



# Annual report 2008-9

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## Objectives of Professional Historians Association (NSW)

PHA (NSW) was formed in 1985 as a professional association for practising qualified historians. It is a member of the national body - [Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations 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 2008-2009

President	Virginia Macleod
Vice President	Christine Cheater
Secretary	Ruth Banfield
Treasurer	Peter Tyler
Member	Rosemary Kerr
Member	Susan McClean
Member	Zoe Pollock
Public Officer	Pauline Curby

## **President's report**

PHA (NSW) has had an active year. Our members are involved in the organisation in diverse ways, both benefiting from and contributing to its activities.

We have forged closer links with the State Library who have provided several CPD events and some of our members have had awards and scholarships from the Library Council of NSW and have regular contact with library staff.

At one of the year's highlights, History in July it was a particular pleasure to have member Bridget Griffen-Foley as guest speaker. CPD is a core activity of PHA and this year's report illustrates what we have covered and how members also contribute by leading discussions or sharing expertise.

The changes to the Heritage Act prompted PHA (NSW) to respond, particularly to the potential lack of historian in the process of heritage assessment, thanks to Susan McClean and Pauline Curby who drafted a position paper. Ron Ringer and Ian Willis wrote a submission on behalf of PHA (NSW) for the Review of the National History Curriculum. We have had preliminary discussions with a representative for history teachers in NSW schools about historians developing teaching support material.

Our PHAES bulletin is unfailingly compiled each week by Cathy Dunn. *Phanfare* continues production thanks to three cooperatives, Rosemary Broomham, Rosemary Kerr, Christa Ludlow, Terri McCormack; Roslyn Burg, Mark Dunn, Shirley Fitzgerald and Lisa Murray; Ruth Banfield, Cathy Dunn, Terry Kass, Katherine Knight and Carol Liston. Our website is kept up to date by Christine de Matos.

Roslyn Burge and Terry Kass represent us on committees at government institutions. We have stressed the importance of funding for State Records NSW to manage digital collections. Terri McComack has managed PHA (NSW) library and also represented us on the RAHS library committee. We are grateful to RAHS for accommodating our filing cabinet and more importantly allowing us to use their premises for meetings. We also enjoy a good relationship with the History Council thanks to our representative, the President Mark Dunn and our close communication with the Secretary, Zoe Pollock.

The committee has worked hard this year, dealing with routine business, and also innovative ideas such as the undergraduate history prize. For members we have developed guidelines for agreeing to contracts and managing potential difficulties. We have arranged for our members to be listed on Expert Guide, and taken out a group membership at the NSW Writers Centre. We have streamlined our ability to assist with inquiries about commissioning a history.

We have been in effect a team of eight people as Pauline Curby has been our public officer and continued to support the executive, although not officially on the committee. Ruth Banfield, Christine Cheater, Rosemary Kerr, Susan McClean, Zoe Pollock and Peter Tyler have been congenial and hardworking team members and I thank them for all their efforts.

Sadly Peter, Pauline and Rosemary will not be standing for the committee again and they will be sorely missed. However other members have volunteered to stand for the committee and they will be very welcome as we move ahead in another year.

**Virginia Macleod**

## Secretary's report

This past year has been very successful as far as new initiatives undertaken by our committee. We held a number of CPD workshops. Of particular interest was an outing to the Powerhouse Museum. A curator took us down to the storage area to look at the textile collection. We were amazed at the diversity. We saw costumes from Moulin Rouge that Nicole Kidman wore. We saw a range of quilts. They even had a plant container which was an old tyre made into a swan similar to ones that used to be on Redfern station many years ago.

The committee has met seven times. Due to illness I have missed two meetings and Zoe Pollock one. My job has been made easier this year because Peter Tyler has collected the mail for me. I have also changed our phone message to include my home number, so that if the message is urgent such as in the case of journalists wanting historical information from our members..

## Ruth Banfield

### Continuing Professional Development Report

An eclectic range of professional development activities were organised for members throughout the year. While all these events aimed to further members' professional skills/knowledge, most also included a social networking component which those of us who spend considerable time working in comparative isolation appreciate. In addition to workshops and excursions, our sociable Christmas party on 11 December was a low-key but well-attended function.

History in July was for the fourth consecutive year a resounding success. Members and guests socialised enjoyed the refreshments provided and listened intently to the address by PHA member and Macquarie University Associate Professor Bridget Griffen-Foley speaking on *History in the Media*.

This year we are trialling a new 'history in the pub' format as part of our CPD program. Members meet at the Hero of Waterloo Hotel to enjoy a convivial evening discussing a topical issue. Our first event in April was a great success and will be followed by another in History Week in September when Chris Cheater leads a discussion on the History Week theme 'Crime, Scandal and Corruption'.

Members are urged to support the CPD program organised to enhance your professional standing. Next year a conference, organised in conjunction with PHA New Zealand assisted by PHA member Bruce Baskerville will be held on Norfolk Island. Details of this exciting event will be available soon.

The following CPD events were held during 2008/2009:

September	History Week – harbour cruise to historic Chowder Bay
October	Oral history workshop with City of Sydney oral historian, Margo Beasley
November	Workshop examining NAA sources at Chester Hill
February	State Library workshop on electronic databases
April	Discussion forum at the Hero of Waterloo Hotel - 'When should we celebrate Australia Day?', led by Ron Ringer
May	Powerhouse Museum – an inspection of historic textile crafts with textiles curator
July	History in July, guest speaker Associate Professor Bridget Griffen-Foley
July	Workshop on fellowships, prizes and awards for professional historians

**Chris Cheater, Pauline Curby and Peter Tyler**

## **ACPHA report**

During 2008/9 ACPHA held the AGMA in Sydney, which was attended by delegates from all PHAs, and two teleconferences. At the AGMA it launched an online database where members can use to list their publications especially grey literature, which in some cases forms the bulk of members' work. ACPHA encourages PHA members to add their work to the database and to update it when necessary.

Other ACPHA activities during 2008/9 include:

- A revised Scale of Fees has been placed on the website and will be adjusted to the CPI at regular intervals.
- Policies regarding the portability of PHA membership from one state to another and on the issue of dual membership have been finalised
- Canvassed options for amalgamating PHA websites onto a single server and the financial benefits of such a move
- Continued work on a model contract
- Supported two submissions to the National Curriculum review – from PHA (NSW) and PHA (SA)
- PHA (Qld) was given \$2000 assistance for their Brisbane Conference
- \$2000 will also be offered to PHA (Vic) for their planned journal of public history

## **Christine Cheater ACPHA delegate**

### **Membership and Prizes**

The total membership of the Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc. at 30 June 2009 was 106 members. Professional members constituted 74 of these, Associates 25 and Graduates 7.

The PHA NSW had a successful year 2008-9 having received ten applications for membership, five of them for new membership, four for upgrades of their membership status and one transfer from interstate. Of these, four new full Professional Members and three associate members were admitted. Three applications are still being processed.

The PHA has been keen to promote history as a profession as well as membership of the Association. Over 2008-9 it undertook to encourage, by the establishment of an undergraduate Prize in Public History, students' appreciation both of their study and research in history and of the history profession.

A pilot study was conducted in conjunction with the School of History and Philosophy at UNSW. Dr Grace Karskens was particularly welcoming, offering support during the administrative phase, maintaining the Prize's profile within the school and in circulating the PHA's promotional material. Two delightful essays shared the PHA Public History Prize in 2008 and these have been posted on the PHA Website. It was clear from discussions with the student winners and their families that the Public History Prize was a most successful method of informing students and their families of public history as a career path and the PHA as an organization.

The PHA Management Committee has recently decided to offer a prize at two universities in 2009-10: these are the University of New England, Armidale and UNSW once again.

## **Susan McClean, Memberships and Prizes.**

## **PHA (NSW) web site**

The PHANSW web site continues to develop with new material and documents being added continuously. Recent additions include the PHANSW brochure (home page and Publications), a scale of fees (Scale of Fees), the 2009 'History in July' lecture (Publications) and submissions to government (Publications). Of course, as always, you can also find upcoming PHA professional development workshops (Professional Development) and *Phanfare* (Publications).

There are two parts of the site currently unavailable as they are undergoing review: the What's On and the Links pages. Previously these were linked directly to the ACPHA web site, but they have decided not to continue these on their new site. No decisions have been finalised, but it is likely that What's On will discontinue in its current form (including in *Phanfare*) and we will have a combined Links page – ie: links to related professional history and links to other 'What's On' (eg HHT) and conference sites. Feedback from members is most welcome - email Christine de Matos at [webmanager@phansw.org.au](mailto:webmanager@phansw.org.au).

We are also investigating the use of social networking sites for PHANSW, primarily Facebook, which will complement the website. A social networking presence will create a space for greater online discussion between members, allow for member notifications of upcoming events and announcements, facilitate membership recruitment, and direct internet traffic back to the website (for a good nfp guide to facebook, check: [http://www.amnesty.org.au/wiki/Guide\\_to\\_Facebook/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/wiki/Guide_to_Facebook/)). I would also like to float the idea of having a 'professional historian' blog on the website, which can also be linked to the Facebook page, ie days in the life of a professional historian. Perhaps one of our members, particularly an early career historian, would be interested in this? Or it could be something rotated between members throughout the year rather than one person's responsibility. A blog might help those considering a career in history and are seeking information about what historians actually do. Once again, feedback from members is encouraged.

## **Christine de Matos, website manager**

### **Professional Historian Association Employment Service (PHAES)**

PHAES is emailed to over a hundred members each week. This information is compiled for the benefit of members of Professional Historians Association (NSW) Inc. and is not for distribution to non-members. The weekly collating of positions for the PHAES is completed by PHA member Cathy Dunn using newspapers, websites, subscription mailing lists and other sources. Each PHAES also includes a reminder of jobs/projects that are still open for submission.

Included in the PHAES are government & private positions in addition to history projects including tenders, fellowships and awards covering a vast range of related vacancies/jobs suited to the complex and diverse skills of all our members in NSW and the ACT.

Members, who include exhibition curators, archivist, heritage planners, researchers, writers, teaching, curatorial & conservation assistants, heritage and cultural officers, museum guides, librarians, archaeologist and more, have commented that they appreciate being able to see what is available.

## **Cathy Dunn, PHAES compiler**

## **History Council Report**

The year 2008-2009 has, as ever, been an eventful and rewarding year for the History Council of NSW. 2009 represents the first year of the new bi-annually elected General Council, introduced after a change in the constitution in 2007, to promote more stability on the Council and allow the Council to follow projects and initiatives through.

As in past years the History Council's flagship event was History Week. With 2008's theme of 'The Waters Edge', the Council aimed to pursue a theme for the week that was easily accessible to all members and that spoke about one of the key experience's for Australian's; the role of water. In a year that was beset by drought, the theme elicited a strong response across NSW with close to 180 events organised. The PHA ran a very successful day at the Institute of Marine Science at Chowder Bay. The Annual History Lecture was again held at Government House with 'Elocution Lessons' by Professor Joy Damousi looking at Australian speech and vernacular.

In 2009 the theme for History Week is 'Scandal Crime and Corruption'. By selecting this theme the Council hopes to be able to have a common link throughout the week, wherever you attend an event. This year's theme has proved to be very popular with almost every event listed being linked strongly to the topic. Just about every skeleton in every closet in every town is getting rattled this September.

The History Council also continued its Off the Beaten Track series, with Professor Jill Roe, our then President, travelling to Tumut, Goulburn and Parkes to talk about Miles Franklin, the subject of her recently released biography. The Off The Beaten track series proves to be increasingly popular, taking the historical series to places that are often overlooked on the speaking circuits. Again we are taking the series to the road with this year's speaker, Laila Ellmoos covering our crime theme with her Solitude of Sighs lectures on prisoner's letters and writings about life on the inside. Former gaols and lock-ups at Newcastle, Maitland and Hay are hosting us this year.

The History Council has also increased its advocacy role over the last twelve months. Submissions were made to the review of the NSW Heritage Act and the National Curriculum in regards to History. We were also involved in a campaign to save the Lucy Osborne Nightingale Museum at Sydney Hospital which was threatened with closure and having its collection split up. When the Council held its AGM in the museum in 2008, many thought that would be the last time it was still open. Happily the museum was saved with a last minute reprieve and remains on site where it belongs at Sydney Hospital. The Council is also concerned with the preservation of Digital Archives and has started to have a closer look at the issue. As more and more of our public and company records are created electronically, be they emails or electronic reports, what happens to them afterwards? They represent the historic record of today but seem to be largely being discarded rather than saved for historians of the future. It is a growing issue that we are following.

Finally, the new General Council was elected at the end of 2008 and sat for the first time in early 2009. It was a great honour to be elected President of the History Council at the first General Council meeting. The role is challenging and exciting, and is backed up by a very good Council including Vice President Emeritus Professor David Carment.

We are also very pleased to be able to show off our new web site which after some time fine tuning is now up and running.

The History Council of NSW (HCNSW) continues in its work as the peak body representing and promoting the profile of history in the state.

**Mark Dunn, PHA Representative**

## **History Advisory Panel to NSW Heritage Office Report**

The Panel provided input into key themes for the identification of heritage sites of State Significance for the current nomination programme. For the current nomination period the focal themes are the period of Governor Macquarie, convicts, and the World Wars. Aboriginal heritage is also a parallel focus theme. As part of the programme of identifying potential sites associated with Macquarie, a Workshop for members of the panel, plus knowledgeable invited participants and archaeologists was held late in 2008 to identify sites which had not so far been examined.

The selection of suitable focal themes for the next round of studies has also drawn the attention of the Panel, with considerable attention being devoted to a possible 'Rural' theme. Input into a programme to identify sources of accurate information for items on State Heritage Inventory of State Significance that lack data in key fields has also occupied the Panel.

Dr Olwen Beazley replaced Bruce Baskerville as the Senior Heritage Officer and has begun to attend meetings of the Panel.

### **Terry Kass, PHA Representative**

#### **NAA Consultative Forum**

Members of the Sydney Consultative Forum have raised the issues of opening hours for the Sydney office, particularly on weekends when researchers who are employed during the week wish to use the records. Copying issues have been raised. The Sydney office will be changing its copying from photocopying to digitisation for all copy requests this year. The Sydney office is now able to digitise records requested by researchers from remote locations.

A significant development was the passing of a new Commonwealth Archives Act that strengthens the archival provisions of the Act. The reduction of the closed period for Cabinet records from 30 years to 20 years has meant that a wider range of records will be available sooner. However, in order to prevent Archives staff being overwhelmed by the volume of work the release of cabinet records will be staged. Records for two years will be released every year until the 20-year limit is reached.

The NAA provides lists of record series recently cleared for access to members of the Forum at each meeting. The meetings also provide data about recent NAA exhibitions and outreach activities as well as serving as general forums to provide user input into NAA operations. The recently appointed Director of the Sydney office, Michael Hoy reached retirement age during the year.

### **Terry Kass, PHA Representative**

#### **Community Advisory Committee of State Records NSW Report**

The PHA continues to be represented on the Community Advisory Committee of State Records NSW. Members are also advised when State Records' publications (such as *For the Record*, *Now and Then* and *Vital Signs*) are available on its website and links circulated with PHA email newsletters.

### **Roslyn Burge, PHA representative**



## Treasurer's Report

The attached financial statement shows that PHA New South Wales incurred a deficit of \$2,815 on its activities during the financial year ended 30 June 2009. This compares with a small surplus of \$456 in the previous year. However, the two statements are not directly comparable, because the 2009 accounts do not include membership fees and internet charges paid in advance, and which strictly speaking should be attributed to the 2009-2010 accounts. Furthermore, there has been some re-allocation of items under different headings this year, so it is not possible to make accurate comparisons.

On a purely cash basis, it has been a very successful financial year, with a bank balance of nearly \$19,000 at 30<sup>th</sup> June, over \$4,000 more than on the same date in 2008. This is because \$5,535 in advance membership subscriptions had been collected by that date. At the time of the Annual General Meeting the cash position will be even better, because over \$4,000 in membership subscriptions has been collected since the beginning of July.

The financial situation has been monitored closely by the Management Committee throughout the year. The deficit was anticipated, but was not a cause for concern, because of the generally healthy position that PHA finds itself in at present. The Committee has not hesitated to embark on new initiatives such as the student essay prize awarded at University of New South Wales, the PHAES employment service, and commissioning of PHA members with expertise in a particular field to prepare submissions to governments on the proposed national history curriculum and revisions to heritage legislation.

During 2008-2009, 91% of PHA income came from membership subscriptions, with 7% from events and functions, and the remainder from sundry sources.

Looking at the expenditure under broad categories rather than individual items, we find that members' funds were spent in this way:

Events and functions	25%
Communication	18%
Affiliations	17%
Advocacy	16%
Publicity and promotion	11%
Administration	8%
Awards & donations	<u>5%</u>
	100%

As I shall not be standing for re-election as Treasurer, I wish to pay tribute to the diligence of my colleagues on the Management Committee for their prudent disbursement of the resources entrusted to them. I am confident that the future of PHA is in good hands.

**Peter J. Tyler Honorary Treasurer**