

National Trust Tasmania

Annual Report

2025-26

Acknowledgement of Country

National Trust Tasmania acknowledges the palawa/pakana people as the Traditional Custodians of lutruwita/Tasmania. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise their continuing connection to Country, culture and heritage.



Image: The Ablutions & Homestead at Wybalenna, Taylor and Hinds Architects with the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania;
Photographer: Adam Gibson

A YEAR IN REVIEW



HOBART CONVICT PENITENTIARY

For the second year in a row, the Hobart Convict Penitentiary has been recognised as the number one attraction in Tripadvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards for both Australia and the South Pacific.

The impact of rising living costs and broader economic challenges was certainly felt at our busiest site this year. Despite this, we continued to strengthen our external relationships, engage with existing and new partners, and deliver a range of creative campaigns, local promotions, workshops, talks, events, educational programs and media outreach.

These efforts contributed to an increase in visitation, with the cruise ship season and school holidays keeping the team busy, Ghost Tours remaining as popular as ever, and ongoing community engagement helping us maintain a strong presence.

None of this would have been possible without our dedicated Volunteer team whose energy and enthusiasm continue to take the site from strength to strength. Looking ahead, we have many exciting ideas for the Penitentiary, while also recognising the growing need for sustainable conservation and ongoing maintenance.

We look forward to continuing this important work and ensuring the site remains a valued part of Tasmania's heritage for years to come.

Jim Ward
Property Manager South

RUNNYMEDE

The past year has been a productive one for Runnymede, with continued support from the community, volunteers and partner organisations helping to preserve and promote the house.

We are grateful for the financial support received from the Australian Garden History Society, who have generously provided funding that allowed us to update interpretation in the garden and to begin the process of removing a deceased Walnut tree. These projects will improve the presentation and accessibility of the grounds. Runnymede was also successful in securing a grant from ArtsNational to allow us to the restore the maritime painting 'The Lufra" which was donated by Emma Bayly, the last member of the Bayley/ Bayly family to live at the house.

The Spring and Autumn Fairs continued to be highlights of the Runnymede calendar. The events brought together local residents, visitors and community groups while providing the opportunity for people to enjoy the gardens and property. The involvement of the school bands from Hobart City High School added to the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere of the fairs.

The Runnymede Concert Series continued to provide a varied programme of music in an intimate setting to sold out crowds. The concerts have become an important part of Runnymede's cultural programme and demonstrate the property's potential as a venue for the arts.

The House continued to welcome cruise ship visitors throughout the season, providing tours of the property and gardens. These visits offer an important opportunity to introduce visitors from around Australia and overseas to Runnymede's history and its place within New Town and Tasmania.

The coming year will build on these achievements, with a continued focus on conservation, community involvement, cultural activities and welcoming visitors to Runnymede. We thank our volunteers, supporters, grant providers, community partners and visitors for their ongoing contribution to the preservation and enjoyment of this special place.

Jim Ward
Property Manager South

HOME HILL



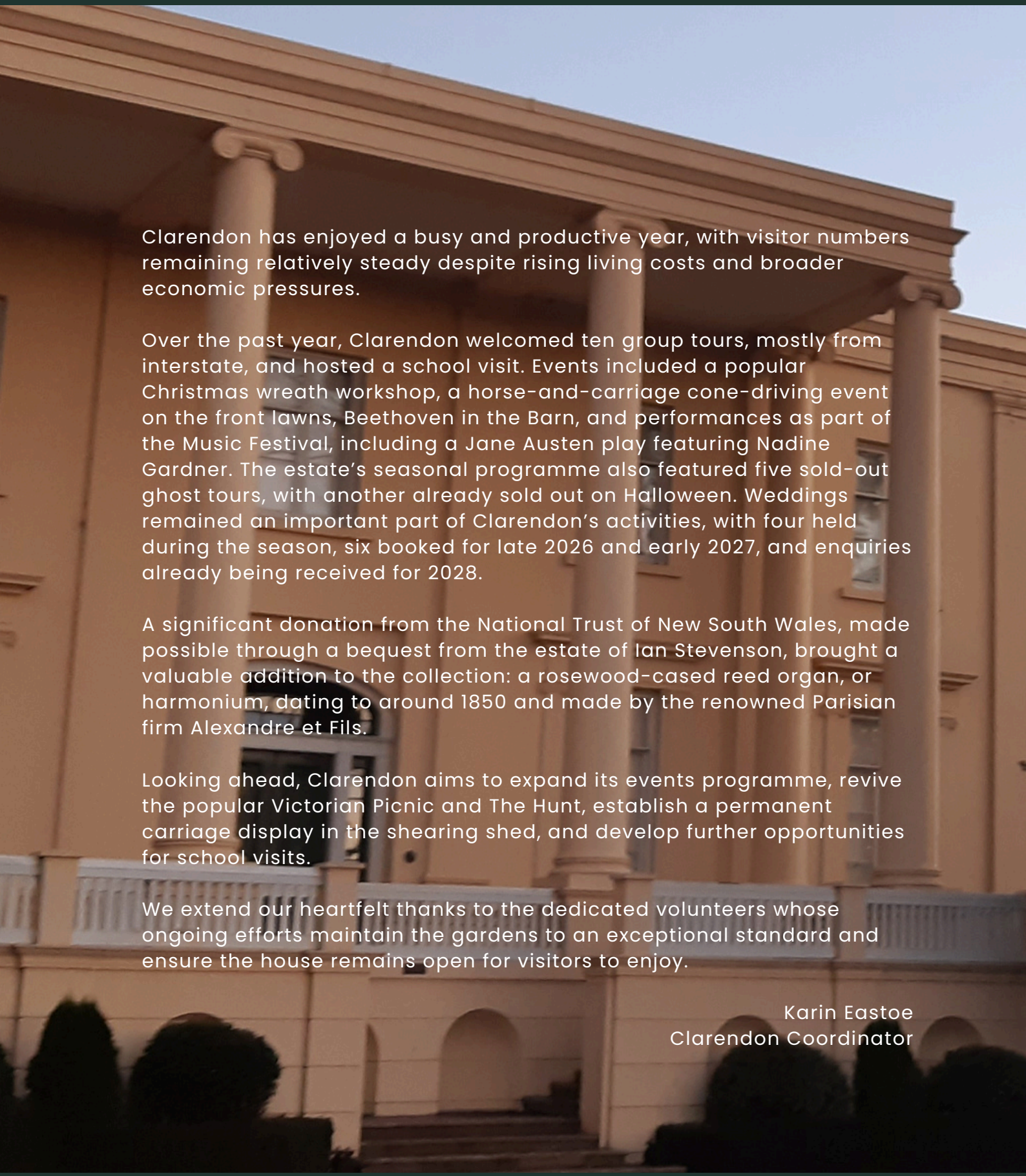
Home Hill delivered a diverse program of events throughout the year, including concerts, popular stargazing evenings, fetes, family-friendly activities, school programs and book launches. Fireside chats, initially introduced as part of the Australian Heritage Festival, proved so successful that additional sessions were introduced, featuring speakers from a wide range of backgrounds and expertise.

Home Hill continued to strengthen community partnerships and expand its engagement with local organisations, clubs and council initiatives, reaching new audiences while nurturing relationships with existing members and visitors. We welcomed the Governor for a special 'Read Aloud to Your Child Every Day' event, bringing families and young readers together for a garden picnic celebrating the importance of reading. Engagement with children and families remains a key focus, with related programs continuing to expand.

More recently, Home Hill was nominated for the People's Choice Award in the 2026 Tasmanian Tourism Awards, recognising its contribution to the local community and visitor experience. We look forward to the announcement of the results. A huge thank you to all our Home Hill volunteers and community partners, whose dedication helps Home Hill continue to flourish and shine year after year!

Ann Teesdale
Property Manager North and North-West

CLARENDON ESTATE



Clarendon has enjoyed a busy and productive year, with visitor numbers remaining relatively steady despite rising living costs and broader economic pressures.

Over the past year, Clarendon welcomed ten group tours, mostly from interstate, and hosted a school visit. Events included a popular Christmas wreath workshop, a horse-and-carriage cone-driving event on the front lawns, Beethoven in the Barn, and performances as part of the Music Festival, including a Jane Austen play featuring Nadine Gardner. The estate's seasonal programme also featured five sold-out ghost tours, with another already sold out on Halloween. Weddings remained an important part of Clarendon's activities, with four held during the season, six booked for late 2026 and early 2027, and enquiries already being received for 2028.

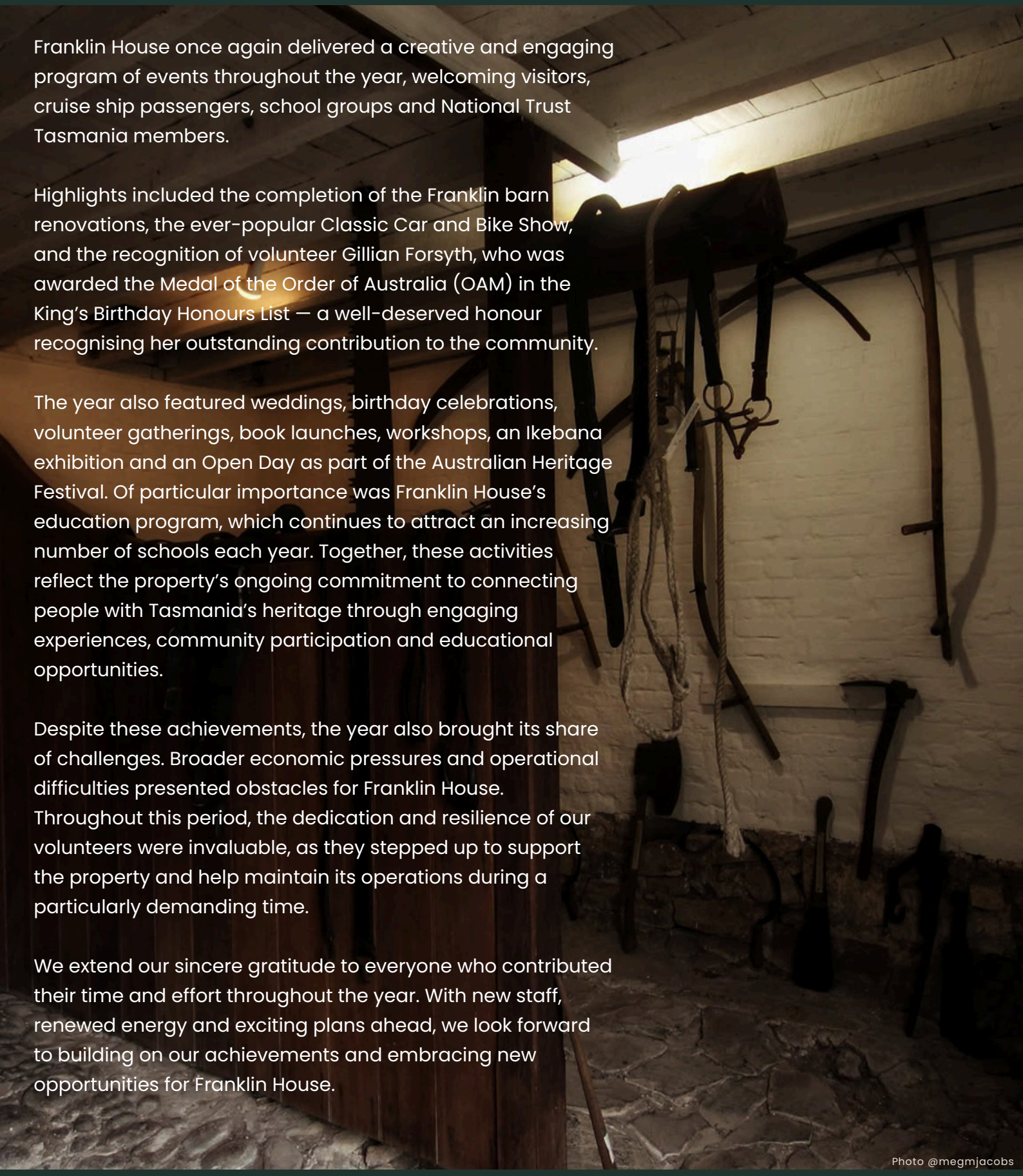
A significant donation from the National Trust of New South Wales, made possible through a bequest from the estate of Ian Stevenson, brought a valuable addition to the collection: a rosewood-cased reed organ, or harmonium, dating to around 1850 and made by the renowned Parisian firm Alexandre et Fils.

Looking ahead, Clarendon aims to expand its events programme, revive the popular Victorian Picnic and The Hunt, establish a permanent carriage display in the shearing shed, and develop further opportunities for school visits.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated volunteers whose ongoing efforts maintain the gardens to an exceptional standard and ensure the house remains open for visitors to enjoy.

Karin Eastoe
Clarendon Coordinator

FRANKLIN HOUSE



Franklin House once again delivered a creative and engaging program of events throughout the year, welcoming visitors, cruise ship passengers, school groups and National Trust Tasmania members.

Highlights included the completion of the Franklin barn renovations, the ever-popular Classic Car and Bike Show, and the recognition of volunteer Gillian Forsyth, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours List — a well-deserved honour recognising her outstanding contribution to the community.

The year also featured weddings, birthday celebrations, volunteer gatherings, book launches, workshops, an Ikebana exhibition and an Open Day as part of the Australian Heritage Festival. Of particular importance was Franklin House's education program, which continues to attract an increasing number of schools each year. Together, these activities reflect the property's ongoing commitment to connecting people with Tasmania's heritage through engaging experiences, community participation and educational opportunities.

Despite these achievements, the year also brought its share of challenges. Broader economic pressures and operational difficulties presented obstacles for Franklin House. Throughout this period, the dedication and resilience of our volunteers were invaluable, as they stepped up to support the property and help maintain its operations during a particularly demanding time.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed their time and effort throughout the year. With new staff, renewed energy and exciting plans ahead, we look forward to building on our achievements and embracing new opportunities for Franklin House.

Photo @megmjacobs

Franklin House, Gardens & Tea Room 413-419 Hobart Road, Youngtown franklin@nationaltrusttas.org.au 03 6344 7824

OLD UMBRELLA SHOP

The Old Umbrella Shop enjoyed a steady year, with a few exciting milestones along the way, including a fantastic window exhibition during the Australian Heritage Festival. We continued to welcome our loyal, long-standing customers, expand our signature umbrella range, and introduce new retail products and attractive seasonal offers.

A heartfelt thank you to all our wonderful Volunteers for their ongoing support, and to our loyal customers who continue to visit us regularly, rain or shine!



Old Umbrella Shop 60 George Street, Launceston umbrellashop@nationaltrusttas.org.au 03 6331 9248

LATROBE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM



The Latrobe Courthouse Museum reopened this year following a thorough spring clean and refresh, with exhibition cases and spaces rearranged to enhance the presentation of its collections and improve the visitor experience.

The Museum's continued operation is made possible by its dedicated volunteers, whose hard work and commitment are greatly valued and appreciated. These efforts reflect the National Trust's ongoing commitment to caring for the museum's collections, sharing local stories and preserving the heritage of the Latrobe community for future generations.

Ann Teesdale
Property Manager North and North-West

Latrobe Courthouse Museum 113 Gilbert Street, Latrobe latrobe.courthouse@nationaltrusttas.org.au 03 6426 1289

PENGHANA

Penghana, National Trust Tasmania's West Coast jewel, has a rich history as the residence of successive General Managers of the Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company Ltd for almost a century.

Today, this significant Queenstown property operates as a boutique bed and breakfast, managed for the past 11 years by Wellington Consultancy. Business owners Karen and Steve have been passionate advocates for Penghana, helping showcase its unique heritage and deliver memorable visitor experiences. Their dedication has been recognised through being officially accredited by the Australian Tourism Industry Council, as '4.5-star rated accommodation delivering a deluxe guest experience'.

For 11 consecutive years, the business has also maintained its place among the world's top 10% of hosted accommodation providers, as recognised through guest reviews on Tripadvisor. This ongoing success highlights the value of Penghana as both a treasured heritage property and an important contributor to the West Coast's tourism offering.

Ann Teesdale
Property Manager North and North-West



Chair's Message

This year has been one of progress and development, marked by significant operational milestones, successful fundraising and media campaigns, and continued growth in our membership and wider heritage and conservation networks.

Our fundraising efforts continued to support important conservation priorities, including the Repair the Stairs campaign at Clarendon, which received a significant boost through our successful Christmas fundraising event. We are grateful to everyone who contributed, and particularly to those who continue to support the preservation of our properties and collections.

The Trust's engagement with the wider community also continued to grow. The Touchstone Heritage campaign significantly increased our social media reach and engagement, while the Australian Heritage Festival once again provided an opportunity to share Tasmania's diverse heritage through events, exhibitions and open days across our properties. We held a Heritage Network Tea at Parliament House, strengthening connections across Tasmania's heritage, conservation, arts, culture and tourism sectors.

Conservation and collections remained central to our work. We were successful in securing funding for the professional conservation of The Lufra, while donations and grants enabled important improvements to our properties, gardens and collections. Our new Heritage Plaque project also provides an opportunity to recognise and celebrate Tasmania's privately held heritage properties.

We continued to invest in the future of heritage through our Youth Heritage Collective and other initiatives aimed at engaging younger audiences and encouraging new perspectives on our collections and places. We welcomed new members to our team, strengthening our capacity in communications, property management and community engagement.

We take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of those who have recently concluded their roles with the Trust. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Jude Franks, Kerry Houston, Alistair Scott and Emma Boyce for their valued contributions to the Board. Jude's proactive and strategic leadership as Deputy Chair, has left a lasting impact. Her skills in management, tourism, marketing and strategic planning made significant contributions to the success of many projects. Kerry's knowledge of the tourism industry, her energy and her willingness to pitch in and help, in particular with grant applications was invaluable. Alistair's focus on good governance and financial sustainability and his thoughtful and knowledgeable perspective were valued by the Board and staff alike, and Emma's extensive knowledge of the Trust and its operations, has been greatly appreciated. We also acknowledge Ken Richards for his three years of dedicated service as Property Manager North, particularly his strong community connections and contribution to Clarendon. We wish all five the very best for the future and thank them for their commitment to the Trust.

We welcomed the wonderful Jen Fry as the National Trust Tasmania CEO/managing director. Focusing on helping to secure a resilient, sustainable and well governed organisation for the future, Jen has lead a successful period of significant and positive change across the organisation. There are many challenges ahead but Jen is up for them and enjoys the fact that there is never a dull moment in her role.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary commitment of our volunteers and staff. To all our volunteers, thank you for the time, energy and passion you continue to give to the Trust. We would be nothing without you. I extend the same heartfelt thanks to our staff, who consistently go above and beyond to care for our properties, support our members and deliver the Trust's work across Tasmania.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building a strong, connected and sustainable National Trust that protects Tasmania's heritage while finding new ways to share it with our communities and future generations.

Thank you all.
Harriett England

MD/CEO Year in Review

The 2025–26 financial year has been one of transition, achievement and renewal for the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania).
I commenced as Managing Director in October 2025, joining an organisation with; an extraordinary heritage legacy, truly amazing and dedicated staff, inspiring volunteers, and an important role in Tasmania's communities.

A significant achievement has been the development of our Strategic Plan 2026–2030, establishing four pillars to guide our future:

- The NTT is a contemporary and integral part of our communities.
- Tasmania's diverse cultural heritage and stories are respected and shared thru heritage.
- Tasmania's significant heritage places are preserved, to recognised standards, and protected for future generations.
- The NTT is financially sustainable ongoing.

These priorities recognise that our role extends beyond conserving historic buildings. We must ensure all heritage remains relevant, accessible and valued by our communities, while strengthening our capacity to care and advocate for these places. Throughout the year, our properties continued to deliver engaging visitor experiences, conservation activities and community events. A particular highlight was the Hobart Convict Penitentiary being named Tripadvisor's No. 1 Top Attraction in Australia and the South Pacific in 2025, and receiving further Best of the Best recognition in 2026, placing it among the top 1% of attractions worldwide. This outstanding achievement reflects the dedication of our staff and volunteers. Our partnership with Red Kelly's Sauces also demonstrated how creative collaborations with Tasmanian businesses can bring heritage stories to new audiences. The new avatar of Red Kelly himself can be seen in the Convict Memorial.

Behind the scenes, work progressed to strengthen governance, financial oversight, workplace health and safety, and operational systems. Staffing changes provided opportunities to review our organisational arrangements and better support our properties and people. The development of our Sustainable Business Plan has been another important step, identifying opportunities to diversify income, strengthen partnerships and improve the long-term sustainability of our property portfolio. We will continue to strive to meet these goals.

Our volunteers remain fundamental to everything we achieve, generously contributing their time, skills and knowledge alongside our dedicated staff.

I sincerely thank our Chair, Harriett England, the Board, staff, volunteers, members, donors and partners for their commitment and support throughout the year.

Jen Fry
Managing Director / CEO
National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)



Our Volunteers

The Trust continues to be fortunate to work alongside a dedicated and talented community of volunteers whose knowledge, stories and generosity play an important role in preserving Tasmania's heritage.

Over the past 12 months, we continued to strengthen our relationships with our 212 volunteers, while welcoming new faces to the team. Our annual volunteer survey provided an opportunity to share experiences, ideas and feedback, helping us identify ways to further strengthen our volunteer program and foster a more connected and supported community across our properties.

We continued to keep our volunteer teams informed through regular newsletter updates from Property Managers and the CEO/Managing Director, recognising the importance of sharing ideas, plans and objectives across the Trust.

We also introduced a new Volunteer Feature in our monthly newsletter, celebrating individual volunteers highlighting their backgrounds, ideas, experiences, research, achievements and initiatives.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers, whose time, enthusiasm and expertise are fundamental to our work and help ensure Tasmania's heritage continues to be valued, protected and shared.

Volunteers by Property



1. Home Hill, Devonport - 17 Active Volunteers
2. Latrobe Courthouse Museum, Latrobe - 2 Active Volunteers
3. Clarendon Estate, Nile - 25 Active Volunteers
4. Franklin House, Youngtown - 39 Active Volunteers
5. Old Umbrella Shop, Launceston - 21 Active Volunteers
6. Runnymede, New Town - 43 Active Volunteers
7. Hobart Convict Penitentiary, Hobart - 25 Active Volunteers
8. Oak Lodge, Richmond - 10 Active Volunteers

National Trust Tasmania is supported by 212 volunteers, including 182 active volunteers, with others contributing on a casual or ad hoc basis across our events, projects and daily operations.

We are proud to welcome volunteers at every level of involvement, providing flexible opportunities for everyone.

Our Members & Supporters



Membership remains fundamental to the sustainability and success of the Trust, providing an important source of recurrent income while fostering a strong community of people committed to preserving Tasmania's heritage.



We recorded a **10% increase** in membership subscriptions during 2025–26, growing from **804 to 886** members.

This positive result reflects the continued support and engagement of our existing members, alongside increased uptake of Corporate Memberships and the introduction of digital membership cards for those who prefer a convenient electronic format.

JOIN TODAY

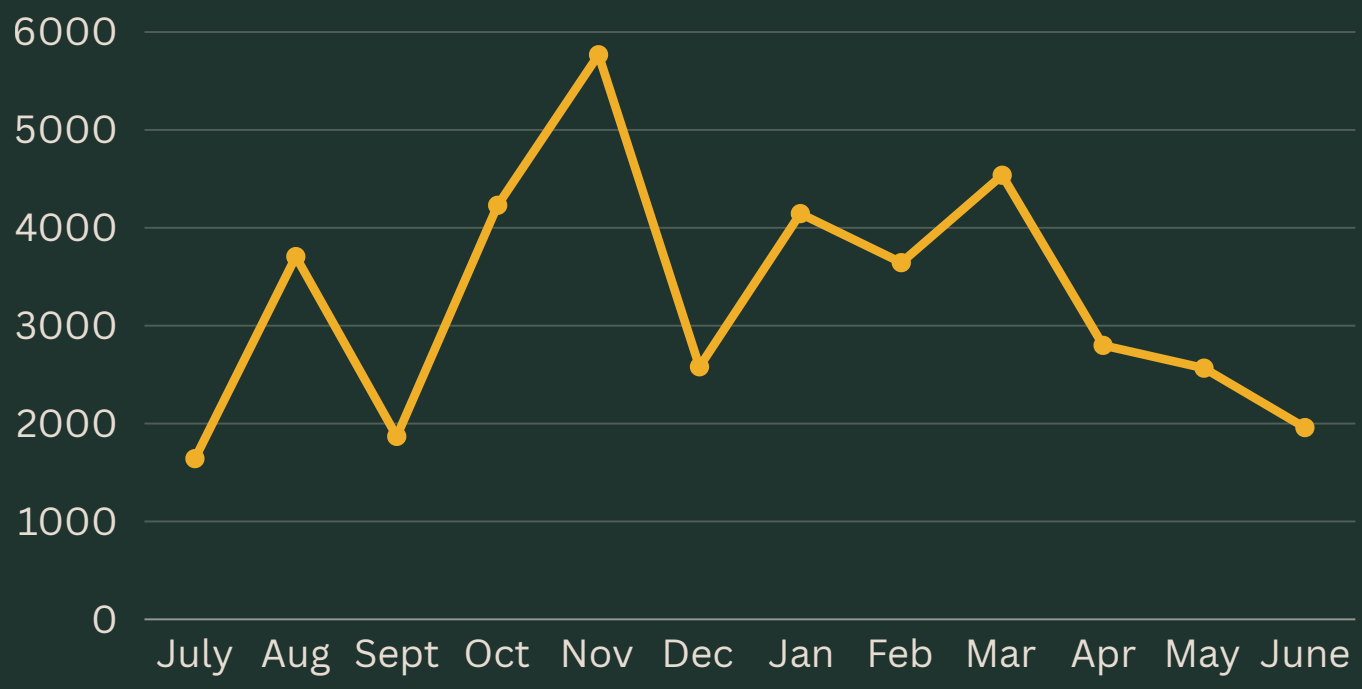


The launch of the National Trust Tasmania Bronze Plaque Project in early 2026 also contributed to membership growth, creating additional opportunities to promote the Trust and strengthen connections with the wider community. Improvements to membership administration, including a focus on reducing card delivery turnaround times, further supported the member experience.

Looking ahead, the Trust remains committed to enhancing the value of membership through improved benefits, greater accessibility and continued engagement with our community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all members for their ongoing support, participation and commitment.

Visitation Figures

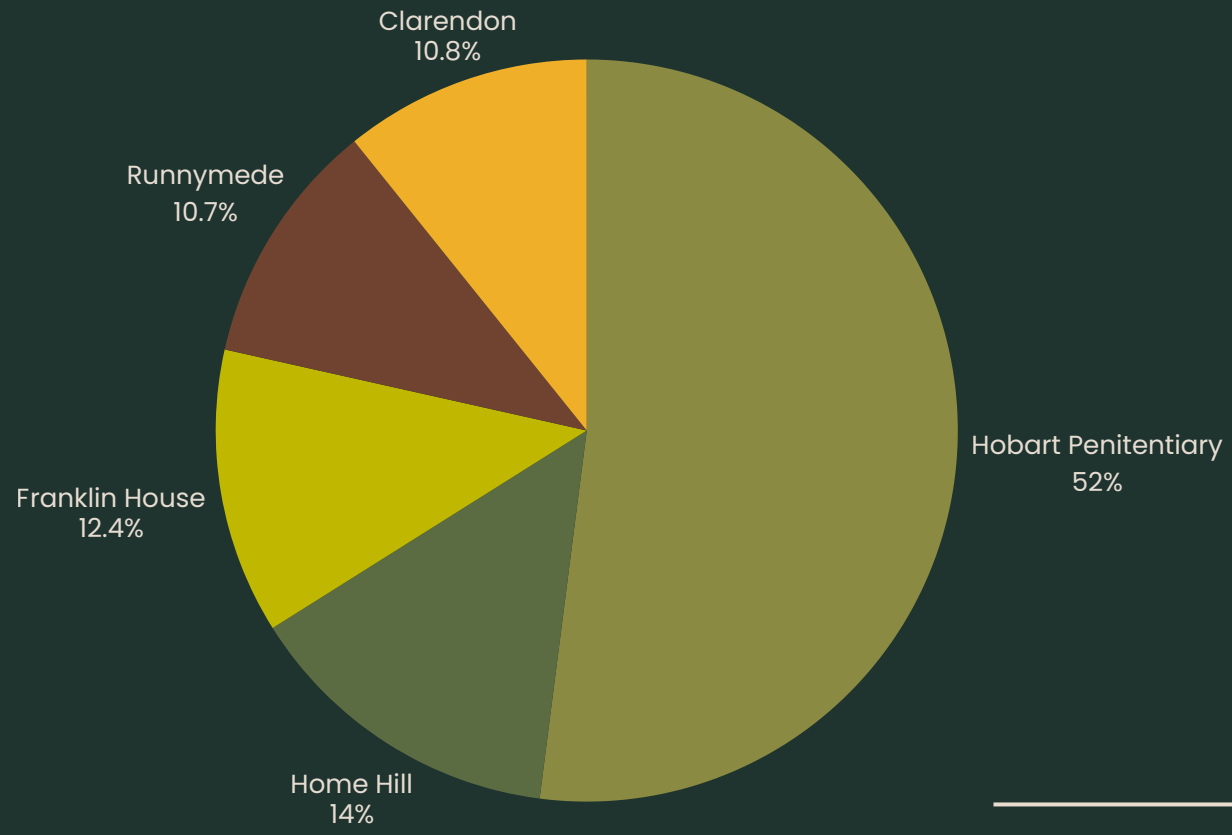


Total visitation numbers across all NTT sites :

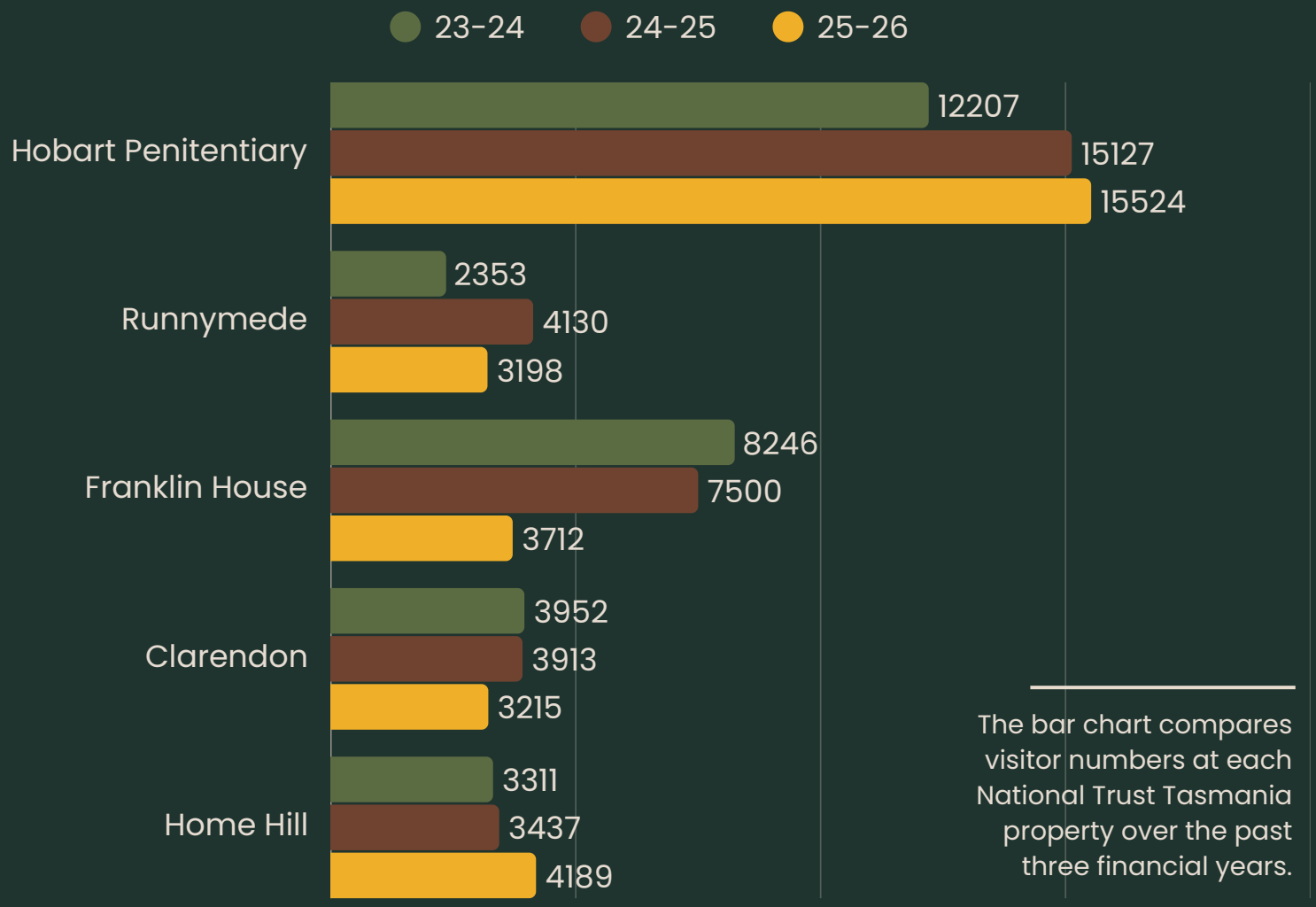
July	**1,216**	2025
Aug	**1,629**	
Sept	**1,573**	
Oct	**3,644**	
Nov	**4,896**	
Dec	**1,800**	
Jan	**3,331**	2026
Feb	**2,874**	
Mar	**3,518**	
Apr	**2,118**	
May	**1,904**	
June	**1,335**	
	29,838	

29,838 visitors were welcomed across all National Trust Tasmania properties during the 2025–2026 financial year (July 2025–June 2026).

This represents a decrease of **3,798 visitors (-11.3%)** compared with the 2024–2025 financial year, when **33,636** visitors were welcomed. It also represents a decrease of **231 visitors (-0.77%)** compared with the 2023–2024 financial year, which recorded **30,069** visitors.



The pie chart illustrates the % contribution of each National Trust Tasmania property to the total visitor numbers recorded during the 2025–2026 financial year.



The bar chart compares visitor numbers at each National Trust Tasmania property over the past three financial years.

Our Online Community



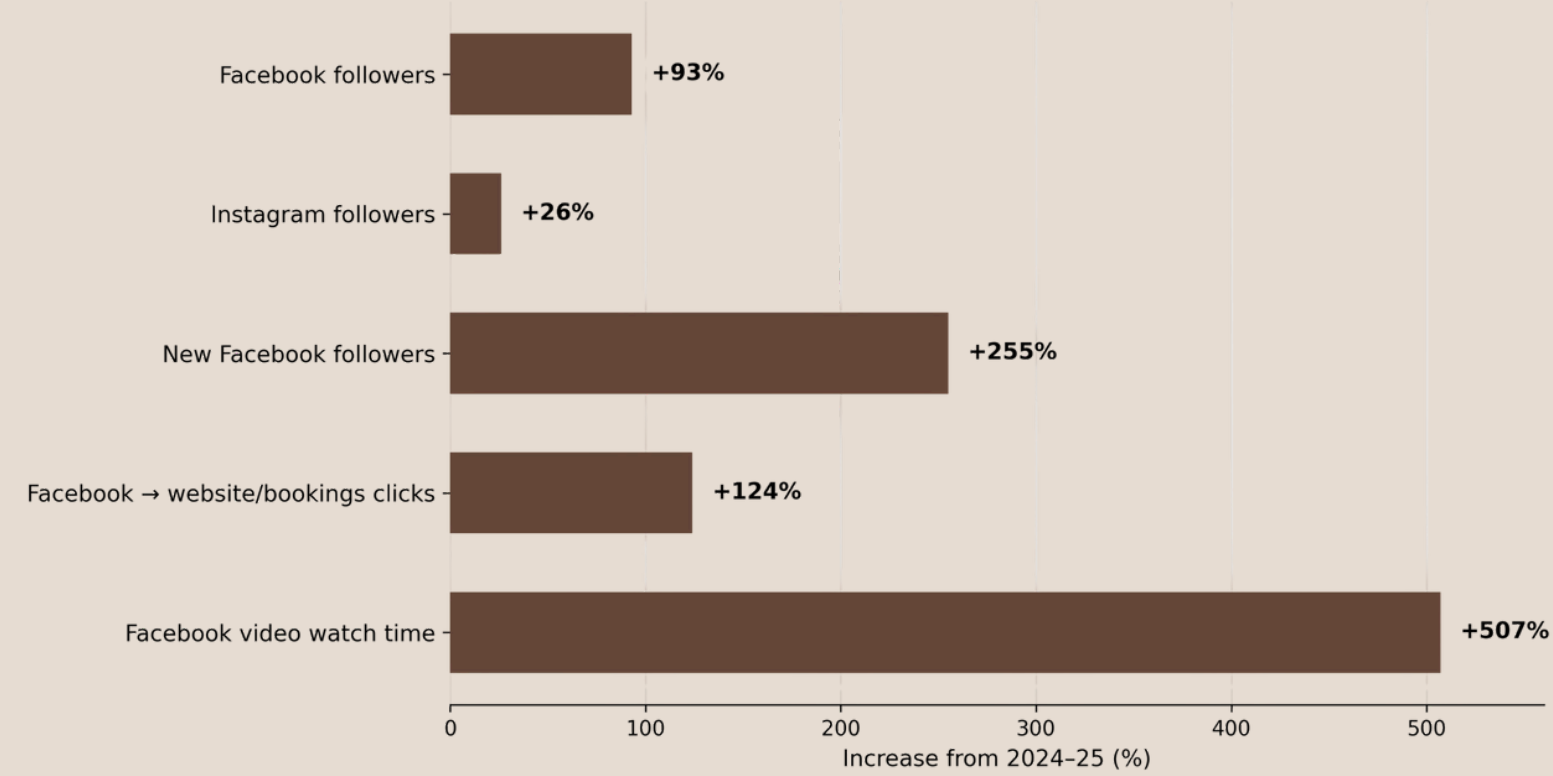
In 2025–26, National Trust Tasmania's online community continued to grow, with our Facebook following nearly doubling and content reaching more than **1.8 million** views across Facebook and Instagram, entirely through organic engagement.

Events remained a strong drawcard, with Twilight and Paranormal tours attracting our largest audiences of the year and several tours selling out. Stories from our heritage places, concerts at Runnymede and glimpses into Tasmania's history continued to engage audiences and strengthen connections with the places we care for.

Our National Trust Tasmania Newsletter now reaches more than **2,000+** subscribers, providing a regular platform to share news, events and stories from across the Trust. Our website, shared with other National Trusts across Australia, recorded more than **843,000** users so far this calendar year, representing a 12% increase in website traffic compared with the same period last year.

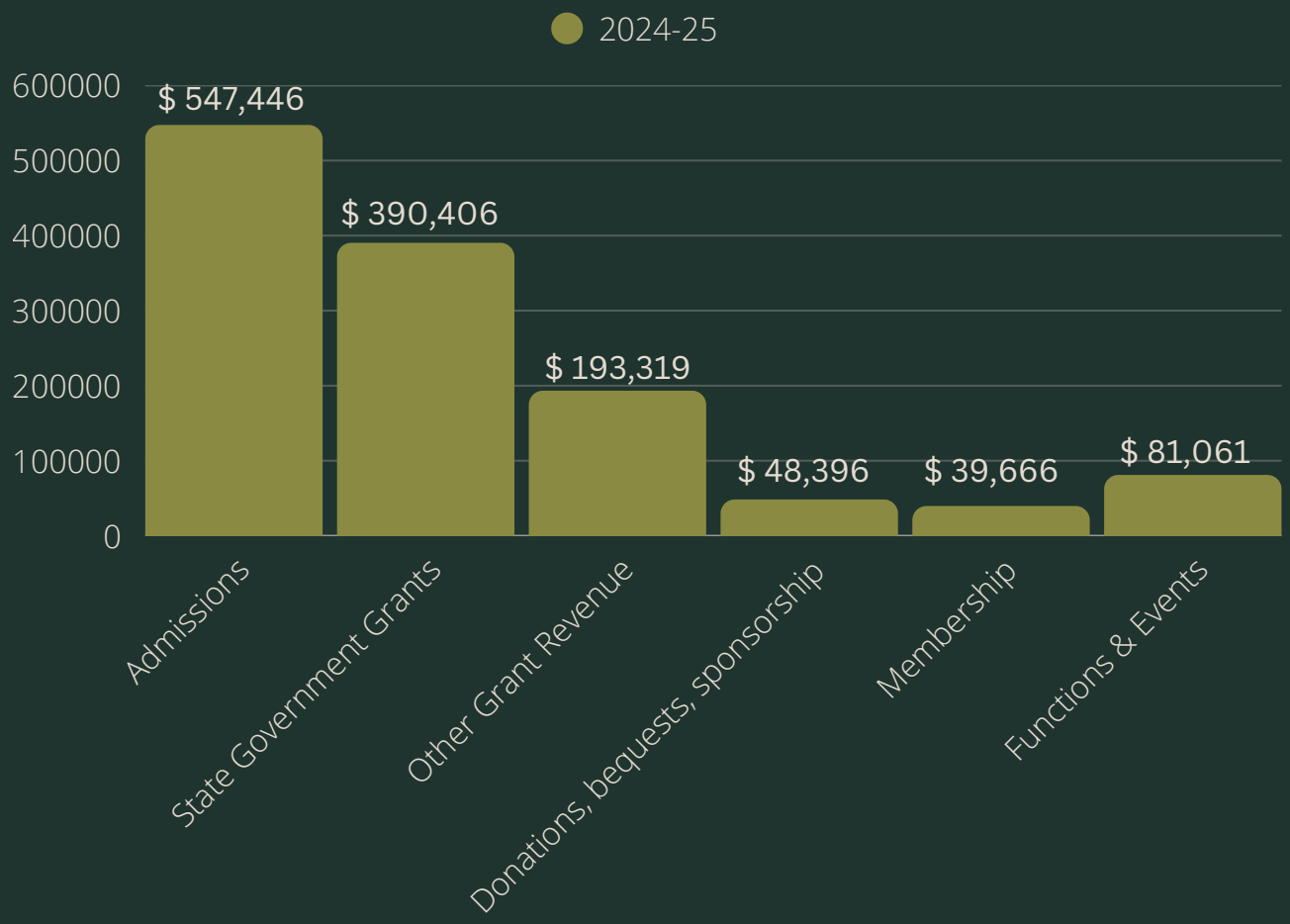
Social media growth and engagement

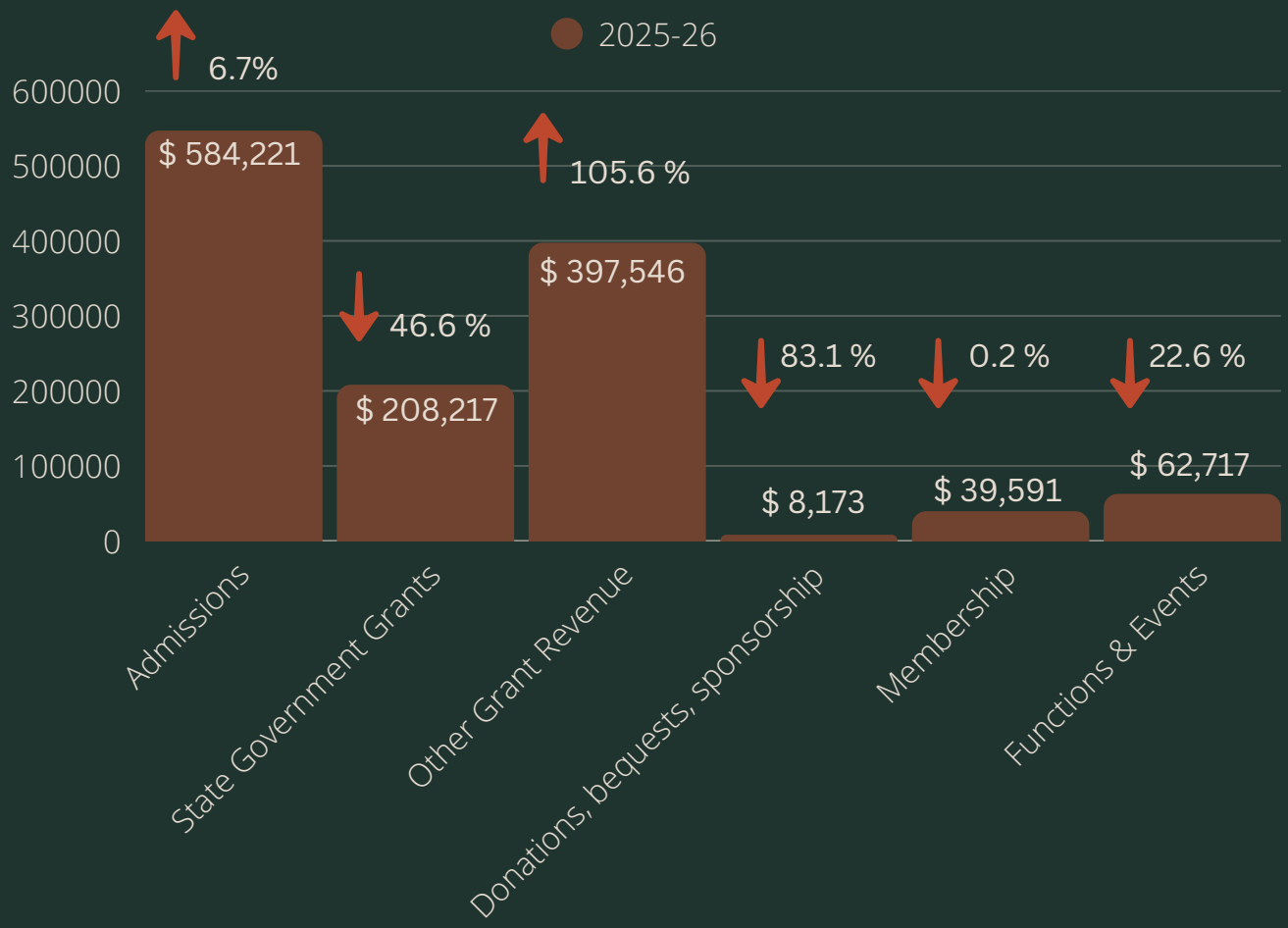
National Trust Tasmania | 2025–26 compared with 2024–25





Financial overview





Opportunities & Challenges

It is no secret that we are living through incredibly challenging times. For everyone working in cultural and creative industries, the constant reduction of funding means we are being asked to build on unstable ground.

We recognize the immense strain of trying to enrich our communities while witnessing the **erosion of our cultural bedrock**, as the financial foundations beneath us keep moving. Our core funding provided by the Government is not guaranteed into the future which puts us in a perilous position.

We are witnessing job cuts across our partner organisations, reductions in funding for the arts, heritage and conservation sectors. Our visitation numbers are being impacted by global economic and political problems and uncertainty is the only constant.

Heritage neglect is often tied to economic challenges and it is vital that organisations and individuals are supported in preserving places of cultural and historic significance.

At the Trust we know that these places are often lost through years of gradual deterioration and neglect.Whilst Tasmania does not yet have the same strong anti “demolition by neglect” protections seen in other states, communities can still play an important role in speaking up early when heritage places appear to be at risk. The National Trust can assist communities by helping identify heritage significance, providing advocacy support, connecting people with heritage and planning processes and amplifying concerns with decision makers.

We encourage you to voice your concerns.

Our Governance

The Trust looks forward to welcoming three new Board Directors following the 2026 AGM.

Six nominations were received for the three vacant positions, with election results to be announced by the Returning Officer at the AGM.

The Board extends its sincere thanks to Alistair Scott and Emma for their valuable contributions, dedication and expertise throughout their tenure.



- **Harriett England**
  Chair
  Minister Appointed - 8 January 2024

- **Jude Franks**
  Deputy Chair
  Minister Appointed - 20 April 2023 - 20 April 2026

- **Kerry Houston**
  Non-executive director
  Member Elected - 29 October 2023 - 31 December 2025

- **Alistair Scott**
  Non-executive director
  Member Elected - 22 October 2023 - 31 October 2026

- **Dr Peter Tucker**
  Non-executive director
  Minister Appointed - 8 January 2024

- **Emma Boyce**
  Non-executive director
  Board Appointed - 6 March 2026 - 31 October 2026

- **Jennifer Fry**
  Managing Director
  Board Appointed - October 2025



New Acquisitions & Donations

Clarendon Estate received a very important donation from the National Trust of New South Wales as part of bequest from the estate of Ian Stevenson. The bequest was a reed organ or harmonium in a rosewood case c1850 by the leading Parisian maker Alexander et fils which also bears the name of the Hobart musical retailer Huxtable and Deakin.

A harmonium was listed in the 1869 inventory of the estate of Eliza Cox widow, of James Cox. The National Trust of Tasmania remembers Ian fondly via this harmonium,his personal contribution to telling The Cox and Clarendon.