



MEDIA RELEASE

2024 HISTORIAN AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

University of South Australia architecture historian Dr Julie Collins has won South Australia's prestigious 2024 Historian of the Year Award for her commitment to exploring the state's rich built heritage and influencing its preservation.

The 2024 awards, announced tonight at the finale event for South Australia's History Festival, also recognise individuals and groups contributing to the field of history right across the state, from Burra to the Barossa and Gawler to Tailem Bend.

History Council of South Australia president Matthew Fitzpatrick says the annual awards aim to shine a light on professional and amateur historians quietly going about the business of researching, celebrating and preserving the state's past – often for decades and generally unheralded.

"To understand the past is to better appreciate what the future might hold," Prof Fitzpatrick says.

"We are indebted to our award winners and nominees who've poured their hearts into history projects across the state, and made South Australia a richer place for it."

The 2024 award winners are:

- **Historian of the Year:** Dr Julie Collins is an internationally respected historian and curator of the University of South Australia's Architecture Museum and its collection of 500,000 items. Through recent projects exploring South Australia's sleepouts, department store buildings, Adelaide Oval and clock towers, Julie has raised awareness of history and brought it to new audiences.
- **Digital Technologies Award:** Dan Schmidt inspires new audiences by combining meticulous historical research and interviews with quirky podcasting and storytelling on radio stations including ABC Radio Adelaide and FiveAA.
- **Emerging Historian:** Samuel Doering's outstanding body of work in a few short years includes research into Vietnam military history and German and Lutheran migration into the Barossa (he's even learned German to translate historic documents).
- **Excellence in Oral History:** Christeen Schoepf was instrumental in creating the 'Story-Lab' recording studio in Port Pirie to capture local oral histories. She has also created publications for local history groups and content for 'Story Towns' podcasts.
- **Regional and Community Award:** The Tailem Bend Historians Association has breathed new life into the town's disused railway station; integrated Aboriginal history with colonial interactions; and commemorated the death of Mounted Constable Charles McCullagh.

- **Life-long Historian:** For the second year, the judges were unable to separate two outstanding nominees. **Meredith Satchell** has been integral to the development of Burra's popular history precincts over many years. This includes a World Heritage nomination, the heritage plaque project, a range of fascinating publications on the Burra region and self-guided history walks. **Martin Walker** has dedicated more than 50 years to researching and collecting the postal and telecommunications history of South Australia. He curated an exhibition of South Australian philatelic and post office history for the joint Texas/South Australian sesquicentennial, was part of the 2019 Epic Flight Centenary organising committee and contributed material to a display of Gawler's role in WWI for an exhibition in Turkey.
- **Wakefield Press Essay Prize:** Amanda Wells has won this year's award for her standout essay *Halting Chowilla Dam: Salt, Science, and River Murray Politics in the 1960s*.

The Wakefield Prize award winner receives a \$500 book voucher from the publisher. All other award winners receive a \$250 book voucher from Wakefield Press, plus statewide prestige and a year's membership to the History Council of SA. The winner in the Excellence in Oral History Award also wins a year's membership to Oral History Australia SA/NT.

Ends.