

RAVENSTHORPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY (Inc.) ANNUAL REPORT for 2024 PRESENTED TO AGM 22  
MARCH 2025

I've just noted that I commenced my last Annual Report with the phrase 'it's been the most challenging year of my presidency so far'. Well it's fair to say nothing has changed, if anything the challenges are now even greater. Our lack of success in gaining Commonwealth Government funding for the extension project has indicated where we won't be going in the immediate future, but our engagement with consultant Cathy Day has indicated some directions we should be going in spite of that lack of success. I will return to these issues.

Before I go any further I would like to acknowledge the passing of Ian Goldfinch on 14 April 2024. Goldie was our driving force when it came to the extension project; no one could have done more. In my view our lack of success was due to other priorities at the national level and political considerations rather than the quality of the submission.

I also acknowledge and thank Derek and Ann Williams as well as Jenny Lloyd who have re-located to Busselton and Albany respectively for their support over many years.

The 'stand out' event of the year was undoubtedly our engagement with Heritage Today consultant Cathy Day who spent 25 – 28 November in Ravensthorpe/Hopetoun to make recommendations for future directions for RHS and spoke with RHS members, visitor centre volunteers, Shire CEO and Community Sport and Recreation manager and Shire President. Cathy also facilitated a public meeting on 27 November attended by 28 people. Cathy produced a report with recommendations, some of which have already been implemented; these are discussed as ordinary meeting business rather in detail than here. Cathy's participation was *pro bono*; a return flight from Perth was provided by Arcadium Lithium, accommodation and transport were provided by Sue Leighton and Colin Hughes.

The remaining activities for the year divide somewhat arbitrarily into the following groupings:

Facilities management, Digital access and technology, Events, Publicity, Curation, Security, Membership, Visitor Centre and Craftshop.

Facilities Management. We have begun re-arranging the visual entry statement in keeping with visitor focus recommendations from Cathy Day by making the Museum entry more eye catching, open and inviting by better use of the Chuditch/Echidna display. Only last week Colin Hughes removed the front counter high front for immediate eye contact with visitors as they come through the door. It has made a splendid difference. Colin provided his cabinet making (and unmaking) skills *pro bono*; I thank Colin for his generosity.

Digital access and technology. We have dispensed with the linet/Messaging Company fiasco for phone/ internet/ email/ wi-fi in favour of Telstra by NBN delivery.

Events. We held a very successful Mystery History Tour based from Hopetoun on 19 May; 26 people with 10 vehicles attended. A highlight was lunch at Springdale Café. We also hosted a thank you lunch for visitor centre volunteers on 5 October attended by 18 people at Sue Leighton and Colin Hughes' Blue Vista property.

Publicity. We had eight articles in Community Spirit throughout the year as well as numerous Facebook postings thanks to Madeleine. In February alone there were 12,600 views reached 1,600 people of whom 707 were followers.

Curation. Enid Tink accessioned 59 objects and Chenda Goldfinch scanned 150 photographs. Chenda indicated at our last ordinary meeting that she had now scanned 4,000 photos and still had about 4,000 to go!

Security. Funded by Arcadium Lithium we have had installed eight motion sensitive floodlights in the Museum courtyard. They were installed by Mark Lloyd.

Membership. Our current total membership is 26 members. The greater majority of members are out of town supporters. While they are of course very welcome and valued we only have five local people actively involved in the management committee which by our constitution requires eight.

Visitor Centre and Craftshop. We had 4999 visitors in 2024. This is down on last year's figure which was 5780 which was our highest ever. Approximately one third of visitors also enter the Museum. As reported in Madeleine's annual statement entry fees and donations were \$3,904.05, shop gross takings were \$21,837.00, 80% of this went back to local vendors/suppliers.

RHS welcomes and thanks the following new Visitor Centre volunteers: Andreas Preisser, Jenny Chambers, Judy Harp, Gabriella Kastro, Anita Schuler and Claire Daniel.

I think that RHS has a sound rapport with the Shire of Ravensthorpe and I believe we should work to maintain that relationship.

Andrew Chapman, President, Ravensthorpe Historical Society, 22 March 2025.