



NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (A.C.T.)

ABN 50 797 949 955

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



John Tucker, organiser of 15 Reid Houses and Gardens tours, with participants at Dirrawan Gardens on 29 October 2023. (Photo: Sue Byrne).

President's Report

It is with much pleasure that I present to you on behalf of Council the Annual Report of the National Trust of Australia (ACT) (the Trust) for 2023-24.

I extend my sincere thanks to all Trust members for their continuing support and work in advancing the interests of ACT heritage.

This year has again been very busy. As usual we conducted a range of activities in the 2024 ACT Heritage Festival, including the second ACT Heritage Oration and the very popular Heritage Polaris.

During the year we maintained our comprehensive program of walks, talks and tours, announced the annual ACT Heritage Awards, and published a series of new and updated self-guide walk brochures for a number of Canberra suburbs, with more in development.

We continued our work in heritage advocacy, as detailed in the Heritage Committee report elsewhere in this document. Key issues for the future included securing the heritage listing of Canberra, the need to engage with planning processes for Light Rail depending on the outcome of the election, and how to secure the future of unoccupied heritage-listed buildings.

We were delighted that the 2023-24 ACT Budget included a four-year extension of the Trust's ACT Government grant. The previous grant enabled allowed the Trust to expand the range of its activities and take up some new ones. We have an excellent relationship with ACT Heritage, which administers the grant, and look forward to continuing this partnership in the years ahead.

The Minister for Heritage, Rebecca Vassarotti MLA has been a very strong and engaged supporter of the Trust, for which we are very appreciative. We continue to enjoy an excellent and productive relationship with the ACT Heritage Council, chaired by Duncan Marshall.

The Trust continues to work constructively as a member of the Australian Council of National Trusts, which under the leadership of Lachlan Molesworth has a strong and vibrant agenda.

We look forward to meeting the many challenges ahead in 2025. At the time of writing the ACT Assembly elections are just around the corner and we look forward to working with the new Government and its Heritage Minister, when the results of the election and new government arrangements are known.

Succession planning continues to be an issue for the Trust, as it is for many of our kindred groups, and there is a need now as much as ever to attract committed volunteers to help the Trust undertake its important work.

On behalf of Council I wish you a happy and prosperous 2025.

Gary Kent

President

Tours and Events Report

This year we planned a total of 32 tours, walks, visits, and other events – inevitably there were a few cancellations due to weather or key people unable to participate in events.

During the 2024 Canberra and Region Heritage Festival we planned ten events. These included the second ACT Heritage Oration with speaker Ted Baillieu AO. Once again, we held the Heritage Polaris and our Open Day, this year at Yarralumla Woolshed. A highlight was our visit to Millpost, a private property with many historic features, including a stone axe quarry. There were six Heritage Walks scheduled but two had to be cancelled.

There were three well-supported coach tours during the year – the Postman's boat cruise, Shoalhaven and Tumut. Other tours included a tour of the conservation works at Lanyon and another Reid Houses and Gardens.

A total of 17 Heritage Walks were planned during the year – including six during the Festival. Three had to be cancelled and one rescheduled so there were 14 Heritage Walks held.

Seven other events were planned included the Heritage Symposium, AGM, Heritage Awards presentation, Christmas party and two launches (Heritage Awards exhibition and brochure launch). The Heritage Symposium was unfortunately cancelled as the key speaker was unavailable (but was rescheduled to August 2024).

Several events were held jointly with other groups, including the Australian Garden History Society, ACT Historic Places and residents' groups and we thank them for partnering with us and the many other people who guided walks, opened their gardens or assisted with events. Without them, we could not provide such wonderful opportunities for members and others to learn more about Canberra's heritage or to visit other areas.

If you would like to help plan and organise the future program, please contact the National Trust Office and let us know of your interest.

Mary Johnston
Chair, Tours and Events Committee

Heritage Report

The Trust continued to advocate for Canberra's heritage through a number of projects and other initiatives during 2023-24.

Mr Ted Baillieu AO, the then chair of the Australian Heritage Council and former Premier of Victoria, presented the second ACT Heritage Oration on World Heritage Day, 18 April 2024. The Oration was held at the Shine Dome, celebrating 65 years since its opening in 1959. Mr Baillieu's Oration was titled 'Heritage – The Power of Place and the Primacy of Purpose'. A copy of his thought-provoking address is available on the Trust's website.

The Trust engaged GML Heritage Pty Ltd to undertake the Thematic Study on Mid-Century Modernist Houses in the ACT. Funded by the ACT Government through its annual Special Grant to the Trust, a draft version of the report has been completed. The report will be finalised during 2024-25.

The Special Grant has also allowed the Trust to release new or updated versions of selected Heritage tour brochures. Brochures released during 2023-24 were for Campbell–Russell, Dairy Flat (based on Dairy Road), East Lake, Hall and Kingston. Further brochures are being reviewed and will be released during 2024-25. Copies of these new brochures are available on the Trust's website and in hardcopy from the Trust's office.

An annual highlight for the year is the National Trust (ACT) Heritage Awards. This year, the Trust used a different approach and made Awards based on categories. The winners for each category were:

- The Old Parliament House Fire Remediation Project team at the Museum of Australian Democracy, winners in the Architecture and Building Conservation category.
- The Jarramlee Nature Reserve Remediation and Restoration Project by Cord Civil Pty Ltd, winners in the Heritage Landscapes and the Natural Environment category.
- The Restoring the Natural Riparian Environment of the Tuggeranong Creek at the Tuggeranong Homestead Project by Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead Inc, winners in the Local Community Projects category.
- The Ngunnawal Night Tales – Wildbark Fire Pit and Interpretation Program at Wildbark, winners in the First People's Heritage category.
- The Play On: From Grassroots to Glory Project from the University of Canberra, winners in the Heritage Education and Promotion category.
- The Digital Heritage: Collaborative Research and Promotion Project from Canberra and Region Historical Researchers, winners in the Heritage Research Tool or Resource category.

The Trust's Council also made the following Awards:

- Lifetime Achievement Award: Mr Ken Charlton AM FRAIA
- Outstanding Advocacy: Mr Nick Swain.

The Trust engaged with, or responded to, contemporary heritage matters in the ACT. These included the ACT Government and ACT Legislative Assembly reviews, an unsuccessful heritage nomination of CML House, concerns about the state of Coggins Bakery in Braddon, the UNSW Canberra Phase 1 Development in Reid and Parkes, the future of Tuggeranong Schoolhouse, Canberra Brickworks, Urban Tree Management in Canberra, Belconnen Transmitting station, demolition at Gold Creek Homestead, the Provisional Listing of Early Kingston Shops, and the Light Rail Stage 2B project.

The Trust would like to note that many of the activities above would not be possible without the support of the ACT Government through the Trust's Special Grant. The

Trust would also like to thank Capital Holdings for its sponsorship of the Heritage Awards. All committee members are thanked for their efforts during the year.

Gary Watkins
Manager

Treasurer's Report

At the time of writing we are still finalising audited accounts for 2023-24. As mentioned in previous years we have a Special Grant with the ACT Government which is subject to annual sign off between the two parties by way of a Work Plan, supported by an independent audit report. Due to the short time frame after EOFY this aspect remains outstanding.

Having said this, the Trust continues to operate on a slightly better than breakeven basis due to the continued good work of a core group of motivated volunteers and, after discounting any funds pertaining to the grant, we have circa \$180k in the bank with nil commercially related liabilities.

Special mention to Gary Watkins, who draws a moderate salary as Manager, but continues to provide a high level of corporate support to the Council; support we could not have afforded at commercial rates.

Scott McAlister
Treasurer