



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY FOUNDATION 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Foundation's Objectives

The objectives of the Foundation are stated clearly in the "Rules" for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation, adopted by the Senate and effective 1 June 2007.

- On 3 June 1985, the Senate approved the establishment of the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 June 2007, the Senate approved the revised rules and regulations for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 April 2011, the Senate approved the revised rules and regulations for the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation.
- On 1 June 2016, the Senate approved the new "Foundations Procedures 2016" to give effect to the "Foundations Policy 2016" also effective on 1 June 2016.

The Objects of The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation

(1) The objects of the foundation are to:

- . (a) increase the resources of the University, by fundraising or otherwise securing gifts, grants, the provision of services or other non-financial contributions; and
- . (b) assist the Senate and Vice-Chancellor in promoting the object of the University in relation to research, education and scholarship in the field of archaeology through the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of the University.

(2) The foundation is authorised, for the purposes of and consistently with its objects, to:

- . (a) seek to acquire resources by gift, bequest or devise to the University, subject to prior written approval of each acquisition, in accordance with the [Administrative Delegations](#), and relevant University policies and procedures;
- . (b) encourage philanthropy and other charitable activity in support of its objects;
- . (c) recommend to the University Officer (Foundations) purposes for which it may seek to acquire resources;
- . (d) arrange sponsorships and or partnerships with external organisations provided that that approval is given in accordance with the [Administrative Delegations](#);
- . (e) provide advice to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences about the application of any resources;
- . (f) provide opportunities for admitting members to the foundation and members' participation in its activities, in accordance with these rules; and
- . (g) arrange or conduct activities, such as lectures, seminars, conferences, publications or other activities, consistent with the object of the University and subject to the approval of the University Officer (Foundations).

Foundation Governance Statement

The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation recognises the importance and benefit of reviewing its adoption and alignment with governance principles and provides the following report:

Principle 1 – Lay solid foundations for management and oversight

Nature of the entity

The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation is a part of the University of Sydney ABN 15211513464 and not separately incorporated under a State or Commonwealth Act. The Foundation is required to gain prior approval for its fundraising activities from the appropriate University delegate. The Foundation's activities are not-for-profit and covered by the DGR status of the University of Sydney. The University is exempted from the requirement to hold an Authority to Fundraise and obligations upon holders of such an authority but is still required to comply with the balance of provisions of the Charitable Fundraising Act

Roles of Board/Council and management

The Foundation operates under the authority of the Senate of the University of Sydney, as approved on 3 June 1985 and has no powers of delegation. The Foundation conducts its affairs pursuant to the Foundation Rules and the relevant policies of the University. The Foundation had its annual fundraising plan approved and was **able** to meet its objectives.

Principle 2 – Structure of the Council

The Council of the Foundation in 2022 consisted of the following **18** members.

The Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and Group Secretary are non-voting officials of the Foundation.

Ex officio members of the University were:

- Professor Lisa Adkins (University Officer -Foundations)
- Ms Alexia Nicholson (Development Manager, University Foundations). The Development Manager represents Mr Tim Dolan – Vice-Principal (Advancement).

Ex-officio Council Members as Office Bearers

- Professor Alison Betts (Director – January 2020 to date)

Council members elected by the Members – All Council Members Appointment dates were reset at 1/4/2011 under the approved amendments to the Foundations Rules effective 1/4/2011.

Dr Peta Seaton AM – President (July 2019 to 1/4/2023)

Dr Seaton has maintained a long-standing interest Near Eastern archaeology and research and an alumnus of the University of Sydney. She runs her own strategic policy and business consultancy drawing on her background in government, as a former Member of Parliament, and in advertising and media. She is a professional non-executive director, serving on the Boards of the NDIS (since 1 Jan 2022), Bundanoon Trust (since July 2021) and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. She is a former Chair of Hearing Australia, and former Director of BDCU Alliance Bank, the Bradman Foundation, Menzies Research Centre and CARE Australia. She continues her archaeological research on the Chalcolithic period with current fieldwork at Pella in Jordan.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/15-1/4/2024

- Specialised responsibilities: President, Fundraising advisor
- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Ruth Ward (Vice President 1/4/22-1/4/25)

Dr Ward has a BA Hons in the Archaeology of Western Asia (BA Hons) from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and a PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology from The University of Sydney.

Dr Ward has extensive experience as a field archaeologist, working on multi-period sites across Britain and the Middle East. Alongside archaeology, Dr Ward is currently a Senior Program Manager, Executive Health Leadership within the NSW Health Education and Training Institute and has a strong background in human resources, organisational change and promoting the development of positive and effective leadership cultures and practice. Dr Ward can apply her multiskilled background to NEAF.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Vice President, Policy and Procedures Advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Mr Stephen Coutts (Treasurer 1/4/20 -1/4/23)

Mr Coutts completed an honours degree in history, then worked on the personal staff of the Hon. Nick Greiner, Premier and Treasurer of NSW from 1988 to 1992. From 1992 to 1995, Mr Coutts was Chief of Staff to the NSW

Minister for Community Services, Assistant Minister for Health, Minister on Ageing and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. From 1995 Mr Coutts has worked as a government relations adviser in the private sector. He is a former Director of the Motor Accidents Insurance Board of Tasmania, a former Councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society, a former Secretary of the Australia Asia Young Leaders Program, a former Trustee of the Rose Bay War Memorial Crown Reserve Trust and a former Chair of Hear for You, a charity which provides mentoring services to deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers. He is a member of the Council of the Australian National Maritime Museum. With his extensive political and corporate background Mr Coutts will add much needed value to the board for fundraising purposes.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Corporate Liaison and Sponsorship, Treasurer
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr James Fraser

Dr Fraser is a graduate of the University of Sydney and held a previous position as Senior Curator at the Nicholson Museum. Dr Fraser is now a senior Curator at the British Museum in London. Dr Fraser has extensive knowledge regarding archaeological excavation and museum curatorship and is an immense asset to the Council of NEAF.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/18 – 1/4/2027

Special responsibilities: Event and Fundraising advisor.

- Number of Meetings attended (incl AGM) =1
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Catriona Bonfiglioli

Dr. Catriona Bonfiglioli is a Senior Lecturer in Media Studies at UTS Sydney. She holds a BA (East Anglia), a Journalism Diploma (Cardiff) and a PhD (Sydney). She has worked as a journalist for various organisations in the UK and Australia for more than 17 years, with nine years at AAP Sydney, three as National Medical Correspondent. After her PhD at Sydney (awarded 2005), she has worked in academe for the past 15 years. She has travelled extensively through the Middle East over the last 40 years and has had travel features published in various news media. She currently serves on the Committee of the Public Health Association of

NSW (2000-) and has done so for 20 years. As well, Dr Bonfiglioli served in various Board capacities with the Australian Medical Writer's Association for seven years (1993-2000), including President for three.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Educational, media and publication advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Iona Kat McRae

Dr (Iona) Kat McRae is a practicing archaeological consultant and heritage advisor based in Sydney. She has over 10 years of experience working as a professional archaeologist and has worked extensively on sites throughout Australia and the Middle East (including Cyprus, Jordan, Syria, Iran, the U.A.E and Armenia). Kat has a BA (Hons) and PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Sydney. Previously she has worked as a lecturer and tutor for the University of Sydney, Canberra University and the Centre for Continuing Education, teaching Near Eastern archaeology and practical archaeological skills.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029 (resigning 1/4/23)
- Specialised responsibilities: Archaeological and Social Media advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Amanda Dusting

Dr Dusting holds a PhD from the Near Eastern Department of Archaeology, University of Sydney. Her thesis focussed on the architecture of an Achaemenid 'way station' in Fars province Iran titled *The Architecture of Achaemenid Qal'eh Kali*. Dr Dusting has many distinguished awards including an Endeavour Australia Award, conferred by the Australian Federal Government as a six-month fellowship at the British Institute Archaeology Ankara (BIAA), Turkey. Further honors include the Max le Petit Award for Academic Achievement in Classical Archaeology, University of Sydney. Previously Dr Dusting was awarded a Graduate Diploma in Communications (Film Production) from the University of Technology, Sydney and a Diploma of Visual Arts (Painting & Film Media) from

Newcastle College of Advanced Education, NSW. She brings to NEAF a vast experience in film media and archaeology.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Digital and communications for NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Mr Jack McBride

Mr McBride is a retired high school principal with previous educational experience in English and History in NSW public high schools. Mr McBride finished his career with the NSW Department of Education and Training as a project officer overseeing the raising of the school leaving age.

His interest in history led him to archaeology and his participation as a volunteer at the University sites of Pella and Paphos. In 2018 Mr McBride undertook the volunteer librarian position to aid in the cataloguing of the NEAF library at CCANESA, accessioning new acquisitions and incorporating the NEAF catalogue onto the overall CCANESA database. Mr McBride brings extensive educational knowledge to the Board and is liaison officer with the History Teachers Association of NSW.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Library and History Teachers liaison Officer- NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Mr Gregory Beattie

Mr Greg Beattie is a senior partner in the law firm Wilshire Webb Staunton Beattie Lawyers and has a Bachelor of Economics, Bachelor of Law, Bachelor of Arts all from the University of Sydney and a Master of Law from Cambridge University. He has extensive experience in numerous areas of law in property and development and special events management. He also has had considerable exposure to archaeology through his association to the Pella Project. He brings valuable knowledge to NEAF from his legal background.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: General legal and events advice.
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Ms Holly Winter

Ms Holly Winter is a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney, who specialises in Near Eastern Archaeology. After completing her undergraduate degree and Honours at Flinders University, Holly moved to Sydney to pursue her PhD, where she is completing her thesis on palace function in the Middle and Late Bronze Age in the Southern Levant. She has convened the Near Eastern Seminar Series (NESS) for the past five years, which is a weekly series of talks by students, staff and academics on Near Eastern archaeology at the University of Sydney. Holly is a trench supervisor and team member of the University of Sydney Pella Excavation Project and the British Museum excavation project Khirbet Umm al-Ghozlan in Jordan. In addition to working on several overseas projects, Holly is a senior archaeologist for Casey and Lowe, a historical archaeological and heritage consulting company in Sydney.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2020-1/4/2029
- Specialised responsibilities: Student liaison and event co-ordinator.
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Joseph Lehner

Dr. Lehner is currently an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award Fellow at the University of Sydney Department of Archaeology, an Honorary Fellow at the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Macquarie University, and an affiliated scholar at the Institute of Nautical Archaeology. He finished his PhD at the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA and is a former Alexander von Humboldt German Chancellor Fellow at the University of Tübingen and a Senior Fellow at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations at Koç University in Istanbul.

Dr Lehner will provide an important link to FASS & SOPHI ensuring that NEAF is provided with the most up to date information on policy and decisions affecting them. He has vast experience as an archaeologist, academic and public speaker.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/21 – 1/4/2030

- Specialised responsibilities: University liaison, public lecturer & events coordinator.
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Ms Prudence Sheaves

Ms Sheaves has worked in the New South Wales public sector in policy and management positions for many years. She has been a Committee Director for the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales Parliament where she provided advice and support for the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Office of the Ombudsman and the Police Integrity Commission, the Public Bodies Review Committee and the Committee on Children and Young People. She was the Executive Officer at the Police Integrity Commission for a few years. Most recently she provided probity advice to Sydney Metro in their procurement program for the City and Southwest Rail projects and Western Sydney Airport. In her capacity as a volunteer, she provided the Centre for Public Integrity secretariat services for their Board and Committees and remains a member of the Centre for Public Integrity. She is also part of the Acacia Scholarship program mentoring high achieving students at public high schools. Ms Sheaves has volunteered at Pella for several seasons and is a part time doctoral candidate at Sydney University.

Ms Sheaves comes from a strong background in politics, policy and management and will add exceptional value to NEAF on the council.

Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 1/4/21 – 1/4/2030

- Specialised responsibilities: Policy and procedures advisor, public lecturer.
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

New Councillors Elected at the AGM 23 March 2022

Ms Emilia Sellaro undergraduate honours student will replace Mr Nicholas Turvey as the NEAF Council student representative for 2022.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2022-1/4/2023

- Specialised responsibilities: Student Liaison representative
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Dr Margaret O’Hea

Dr O’Hea is a Senior Lecturer in Archaeology Classics, at the University of Adelaide with an impressive academic career studying Roman-Byzantine and early Mediaeval periods of Jordan, Syria, southern Turkey and Greece. She has a long association with Near Eastern archaeology and in particular the site of Pella in Jordan.

Dr O’Hea also specialises in the analysis of glass in the ancient Near East and is the Director of the Departmental Museum of Classical Archaeology.

Considering Dr O’Hea’ s long career in Australian academia and field experience as an archaeologist in the Near East her contributions to NEAF will be invaluable.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2022-1/4/2031
- Specialised responsibilities: Special Projects, academic advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Ms Jennifer Skulander

- Ms Skulander is a senior Librarian at the University of Newcastle and holds a research liaison position and has a strong administrative background. She has a proven record of team leadership and guidance and has provided support across multiple formats for student cohorts such as Indigenous, International, Education, Law, Health and Digital Humanities in collaboration with academics. Ms Skulander has experience to train students to use a variety of tools and resources including multidisciplinary, medical and legal databases, citation management programmes, evidence-based resources for clinical application. • Her strong and long association with a tertiary institution will be Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2022-1/4/2031
- Specialised responsibilities: Library and Student liaison NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

Councillors Retired

Mr Ross Burns (Councillor) retired and Mr Nicholas Turvey (Student Representative) resigned on the 31/3/2022.

Council members were re-elected at the Foundation's AGM on the **23rd of March 2022 via zoom**. Office Bearer's were elected at the Council meeting 11 April 2022 by Council nomination. There is a separate "nominations committee" of Council. The full Council resolves on nominations for co-opting of members to fill vacancies outside of the process of election at the AGM. There **was not** a performance evaluation of the Council undertaken in the reporting period.

Principle 3 – Promote ethical and responsible decision-making.

Council members have been provided with the University of Sydney Foundation Rules, Code of Conduct, Work Health & Safety policy and the External Interests policy. All these policies are available on the University's Policy Register, as are other relevant University policies regarding harassment, grievance procedures and the Delegations of Authority.

Principle 4 – Safeguard integrity in financial reporting

The annual accounts of the Foundation are prepared by the financial staff of the University, signed off by The Dean, Professor Lisa Adkins and included in this Annual Report to the Senate. The Foundation is part of the University and therefore does not have its own audit sub-committee. While the Annual Financial Report of the University is audited by the Audit Office of NSW, the Annual Report of the Foundation has not itself been audited.

The Foundation undertook its usual fundraising activities through donations, seminars, lectures and tours during 2022. And in conducting those activities, the Foundation took all reasonable steps to ensure that commissions paid or payable to any person as part of a fundraising appeal did not exceed one-third of the gross money obtained by that person in the appeal¹ and appropriate particulars of all items of gross income received or receivable, all items of expenditure incurred, including the application or disposition of any income obtained from the appeal and particulars of those transactions to which they related were recorded in the minutes of the Foundation.²

Principle 5 – Make timely and balanced disclosure.

The Foundation complied with the reporting and disclosure requirements of the Senate. These include an annual budget and this Annual Report.

¹ Reg 9(6) Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2008

² See s22(2)(b) Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)

Members and Council have been made aware of the processes for disclosure pursuant to the Code of Conduct, External Interests policy, which include protected disclosure to the ICAC, the Ombudsman or the Auditor General.

Principle 6 - Respect the rights of shareholders, members, staff, volunteers, clients, & other stakeholders.

The Foundation Council and/or membership consists of members of the community, industry bodies and the University whose input is invited via the Annual General Meeting and Council meetings of the Foundation.

The following forums/mechanisms have been held during the year to involve stakeholders in election of the Council, activities of the Foundation or other stakeholder participation. These include our AGM on 23rd March 2022 in which Council nominations were called for and accepted.

At various times throughout the year our members are invited to participate in NEAF functions/activities (see below for details). At these functions Members are encouraged to discuss future activities and directions with Council members.

Under the Charitable Fundraising Act, the University may be questioned about any appeal on details of the purpose of the appeal such as the appeal target, objectives, distribution of proceeds, etc and the process to provide answers. During the year, the Foundation published information on its website and publications and outlines those activities in this Annual Report. Other enquiries may have been made to other parts of the University.

Principle 7 - Recognise and manage risk.

The Foundation recognises its activities within university premises or other premises require risks such as health and safety, environmental protection, privacy, trade practices, and compliance with the Charitable Fundraising Act to be considered and managed. The Foundation has managed these risks during the year by complying with WH&S practices during its activities and including in its publication's information about privacy assurance etc. Information about privacy and compliance with the Charitable Fundraising Act are also found on our website.

Principle 8 – Remunerate fairly and responsibly.

No member of a Council is entitled to receive any remuneration for acting in that capacity except reasonable remuneration on a basis, which has first been approved in writing by the University Officer (Foundations)

Members of the Foundation Council may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses after written approval of the University Officer (Foundations). Any such instances are recorded in the minutes of the Council.

Report on the Activities of the Foundation

MEMBERSHIP, DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

NEAF had a membership @ the end of 2022 of 194 financial members (plus 16 Free list, 81 Free Students, 17 Life Members; 4 ex-officio) making a total of 313 members of NEAF. The Pella Project received donations of \$2,500 and NEAF received \$2,075 to General Donations during 2022. NEAF is to yet receive the funds from a \$150,000 bequest from a Mr Keith Hayes (this has yet to be finalised by Mr Hayes estate).

Total Philanthropy for 2022 was **\$4,575.00**.

The Development Office has appropriately acknowledged all donations as well the President of NEAF has sent individual Thank you letters.

NEAF GRANTS

NEAF awarded three grants in late 2022 (for research etc. in 2023) totaling **\$14,465.00**.

Ms Georgia Baker from Macquarie received a \$5,000.00 from the Catherine Southwell-Keely Travel Grant and \$2,415.00 from the Leonie Crawford Travel Grant for research on the ***“Funerary Art of the Ancient Egyptian Old and Middle Kingdoms”***.

Ms Holly Winter of the University of Sydney received a total of \$4,150 from a combination of the Leonie Crawford Travel Grant, the Sam Eames grant-in-aid and general grant-in-aid to assist her research on ***“Middle Bronze Age Palaces in the Southern Levant”***.

Ms Frances Wiig of the University of New South Wales received \$2,900.00 as a grant in aid for her research on the ***“Archaeological Water Histories of Oman”***.

GRANT REPORTS

Several Grant-in-aid recipients offered grant reports (as part of their acceptance of the grants) and these are posted on our website <http://sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi/neaf/grants/reports> for review.

NEAF AGM

NEAF's AGM was held on 23rd March 2022 online due to resurgence of COVID-19 and 128 people attended including current councillors, newly co-opted councillors and members. Our AGM was followed by a public lecture given Dr Josef Briffa and Dr Peta Seaton on ***“Rome, Sydney, Jerusalem and Teleilat Ghassul: Pioneers of Chalcolithic Research in the Southern Levant”***

In 2022 our public lecture program and seminar series were in part by hybrid (zoom and face-to-face and zoom only) delivery and we ran a successful lecture/book launch and a three-part lecture series titled "*Ancient Anatolia*".

Our first lecture was given by Professor Alison Betts titled "*Game Drives and Communal Hunting in a Global Perspective*" and during this lecture Professor Betts launched a book titled "*The Gazelle's Dream: Game Drives of the Old and New Worlds*". This hybrid lecture was attended by 46 people on zoom and face to face.

Our second lecture was presented as a hybrid lecture and given by Professor Claudia Glatz from the University of Glasgow on "*Rethinking the Archaeology of Empire in Late Bronze Age Anatolia and Beyond* (62 participants).

Following this the next lecture was presented as a hybrid lecture given by Dr Joseph Lehner and Dr Amanda Dusting both from the University of Sydney on "*The Iron Age Megacity on Kerkenes Dağ*" (90 participants attended).

The fourth lecture was presented as zoom only lecture by Associate Professor Gonca Dardeniz on "*Production, Perception, and the use of Faience and Glass in the Second Millennium BCE Anatolia* (40 participants)

SEMINAR SERIES.

NEAF had two successful Seminar Series in 2022 all delivered via zoom. The first was a four-part Saturday morning series titled "*Technology and Innovation in the Ancient World*" and attracted a total of 78 participants over the four Saturdays.

The second seminar series was a 4-part series titled "*Great Cities of the Ancient Near East*" and a total 130 participants linked onto this very popular series.

The third seminar series was another 4-part series "*Dispatches from the Trenches: New Research and Discoveries in the Near East*" and a total of 85 attended.

SPECIAL EVENT:- FOOD & FESTIVE SAFARI

Dr Peta Seaton and Dr Kate da Costa led a small and enthusiastic group (22) on a cultural and food tasting experience in Fairfield NSW.

STUDY TOURS

NEAF has established links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel to conduct Archaeological Tours. In 2022 due to COVID-19 our tour program was postponed, and all upcoming tours were placed on hold until restrictions are lifted on international travel.

NEAF Director's Report by the Director, Professor Alison Betts

Development of the VG Childe Centre is underway as CCANESA transitions to the Childe Centre.

Two University Endowments are closely associated with the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation. A second on-line lecture series was delivered by hybrid with Nicolo Marchetti speaking on Nineveh and Carchemish. This year we also established an Edwin Cuthbert Hall Visiting Lectureship with the inaugural lecture given by Dr Lee Clare in May 2022 on Gobekli-tepe, a magnificent prehistoric site in eastern Anatolia.

I wish to congratulate Dr Stephen Bourke and the Pella excavation team on another successful 2023 season of excavations at the ancient site of Pella in Jordan.

NEAF President' Report – Dr Peta Seaton AM

2022 was a year of adjustment for NEAF – with the relief of having passed COVID lockdowns, we were still navigating the community and university pathway back to something like normal. It is not the same as it was! We continue to try to respond to the priorities Members have told us are important, and to deliver those in a context where people are more agile in their choices – but also increasingly more budget conscious in some ways.

The constant in this has been our amazing NEAF members – around 300 people, all interested in Near Eastern archaeology and research. I wish to thank our NEAF administrator Karen Hendrix, who has for another year keeping us all connected and informed.

EVENTS

We focused on topics Members said they were keen on, including new discoveries and research

Our Saturday Series in 2022 included: "Technology and Innovation in the Ancient World"; "Dispatches from the Trenches: New Research and Discoveries in the Near East"

We thank Mel Kennedy, Dr Stephen Bourke, Dr Conni Lord, Professor Haskel Greenfield, Dr Maggie O'Hea, Pru Sheaves, Dr Seppi Lehner, Dr Craig Barker, Dr Jamie Fraser, Anne Dighton, and Dr Ruth Ward for their wonderful contributions on Saudi, Egypt, olives, sacred pits, temples, donkeys, mummies, iron maidens, glass, and Pella.

Our evening series focused on Anatolia – Modern Turkiye, and thanks to Dr Seppi Lehner we were introduced to new projects by contemporary Turkish scholars, and also presentations by Seppi and Amanda Disting about the just completed Iron Age mega-city Kerekenes excavation season, in hybrid. People are keen for us to continue to deliver in hybrid, and this enables more people to join in which is now our new normal.

Our Events programme this year, which Jennie Skulander is busy finalising, will include Saturday series on latest research on aspects of ancient religion and beliefs.

The Evening Lecture theme centred on Cyprus and its Near Eastern connections, from prehistory to crusader times. We'll have a programme through to you and dates to save, very soon.

The end of COVID has seen a change in people's availability, and a continuing preference by some to zoom rather than join for a glass of something at CCANESA and we have had a drop in overall lecture attendances and our lecture revenues are half what they were in COVID – which is good news that people have resumed life, but also tells us that we need to find new ways to deliver to members and the public, in ways that suit them.

That brings me to **tours, partners, food, and new ideas** (artisanal experiences). When people couldn't travel in COVID they loved lectures – and I'm glad to say as people are now jumping back on planes, we have big thanks to make to Ben Churcher (who is leading a tour right now in Jordan, and another one on the agenda for Morocco), and Dr John Tidmarsh who will head to Greece, all with amazing Academy Travel Tours, and Karen Hendrix will take her tour to Egypt in November for Alumni – all of whom support NEAF with associated revenue. We thank them very much.

I take this opportunity to recognize our tour partners Academy and Alumni. We value these relationships and are working with Academy in other ways to contribute to their popular lecture series.

Both Dr Seppi Lehner and Pru Sheaves have given well received lectures, and these have wet the appetite of Academy audiences for tours. We are working to expand our NEAF tour leaders as we go.

Alumni travel is Karen's partner on her Egypt tour, and with I plan for an India tour in 2024. If you'd like to come to India with me please drop me an email and we can keep in touch or say so in the chat – and we can keep you up to date.

We mixed it up and invented a Fabulous Foor Safari to Fairfield! – Dr Kate da Costa and I took a very energetic group of foodies and culture lovers to an amazing part of Sydney and immersed in the vibrant Arabic community right here in Sydney. We will do more of these – I've already used all my pomegranate molasses.

Pru Sheaves, Maggie and I are working on some exciting artisanal workshop options for this year.

If you'd like to learn ancient Roman mosaic making using real marble or try your hand at making a ceramic cult object or a glass bead, stay tuned.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

NEAF appreciates our partnerships with several organisations and I want to acknowledge and thank them.

CCANESA is in transition to become the VG Childe centre and we are committed to play a positive role in that vision and continue to work with Prof. Keith Dobney as Head of School as it takes shape. We welcome Prof Tamar Hodos as the new Director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology at Athens, part of CCANESA. She and I had an online chat this week and I assured her that NEAF looks forward to helping all those parts of the new VG Childe Centre add to something even greater.

We thank Stavros Paspalos for his contribution and collegiality, along with Prof Alison Betts and Dr Seppi Lehner in their 'school' roles, and the Dean Professor Lisa Adkins.

I said last year, you can expect your Council and President to defend and uphold the autonomy and objectives of NEAF, in a positive spirit, and in the hope that NEAF can play a strong role to promote Near Eastern archaeology study and research, and the reputation and appeal of archaeology in the University.

The Chau Chak Wing Museum continues to be a close institutional colleague and we continue that relationship through close ties with Dr Paul Donnelly, Deputy Director and Dr Craig Barker, both of whom are always NEAF enthusiasts and contributors, and other CCWM staff. NEAF assisted in the preparations for the 2022 Anthony McNicol Memorial Lecture at CCWM.

MEMBERSHIP

We continue to welcome student members – who enjoy free memberships, and Deputy President Ruth Ward and her committee are working on new ways to engage new membership.

DONATIONS AND GRANTS

And we have continued to attract generous donor support at many levels – I am very grateful and we appreciate every dollar that people chose to invest in Near Eastern archaeological research through NEAF.

I reported last year that the Council has been working on a new approach to supporting Near Eastern archaeological research, and this year plans to launch an expanded offering of support for a wider range of grant opportunities.

As you know we currently offer grants to doctoral and post doctoral students and in calendar 2022 we awarded grants to Holly Winter, Georgia Barker & Frances Wiig

However, we think we can do more to offer opportunities to scholars at other stages of their careers, and are devising some new categories of grants which can support publication, small scale field work, record digitising, scientific analysis on materials, and some focus on the Pella project materials and analysis.

To date our grants as a proportion of our assets is very small. We propose that we would generally increase the amount of money we make available by approximately \$50-60k on average per annum, with appropriate policy and regulatory guidelines, in collaboration with the University development professionals.

We also think that by creating more purpose specific 'buckets' of grant opportunity, we will give clearer opportunities to donors who might be interested to support a particular area of interest – for example the Pella project, or publication of a particular thing, or an area of interest like Cyprus, or aspects of human and technological development through diagnostic techniques, or a particular subject area. At the same time as we offer a more diverse range of for-purpose grants, we also hope to help donors make more specific contributions should that be their interest, either as gifts or bequests. The Council will finalise this in the next couple of months and we will keep you up to date.

DIGITAL NEAF

We continue to expand the ways people can access NEAF, including an increased investment in our NEAF-Plus website, and I thank Amanda Disting for her leadership and expertise on this. We are glad to be able to honour our major donors on the website, and I hope it will become a platform for storing digitized research material over time. And do check out the podcasts – great listening. We also engage via Facebook.

Thanks goes to Ben Churcher for continuing to help with our layouts and flyers, to Jack McBride and Sue Waldron for many hours of library and book collection wrangling, and to Sandy Parker, Maree Browne, Michael Rodriguez, Dr Ross Burns – no longer on Council but still lending a hand. NEAF Bulletin editor Dr Stephen Bourke is putting finishing touches on 2 Bulletins – which I expect will be available soon.

Pella Project

The 2023 Pella season included around 30 volunteers, many of them here tonight. The Pella Volunteer Scheme is 'housed' in NEAF and we are proud of the role we play to facilitate this iconic Near Eastern research project.

NEAF COUNCIL

NEAF is a volunteer entity, and I want to thank Dr Ruth Ward – who was appointed Vice President by the Council in 2022; Dr Maggie O'Hea; Stephen Coutts; Holly Winter; Greg Beattie; Dr Amanda Disting; Jack McBride; Dr Catriona Bonfiglioli; Dr Kat McRae; Pru Sheaves; Dr Seppi Lehner and our Student Rep Emelia Sellaro for another year of achievement.

We are sorry to hear from Dr Iona Kat McCrae that due to her work commitments she is unable to take on a second 3-year tranche, but I hope that in future she will be available, and maybe even be able to help us resume tours in Iran, where she has specialist archaeological expertise. Thank you, Kat, for all you have contributed in the last 3 years.

We will shortly hold the NEAF AGM and election of Councillors for 2022, which Alison Betts will Chair.

Council recommends that we elect a new Councillor to fill the vacancy. Dr Craig Barker is well known to NEAF members and indeed to many people around Australia! His CV is on the Agenda paper. Craig has been someone we hoped to bring to the Council not only because he has always been an enthusiast for NEAF's

objectives and spent many hours of his volunteer time contributing talks and lectures, but because of his genuine interest in the role of Cyprus and its interconnections with the Near East over millennia.

It is impossible to study Near Eastern Archaeology and not include Cyprus, and our founders in University of Sydney Archaeology understood this – Professor JB Stewart, Emeritus Professor Basil Hennessy, and many others including Professor Richard Green.

The Council is keen to re-invigorate what has always been a very strong intersection between NEAF and Near Eastern Archaeology, and Cyprus – indeed our purpose says that;

'We facilitate research in the archaeology of the Near East, Egypt and Cyprus, and bring the world of Near Eastern archaeology to the general public'

With Dr Barker's help, we would be re-focussing on Cyprus, as part of our key Near Eastern mission.

Which brings me to Emeritus Prof Richard Green. Many will know Dick and his exceptional teaching of my generation in all things classical but also his deep immersion in the role of Cyprus in Hellenistic and Classical Near Eastern interconnection, including Petra and Egypt, through his Paphos Project, which Dr Craig Barker now directs. Dick continues his research and publication from Adelaide.

When I visited him late last year with Maggie O'Hea, I asked him if he would accept an Honorary Life Membership of NEAF, in recognition of his enormous contribution to Near Eastern archaeology and scholarship, particularly through his work in Cyprus.

I am delighted to say that he agreed. In a recent email to me he said

'This is a wonderful thing and I am deeply touched. Thank you all. Let us hope we can build up the role of Cypriot studies again in NEAF. I shall certainly do everything I can to help'.

Professor Green is visiting Paphos with Craig next month – and we plan to bring you some exciting reports in the next couple of months.

My biggest thanks for the year is to all our NEAF members. Thank you for being members, for supporting our events, for being donors, for giving us valuable feedback, for volunteering, for helping us engage the wider public on Near Eastern archaeology. The Council appreciates it and looks forward to a successful 2023 with and for you.

Consolidated Financial Statements

Consolidated Financial Statements are appended to this report.