

PHA NSW & ACT

Professional Historians Association

NEW SOUTH WALES AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Annual Report 2014-15

The Year of our Pearl Anniversary

1985 - 2015



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Objectives of the Professional Historians Association in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory Inc.

PHA NSW was formed in 1985, and renamed PHA NSW & ACT in 2014, as a professional association for practising qualified historians. It is a founding member of the federal peak body Professional Historians Australia (PHAus) (formerly the [Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations Inc. \(ACPHA\)](#))

The objectives of PHA NSW & ACT are:

THE Association works to support and develop the professionalism and status of public historians in the community through:

- I. Leading public historians in the continuing professional development of their skills and practices across a life-long career as a historian,
- II. Facilitating and inculcating an ethos of high standards of professional and ethical practices among public historians,
- III. Promoting concepts of public history and professional practice across the many fields of historical inquiry and diverse forms of interpreting and presenting history to which public historians are significant contributors,
- IV. Advocating public history perspectives in public debates concerning interpretations of history and the keeping of documentary, environmental and other historical records,
- V. Providing potential clients with guidance on engaging public historians for appropriate remuneration, conditions and other considerations,
- VI. Representing members in contractual and employment matters,
- VII. Recognizing the outstanding contributions made by public historians within the field of history and within the broader community,
- VIII. Fostering mutually supportive and co-operative relationships among public historians, being a forum for the exchange and sharing of information and news between fellow public historians, and publishing in any form of technology

materials relating to the objects of the Association,

IX. Maintaining links, formal and informal including through memberships and affiliations, with public and private external bodies engaged in the practice of history in any of its diverse forms, and

X. Maintaining membership of and contributing to the evolution of Professional Historians Australia Inc, and maintaining and deepening collegiate links with other professional and public historians associations around the world.

Membership of the 30th Committee 2014-15

Chair	Bruce Baskerville
Deputy Chair	Christine Yeats
Secretary/Public Officer	Stephen Gapps
Treasurer	Carol Liston
Member (Memberships)	Judith Godden
Member (PH prize)	Birgit Heilman
Member	Ian Hoskins
Member (PHA delegate)	Pauline Curby

1.1	Chair’s Report	5
1.2	Secretary’s Report	12
1.3	Membership Officer Report	13
1.4	Public History Prize Report	15
1.5	Website/IT and Blog Report	
1.6	Social Media Report	
1.7	Professional Historians Australia (PHA) Report	17
1.8	PHA NSW &ACT Representative on RAHS Library Committee Report	19
1.9	Records and Archives Officer Report	22
1.10	Continuing Professional Development Program Report	23
1.11	Mitchell Library Consultative Group Report	23
1.12	NAA Consultative Forum Report	24
1.13	History Advisory Panel to NSW Heritage Office Report	25
1.14	Delegate to History Council of NSW Report	24
1.15	Community Advisory Committee of State Records NSW Report	26
1.16	Treasurer’s Report	28

1.1 Chair's Report

The constitution requires a report, under clause 24(2)(b), on “...*the activities of the Association during the last preceding financial year*”. The 30th Committee was elected on 19th August 2014. Its first important activity was the planning meeting held on 18th November 2014, and a number of members also attended and participated in the discussions.

Six priority areas were settled upon as the focus for the year, and this report is arranged according to those priority areas to allow you to use them as indicators of the committee's performance.

The six priorities are:

1. Communications
2. Continuing Professional Development
3. Membership Structure
4. External Representation and Advocacy
5. ACT and Regional Membership
6. 30th or Pearl Anniversary

These priorities naturally coalesce into four themes or groups: how we manage our Association, how we support our members, how we communicate and advocate, and how we are part of a bigger movement.

Most of these themes, priorities and issues are covered in greater detail in the various annual reports submitted by our various officers. My report, therefore, ranges across all the activities of our Association and concludes with some reflections on where we are going.

Each theme outlines the *issues* identified at the planning meeting, then covers the *outcomes* from addressing these issues, and concludes with a list of *future directions* for consideration by the 31st Committee.

Theme One: How we manage our Association

Priorities: ACT and Regional Membership, and 30th or Pearl Anniversary

Constitutional Objectives I, VII, X

Issues:

- A. Membership in the ACT, and more specifically in the national capital, was small and declining.
- B. Need to act upon specific inclusion of references to the ACT in our constitution
- C. Desire to mark our 30th anniversary, possibly with some emphasis on the changing nature of our profession and of public history.
- D. The utility of providing the committee with a capacity to co-opt additional members was identified during the year.
- E. All activities involve a financial cost, but not all members can attend every activity, so a means of spreading such costs more fairly was identified.

Outcomes:

- A ‘Speeding Through History’ event held in Canberra on Saturday 30th May, attended by

about 20 historians working in Canberra and the south-east of NSW

- Events during the year badged as ‘pearl anniversary’ activities.
- Chair’s speech at Christmas Party, and Peter Tyler Oration at History in July by Em Prof Alan Atkinson explored changing meanings of public history and the development of the historians’ profession.
- Constitutional amendments to provide a co-option power for the committee were prepared for consideration at the AGM.
- A policy or practice of charging a fee for every activity was put into operation, and members will know that both the Christmas Party and History in July attracted a \$10/head cover charge. While this did not cover the costs of each event, it did mean that the costs were now only partly paid from our general revenue (i.e. by all members) and partly by the members who could attend.

Future directions:

1. Work to form an active and stable ACT group, initially from among the Speeding Through History attendees.
2. Make use of the co-option power (provided it is approved at the AGM) to mentor or introduce additional members to committee responsibilities and assist with succession planning.
3. Continue to monitor the costs of activities, and achieving a balance between a fair contribution from the treasury and a fair and affordable cost-recovery component.

Theme Two: How we support our members

Priorities: Continuing Professional Development and Membership Structure

Constitutional Objectives: I, II, IX

Issues:

- A. Time and attendance at CPD activities can be difficult for members, especially for regional members when activities are held in Sydney
- B. CPD activities need to focus on professional or business skills, and be held quarterly.
- C. Retaining retired members within the Association – this issue has been raised for some time by members approaching retirement or actually retired.
- D. Annual issue of certificates to new and upgrading members following changes in the administration of the certificate program by Professional Historians Australia.

Outcomes:

- Webinar program held in partnership with RAHS, making activities accessible to every member with access to a computer.
- CPD activities this year covered Assessing the Significance of Collections (November 2014), Land records (February 2015), Speeding through History in Canberra (May 2015) and Oral History issues and perspectives (June 2015).
- After much discussion, a category of Friend of the Association, aimed at retiring or retired members, has been developed and submitted to the AGM in the form of constitutional amendments.
- New and upgrade certificates were available for History in July, but the system still has some issues to resolve.
- The Peter Tyler Oration at History in July has attracted two significant speakers, Prof Joan Beaumont and Em Prof Alan Atkinson. Both speakers reflected upon their work

as historians, and I think, showed that the divide between academic and public history is not so great as is sometimes claimed.

- I would have like to have held a CPD activity on ethics for public historians, but this was not ultimately achievable. However, I think this remains an issue that will become more important in the future. Perhaps a starting point would be to work with Professional Historians Australia on reviewing and updating the current Code of Ethics.

Future directions:

1. CPD activities being offered could continue to diversify, in terms of topics, means of delivery, and stand-alone or in partnership with other organizations.
2. Implement, assuming approval by the AGM, the new category of Friend of the Association.
3. I retain the view, as set out in several *Members Circulars*, that the need for membership categories to be responsive to rapid changes in the workplace will continue to be a significant issue for the Association, and that this will remain a continuing issue for future committees.
4. Continue to work with Professional Historians Australia to smooth-out the process for the issue of certificates.
5. The presentation of certificates at History-in-July is an important public welcome to new and upgrading members by their peers, and I recommend this continue.
6. Continue to invite high-profile speakers to present the Peter Tyler Oration, and use the Oration to breakdown barriers between public historians and other historians.

Theme Three: How we communicate and advocate

Priority: Communications

Constitutional Objectives I, V, VIII

Issues:

- A. We currently operate a website, a blog, a twitter account and a facebook page, issue a roughly-fortnightly *Members Circular* e-newsletter and the annual reports.
- B. The PHA NSW & ACT *Jobs Bulletin* has been well received for some years, and ideally could operate on a national basis to offer more opportunities.
- C. Professional Historians Australia also provides *Historia* e-newsletter and the printed journal *Circa* to members across the country.
- D. These methods all require continuing co-ordination, and constant attending to technical issues, by volunteers and our casual Admin Officer.
- E. Some key issues for improvement are improving e-communications and access between committee members, increasing opportunities for exchanges between members and non-members, changing the website to remove outdated information and to fix ongoing problems with the members page, among other things.

Outcomes:

- The *Jobs Bulletin* was changed from NSW & ACT only distribution to national-wide distribution, and re-badged as a Professional Historians Australia *Jobs Bulletin*. This is a pilot program that will be assessed towards the end of the year, but so far seems to be attracting increasing advertising of jobs and other opportunities.
- Facebook was changed from closed to open to the public to provide a forum for additional exchanges between historians and the public on topical issues.
- The committee resolved to investigate completely replacing the current website with a new website that would be easier to navigate and update. Professional Historians

Australia has also decided to review and update its website.

Future directions:

1. The assessment of the *Jobs Bulletin* national pilot program will make clear the costs and benefits of transferring to the national level, and identify issues to be addressed to make it more successful.
2. Work closely with Professional Historians Australia to see whether the same people can upgrade the two websites at the same time, perhaps with some benefits in terms of cost-savings and better connections between the two sites.

Theme Four: How we are part of a bigger movement

Priority: External Representation and Advocacy

Constitutional Objectives III, IV, IX, X

Issues:

- A. Surveys by both PHA NSW & ACT and Professional Historians Australia in recent years have indicated members desire for the Association playing an increased role in advocacy.
- B. Advocacy, when considering the survey responses and committee discussions, involves two aspects, that of engaging in public discussions on matters of historical significance, and on matters of importance to working public historians.
- C. One aspect of advocacy that needed further work is engaging with tertiary-level students to make them aware of opportunities to work as a historian outside the academy.
- D. The Heritage Council's History Advisory Panel has not been convened all year, this being at least the second-year of such a failure.

Outcomes:

- On matters of importance to working public historians, the committee has made representations on behalf of two members concerning the non-publication or the poor publication of commissioned works. The Association has also, through its membership of the Mitchell Library Consultative Group in particular, helped improve facilities available to working historians during the recent changes in the Library.
- On matters of public discussions on matters of historical significance, representations and submissions have been made on the following matters (in chronological order), with mixed outcomes:
 - ◆ State Records: several representations have been made to State Records NSW across the year requesting the appointment of an Aboriginal archivist. This has not yet been achieved.
 - ◆ Mitchell Library: Our representative on the consultative group, Joy Hughes, has reported regularly on meetings and her reports have been published in the *Members Circular*. Without this engagement, many changes would have been made during the library renovations that failed to recognize the way historians work. Issue such as accessing the Small Picture File, and responding the microfilm 'vinegarisation', are ongoing.
 - ◆ ABC Radio National: representations were made to the managing Director of the ABC arguing that the *Hindsight* and *Rear Vision* programs should be maintained. The programs were, ultimately, closed.
 - ◆ Census: a representation was made by Professional Historians Australia to the Commonwealth Statistician requesting the continuance of the five-yearly census,

and arguing against any abandonment of the 2016 census. As this is a federal issue, PHA NSW & ACT supported Professional Historians Australia rather than took a leading role. The 2016 census will be held, and the five-yearly program looks likely to continue.

- ◆ Adam Goodes: a blog post, expressing support for all people involved in confronting racism and bullying, and acknowledging the importance of sport in our cultural history, was developed by the Chair and edited by the committee, was posted on our blog, with good feedback on the blog, facebook and twitter from members.
 - ◆ Copyright in unpublished materials: written representations were made to the Commonwealth Attorney General requesting the perpetual copyright in unpublished materials be aligned with that for published materials.
 - ◆ Possible closure of PWD Stoneyard: representations to NSW ministers for heritage and finance requesting the Stoneyard be maintained as an operating enterprise, and noting the importance of the traditional skills and methods of the stonemasons for working on public buildings.
 - ◆ NSW Arts & Cultural Policy: a submission was made the previous year on the draft policy, focusing on the need to be more inclusive of history and historians. The final policy was issued this year, with almost all references to history and historians removed.
 - ◆ Copies of most submissions are placed on our website for member's information and public dissemination.
- The committee resolved to open up the Public History Prize to a wider audience of tertiary-level students, to a wider range of media for the presentation of their work beyond the essay, and to focus the prize on public history.
 - I made a presentation to a third year university history seminar group on working as a public historian, and engaged in an interesting discussion about the future of working as a historian. I think my conclusion that, as future public historians (and the future of our profession and of the Association), the students need to be thinking, not of getting a job, but of making their jobs, actually reflected the thinking of the students..
 - Despite representations made to the Heritage Council, it's History Advisory Panel has remained in a state of limbo, apparently (along with the other advisory panels) in a state of never-ending review. No information has been made publicly available as to why the panel is being reviewed, what the terms of reference are for the review, who is conducting any review, or what has been progress with the review.

Future directions:

1. The level of advocacy that can be carried out will always depend upon the capacity of volunteer committee members to make representations, whether in writing, online, or in meetings. In my view, it is better to focus on a small number of issues that can be successfully pursued rather than try to cover too many issues. It is a matter of matching resources, finding time, and preventing burn-out. This will be helped by always seeking guidance from our Objectives as to whether a particular issue is within our 'orbit' for comment and advocacy; and by being the 'lead-PHA' in regard to NSW and ACT issues, but supporting Professional Historians Australia in advocating on federal or national issues.
2. The committee resolved to move the Public History Prize from the History-in-July event to its own stand-alone event in March. This will be experimental, in terms of both the timing and the broader criteria noted above. The committee will need to support and emphasis

the value of the re-formulated Prize to the Association in terms of regularly recruiting new members into the Association.

3. Continual representations to the Heritage Division, Heritage Council and the NSW Minister for Heritage should continue to be made regarding the fate of the History Advisory Panel. I remain concerned that the desuetude of the Panel, when combined with other matters on which we have been advocating, could suggest the State is marginalizing the role of historians in public policy, and the importance of historical understandings in formulating future actions.

Thanks

Members present at the last annual general meeting, or reading the last annual reports, will be aware that I am not standing again for election to the 31st Committee. I would like to thank all the members of the 30th Committee for working as a team over the year. There are Christine Yeats (Deputy Chair), Carol Liston (Treasurer), Stephen Gapps (Secretary), Ian Hoskins, Birgit Heilmann, Judith Godden and Pauline Curby (general members). I would also like to thank former Admin Officer Guy Betts, and his successor Natham Esler. I am sure Nathan will prove to be a real asset to the 31st Committee and the Association more generally.

Committee members are, of course, assisted and supported in their work by the larger 'committee circle', which this year has included Christine Yeats (CPD Officer and Records & Archives Officer), Francesca Beddie (Blog Editor) and Christine de Matos (Website Administrator), and our nominees and representatives on external bodies: Joy Hughes (Mitchell Library Consultative Group Member), Dr Terry Kass (National Archives Consultative Forum Member and Mitchell Library Consultative Group Alternate), Mark Dunn, then Stephen Gapps (History Council Member), Michael Bennett (State Records Community Advisory Committee Member), Patricia Curthoys (Heritage Council's History Advisory Panel Member), Christine Yeats (RAHS Library Committee Member), Pauline Curby (Professional Historians Australia Committee Member) and Emma Dortins, then Michelle Richmond (Professional Historians Australia Committee Alternate). Annual reports, where required, from these representatives are presented elsewhere.

I would also like to thank Virginia Macleod who served as Returning Officer for the 2014 AGM, and Rosemary Kerr who is serving as Returning Officer today.

In conclusion...

I have noted, throughout my report, a number of issues to which the 31st Committee may like to give further consideration. If there is one issue above all others that needs work, I think that is in the area of communications, and especially upgrading or rebuilding our website and the associated social media. I think we can make much more use of all our online communications to engage with members, prospective members, and the general public. The right 'amount' of communications with members will always be somewhat vexed, as some will want more and others less, but nevertheless I believe it better to err on the side of too much rather than not enough. This is especially given how geographically dispersed our membership is. Whether a member lives in Darlinghurst or in Wilcannia or in Civic, she or he should not be wondering what their Association is up to.

It is important to the operations and continuation of our Association that we all recognise all of members have given their time voluntarily. None have received any payment (or would want any) for their extensive contributions, but without their contributions the Association would not

have functioned. Associations such as ours are critical to the functioning of a civil society, and the fact that some 20% of our members are actively participating in its operations in some way, and well over half attended the Xmas and History-in-July functions, is testimony to its vitality and endurance. This is a very good omen for the future.

And You

And finally, my most sincere thanks go to all of you, the members, whether Professional, Associate or Graduate, who make our Association what it is and whose collective support has enabled the 30th Committee and all the other member-volunteers to pursue the activities reported upon in this and the accompanying reports for the benefit of us all.

Bruce Baskerville, Chair, PHA NSW & ACT Inc., 23 August 2015

1.2 Secretary and Public Officer's Report

2014-15 was my third year as Secretary. Under the new committee system adopted I have one further term. While I feel I have worked on some significant areas during my time as Secretary of PHA NSW & ACT, there is never enough time in a day and there are some things I would like to continue to develop during the next 12 months.

The past year has seen an increase from the previous year in external contact with the secretary from three areas in particular; prospective employers, media and various agencies and history related organizations wishing to promote events and services.

This reflects what I have found to be a wider knowledge of PHA NSW & ACT that has continued to be developed over the last year via, in the main, an increasing social media presence. When asking prospective employers why they have contacted PHA, the main response is that they found us on the web searching for historians or had heard of us through various social media avenues.

Our Twitter followers throughout 2013-14 increased from 200 to 290 followers. In 2014-15 it increased from 290 to 430 followers. (In 2012 the PHA Twitter account had 40 followers).

In 2015 we opened the PHA Facebook group to non-members. There were 40 PHA members using the Facebook group, now we have 95 PHA and non-PHA members in our public Facebook group.

To reflect these important changes in the public presence of PHA NSW & ACT a Social Media Report has been added to the annual report (see below).

The regular blog updates by members and activity around the annual Public History Prize has also been critical in broadening knowledge of members and their work. Media requests for historians have increased over the last year as well.

The introduction of the National Jobs & Opportunities Bulletin has been the highlight of this last year. With the admirable assistance of our new Administrative Officer Nathan, we have instituted a new bulletin which both actively searches jobs in all states and territories, and asks for each state PHA to contribute with job notices and other opportunities. This trial was implemented and has received excellent feedback from our members and members in other states, as well as from PHA (national body).

I believe it is important for members to know that the PHA is a 'one stop shop' for all sorts of public history opportunities and that members can rely on their bulletin to inform them of

history jobs not just in their own state but what is on offer nationally. While we could still do with further contributions from other states, the national bulletin seems to have been a great success. Members have sent feedback that they find the bulletin most useful in their employment searches, and others who are not actively searching have responded that they are very interested to know what is being offered in their field, and in other states.

In terms of the next year ahead, I would like to focus on developing the bulletin further, continuing to develop our social media push, and investigating new opportunities for our website and how it might link in better to promotion of members work and job opportunities.

Finally, a thank you to our outgoing Chair the enigmatic Bruce Baskerville, whose leadership and direction has been a key to the committee being inspired to continue to working on PHA matters in our very busy lives.

Stephen Gapps, Secretary & Public Officer, 22 August 2015

1.3 Membership Officer's Report

All the new processes put in place during the past two years are working smoothly, with the new application and referees' forms making the process much more transparent and easier. The e-meetings are particularly valued in allowing speedy processing of applicants.

Since the last AGM, we have welcomed eight new members. The new Professional Members are: Catherine Freyne, Carol Roberts, Caroline Cosgrove (transferred from PHA Victoria) and Dr Paul Irish. In addition, Nicole Cama successfully applied to upgrade her membership to Professional level. New Professional Historians (Associate) members are Nicola Pullan, Minna Muhlen-Schulte and Anisa Puri. The latter two both transferred from PHA Victoria. There is one new Graduate Historian: Katrina Kittel. We currently have one applicant who is completing the required documentation. The number of new members is similar to most previous years. I have also responded to a steady number of membership enquiries though not all are eligible.

I thank all the Committee for their input and support as well as the PHAus's Accreditation Secretary Jill Barnard. I also thank Stephen Gapps for help ensuring changes are made to the website. Cameron Adams responds almost instantly to requests to add new members to our newsletter subscription lists. I thank Guy Betts for his past efficiency and am confident that his successor as Administrative Officer, Nathan Esler, will be equally efficient in ensuring new members have prompt access to their membership rights.

Judith Godden, Membership Officer, 23 August 2015

1.4 Public History Prize Report

The Public History Prize was established in 2008 to encourage students enrolled in undergraduate history courses to research, write and present accessible and engaging histories, and to consider a career as a professional historian operating in the public history field. The three submitted entries for 2014 were judged by PHA (NSW & ACT) committee member Ian Hoskins. I would like to thank Ian for his expertise and donated time.

The 2014 Public History Prize was awarded to Nathan Fallon, for his essay: "Transmitting the

memory of the Holocaust to the Australian Public: the cultivation of prosthetic memory in the Sydney Jewish Museum'. Nathan Fallon undertook this project as part of his Bachelor of Arts at Macquarie University within the Modern History Department. Nathan's essay is publicly available on the History Prize page on the PHA NSW & ACT's website; a Q & A blog post revealed a bit more about Nathan's personal interest on the project.

The PHA NSW & ACT committee agreed on a few changes for the 2015 Public History Prize to encourage more students to submit their work. The Public History Prize will be open to students (undergraduate, graduate diploma, master studies) in NSW & the ACT whose work engages with the field and practice of professional and public history (both Australian and international).

It was also agreed that at least two judges will select the winning essay. A separate awards ceremony will be trialled in early 2016 to shorten the gap between submission closing day and presentation of the prize. Detailed information on the 2015 Public History Prize guidelines can be found on the Public History Prize page on the PHA NSW & ACT website.

The likes on the Public History Prize facebook page increased over the last year, and this platform was especially used to encourage submission entries and to promote Nathan Fallon's winning essay.

Birgit Heilmann, Public History Prize Officer, 24 August 2015

1.5 Website and Blog Report

Blog report

In September 2014, *Inside History* magazine named the PHA NSW & ACT blog as one of the '50 blogs you need to read'. That was heartening for both the editor and the contributors to the blog, given that commentary on individual posts remains muted. The executive committee's public statement in support of Adam Goodes received positive feedback and a couple of other posts generated some discussion. Overall, the blog remains primarily a static means of airing issues of interest to professional historians and presenting members to each other and the broader readership. The blog editor, Francesca Beddie, looks forward to working with members to further increase engagement with the blog. In the meantime, many thanks to those who have contributed over the last twelve months.

Francesca Beddie, Blog editor, 23 August 2015

Website report



Who We Are

The Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT represents practising professional historians in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

This year is the Year of our Pearl Anniversary 1985 - 2015.

What We Do

Professional historians are skilled in the practice of history including: research, writing, editing, publishing, curatorial, public speaking, oral interview, native title and genealogy.

[Learn More](#)



Become a Member

Do you engage in the professional practice of history? Become a member and receive accreditation among other benefits.

[Learn More](#)

Employ an Historian

Looking for an historian? Our members engage in everything from small research projects to contract histories and permanent employment in cultural institutions.

[Learn More](#)

[Follow @pha_nsw](#)

From the Blog

A Reflection on Two Museums

14/08/2015

by Katherine Knight... In the past three months, I have had the opportunity to reflect...

[Read More](#)

Member profile:

Jennifer Debenham

04/08/2015

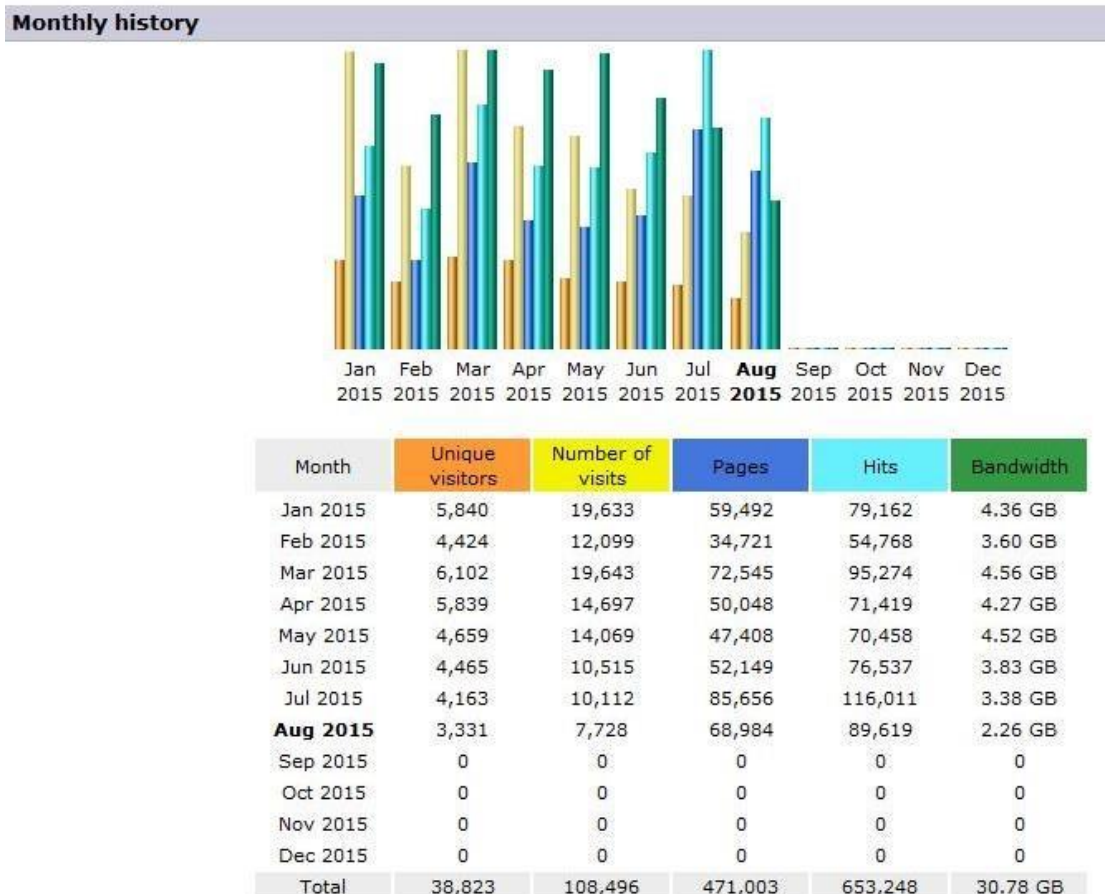
Dr Jennifer Debenham is Senior Research Assistant, Centre for the History of Violence and...

[Read More](#)

The PHANSW website continues to grow, even while some development issues remain to be ironed out. The Twitter feed (see image above), for instance, adds another dynamic element to the home page. The blog continues to be expertly administered by Francesca Beddie, and the server side (the hidden 'back end') by Christine de Matos.

If we were to take the 2015 website traffic statistics a bit too literally, we could describe the average PHANSW site visitor as a Russian using a Windows machine and Internet Explorer, who was most likely to visit on a Monday in March between 5 and 6am. This visitor found the site via Google, stayed for less than 30 seconds, downloaded a copy of Nov/Dec 2004 Phanfare, took a look at either Bruce Baskerville's blog entry 'Place Names Can Break Our Hearts' or Ian Willis' 'Ministering angels to our warriors of Empire', and returned for another visit approximately 3.21 times.

All of that might be interesting, even a bit strange, but does not tell us anything really useful. A broader look can demonstrate how users are using the site and reveal changes over time. Below is a graph containing a snapshot of site visit traffic for 2015 (so far):



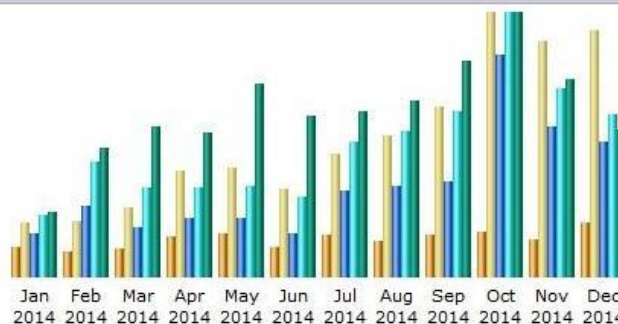
The two most important statistics to look at are unique visitors (orange) and number of visits (yellow). The first tells us how many unique individuals used the site, the second how many return visits these unique visitors collectively made. The dark blue relates to the number of pages viewed by the visitors in total. The last two table items (light blue and green) are not particularly useful for our concerns, and 'Hits' is especially misleading as it includes downloads of everything required to view a single page, such as images and java script files.

Site traffic remains steady between 4500 and 6000 visitors per month, with July falling slightly under and March at the top with 6102 unique visitors. The first part of the year saw a higher number of return visits, but the difference is not as stark as looks on the graph, the overall average being 2-3 return visits per month.

What does this all mean? What is driving people to the site? Do people simply have more time at the beginning of the year than later? While a deeper analysis would be required to have any certainty, a quick look at which pages, aside from the home page, are most active suggests that while downloads remain fairly consistent (Phanfares and Public History Prize-winning essays, averaging 50-200 downloads per month), it is the blog entries that are reeling in new visitors.

While average monthly blog views are 200-500, in the best months they can extend to over a thousand visits. For example, in January, one of the peak months, Christine Yeats' 'Droughts and flooding rains' received 1593 views and 'Five minutes with ... Frank Heimans' 1411 views. In order to get a better idea of how the site has grown in traffic, it is useful to compare the current stats with those of 2014:

Monthly history



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2014	3,790	7,005	30,546	45,086	2.49 GB
Feb 2014	3,341	7,177	50,680	82,915	4.83 GB
Mar 2014	3,622	8,912	36,128	64,281	5.68 GB
Apr 2014	5,271	13,594	42,358	65,152	5.44 GB
May 2014	5,527	13,963	42,937	65,886	7.27 GB
Jun 2014	3,842	11,215	31,246	57,020	6.06 GB
Jul 2014	5,454	15,754	61,542	97,074	6.25 GB
Aug 2014	4,624	18,160	65,456	105,015	6.68 GB
Sep 2014	5,385	21,853	69,336	118,084	8.16 GB
Oct 2014	5,671	33,940	159,487	189,395	9.98 GB
Nov 2014	4,719	30,328	108,339	135,597	7.46 GB
Dec 2014	7,042	31,562	96,833	115,759	5.54 GB
Total	58,288	213,463	794,888	1,141,264	75.83 GB

The year 2014 showed a steady growth from the 3000s in January to over 7000 (!) unique visitors by December. The current year has seen a plateauing and the maintenance of those average latter 2014 levels (4-5000 mark). While the number of visits seems at first to have dropped in 2015 compared to the latter part of 2014, this can be easily explained by visitors becoming familiar with the site and only returning for new material (like blogs). One key, therefore, to sustaining return visits is to regularly update the dynamic parts of the site.

The following graph refers to the country of origin for site visitors for the month of July 2015 (top 25 only):

Countries (Top 25) - Full list				
Countries		Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
United States	us	25,592	27,291	462.99 MB
Netherlands	nl	21,728	21,742	23.11 MB
Unknown	zz	9,223	9,384	99.11 MB
Russian Federation	ru	8,011	8,101	19.71 MB
France	fr	5,214	5,393	110.14 MB
Australia	au	5,039	28,698	1.12 GB
China	cn	4,936	5,552	680.40 MB
Ukraine	ua	2,611	2,629	64.68 MB
Turkey	tr	720	761	5.72 MB
Germany	de	376	754	191.02 MB
Canada	ca	187	337	18.04 MB
Great Britain	gb	179	984	74.19 MB
Romania	ro	159	279	47.60 MB
South Korea	kr	155	189	11.54 MB
European country	eu	144	144	2.43 MB
Israel	il	122	133	8.30 MB
Vietnam	vn	116	123	1.83 MB
Singapore	sg	96	106	1.68 MB
Sweden	se	88	128	12.85 MB
Thailand	th	64	67	1.36 MB
Brazil	br	57	549	13.56 MB
Italy	it	57	231	6.42 MB
India	in	55	142	2.81 MB
Estonia	ee	54	58	12.62 MB
Azerbaijan	az	49	50	181.44 KB
Others		624	2186	443.58 MB

While there is some variation from month to month, the main top visitors usually come from some combination of the United States, China, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, France and Australia. The analysis software, AWStats, does take known web-bots out of the statistics, but obviously not all spam attempts can be found and removed. Nevertheless, the range of countries of origin is quite interesting.

Most users use a search engine to find the PHANSW via Google or Microsoft Bing, using terms like ‘professional’ and ‘historian’ or individual member names. But what about external referring pages? Perhaps unsurprisingly, most users are redirected from the national ACPHA page and other history sites, like the AHA or NSW State Records. What is interesting to note, however, is the increasing presence in the list of referring pages from social media and networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and, especially, Twitter. The top external directors towards the PHA site in August 2015, for instance, have been from tweets referencing Bruce Baskerville’s ‘Public Statement’ on Adam Goodes.

The two main things to take away from all of the above are first that traffic on the site is steady and healthy, and second that integral to continued growth and ongoing interest will likely be use of the blog and strategic utilisation of social media. I will leave you with the key site traffic stats for the last complete month, July 2015.

Christine De Matos, Website Administrator, 23 August 2015

1.6 Social Media Report

As outlined in the Secretary’s Report, the past year has seen an increase beyond the one of the previous year in external contact with the secretary from three areas in particular; prospective employers, media and various agencies and history related organizations wishing to promote events and services.

This reflects a wider knowledge of PHA NSW & ACT that has largely stemmed from a growing social media presence. In particular, our Twitter account is followed by all relevant major history related institutions such as the State Library of NSW, Arts NSW, HCNSW, various museums, Sydney Living Museums, Museums & Galleries Foundation, AHA, etc. It is also followed by other PHA accounts (PHA VIC being the most active in re-tweeting and sharing tweets) and national and international public history bodies such as NCPH (US).

The account is followed by other prospective employers as well, such as local councils, and universities. It is also followed by other individual historians and active promoters of history related information and issues.

The Secretary and Administrative Officer manage the Twitter account and generally post examples of members work, upcoming members' events, items of interest to members and others and items of public history advocacy. Generally, anything members post in our Facebook group will become a Tweet.

Our Twitter followers throughout 2013-14 increased from 200 to 290 followers. In 2014-15 it increased from 290 to 430 followers. (This is from a base in 2012 of 40 followers).

Unfortunately I have not had time to pull together analytics of the reach of our Twitter account, but this can be provided. Essentially, many of the larger accounts such as Sydney Living Museums have several thousand followers and any re-tweeting or sharing of PHA posts reaches a very broad audience.

It would be of great benefit to continue this push and expand this outreach and we aim to do this in 2015-16. We strongly encourage members to post links of their work to the Facebook account to gain the value of this broad outreach.

In 2015 we opened the PHA Facebook group to non-members. There were 40 members using Facebook group, now we have 95 members in our public Facebook group. This group is an opportunity for members to post about items of general interest and to promote their work to a broad audience. The Facebook group will be promoted during 2015-16 and should continue to expand PHA NSW & ACT exposure.

Stephen Gapps, Social Media manager, 22 August 2015

1.7 Professional Historians Australia (PHAus) Report

Professional Historians Australia AGM was held by Skype on 8 August 2014, following the general meeting in Brisbane in July 2014, held in tandem with the AHA conference. There were three PHA Skype conferences in 2014/15, in December, March and July.

The main activities have been:

- The trial National Employment Bulletin is under way, with all PHAs apart from SA receiving the bulletin. Administered by PHA (NSW & ACT), the bulletin has received positive feedback during the first phase of its 6-month trial.
- Professional Historians Australia's e-bulletin *Historia*, distributed four times a year – in March, June, September and December – is consistently opened by 40-45 per cent of subscribers. Efforts are made to ensure copy is included from all states and territories.
- In early 2015 Professional Historians Australia sent a letter to the Australian Statistician and the Treasurer expressing concern in regard to suggestions that the taking of the Australian census be reduced to ten-yearly intervals in lieu of the current five-year

pattern.

- Professional Historians Australia website is to be updated with a new Content Management System while retaining the current content in order to expedite this process. Transfer to the new Content Management System is now underway.
- Work is in progress on the 5th edition of *Circa* to be launched in mid-2016. Referee guidelines had been recently updated to ensure the process is better understood.
- PHA (Vic) plans to host a national conference next year coinciding with Professional Historians Australia's 20th birthday.

Pauline Curby, PHA NSW & ACT Professional Historians Australia delegate, 19 August 2015.

1.8 PHA NSW & ACT Representative on RAHS Library Committee Report

Purpose of the RAHS Library Committee

The purpose of the Committee was reviewed in 2014/15 as part of the development of the new terms of reference. Currently, the purpose of the Library and Archives Committee is to provide strategic support for the management of the RAHS Library and Archives Collection - including acquisition, storage and accessibility – and the residual museum collection (held at History House) and to ensure that the Library Collection Development Policy, Archives Collection Development Policy and the Records Retention and Disposal Policies are implemented. It does this by providing:

- Expertise from a mix of individual researchers and qualified librarians and archivists.
- Advice to the RAHS Council and Librarian regarding the use of the library and archives collections to support the Society's objectives in researching Australian history.
- A link between the RAHS Council and the Library. The Committee may assist in the 'implementation of any policy decisions which may be made by the Council'.
- A forum to discuss any proposed changes to the Library or Archives Collection Development Policy and to put forward appropriate recommendations to the RAHS Council.
- A forum to consider proposals for new Library or Archives projects (for example, a new database) and to put forward appropriate recommendations to the RAHS Council should this be required.
- A forum to discuss conservation priorities.
- Assistance with the review and disposal of unwanted Library and archives material (such disposals to be approved by the Executive Committee of the RAHS Council).
- Advice on the implementation of records management policies and practices.
- An advocate for the Library on the RAHS Council.

Membership

The current Committee membership is a mix of RAHS Councillors and RAHS staff, RAHS library users, subject experts and the PHA NSW & ACT representative. The RAHS President is an ex-officio member. Christine Yeats currently chairs the Committee.

Meetings

11 September, 27 November 2014, 24 March 2015 and 23 June 2015.

Summary report on library activities over the past 12 months

Preservation needs assessment

The RAHS received Cultural Heritage Grant from the National Library to fund a Preservation Needs Assessment on parts of the Foster Collection[i]. The RAHS has submitted an application for a grant for the conservation, re-housing, indexing, digitisation of selected items from the Collection.

Library Collection Development and Management Policy

The Library Collection Development and Management Policy are currently under review and the first draft has been circulated to Committee members for feedback.

Storage of the James Semple Kerr Collection

Following the death of James Semple Kerr in late 2014 the RAHS took custody of books, reports and other material from his collection, which were not required by the National Library. This material is currently being stored offsite.

Beyond the Blue Mountains Grant

The RAHS received a grant from the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and Heritage Council for a project titled Beyond the Blue Mountains. This grant enabled the RAHS to revamp the website. The Library ‘pages’ on the website have been streamlined and rationalised. Selected items from the library collection were digitised for the website as part of the project.

Ask a Librarian

A new service ‘Ask a Librarian’ — an online request form — was introduced with the launch of the revamped RAHS website.

Changes to opening hours

The library is open Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm (except Public Holidays and between Christmas and New Year).

Library Committee planning for 2015/2016

The following tasks/projects are planned:

- Continuing promotion of the library resources through the History magazine, the RAHS website, additions to TROVE and social media.
- The Library Collection Deaccessioning and Disposal Policy (Retention and disposal schedule).
- The ongoing rationalisation of the History House basement storage space.

[i] Josephine Ethel Foster (1870-1955) joined the RAHS with her Arthur George (1861-1924) husband in 1901. They were inaugural members and awarded Fellowship 1924 and 1921 respectively. They bequeathed their collections to the Society, which included over 250 books, 381 glass slides as well as their collection of 35 scrapbooks. The glass slides contain rare photographs of Devonshire Street Cemetery, taken as it was being demolished to make way for Central Station.

Christine Yeats PHA Representative, RAHS Library Committee, 21 August 2015

1.9 Records and Archives Officer Report

Paper records

The PHA NSW&ACT has a filing cabinet in History House, which contains material dating back to the last transfer of archival records to the State Library of NSW (SLNSW). The cabinet is filled to capacity and action is continuing to rationalise the material – culling as appropriate and preparing the remaining material for transfer (see below under action plan).

Digital records

PHA NSW & ACT e-files comprising minutes and agenda were saved to Google Drive, and also on the USB stick.

Action plan 2015

The focus of the 2015 action plan will continue to be the management of the paper-based records stored at History House including:

- finalising the retention and disposal schedule for submission to the PHA (NSW & ACT)

Committee for its endorsement

- applying the schedule to sorting and arranging, describing and listing the records in the filing cabinet in History House, and
- arranging the transfer to the State Library of NSW.

Christine Yeats Records and Archives Officer 24 August 2015

1.10 Continuing Professional Development Program Report

The 2014-2015 Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD) continued to offer a mix of workshops and practical sessions aimed at enhancing members' knowledge and skills in key areas. Over the 12 months we have provided these events in partnership with the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) and Oral History NSW. The PHA (NSW & ACT) acknowledges and thanks the RAHS for its ongoing support, in particular for providing the venue at History House.

In 2014/2015 the PHA (NSW & ACT) held the following CPD events:

- 6 November 2014 an all-day workshop on conducting significance assessments was presented by Dr Roslyn Russell from Canberra, an expert in this area.
- 13 February 2015 Dr Terry Kass presented a workshop on Lands Department records, including Land Title research and other types of land occupation. A feature of this workshop was a visit to the Land and property Information office at Queens Square for some hands on experience with land title research.
- 30 May PHA (NSW & ACT) held a 'Speeding Through History' event in Canberra on Saturday 30 May with delegates attending from Canberra, Wagga Wagga and the Southern Highlands. The format aimed at giving ACT members and locally based historians some insight into the range of projects being undertaken by professional historians in the ACT and the region.
- 11 June the PHA, RAHS and Oral History NSW presented Possibilities and Pitfalls in Oral History: The Interview in Perspective with panelists Catherine Freyne, Alison Clarke, Margo Beasley and Paula Hamilton.

An important follow-up to the sessions has been the blog postings about the event. These postings offer a forum for discussion and comments arising from the workshop/event. They also allow members who were unable to attend the event engage in the discussion.

Members are encouraged to offer suggestions for future CPD events.

Christine Yeats CPD Coordinator, 21 August 2015

1.11 Mitchell Library Consultative Group Report

During the past year the PHA was represented at all five meetings of the Mitchell Library Consultative Group. The so-called 'Revitalisation' of the Mitchell Library Reading Room is now considered complete, including new carpeting and much improved lighting. As a result of strong lobbying by the group, almost all facilities that were available before the debacle in December 2013 have been reinstated. They include return of the ML Printed Books Card Catalogue, return of the Australian Reference Collection from SRL (albeit much reduced), sit-down computer catalogues, and following further lobbying additional microfilm readers with USB facility and

additional staff on the desk.

Unfortunately requests for the return of the microfilms of the Votes and Proceedings of the NSW Legislative Assembly have been unsuccessful. It remains a great concern that more than 90 boxes of the Small Picture File (mainly of place) remain virtually inaccessible; they have not been digitised and there is no date proposed for this to occur. Similarly no information has been available at the last two meetings regarding the survey that was to be undertaken of the significant FM4/- series of microfilms to determine the number affected by the vinegar syndrome.

The loss of expertise caused by the drastic redundancies remains noticeable and lamentable. Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian and chair of the group acknowledged that the group is an important conduit and will continue to meet.

Joy Hughes, PHA NSW & ACT Representative, Mitchell Library Consultative Group, 24 August 2015

1.12 NAA Consultative Forum Report

To be received

Terry Kass, PHA NSW & ACT Representative, August 2015

1.13 History Advisory Panel to NSW Heritage Office Report

As the History Advisory Panel did not meet during this period there is no report. Please see the Chair's report for action taken on this situation.

Patricia Curthoys, PHA NSW & ACT Representative

1.14 Delegate to History Council of NSW Report

In February 2015 the History Council of NSW (HCNSW) elected new councillors. Stephen Gapps (previous alternate delegate) replaced Mark Dunn as the PHA NSW & ACT representative. Stephen was also later elected as an ordinary member of the executive committee. PHA member David Carment is the current President of the HCNSW and there are a number of other PHA members among the general council.

The main business in the first half of 2015 for HCNSW has been securing ongoing funding after changes to the previous model, and coordinating another History Week and associated events. The complex funding application has been submitted and the Council await results. Planning for 2016-2018 is thus somewhat dependent on this, but has been moving on with an interesting series of history week themes being planned. The HCNSW has continued with various history advocacy roles, supporting projects, seminars and prizes, obtaining sponsorship and collaborations.

Stephen Gapps, PHA NSW & ACT representative, History Council of NSW, August 2015

1.15 Community Advisory Committee of State Records NSW Report

To be received.

Michael Bennett, PHA NSW & ACT Representative, Community Advisory Committee SR

1.16 Treasurer's Report

PHA NSW accounts 2014-15

Opening balance at 30 June 2014	\$23,724.86
Income 2014-15	Income
Membership fees 2014	\$10,090.00
Membership fees 2015 (pre 30 June)	\$1,710.00
Continuing Professional Development	\$274.00
Events	\$336.00
Interest	\$45.08
TOTAL INCOME	\$12,455.08
Expenditure 2014-15	Expenditure
Administration (salary & postage)	\$3,301.55
Events (catering, support for speakers, AGM, Special mtgs, CPD, History in July, Xmas)	\$2,279.28
ACPHA Levy (2013-14)	\$2,640.00
ACPHA Levy (2014-15)	\$3,030.00
RAHS Facilities use (2014)	\$1,500.00
Advertising	\$350.00
Web site maintenance	\$2,689.50
Logo redesign	\$270.00
Legal (registration, insurances)	pd July 2015
Memberships	\$250.00
Prizes	\$500.00
Phone	\$89.60 cancelled
PO Box Rental	pd July 2015
Bank Fees	\$13.30
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$16,913.23
Closing balance at 30 June 2015	\$19,266.71
Profit/(Loss)	-\$4,458.15

Carol Liston, Treasurer, 24 August 2015

