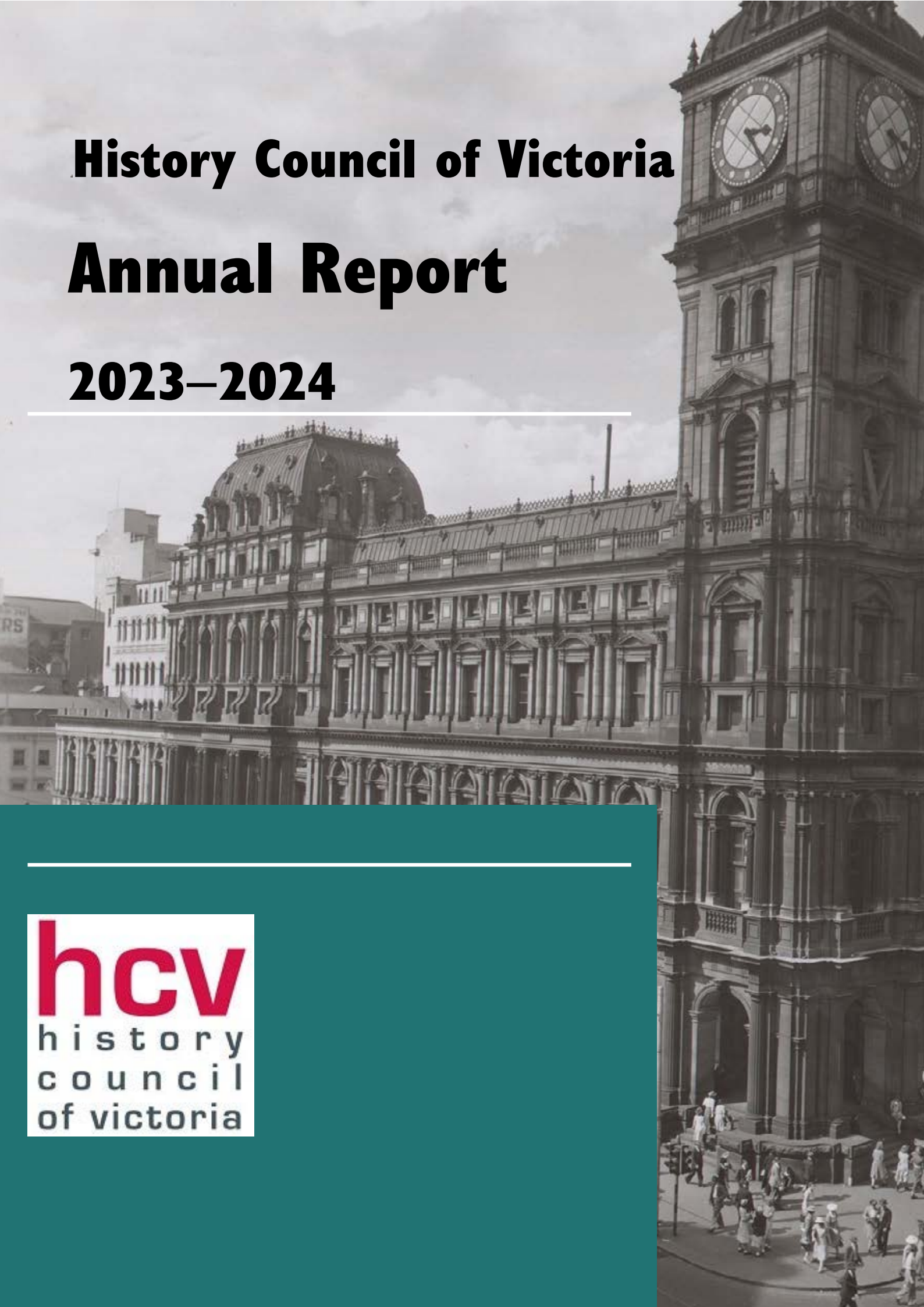




History Council of Victoria

Annual Report

2023–2024



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From the Chair



The year 2023–2024 has been a challenging year for lovers of history in Australia, including the History Council of Victoria. While public debate about the place and consequences of history in Australian life remains as lively and divisive as ever, the HCV has faced particular challenges, in particular financial.

There have been major public issues around many matters concerning the place of the study of history in our country, including the safety and funding of major research collections, the funding of humanities programs in universities and the historical bases of inequalities in Australian life, especially for Indigenous Australians.

The HCV has involved itself in all of these issues. Among our initiatives in advocating the importance of historical awareness and the resources necessary to sustain that have been:

- direct involvement with Federation University on a restructuring of its Bachelor of Arts course
- letters to the press concerning Indigenous education in schools and the Jobs Ready Graduate funding model
- representations concerning the preservation of Alfred Deakin home “Ballara”, Point Lonsdale
- representations concerning amendments to secure the continued functioning of the Public Records Advisory Committee
- representations to the review of the Victorian Heritage Register
- representations concerning the position of City Historian in the City’s heritage strategy review.

We have continued to highlight the value of an education in history and the centrality of historical literacy to the quality of our public life.

These core principles are elaborated in our Value of History statement:

https://www.historycouncilvic.org.au/value_of_history

We share these values with closely aligned bodies such as the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the History Teachers’ Association of Victoria.

The HCV has had a successful year in terms of delivering its four major public activities:

- the Annual Lecture in October 2023, superbly presented by Professor Susie Protschky of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and a former Board member of the HCV
- the Making Public Histories series, delivered in conjunction with the Monash University History Program and the Old Treasury Building, and expertly managed by Professor Al Thompson (Monash University) and then by Margie Anderson (Old Treasury) and now in its seventeenth year
- the Book+Author series for Friends of the HCV, which in 2024 was opened to other supporters of the HCV and moved to an in-person location at the Wheeler Centre at the State Library, brilliantly curated by Yves Rees (La Trobe University), a Board member of the HCV
- the online delivery of our annual History Roadshow, funded by the Department of Education & Training for VCE students in regional schools, which was again a great success in September 2023, with online video presentations from prominent academics available to a higher number of students and schools, and an in-person event was held at Federation University Ballarat on 27 August.

I am very grateful to the Board, our Executive Officer and others who sustain our important work with our Friends, schools and the wider community. We have a Board of talented individuals drawn from cultural and educational institutions and heritage bodies; history teachers; academic and professional historians; and other

organisations. These are all busy people whose commitment to the place of history in our society nevertheless motivates them to organise, participate in and support our activities.

For nearly twenty years the HCV has received funding from the Department of Education & Training for its History Roadshow program which, in various guises, has been offered to regional VCE students since the 1970s. In September 2023 we were notified that our application for further funding From the Department had been unsuccessful, despite the great success with which we had transferred the Roadshow program to online delivery in 2020-23. Fortunately we have been able to secure philanthropic funding, albeit on a short-term basis. (See “Sources of Support” below.)

We seek to supplement this philanthropic income through Friends membership fees and donations and modest charges for some events. Despite this small funding base, the History Council is able to sustain a wide range of activities. For this we are indeed fortunate to have the creative talents and management skills of our Executive Officers, Alicia Cerreto and now Stephanie Holt, who continue to oversee and produce events of high quality. Their predecessor Margaret Birtley has continued to offer most generous administrative assistance in the financial area. A special grant from the Hansen Little Foundation has enabled us to employ the skills of a part-time Publicity Officer, Molly McKew.

Finally, we are grateful for the generosity of people who care passionately about the place of historical literacy in our society. This has enabled us to undertake an update of our website, and has funded two prizes:

- The Jane Hansen Prize for Advocacy (first awarded in 2021)
- The Lynette Russell Prize for First Peoples’ History in Schools (first awarded in 2023)

Emeritus Professor Peter McPhee AM, Chair

Board Membership

The HCV was formed as an advisory body in 2001 and incorporated in 2003. It comprises representatives from cultural and educational institutions and heritage bodies; history teachers and curriculum advisors; academic and professional historians; and local, community and specialist history organisations.

In 2023–2024 the Board farewelled several members: our Deputy Chair David Lowe (Deakin University), Penny Addison (Department of Education and Training), Ashley Robertson (Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria), Tim Hogan (State Library of Victoria) and Associate Professor Susie Protschky, an individual member.

We were very pleased to welcome Carolyn Holbrook to replace David; Anna Welch to replace Tim; Jackie Fraser to replace Ashley; and Nell Musgrove from the Australian Catholic University and Julie Fedor from the University of Melbourne. We also welcomed Jen Rose to represent Oral History Victoria.

Representatives of organisations specified by the Act of Incorporation

Organisation	Name
Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Michelle Rayner
Heritage Council of Victoria	Helen Doyle
History Teachers Association of Victoria	Bronwyn Cook
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)	Annette Shiell
Australian Museums and Galleries Association (Victoria)	Jackie Fraser
Museums Victoria	Deb Tout-Smith
Oral History Victoria	Jen Rose
Professional Historians Association (Victoria and Tasmania)	Katherine Sheedy
Public Record Office Victoria	Tara Oldfield
Royal Historical Society of Victoria	Judith Smart
State Library Victoria	Anna Welch

Representatives of other organisations

Organisation	Name
Monash University	Nathalie Nguyen
La Trobe University	Yves Rees
Old Treasury Building	Margaret Anderson
Australian Catholic University	Nell Musgrove

Individuals

Name
Graeme Davison
Peter McPhee
Julie Fedor
Carolyn Holbrook

Governance and board activities

During this year, all meetings of the members, the Board and its committees were conducted by video conference. The members met in 2023 on 17 August and 19 October and in 2024 on 22 February, 11 April and 20 June.

Board positions as at 30 June 2024 were held by Peter McPhee (Chair), Tara Oldfield (Deputy Chair) and Katherine Sheedy (Honorary Treasurer).

These people served on the HCV's Executive committee alongside Bronwyn Cook and Graeme Davison. The Executive committee provides guidance on governance, strategic planning, financial planning and management, and risk management. The Executive Committee is used as an expert sounding board and only has formal meetings if needed.

Other Board members serve in small teams to advise on key areas of HCV activity: Public Fund, Communications, Development (including the Friends program and the management of awards and prizes), Events and History Education (including the History Roadshow program). Additional experts are appointed to assist where appropriate.

The HCV acknowledges the invaluable support and input of the Board, its committees and the Executive Officer.

Each year the Board establishes judging panels to assess entries for the Jane Hansen Prize for History Advocacy, the Lynette Russell Prize for First Peoples' History in Schools and the Historical

Fiction Competition organised by the History Teachers' Association of Victoria.

The Making Public Histories series is organised by a partnership between HCV, Monash University and Old Treasury Building. Board members on the partnership committee included Associate Professor Susie Protschky, Professor Nathalie Nguyen representing Monash and Margaret Anderson representing Old Treasury Building, with Executive Officer Stephanie Holt.

Collaboration with other History Councils

The HCV collaborates with the History Councils in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia on advocating for the discipline of history, the work of historians, and history in the broader public sphere and highlighting the Value of History Statement.

Public Fund Committee

To meet its obligations through the Register of Cultural Organisations and as a Deductible Gift Recipient, the HCV has a Public Fund Committee comprising Boyce Pizzey OAM, Dr Charles Fahey and Dr Geoffrey Robinson.

Sources of Support

The Department of Education and Training has funded the History Roadshow for VCE history students since 2006 through its Strategic Partnerships Program. The triennial funding for 2018-2020 was extended to cover a fourth calendar year in 2021 and we were successful in our submission for funding across 2022-2023. However, in September 2023 we were informed that our application for a new tranche of funding had been unsuccessful.

Fortunately, we have been able to secure \$5000 from the Hugh Williamson Foundation towards a regional History Roadshow event in 2024, supplementing the \$10,000 already received from the Vera Moore Foundation towards that event. We also received funding of \$30,000 over 2 years from Hansen Little Foundation to be used to fund a 0.2 Communications Officer position with primary responsibility for newsletter and social media (Molly McKew has been appointed to this position). Added to this was a further \$5000 for the Jane Hansen Award and \$5000 for unspecified project use. We are deeply grateful to these foundations, although we will need to continue to seek other sources for longer-term funding.

The HCV enjoys generous in-kind support from the employers of its members and from many of the organisations represented on its Board.

Monash University, Old Treasury Building and the HCV collaborated effectively to plan and deliver the Making Public Histories series. Monash University Publishing generously supplied books as gifts for the speakers at each seminar.



The HCV acknowledges the many historians who contributed their time and specialist knowledge to the HCV's programs, including the History Roadshow, the Making Public Histories seminars and the Annual Lecture. Appreciation is extended to all speakers, many of whom gave their services pro bono.

Thanks are also extended to all the HCV's supporters and contributors for their good will and assistance, in particular the many kind people who make donations to the Public Fund and thereby support the HCV's cultural program. We are especially grateful to our new donor members, both individuals and organisations. Recent donations have been specifically directed towards newer initiatives such as developing our capacity for online and hybrid communication.

Advocacy

The History Council of Victoria is the peak body for history in Victoria, comprising representatives from cultural and educational institutions and heritage bodies. The HCV advocates the importance of historical literacy in a well-educated citizenry. The study of the past and telling its stories are critical to our sense of belonging, to our communities and to our shared future.

As the peak body for history in Victoria, the History Council makes submissions on current issues. In doing this, the HCV Board is guided by its Advocacy Policy and by the Value of History statement that was developed co-operatively by the HCV and the History Councils of New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia.

The history of all places and times is our concern, but we use our public programs and the Lynette Russell Award to highlight knowledge of First Peoples' histories. As a body of institutional representatives across the fields of history, historical records, history teaching and heritage, the HCV notes the profound importance of the referendum concerning a First Peoples' Voice to Parliament. Our engagement with the history of this land is the basis for our support for the aspirations in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and our view that First Peoples must be recognised in our Constitution. We acknowledge that First Peoples lands were seized without formal cession or treaty, and that survival despite often deliberate discrimination is a daily reminder of both extreme disadvantage and the strength of Indigenous cultures.

During this past 12 months the following additional actions have been taken:

2023

- Letter to the press concerning Indigenous education in schools
- Representations to government concerning the preservation of Alfred Deakin home "Ballara", Point Lonsdale

2024

- Direct involvement with Federation University on its restructuring of its Bachelor of Arts course
- Letter to the press and Federal Minister for Education concerning the Jobs Ready Graduate funding model
- Representations to government concerning the continued functioning of the Public Records Advisory Committee
- Participation in the review of the Victorian Heritage Register
- Representations to Melbourne City Council concerning the position of City Historian in the City's heritage strategy review.

The HCV aims to communicate with a wide range of interested people, through social media, our regular newsletters and website.

On Twitter/X, Instagram and Facebook, our Publicity Officer highlights our events and those of the broader history community. The HCV's Facebook page had a community of 2,259 followers in June 2024 and on X/Twitter we have 2,522 followers. The members of the Communications Committee have also offered valuable contributions to our X/Twitter followers with regular tweets highlighting history. We have 184 subscribers to our YouTube Channel and well over 5,000 views of our various videos. Our Instagram account has 438 followers.



The HCV's regular newsletter is currently received by over 3,200 subscribers. The e-news contains not only announcements about HCV events and programs, but also selected information from the history community in Victoria. It is published every second month.

All HCV Friends receive our regular newsletter as well as the Friends "Alert" email, which contains early notice of events and special information for Friends. Friends Alerts are published every second month.

Our HCV website has received a significant visual upgrade thanks to our Communications Committee alongside our previous Executive Officer, Alicia Cerreto.

Our current Executive Officer, Stephanie Holt, works 0.2 EFT (one day per week) for the HCV. Stephanie brings her experience in editing, history, project management, and communications to the role. She is supported by another 0.2 EFT employee, Molly McKew, funded by the Hansen Foundation to provide expertise in communication.

Our former Executive Officer Margaret Birtley continues as the voluntary Finance Officer, a part-time role that reports to the Executive Officer and the Treasurer. The bookkeeping is managed by Resolve UBM Business Management Services.

Making Public Histories

The Making Public Histories series traditionally attracts audiences with specialised interests and expertise. Delivered in webinar format, the series is accessible to people from outside Melbourne, including regional Victoria, interstate and overseas. A recording of each webinar is posted to the HCV's YouTube channel and thus is available to people who are unable to attend the "live" discussion, and discoverable by new audiences that were previously not aware of the HCV.

The events in 2023-24 were facilitated by Professor Alistair Thomson (Monash University), Associate Professor Susie Protschky (HCV and Monash), Alicia Cerreto and Stephanie Holt (HCV), Margaret Anderson (Old Treasury Building) and Professor Nathalie Nguyen (Monash) and supported by Monash University Publishing.

The topics and presenters for 2023 were overseen by Alastair Thomson (Monash University), who has long provided his curating and interviewing skills in this successful program. We thank Alastair for his remarkable and invaluable contribution.

- 27 July: **Culture in Overseas Embassies: Buildings that Evoke Australia**, with David Lowe (Deakin University), Anna Johnston (President of the International Association of Australian Studies) and Kate Darian-Smith (University of Tasmania)
- 28 September: **Australia's Broken Years?** with Joan Beaumont (Australian National University)
- 30 November: **Behind the Scenes: Making History Exhibitions**, with Deborah Tout-Smith and Tracey Taylor (Museums Victoria)

The 2024 events have been overseen by Margie Anderson (Old Treasury) with valuable assistance from Rohan Hewitt (Monash University).

- 21 March: **Australia's Housing Crisis**, with Janet McCalman (University of Melbourne), Kath Hulse (Swinburne University) and Anne O'Brien (University of NSW).
- 30 May: **Energy Transitions: Historicising Australia's Nuclear Debate**, with Nancy Cushing (University of Newcastle), Jessica Urwin (La Trobe University/Australian National University), and Matthew Ryan (The Australia Institute)



History Roadshow

In 2023, the History Roadshow program was delivered both online and in-person. Originally designed to offer VCE History students from rural and regional schools the opportunity to hear from highly experienced academic and professional historians and to have rich curriculum-related experiences, the online approach has enabled even more students the opportunity to participate.

We offered a series of recorded 30-minute video lectures from expert historians.

These were supplied to participating schools as a password protected video. Registered participants received unlimited access to the videos from August until December.

We also offered an in-person Roadshow held at Federation University Ballarat on 27 August. While the presentations were of high quality, there were fewer registrations than hoped (about 70), and it was suggested that a week day rather than a Sunday might be preferable in future.

The presenters were:

Revolutions:

Emeritus Professor Peter McPhee (France)

Dr Julie Fedor (Russia)

Dr Koji Hirata (China)

Professor Michael McDonnell (US)

Australian:

Professor Richard Broome

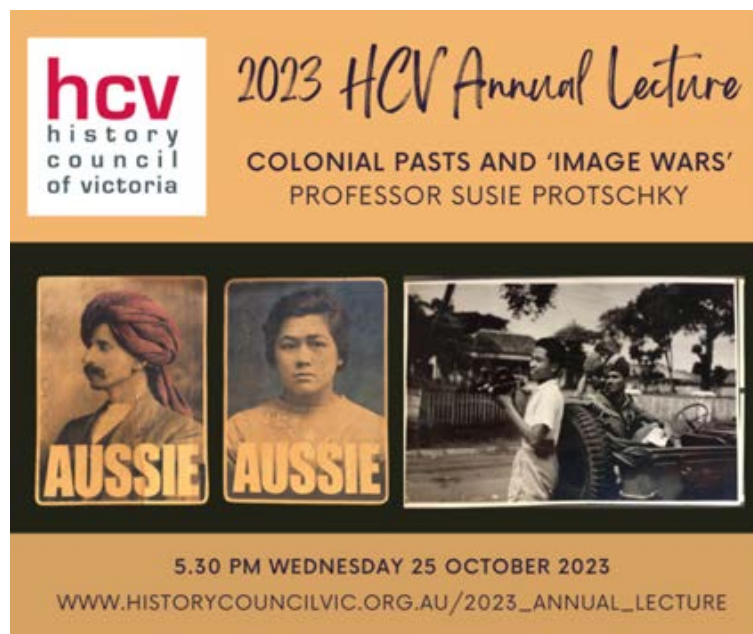
Emeritus Professor Graeme Davison

Dr Richard Trembath

Annual Lecture

Each year, the History Council of Victoria presents a public lecture that shares fresh thinking and new evidence on an historical topic.

On 25 October 2023, Professor Susie Protschky of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam presented a memorable and thought-provoking lecture on Colonial Pasts and Image Wars.



HCV Friends / Book+Author

The HCV Friends program aims to offer current and future supporters a way to engage with and demonstrate support for HCV while receiving tangible benefits in return for an annual subscription fee. Our HCV Friends support our advocacy for history, have priority access to events, are part of our Book+Author HCV Friends Book Club and help to educate Victorians about the value of history. We keep all Friends informed of future events via an additional email newsletter.

The HCV encourages everyone to become a Friend – not only for the opportunity to participate in the Book+Author Book Club and other activities, but also in order to help our association advocate for history and educate Victorians about the value of history.

Gatherings of our Book+Author events have been held every second month. These online events welcome our HCV Friends to hear an author speak about a recent book and participate in a question and answer.

2023

31 August: **Graeme Davison, David Lowe and Carla Pascoe Leahy** in conversation with Michelle Rayner

26 October: **Louisa Lim** in conversation with Yves Rees

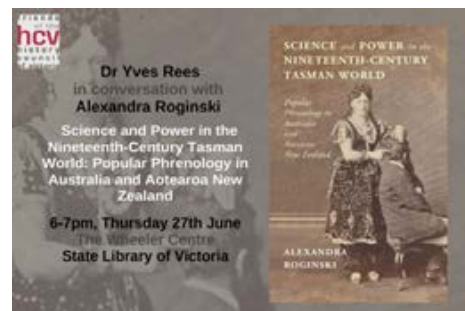
2024

In 2024, Book+Author events have been held in-person at the Wheeler Centre at the State Library of Victoria, HCV Board member Yves Rees has curated a series of stimulating conversations with authors:

29 February: Dr **Alecia Simmonds**,
Courting: An Intimate History of Love and the Law (La Trobe University Press, 2023).

18 April: Prof. **Kate Fullagar, Bennelong & Phillip. A History Unravelling** (Simon & Schuster, 2023).

27 June: Dr **Alexandra Roginski**, *Science and Power in the Nineteenth-Century Tasman World: Popular Phrenology in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).



HCV Friends /

End-of-year Celebration

On 7 December 2023, for our end-of-year event our HCV Friends and Board gathered to hear Janet McCalman in conversation with Lachlan Strahan on Lachlan's engrossing book *Justice in Kelly Country*.



The event included presentations to retiring board member David Lowe and Executive Officer Alicia Cerreto (below).



This special event was for HCV Friends, guests and the HCV Board and was held in person at the Drill Hall, Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

Prizes

Historical Fiction Competition

The Board continued its sponsorship of the Year 9 and 10 category of the Historical Fiction Competition organised by the History Teachers' Association of Victoria. HCV Board members Bronwyn Cook and Tim Hogan served as the judging panel.

More here: <https://www.htav.asn.au/students/htav-historical-fiction-competition>

Lynette Russell Prize for First Peoples' History in Schools



The Lynette Russell Prize for First Peoples' History in Schools was established in 2021 to recognise the efforts of Victorian school students in years 7-10 in their study of First Peoples' history. In 2023, we expanded the prize to recognise contributions from Foundation to Year 10.

The prize was established by Professor Lynette Russell AM to encourage the creative engagement and deeper knowledge of a wider number of primary and secondary school students in this area.

The 2023 prize was awarded to Bairnsdale West Primary School for their work alongside local Aboriginal people, the Gunaikurnai, educating and engaging students in local First People's histories.

In December 2023, HCV Chair Peter McPhee attended a Bairnsdale West Primary School assembly to present the award, noting that "This entry to the Lynette Russell Prize was a whole school effort by the Bairnsdale West Primary School with a great deal of substance, a sustained effort that was built into the school year, and a deep engagement with local Indigenous people and creative material." The school assembly was a moving and unforgettable event.



The school was delighted and responded: “At Bairnsdale West PS we are proud to receive this award and we remain committed to teaching the true history of Australia and acknowledge that it is an important part of reconciliation. Our local Aboriginal people, the Gunaikurnai, and their history should be celebrated, and we will continue to work closely with local Koorie groups to inform our school community about this. Our motivation is to have a positive influence in the wider community by helping others to understand the ongoing impact of colonisation on our First Nations People.”

Jane Hansen Prize for History Advocacy

The Jane Hansen Prize for History Advocacy recognises the efforts of a group or individual that has advocated for the value of history, the work of historians and/or the importance of an education in history. The judging panel was Deb Tout-Smith, Nell Musgrove and Katherine Sheedy.

2023 awards

Peter Symons – winner

Peter Symons has made an extraordinary commitment to the access and preservation of history research, which impacts on history practice right across Australia and beyond. Through his efforts to lobby for Trove funding, part of a national campaign that ultimately resulted in \$33 million for the National Library, Peter was an outstanding advocate for the value of history and the voice of historians. The judges recognise the breadth of impact of Peter’s advocacy, including the accessibility of historically significant sources and research to the wider community.

Lorraine Stokes – highly commended

The judges highly commend the outstanding work of Lorraine Stokes. She has a strong record of history advocacy and demonstrates great enthusiasm in sharing history through engagement with the local community in a voluntary capacity. The breadth of her work – writing, research, museums, talks – is an impressive example of, in a single person, so many aspects of history practice.

The prize’s founder Jane Hansen AO has commented: “As I am sure we would all agree, it is vital to continue to raise broad awareness of the importance and relevance of history - as we look to the past for answers today and guidance tomorrow.”

Other Activities

Women's History Month

The HCV hosts a Women's History Month calendar on our website. This collaborative calendar lists public events that relate to women's history and is scheduled to occur during the month of March. The events are hosted by a range of organisations -

government, academic, professional and community-based - in the history sector.

Glen Eira Storytelling Festival

The HCV partnered with the Glen Eira Storytelling Festival to put on an evening of storytelling and tunes with Aboriginal Australian singer, cultural practitioner and historian Jessie Lloyd; teacher, writer and historian Alice Garner; and musicians Luke Watt and Nigel Wearne of Above the Bit, who took the audience through an Australian history of civil disobedience through song. The evening was hosted by historian and former Executive Officer of the HCV, Alicia Cerreto.

The event was held at the Bentleigh Library and Youth Hub on Saturday 2 March 2024.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support of the History Council of Victoria.

Ways to support:

Subscribe to our newsletter: www.historycouncilvic.org.au/subscribe

Endorse the Value of History statement: www.historycouncilvic.org.au/endorse

Find us on socials: [Instagram](#) / [X \[Twitter\]](#) / [Facebook](#) / [YouTube](#)

Ways to donate:

Make a one-off donation: www.historycouncilvic.org.au/donate

Become a Friend of the HCV: www.historycouncilvic.org.au/friends_sign_up

Encourage your workplace or organisation to become an institutional donor:

www.historycouncilvic.org.au/friends

History Council of Victoria Incorporated

PO Box 443

Carlton South Vic 3053 www.historycouncilvic.org.au