

2026 Session Synopses and Presenter Bios

General Information <https://htansw.asn.au/Teachers/2026-State-Conference>

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DAY ONE KEYNOTES: FRIDAY 24 JULY**Keynote****Annabel Crabb (Australian Broadcasting Corporation)**

Annabel Crabb is an ABC writer and presenter who has covered Australian politics for nearly 30 years as a news reporter, columnist and broadcaster.

Known for her engaging approach to explaining Australian politics and history, Annabel created the long-running interview series *Kitchen Cabinet*, which has aired for eight seasons on ABCTV.

She has written and presented two major documentary series on the life and history of the Australian Parliament: *The House*, *With Annabel Crabb*, and *Ms Represented*, which marked the centenary of the first woman's election to an Australian parliament. A third series in the trilogy is due out this year.

Annabel has also hosted the ABC Australian history and food series, *Back In Time For Dinner*, *Further Back In Time For Dinner* and *Back In Time For The Corner Shop*. She is a regular face on ABC TV's election night and Budget broadcasts and has a long history of appearances on ABC's *Insiders* program, including a stint as acting host in 2019. Annabel won a Walkley Award for her Quarterly Essay "Stop At Nothing: The Life And Adventures Of Malcolm Turnbull", and in 2024 was named columnist of the year for her political

commentary at the ABC. In 2014, she wrote non-fiction bestseller *The Wife Drought*, about gender and work in Australia.

She is a regular commentator across the ABC's radio network. With friend and ABC colleague Leigh Sales, Annabel hosts the podcast Chat 10 Looks 3, an independent podcast in which the pair discusses books, film, culture, and cooking.

1.2A: Ancient History Subkeynote

What is the Point of Ancient (Western) History in 2026?

Dr. James Tan (University of Sydney)

Bio

James Tan is Senior Lecturer in Classics and Ancient History at The University of Sydney, where he also studied as an undergraduate before completing his PhD at Columbia University in the interdisciplinary program in Classical Studies. He specializes in the sociology of the Roman world and especially the intersection of economic and political history. He teaches across the range of Greek and Roman history, from the archaic Greek world to the Fall of Rome, and from gender, environment and medicine, to war, politics and empires. He is the author of *Power and Public Finance at Rome*, as well as a range of articles and papers.

Synopsis

The word 'ancient' refers to time, but 'ancient history' often implies a place as well: The Mediterranean and its surrounds. This is the 'classical world' – itself a loaded term – a time and place endowed with a prestige or a status or an authority that make them somehow more obvious or more vital to study. And all of that has come at a cost. The West's lineage from Socrates and Caesar has been used to justify or undergird various visions of racial or cultural supremacy, whether conscious or unconscious. This lecture will discuss two recent works that attempt to resituate Greek and Roman studies within a world that no longer takes for granted its default position as a – or even *the* – pinnacle of civilization: Walter Scheidel's 'What is Ancient History' and Dan-el Padilla Peralta's 'Classicism and Other Phobias'. Each takes a very different approach, but each also prompts questions about which parts of Greece and Rome most need to be studied and amidst which cultures should Greece and Rome be contextualized. Perhaps more than anything, they ask us whether we need to understand Greece and Rome because they are so familiar or because they are so foreign.

1.2B: Modern History Subkeynote

Civil Rights in the USA: Perspectives from the Classroom

Dr. Kathryn Schumaker (United States Studies Centre)

Bio

Kathryn Schumaker is a Senior Lecturer in American Studies at the United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney. A legal historian specialising in the intersection of race and US law, she is the author of two books: *Troublemakers: Students' Rights and Racial Justice in the Long 1960s* (2019) and *Tangled Fortunes: The Hidden History of Interracial Marriage in the Segregated South* (2025). Prior to joining the staff at the University of

Sydney, she taught secondary school in Baltimore and was an academic staff member for ten years at the University of Oklahoma in the United States. She teaches units on the history of social movements; sex, gender, and the law; and American politics and culture.

Synopsis

This lecture examines the history of civil rights from the perspective of the American classroom. Historians have long challenged the framing of the civil rights era as beginning with *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and ending with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968. They have also increasingly explored the movement from new angles and incorporated the perspectives of marginalised actors, including young people. This keynote draws upon original archival research on the activism of secondary school students in segregated Black schools in Mississippi whose free speech lawsuit changed American constitutional law. It will conclude with reflections on how teaching civil rights is limited and policed in the contemporary US amid the rise of so-called anti-Critical Race Theory laws.

DAY ONE BREAKOUT SESSIONS: FRIDAY 24 JULY

1.3A

Exploring Ancient Rome through Latin Inscriptions

Suanne Knight (Radford College, ACT)

Bio

Suanne Knight has 15 years experience teaching Ancient History and History Extension at Ulladulla High and Radford College. Awarded the 2025 NSW Premier's HTA Study Tour Scholarship, Suanne travelled through Türkiye, Croatia and Italy researching Latin inscriptions, exploring their use to illuminate everyday lives in the Roman world.

Synopsis

Latin inscriptions, carved across the Roman world, preserve voices often absent from surviving ancient texts. Found on monuments, temples and tombs, these brief but powerful texts record the words and identities of emperors, soldiers, women, children and freed persons, offering valuable insights into everyday life throughout the Roman Empire.

Drawing on research undertaken as part of the 2025 NSW Premier's History Teachers' Association Study Tour Scholarship, this paper traces an epigraphic journey across the Roman world. In Türkiye it explores the cities of Ephesus, Hierapolis and Pergamon, then across the Adriatic to the Roman sites of Pula, Zadar and Split in Croatia, and finally to Rome. Through selected inscriptions at these locations, the paper explores how epigraphic evidence reveals freed persons asserting new identities, families commemorating loved ones, and provincial communities honouring imperial figures.

By examining these inscriptions in their historical and archaeological contexts, this paper demonstrates how epigraphy can enrich our understanding of the Roman world and seeks to offer practical ways teachers can use inscriptions as engaging primary sources in the Ancient History classroom.

1.3B

Developing Content Knowledge Using Sources

Dr Robert Loeffel (Sydney Grammar)

Bio

Robert has taught history at Sydney Grammar School for 20 years. He has published both original research and secondary textbooks related to Nazi Germany and the NSW Modern History syllabus.

Synopsis

This session will explore teaching 'Political, economic and social challenges to the Weimar Republic, 1919–1933' and 'Reasons for the collapse of the Weimar Republic' in the new Modern History Core, Democracy and Dictatorship, through sources. Some suggestions will be offered on how to use sources for knowledge development in the new Modern History HSC syllabus.

1.3C

To Discriminate or Populate? Dismantling White Australia

Dr Zachary Gorman (Robert Menzies Institute)

Bio

Dr Zachary Gorman is the Historian at the Robert Menzies Institute at the University of Melbourne. He has a PhD from the University of Wollongong, and has authored or edited nine books on Australian history.

Synopsis

The cry of 'populate or perish' had first been raised prior to World War 1, but it took Australians more than fifty years to accept that a non-discriminatory immigration policy was in the national interest. The abolition of the White Australia policy was thus not something achieved overnight, nor did it reflect a sudden change of heart. It was the product of decades of debate and shifting geopolitical circumstances, in which Australians reluctantly gave up their prejudices in favour of competing imperatives. Understanding the full span of this journey is essential to understanding the forces that have shaped modern Australia, and equally the resonances of history in modern debates surrounding immigration.

1.3D

People, not Footnotes: Reframing Colonisation through Aboriginal Personalities

Martin Douglas (Corowa High School)

Bio

Martin is the Head Teacher English and HSIE at Corowa High School, and is passionate about Australian History and the multitude of stories that shape our national narrative. He is

particularly committed to foregrounding Aboriginal perspectives and exploring how diverse voices deepen students' understanding of the past and its ongoing significance.

Synopsis

This presentation explores practical approaches to teaching historical personalities within the Stage 4 topic Aboriginal Peoples and the Experience of Colonisation. Too often, the study of colonisation is framed through policies, dates and broad processes, leaving Aboriginal individuals positioned as passive recipients of change. By foregrounding personalities such as Pemulwuy, Windradyne, Tarenorerer and Yagan, teachers can humanise the frontier and centre Aboriginal agency, resistance, adaptation and survival. This session aims to demonstrate how focusing on individuals strengthens historical skills, deepens empathy and supports syllabus outcomes related to perspective, continuity and change, and historical interpretation. Participants will explore strategies for using biography as a lens to examine contested narratives, frontier conflict and cross-cultural encounters. The session will also address the importance of localising content, enabling students to connect national histories to stories within their own communities.

1.3E

Content to Curiosity: Creating Critical Thinkers from the New Curriculum **Franco Chiu (Baulkham Hills High School)**

Bio

Franco Chiu is a passionate History teacher, having worked across various schools teaching subjects including Ancient, Modern and junior history. He has a broad interest in simulation-based learning, archaeology and military history. Based in Sydney, he currently teaches at Baulkham Hills High School.

Synopsis

How do we balance the development of students' historical inquiry skills with the need to build strong content knowledge? As history educators, we are increasingly challenged to integrate critical skills such as source analysis and historical investigation within an ever-evolving and expanding syllabus. This session explores how connections can be drawn across different combinations of syllabus dot points from historical contexts and depth studies to design compacted lessons that add greater value to student learning than treating syllabus dot points in isolation. The focus will be on creating meaningful opportunities for students to engage in deeper historical thinking, with particular attention given to integrating content from the new Stage 4 and 5 History syllabuses. Curriculum compacting will also be examined as a way to create opportunities for excelling students to deepen their mastery of stage outcomes, strengthening the foundational skills needed for those intending to continue their studies into Stage 6. These ideas will be presented and analysed through practical examples of lesson approaches and assessment strategies that support both knowledge development and historical inquiry.

1.3F

Unsafe History: Making Sense of the World Today

Dr Daryl Le Cornu (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons)

Bio

Daryl has 30 years' experience teaching Modern History and has been involved in curriculum development in various capacities over the years. More recently, he taught history at university to pre-service teachers. Daryl has a PhD in WW1, and a passion for teaching about nuclear disarmament, human rights, democracy, and contemporary history.

Synopsis

'Unsafe history' refers to recent history in which key forces are still unfolding and outcomes remain unresolved. It seeks to identify and interpret the historical dynamics shaping the present, recognising that significant history is happening now and may affect our lives in unpredictable ways. Unsafe history recognises that the 'rules-based international order' that has broadly structured global politics for the past eighty years is faltering, contributing to a more unstable global environment. This presentation defines the idea of unsafe history and explains why engaging with the recent past is especially important for Gen Alpha students (born since 2010).

History educators are well placed to provide informed commentary and guide discussions about current events. There are many historians demonstrating this today, such as Heather Cox Richardson and Timothy Snyder who have emerged as trusted public intellectuals. Finally, the session explores practical ways teachers can use the creative spaces in the Year 11 section of the updated Modern History syllabus to introduce recent history topics. This approach can engage students with events unfolding in their own lifetimes while also helping to bridge the gap between Year 12 topics and the present, creating a more coherent and meaningful two-year modern history program.

1.3G

The Power of Their Voices

Dr Ari Lander and Bahati Salima (Voices of Survival)

Bio

Dr Lander is the founder of Voices of Survival. The organisation brings together Stolen Generations survivors, Holocaust survivors and survivors from Cambodia, Bosnia, Burundi, Sudan, Rwanda and Sri Lanka. He has been working with survivor recollections for 20 years.

Bahati Salima is a survivor of the Genocide against the Tutsi and a founding member of Voices of Survival. While it is incredibly painful at times to talk, being able to share her story is also a chance to bear witness and model resilience, healing and compassion for the younger generations.

Synopsis

The study of genocide is not only an examination of historical events but also an exploration of human resilience, inherited memory, and the enduring power of testimony. The Power of Their Voices examines how oral histories—particularly those shared by survivors and their descendants—serve as essential pedagogical tools in understanding the Armenian Genocide and other cases of mass violence. This session highlights the unique role that personal narratives play in shaping collective memory, confronting trauma, and fostering empathy in learners of all ages.

By centering lived experience, educators can transform genocide education from abstract history into a humanized, emotionally resonant learning journey. This session invites teachers to reflect on the transformative potential of oral history and to consider how amplifying these voices can inspire students to recognize injustice, value human rights, and engage meaningfully with the past. Participants in this session will hear directly from a survivor, who will share selected experiences and reflect on the significance of presenting their testimony in educational settings.

1.4A

The Odyssey in Imagery: A Two and a Half Thousand Year Journey **Dr Craig Barker (Chau Chak Wing Museum)**

Bio

Dr Craig Barker is an archaeologist and museum professional. He works as the Manager, Education and Experience at the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney and is the Director of the Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project at the World Heritage listed site of Nea Paphos in Cyprus. He is particularly interested in archaeological education and museum education.

Synopsis

The forthcoming release of Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey* (2026) is the latest in a long line of cinematic adaptations of The Iliad and The Odyssey. Before film-makers the epic had inspired artists and storytellers for millennia.

This paper will review visual depictions from The Odyssey from ancient Greece and Rome with more limited discussion of how the Homeric epic has been depicted in more recent times as well. We will examine a wide range of media including vase painting, mosaics, frescoes and terracotta figurines and marble sculptures, including depictions of Circe's magic, the return to Ithaka, the siren's song and the capture and escape from Polyphemus. We will attempt to contextualise these depictions artistically and archaeologically. How were an ancient audience receiving visual images of stories they already knew well? What types of imagery was consistent and what were the visual attributes of key figures from the myth?

The talk is designed to focus on the relationship between oral epic storytelling and artistic representations of those stories. both ancient and modern and will discuss how students can access ancient mythology through visual storytelling as well as the epic poetry.

1.4B

Ideology and Apartheid in South Africa

Michael Street (Oxford Falls Grammar School)

Bio

Michael Street is a History teacher and Dean of Academic Studies at Oxford Falls Grammar. He is a recipient of the 2019 Premier's HTA History Scholarship and a 2023 Gandel Holocaust Program participant. Michael is currently preparing a textbook on Apartheid in South Africa for the new HSC Modern History syllabus for Small Caps Publishing.

Synopsis

Ideology significantly influenced the actions and justifications of the National Party and anti-apartheid resistance groups during South Africa's Apartheid era. There are evident parallels between the ideologies of these groups and others around the world: Nazism and Apartheid, Marxism/postcolonialism and anti-apartheid movements. Nonetheless, distinct differences arise due to the unique historical, geographical, social, political, and religious contexts of the South African experience. Understanding the connection between these international and local influences, as well as how ideologies developed and evolved during the Apartheid period, is crucial for success in the HSC South African history study. This session will guide teachers through the intellectual history of Apartheid ideology and its various expressions through the National Party's policies from 1948 to 1994. Additionally, teachers will examine the ideological foundations of anti-apartheid movements opposing National Party rule and the ways these beliefs persisted or were challenged. The session is especially beneficial for experienced teachers of the HSC South Africa unit, as well as new teachers preparing for the Anti-Apartheid Movement unit in the updated HSC Modern History syllabus.

1.4C

Teaching Narrative Competence in an Age of Populism

Emma Bergin (Queenwood)

Bio

Emma Bergin is Head of History, Social Sciences and Instructional Leadership at Queenwood School, Sydney. She is an author of the forthcoming *Key Features of Modern History Stage 6* (Oxford University Press), supporting the new Modern History Years 11–12 syllabus, and specialises in curriculum design. She regularly presents at educational conferences as both a History specialist and instructional leader and is completing a Master of Educational Leadership at UNSW.

Synopsis

History teachers are increasingly working in what can be described as a toxic narrative environment. Social media algorithms, polarised public discourse and populist narratives frequently circulate simplified or distorted accounts of the past, shaping how young people understand history, identity and civic responsibility.

In this environment, new demands are being placed on the kinds of narrative competence that history education must develop. This raises important questions for the discipline. How do we respond to distorted historical narratives? Does our conventional history education provide the tools young people need to understand the power of narrative in shaping historical meaning? While history teaching has long emphasised evidential reasoning and causal analysis, students must also learn how narratives are constructed, interpreted and sometimes manipulated.

Drawing on the work of Arthur Chapman (UCL) and initiatives such as the Parallel Histories project in the United Kingdom, this session explores practical ways teachers can respond to these challenges. Participants will explore approaches including dual-narrative inquiry, evidence-led investigation and structured classroom debate grounded in historical sources. These strategies nurture students' narrative competence and responsibility, equipping them to question distorted narratives and engage thoughtfully with contested histories while supporting respectful discussion of controversial issues.

1.4D

New Ways, Old Ways: Songs, Skins, Stories: Reimagining Histories Down Glenmore Road

Dr Sarah Jane Moore (Glenmore Road Primary School)

Bio

Dr Sarah Jane Moore holds a PhD from the University of Sydney. Her work focuses on Reconciliation through music and art, using action research in schools to foster inclusion, cultural understanding, and community engagement. She collaborates across disciplines to translate creative practice and evidence-based research into meaningful educational and social impact.

Synopsis

This conference paper focuses on strengthening the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives within the history curriculum in Stage Three classrooms. Drawing on a classroom-based case study, the paper outlines specific strategies used by Dr Sarah Jane Moore to redesign learning experiences so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures are embedded authentically rather than treated as add-on content. The project maps the ways in which teaching and learning programs were adapted to support culturally responsive and inclusive history education.

The case study highlights how storytelling, music, visual art, and place-based learning were used as pedagogical approaches to deepen students' cultural understanding and engagement with historical inquiry. Through these creative and experiential learning strategies, students were encouraged to explore diverse perspectives and develop greater awareness of Indigenous histories and knowledge systems.

The presentation also emphasises the importance of teacher inquiry and reflective practice in improving the quality of teaching and learning. By trialling new approaches and gathering

student feedback, the project demonstrates how classroom action research can support meaningful curriculum change.

Delivered through creative modes, the presentation will showcase student projects, classroom artefacts, and reflections from the action research process, offering an engaging and practice-based contribution to discussions of inclusive and culturally responsive history education.

1.4E

***Between History and Myth: Teaching Ancient History Through Film* Ricky Collins (Erskine Park High School)**

Bio

Ricky Collins is a passionate history teacher working in Western Sydney with an interest in the benefits of utilising film effectively as a resource in the History classroom. Preceding this, Ricky attained a Bachelor of Arts in Media, Film & Communication at UNSW with a focus on allegorical film as a tool for cross-cultural analysis.

Synopsis

For many students, the ancient world is first encountered not through textbooks or archaeological evidence, but through multimedia — video games, social media, streaming platforms, and YouTube. These representations shape assumptions long before formal study begins. Among them, film stands as one of the most layered and influential forms, combining narrative, visual symbolism, and authorial perspective to construct persuasive versions of the past.

Drawing on my article from HTA Teaching History (Fact vs Fiction), this session explores the study of Representations of the Ancient Past through the lens of the Rashomon Effect — the idea that a single event can be interpreted and presented in fundamentally different ways. Exploring this concept through the medium of film, this presentation I will demonstrate how students can critically analyse film as a secondary source of Ancient History: interrogating perspective, bias, and motive; comparing representations with literary and archaeological evidence; and explaining why interpretations of the past differ over time.

Opening the course in this way allows students to develop evidence-based judgement and construct clear, coherent historical arguments, establishing the analytical foundations for sustained engagement with Ancient History.

1.4F

***Tu Do: Exploring Migration Stories in the National Maritime Museum Collection* Tamsin Mirch and Dr Roland Leikauf (Australian National Maritime Museum)**

Bio

Tamsin is the Senior Learning Officer at the Australian National Maritime Museum, responsible for the research, development and writing of lesson plans for the Museum's

range of excursion programs for students from K-12, covering the HSIE, Science and Textiles curriculum.

Dr Roland Leikauf is the expert for all things migration at the Australian National Maritime Museum. Roland migrated to Australia in 2021, becoming both a migrant and a migration curator. In Germany, Roland worked for different museums as a curator and historian, among them the Haus der Geschichte / House of History, Germany's largest state-financed museum and the Hadamar Memorial Museum which commemorates the murders perpetrated under Nazi 'Euthanasia'. Roland is an experienced freelance historian, and currently serves on the committee of the Professional Historians Association (NSW & ACT). His PhD "Welcome to my Bunker", which was published by transcript publishing, analysed the strategies of memory construction on the websites of veterans of the Second War in Indochina.

Synopsis

This talk will showcase the case study of the Vietnamese refugee boat Tù do (or 'Freedom'), and the voyage bringing the 31 people including the Lu Family to Darwin in 1977, to explore Migration experiences pertinent to the Stage 5 depth study (2024 curriculum). It is one of just three refugee boats from the 1970s "boat people" crisis held in Australian museum collections. Very little was known about it before research was conducted by Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) curators, research which Dr Leikauf continues. The contribution of the Vietnamese community to Australia will be considered through the story of Hieu Van Le, Chair of the ANMM and Former Governor of South Australia, himself a former refugee. Lastly, we will highlight physical and digital assets from the National Maritime Collection and facilitate a short interactive session with the audience to discuss which of these might be useful to teachers and students conducting this depth study and the best ways for the ANMM to support secondary History teachers with our revised programming.

1.4G

Spain and the Mexica: Current Historiography

Peter Hartman (Cherrybrook Technology High School)

Bio

Peter Hartman is the Head Teacher of HSIE at Cherrybrook Technology High School. He was a Premier's History Teacher Scholar in 2024, travelling to Mexico and the USA to investigate the historiography of the Spanish Conquest of the Aztecs. He is a Masters of Research candidate at Macquarie University.

Synopsis

This paper presents the findings from Peter Hartman's Premier's Teacher Scholarship tour to Mexico and the USA in 2024. This tour proposed to investigate the current historiography of the Spanish Conquest of the Aztecs and included site and institutional visits in Mexico, and meeting with historians of the Conquest in the USA. The major finding was a split between the conventional or narrative paradigm, which was created by Bernal Diaz and Gómara, and popularised by most subsequent historians, and the more recent turn to the New Conquest History, best communicated by Matthew Restall and Camilla Townsend. The latter is

considered the dominant paradigm in the USA and is built upon the work of New Philology and New Ethnohistory. It returns to the original Spanish sources and also incorporates Nahuatl-language sources. It questions the language used around conquest and identifies the deliberate emplotment of conquest history in Mexico in such a way that the reality of the past is obfuscated. The paper will make reference to the debates of the current History Extension syllabus in the lead up to this year's examination, as well as the debates of the new syllabus to be examined in 2027.

1.5A

Issues in Understanding the Sources for Spartan Society

Dr Denis Mootz (HTANSW)

Bio

Dr Denis Mootz taught K-12, 7-12 History and Ancient History, for forty years in NSW. He worked and lectured at UNSW and Macquarie University. He has a long involvement in pre-service education, professional learning, and publications for History teachers, and students. In 2024 he returned to the classroom for a five week block.

Synopsis

The imminent introduction of a new HSC syllabus for Ancient History will require a rethink of teaching programmes. There is an obvious increased focus on the nature of the sources that are available for re-imagining the ancient past. This is perhaps more true of Sparta than many other available options.

1.5B

Voices from the Spanish Civil War

Francisca Castro (Moriah College)

Bio

Francisca Castro is a history educator with experience teaching across a range of school and educational contexts. With a strong passion for both history and pedagogy, she plays an active role in developing resources that make complex historical topics accessible and engaging for high school students.

Synopsis

How might voices help students understand contested histories? The Spanish Civil War (1936 -1939) and the dictatorship of Francisco Franco remain among the most debated histories of twentieth-century Europe, offering rich opportunities for students to examine historical interpretation, evidence and memory.

This workshop explores how testimonies and primary sources can be used to investigate the experiences of individuals who lived through the Spanish Civil War and the early years of the Francoist dictatorship. Drawing on accounts from prisoners, civilians and other witnesses, as well as evidence from historical sites and material culture, the session demonstrates how

these sources can be incorporated into classroom inquiry to develop students' historical thinking and critical analysis skills.

Participants will engage with a range of sources, including testimonies, letters, photographs and site-based evidence, and consider how they reveal contested narratives of conflict, repression and remembrance. The workshop will also provide practical strategies and classroom activities aligned with the Stage 6 Modern History syllabus.

In particular, the session demonstrates how the Spanish Civil War can support the Year 11 Nature of Modern History topics 'The Construction of Modern Histories' and 'Historical Investigation: Historic Sites and Sources,' while also providing valuable contextual background for Year 12 Modern History national studies.

1.5C

Teaching the Holocaust in a Rapidly Changing World

Dr Greg Keith (University of Sydney)

Bio

Dr Greg Keith has been a secondary History teacher for 25 years, working in both the government and Catholic systems in Sydney and regional New South Wales. He has an MA in Colonial Australian History from Macquarie University and an MA in Holocaust Studies from the University of Sydney. He has recently completed his PhD in Holocaust Education at The University of Sydney, where his research focused on the challenges confronting teachers of the Holocaust. Chief among these challenges in many schools were the problems of classroom racism and antisemitism. The research considered the role of gender, empathy development and school leadership in incidents of antisemitism and appropriate strategies to deal with these issues. Dr Keith is currently teaching on the north coast of New South Wales at St John Paul College where he chairs the working party on racism and misogyny.

Synopsis

Teaching about the Holocaust has always presented a unique set of challenges but in recent years these have been amplified by the attack on Israel by Hamas, the war in Gaza, the massacre of 15 Jews at Bondi in 2025 and the war in Iran. Antisemitism, Islamophobia and racism more broadly, especially directed at First Nations and Indian Australians, are all on the rise in Australia. The revisions to hate speech laws by the New South Wales government have left many teachers concerned that they are no longer able to conduct difficult conversations about these events in their classrooms. At the same time, the new 7-10 syllabus for History asks teachers to spend more time and go into greater depth when teaching about the Holocaust. This presentation will consider the impact of recent global developments on teaching and learning about the Holocaust, how important classroom conversations can be managed within the framework of hate speech laws, and how teachers might approach the requirements regarding the Holocaust in the new syllabus.

1.5D

A Local Memorial as a Stage 5 Site Study

Christian Bell (Reddam House North Shore)

Bio

Christian Bell is the Head of History at Reddam House North Shore and an experienced educator committed to inspiring students through rigorous, inquiry-driven History teaching. Christian is passionate about sharing practical, classroom-ready strategies with colleagues.

Synopsis

This session explores an approach to teaching a site study of a local war memorial within the new Stage 5 History syllabus. Using the North Sydney War Memorial as a case study, the presentation demonstrates how war memorials can be used to develop students' understanding of historical significance and commemoration.

Participants will be guided through a teaching sequence in which students examine key features of commemoration and investigate the memorial's origins, symbolism, inscriptions, and changing meanings over time. The sequence culminates in an authentic learning task in which students design and conduct their own commemorative service at the memorial.

The session will also provide practical suggestions for adapting this approach to different local contexts, supporting teachers to confidently use local war memorials as meaningful and engaging site studies.

1.5E

From Federation to Fascination: Fostering Student Engagement in Making a Nation

Michael Condie (Crankbrook) and Ashley Chee Quee (Ascham)

Bio

Michael Condie is a History teacher and Head of House at Cranbrook School and also serves as a Vice President for HTANSW. He has broad interest in Australian history, civics and citizenship and the role the history syllabus can and should play in educating for active citizenship. In 2025 he was a convenor of the HTANSW conference on the new Making a Nation Core topic held at the State Library of NSW.

Ashley Chee Quee is History teacher at Ascham School who is passionate about promoting historical thinking skills. She has a broad interest in Australian history and historiography, and is particularly interested in the ways our national history was initially constructed to exclude certain groups. Ashley has served as a Director for HTANSW since 2016 and was previously Course Convenor of Ancient History Methods at UNSW.

Synopsis

This presentation will outline strategies for ensuring that the Stage 5 "Making a Nation" unit remains engaging, relevant and intellectually rigorous for students. It identifies key barriers

to student understanding and proposes solutions to these challenges, including the use of active learning strategies such as role-play, design tasks and historical inquiry, alongside the explicit teaching of key terminology and relevant skills. Central to our approach is the use of inquiry questions to structure learning, promote understanding, and support higher-order thinking about issues of unity, exclusion and national identity. This presentation will also include assessment approaches that enable students to demonstrate both content knowledge and historical skills, ultimately fostering deeper engagement with Australian history.

1.5F

Developing Historical and Critical Thinking Skills in High School (Virtual)

Naira Yerkanyan (Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University)

Bio

Naira Yerkanyan is a historian and a PhD applicant at Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University. She currently works as a teacher and trainer at Yerevan High School No. 83. Her research focuses on developing historical thinking skills among high school students.

Synopsis

This paper is based on my professional experience as a history teacher and trainer in a senior high school. The study explores practical ways of integrating historical thinking and critical thinking skills into history lessons for upper secondary students. Instead of focusing on memorization of facts, my teaching approach encourages students to analyze sources, identify cause-and-effect relationships, compare different interpretations, and evaluate historical evidence.

The paper presents classroom-based practices, learning tasks, and discussion strategies that help students ask meaningful questions, justify their opinions, and reflect on continuity and change in history. Special attention is given to inquiry-based learning and student-centered methods that promote independent thinking and active participation.

The findings show that systematic work with historical sources and structured questioning improves students' ability to think critically and understand history as an interpretive discipline rather than a fixed narrative. The paper highlights the role of the teacher as a facilitator and emphasizes the importance of historical thinking as a core component of 21st-century education.

DAY TWO KEYNOTES: SATURDAY 25 JULY

Keynote

Writing the History of Australia in the 2020s

Professor Mark McKenna (University of Sydney)

Bio

Mark McKenna is one of Australia's leading historians. His book, *Return to Uluru* (Black Inc. 2021) was shortlisted for the Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History. *From the Edge: Australia's Lost Histories* (MUP, 2016) won the NSW Premier's Prize for Australian History. *An Eye for Eternity: The life of Manning Clark* (MUP 2011) won five national awards, including the Prime Minister's Prize for Non-Fiction. He is also the author of *Looking for Blackfellas' Point* (UNSW Press), which won the Book of the Year and the Douglas Stewart Prize for Non-Fiction in the 2003 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. His latest book is *The Shortest History of Australia* (Black Inc. 2025).

Synopsis

In this keynote session, Professor Mark McKenna will discuss his latest book: *The Shortest History of Australia* (Black Inc, 2025). In the first part of the session, Mark will speak to some of the most important ideas that lay behind and within the book. This will then be followed by a discussion between Mark and HTANSW with some time at the end for audience questions. Overall, the session will focus on themes relevant to Stage 4-5 History, particularly topics relating to Australian History, and to the key questions that sit at the heart of Stage 6 History Extension surrounding the aims and purposes and construction of History.

2.2A: Ancient History Subkeynote

Alexander the Great and How to Do (Ancient) History (Virtual Session)

Stephen Harrison (Swansea University)

Bio

Stephen Harrison is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at Swansea University in Wales. His research explores the interactions between Greece and the Near East, as well as representations of power and interdisciplinary approaches to monarchy and empire. His first two books were published in 2025. The first, *Alexander the Great: Lives and Legacies* (Reaktion Books), is a biography of Alexander written for a general audience, while the second, *Kingship and Empire under the Achaemenids, Alexander the Great and the Early Seleucids* (Edinburgh University Press), is a more specialist research monograph. Stephen is a passionate teacher who has published on pedagogy in Higher Education; in 2023, he won an Excellence in Learning and Teaching Award from Swansea University. You can find him on Instagram and YouTube, both @stephenharrisonhistory.

Synopsis

The earliest surviving sources for Alexander the Great were written centuries after his death meaning that almost every moment of his life is shrouded in mystery and controversy – so,

what is a historian supposed to do? This session uses Alexander, and the peoples and cultures that he encountered, as a lens through which to explore how to study history. Drawing on a decade of teaching Alexander in Higher Education, I'll share models and frameworks for analysing sources – both written and material – and discuss how we can help our students engage critically with scholarly interpretations. Using examples from Alexander's reign, like the sack of Thebes, we'll explore how we can develop our students' research skills and give them the confidence to express their own ideas. The aim is to share some of my knowledge about the time of Alexander the Great, while also giving you some ideas about how to teach ancient history which you can adopt and adapt in your own classrooms.

2.2B: Modern History Subkeynote

Nazi 'Revolution' or 'Counter-Revolution'?

Professor Andrew Bonnell (University of Queensland)

Bio

Andrew Bonnell is a Professor of History at the University of Queensland. He has written or edited ten books, including *Red Banners, Books and Beer Mugs. The Mental World of German Social Democrats, 1863-1914* (2021), *Robert Michels, Socialism, and Modernity* (2023), and *Revolutions in Modern German History* (2025). He has also published numerous book chapters and articles on German and European history. He is on the editorial advisory boards of *German History* (Oxford UP), and *European History Quarterly*. He is also on the management board of the Queensland History Teachers' Association.

Synopsis

Was the Nazi takeover of power in 1933 a revolution? The regime's rhetoric sometimes claimed it was, using the language of a "national uprising". At the same time, Hitler came to power through backroom deals with representatives of Germany's conservative elites, with whom he initially formed a coalition government, with President Hindenburg staying on as head of state until his death in 1934. This presentation looks critically at the arguments for Nazism as a revolutionary movement and regime, and also considers claims that some historians have made from the 1960s to the present that the regime brought about a rapid modernization of German society that had revolutionary effects. The presentation will also draw on comparisons and contrasts with other European dictatorships (Fascist Italy and Stalinist Soviet Union) where relevant.

DAY TWO BREAKOUT SESSIONS: SATURDAY 25 JULY

2.3A

Re-examining Julius Caesar and the Collapse of the Roman Republic

Sarah Coleman (Mackillop Catholic College, Mount Peter QLD)

Bio

Sarah Coleman is Head of Humanities at MacKillop Catholic College, Mount Peter, Ancient and Modern History teacher, and PhD candidate researching representations of women in the Ancient History curriculum. She presents nationally on history pedagogy and curriculum

design, contributes to Cambridge and Oxford textbooks, and works with QCAA as an endorser, confirmer and external marker.

Synopsis

The collapse of the Roman Republic and the rise of Julius Caesar remain among the most contested topics in ancient history. Was Caesar the destroyer of the Republic, a reformer responding to systemic crisis, or the product of a political system already in decline? This workshop explores the historiographical debates surrounding Caesar and the late Republic while modelling classroom strategies that help students engage critically with evidence and interpretation.

Designed for teachers of Ancient History under both the HSC 2017 and incoming 2027 syllabi, the session aligns with the Personalities in their Times and Historical Periods studies. Participants will examine how ancient authors such as Plutarch, Suetonius, Appian and Cassius Dio construct Caesar's image, and how modern historians debate issues including the populares–optimates divide, structural instability within the Republic, and Caesar's intentions as dictator.

The workshop demonstrates practical approaches to developing historiographical thinking in the classroom, to build a conceptually more rigorous understanding of this fabulous period of Roman history. Participants will leave with ready-to-use strategies and activities that support students to evaluate competing interpretations and develop sophisticated historical arguments about one of antiquity's most enduring controversies.

2.3B

Cuba 1940-1991 as a New HSC National Study

David Van Tol (Kambala)

Bio

David Van Tol is Head of History at Kambala, Sydney. Awarded the 2026 NSW Premier's History Teachers Scholarship, his current research explores revolutionary memory and the teaching of Cuba 1940–1991. He is a textbook author, HSC marker and regular presenter on historiography and historical thinking.

Synopsis

The introduction of Cuba 1940-1991 as a new HSC Modern History National Study invites teachers to engage with a revolutionary movement whose significance extended far beyond the island itself. Undoubtedly shaped by Cold War politics, the Cuban revolution was also the culmination of a century of revolutionary struggle against imperialist powers and became a symbol for anti-colonial struggles in the decades that followed.

Within Cuba itself, key turning points such as the Bay of Pigs invasion and the thirteen days of the Cuban Missile Crisis reverberated internationally and were quickly incorporated into competing narratives about the meaning and legitimacy of the revolution itself. The new National Study also raises enduring questions about how a small Caribbean state maintained a revolutionary regime despite persistent opposition from the United States and the collapse of its principal ally, the Soviet Union. Across the four decades covered by the study, global and domestic pressures shaped and reshaped patterns of continuity and change in Cuban politics, society and foreign policy.

Drawing on research supported by the 2026 NSW Premier's History Teachers Scholarship, this practical session focuses on the classroom delivery of the topic. It outlines approaches

to planning, sequencing and resourcing the study, including ways to engage, challenge and extend students. Teachers will leave with practical strategies for programming the topic and using contested interpretations to strengthen student argumentation.

2.3C

Teaching the New USA National Study, 1919-41

Elyse Read (Kincoppal-Rose Bay)

Bio

Assistant Head of HSIE at Kincoppal-Rose Bay and current vice-president of the History Teachers Association NSW. Teaching history since 2013 with a largely Modern History focus.

Synopsis

This session will focus on exploring the changes to the syllabus for the National Study: USA 1919-1941 topic, with particular focus on key updates including the urban-rural divide. Suggestions for structuring and unpacking the key concepts of the course will also be provided.

2.3D

Responding to Intolerance When Teaching Contested Histories

Dr Rebecca Kummerfeld and Kate Xavier (Together for Humanity)

Bio

Dr Rebecca Kummerfeld brings together a background in history, teaching and museum education to create meaningful learning experiences that inspire curiosity, build empathy and encourage critical thinking.

Kate Xavier is a high-school teacher with a passion for anti-racism and intercultural education. Kate is an experienced Interfaith practitioner and is a member of the NSW Faith Affairs Council and Chair of the Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta.

Synopsis

You're about to start your Holocaust unit when you notice swastikas graffitied on a desk. Or you're mid-lesson on the Stage 4 Impacts of Colonisation unit when a student makes a racist slur. These moments are confronting — but they're also some of the most important teaching opportunities you'll encounter.

Join Kate Xavier and Dr Rebecca Kummerfeld to explore practical, classroom-ready strategies for responding to bias and intolerance when teaching contested histories. Drawing on proven frameworks, this session will help you facilitate difficult conversations with confidence, guide students to examine their own assumptions, and build the critical thinking and empathy skills at the heart of the History syllabus.

Participants will consider:

- The impacts of racism and other harmful language on student safety, wellbeing and belonging

- Strategies for effectively responding to students using harmful language
- Ways that historical perspective-taking can enable empathy building in the classroom

Walk away with tools you can use immediately — whether you're navigating a charged classroom moment or designing lessons that proactively cultivate respectful, curious historical thinkers.

2.3E

Understanding the Impact of Federation

Raina Evans (Wellington High School)

Bio

Raina Evans has been teaching History for over 15 years. Her interest in History was sparked by her brother's frustration at being advised not to take Modern History at school. She has been studying History ever since, with a Bachelor of Arts from CSU, majoring in early Twentieth Century History.

Synopsis

This workshop will focus on understanding differing perspectives that contributed to the Federation of Australia and how they shaped the course of Australian History in the early 1900's. There will be a focus on how to engage students in the study of Federation and how the decisions made during the formation of our nation continue to influence society today. This session will also provide examples on how to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, women's and migrant voices in the classroom. Participants will be equipped with strategies to adapt for their classroom settings in preparation for the implementation of the new Stage 5 curriculum.

2.3F

A Curriculum Dissection: Corpus Analysis of the 2027 NSW History Curriculum

Dr Alison Bedford (University of Southern QLD)

Bio

Dr Alison Bedford taught secondary history for 19 years, and is now a Senior Lecturer in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research centres on the teaching of national histories and the development of students as critical and independent learners.

Dr Alison Bedford taught secondary history for 19 years, and is now a Senior Lecturer in Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland. Her research centres on the teaching of national histories and the development of students as critical and independent learners.

Synopsis

History curricula across Australia share many similarities, but each state and territory has their own approach. Using corpus-assisted discourse analysis, this presentation interrogates the new 2027 NSW history syllabuses to understand how they 'adopt and adapt' disciplinary cognitions, concepts and content in contrast to other states and territories. The teaching of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and perspectives, and the ways in which students are positioned discursively as learners will be a focus of the analysis, to explore how contested histories are taught in classrooms which aim to develop critical minds.

2.3G

NEW HISTORY EXTENSION SYLLABUS: The Project

Ashley Chee Quee (Ascham)

Bio

Ashley Chee Quee is History teacher at Ascham School who is passionate about promoting historical inquiry skills. She has taught and delivered professional learning on History Extension for a number of years, and her students have achieved outstanding academic results. Ashley has served as a Director for HTANSW since 2016 and was previously Course Convenor of Ancient History Methods at UNSW.

Synopsis

This session is dedicated to exploring the updated NSW History Extension syllabus due to be implemented from term 4 of 2026. In particular, this session will provide an overview of the requirements for the major project in the updated course.

2.4A

Unlearning Entrenched Ways of Seeing: New Ethical Approaches to Egyptian Mummified Human Remains

Professor Ronika Power (Macquarie University) and colleagues

Bio

Ronika Power is a Professor of Bioarchaeology within the Discipline of History and Archaeology (School of Humanities, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University). She will be joined by a stellar lineup for this session including her colleagues Dr Melanie Pitkin (Macquarie University), Jacinta Carruthers (Macquarie University) and Alice Stevenson (UCL, London).

Synopsis

Although we are often blind to it, museums have long been responsible for constructing public expectations around the display of ancient Egyptian mummified human remains. In this paper, we present aspects of recently published culturally-specific guidelines (Pitkin et al. 2024) for the care of Egyptian ancestral remains at the Chau Chak Wing Museum, University of Sydney, aimed at helping museum publics unlearn entrenched ways of seeing and engaging with the ancient Egyptian dead. While these guidelines apply to all platforms

of the Museum, the paper will focus especially on the new messaging implemented in our galleries, online and via our education and public programmes, as well as how we are managing the ways this messaging has been, and could in the future be transmitted and consumed e.g. via the media, teaching and visitor photography and social media channels. The paper also addresses how this sensitive topic is navigated in the context of being a University Museum on unceded Australian Aboriginal land grappling with its own problematic colonial histories.

2.4B

Democracy and Dictatorship: Challenges and Opportunities

Dr Sally Cove (Sydney Grammar) and Jonathon Dallimore (HTANSW)

Bio

Sally Cove is a History teacher at Sydney Grammar School. Her research interests have included literary history, Holocaust history, and the development of historical consciousness, and her current teaching obsession involves the Iran and Gulf Wars topics from the Stage 6 Modern History syllabus.

Jonathon Dallimore is the Executive Officer (Professional Services) at the History Teachers' Association of NSW. He also teaches History methods at the University of New South Wales and enjoys writing and speaking about History.

Synopsis

This session aims to provide some initial insights into the changes that have been made to the HSC Modern History Core, now called 'Democracy and Dictatorships'. The session will not cover a detailed discussion of all content points within the new Core study, but focus on 3-4 of the newest aspects of the topics to help teachers consider how their teaching, resources and examination preparation work may need to shift to accommodate the changes.

2.4C

Crafting Neurodivergent-Affirming Programs

Nadia Szimhart (St Mary's Star of the Sea College)

Bio

Nadia Szimhart, HSIE Coordinator and Head of History, offers 25 years of history teaching experience. A certified Holocaust educator with a Master's in International Studies and Special Education, she champions adaptive pedagogy grounded in well-designed programs that sit within a carefully crafted curriculum. She also believes teachers can save the world by teaching students how to question deeply, think critically, and communicate effectively.

Synopsis

In this workshop, we will explore how to design programs that provide built-in support for neurodivergent students. We will focus on how to remove barriers to learning for students with specific learning needs in the History classroom and to embed inclusive activities that provide opportunities for strengths-based learning through clever design. This workshop is informed by the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Model, Understanding by Design, and Universal Design for Learning, as well as key features of cognitive styles and thinking patterns of neurodivergent students. Bring your laptop and a unit of work you are working on to put the ideas into practice in real time.

2.4D

The Shoah: A Term-Long Case Study

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis (Waverley College)

Bio

Dr Panayiotis Diamadis is a genocide scholar with extensive experience in research and education around the Shoah of the Jews of Europe and North Africa, and the indigenous Armenian, Assyrian and Hellenic peoples of the former Ottoman Empire. His most recent book is *From Genocide to Regeneration: the photographs of George Devine Treloar* (Unity in Philia Press 2025).

Synopsis

In recent years, Waverley College has been developing a term-long study of the Shoah (Holocaust) of the Jews of Europe and North Africa for its Year 10 Mandatory History cohort. The decision to create and adapt this intense study was driven by two main factors. Firstly, the demography of the Waverley neighbourhood in eastern Sydney, home to a large concentration of the Australian Jewish community. Secondly, the understanding of the need to combat hatred of Jewish Australians through education within the College community and, through our students, within the broader community.

A key part of the term-long study is the examination of Australian connections to the Shoah: media reports from the 1930s and 1940s, on events in Europe and Australia as well as the testimonies of survivors who made Australia home.

The Shoah unit combines traditional education methods, student-driven learning and engagement with Australian Jewish community organisations involved in Shoah education. Part of the Assessment Task involves a review of an incursion by one such community organisation. Other parts of the Assessment Task involve student research into deep-learning questions such as the value of primary evidence in combatting denial of the Shoah.

2.4E

Embedding First Nations Perspectives in the New Curriculum

Baylah Betar and Tim Chuan (Australian Museum)

Bio

Tim Chuan and Baylah Betar are museum professionals dedicated to providing meaningful educational experiences to every student who visits the Australian Museum.

Tim taught secondary History for over 10 years before transitioning to museum education. He earned his Master of Research from Deakin University, writing on decolonial pedagogy within museum spaces. Tim continues to integrate his research throughout stage 4 – 6 History programs and teacher professional development. Baylah is the First Nations Education Lead at the Australian Museum, driving powerful, community-led programs that centre First Nations histories and voices. A proud Bundjalung man, he advocates truth telling and authentic integration of First Nations knowledges into curriculum, empowering deeper cultural understanding and a more respectful, connected learning experience.

Synopsis

The new history curriculum sets out protocols for collaborating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities when providing the opportunity to study Aboriginal Cultures and Histories through stages 4 to 6. Adapted from Teacher Professional Development offered at the Australian Museum and developed in consultation with the First Nations Division, this session will build teacher capacity to embed authentic First Nations voices and perspectives in the History classroom in line with the overview and rationale of the new history curriculum.

Through the use of the award-winning museum display 'Her Name is Nanny Nellie' and the associated documentary, we will showcase how First Nations led resources that champion truth telling can be transformative tools in the classroom. Drawing on contemporary First Nations research and epistemologies we help teachers actively hold space for First Nations pedagogies and perspectives inside their teaching and learning programs. Participants will be invited to reflect on their current practice, learn how to appropriately select sources that include First Nations and decolonial perspectives, and explore the importance of community consultation when teaching First Nations content. We hope you join us in working towards a more reconciled future.

2.4F

Teaching Historical Thinking in an Age of AI

Shirly Griffith (Jacaranda)

Bio

Shirly Griffith is Senior Director and Head of Jacaranda, Australia's leading educational publisher for secondary schools. With over 18 years of classroom experience, she has spent nearly two decades shaping innovative digital learning solutions that support teachers and students — driven by a vision of technology that levels the educational playing field.

Synopsis

AI is already in your classroom. Students are using it to find information, generate text and, increasingly, to form historical understanding — usually without any teacher oversight. jacTUTOR, Jacaranda's built-in AI tool, gives teachers and students a better, safer alternative: AI that works within the learning, not around it.

In a world where information and historical narratives are increasingly easy to manufacture and harder to interrogate, critical thinking matters more than ever. This workshop explores how jacTUTOR can be deliberately deployed to support the demands of the new NSW Stage 4 and 5 History Syllabus — helping teachers turn AI from a shortcut into a thinking tool.

In this session, participants will:

- Experiment with jacTUTOR from both a student and teacher perspective
- Explore how AI can scaffold historical inquiry to build critical thinking skills
- Examine practical strategies for building AI literacy alongside historical literacy

Please note: this session requires internet access. Bring a laptop. You'll leave with trial access to our new edition of Retroactive (with jacTUTOR).

2.4G

NEW HISTORY EXTENSION SYLLABUS: Key Questions

Michelle Kennedy (North Sydney Girls' High School)

Bio

Michelle has taught History for 30 years and is currently the Head of HSIE at North Sydney Girls' High School. She is a regular presenter at HTANSW conferences and HSC study days. She has over 20 years' experience marking the HSC and was the Supervisor of Marking for History Extension in the period 2018-2023.

Synopsis

This session is dedicated to exploring the updated NSW History Extension syllabus due to be implemented from term 4 of 2026. In particular, this session will provide an overview of the requirements for the key questions component of the updated syllabus.

2.5A

Using Court Cases and Legislation as Historical Sources in Australia: 'Making a Nation'

Jessica Speed (Rule of Law Education Centre)

Bio

Jessica Speed is a high achieving final year History and Secondary Teaching student at Macquarie University, having been awarded Marcella Ryan Memorial Prize for Medieval Studies as well as multiple Highest Achiever in Unit Awards. She works at the Rule of Law Education Centre taking students on excursions to the Law Courts and has experience in

Catholic, State and independent schools as well as an all-Indigenous Primary School. Jess brings a fresh perspective to teachers developing resources for the History curriculum on democracy, federation and nation-building.

Synopsis

In the Depth Study (core) Australia: Making a Nation—from Federation to the First World War—students investigate the development and features of Australia’s democracy and the process of Federation. Achieving this requires teachers to integrate a broad range of primary sources. While newspaper articles, letters, and speeches are commonly used, court cases and legislation are equally important historical sources that reveal how democratic ideas were articulated, contested, and implemented.

This paper demonstrates how teachers can meaningfully incorporate two key court cases, foundational New South Wales legislation establishing democratic structures, and the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution into historical inquiry. It will show how these sources illuminate differing contexts and perspectives, support the development of disciplinary thinking, and help students recognise both the value and the limitations of legal sources when constructing historical accounts. The session provides practical strategies for bringing these sources to life in the classroom, deepening students’ understanding of nation-building and the evolution of Australian democracy.

2.5B

Ho Chi Minh Trails: Strategy, Cambodia and Civilians

Mick Klipin (Bishop Druitt College)

Bio

Mick Klipin has been teaching History for over 25 years. During this time he had stints teaching Modern History in addition to junior History but for the past years has stepped back into Modern History and History Extension. His passion for all things History can be traced to a Year 8 teacher and turning the whole classroom into a medieval castle! Mick was fortunate enough to gain a 2025 HTA Premiership Scholarship to spend 5 weeks conducting research in Cambodia and Vietnam, from which this presentation has been developed.

Synopsis

This presentation examines the historical and pedagogical significance of the Ho Chi Minh Trails (HCMT) within the revised Modern History syllabus, which retains a focus on strategies and tactics and on the Vietnam War’s impact on civilians in Cambodia and Laos (to 1973). The HCMT represents a vital intersection between military strategy and civilian experience. Conceived as a tactical response to North Vietnam’s objective of sustaining the southern insurgency, the Trails became the target of extensive U.S. bombing campaigns designed to sever supply lines and weaken resistance. The decision to extend the HCMT through neutral Cambodia and Laos, shaped by geography and the demilitarised zone, drew local populations into the conflict, subjecting them to immense hardship and displacement.

2.5C

Rethinking the Impact of WWII on Australia's Foreign Relations

Dr Linda Wade (All Hallows', Brisbane)

Bio

Linda is the Head of Social Science at All Hallows' School in Brisbane. She is fascinated by Australian history and is genuinely baffled by those who complain that it's 'so boring'. Investigations into war experiences and war memory hold a special interest for Linda.

Synopsis

March 2026. The Australian government announces that the RAAF will deploy a Wedgetail aircraft and air defence personnel to support US efforts in the war against Iran. It's a familiar chapter in the story of Australia. It's easy to trace the roots of this decision back to PM John Curtin's 'The Task Ahead' speech of December 1941, with several historical narratives seeing this moment as a decisive shift in Australia's external affairs, and as the genesis of Australian decisions to commit troops to American-backed wars. But just how significant was Curtin's 'look to America', and to what extent did Australian foreign policy change in the 1940s? Moreover, what can be learnt about Australia's current participation in Iran from taking a broader view of Australian involvement in conflicts throughout the twentieth century?

This session will consider Australia's foreign relations in the 1940s, querying the extent to which Australian foreign policy shifted throughout those years. In doing so, it raises questions about the degree of Australian agency in making commitments to various causes and conflicts, particularly in the Middle East region. It has relevance for teachers of Stage 5 (Australia at War -WWII) and Stage 6 (Australia, 1918-1949; Conflict in the Gulf, 1980-2017).

2.5D

Educational Potential and Ethical Challenges: AI-Mediated Holocaust Survivor Testimony

Elsie Leask (University of Newcastle)

Bio

Elsie Leask is a PhD candidate and sessional academic in the School of Education at The University of Newcastle. With experience teaching in English and the Humanities, her research explores the application of artificial intelligence to Holocaust survivor testimony. Elsie lectures and tutors in History, English, and Geography/Commerce curriculum courses.

Synopsis

For Australian students who may be culturally, geographically, and temporally distanced from the Holocaust, survivor testimony can be a powerful and engaging inclusion that seeks to humanise the past. The emerging post-witness era, however, means that in-person interactions with survivors as part of curriculum experiences are becoming limited. Developed by the USC Shoah Foundation in 2014, Dimensions in Testimony (DiT) uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support perpetual interaction with specially filmed survivor testimony, where typed or spoken questions are semantically matched to relevant responses. While DiT effectively represents survivors in authentic ways and supports

co-constructed learning experiences, it presents significant ethical concerns relating to survivor agency and the safe navigation of traumatic pasts.

As developed from empirical research, this presentation seeks to critically assess the use of DiT as a curriculum resource for Stage 5 and 6 History (with a focus on the 'experiences of the Holocaust through survivor testimony' for the optional Stage 5 Depth Study of the Holocaust included in the NSW History syllabus for implementation from 2027). More broadly, and as may be relevant for Stage 6 Modern History and History Extension students, the presentation analyses the efficacy and challenges of AI-mediated Holocaust memorialisation.

2.5E

Teaching Australia in the 1st and 2nd World Wars

Kris Katavic (Department of Veterans Affairs)

Bio

Kris Katavic is the Assistant Director and Senior Educational Content Writer with the Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Team. A passionate History educator and experienced teacher, he creates high-quality, classroom-ready resources featuring provocations and meaningful and varied activities that support teachers to develop engaging, effective lessons.

Kris Katavic is the Assistant Director and Senior Educational Content Writer with the Department of Veterans' Affairs Education Team. A passionate History educator and experienced teacher, he creates high-quality, classroom-ready resources featuring provocations and meaningful and varied activities that support teachers to develop engaging, effective lessons.

Synopsis

This presentation will showcase engaging approaches to teaching the First World War and the Second World War in Year 9 and 10 classrooms. This includes syllabus based, sequenced lessons that contain historical sources and information and a range of activities that allow students to engage in differentiated surface, deep and transfer learning options. Printable or online, the resources include source analysis skills, extension and learning review activities and links to videos that explore the veteran experience.

Created by a group of highly motivated, dynamic History teachers in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Education team, these History lessons and resources for students and teachers, are freely available on the Anzac Portal classroom page. Our focus is on developing engaging, contemporary, historically accurate and fully resourced lessons and student activities that explore Australia's involvement in wars, conflicts and peace operations. Designed for the new and experienced History teacher – your prep is done!

2.5F

From Security to Stigma: Contesting Australia's Post-9/11 National Narrative **Shannon Kelly (Leeton High School)**

Bio

Shannon Kelly is a secondary HSIE teacher at Leeton High School, teaching Ancient History, History Extension, History, and Geography. Teaching since 2016, she is passionate about engaging students with the past, developing historical thinking skills, and creating meaningful learning experiences through inquiry-based lessons and real-world connections.

Shannon Kelly is a secondary HSIE teacher at Leeton High School, teaching Ancient History, History Extension, History, and Geography. Teaching since 2016, she is passionate about engaging students with the past, developing historical thinking skills, and creating meaningful learning experiences through inquiry-based lessons and real-world connections.

Synopsis

Post-9/11 Australia has faced profound tensions between security, civil liberties, and national identity, raising questions about whether the nation became safer or more divided in the wake of global terrorism. This session presents a Stage 5 History school-developed depth study designed within the new NSW History syllabus. Positioned as a natural progression from the Rights and Freedoms core depth study, it extends students' understanding of civil liberties, democratic values, and state power into the twenty-first century. The program situates Australia's responses to terrorism since 2001 within broader global developments, inviting learners to interrogate how security policies, media discourse, and social tensions have reshaped notions of inclusion, exclusion, and citizenship. Through inquiry-based learning, source analysis, and ethical debate, students examine primary and secondary sources to explore contested narratives and competing perspectives. Case studies such as counter-terrorism laws, citizenship testing, and social reactions to security policies encourage students to critically evaluate justifications for the War on Terror and broader debates about Australia's national identity. By connecting historical events to ongoing social and political developments, the program empowers students to develop historical thinking skills, reflect on contested narratives, and understand how Australia's national story continues to evolve in a contemporary, post-9/11 world.

2.5G

NEW HISTORY EXTENSION SYLLABUS: Case Studies **Nico Forell (Roseville College)**

Bio

Nico Forell is a dedicated educator with extensive teaching experience across international and Australian schools. He currently serves as the Head of History at Roseville College and is a Senior Marker for History Extension.

Synopsis

This session is dedicated to exploring the updated NSW History Extension syllabus due to be implemented from term 4 of 2026. In particular, this session will provide an overview of the requirements for the Case Study component of the updated syllabus.