

## President's Report - March 2024

A very warm welcome to 2024 at the Newcastle Family History Society!

I hope you had a most enjoyable break pursuing whatever makes you happiest. For me, that involved a quiet Christmas and New Year with an opportunity to indulge in some serious reading and a spot of personal research which rarely makes it to the top of my 'to do' list. I now return for the new year full of enthusiasm for what we can achieve at the Society in the coming months.

The Management Committee has put in place a wonderful collection of events, courses, and excursions for the year which we feel will cater well for everyone's needs and enjoyment. We hope you will agree. The monthly Newsletter will keep you abreast of what's coming up.

We begin the year with three new publications ready to be released. The first is a revised edition of ***They Sent Me North: Female Convicts in the Hunter*** which includes a further 300 female convict entries in the extensive database and a much-expanded bibliography with active links. This is a downloadable only publication from our online shop. The second is in two parts and entitled ***They Served their Country*** – edited by Maree and Ken Shilling. The third, ***War Cemeteries in the Hunter***, edited by Margaret Ashford.

To coincide with the release of this publication a second NFHS website entitled ***Female Convicts of the Hunter Valley*** has been developed to provide information and assistance for those researching their family history in this area. This website will include links to pages on our main website such as the Online Shop and the Research Request page.

Some of our other publications are also currently being prepared to be made available via download. Those publications that are already available in this format are proving popular purchases through our online shop. We are most fortunate to have members who are so conversant with recent technology and are prepared to share their expertise to ensure that NFHS enjoys those benefits.

Have you discovered our podcasts yet? The newly formed Podcasting Special Interest Group works very hard to bring you interesting topics. There are podcasts about the Society, our publications, and assistance with your family history work in *The Wonderful World of Genealogy* series. There are also special interest podcasts such as the *Felonious Females* series about the Hunter

Valley female convicts, and the *Bad Girls* series about the Newcastle Industrial School and Reformatory for Girls in Watt Street during the 1860s and 1870s. Do take a look on our website at <https://nfhs.org.au/podcasts/>

If you have an idea for a podcast or a series, we would love to hear from you.

We have an exciting year to look forward to and I hope to see you at one of our monthly meetings, special interest groups, open days, courses, or excursions in the very near future.

Best wishes always,

Mel