



THE ROYAL  
SOCIETY OF  
TASMANIA

THE ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023



We acknowledge that Tasmanian Aboriginal Peoples have survived severe and unjust impacts resulting from invasion and dispossession of their Country. As an institution dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, The Royal Society of Tasmania recognises Aboriginal cultural knowledge and practices and seeks to respect and honour these traditions and the deep understanding they represent.

## The Royal Society of Tasmania Annual Report for 2023

Produced by The Royal Society of Tasmania for the Annual General Meeting 7 March 2024



ABN 65 889 598 100

### The Royal Society of Tasmania

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Cover Image: Crested Tern [SYLOCHELIDON STRENUOUS, *Gould*. Powerful Tern. J. Gould and H.C. Richter del et lith. [*Hydroprogne caspia*, Caspian Tern]. Hand-coloured lithograph in Gould, J. 1848: *A Synopsis of the Birds of Australia, and the Adjacent Islands*.



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# THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA

**PATRON:** Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania

## OFFICE BEARERS & COUNCIL MEMBERS 2023

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

President	Professor Jocelyn McPhie
Vice President	Associate Professor Julie Rimes
Immediate Past President	Mrs Mary Koolhof
Honorary Secretary	Dr Don Garden OAM
Honorary Treasurer	Dr Sonia Shimeld
Council Members	Ms Chel Bardell Emeritus Professor Richard Coleman Dr Anita Hansen Ms Evelyn Lambeth (Student Councillor) Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO Mrs Roxanne Steenbergen Dr Imogen Wegman (Early Career Researcher) Mr John Williamson
Northern Branch Representatives	Mr Neil MacKinnon Mr David Morris (Northern President)

### EX OFFICIO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Honorary Librarian	Ms Janette Burke
Honorary Editor <i>Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania</i>	Dr Sally Bryant AM
Honorary Solicitor	Mr James Crotty
Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery Representative	Ms Mary Mulcahy (Director) to 18 June 2023

## NORTHERN BRANCH & OTHER ROLES

### NORTHERN BRANCH OFFICE BEARERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Northern Branch President	Mr David Morris
Honorary Secretary	Mrs Christine Beswick
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Neil MacKinnon
Northern Branch Rep on the Foundation	Mr Neil MacKinnon
Northern Branch Committee Members	Dr Andrew Alexander Dr Lois Beckwith (Assistant Secretary) Mr Shane Fitzgerald ( <i>ex officio</i> , QVMAG Rep, Director of Creative Arts & Cultural Services, QVMAG Director) The Honorable Dr Frank Madill AM Mrs Melanie Morris Mr Andrew Parsons ( <i>ex officio</i> , Honorary Librarian) Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM (Immediate Past President) Dr Martin Renilson (Assistant Secretary) Ms Lynette Ross Dr Liza Snow Mr Robin Walpole

### OTHER RST ROLES

Auditor	Mr Richard James FIPA (IPA#: 134606)
Newsletter Editor	Mr Bernard Pryor OAM
Webmaster	Mr Eddy Steenbergen
Honorary Art Curator	Dr Anita Hansen
Office Manager	Mrs Bronwyn Beechey
RST Nominee to Trustees of the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery	Position vacant

## RST COMMITTEES 2023

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	MEMBERS
<b>Aboriginal Engagement</b>	Professor Jocelyn McPhie	Mrs Mary Koolhof Dr Sally Bryant AM Mr David Morris Mr David Wilson
<b>Art Collection</b>	Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO	Dr Anita Hansen (Hon. Art Curator) Ms Marley Large
<b>Art Fundraising</b>	Mrs Mary Koolhof	Mr James Crotty Mrs Marley Large Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO Associate Professor Julie Rimes Ms Lorraine Polglase
<b>Bursaries</b>	Professor Jocelyn McPhie (Acting Chair)	Dr Deborah Beswick OAM Mrs Mary Koolhof Associate Professor Julie Rimes Mrs Roxanne Steenbergen Mr John Williamson
<b>Events &amp; Publicity</b>	Associate Professor Julie Rimes (Events) Ms Chel Bardell (Publicity)	Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO Ms Evelyn Lambeth Dr Imogen Wegman Mr John Williamson
<b>Foundation</b>	Mr Neil MacKinnon	Mr Tony Culberg OAM Dr Don Garden OAM – RST Secretary Dr John Thorne AM Dr Sonia Shimeld – RST Treasurer
<b>Honours &amp; Awards</b>	Emeritus Professor Richard Coleman	Dr Eva Meidl Professor Jim Reid Professor Jocelyn McPhie Professor Brian Yates Professor Jonathan Sprent (Medical Sciences Consultant)
<b>Membership</b>	Mrs Roxanne Steenbergen	Dr John Thorne AM Ms Chel Bardell
<b>Publications</b>	Dr Sally Bryant AM	Ms Chel Bardell Dr Margaret Davies OAM Mr David Wilson

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In addition to core business, major preoccupations for the Society during 2023 were the RST Art Collection, a new RST medal, engagement of the Society with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, and a review of the RST Library Collections at UTAS.

There has been significant progress in management of the RST Art Collection. Using a Cultural Heritage Grant from the National Library of Australia, the Society commissioned a Significance Assessment by Mr Warwick Oakman (Fine Art Assessor), a Preservation Needs Assessment by Ms Amy Bartlett (Art Conservator) and invested in an *eHive* account for the purpose of creating an online catalogue of the collection. Mr Oakman supported the significance of the collection and concluded that it "is rare and unique to Australia".

During 2023, the RST was engaged in a dispute with the TMAG Board of Trustees over the ownership of 44 artworks by Louisa Anne Meredith known as the 'Fish Illustrations'. These artworks were to be considered during the November 2021 mediation between RST and TMAG but had to be set aside because of time constraints. Discussions between the RST and TMAG reached an impasse early in 2023, and during formal mediation on 19 December 2023, the matter was still not resolved. The next step will be decided by the RST Council in early 2024.

Louisa Anne Meredith was an artist, author, conservationist, social commentator and highly respected member of the RST. Her life and achievements were celebrated at a very successful fundraising event organised by Julie Rimes, Ross Large and Mary Koolhof, and hosted by RST Patron, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC and Professor Chalmers AO at Government House in September. The proceeds will be used for conservation of the RST Art Collection. Further, the Society has created a new medal, the 'Louisa Anne Meredith Medal' as a lasting tribute. The medal is intended for a senior scholar who has made an outstanding contribution to the arts or humanities or both and will be offered for the first time in 2024.



(L) The Honourable Barbara Baker AC with Mr Richard Warner AM, (C) 'An Evening with Louisa' brochure and (R) (L-R) Ms Louise Gillett, Professor Kate Warner AC and Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO with Lynne Uptin's waratah painting.

2023 will be remembered as the year of the Voice Referendum, when Australians voted on the Federal Government proposal to create a 'Voice to Parliament' advisory body to promote the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Society hosted lectures by two Tasmanian Aboriginal leaders, Mr Michael Mansell and Ms Kerry Sculthorpe, in July. Both lectures were intensely engaging and were followed by discussion that allowed the audience to express diverse views around the proposal. Recordings of these two lectures received the highest number of views by far of all RST lectures in 2023.

In addition to presenting their lectures in person, Michael and Kerry provided their transcripts for publication in the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* (Vol. 157, 2023). This volume also includes a transcript of the December 2022 RST lecture by Rodney Gibbins in which he explored the concept of a treaty between the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the state government.

The Society continued to publicly support removal of the statue of William Crowther from Franklin Square, giving a deputation at the Hobart City Council Planning Committee meeting in August. The Society also committed to funding a permanent marker to the 2021 Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal people so that future generations know of the event and the history that led to it.

The RST Library Collections are held in the Morris Miller Library at UTAS and managed by the University Librarian, Janette Burke, and Historical Collections Co-ordinator, Katrina Ross. Janette and Katrina undertook a comprehensive review of the RST Library Collections in August 2023 that led to several recommendations for action and/or change. An inventory of the rare books in the RST Library Collections is underway and when complete, will be used to inform a new valuation, as well as to improve accessibility.

At the end of 2023, the Society embarked on writing a Collections Development Policy for both the RST Art Collection and the RST Library Collections. The RST and UTAS have a Deed of Agreement in relation to the RST Library Collections but UTAS now also requires that a formal Loan Agreement be put in place. The Society is also considering making the RST Library Collections available online through the Biodiversity Heritage Library Australia website. All these Library-related projects will occupy much of 2024.

This year the Society presented 11 events in Hobart and 11 events in Launceston. The events in Launceston were lectures at QVMAG and attracted large audiences. Six of the events in Hobart were stand-alone lectures. Three of these lectures were reasonably well attended but attendance at the other three lectures was disappointing (less than 15 attendees, 5-6 of whom were RST volunteers involved in organising the lecture). Regardless of attendance, the RST lectures have been universally excellent and views of the recordings on the RST YouTube channel since the channel began in 2020 now number more than 30,600.



**Members of the RST beside the Tasman Monument, 3 December 2023. The monument was constructed one hundred years ago by members of the RST to commemorate the landing of the Abel Tasman Expedition on the Forestier Peninsula in December 1642.**

The mid-winter dinner, fundraising art auction, the 'Behind-the-Scenes' tour of the RST Library Collections at UTAS, and end-of-year dinner were all popular, and the Government House fundraising event sold out. The Society also joined with other organisations in three additional events: the talk by Ann Cripps and Professor Kate Warner AC with the Friends of TMAG, a lecture by Dr Peter Puskic with Beer Aquatic, and an excursion to the Tasman Monument with The Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

The Society is indebted to Dr Sally Bryant AM in her role as Editor of the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*. This prestigious journal has been published annually since 1849 and Volume 157 contains ten scholarly papers on diverse themes.

The RST Bursaries for senior secondary students are continuously on offer but from 2019 until the middle of 2023, there were no applications primarily because Covid-19 precluded or greatly inhibited travel. It is a great pleasure to report that the Society received seven applications in the second half of 2023, all of which were of very high quality and all granted. Two RM Johnston Memorial Medals were awarded in 2023, one to chemist Professor Paul Haddad and the other to climate scientist Professor John Church AO. Dr Alexander Bissember won the MR Banks Medal, and the Doctoral Award went to Dr Tobias Stål.

The Royal Societies of Australia (RSA) is a national organisation established to advocate for the efforts of Australia's six Royal Societies. The RSA has existed since 2007 but been largely inactive. The current RSA President, John Hardie AM FRSN (NSW) organised a meeting in Canberra of the six state Royal Societies at the Australian Academy of Science followed by a meeting with the Governor General at Government House. These meetings allowed very valuable sharing of information on society operations, successes and challenges. The Governor General David Hurley strongly supports the activities of the Royal Societies and endorsed the role of the RSA.



**Governor General David Hurley, Her Excellency Linda Hurley (front row, centre) and leaders of Australia's Royal Societies at Government House, Canberra, November 2023.**

**RST President, Professor Jocelyn McPhie, seen front row first left.**

At the beginning of 2023, we had no Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer. By mid-year, both positions were filled, Dr Sonia Shimeld joining as Honorary Treasurer and Dr Don Garden OAM joining as Honorary Secretary. Sonia and Don have already contributed a great deal of knowledge and experience in their roles and together with our well-organised and universally helpful Office Manager, Bronwyn Beechey, the RST Office has been operating with unprecedented efficiency.

The financial position of the Society has been carefully reviewed during 2023 by Honorary Treasurer Sonia Shimeld and Chair of the RST Foundation, Neil Mackinnon. Sonia and Neil have identified and eliminated some complications in RST accounts with a view to ensuring that the Society is compliant with all relevant legislation, and that management of finances into the future is as straightforward as possible.

The Society's operations and achievements depend largely on the expertise and generosity of Council members, Committee Chairs, Committee members and other volunteers, all of whom deserve sincere thanks for their contributions. Thanks also to Webmaster Eddy Steenbergen and Newsletter Editor Bernard Pryor OAM for the time and invaluable skills they devote to ensuring the Society's web presence and Newsletter are accurate, up-to-date, and informative. I have called on Honorary Solicitor James Crotty for advice on numerous occasions during the past year and greatly appreciate James' wise counsel.

**Professor Jocelyn McPhie  
President**

## HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT

I joined The Royal Society of Tasmania in the middle of 2023 and shortly after was elected to the position of Honorary Secretary, hence the last several months have involved a steep learning curve as I discovered the Society, its people and its diverse activities and achievements. The Royal Society of Tasmania is a busy and impressive organisation with a long history of promoting research and learning. Historically these efforts have been directed largely towards the sciences but in recent times its focus has broadened to include cultural matters. Notably, it is forging a rewarding working relationship with the Palawa community after delivering its apology in 2021 for abhorrent past wrongs.

RST maintains a range of educational and social activities for its members and the public. These include lectures, publications, scholarships, bursaries, medals, dinners and, in the last year, events such as a reception at Government House and a soiree art auction. Many of these events are directed towards raising funds to sustain the invaluable RST Art and Library collections.

Much of my focus to-date has been addressing RST correspondence, circulating meeting papers and distributing information to the Council, RST Committees, and wider membership. This year the Council has continued development of policies to assure good governance. These policies have included a Strategic Plan, a Risk Register, Collections Development Policy and Privacy Policy. I pay tribute to those Council members who have been involved in these demanding issues.

As Honorary Secretary, I spent time organising the RST Council records to have them available in digital files ready to place, along with other RST records, in the University of Tasmania repository. I also worked on the creation of an online filing system that would make Council material separately accessible to members of the Executive and to the full Council.

It has proved fortunate and effective that Council meetings are now held every two months rather than monthly as before, as they require a great deal of time by many people to organise. I express my gratitude to the members of Council for their advice, guidance and punctual submission of reports and especially to the members of the Executive.



**New RST Honorary Secretary Dr Don Garden OAM, Office Manager Ms Bronwyn Beechey and new RST Honorary Treasurer Dr Sonia Shimeld.**

Finally, the Office Manager, Bronwyn Beechey has been an invaluable support for the Executive and the Council, and I am personally indebted to her for her assistance as I learned the role required of the Honorary Secretary. It was therefore disappointing to hear that Bronwyn will resign in February 2024 to move interstate and on behalf of the Society, we are very grateful for her contribution and wish her well in the future.

**Dr Don Garden OAM**  
**Honorary Secretary**

## FINANCIAL REPORT

As the new Treasurer (and accountant) I fully value the work that has gone on before me. Previous Treasurer David Wilson was very thorough in his record keeping and has continued to help as Assistant Treasurer. It is great not to lose such valuable corporate knowledge.

The financial procedures have been streamlined while still encompassing the requirements for the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Changing the accounting software system to Xero has simplified many processes and using accrual accounting has enabled a more accurate matching of revenue with expenses within a period. To comply with the accounting standards required by the ACNC, a full set of financial reports has been prepared and is presented separately, with a summary provided here. A few of the accounts required correction to comply with accounting standards and these corrections have been documented in the full statements.

The RST Foundation is treated as an investment arm of the Society as it is not a separate legal entity. Hence, the financial reports represent the organisation in its entirety. The Foundation's investments and interest are integral to the Society's finances for annual reporting purposes.

Major impacts on the 2023 financial results (other than the above) included:

- RST Library Collections - \$42,000 spent on conducting an inventory of the rare book collection and digitising three archival collections,
- RST Art Collection - \$25,500 spent on solander boxes for artwork and a significance assessment,
- Changes required by ACNC and/or accounting standards:
  - removal of publications as an inventory item in the Statement of Financial Position (an historical remnant)
  - creation of a revaluation surplus account in equity for previous valuations of the RST Art and Library collections
  - creation of restricted reserves to denote amounts that are set aside for a specific purpose (such as deductible gift recipient funds)

The financial results for 2023 are lower than budgeted, due to an unbudgeted expense for the rare books in the RST Library Collections (subsidised by the Foundation and UTAS) and up until that point the surplus would have been \$17,000, but it ended up being a loss of close to \$15,000. All other categories of expenses were below budget. Membership receipts increased but book sales continued to fall. The Art Fundraising Committee is an essential element of the income stream for the RST Art Collection, raising over \$20,000 gross from functions and donations. A total of \$5,290 was paid out as ANZAAS bursaries to six students and \$710 for a Peter Smith bursary to another student.

As shown in the summary and pie charts produced, the Society's main income streams are membership and program income (dinners, lectures and events) and interest is being reinvested for future needs. Donations, bequests and publications all play a critical role with grants supplementing the other income streams.

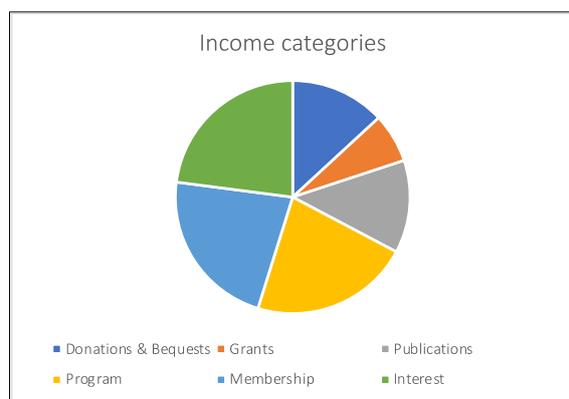
The expense categories reflect the increased spending on the RST Art and Library collections this year. The publications (including the journal *Papers and Proceedings of the RST*) are the next highest category of expense followed by program expenses (dinners, lectures and events).

The Royal Society of Tasmania  
 Profit and Loss  
 For the year ended 31 December 2023

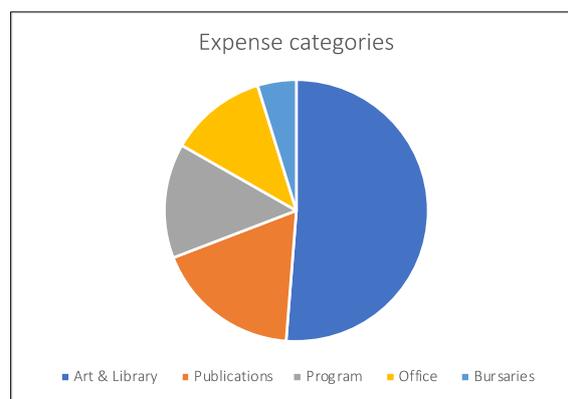
Summarised Income Statement

	2023	2022
<b>Income</b>	\$	\$
Donations & Bequests	15,345	54,403
Grants	8,000	14,050
Publications	15,105	16,848
Program	25,817	10,756
Membership	26,130	23,560
Interest	26,902	6,519
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>117,299</b>	<b>126,136</b>
<b>Less: Expenses</b>		
Art & Library	67,525	29,412
Publications	23,599	37,103
Program	18,660	23,470
Office	15,756	14,928
Bursaries	6,250	4,987
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>131,790</b>	<b>109,900</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(14,492)</b>	<b>16,236</b>

A breakdown of income and expenditure is presented in the following two charts.



RST Income Breakdown



RST Expenditure Breakdown

This Statement of Financial Position provides a clearer picture of the funds available for the Society, and those funds that are allocated for specific purposes (all shown in Equity). It is difficult to compare to last year as these funds were not identified.

Using accruals there are a few additional items on the Balance Sheet. 'Accounts Receivable' reflect copies of the *Papers and Proceedings of the RST* that have been sent to organisations but are yet to be paid. 'Accrued Income' denotes interest on term deposits that has not yet been received. 'Prepaid expense' represents insurance allocated across months. The 'Prepaid income' refers to payments for membership and *Papers and Proceedings of the RST* that relate to the next financial year.

The Royal Society of Tasmania  
Statement of Financial Position  
As at 31 December 2023

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Assets</b>	\$	\$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	28,623	53,958
Accounts Receivable	1,674	0
Accrued Income	9,147	0
Investments	609,295	610,785
Prepaid expense	1,763	0
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>650,502</b>	<b>664,743</b>
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
RST Art collection	8,100,000	8,100,000
RST Library inc Rare Book collection	3,057,355	3,057,355
<b>Total Non-current Assets</b>	<b>11,157,355</b>	<b>11,157,355</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>11,807,857</b>	<b>11,822,098</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Prepaid income	250	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>11,807,607</b>	<b>11,822,098</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Reserve - ANZAAS	65,576	0
Reserve - Library and Art Fund donations	71,804	0
Reserve - Peter Smith	38,463	0
Revaluation Surplus	11,157,355	11,157,355
Accumulated surpluses	474,409	664,743
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>11,807,607</b>	<b>11,822,098</b>

For a more detailed explanation of this information, please refer to the full set of audited financial statements provided separately on the RST website <https://rst.org.au/annual-report/>.



Dr Sonia Shimeld FCPA  
Honorary Treasurer



ABN 65 889 598 100

**THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT  
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

I have audited the financial report of The Royal Society of Tasmania.

In my opinion the accompanying financial report of the organisation has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)*, including:

- Giving a true and fair view of the organisation's financial position for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended;
- Complying with the Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*;
- My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting accounts and other disclosures in the accounts, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates; and
- To the best of my belief and knowledge, all information and explanations required have been obtained and rules relating to the administration of funds appear to have been observed.



Richard H James FIPA FFA  
Institute of Public Accountants IPA#: 134606

**AUDITOR**

6 February 2024

## ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Actions by members of The Royal Society of Tasmania during the nineteenth century continue to attract the attention of historians. Twice in 2023, the Aboriginal Engagement Committee made recommendations to the RST Council in relation to articles that mentioned the RST in such a context. An article by Mark Powell entitled “The Posthumous Lynching of William Crowther” was published in online magazine *Quadrant* in March 2023. Powell quoted four unpublished assertions by historian Ian McFarlane that mentioned the RST in relation to the aftermath of the mutilation of the body of William Lanne following his death in 1869. Because the assertions are unpublished, it was not possible to establish the context in which they were made, nor whether they had been accurately quoted. Although two of the assertions were demonstrably incorrect, the other two involved speculations that would be impossible to fully refute. The committee recommended that the RST not respond to these assertions.

In November, Jack Ashby published an article entitled ‘How collections and reputation were built out of Tasmanian violence: thylacines (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*) and Aboriginal remains from Morton Allport (1830–1878)’ in *Archives of Natural History*. Morton Allport was a prominent Hobart citizen and member of the RST. Ashby’s paper was the subject of an article by Matthew Agius published in *Cosmos* “Colonial ‘scientist’ got cred for trading human, thylacine remains”. The RST accepted an invitation from Agius to post a comment on his article. The article and the comment can be found at <https://cosmosmagazine.com/people/ethics/colonial-scientist-got-cred-for-trading-human-thylacine-remains/>.

### **Cosmos received a response from the Royal Society of Tasmania on 4 December 2023:**

“The Royal Society of Tasmania welcomes the publication of Jack Ashby’s research on Morton Allport and the impacts of his actions on Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Ashby’s research adds to existing accounts of the trade in Tasmanian Aboriginal ancestral remains perpetrated by prominent citizens of Hobart. The Royal Society of Tasmania took responsibility for its role in these events and apologised without reservation to Tasmanian Aboriginal people in February 2021 <https://rst.org.au/apology-to-tasmanian-aboriginal-people-2021/>.”

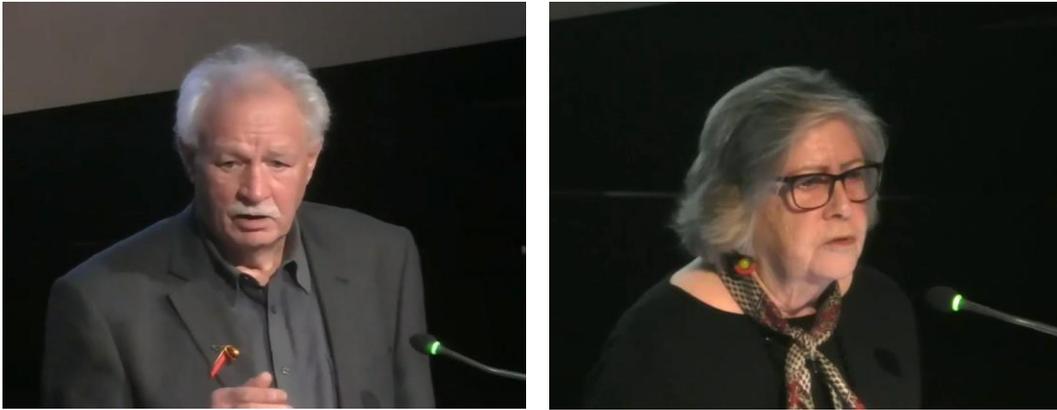


(L) RST reply to Cosmos article. (R) Mrs Mary Koolhof (top left) participated in the Science Meets Parliament event.

Science Meets Parliament (SMP) is an annual national event connecting STEM experts, policymakers and federal parliamentarians. In March 2023, the RST was invited to take part in the panel discussion ‘Knowing our past: truth telling in science’. Mary Koolhof represented the Society. The aim of the session was to share reflections on how to approach truth telling about the history of science’s relationship with Indigenous peoples. There was considerable interest in the work of the RST in truth telling, and a great deal of respect for the process undertaken in the delivery of the RST Apology to Tasmanian Aboriginal People in 2021.

Members of the Aboriginal Engagement Committee, Dr Sally Bryant AM and David Morris represented the Society at the annual National Reconciliation Week Breakfasts held in Hobart (Sally, 1 June) and Launceston (David, 31 May). The theme of the event was ‘Be a Voice for Generations’, tying the event to the ‘Voice’ Referendum held on 14 October 2023.

The committee worked behind the scenes to organize and promote the RST 'Voice' Referendum lectures by Tasmanian Aboriginal leaders Mr Michael Mansell (2 July) and Ms Kerry Sculthorpe (30 July). The two lectures added significantly to understanding of the issues and the different perspectives held by members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. A very significant outcome has been the publication of transcripts of both lectures in the 2023 issue of the *Papers and Proceedings of the RST*, together with a transcript of the 2022 RST lecture on Treaty by Mr Rodney Gibbins.



(L) Mr Michael Mansell and (R) Ms Kerry Sculthorpe delivering their presentations on the 'Voice' Referendum.

In August 2022, the Society publicly supported removal of the statue of William Crowther in Franklin Square, in large measure because the statue is abhorrent to Tasmanian Aboriginal people. That action led to an invitation in July 2023 from the Hobart City Council to comment on the Planning Application submitted to effect the removal. On behalf of the Society, I subsequently gave a deputation (short verbal statement) in support of application to the HCC Planning Committee meeting. The HCC voted to accept the application, but that decision is the subject of an appeal to be dealt with by the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in 2024.

On 30 November, the Society was invited to attend the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre at the Theatre Royal, Hobart. Mrs Mary Koolhof represented the RST at the event and received positive feedback from TAC members.

**Professor Jocelyn McPhie**  
**Chair, Aboriginal Engagement Committee**

## ART COLLECTION

The Art Collection Committee had a successful year to further place the RST Art Collection in a sound position for the future. Our initiatives included cataloguing, conservation, fundraising support and establishing the profile of the collection amongst the Tasmanian art lovers, historians and general public. In brief, the following was achieved in collaboration with the Honorary Art Curator and Art Fundraising Committee:

- A Significance Assessment was completed by Warwick Oakman and a Conservation Assessment by Amy Bartlett.
- Solander boxes were purchased to house the collection separately from TMAG artworks in the Print Room at TMAG.
- Discussions were held with several Tasmanian art galleries regarding future exhibitions of the artworks.
- The Art Collection Committee supported several successful fundraising events that included an art auction and an event at Government House celebrating the Tasmanian colonial artist, Louisa Anne Meredith.
- Subscription to a digital cataloguing package was achieved. The online catalogue will be available for the public to investigate the RST Art Collection.
- Initial discussions were held with Wagner Framemakers to exhibit selected RST art reproductions in their new gallery in Argyle Street, Hobart.

Some of these achievements are discussed in more detail in the Art Curation and Art Fundraising reports.

**Emeritus Professor Ross Large AO**  
Chair, Art Collection Committee

## ART CURATION

At the end of 2022, the Art Collection and Art Fundraising committees secured three Cultural Heritage Grants (CHG) from the National Library of Australia. They were for a Significance Assessment, Conservation Assessment and Cataloguing Software for the RST Art Collection. I managed the implementation of these grants.

Warwick Oakman was commissioned to write the Significance Assessment. In his summary, he wrote:

- The collection is of national/international significance for its contribution to an understanding of Tasmania's unique flora, fauna, and first peoples, and the role of women artists working in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- The RST Art Collection contains extensive works by seminal professional and amateur artists working in Tasmania from c1830–1860: GTWB Boyes, Thomas Evans Chapman, Anna Maria Nixon, WC Pigenit, John Skinner Prout, Owen Stanley and Francis Simpkinson de Wesselow. The works by Meredith, Nixon, Stanley and de Wesselow, represent the largest and more important groups of these artist's works held anywhere.
- The RST Art Collection is rare and unique to Australia. It is a coherent and focused group.

Amy Bartlett was commissioned to produce the Conservation Assessment. Her overall assessment of the collection and its storage and condition were positive. Her assessment included the following summary: "Overall, The Royal Society of Tasmania's works on paper collection is in excellent or a good to stable condition. The current storage methodology is consistent with conservation recommendations and archival materials are being used...Detailed conservation proposals for chosen artworks should be sought including quotes before specific works are authorised for conservation treatment. The high priority artworks should be ranked first... Note that conservation treatments such as backing removal can be a lengthy and costly process."



(L) Ms Louise Gillett, a descendant of Louisa Anne Meredith, from Melbourne viewing new solander boxes, (C – R) images from the Conservation Assessment Report showing examples of restoration work needed.

With the third grant, the RST purchased a five-year licence for the recommended *eHive* cataloguing software. Elizabeth Adkins trained Marley Large and I in the use of the software and uploading of the art collection data has begun. A call for volunteers to help with this process was made in the RST December Newsletter. When the data upload is completed, the RST Art Collection will become available online.

The Cultural Heritage Grants were completed on 31 October 2023 and all acquittal requirements were met.

As Honorary Art Curator, I wrote five newsletter articles based on the artists and artworks in the RST Art Collection. The articles have sparked interest from readers worldwide. As a result, we have had visitors from New Zealand and Melbourne, correspondence from New Zealand regarding the use of RST artworks for lectures, and a request from an Irish filmmaker to use images from the collection for a film being made about Irish convicts and Van Diemen's Land. The film premiered at the Cork International Film Festival.

A proposal for an exhibition featuring a number of the Society's artworks was submitted to the TMAG, and Marley Large and I visited QVMAG and the Burnie Regional Gallery with proposals for future exhibitions. Negotiations are still in progress.

Work has commenced on a proposed RST Art Collection Catalogue. To-date experts in various fields of art genres, art history and art theory have been approached to contribute to the catalogue.

Work continues on the ownership of the Louisa Anne Meredith Fish Illustrations with the other members of the RST Art Collection Committee (Ross Large and Marley Large), and Jocelyn McPhie and Mary Koolhof, and some valuable information has been unearthed.

An art exhibition by Jane Giblin, based on the Sarah Mitchell Scrapbooks (part of the RST Library Collections) was held at the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts from August – October 2023. I wrote the Introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition, officially opened the exhibition, and participated in a nationally broadcast ABC television interview about the exhibition. The exhibition then travelled to Swansea in December 2023. Jane Giblin is completing a PhD in Fine Art at the University of Tasmania based on the Sarah Mitchell Scrapbooks.



The Sarah Mitchell Scrapbooks (above) and (L-R) Ms Jane Giblin and Dr Anita Hansen at the exhibition launch at the Allport Library.

**Dr Anita Hansen**  
Honorary Art Curator

## ART FUNDRAISING

The Art Fundraising Committee has been very active in 2023. Our Patron, Her Excellency the Governor, the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, kindly hosted a reception at Government House to support fundraising for the RST Art Collection conservation work. This event on 28 September, 'An Evening with Louisa', was a tribute to 19<sup>th</sup> century naturalist, author and artist Louisa Anne Meredith; over 250 of her works form an important part of the RST Art Collection.

Professor Ross Large AO and volunteers including Marley Large, Julie Rimes, Lorraine Polglase and John Williamson set up a display of artworks, prints and banners featuring Louisa Anne Meredith's life and work. Government House Official Secretary David Owen kindly arranged a display of historical photographs featuring Meredith, and original artworks. RST Vice-President Julie Rimes led the creative team of Marley Large, Thomas Rimes, Dr William Simon and Meg Johnson in developing a modern adaptation of a Masque such as Louisa herself performed at Government House, Hobart in 1866. The Masque comprised dancing and acting by costumed players. Everything said came directly from Meredith's own writings and John Williamson very capably narrated the linking text.

Following the performance, Pipe Major David North piped the guests to supper with a rendition of 'Auld Lang Syne' and guests were then treated to botanical-themed food and desserts. Very warm thanks go to Executive Chef Ainstie Wagner and her team for these masterpieces. Grateful thanks also go to Leanne Balmforth for designing the printed program, and to Bernard Pryor OAM and Heather Pryor for capturing a photographic record of the evening.



(L) Government House display of Meredith artworks and photographs. (R) Modern Masque Cast: Back (L-R) Melissa Cuthbertson, Zoë Fitzherbert, Thomas Rimes, and Front (L-R) Pearl Smithies, Ji Won Kim, John Williamson.

A highlight of the evening was the attendance of several descendants of Louisa Anne Meredith, including Louise Gillett from Melbourne who brought with her for display on the night a magnificent 22cm medal won by Louisa at the Intercolonial Exhibition of Australasia held in Melbourne in 1866–1867. The evening concluded with the auction of an original painting of a waratah very generously donated by the noted Tasmanian botanical artist and RST member Lynne Uptin.

We extend very grateful thanks to Her Excellency and Professor Chalmers for hosting this special evening, and to the Government House team who provided the RST volunteers and guests with magnificent support before and during the event. Thank you to all who attended or supported the event in various ways. A total of \$15,155 was raised for the conservation and restoration of artworks in the RST Art Collection.



(L) Auction items at RST art fundraising event.

(R) (L-R) Bronwyn Beechey, Marley Large and Roxanne Steenberg inspecting items at the RST's auction.

A silent auction on 5 November of 'Art, Objets d'Art and Collectables' donated by RST members raised \$3,652.25. Warm thanks are extended to Julie Rimes for very kindly providing her home as the venue; the team of volunteers who organised and ran the event; and the art donors Christine Hurley, Ross and Marley Large, Alison Parsons, Lorraine Polglase, Heather and Bernard Pryor OAM, and Julie Rimes.

The final fundraising event for the year was a raffle at the Christmas Dinner raising \$400 to add to the \$530 raised at the Midwinter Dinner in June. Members and supporters have continued to send generous donations to the RST Art Fund. Now that the Conservation Assessment for the RST Art Collection has been completed, fundraising efforts for 2024 will focus on specific-purpose grant applications once cost and priorities for conservation and restoration work have been determined.

**Mrs Mary Koolhof**  
Chair, Art Fundraising Committee

## BURSARIES

The Royal Society of Tasmania offers bursaries to Tasmanian secondary students who have been selected through a competitive process to represent Australia at an international event. Bursaries may also be awarded for national events held interstate. Bursaries are offered in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering, the arts, humanities and social sciences.

After a dormant period of three years, seven applications for RST Bursaries were received in mid-2023. An ad hoc assessment committee was convened, comprising RST members and teachers, Dr Deborah Beswick OAM, Mary Koolhof, Julie Rimes, Roxanne Steenberg and John Williamson. I served as Chair.

In 2023, RST Bursaries helped Lachlan Fox, Abhitaj Singh, Nguyen (Tim) Le and Moanie Zier Williams from Elizabeth College (Hobart) and Hayley Carpenter from Don College (Devonport) to attend the ANZAAS Youth Science Forum in Melbourne. RST bursaries also assisted Zoe Bremner from Scotch Oakburn College (Launceston) who attended the Endeavour Space Camp in the USA, and Naren Pillai from Elizabeth College (Hobart) who attended the Australasian Society for Philosophy and Psychology Conference in Canberra.



(Left) (L-R) Nguyen (Tim) Le, Lachlan Fox, Abhitaj Singh, Moanie Zier Williams and Hayley Carpenter outside Ormond College, Melbourne for the ANZAAS Youth Science Forum. (Right top) Zoe Bremner and the 'Right Stuff' medal she was awarded at the Endeavour Space Camp, USA. (Right bottom) Naren Pillai at the Australasian Society for Philosophy and Psychology Conference.

In November 2023, the RST Council unanimously approved addition of the following sentence to the guidelines for the RST Bursaries: "Upon recommendation from the RST Bursaries Committee, Council may if satisfied the circumstances so merit, award a bursary". This statement allows a measure of flexibility so that bursaries can be awarded to high-achieving students wanting to attend unconventional events.

**Professor Jocelyn McPhie**  
Acting Chair, Bursary Committee

## EVENTS – SOUTH

### 6 March

Event: The Clive Lord Medal Lecture and RST Annual General Meeting 2023

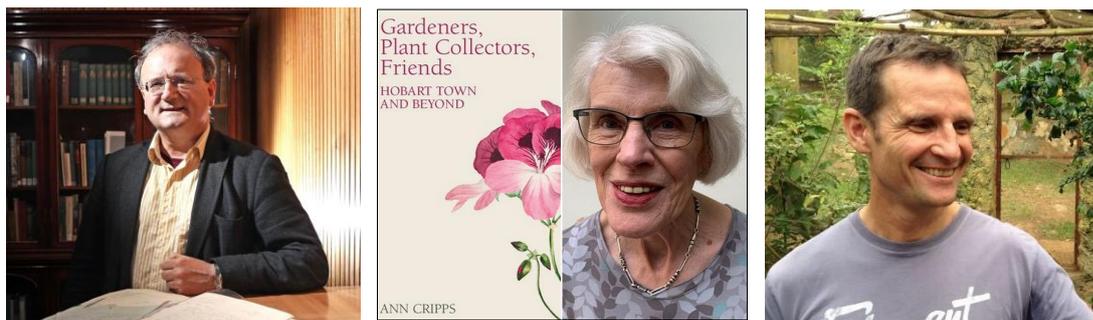
Speaker: Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow

Title: A very great idea? Acclimatisation of animals and birds in Tasmania, 1860 – 1895.

Venue: Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1x4G03mZ40&list=PLzn2N4MvUU\\_dbU7S5urOXF1TBkscVWwO6&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1x4G03mZ40&list=PLzn2N4MvUU_dbU7S5urOXF1TBkscVWwO6&index=7)



(L - R) Lecturers Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow, Mrs Ann Cripps (FOTMAG event) and Dr Keith Hayes.

### 2 April

Speaker: Dr Keith Hayes

Title: Assessing the risks of eliminating malaria with gene drives.

Venue: In person at Geology Lecture Theatre, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa-nXpL7iH0>

### 25 May

Invited Event: Friends of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (FOTMAG)

Speaker: Ann Cripps in conversation with Emerita Professor Kate Warner AC

Title: Gardeners, Plant Collectors, Friends: Hobart Town and Beyond.

Venue: Central Gallery, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

Recording: <https://friendsoftmag.org.au/resources/Documents/Anne%20Cripps%20Gardens-compressed.pdf>



### 8 June

Event: RST Midwinter Dinner

Speaker: Dr Shasta Henry

Title: Future Shock! Or Not?

Venue: Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDQHUPijoi0&t=23s>

## 2 July

Event: Royal Society of Tasmania Voice Referendum 2023 Lecture Series

Speakers: Mr Michael Mansell

Title: Empowering Aborigines: Voices inside parliament or advisers outside? Voting 'No' to the referendum is a vote of support for Aboriginal self-determination.

Venue: Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vzmxXQWE654>

## 30 July

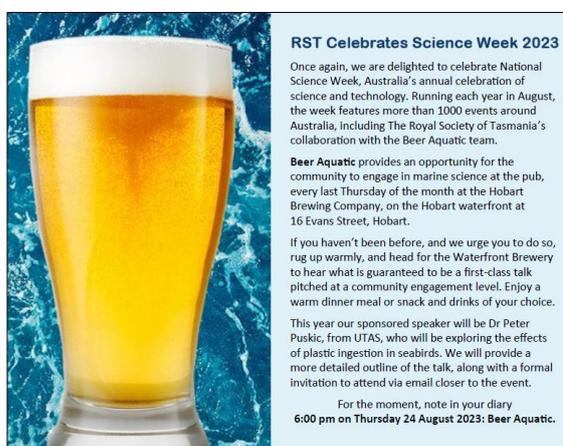
Event: Royal Society of Tasmania Voice Referendum 2023 Lecture Series

Speaker: Ms Kerry Sculthorpe

Title: An exploration of the Voice to Parliament – how we got here and what we might expect after the Referendum.

Venue: Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAnS-PohQzo>



(L) Notice for Beer Aquatic event, and (R) Dr Vipul Gupta and Dr Rachel Climie with their Peter Smith medals.

## 6 August

Event: Presentation of 2022 Peter Smith Medal to Dr Rachel Climie and Dr Vipul Gupta

Speakers: Dr Rachel Climie and Dr Vipul Gupta

Title: Cardiovascular Health in Early Life (Dr Climie) and Transforming 3D Printing from Rapid Prototyping to Advanced Manufacturing (Dr Gupta)

Venue: Geology Lecture Theatre, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAnS-PohQzo>

## 31 August

Hybrid Event: The Royal Society of Tasmania and the Beer Aquatic celebrating National Science Week

Speaker: Dr Peter Puskic

Title: Trash Talk: The plastic peril in our oceans.

Venue: Hobart Brewing Company, Hobart

## 28 September

Event: Fundraising event in support of the RST Art Collection

Musical & Visual Presentation: An Evening with Louisa

Venue: Government House Tasmania, Hobart

### 1 November

Event: Behind-the-Scenes Tour, RST Library Collections

Speaker: Katrina Ross, University of Tasmania, Historical Collections Coordinator

Venue: In person at the Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

### 5 November

Event: Art, Objets d'Art and Collectables Auction

Purpose: Fundraising event in support of the RST Art Collection

Venue: 96 King Street, Sandy Bay

### 3 December

Invited Event: The Tasmanian Historical Research Association.

Purpose: An excursion to the Tasman Monument, Tasman Bay, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the unveiling of the Tasman Monument, built by the Royal Society of Tasmania to commemorate Abel Tasman's landing on the Forestier Peninsula in 1642.

**Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the RST Library Collection**

Wednesday 1 November  
10:00 – 11 am  
Level 5, Morris Miller Library, UTAS

Visit the home of our RST Library Collection and hear about what makes it important and how it is used by researchers, students and the broader community. Historical Collections Coordinator, Katrina Ross, will delve into the collections and share the stories of the popular, the oldest and the quirky items that make this Collection nationally significant.

Places are strictly limited to 15 participants. To register, send an email to [office@rst.org.au](mailto:office@rst.org.au) to reach our office assistant Bronwyn Beechy **before 27 October 2023**.

Details of the event will be in an email of confirmation.

Left: Hobart Town Almanack and Van Diemen's Land Annual, 1837. RST Library Collection.

(L) Behind-the-Scenes Library Tour and (R) Dr Annaliese Jacobs-Claydon delivered the Christmas Dinner lecture.

### 7 December

Event: RST Christmas Dinner Lecture

Speaker: Dr Annaliese Jacobs-Claydon

Title: Shearwater Stories: Histories of Tasmania and the Arctic, c1800-1860.

Venue: In-person lecture at the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO3PtgHuHOU>

Associate Professor Julie Rimes

Chair, Events Committee

## HONOURS & AWARDS

The Royal Society of Tasmania medals and Doctoral Awards recognize the achievements of outstanding scholars at PhD, early, mid and senior stages of their careers. The Honours and Awards Committee has the responsibility of seeking and assessing nominations for the RST medals and awards.

In June 2023, the Society offered two medals: the MR Banks Medal, intended for a scholar of distinction in mid-career, and the RM Johnston Memorial Medal, awarded to a scholar of great distinction in any field.

The MR Banks Medal was awarded to Associate Professor Alexander Bissember, School of Natural Sciences, University of Tasmania. Associate Professor Bissember has made a substantial contribution to the field of chemical synthesis and catalysis. His research interests span areas of organic, organometallic, inorganic, and natural products chemistry and chemical education.

The RM Johnston Memorial Medal attracted an exceptionally strong field of nominations. The Honours and Awards Committee decided that it was inappropriate to attempt to separate two outstanding nominations and for the first time in the history of the medal, two medals have been awarded. The RM Johnston Memorial medals for 2023 were awarded to Distinguished Emeritus Professor Paul R Haddad (University of Tasmania) and Emeritus Professor John A Church AO (University of NSW). Professor Haddad has made truly outstanding and internationally recognised contributions to the field of analytical chemistry. Professor Church AO is internationally known for his work on sea level and climate, and has significantly advanced the field of climate science, including ocean observing systems, and theoretical understanding of physical oceanic processes.



**2023 RST Medal Winners: (L-R) Distinguished Emeritus Professor Paul R Haddad, Emeritus Professor John A Church AO (photo Dr B Sloyan, CSIRO), Associate Professor Alexander Bissember and Dr Tobias Stål.**

The RST Doctoral (PhD) Award recognises recent PhD graduates who have made significant advances during their doctoral research. The value of the award is \$1,000 (AUD). In 2023, the Doctoral Award was open to both STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) and non-STEMM applications, however no nominations were received in non-STEMM disciplines.

Dr Tobias Stål was the winner of the 2023 RST Doctoral Award. Dr Stål is a geophysicist focusing on understanding Antarctica's deep and shallow structure and properties. He completed his PhD at the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, University of Tasmania (UTAS) in 2021. The focus of his PhD research was a study of the Antarctic lithosphere revealed by multivariate analysis. Since graduating, Dr Stål has taken up a Research Associate position in computation physics at the School of Natural Sciences, UTAS.

During June 2023, the RST Council approved the establishment of a new RST Medal, the 'Louisa Anne Meredith Medal'. This medal will be awarded for the first time in 2024 and is to recognise an outstanding

researcher who excels in the fields of arts or humanities or both, with outstanding contributions evidenced by creative outputs.

The Peter Smith Medal, Louisa Anne Meredith Medal and the Doctoral Awards are scheduled for 2024.

Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC is the Patron of the RST and will host a medal and award presentation ceremony at Government House on 22 April 2024. There will be three RST 2023 medal winners and the Doctoral Award winner in attendance.

**Emeritus Professor Richard Coleman**  
**Chair, Honours & Awards Committee**

## LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The RST Library Collections comprise a diverse range of books, journal titles, early maps, and private family deposits. They are housed in the Morris Miller Library (MML) on the Sandy Bay Campus of UTAS and managed by the University's Cultural Collections staff. The RST Library Collections is open Monday and Wednesday to RST members and the public by appointment.

Enquires to [RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au](mailto:RSTLibrary.Collections@utas.edu.au). Further details are available on the web site: <https://www.utas.edu.au/library/research/special-and-rare-collections>.

### STAFF

The University Librarian, Janette Burke, retired at the end of December. Janette has had oversight for the RST Library Collections for the last five years and strengthened relationships with RST and the Council. Janette and Katrina Ross, Historical Collections Coordinator made significant changes to improve the management of the RST Library Collections. Caine Chennatt will be Acting University Librarian until the position is recruited.

### COLLECTIONS

Over the last 12 months the Council approved several recommendations to improve the viability, management, discovery of and access to, the RST Library Collections including:

- Funding towards an inventory of the rare books in the collection to improve audit and risk compliance. As part of the inventory, from November 2023 to February 2024, books are viewed for correct documentation and condition and any unique identifiers such as bookplates or inscriptions are recorded. The funding provided employment and training of Evelyn Lambeth and Josh Prouse to assist with the inventory.
- The RST Library Collections were separated from the broader UTAS collection and relocated in dedicated shelving bays within the Special and Rare store, improving access to, and identification of the collection.
- Nicole Kearney, Manager of Biodiversity Heritage Library Australia, visited the collections and provided expert advice. She also gave a presentation to the RST Council on the Biodiversity Heritage Library.
- The following collections were digitised ready for upload to the University open access portal:
  - RS22 Leonard Rodway Collection
  - RS9 Derwent Bank & Swanston Letter
  - RSA/G RST Library Accession Register

## Online Collections

The visibility and access to the collection was improved by:

- The migration of 3,161 papers from the *Papers & Proceedings of the RST* to the new University's Open Access Repository (OAR). The *Papers & Proceedings of the RST* are publicly available shortly after publishing and can be found here: [https://figshare.utas.edu.au/Royal\\_Society\\_of\\_Tasmania](https://figshare.utas.edu.au/Royal_Society_of_Tasmania).
- A total of 77 copies of the *Papers & Proceedings of the RST* were posted to institutions at a cost of \$1,546. Of these, 58 copies were for international organisations.
- As of 1 January 2024, the RST Minutes and Reports will be made publicly available online immediately after the seven-year embargo is lifted unless identified as confidential.



(L) UTAS Cultural Collections team at an 'inventory' session (L-R) Katrina Ross, Jennifer Franklin, Neil Apted, Josh Prouse, Cindy Thomas, Jane Barlow and Anna Millward. (R) (L-R) Ms Janette Burke being thanked by RST President Jocelyn McPhie at the Christmas Dinner.

## ENGAGEMENT

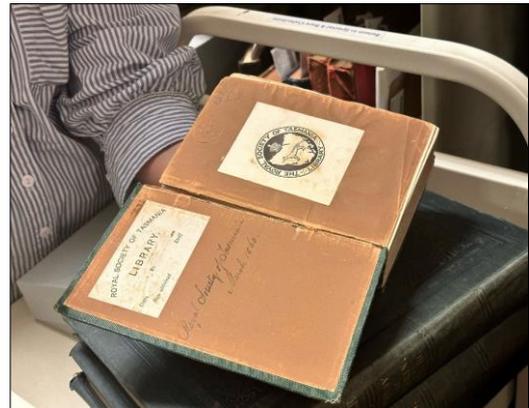
Statistics on the number of downloads for digitized items in the collection and of papers from the *Papers and Proceedings of the RST* are unavailable at this time as a transition is underway to a new repository. The figures will be provided during 2024.

In 2023, RST members, UTAS staff and students and the public accessed and engaged with the RST Library Collections in several ways as shown in the table provided for the past three consecutive years.

	2023	2022	2021
Royal Society Members visits	18	18	24
Royal Society rare books viewed	10	13	67
Royal Society Deposits viewed	48	281	350

The Sarah Mitchell Scrapbooks (RS32/89) once again proved to be the most requested item in the RST Library Collections. The sketches within are tangible records for many Tasmanian families researching their family tree. The publicity and popularity of Jane Giblin's exhibition, *Dear Kate: The vision of the Mitchell women*, also created extra interest in this important collection item. A drawing in the scrapbook also provided documentary evidence for Ann Cripps for her presentation to the Friends of TMAG event in May 2023.

Katrina Ross provided Behind-the-Scenes tours of the RST Library Collections and UTAS rare book collections for RST members. She explained that stories about how books entered the collection are often just as fascinating as the book itself.



(L) RST members viewing the oldest book in the RST Library Collections, Iohannes Nider, *Praeceptorium Divinae Legis* (Commentary on the Ten Commandments), 1470. This book was presented to the Society by Mr Warren of Argyle Street Hobart on 8 July 1853. (R) The RST's first edition copy of Charles Darwin's, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, 1859.

Ms Janette Burke  
RST Honorary Librarian

## MEDIA & PUBLICITY

The RST continues to use a range of communication tools for promoting and communicating news, events and core business of the Society and helping expand its reach statewide, nationally and internationally. The 2023 RST lecture series in the North and South of the state continued to provide an impressive range of speakers and wide diversity of topics. A full list is contained in the RST Events - South and Northern Branch Report. Most presentations utilised both in-person presentations and continued to be recorded and uploaded to the RST YouTube channel.



The RST YouTube channel is important for viewing of recorded lectures.

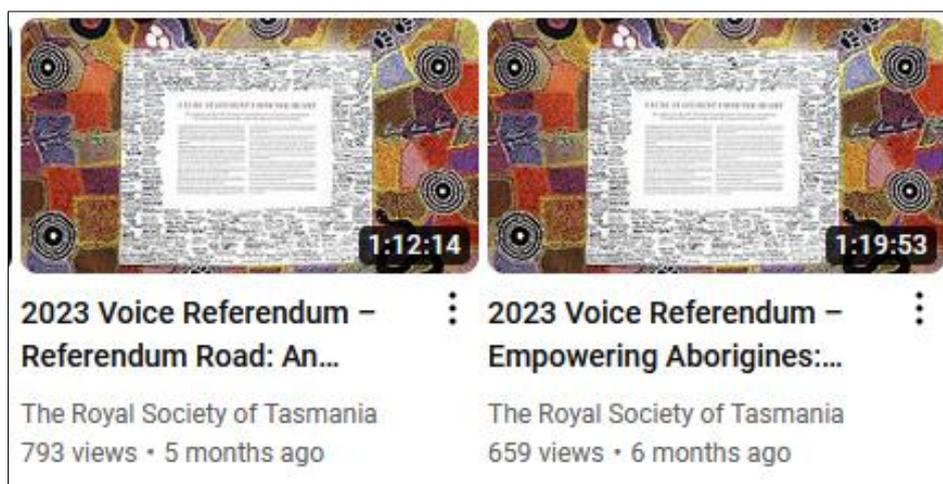
Recordings of RST lectures were widely promoted on social media outlets and were viewed by individuals from outside of the RST, including both Australia-wide and overseas. The three most viewed lecture recordings delivered in the North and the South were:

### 2023 Northern Lecture Recordings

- 28 July 2023 lecture - Professor Nicholas Shackel 'Liver disease, the good, the bad, the ugly' - 262 views
- 23 July 2023 lecture - Mr Jon Addison 'The Tasmanian origins of the Australian flag' - 187 views
- 22 April 2023 lecture - Professor Jocelyn McPhie 'Complex volcanic eruptions: Piton de la Fournaise, Reunion Island, 2007' - 173 views

### 2023 Southern Lecture Recordings

- 30 July 2023 lecture - Ms Kerry Sculthorpe 'Referendum Road: An exploration of the Voice to Parliament – how we got here and what we might expect after the referendum' - 793 views
- 2 July 2023 lecture - Mr Michael Mansell '2023 Voice Referendum – Empowering Aborigines: Voices inside parliament or advisers outside? Voting 'No' is a vote of support for Aboriginal self-determination' - 659 views
- 6 March 2023 Clive Lord Lecture - Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow 'A very great idea?' Acclimatisation in Tasmania, 1862 – 1895' - 102 views.



The two most viewed lecture recordings during 2023 were both on the Voice Referendum.

The RST Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/RoyalSocietyTas>), as of the end of 2023, had 1,007 followers (66.9% female, mostly 35-44 yrs, 33.1% male, mostly 45-54 yrs), and had displayed 145 posts and 22 events listings during the calendar year. The posts reached 14,713 viewers, attracting 3,873 views, and the total number of page 'likes' reached 920. The top posts for 2023 were:

- 'Artificial Structures as Marine Habitats' – Dr Valeriya Komyakova – 931 views
- Lectures by the 2023 winners of the Royal Society of Tasmania Peter Smith Medal - Dr Rachel Climie and Dr Vipul Gupta - 644 views
- 'The Royal Society of Tasmania invites Secondary school students to apply for bursaries' - 636 views
- 'International Big Picture Learning Credential: Putting the Person Back in Assessment' - Tanya Ringuet - 516 views
- 'Complex Volcanic Eruptions' - Professor Jocelyn McPhie - 461 views
- 'Congratulations to RST Member and experienced field geologist Dr Keith Corbett on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia' - 272 views.

The top three event listings via the RST Facebook page were as follows, however all event listings are picked up by UTAS and other organizations/societies and distributed through their various networks, resulting in a far greater reach:

- Mid-Winter Dinner and Lecture 'Future Shock! Or Not?' - Dr Shasta Henry - 998 views
- 'Trash Talk: The Plastic Peril In Our Oceans' - Dr Peter Puskic - Royal Society of Tasmania in Conjunction with Beer Aquatic - 650 views
- The Royal Society of Tasmania's Art, Objets d'Art and Collectables Auction - 441 views.

The 'X' account ([twitter.com/RoyalSocTas](https://twitter.com/RoyalSocTas)) like Facebook expands the Society's reach and in 2023 attracted 557 regular followers. Although RST Facebook and 'X' accounts continued to provide the most prominent, and increasingly important means of publicising RST events and activities, local promotion via the RST website and newsletter, ABC Local Radio interviews, the *Examiner* newspaper, the *Hobart Magazine* calendar of events, flyer distribution through established email networks, and online event listings maintained by QVMAG and the UTAS Events Calendar, ensured an even wider distribution of information.

A significant amount of work was devoted to maintaining and updating social media. Starting in June 2023, RST Student Councillor Evelyn Lambeth has been assisting in the management of the RST Facebook account. Preparation of event listings opens a wide promotional avenue, as it allows other interested people and groups to distribute the RST event information across their own networks. Christine Beswick, Northern Branch Secretary, promoted Northern Branch lectures via similar email networks involving schools, northern organisations and other interested parties. Sincere thanks to all those involved.

The RST monthly Newsletter remains critical for the Society's business and events and during 2023 has kept members informed and entertained with history snippets and articles based on the RST Art Collection. Sincere thanks go to our 2023 Newsletter Liaison John Williamson, Newsletter Editor and designer Bernard Pryor OAM, Website Liaison Chel Bardell and Webmaster Eddy Steenbergen, for all their hard work in compilation and distribution and to Hon. Art Curator Dr Anita Hansen for her regular features.



The RST Newsletter, edited and designed by Bernard Pryor OAM, is a significant communication tool.

Promotion of events is a RST team effort significantly aided by communications from the President, Professor Jocelyn McPhie, the RST Council and other RST members who have helped publicise events, share newsletters, flyers and social media posts, as well as encourage attendance at the Society's activities. Sincere thanks also go to ABC Local Radio hosts and producers, for their continued support in enabling our guest lecturers and RST Award and Medal winners to be interviewed on air, and available later on-line. Thanks also to staff of the Hobart Magazine for their support, and to the UTAS Events team, for their inclusion of RST lecture information on the UTAS public events calendar and associated email newsletter.



RST President Professor Jocelyn McPhie thanking Ms Chel Bardell who retires at the 2024 AGM.

Ms Chel Bardell  
Publicity Manager

## MEMBERSHIP

During 2023 the Membership Committee continued to make the retention of current members and increasing the number of new member applications its top priority. Despite 43 new members in 2023, there was overall a slight decrease in membership numbers. Some long-term members discontinued membership indicating that ill health did not enable participation in RST events. At the end of 2023 the total number of members was 362, comprising:

South .....	262
North .....	71
Australia (outside Tasmania) .....	25
Overseas.....	4

RST Council determined the membership fees for 2024 would not change from 2023 and were as follows:

Full member with <i>Papers and Proceedings of the RST</i> .....	\$95
Full member without <i>Papers and Proceedings of the RST</i> .....	\$70
Student member with <i>Papers and Proceedings of the RST</i> .....	\$55
Student member without <i>Papers and Proceedings of the RST</i> ...	\$30

During 2023 the Society also moved from the Reckon online accounting system to Xero. That move had significant consequences. First, the more limited capacity in Xero for the storage of membership data forced a search for alternatives. The Society now manages membership data in a desktop database. Second, the move forced training in both Xero and the database application by the Membership Secretary. Finally, the switch to Xero indirectly brought about the development of a Privacy Policy addressing the treatment of membership data by the Society.

Council discussed privacy as a major issue in response to a recommendation by the Membership Committee that the membership database be archived annually after each AGM, to ensure a long-term record of its members and their membership history. The new policy was approved by Council at the December 2023 meeting. It has been published on the RST website alongside the Code of Conduct.

Finally, I want to thank the Membership Committee and other Council members for their support.

### NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED IN 2023

Mr Phillippe Allen, Dr Graham Baird, Ms Portia Barnes, Professor Michael Breadmore, Dr Rachel Climie, Mr George Davis, Dr Ashley Dyson, Mr Leigh Dyson, Dr Rowan Eisner, Ms Charlotte Faine, Dr Don Garden OAM, Ms Louise Gillett, Mrs Sally Gray, Dr Ashley Greenwood, Professor Paul Haddad, Dr Paul Hanson, Dr Jody Heald AM, Ms Victoria Jayde, Dr Ian Kidd, Dr Valeryia Komyakova, Ms Evelyn Lambeth, Ms Robyn Lewis, Mr Thomas Lyons, Mrs Cecily MacFarlane, Ms Stephanie McKellar, Mr Andrew Mead, Professor Stefan Petrow, Mrs Lorraine Polglase, Mr John Presser, Mr Russell Reid, Ms Maria Riedl, Professor Benjamin Richardson, Mrs Susie Riddoch, Ms Heather Scandrett, Ms Kerry Sculthorpe, Ms Miriam Shevland, Mr Peter Shimeld, Dr Sonia Shimeld, Dr Jan Tilden, Mr Christopher Walker, Mrs Alison Watson, Ms Narelle Wickham, Professor Kemal Yildirim

**Mrs Roxanne Steenbergen**  
**Membership Secretary and Chair, Membership Committee**

# PUBLICATIONS

The Publications Committee oversaw a wide range of tasks in 2023 and continued its efforts to promote and expand sales. Much of this work has been due to the enormous contribution of Ms Chel Bardell, who retires from the Publications Committee at the 2024 AGM. For many years Chel has tirelessly contributed to the Committee, including reaching out to wholesalers to promote RST publications. Chel’s success in establishing sales tables at the TMAG and QVMAG in 2023 resulted in excellent sales and exposure for the Society and an agreement to continue using these outlets. We will miss Chel’s expertise and friendship over many years and sincerely wish her well in the future.



**RST publications on sale at TMAG September 2023.**

During September-October 2023, the RST sold 141 items through the TMAG gift shop sale and sincerely thank the shop manager Matthew Spencer for making this promotional opportunity such a success. A total of 25 items were sold at the first QVMAG book-sale which was also pleasing.

The RST books and notebooks have remained steady sellers throughout the year. A total of 679 items (including sets of gift cards) to the value of \$14,171.95 were sold in 2023, and further sales were made by the Northern Branch to the value of \$621. The 2024 RST Calendar sales will be known by March 2024.

Numbers of items sold during 2023 were as follows:

Australian Mineral Discoverers	13	Charles Darwin in Hobart	23
The Library at the End of the World	35	Mapping Van Diemen’s Land	56
<i>Papers &amp; Proceedings of the RST</i> Vol 157	19	<i>Papers &amp; Proceedings of the RST</i> past volumes	29
RST Notebooks	64	Poles Apart: Fascination, Fame and Folly	54
An Illustrated Checklist of Tasmanian Beetles	16	2024 RST Calendar (to Dec 2023 does not include news agency sales to March 2024)	314

This year we re-instated the RST calendar to reassess its feasibility as escalating printing and postage costs have eroded profit margins on time-limited sale items. Sincere thanks to David Wilson who took stunning photographs of Gould’s Mammals of Tasmania and oversaw the calendar production. The RST will decide whether to continue producing an annual calendar after returns are assessed in April 2024.



(L) Cover of Vol 157 of the *Papers and Proceedings of the RST* and (R) promotional flyer for the RST 2024 Calendar.

The Committee provided input on a range of issues including refining policies and procedures for journal exchanges for the RST Library Collections and more timely distribution of the *Papers and Proceedings of the RST* to improve its visibility. Special thanks to UTAS Library staff Ms Janette Burke and Ms Katrina Ross and Dr Margaret Davies OAM for her knowledge of the RST Library Collections which helped guide these changes.

### ***Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania***

In 2023, several changes to the ‘Instructions to Authors’ were trialed to simplify and streamline paper preparation and editing. These changes have reduced the time spent on formatting changes and will now be adopted. Volume 157 of the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, edited by Dr Sally Bryant AM, was published on 1 December 2023. Totalling 118 pages, the volume contains ten papers, three of which were author transcripts of landmark Palawa lectures presented to the Society during late 2022 and 2023. Papers were prepared by 14 contributing authors and reviewed by 16 independent referees. Twelve referees were based in Tasmania, and four at mainland institutions. Papers covered a range of topics and disciplines from the natural sciences to cultural and indigenous history. A fascinating paper on the Tasmanian Acclimatisation Society was contributed by Emeritus Professor Stefan Petrow, a paper on the pioneering filmmaker Norman Laird by Professor Ben Richardson and a paper following one in Volume 156 on fluorescence in Tasmanian mammals and birds completed this topic for Dr Lisa Gershwin. An overview paper by Mary Koolhof, Marley Large and Julie Rimes, documented the legacy of Louisa Anne Meredith including the new RST medal to be awarded in 2024. The paper featured the modern masque event performed at Government House to recognize Meredith’s invaluable contribution to Tasmania and beyond, and as a fitting tribute, the 2023 Journal cover features one of Louisa’s delightful Tasmanian frog paintings.

Once again, sincere thanks to copy-editor Caroline Mordaunt and typesetter June Pongratz for their expert assistance and invaluable support throughout the year. Several enquiries have already been received for Volume 158 and one already accepted paper is in the final stages of editing for this volume.

Work continues with Dr Gershwin on production of a Jellyfish Monograph and with Ms Kathryn Medlock on a TMAG Thylacine Catalogue with hopes both may be published in 2024 or soon after.

**Dr Sally Bryant AM**  
**Chair, Publications Committee**

## RST FOUNDATION

The RST Foundation was established to provide a reserve fund of capital and income to meet the Society's unforeseen future needs and operates as a committee of the RST Council. The Foundation welcomes donations, gifts and bequests that can be used to assist the Society in its activities. The Society and hence the Foundation have the special benefit of endorsement as a Deductible Gift Recipient under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* for gifts and donations made specifically for use in maintaining the Society's Library and Art collections. Other non-tax-deductible donations and gifts to the Foundation may be used for special projects and activities as prescribed by the donor or where the Society and the Foundation see fit.

During the year some changes were made in the way investments are held.

1. Investment funds have been transferred to the Foundation, combining management and oversight of all investment funds in one place.
2. Separate investments have been set up to hold or reinstate the current balances of Protected Assets, being those funds held for specific purposes and not available for general RST use. Any of these funds that remain unspent at year end are denoted as a Restricted Reserve.
  - a. Peter Smith Trust. The RST receives income from the Estate of the late Peter Smith which is to be used to assist senior secondary science students travelling to international conferences. The investment is the unspent amount of those funds and accumulated interest thereon.
  - b. ANZAAS Funds. The RST received an initial sum when ANZAAS ceased operations in Tasmania in 2015. The funds are to be used for purposes similar to those of ANZAAS, such as lectures, symposia and other activities enhancing academic excellence in the sciences. The investment is the unspent amount of those funds and accumulated interest thereon.
  - c. A separate investment has been set up to hold tax-deductible donations received to support the RST Library Collections and the RST Art Collection.
  - d. A separate investment has been set up to hold donations received specifically for the current RST Art Fund.

These rearrangements will provide for clear separation and management of funds for their specific purposes and better enable RST and Foundation compliance with regulatory requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Bank Term Deposits have been retained to take advantage of the Federal Government Deposit Guarantee scheme.

During the year, some \$36,000 in Foundation funds were allocated towards an inventory of the RST Library Collections that will in turn facilitate a valuation and significance assessment of items in the collection. This work was well overdue and undertaken under the direction of the Librarians at UTAS who manage the collections.

A summary of the investments held as of 31 December 2023 is provided below.

## RST FOUNDATION INVESTMENTS 31 DECEMBER 2023

INVESTMENT FUND	AMOUNT
Fund 1 TPT Long Term Fund Library & Art Gallery (DGR)	\$36,273
Fund 3 TPT Fixed Term Fund ANZAAS	\$65,576
Fund 4 TPT Balanced Fund	\$ 3,277
Fund 5a MyState Bank Term Deposit	\$35,834
Fund 5b MyState Bank Term Deposit	\$36,298
Fund 5c MyState Bank Term Deposit	\$41,667
Fund 5d MyState Bank Term Deposit	\$15,540
Fund 6a MyState Bank Term Deposit	\$143,335
Fund 6b CBA Term Deposit	\$80,000
Fund 7 TPT Long Term Fund	\$77,500
Fund 8 TPT Fixed Term Fund Peter Smith Trust	\$38,463
Fund 9 TPT Long Term Art Fund	\$35,531
<b>Total Foundation Investments</b>	<b>\$609,295</b>

Mr Neil MacKinnon  
 Chair, Royal Society of Tasmania Foundation Committee

# RST NORTHERN BRANCH

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

There were several changes to the membership of the Northern Branch Management Committee in 2023. Mr Brian East retired after several decades of exemplary service, notably as the Branch's Honorary Treasurer and Dr Snow joined as a new member. Mr Fitzgerald is Director of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG). Mr Morris replaced Dr Ratcliff OAM representing the Northern Branch on Council and Mr MacKinnon was the other Branch representative on Council. During the year the Honorary Secretary, Mrs Beswick, took extended leave and Drs Renilson and Beckwith shared the secretarial load during her absence. The three worked well together to provide efficient and effective administrative support to the Branch. This arrangement raised the issue of security of Society membership data particularly in the form of email lists, and Council provided guidance in this area. We would like to thank the Council members for their support of the Branch in 2023.

## LECTURE PROGRAM 2023

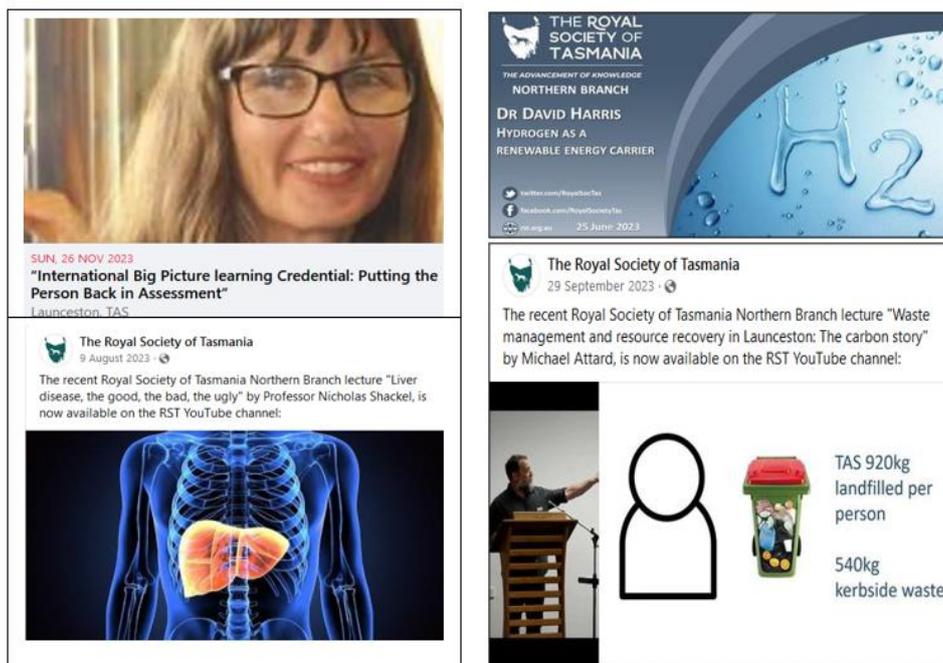
The Committee extends its thanks to all 2023 speakers for their generosity and for the excellence of their presentations. The year's program has again been notable for the quality of the speakers and for the pleasing attendances at our lectures. Each guest speaker was presented with a certificate of appreciation and a book, as a token of thanks for their contribution. We were also pleased to hold a successful third joint meeting with the Geological Society of Australia, Tasmania Division in September.

In 2023 the Launceston Lecture Series included ten lectures and two doctoral candidates' reports.

Date	Guest Lecturer	Title of Lecture	Attendance (+online)
26 Feb	Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM [RST Medal Address]	The Peril of Naming Things: Nosology, Taxonomy and the Identification of Style	62 (+16)
26 Mar	Professor Jocelyn McPhie [RST President]	Complex Volcanic Eruptions	54
23 Apr	Professor Nicholas Shakel	Liver Disease: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly	51 (+11)
28 May	Dr Valeriya Komyakova	Artificial Structures as Marine Habitats: Challenges and Opportunities	47 (+3)
25 June	Dr David Harris	Hydrogen as a renewable energy carrier	49
23 July	Jon Addison [QVMAG 8th Annual Staff Lecture]	The Tasmanian Origin of the Australian Flag	38
27 Aug	Michael Attard	Waste Management and Resource Recovery in Launceston	53
10 Sep	Dr Michael Roach [Joint Meeting with the Geological Society of Australia]	Making It 'Real': Geological Visualisation Methods	41
24 Sep	Dr Ian Kidd	The Tamar: 200+ Years of Mud and Misunderstanding	67
22 Oct	Misha Ansari; Stan Kaine [Doctoral Candidates' Forum]	Breaking New Ground - current doctoral research reports: Ansari on Exercise & Type 2 Diabetes; Kaine on using AI to improve safety at sea	31
26 Nov	Tanya Ringuet [2nd Elvin Fist Lecture]	International Big Picture Learning Credential	31

Most lectures were recorded and subsequently posted on the RST YouTube channel. Three were broadcast as webinars. In future, webinars may be offered in certain situations such as the joint meeting with the Tasmanian Division of the Geological Society of Tasmania, but otherwise the policy is not to offer webinars.

The audiovisual company 'Bent Eared Records' was retained for audiovisual technical support and recording of lectures, and the QVMAG upgraded some of the audio-visual and public address equipment. The program of upgrading has yet to be completed.



A diverse range of public lectures was delivered in 2023 by the RST's Northern Branch.

Admission to Northern lectures is free for all RST members and to all children under 16 years of age. The admission price in 2023 remained at \$6 for the public, with a discounted price of \$4 for members of the Launceston Historical Society, members of the Friends of QVMAG, Friends of TMAG and secondary students and tertiary students who were halftime or greater. A light afternoon tea is enjoyed in the Meeting Room foyer following each lecture.

## VENUE

The Branch acknowledges the assistance of the City of Launceston Council through our official Partnership with the QVMAG. We are grateful to Director Mr Shane Fitzgerald and his staff for their support of our efforts to bring important and interesting lecturers before the community.

## APPEALS

The Northern Branch promoted two fundraising appeals in 2023. One was the RST Art Fund, and the second was the Butterfly Cabinet Appeal. The QVMAG Lambkin-Knight Butterfly Collection, one of the finest in Australia and one which is of national research significance, requires many more specimen cabinets to be purchased to accommodate the extensive collection. The Branch committed last year to raising funds to purchase an insect specimen storage cabinet to assist in the housing of the collection. The Branch has previously donated a cabinet to QVMAG for this collection.

## CATALOGUE OF THE NORTHERN BRANCH PUBLIC PROJECTS

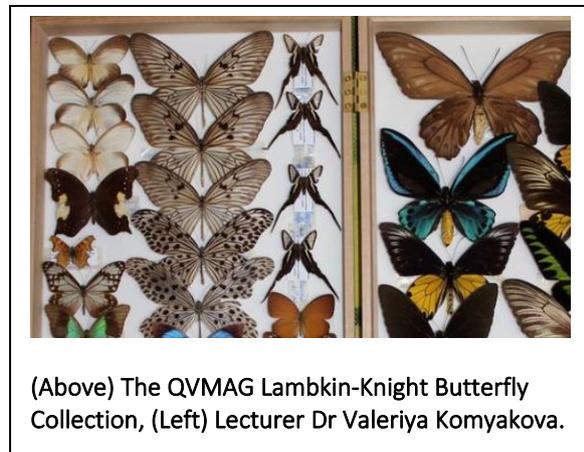
Dr Eric Ratcliff OAM and Ms Lynette Ross have taken on the task of preparing a catalogue of the Northern Branch's public projects over the last 100 years.

## NORTHERN BRANCH LIBRARY

Accessions, including donations, to the Northern Branch library collection are administered by Mr Andrew Parsons, who is an *ex officio* member of the Northern Branch Management Committee.

## WEBSITE

The Northern Branch events and projects have been posted on the RST website and Facebook and Twitter 'X' pages with the assistance of Ms Chel Bardell and Webmaster Mr Eddy Steenbergen. We are also grateful to Mr David Wilson for editing and uploading the Northern Branch's lecture recordings to the RST YouTube channel.



## EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

2023 has been a successful year and we owe special thanks to our secretarial team, Mrs Christine Beswick and Drs Martin Renilson and Lois Beckwith for their hard work and dedication to a demanding job, and to Ms Chel Bardell for her work on the RST Publications Committee on behalf of the Branch. Finally, our sincere thanks to all Committee members for their efforts in making sure our lectures and meetings are well run.

**Mr David Morris**  
Northern Branch President

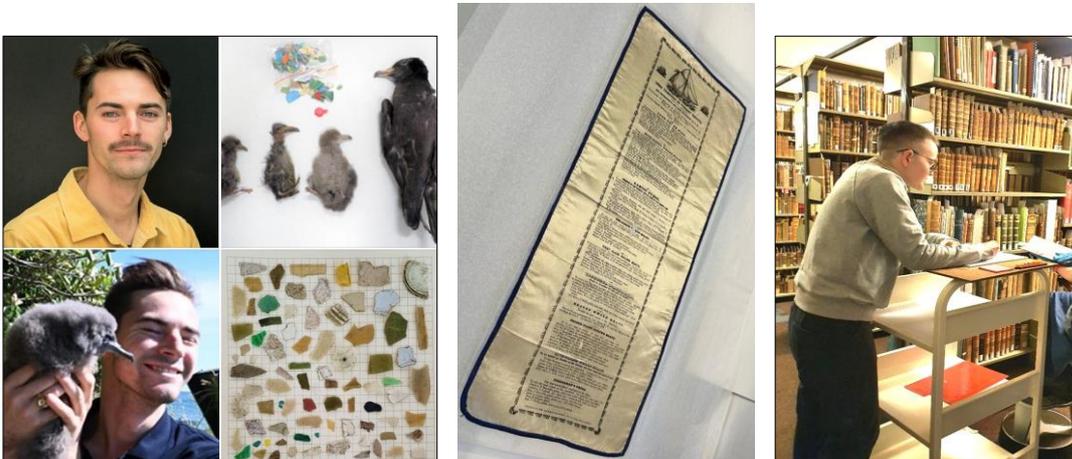
**Mrs Christine Beswick**  
Honorary Secretary

## STUDENT COUNCILLOR

In 2023 I joined the RST as the Student Councillor. Being my first year in the role, I am still finding my feet, but have felt very supported by fellow RST members and look forward to making more impact in the role in 2024. The RST has an immense capacity to advance knowledge through community lectures and events, an expansive archival collection held within the Morris Miller Library at UTAS, an academic journal, as well as funds from which generous awards and scholarships are offered. I hope to better disseminate these assets amongst student groups going forward.

### LIBRARY TOURS

A 'Behind-the-Scenes' library tour led by the Historical Collections Coordinator, Katrina Ross revealed some of the work that goes into caring for old and rare books, and many of the artifacts that make this collection useful to students, researchers, and the wider community. On display were some of the beautiful illustrations by the renowned painter and writer, Louisa Anne Meredith, a poem printed onto silk from one of the earliest Royal Hobart Regattas, and a first edition of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.



(L) Beer Aquatic talk delivered by Dr Peter Puskic. (C) One of the rare items in the RST Library Collections is a poem printed onto silk, and (R) Ms Evelyn Lambeth inspecting the RST Rare Book Collection.

From advancing personal knowledge about family history to witnessing first-hand accounts of world-renowned scientists' connection to the island, the treasures housed within the Morris Miller Library are of immense value to the RST and the community.

### EVENTS COMMITTEE

In 2023 I assisted the RST Events Committee by liaising with the Beer Aquatic team to help organize and deliver a lecture at the Hobart Brewing Company. The lecture by Dr Peter Puskic was an interdisciplinary discussion of ecology in subantarctic ecosystems, specifically looking at the risk of plastics in our oceans. The collaboration between the RST and Beer Aquatic will continue in 2024.

### MEDIA AND ENGAGEMENT

I assisted Chel Bardell with media relations. Chel did most of the organization, but we combined forces to ensure posts to the Facebook Page as well as YouTube videos were shared regularly and in a timely fashion.

**Ms Evelyn Lambeth**  
Student Councillor

## TASMANIAN MUSEUM & ART GALLERY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

I am again delighted to share with you some thoughts on the year that has just passed. In 2023 TMAG continued to provide access to the State Collection with our teams undertaking research and scholarly activity and delivering programs of engagement with the public through face-to-face and online programs. We are still recovering from the changes and challenges posed by COVID-19 with our visitor numbers increasing gradually to pre-COVID levels.

During 2023 TMAG completed important infrastructure and building maintenance to protect TMAG's heritage buildings and collections into the future. These included works to stabilise and re-render the Watergate wall after completing the rendering and replacement of the roof of the Bond store in 2022. We are grateful to the Tasmanian and Australian Governments for providing the funding for these important works.

At the beginning of May 2023 TMAG closed probably the most important exhibition they have ever developed – *taypani milaythina tu* - Return to Country. *taypani* showcased the work of 20 contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal artists alongside work by ancestors that are held in institutions around the world, mainland Australia and Tasmania. Once the exhibition closed the community engagement element of the *taypani* program began providing access for the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community to the objects that are on loan for an unprecedented two years. *taypani* was and is an important step for TMAG, as we follow on from the apology we offered to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people in February 2021. *taypani* is the beginning of a journey of truth-telling that enables us to better work with Tasmania's Aboriginal Community in celebrating and presenting their unique and extraordinary culture. We hope that *taypani* is the beginning of a permanent journey home for the objects held outside Tasmania.



TMAG's successful *taypani milaythina-tu* - Return to country exhibition.

Following on from *taypani* was the acclaimed exhibition *Twist* which was inspired by themes and dark undertones that Charles Dickens explored in his novels such as crime and punishment, the impact of poverty on women and children, and the conditions in public institutions such as orphanages, prisons and workhouses. Though most of his work was set in the UK, Dickens was as fascinated by the people and social interactions in the far-flung colonies as he was in those of the dirty streets of London. Many of his characters were transported or immigrated to Australia – including the convict Abel Magwitch in *Great Expectations*. It is also believed that the character of Fagan in *Oliver Twist* was based on Isaac (Ikey) Solomon, a notorious convict who travelled to Van Diemen's Land twice – once as an escapee and the second time transported. Thus, *Twist* was very relevant to Tasmanian and Australian audiences.

Continuing the links between Britain and Australia, *Twist* included artworks by 24 Australian and Irish contemporary artists, 13 of whom were commissioned to research and develop new work engaging with Dickensian themes from their own unique perspectives. It also contained artworks, artefacts, and specimens from TMAG's Collection, and material generously lent to TMAG by other institutions – including the RST.

TMAG has worked hard this year to support the RST – including finding a solution to the space and storage issues that the RST has had for many years. I look forward to this collegiality continuing – especially in relation to commissioning an artwork to commemorate the atrocities that the RST and TMAG perpetrated on, and that caused so much pain to, Tasmanian Aboriginal People that led to the Apology by both organisations in 2021.

This year we have not managed to settle on the ownership of a small number of works that are part of the long-standing issue between the Royal Society and TMAG. I thank the Royal Society for being patient with us as we work around our day-to-day business and track down the evidence and provenance for these works and I hope that collegiality, friendship, and partnership will help us finally resolve this issue in 2024.

The RST and TMAG continue to work together on many projects in 2023 including continuing the 2022 initiative of a sale of RST books at the TMAG Shop. The sale had 8 titles, some in hard and soft cover, and 2 types of greeting card packs and with over 140 items sold it was well accepted by shop patrons. I look forward to seeing what other opportunities there are to work together – including publication of a catalogue of thylacine specimens in the TMAG Collection in 2024.

TMAG is able to do what it does because of the ongoing and generous support of our friends, partners and donors. We would like to express our gratitude to Detached Cultural Organisation, Allport Bequest, Avalon Coastal Retreat, Darklab Pty Ltd, Dr Alison Green bequest, DULUX Australia, Emirates Airlines, Friends of TMAG, Gordon Darling Foundation, Ingrid McGaughey, Jayne Wilson Bequest, Keith Clarke Foundation, Marian Steinberg Squires, Metal Manufactures Pty Limited, Pennicott Foundation, Qantas, Spring Bay Distillery, TasNetworks, The Friends of TMAG, The Mountain Air Foundation, The Royal Society of Tasmania, TMAG Foundation Limited, Ulster University and Woolnorth Renewables, all those who generously responded to our Annual Appeal and several generous anonymous donors. I would like to especially acknowledge Penny Clive and Bruce Neil for the support that Detached Cultural Organisation provided for *taypani* and without which the program would not have been possible. We extend our gratitude to the artists and collectors who gave generously to the TMAG Collection and to the organisations who provided grant funding to TMAG including the Council of the Heads of Australian Faunal Collection, CSIRO, Tasmanian Department of Education, the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and the Arts, Director of National Parks, Hobart City Council, National Taxonomy Research Grants Program.

My thanks to the Tasmanian Government, and the Minister for the Arts in particular, for her support of TMAG, and the TMAG Board of Trustees for its diligence and strategic thinking. I am pleased that we continue to work collaboratively together and that we have been able to build a stronger relationship with the RST Council. I would like to thank Jocelyn McPhie and her team for their conversations, collaboration and support throughout the year. Together, we are well-placed to continue to champion the cultural, creative and scientific excellence of Tasmania.

**Brett Torossi**  
Chair, TMAG Board of Trustees

