



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY FOUNDATION 2024 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 2024 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 Ruth Ward (President 1/4/24-ongoing)

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: Previous Vice President, Policy and Procedures Advisor
- Number of Meetings attended =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

Ms Prudence Sheaves (Vice President 1/4/24 -ongoing)

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 =6

Mr Jack McBride –(Minutes Secretary 1/4/21-ongoing)

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 =6

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 =6

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 =6
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

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 =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

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 =6
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

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 six 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 =6

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 =6

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 =6

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 =6
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

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 =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =6

Ms Stefi Angelevski an undergraduate honours student is the NEAF Council student representative for 2024.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2023-1/4/2024
- Specialised responsibilities: Student Liaison representative
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

New Councillors Elected at the AGM 20 March 2024 -CV noted below

Dr Melissa Kennedy

Dr Kennedy holds a PhD in Near Eastern Archaeology and leads important fieldwork in the Middle East. Currently she is the Co-Director of PAKEP – Prehistoric AIUla and Khaybar Excavation Project. Dr Kennedy is active in the international research community and has published regularly in scholarly journals and the popular press. Dr Kennedy teaches in Archaeology at the University of Sydney, has regularly given lectures for NEAF and would provide new ideas for NEAF in areas not traditionally explored.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2024 -1/4/2033
- Specialised responsibilities: Liaison with CCWM and USYD
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Ms Susan Wrigley

After a career in finance (Vice President, J.P. Morgan), in 2011 Susan Wrigley completed a Bachelor of Arts (Hons 1) at the University of Sydney majoring in Archaeology. Prizes included the Max Le Petit and the Thomas Dunbabin Prizes for Archaeology, the Countess Freehill Prize, the Walter Reid Prize, and the University of Sydney Academic Merit Prize. Since graduating she has excavated at Zagora, Pella and Paphos as well as at historic sites around Sydney. Susan also works as an education officer and administration assistant at the Chau Chak Wing Museum and volunteers at the Archaeology Research Hub. She is passionate about raising the profile of and sharing the results of the excavations associated with the University of Sydney with both the general public and with students at the University. She brings experience in finance and working within the University environment.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2024-1/4/2033
- Specialised responsibilities: Liaison with CCWM and USYD
- Number of Meetings attended =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Council members were re-elected at the Foundation's AGM on the 20 March 2024. Office Bearer's were elected at the Council meeting 15 April 2024 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 2024. 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.

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 20th March 2024 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.

¹ Reg 9(6) Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2008

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

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 338 at the end of 2024 of 166 financial members (plus 9 Free list, 88 Free Students, 21 Life Members; 4 ex-officio) making a total of 338 members of NEAF.

The Pella Project received donations of \$1,700 and NEAF received \$1,000 to General Donations during 2024.

NEAF also received two bequests in 2024.

Mr Kevin Hayes \$140,372.99 and \$50,000.00 from Mrs Alison Salter.

Total Philanthropy for 2024 was **\$192,123.00**

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 2024 (for research etc. in 2025) totaling **\$13,553.00**

Mr Sullivan Heywood, PhD Candidate (archaeology), University of Queensland – Leonie Crawford Travel Grant (\$4553) for “*Settlement resilience and adaptation through the climatic, economic, and political changes of the Central Anatolian Bronze Age*”.

Mr Angus Jacobson, PhD Candidate, University of Tasmania, Catherine Southwell Keely (\$3,500). “*Consolidating Control through Cooperation: The Antigonid-Seleucid Alliance as a Mechanism of Power during the Early Hellenistic Age*.”

Ms Tracy Lakin, PhD Candidate, Monash University Melbourne – Sam Eames (\$1500) plus Grant in Aid (\$3,500) total (\$5,000) for “*The Streets of Urban Amarna: Landscapes of Movement, Materiality, and Lived Experience in Ancient Egypt*”

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 for review.

NEAF AGM

NEAF's AGM was held on 20th March 2024 via hybrid and 96 people attended including current councillors, newly co-opted councillors and members. Our AGM was followed by a public lecture given Dr Melissa Kennedy on *Digging in the Desert: Life and Death in Ancient Arabia*.

In 2024 our public lecture program and seminar series were in part by hybrid (zoom and face-to-face and zoom only) delivery including a four-part evening lecture series on the *Archaeology of Lebanon*, the third JB Hennessy Memorial Lecture and a book launch/lecture.

Our first lecture was given by visiting scholar Professor Jens Kamlah from the University of Tübingen on “*New insights into the Archaeology of Lebanon: The Excavations at Tell el-Burak*”. This event was attended by 76 people. Our second lecture attended by 48 people was given via zoom by Assistant Professor Kamal Badreshany, Durham University on “*Understanding the Development of Complex Societies on the Lebanese Coast*”. Continuing with our Lebanon theme our third presenter Professor Hermann Genz from the American University of Beirut gave an impressive lecture on the *Urbanization, Trade, and Growing Social Complexity Results from Tell Fadous-Kfarabida*. This was attended by 57 people. Our last lecture attended by 42 people was given by Dr Paul Newson from the American University of Beirut on *Approaches to Landscape History and Settlement in the Central Bekaa Valley*.

NEAF hosted the third JB Hennessy Memorial Lecture given by Professor Lorenzo Nigro from the University of Rome La Sapienza. Prof Nigro spoke on the *Twenty Seasons of Excavations at Jericho: Across the history of one of the oldest capitals in the Levant*. It was attended by 72 people.

BOOK LAUNCH

Dr John Tidmarsh launched his book in the NEAF ADAPA series *After Alexander, The Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods of Pella in Jordan*. As well as providing the members with the opportunity to buy the book, Dr Tidmarsh gave a short lecture on “*Pella of the Decapolis from the Ptolemies to Rome: But Where was Alexander?*”. This event was attended by 80 people.

STUDY DAYS

NEAF had two successful Study Days in 2024 delivered in the room and on zoom. The first “*Archaeology in Action*” was presented by several scholars from the University of Sydney. These include Dr Stephen Bourke, Dr Joseph Lehner, Professor Lesley Beaumont, Dr Paul Donnelly, Dr Stavros Paspalas, Dr Craig Barker, Ms Prudence Sheaves and Ms Ioana Dumitru. At this Study Day we launched Dr Ross Burn’s latest book *Understanding Syria through 40 Monuments: A Story of Survival*. Our second study held in the spring was “*Rising Above: Monumental Architecture in the Near East*”. Several scholars presented including Dr Stephen Bourke, Dr Craig Barker, Dr Ross Burns, Dr Amanda Dusting, Dr Gillian Smith and was attended by 42 people.

STUDY TOURS

NEAF has established links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel to conduct Archaeological Tours and NEAF receives commission from this association. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing unrest in the Middle East only one tour was undertaken by our tour leader Mr Ben Churcher (past councillor/archaeologist). Mr Churcher lead a tour for Academy Travel to Morocco. NEAF is grateful to our tour leaders for providing members with the opportunity to see these countries led by an experienced archaeologist. We are hopeful in 2025 more tours will be available for our members to participate.

NEAF Director’s Report by the Director, Professor Alison Betts.

2024 has been a good and dynamic year for NEAF. We thank Peta Seaton for her longstanding service to NEAF and welcomed in our new President, Dr Ruth Ward. Ruth has carried forward Peta’s energy with support for new initiatives and consolidation of ongoing projects. The most substantial change for NEAF has been its incorporation into the newly founded Vere Gordon Childe Centre. Previously, NEAF had its offices in the Centre

for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia (CCANESA), housed in Madsen Building on the University's Camperdown campus. CCANESA had extensive library space, allowing for valuable book donations, and a board room for NEAF lectures. CCANESA has been restructured as the Vere Gordon Childe Centre, now a multi-disciplinary research centre with a remit to understand global human diversity through the study of material culture, artistic representation, and intangible heritage. This has brought NEAF into a broader sphere of scholarship with a more dynamic research agenda, fully supported by leadership from academics seconded from the Faculty of Arts. While NEAF still retains its original independence, association with the new Centre will only enrich NEAF's range of activities and outreach. There have been some changes. The library space will now be more limited and NEAF has been given a new office but will continue to work actively for its membership as before. The activities of 2024 have also been significant, but I leave these to our President to report on.

NEAF President's Report – Dr Ruth Ward

Thank you everyone for joining this Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation AGM, in the room here, and online, in Australia and around the globe - you are very welcome.

It's the rich tapestry of people, past and present, that helps make NEAF great. Thank you, members, friends, volunteers, donors, communities, council, the University of Sydney, and our speakers, locally and internationally. Thanks to you, NEAF is a strong community, realising its role as a University Foundation since 1986, and aligning with its purpose to facilitate research in the archaeology of the Near East, Egypt and Cyprus, and to bring the world of Near Eastern archaeology to the public.

Thank you to our many volunteers who have tirelessly given their time, expertise, energy and efforts to support NEAF in different ways over the last year, helping with the NEAF library, supporting the work of the Pella In Jordan Excavation Project, or volunteering at NEAF events. Thank you. Thank you to our University of Sydney partners, and to our contributing speakers, for sharing your expertise and time in support of NEAF.

Thanks also to our NEAF Council members, for your voluntary commitment, generosity and inspiration, at the helm in steering NEAF into the future, with a strong headwind in the sails. As an internal University of Sydney foundation, councillors bring different perspectives from outside and within the University. Karen Hendrix is a strong anchor in supporting NEAF, and I'm very much hoping she will continue to do so for many years to come.

During 2024, we were so sad to learn of the passing of some of our dear NEAF members. Jill Faddy, a loyal follower of NEAF since 1996 passed away in 2024. Jill had an enduring interest in everyone at NEAF and attended many NEAF events.

We also lost Heather Robson, a NEAF member since 1991, 4 times Pella volunteer, Paphos volunteer, and Friend of the Nicholson Museum. I remember Heather's sharp wit and broad grin, on site at Pella in 2019.

Alison Salter (known as Sally to us), became a Pella volunteer in 1999 and continued her membership until becoming a life member in 2017. Sally lived in Victoria and kept in touch with NEAF events in person including coming up to Pella@40, and via Zoom and telephone to Karen. Sally very kindly left NEAF a bequest which Susan will talk about in the treasurer's report.

Our guest speaker tonight is Dr Claudia Sagona from The University of Melbourne. Claudia has very kindly come up to be with us in Sydney and we are very grateful to you for this. Soon Claudia will share a lecture on the contributions to excavations in Malta of the pioneer archaeologist Margaret Murray. For people in the room, please join us after for a light supper. For those online, we really value your participation as part of the NEAF community, and we can set up a space online if you'd like to catch up together after.

On behalf of the NEAF Council, let's shine a light on NEAF in 2024. I'll then hand over to our wonderful treasurer Susan Wrigley who will provide a summary of our NEAF finances.

Soon, NEAF members will be able to sit down with a nice cuppa to read the new Near Eastern Archaeology Bulletin. The first bulletin was launched nearly 40 years ago in December 1987. During 2024, the irreplaceable Ben Churcher, bulletin editor, was working behind the scenes with people including Stephen Bourke, our contributors, and others helping with layout and editing, to bring you exciting research and stories of the archaeology of the ancient near east.

In tandem with this is the NEAF Website where bequests of donors are acknowledged, and where events, tours, podcasts, publications, grants, volunteering opportunities, and so much more can be found. The website has significantly developed during 2024 thanks to our university partners, Councillor Amanda Dusting, and our new web editor, Izzy Crerar. Social media continues to play a part in promoting NEAF and I thank everyone for their efforts in these spaces.

The Vere Gordon Childe Centre (VGCC) opened in April 2024, with Professor Kirsten McKenzie, the new Director, and Dr Joseph (Seppi) Lehner (a NEAF Councillor) the new Deputy. These premises are still home to NEAF, and this is great for building healthy relationships with the VGCC, Faculty, the *Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens* (AAIA), and other linkages to the Departments of *Archaeology*, and of *Classics and Ancient History*. NEAF benefits from the space provided for lectures, meetings and an office, and the NEAF library is now held within the new VGCC Reading Room. Thanks to our library volunteers Jack McBride and Sue Walden for all your help in this transition.

Thank you to everyone who found the time to complete our 2024 NEAF Member Survey - your voices are helping shape the future of NEAF.

The broad-ranging NEAF events across 2024 recorded over 500 attendees. These were mostly hybrid, allowing for everyone to attend in a way that suited them.

Evening lectures continue to make Near Eastern archaeology more accessible to audiences. And they help raise much needed funds. The *Archaeology of Lebanon* underpinned the four-part 2024 Evening Lecture Series. Councillor Holly Winter was instrumental in setting this up with the help of Karen. Councillor Jennie Skulander put together wonderful slides in support. Councillors supported the series online and in the room. NEAF audiences heard from four eminent speakers based overseas, with each bringing this theme to life for us. Professor Jens Kamlah, from the University of Tübingen gave our first lecture on “*New insights into the Archaeology of Lebanon: The Excavations at Tell el-Burak*”. Assistant Professor Kamal Badreshany, from Durham University then shared on “*Understanding the Development of Complex Societies on the Lebanese Coast*”. Professor Hermann Genz, American University of Beirut, presented the third lecture on the *Urbanization, Trade, and Growing Social Complexity: Results from Tell Fadous-Kfarabida*. Dr Paul Newson also from the American University of Beirut gave the final lecture on *Approaches to Landscape History and Settlement in the Central Bekaa Valley*. It was also lovely to see some of these lecturers dialling back into this series.

The last AGM (2024) enabled members, friends, the public and councillors to hear from Dr Melissa Kennedy, Co-Director of the Prehistoric AIUla and Khaybar Excavation Project, on new discoveries revealed in *Digging in the Desert: Life and Death in Ancient Arabia*. Mel is now a new NEAF councillor.

The University Edwin Cuthbert Hall Lecture in April 2024 provided an opportunity for NEAF members and friends to hear Professor Barbara Helwing present on *Digging the Museum. The Ancient Near East in Berlin's Pergamon Museum*.

These were held, bringing people together, and raising precious funds. These popular Saturday sessions have evolved from the inaugural Saturday Seminar series first orchestrated by Maree Browne, NEAF President from 1987-2003. In 2024, 100 people got involved in these events which provided a great opportunity for learning and mingling over lunch. The first study day, *Archaeology In Action*, aligned with *National Archaeology Week*. Current University of Sydney Near Eastern archaeological projects were showcased through the generosity of University scholars

The second Study Day focussed on *Rising Above: Monumental Architecture in the Near East*, with talks by scholars on themes relating to Egypt, Persia, Cyprus and the southern Levant. I thank all speakers across both events for bringing their time, energy, expertise and good will to make these events so successful to audiences, and to all councillors involved.

The Second Study Day opened with the exclusive launch of our former NEAF Vice President, Dr Ross Burns' new book, *Understanding Syria through 40 Monuments: A Story of Survival*. Thank you, Ross, for choosing NEAF for your book launch. Later in the year Dr John Tidmarsh, former NEAF President, gave us both a lecture and book launch of *After Alexander, The Hellenistic and Early Roman Periods of Pella in Jordan*. This is the fifth monograph published by ADAPA Monographs, the Imprint of NEAF, and this accrues a percentage of publication royalties. John drew a huge crowd, selling lots of books and enjoying fun and laughter over supper and a drink afterwards.

In 2017, NEAF established a lecture series in honour of J. Basil Hennessy, the first Director of NEAF, and a renowned academic of the University of Sydney. 2024 saw the third Basil Hennessy Memorial Lecture presented by Professor Lorenzo Nigro from the University of Rome La Sapienza. Lorenzo showcased *Twenty Seasons of Excavations at Jericho: Across the history of one of the oldest capitals in the Levant*. What a delight it was to see Lorenzo's lecture dappled with his very own artistic paintings of the site.

In 2024 the NEAF Council agreed to become the new custodian of the Anthony McNicoll Visiting Lectureship, funding and resourcing permitting. This enables a Senior Fellow to visit Australia where they present a public

lecture at the University of Sydney, a seminar or workshop to students at the university, and additional lectures/seminar)s in one or more other cities. Previously, responsibility sat within the School of Humanities, under the oversight of Professor Alison Betts, Edwin Cuthbert Hall Chair of Archaeology and Mythology of the Ancient Middle East, here at the University of Sydney, and NEAF Director. The VGCC are supporting NEAF in these efforts under newly established *in-kind* relationship arrangements.

Archaeological Tours are one of the main ways that NEAF raises much-needed funds to support students in their research. They're also great for bringing the world of archaeology to those on tour, and hopefully firm friendships are formed along the way. Long established links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel have helped facilitate tours, led by our own intrepid and experienced tour leaders. Ben Churcher led the only tour in 2024, exploring Morocco. NEAF is always looking at alternative destinations designed for our members and friends. 2025 looks more promising with Dr John Tidmarsh led a recent tour to Oman, and Ben's upcoming tours to Central Asia and Morocco are filling up fast.

Since 1993, the University of Sydney Pella Volunteer Scheme has enabled volunteers to work with archaeologists at Pella in Jordan, the long running multi-period tell site. This scheme has built an amazing group of new NEAF members, and it offers a significant contribution to the world of Near Eastern Archaeology and academic life at the University. I thank Dr Stephen Bourke AM, Director of Pella Excavations, for his continued support and advice to NEAF, and for his generosity with giving lectures during 2024. I also acknowledge the enormity of relocating the Pella archive into the new Archaeology Hub and I look forward to the Pella material on becoming a readily accessible resource for researchers, under the leadership and oversight of Stephen. I also thank volunteers including Maree Browne, Annette Dukes, Lea Alexopoulos, Susan Wrigley and Pru Sheaves for their continued devotion, generosity and time for progressing these archival elements of the Pella excavations.

Alison (Sally) Salter who sadly passed away in 2024 very kindly left NEAF a financial gift of \$50,000. At the last AGM, a large bequest was mentioned that was being very kindly gifted to NEAF by Kenin Hayes. Kevin was a NEAF/Academy tour participant. Both bequests have general conditions, enabling NEAF to establish approaches that honour the kindness of Sally, and of Kevin, in ways that further the purposes of NEAF, as other bequests have, and continue to do. Council is continuing to work on progressing these spending initiatives.

An example of this can be seen in the new *NEAF Jon Hosking Research Award* which was finalised 2024. This research award will support eligible candidates (post graduate and early career) in their research into and/or publication of the archaeology and/or coinage of the ancient Near East. This Award is made possible through the kind generosity of the Jon Hosking Bequest, to be facilitated by NEAF.

Staying with Jon Hosking, many people have helped in the successful relocation of the Jon Hosking collection of replicas to the Chau Chak Wing Museum. These replicas are now being used to support student learning through live handling sessions. For more information have a chat to Craig or Susan.

Thanks to the generosity of bequests, and funds raised through members and guests attending events and tours, the following NEAF grants were awarded in 2024 to help students undertake their research:

- Leonie Crawford Travel Grant (\$4553) was awarded to Mr Sullivan Heywood, PhD Candidate (archaeology), University of Queensland, for research into *“Settlement resilience and adaptation through the climatic, economic, and political changes of the Central Anatolian Bronze Age.”*
- Catherine Southwell-Keely Travel Grant (\$3,500) was awarded to Mr Angus Jacobson, PhD Candidate, University of Tasmania, for research into *“Consolidating Control through Cooperation: The Antigonid-Seleucid Alliance as a Mechanism of Power during the Early Hellenistic Age.”*
- Sam Eames (\$1,500) plus a Grant in Aid (\$3,500) to the total of \$5,000 was awarded to Ms Tracy Lakin, PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne, for research into *“The Streets of Urban Amarna: Landscapes of Movement, Materiality, and Lived Experience in Ancient Egypt.”*

Grant awardees are required to contribute an article and/or a lecture showcasing how the awarded NEAF fund supported their research. Hop onto the NEAF website where you can keep up to date on these endeavours. More information coming soon.

Very exciting news - last year, 2024, was the 38th anniversary of the *University of Sydney Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation*. A celebratory dinner marked the occasion of the 25th anniversary of NEAF in 2011.

This means that 2026 marks the 40th anniversary from when NEAF began operating in January 1986 - I look forward to celebrating that anniversary with you.

Thank you everyone again for making NEAF great.

Consolidated Financial Statements

Consolidated Financial Statements are appended to this report.