

Ron Rathbone Local History Prize 2024

History: Made To Be Remembered

Why Is Bayside's Local History Important?

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History: Made to be remembered. Why is Bayside's local history important?

"Our Bayside local governments are rich with history as a result of the contributions made by people, places, and events that have shaped our area we call home."

- Councillor Sedrak in his statement supporting his Notice of Motion.

History on the local level is not just made to be then forgotten. History is made to be explored and celebrated, a precious legacy left behind by individuals and events we may have never seen but are touched by their actions and consequences. Local history is the study of the triumphs and struggles of ordinary people in our community, which then make our history extraordinary. Hence Bayside history is vital in fostering research and connection between present generations and the past generations to create a diverse and inclusive society for the future generations to come. The rich history of Bayside is shaped by the people in the Bayside region, with an evident transition to multiculturalism as a reflection of our changing Australian society, historical places such as Botany and key monuments of cultural significance, and events Bayside holds to celebrate the various walks of life Bayside residents come from. In order to encourage research into local histories, it is vital for the Bayside community to preserve records in the context in which they originated so that they are understandable and accessible to future generations. After all, history is made to be acknowledged, not forgotten.



Figure 1: Albert the King of the River

The first inhabitants of the Bayside area were the First Nations people, including the Gweagal, Bidjigal, and Gadigal Clans. Research has illustrated that the First Nations peoples' occupation of the Australian continent goes as far back as 60 000 years. Archaeological evidence from the shores of the Kurnell peninsula at Botany Bay has yielded evidence of the Aboriginal settlement dating back at least 5000 years. However, records and artefacts of the Indigenous peoples historical past are fast-fading; many artworks and cultural monuments have been eroded by time or by the evolving urban environment. Consequently, research into the history of pre-European settlement and Indigenous interactions with European settlers is particularly important to the Bayside community in order to understand and appreciate the traditions of the Indigenous clans that lived on the Bayside land. Among the



Figure 2: Photograph is labelled 'Last 5 full bloods'

numerous photographs in the Local History collection of Rockdale Library are two prints of the indigenous people of the southern area. Figure 1 is titled Albert, King of the Georges River, and Figure 2 showcases 5 people photographed at Kurnell. Both photographs provide eyewitness insight into Aboriginal life post-European Settlement. Figure 1 highlights the resistance provided by the Indigenous community, and the retaliation to the discriminatory policies towards the First Nations people. In addition, the prevalent attitudes towards indigenous people are portrayed in the 1888 photograph named "Last five full bloods," highlighting the common belief that the indigenous

natives were gradually becoming extinct. These values aligned with the Protectionism policies in place in the 1800s and early 1900s. Consequently, due to the extensive research into the lifestyle of the First Nations people and the local history of Bayside in relation to the First Nations people, such as commissioning the Bringing Them Home Report, Bayside councils and Australian legislative bodies have been able to revise and change their programs and implement resources into supporting First Nations individuals. Today the Bayside council supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart in line with its REFLECT Reconciliation Action Plan, and the First Nations population represents 1.1% of the total



Figure 3

Bayside population. Furthermore, artworks created post-colonisation encapsulate the perspectives of Bayside heritage and the First Nations contribution to Bayside’s local history. “Australia: The First 100 Years” by Andrew Garran (Figure 3) portrays the initial interaction between Indigenous individuals and European settlers. The artwork accentuates the importance of artworks in preserving Bayside local history. By analysing and appreciating the artwork, it allows the individual to reflect on the hardships and perseverance of the First Nations people in regaining their identity, hence compelling the individual to challenge their own attitudes and advocate for an egalitarian society. The local history is then able to encourage individuals to proactively engage in community-based campaigns such as National Sorry Day. Hence, it is clear that exploring the local history of Bayside has enabled residents to develop a greater awareness of the indigenous culture and promoted

inclusivity in the community.

Furthermore, the Bayside community is culturally diverse. This is evident in the increase in the number of residents born overseas, with 48.1% of people in the Bayside Council born overseas in 2021 compared to the 35% in 2001. It is observed that in 2001, although Europe still dominated as the most popular birthplace, China replaced the UK as the largest country of birth for migrants living in Kogarah. In comparison, in 2021, China continues to dominate as the largest country of birth, with almost 12,000 individuals born in China; however, there is

an increase in emerging groups, such as an increase in Nepalese, Greek, and Indonesian migrant residents, as seen in Figure 4.

Birthplace - Ranked by size

Bayside Council area - Overseas born (Usual residence)

Birthplace	2021			2001			Change 2001 to 2021
	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	
China	11,801	6.9	4.6	4,876	4.0	3.1	+6,925
Nepal	4,683	2.7	1.1	294	0.2	0.0	+4,389
Indonesia	4,480	2.5	0.7	1,343	1.1	0.5	+3,137
Greece	3,027	2.2	0.5	4,415	3.6	0.9	-1,388
United Kingdom	3,812	2.2	3.5	3,227	2.6	4.7	+585
Philippines	3,558	2.0	1.7	1,881	1.5	1.2	+1,677
Lebanon	3,384	1.9	1.2	3,004	2.4	1.3	+380
North Macedonia	2,915	1.7	0.2	3,094	2.5	0.3	-1,179
India	2,910	1.7	0.6	781	0.6	0.9	+2,129
New Zealand	2,818	1.5	1.6	2,386	2.4	2.1	-568

Figure 4: Birthplaces ranked by size from 2021 census

Furthermore, language reflects the cultural diversity of Bayside, a touchstone in connecting families to their histories and contributing to the local history of Bayside. Between 2001 and 2021, the number of people who used a language other than English at home increased by 31,699, or 54.2%, and the

number of people who used English increased by 18,002, or 32.2%. The statistics prove that more individuals of different ethnicities are willing to establish their livelihoods in Bayside due to various factors, such as common cultural groups in the vicinity, which enable migrants to



Figure 5: Flourishing cultural restaurants

adjust in a different country. As a result, this makes individuals more accepted and secure in a community, while also expanding their cultural group's prominence in the community. In addition, by exploring the local history of Bayside, one is able to uncover trends in the demographic makeup. This is crucial in understanding the influences that are changing the Bayside vicinity. To accommodate the increase in diverse cultures, there has been a change in businesses in the area, including a boom in cultural shops such as Asian groceries and restaurants,

as seen in Figures 5 and 6. This demonstrates a change in the history of retail commerce in Bayside as businesses are establishing themselves where they perceive an appropriate community to trade with.



Figure 6: Emerging Asian grocery shops

In addition, the Bayside community has developed many renowned individuals that have represented Australia on the international stage. Clive James (1939-2019) was born in Kogarah and was educated at Sydney Technical High School and Sydney University. He was



Mr. Clive James

well known for his original television shows, interviews, and commentaries, which he presented with an organic type of Australian humour and craft. Due to his plethora of works, including books, literary criticism, and television journalism, James became known as one of the most 'influential metropolitan critics of his generation.' Another notable figure is Michelle Ford (1962-) who is an Australian sportswoman. She grew up in the suburb of Sans Souci and was educated at St. George Girls High School. Ford developed her passion for swimming, and one of her notable

achievements was winning gold in the 800m freestyle in the 1980s Summer Olympics at Moscow. She was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1994 as recognition of her achievements. These are few of the numerous notable figures Bayside is proud to recognise, highlighting how individuals shape the local history of Bayside and influence future generations to strive for personal excellence. Therefore, it is vital to recognise that individuals and cultural groups drive the vehicle of history, influencing



Michelle Ford

and imprinting their achievements and values into the rich local history of Bayside.

Furthermore, another key aspect of Bayside's local history are the places of historical and cultural significance. From the outset, Botany Bay holds a significant place in Bayside history. It is where Captain Cook first landed in Australia on 29 April 1770, marking the beginning of Australian colonial settlement. Though colonisation in Australia is a contentious debate, due to the discrimination indigenous populations faced, it is still significant as European



Figure 7: The Allawah Hotel

colonisation has shaped modern Bayside and Australia. Through uncovering Botany's local history, individuals are able to understand Bayside's colonial history and establish a progressive society by reflecting on the errors made towards marginalised groups in the past. In addition, buildings and monuments play a vital role in enabling the individual to appreciate and acquire an understanding of preceding architectural methodology. An example of interwar classical architecture is the Allawah Hotel, as seen

in Figure 7, which was built in 1928 in response to the opening of the Allawah railway station. Furthermore, the hotel holds significant cultural value as it was the first site in the Kogarah vicinity to hold Jewish services, highlighting how architectural monuments impacted local communities in the past and continue to influence the present. Furthermore, as seen in

Religion - Ranked by size

Religion	2021			2001			Change
	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	Number	%	Greater Sydney %	
Western (Roman) Catholic	39,932	22.3	22.1	36,465	26.0	26.1	+4,569
Islam	15,275	8.7	6.3	10,146	6.2	3.4	+5,129
Greek Orthodox	14,929	8.5	3.3	13,429	10.0	2.9	+1,500
Anglican	8,329	4.8	9.2	15,967	13.0	20.2	-7,638
Buddhism	7,799	4.4	3.8	3,410	2.8	3.4	+4,389
Hinduism	7,664	4.4	4.8	1,217	1.1	1.2	+6,447
Christian (All)	5,262	3.0	2.5	948	0.8	1.1	+4,314
Macedonian Orthodox	3,327	2.2	0.3	4,940	3.8	0.4	-1,613
Presbyterian and Reformed	1,836	1.0	1.5	2,351	2.1	3.0	-1,515
Eastern Orthodox	1,563	0.9	0.4	1,109	0.9	0.3	+454

Figure 8: Religions in Bayside ranked in size

Figure 8, the largest religious group in 2021 was Christianity, which comprised 47.7% of the total population of Bayside. Hence, religious buildings also hold great historical significance for the Bayside community. An notable example would be St. Paul's Anglican Church, which was consecrated on 21st September 1868. Additionally, due to Bayside becoming more culturally diverse, there has been an emergence of religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and



St Paul's Anglican Church

Hinduism, as seen in Figure 8. This is seen in the formation of the Fatima Al-Zahra Mosque in Arncliffe, which was established in 1980. These



Fatima Al-Zahra

institutions play a significant role in Bayside history as they showcase the cultural diversity and dynamic Bayside demographic. Furthermore, these institutions today play a vital role in providing an opportunity for individuals that hold similar values and beliefs and are a vehicle for creating a community accessible to all. In addition, Bayside hosts war memorials to commemorate the war effort of Bayside residents and provides individuals the

opportunity to reflect and remember those who served for Australia. A notable example is the Kogarah War Memorial, seen in Figure 9. This memorial, through its solemn presence, serves to remind society of the consequences of conflict being prevalent in society. Therefore, places and monuments in Bayside hold significant historical importance to Bayside's local history as they allow individuals to reunite as a whole community, and history plays the role of educating Bayside communities of Bayside's history of sacrifice and the aftermath of violence - something still prevalent in our global society.



Figure 9: Kogarah War Memorial

In addition, Bayside hosts numerous events to celebrate and reflect on its rich history. From the outset, Bayside annually holds NAIDOC Week as an opportunity to celebrate and understand the “rich culture, history, and



Figure 10: NAIDOC Week

achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.” As seen in the photograph Figure 10, the showcasing of traditional customs such as dances allows Bayside residents to be enlightened about the indigenous people's culture and enables First Nations people to demonstrate their identity and value. Furthermore, Bayside commemorates the sacrifice of Australian soldiers, who make a significant impact on Bayside's local history, by supporting RSL clubs and hosting ANZAC Day Dawn services, as seen in Figure 11. This aligns with Bayside's values showcased by the perspective of Bayside's mayor Saravinoski through “I am

proud...to support....RSL clubs....to help ensure future generations never forget the courage, self-sacrifice, and compassion of the ANZACs,” in a statement she made in the 2024 ANZAC Day services. This is especially significant to the local veterans and their families in the Bayside community. Moreover, Bayside promotes inclusivity by celebrating the



Figure 11: ANZAC Day commemoration at Bayside

cultures of ethnic groups. An example of this would be the annual Chinese New Year through a series of events in the local libraries and demonstrating Bayside's cultural inclusivity by decorating public spaces such as town centres with lanterns and traditional dragon dances as seen in Figures 12 and 13. This has a positive



Figure 12: Public Spaces decorated with Lanterns

externality on the local Asian communities by preserving the rich cultural heritage and allowing for more members of the public to participate. Therefore, by embracing the diversity in the Bayside community by hosting events to celebrate and commemorate the values of different individuals/communities, one is able to sustain a rich local history that values harmony and community progression.



Figure 13: Chinese New Year Dragon Dances

In conclusion, exploring and sustaining the rich local history of Bayside is crucial for the personal development of Bayside residents, especially in a time of volatility and uncertainty. By uncovering the past, through understanding the cultures and values of the people who reside in Bayside, analysing the architecture and the significance of historical monuments and by participating in multicultural and commemorative events, individuals and communities are able to make informed decisions and advocate for a progressive society. After all, history is made to be remembered.

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