



REPORT

HISTORY WEEK 2019: MEMORY & LANDSCAPES

Report prepared by Catherine Shirley, Executive Officer
and Cassandra Rodger, Programs and Administrative Officer
October, 2019

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 2019 was Memory & Landscapes. HCNSW members were invited to explore our relationships to landscapes.

OBJECTIVES OF HISTORY WEEK

- 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 30 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. Dr Stephen Gapps, President of the HCNSW, delivered the History Week address to an audience of 120.

SPEAKER CONNECT

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.

"Those who attended the talk were very engaged and, due to the small numbers, I was able to speak to them individually before the talk and ascertain their interests. This enabled me to personalise the talk beyond the local history that I had already researched and included."

DR FIONA REILLY, SPEAKER, 2019

During History Week 2019

In 2019, HCNSW continued its **Speaker Connect** program with a number of speakers opting to present in **History Week** and during the year. History professionals were invited to travel to organisations in Sydney and regional NSW to deliver talks on the topic of memory and landscape.

For **History Week 2019**, the HCNSW received 17 presentation proposals from speakers (a 22% increase from 14 in 2018) and 8 host applications (an 11% decrease from 9 in 2018). The talks were held free of charge and were open to the public.

A total of **5 *Speaker Connect* sessions** were held during **History Week 2019**, after inaugurating *Speaker Connect* as a year-round program:

Dr Ian Willis	"Country girls go to London" 2 September Mid-Western Regional Council Library
Dr Mark Dunn	"A Landscape of Violence: Colonial Conflict in the Hunter Valley" 5th September Lake Mac Libraries
Dr Fiona Reilly	"The Recruiting Officer: A Theatrical Palimpsest" 5th September Singleton Public Library (Singleton Council)
Dr Gary Werskey	"Australia = A Colonial Settler Landscape? The Art of the 'Picturesque Atlas'" 5th September Bathurst Library
Michael Bodey	"50 Secrets of Surry Hills and Redfern" 5th September The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts

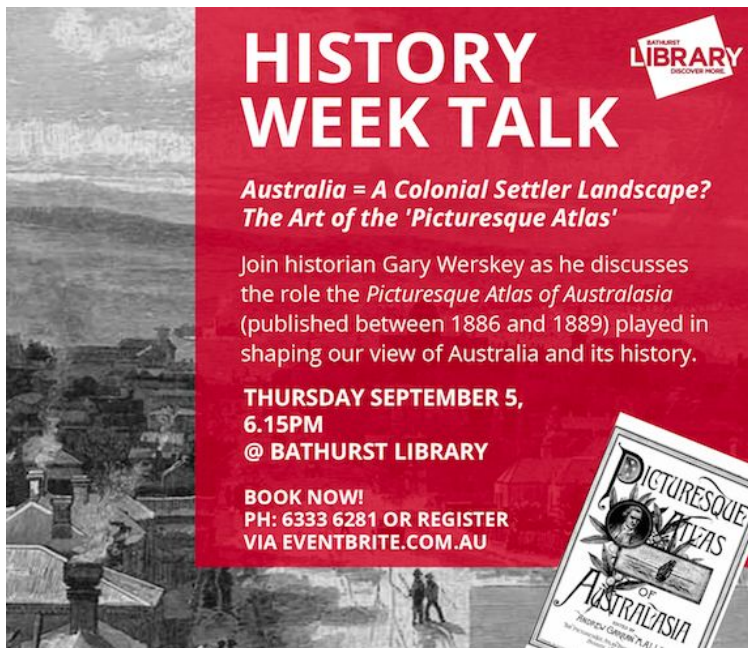
There was a total of **80%** of regional host organisations and audience engagement for this year's sessions during **History Week**.

Due to a successful ***Speaker Connect Program*** during **History Week 2019**, Bathurst Library have expressed interest in hosting 3 Speakers, year round. The HCNSW are seeing past Host Organisations such as Lake Mac Libraries requesting additional Speakers' outside of **History Week**.

Outside of History Week 2019

Due to increased advertising about ***Speaker Connect*** leading up to **History Week 2019**, the HCNSW received an increased number of applications from Regional Organisations becoming a Host Organisation for the ***Speaker Connect Program***, year round. For example, Mid-Western Regional Council Library & Don Dorrigio & Guy Fawkes Historical Society. The HCNSW received 6 regional host applications. This is a 6:5 ratio compared to Metropolitan Organisations.

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, an HCNSW branded 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.

Promotional Banner for Bathurst Library's Speaker Connect Talk during History Week 2019..

ANNUAL HISTORY LECTURE & AWARDS 2019

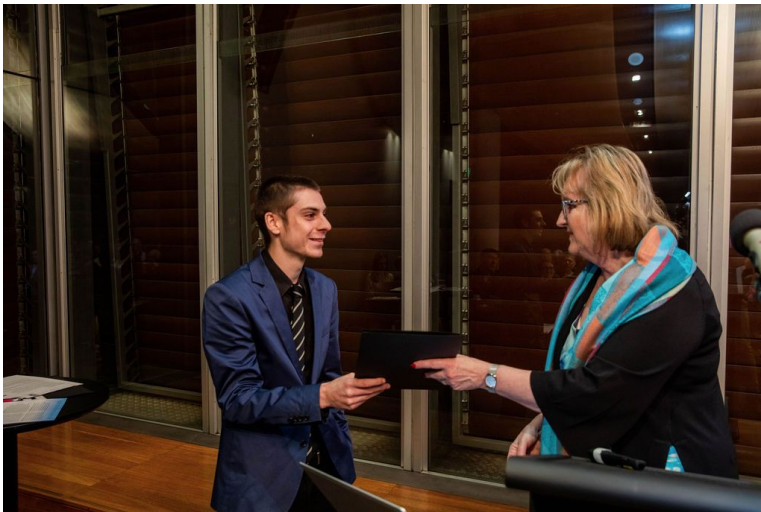
The key event run by the HCNSW during **History Week** was the **Annual History Lecture** (AHL) staged on 3 September at The Mint, Macquarie Street, Sydney. The AHL, entitled **Counter Currents – Aboriginal Men and Women at the Heart of Empire**, was delivered by Professor John Maynard, Professor of Indigenous Education and Research (Indigenous History) at the University of Newcastle.

The awarding of the Max Kelly Medal, Aboriginal History Prize, Addison Road Community Centre Organisation Multicultural Award, Macquarie University Centre for Applied History Award and Annual History Citation preceded the lecture. A list of AHL event sponsors is provided on the last page of this report.



The **Annual History Citation** was awarded to Sydney Historian, Max Solling in recognition of his role as a leading urban historian, practising in Sydney today.

Max Solling, Annual History Citation, addressing the audience at the Annual History Lecture 2019. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Max Kelly Medal** was awarded to Robert Mason for his essay ‘The (First) “Battle of the Wasser”, 2 April 1915: A Footnote in History?’.

Robert Mason accepting his award from Catherine Shirley, Executive Officer, HCNSW. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Aboriginal History Prize** was awarded to Deirdre O’Connell for her essay ‘American Boomerang: Searching Aboriginal Sydney, 1928’

Deirdre O’Connell accepting her award from A/Prof Nancy Cushing (Vice President of the HCNSWr). (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Addison Road Community Centre Organisation Award for Multicultural History** was awarded to Charlotte Ward for her essay ‘Captain Cook: A Catalyst for Contestation’.

Charlotte Ward accepting her award from Mina Bui Jones (Representative of Addison Road Community Centre Organisation). (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)



The **Macquarie University Centre for Applied History Award** was awarded to Kieran Bonin for his podcast 'Rugby and Union?'

Kieran Bonin accepting his award from A/Prof Tanys Evans (HCNSW Committee Member). (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)

ANNUAL HISTORY LECTURE

'Counter Currents - Aboriginal Men and Women at the Heart of Empire'

Professor John Maynard's lecture analysed memory and location in an Aboriginal context, far removed from the Australian experience, providing an Indigenous perspective and insight about these journeys. He asked thought-provoking questions such as why were they there?

What were the differences in experiences of these Aboriginal travelers?

Did they come home, and if so, what experiences, memories, observations and understandings did they bring back with them of the lands outside Australia?

ABC Radio National's '*Big Ideas*' recorded the lecture with broadcast date in late 2019 or early in 2020.



Prof John Maynard presenting the Annual History Lecture, 2019. (Photo credit: TWH Photography, courtesy HCNSW)

In total 95 guests attended the AHL, compared with 115 in 2018. The HCNSW offered a discounted student ticket to attract a broader audience. Of the 95 guests, 5 were students, 33 Complementary/VIP, 34 HCNSW members, and 23 General Admission.

HISTORY WEEK COMMUNITY EVENTS

A total of 75 events (compared with 92 in 2018) were registered in 2019, which included exhibitions, talks, tours, screenings and more.

"It was a delightful crowd and the event was expertly organised."

"Michael was (not suprisingly, given his background) a very professional and proficient speaker, and targeted the talk perfectly to our audience, with a mix of nostalgia and interesting facts they would not have known about these suburbs. The feedback from the members and other guests was fantastic!"

Host Feedback, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts

"Thank you for the interest you show in what our Don Dorrigio & Guy Fawkes Historical Museum does in our community. The town has a interesting history that we endeavour to preserve. Following your theme 'Memories & Landscapes' gave us an opportunity to take our Museum to the people with music & memories."

Ruth Holmes

President, Don Dorrigio & Guy Fawkes Museum, Dorrigio

Twenty-nine (49 in 2018) of the events were held in Sydney and the Eastern Suburbs, eighteen (15 in 2018) in Greater and Western Sydney, and sixteen (28 in 2018) in regional NSW.

Feedback surveys were circulated to audience members, host organisations and speakers. These surveys contained an enhanced list of questions from 2018.

Representatives from 39 (32 **History Week** host organisations and 7 **Speaker Connect** host organisations) responded (in comparison to 26 in 2018) and attendances reported were between 5 to 186.

Despite some concerns being voiced that the program was published later than expected, feedback from hosts and speakers was resoundingly positive as they thought **History Week** was very well organised, promoted and attended.

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, Library and our member organisations' personal eNewsletters.

The HCNSW publicised all **History Week** events on its website through a new interactive event calendar and program with events categorised by region, social media and two special edition e-newsletters between 13-28 August.

A PDF program was published and placed on the website for download by audiences and the calendar of events was linked by direct social media feed the HCNSW Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/HistoryCouncilNSW/>. Twitter and Instagram were also used extensively, and event inquiries and bookings were tracked via BitLy links.

This enabled bookings, reminders, event partnerships and some gathering of event statistics, as detailed in the table below and measured in comparison to 2018, mainly for the period 1 July - 30 September.

Social media platforms included:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

Online platforms included:

- HCNSW Website (events calendar, announcements and blogs)

Printed promotional materials included:

- Postcards
- Posters (Memory & Landscape thematic poster & Value of History Statement)
- Program (Annual History Lecture)

Details of engagement are as follows, showing 2019 in comparison to 2018:

DESCRIPTION	DISTRIBUTION	STATISTICS 2018	STATISTICS 2019
History Week postcard	Sydney Writers' Festival session, Newcastle Writers' Festival session, Orange Readers and Writers Festival event, NSW Premier's History	Total printed = 2,000	Total printed = 2,000

	Awards, ad hoc industry events, event hosts and members		
History Week A4 poster	Event Hosts and members	Total printed = 200	Total printed = 500
Annual History Lecture program	Annual History Lecture attendees and sponsors	Total printed = 120	Total printed = 135
Value of History Statement A4 poster	Annual History Lecture attendees and sponsors, general public Launch of the Value of History Statement & call to action.	N/A	Total printed = 135
Flagpole Banners courtesy of City of Sydney Council	On Phillip Street North, Bathurst Street, Glebe Point Road and Harris Street in Pyrmont. Not present on Macquarie Street.	Approximately 100 banners	99 banners
History Week interactive program	Online and interactive. Repeat format from 2018 to 2019 (but different platform), which continued to provide greater clarity to the audience about events per region, and enabled HCNSW staff to update last minute changes more efficiently than in previous years.	2018 1,753 pageviews 81.6% new visitors 18.4% returning Average duration = 3 minutes and 37 seconds	2019 Refer to HCNSW Statistics below, as the interactive calendar was on the main website in 2019
History Week e-newsletters	2019 -67 e-newsletters from 14-24 August. <u>Features </u> Continued - interactive program filtered by region. Established - new interactive events calendar on website, filtered by region.	Averages subscribers (2018) - 1,622; Totals during campaign: 3,603 opens & 580 clicks Average opening rate of Newsletter: 31.93%. Comparison industry average (Arts) opening rate: 20.20% Most popular click-throughs: PDF	Average subscribers (2019): 1,694 Average Individual Member subscribers: 111 Average Corporate Membership subscribers: 113 Average opening rate of Newsletter: 34.62%

		Program, Interactive Program.	<p>Comparison industry average (Arts) opening rate: 26.03%</p> <p>Totals during campaign: 3,232 opens & 395 clicks</p> <p>Most popular click-throughs: History Week Events Calendar, PDF Program & Interactive Program</p>
<p>HCNSW website</p> <p><i>(extracted from Google Analytics)</i></p>	<p>2018 - Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2018</p> <p>2019 - Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2019 (note: traffic also driven through to Facebook in greater numbers)</p>	<p>2018 </p> <p>Total users: 9,712</p> <p>41,561 pageviews</p> <p>9,211 new visitors</p> <p>16.2% returning</p> <p>Average duration = 1 minute and 36 seconds</p>	<p>2019 </p> <p>Total users: 5,297</p> <p>24,008 pageviews</p> <p>4,845 new visitors</p> <p>16.2% returning</p> <p>Average duration = 1 minute 40 seconds</p>
HCNSW Facebook	<p>2018 - Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2018</p> <p>2019 - Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2019</p>	<p>2018 </p> <p>Followers: 2,734</p> <p>Average Impressions per post: 732.72 impressions (1:147)</p> <p>Average Impressions per video post: 139 impressions (1:2)</p> <p>Average viral impressions/interactions per day: 304.23 (1:92)</p> <p>1 Sept: 85 unique user page views</p>	<p>2019 </p> <p>Followers: 3,425</p> <p>Average Impressions per post: 541.54 impressions (1:176)</p> <p>Average Impressions per video post: 670.5 impressions (1:10)</p> <p>Average viral impressions/interactions per day: 184.33 (1:92)</p>
HCNSW Twitter	<p>Impressions from 1 July to 30 September 2018 & 2019</p> <p>(Impressions = number of times HCNSW tweets were delivered to Twitter users)</p>	<p>2018 </p> <p>Tweet impressions: 47,122</p>	<p>2019 </p> <p>Tweet impressions: 51,279</p> <p>Mentions: 103</p>

		(Measured directly front Twitter in 2018)	Profile visits: 510 (Measured directly front Twitter in 2019)
HCNSW Instagram	Impressions from one month (mid August - mid-Sept 2018 & 2019)	2018 92 Posts and 261 new, unique follower. Statistics of re-sharing currently unknown.	2019 13 posts and 63 new, unique followers. Statistics on sharing 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 2019 surveys received a total of 43 responses (compared to 37 in 2018).

Here is a precis of responses to the Surveys:

1. Event Host Survey - 33 responses
2. Event Guest Survey - 0 responses
3. Speaker Connect Host Survey - 7 responses
4. Speaker Connect Speaker Survey - 4 responses

Host Feedback, Addison Road Community Centre Organisation

"Our event was fully booked a week ahead, and although it was a free event, close to 80% of those who booked actually attended. The audience stayed for the whole event and was engaged, attentive and appreciative."

There were no entries for guest event feedback.

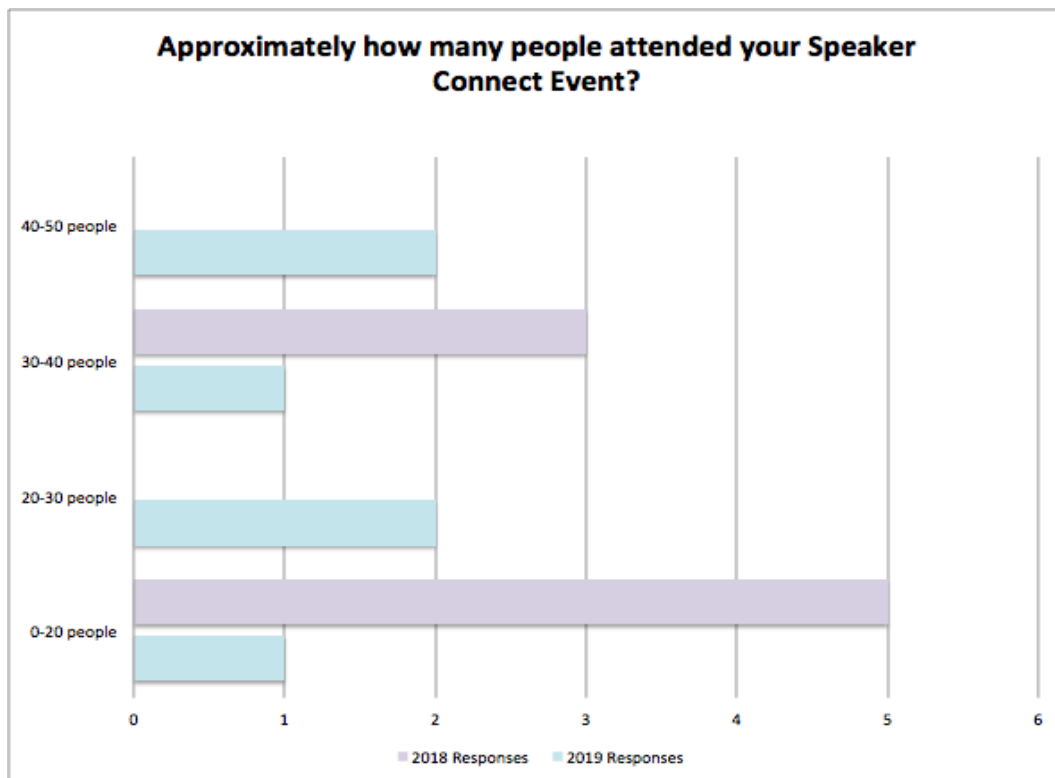
Feedback from surveys indicated that while the majority of hosts were happy with the timing, variety and quality of promotion, several indicated that, often due to the scale/difficult location of their venue, they would have preferred for promotion to have begun earlier and crossed more mediums.

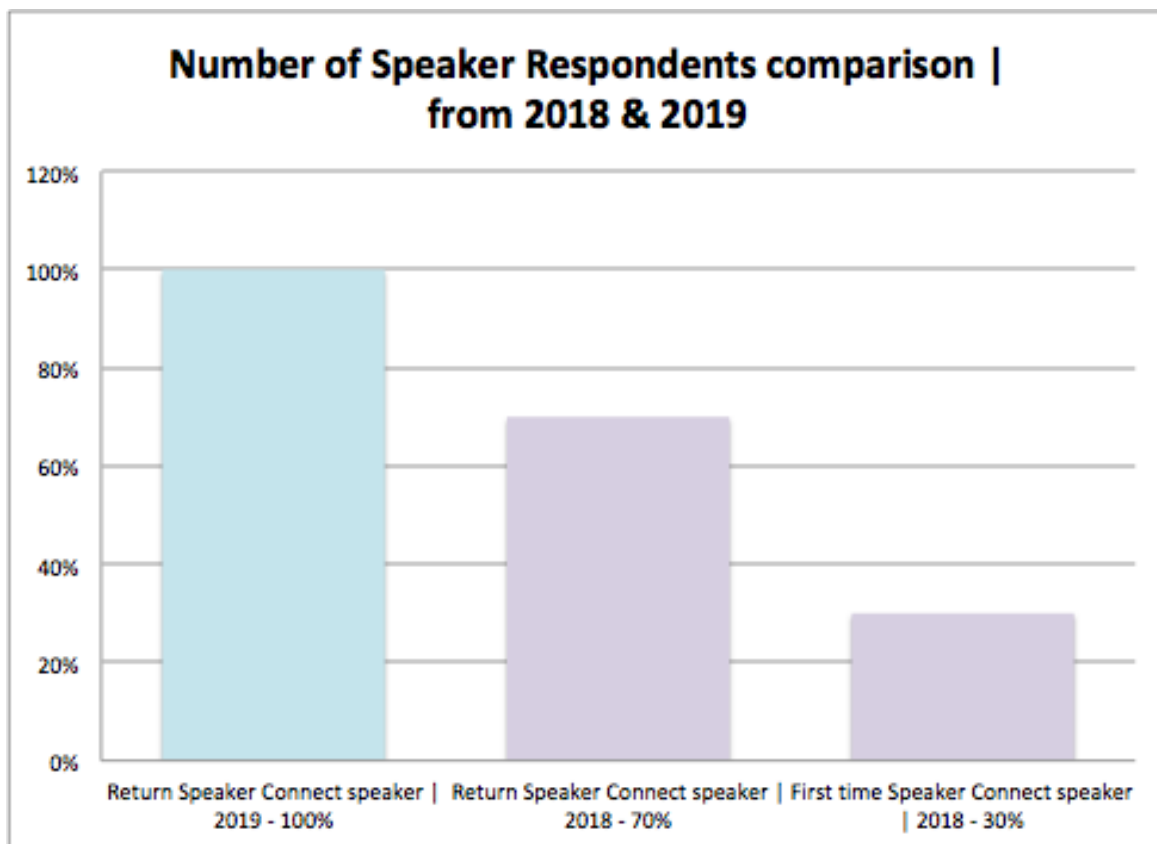
(Note: Each year, the HCNSW creates a media/publicity guide for host members, it contains helpful hints on how to publicise their History Week event and encourages hosts to contact us at admin@historycouncilnsw.org.au for more information. A number of hosts took us up on this offer.)

Other feedback

- Particular hosts also noted that they would like to have been more involved with the registration process for their events i.e. direct speaker contact details etc. as standard registration process. Perhaps even a poster/flyer template.
- Some hosts noted that it would be helpful to include a related image for publicity use for the explored talk/s, a speaker biography and photo without having to ask for it.
- Some hosts and speakers believed that having a broader publicity deadline prior to the events would be great in increasing audience attendance with the HCNSW providing a poster/flyer template to assist them with publicity.
- We received positive feedback from many hosts that their events attracted good crowds, that their audiences were interested and engaged with the content. One in particular expressed the following sentiment about their speaker: *"[he] was (not surprisingly, given his background) a very professional and proficient speaker, and targeted the talk perfectly to our audience"*.

Responses to key questions





Individual survey responses from speakers

1. *"The programme is very worthwhile, especially when pitched at a regional NSW venue."*
2. *"I have been involved in the past and find it a good way to engage with regional audiences that are directly related to the topic/work I am presenting."*
3. *"I feel that, as an historian, the communication of my interests is of paramount importance. As I do not see myself as an academic historian I enjoy enormously communicating my passions to the general public and making history come alive for them. Also, as one who also comes from the arts and entertainment industry, I want them to enjoy and be entertained by the past as much as I do. Making it alive is of great importance and History Week is a wonderful time to try to do this."*
4. *"Those who attended the talk were very engaged and, due to the small numbers, I was able to speak to them individually before the talk and ascertain their interests. This enabled me to personalise the talk beyond the local history that I had already researched and included. On the level of Speaker Connect in History Week aiming to speak to a general audience I felt that this was achieved."*

Responses from host organisations and speakers -

Q: "How would you rate the audience's response to your event & your audience feedback?"



Responses from History Week host organisations -

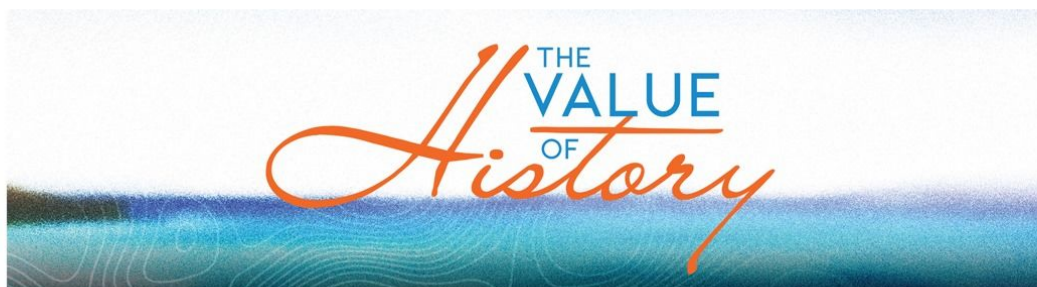
Q: Would you be likely to apply and participate in History Week again next year if the theme meets your organisation's needs? Please explain."



Word bubble of responses to these survey question, created using WordClouds.com | <https://www.wordclouds.com/>

OTHER ACTIVITIES IN HISTORY WEEK 2019

In 2019, the HCNSW also used the publicity and focus on history matters generated around **History Week** to launch the ***Value of History Statement***:



On 3 September 2019, at the ***Annual History Lecture***, HCNSW President Dr Stephen Gapps presented the ***Value of History Statement*** to the general audience/HCNSW members.

As of 22 October 2019, there have been a total of 91 endorsements for the Value of History Statement from members of the History Council & non-members.

"History starts one second ago, so the records of history are the records of the near present & the past. The records of history provide us with **evidence** of the decisions, thoughts, deliberations, actions & choices made by people coping with the demands of everyday life. The study of **choices & actions** in the past shows us that the same problems arise repeatedly yet the responses differ. The capacity to study history gives us crucial **informed** context for the challenges & decisions of the present."

Dr Louise Trott

NON-MEMBER ENDORSEMENTS | **73 ENDORSEMENTS**

MEMBER ENDORSEMENTS | **18 ENDORSEMENTS**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020

1. Audience engagement - research and source new ways of increasing audience engagement for History Week across social media platform with a view to increasing attendances
2. Statistics
 - a. Seek cooperation from Host Organisations to create Eventbrite linkages to all events through organisers sites
 - b. If Eventbrite linkages are not possible, use BitLy links via a subscription plan to gain click-through statistics from program to events
 - c. Social media - research new Social Media aggregator needed to replace Hootsuite
 - d. Overall survey methodologies and response inducements to be improved in 2020
3. Speaker Connect
 - a. Continue to aim to spread Speaker Connect events throughout the year and target regional organisations
 - b. Partnerships for SC events to be sought
4. Sponsorship
 - a. New sponsors to be sourced for overall History Week and other events
5. Partnerships
 - a. New and refreshed partnerships to be sought for History Week and Annual History Lecture
6. Venue - AHL
 - a. Research viability to run AHL in a regional location
 - b. Research new location & partnership agreement for AHL venue if the regional is not feasible
7. 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. Continue seeking media partners in metro and regional centres for wider reach of publicity.

PRINCIPAL SUPPORTER

Create NSW

PARTNERS

City of Sydney

Dictionary of Sydney

Macquarie University (Department of Modern History, Politics and International Relations)

National Archives of Australia

NSW State Archives and Records

Reserve Bank of Australia

State Library of New South Wales

Sydney Living Museums

University of New England

University of Newcastle

University of New South Wales (School of History and Philosophy)

University of Technology, Sydney (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

DONORS

Macquarie University

Addison Road Community Centre

Geoffrey Jones (Max Kelly Medal)

Anonymous donor (Aboriginal History Prize)

History Week 2019 is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW



Report prepared by Catherine Shirley & Cassandra Rodger, History Council of NSW, October 2019