


Subject:	Annual General Meeting	
Date	24 th July 2025	
Location:	Williamstown Town Hall – Level 1	

The meeting opened at 7.35pm.

Russell Brown (President) provided a Welcome to Country.

Summary of activities during the 2024-2025 year.

- Thank you to Janet Long (Vice President) for her exceptional service to the society over a period of 33 years including roles as President, and currently Vice President. Janet is stepping down from her Vice President role, but we are pleased to say will remain on the Committee.
- We have an expanding volunteer team in the office on Wednesdays, with up to 15 people, with other volunteers contributing from home. Tasks being undertaken by these volunteers include digitising the collection, cataloguing our artefacts, responding to public and members requests, undertaking research, and planning for future events.
- A big thanks to Nicole Harris for her efforts in driving the efforts of the volunteers and preparations for the AGM.
- During the year we have received several grants from the Westgate Tunnel project and the HBCC which have enabled us to purchase necessary equipment (computers, and scanners) to continue our work.
- To enable more volunteers to utilise the limited equipment resources and increase our output, we are looking at opening on Saturday mornings as well.
- We currently have 242 members and are still looking to recruit more. We are encouraging members to please recommend joining to their friends and relatives. Membership is very reasonable at \$20 single, and \$30 family, and can be done online, or at the office on Wednesdays between 10am, and 3pm.
- We are progressing the upload of the digitised details from our collection to Victorian Collections. Currently our collection is not public but once checked and formatted will be available to members to access with low resolution images. If there are items of interest the high resolution image will be made available to members by request.

So far we have catalogued over 3000 items and 700 photographs.

Victorian Collections is a digital archive where you can search thousands of items held by galleries, museums, libraries, archives, historical societies and cultural collections across the state of Victoria, Australia. Victorian Collections is also a free collection management system with training available for organisations to help catalogue, digitise and upload records.

<https://victoriancollections.net.au/>

- We installed a WiFi link between the rooms we have at our Douglas Parade office to enable the collection staff to have internet access and allow upload of information.
- As the packing up of our collection when we had to vacate the Mechanics Institute was done in a hurry in 2018, there were many items which were not catalogued.

- Our volunteers recently were involved in unwrapping our collection of paintings, cataloguing them and rewrapping them. They are still in storage at Jim's Storage.
- We purchased racking for both our office and storage (Jim's Storage) to enable our archives to be safely stored and accessed and provide better space utilisation.
- We have met with other societies from the Western Region Historical Societies with a view to building relationships and addressing common interests. These meetings had lapsed but will now be held every 3 months.
- Committee members attended a workshop by the RHSV (Royal Historical Society of Victoria) entitled "Practical Strategies for a Successful Vibrant Organisation" which provided some insights into how to access useful resources, applying for grants, attracting members, newsletters in the digital age, and creating engaging events.
- As a follow up our collection team visited the RHSV and spent time with their Collections Manager which provided insight into preservation of artifacts and documents, museum development, cataloguing, documentation, and contacts for additional resources.
- We have also responded to over 100 enquiries for information in relation to the history of the area. Access to our records is available to our members at the offices on Wednesday between 10am and 3pm, and a small charge is made for research work for public requests.
- At our bi-monthly meeting we have had guest speakers on a variety of interesting topics relevant to the area.

We have also had off-site visits to Blunts Boatyard on Nelson Place, and the Clocktower at the Newport railway Workshops on Champion Road.

- Other activities included walks detailing the history of Thompson Street, and several walks done by Brain Haynes with community groups on our behalf. The society is very grateful to Brain who conducts these walks on our behalf and donates the fees to our operations.
- The society participated in the Heritage Festival organised by the National Trust in April/May with a display in the heritage Room at the Council Heritage Library, highlighting some of the significant items from our collection.
- The society is also partnering with "The Westsider" newspaper to provide historical articles in rotation with other local societies. This will facilitate educating the community on the history of the area and increase the exposure for the society.
- The society thanks to the HBCC for their ongoing support with office space and storage, without which we could not continue.

Elections

The meeting was handed over to one of our members Geoff King as Returning Officer for the election of committee and members.

Nominations were received as follows:-

President	Russell Brown
Vice President	No nominations
Treasurer	Colleen Miller
Secretary	Ian Miller
General Committee	Nicole Harris Janet Long Rick Sidgwick Laurie Treadwell Steven Webb

Note:- John Mylonas was unable to attend the meeting to complete a nomination due to ill health and will be seconded onto the committee under Rule 54.3.at the next committee meeting. He had support from a nominator and seconder.

As there were no other nominations the Returning Officer declared the nominees elected.

The meeting was then handed back to the elected President to chair the meeting.

Membership Fess

It was resolved that the membership fees will be the same as 2024 at \$20 single, and \$30 family, with an additional cost of \$10/year for any member requiring a mailed copy of the newsletter.

Constitution

A draft copy of the prosed constitution had been provided to members by email.

This document was presented for ratification by members present at the meeting and was agreed to without objection.

This will now be the guiding document for the operation of the Williamstown Historical Society going forward.

Future endeavours.

Cataloguing

A major focus will be continuing the digitising, cataloguing, and uploading of our collection.

Williamstown Mechanics Institute

Photos of the current state of the Mechanics Institute were displayed on the screen for members to review. This showed the current state of the building and removal of the floor in the main hall.

HBCC had undertaken a community consultation process with the community to provide feedback online and the Farmers Market in the Commonwealth Reserve.

Previously our President was prevented from commenting on the proceedings of the Williamstown Mechanics Institute Community Reference Group due to the requirement to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement with the HBCC. As we have now been released from this agreement we can make comment.

The reference group was scheduled to meet 3 times, with the 3rd meeting being cancelled and a report being provided to council (Item 8.4.1 for the HBCC 1st July meeting). The agenda, unconfirmed minutes, and attachments providing details of designs can be accessed at the following link.

<https://www.hobsonsabay.vic.gov.au/Council/Council-meetings/Minutes-and-agendas>

We had previously been asked to provide details of the minimum space we would require to reestablish our operations and museum. The planning at that stage would not have allowed a suitable space to accommodate our requirements.

Ralph Coghill (President of the Inner West National Trust) spoke in relation to the status of the building. The building is currently not on the Victorian Heritage Register, however there is a heritage overlay for the area incorporating the Mechanics Institute. This does however not provide protection against inappropriate use.

Going forward the WHS could nominate the building for listing with the National Trust, and the Inner West National Trust would be prepared to support such an application.

There are 8 criteria which are considered for listing with a minimum of 3 being required to be met.

1. Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history.
2. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history.
3. Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history.
4. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places and objects.
5. Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics.
6. Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period.
7. Strong or special association with a particular present-day community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
8. Special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Victoria's history.

These criteria are assessed for both local and statewide compliance.

Based on recent inspection the building was assessed as sound as the underpinning work has been completed and we believe could be accessed if the floor was replaced and the cottage restored.

The WHS has been recognised as a major stakeholder in the future of the building.

WHS has sent letters to both the Councillors and the Council CEO, with an offer to visit our operations. The letter clarified the WHS traditional attachment to the building. We are also going back through the archives to trace the history of the building in relation to WHS occupancy to clarify this for HBCC personnel not familiar with the history.

WHS is looking at a 2-prong approach:

1. Preserve the building
2. Facilitate our return to the building.

Any members proposing to make a private representation to the council should make it clear they are not doing so on behalf of the WHS.

It was the clear understanding from HBCC staff when we were required to vacate the building that this would be a temporary situation and we would be restored to the space we previously occupied once the restoration work was complete (schedule for 18-24 months duration).

Show and Tell

This is the traditional part of the AGM where members are encouraged to bring historical artifacts and provide a presentation in relation to their provenance.

Geoff van Wyngaarden

Geoff operated the scoreboard the at the Williamstown Football Ground for over 15 years.

From the period form 1909 – 1962 the board was sponsored by Nugget.

Subsequent score boards were bult, but the letters were not large enough to be seem from around the ground. Geoff recovered the original numbers from storage and retrofitted them to the new board.

The boards also used to display the umpire's numbers and score from other games.

John Becroft

In 1958-59 John played under Scotch College with Bob Cowper as captain.

He was selected for a tour to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) to pay 10 matches over 2 months. The trip was by boat with 2 weeks on the water both was at a cost of £200 with £50 spending money.

He brought along a bat from the time and a miniature commemorative bat from the series.

Iris Whitehead

Iris brought along various documents from the Williamstown High School Ex Students and Staff Association which she has donated to the WHS.

She also had a publication "Holding Fast" Williamstown High School 1867-2014. Iris has these books for sale and if you contact WHS we can provide you with her details to acquire one of these very special books.

Geoff King

Geoff presented a copy Proclamation of the City of Williamstown from the Chronicle and the Programme of Celebrations for the Centenary of Williamstown on Saturday April 12th 1937.

He also listed the prize winners in a range of categories from the grand parade.

Peter Williams

Peter was a foundation member of the WHS has this was his 69th consecutive AGM. As a young lad he used to come down on the train from Eaglemont to attend.

Peter is also a foundation member of the Heidelberg Historical Society and noted the connection in that the first land sales in Victoria were Melbourne Village, Heidelberg and Williamstown Waterfront.

He also represented the original Bill of Sale for the "Success" which was one of the prison hulks along with the President, Lysander, and Sacramento.

He also related details of the first shot fired in WW1 from the battery at Fort Nepean at the SS Pfalz a German ship attempting to leave the bay on 5th August 1914 after the declaration of war.

There was also an unusual map of Port Phillip Bay from early 1900's which was on silk and designed to be folded not rolled.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm and we retired for refreshments.

End of document.