

Opal

HISTORY  
TRUST  
OF SOUTH  
AUSTRALIA



HIGHLIGHTS 2024  
➤ 2025

Our promise

The History Trust of South Australia’s promise is a reminder that every time we connect with our audience, communities and colleagues we are committing to shared goals and to providing a consistent History Trust experience at every interaction.

*“We collect and creatively tell stories of South Australia’s past to keep our history relevant for present and future generations, so together we can better understand and celebrate our place in the world.”*



Front cover: Opal Wonders  
Right: Jack Buckskin of Kuma Karuu, Welcome to Country Smoking Ceremony at Bay to Birdwood, National Motor Museum. Nathan Richmond Photography

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The History Trust of South Australia respects the primary role of Aboriginal people in the history of this place.

We acknowledge that this story commenced long before the province of South Australia was proclaimed on 28 December 1836.

Aboriginal people have knowledge, histories and cultures that extend millennia into the past. We acknowledge that their land and sovereignty were never ceded, and that building a shared understanding of history is critical to the future of this place.







# Elizabeth Ho OAM

Chair of Trustees (2016 to 2025)

There's been no standing still at the History Trust of South Australia — the only Australian agency with a legislative charter to promote history.

We continue to chart new courses as we share South Australia's unique stories through a vibrant program, a dedicated crew, multiple sites and a state-wide remit to serve all South Australians.

Over the past 9 years, it has been a privilege to chair our 8-member Board — Trustees whose skill and vision have steered the Trust towards a bolder future, ably supported by our Chief Executive Officer.

Throughout 2024 to 2025, the wind has truly filled our sails. Our strategic course is delivering tangible results. We are sparking curiosity and guiding South Australians through new, inspiring and sometimes challenging journeys into our shared past.

Our work with students and teachers continues to gain momentum. A strengthened digital outreach program is bringing history to classrooms across the state, broadening horizons for a new generation of learners.

Two major projects are on the horizon: the redevelopment of the Migration Museum site and *Priscilla: Driving Change!*, an ambitious exhibition, restoration and learning resources package celebrating a world icon of humanity and inclusion.

Alongside these, our public maritime and motor museums, the ever-popular Bay to Birdwood, South Australia's History Festival and the State History Collection continue to power our voyage. They offer rich opportunities for creativity, connection and community well-being as we sail toward the state's bicentenary in 2036.

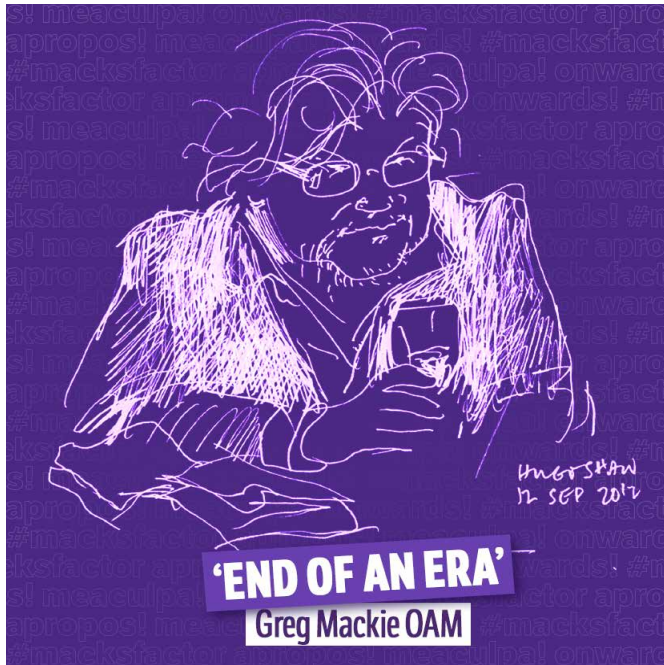
We have made real headway in building our brand presence and have a sharper sense of how and where to reach more South Australians with stories that matter.

Sincere thanks to our retiring CEO Greg Mackie OAM for 9 years of exceptional service, to our Minister Hon Blair Boyer MP, to all Trustees, past and present, who have joined with me on the journey, to our hardworking teams, generous supporters, donors and sponsors, ambassadors, History Guardians, volunteers and Department for Education colleagues.

I am confident that the Trust will continue to prosper under future leadership that understands the vital links between history, democracy, education and social cohesion and keeps this combination front and centre for the benefit of our state.

Taking our past into the future is a great adventure - come and sail those waters with us!





## Greg Mackie OAM

Chief Executive Officer (2016 to 2025)

April 2025 marked 9 years leading the History Trust, and so these final words give pause to reflect on a decade of change. It has been my privilege to have served 3 governments, 4 Ministers, a dedicated board of Trustees and a committed public sector team - all in service of the people of South Australia.

Among many achievements there remain opportunities missed. In anticipation of the forthcoming bicentenary of the 1836 proclamation of the establishment of government in the Province of South Australia, from 2018 to 2022 it was a privilege to develop a strong business case for the establishment of the Adelaide Museum of South Australia's History (AMoSAH). While this vision was unrealised, the opportunity remains compelling.

The relocation to new headquarters along North Terrace would not have been possible without additional funding provided by the Malinauskas Government. And likewise, important structural repairs to the state heritage listed buildings that comprise the Migration Museum on Kintore Avenue will soon commence.

In response to climate change and rising energy costs, the History Trust established a major 300kw solar power station at its National Motor Museum.

And in another major initiative, a purpose-designed state collections' storage facility is being constructed to house the treasures for the people of South Australia held by 4 major state collecting institutions: the State Library of South Australia, South Australian Museum, Art Gallery of South Australia and the History Trust of South Australia. Preparation for the move is a major task: collection evaluation, documentation, digitisation and packing for the safe keeping of state treasures is important work. A small and dedicated team have been diligently undertaking the 'invisible' work that will yield public benefit for decades to come.

The History Trust plays an important role in supporting many local and niche museums and historical societies across South Australia. I remain particularly proud of the leadership role played by the Trust in securing Commonwealth and State Government funding for the relocation of the world-famous Vickers Vimy aeroplane that was the first in history to complete a trans-planet journey.

History is a dynamic practise with many people and even more moving parts. Long may the History Trust and its dedicated people flourish.



Images top left clockwise: Impression of Greg Mackie by Hugh Shaw, Greg Mackie speaking at the Migration Museum, Greg's headshot, (left to right) Jonathan Lambert, Troy-Anthony Baylis (aka Kaboobie) and Greg Mackie at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade 2025

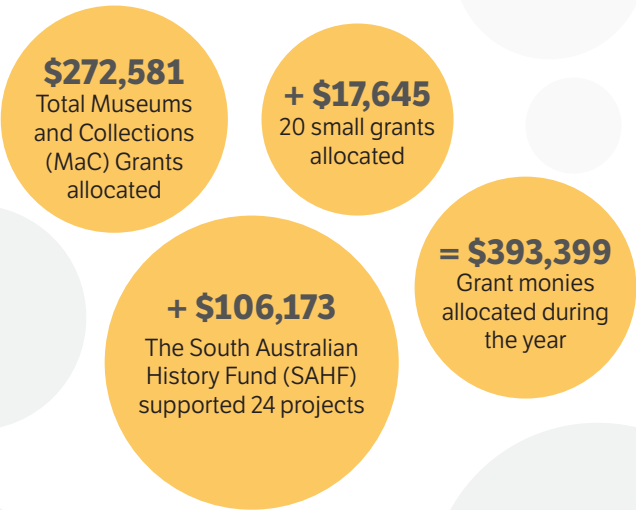


# 2024•2025 AT A GLANCE

## ATTENDANCES AT HISTORY TRUST SITES



## GRANT PROGRAMS



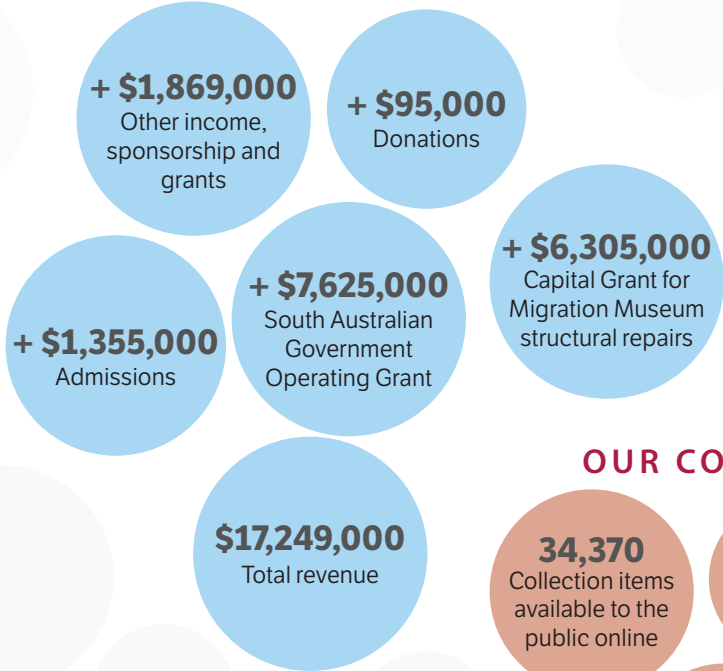
## ATTENDANCES AT OTHER SITES



## VOLUNTEERS



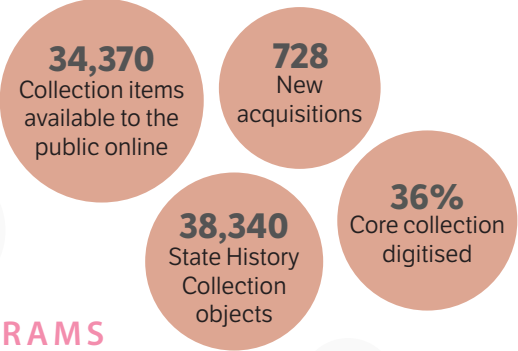
## HISTORY TRUST REVENUE



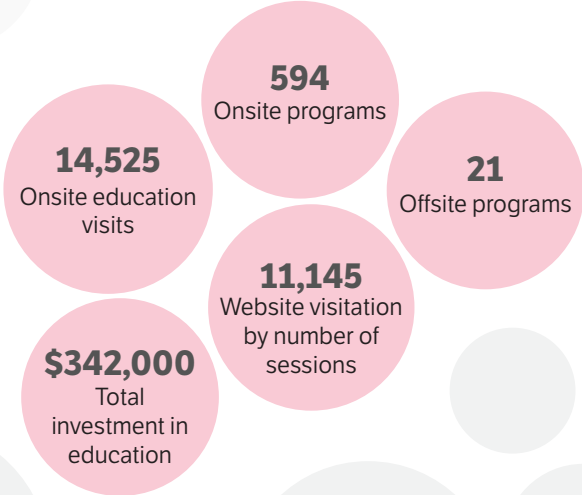
## ONLINE ACTIVITIES



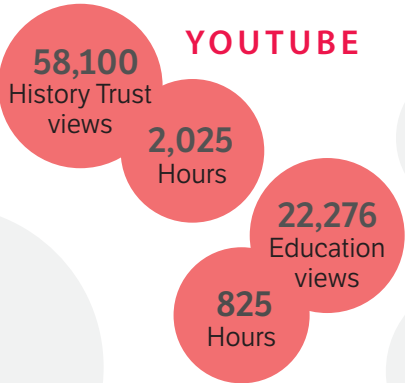
## OUR COLLECTIONS



## EDUCATION PROGRAMS



## YOUTUBE





# SAVE THE QUEEN



Throughout 2024 to 2025, the *Priscilla: Destination Fabulous* project gained momentum. To mark the 30th anniversary of the Australian release of *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, the Trust hosted a screening at the Piccadilly Cinema in North Adelaide, with Executive Producer Rebel Penfold-Russel. The Trust took part in the Broken Heel Festival and a screening at RMIT Melbourne alongside Rebel and costume designer Tim Chappell. The Trust also participated in Feast Festival, Picnic in the Park, Pride Parade and MELT Festival in Queensland, strengthening allyship with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual community and raising greater awareness for the campaign.



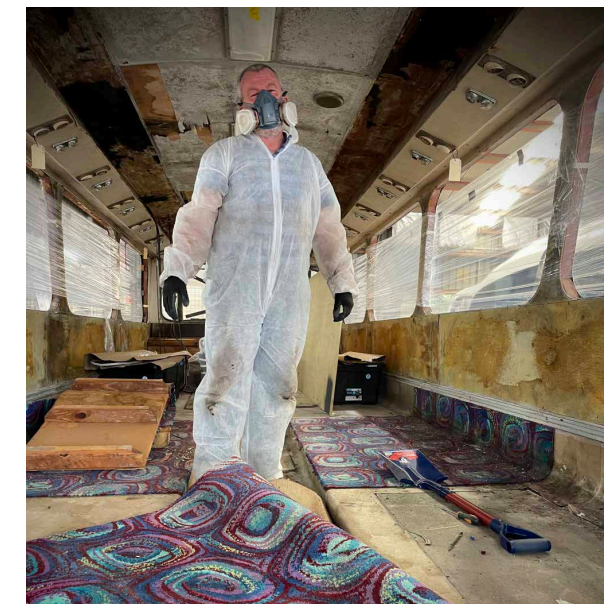
In March 2025, Glambassadors Troy-Anthony Baylis (aka Kaboobie) and Vonni joined forces with the Trust's team to create a spectacular float for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. Featuring a replica silver stiletto and bright pink corflute buses, the float united 40 Priscilla enthusiasts, including Minister Blair Boyer, CEO Greg Mackie OAM, original 78er Aunty Del, former Matilda's vice-captain Moya Dodd OAM and the late Carla Stacey AO. The float captured hearts worldwide, with coverage across national and international media.



During South Australia's History Festival in May, the Trust staged *Frock Up and Find Out* at Ayers House. It was a celebration of 1990s Australian film hosted by Vonni, with guest speaker Graeme Mason, former CEO of Screen Australia and influential in producing the original 1994 movie. Mason shared behind-the-scenes stories from his extensive film career. The event drew over 100 guests and helped raise greater awareness of the *Priscilla* project.

Looking ahead to 2025 to 2026, restoration of the bus will commence, alongside concept development of an ambitious exhibition and education program at its new home, the National Motor Museum Australia in Birdwood, South Australia.

Image above: Audience at the Piccadilly Cinema screening  
Image credit: Frankie The Creative



Images: Initial steps towards Priscilla's restoration  
Image credit: Sue Arlidge, History Trust of South Australia

10 Images top to bottom: Attendees at the 2025 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade, practicing before the show, Image credit: Sue Arlidge, History Trust of South Australia, putting on our best performance, Image credit: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Ltd



# RESEARCH

In 2024 to 2025, research remained central to the History Trust of South Australia's work, with several collaborative projects advancing public understanding of history in innovative ways.

## Fancy a Bit of History? (FABOH)

South Australia's History Advocate, Dr Kiera Lindsey, in collaboration with Grace Turpin, University of Adelaide Master's student, designed the *Fancy a Bit of History?* survey, conducted between August and September 2024. This was a response to the South Australian Stories Survey Initiative (SASSi) findings aimed at building better understanding about how South Australians aged 18 to 29 engage with and perceive history.



←  
SCAN TO WATCH  
A PRESENTATION  
AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE  
AND READ THE RESULTS

## Comedy Country

The Trust continues to be a Partner Organisation in the Australian Research Council (ARC) Project *Comedy Country: Australian Performance Comedy as an Agent of Change*. Led by researchers at Monash University and University of Adelaide, the project investigates the development of comic performance in Australia from the aftermath of World War II until the present. It hypothesises that since the 1950s comic performance has not merely reflected a changing Australia but helped drive social and cultural transformation.

The project's outputs over the next 3 years include an interactive website, research papers and travelling exhibition. Workshops with school students will be run through the Centre of Democracy to explore how comedy can facilitate public discussion about complex social issues.



Research for *On the Move*, an online exhibition exploring Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) migration to Adelaide between 1950 and 2000, uncovered powerful personal and political stories that reflect the city's reputation as a progressive centre for LGBTQ rights. Supported by an ARC Linkage grant, the Trust collaborated with the University of Adelaide and RMIT University, and it used oral histories and objects to highlight the role LGBTQ people played in shaping contemporary Adelaide.

→  
SCAN TO  
ACCESS  
THE ONLINE  
EXHIBITION



## Karrawirraparri

In ongoing collaboration with Sophia Booij, University of South Australia PhD candidate, the Education team delivered several professional development workshops on game design. Focused on the creation of educational game prototypes, these workshops enabled educators within metro Adelaide to understand both the importance of play for learning and ways this pedagogy could be applied to their specific school or collections context. Development continues on 2 new educational games aimed at school audiences: the boardgame *Karrawirraparri Journey* about Kaurna history and connection to Country and *First Day*, a digital visual novel centred around the 1975 constitutional crisis. Sophia presented this professional development workshop and both game prototypes as case studies at 2 national and one international academic conferences.







# EDUCATION

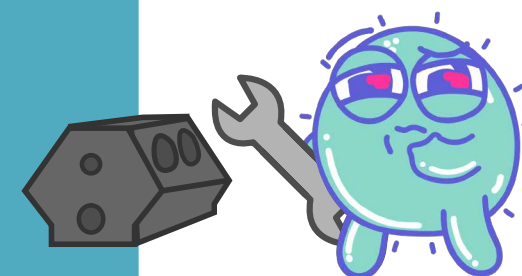
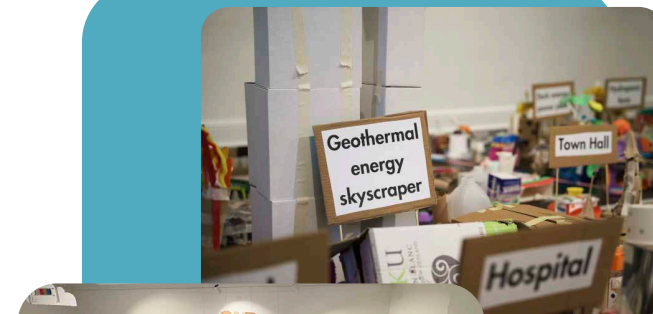
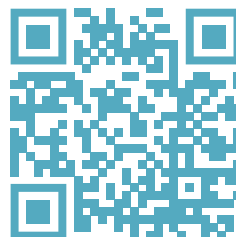
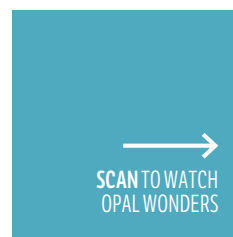
Education at the History Trust of South Australia continues to evolve and change in order to offer experiences online, at our museums, and through events and festivals. Irrespective of where they learn, the History Trust aims to reach all students with South Australia's stories and histories.

Supporting students and teachers to connect with our exhibitions regardless of their location continues to be an area of growth for the Trust. Over the last 12 months, learning activities and teaching resources were created to accompany 2 exhibitions: the South Australian Maritime Museum exhibition, *Yuki (bark canoe): Sharing Ngarrindjeri culture*, and *Holden and Me* at the National Motor Museum. These resources cater across age groups, are curriculum-aligned and are designed with useability in mind. By providing these alternative methods of engagement with the State History collection, the Trust continues to expand its reach to more students and teachers.

## Opal Wonders

Online experiences allow the Trust to reach schools across the state. Largely free, our online content and excursions are an accessible way for students, teachers and their communities to engage with the stories and histories of South Australia.

In April 2025, *Opal Wonders*, a 5-part animated series with accompanying curriculum-aligned resources, was released. Designed for Reception to Year 2 students, *Opal Wonders* teaches foundational history skills and dispositions while exploring family history. The series encourages teachers and students to make connections with local libraries, museums and other historical resources in their communities. Available for free through YouTube, *Opal Wonders* supports teachers and students to engage with their local histories and make connections between themselves and the past.



## Events

Festivals and events provide an alternative method for schools to engage with the Trust's education programs.

For 2 weeks in May, nearly 400 students from a range of government, private and home schools took part in the Trust's DreamBIG program *Our Changing City*. The program explored how Adelaide, as a city, has changed, from the pre-colonial period to today. A collaborative artwork made from recycled materials allowed students to imagine what Adelaide city might become. This artwork formed the centrepiece of an exhibition at the Migration Museum displaying the work of students from the *Our Changing City* program.

In 2024, the Trust was the presenting partner for the VAILO Adelaide 500 Schools Day for a second year. The day was free to all schools to attend and provided the Trust with the opportunity to engage with more than 1,000 school students including those from the home school community. Every school that registered received a printed booklet of STEM-based cards related to the National Motor Museum's vehicle collection to use in the classroom.



# EDUCATION

## New programs

**The Education team continues to update and create new excursions to deliver innovative and pedagogically current experiences for students.**

After extensive trials and feedback from schools, the new *Encounters* excursion was released at the Maritime Museum in April 2025. The new program takes a student-centred and hands-on approach to teaching students about the early interactions between sea-faring explorers and Australia's Aboriginal people. The program encourages students to develop their creative and critical thinking skills while investigating museum objects and reflecting on the complex impacts, both positive and negative, of these first cross-cultural encounters.

Future programs will build upon this student and skills-based approach to create experiential and meaningful programs that build connections between South Australia's history and the lives of students.



## Work experience

In July 2024, the Education team oversaw the Trust's inaugural intake of work experience students as part of a new initiative that exposes senior high school students to a variety of career paths across the Trust and its museums. Over the course of a week, 4 students from Year 10 and Year 11 spent time with multiple teams across the Trust's sites, culminating in a presentation to our Deputy CEO and South Australia's History Advocate on possible student-led programs to engage young people with South Australian history.



## Comments from the work experience students

*"Moving between the sites was very enjoyable as we were able to see, learn, and experience what a career would look like in many different fields."*

*"The program structure was enjoyable. It was neatly planned and I enjoyed it."*

*"... it was an amazing experience and I got a lot out of it."*

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# STATE HISTORY COLLECTION

Your collection, the State History Collection, comprises 38,340 historical objects cared for by the Trust on behalf of the people of South Australia. They range from motorbikes to marlinspikes, wedding dresses to dress uniforms, and lockets to locomotives (which you can see on loan at the National Railway Museum). All help us to tell the stories of South Australia and South Australians.

This year the collection grew by over 1,163 items. We are grateful to the generous individuals, families, organisations and businesses that have donated items. Highlighted here are some of the treasures that came into the collection this year.



## Laying the foundation

Made of gold mined at Talunga in the Adelaide Hills, this trowel was presented to the Governor of South Australia, Sir William Robinson, after he laid the foundation stone of the Jubilee Exhibition Building on North Terrace in 1886. Donated by Dr Hercules Robinson, Sir William's great-great-grandson. HT 2025.0124

## Rediscovered

Captain Matthew Flinders was buried in St James Churchyard, London, in 1841, but extensions to Euston Station in the following decade had obscured his grave. Recent archaeological excavations as part of the London to Birmingham High Speed rail project relocated the grave, identifiable by the engraved lead plate on the top of the coffin. Flinders was reburied in 2024 at his birthplace, Donington, Lincolnshire, during a weekend of celebrations honouring his achievements as a naval officer, navigator and cartographer. Her Excellency, the Hon Frances Adamson AC, The Governor of South Australia, accepted the generous gift of the coffin plate by descendants of Flinders to the people of South Australia.

HT 2024.0403



## Crafting connection

This hat was crocheted by a female refugee being held in Baxter detention centre, Port Augusta, in 2000, and given to a Red Cross worker as a gift. The recipient was unable to wear the hat as it was not official Red Cross clothing. Donated by Dr Martine Hawkes.

HT 2024.0394

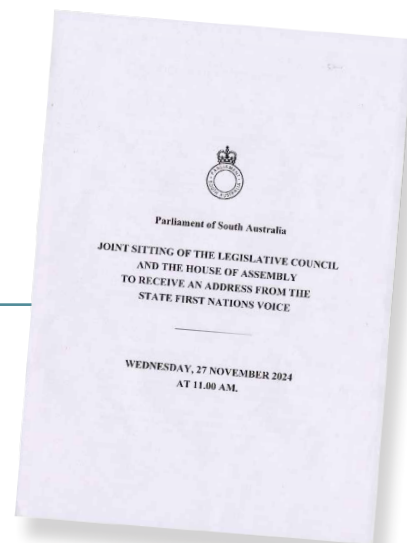


## STATE HISTORY COLLECTION

### Voice to Parliament

On 27 November 2024, First Nations Voice Presiding Member Leeroy Bilney made the inaugural address to the South Australian Parliament at a special joint sitting. A copy of the program of this historic moment is now part of the State History Collection.

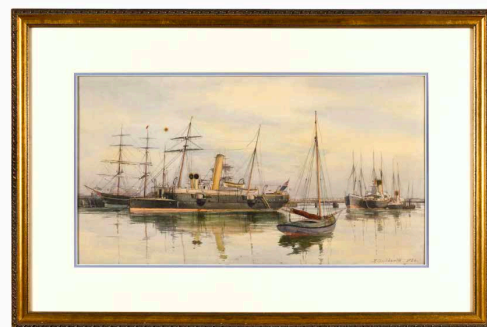
HT 2025.0377



### HMCS Protector

This 1884 watercolour was painted by Edmund Gouldsmith of Her Majesty's Colonial Ship Protector, which had just arrived in South Australia in response to the perceived threat of Russian invasion. It was bequeathed to the State History Collection by Allan Weston.

HT 2025.0299



### Tradeswomen on the move

In the 1990s, a federally-funded initiative encouraged women to consider 'non-traditional' trades and careers, including in male-dominated areas such as metalwork and engineering. The work of the South Australian co-ordinator included production of a newsletter, maintenance of a register, and management of a program of school visits. Donated by Vicki Rich.

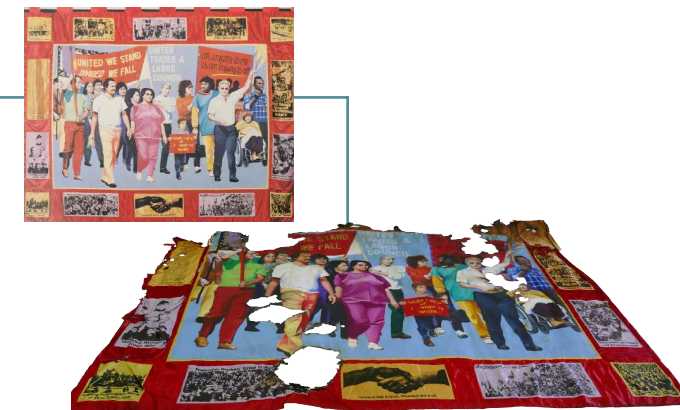
HT 2025.0482



### United we stand

This banner was designed by Andrew Hill for the United Trades and Labor Council in the 1980s. It was later damaged when Trades Hall was firebombed, and later still conserved by Artlab. It is now part of the State History Collection, along with the design sketches that show its development. Donated by the artist.

HT 2025.0126 a



### The little car that could

Home-grown motorsport legend Ron 'the Wizard' Uffindell modified this Austin 7 and in 1936 raced it at the Centennial Grand Prix, from Port Elliot to Victor Harbor. In 1938, he drove it to Bathurst and back, placing 8th in the gruelling Australian Grand Prix, which was run on unsealed roads. Donated by Mark Robertson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

HT 2024.0418



### Dressing up

This home-made costume was worn at the 1954 Children's Day performance for Queen Elizabeth at Wayville showgrounds. Donated by Val McIntosh, who was one of 87,000 children reported in attendance that day.

HT 2024.0488



# Community Engagement

**The History Trust of South Australia is proud to be a leading voice for the South Australian History Network, and it is committed to supporting community history organisations across the state.**

In 2024 to 2025, the Community Engagement team at the Trust travelled 3,341km to visit 38 community history organisations across South Australia, including a week-long trip to visit 6 history organisations in the Limestone Coast. The team also participated in the History Council of SA Regional Day. These visits supported groups with core business such as interpretation and collection care, as well as helping them to develop projects and grant applications.

Within the South Australian History Network, the MaC membership continues to grow with the Trust welcoming 12 new members to be a part of this development program. These 12 groups join a diverse network of organisations spread across the state, with approximately 67% of members being outside of the metro Adelaide area.

In addition to direct support for the South Australian History Network, the Community Engagement team also contributes to broader initiatives within the Galleries, Libraries and Museums Sector. In 2024 to 2025, this has included presenting in workshops for the Australian Library and Information Association, Ku Arts (Ananguku Arts and Cultural Aboriginal Corporation) and Regional Galleries Association SA.



## HISTORY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA GRANTS PROGRAM

Each year the History Trust of South Australia offers 2 grant programs. In 2024 to 2025, the History Trust awarded \$396,399 through the MaC program and South Australian History Fund. The South Australian History Fund supports community organisations and independent researchers to investigate, care for and share South Australian history.

The MaC program supports community history organisations to interpret, care for and make their collections accessible in innovative and interesting ways. With industry best practice at the core of this program, participants are supported to develop their organisations to be impactful and sustainable.

Highlights from the 2024 to 2025 grant round include awarding Adelaide Contemporary Experimental a grant to investigate the history of women performance artists at the Experimental Art Foundation and supporting Dark Before Dawn Productions to produce *Man from a Mission*, a 6-episode podcast series.

Other grant-supported projects included the creation of a new digital interpretation experience at the Murray Bridge Round House and an oral history project undertaken by the Burra History Group.

Grant projects successfully completed in 2024 to 2025 include the publication of *John Martins; the Story of South Australia's Beloved Department Store* by Paul Flavel and the production of a documentary exploring the history of the Reliability Trial, the oldest motorcycle race in Australia. In the digital sphere, we also saw the completion of a new website for the National Railway Museum and the launch of a Walking Trail App developed by Discover Mount Torrens to share the history of the Mount Torrens township.





# Aboriginal projects

## Co-designing Aboriginal Digital Museology Frameworks in the Southern Gulfs

The History Trust is a partner on an Australian Research Council funded project that will examine how co-designed digital museum practices can provide new and meaningful ways to record and share Aboriginal stories. The Aboriginal Groups also partnering on the project are the Kaurna, Narungga and Nukunu peoples from Australia's Southern Gulf Country. The project will design new culturally appropriate digital tools for Aboriginal communities to work with museums to record and present their histories. Academics from the University of New South Wales, Flinders University, and University of Adelaide will work with the Aboriginal partners, the South Australian Museum and the Trust to create enhanced digital methods of preserving, collecting and exhibiting Aboriginal heritages. The project will be undertaken over 4 years.



## Impact

Truth-telling is a critical part of the reconciliation process – often overwhelming, sometimes hard to hear. The History Trust of South Australia's Impact Program delivers a factual timeline of events in South Australia's Aboriginal and Coloniser contact history that helps participants improve their cultural capability. The program explores perspectives, policies and practices impacting Aboriginal peoples through to the current day. The program, co-designed with Aboriginal people, is delivered to over 1,000 people annually across South Australian corporations and government departments. The program often fulfills key actions in an organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan. Aboriginal Elders indicated that it should be delivered by non-Aboriginal presenters, enacting a powerful symbolic gesture about truth-telling, trauma and responsibility.

## Karrawirraparri

A significant project continues to be the development of the boardgame *Karrawirraparri Journey* by PhD candidate Sophia Booij and the Education team. Begun with Aunt Jennifer Dries in 2024, this boardgame seeks to teach primary and high school audiences about basic Kaurna histories and knowledges, including connection to Country, language, seasonal travel and ways of learning. A playable prototype is currently under consultation with Kaurna community members and Elders and will be supported by a comprehensive teacher's guide designed to help South Australian teachers to easily integrate the game into their classrooms. This game has provided a valuable opportunity to build new relationships with the Kaurna community and reflects the organisation's genuine commitment to promoting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories.

*The project is supported by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet through Arts South Australia.*



*Above: Students at Glen Osmond Primary School participating in Karrawirraparri game testing, Museum and Collection Network members participating in Playful Learning workshop, Migration Museum  
Image credit: Ethan White, History Trust of South Australia.*



# Connecting with audience and communities



In 2024 to 2025, the History Trust of South Australia deepened its engagement with audiences and communities through a range of public programs, partnerships and events.

## Sir Hubert Wilkins bus trip

The Sir Hubert Wilkins bus trip returned by popular demand in 2025 during South Australia's History Festival, and it once again sold out. On the journey to Mount Bryan East, participants heard from South Australian Museum Senior Collections Manager, Mark Pharaoh and local historian and Wilkins enthusiast, David Jarman who provided insight on the extraordinary life of Wilkins. Sincere thanks go to the Sir Hubert Wilkins Memorial Cottage Committee for their generous hospitality and for their coordination of local speakers, who shared knowledge of the region and its history, the conservation of Wilkins' cottage, and their personal connections to the explorer.

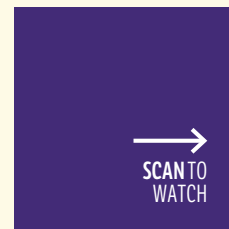


The *Talking History* partnership with University of South Australia continued with a renewed focus on South Australian stories and researchers. Topics ranged from the often-overlooked contributions of family historians to exploring how South Australian art can serve as a lens into the past and examining the state's progressive legacy while asking whether South Australia can still be considered 'exceptional' today.

“

## Comment from survey:

*'[A highlight was] meeting the awesome locals who shared a variety of historical and personal knowledge of Sir Hubert and the area he grew up in, his massive achievements and people involved in all aspects of keeping his narrative and achievements alive and continuing through generations'*



# Engaging audiences online

This year saw greater worldwide reach and engagement with our history and collections through 4 new online exhibitions.

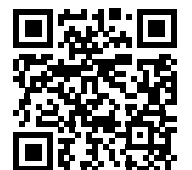
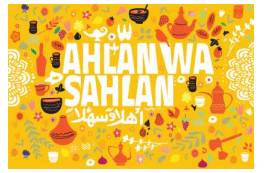
- *Ahlan Wa Sahlan – Welcome: Hospitality in Arabic Culture*
- *Holden and Me*
- *On the Move: Adelaide and LGBTQ Migration*
- *The Power of Protest: Young People's Climate Action*

These exhibitions, curated with the support of external grants and in collaboration with community members, artists, universities and academics, offer rich and nuanced explorations of South Australian stories and identities.

New physical exhibitions also had companion web pieces. The *Yuki (Bark Canoe): Sharing Ngarrindjeri Culture* exhibition website went live with 3D imaging and documentary footage about the Yuki's development.

Visitors to *Mr. Bond's Studio* at the Maritime Museum can find the full glass negative collection via the exhibition website, which also features a video series encouraging viewers to use historical photographs as a springboard for further research. The video series was made in partnership with local collector Lachlan Haig, Adelaide Festival Centre, Port Adelaide Football Club, Mary MacKillop Museum and the Sisters of St Joseph.

Social media reach continued to climb throughout 2024 to 2025, as the Trust explored new ways to interpret and share South Australian histories. Highlights included a commemorative walking tour marking 130 years of women's suffrage, a series of history themed Book Week videos, and a collaboration with the Australian Migrant Resource Centre to celebrate Refugee Week. The sharing of various 'throwback' photographs, particularly of celebrated places and vehicles, sparked lively discussion and fond memories among online audiences, helping to connect South Australia's past to the present.





# ORATIONS

## **Sir Hubert Wilkins Oration (1 May 2025) / South Australia's History Festival Opening Night**

Speaker: Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris

Presented as part of South Australia's History Festival Opening Night at the Torrens Parade Ground Drill Hall, the 2025 Sir Hubert Wilkins Oration was delivered by the Lieutenant Governor, and Wilkins Project Patron, Dr Richard 'Harry' Harris SC OAM.

With a focus on exploration and the enduring spirit of adventure, Dr Harris shared stories of his personal heroes, reflecting on how each has shaped his life and career. Among them, he highlighted Sir Hubert Wilkins' remarkable achievements, including his fearless photography during World War I, pioneering work in aviation and navigation, and groundbreaking polar exploration.

Adding a powerful sense of connection to the evening, Wilkins' 1939 Chevrolet 'Woody' Station Wagon and Polar Sled were on display in the auditorium, offering guests a tangible link to his extraordinary life.

*The Sir Hubert Wilkins Oration is presented in partnership with the Sir Hubert Wilkins Committee.*



## **Gladys Elphick MBE Oration (27 August 2024)**

Speaker: Dr Natalie Harkin

Held at the Torrens Parade Ground Drill Hall, the 2024 Gladys Elphick Oration was delivered by Dr Natalie Harkin, and was titled *APRON-SORROW / SOVEREIGN-TEA: Aboriginal Domestic Service Stories in South Australia*.

Dr Harkin shared insights from her creative arts-based research project, exploring the histories of Aboriginal domestic service in South Australia. Her presentation highlighted the collaborative exhibition presented for Tarnanthi in 2021, which was an intergenerational project honouring Aboriginal women through state colonial archives and blood-memory stories spanning loss, love, sorrow, solidarity, resistance and pride.

In a poignant conclusion to the evening, a special batch of Sovereign Tea, commissioned as part of the project, was brewed and shared amongst the audience. This created a space for conversation, listening and shared reflection.

*The Gladys Elphick Oration was delivered in partnership with Reconciliation South Australia and the Gladys Elphick Awards.*





2025 South Australia's History Festival was a vibrant celebration of South Australia's history, brought to life under the theme *Decisions*. Five unique printed program covers depicted places and spaces where decisions are made, using striking imagery to embody the theme and invite audiences to reflect on how decisions shape our communities.

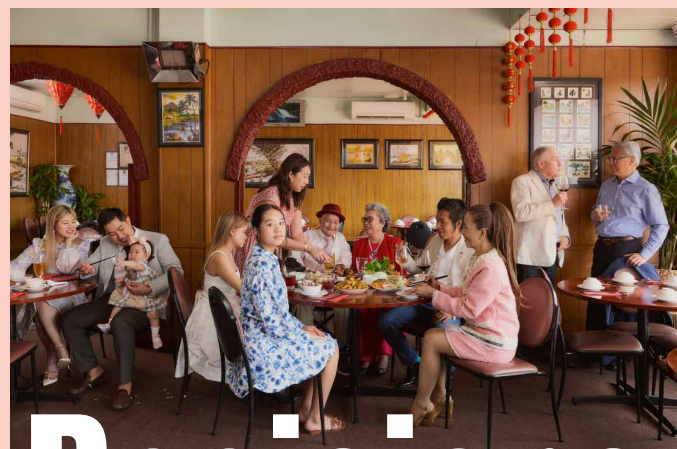
A new Focus Program, *Tasting History*, was introduced to spotlight South Australia's rich food and beverage histories. It highlighted the traditions, innovations and cultural influences that have defined food, beverages and cooking across the state.

Throughout May, 597 events unfolded across South Australia in each of the 11 state-wide tourism regions, offering attendees an extraordinary range of experiences. Festival highlights included *Back to Burra 180*, the *Sir Hubert Wilkins Oration*, the Migration Museum's sold-out season of *Births, Burials, and Bodysnatching* tours, the *Komodo no Hi Japan Festival*, the *Kernewek Lowender Cornish Festival*, *Desert Voices: 'Afghan' Outback Stories*, and the *House of History* program at Ayers House featuring 25 history-focussed talks and the acclaimed play *An Audience with Don Dunstan*.



South Australia's History Festival continues to grow as one of the nation's largest and most inclusive celebrations of community history, fostering connection, curiosity and pride in South Australia's unique stories.

Left: South Australia's History Festival 2025 Welcome to our Table: An Afternoon with the Slovenian Club  
Image credit: Ben Macmahon  
Right: South Australia's History Festival 2025 Program cover photos, Image credit: Bri Hammond



## Decisions







# BAY to BIRDWOOD

The 2024 Bay to Birdwood was another outstanding celebration of one of the world’s great historic motoring events. With ‘Back to the 90s’ pricing, we welcomed over 10,000 visitors to the National Motor Museum for the 2024 Finish Festival.

Nearly 115,000 spectators lined the route and at the Finish Festival guests soaked up the vibrant atmosphere, admired over 1,500 historic vehicles alongside their passionate owners, embraced the creativity of period fashion, and savoured delicious offerings from gourmet food trucks.

The day concluded with the official award ceremony, where Bay to Birdwood Patron, Her Excellency the Hon Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, presented prizes to winners across all 5 categories:

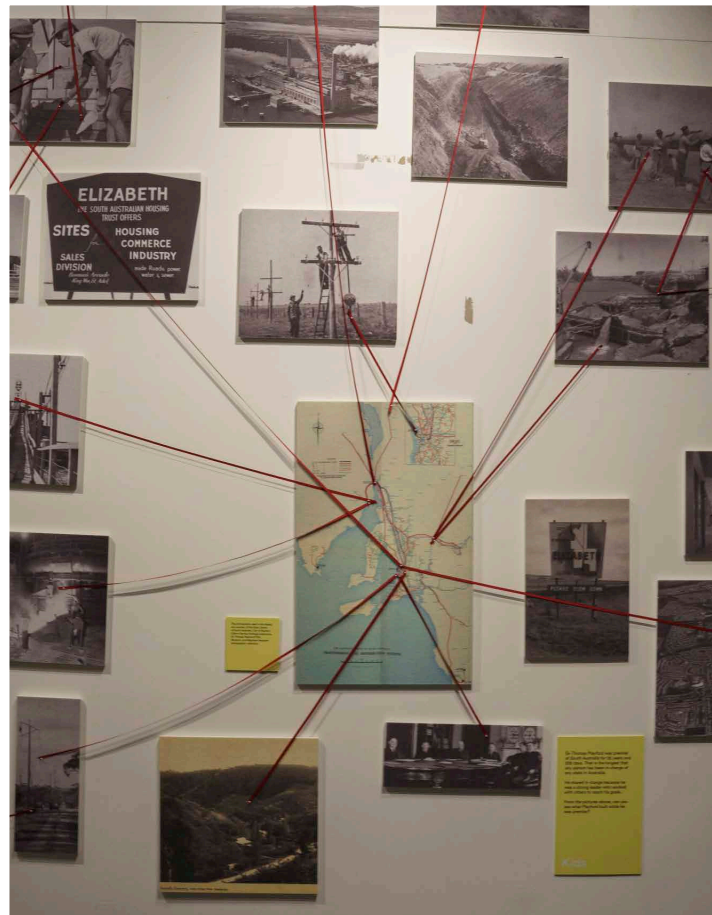
- ① Concours d’Elegance (Pre-1950): Matthew & Kerrie White, 1937 Lincoln Zephyr
- ② Concours d’Elegance (Post-1950): Mark Kraulis, 1971 Ford XY Falcon GT
- ③ Preservation (Pre-1950): Lincoln Tyner, 1926 Chrysler H
- ④ Preservation (Post-1950): Troy Mason, 1992 Volvo 940 GL
- ⑤ EV Conversion: Matthew Stead, 1975 BMW 2002

In 2024, the Bay to Birdwood proudly donated \$8,375 to charity partner Trees for Life, supporting vital environmental regeneration across South Australia.

Images 1-5: Bay to Birdwood 2024 Award winners  
Image credit: Nathan Richmond Photography





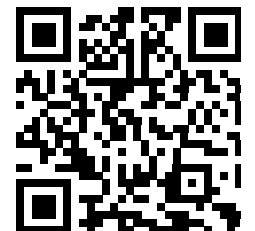
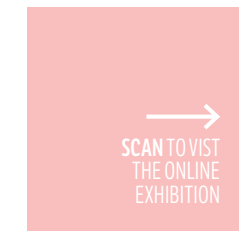


# CENTRE OF DEMOCRACY

In 2024 to 2025, the Centre of Democracy continued to showcase the people, ideas and movements shaping South Australia's democratic story, both physically and digitally, through projects exploring leadership, civic engagement, and the power of collective action.

*Trust in Playford: SA's Longest Serving Premier* exhibit was developed for the gallery in 2024 through a collaboration with the Sir Thomas Playford ETSA Museum, City of Playford Library Service Heritage Collections, and State Library of South Australia. The Centre worked closely with these partners to source images, including selections from the Migration Museum photographic collection. Through compelling visuals, the display invited visitors to explore the lasting impact of Sir Thomas Playford, Premier from 1938 to 1965, on the state of South Australia, alongside the themes of leadership, bi-partisan action and electoral reform.

The *Power of Protest: Young People's Climate Action* evolved from a physical display into an online exhibition now featured on the Centre of Democracy website. This allows teachers and students to explore themes of active citizenship and youth engagement beyond the gallery space.



Left: *Trust in Playford* exhibit  
Right: Visitors explore the 'Picturing Democracy' exhibit  
Image credit: Ethan White, History Trust of South Australia.





# MIGRATION MUSEUM

Located on the historic site of Adelaide's former Destitute Asylum, the Migration Museum continues to share the diverse stories of migration to South Australia, fostering understanding of our cultural identity and the journeys that shape it.

In 2024 to 2025, the Museum delivered a vibrant program of events, exhibitions and partnerships. Highlights included *On the Terrace* performances by Lawrence Mooka-Neliman and Poco Tutti, and *Tra Due Mondi*, a moving celebration of Italian migration stories presented by Australia Donna. The museum courtyard came alive during *A Tapestry of Cultures*, a community day led by the Muslim Women's Association of South Australia, where over 300 visitors enjoyed Palestinian music, dance and food.

During the 2025 Adelaide Fringe, the museum and courtyard transformed into the popular hub *Courtyard of Curiosities*, welcoming over 17,000 Fringe enthusiasts with a diverse program of performances and spaces to relax and connect. Other community celebrations included the Adelaide Estonian community's 75th anniversary exhibition *Maa Minu Sudames*, and ALCASA's *Arabic Arts Alive*, which shared personal stories through dance and music.

The museum also presented the Refugee Week *Finding Freedom* interactive discovery trail, and offered sold-out tours and a new Migrant Heritage Walk during South Australia's History Festival. Young visitors were inspired through DreamBIG Children's Festival and engaging school holiday workshops. The Italian Historical Society of South Australia launched their journal *La Partenza*, exploring rich Italian migration journeys to South Australia.

In the 2024 to 2025 State Budget, the Malinauskas Government committed \$6.305 million to the conservation of the Migration Museum, including essential compliance and structural works scheduled to commence in late 2026. In preparation for these significant repairs, the History Trust has worked with specialist heritage architects throughout 2024 and 2025 to plan and detail the necessary upgrades to facilities and public spaces.

*Top left: Tapestry of Cultures, Bottom left: Adelaide Estonian exhibition Maa Minu Sudames, Top: Poco Tutti, On The Terrace Performance, Bottom: Refugee Week story tellers, Image credit: Ethan White, History Trust of South Australia.*





# SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM

Located in the State Heritage Precinct of historic Port Adelaide, the South Australian Maritime Museum preserves and shares the rich maritime stories that have shaped South Australia's history.

In 2024 to 2025, the Maritime Museum delivered a dynamic year of exhibitions, tours, events and community engagement. Two standout exhibitions included *Yuki (Bark Canoe)*, an immersive display sharing Ngarrindjeri culture through the artistry and knowledge of Uncle Major 'Moogy' Sumner, and Mr Bond's Studio, which showcased rare glass plate photographs capturing life in early 1900s Port Adelaide.

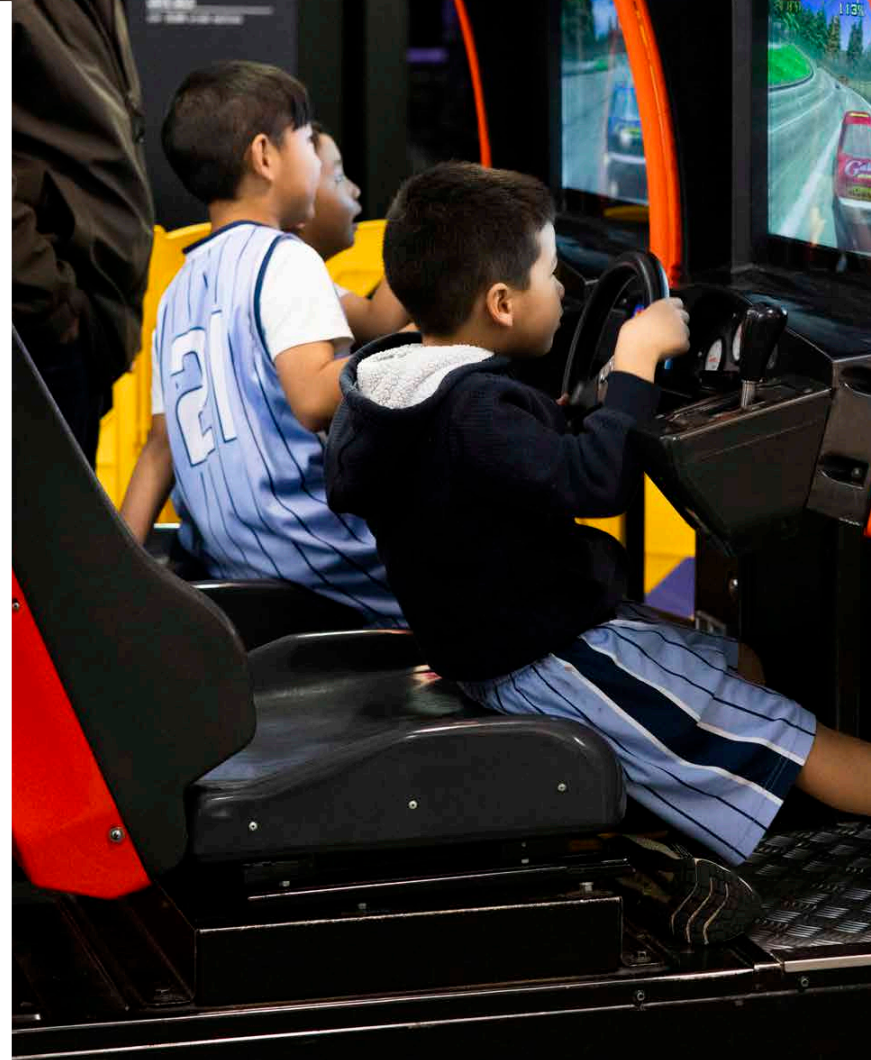
Flagship experiences continued to delight visitors, with Port River historic cruises aboard the MV Archie Badenoch and guided tours of the Torrens Island Quarantine Station. A new Portside Lighthouse & Museum Discovery Tour was launched, offering a full heritage precinct walk and the chance to climb the historic lighthouse for sweeping views.

The Maritime Museum's reach extended beyond its walls with participation in the Dockside Festival and SA Wooden Boat Festival, each attracting over 10,000 people. Other highlights included a science talk with CSIRO marine ecologist Dr Ben Arthur and New Found Sound, a live music night hosted across Port Adelaide venues.

During the Adelaide Fringe, the museum presented the event *Salty Sessions: Click!*, celebrating maritime photography history. In May 2025, the Maritime Museum marked South Australia's History Festival by honouring Vernon Smith's 150th birthday, recognising his enduring impact on the museum's collection and storytelling today.

*Top: A Performance of 'HMS Pinafore' aboard the Ketch during Fringe  
Image credit: Jacqueline Cook, History Trust of South Australia  
Left: Archie during a guided tour, Image credit: South Australian Maritime Museum  
Right: Uncle Moogy at the opening of the Yuki Exhibition, Image credit: Kinsern Yern*





# NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM

The National Motor Museum explores Australia's social history through its deep relationship with motoring.

In 2024 to 2025, the Motor Museum continued to strengthen connections with the historic motoring community, hosting more than 28 vehicle clubs and showcasing over 1,170 vehicles. Highlights included All Japan Day Classic, Minis at the Mill, the Holden Gemini 50th Anniversary, Alfesta! with the Alfa Romeo Car Club, and the Jaguar Drivers Club of SA's All British Picnic.

The museum featured prominently at major public motoring events. At the VAILO Adelaide 500, a 1988 Shrike Formula Australia racing car was displayed, and as official Education Partner, the History Trust delivered engaging student programs on Schools Day. In March 2025, the museum also participated in All British Day at Echunga and the Adelaide Motorsports Festival, presenting collection vehicles to a combined audience of over 46,000.

A highlight of the year was *Blumberg to Birdwood: The Steps in Between*, a new guided walking tour for South Australia's History Festival exploring Birdwood's rich local history. The popular Farm Day event returned, attracting 3,000 visitors for a fun day of farm animals, displays, and demonstrations of traditional trades and machinery. The event raised \$30,000 for Birdwood Primary School.

Other highlights included a 70th anniversary screening of the Tom Kruse film *The Back of Beyond*, Nature Festival talk featuring the Leyland Brothers vehicle, and after-hours curator tours as part of the Adelaide Fringe program.

Top: An activity available on Farm Day

Right: Motor Museum attendees enjoying the Game Engine exhibit

Image credit: Kelsey Zafiris Photography

Left: The Nature Festival talk featuring the Leyland Brother vehicle, Image credit: National Motor Museum

# THE HISTORY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

As a Statutory Authority, the History Trust of South Australia reports annually to Parliament and its Board is accountable through the Minister for Education, Training and Skills.

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University of South Australia

## History Festival

Freemasons South Australia & Northern Territory  
City of Adelaide  
Botanic Gardens & State Herbarium  
Police Health  
Drakes Supermarkets  
Hugh Hamilton  
Duxton Pubs  
Kalyra  
Mile End Office Furniture  
Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia  
Channel 44

## National Motor Museum and Bay to Birdwood

South Australian Tourism Commission  
Shannons Insurance  
Stuckey Tyres  
Burnside Village  
Media Partner – Channel 44  
Charity Partner – Trees for Life

## South Australian Maritime Museum

Dock Yard Adelaide  
City of Port Adelaide Enfield

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are invaluable to our mission, helping to preserve, document, and interpret the evidence of South Australia’s history.

The History Trust acknowledges the generous support and contribution of our volunteers. All have a strong interest in, and enthusiasm for, history, and assist across the organisation.

Thank you.



**SCAN CODE** ↙

TO VIEW THE DIGITAL  
VERSION OF THE  
**HIGHLIGHTS BOOKLET**

**Published by the  
History Trust of South Australia**

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