

A graphic logo consisting of a central black circle with several lines radiating outwards to smaller grey circles. One line extends further to a blue circle.

# PHA NSW & ACT

Professional Historians Association

NEW SOUTH WALES AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

## **Annual Report 2016-17**

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## 1. Introduction

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 (PHA) (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.

## **2. Membership of the 32st Committee 2016-17**

Chair	Mark Dunn
Deputy Chair	Nicole Cama
Secretary/Public Officer	Birgit Heilmann
Treasurer	Nicole Cama
Membership Officer	Patricia Curthoys
CPD Officer	Lisa Murray
Member and PH Prize Officer	Minna Muhlen-Schulte
Member and PHAus Delegate	Michelle Richmond
Member PHAus Delegate Alternate	Emma Dortins
Member	Francesca Beddie
Administration Officer	Nathan Esler

### 3. Reports

#### 3.1. Chair's Report

The following report of the activities of the Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT is prepared in accordance with Clause 24 (2) (b) of the Constitution of the Association, being that the business of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will include reports on the activities of the Association during the last preceding financial year.

2016-17 completes my first term as Chair of the Association, and much as 2015-16 did, the year has gone quickly. We have had a quieter year than the previous one, but have addressed a number of internal procedural and administrative issues to make the committee's work smoother and hopefully to improve opportunities for regional members to participate more directly in the Association and the committee.

One of the ways we can and do connect to members across the State, to members of other PHA's and to those interested fellow travellers is through our social media presence. This is an increasingly important tool for organisations to get their message across and to promote the work of its members. Once again the numbers who are connecting to the PHA NSW & ACT through Twitter and Facebook are growing. Our Twitter followers have grown from 626 in 2016 to 745 currently, while our Facebook followers are also up to 145. The Blog too has been attracting increased readership. In 2016-17 we had 26 posts on the blog, the details of which can be seen in the blog report. We encourage members once again to engage where they can with these mediums and use them to promote their work and spread our message further.

Engagement with our events has also been a pleasing outcome for 2016-17. With a flurry of new members joining through the year, it was great to see some of them at the *History in July* event. With around 60 attendees, the function was one of our best attended in a few years. Mark Tedeschi AM QC gave an engaging talk about the process of writing true legal history on some of NSW's most sensational trials, continuing the standard for the Peter Tyler Oration established by previous committees. It was also heartening to see so many established and new members in attendance for the awarding to the 2016 Public History Prize. This prize for emerging and student historians is a very effective technique to advertise the PHA to those younger historians wondering about a future in the industry.

We were happy to see a number of ongoing representation issues resolved in 2016-17. As members would be aware, PHA is represented on a collection of boards, advisory committees and community committees for libraries, archives and government. It has been a challenging environment for a number of these boards as they have been in hiatus, some such as the History Advisory Committee for the Heritage Council, for a number of years. In 2016-17 it was therefore gratifying to see some of these committees reignite, specifically the State Records Community Advisory Committee and the History Advisory Committee, albeit in a slightly different format. The History Advisory Committee has been reconstituted as the Heritage Committee consisting of members from a collection of former heritage Council Committees including history, archaeology, maritime archaeology and building heritage. Organisations are no longer represented per se on this committee, however with two PHA members appointed (Paul Ashton and Patricia Curthoys), the PHA has a voice in this new format. Thank you to those members who represent us across all the committees being David Carment (PHAus Appeals Committee), Judith Godden (PHAus Advice), Christine Yeats (Honorary Librarian), Stephen Gapps (History Council of NSW), Michael Bennett (State Records Community Advisory Committee), Terry Kass (National Archives of Australia Consultative Forum), Christine Yeats (RAHS Archives & Records management Committee), and Joy Hughes (Mitchell Library Consultative group).

As well as our advocacy and our growing social media presence, the Committee has worked hard to streamline processes for the organisation with more processes under review for the upcoming twelve months. We have successfully trialled skype meetings for the committee which allows for those of us who cannot easily attend city meetings to be involved. This AGM is our first where we will also trial it for the broader membership. Opportunities for regional members and our ACT members to now be more active participants in Sydney events is an exciting and important progression. We would be very interested in hearing from any of those members who might be contemplating a position on the committee from 2018. We are also in conversation with the other states about the streamlining of the Jobs and Opportunities bulletin, including clear terms of reference for what should be posted and how jobs are advertised, about clarifying the membership categories across all states and about establishing a national calendar of events so members from different states can see what is going on where, and then attend events if they are in the neighbourhood. All of these initiatives will strengthen the national body and the co-operation of the member states.

As I mentioned in last year's AGM report, there had been some talk of NSW hosting the next National Conference in 2018. The committee has now committed to proceeding with this for a conference to be held in September 2018 to coincide with the History Week celebrations. Details are still to be worked out, but we are excited by the opportunity to show case our Association and the work of our members.

I would like to thank the members of the 32nd committee for 2016-17: Birgit Heilmann, Nicole Carma, Lisa Murray, Michelle Richmond, Francesca Beddie, Minna Muhlen-Shulte and Patricia Curthoys and also Emma Dortins, who served as the alternate for PHAus and as a member of the committee.

Much of the work to keep the committee functioning falls on the shoulders of our Administrative Officer Nathan Esler. We all appreciate that the job is a big one and a vital one to the ongoing success of the Association. Nathan has indicated that it is time to move on from his role with the PHA as of this year. On behalf of the Committee, the membership and myself personally, I would like to thank Nathan for all his work, much above and beyond what was expected, for our committee and for that he was doing for the national body as well. We wish him well on his future path and look forward to seeing him at events in the future.

I would also like to thank all our members. Your attendance at events, response to surveys and call-outs, contribution to the blog, tweets and re-tweets, Facebook likes and general support is invaluable. Thank you.

I look forward to working with the committee for 2017-18 and with all our members in what promises to be another exciting and fulfilling year for the NSW & ACT PHA.

*Mark Dunn, Chair, August 2017*

### **3.2. Secretary and Public Officer's Report**

2016-17 was my first year in the role as Secretary/ Public Officer and my core tasks were to respond to email and phone enquiries, looking after the National Jobs & Opportunities Bulletin and general PHA related administration.

#### **Enquiries**

There has been a regular number of history research related enquiries from the public, which I usually refer to relevant organisations such as local libraries and archives.

We regularly received media and business enquires to be put in contact with PHA members for job opportunities and expert knowledge. The process of the public contacting our members would be much easier, if more members would supply their contact details on their Member's Profile on the website. I was hoping to improve the accessibility (keyword search/ categories of work fields/ expertise) of the Members' list on the website, but didn't find the time to work on it. This is an action item for the upcoming year.

We received a reasonable number of enquiries from prospective employers. Some enquiries were a bit tricky, because companies were reluctant to include their job opportunities in the job bulletin, and looking for a list of names instead. Other job enquiries had a very short deadline or were pro bono work.

A fourth category of correspondence was from PHA members and history related organisations wishing to promote events and services. This content was, when possible, included in the MC Newsletter and published on facebook.

#### **National Job Bulletin**

Nathan Esler, our Administration Officer, has done a terrific job in sourcing job listings from various State and Territory government career sites, sandstone university career sites, major gallery and museum career pages, as well as from Seek.com, Indeed.com.

Combined with job listings directly received from prospective employers and listings occasionally provided by PHA Vic and PHA Queensland Employment Officers, the National Jobs and Opportunities bulletin is very comprehensive and has proven to be of great benefit for all PHA members.

As a direct response of job related enquires and issues, we introduced publication dates and

updated the website content to give clear instructions on how to commission a history and how to submit a job listing. We also included the following statement on the website: 'If you wish to employ an historian, PHA NSW & ACT can include a short advertisement in our employment bulletin for members. This is a fair and professional way of putting you in contact with the right person. Please note, we don't provide a preferred list of members for you to choose from.'

Since making these changes we have noticed that the communication with prospective employers has improved substantially. A task for the upcoming year will be to work on the Terms of Reference for the job bulletin.

### **PHA administration**

At the beginning of the year all PHA NSW & ACT org.au email addresses were phased out and are now replaced with gmail addresses.

*Birgit Heilmann, Secretary and Public Officer, August 2017*

### 3.3. Treasurer's Report

PHA NSW & ACT Income and Expenditure report (1 July 2016-30 June 2017)	
Income	
Membership subscriptions	\$14,178.60
Copyright Agency (CAL)	\$86.06
Employment bulletin	\$2173.00
History Writing workshop ticket sales	\$1275.00
History in July 2016 ticket sales	\$644.85
Christmas Party	\$370.00
Interest	\$0.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,728.50</b>
Expenditure	
Admin	
Administration Officer	\$6042.00
Office expenses (PO Box)	\$279.00
Insurance (Ambro)	\$336.19
PHA Capitation fee	\$3510.00
RAHS rent	\$750.00
Bank fees	\$50.06
External membership subscriptions (RAHS & HCNSW)	\$413.00
PH Aus AGM	\$585.09
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>\$11,965.34</b>
Events	
History Writing Workshop	
Speaker fees and expenses	\$2001.20
History in July 2016	
Catering and drinks	\$1079.87
Speaker fee	\$150.00
Publishers' reimbursement	\$195.97
Certificates/Admin expenses	\$55.87
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>\$1481.71</b>
Christmas Party 2016	
Catering and drinks	\$1209.00
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>\$1209.00</b>
AGM 2016	
Catering and drinks	\$352.45
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>\$352.45</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$17,009.70</b>

## Accounts

The PHA NSW & ACT ended the financial year 2016-17 in a good position, with total profit of \$1,718.80 and the total balance of accounts as at 30 June 2017 being \$19,172.41.

## Membership renewals

The PHA NSW & ACT had a total of **116 members in 2016-17**.

*Nicole Cama, Treasurer, August 2017*

### 3.4. Membership Officer's Report

There has been a steady stream of inquiries about membership throughout the year, including a couple of requests for dual membership by members of other state associations.

Since the last AGM the following members have been admitted:

*1. At the Professional level:*

Bruce Baskerville (by upgrade from Associate level), Tanya Evans, Jodi Frawley, Naomi Parry, Marc Rerceretnam, Iain Stuart, Kimberley Webber and Janis Wilton.

*2. At the Associate level:*

Patrick Wilson and Rebecca Gross

*3. At the Graduate level:*

Michael Lever (by transfer from PHA VIC).

My thanks to the Committee, and particularly to Judith Godden, the immediate past Membership Officer and Nicole Cama, our Treasurer, for their support, assistance and, at times, forbearance during my first year in this role. Thanks also to Nathan Esler, our Administrative Officer and to Cameron Adams, our e-mail/ newsletter subscriptions administrator, for their assistance.

*Patricia Curthoys, Membership Officer, August 2017*

### **3.5. Public History Prize Report**

The 2016 Public History Prize attracted only six submissions. The Prize was open to any students (undergraduate, graduate diploma, master studies) in NSW and ACT whose work engaged with the field and practice of professional and public history.

The submissions were of varying quality and drawn from both undergraduate and masters projects as well as an abridged honours thesis. Topics explored included political and legal implications of the republican referendum in Australia, urban history of Sydney, Muslim culture and case studies of 19<sup>th</sup> century abortion practices.

The judges were the current chair of PHANSW & ACT, Dr Mark Dunn and PHA Executive Committee member and blog editor Francesca Beddie.

It was decided that the award would be presented at History in July instead of at a separate event due to the low number of entries and the lack of availability of nominees. About 50 guests attended History in July on 11 July 2017.

The 2016 Public History Prize was awarded to Alix Biggs for her essay 'Building Mosques, Building Community: Australian Mosque Establishment and the Muslim Migrant, 1967-1990.' The Judges noted that the essay 'offers a nuanced understanding of how Muslim migrants have built their communities, not just in recent times but over many decades.' Alix's essay was part of her Bachelor of Arts undergraduate degree at Sydney University.

The judges also highly commended Daniel McKay as a runner up for his essay - 'Silent Empire: Empire Unity and the First Observance of Two Minute's Silence on Armistice Day, 1919.' This research essay was undertaken as the principal assessment component for the history honours course 'War and Culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century' Semester One 2015 in the School of History at The Australian National University.

#### **Entries: Public History Prize 2016**

Daniel McKay: Under The Crown: Evolving Interpretations Of The Office Of Australian Governor-General As Constitutional Link To The British Empire, 1890-1931.

Alix Biggs: Building Mosques, Building Community: Australian Mosque Establishment and the 'Muslim Migrant', 1967-1990

Phoebe Wilkens: Focusing on the thirty year period of 1880-1910 and using a range of Victorian case studies, discuss the reasons why women performed abortions. When charged, how did these abortionist "murderesses" fare?

Cameron Morrison: Untrustworthy politicians, bourgeois republicans, and chardonnay sipping Sydney-siders: Elitism as a factor in the failure of the 1999 Republican Referendum among rural electorates

Elizabeth Lindsay: An Imperfect Structure: The Building of Circular Quay West 1853- 1855

Girogia Ortolani: Gilgamesh On Campus: The University Of Sydney, Assyrian Heritage And World Culture

The PHA NSW & ACT committee agreed on a few changes for the 2017 Public History Prize including:

- The promotion of the prize in between the academic semesters, and
- The opening of the prize from mid-year to increase the pool of entries.

*Minna Muhlen-Schulte, Public History Prize Officer, August 2017*

### **3.6. Continuing Professional Development Program Report**

The Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT) Continuing Professional Development Program (CPD) aims to provide sessions that will enhance members' knowledge and skills in key areas.

It has been a quiet year for events this year, partly due to lack of member interest and partly due to the coordinator's over-commitments.

A *Writing History Masterclass* with Mark Treddinick was held on Saturday 23 July 2017, 10am to 4pm. Mark Tredinnick, winner of the Montreal Poetry Prize (2011) and the Cardiff Poetry

Prize (2012), is the author of 'The Blue Plateau', 'Fire Diary', and nine other acclaimed works of poetry and prose. Dr Tredinnick talks and teaches widely on writing, landscape, justice and ecology. For over a decade he has run writing programs at the University of Sydney and at writers' centres in Australia and the United States. He teaches grammar and composition, and he consults, on writing matters, with clients in business and government. About a dozen members and students from Macquarie University attended the workshop.

The Christmas Party in December 2016 at History House was well attended. Members were asked to pay a small fee of \$10 to partially cover catering costs.

The PHA NSW & ACT participated in the *How to Get a Job in History* panel on 31 January 2017, with the Chair Mark Dunn formally representing the organisation. Organised by the History Council of NSW, and supported by Macquarie University's PACE Program, the panel session was a sell-out and several PHA members were in attendance, both learning and sharing their experiences as part of the Q&A session at the end of the panel discussion.

The Public History Prize and lightning paper evening planned for April 2017 was cancelled due to a lack of bookings by members and the unavailability of the winner of the Public History Prize. The Public History Prize was subsequently announced at the History in July event.

Our annual event History in July was once again a successful gathering, bringing members together with history and heritage industry colleagues to network, keep up with the latest work in the field and catch up over a glass of wine and a light meal. Crown prosecutor, author and photographer Mark Tedeschi AM, QC delivered the annual Peter Tyler Oration. Mark talked about his three true-crime books, which have been published by Simon & Schuster Australia. They are: 'Eugenia: a true story of adversity, tragedy, crime and courage', published in 2012; 'Kidnapped: the crime that shocked the nation' published in 2015; and 'Murder at Myall Creek: the trial that defined a nation'. He talked about the process of approaching historical crimes from a legal point of view, the writing process and his motivation in choosing his subjects. This was a sell-out event; with members paying a small fee of \$10 to assist with catering. The Public History Prize was also awarded. Please see separate report on this.

A few events are currently being investigated and negotiated:

- State Records NSW workshop on their new catalogue and search strategies – to be held in the City
- State Library of NSW workshop on their new catalogue
- photographer for professional headshots
- PHA Conference in late August / early September 2018

The Executive Committee always welcomes ideas from members about what skills they wish to develop or event opportunities. You can contact the CPD events coordinator at [phanswevents@gmail.com](mailto:phanswevents@gmail.com)

The PHA (NSW & ACT) acknowledges and thanks the RAHS for its ongoing support, in particular for providing the venue at History House for a nominal rent. It is a convivial space for our events. Due to planned renovations in the forthcoming months, the Executive Committee will be investigating other appropriate spaces to hold our events.

*Lisa Murray, CPD Events coordinator, August 2017*

### **3.7. Website and Blog Report**

#### **Blog report**

In the 2016/17 financial year, 26 posts were published on the PHA NSW & ACT blog.

In May 2017, members were asked to respond to a survey about the blog. The survey was live for 56 days. It attracted 17 responses, a response rate of about 13 per cent. As an internal survey of a membership group this is a very poor response. The answers to the questions from the 12 people who said they read the blog were mainly positive but this is a biased sample. Overall, the survey pointed to low engagement among the membership with the blog.

On the other hand, available web statistics suggest that the blog does attract an audience. In terms of visits, the top ten posts in 2017 (January to June) were:

Sacrifice-Rayner-Hoff-and-Anzac-day/ (D.Beck, 2017)	1,773
Droughts-and-flooding-rains/ (C. Yeats, 2014)	1,535
Access-to-records-user-expectations-in-the-digital-age/ (C. Yeats, 2016)	1,177
Knitting-as-an-historical-and-activist-source/ (S. Castrique, 2017)	861
Sydney's Royal Botanic-Gardens-an-historical-source/ (I. Willis, 2017)	849
Blainey-on-history-making/ (F. Beddie, 2016)	644
Five-minutes-with-Rebecca-Gross/ (R. Gross, 2017)	576
Public-service-the-role-of-history-and-historians-in-government... (R. Kerr, 2013)	569
Crown-Street-four-history-lessons/ (J. Godden, 2017)	560
Private-lives-public-history/ (A. Clark, 2016)	543

Gathering web statistics about the blog is not straightforward in the current configuration of the Word Press site. It is not therefore possible to say whether members were among the readers of the blog, although this is a reasonable assumption. The lack of commentary on the posts suggests people prefer to use the blog as a source of information rather than a platform for interaction and discussion about the subjects and issues raised.

*Francesca Beddie, Blog Manager, August 2017*

### Website report

The website continues to grow in traffic, and has in fact improved considerably on the year 2016. Last year's numbers seemed to be down, especially compared to 2015. However, the number of unique visitors has bounced back, some months achieving more than double the traffic compared to the same time last year. As a comparison, March 2015 had 6102 visitors, March 2016 had 2983, and March 2017 had 7694. A great comeback!

So, who was the average imaginary visitor in 2017? They were based in China, and accessed the site using a Windows machine and Internet Explorer on perhaps a Thursday or Friday morning. This visitor found the site via Google, stayed for around 30 seconds, and downloaded a copy Bethan Donnelly's 2008 essay 'Villawood Migrant Hostel', or dropped by the blog to read 'Sacrifice: Rayner Hoff and Anzac Day' by Deborah Beck.

The statistics and graphs for 2017 have been produced with Awstats, which automatically filters out robots and similar unwanted visitors.

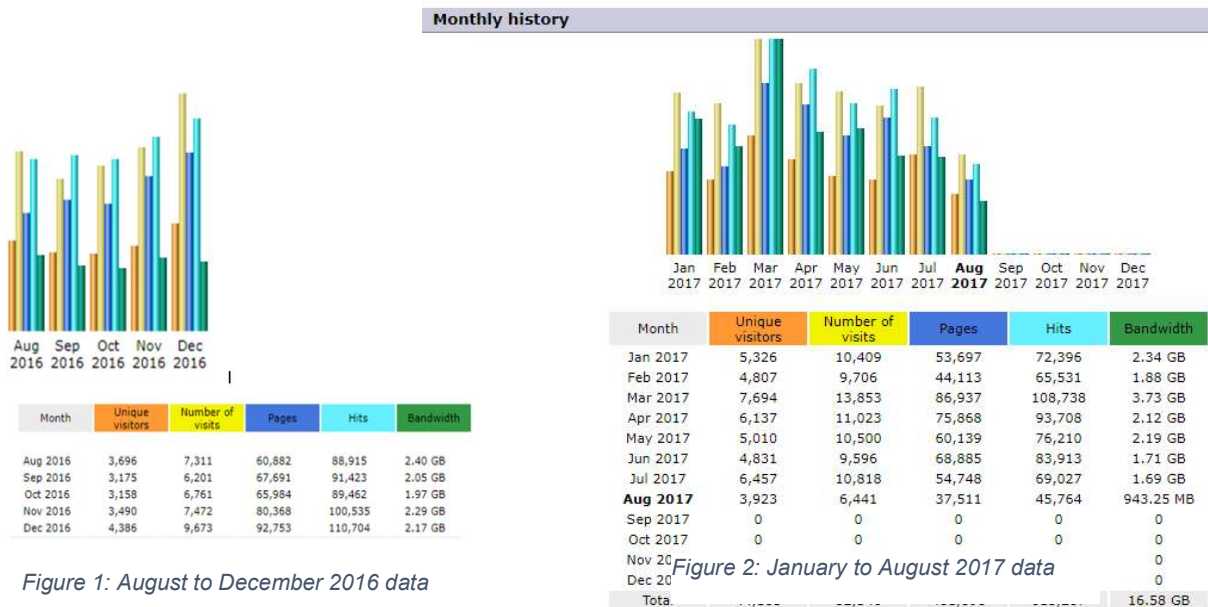


Figure 1: August to December 2016 data

Figure 2: January to August 2017 data

Awstats only produces graphs and data from January to December in a given year, and while I will concentrate on 2017 thus far in the discussion below (and see **Figure 2** above), I have collated some data from the end of 2016 for those interested (see **Figure 1** above). The two most important statistics to look at in the above graphs 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.

What can be seen from the above is that no month in 2017 has had less than 4000 visitors (as we are not through August yet we can still expect this month to conform to that trend). March was the month with the highest site traffic, closely followed by July. It could be an interesting exercise to investigate whether site traffic rises at particular times due to specific reasons – maybe the publication of a an individual blog, or an external historical marker like Anzac Day (high traffic in March and April), or increased visibility of the PHA at an event, like the AHA conference in July (6457 visitors that month).

The blog continues to be the star of the site. Some of the standouts, aside from the previously mentioned ‘Sacrifice: Rayner Hoff and Anzac Day’ by Deborah Beck, include: ‘Droughts and flooding rains’ (Christine Yeats); ‘Access to records: user expectations in the digital age’ (Christine Yeats); ‘Sydney’s Royal Botanic Gardens: an historical source’ (Ian Willis); ‘Knitting as an historical – and activist – source’ (Sue Castrique); ‘Blainey on history making’ (Francesca Beddie); ‘Public Service: the role of history and historians in government’ (Rosemary Kerr); ‘Crown Street: Four history lessons’ (Judith Godden); and ‘Five minutes with...Rebecca Gross’.

In terms of downloads, the Public History prize winner documents remain the most popular, along with some old issues of *Phanfare*, especially, it seems, the Sept/Oct 2009 issue (subtitled ‘History and Planning in New South Wales’). Others include PHA talk transcripts, with Ann Curthoys’ ‘History in the Howard Era’ (2006) continuing to rate highly. Practical documents for members, like the Recommended Fees, Membership Renewal forms and Membership Application forms, come in at 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> respectively on the downloads list (hits ranging from 60 for fees down to 30 for applications).

Since March was the busiest month of 2017, let’s break it down a bit further.

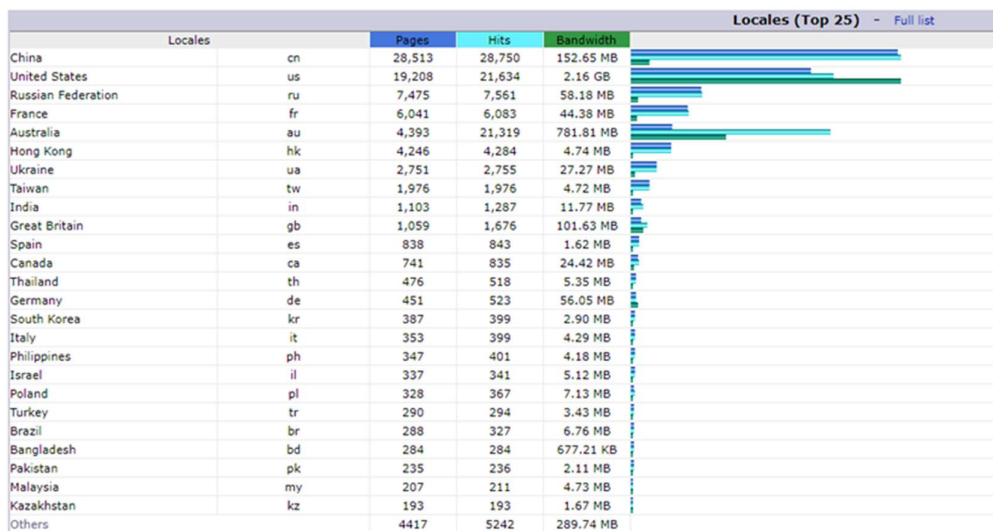


Figure 3: Origin of visitors to the site, March 2017 (top 25 only)

**Figure 3** above shows the top 25 country of origin statistics for March (and no doubt the origins of some of the spam). While there is some variation from month to month, the top visitors usually come from a combination of China, the United States, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, although Australia is consistently high and *usually* has the largest bandwidth usage (which suggests higher downloads and/or accessing pages with more images). Further March statistics are in the figures below.

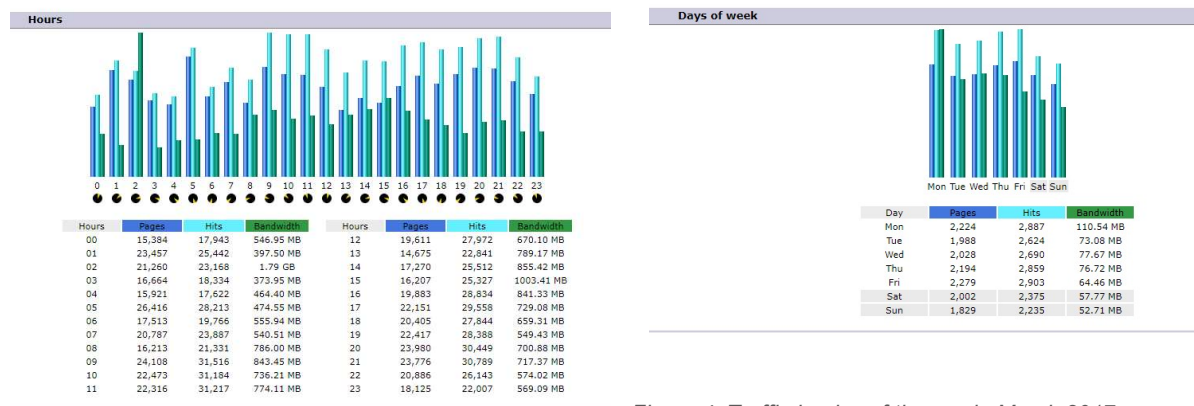


Figure 4: Traffic by day of the week, March 2017

Figure 5: Traffic by the hour, March 2017

Over the course of 2017, most visitors used a search engine to find the PHA NSW & ACT website via Google or Microsoft Bing, and while 'pha nsw' is found amongst the key search terms, out of the top 20 search phrases of this year, half are particular member names. Top external referring sites (ie not search engines) include those of Professional Historians Australia, Australian Historical Association and Facebook.

So in all, 2017 has been a pretty good year for site traffic on and usage of [www.phansw.org.au](http://www.phansw.org.au), and that trend looks set to continue for the rest of this year.

*Christine De Matos, Website Manager, August 2017*

### 3.8. Social Media Report

Please see Chair's Report

### **3.9. PHA (Professional Historians Australia) Report**

During 2016-17 Professional Historians Australia held four general meetings, including the August 2017 AGM and major face-to-face meeting in Adelaide, hosted by PHA (SA). There was no national conference in 2017 but in September 2018 PHA (NSW & ACT) have agreed to host the two-day national conference in Sydney.

At the membership census date of 1 May 2017, the total number of PHA members was 502, an increase of 31 (6.5%) nationally over last year's total of 471. The size of the PHAs ranged from PHA (Vic including Tas) the largest at 200, to 13 in the Northern Territory.

Professional Historians Australia produces two publications. The e-bulletin, *Historia*, which focuses on news and events of interest to PHA members and stakeholder groups around Australia is sent out on a quarterly basis – in March, June, September and December. Sonia Jennings has stepped in as editor of *Historia* following Pailine Curby's retirement. Sonia has since edited three editions of *Historia* and also liaised with Lisa Mayo to oversee a refreshed design for the newsletter. PHA's journal *Circa* has not been published in this financial year but will be published either in the early months of 2018 or held off until the national conference in Sydney in September 2018.

The redeveloped national website is nearing completion and with this Professional Historians Australia is moving towards a more centralized Professional Development Program and Public Relations Program for our organization. We are aiming at having a national events calendar on the website and also a place to share good new stories from all states and territories.

Professional Historians Australia have been re-examining membership criteria to take into account the changing nature of degrees being that many are not strictly history only based. The National Standard for the Accreditation of Professional Historians in Australia Preamble has been adjusted to reflect this. Professional Historians Australia also standardized the names of the categories for membership to Professional, Associate, Graduate and Professional retired.

The national employment bulletin continues to be subsidized by Professional Historians Australia. Overall it has been very well received.

It was decided at the AGM in August 2017 that the capitation fee for each state needed to be raised by \$5 to cover the cost of annual expenses.

Professional Historians Australia has seen limited change of positions. Jill Barnard (Vic) remains the President, Alan Davis (NT) is Vice-President and Website Manager, Sue Graham-Taylor (WA) is secretary, Carmel Black (Qld) is treasurer and Michelle Richmond (NSW & ACT) is Accreditation Secretary.

*Michelle Richmond, PHA (NSW & ACT) Delegate, August 2017*

### **3.10. PHA NSW &ACT Representative on RAHS Library Committee Report**

#### **Purpose of the RAHS Library Committee**

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.

#### **Membership**

The current Committee membership is a mix of RAHS Councillors (Christine Yeats and Phillip Black) and RAHS staff (Suzanne Holohan and RAHS librarian Donna Newton), RAHS library users (Ian Jack), subject experts (Julia Horne) and the PHA representative (Christine Yeats). The RAHS President is an ex-officio member. Christine Yeats currently chairs the Committee.

#### **Meetings**

14 February 2017. The meeting scheduled for 12 May 2017 did not go ahead.

#### **Summary report on library activities over the past 12 months**

##### **RAHS Library catalogue**

Investigations are underway on how best to manage the migration of the RAHS library catalogue from Filemaker to another platform, compatible for harvesting by Trove. A range of

“off the shelf” products are being considered. At present the RAHS library holdings are available on Trove (Books Zone) but this is dependent on Donna Newton uploading the additions through the Libraries Australia portal.

### **RAHS Serials Collection**

The project to list the serials (journals and newsletters) in the RAHS library collection on an Excel Spreadsheet has been completed. This is the first time the list has been available in a digital format. It is hoped to make the information available online as part of a project to trial the e-hive software.

### **Storage of the James Semple Kerr Collection**

This material continues to be stored offsite.

### **History House Building project**

Preparation and planning associated with the History House Building project, including closing off access to the Library and archives collection, are underway. It is hoped that the library will only be closed for a short time.

### **Library Committee planning for 2017/2018**

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.
- Implementation of the Library Collection De-accessioning and Disposal Policy (Retention and disposal schedule).
- Ongoing rationalisation of the History House basement storage space.

*Christine Yeats, PHA Representative on the RAHS Library Committee, August 2017*

### **3.11. Records and Archives Officer Report**

#### **Paper records**

The PHA NSW&ACT filing cabinet is still housed at History House. This will have to be temporarily relocated while the History House building project is underway. It contains paper-based records required for current administrative purposes. The boxes of records identified permanent retention are waiting to be transferred to the SLNSW.

#### **Digital records**

PHA NSW & ACT e-files comprising minutes and agenda are being saved to Google Drive.

#### **Action plan 2017-2018**

The focus of the 2016-2017 action plan will continue to be the ongoing management of the paper-based records stored at History House.

*Christine Yeats, Records and Archives Officer, August 2017*

### **3.12. Mitchell Library Consultative Group Report**

During the past year the PHA was represented at all four meetings of the Mitchell Library Consultative Group. More than twelve months down the track, SLNSW staff are keenly aware and apologetic that the Library's catalogues are still plagued with a range of problems, especially the new manuscripts and pictures catalogue where many pictures (images, contents lists and thumbnail sketches) dropped out during migration from the old catalogue necessitating an ongoing lengthy process to identify the missing items. And new glitches are occurring, for instance, instructions for book delivery to the Special Collections Area suddenly disappeared into the ether and a search party is still looking for it. And the digitized subdivision plans due for migration back in February 2016 are still in exile.

On a positive note the library's digitisation contribution to Trove has included many important sources such as the NSW Government Gazette, Building (magazine), Tribune and numerous metropolitan and rural newspapers. Transcription of the Banks Papers is proceeding with crowd transcribing through the library's Amplify app. Planning for the Cook 250th

commemorations has commenced. And digitization of the David Scott Mitchell collection of printed books is proceeding and will ultimately have a keyword search function.

No tenders were considered acceptable for the digitisation of several thousand AJCP and M series microfilms affected by vinegar syndrome, and as a partial solution, the library is acquiring Adam Matthews eresource, Frontier Life: Borderlands, Settlement and Colonial Encounters which has the main Colonial Office series, CO 201/. Refilming of the microfilms of Mitchell Library's significant FM4/- series is proceeding.

Heritage concerns and Council requirements have delayed the internal buildings works and the new external disabled access to the Mitchell Library wing, however internal work (and consequent loud drilling) is about to commence.

*Joy Hughes, PHA NSW & Act Representative, Mitchell Library Consultative Group August 2017*

### **3.13. NAA Consultative Forum Report**

Terry Kass represents the PHA on this Forum. The Sydney office of the National Archives of Australia is based at Chester Hill. The NAA provides lists of record series recently cleared for access to members of the Forum at each meeting. The meetings also provide information about recent NAA exhibitions and outreach activities as well as serving as general forums to provide user input into NAA operations. The Forum met three times in this period.

Construction of a new preservation and record storage facility near Canberra was completed by 1 July 2017. Archive services in Canberra have now returned to normal.

Last year, National Archives of Australia staff tested an enhanced search facility that would enable researchers to locate records on its online catalogue in a more sophisticated manner. However, the release of this has been postponed.

Opening hours of the Sydney search room remain at 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Wednesday to Friday. The opening of the search room for researchers on Saturdays has been suspended since demand was too meagre to warrant continuation of that service. Pro-active digitisation of records continues, mainly for heavily used series. The series involved include the Post Office files (SP32/1) when staff capacity is available. The National Archives of Australia takes

a leading role encouraging the preservation of digital records created by Federal government agencies.

*Terry Kass, PHA & ACT Representative, August 2017*

### **3.14. Delegate to History Council of NSW Report**

In March 2017, the History Council of NSW (HCNSW) elected new General Councilors. PHA NSW & ACT Representative Stephen Gapps was also later elected a member of the Executive Committee. The committee and council members can be found here;

<http://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/general-council/>

The Council's Annual Report for 2016 can be found here;

<http://historycouncilnsw.org.au/about/>

HCNSW is fortunate to have excellent support in Executive Officer Nicole Cama and Administrative Assistant Amy Way.

In 2016-17 the HCNSW continued to develop its signature event History Week, secure ongoing funding, monitor history issues in the community and explore new ways of engaging with the public. The HCNSW website and social media continues to develop and thrive and is a prominent presence in the history sector.

Much of the work of the council can be found on the website. Programs and Events can be found here. Some highlights were the ongoing speaker connect program, an employability seminar and writers festival workshops. An 'Employability' seminar in January was a great success, with significant involvement from PHA members. Several Speaker Connect talks through the year also included PHA members.

There were no specific issues relevant to PHA members that arose through the year. The HCNSW council and executive have several PHA members.

One important ongoing development HCNSW is involved in is a 'relevance of history' project. At the AHA conference in Newcastle a roundtable of Australian History Councils agreed to

work on a 'relevance of history' statement or similar, based on the US model;  
<https://www.historyrelevance.com/value-history-statement>

It will be important to see the role of professional historians highlighted in this public history initiative.

*Stephen Gapps, PHA NSW & ACT Representative, History Council of NSW, August 2017*

### **3.15. State Archives Community Advisory Committee**

The State Archives Community Advisory Committee (renamed the State Archives Advisory Group) recommenced in April 2017 after a hiatus of 18 months. The new terms of reference for the group are more defined than was previously the case – the group now has a specific role about providing feedback and advice for existing and planned access services. The Executive Director, Geoff Hinchcliffe, advised the group that a new name for State Records was adopted in October 2016. The organisation is now known as State Archives and Records Authority of NSW (SARANSW). Geoff Hinchcliffe also advised that SARANSW is pursuing as a priority a community engagement and cultural centre in Western Sydney. There will also be a continued focus on the development of digital records. The webinar program, only recently commenced, will be expanded. Penny Stannard also outlined a 4-year exhibitions program for SARANSW. Each exhibition will have three components: on-site, on-line and regional tours. The first exhibition of the program, based on gaol photographs, is due to be launched in September. The next meeting of the advisory group is set for September 2017.

*Michael Bennett, PHA NSW & ACT Representative, Community Advisory Committee SR14  
August 2017*