

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT – 2024

DUE DATE Friday 26 July 2024

Please complete the following Activity Report to be eligible for consideration in the Annual MERIT AWARD which recognises the various activities carried out by our affiliated societies.

The report should be **ONE PAGE** only, providing a summary of your activities and actions that occurred between **01 June 2023** and **30 June 2024** return to admin@histwest.org.au

Should you wish to submit separately please ensure your organisation's contact details are clearly shown

1. Engagement with members e.g. activities - opportunities for involvement, talks, excursions

We host various social events throughout the year such as dinners and afternoon teas to promote the AHS and engage with our members and volunteers. Our magazine is crucial in keeping our members informed about our projects and plans. Additionally, we have added a new members-only section on our website, which can be accessed using a password provided to members. This area contains previous issues of our magazine and other relevant information for members, including advance notice of upcoming events.

Engagement with the local and wider community e.g. involvement in committees outside your association, outreach activities; education, displays, exhibitions, talks, enactments

We have launched a campaign to raise awareness in the community for the Albany Bicentenary in 2026, which will be a first for Western Australia. We have identified several projects that the AHS will undertake over the next 2 years leading up to the bicentenary. We have successfully secured a partnership with a major sponsor to ensure that our projects will receive the necessary funding. We are also inviting members of the community and local businesses to contribute to these projects and have received an amazing response so far. More information regarding our plans for the bicentenary can be found on our website at www.historicalbany.com.au

Over the past 12 months, the Albany Historical Society has been actively involved in a campaign to save one of Albany's most historic buildings. This Georgian gentleman's residence was constructed between 1852-1858 by George Cheyne and his wife Grace, who were early settlers, pioneers, pastoralists, and entrepreneurs. The building was later known as the Toc-H Building or Edward House. The building was gifted to the organisation, making it their only owned property in Australia, known as Mark 1. The building was at risk of demolition to make room for a social housing development. After a sustained campaign by the Albany Historical Society and the broader community, the developer has generously decided to gift the property to the society for the community's benefit. We would like to recognise Professor Donald Garden OAM FFAHS, FRHSV, as well as the tireless efforts of our Heritage Officer for working to save this icon of Albany's history.

The Heritage Council of Western Australia has decided that, despite its significant historical importance in Albany and Western Australia, the building does not meet the requirements for listing on the state register. This decision we believe shows a significant disconnect between the department responsible for the register and the wider community and needs urgent investigation. The listing requirements under the Heritage Act present significant challenges for obtaining new listings on the State Register, putting Western Australia's built heritage at risk of being lost. This issue should concern anyone interested in preserving the state's-built heritage. The Heritage Council seems to want all buildings to be listed on municipal registers going forward. We believe these municipal registers do not guarantee adequate protection for the state's-built heritage as they can and have been manipulated in the past.

2. Research activities, enquiries and other research, **Publications**, Leaflets, books, websites etc.
Collection development and management, Curation, Oral History and other areas, achievements and training etc.

Over the past 12 months, we have been focused on increasing our presence on social media. As a result, we have completely redesigned our website and social media platforms, and these changes have been well-received by the public. We are constantly updating the website with new information. The new website has a focus on the bicentenary and highlights Albany's early pioneers as well as the local Menang people. We believe the site is an excellent tool for promoting Albany's upcoming 200th birthday. Additionally, we have been actively contributing to Collections W.A. by uploading over 16,000 records with approximately 2000 of them being live and publicly available, thus making us the largest contributor to the site.

In April, we introduced a new format for the Night Tours at the Albany Convict Gaol, making the tours self-guided. The first tour was very successful, generating over \$3,500.00 in revenue over the 5 hours of the opening period. We plan to hold these tours on the Saturday night of every long weekend. We have also started a complete revamp of all the interpretation at our venues and launched a new kids' holiday program called "Little Convicts" at the Albany Convict Gaol, starting this July school holidays.

"This year, we have redesigned all our brochures for both our museums and heritage walk trails, as well as our teacher's packs and educational support documents. These are used for visiting school groups and community groups, such as PCYC.

In late January, we replaced our old blue tree with a new, bigger, and better tree. The new tree symbolises a new message about mental health. As a community organisation, we believe it is our responsibility to support other community groups whenever possible. The new tree has garnered significant interest and support from the wider community, and it has brought media attention to the AHS, particularly Patrick Taylor Cottage, through the promotion of our park on Duke Street. The tree has increased public awareness of the park with an increase in visitor numbers.

During July 2023, we were grateful to have received a \$5,000 grant from Rio Tinto for new garden maintenance equipment. Our garden team has gratefully accepted this generous support. We would also like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Bunnings for their ongoing support of our gardens. They have donated plants, fertilizers, and garden equipment, for which we are truly grateful. We also wish to acknowledge Officeworks Albany for their generous support of the AHS over the last 12 months especially regarding our computer upgrade program.

Andrew Eyden
C.E.O