

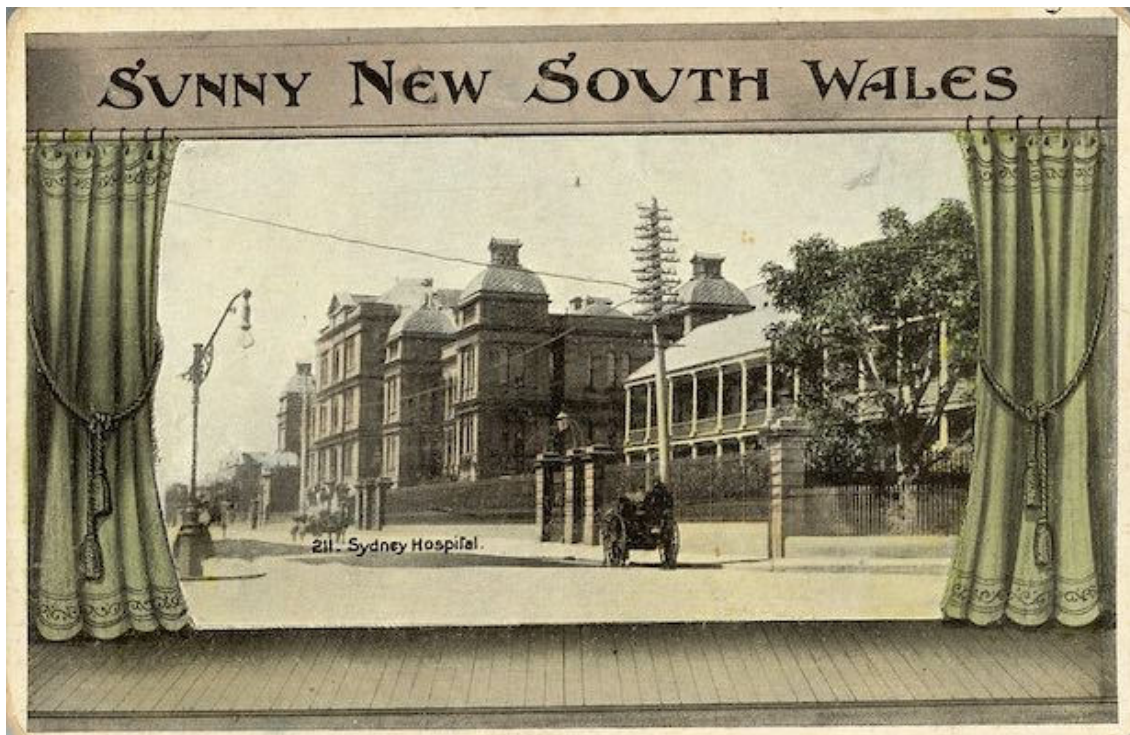


Royal Australian Historical Society

Knowing your history

22 February 2024

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



Sydney Hospital (RAHS Postcard Collection)



Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Canberra, 2022 (Wikimedia Commons)

Blue Plaque for Pearl Mary (Gambanyi) Gibbs

On 14 November 2023, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment announced that fourteen new Blue Plaque recipients had been chosen to highlight significant people and events which have contributed to our State's rich history. They included Pearl Mary (Gambanyi) Gibbs, who we understand is the first Aboriginal woman to have a Blue Plaque in her honour. Pearl, who was a prominent female activist in the Aboriginal rights movement, was heavily involved in the development of the Day of Mourning and the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy.

She described herself as a 'battler' because she spent her life fighting the policies and practices that oppressed Aboriginal people. Politically astute and outspoken, she 'lived and breathed, ached and bled Aboriginal affairs'.

On 8 June 1941, Pearl became the first Aboriginal woman to speak on radio in Australia, with her broadcast airing on 2GB Sydney and 2WL Wollongong. Reading from a carefully prepared script, Pearl condemned the exploitation of Aboriginal domestic servants and Aboriginal people's lack of access to social services and schooling. She pointed out the contributions Aboriginal people

She concluded by asking not for pity but for 'practical humanity'.

[For more information about Pearl Mary Gibbs' life.](#)

Christine Yeats

RAHS Senior Vice President



RAHS volunteer Jessica Buckton who was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation in 2023

Callout for History House volunteers

As we begin the process of reopening History House to the public again, we are calling out for volunteers to help us reopen in style!

As we return to normality, we will need volunteers to help us with events, library projects and administration, digital media activities, and more.

Below is a list of tasks we are particularly interested in finding volunteers for:

- Welcoming visitors, administrative assistance, and helping with events.

- Digital media activities, such as social media, blog posts and reviews.

There are also opportunities for members with specialist expertise and skills to get involved with one or more of [our various committees](#).

Volunteering can be a worthwhile opportunity to develop new research, library and digital media skills, while also giving back to the history community.

To enquire about volunteer opportunities at History House, please email history@rahs.org.au or call (02) 9247 8001.



RAHS members visit St Peter's Church, Campbelltown on 27 June 1942

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Tuesday, 16 April 2024, 6 pm

Online via Zoom

RAHS members are invited to attend our AGM. If you wish to attend, please email admin@rahs.org.au and you will be forwarded a link to the meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies.
2. Confirmation of the previous AGM minutes held on Tuesday, 18 April 2023.
3. Consideration and, if deemed fit, adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023 (as printed in the March 2024 issue of *History* magazine).
4. Consideration and, if deemed fit, adoption of the Financial Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023 (summary of Financial Statements printed in *History* magazine. A full statement of accounts is available to members on request).
5. Declaration by the Returning Officer of the Council for the current year.
6. Presidential Address.
7. General Business.

All financial members are eligible to attend and vote at the AGM. They are also entitled to appoint a proxy to vote in their stead. A proxy must also be a financial member of the Society at the time of voting. Proxy forms addressed to the Returning Officer must be received at History House by no later than Tuesday, 9 April 2024 at 5 pm. Members who are not currently financial but renew their subscriptions before the AGM are eligible to attend the AGM and hold proxies for other financial members.

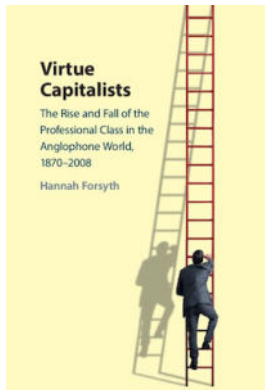
Notice of Election

At the close of nominations at 4 pm, Monday, 12 February 2024, four nominations had been received for four positions. The nominations were from:

- Mark Dunn
- Judith Godden
- Iain Stuart
- Alison Wishart

be held to determine the four positions on the twelve-member Council.

RAHS Events



RAHS Day Lecture Virtue in Australian Capitalism

Speaker: Hannah Forsyth.

When: Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 1.00 pm.

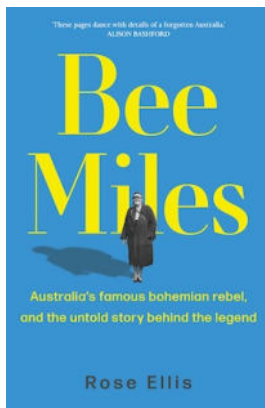
Where: Online via Zoom.

Cost: Free.

In 1868 Miss Lucy Osburn, a trained nurse, read a book on board the ship *Dunbar Castle*. She and six Nightingale nurses were travelling to Sydney to take up their posts in the Sydney Infirmary. They arrived on 11 March to a strange small town known to be peopled by criminals and an infirmary that stank of sewage. Miss Osburn's book was a gift intended to help her prepare for life in the colony. It was much-needed, though 'she was afraid', she wrote to Florence Nightingale, that the book was about a different colony. It was very easy to get them mixed up, partly because all of the settler colonies shared a shaky, anxious goal of building a new kind of economy, based on virtues that often seemed overshadowed, at home in England, by the excesses of the old aristocracy and an entrenched class system. Nurses like Osburn, and also medical doctors, lawyers, accountants, clergy, teachers, charity workers, engineers, architects and surveyors were the vanguard of the moral-economic goals of these 'social laboratories'. Although many professions were modelled on those established in Britain, such white-collar work grew much faster in the Antipodes and in the other English speaking settler colonies of Canada and the United States than they had in the home country. Over the following decades, this professional class invested a combination of financial capital and morality into the economies of Australia and the rest of the settler world, building a model of 'virtue capitalism'

talk about the ways virtue was imagined and built into Australian capitalism, how it went wrong and what has happened to professional expertise and morality in the economy in recent decades.

RESERVE TICKETS



RAHS Special Lecture

Bee Miles: Australia's Famous Bohemian Rebel

Speaker: Rose Ellis.

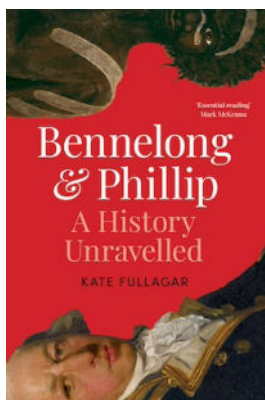
When: Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 1.00 pm.

Where: Online via Zoom.

Cost: Free.

Bee Miles was famous for appearing in public in towns and cities across Australia, breaking their rules, and living, she said, 'recklessly'. But she was no ordinary wanderer. Born into a wealthy family, Bee moved in Sydney's literary and artistic circles in the 1920s and 1930s before she took up residence on the streets. A truly larger-than-life character, Bee constantly defied conventional expectations of female behaviour. Until now, no one has uncovered the real story behind the legend. This first full biography offers a fascinating glimpse into a dark side of Australia's history.

RESERVE TICKETS



RAHS Day Lecture

Bennelong and Phillip: A History Unravelling

Speaker: Kate Fullagar.

When: Wednesday, 3 April 2024 at 1.00 pm.

Where: Online via Zoom.

Cost: Free.

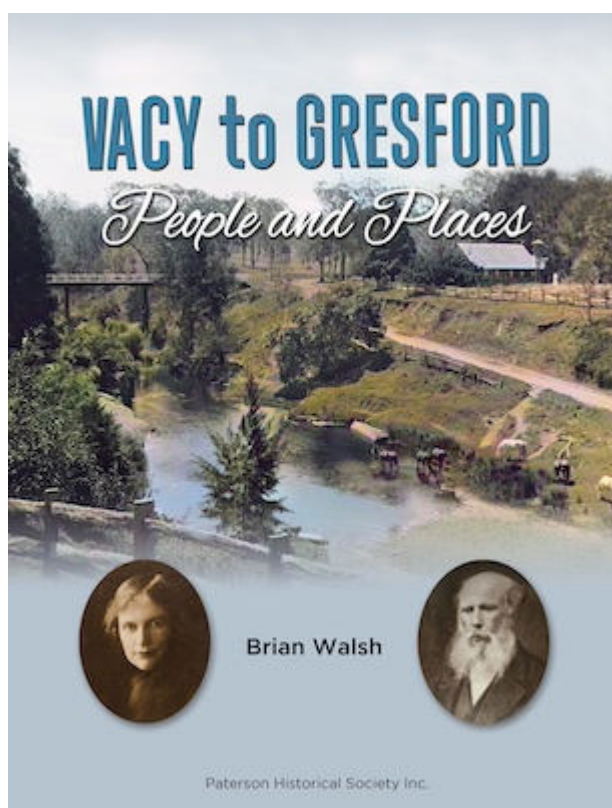
Kate Fullagar will speak about her new book, *Bennelong & Phillip: A History Unravelling*, the first joint biography of Bennelong and Governor Arthur Phillip, two pivotal

Bennelong became alienated from his people and that Phillip was a paragon of Enlightenment benevolence. To present this history afresh, *Bennelong & Phillip* relates events in reverse, moving beyond the limitations of typical Western ways of writing about the past, which have long privileged the coloniser over the colonised.

[RESERVE TICKETS](#)

Affiliated Societies News

Paterson Historical Society



Vacy to Gresford – People and Places

You are invited to the launch of Paterson Historical Society's new book, *Vacy to Gresford – People and Places*, on Sunday, 17 March 2024. The book will be launched by Mr Dave Layzell MP, Member for Upper Hunter.

The book was written by Society member and long-time historian Dr Brian Walsh. It covers the people and places along the Paterson and Allyn Rivers

the dispossession of Aboriginal people.

The immigrants lured by grants of riverside land were remarkably diverse in age, wealth, nationality and life experience. Welshman Charles Boydell was only 18 years old when he was granted 'Camyr Allyn'. In contrast, Jamaican plantation owner and slave master Francis Blower Gibbes had fought in the Battle of Trafalgar two decades before he was granted 'Norwood'. Constantine Crichton, who purchased 'Wallah' near Gresford, was born in St Petersburg, Russia, where his father was personal physician to the Tsar. Irish shepherd boy Edward Kealy was granted a mere 200 acres that he named 'Summer Hill'.

The book also provides information on the convicts, emancipists, free immigrants and colonial-born who worked on the estates or leased parts of them as tenant farmers. This includes the wave of German immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s.

Vacy to Gresford shows how the subdivision of many of the large estates from the late 1800s replaced a mosaic of tenanted farms with a patchwork of small, privately owned farms, many of which became dairy farms. The book also explains the formation of the villages of Vacy, Gresford and East Gresford.

When: Sunday, 17 March 2024 at 2 pm.

Where: School of Arts Hall, Vacy NSW 2421.

Details: patersonhistory.org.au.



This book was supported by the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program, a devolved funding program administered by the RAHS on behalf of the NSW Government.

Closure of the Griffith Genealogical and Historical Society

We were recently informed by Christine Gavin, President of Griffith Genealogical and Historical Society, that the society had decided to close after 42 years.

two pictorial histories and three editions of cemetery transcriptions.

Although the society has now closed, people can still access their resources at the Griffith City Library. A roster of ex-members who will be on duty will be drawn up, and there will also be a list of those willing to be called in when someone at the library needs assistance.

We wish Christine and the members all the best with the future, and thank them for all their hard work preserving Griffith's local history.

Military History Society of NSW



Operation Oboe

Australian Amphibious Landings in Borneo, May-June 1945

In May 1945, the Australian Army launched three major amphibious assaults in Borneo. The operations were collectively known as 'Oboe' and comprised the individual landings on Tarakan, Brunei and Balikpapan. These operations were considered to be the most efficient and well-planned by the Australian Army.

Borneo is surrounded by a number of waters – the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean and others between Borneo and New Guinea. It is a volcanic island which has a rocky coastline with some beach areas. The centre of the island is

Before the Second World War, Borneo was used by the Dutch for oil production and the British for the production of rubber. The Japanese invasion in 1942 was due to their need for oil to be used in the mobility of their forces. Borneo was home to British and Dutch colonists, as well as a Chinese population. Indigenous people had their origins in Indonesia, then known as the Netherlands East Indies, and from Malaya.

The landings in Tarakan, Brunei and Balikpapan made little or no contribution to the defeat of Japan. The island had been bypassed in the planning of the Supreme Commander, South West Pacific Area – General Douglas MacArthur – whose eyes were fixed upon the liberation of The Philippines and the subsequent invasion of the Japanese mainland. This presentation will examine amphibious landings and subsequent land operations in Borneo.

Speaker: Major (ret'd) Paul Handel, RFD.

When: Saturday, 2 March 2024 at 10.30 am.

Where: The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park.

Admission: Free, but a donation is appreciated.

City of Sydney Historical Association



Treasures in Sydney Churches

devotion in church services require safekeeping for survival. Patrons, whether they be individuals or institutions, have funded these creations and thus served as a means of ensuring that works were completed to a high standard. Objects include statuary images, architectural details, baptismal fonts, shrines, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, and paintings.

In Sydney, the earliest statuary from Eastern Europe dates from the 15th century, and the most recent work of art was installed in 2018 by the Armenian community. Historian Robijn Alxanda will reveal some of Sydney's secrets.

When: Saturday, 9 March 2024 at 2 pm.

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

Admission: Members \$5. Visitors \$10.

Mosman Historical Society



Port Jackson Heads with Hornby Lighthouse, 1888 (Australia National Maritime Museum)

Strung Out or Seduced?

Exploring the Scandalous *Queen of Nations* Shipwreck

In 1881, the barque *Queen of Nations* was bound for Sydney when, seemingly inexplicably, it sailed straight onto a beach just north of Wollongong. Why would

highly significant shipwreck?

Dr Peter Hobbins is Head of Content at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Darling Harbour. As a historian, his research focuses on the development – and disasters – surrounding medicine, aviation, maritime and defence technologies.

When: Wednesday, 13 March 2024 at 7 pm.

Where: Mosman Library.

Admission: Members Free. Visitors \$5 donation. All those wishing to attend should email David Carment before 11 March. E: davidcarment@mac.com. Refreshments will be served following the talk.

Molong Historical Society



**THE MOLONG HISTORICAL SOCIETY INVITE YOU,
FAMILY AND FRIENDS
TO AFTERNOON TEA AT THE HISTORIC WOOLSHED AT
BOREE CABONNE
ON SUNDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2024
FROM 2:30 PM.**

**TO CELEBRATE ANDREW 'BANJO' PATERSON'S
160TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Poetry by past Australian champion
Susie Carcary

Local performers Mark Oates and
Jeff Tonkin with music to tap your toes and
sing along

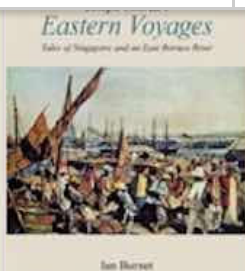
Afternoon tea *\$30.00 per person*

For more information or to book.

Contact: Elizabeth Griffin 0437 868 595

Sue Milne 0400 425 015

The City of Canada Bay Heritage Society



Joseph Conrad's Eastern Voyages

Ian Burnet, in his latest book, *Joseph Conrad's Eastern Voyages*, tells the story of Joseph Conrad's sailing career on the three-masted clipper ships that once graced the world's oceans, and how Conrad worked his way up from an ordinary seaman to captain on one of these magnificent vessels.

Conrad's first books - *Almayers Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *Lord Jim* and *The Rescue* - were all set in Borneo and based on the people and places he encountered in his own voyages. Burnet has placed the parts of these first novels into their proper narrative and sequence and focused on the back-story of his characters.

The City of Canada Bay Heritage Society

invites you to join us to hear a talk by

Ian Burnett

on

Joseph Conrad's Eastern Voyages

at the

City of Canada Bay Museum

1 Bent Street, Concord

on

Saturday, 2nd March, 2024

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)

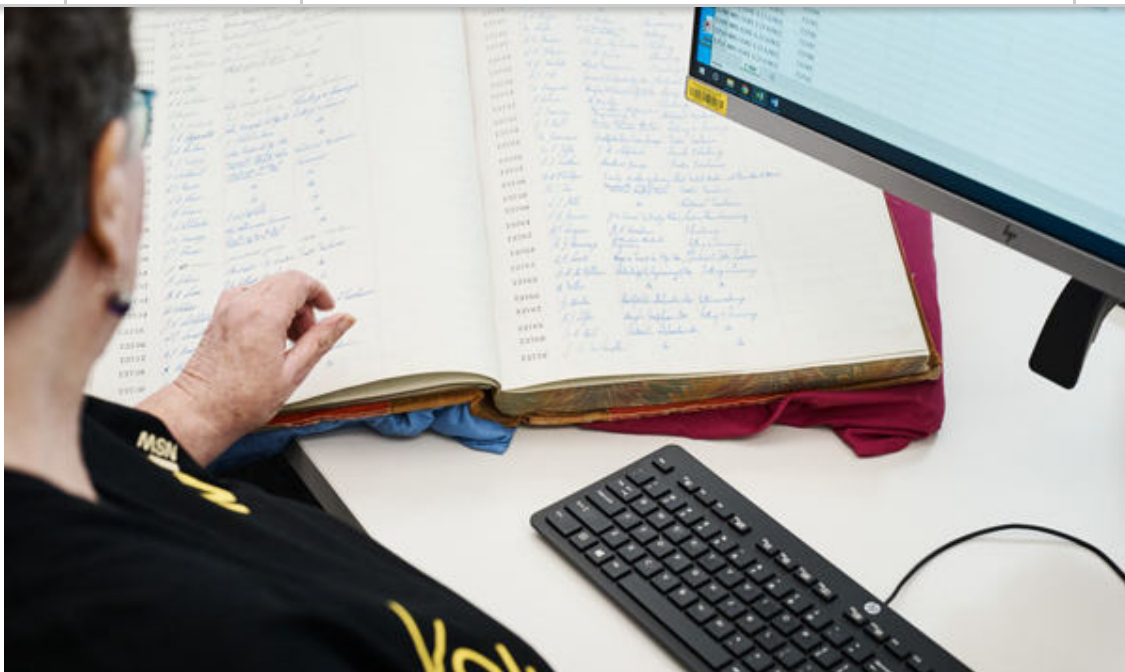
Come early to look around our new displays.

*For more information: www.canadabayheritage.asn.au or
heritage@canadabayheritage.asn.au*

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

History News

Museums of History NSW



Archives for Everyone: Community digitisation and indexing partnerships

We are looking to partner with groups and societies with an interest in history and in making the State Archives Collection more accessible.

Our project

We have scoped a pilot project which we would love your help with. This project will involve the digitisation of Small Debts Registers from the Courts of Petty Sessions that will highlight your local area and enhance our digitisation efforts. Not only are the records imaged as part of this process, but they will also be indexed.

About the Small Debts Registers

Small Debts Registers were created by Courts of Petty Sessions throughout NSW. The courts had the authority to recover debts up to 10 pounds. The registers contain information such as the name of the plaintiff, name of the defendant, the cause of the action, amount of the claim, costs, judgment and amount of the judgement.

These records are all about people taking other people to court to recover debts, referring to events in people's lives or in a local community that you may not find in other records.

There are over 375 Small Debts Registers in the State Archives Collection from about 70 geographic locations.

at our State Archives Reading Room at Kingswood, and/or indexing entries either onsite or remotely, find out more information and express your interest on our website until **31 March 2024**. [Read More](#).

Anzac Memorial Hyde Park

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

HERstory: Remembering Australia's Military Women

A new exhibition honouring the service and sacrifice of Australian servicewomen

**ANZAC MEMORIAL
ENTRY IS FREE**



Other News



A Place Called Home Exhibition – Why heritage houses matter

Artist Marta Madison presents a collection of watercolour paintings depicting Federation and Arts and Crafts style homes (circa 1880–1920), on display at Artspace at The Concourse, Chatswood, 24 April–5 May 2024. [Learn more.](#)

This exhibition is in partnership with the 2024 Australian Heritage Festival.



Indie publishing: Your book in the NLA Collection

Have you ever wondered how to design a book cover or how to get your book into a library? What is an ISBN and does your book need one? Independently

take on the way. Explore tips for taking your book from the final manuscript to being picked up by a reader, including how to get your book into the national collection. The National Library collects all works published in Australia, however they are published. [Read all about it here!](#)

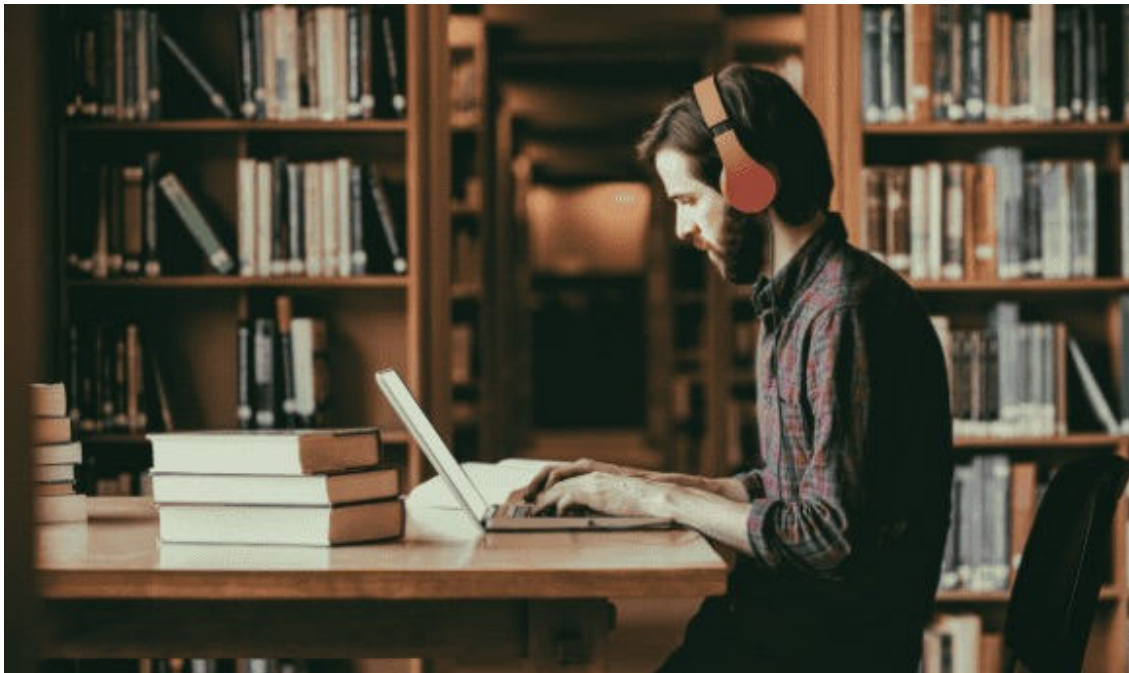
GLAMSLAM 2024

*A day for those working in & with galleries,
libraries, archives & museums*



Friday 15 March 2024, 9am - 5pm
Australian National Maritime Museum

Hosted by the Australian Centre for Public History, UTS
in partnership with the Australian National Maritime Museum



Researcher Survey: Access to Public Sector Data

The Australian Research Data Commons (ARDC) has launched an online survey to measure researcher access to Australian public sector data so we can assess the gap between demand and supply.

The survey results will inform priority areas for the development of relevant infrastructure and facilitate researchers in making best use of public sector data. [Take the survey here.](#)

The ARDC has engaged the consultancy firm Lateral Economics to produce a report detailing the findings of the survey, which will be published and shared in mid-2024.

The survey is anonymous, and will take around 10–15 minutes to complete.
The survey closes on 28 February 2024.

Who should complete the survey?

We encourage all researchers, research managers or those supporting researchers who have requested access to Australian public sector data in the past 2 years to complete this survey.

We are particularly interested in hearing from Australian researchers regardless of their location (here or overseas), and we are also interested in hearing from non-Australian researchers (in Australia or overseas) who have sought access

We welcome responses from those working as a researcher full- or part-time in a university, research institution, industry, government or elsewhere.

What does the survey ask?

The survey asks questions about the availability and accessibility of Australian public sector data collected, created or held by Commonwealth, local, state or territory governments, or on their behalf. It asks about a specific experience you have had in the last 2 years trying to find, access and use Australian public sector data.

Privacy

The survey responses are anonymous. Respondents can optionally provide their contact details to receive the outputs of the survey or answer follow up questions. The ARDC will keep those details confidential in line with our privacy policy.

Why is the ARDC conducting the survey?

Public sector data is highly valued by researchers as it:

- already exists and could be readily reused rather than having to be re-collected
- covers the whole nation and usually an extended period of time
- is authoritative, having been created under legal or policy mandates
- reflects issues known to be of concern to the government and society.

In recognition of the value of public sector data, there has been advocacy for policy reforms to improve researcher access to public sector data for more than 20 years. But to date, there is no trusted measure of where improvements to access have occurred, where gaps remain and the consequences of both on researchers and society. The survey is part of our project, Baseline Researcher Access to Public Sector Data, within our Policy Program.

We thank you in advance for your participation in the survey, and kindly ask you to share it with relevant colleagues. [Learn more about the project.](#)

The ARDC is funded through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy to support national digital research infrastructure for Australian researchers.



Elizabeth Street, Sydney (RAHS Postcard Collection)

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The Royal Australian Historical Society

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Our mailing address is:

Royal Australian Historical Society
133 Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW 2000
Australia

Email:

history@rahs.org.au

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