



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

8 October 2024

Thank you to all of our members for your engagement and your interest in supporting the History Council of South Australia. My first year as President of the HCSA has been a busy one and I'd like to thank all of the Executive Committee (particularly outgoing President Gillian Dooley and Secretary Carmel Pascale) for ensuring the transition was a relatively painless one.

The following report outlines the HCSA's role over the past year in advocacy, events, awards and fellowships. For any members interested in further details of our activities, please feel free to reach out to us.

Advocacy

Riverlea: With the news that Kaurna ancestral remains and artefacts had been unearthed during earthworks on this housing estate, a letter was sent to the State Premier and Minister for Indigenous Affairs urging caution and close attention to the full range of opinions on the fate of the site and the unique materials found upon it. On 11 October 2024, the news came down that the Riverlea development would move ahead, albeit subject to further conditions.

Museum of South Australia: With the announced restructure and revamping of the museum, a press release was issued (with follow up media with Channel 7 and *Indaily*) advocating support for the rejuvenation of the museum and funding for this. This led to HCSA's inclusion in a parliamentary panel advising on the fate of the museum. The government's decision on the next steps forward were released in late September.

Job Ready Graduates: A letter was sent to the Federal Minister for Education requesting that the Job Ready Graduate policy that was unfairly impacting upon the lives of aspiring history and humanities graduates be reversed to offer a level playing field for university fees. A follow up press release was also featured in *Indaily*. The Minister replied that while no

immediate action was coming, future budget announcements might see movement on the issue.

Wakefield Press: As part of a broader representation to the state government, the HCSA registered its support for the unique cultural mission of Wakefield Press in supporting the cultural life and historical record of SA. The HCSA urged the government to offer meaningful support to this valuable press.

Events

Regional Lecture: The 2023 Regional Lecture was held at Whyalla Library 16 November 2023. The lecture was given by Sky Krichauff speaking on ‘Uncovering and Understanding the South Australian Frontier and its Legacies’ and saw a healthy attendance of 25-30 attendees. The event was followed by lunch and by an oral history workshop from David Sweet and Christeen Schoepf. Special thanks to our regional partner Paul Mazourek and Whyalla City Council.

Fellows’ Lecture: On 23 April 2024, the HCSA fellows spoke at a very well attended event at the SLSA. The 2023 fellow Maggi Boulton spoke on ‘Settler Health in Early South Australia, 1836 – 1856’. Thereafter the 2024 fellow Alice Neikirk spoke on ‘Police Matrons (and their Advocates) in South Australia’ while the 2024 winner of the highly recommended prize, Angela Gurr, spoke on ‘Combining historical records and archaeological methods to enhance identification of individuals in unmarked graves and increase understanding of their lifestyle challenges’. Special thanks to our partners for this event, including the State Library and the Marsden Szwarcbord Foundation.

Awards Evening: As part of the History Trust’s end-of-festivities, the History Council bestowed its annual awards to winners drawn from across the state. Matt Fitzpatrick opened the prize announcements with a short address before the winners were given their awards. The event was covered in the media, with many awardees also being offered follow up interviews with the press.

Awards and Fellowships

HCSA Fellow: As indicated above, the 2024 HCSA Fellow is Alice Neikirk. For 2024 the Marsden Szwarcbord Foundation also supported a second ‘highly commended’ award to Angela Gurr.

Wakefield Prize Essay Prize: Amanda Wells won this award for her essay “Halting Chowilla Dam: Salt, Science, and River Murray Politics in the 1960s.” Our thanks too to Wakefield Press for its support of these awards.

Historian Awards: At the History Trust end-of-festival celebration, the HCSA also offered prizes in the following categories:

- Emerging Historian Award: Samuel Doering
- Oral History Excellence Prize: Christeen Schoepf
- Digital Technologies Award: Dan Schmidt
- Regional or Community History: Tailem Bend Historians Association
- Life Long Historian Award: Martin Walker & Meredith Satchell
- Historian of the Year Award: Julie Collins

Thanks once again to all of the committee members – in particular to our outgoing office holders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matt Fitzpatrick', written in a cursive style.

Matt Fitzpatrick

President, History Council of South Australia