



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY FOUNDATION
2025 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 Objectives of The Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation

(1) The objectives 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 objectives 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 objectives, 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 objectives.
- . (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 objectives 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 2025 consisted of **18** members from 1/4/25 to 14/7/25 and then **17** members from 14/7/25 to 31/12/25.

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 Ms Rosalind Ogilvie – Vice-President (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, including at Pella in Jordan. Alongside archaeology, Dr Ward is a leadership development practitioner with NSW Health, promoting positive and effective leadership across all levels and boundaries of complex adaptive health systems. Dr Ward has a strong background in human resources and leading organisational change. 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 =5

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 =5

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 =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 =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 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 =4
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Dr Joseph Lehner

Dr. Lehner is currently Tom Austen Brown Senior Lecturer in World Prehistory and Deputy Director, Vere Gordon Childe Centre at the University of Sydney Discipline 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

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 =4
- 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 =4
- 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 =5

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 =4
- 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 =5
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Ms Emily Hinton West an undergraduate honours student is the NEAF Council student representative for 2025.

- Current Term of Appointment as Council Member 01/04/2025-1/4/2026
- Specialised responsibilities: Student Liaison representative
- Number of Meetings attended =3
- 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 – **Resigned 14/7/25**

Special responsibilities: Event and Fundraising advisor.

- Number of Meetings attended =3
- Number of Meetings eligible to attend =5

Council members were re-elected at the Foundation's AGM on the 12th March 2025. Office Bearer's were elected at the Council meeting 7th April 2025 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. Councillor Dr James Fraser resigned on 14th July 2025, and council decided not to fill the vacancy for the remainder of 2025.

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 2025. 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.

¹ Reg 9(6) Charitable Fundraising Regulation 2008

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

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 12th March 2025 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 320 at the end of 2025 of 152 financial members (plus 31 non-financial members for 2025, 9 Free list, 103 Free Students, 21 Life Members; 4 ex-officio) making a total of 320 members of NEAF. NEAF received \$95 to General Donations during 2025.

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

NEAF GRANTS

NEAF awarded \$15,000 in grants for projects in 2026. The following were awarded:

Dr Rehab Ismail from Macquarie University the Leonie Crawford Travel Grant (\$5,000) for *“Egypt in Turmoil: Teti to Pepy I”*.

Leonie van den Berg from Macquarie University the Catherine Southwell-Keely travel grant (\$3,500) for *“Personal Piety Reflected in the Pottery of Theban Tomb 149”*

Levan Losaberidze from Flinders University, Grant in Aid (\$1,000) for *“Between Mountains and Seas: Rock art, symbolic landscapes and cultural interaction in the Caucasus region, southern Georgia.*

Dr Fritz Hardtke from Macquarie University, Grant in Aid (\$1,000) for *Archival Echoes and Field Realities of Rock Art: A Synthesis of Historical Sata and New Discoveries in Upper Egypt.”*

Prudence Sheaves from University of Sydney, Grant in Aid (\$3,000) for *“Pella Tomb 89 Dental Morphology”*.

Dr Peta Seaton from University of Sydney, Sam Eames Research Grant (\$1,500) for *“Pottery residue analysis at Pella and Teleilat Ghassul”*

NEAF Awarded the inaugural Jon Hosking Research Award 2025 (\$15,000) to Dr Amanda Dusting from the University of Sydney for her project *Investigations at an Achaemenid structure at Gird-i Resh, Raparin Province Iraqi Kurdistan.*

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 12th March 2025 via hybrid and 110 people attended including current councillors, and members. Our AGM was followed by a public lecture given Dr Claudia Sagona on *“Margaret Murray's Excavations in Malta”*.

In 2025 our public lecture program and seminar series were in part by hybrid (zoom and face-to-face and zoom only) delivery including an eight-part evening lecture series on the *“Ancient Jordan: Celebrating 50 years of the archaeological association of The University of Sydney with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan”*.

Our first lecture was given by Dr Stephen Bourke, University of Sydney on *Teleilat Ghassul 1975 & Beyond: Celebrating 50 years of University of Sydney's association with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*: This event

was attended by 123 people. Our second lecture attended by 72 people was given by Professor Alison Betts, University of Sydney on *Jawa: Lost City of the Black Desert*. Continuing with our theme our third presenter was Dr Margaret O’Hea from the University of Adelaide on “*Looking through the Glass: Reflections of the Archaeology of Jordan*”. This event was attended by 62 people. Dr Phillip Edwards from the La Trobe University had 80 people attend his lecture “*Founders of the First Villagers: Reports from the Earliest Village People project at the Natufian site of Wadi Hammeh 27, Jordan*”. Our fifth lecture was presented by overseas academic Dr Maria Guagnin on “*Rock Art and Lived Climatic Changes in the Prehistory of Saudi Arabia*”, this was attended by 51 people. Following on in August Dr Pamela Watson, University of New England presented on “*Framed by Earthquakes: How the evidence from two major destructions illuminates the development of Pella in Late Antiquity (3-7th centuries CE)*”. This was attended by 70 people. Dr Glenn Corbett presented a lecture on “*Stories in Stone: Revisiting Bill Jobling’s Wadi Rum Survey*” -attended by 43 people. Our last lecture in this wonderful series was presented again by Dr Stephen Bourke, University of Sydney on “*Digging Up Pella*” and brought this very successful series to a close, presenting to 92 people.

STUDY DAYS

NEAF held a successful study in 2025 delivered in the room and on zoom. This was titled “*Recent Research in the Archaeology of the Near East: Paper from the 14th ICAANE in Lyon*”. Several speakers presented their papers including Dr Holly Winter, Dr Hugh Thomas & Dr Melissa Kennedy; Jane McMahon, Dr Laura Srolin, Dr Amanda Disting, Prudence Sheaves, Dr Paula Phillips, Dr James Fraser and Dr Stephen McPhillips. The day 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. In 2025 NEAF partnered with Academy Travel for two tours led by our experienced tour leader Mr Ben Churcher. The first was *Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan* and the second was *Morocco: The Grand Tour*. Mr Rob Lovell, Director/Owner advised that he would be closing Alumni Travel on 30th June 2025.

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

In terms of the relationship between NEAF and the university I can report on the successful Edwin Cuthbert Hall lecture given last year by Professor Michael Frachetti who spoke on his work on highland cities in Uzbekistan.

Regarding the Vere Gordon Childe Centre there remain some ongoing issues regarding repairs and maintenance which are being undertaken by the university.

Of special note last year was the appointment of Professor Chris Hilliard as Head of School. In his previous position as acting head Chris has been a good friend to NEAF and I thank him for his role as Dean's representative on the NEAF council when the Dean is unable to attend meetings in person.

I extend my thanks to NEAF members for your continued support for USYD and other students through NEAF grants and stress how important these are to ongoing research in archaeology.

NEAF President's Report – Dr Ruth Ward

Thanks to NEAF members, friends, volunteers, donors, communities, council, tour leaders, the University of Sydney, and our speakers, both locally and internationally. NEAF has evolved as a member-based University Foundation since its launch in 1986, aligned with its purposes 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 so generously given to supporting NEAF over 2025, helping with the NEAF library, volunteering to bring NEAF events to members and friends, or assisting the ongoing work of the Pella In Jordan Excavation Project.

Thank you to each of our NEAF Councillors in steering NEAF so effectively in 2025. Thank you to Alison Betts, Director; Amanda Dusting, Councillor; Alexia Nicholson, University of Sydney; Arts Dean, University of Sydney; Catriona Bonfiglioli, Councillor; Chris Hilliard, Head of School, University of Sydney; Craig Barker, Councillor; Greg Beattie, Councillor; Holly Winter, Councillor; Jack McBride, Secretary; James Fraser, Councillor (resigned, July 2025); Jennie Skulander, Councillor; Joseph (Seppi) Lehner, Councillor; Margaret O'Hea, Councillor; Melissa Kennedy, Councillor; Prudence Sheaves, Vice President; Emily Hinton West, Councillor (students); Stephen Bourke AM, Observer; Susan Wrigley, Treasurer. Thank you also to Karen Hendrix, NEAF anchor who has supported NEAF administration through 2025 and across many years.

Achievements in 2025 cover collaboration, an approved new five (5) year spending approach, events, tours and grants.

In 2025, the Vere Godon Childe Centre established a Collections Management working group represented by the Centre Deputy Director and the Program Officer, and the three Centre collections stakeholder representatives: the Australian Archaeological Institute of Athens (AAIA), the Department of Classics & Ancient History and NEAF. Everyone worked together on establishing a Collections Guideline to cover collections within the centre. Our library volunteers Sue Walden, a former librarian and Jack McBride, NEAF Council Secretary were instrumental in drafting an appropriate NEAF collections guideline.

The NEAF Member Survey continued to guide and shape NEAF in 2025 based on the input of 86 NEAF members and friends shared in late 2024. The NEAF Council considered themes including preferred geographic region and topic area along with a preference for hybrid formats. The value and ideal benefits of NEAF were also considered.

In 2025 the NEAF Council developed the *NEAF Bequests Spending Approach 206-2030*. This was made possible through the generous donations of Kevin Hayes, Judith McKenzie, Alison Salter and Lady Winifred Stephen. The NEAF council and the University approved the approach in view of governing principles, an annual budget, five guiding themes and supporting initiatives. Susan Wrigley, treasurer will share more on this.

The broad-ranging NEAF events across 2025 recorded 680 attendees (226 in person and 454 online). These were mostly hybrid, creating accessible, inclusive environments. The seven part Evening Lecture Series was focused on *"Ancient Jordan: Celebrating 50 years of the archaeological association of The University of Sydney with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan"*. NEAF audiences heard from eminent speakers based mostly in Australia, with each bringing this and other themes to life. Speakers from the NEAF Council were Professor Alison Betts (Director), Dr Stephen Bourke AM (Observer) and Dr Margaret O'Hea (Councillor). Non-NEAF council speakers were Dr Phillip Edwards (La Trobe University), Dr Pamela Watson (University of New England) and Dr Glenn Corbett (Biblical Archaeology Review). All generously shared their experiences on the archaeology of Jordan and volunteers helped support the series. Dr Maria Guagnin, a visiting academic, gave a separate lecture on prehistoric rock art of Saudi Arabia.

The previous AGM in March 2025 enabled members, friends, the public and councillors to hear from Dr Claudia Sagona, Honorary Principal Fellow in Archaeology, at The University of Melbourne, on *Margaret Murray's Excavations in Malta*.

A successful hybrid NEAF Study Day showcased *Recent Research in the Archaeology of the Near East: Paper from the 14th ICAANE in Lyon* NEAF Study Day. Thank you to all of the speakers who had given papers at the Lyon conference and shared with NEAF members and friends across wide ranging topics: Dr Holly Winter, Dr Hugh Thomas & Dr Melissa Kennedy, Dr Amanda Disting, Prudence Sheaves, and Jane McMahon, from the University of Sydney; Dr Laura Srolin from the University of Kiel, Dr Paula Phillips from the University of Melbourne, Dr James Fraser, Albright Institute, and Dr Stephen McPhillips, CNRS France.

The NEAF Website and social media continue to support promotion and awareness raising about NEAF events. The website continues to develop. This is where tours, publications, podcasts, acknowledgements of bequests of donors, grants and past awardee reports, volunteering opportunities and lots more can be found. Thanks to Izzy Crerar, our web editor, Councillor Amanda Disting and our University partners for enabling the NEAF Website. Some previous lectures can now be found there too if you want to revisit them.

An update on ADAPA, the NEAF Imprint published by Sydney University Press. Three monographs were accepted for publication in 2025, with others in preparation.

Since 2024, NEAF has been the new custodian of the Anthony McNicoll Visiting Lectureship, funding and resourcing permitting. This is in honour of Dr McNicoll, a senior lecturer in Middle Eastern Archaeology at the University of Sydney from 1976 until his untimely death in 1985. This Lectureship enables a Senior Fellow to visit Australia where they present a public lecture at the University, a seminar or workshop to students, and additional lectures/seminar(s) in one or more other cities. The VGCC are supporting NEAF in these efforts under newly established *in-kind* relationship arrangements and with the support of the School of Humanities who were previously responsible for this, under the oversight of Professor Alison Betts. In 2025, Professor Lloyd Weeks, University of New England gave a lecture on *Saruq al-Hadid: Cult, Craft, and Community in the Rub' al-Khali*.

Archaeological Tours continue to be an exciting way that NEAF raises funds to support students and other eligible academics in their research. Enduring links with Academy Travel and Alumni Travel have helped facilitate tours, led by tour leaders with long established histories with NEAF. In 2025 there were three tours in partnership with Academy Travel. The first was guided by the very experienced John Tidmarsh to Oman. Ben Churcher then led two tours with the first exploring Uzbekistan & Turkmenistan and the second to Morocco.

The University of Sydney Pella Volunteer Scheme continues to be supported by volunteers including Maree Browne OAM, Annette Dukes, Lea Alexopoulos, Susan Wrigley and Pru Sheaves who helped progress the archival elements of the Pella excavations within the new Archaeology Hub at the University, under the guidance of Dr Stephen Bourke AM, Director of Pella Excavations. I thank Stephen for his continued support and advice to NEAF, for his generosity with giving lectures during 2025, and in securing a number of speakers for the evening lecture series.

Grants: Thanks to the generosity of bequests, and funds raised through members and guests attending events and tours, NEAF awarded \$15,000 in grants in 2025 to help students and researchers undertake projects in 2026:

- Leonie Crawford Travel Grant (\$5000) was awarded to Dr Rehab Ismail from Macquarie University for *“Egypt in Turmoil: Teti to Pepy I”*.
- Catherine Southwell-Keely Travel Grant (\$3,500) was awarded to Leonie van den Berg from Macquarie University for *“Personal Piety Reflected in the Pottery of Theban Tomb 149”*.
- Sam Eames Research Grant (\$1,500) was awarded to Dr Peta Seaton from University of Sydney, for *“Pottery residue analysis at Pella and Teleilat Ghassul”*.
- NEAF Grant in Aid (\$1,000) was awarded to Dr Fritz Hardtke from Macquarie University, for *Archival Echoes and Field Realities of Rock Art: A Synthesis of Historical Sata and New Discoveries in Upper Egypt.”*
- NEAF Grant in Aid (\$1,000) was awarded to Levan Losaberidze from Flinders University, for *“Between Mountains and Seas: Rock art, symbolic landscapes and cultural interaction in the Caucasus region, southern Georgia.*
- NEAF Grant in Aid (\$3,000) was awarded to Prudence Sheaves from University of Sydney, for *“Pella Tomb 89 Dental Morphology”*.

Finally, the inaugural *NEAF Jon Hosking Research Award* of \$15,000 was awarded in 2025. This Award is made possible through the kind generosity of the Jon Hosking Bequest, to be facilitated by NEAF. This research award supports eligible candidates (postgraduate and early career) in their research into and/or publication of the archaeology and/or coinage of the ancient Near East.

In 2025, strong applications were received, articulating compelling research interests. This inaugural award was granted to Dr Amanda Disting from the University of Sydney for her project *Investigations at an Achaemenid structure at Gird-i Resh, Raparin Province Iraqi Kurdistan*. Dr Disting undertakes this new work under the auspices and provisions of the Zagros Archaeological Trust expedition, The University of Cambridge, United Kingdom. Grant awardees are required to contribute an article and/or a lecture showcasing how the awarded NEAF fund supported their research.

Beyond 2025 - 2026 marks the 40th anniversary from when NEAF began operating in January 1986. A few events upcoming for your diaries:

- Saturday 11 April VGCC 12.30pm - *Tatreez Embroidery Workshop (with Gina Barjeel)* – Exclusive to NEAF members (in person only).
- Thursday 7 May 6.00pm - 7.00pm - Archaeology, Art and Colonialism in the Middle East: A Biennale Panel Discussion. CCWM/NEAF collaboration (in person only). Free.
- Wednesday 27 May 6.30pm Evening Lecture Series: *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*. Professor Jodie Magness, University of North Carolina USA (hybrid)

Consolidated Financial Statements

Consolidated Financial Statements are appended to this report.