



# HISTORY WEST

THE ROYAL WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

## **President's Report July, 2021 – June 2022**

I count it a great privilege to have been elected President of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and have thoroughly enjoyed my first year in office. Working with such an amazing group of people, whose passion for the history of Western Australia is unquenchable, has been a complete joy.

As with most organisations in Western Australia, the COVID pandemic has continued to affect the way the Society has operated. Social distancing and restricted numbers had a significant impact on our regular meetings and the saga of whether the Society was supposed to require visitors to show their vaccinations certificates on entry to Stirling House provided us with an extremely frustrating fortnight of 'yes we do', 'no we don't' answers from the State Government. Thankfully, the Australian Museums and Galleries Association managed to get a definitive answer out of the Premier and Cabinet Department, that only the large museums we affected by this mandate. Also, at one stage earlier this year, the social distancing rules for large group gatherings meant that we had to serve pre-meeting refreshment in the car park outside Stirling House. Thankfully, that rule was rescinded just as the bad weather of the autumn descended!

Despite the ever-changing COVID regulations, our monthly meetings and the various morning soirees the Society lays on have been extremely well supported, with those attending being treated to a wide variety of Western Australia historical topics, offered by excellent presenters. Thank you to all those who have organised, presented, attended, or hosted these excellent events, which are the life blood of the Society.

Although at times in the run-up we wondered if we would be able to hold it, the annual second-hand book sale was held in April as usual. Despite still being under COVID restrictions and with not ideal weather, the sale netted \$17,500. An excellent result from what is a gargantuan feat of organisation. Our thanks go to the very hardworking team, under the leadership of Pamela and Nick, who once again enabled the Society to swell its coffers by a significant amount.

Of the other events the Society runs, the Williams/Lee Steere Annual Prize for the best book published on WA history has become a major prize for history writing. Tonight's winner was chosen from a large field of entries.

Communication with our members is a vital component of the Society's work and I thank Lenore Layman, who puts together and edits our monthly newsletter so skilfully. This is no small undertaking as is demonstrated by the amount of information contained in every edition. To those who contribute to this monthly digest, please keep the articles and news items coming; this makes the editor's job so much easier.

One of the jewels in the Society's crown is our annual journal, 'Early Days'. The first edition was published in 1927 and the publication has been published annually ever since. As with previous editions, this year's edition is a high quality publication, both in terms of its content and its reproduction. High praise goes to the Readings and Publications

Committee, who oversee its publication, with special mention going to Heather Campbell and Jennie Carter, the joint editors, who's hard work has produced a stellar edition.

The Society's Council and Executive Committee have continued to meet in alternate months to manage our affairs. Foremost amongst these has been the Treasurer's work to streamline and update our accounting system, making it more efficient and compliant with modern accounting standards. The result of this work is that fully audited accounts for the 2021-2022 financial year, can be presented at the AGM – something that has often not been possible in the past.

Other Council and Executive work has included the revision of several of the Society's policies, a major grant application to Lotterywest to fund a much needed update to our website. We have also started the process of reviewing our governance to ensure that the organisation is run as efficiently as possible and conforms to all of the requirements of our incorporated association status. This is particularly necessary as the employment of an executive officer is still beyond our financial means – a problem that is actively being pursued by Council.

Amongst our fundraising activities, I am pleased to report we have received a generous donation from the Minderoo Foundation for the conservation and digitisation of items from the John Forrest archive held by the Society.

In reporting on the work of Council and Executive, I am sad to have to report that two of our long-standing and very hard working Councillors, namely Helen Henderson and Lennie McCall, have decided to step down this year and are not seeking re-election. I think it would be fair to say they have been at the centre of the Society's work for many years and have both served with distinction. We thank them for the enormous amount of time they have devoted to the affairs of the Society over many years.

The bulk of the work of the Society is carried by our nine committees and our enthusiastic volunteers. The annual reports of all committees can be read in the reports appended below. I am sure their work to ensure a lively and active Society is very much appreciated by our membership.

I would also like to pay tribute to our Community Officer, Lesley Burnett. She is very often the public face of the Society; a role she carries out with great aplomb. More than that, Lesley frequently goes above and beyond the call of duty to make sure our daily affairs run as smoothly as possible. She has been of particular help to me as the 'new boy' trying to get his head around the Society's activities and need. Thank you, Lesley.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of the following members during the reporting period: Winifred Cann, David Crann, Michael Croudace, Howard Haselhurst, B.C. Hastie, Christopher Lane, Harold Loton and Jean Rushton.

Please let me know if there are others you know of whom we have not acknowledged above.

Thank you to everyone who helps us to achieve our mission of ensuring present and future generations have access to the history of Western Australia.

Richard Offen  
President and Chair of Council  
September, 2022



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## **Officers for 2021-2022**

### **PATRON**

The Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia

### **VICE-PATRONS**

Hon. Mark McGowan MLA, Premier of Western Australia

Hon. Mia Davies MLA, Leader of the Opposition

### **President and Chair of Council**

Mr Richard Offen

### **Immediate Past President**

Dr Steve Errington PhD MRSC FRACIJP

### **Vice-Presidents**

Mrs Sally Anne Hasluck OAM

Ms Lennie McCall AM FRWAHS FFAHS

### **Vice-Chair of Council**

Dr Fiona Bush OAM MBEEnv PhD AICOMOS

### **Secretary**

Dr Pamela Statham Drew PhD FRWAHS

### **Treasurer**

Ms Klara Haselhurst BEc MPA ACG(Affiliated)

### **Assistant Treasurer**

Mr Nick Drew

### **Councillors**

Dr Helen Henderson AM PhD FRWAHS

Dr Lenore Layman AM PhD FRWAHS

Mrs Wendy Lugg (Honorary Artist in Resident)

Mr John Lukin

Mrs Jan McCahon Marshall (Minute Secretary)

Hon. Robert Nicholson AO KCSJ FAAL BA LLB MA LLM HonLLD

Mr Michael Nind

Mrs Ellen Parrick, Affiliated Societies' Committee Representative

Mrs Rachel Roe, President of the RWAHS Auxiliary

Mr Phillip Vile AFAIM MPICS