

Historical Society of the Northern Territory

NEWSLETTER AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2026

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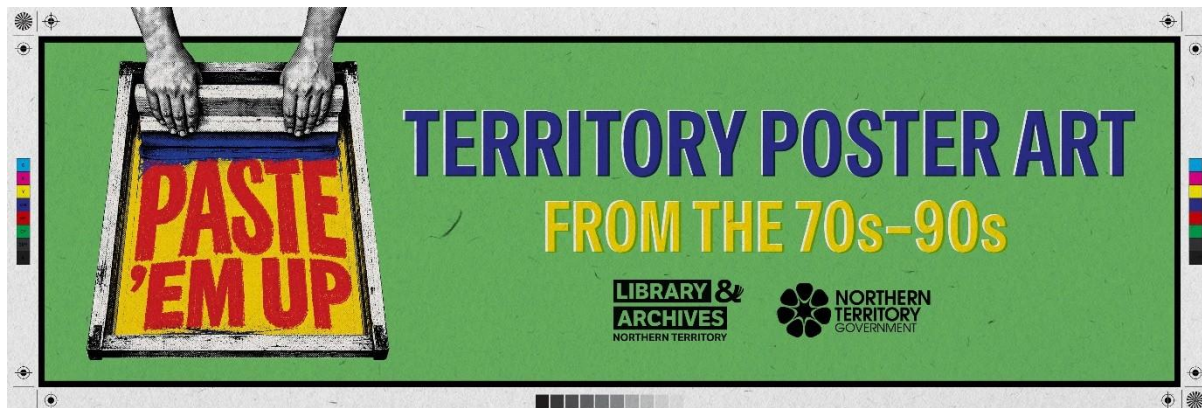
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HSNT Committee – President: Derek Pugh; Vice President: Bev Phelts; Secretary: Libby Siebert; Treasurer: Clare Corfield. others - Brian Reid, Clayton Fredericksen, Vida Goodvach, Rosemary Cameron & Peter Siebert

FUTURE EVENTS

Now open – New Exhibition | Paste 'Em Up: Territory Poster Art from the 70s-90s at NT Archives & Library



In the 1970s, a group of Sydney university students took fine art screen-printing techniques from the galleries to the streets. When Do-It-Yourself postering arrived in Northern Australia, a new visual language—striking, earthy and totally of the Territory—was born. Follow this unique journey through our new exhibition. NT Library & Archives, Level 2, CDU Building, Cavenagh Street, (opposite Woolworths)

Saturday 1 August - Parap Markets HSNT Book Stall

Janie will be holding a book stall at the markets. Plenty of new books and great prices to choose from.

Saturday 8 August - CDU Library's new exhibition opening at 1pm

"Towards Tomorrow: CDU's Desert Rose and The World Solar Car Challenge" at 1:00 pm, Saturday, 8 August in Building Red 8 on Casuarina campus, as part of Open Day.

The exhibition showcases the ingenuity, resilience, and incredible achievements of the Desert Rose Solar Car team from 1987-2001 and contains select memorabilia, including a model of the Desert Rose Solar Car and photographs from the CDU Library archival collection, as well as recorded interviews with people involved, one of whom will be speaking at the exhibition opening.

Saturday 8 August – Government House Open Day – 9am-3pm – Free Entry



Garden lovers can join our Horticulturists for a Garden Information Session in the Gazebo and discover the stories behind our beautiful gardens.

Food enthusiasts can enjoy an interactive cooking demonstration on the Terrace with Chef Matti, showcasing delicious local flavours.

Entertainment for all ages includes live performances by the Royal Australian Navy Band Acoustic Trio, Orshi the Cartoonist, games and children's activities with Fairy Jill, plus encounters with the Territory Wildlife Park.

Support local by enjoying a bite to eat from local food vendors or grabbing a sausage sizzle from the fundraising BBQ.

History and architecture enthusiasts can explore Government House and discover the fascinating stories, heritage, and design of one of the Territory's most significant historic residences. Visitors can also meet members of The Government House Foundation of the NT Inc., learn about their support of Government House, and enter a raffle to win a Territory artwork.

Monday 10 August at 2pm – A Centenary Muster at Jones Store, Newcastle Waters

Join Mates of the Murrniji at Jones' Store, Newcastle Waters Historic Township, to recognise and celebrate two centenary events of 1926. The Administrator of the NT, David Connolly and his wife Ms Sue Brosnan will be attending the event.

With the support of our sponsors, particularly Great Northern Beer, we also intend to raise a beverage to honour the history of the Newcastle Waters and to also reflect on the lives of absent friends, with special emphasis on the recent passing of the Honourable Ted Egan AO - Foundation Mate, past Administrator of Australia's Northern Territory, founder of the 'Bloody Good Drinkers Club', National Treasure and all-round great bloke!! Through his songs and literature, his passion for Australia and its peoples, Ted's love and generosity provides us with an enduring immeasurable legacy.

2026 represents the centenary of two special events in Australia's and Newcastle Waters history. On 4 June 1926, the Commonwealth of Australia assented the *North Australia Act* which effectively split the Northern Territory into two - Central Australia and Northern Australia.

47. The seat of Government of North Australia shall be established as soon as practicable at Newcastle Waters, and until the seat of Government is so established it shall be at Darwin.

Seat of
Government of
North
Australia.

Alice Springs was to become the capital of Central Australia whilst Newcastle Waters was designated the capital of North Australia replacing Darwin as the seat of Government. The Act was subsequently repealed some 5 years later.

Following this proclamation on 19 August 1926, the Governor General of Australia and his wife, Lord and Lady Stonehaven, flew from Longreach, QLD, to Newcastle Waters, in the first ever Australian built Qantas De Havilland DH50 plane.

Wednesday 12 August - Vincent Lingiari Memorial Gathering at Casuarina CDU – 5.30-7.30pm

Join Yolŋu Elder and Yothu Yindi co-founder Witiyana Marika for the 25th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Gathering.

Marking 60 years since the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off and the beginning of the modern Aboriginal land rights movement, this year's theme is:

"ngumpin, kartiya karu-la jintaku-la" — blackfella, whitefella, unite as one.

Witiyana will reflect on the enduring legacy of Vincent Lingiari and share insights on culture, truth-telling, reconciliation and the importance of walking together towards a more just future.

The free public gathering will be opened and closed by special guest violinist Eric Avery, Kabi Marrawuy Mumbulla.

Hosted by Charles Darwin University, the annual gathering honours the courage, leadership and legacy of Vincent Lingiari and the Gurindji people. It brings communities together to reflect on justice, equality, reconciliation and our shared future.

The event will be held in 7 Orange Building.

Wednesday 12 August - From Names to Stories: Using Archives to Discover Your Ancestors' Lives at NT Library and Archives - 10.30 – 11.45am

Join genealogist and family historian Virginia Pessanha for an engaging presentation and Q&A exploring how archival records can transform your family tree from a list of names and dates into a deeper story about the people, places and experiences that shaped your ancestors' lives.

Using local examples and case studies, participants will explore how immigration records, land files, court documents and employment histories can reveal insights into ancestors' daily lives, occupations and contributions to their communities.

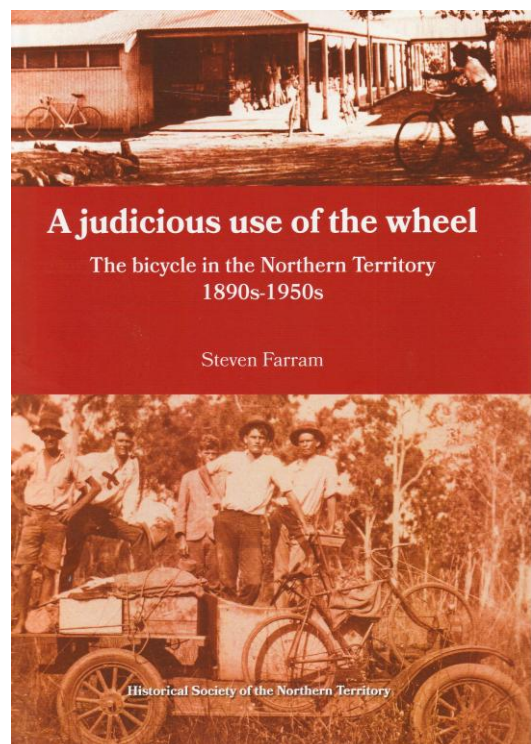
NT Library & Archives, Level 2, CDU Building, opposite Woolworths, Cavenagh Street, Darwin
Free event – Register on line <https://events.humanitix.com/from-names-to-stories>

Friday 11 September - New Book published by the Society – to be launched at NT Library & Archives

Dr Steve Farram's new book titled *A Judicious Use of the Wheel: The Bicycle in the Northern Territory 1890s-1950s* is out now.

The book will be launched on Friday 11 September at 12.30pm by Paul Clark (Flinders University, ex-MAGNT)

The launch will be held at NT Library & Archives, Level 2, CDU Building, opposite Woolworths, Cavenagh Street, Darwin



The book includes tales of the overlanders who cycled through the Territory seeking fame as the first or the fastest. It discusses the many clubs that have supported organised cycling over the years & the different businesses that sold and repaired bicycles.

Several books have been written about the history of cycling in Australia but none have gone into this level of detail for a single jurisdiction. The book includes over 80 images, many published for the first time.

The book will be for sale \$25 **CASH ONLY**

Sunday 25 October – HSNT 8th Annual Oration at History House – Speaker Dr Jeff Swann

Jeff will talk about his Canning Stock Route 4WD trip along with lots of photos that highlight his adventure. The Canning Stock Route opened in 1910 and is a track that runs from Halls Creek to Wiluna in the mid west of WA. With a total distance of around 1,850 km (1,150 mi) it is claimed to be the longest historic stock route in the world.



The Canning Stock Route



Scenery along the stock route

Our Oration will be held at History House, 1/16 Charlton Court, Woolner at 3pm. Everyone is welcome to attend. Nibbles and drinks will follow the talk.

NT History Grants 2026 – 2027 are now open

Issued by: Department of People, Sport and Culture (NT) Closes: 7 September 2026

Category: Environmental & Heritage Services : Heritage Advisory Services Community & Social Services : Community & Social Services (other) : Grant & Funding Programs Education & Training : Academic Research

The NT History Grants 2026–2027 provide up to \$10,000 to support NT-resident individuals and NT not-for-profit organisations undertaking history and heritage research projects about the Northern Territory. Likely applicants include local historical and genealogical societies, community organisations and small organisations able to deliver research, oral histories, writing/editing, and publication-related activities (noting professional historical consultancy fees are excluded).

For more information - <https://lant.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-history-grants-program>

200th Anniversary of Mechanics' Institutes in Australia will be held in Hobart & Launceston in March 2027

HIGHLIGHTS OF PAST EVENTS

The launch of *The First Yalu* at History House on 5 July
Photos courtesy Libby Siebert & Clayton Fredericksen



Clayton Fredericksen, Ivan Baker & Elaine Hellyer



Peter Siebert, Mark Ames & Brian Reid



Gwenda Baker, Jan Richardson & Sachiko
Hirayama



As most of you would be aware, our annual field trip had to be cancelled as Pt Stuart was still closed and Hardies Track had only just opened but was damaged by buffalo wallow and deep ruts. As several of us had booked and paid for our accommodation at the Bark Hut, we decided to still stay the night and do a day trip.

Members set off early to visit the granite rock carvings carved by Japanese sculpture, Mitsuaki Tanabe. Mitsuaki went back and forth between Japan and Australia for 10 years, carving insects and lizards into the granite. Unfortunately, he died before he finished his sculptures but his son continued his work.



Vida Goodvach, Peter Siebert, Sue Ridgewell, Libby Siebert & Rosemary Cameron at one of the many carvings

Next stop was a drive along a bush rough track into the Snake Creek WW2 Armament Depot. Built with a 2.85 km rail loop, extensive service roads and infrastructure, and ammunition storage carved into hillsides, it was designed on a large scale and secrecy. At its peak, the Depot could hold thousands of tonnes of ammunitions and the whole complex was camouflaged against aerial observation. Its rail line was linked to the Adelaide River and Darwin railhead. Today, much of the infrastructure has disintegrated and is badly weathered.



Bev Phelts at one of the many ammunition storage shelters.



One of the shelters showing how it was camouflaged



Shell scraping & painting rooms



Possibly accommodation and kitchen facilities

We then travelled on to the Adelaide River War Cemetery which was established in 1943 for the service men and women who died in Northern Australia during the War. Among the 436 burials, there are 408 Australian soldiers with the others being British and Canadian defence personnel. Sixty-three civilians who were killed during the bombing of Darwin and the top end are also buried here. The Cemetery has ample informative signage and shows a short film about the bombing of Darwin which includes interviews by those who were there.



Adelaide River War Cemetery entrance

We then visited the Adelaide River Railway Station Precinct. The Station opened in 1889 and had staff accommodation and a refreshment room for passengers. Behind the Station, a reservoir and overhead water tank provided water for the steam locomotives working the line. During WW2, Adelaide River became an important military base, and a large field hospital was established near the railway station. A siding was added to serve the hospital train. Trains from the station delivered supplies to and from the Snake Creek Armament Depot and Darwin. During the War, the traffic on the line had increased eight times compared to the pre-war years and by 1943, it was servicing 247 trains per week. The Station closed in 1976, when trains no longer travelled to Darwin. The Station is managed by the NT National Trust and has been developed into a precinct which holds Sidney Williams Huts, railway carriages, and several displays including the Overland Telegraph Line and a history of the Territory railway.



Adelaide River Railway Station showing the elevated water tank in the background



Inside one of the Sidney Williams Huts that holds displays

Our final stop for the day was a late lunch at the Adelaide River Inn. The Inn was founded in 1873 and was a stopover between Katherine and Darwin. During WW2, it became part of an Army base and was put together by soldiers. Its bar is appropriately named 303 and bullet holes from the soldiers "shooting up" can be seen. Today it is the home of Charlie, the buffalo which starred in Crocodile Dundee.

