



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Over the past twelve months, the Phillip Island & District Historical Society has achieved significant milestones and robust community engagement. We have successfully transitioned into our new museum and research room, with the former equipped with state-of-the-art digital display units. Our off-site storage challenge has been temporarily resolved thanks to a generous donation and we have engaged in a number of events expanding our reach within the community.

Our community's enthusiasm is mirrored in the record-high membership levels and substantial publicity from various events. Highlights included our feature on "What's Up Downunder," extensive local press coverage, and our successful participation in the Heritage Festival Walk, which showcased our commitment to making history accessible and engaging.

Financially, we have been bolstered by over \$20,000 in grants and donations for special events and operation purposes, facilitating significant infrastructure improvements and community events.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch exhibitions celebrating the 150th anniversaries of two local schools as well as celebrating the history of the beloved Warley Hospital. Additionally, the transition to a cloud-based accounting system has greatly enhanced our operational transparency and efficiency.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are not only preserving the rich history of Phillip Island but are also actively expanding its reach and impact. I look forward to building on this momentum in the coming year.

Warm regards,

Doug Waugh  
President,  
Phillip Island & District Historical Society

## Mission Statement

- (a) Fostering interest and encouraging the study of the history of Phillip Island and surrounding district, and to promote the compilation and publication of authentic historical records.
- (b) Collecting, reserving and displaying artefacts and items of historical interest.
- (c) Aiding in the preservation of places, artefacts and records of historical interest relating to the history of Phillip Island and district.
- (d) Promoting all aspects of the history of Phillip Island and surrounding district through exhibitions, publications and events for its members and the community.
- (e) Maintaining and enhancing the Society's local history museum, ensuring it remains a vibrant, engaging and educational resource for the community.

# Year in Review

## Overview

This financial year has been a transformative period for the Phillip Island & District Historical Society, marked by significant growth and change. We successfully navigated the challenges of moving into our new museum and research room facilities, enhancing our capability to preserve and present the rich history of our area. Our dedication to making history accessible and engaging has strengthened our presence in the community and broadened our impact.

## Key Events and Programs

*Transition to New Museum and Research Room:* The move was completed with great success, involving the installation of purpose built display units and storage cabinets funded through targeted fundraising and generous donations.

*Media Engagement:* This year, our society gained prominent exposure on "What's Up Downunder" and received extensive coverage in local media, enhancing our visibility and highlighting our community involvement. Additionally, we consistently provided historical narratives to several island publications, further elevating our profile within the local community. These efforts have significantly amplified awareness of our mission and activities.

*Heritage Festival - Walk Around the Block in Cowes:* This event, starting at Genista House with a delightful morning tea, drew over 20 participants. It was a resounding success, providing both locals and visitors with insights into the historic features and stories of our township.

*Educational Outreach:* We held several presentations, including a notable session for U3A Frankston and local clubs, which were well-received and further established us as a key educational resource in the community. Additionally, we developed a historic display to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Cowes Primary School. This display was featured during the school's annual fair and offered a visually engaging look back at 150 years of educational history. The event provided an excellent opportunity to educate both current students and the general public about the school's significant legacy and its role within our community.

## Membership

This year, we reached an all-time high in membership numbers, a clear testament to the growing interest and support for our work. The increased membership has not only bolstered our financial stability but has also enhanced our community engagement efforts. Each new member brings us closer to our goal of preserving and celebrating the history of Phillip Island through active participation and support.

*Membership Drives:* Throughout the year, we implemented several strategies to attract new members, including engaging presentations at local clubs and offering attractive membership incentives. These initiatives successfully highlighted the advantages of joining the Historical Society, drawing in a diverse group of new members.

*Member Engagement:* We increased our efforts to engage members through newsletters, and discounted events for members and continued to hold quarterly meetings which encouraged social interaction between members. This all helped deepen our relationship with the community and reinforce the value of membership.

*Historical Story Contributions:* In the past twelve months, we continued our commitment to educating and engaging the wider community by supplying a monthly historic story to the Phillip Island Vibe Magazine and the Rhyll Reporter. These stories, focusing on the rich history of the broader Phillip Island area, and localised stories in Rhyll not only keep our members informed but also stimulate interest among the general public, drawing new visitors and supporters to our cause.

# Financial Report

## Treasurer's Report

Attached in Appendices is the P & L and Balance Sheet for the year ending June 30 2024.

As we close another fiscal year, we are pleased to present the financial overview for the Phillip Island & District Historical Society. This year has been marked by significant financial activities, reflecting both our challenges and our achievements in advancing our mission.

*Revenue Highlights:* This year, our donation income was exceptionally high, largely due to the generous contributions towards our off-site storage facility. Additionally, the Society successfully hosted various special events that generated a net surplus of \$6,643, showcasing the community's enthusiastic participation and support.

*Expenditure Overview:* Total expenses for the year amounted to significant investments in our infrastructure and Museum programming. Museum-related expenses totalled \$14,225, with the majority allocated to the production of digital videos for our museum displays. I am pleased to report that these expenses were fully funded by a grant from the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), which we received in the previous financial year but expended this year.

Other notable expenses included freight and courier costs associated with the transport of bookcases and other furniture from storage to the Research Room. These costs arose after the Council declined to cover these expenses. Additionally, we invested in small asset purchases, such as new filing cabinets, to enhance our operational capabilities.

*Financial Position:* Despite an operating loss of nearly \$10,000, it is important to note that this figure does not reflect a financial shortfall but rather a timing issue related to the receipt and expenditure of grants. The grants received in the previous financial year have adequately covered this year's expenditures, ensuring our financial stability.

*Looking Ahead:* The Management Committee is optimistic about the financial future of the Society. With the majority of the expenditure for museum enhancements behind us, we anticipate a return to a financial surplus in the coming year. Our focus will remain on strengthening our financial base through continued community engagement, effective fundraising, and prudent management of resources.

## Fundraising Efforts

This year, our fundraising initiatives have played a crucial role in supporting the Society's growth and operational enhancements. One significant development was the installation of a tap-and-go donation system in the museum. This modern, user-friendly technology has made it easier for visitors to contribute, boosting our voluntary donations significantly.

Through targeted grant applications, we successfully secured funding that enabled the construction of new display cases and plinths for our upcoming exhibitions. These additions are essential for properly showcasing our valuable artifacts and will greatly enhance the visitor experience. Additionally, the grants helped us replace outdated filing cabinets and install new large-format storage cabinets, crucial for preserving important documents and maps in our expanding collection.

We recognize the importance of increasing our membership, which remains excellent value at just \$30 per annum. Doubling our membership could significantly contribute towards making the Society self-sufficient. This potential increase in members not only boosts our financial stability but also enriches our community engagement and support.

Looking ahead, we aim to increase our fundraising activities, which were somewhat limited this year due to the extensive efforts required to transition our office and open the new museum. In the coming year, we plan to explore more diverse fundraising strategies, including more grant opportunities, community fundraising events, and partnerships with local businesses. These efforts will not only help secure the financial resources needed to sustain our operations but also strengthen our community ties, enhance our offering to our members and ensure that we continue to preserve our local heritage effectively.

In conclusion, while this year has presented its financial complexities, our strategic management of resources and the continued support of our community and funding bodies have allowed us to maintain a stable and promising financial trajectory. We extend our gratitude to all who have contributed to our financial efforts, ensuring that we continue to preserve and celebrate the rich history of Phillip Island.



## Cataloguing and Archives Report

This past year has been a pivotal one for our archiving efforts at the Phillip Island & District Historical Society. Despite the considerable disruption posed by transitioning into our new premises, our progress in archiving and preserving the historical records of Phillip Island has been substantial. The ongoing dedication of our cataloguing team ensures that our history is not only preserved but also shared widely.

**Ongoing Archival Activities:** Our dedicated team has diligently continued to catalogue and digitize our collection. We have made significant strides in uploading images and detailed information to Victorian Collections, a vital resource that ensures public access to our valuable historical records. This year, we have been exceptionally busy registering and meticulously listing the details of hundreds of documents and files we hold. This extensive effort supports our mission to make our archives more accessible and searchable for researchers, historians, and the general public.

**Enhancements in Archival Processes:** The transition to the new premises offered an opportunity to re-evaluate and improve our archival processes. With the new storage cabinetry which is designed to better preserve our documents and files, improves and not only aids the longevity of our physical collections but also enhances the efficiency of retrieval for research.

**Future Goals:** Looking ahead, we plan to expand our digital archiving efforts further. This includes increasing our capacity for scanning and digital storage, which will help in mitigating the risk of physical deterioration of documents. Additionally, we aim to enhance our online presence by providing more detailed narratives and historical contexts for the items in our collection, thereby enriching the user experience on Victorian Collections.

## Outreach and Education

This past year, our outreach and education initiatives have expanded significantly, strengthening our connections within the community and enhancing our offerings to members.

*Digital Engagement:* In addition to our in-person events and presentations, we have actively maintained and updated our Facebook page and website, providing regular posts filled with interesting information. These digital platforms play a crucial role in our outreach strategy, allowing us to reach a broader audience and engage with the community on a daily basis. Through these updates, we share insights into our current projects, highlight historical facts about Phillip Island, and promote upcoming events and exhibitions. This continuous digital engagement helps to keep our members and the public informed and connected to our work.

*Cowes Primary School Sesquicentennial Display:* In a highlight of our community engagement, we organized a historic display to mark the 150th anniversary of Cowes Primary School. This event was supported by extensive research into the school's 150-year history. The display included educational postcards, which we published and distributed. These postcards featured significant historical insights and served as both educational tools and keepsakes for attendees, further enhancing the community's connection to its history.

*Community Presentations:* Our commitment to educational outreach was further demonstrated through a series of presentations delivered to local organizations, including the U3A, the Probus Club, and the Rotary Club of Phillip Island and San Remo. These presentations focused on various aspects of Phillip Island's rich history, helping to inform and engage community members while fostering a deeper appreciation for the region's heritage.

We anticipate organizing more community events, both educational and social, in the coming year which will enhance our educational offerings and provide greater value to our members. These initiatives not only help in preserving local history but also in making it accessible and engaging to people of all ages within our community.

## Volunteer Contributions

Over the past year, the commitment and diligence of our committee members have been nothing short of outstanding. Their dedicated efforts have steered our society through significant transitions and initiatives, continually advancing our mission to preserve and share our local heritage.

We also extend a heartfelt vote of thanks to the invaluable non-committee members who devote their time each week to cataloguing and sorting our collections. Their meticulous work is crucial in maintaining the integrity and accessibility of our historical resources, ensuring that our community and future generations can benefit from these preserved histories. Together, these efforts embody the spirit of teamwork and dedication that is vital for the success and longevity of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society.

## Goals for Next Year

As we look to the future, the Phillip Island & District Historical Society is excited to continue our growth and development through a series of strategic initiatives designed to enhance our engagement and sustainability

These goals are designed to build on our current successes and open up new opportunities for the Historical Society. By expanding our reach, enhancing member experiences, and securing new revenue streams, we aim to ensure the long-term sustainability for the Society.

*Enhanced Exhibition Planning:* Utilize our comprehensive History Time-Line to guide the scheduling and thematic development of our temporary exhibitions. This tool will help us better plan our exhibits around significant historical dates and community events, ensuring they are both informative and timely.

*Member Engagement Events:* Host an opening exhibition event, featuring a wine and cheese afternoon for our members. This event will not only serve as an appreciation gesture but also as an opportunity to showcase our latest exhibitions, expanding our offering to our members.

*Digital Enhancement:* Explore the addition of another digital screen within our museum. This upgrade will allow us to offer more dynamic and interactive temporary displays, enriching the visitor experience and providing more versatile presentation options for our exhibits.

*New Revenue Streams:* Investigate the possibility of involvement at the Rhyll Markets over Summer as a revenue-raising venture. This initiative would provide a steady income stream while increasing our presence and engagement within the local community.

*Outreach at Local Events:* Plan to meet passenger ships at Rhyll with a selection of books and photographic images for sale. This approach will tap into the tourist market, promoting local history and generating additional revenue to support our activities.

## Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the volunteers whose dedication and hard work have been instrumental throughout the year. Your tireless efforts ensure that our society continues to thrive and fulfil its mission. We are also profoundly thankful for the generosity of those who have financially supported the society. A special thank you goes to Bendigo Bank for their crucial funding, and to the Federal Government's Department of Social Services for their gracious grant, along with the Bass Coast Shire Council for assisting us with a large Perspex display cabinet.

An extra special thank you to John Tennant, who provides us with a service unmatched for a price which is also unmatched! Finally, we deeply appreciate our members who consistently contribute beyond their annual subscription fees. Your donations significantly bolster our ability to sustain our operations and our programs and initiatives. Each contribution, big or small, plays a vital role in the success and vitality of our society.

## Appendices

PR Note to include: financial statements, membership forms, event flyers and any PR.