

Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc.

Annual Report 2003-4

Objectives of PHA (NSW)

Formed in 1985 PHA (NSW) is a professional association for practising qualified historians. It is a member of the national body the Australian Council of professional Historians Inc. (ACPHA)

The objectives of PHA (NSW) are:

- To set and maintain standards of professional practice
- To ensure observance of the Australian Council of Professional Historians' Associations Inc. *Code of Ethics and Professional Standards for Professional Historians in Australia*
- To pursue common objectives and maintain links with other Australian professional historians' associations through membership of the Australian Council of Professional Historians' Associations Inc.
- To maintain links with other similar organisations
- To promote the concept of professional history and the status of professional historians in the community
- To represent its members in contractual and employment matters
- To inform its members and prospective employers of acceptable standards of employment
- To encourage its members' continuing professional development
- To collect and disseminate information of interest to professional historians

Executive Committee 2003-4

The committee has met 11 times since it was elected in August 2003

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| President | Pauline Curby |
| Vice President | Kate Waters |
| Secretary | Virginia Macleod |
| Treasurer | Rosemary Broomham |
| Member | Margo Beasley |
| Member | Rosemary Kerr |
| Member | Peter Tyler |

President's Report

I begin this report by reminding members what the objectives of the PHA (NSW) are (see previous page) and suggest that in looking back over the year's activities it is useful to have these objectives as a benchmark to evaluate the progress the Association. Has enough been achieved to encourage members' continuing professional development? Is the Association adequately promoting the concept of professional history and the status of professional historians? Are we expending energy on activities that do not reflect the Association's objectives? My conclusion is that while the Association has made some progress we still have a long way to go. In our discussion at the Annual General Meeting we need to consider where our strengths and weaknesses lie so we can reach achievable goals.

Continuing professional development has been a priority this year (see separate report) and a number of successful activities have been organised. There are still many members, however, who have not participated in any of these. It is hoped that a wider range of people will become involved in either organising or participating in activities in the future.

The PHA had input into commissioning histories on several occasions by giving informal advice at the commissioning stage. A number of PHA members volunteered to sit on interview panels and/or to advise potential commissioning bodies and two senior historians now represent the association in this fashion. On one occasion the Association successfully negotiated the amendment of a brief in the interests of the commissioned historian.

Other matters that members should consider are:

- Considerable energy has been expended this year in dealing with matters relating to the *Public History Review* (see separate report). The executive decided that it would not deal with editorial matters but would address administrative details only.
- An increased level of reporting from our representatives on various bodies has been pleasing. These reports appear regularly in *Phanfare* and help keep members informed.
- It should be noted that membership is basically static - two years ago membership was 93 – two more than at present.

This has been a busy year for the PHA (NSW) but a very rewarding one. I would like to thank a cohesive executive for their hard work and support. Many other members of the Association, who have willingly volunteered to help out in a variety of ways, have ensured that the PHA has continued to operate efficiently. Thank you to all those people and to the staff and Council of the RAHS for their generosity and support.

Pauline Curby

Secretary's report

There were 91 members this year (6 graduates, 26 associates and 59 professional), nine members were admitted during the year and we have welcomed three new members since 30 June.

Many inquiries were received by phone, email and letter. Most people either wanted help with small research jobs, or sought to commission a history, or were interested in joining PHA or pursuing a career in history.

With the establishment of premises at History House we have been able to dispense with the services and expense of the Professional Centre who basically forwarded phone calls. PHA (NSW) now has its own phone line at 02 9252 9437. Messages can be left at any time and are cleared regularly.

The PHA (NSW) web site is currently being rebuilt to streamline information and make it look contemporary. It also incorporates the new PHA (NSW) logotype. This has been used too on PHA stationery, which has also been updated to include the new phone number.

I am grateful to Margo Beasley who has acted as Minutes Secretary for most of the year and relieved part of the secretarial load. It has been a pleasure working with the executive team who have all contributed to a good year's work.

Virginia Macleod

Public History Review

Public History Review is published annually for the Professional Historians Association - PHA(NSW) It is a refereed journal. Professional Historians throughout Australia are invited to contribute. The editors welcome submissions of articles and book, film, exhibition, multimedia, heritage and other reviews. Notices of conferences, workshops, exhibitions and other events are also welcome. A copy of the journal style is available on request. All inquiries should be directed to Public History Review, PO Box 219, Leichhardt NSW 2040
Email: Paul.Ashton@uts.edu.au or Paula.Hamilton@uts.edu.au

This year PHA executive has endeavoured to work closely with Halstead Press who produce and distribute the journal. Unfortunately Halstead's database of subscriptions was corrupted and they are rebuilding the list. Currently the journal is distributed directly to about 465 listed recipients. There are about 135 subscriptions for the next volume, which will be released in September.

A 40% reduction in subscription rates has been negotiated for PHA members throughout Australia. There are saving for multiple subscriptions. Back copies are also available for volumes 8, 9 and 10. Contact PHA secretary

No journal has been produced in this financial year so the only payments are for the post box. The committee has decided to reduce expenses by closing the separate bank account which has been incurring fees of \$120 a year.

Virginia Macleod

Volume 11 of *Public History Review* is in press and work has commenced on volume 12. We were successful in gaining a grant for the journal from the NSW Ministry for the Arts in their History and Literature program last year and this year's application is currently being assessed. *Public History Review* continues to be the only journal in the southern hemisphere devoted to public history. The PHA is currently negotiating a new contract with Halstead Press to continue publishing the journal.

Paul Ashton

Continuing professional development

When the executive considered our direction for 2004 earlier this year it was decided to make continuing professional development a priority, and a sub-committee consisting of Pauline Curby, Peter Tyler and Kate Waters took charge of this. It was hoped that a member would take on the task of reviving the reading group that ran successfully in 2003 but this has not happened. A number of activities have been organised over the last 12 months:

Visits to the following repositories:

- State Records NSW at Kingswood
- National Archives of Australia at Chester Hill
- History of Medicine Library at the Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australian Historical Society library
- National Maritime Museum

Workshops

- *Historians: Men and Women at Work* in collaboration with Royal Australian Historical Society during History Week 2003
- Two film documentary workshops
- Writing workshop

The following activities are planned:

- Indexing workshop, 4 September 2004
- Publishing workshop with RAHS, 16 September 2004 during History Week
- Internet use for the historian, 23 October 2004
- Excursion, November - to be announced
- 2005 – writing workshops; giving better presentations - to be announced

Thank you to members who organised these events and it is hoped that those planned in the future will be enthusiastically supported.

Pauline Curby

Phanfare

Phanfare, the newsletter of PHA NSW, has undergone a number of changes during the past financial year. Towards the end of the previous year, transmission became primarily via our website. This year, the teething problems with this system have been ironed out and feedback from members has been positive. Subscribers (that is non-members) still receive a hard copy.

The collectives have been 'rationalised' (for want of a better word) and we now have three collectives replacing the original four. The Central Coast collective (Christine Cheater, Grace Karskens, Tony Prescott), after years of great work, decided that the time had come to retire gracefully. The Inner City collective (Rosemary Broomham, Rosemary Kerr, Christa Ludlow, Terri McCormack) welcomed Anne Smith. The Northern collective (Terry Kass, Carol Liston) added remaining members of the Three Birds collective (Nicole Secomb, Anna Wong) to their numbers plus one new member, Katherine Knight. A completely new collective was formed (still searching for an identifying name) consisting of Roslyn Burge, Mark Dunn, Lisa Murray and Shirley Fitzgerald.

A further change has been in the number of newsletters sent per year. Previously we had eleven, now we have six. This change was desirable, as the email system has now replaced some of the role of *Phanfare* in keeping members up to date with coming events and with employment prospects.

The time has come to reconsider the role of the newsletter. Has the email notification system made it redundant? If so, what should replace it? Pauline Curby has raised the possibility of replacing it with a magazine that could provide an outlet for members to publish articles. At the AGM, all your suggestions will be welcome.

Annette Salt, Co-ordinator

ACPHA report

ACPHA has held one teleconference and one face to face AGM this year in addition to regular weekly email discussion of ongoing issues. At the AGM held in early August of this year Margo Beasley took over as NSW's representative from Kate Waters. ACPHA has dealt with a range of issues including representing professional historians in a variety of public forums; developing by-laws for potential use by all states in relation to accreditation, ethics and appeals issues; clarification of legal issues relating to constitutions and associated by-laws; development of a membership information package; production of a 'commissioning history' brochure; ongoing investigation of insurance options; development of links with other national level bodies in the area of history.

Kate Waters

NAA Consultative Forum – Report

On 15 December 2003, Terry Kass attended his first meeting as the PHA representative to this committee, replacing the former representative, Nicole Secomb. To date, there have been two meetings, both of which he attended. Matters discussed at the forums relate to public access to National Archives of Australia (NAA) and suggestions for better service for users. Information about ASIO records, made available at one of these forums, was of sufficient interest to PHA members that it was subsequently published in *Phanfare*.

At the request of a member, Terry Kass has also raised the issue of the privatisation of the plan collection of the Department of Housing and Construction, which apparently bypassed the normal assessment process for archival sentencing. NAA is still investigating this matter.

A tour of the NSW repository at Chester Hill was arranged for PHA members in Thursday 13 May. This brought together a number of new and old members and enabled them to gain an insight into how the NAA functions. It also allowed them to see what goes on ‘behind the scenes’ at the repository.

In addition, Terry Kass also attended a workshop held on 25 June seeking input from users about proposed changes to the manner in which NAA calculates its charges for copies of documents.

Terry Kass

The History Advisory Panel to the Heritage Council

The History Advisory Panel to the Heritage Council sat four times during the year. The main achievement of the outgoing committee was the preparation of guidelines for assessment of items under Criteria A, significance in the course or pattern of NSW’s natural and cultural history. These guidelines will be published later in the year as part of the Heritage Office’s heritage series. Numerous other issues, including the treatment of ruins, the impact of the removal of coats of arms from government buildings, place names and interpretation principles, came before the committee for discussion. It was, however, the development of the guidelines that constituted the major ongoing and consistent issue under consideration.

Sue Rosen

The PHA Collection - ML SLNSW

A few publications were submitted and forwarded to the Mitchell Library, but more members could have contributed to this opportunity to register their work.

Sue Rosen

State Records NSW – Community Advisory Committee

The PHA continues to be represented on the State Records NSW Community Advisory Committee. Baiba Berzins, after representing the PHA for three years, attended her last Committee meeting in December 2003. Roslyn Burge now represents the PHA. The Committee met in September and December 2003, March and May 2004. Matters dealt with included:

- New records management standards have been issued.
- As part of the Review of State Records Act an Issues Paper was released for comment: the PHA prepared a submission to this first review of the Act.
- A pilot program providing Aboriginal women with training in family history research methodology was delivered at Emu Plains Correctional Centre
- Indigenous Records Information Day was held at Wagga Wagga.
- A new General Retention and Disposal Authority - Public Health Services: Patient/Client records (GDA17) has been issued.
- Writing continues on the administrative history of NSW Government. Dr Hilary Golder wrote the first volume 1788-1900; Dr Peter Tyler will write volume 2 (20th century to 1960). It is anticipated that a third volume will be published after 2006.
- A CD of 1865 Trigonometrical Survey of the City of Sydney was launched.
- Photo Investigator - a searchable database providing on-line access digital images covering the period c.1900-33 is available.
- Probate Packets - all of series 2 have now been added to Archives Investigator.
- Indexing insolvency records 1842-1887 continues and this project is now up to letter 'S'.
- The first series of Company Office packets is already available in Archives Investigator and the second series (c1870-1950s) is waiting on an access direction from the Office of Fair Trading.
- Australian Women's Archives Project (AWAP) - women who were unsuccessful in standing for Parliament will be documented.
- Sydney Harbour Bridge - in preparation for the 75th anniversary in 2007 State Records the focus for arrangement and description work for the next few months will be records relating to the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
- Estrays from Crown St Women's Hospital, including minute books 1880s–1925, matron's reports 1951-1973 and a letter book from 1907 have come to light. Archives in Brief on the hospital will be revised.
- State Records received funding to write a guide to the archives relating to the 1850s and the various celebrations surrounding the proclamation of responsible government in 1856 and the subsequent anniversaries in 1906 (50th) and 1956 (100th).
- Theft of maps from State Records - trials resulted in one accused being found guilty and sentenced to community service). Six maps are still missing.
- The Committee received regular reports about indexes available on-line, publications, State Records' representation on conference/anniversary committees, and regional activities.

Roslyn Burge

Library Report

As members would be aware, the PHA Library consists of items received by either donation or by reciprocal subscription. The majority of items are newsletters and journals from other historical organisations and societies. Because items are received on a voluntary basis, not all series are complete but we do have a representative collection of newsletters from professional historical organisations in Australia.

The main function of the Honorary Librarian is to receive and store library material and to report on items of interest in *Phanfare*, the newsletter of the Professional Historians Association of NSW. This keeps local members informed of interstate activities, events and publications of historical relevance and connects them to other corporate members of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations.

The Library Report appears irregularly in *Phanfare* and depends on incoming material for its compilation. In the year from August 2003 to August 2004, Library Reports have been published in the September 2003, March 2004, and July-August 2004 issues.

For the first time, material received in the PHA Library is about to be made accessible to a wider membership. An arrangement has been made with the Royal Australian Historical Society to incorporate our library with theirs. The major advantage for members is that they will be able to access items more easily. This applies in particular to newsletters received from our fellow professional organisations in other states and New Zealand. These are not available elsewhere in Sydney and current issues often provide useful information about interstate activities - especially for those embarking on research in other States.

Some material will be already be held by the RAHS so decisions will have to be made about how to dispose of duplicate items. Meanwhile, the Library Reports in *Phanfare* will continue to provide information about history-related activities, organisations, and publications around Australia and New Zealand.

Terri McCormack, Honorary Librarian

Ministry for the Arts Report

On behalf of the PHA Margo Beasley and Kate Waters attended a meeting called by the Ministry for the Arts in December 2003. Other attendees included Ministry staff, members of the Ministry's Literature and History Committee and representatives of organisations that receive funding of various kinds under the Ministry's history umbrella. The PHA receives funding from the Ministry for *Public History Review*. The Ministry's purpose in convening the meeting was its desire to see clear outcomes in the community, in terms of skills development and cultural diversity, for the funding it provides. Whilst the Ministry regards the History Council as having the major responsibility for the promotion of history in New South Wales, funding for history organisations in general may come under increasing scrutiny with respect to these issues.

Margo Beasley

History Council of NSW Report

The History Council continues to raise the public profile of history through its publications, public programs and developing partnerships with government and community organizations. Penny Russell was elected as President, with Lisa Murray as Vice-President.

History Week in 11-19 September remains the key calendar event. The theme for 2004 is 'Links in Time' and 'explores connections and continuities'. The festival involves many organizations, including government, academic and community groups, and the program for 2004 has increased substantially from previous years.

The History Council also completed and launched the Children's History Publication at the History Teachers Association in May.

Other events included the Legislative and Regulatory Landscapes Symposium in June. Representing historical researchers and collections managers, the presentations covered such topics as the implications of digitization, the impact of privacy legislation, and the loss of funding to State Records. Funding cuts will have detrimental effects on access to archival records by historians and the public, and the History Council plans to make representations to the State Government of New South Wales on this issue.

The Heritage Council submitted a grant application and business plan to the Ministry for the Arts for the next cycle of triennial funding. Initial feedback has been positive, and we look forward to working with the History Council in the up-coming years.

Anna Wong

Membership

A membership sub-committee was formed for the first time at the beginning of the 2003-4 year and this has assisted in streamlining the assessment process. It is pleasing to report that we have received a steady flow of applications during the year, including two members who have transferred from PHA Queensland and Western Australia. In total, we welcomed eleven new members – nine Professional Members and two Associates. Congratulations and welcome to: Michael Bennett, Anne Dunne, Laila Ellmoos, Bronwyn Hanna, Shawn Hollbach, David Lewis, Barry McGowan, Ron Ringer, Chris Salisbury, Sue Shaw and Mary-Jean Sutton. In addition, Graduate and Associate members were encouraged to apply to upgrade their membership level if their qualifications and experience entitled them to do so; and Lisa Murray and Rosemary Kerr upgraded from Associate to Professional Member level. We hope that our new members will take an active role in the Association and we look forward to meeting you at future events.

Rosemary Kerr, Rosemary Broomham & Kate Waters

Treasurer's report for the Year ended 30 June 2004

At the end of the year 2003-4, I am pleased to report that the financial situation for PHA (NSW) is much healthier than it was at the same time last year. Whereas last year we made a small loss of \$1,284.00, this year we finished with a modest gain of \$2,795.51 and our funds at the end of this year were \$8,608.12, compared with the previous year's \$5,942.51. As a consequence, we have been able to invest \$5,000.00 in a term deposit, replacing the one we had to redeem during 2002-3.

The main reason for this improvement in our fortunes is the reduction of our expenses. The move to achieve this was commenced in 2002-3 and vigorously continued in 2003-4. Cost-cutting measures include:

- returning to a wholly voluntary organisation run by honorary office bearers;
- issuing *Phanfare* as an electronic publication and, from January 2004, reducing the number of issues from eleven to six a year;
- simplifying our accounting by cancelling our registration for the GST; and

This year our greatest outlay has been the two payments to ACPHA – \$1860.00 for 2003-4 and \$1,820.00 for 2004-5 – made necessary by a change in the payment date. We have expended the sum of \$2,011.00 on six professional development events over the last twelve months. The fees paid to attend the workshops being \$1,605.00, the Association has willingly subsidised these events at a cost of \$406.00.

Unfortunately, the NSW Ministry of the Arts Grant was reduced during the past year from \$6,050.00 to \$4,950.00. The current balance of \$12,969.95 in the PHA No 2 Account that supports the *Public History Review* is unrealistically inflated because Halstead Press has not yet presented its invoice for publishing Vol 11 of the journal. As the publishing cost is likely to be at least \$8,000.00, payment of this amount will leave a balance of less than \$5,000.00.

Thanks are due to all the members of the executive committee whose hard work has been responsible for the improvement in our finances, and to Rosemary Kerr in particular, for her work as Assistant Treasurer.

Rosemary Broomham