



Old Court House
Law Museum

OLDEST BUILDING IN PERTH



YEAR IN REVIEW

2024-2025

SMALL COURT HOUSE. BIG HISTORIES.

Perth's oldest building, the Old Court House, is one of Western Australia's most significant cultural heritage sites. From its principal function as a court house, to its cultural role as the main social and civic hub of early colonial life, this small but highly significant building now operates as the Old Court House Law Museum and is open for everyone to explore and be amazed.

As a contemporary Museum, we collect, conserve and interpret Western Australia's legal and social histories from the past to the present.

This significant building and Museum have big Western Australian histories to share and we invite you to help us bring these stories to the world.

Creative Vision

To be a must-see Western Australian cultural heritage site.

To explore the early years of the Swan River Colony, and to engage with, and reflect on, the life changing legal and social legacies on Whadjuk Noongar Boodjar.

To reflect on how we understand our shared Western Australian histories, what those shared histories shape and how they impact on the present.

To interrogate the continuing evolution of the justice system and the concept of justice in the context of diverse voices and perspectives.

Mission

- Collect, conserve, interpret and research Western Australia's legal and social history.
- Provide local, interstate and international visitors with a unique Western Australian experience that stimulates discussion and reflection.
- Represent all systems of law that have been a part of Western Australia's history including Aboriginal, British and Australian.
- Engage responsibly with the broad legal and social Western Australian histories that occurred within, and beyond, the Old Court House and to be a site of 'unforgetting' of Aboriginal and other minority groups' experiences of justice and injustice.



Cultural Acknowledgement

The Old Court House Law Museum, located on Noongar Boodja, respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Artist: Marlia Miyalan Fatnowna

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Committee Foreword

As Chair of the Old Court House Law Museum Foundation Committee, I am pleased to present on behalf of the Committee the 2024/2025 Year in Review. In this reporting period the Committee worked with the Museum Team towards the following goals:

1. Expanded access to the Museum
2. Improved visitor experience through redesign of the Judge's Chambers
3. Digitisation of the Collection and publishing it online
4. Ongoing collection management work to conserve the Collection

Whilst significant progress has been made, the Committee is committed and inspired to achieve more in the short to medium term to attain these goals.

We are pleased to have expanded access for visitors to the Museum, with weekend opening now attracting 18,969 visitors which is an increase of 56% on last year. Weekend opening has also seen us attract a much more diverse audience, including local families who could not visit during the week.

Progress in improving the visitor experience has hit a milestone with the commissioning of a short film on traditional Aboriginal law. Thanks to a Lotterywest grant, the Museum will incorporate this film into the Judge's Chamber redesign and re-interpretation. The Committee is proud to support Museum initiatives to expand Aboriginal Peoples' voices in the interpretation.

Our digitisation work continues and has made significant steps to migrate the Museum collection database to a new platform. This will ensure that third parties globally will have access to our significant items for education and research purposes.

The Committee congratulates the Museum team for its work in 2024/2025 which resulted in record visitation, important progress with digitisation of collection items, and the presentation of a new exhibition and short film looking at a historic case of domestic violence; a very relevant and timely exhibition.

The behind-the-scenes work conducted by the Museum team is extraordinary; much not visible to the public including the Committee. A growing resource base for the Museum sees it now in an improved position to meet visitation and curatorial demands, with the reach and impact of the Museum expanding as a result.

Ensuring the Old Court House building is conserved and maintained is essential to the work of the Museum. Committee Members and the Museum team were pleased to meet with Beryl Matheson, Department of Justice, Executive Manager, Infrastructure and Contract Services to build on the relationship between the Museum and the State Government to ensure the building is conserved and maintained to the requisite standard. The Committee

is grateful to Darren Foster, Chair, Heritage Council and Kathryn Exell, Senior Heritage Officer, Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage for their advocacy for this significant Western Australia built heritage site.

With Western Australia's bicentenary approaching in 2029, the Committee looks forward to building on its relationship and discussions with the State Government to ensure that this significant Western Australian cultural heritage site is cared for and maintained according to the standard for heritage conservation practice in the Burra Charter.

Donors to the Museum have allowed us to build on recent successes and the Committee is grateful to every donor for their support. The Committee would like to particularly acknowledge the support of the Wright Burt Foundation and our Law Firm and Founding Champion Donors. The Committee looks forward to building on recent achievements to drive the momentum towards our ambitious goals for the future.

With visitation continuing to increase and the importance of working to conserve, display and grow the Collection, the Committee will continue to advocate and champion the work of the Museum to progress towards the goal of making the Old Court House Law Museum a must see Western Australian cultural heritage site that interprets concepts of law and justice through diverse voices and perspectives from past to present.

The Committee invites you to reach out to us and be part of the Museum journey and support our goals.



The Hon Lindy Jenkins

Chair, Old Court House Law Museum Foundation Committee

Other Foundation Committee Members

- Sandy Anghie (Deputy Chair)
- Dr Toni Church
- Catherine Fletcher
- Ante Golem
- The Hon Dr Andrew Lu AM



Curator's Introduction

This year marks the first full financial year of weekend operation, which boosted total visitation by 56%! Our goal of raising the Museum's profile from hidden gem to becoming a must-see cultural heritage destination in Perth is becoming increasingly realised. Maintaining six-day operation - free to the public, is a priority we wish to uphold, to ensure we are accessible to diverse audiences.

The theme of expansion and visibility continues with our digitisation project. I am pleased to share the Museum team's work to digitise and enable accessibility to the collection has come leaps and bounds. This year we have published our first records online and are continuing our comprehensive Collection audit as part of moving to an online collection management database. This work has been realised by our dedicated team whose steadfast work behind-the-scenes ensures that records are standardised, researched and correctly documented for future generations.

A personal highlight was the launch of *The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer* exhibition. The Museum showcased its potential as an outdoor event space, with ambient lighting and a stunning projection onto the walls of the court house. The *Unfortunate Woman* exhibition film and launch are a testament to the power of collaboration between experts in diverse fields which strengthens the interpretation of the history the Museum collects and conserves.

We are a reflection of our community; which we serve, work with and that in turn support us. I am ever grateful to the Museum's Foundation Committee whose support, expert vision and advocacy has shaped our direction; their impact is reflected in the outcomes the Museum is achieving. Thank you to the Museum team for another incredible year. Your dedication and energy towards ongoing projects which bring the Museum's mission to life are appreciated. I would also like to thank our volunteers, the face, heart and soul of the Museum, for their continued commitment to ensure a positive visitor experience in Perth's oldest building.

Growing support for the Museum has allowed us to realise some incredible outcomes this year. By sharing our progress, I hope we can strengthen and expand our relationships within a community that is invested and confident in our work and mission to collect, conserve and interpret Western Australia's unique legal and social heritage.

The Museum has another rewarding year of achievement and growth behind it and a bright future ahead.

Megan Shaw

Curator, Old Court House Law Museum



The Museum team: Law Society Director of Strategy & Growth, Áine Whelan with Janelle Hauser, Margie Eberle, Megan Shaw and Manager Education and Community Services, Dean Curtis.

Museum Donors



Old Court House
Law Museum
OLDEST BUILDING IN PERTH

Making History – Framing the Future

Foundation Donor

**WRIGHT BURT
FOUNDATION**
ALL FOR THE BETTER

Law Firm Donors



HERBERT SMITH
FREEHILLS
KRAMER

Bennett
LITIGATION AND COMMERCIAL LAW

Francis Burt

FRANCIS BURT CHAMBERS

SQUIRE
PATTON BOGGS

BRAND
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

Founding Champions:

- Sandy Anghie
- Ante Golem
- The Hon Dr Andrew Lu AM
- Anonymous x 2

Individuals:

- Susanne Ascott
- Louisa Bell
- Henry Boston OAM
- Peter Brindal
- Tony Chong
- Dean Curtis
- Professor Brett Davies
- Danielle Davies
- Olivier David and Dr Bennie Ng
- Karen Farley SC
- Catherine Fletcher
- The Hon Nicholas Hasluck AM
- Oisín Hides
- Stephen Josland
- Dr Norman Jouppi
- Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AO and The Hon Dr Andrew Lu AM
- James Mactaggart
- Maryka Mensink
- Pino and Christine Monaco
- Dr Narrelle Morris
- Jodie Moffat
- David Price
- Gavin Ryan
- Professor Ralph Simmonds
- The Hon Justice Melanie Sloss
- Carolyn Thatcher SC
- Clare Thompson SC
- Nicholas van Hattem
- Walpole Leake Family
- Áine Whelan
- Anonymous x 10

2024/2025 Visitation

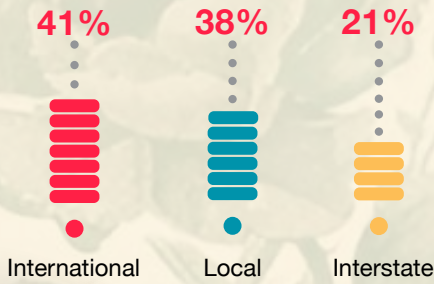


Old Court House
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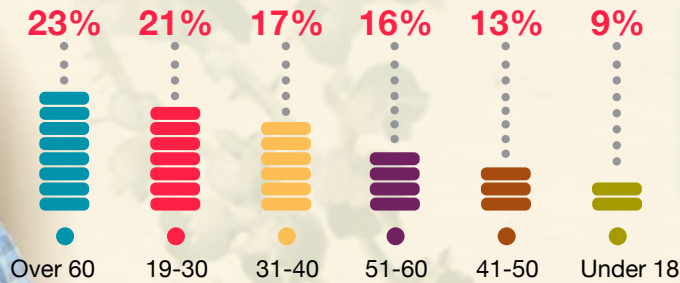
↑
56%

18,969
Total Visitors

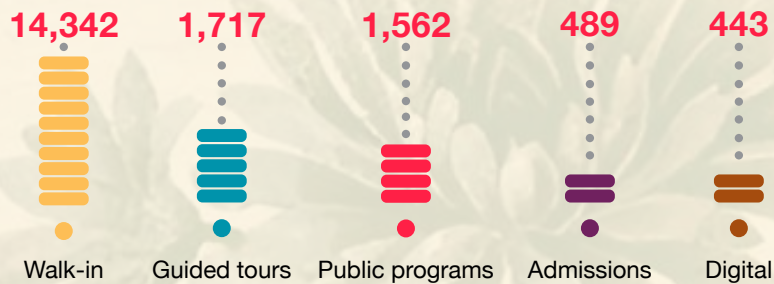
Visitor Origin



Visitor Age



Visitor Type



Visitor Feedback



“As a foreign tourist who has a limited knowledge on Perth’s history I found the museum a great source of information on how the legal system was founded and how it has changed and developed to today’s system. I found the history of the interactions between the European settlers and Aboriginal Peoples very interesting. Would recommend anybody visiting Perth to come to the Museum.”

“I loved the museum. It is the first museum we visited in Australia and it gave me a very good overview of the cultural history of the country. I like that it included the history of all members of society: Aboriginal peoples, colonisers, children and women and all social classes.”

“I found the audio of the stolen generation most interesting. There should be more information and stories about the stolen generation. Love the building and the information on laws (past and present).”

“There is so much important knowledge shared in this museum, and a deep respect towards Aboriginal people. I think it shares important ideas about WA’s history.”



Digitisation and Publishing the Collection Online

Professional Photography

Digitising and publishing the Museum's Collection online is imperative work to expand the accessibility of a Collection that is of state, national and international significance¹.

This financial year the Museum had four sessions with collections photographer Bo Wong, who has been working with the Museum Collection since 2023. Large and fragile items, such as wigs and robes were targeted during the four photography sessions, with over 120 items photographed.

Allocating resources to a professional photographer has saved the Museum hours of time, with all digital file rendering and naming outsourced. Collection items may have several parts or pages and each part has multiple photographs in both high-quality and low quality file sizes. Having two file types saves space on the collection management platform and ensures that there are multiple high quality image files to work with for future projects. This process will ensure the Museum will not need to re-photograph or double handle items in the future for research, print and design purposes. The digitisation and photography of the Collection have been made possible through the support of the Museum's champion donor the Wright Burt Foundation.



*Note: 1 Statement of Significance, Dr Joanna Sassoon, March, 2019, p. 4.
Behind the scenes digitisation photography with Bo Wong.*

Publishing the Collection Online

In 2023 the Museum resolved to transfer its Collection records from Mosaic software to an online platform to expand access to the Collection. Finally, in 2024/2025 further progress was made with a bulk data transfer onto the eHive platform.

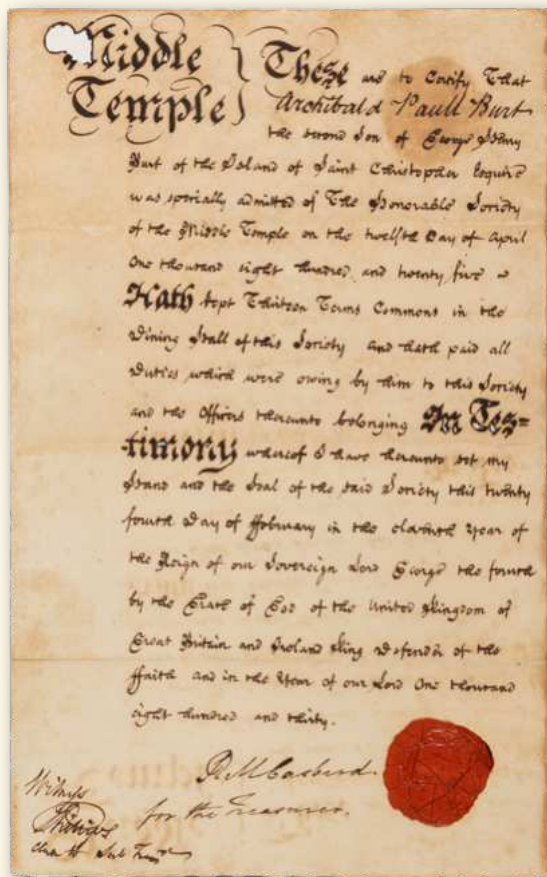
eHive is a web-based collection management system which catalogues records, stores images and manages acquisition and research data online. The eHive database allows for records to be published online whilst maintaining private internal collection management information on the same platform. Privately held data includes information gathered at acquisition (donor, provenance), conservation work undertaken, condition reports, valuations, and records of additional administrative tasks such as loans inward/outward, exhibition history and research.

Transferring the data has relied on hundreds of hours of behind-the-scenes work, to ensure that object data stored on the database is correct and matches what is physically in the Collection. Collection audits and data cleaning were undertaken by the Museum team to ensure that terminology, descriptions and data were consistent and that data transferred is standardised on the new collection database. Ensuring physical and digital data collected over the 50 years of the Museum's history is documented and stored together on collection records is extremely important for accurate record keeping.

At the time of writing this report, 114 records have been made publicly available on eHive. The digitisation project was initiated thanks to the support of the Wright Burt Foundation. This support enabled the Museum to begin the digitisation journey with items relating to the Burt family first. Handwritten documents relating to the Burt family, or items which previously had very little research attributed to their records have now been updated with transcriptions and stunning collection photography.

Contributing to the searchability and clarity of records, the Museum team is continuing work to transcribe and index the entire collection of Chief Justice Archibald Paull Burt's trial notebooks and letterbooks. Each record will have unique keywords embedded to help researchers to identify the plaintiffs and defendants involved in each trial. This work has already contributed to the work of Honorary Senior Research Fellow Peter Yule from Melbourne University, who is compiling the history of the Burt family. Peter commented on the ease of accessing the Museum's Burt records and commended the quality of the digitised records and transcriptions, which will aid his research and enable him to access the Collection anywhere in the world.

Please explore the collection online [here](#).



Certificate, Middle Temple, Archibald Paull Burt 1825 (1976.20a).



Wig Tin Mr Justice Wickham (2025.7b).

Collection Management

Notebook Conservation

The Museum has finished an extensive project with Conservator Hannah Hoffman to conserve the collection of 42 trial notebooks (this includes one index and 8 letterbooks) written by Chief Justice Archibald Paull Burt.

Conservation treatment, such as tear and flaking repair to pages, will ensure that weakened areas are consolidated. After being stabilised, each notebook received updated preventative conservation and custom-made clamshell boxes to improve storage and prevent further degradation.

The updated storage has also decreased the space requirements of this large collection which is an additional benefit to overall care of the Collection as a whole.

This conservation project was initiated in late 2023 and would not have been possible without the support from the Wright Burt Foundation. Thanks to this work, this highly significant collection is safely housed for future generations.



Archibald Paull Burt's Supreme Court Criminal Trial Notebook (1989.33s) before and after treatment.

2024/25 New Collection Acquisitions

The purpose of the Museum's Collection is to connect people to Western Australia's legal and social history and inspire reflective discussion. The Museum has received and accessioned several donations; guided by the Museum's Collections Policy. The new acquisitions contribute to the overall strength of the Collection based on their relevance, significance, provenance, condition, rarity and interpretive potential.

Organisational Donations

Squire Patton Boggs

During a recent office re-location, one of Perth's oldest law firms found a secured box containing historic objects with links to some of the biggest names in Western Australia's legal and governance history. Of the items discovered, the following was donated to the Museum:

- Documents: four letter books from 1896/7, 1899, 1899/1900 and 1909 containing copies of outgoing correspondence. They include letters to prominent people who have had a significant impact on the State's history
- Document: a file containing opinions from 1949 on a wide range of legal matters being dealt with during the immediate post WW2 era
- Document: apprenticeship document for Thomas Munro to the WA Goldfields Courier newspaper dated 1896. This document is a rare survivor from the era with high interpretive value to demonstrate reforms in industrial law
- Document: letters admitting Harry Hale as Commissioner of Western Australia
- Object: stamp, "Commissioner of Declaration"
- Object: trophy "The Presidents Cup" Western Australian Bar Association
- Document: diary of B.H Darbyshire
- Book: Colonial Court of Admiralty Rules 1865-1903.

Supreme Court of Western Australia

- Documents and Stationery representative of previous professional communications of Judiciary, Masters and other staff of the Supreme Court of Western Australia which are now obsolete due to technological evolution.

Individual Donations

- Book: Supreme Court Act and Rules of the Supreme Court book, formerly owned by Deputy Registrar Harman and Master Staples.
- Costume: District Court Judicial regalia, which included a photograph which was kept in the pocket of Western Australia's first female Master of the Supreme Court, Master Sarah Russell.

Thank you to all those who donated items in 2024/2025 for their generosity and foresight to contribute to the preservation of Western Australia's legal and social history.

Should you have something in your possession that you believe is significant to Western Australia's legal and social history and is worthy of consideration for accession into the Museum Collection, please contact the Museum Curator at museum@lawsocietywa.asn.au.



Visitor Experience

Special Exhibition

The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer: A Domestic Violence Trial in 1876

This exciting new exhibition demonstrates the Museum's mission to connect its historic Collection to reflect on the themes of justice, then and now.

The Unfortunate Woman, covers a domestic violence trial which took place in the Old Court House in 1876 and provides a fascinating glimpse into a tragic and compelling chain of events which still holds relevance today.

This exhibition focuses on the Supreme Court Criminal trials of Kenneth Brown, who was the father of Edith Cowan and a man from a well-respected settler family. Kenneth murdered his wife, Mary Ann on 3 January 1876. Due to a multitude of cultural and social issues and the structure of the colonial justice system at the time, it took three trials to find Kenneth Brown guilty of murder, despite shooting his wife twice at point blank range in front of witnesses.

The exhibition content works to contextualise and describe the historic elements of the trials, using newspaper articles, photos, court transcripts and primary sources written by Chief Justice Archibald Paull Burt.

The exhibition was inspired by the direction to jury manuscript written by Chief Justice Burt during the Regina v Brown trial. The document forms part of the Old Court House Law Museum Collection and was found tucked between the pages of Sir Archibald Paull Burt's notebooks. The text matches verbatim, the newspaper reporting of the second trial of Kenneth Brown. The Chief Justice's instructions to the jury were reportedly identical in the third and final re-trial of Kenneth Brown.

This document when re-examined by contemporary experts demonstrates the expansive opportunity each item in the Museum Collection can provide in inspiring discussion and reflection on contemporary social and legal issues. It also reveals the importance of working with the Collection and uncovering its secrets to understand the ever-evolving relationship between the historic and the contemporary.

Deaths.
BACWR.—On January 3, at Western Australia, Mary Ann Brown, the beloved daughter of Mrs. Jane Todall, and sister to Mrs. Henry Borry, aged 20 years.



Visitors at *The Unfortunate Woman* exhibition launch.

The Unfortunate Woman Film

To extend the interpretation of the exhibition and bring it into the contemporary, a special short film was created and installed in the gallery. The film breaks down the trial of Kenneth Brown into themes which were analysed by experts across several fields. Experts used this case study to discuss powerful themes of justice, truth, and social reckoning around family and domestic violence; an issue at crisis point locally, nationally and globally.

The Museum is grateful for the expert collaborators; their generosity, time and expertise which led to the success of the film.

- The Honourable Lindy Jenkins, retired Supreme Court Justice and Chair of the Law Reform Commission: Narrative and unpacking elements of the trial
- Dr Caroline Ingram, Historian and Museum Curator: Women's rights in late nineteenth century Western Australia
- Mark O'Hare, Deputy CEO, Stopping Family Violence: Perpetrator accountability and stereotypes which shift blame onto victim-survivors
- Emeritus Professor Peter Handford, University of Western Australia: Colonial Laws in 1876 which affected the trial of Kenneth Brown
- Dr Jennie Gray, CEO, Women's Legal Services WA: Victim-survivor credibility and contemporary issues affecting access to justice

The film has received excellent feedback. Viewers have reflected that contemporary analysis is sobering but critical.

The film was created Andrew Clarke at Edify Media and supported by The City of Perth and Lotterywest Boorloo Heritage Festival.

Artwork Loan

The inclusion of an artwork in the court room at the Old Court House Law Museum provides an opportunity to create an interpretive and aesthetic link to the special exhibition. This year the Museum was privileged to receive the short-term loan of Sandra Hill's Artwork, *Maid to Order / In Training* (2010) from the Janet Holmes à Court Collection. This artwork was chosen by the Museum to include First Nations Women into the conversation of family and domestic violence which The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer exhibition explores.

The artist, Sandra Hill is a Minang/Wardandi/Bibbulmum/Ballardong Noongar woman who lives and works in Balingup, Western Australia. This artwork was chosen to invite Museum visitors to consider the wider scope of gendered violence as a cultural import of colonisation. Sandra Hill's artwork is a creative response to the Government's assimilation policies which imposed colonial domesticity upon Noongar women in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Sandra Hill also features in the Past to Present Gallery, with part of her oral history from the National Library accessible in the Stolen Generations audio exhibit.



Andrew Clarke, Edify Media Director during filming.

Touch Screen Kiosk

The Museum's touch screen kiosk, installed into the Past to Present gallery in November 2024, is providing excellent opportunities to maintain digital assets from previous exhibitions.

Thanks to support from the Wright Burt Foundation, the Museum was able to purchase and install a digital touch screen kiosk to expand interpretation in the gallery. The new kiosk has lightbox3 gallery software installed, which facilitates multiple menu options, allowing visitors to experience a range of materials from current and previous special exhibitions. This technology expands the Museum's capacity of stories it can tell and diversifies the ways in which stories are told.

Since installation there has been a monthly average of 178 viewing sessions on the lightbox touchscreen, with the average viewing session of just over 6 and a half minutes. Screen viewing sessions have increased an average of two minutes after the inclusion of new content in April for *The Unfortunate Woman* special exhibition.

In addition to viewing content from the special exhibition, visitors can read articles published by the Museum, sign up for the Quarter Session newsletter, discover Collection items which are digitised but not on display, read a transcribed and digitised notebook and watch the *A Just Legacy* (2024) short film.



Visitors enjoying, last year's exhibition film *A Just Legacy* and a range of audio visual materials accessible on the gallery's touch screen.



Re-imagining the Judge's Chambers Gallery

New Film on Noongar Law

The Museum's mission is to represent all systems of law that have been part of Western Australia's history; Aboriginal, British and Australian. The Museum's vision is to be a site where truth-telling enables reflection on themes of justice then and now.

The Museum has been working to expand Aboriginal Peoples' voices in its interpretation and to update exhibition content. Thanks to funding from Lotterywest, the Museum has been working with Bibbul Ngarma Aboriginal Association to create and produce a short film on traditional Noongar law.

With Ilona McGuire as the creative lead, the Bibbul Ngarma team chose to animate the Dowingerup Waters dreamtime story; an example of the sensitive food knowledge and laws; practiced for hundreds of generations here in the southwest of Western Australia.

This project facilitated the coming together of four generations of family to share knowledge and breathe new life into this ancient story. The Museum is thrilled to share the trailer of [Kwejuk Nyitting: Long Ago Dreaming](#), designed by Ilona McGuire, informed by the cultural knowledge generously shared by elders. The Museum warmly acknowledges Clive Smith, Walter McGuire Jnr, May McGuire/Stack and elders of the past, Pop Cliff Humphries and Pop Walter McGuire Snr, whose stories and cultural knowledge lives on in this offering.

The Museum is grateful to Lotterywest for its support of the Kwejuk Nyitting: Long Ago Dreaming film.

From here the Museum will work to re-imagine the Judge's Chamber gallery. The focus of this upcoming project is to continue diversifying voices within the Museum's interpretation and incorporating the Kwejuk Nyitting: Long Ago Dreaming film into the gallery.

The Judge's Chambers gallery was completed in 2012, the displays currently tell the story of law in the first 50 years of the colony. The Museum is continuing its collaboration with cultural consultants Bibbul Ngarma, to update Noongar law content in the gallery which predates colonial settlement and spans millennia. This is a much-needed opportunity to provide local, interstate and international visitors with an understanding of law specific to this area and provide a space for truth-telling and to champion diverse forms of storytelling.

Animation process by Tracey Kim from animatic stage to polished final render.



Public Programs and Events

Boorloo Heritage Festival Collaborations

The Boorloo Heritage Festival facilitated cross-institutional collaborations which encouraged new encounters and experiences at the Museum.

The Museum was a host venue for the Singing in the City program which hosted several choirs; these events allowed visitors a chance to experience the Old Court House's incredible acoustics.

Sunday 13 April was one of the festival's major activation days, the Supreme Court held its biannual open day and the Museum received 1,254 visitors! The Museum and the Supreme Court collaborated to hold a fundraising sausage sizzle to feed the crowds of visitors during the

peak lunchtime period. The Supreme Court generously used their Boorloo Heritage Festival grant money to fund the sausage sizzle and allowed the Old Court House Law Museum to operate the stall, \$1,800 was raised, with 100% of proceeds going towards the Museum.

It was a team effort and great fun - the Museum hopes the sausage sizzle will make a return at open days in the future!

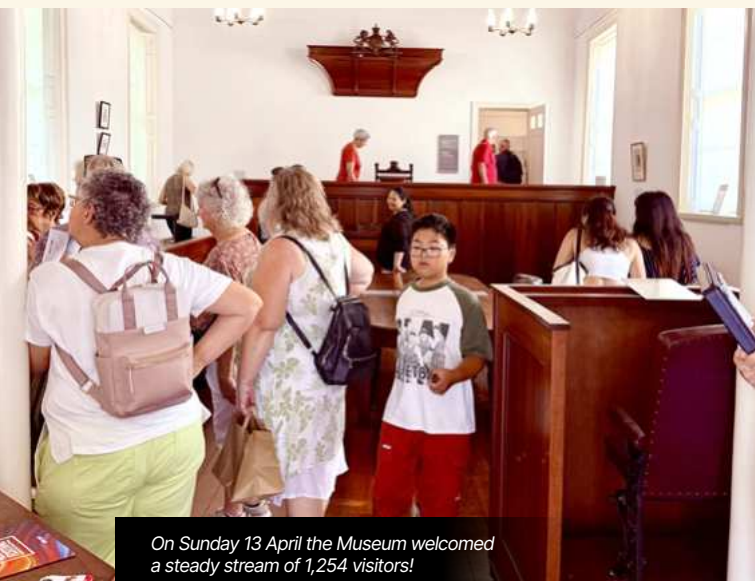
Thank you to all those who helped out on the day; Museum volunteers, Foundation Committee Members, Law Society of Western Australia's volunteers, staff and Law Society President Gary Mack.



Tiffany, Saras, Jessica, Leanne and Megan during the Boorloo Heritage Festival open day sausage sizzle.



Áine and Gary at the Boorloo Heritage Festival open day sausage sizzle.



On Sunday 13 April the Museum welcomed a steady stream of 1,254 visitors!



Echoes of Ukraine performing in the Old Court House Law Museum for Singing in the City.

Special Exhibition Launch

The exhibition launch, held on the evening of 9 April, was an unforgettable occasion. Friends, supporters and project collaborators were invited to enjoy drinks and canapes in the car park of the Museum which was transformed into an ambient event space.

Guests were told to be prepared for 'a surprise outdoor element' - the surprise was the world premiere of *'The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer'* short film, which was projected onto the side of the 1836 building. This projection was visually stunning and served a site-specific purpose. The story danced across the very walls where Kenneth Brown's trial for the murder of Mary Ann Brown took place. This was a creative choice to encourage institutional critique and a reflection on individual and collective biases which inhibit justice for victims-survivors of domestic violence.

The Museum collaborated with the team at VJZoo to map the shape of the building and project the film. VJZoo also developed a digital reproduction of the wallpaper samples which were found underneath the floorboards earlier in the year, in what was the Judge's Chambers. The design motif of the wallpaper was projected onto the Old Court House throughout the event. There is great future potential in utilising the car park area as an events space and in illuminating the building, transforming it into a canvas for powerful ideas.

After enjoying the atmosphere and projection, visitors were able to explore the exhibition inside the Museum.

Thanks to VJZoo for the wallpaper reproduction, projection, photography and soundtrack, Prescription Entertainment for transforming the space and ensuring the night went to plan and Grace Sanders for stunning event photography.



World premiere of *The Unfortunate Woman* short film projected onto the Old Court House.

Panel Discussion

The Old Court House Law Museum contributed to this year's Law Week programming by hosting and organising a sellout panel discussion inspired by the special exhibition, *The Unfortunate Woman v Her Well-Respected Killer*. The exhibition content interprets themes of domestic violence using the 1876 trial of Kenneth Brown as a case study to make connections; past and present. The goal of the panel discussion was to extend themes of the exhibition to discuss the future of women's access to justice and perpetrator accountability.

Facilitated by Kate Wellington, CEO, the Law Society of Western Australia, with panellists: The Hon Lindy Jenkins, Dr Jennie Gray, Gail Beck OAM, and Mark O'Hare. The panel discussed sobering statistics, lived experience, legal and cultural barriers to justice and perpetrator focussed strategies for combatting gender violence in today's social media-driven society.



Panellists Gail Beck OAM, Mark O'Hare, Jennie Gray, The Hon Lindy Jenkins and Kate Wellington.



Full house for *The Unfortunate Woman* Panel Discussion, Law Week event.

Volunteer Events

To thank volunteers for their time and dedication, the Museum tries to create meaningful opportunities for volunteers to learn, connect, and enjoy each other's company through workshops, tours, and talks.

Throughout the year, the Museum partnered with other cultural heritage organisations to organise reciprocal tours for volunteers. The Museum team hosted and participated in private tours at Government House and Royal Perth Hospital Museum.

Emeritus Professor Peter Handford expanded the Law Society, Museum and volunteer team's knowledge with an informal lecture about the history of the Old Court House, discussing the Court of Quarter Sessions and the formation of the Supreme Court in Western Australia.

The Museum will continue to provide opportunities for volunteers to learn more about local history and build the community around the Museum.

Interested in volunteering? Register your interest [here](#).



Volunteers, Kathy, Freda and Casey at the special exhibition launch.



Museum Staff and Volunteers on a private tour of Government House and gardens.

Museum Volunteers

The Museum is grateful to the team of dedicated volunteers for their ongoing support and input.

The volunteers welcome local, national and international visitors to the Museum and Perth's oldest building. Each volunteer brings unique skills, perspectives and energy to their role. The Museum is grateful for the diversity and generosity which the volunteer team contributes to the visitor experience and community around the Museum and acknowledges that weekend operation would not be possible without their input.

Thank you for helping to make the Museum a welcoming and inspiring place for all. It is important to note the economic value of volunteer contributions to the Museum. Volunteer contributions demonstrate not only an economic value; their contributions also demonstrate tangible evidence of the importance that the Western Australian community places in the Museum and the services it provides.

Thank you to the brilliant and dedicated 2024/2025 Volunteer Team which has grown immensely.

- Asvira
- Freda Bajrovic
- Jasmine Ball
- Kathy Barnes
- Elizabeth Borrello
- Karen Carrington
- Casey Chan
- Trisha Christian
- Aaron Eacott
- Nina Ford
- Peter Handford
- Portia Ho
- John Hylton Davies
- Moira Joyce
- Tim Leake
- Suné Nel
- Matthew Parry
- Randy Sharpe
- Saras Sundram
- Jessica Tao
- Zoe Thwaites

Volunteer Impact



\$69,855

Economic value of volunteer contributions



21

Number of volunteers



1,460.5

Total volunteer hours

Social Impact



The Museum continued social impact measurement aligned to the [Education and Community Services Program Logic](#) in 2024/2025. The Museum carries out social impact measurement to:

- Promote education and lifelong learning
- Encourage empathy, engagement and reflection
- Address social challenges
- Ensure relevance and support

By facilitating reflection, supporting the development of civics education and creating a shared value between the legal profession and the broader community, the Museum allows visitors to explore how we, as a society, understand our shared histories, what those shared histories teach us and how they impact on the present.



Cost Benefit

A Building and Collection of State, National and International significance.³

A [Cost Benefit Analysis](#) carried out in 2023 by Far Lane Consulting demonstrates the economic benefits of the Museum and the services it provides extend beyond its operational cost.

It is pleasing to note record Museum visitation in 2024/2025 which then further increases, and adds to, the Cost Benefit of the Museum.



\$2.01 million¹

Annual net benefit to Western Australia



\$18.30 million²

Ten-year net benefit to Western Australia



¹ and ²: Law Society of WA: Education and Community Services, Cost Benefit Analysis Report 2023 – Far Lane Consulting.

³: Dr Jonna Sassoon, Statement of Significance of the Old Court House Law Museum, Perth, March 2019.

Cultural Impact



Old Court House
Law Museum
OLDEST BUILDING IN PERTH

Reflection and Social Justice

"The Museum facilitates important conversations about past and contemporary justice and injustice in Western Australia."



"The Museum encouraged me to consider the enduring impact of colonisation in Western Australia."



Western Australia's Cultural Heritage

"How important is the Old Court House (Law Museum) to the culture and heritage of the City of Perth? "



"How important is the Old Court House (Law Museum) to the cultural heritage of Western Australia? "



Unique and Valuable

"The Museum creates a unique and valuable link between the community, the courts and the legal profession past and present."



"The Museum provided me with new or different perspectives on Western Australia's legal and social history. "



A Charitable Entity

The Museum continued to explore fundraising opportunities in 2024/2025 through its Give and Grow campaign and engaged with foundations, corporates and individuals.

\$246,275 in tax-deductible donations was raised in 2024/25, enabling the Museum to make positive progress towards its goals:

- Expanded access to the Museum
- Improved visitor experience through re-imagining the Judges Chambers gallery
- Digitisation of the Collection and publishing it online
- Collection management work to conserve the Collection

The Museum is very grateful to the Wright Burt Foundation and is pleased to note the increase in law firm, founding champions and individual donor support.

With the continued support of our donors, key stakeholders, the Foundation Committee, collaborative partners, and volunteers, this small court house with its big stories has a bright future.



[Donate Today](#)



Keep in touch



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LinkedIn

In January, the Museum launched a LinkedIn account as part of the Museum's broader commitment to meaningful engagement with professional audiences. This platform allows the Museum to connect with industry peers, potential partners, and supporters in a more targeted and professional context. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, which focus on community outreach and public programming, LinkedIn provides a space to share behind-the-scenes insights, institutional achievements and sector-relevant updates. The Museum is working on growing its voice on this platform and since launching, the LinkedIn account welcomed over 200 new followers. The Museum is looking forward to engaging with cultural, heritage and professional sectors through this platform.

Quarter Sessions

The Quarter Sessions newsletter began in 2024 and continues to sustain an active engagement rate. Named after the type of matters heard at the Old Court House, Perth's first purpose built court house, from 2 January 1837. The digital newsletter is emailed quarterly and connects with a diverse range of communities locally, nationally and internationally. Quarter Sessions is continuing to steadily expand its reach and follower base with 73 new subscribers this quarter.

Subscribers are the first to receive behind-the-scenes updates, facts, invitations and Collection, community and Museum updates. The newsletter continues to be a hit with readers, with a 50% open rate.

[Subscribe](#) if you would like to sign up for Museum news and if you would like to see what it's all about, you can read the last edition [here](#).

The Law Society
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
The voice of the legal profession in Western Australia

Old Court House
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Welcome to Quarter Sessions





Old Court House Law Museum

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Visit


 **Opening hours**
Tuesday - Sunday | 10am - 4pm


 **Stirling Gardens, Perth**
(next to the Supreme Court of Western Australia)


[Google Maps](#)  [Virtual tour](#)


 [Facebook](#)  [Instagram](#)  [LinkedIn](#)

Contact

 (08) 9324 8688

 museum@lawsocietywa.asn.au

 lawsocietywa.asn.au/museum

 [Sign up to Quarter Sessions](#)

Donate today

