



## **REPORT**

### **HISTORY WEEK 2018: LIFE & DEATH**

Report prepared by Catherine Shirley, Executive Officer, and Lucy King, Programs Officer

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#### **BACKGROUND**

The History Council of New South Wales (HCNSW) initiated History Week in 1997 to showcase the rich, diverse history being produced across New South Wales.

During History Week, HCNSW members including community groups, local councils, libraries, archives, museums, universities, cultural institutions and history professionals celebrate the best in

community and professional history and highlight its important role in our cultural life.

The theme for History Week 2018 was Life & Death. HCNSW members were invited to explore life's defining moments and the impact of death on communities across time.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Showcase history in an innovative and exciting format
- Provide educational experiences that reach students and the general public, and promote lifelong learning opportunities
- Present audiences with rich and diverse histories relevant to all aspects of our community
- Attract new audiences to history, demonstrating that history is exciting, relevant and all around us.



## NSW PREMIER'S HISTORY AWARDS AND HISTORY WEEK LAUNCH

On 31 August, the State Library of NSW and HCNSW continued their long-standing, successful partnership to launch History Week at the NSW Premier's History Awards. The HCNSW played a support role in the running and promotion of the awards, providing advice on suitable judges and promoting the call for nominations, shortlist and results. A/Prof Tanya Evans, President of the HCNSW, delivered the History Week address to an audience of 120.

## SPEAKER CONNECT

In 2018, HCNSW continued its Speaker Connect program with a number of speakers opting to present in History Week instead of during the year. History professionals were invited to travel to organisations in Sydney and regional NSW to deliver talks on the topic of life and death.

Speaker Connect aims to:

- Connect history professionals with organisations across NSW and provide regional audiences with cultural enrichment opportunities
- Promote the work of history professionals to wider audiences and raise the profile of history
- Provide professional development and paid opportunities to history professionals.

The HCNSW received 9 applications (down from 14 in 2017) from potential hosts and 14 presentation proposals from speakers (down from 18 in 2017). The talks were held free of charge and were open to the public.

*"What I like about Speaker Connect is that it partners speakers and organisations who would not otherwise know of each other."*

*"I particularly like that, in many cases, it forges connections with young researchers who are emerging in the history discipline and/or academics who are speaking on a wide variety of topics, but might not be something we would book ourselves."*

A total of **12 Speaker Connect sessions** were held during History Week 2018 after some additional hosts were approached directly by HCNSW staff:

Alison Wishart	The Impact of the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic in Australia 5 September, Lake Mac Libraries
Alison Wishart	Using Oral History to Inform Family History Research 3 September, Wea Sydney
Fiona Reilly	Lest We Forget: How the Great War Changed What We Wore in the Face of Death 5 September, Mosman Library
Ian Willis	Death of Men in Training at the Liverpool Field Hospital 1915 3 September, Nowra Library
Isobelle Barrett Meyering	Activist Commemorations: Remembering the Life of Bessie Guthrie 5 September, Sydney Mechanic School of Arts
Fiona Reilly	Punk: So What's New? 6 September, Fairfield City Museum & Gallery
Dr James Dunk	Darling's Suicides 8 September, Wollongong City Libraries
Michelle Cavanagh	Veiled Warriors: Lives and Deaths of Australian Nurses in War 3 September, Mudgee Town Hall Theatre
Pauline Conolly	In the Footsteps of Governor Macquarie 6 September, Singleton Public Library
Dr Rachel Franks	Execution as Entertainment 3 September, Sutherland Shire Libraries
Dr Rachel Franks	Why We Read True Crime 5 September, Woollahra Library
Yvonne Fletcher	Maud Butler: You Can't Fight, You're a Girl 4 September, Lake Mac Libraries

## SPEAKER CONNECT - EVENT SUPPORT FROM HCNSW



Each organisation was provided with an 'Event Host Kit' which included detailed information about the speaker and their talk, as well as contact details, posters and postcards, a publicity 'How To' guide, PowerPoint template and media release template. Each speaker received a similar kit with information about the venue and travel itinerary. The speakers were each offered a \$300 honorarium for their efforts.

*Advertising poster created for Alison Wishart Speaker Connect Event at the Belmont Library, 5 September 2018*

## ANNUAL HISTORY LECTURE & AWARDS 2018

The Annual History Lecture (AHL) was presented by the HCNSW on 4 September at The Mint, Macquarie Street, Sydney and was delivered by Dr Lisa Murray, City of Sydney Historian. The awarding of the Max Kelly Medal, Aboriginal History Prize, Deen De Bortoli Award for Applied History and Annual History Citation preceded the lecture. A list of sponsors is provided on the last page of this report.



The **Annual History Citation** was awarded to Professor Lyndall Ryan in recognition of her research and teaching in women's and Indigenous history, and her service to the profession in contributing to the development of Australian Studies and Women's Studies.

Professor Lyndall Ryan accepting her award, 2018. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)





The **Max Kelly Medal** was awarded to Jessica Urwin for her essay 'Physicists in the Fields of Thunder: Ernest Titterton and Britain's Empire in the 1950's Australia'.

*I have always found the academics and professionals I encountered in history to be so encouraging or genuine, it inspired me to be part of a larger community of people who shared and experienced their passion together."*  
Jessica Urwin

Jessica Urwin accepting her award from Catherine Shirley, Executive Officer, HCNSW. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Deen De Bortoli Award for Applied History** was awarded to Dr Peter Prince for his essay 'Australia's most inhumane mass deportation abuse? Robtelmes v Brennan and expulsion of the Alien Islanders'.

Dr Peter Prince accepting his award from Darren De Bortoli, sponsor. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Aboriginal History Prize** was awarded to Meg Foster for her essay 'The Forgotten War of 1900: Jimmy Governor & the Aboriginal People of Wollar'.

Meg Foster accepting her award from A/Prof Lisa Ford (HCNSW Awards Committee member). (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)

## ANNUAL HISTORY LECTURE

### 'Warnings from the grave: Death, glory and memory in Australian cemeteries'



Dr Lisa Murray's lecture surveyed the history of Australian cemeteries, highlighting the central role memory has played in their fates. She reflected upon the beauty, value and threats to our national heritage.

ABC Radio National's 'Big Ideas' recorded the lecture with broadcast date early in 2019.

Dr Lisa Murray presenting the Annual History Lecture, 2018.  
(Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)

In total 115 guests attended the AHL, compared with 94 in 2017. The HCNSW offered a discounted student ticket to attract a broader audience. Of the 115 guests, 9 were students, 23 complimentary/VIP, 41 HCNSW members (or Professional Historians Association NSW & ACT members), 42 General Admission.

## HISTORY WEEK COMMUNITY EVENTS

A total of 92 events (compared with 80 in 2017) were registered in 2018, which included exhibitions, talks, tours, screenings and more. Forty-nine (47 in 2017) of the events were held in Sydney, 15 (13 in 2017) in Greater and Western Sydney, and 28 (19 in 2017) in regional NSW.

Feedback surveys were circulated to audience members, host organisations and speakers. Representatives from 26 18 host organisations responded (in comparison to 18 in 2017) and noted attendance varied from 6 to 250 people.

Despite the limited resources of the HCNSW, with the office staffed part-time, feedback from hosts and speakers was resoundingly positive as they thought History Week was very well organised, promoted and attended.

*"It is a great week and gets a lot of people to come along to history events that otherwise wouldn't. You also get to meet others who are interested in history and learn from them, which is always fun"*

## COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

History Week received extensive publicity, which was generated organically through social media and word of mouth, as well as through local newspapers and Library eNewsletters.

The HCNSW publicised all History Week events on its website, social media and seven special edition e-newsletters between 14-24 August. An interactive program of events through an online site <https://events.historyweek.com.au/> as well as a PDF program were provided to encourage audience attendance. The calendar of events was also entered on the HCNSW Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/HistoryCouncilNSW/> which enabled bookings, reminders, event partnerships and some gathering of event statistics, as detailed in the table below and measured in comparison to 2017, mainly for the period 1 July - 30 September.

Social media platforms included:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram (account opened in mid-August 2018)

Online platforms included:

- HCNSW Website (events, announcements blogs)
- Historyweek.com.au site (interactive calendar)

Printed promotional materials included:

- Postcards
- Posters
- Program (Annual History Lecture)

Details of engagement are as follows, showing 2018 in comparison to 2017:

Description	Distribution	Statistics 2017	Statistics 2018
History Week postcard	Sydney Writers' Festival session, Newcastle Writers' Festival session, Orange Readers and Writers Festival event, NSW Premier's History Awards, ad hoc industry events, event hosts and members	Total printed = 2,000	Total printed = 2,000
History Week A4 poster	Event Hosts and members	Total printed = 200	Total printed = 200
Annual History Lecture program	Annual History Lecture attendees and sponsors	Total printed = 120	Total printed = 120

Flagpole Banners courtesy of City of Sydney Council	On Macquarie Street, also in Pyrmont	Approximately 100 banners	Approximately 100 banners
History Week interactive program	<p>Google Analytics from 14 August to 30 September 2017 compared to the same period in 2018.</p> <p>Online and interactive. New format in 2018 gave greater clarity to the audience about events per region, and enabled HCNSW staff to update last minute changes more efficiently than in previous years.</p>	1,217 pageviews; 77.6% new visitors, 22.4% returning; average duration = 3 minutes and 6 seconds	1,753 pageviews; 81.6% new visitors, 18.4% returning; average duration = 3 minutes and 37 seconds
History Week e-newsletters	<p>2017 - 8 e-newsletters</p> <p>2018 - 7 e-newsletters from 14-24 August.</p> <p><u>2018 Features:</u> divided up by regions with regional event news driving through to interactive program and PDF program.</p> <p>Both of these items proved popular;</p> <p>Average opening rate of Newsletter: 31.93%. Comparison industry average (Arts) opening rate: 20.20%</p>	<p>Averages subscribers (2017) - 1,583;</p> <p>Totals during campaign:</p> <p>4,331 opens;</p> <p>919 clicks</p>	<p>Average subscribers (2018) -1,622;</p> <p>Totals during campaign:</p> <p>3,603 opens</p> <p>580 clicks</p> <p>Most popular click-throughs: PDF Program, Interactive Program</p>
HCNSW website	<p>2017: Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2017</p> <p>2018: Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2018</p>	<p>2017:</p> <p>Total users: 8,460</p> <p>41,007 pageviews; 81.9% new visitors, 18.1% returning; average duration = 1 minute and 58 seconds</p>	<p>2018:</p> <p>Total users: 9,712</p> <p>41,561 pageviews; 83.8% new visitors, 16.2% returning; average duration = 1 minute and 36 seconds</p>
HCNSW Facebook	Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2017 & 2018	2017: Followers: 2,442	2018: Followers: 2,734;



		Peak page views: 11 Sept - 28 unique user page views	Peak page views: 1 Sept: 85 unique user page views
HCNSW Twitter	Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2017 & 2018  (Impressions=number of times HCNSW tweets were delivered to Twitter users)  (2017 - only Twitter operating, not Instagram)	185,747 impressions  (Measured by Hootsuite in 2017)	47,122 impressions  (Measured directly front Twitter in 2018 due to Hootsuite switching to pay per report, therefore source/s of statistics from 2017 cannot be verified)
HCNSW Instagram	Impressions from one month (mid August - mid-Sept 2018)	2017 - no data	2018 - 92 Posts and 261 new, unique followers who then shared our posts. Statistics of re-sharing are currently unknown.

## FEEDBACK

Directly following History Week, HCNSW sent out surveys to hosts, speakers and invited attendees to evaluate events. This was in addition to surveys and attendance sheets that had been circulated to hosts prior to History Week.

The 2018 surveys received a total of 37 responses (compared to 30 in 2017), but only one of these was from a guest. It is believed that this is because we did not offer inducements to participate in the surveys (ie, in 2017 participants were offered the chance to win 12-months' digital access to *Inside History* magazine, which is now defunct and no longer an HCNSW partner). Here is a precis of responses to the Surveys:

*“Fantastic buzz and excitement of sharing the love of history with friends and strangers...”*

- Event Host Survey - 17 responses
- Event Guest Survey - 1 response
- Speaker Connect Host survey - 9 responses
- Speaker Connect Speaker survey - 10 responses

Feedback from surveys indicated that while the majority of hosts were happy with the timing, variety and quality of promotion, several indicated that, often due to the scale/difficult

location of their venue, they would have preferred for promotion to have begun earlier and crossed more mediums, with one host in particular noting that in a previous year her event had been promoted on the radio.

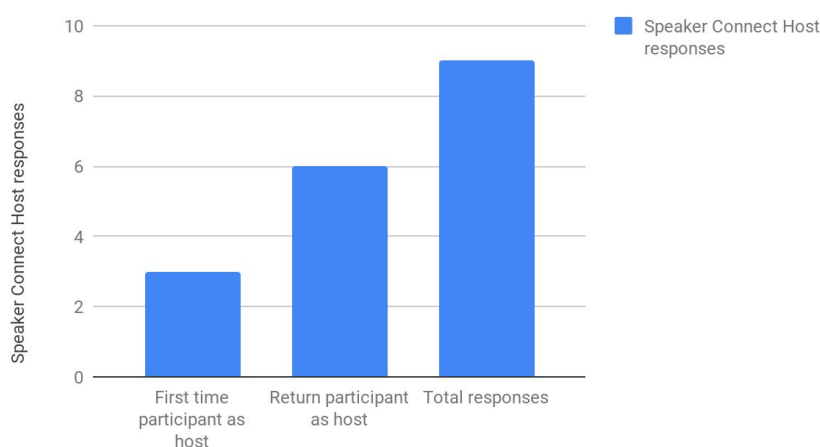
(Note: Each year, the HCNSW creates a media/publicity guide for host members, it contains helpful hints on how to publicise their History Week event and encourages hosts to contact us at [admin@historycouncilnsw.org.au](mailto:admin@historycouncilnsw.org.au) for more information. A number of hosts took us up on this offer.)

## Other feedback

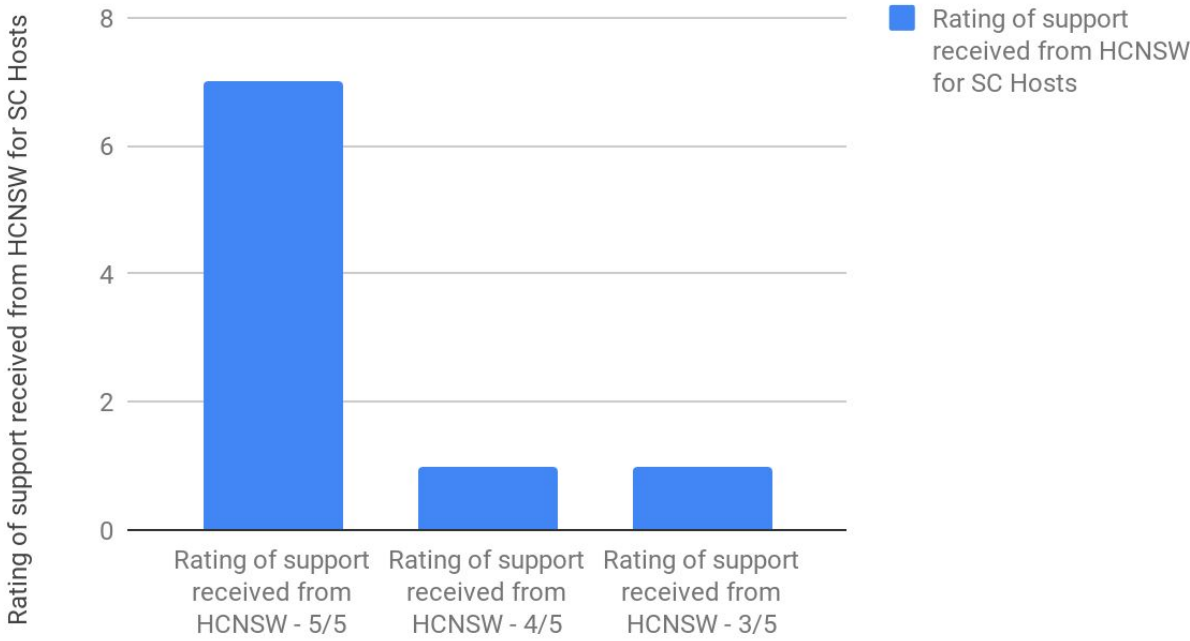
- Several hosts and speakers also noted that they would like to have been more involved with the registration process for their events. While this option was available, many hosts appear not to have realised this, so this will need to be made clearer during the application process for next year.
- We received positive feedback from many hosts that their events attracted good crowds, including many guests who may not otherwise have visited. Although some expressed sentiments that: "I feel that it is a very effective way to bring approachable history to audiences but would really like to try to reach a younger, schools or tertiary audience in the future"

## Responses to key questions

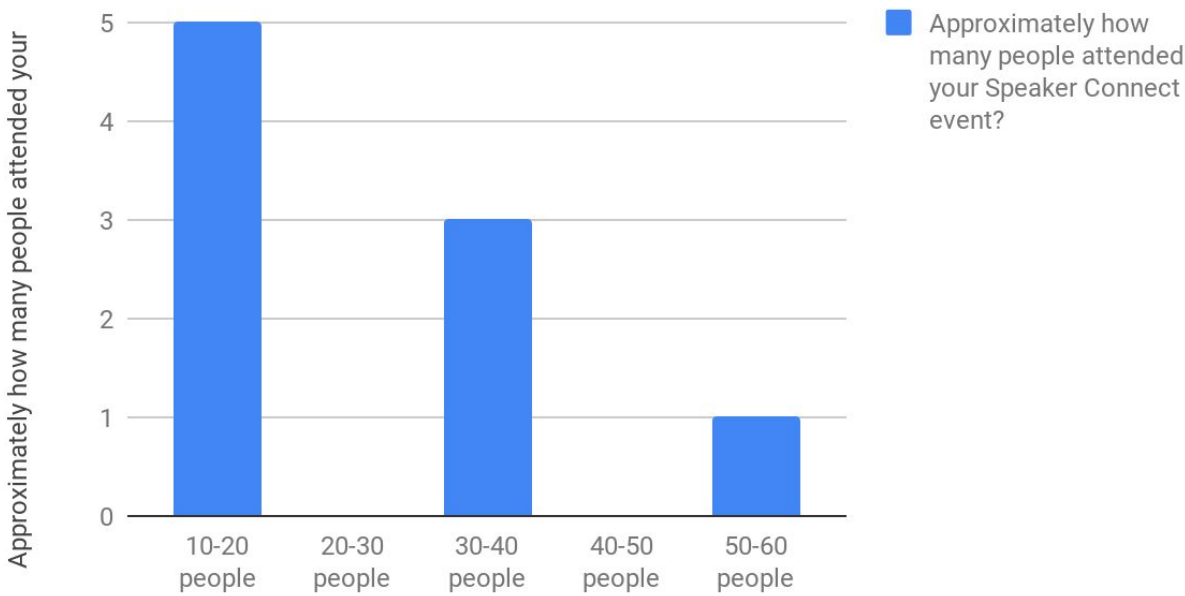
Speaker Connect Host responses



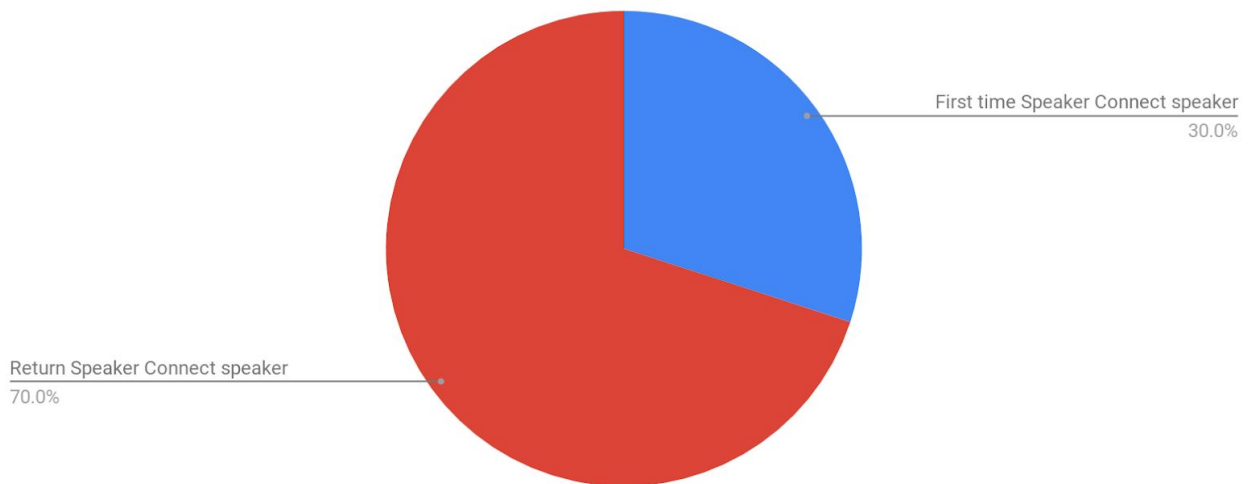
### Rating of support received from HCNSW for SC Hosts



### Approximately how many people attended your Speaker Connect event?



## Number of Speaker respondents



## Individual survey responses from speakers

- “A good experience”
- “It's a great program - well-conceived, well-executed, and offers valuable opportunities both to speakers and to communities interested in attending high quality historical events.”
- “I really enjoy sharing my passion for Australian history.”
- “I would be very pleased to present again next year on a topic that aligns to the History Week Theme.”
- “It was a good opportunity to share my research with a wider audience and to make links with an organisation. It has also opened up some future opportunities. The host organisation indicated that they would be happy to have me back for another event and I was also approached by a participant to present to another group.”
- “I'm very happy to work with the History Council of NSW again.”
- “Bringing my history research and passions to the general public is a great delight for me so would like to continue with the program. I feel that it is a very effective way to bring approachable history to audiences but would really like to try to reach a younger, schools or tertiary audience in the future as am always disappointed in the age range of

audiences.”

- “I love History Week and public history.”

## Responses from hosts and speakers - "What did you appreciate or enjoy most about History Week 2018?"

Word bubble of responses to this survey question, created using Voyant <https://voyant-tools.org/>



*“Every year the History Council goes above and beyond to host a range of events catered to not only historians, but also the public. It is plain to see how much time, effort, and organisation goes into running these events. Thank you for all your hard work, it is appreciated.”*

*“It’s fantastic to see so many people and organisations taking part. Congratulations to the organisers who are really promoting history in NSW and demonstrating its importance in the cultural life of Australians.”*



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2019**

1. Statistics
  - a. Eventbrite linkages to all events through organisers sites
  - b. Social media - new Social Media aggregator needed to replace Hootsuite
  - c. Survey methodologies and inducements to be improved in 2019
2. Speaker Connect
  - a. Aim to spread Speaker Connect events throughout the year, not just concentrated in History Week
  - b. Partnerships for SC events to be sought
3. Sponsorship
  - a. New sponsor for Award for Applied History needed to replace De Bortoli
  - b. New sponsors to be sourced for overall History Week and other events
4. Partnerships
  - a. New and refreshed partnerships to be sought for History Week
5. Venue
  - a. Look at option to run HW in a regional location
6. Publicity/Promotions
  - a. Create a Communications plan 6 months in advance of History week that contains a multi-media promotions schedule that escalates 2-3 months in advance of History Week
  - b. The Communications plan to also spread the escalation of newsletters information about History Week to earlier dates rather than 2 weeks out from the event, thus freeing up resources for other admin efforts
  - c. Seek media partners in metro and regional centres for wider reach of publicity.

## **PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER**

Create NSW

## **PARTNERS**

State Library of NSW

Sydney Living Museums

City of Sydney

Royal Australian Historical Society

Dictionary of Sydney

## **SPONSORS**

De Bortoli Wines (Deen De Bortoli prize for Applied History)

Geoffrey Jones (Max Kelly Medal)

Anonymous donor (Aboriginal History Prize)

History Week 2018 is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW



Report prepared by Catherine Shirley & Lucy King, History Council of NSW, October 2018