



# Royal Australian Historical Society

## Knowing your history

24 August 2023

[View this RAHS email in your browser](#)



The Bushman's Home, Wagga Wagga, 1910 [Museum of the Riverina]



**Graham Shirley (at right) interviewing Australian television pioneer Dick Collingridge, 25 June 2015 [Photo: Louise Collingridge]**

## **2023 RAHS Conference - Featured Session: *Voices from the Past***

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Bookings are now open for the 2023 RAHS Conference, with discounted early bird prices available until 15 September. The conference will be held on 21–22 October at the Wagga Wagga RSL Club. In this eNewsletter, we look at how oral histories can provide unique perspectives on the past, with our speakers in Session E discussing how to conduct and use oral histories in your research.

In late 2019, the State Library of NSW provided Oral History Collection Kits to eleven public libraries across the state. The project's focus was collecting oral histories from communities whose stories were not held in libraries and making them accessible in local studies collections. Fran O'Flynn is the Local Studies Officer with Goulburn Mulwaree Library, and her talk will give an insight into the Oral History Project and highlight some amazing recordings.

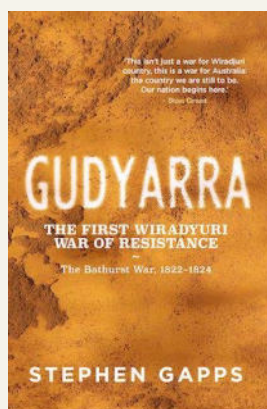
Alison Wishart has recorded oral histories with old 'Sea Salts' in Townsville,

Australian Defence Force personnel in the Middle East Area of Operations, and British migrants to Australia. Alison's talk will be a practical session that examines some of the challenges of conducting oral histories for local and family history. Her talk will also provide tips for recording oral history and how to get the most out of the interview.

Graham Shirley has worked as a director, writer and researcher on historical documentaries and has conducted numerous oral histories. 'Recording an oral history for one purpose can, decades later, be rethought for entirely new usage. For example, in the 1970 and 80s, when I recorded oral histories about Sydney's filmmaking McDonagh sisters for articles and an intended TV miniseries, I could not predict that in 2019 these interviews would be essential to an ABC radio podcast about the sisters'. Graham's presentation will cover the use of oral histories in books, television documentaries, and the abovementioned podcast. The presentation will also cover archival repositories of oral history recordings and associated rights issues.

The conference program also features sessions on the Riverina Region, the benefits and challenges of undertaking digitisation projects, and a panel discussion on the future of museums. For bookings and a detailed program, visit our conference website: [www.rahs.org.au/2023-rahs-conference/](http://www.rahs.org.au/2023-rahs-conference/)

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!



## Update to the Conference Program

Dr Stephen Gapps will speak during Session B on Saturday, 21 October. His subject will be: 'The Wiradyuri Wars 1824–1842. Connecting local resistance along the colonial frontier'.



## ICOMOS General Assembly 2023

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The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) works for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage places. The members of ICOMOS contribute to improving the preservation of heritage, the standards and the techniques for each type of cultural heritage property: buildings, historic cities, cultural landscapes and archaeological sites.

Australia ICOMOS was formed in 1976 as a national committee of ICOMOS and its mission is to lead cultural heritage conservation in Australia by raising standards, encouraging debate and generating innovative ideas. Australia ICOMOS is known for developing the 'The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance', otherwise known as the Burra Charter. This document and approach to conserving heritage comprises the broad nature of heritage significance rather than heritage significance being determined by an 'expert'. The Burra Charter forms the basis for heritage practice in Australia.

Both international ICOMOS and Australia ICOMOS have various National and International Scientific Committees, regular meetings and lively conferences.

Every three years, ICOMOS holds its General Assembly, which comprises meetings of the International Executive Committee, Advisory Committee and Scientific Council, voting in of the new International Executive Committee, meetings of the International Scientific Committees and a conference. The 21st

Triennial General Assembly of ICOMOS will be held in Sydney from 31 August – 9 September 2023. This is slightly later than originally planned but the pandemic got in the way.

Promised to be bigger than 'Ben Hur', the General Assembly is usually attended by over 1,000 heritage professionals from around the world. The GA includes ICOMOS business meetings as well as what they call a 'Scientific Symposium', which will showcase and discuss the latest in heritage practice organised around the theme of Heritage Changes.

ICOMOS has invited the Sydney community to join some free events during the ICOMOS GA.

RAHS Members might be particularly interested in the **Heritage Lecture at Sydney Town Hall on Monday 4 September from 6 pm – 8 pm** which positions Australian Aboriginal heritage in a global context and learn more about the scope and interconnectedness of living cultural heritage in the southeast region of Australia. You can book tickets at [icomosga2023.org/public-events/](https://icomosga2023.org/public-events/).

The **Heritage Exposition at Darling Harbour** also runs from Tuesday, 5 September – Saturday, 9 September 2023. Time: 8.30 am – 5.30 pm daily. This will be at ICC Sydney, Level 2 and is free.

This is promised to be a fascinating showcase of cultural heritage highlighting a journey to discover Australia's World Heritage properties, while also gaining insights into our professional heritage expertise and cultural heritage projects both locally and internationally.

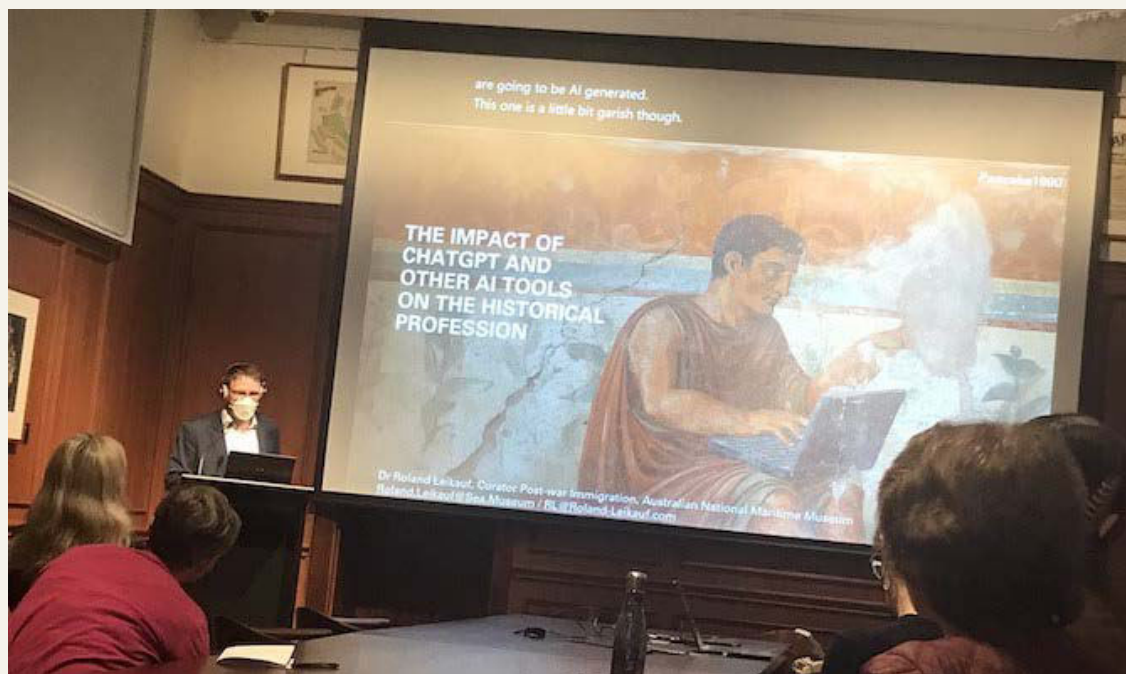
The **Heritage Trades Fair** will promote traditional heritage trades and showcase trade skills rarely seen today, but essential to the repair of heritage buildings. It is on at the ICC Sydney forecourt between Thursday, 7 September



– Saturday, 9 September 2023, 8.30 am – 5.00 pm daily and is free.

Dr Iain Stuart, RAHS President

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**Dr Roland Leikauf explores the impact of ChatGTP and other AI tools on the historical profession [Photo: Max Reid]**

## **The Impact of ChatGPT and other AI tools on the Historical Profession**

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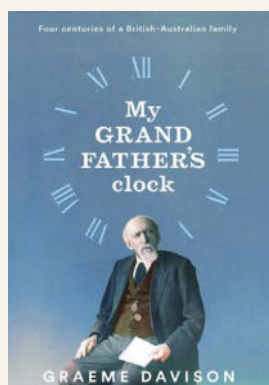
*On Wednesday, 9 August, RAHS volunteer Max Reid attended the Professional Historians Association presentation on the impact of ChatGTP and other AI tools on the historical profession at the State Library of NSW. Below is a summary of the points raised by Dr Roland Leikauf.*

The questions raised by Dr Roland Leikauf in his presentation 'The Impact of ChatGPT and other AI Tools on the Historical Profession' are fascinating for our present and prescient for our future. Dr Leikauf, currently curator for Post-War Immigration at the Australian Maritime Museum, detailed a comprehensive history of not only the development of AI but how interest within the public consciousness waxes and wanes. These 'seasons' of interest, beautifully

described as 'AI Summer' and 'AI Winter', intermingle with not just the interest of policymakers in utilising AI but in popular culture. But the heart of Dr Leikauf's presentation lay in the fundamental questions, benefits and risks of AI for historians as a profession. Though numerous legal battles are being fought in a number of jurisdictions to determine the proper boundaries of AI for creatives, for historians who, at least in some capacity, deal in truth-telling, the boundaries are less clear. Does the proliferation of AI-created historical content raise the profile and authority of the professional historian? Or does one of the great challenges of the Information Age, the proliferation of 'fake news', become supercharged by AI in the hands of the unscrupulous? In whatever eventuality, there will likely be no easy answers, and the questions raised by this fascinating presentation by Dr Leikauf remain.

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## RAHS Events



### RAHS Day Lecture My Grandfather's Clock

**Speaker:** Graeme Davison.

**When:** Wednesday, 6 September 2023 at 1.00 pm.

**Where:** Online via Zoom.

**Cost:** Free.

A great-aunt's bequest – a 200-year-old grandfather clock – sends historian Graeme Davison on a journey deep into his father's family's past. From their tribal homeland in the Scottish Borders, he follows them to the garrison town of Carlisle, from industrial Birmingham to Edwardian Australia, and from the Great War to his own suburban childhood. This is the story of an ordinary family's journey from frontier warfare and dispossession through economic turmoil and emigration to modest prosperity. At each step, we are led to reflect on the puzzles of personal identity and the mystery of time. Based on a lifetime of creative scholarship, *My*

*Grandfather's Clock* is a moving testament to the power of family history to illuminate the present.

RESERVE TICKETS



### RAHS Special Lecture Garden Design Using Australian Natives: A History

**Speaker:** Stuart Read.

**When:** Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at 1.00 pm.

**Where:** Online via Zoom.

**Cost:** Free.

Landscape historian Stuart Read will talk on the history of Australian garden design using native plants, including waves of fashions (it didn't just start in the 1960s), players who were influential, and examples of gardens that remain so. You might be surprised how early and how widely natives were used. He'll delve into matters of fashion, treatment and shrinking gardens.

RESERVE TICKETS

RAHS News





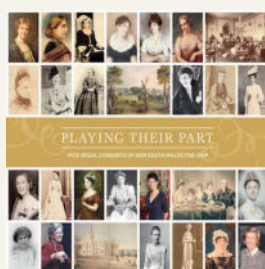
## Election of the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee (ASC)

Nominations are called for election of members to the RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee.

The committee consists of two members from the Sydney area, two from the country, and two members from specialist associations and meets about four to six times a year online by Zoom. The Committee assists with planning the RAHS Conference, supporting the Cultural Grants Program, and providing management and governance advice to affiliated societies.

Contact [admin@rahs.org.au](mailto:admin@rahs.org.au) or call (02) 9247 8001 to get a copy of the nomination form.

**Deadline for nominations: 22 September 2023.**



## *Playing Their Part: Vice-Regal Consorts of NSW, 1788-2019*

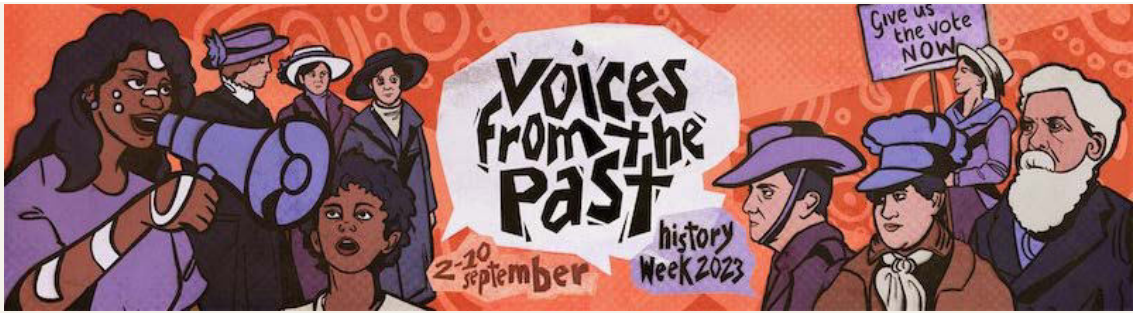
**SPECIAL SALE PRICE - \$15**

The book features 38 biographical sketches of the women (and one man) who were the wives, daughters, sisters (and husband) of the governors of New South Wales. Their lives were researched and written by 22 dedicated authors whose commitment, and that of the three volunteer editors (Joy Hughes, Carol Liston and Christine Wright), has resulted in a publication that adds to the understanding of the consorts' service and survival.

You can learn more about the book on our [website](#). Copies can be purchased from the [RAHS online shop](#) or call (02) 9247 8001.

## Affiliated Societies News

### History Week 2023



## Key Dates and Events Calendar

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History is often about giving a voice to people and events from the past, or about listening for voices in the historical record and amplifying the voices of storytellers. At the current moment, a Voice for First Nations peoples is front and centre for all Australians in a referendum.

The History Week theme for 2023, **Voices from the Past**, is an opportunity to engage with the histories of those who were often voiceless in the past such as women, migrants, workers, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Sometimes these voices were once heard but now sit forgotten in archives. At other times they have been ignored or all but erased.

This History Week the History Council of NSW invites members to consider how we have – or haven't – listened to voices from the past.

### Key dates and events:

- **History Week:** Saturday, 2 September to Sunday, 10 September.
- **The Annual History Lecture:** Tuesday, 5 September.
- **The NSW Premier's History Awards:** (an event run in partnership with the State Library of NSW) Thursday, 7 September.

For bookings and more info, [visit the Events Calendar](#).



## **Annual History Lecture 2023: Thomas Mayo**

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In 2023 the Annual History Lecture will be presented for the first time in Western Sydney at the Western Sydney Startup Hub in the North Parramatta Heritage Precinct. The speaker is Thomas Mayo, signatory to Uluru Statement from the Heart signatory and Voice to Parliament campaigner.

Thomas will discuss the history and significance of the Voice to Parliament. Thomas will speak about the long journey to this constitutional moment today, when all Australians will face a unique opportunity to answer the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

[Ticket registrations](#) (registrations close 31 August for catering purposes).

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**Mosman Historical Society**



## Sydney's Planning History: From Woe to Go?

Professor Paul Ashton will discuss how Sydney has been described as an 'accidental city', one with a planning history characterised by opportunistic development and disjointed or abortive attempts at holistic planning. Despite attempts by colonial governors back to Arthur Phillip to regulate urban growth, Sydney grew 'like Topsy'.

Paul is an adjunct professor of public history at the University of Technology Sydney, where he co-established the Australian Centre for Public History in 1999. He is also an adjunct professor at Macquarie University and the University of Canberra. He has authored, co-authored and edited more than 40 books. These include *The Accidental City: Planning Sydney since 1788* (1993).

This talk will, as at previous Mosman Historical Society September meetings in recent years, honour the late Pat Mills, a president of the Society.

**Where:** Mosman Library.

**When:** Wednesday 13 Sept. at 7 pm (immediately following the AGM).

**RSVP:** All those wishing to attend should email David Carment,



[davidcarment@mac.com](mailto:davidcarment@mac.com), before Monday 11 Sept.

**Cost:** Members Free / Visitors \$5 donation.

Refreshments will be served following the talk. Copies of *Mosman: Times Gone By* will be available for cash only purchases at \$30 each.

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## City of Sydney Historical Association



### The Bureau of Meteorology: Home on the Hill

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We are all familiar with 'Weather Man' Dick Whitaker talking about storms in Sydney. In September, he will present some of the storms inside the BOM as part of its history, starting with its performance by the Government Astronomer at the Observatory to its departure from 'The Hill' to its modern home.

In 1908, the Bureau was made a formal part of the Australian Public Service located at the Observatory, but the relationship with the astronomers and the weathermen becoming increasingly testy. In 1922 it was relocated to a purpose-built structure near the Observatory, where it stayed until 1963. That time involved an intense conflict between the Bureau Head and the Government Astronomer while navigating two World Wars, all interspersed with



several memorable weather events. The latest development in its history is the restoration of its dilapidated home on the Hill to become the library for nearby Fort Street Public School, a wonderful outcome that will preserve part of the history of this important national service.

**Where:** Henry Carmichael Theatre, SMSA, 280 Pitt St.

**When:** Saturday 9 Sept. at 2 pm.

**Cost:** Members \$5. Visitors \$10. No bookings are required.



### **Eight Voices of Chinese Australians**

Dr Michael Williams will present a selection of eight writings by Chinese Australians in both Chinese and English. Covering 150 years of Chinese Australian history, taken together these Chinese voices provide an insight into many aspects of Chinese Australian history as spoken to us by Chinese Australians themselves.

They range from the first (certainly the earliest extant) piece of Chinese writing in Australia as an indentured shepherd named Ang defends himself in 1850 from a murder charge, to a 1910 novel written in Literary Chinese on the eve of China's Republican revolution by the Melbourne based Wong Shee Ping. There are also reasoned attacks on discriminatory legislation, personal memoirs old and new, poetry, letters from relations back in the village, and short stories expressing something of life in Australia for someone of non-white heritage.

**When:** Saturday 2 Sept. at 2 pm.

**Where:** Online: [Join Zoom Meeting](#).

## Randwick and District Historical Society



On Saturday, 19 August 2023, the Randwick and District Historical Society held its first Saturday History Talk since the Society had to suspend the talks some years ago due to COVID-19. The speaker was Dr Rachel Franks, whose topic was 'Crime and Punishment in the Colony'. She discussed Robert Howard, the noseless hangman – better known as 'Nosey Bob' – who sparked fear and fascination everywhere he went. Dr Franks holds Doctorates in Australian crime fiction from Central Queensland University and true crime texts from the University of Sydney. An award-winning writer, she is the author of *An Uncommon Hangman: The Life and Deaths of Robert 'Nosey Bob' Howard*.

Christine Yeats FRAHS  
President, Randwick and District Historical Society

## Military History Society of NSW

The Military History Society of NSW presents

# NEW SOUTH WALES AT WAR

heroes and tragedies of a state in three conflicts

**ONE DAY CONFERENCE, SAT 7 OCTOBER 2023**

Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Sydney CBD

Featuring talks by four renowned military historians and a special guided tour of the Memorial including back of house areas



**FREE EVENT**



## 'Deep Thinkers': NSW's 5th Brigade 1st AIF, 1915-1919

Major General the Hon Justice Paul Brereton  
AM RFD



## On Our Doorstep: Japanese Submarines Attack Sydney Harbour, 1942

Dr Tom Lewis OAM



## Two NSW Battalions in Hell: Kokoda and the New Guinea Beachheads, 1942-1943

Dr David W Cameron



## Kevin Wheatley VC: Surry Hills Boy to Hero of the Vietnam War

Michael C Madden



## New South Wales at War Conference

Our aim is to raise awareness of NSW military history as widely as possible, and thanks to the generous support we have received in setting up the event, we are now in a position to make **admission free of charge**.

The conference program features talks by four outstanding military historians and a special guided tour of the Anzac Memorial, including back-of-house areas, with morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea provided. Details can also be obtained from our blog by [clicking here](#).

In addition, we will be offering autographed books by the speakers for sale at a 20% discount on the recommended retail price.

Come along to what promises to be a great day and hopefully an important contribution towards raising awareness of NSW military history. We ask attendees to email [president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au](mailto:president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au) to register their interest so that we can keep track of the numbers.

**Where:** Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Sydney CBD.

**When:** Saturday 7 October at 2 pm.

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**Society of Australian Genealogists**



**Society of Australian Genealogists  
presents:**



*In Search of ...*  
**The Australian  
Welfare Experience**



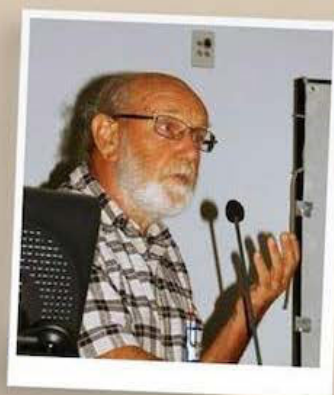
**KEYNOTE**

**Associate Professor Toby Raeburn**

**Early colonial Australian mental health  
practitioners and the good colonist  
paradox, 1810-1850**

**KEYNOTE**  
**Dr Howard Guille**

**Out of sight and out of mind: The  
Dunwich Benevolent Asylum 1865-  
1946**



**INTERVIEW**

**Society CEO Ruth Graham in conversation  
with Emeritus Professor Shurlee Swain**

**Saturday 26 August 2023  
1.00pm - 6.00pm AEST  
Online via Zoom**

**Register at:  
<https://www.sag.org.au/event-5322511>**



**Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee**



**SAVE THE DATE**

Calling all  
Irish Famine Orphan Descendants

You are invited to a Descendants' Day at the  
Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine  
Hyde Park Barracks Museum,  
Macquarie Street, Sydney  
followed by  
BYO Lunch and Conversation

Relatives and friends also welcome.  
Conveners:- Trish Power and Noeleen Lloyd,  
GIFCC Inc Sub-Committee Members

**AUGUST**

**SUNDAY | 27 | 10.00 -2.00**

10am - tour Barracks (free)  
10.45am - assemble on outside of Memorial with your SHIP group.  
11am - Proceed in Ship Groups to inside of Memorial and be seated.  
~ Descendants Day Programme - tbc  
12pm - proceed to Hyde Park for picnic lunch,  
socialising and networking.  
2.00pm - Finish

rsvp:- trishmpower@gmail.com before Thursday August 17th  
Include your name, orphan and ship.

**City of Canada Bay Heritage Society**



## History of Rum and Drinking in Australia

Could the Rum Rebellion have been averted if Major Johnston wasn't hungover?  
Would the Eureka Stockade have been different if the rebels weren't pissed?  
How were prisoners to get drunk if Macquarie closed the only pub in the gaol?

And why should sailors under fourteen be deprived of their sixteen shots of rum per day?  
To get the answers to these and many more questions come and meet Matt at the Museum.

### The City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

invites you to join us to hear a talk by

**Matt Murphy**

on

**Australia and its Formation -  
Through the distorted view of a rum bottle.**

at the

**City of Canada Bay Museum**

1 Bent Street, Concord

on

**Saturday, 2nd September, 2023**

**at 1:30 for 2:00 pm sharp start**

*The talk will be followed by light refreshments and a chance  
to chat with the speaker and our wonderful volunteers.*

**Admission: FREE**

*(donations always welcome)*

***Come early to look around our new displays.***

*For more information: [www.canadabayheritage.asn.au](http://www.canadabayheritage.asn.au) or  
[heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au](mailto:heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au)*

***Phone: 9743-3034 (Museum hours) or 9744-8528 (Secretary)***

**History News**



## Museums of History NSW

### Important immigration records now released online

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We're delighted to announce that our partner Ancestry has digitised, indexed and published an important set of 19th-century NSW immigration records held in the State Archives Collection. The database is titled [New South Wales, Australia, Immigration Records, 1840–1902](#).

These previously undigitised records provide a remarkable range of information about immigrants and the schemes under which they emigrated.

Key indexed series included in this suite are:

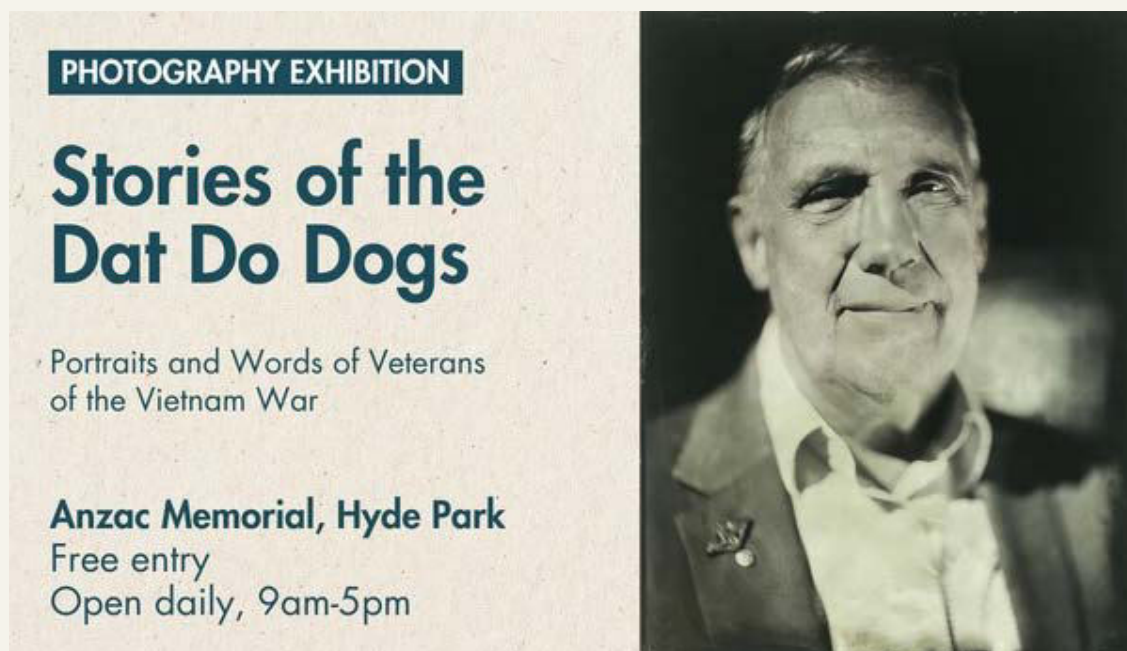
- [NRS 5274](#) Wages paid to orphans, 1849–51
- [NRS 5324](#) Persons authorised to import migrants, 1838–42
- [NRS 5243](#) Applications from persons in the colony nominating immigrants, 1857–58, 1880, 1885–95

In addition, a number of non-indexed, browsable series are included:

- [NRS 5328](#) Ships' papers, 1839–91
- [NRS 5250](#) Copies of letters sent to public officers re migration to NSW, 1841–02

Digitisation increasingly plays a key role in both the preservation of and access to the State Archives Collection. Our partnership with Ancestry is central to furthering this work and we're so pleased to bring these records to a worldwide audience.





### **New photographic exhibition: Stories of the Dat Do Dogs**

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In mid-1962 the first Australian soldiers arrived in Vietnam, and over the next decade more than 60,000 Australians served there. Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War officially ended on 11 January 1973, with the last troops leaving in June 1973.

Stories of the Dat Do Dogs is a photographic exhibition commemorating the 50th anniversary of the final withdrawal of Australian troops from Saigon. The exhibition features the photographs and stories of 50 veterans and nurses who served in Vietnam.

Veterans from across NSW volunteered to be featured in this exhibition. There are photographs and stories of those who served in the Australian Army, the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force, and as nurses on the front line in the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps and the Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service.

The exhibition is in the Hyde Park Anzac Memorial's Auditorium, open daily, 9 am to 5 pm. Entry is free. [Full details](#).

## **Other News**



### **Upcoming History Courses at WEA Sydney**

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Check out the WEA Sydney website for a range of

Australian history courses. A selection is included here:

- The Improving Macquaries: Lachlan.
- The Improving Macquaries: Elizabeth.
- Touring Marvellous Melbourne.
- What happened to these political parties?

For course info and bookings, [visit their website](#).

AAADA  
ANTIQUES  
& ART FAIR  
SYDNEY



NEW DATES & NEW VENUE!  
31 AUG - 3 SEPT  
2023  
THE GREAT HALL  
UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY  
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE FOR A CHANCE TO  
WIN \$1,000 TO SPEND AT THE FAIR  
T&Cs APPLY  
AAADA.ORG.AU/SYDNEY  
THE ONLY ANTIQUES & ART FAIR BACKED  
BY THE AAADA CODE OF PRACTICE  
SO YOU BUY WITH CONFIDENCE

AAADA



Corner of Johnston and Fitzmaurice Streets, Wagga Wagga c.1890 [WWDHS]

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# The Royal Australian Historical Society

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