our efforts to accomplish the building project which we sadly had to forgo, returning to repairing History House, as the final cost estimates with proceeding were prohibitive. Thinking of the long-term viability of the RAHS, and our capacity to raise funds, especially during the COVID years, we opted for the safe option of repairs. However, we again thank our members and donors and acknowledge the generosity of our members.

As I stated last year, as a result of our fundraising the RAHS can afford repairs to History House and the building will remain a place for community and local history. Our online activities have been important as we reach out to more diverse groups of people, especially those in rural areas. We have invested in new technology to facilitate hybrid events (online as well as inhouse) at History House so that members unable to come to History House in person, can take part in our seminars and other events electronically. History House now has high-speed internet and improved WiFi helping us adapt to today's digital environment.

To progress our repairs, we have engaged Hector Abrahams (a former Councillor and a person with a long association with the RAHS) and his firm of heritage architects to ensure we preserve the heritage integrity of History House while we make it more functional for the future.

Inhouse discussions are occurring about how we may best serve our members: how best to use our team's time, whether we should have annual conferences in person or perhaps looking to the future, whether we might consider a hybrid conference based at History House. It is an exciting time for the RAHS, our Council and our team, as we do our best to position the RAHS as a solid organisation devoted to, and capable of, supporting Australian history in the twenty-first century.

General Position

In 2024, the Society recorded a surplus of \$19,167 after transfers of dedicated money of \$45,458 to its various funds compared to the deficit of \$116,753 reported in 2023. This result must be attributed to our employees and Councillors holding a steady line on expenditure, especially as we have elected not to take in new tenants while we undertake our repairs. We have seen an increase in dividend income (including imputation credits) from \$48,088 to \$172,978 as we placed some of our building donations into a sinking fund to prepare for further repairs over time. We also received \$225,668 in donations with \$35,047 of donations transferred to the building fund account.

I again wish to sincerely thank Ms Christine Yeats, Chair of the Events Committee and RAHS Senior Vice President, who enthusiastically and successfully has run a myriad of events to engage members and at the same time, contributing \$6,535 to our income, almost double last year's input. The RAHS Conference, held in Campbelltown, contributed \$17,499 (approximately the same as last year) with an extra \$944 from the raffle sales. We also managed a further \$4,177 from venue hire, again mainly underpinned by serious employee effort in this area.

A total of \$71,380 in one-off costs was incurred in reopening History House. Due to Sydney's wet weather, mould remediation was necessary, costing \$24,750. An additional \$42,989 was spent on costs associated with the planned renovations, including architect and engineer fees.

On the brighter side, dividend and bank interest increased by 115% to \$184,496. Additionally, \$86,402 was received in bequests, and \$225,668 in donations, with \$35,047 of donations transferred to the building fund account.

Grants and Bequests

Through the 2024 Cultural Grants Programme, for funding to regional community and history projects, 21 projects received financial support totalling \$66,924 under this programme, a 10% increase on last year. We remain very grateful to The Hon. John Graham, MLC, NSW Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, Minister for Jobs and Tourism, for providing this funding and recognising the importance of Australian history.

This is the tenth year the RAHS has run the Transport Heritage Grants Programme managed by Transport NSW and Transport Heritage NSW. In 2024, twelve transport heritage projects received a total of \$184,833 in grant funding.

In 2024, we received \$50,000 bequest from the estate of Helen Elizabeth Allum, a well-known local historian, for which we are most grateful. We also received an additional \$30,000 to be allocated to our library from the estate of Judith McMinn. A further \$6,042 was received from the estate of Robert Pauling from the sale of overseas shares.

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

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 2025 RAHS Annual General Meeting.

History House

History house has been valued by a professional valuer who has assessed the building's worth as \$15,000,000. The valuation is affected by the heritage status of the building but reinforces the significance of History House as both a heritage asset and a key financial resource for the RAHS.

In January 2024, the RAHS Council made the difficult decision to discontinue the building project as originally conceived in its 2016 development application. As a result, the RAHS wrote off \$685,060 in building project costs incurred between 2012 and 2023. Additionally, we reduced the History House Fund Reserve on the Balance Sheet to reflect the drawdown of building fund donations used to cover these costs.

Asset Valuations

The RAHS intends to review its collection of antiques and museum items in 2025 to determine whether in fact these items fit with the RAHS collection policies and philosophy or whether they might be better located in other cultural institutions, especially those items that are not on display or require specialist care. As custodians of history, we must ensure that items are preserved in environments where they can be properly maintained and accessed by the public.

Sincere Thanks

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

Income and Expenditure Statement

INCOME	2024	2023
Dividend and Interest received	184,496	85,954
Bequests: Made during financial year	86,042	21,220
Bequests: Drawdown from previous years	0	45,000
Donations History House: Made during financial year	35,047	392,132
Donations History House: Drawdown from previous years	728,427	0
Donations received: Other	190,621	52,785
Grants Received: Create NSW	80,000	122,739
Other Income	102,497	77,582
Subscriptions Received	93,760	94,768
TOTAL INCOME	1,500,891	892,180

EXPENDITURE

Accounting and Audit Services	45,877	44,967
Depreciation	13,562	5,702
Employee Related Expenses	316,594	296,048
Grants expended: Create NSW	80,486	80,000
History House Expenses: Business as Usual	107,763	75,266
History House Expenses: Projects	114,370	18,339
IT, Internet and Phone expenses	23,461	25,959
Insurance	18,445	27,471
<i>JRAHS</i> and <i>History</i> Magazine	32,685	32,185
Other Expenses	18,940	16,582
Postage, Printing and Stationery	17,356	18,333
Offset: Expenses funded by grants	0	-24,052
Write off of History House Project Expenses	685,060	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,474,600	616,801
SURPLUS BEFORE TRANSFERS	26,291	275,379

TRANSFER TO OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

History House Build Project Donations	35,047	392,132
Other	10,411	0
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	-19,167	-116,753

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Cash	1,023,837	1,467,619
Receivable and other current assets	171,828	164,532
Financial assets	2,959,114	2,408,210
Property, plant and equipment	16,589,888	17,259,056
TOTAL ASSETS	20,744,667	21,299,357

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and other liabilities	250,050	373,175
Provisions	73,783	64,220
TOTAL LIABILITIES	323,837	437,395

NET ASSETS	20,420,834	20,861,962
EQUITY		
Reserves	19,386,033	19,807,997
Retained Surplus	1,034,801	1,053,965
TOTAL EQUITY	20,537,584	20,861,962

A full copy of the financial statements is available on request to members. The financial statements will also be included in the 2025 Annual General Meeting papers.

SERVICES TO OUR MEMBERS

RAHS Events and Outreach

Christine Yeats, Events Committee Chair

The RAHS delivered a full calendar of events in 2024, including lectures, skills-based workshops, seminars, and book launches. While the return of in-person events allowed members to reconnect and engage face-to-face, the RAHS remained committed to offering online lectures and seminars, ensuring accessibility and inclusivity for regional and interstate members, as well as a broader audience.

Day Lectures remained a cornerstone of the events program, taking place on the first Wednesday of each month, alongside the popular Special Lecture series. These lectures provided opportunities for participants across Australia to hear from emerging and established historians on diverse historical topics.

A significant milestone in 2024 was hosting the first in-person event at History House since its closure during COVID. The workshop, *How to Conduct Guided Historical Tours*, presented by Judith Dunn on 12 June 2024, marked a return to face-to-face engagement at the RAHS headquarters. This workshop exemplified the Society's commitment to equipping historical society members with practical skills for their work.

On 25 September 2024, we hosted our first Evening Lecture since reopening the building. The lecture, presented by architectural historian Emeritus Professor Miles Lewis AM, FAHA FRSA, BArch (Hons), BA, PhD, was titled *Portable Buildings: Port Jackson to Darwin* in association with the Australian Institute of Architects. It examined the significant role of prefabrication in Australia, starting from the first

European settlement. Australia is home to more surviving examples of these buildings than anywhere else in the world. These include wooden houses from Singapore (none of which remain in Singapore itself), English iron buildings from the 1850s (only one still stands in Britain), plate iron buildings from Glasgow, such as the NSW Legislative Council building in Macquarie Street (none survive in Scotland), redwood buildings from the USA (none remain there), and structures from Germany, France, and Italy. Around 60 people attended, including The Hon Bob Carr, Chair of the Australian Heritage Council and Museums of History NSW, who shared a few words at the event's conclusion.

The RAHS collaborated with several organisations throughout the year, including the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG), the Workers Education Association (WEA), the Australian Railway Historical Society, National Archaeology Week, and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS). These partnerships enriched the RAHS calendar, delivering engaging and high-quality events to members and broader audiences.

The RAHS would like to thank the Events Committee, RAHS Councillors, and our partner organisations for their support in developing this year's events calendar.

Looking ahead, 2025 is set to be an exciting year. The RAHS is planning to host hybrid events and work with our affiliated societies and other organisations in the history sector to deliver an innovative and engaging program.

Event Type	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Seminars and Workshops	7	5	5	18	12
Lectures – Day, Evening, Joint, Special	18	18	17	19	8
Excursions and Tours	0	3	6	1	2
Book Launches	2	0	0	0	0
Other	3	3	1	1	3
TOTAL	30	29	29	39	25

REGIONAL SEMINARS FUNDED BY CREATE NSW

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

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

Central Coast Regional Seminar – *Beyond the Digital Horizon: Trove, Libraries and Archives*

Saturday 2 March 2024 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: *Beyond the Digital Horizon: Tips and Advice for Making the Best Use of Trove* and *Researching Passenger Arrivals to the Australian Colonies* by Christine Yeats, which utilised the collections of the NSW State Archives and the National Archives of Australia; and *It's Not All Online* by Carol Liston AO, which outlined the benefits of visiting archives and libraries in person, using examples from the State Library of NSW and NSW State Archives Collection. Carol also provided a virtual 'tour' of the RAHS Library, highlighting its importance for local and community history.

The Western Sydney Seminar, planned for Friday 12 July 2024, during NAIDOC Week at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, was unfortunately cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. Themed *Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud*, the event was a collaboration with the Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT to celebrate the resilience and activism of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The RAHS remains committed to engaging with Western Sydney communities and is planning additional seminars in 2025.

WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

Wednesday 13 March 2024
– *Using Trove: A Beginner's Course*

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

Christine demonstrated how to research the Australia of yesteryear using resources available on the National Library of Australia's Trove database.

Thursday 16 May 2024 – *'Who Travels by Train sees NSW Best': The Role of Railways in the Progress of NSW*

RAHS workshop via Zoom in conjunction with the Australian Railway Historical Society and the WEA.

Presented by James Dalton.

James explored how railways have shaped the economic, social, technological, industrial and political development of our society.

Wednesday 12 June 2024 – *How to Conduct Guided Historical Tours*

RAHS seminar at History House.

Presented by Judith Dunn.

Judith delivered a practical seminar for members and volunteers of historical societies on conducting guided historical tours. The workshop covered commentary, timing, dealing with difficult customers, leading tour groups, and tour group management.

Wednesday 21 August 2024 – *Stitching Stories: Crafting personal narratives using interconnected online resources*

RAHS workshop at History House in conjunction with the WEA.

Presented by Christine Yeats.

Christine equipped participants with skills to explore online resources for uncovering life stories. It demonstrated how to piece together historical narratives, provided search strategies, and emphasised corroborating information across multiple sources for accuracy.

Wednesday 13 November 2024 – *Stepping Ashore: Researching Passenger Arrivals to the Australian Colonies*

RAHS workshop at History House in conjunction with WEA.

Presented by Christine Yeats.

Christine guided participants in uncovering immigration records from the 19th and early 20th centuries and shared the skills required to access and interpret ship passenger records, government archives, newspapers, and personal narratives.

Tuesday 3 December 2024 – *Writing History: Some Tips and Taboos*

RAHS seminar at History House

Presented by Richard White.

Richard presented a seminar on transforming historical research into readable history. He explored the nature of historical writing and offered practical tips for publishing engaging and accessible histories.

DAY LECTURES

Wednesday 7 February 2024 via Zoom – *Ella Zuila, Australia's Forgotten Heroine of the High Wire*

Presented by Mark St Leon.

Wednesday 6 March 2024 via Zoom – *Virtue in Australian Capitalism*

Presented by Hannah Forsyth.

Wednesday 3 April 2024 via Zoom – *Bennelong and Phillip: A History Unravelled*

Presented by Kate Fullagar.

Wednesday 1 May 2024 via Zoom – *What Is So Good About Crime, Historians' Edition*

Presented by Nancy Cushing.

Wednesday 5 June 2024 via Zoom – *Awabakal and Nikkin: Reconnecting histories of First Peoples, coal and colonists*

Presented by Julie McIntyre.

Wednesday 3 July 2024 via Zoom – *The Power to Read Others: Popular Phrenology in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand*

Presented by Alexandra Roginski.

Wednesday 7 August 2024 at History House – *Sylvia Lawson's Journey From Film Critic to Historian*

Presented by Sam Twyford-Moore.

Wednesday 4 September 2024 via Zoom – *A Transgressive Life: Monte Punshon and the Transformation of Australia, 1882–1989*

Presented by Tessa Morris-Suzuki.

Wednesday 2 October 2024 via Zoom – *Mapping the Colony: The intriguing contributions of Francis Barrallier*

Presented by Andy Macqueen.

Wednesday 6 November 2024 via Zoom – *The Antipodean Laboratory: Re-reading the colonial archive*

Presented by Anna Johnston.

Wednesday 4 December 2024 at History House – *A Nation Divided: The Sister Liguori Affair 1920–21*

Presented by Jeff Kildea.

JOINT AND EVENING LECTURES

Wednesday 22 May 2024 at History House– *Bricks, Bottles and Bones: Historical Archaeology at the Parramatta Metro Site*

RAHS in conjunction with National Archaeology Week.

Presented by Abi Cryerhall.

Wednesday 25 September 2024 at History House– *Portable Buildings: Port Jackson to Darwin*

Presented by Miles Lewis.

SPECIAL LECTURES

Tuesday 19 March 2024 via Zoom – *Bee Miles: Australia's Famous Bohemian Rebel*

Presented by Rose Ellis.

Wednesday 19 June 2024 at History House – *Joseph Banks and the Endeavour: The Unauthorised Biography*

Presented by Ian Burnet.

Wednesday 10 July 2024 at History House – *Broughton House, Parramatta: A Colonial Misnomer*

Presented by Michael Organ.

Wednesday 14 August 2024 via Zoom – *Subjects of Time: Australian lives at the fin de siècle*

Presented by Mark Hearn.

Wednesday 11 September 2024 at History House – *The influence of English Revival architecture in Neutral Bay and Cremorne Point, 1885–1930*

Presented by Ian Hoskins.

BOOK LAUNCHES AT HISTORY HOUSE

Friday 20 September 2024 – *The World We Want: The New York Herald Tribune World Youth Forum & the Cold War Teenager* by Cath Bishop

Wednesday 27 November 2024 – *The Family History Book* by Cassie Gilmartin and Shaun Gilmartin

Hosted in conjunction with SAG.

OTHER EVENTS

RAHS Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 16 April 2024 via Zoom.

RAHS and FAHS Fellowship Award Presentations

Wednesday 13 November 2024 at History House.

RAHS Christmas Party

Tuesday 3 December 2024 at History House.

RAHS Library

Donna Newton, RAHS Librarian

The RAHS Library, recognised by the National Library of Australia for its culturally significant collection, continues to serve as a vital resource for members and the wider history community. With over 65,000 items related to Australian history, the library remains an indispensable hub for research and learning.

Items currently catalogued on online system

Books	15,701
Vertical files	5,571
Microform	343
Electronic format	266
Maps	106
Audio/Video	23
Periodicals RAHS: <i>JRAHS</i> and <i>History</i> articles, Conference papers	4,236
Periodicals: RAHS Affiliated Societies (past and current)	468

Periodicals: Other Organisations	136
Images	439
Items currently catalogued in Excel*	
Photograph Collection	11,432
Glass Slide Collection	7,614
Walker Glass Slides	1,939
Manuscripts	1,058
Press Clipping collection	7,255
Estimate of uncatalogued items, primarily photographs	7,000
Total Items	63,587*

* These catalogue records will need to be reviewed and updated before they can be migrated to our online catalogue.

This year, we focused on reviewing and enhancing our catalogue data in preparation for the launch of our new online library catalogue, Liberty, in 2025. As part of this process, we have been refining subject headings to improve searchability and ensuring that items in the catalogue align with our collection policy.

The reopening of History House and the RAHS Library in April 2024 marked a significant milestone. Throughout the year, we welcomed 96 members, researchers, and visitors who accessed our collections in person. We also conducted guided tours and presentations on our collections for members of affiliated societies, highlighting the unique resources available in our library. Online queries from researchers increased as well, with requests for *JRAHS* articles and items from our image collection supporting family history projects, academic theses, publications, media releases, and more.

Our dedicated volunteers played an essential role in advancing key projects, including promoting the library collections, shelving, cataloguing, and preparing miscellaneous materials for inclusion in our database. Volunteers also contributed by organising affiliated society newsletters and journals. This year, we were delighted to welcome several TAFE and university students completing work placements, providing them with valuable opportunities to learn about managing a library with a diverse and unique collection.

We express our sincere gratitude to the NSW Government, our members, and our volunteers for their unwavering support. Your contributions ensure that the RAHS Library remains a dynamic educational and research resource.

Publications, Website and Digital Media

Phillip Jaworski, Membership Services and Digital Media

The RAHS produced six publications in 2024. This comprised two editions of the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society (JRAHS)* and four editions of *History* magazine.

The *JRAHS* is the oldest journal of Australian history, first published in 1906. It contains original articles and reviews by professional and community historians. In 2024, the journal's editor, Dr Samuel White, introduced two new initiatives. These included the *JRAHS Podcast*, which showcases contributors' research to a broader audience, and a feature called 'Interpreting an Image', in which shorter papers are presented to analyse historical images.

The journal continues to be an essential outlet for publishing new research and writing from members and the history community. We received 16 new submissions and published eight research articles, two 'Interpreting an Image' papers and 16 book reviews. Subjects included Lieutenant Charles Jeffreys, railway navvies and grog shops, the Hyde Park Riots of 1878, and proclamations of martial law in the Australian colonies. We encourage members to consider making a submission to the journal.

History magazine provides articles of general historical interest, developments in research, book notes, forthcoming events, and other relevant news. Each issue is produced by a guest editor who is responsible for sourcing articles from a range of contributors. The guest editors for 2024 were Mark St Leon (March), Carol Liston (June), Christine Yeats (September), and Ian Willis (December). Topics included the architects of Toohey's hotels, the Chalmers Street fires, the curious case of Captain James' ostrich farms, and remembering the Hume and Hovell expedition in 1924 and 2024.

The RAHS eNewsletter continues to serve as an effective way to communicate news and events to members and friends. Over 3,200 people and organisations subscribe to the eNewsletter, with 15 issues circulated in 2024. Some of our top stories included celebrating the Geographical Names Board's milestone 400th meeting, sharing the launch of the digitised 1800 Settlers' Muster Book, and celebrating ten years of the Transport Heritage Grants. The RAHS is grateful for news stories and events submitted by members and affiliates, which ensures our content covers a diverse range of interests.

The RAHS continues to maintain an active social media

presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. We now have over 7,000 followers on Facebook, 2,200 on Twitter, and 1,900 on Instagram. We also saw an increase in followers on YouTube, which features recorded lectures, interviews, and instructional videos. The channel received over 8,000 views in 2024. The most watched videos were *Secret and Special: The Untold Story of the Z Special Unit*, *The Shipwreck: The True Story of the Dunbar*, and *Truganini: Journey through the Apocalypse*. Our most popular post on Facebook was a photograph of the Cenotaph in Martin Place, taken circa 1930s, which we shared on Remembrance Day. Our other popular posts were from our #TransportTuesday series, which featured transport heritage images from the RAHS collections. We thank RAHS volunteer Evan James for helping prepare these posts.

The RAHS website is an important resource for supporting the Society's educational, research and advocacy work. The website features a blog, web pages, an events calendar, an online shop, and a members' area. The website was accessed by 46,481 users throughout 2024. Users were predominantly from Australia (80%), followed by others from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and China in that order. The most visited pages included *Women's History Month* and an associated blog post on Worimi bushranger Mary Ann Bugg; *Exciting New World: Australia in the 1920s*; *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*; and *RAHS Events*. We always want to hear about ways we can improve the website. Please get in touch if you have specific feedback about the website's layout and accessibility.

We look forward to new opportunities in 2025 to increase our presence online and inform our members and friends of the latest news and events from the history community.

RAHS Affiliated Societies

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston AO, Affiliated Societies Committee

The RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee (ASC) plays a pivotal role in fostering and supporting over 350 affiliated societies across NSW. This includes 281 societies in regional and Western Sydney areas, collectively representing over 158,000 members and 14,000 volunteers who serve as dedicated custodians of local history and heritage.

In 2024, the ASC collaborated with the RAHS Council, the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society, and the History House team to deliver the 2024 RAHS Annual Conference, themed *Windows into Local History*.

The RAHS Annual Conference is a signature event on the NSW local history calendar, bringing together historians, researchers and members of affiliated societies. It offers invaluable opportunities for networking and collaboration, inspiring fresh ideas and strengthening connections to preserve and share NSW history.

The program explored Campbelltown's heritage, featuring sessions on its transformation from a rural township into a metropolitan suburb, the Appin Massacre from a D'harawal perspective, and the history of the Ingleburn Military Camp. These presentations offered fresh insights into the region's rich tapestry of local history and fostered a deeper appreciation among attendees. A highlight of the conference was the Lesley Muir Address, delivered by Emeritus Professor Mark McKenna FAHA. In his talk, *Writing a 'Local' History of Australia*, Professor McKenna stressed the significance of local histories in shaping broader national narratives.

Delegates enjoyed many opportunities to connect, particularly during the pre-conference reception hosted by the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society at the Campbelltown Arts Centre. Guided tours of Campbelltown's historic landmarks, including Glenalvon House and heritage walking tours, further enriched their appreciation of the area's historical significance.

In 2024, \$66,294 was awarded to 21 recipients through the Create NSW Cultural Grants program to support projects such as digitising historical newspapers, publishing local histories and preserving cultural heritage. These initiatives ensure the preservation and sharing of our State's rich historical legacy. We extend our sincere thanks to Create NSW for its support of local and community history projects.

The RAHS extends thanks to Lynne Allen for her dedicated service as Chair of the Affiliated Societies Committee. Her leadership has been instrumental in fostering and supporting historical societies across the State. We also warmly welcome new Committee members, Judith Godden and Stephen Coppins, who bring fresh perspectives and expertise to support future initiatives.

As we look ahead to 2025, the RAHS wishes its affiliated societies a successful year and remains committed to supporting their efforts in researching, preserving, and promoting NSW history.

RAHS Membership Data

This year, the RAHS saw a healthy 10% increase in Individual and Pair Memberships. The reopening of History House in 2024 played a key role, encouraging the return of long-standing members and welcoming new ones keen to explore the library and enjoy the

return of in-person events at History House.

The RAHS maintained strong support for its regional members and affiliated organisations through online events and the members-only area of our website. Together, our affiliated societies represent over 158,000 members, including 14,000 dedicated volunteers who play a critical role in preserving and sharing Australian history across NSW.

	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
AFFILIATED SOCIETIES					
Societies with fewer than 15 members	61	61	62	64	60
Between 16-30	66	61	64	58	64
Between 31 - 50	53	54	58	55	58
Between 51-100	104	109	101	106	97
Between 101-200	59	61	64	67	69
Between 201-300	7	8	9	9	16
More than 300	17	15	14	14	13
TOTAL AFFILIATED SOCIETIES	367	369	372	373	377
INDIVIDUAL AND PAIRS					
Individual Members	302	262	307	312	319
Household Pairs (x2)	28	25	32	35	38
Students	13	8	17	11	11
Senior Members	466	431	462	430	451
Senior Pairs (x2)	64	65	64	74	92
TOTAL INDIVIDUALS AND PAIRS	873	791	882	862	911
CORPORATE MEMBERS					
LIBRARIES	75	74	78	79	91
Honorary Fellows	4	4	4	4	4
Life Members	12	13	13	17	17
Members 50 years	4	5	6	6	6
Free and Exchange	32	33	31	31	32
TOTAL NON-SUBSCRIBERS	52	55	54	58	59
TOTAL SUBSCRIBERS	1,316	1,235	1,338	1,319	1,384
GRAND TOTAL	1,368	1,290	1,392	1,377	1,443

RAHS AND THE COMMUNITY

Representation on History and Heritage Boards

As of the 31 December 2024, the RAHS is represented on the Federation of Australian Historical Societies (FAHS) by RAHS Councillor Judith Dunn OAM and RAHS Senior Vice President Christine Yeats (Christine is also President of the FAHS); the Geographical Names Board of NSW by RAHS Councillor Carol Liston AO; the National Archives Consultative Forum by RAHS President Iain Stuart.

RAHS Administered Grant Programs

The **Cultural Grants Program** is a Create NSW devolved funding program administered by the RAHS on behalf of the NSW Government. The program aims to support historical and cultural organisations in NSW by funding projects that promote and preserve the state's diverse history, foster community engagement, and encourage research and education in local and community history.

The following organisations were 2024 Cultural Grant recipients: Albury and District Historical Society, Bathurst District Historical Society, Berry and District Historical Society, Callara Culture and Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society, Canowindra Historical Society and Museum, Clarence River Historical Society, Coonamble Family History Society, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Grafton Rowing Club, Kiama and District Historical Association, Latin American Research Platform, Manly Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society, Nambucca District Historical Society, Paterson Historical Society, Picton and District Historical and Family History Society, Port Macquarie Historical Society, Pyree Library Institute, Shoalhaven Historical Society, Shoalhaven Libraries, and Sydney Heritage Fleet Maritime Research and Records Centre. The total amount awarded was \$66,294.

The Transport Heritage Grants Program is funded by the NSW Government and administered by the RAHS with support from Transport Heritage NSW. This program has been instrumental in preserving and promoting our rich transport heritage. Since its inception, the program has awarded over \$1.7 million to 47 organisations, supporting 132 projects that bring rail, bus, tram, and maritime history to life.

The following organisations received Transport Heritage Grants in 2024: 10 Class Locomotives Limited; Australian Railway Historical Society (NSW); Balranald Southern Cross Inc; Capital Region Heritage Rail; Goulburn Crookwell Heritage Railway; Illawarra

Light Railway Museum Society; New England Railway; Richmond Vale Preservation Co-operative Society; Sydney Bus Museum Ltd; Sydney Electric Train Society; Sydney Heritage Fleet; and Sydney Tramway Museum. The total amount awarded was \$184,833.

RAHS Certificates of Achievement

The RAHS Certificates of Achievement recognise members of affiliated societies whose contribution is significant and noteworthy to both their society and the community. The following people were awarded the certificate in 2024: James Franklin (Australian Catholic Historical Society); Denyse Barker, Patricia Doris and Ian Mackey (Berrima District Historical and Family History Society); Glen op den Brouw (City of Liverpool and District Historical Society); Ian Tyrrell (Marrickville Heritage Society); Bruce Gregory and Verne Tuckwell (Parramatta and District Historical Society); Clive Smith (Port Macquarie Historical Society); Kim Phillips (Ryde District Historical Society); Tim Rigney (Shoalhaven Historical Society); and Doreen Lyon (The Oaks Historical Society).

RAHS Heritage Committee

When the Heritage Council of NSW advises the RAHS of proposed changes to the State Heritage Register (SHR), the Heritage Committee reviews and responds to proposals on behalf of the RAHS. The Committee supported the following proposed listings in 2024:

- Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- Ballast Point Park, Birchgrove
- Berrys Bay Precinct (Carradah Park), Waverton
- Captain Moonlite and James Nesbitt's Graves, Gundagai
- Chelmsford Bridge and Leura Cascades Picnic Area, Leura
- Cooma Gaol, Cooma
- Elsie Refuge (former), Glebe
- Kwong War Chong Building, Haymarket
- Nissan Hut, Belmont North
- Toganmain Woolshed Precinct, Carrathool
- Warringah Civic Centre Precinct, Dee Why
- Wyoming, Birchgrove

In addition, the Committee supported the following changes:

- Fitz Roy Iron Works Precinct, Mittagong – additional curtilage encompassing the blast furnace
- Lansdowne, Goulburn – amendment of curtilage

The RAHS eNewsletter ran stories to inform members about the importance of heritage sites and recent changes to the NSW State Heritage Register. We highlighted

the Fitz Roy Iron Works Precinct for its role as the birthplace of Australia's iron and steel industry; the Kwong War Chong Building in Haymarket, significant to the Chinese community; Cooma Gaol; and the gravesites of Captain Moonlite and James Nesbitt for their LGBTIQI heritage and bushranging legacies.

RAHS Reconciliation Action Plan

The RAHS is committed to reconciliation through truth-telling, education and promoting understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories. By supporting respectful engagement with First Nations' peoples and encouraging members to explore their own reconciliation journeys, the RAHS aims to foster meaningful connections and celebrate the heritage of NSW Aboriginal communities.

In 2024, we informed members about the centenary of the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA), highlighting its significance in Aboriginal activism and promoting events such as the Centenary Forum at the State Library of NSW. We shared resources on Aboriginal history, including Professor Grace Karskens' collaborative work on Dyarubbin (Hawkesbury/ Nepean River), and encouraged participation in National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week by promoting events on our social media platforms.

Through these efforts, the RAHS advocates for respectful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, highlighting their histories as integral to NSW's heritage.

RAHS PEOPLE

The RAHS Council

In 2024 the RAHS Council comprised of the following members:

President

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

Senior Vice President

Ms Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin, FRAHS

Vice President

Mr Graham Shirley to 16/04/2024

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, AO, BA (Hons), PhD, FRAHS from 16/04/2024

Treasurer

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

Executive Member

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, AO, BA (Hons), PhD, FRAHS to 16/04/2024

Dr Mark St Leon, BEc, GCertTQM, MBus, MA (Hons), PhD, CA from 16/04/2024

Councillors

Mrs Lynnette Allen, MA, DipEd, Grad Dip Local, Family & Applied History to 16/04/2024

Mrs Judith Dunn, OAM, FPDHS

Dr Mark Dunn, BA (Hons), MA (Applied History), PhD, M PHA, M ICOMOS from 16/04/2024

Dr Judith Godden, BA (Hons), PhD, DipEd, MPH (aeg), FACN (Hon), M PHA from 16/04/2024

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

Associate Professor Richard White, BA (Hons), DipEd

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

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

In 2024, the RAHS Council held eleven online meetings.

RAHS Committees and Working Parties

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

Below is a list of the Committees and their members as at 31 December 2024.

Affiliated Societies Committee

Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston (Chair/Specialist, Teaching), Mrs Lynne Allen, Mrs Judith Dunn, Mr Stephen Coppins (Campbelltown and Airds), Dr Judith Godden, Ms Lorraine Neate (Wollongong), Ms Angela Phippen (Specialist).

Events Committee

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

Executive Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President), Ms Christine Yeats (Senior Vice President), Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston (Vice President), Dr Kathrine Reynolds (Treasurer), Dr Mark St Leon (Council Representative).

Fellowship and Medals Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Adjunct Associate

Professor Carol Liston (Fellow), Mr Keith Johnson (Fellow), Professor Geoffrey Sherington (Fellow), Associate Professor Richard White (Historian/Councillor), Ms Christine Yeats (Fellow).

Heritage Committee

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

History House Working Party

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Ms Suzanne Holohan, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Mr Craig McPherson, Ms Donna Newton, Dr Kathrine Reynolds, Ms Christine Yeats.

Library and Archives Working Party

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

Publications Committee

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

Reconciliation Action Plan Implementation Committee

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Dr Michael Bennett, Dr Peter Hobbins, Ms Suzanne Holohan, Mr Craig McPherson, Mr Graham Shirley, Dr Mark St Leon, Dr Shayne Williams.

Strategic Review Working Party

Dr Iain Stuart (President/Chair), Ms Suzanne Holohan, Adjunct Associate Professor Carol Liston, Mr Craig McPherson, Dr Mark St Leon.

RAHS Volunteers

The RAHS thanks its volunteers for their invaluable contributions. Our 2024 volunteers included: Kay Abrahams, Melina Apostolidis, Susie Boyce, Jessica Buckton, Johanna Burfitt-Williams, Julie Gregory, Shaani Hutto, Evan James, Ona Maksvytis, Elaine Phillips, Emily Ruthven, Mary Sciberras, Margaret Scott, Julius Spencer, Jan Thomas, Rebecca Vipond, Claudette Wilkinson.

RAHS Certificate of Appreciation

In 2024, a RAHS Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to Lynne Allen. Lynne joined the RAHS and served as a RAHS Councillor from 2013–2024. As an enthusiastic and valued Chair of the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee from 2014, she brought her practical insight from her work as President of the

Shoalhaven Historical Society and of the Shoalhaven Family History Society to inform our programmes for affiliates. In the past year, since standing down from the RAHS Council, Lynne has continued her work with the Affiliated Societies Committee and the organisation of the 2024 Conference. This Certificate honours Lynne's work with the Affiliated Societies Committee.

RAHS Interns and RAHS Student Placements

In 2024, Charles Sturt University students Sophia El Mohamed and Helen Bryce completed their work placements in the RAHS Library.

Helen focused on the challenges of transitioning from in-house catalogues to an online system and managing a specialist collection. She amended and catalogued data in preparation for Liberty – our new online library catalogue system. Helen also gained insights into the roles of RAHS employees and volunteers. Sophia worked on cataloguing, uploading images for two photograph collections and drafting a User Acceptance Testing (UAT) guide for Liberty. Her placement also provided hands-on experience in collection and information management.

TAFE Ultimo students Aimee Crighton and Dorjee Wangchuk also completed placements, with Aimee uploading 30 Aadastra Aerial image records to the catalogue and reorganising library shelves. Dorjee also worked on adding and reviewing records to Liberty in preparation for its launch in 2025.

RAHS Employees

Full-time

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

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

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

Part-time

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

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

SOCIETY HONOURS

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

RAHS Fellows

Members of the Society who, in the judgment of the Council, have rendered service in advancing the knowledge of Australian history and in furtherance of the objects of the Society, shall be eligible for appointment as Fellows. Under the Society's regulations, the number of Fellows shall not exceed 25 and not more than three Fellows may be appointed in a 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

Joy Hughes, MA (Hons), M PHA, FRAHS

Robert Irving, OAM, ARMTTC, FRAIA, FRAHS

Alfred Brian Maxwell James, OAM, MA, Dip Arts, Dip FHS, FRAHS

Keith A. Johnson, AM, FSG, FSAG, 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

Christine Yeats, BA, DipLib, DipArchAdmin, FRAHS

RAHS Honorary Fellows

Persons who, in the judgment of the Council, have rendered valuable service in advancing the knowledge of Australian history, shall be eligible for appointment as Honorary Fellows. Under the Society's Regulations, the number of Honorary Fellows shall not exceed ten and not more than one Honorary Fellow may be appointed in a calendar year.

Emeritus Professor Alan Atkinson, FAHA

Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, BA (Hons), DipT, PhD

Dr Beverley Kingston, FASSA

RAHS Medallists

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

Margaret Coleman, OAM

Richard d'Apice, AM, LLB, FSAG

Margaret Scott