



Royal Australian Historical Society

Knowing your history

17 April 2025

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



Construction of Sydney Harbour Bridge from Lavender Bay c.1931 (RAHS Collection)



Macquarie Street, Sydney, c.1900 (RAHS Collection)

2025 Annual General Meeting

The RAHS held its annual general meeting via Zoom on 15 April 2025, with members joining RAHS Councillors to review the annual and financial reports.

The following motions were passed unanimously:

- Confirmation of the minutes from the previous AGM held 16 April 2024
- Adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2024
- Adoption of the Financial Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024

RAHS Council Nominations

The 2025/2026 Council nominations were:

- Bronwyn Hanna
- Mark St Leon
- Christine Yeats

The RAHS thanks Judith Dunn and Craig McPherson for their contribution during their terms as RAHS Councillors.

RAHS President Iain Stuart announced he will step down after three years in the role, in line with the RAHS Constitution. He thanked Councillors and employees for their support and hard work during his term.

Dr Stuart reflected on the challenges of rescoping the History House Project, with a current focus on roof repairs, drainage upgrades, and addressing subsidence—vital steps to secure the building’s long-term future. He also acknowledged key initiatives, including the rollout of the online catalogue and expansion of hybrid events to improve access and engagement.

He concluded by inviting members to the upcoming RAHS/National Archaeology Week event, which he will host. The session will explore the Irrawang site—an important early colonial industrial site and one of the first historical archaeological projects undertaken in Australia, with insights from leading archaeologists. [Book here](#).

After the AGM, the RAHS Special Council Meeting was held to elect the RAHS Executive. The 2024–2025 RAHS Executive and Councillors are listed below.

We will introduce our Council to our members and readers in the next edition.

2025/2026 RAHS Executive and Council

President: Carol Liston

Senior Vice President: Christine Yeats

Vice President: Mark St Leon

Treasurer: Kathrine Reynolds

Executive member: Mark Dunn

Councillors:

Judith Godden

Bronwyn Hanna

Iain Stuart

Richard White



Affiliated Insurance Reminder and Guidance on Providing Historical Advice

A reminder to all Affiliated Societies that the insurance renewal process is now underway. Completed forms and payments are due by **Tuesday, 29 April 2025**.

If your society has not received a renewal form by email, please contact us at admin@rahs.org.au

We have also received several enquiries regarding the **risks associated with providing historical information to developers and other third parties**. This trend is becoming more common following recent changes to NSW planning legislation—particularly the introduction of the **Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy** in March 2025. This policy allows for the construction of terraces, townhouses, and low-rise apartments in areas previously zoned for detached homes, leading to increased development activity across many local areas.

You can read more about the policy here: [NSW Planning - Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy](#).

In light of these changes, we offer the following guidance:

disclaimer stating that the material is provided for general historical information purposes only and does not constitute legal or professional advice.

- **If historical information is provided for a fee:** Affiliated Societies should also include a disclaimer. In addition, they should assess whether Professional Indemnity Insurance is necessary. Professional historians who charge for historical research often hold this type of insurance, which provides an added layer of protection against the risks of providing information relied upon by third parties—such as building developers—that influences decisions or outcomes.

If you have further questions about insurance and whether your society may need professional indemnity coverage, please contact us. We can refer you to our contacts at **Marsh**, who coordinate the RAHS public liability and group personal accident insurance schemes. They can provide tailored guidance based on your organisation's specific activities and needs, as this type of cover is assessed on a case-by-case basis.



Photo Courtesy Donna Newton

History House welcomes researchers and visitors during State Library Refurbishment

With the State Library of NSW's announced plans to close its Macquarie Street building in May (see Other News for more information), we want to remind our readers that History House is available for research space and venue hire.

The C.H. Bertie and Hugh Wright Memorial Library contains a valuable research collection of more than 60,000 items on Australian history. All of which is available on-site and accessible to RAHS members, visitors and members of RAHS Affiliated Societies. The collection includes publications, photographs, glass slides, manuscripts, press clippings, ephemera, maps, journals and newsletters of our affiliated societies, a complete set of the RAHS Journal, Sands Directories and the NSW Statistical Registers.

The library is open Monday to Friday (except public holidays) from 10 am to 4 pm. For more information about the library, visit our [Library Overview](#) website. If you are interested in arranging a visit, please email library@rahs.org.au

Our Auditorium and Reception Rooms are also available for venue hire. We offer

These rooms are perfect for cocktail evenings, meetings, launches, and lectures. Visit our [Venue Hire](#) website for more information on prices. For availability and bookings, contact 02 9247 8001 or history@rahs.org.au

RAHS News



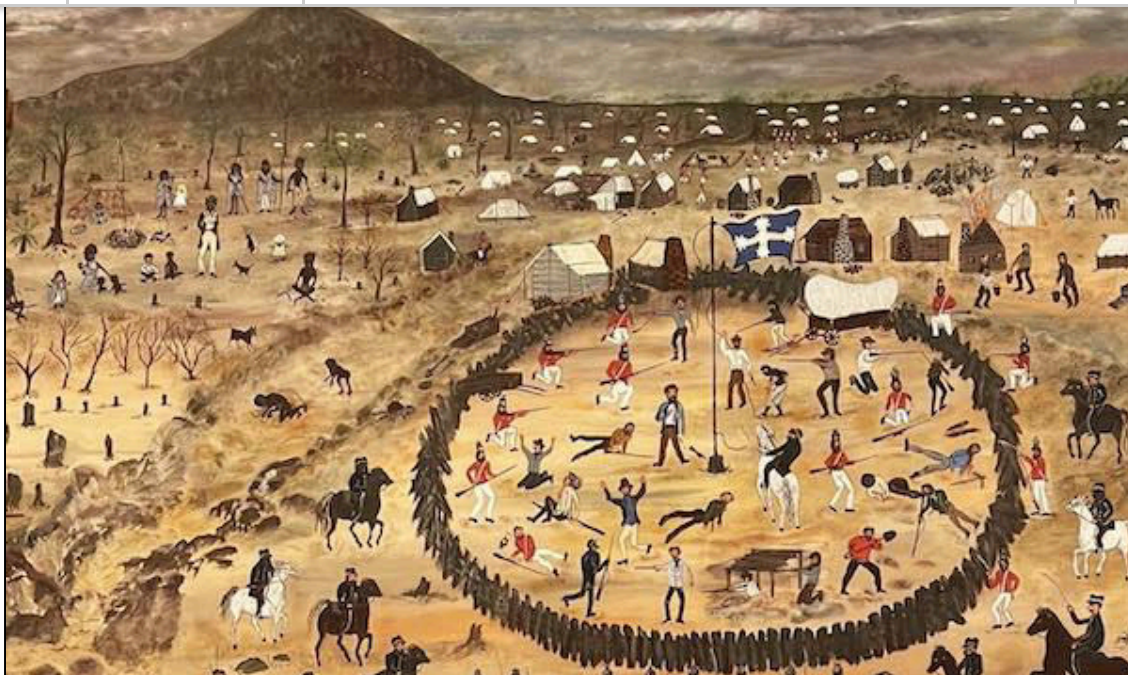
Sydney Showground, Grand Easter Parade, 1936 (RAHS Adastra Collection)

Easter to Anzac Day Close

History House will be closed between the Easter and Anzac Day public holidays, from Friday, 18 April to Friday, 25 April. We will reopen on Monday, 28 April.

We wish all our members and friends a safe holiday break.

RAHS Digital



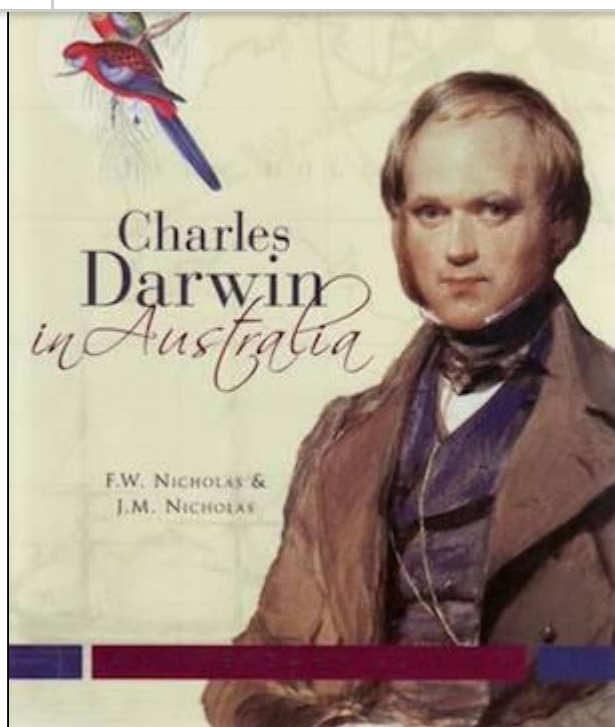
JRAHS Podcast: Martial Law in Australia

Ben Hingley - PhD Student, University of New England

Martial law was declared seven times in pre-Federation Australia, playing a part in some significant historical events. Yet very little has been written on the topic, and no comparative study has so far been made. This paper gathers, for the first time, brief accounts of all of the martial law events in the early colonies into one document and draws some initial comparisons. It will be seen that martial law was an adaptable doctrine. In the years between 1790 and 1853, it was used to fend off starvation, quash two rebellions, overthrow a government, and wage two wars against First Nations peoples.

[LISTEN HERE](#)

RAHS Events



RAHS Day Lecture Charles Darwin in Australia

Speaker: Frank Nicholas.

When: Wednesday, 7 May 2025 at 1 pm.

Where: History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney.

Cost: Free.

Early in 1836, Charles Darwin spent two months in Australia as part of his voyage around the world on HMS *Beagle*. This lecture will be based on Darwin's diary entries, illustrated with contemporary sketches and paintings by former fellow *Beagle* shipmates Conrad Martens and Augustus Earle. The complete story is told in the book *Charles Darwin in Australia*, co-authored by Frank and by his wife Jan, who, having worked in the pictures section of the State Library of NSW, was familiar with the relevant Martens and Earle illustrations.

RESERVE TICKETS



RAHS-NAW Lecture
Irrawang: The History and the Archaeology

When: Wednesday, 21 May 2025 at 6 pm to 7 pm.

Where: Hybrid: History House AND Online via Zoom.

In-Person Cost: RAHS Members \$20 | Non-Members \$25.

Online Cost: RAHS Members \$10 | Non-Members \$15.

Just north of Raymond Terrace near the Williams River lies Irrawang, a site important for its early colonial industry and for being one of the earliest historical archaeological projects in Australia. James King was a colonial entrepreneur with interests in a number of ventures. King experimented with glass manufacture before he took a grant in the Hunter Valley to develop a winery. He then set up a pottery on his land to manufacture utilitarian wares. The pottery was moderately successful until the gold rush resulted in his labour decamping and the enterprise closed down.

In the 1970s, Judy Brimingham and the students from the Archaeological Society at the University of Sydney began to excavate the Irrawang site. The work at Irrawang also provided a key stimulus to the development of historical archaeology in Australia. Recently, members from the Industrial Heritage Committee of the National Trust have revived interest in Irrawang, largely because it has not been listed on the State Heritage Register. Although many know of the site, little is known about what happened there.

This session hosted by Dr Iain Stuart and with contributions from Felicity Barry, Stephanie Moore, Isabella Trope and James Cole, aims to present what is known about the site's history and archaeology. Being a hybrid presentation, we hope to also have contributions from key individuals who worked on the site.

BUY TICKETS



RAHS-WEA Workshop

Making Home: A History of Houses, Interiors and Gardens in NSW

Speaker: Matthew Stephens.

When: Wednesday, 28 May 2025 at 11 am.

Where: History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney.

Cost: RAHS Members \$35 | Non-members \$39.

This workshop is an introduction to the sources that help us understand the history of houses, interiors and gardens in NSW. The range of research material in terms of architecture and interior and garden design is extensive. You will discover the many tools available to help you interpret the range of housing stock that survives both in urban and country areas. You will be introduced to the historical contents of these houses, ranging from door fittings to kitchen furniture and wallpapers to tiles, using trade literature, pattern books and objects from the collections of the Caroline Simpson Library.

Please note: RAHS members should contact WEA first to check if their member number has been added to their student record before enrolling.

BUY TICKETS



RESCUE OF THE CAPTAIN AND MATE OF THE STRANDED BARQUE QUEEN OF NATIONS.

RAHS Day Lecture

Stimulated, exhausted or inebriated? Investigating the *Queen of Nations* shipwreck

Speaker: Peter Hobbins.

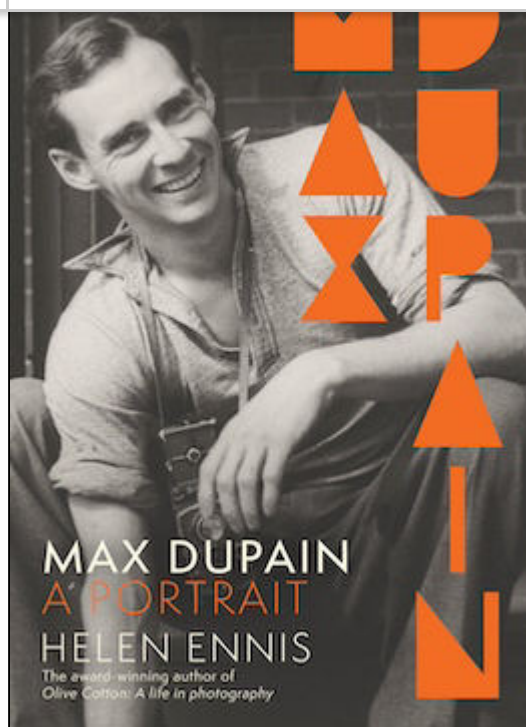
When: Wednesday, 4 June 2025 at 1 pm.

Where: History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney.

Cost: Free.

Why did Captain Samuel Bache drive his fine clipper ship, *Queen of Nations*, onto Towradgi Beach in 1881? Was he really drunk as his crew insisted? And what about the captain's scandalous past involving a sailor who turned out to be a young woman? Dive into the drama and tragedy of sailing to nineteenth-century Australia in this lively presentation.

RESERVE TICKETS



RAHS Special Lecture On Max Dupain

Speaker: Helen Ennis.

When: Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 1 pm.

Where: History House, 133 Macquarie St, Sydney.

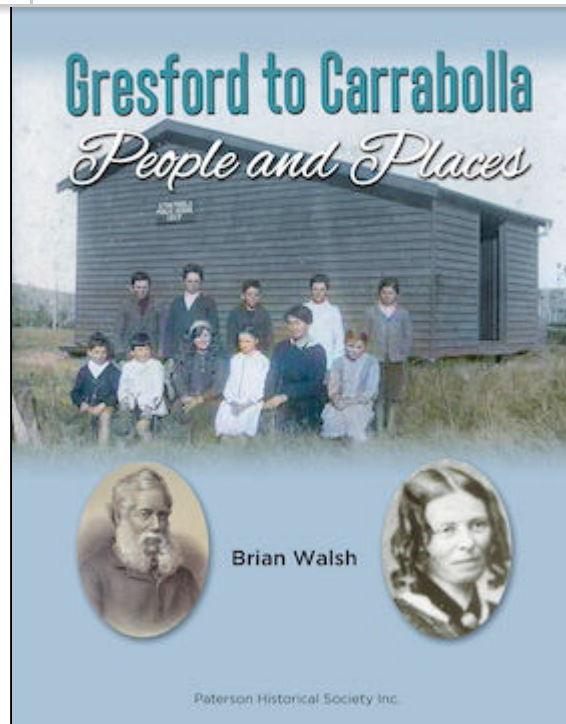
Cost: Free.

Max Dupain's photographs — especially of Sydney — helped shape the image of modern Australia. Helen Ennis will discuss Dupain's views and legacy and the challenges his voluminous archive poses to a biographical approach.

[RESERVE TICKETS](#)

Affiliated Societies News

Paterson Historical Society



Gresford to Carrabolla – People and Places

The Paterson Historical Society's new book, *Gresford to Carrabolla – People and Places* by Dr Brian Walsh, was recently launched by the Mayor of Dungog, Digby Rayward, at Gresford Bowling Club. It was published with support from Create NSW's Cultural Grants Program.

The book reveals how European society emerged along the Paterson River from the 1820s, albeit at the expense of Aboriginal people. It provides information on the landowners, convicts, immigrants and colonial-born who worked on the estates or leased parts of them as tenant farmers. It features the many 'selectors' who took up small blocks in the upper Paterson's remote bushland, hills and mountains. The book also highlights the schools, churches and post offices that became a vital part of the social fabric of the upper Paterson.

The 168-page book includes a comprehensive index and is illustrated with many photos, maps and diagrams. It is available at Paterson Court House Museum on Sundays, Macdonalds Book Store in Maitland and several outlets in Paterson. It can also be purchased online from patersonhistory.square.site.



City of Canada Bay Heritage Society



Open Day at Yaralla

Our next Open Day at Yaralla, the family home of the Walkers of Yaralla, off Nullawarra Avenue and opposite The Drive, Concord West, will be on Sunday, 27 April 2025. The grounds will be open from 9:30 am. Other than the time for your tour, you are free to visit the Dairy, the Squash Court and the Stables complex, or just wander around the grounds until the gates close at approximately 3 pm.

Guided Tours: These 75-minute tours will be of the grounds and inside the Squash Court, the Dairy and the Stables. The first tour commences at 10 am and then every half hour until the last tour at 1:30 pm.

Devonshire Tea: Before or after your tour refresh with tea, coffee, hot chocolate or a cold drink and Sydney's best homemade scones.

Booking Essential: It is essential that you book a time for your tour, as we may not have any spaces available for anyone who turns up on the day without having booked. As the tours fill fairly quickly, particularly the early ones, we suggest you book early to get your preferred tour time.

For bookings and for more information, visit our [booking site](#).



Educating Professional Soldiers in Military History

Military history as a discipline has always been seen and classified as part of military education. Not surprisingly there is a common conception – albeit a wrong one – that military academies and staff colleges are the bastions of military history. Very few people notice that most of military historians are actually working in civilian universities and military history programs in universities have generally better academic ratings. Although military leaders seem to place great emphasis on drawing lessons from military history, it appears that military history programs in higher military educational institutes are simply not flourishing and actually losing ground. Then the obvious question is what is going on with professional military education? Is military history, as an academic discipline, an essential part of the current professional military education? If not, why is that? And finally, what is the way ahead?

This presentation is an effort to analyse these questions within the history of professional military education. The presentation will not spend time justifying the need for the study of military history.

When: Saturday, 3 May at 10.30 am.

Where: The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Sydney.

Mosman Historical Society



Art Deco buildings in the Esplanade and Beaconsfield Road, Mosman (Peter Sheridan)

Sydney Art Deco

Dr Peter Sheridan AM will discuss aspects of his critically acclaimed 2019 book *Sydney Art Deco*, which explores the impact of the Art Deco style on Sydney's landscape and life during the 1930s and 1940s with glimpses of Australian artwork, fashion, furniture, appliances and accessories from the period. Sydney has a rich trove of Art Deco architecture in the central business district and inner suburbs. Art Deco incorporated new technology, mass production and the machine age, promising a new future. Sydney's housing changed with the advent of Art Deco-style apartment blocks in the late 1920s. The best Australian examples of these are in the Potts Point/Elizabeth Bay area, but many are now under threat from inappropriate development. Some copies of Peter's books will be on sale. Please join us afterwards for refreshments.

When: Wednesday, 14 May at 7 pm (please arrive promptly).

Where: Mosman Library, 605 Military Rd, Mosman.

Admission: Members Free. Visitors \$5 donation.

RSVP: Contact [David Carment](#) before Monday, 12 May.

Huguenot Society of Australia

Presented by the Huguenot Society of Australia



Huguenot Music from the 16th century to today: an illustrated overview

**What do Australians know and understand of this rich
legacy?**

A Public Lecture by Dr Jeff Brownrigg
Cultural Historian at the Australian Studies Institute, ANU



Dr Jeff Brownrigg will explore music associated with the Huguenots. He will examine 16th century musical settings of the Psalms from the Geneva Psalter as well as 19th century opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer (famously performed in the 20th century by Dame Joan Sutherland). In addition, he will look into the association of the Huguenot Society of London with the revival of early music on original instruments.

Saturday, 17 May 2025 at 2.00 pm

Gordon Baptist Church Hall, Park Avenue, Gordon
near Gordon Railway Station. Parking available.

All welcome. Free entrance. Afternoon tea will be served.

More information:

Robert Nash

ozhug85@gmail.com

www.huguenotsaustralia.org.au

Parramatta and District Historical Society

**Parramatta and District Historical Society
announces the Speaker for the**

May 2025 Monthly Meeting

The Speaker on this occasion will be

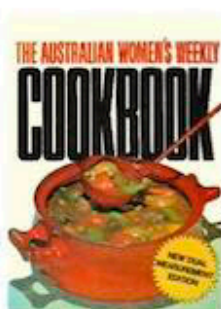
Lauren Samuelsson

Her subject



***“A Matter of Taste – The Australian Women’s
Weekly and Its influence on Australian Food
Culture”***

Dr Lauren Samuelsson holds a PhD in history from the University of Wollongong, Australia, where she is an Associate Lecturer. Lauren’s research interests include cultural history, the history of food and drink, the history of popular culture and gender history. Her first book, *A Matter of Taste* was published in 2024. She is a regular guest on Australian radio, where she shares her love of food history with people nationwide.



The *Australian Women’s Weekly* (the *Weekly*) is Australia’s longest running and most widely read women’s magazine. During the 1950s and 1960s, it had the largest per capita circulation of any women’s magazine in the world. Since its very first issue, food has held an integral place in the *Weekly* magazine as well as in their separate range of cookbooks. Despite its role as premier women’s magazine in Australia, historians have yet to explore the impact that this prominent text has played in shaping the eating habits of ‘everyday Australians’; the food consumed around Australian dinner tables; the tastes of the nation. This presentation will consider some of the myriad ways that the *Weekly* contributed to the development of domestic food culture in Australia.

TIME and DATE: 7.30 pm Monday 19 May 2025

VENUE: Burnside Gardens Community Centre
3 Blackwood Place, Oatlands

The presentation is free and will be followed by supper.
Enquiries Jeff Allen at jallen6@bigpond.net.au or 0414 996 497

Visitors Very Welcome

History News



Batlow Soldier Settlement – a married settlers home, Government Printing Office. State Archives

Collection, MHNSW: NRS-4481-3-[7/15904]-M5464

MHNSW Webinar: Soldier Settlement in NSW

The Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916 allowed the settlement of returned soldiers on Crown and Closer Settlement lands. Soldier settlement repatriation schemes were promoted as a pathway for some of the 300,000 returned servicemen and women to secure land ownership and financial independence.

This webinar will explore records in the State Archives Collection that tell the stories of these soldier settlers. Learn more about the individuals who participated in the scheme, and how you can research these men and women in the Museums of History NSW collection.

When: Online, Thursday, 24 April, 10.30 am–11.30 am.

Cost: Free; booking essential. [Register now](#)



Australian Heritage Festival 2025 – Anzac Memorial Unearthed

Join us as we unearth some of the remarkable stories of bravery, courage and resilience within the Anzac Memorial's collection during a special afternoon of talks for the Australian Heritage Festival.

For 90 years veterans and their families have donated objects to the Anzac Memorial. Each object carries its own personal history of service and sacrifice.

You'll hear from the Anzac Memorial's Curatorial and Learning teams as they bring to life the stories behind some of the Memorial's long-standing or recently acquired collections.

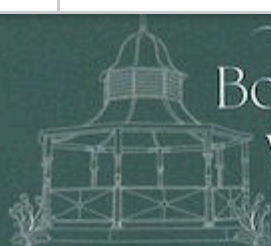
Cost: Free.

When: Tuesday, 13 May, 3–5 pm.

Where: Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park.

[Click here for the full program and to reserve your spot.](#)

Bowral Historical Walking Tours



Guided Bowral Historical Walking Tours

Time

Every Saturday & Sunday, 10am – 11.30am.

Meet 10 minutes prior.

Walking

Generally easy walking, some gentle/medium inclines on footpaths.

Approx. 2kms

Start

Bowral Railway Station entrance
on Station Street

Free car parking generally available at the
station or further down on Station Street.

Booking

Pre-booking only, via Trybooking
(Use QR Code below) or via
visitsouthernhighlands.com.au/whats-on.

Small group max. 12 people. For groups of 6
or more, private tours can be arranged at
alternate times.

Please email: eloisewalking@gmail.com

Book
Now!





Can you help the RNSH Centenary Museum?

Following the closure of Manly Hospital, the following items have all been temporarily housed at the RNSH Centenary Museum:

Portraits of the Hospital's matrons, Miss Edith May 'Molly' Robinson MBE (1926–1960) and Miss Dorothy Jean Nixon O.B.E. (1963–1978) by artist Molly O'Neil Garland, the Director of Nursing Miss Helen Shaw (1978–1988) by A. Franczok, and a portrait of Medical Superintendent Dr John Nash (1948–1982), artist unknown.

Ephemera relating to Edith Robinson including training certificates from Manly Cottage dated 1919 and RPA dated 1922 and 1923, an invitation and menu from the luncheon held for Queen Elizabeth on her first visit to Australia in February 1954, and correspondence relating to the award of her MBE in February 1962.

As RNSH Centenary Museum only collects items relating to Royal North Shore Hospital, the museum would like to hear from organisations or family members who would like to add these items to their collection.

Phone the RNSH Museum on 02 9462 9290.

Other News



State Library of NSW News: Transforming the Macquarie Street Building

We're excited to announce that the contemporary transformation of the Library's Macquarie Street building is moving forward, with work set to begin in May 2025.

Visitor numbers have soared this past year, with more readers and visitors than ever before enjoying our essential services, magnificent collections, and rich and varied experiences. The planned major refurbishment of the Macquarie Street building will ensure we continue to meet your needs – now and into the future.

Here's what to expect:

- an improved entrance providing a world-class welcome
- a refurbished Bashir Reading Room with more seating and study areas
- a modern, expanded cafe and bookshop
- more open and accessible spaces to enjoy.

To make this possible, the Macquarie Street building – including the Bashir Reading Room, Library bookshop and cafe – will temporarily close from 5 pm, Monday 12 May until the completion of the refurbishment later this year. The entrance to the Library will be through the Library's Mitchell building.

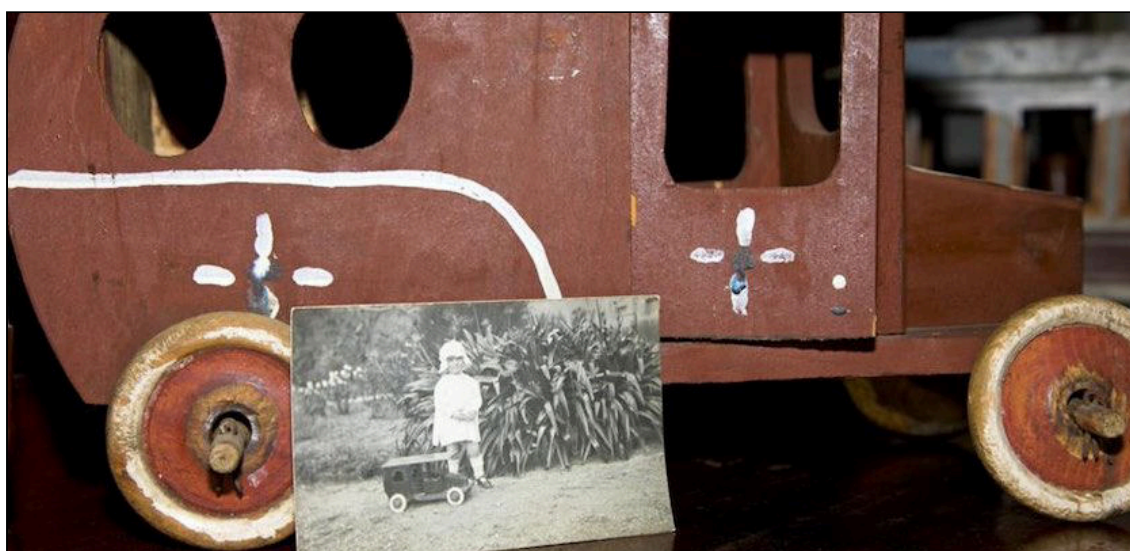
During this time, a temporary bookshop and cafe will be available in the Dixon Room, on the ground floor of the Mitchell Building, so you will still be able to take advantage of your Friends discount.

Room, so the corridor leading to the Friends Room will be busier than usual.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards creating a space befitting a world-leading library at the heart of culture, community and knowledge in NSW.

We look forward to sharing our progress with you. For more information, news and updates, visit sl.nsw.gov.au/buildingworks or email your enquiry to news@sl.nsw.gov.au

Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon
State Librarian



Community Heritage Grants 2025 Round – Now Open

What are the Community Heritage Grants?

The Community Heritage Grants (CHG) program supports community-based organisations to identify and care for Australian, moveable cultural heritage collections which are publicly accessible, locally held and nationally significant.

How we can help

The CHG supports small, local groups with limited funding and staffing resources, who would benefit from access to professional cultural heritage expertise. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available to help organisations undertake a three-stage journey to assess their collection, identify collection care recommendations and implement practical improvements.

Non-profit, incorporated organisations and some government agencies – including historical societies, archives, regional museums, public libraries,

Activities we support

In the first two stages, organisations work with experienced heritage practitioners to produce reports that:

- Explain the meanings and value of their collections (a significance assessment)
- Outline the condition of their collections and provide a conservation and collection management plan (a preservation needs assessment).

In the third stage, funding is available to:

- Undertake conservation and collection management activities, as recommended in the preservation needs assessment. This may include conservation, purchase of collection housing and storage materials, environmental control and monitoring equipment or digitisation.

CHG also offers grants for collection management training projects or cataloguing and collection management system software.

Applications and guidelines

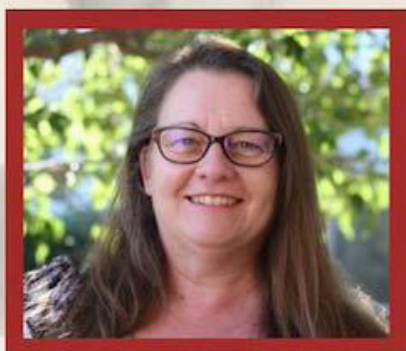
Applicants should read the 2025 CHG Round Guidelines before applying. The Guidelines and application forms are available on the [CHG website](#).

For queries or to discuss your project, contact chg@nla.gov.au

2025 WILSON HISTORY ORATION

PRESENTED BY
PROFESSIONAL HISTORIANS AUSTRALIA

REVISITING THE PAST: RESEARCHING CHINESE HISTORY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



WITH PHA (WA) MEMBER LUCY HAIR

THURSDAY 5 JUNE, 5PM (AWST)

VIA ZOOM

Professional
Historians
Australia



2025 Ron Rathbone Local History Competition

Bayside Council invites high school students and adults to participate in the Ron Rathbone Local History Competition.

A competition for works of original research on any aspect of the history of the Bayside Local Government Area.

Optional theme:

Role of women in war during WWI and/or WWII within the Bayside Council LGA.

Open Category

Prize Pool \$7,000

\$5,000 for the Winner

High School Category

Prize Pool \$2,000



Entries close at 5pm on Thursday 17 July 2025.

Enquiries: local_history@bayside.nsw.gov.au



For more information please scan the QR code or visit our website at:
bayside.nsw.gov.au/ronrathbone





Blue Mountains Inn, Lawson (RAHS Frank Walker Collection)

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The Royal Australian Historical Society

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