



NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY FOUNDATION  
2023 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 2023 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 Council – 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 1/4/2024)**

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) and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. She is a former Chair of Hearing Australia, Bundanoon Trust 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 – Dr Seaton will be completing her 9-year term.

- 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 =4
- 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 (Mr Coutts will resign from council 20/3/24).
- Specialised responsibilities: Corporate Liaison and Sponsorship, Treasurer
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- 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, then he held the role as Senior Curator at the British Museum in London. At the end of 2023 Dr Fraser has taken up the position of Director at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem Israel. 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) =2
- 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 =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 =5
- 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 =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

#### **Dr Holly Winter**

Dr Holly Winter is a recent postgraduate of 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 completed 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 =5
- 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 =4
- 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 =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

**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 =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

**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 a valuable addition to the foundation.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2022-1/4/2031
- Specialised responsibilities: Library and Student liaison NEAF
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

**Dr Craig Barker**

Dr. Barker is the Head of Public Engagement at the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney and an Honorary Associate of the Discipline of Archaeology at the University of Sydney. He is the Director of the Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project at the World Heritage listed site of Paphos in Cyprus. Dr Barker graduated from the University of Sydney and has published on Cypriot archaeology, the history of the discipline, theatre architecture, Roman urbanism and stamped amphora handles. Dr Barker will provide an important link between NEAF and the Chau Chak Wing Museum collections and staff. He has vast experience as an archaeologist, academic, museum educator and public speaker, and considerable media experience with the long running ABC radio segment *Can You Dig It* (2016-2022), and the CCWM's podcast *Object Matters*.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2023-1/4/2032
- Specialised responsibilities: Liaison with CCWM and USYD
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

**Ms Mei She Huang** an undergraduate honours student is the NEAF Council student representative for 2023.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2023-1/4/2024
- Specialised responsibilities: Student Liaison representative
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =4

### **New Councillor Elected at the AGM 22 March 2023**

Dr Craig Barker, Chau Chak Wing, University of Sydney

### **Councillors Retiring at the end of 2023**

Dr Peta Seaton and Mr Stephen Coutts (Councillors retiring) and Ms Mei She Huang (Student Representative) resigned on the 31/3/2024.

Council members were re-elected at the Foundation's AGM on the 22 March 2023. Office Bearer's were elected at the Council meeting 17 April 2023 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 2023. 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 appeal<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

**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.

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 22nd March 2023 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

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<sup>1</sup> Reg 9(6) Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2008

<sup>2</sup> See s22(2)(b) Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 (NSW)

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 2023 of 189 financial members (plus 13 Free list, 76 Free Students, 19 Life Members; 4 ex-officio) making a total of 301 members of NEAF. The Pella Project received donations of \$3,135 and NEAF received \$4,662 to General Donations during 2023.

Total Philanthropy for 2023 was **\$7,797.00**.

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 2023 (for research etc. in 2024) totaling **\$10,000**.

Dr Holly Winter of the University of Sydney received the Catherine South-well Keely Travel grant \$3,500 to explore the '*The Land Behind Aleppo*' examines the economy and structures of rural and urban life in the kingdom of Aleppo (ancient Yamhad) in northern Syria, through an analysis of select ceramic forms collected through by James Sauer's ASOR Syrian Survey.

Ms Candance Richards University of Sydney received a NEAF Grant in Aid for \$5,000 for archival research in Nicosia and Nea Paphos needed to complete her PhD thesis '*Recycling Paphos: An archaeological investigation of architectural reuse and recycling practices in Paphos, Cyprus, from Hellenism to Tourism.*'

Ms Mina Moslemi University of Sydney received \$1,500 from the Sam Eames Grant in Aid to pursue her work on "*Exploring the cultural significance of Lurestan Bronzes and Bimetal artifacts/tools and their impact on Persia and the Middle Eastern trading network during the period 1,500 to 500 BC*".

## 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 22nd March 2023 via hybrid and 117 people attended including current councillors, newly co-opted councillors and members.

Our AGM was followed by a public lecture given Dr Robert Bowker on "***Tomorrow there will be Apricots: An Australian Diplomat in the Arab World***".

In 2023 our public lecture program and seminar series were in part by hybrid (zoom and face-to-face and zoom only) delivery five-part evening lecture series on the "*Archaeology of Cyprus*"

Our first lecture was given by Dr Marina Solomidou-Ieronymidou (Director of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus on "*The Department of Antiquities of Cyprus Its Mission, Activities and Strategic Plans*". This hybrid lecture was attended by 65 people on zoom and face to face.

Our second lecture was presented as a hybrid lecture and given by Dr Craig Barker from the University of Sydney on "*Dispatches from the Trenches: A Report on the 2023 Season at Paphos in Cyprus*" (59 participants).

Following this was a lecture presented on zoom given by Dr Cassa on "*Recent Excavations at Alambra: A Middle Bronze Age Settlement in Cyprus*" (32 participants attended).

The fourth lecture was presented by zoom by Dr Stephen Bourke University of Sydney on "*Richard's Gift: Cyprus in the Age of the Crusades*" (60 participants).

Our last lecture was the Hennessy Memorial Lecturer and presented Dr Lindy Crewe, Director of CAARI on "*Cyprus Bronze Age Regionalism: What was going on in the west?*" (46 participants).

## SEMINAR SERIES.

NEAF had two successful Seminar Series in 2023 delivered via zoom. The first was a four-part Saturday morning series titled "*Ideology and Belief*" and attracted a total of 43 participants over the four Saturdays.

The second seminar series was a 4-part series titled "*In the Time of the Pharaohs*" and a total 90 participants linked onto this very popular series.

## **Special Events**

NEAF presented a unique experience for our members from our councilor Dr James Fraser from the British Museum who delivered a live lecture from the British Museum's exhibition "*Luxury and Power: Persia to Greece*". *105 people viewed this special event.*

Dr Peta Seaton and Dr Kate da Costa led a small and enthusiastic group (21) on a cultural and food tasting experience in Western Sydney.

Dr Peta Seaton provided an opportunity for 14 of our members to learn the art of mosaic making in a workshop held at the University of Sydney raising around \$4,000.

## **STUDY TOURS**

NEAF has established links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel to conduct Archaeological Tours and NEAF receives commission from this association. In 2023 Mr Ben Churcher (past councillor/archaeologist) led two tours for Academy Travel one to Morocco and the other to Jordan and Israel. Dr John Tidmarsh (past councillor/archaeologist) led a tour to Greece and Ms Karen Hendrix (archaeologist) led a tour to Egypt. NEAF is grateful for these tour leaders for providing members with the opportunity to see these countries led by an experienced archaeologist.

## **NEAF AGM 20th March 2024**

### **NEAF Director's Report by the Director, Professor Alison Betts.**

2023 has been an active year in terms of NEAF's relationship with the University. Changes to financial requirements by the University have required us to create a Spend Plan for the largest of our endowments, the Jon Hosking Fund. While it was the subject of much discussion by Council, the result is an excellent 5- year plan to support research, including overseas travel, particularly by our young and up-coming scholars. Our other funds do not require such formal structure, and these are in use as always to fund research through the generosity of our donors, the support of our members and the enthusiasm of the Australian public for touring the lands of the ancient Middle East.

There have been changes in Archaeology which have impacted NEAF as well. The creation of the new Tom Austen Brown Archaeology Hub in the basement of the Quadrangle has allowed the Pella Collection to be combined with existing Archaeology collections and to be formally catalogued. The move has been lengthy and a little difficult, in part due to the large number of whole vessels the collection includes. The move has now been

completed. The next stage will be the acquisition of the cataloguing system EMU and the probably lengthy process of placing all the existing Archaeology collections and the Pella material into a formal Museum quality cataloguing system as required by Heritage legislation. This, when completed, will be a valuable resource for future research.

The third activity this year that has involved NEAF is the establishment of the new Vere Gordon Childe Centre, VGCC, which has replaced CCANESA, the Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies in Australia. NEAF was previously set within CCANESA, established initially to manage the legacies of the two retired Professors, Basil Hennessy (Near Eastern Archaeology) and Alexander Cambitoglou (Classical Archaeology), and is now under the auspices of the VGCC. The new Centre has a broader remit, aiming to connect scholars within the University of Sydney – and beyond – to promote and empower research in our understanding of the human past, its importance in the present, and its lessons for the future. The Centre takes its name from the University of Sydney graduate Vere Gordon Childe, an exceptionally influential archaeologist and important figure in political thought in Australia in the early decades of the 20th century.

As always, we look forward to another exiting and productive year in 2024.

#### **NEAF President' Report – Dr Peta Seaton AM**

It is a privilege to complete close to 5 years as NEAF President, and amongst the many thanks I have for many people, I want to call out a few achievements of the past few years.

NEAF is in an enviable position financially, and we have added around \$100k of cash value over this time, and built our membership and friends to higher levels. We've done this by pivoting during COVID, evolving our mix of room and zoom, and adding new activities to our traditional menu- although Saturday Series, evening lectures and tours continue to be valuable contributors.

We doubled down on attracting new students – for free – to membership and events and hope to keep them life-long NEAF members, like many of my cohort have been.

We've been an active Facebook presence and expanded our reach to nearly 900 followers and can reach several thousand people with our most popular posts.

We attracted new bequests and gifts of nearly \$200k and one more significant but slightly complex one which I have been working with Greg Beattie and the University to 'land'.

These bequests have had a long gestation and, in some cases, for example Lady Winifred Stephen goes back to Basil Hennessy's founding of NEAF and the early stewardship of the great Maree Browne. Another is the result of the work of the indefatigable John Tidmarsh who so inspired one of his NEAF/Academy tour participants



Kevin Hayes that provision was made for us in his will. I'm not sure specifically what inspired a very generous anonymous donor, but we are grateful for the \$25k directed to the Pella Project.

The foundation-stone of NEAF is the visionary and generous and wonderful Jon Hosking whose bequest in 1989 has grown to become the centre of gravity of our resources. His inspired support is continuing to enable NEAF to support administration, research and students, and more recently, the 'excavation' of his personal collection of high-quality replica antiquities is, as Craig Barker has let me know, going to find a new home in the Chau Chak Wing Museum to engage new generations of students with the ancient world.

Speaking of the CCWM I extend a big thanks to Craig, Dr Paul Donnelly, Michael D'Agostino and the CCWM team for their ongoing institutional partnership with NEAF in several ways.

One of the bigger strategic issues to navigate has been the transition of CCANESA to the new Vere Gordon Childe Centre. Keith Dobney, then new to the university, led a necessary change to re-invigorate research and education activity and make it more coherent and relevant to today's needs. NEAF's position from the outset has been to strongly support the concept and pledge our commitment and cooperation in shaping the VGCC, as good citizens and with the idea that whole becomes more than the sum of the parts.

However, NEAF members will want to know that we also were very clear that NEAF's autonomy would not be compromised, and that it is not NEAF's role to generally support administrative arrangements of the University with cash contributions. We said that our contribution would instead be *in-kind* – and in the form of an enlarged suite of supports for grants and research which would help activate the VGCC along with our colleagues in the AIAA, particularly Tamar Hodos, and the other residents of the VGCC.

I want to thank Keith Dobney for what he started, and for his respect for NEAF, and I must acknowledge Acting Head of School Chris Hilliard who has continued to appreciate NEAF and its identity in my recent and very positive working relationship with him.

Tours are returning as significant contributors to fundraising – thanks to our sponsorship agreements with our Tour Partners Academy Travel and Alumni Travel, Ben Churcher, John Tidmarsh and Karen Hendrix have generously given their time to share Greece, Morocco and Egypt with our keen NEAF travelers.

And NEAF speakers including Seppi and Pru have worked with Academy's popular lecture series and I hope will lead to the next generation of tour leaders.

Intrepid former NEAF Councillor Kate da Costa and I took another energetic group of foodies and culture lovers to western Sydney, and a group of us made like Romans at our mosaic ancient crafts workshop thanks to Alison who stepped in at the last minute and got us use of the Lab.

### **Events**

Our lectures and events this year offered fantastic speakers and topics. Jenny Skulander corralled us expertly together, and we gave Craig an extra special challenge by bringing him onto the Council a year ago, where he embarked on a season in Paphos, and then came back to immediately convene an evening series on Cyprus. He introduced us first to no less than the Director of the Antiquities in Cyprus Dr Marina Solomidou-Ieronymidou and her delegation, and then presented lectures through the year on the *2023 Season at Paphos in Cyprus*, Dr Cassa on *Recent Excavations at Alambra*, Dr Stephen Bourke on *Cyprus in the Age of the Crusades* and Dr Lindy Crewe, Director of CAARI on *Cyprus Bronze Age Regionalism*.

I want to thank Stephen Bourke for his ongoing support and counsel to NEAF, as indeed Maree Browne and John Tidmarsh have been to me as past Presidents. NEAF provides the administrative architecture for the Pella Project and it is a privilege to scaffold the extraordinary job Stephen Bourke does in Directing what is the longest running, major excavation project of a multi period site in the Levant, and the numerous doctorates and research outputs it has produced – not to mention the vast and unique community of Pella Volunteers who have joined core staff to make this possible. No other University in the world has done this.

Holly Winter and others produced a great Saturday series on *"Ideology and Belief"* and we aligned with interest in the Ramses exhibition with a series on the *"In the Time of the Pharaohs"*

At our 2023 AGM, we hosted the exclusive book launch of Dr Bob Bowkers memoir *"Tomorrow there will be Apricots: An Australian Diplomat in the Arab World"*.

A live feed from the British Museum, our very own Dr James Fraser took us through the fabulous “*Luxury and Power: Persia to Greece*” blockbuster exhibition, a white knuckle technology ride which worked perfectly, and was enjoyed by a record crowd online.

### **Donations and Grants**

We awarded grants to doctoral and post-doctoral students in calendar 2023 to three University of Sydney scholars:

- Dr Holly Winter received the Catherine Southwell Keely Travel grant to explore the ‘*The Land Behind Aleppo*’
- Ms Candace Richards for ‘*Recycling Paphos: An archaeological investigation of architectural reuse and recycling practices*’
- Ms Mina Moslemi on *Lurestan Bronzes*

These three grants totalled \$10k.

I’ve said in recent AGM reports that I think that an annual grant outlay of between \$10 – 15k a year, which is about what it’s been in recent years, is not an appropriate level of research investment for a Foundation like NEAF which has around \$1.5m in current and non-current assets.

I think we should be making more of our holdings available for grants, not just to doctoral and post-doctoral students, but to other academics at other stages of their career and project affiliation, who are working to study, analyse, and publish materials, including the world leading Near Eastern Projects that are current or legacy projects of the Near Eastern tradition here at Sydney.

Notwithstanding the legitimate constraints of some bequests, and our necessary but relatively modest operational costs, NEAF has a healthy balance sheet that can sustain an enlarged suite of research support, and indeed, if structured well, create new areas of focus for additional donor activity into identified purposes that might align with specific donor interests. For example the Pella project, or publication of a particular thing, or an area of interest like Cyprus or Teleilat Ghassul, or aspects of human and technological development through diagnostic techniques.

To paraphrase a great Australian poet, “not let great plans be thought but not realised”.

Next year, as you heard from Alison, we will make a little more available from the Hosking Bequest.

However – in my opinion NEAF can punch way above \$10k or even \$20+k a year in grant outlays and in my view it should.

The role of NEAF, according to the University's Foundation rules is 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.

In other words, raise as much money as we can – and spend it on research, education and scholarships.

I recognise the strong encouragement I have had in this from some councillors. I wish the new Council well and trust that this objective might be more ambitiously brought to fruition.

### **DIGITAL NEAF**

NEAF continues to build its digital presence on the NEAF-Plus website and Amanda Dusting continues to work to produce great podcasts and to capture lectures where we can. I am indebted to Amanda – she has been a tireless Council contributor in an area few people see.

### **NEAF COUNCIL**

And now to the NEAF Council,

NEAF is a volunteer entity, and I want to acknowledge the voluntary contribution of all Councillors and thank

Dr Ruth Ward – Vice President

Dr Maggie O'Hea - who with Dr James Fraser represent NEAF branch offices in Adelaide, and Jerusalem, both contributing popular and high quality content from wherever they are in the world.

Stephen Coutts – our Treasurer who has worked hard to produce our reports, to support me in my role, and to liaise with the amazing Cam Pham who is the only person I know who truly understands the University accounting system, who I also thank.

Dr Holly Winter

Greg Beattie , especially for his sage legal advice

Dr Craig Barker

Dr Amanda Dusting

Prudence Sheaves

Jack McBride – and his great work as Secretary and with Sue Waldon on the Library

Dr Catriona Bonfiglioli – who with Barbra Wagner and Sandy Parker is one of my most active and expert Facebook sharers

Jennie Skulander, who has transformed our digital event identity.

Dr Seppi Lehner, who always tries to make a half empty glass, seem and be half full

And our Student Rep Mei Shi Huang for another year of achievement.

Dr Alison Betts, our Director, for her engagement on many issues as they arise

Finally Karen Hendrix, our administration officer, and recent tour leader, who works closely with our Members

My biggest thanks go to all our NEAF members and friends.

Those of us who were lucky to study with Basil Hennessy will remember his first lecture of Archaeology where he always said 'don't expect to get a job in archaeology'. We loved every minute regardless and NEAF is testament to his foundations at Sydney. Some of us did become paid archaeologists. Many of us did not! - but we find a community of purpose and education and friendship through NEAF.

Thank you for being NEAF 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.

For those who have not met him, I would like to introduce Professor Chris Hilliard. Chris is the acting Head of School and although archaeology was new to him, he embraced NEAF with enthusiasm and made every effort to understand us. I thank him for his engagement with me as President and I have appreciated his collegiality and interest in NEAF.

Congratulations to Melissa Kennedy and Susan Wrigley on their nominations to Council.

It has been a privilege to lead NEAF and I wish the next President and Council the best in their new Chapter, and I will enjoy being part of that effort as an ongoing member.

### **Consolidated Financial Statements**

Consolidated Financial Statements are appended to this report.