

# **President's Report 2016**

The year just past has been a very busy one for the Council. We continued to try out different things to get our members and others engaged in interesting activities. More clan societies are joining us as our collective national and international interests flourish and are shared, and more information becomes available through our services. Plus, we have a great time at our events.

## **Council's Focus**

The Council's main focus for 2016 was to make Scottish Week a success, especially with our Honoured Guests this year, Sir Malcolm MacGregor of MacGregor, Convenor of the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, and Fiona, Lady MacGregor of MacGregor, Lord Lieutenant of Dumfriesshire.

## **2017 Themes**

The theme for 2017 is taken from the Scottish Government's Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology. This is most appropriate given the nature of our work here in Australia.

## **Projects**

As we predicted last year, the work on Scottish 'hot spots' has had challenges, identifying the scope, depth and approach to the task. The one major issue we have is the people and the energy to carry out projects. Please contact us if you are interested in getting involved in any projects.

Other projects discussed for further work include raising the profile of the Scottish Diaspora and their contribution to Australia's history, past and present. Unfortunately, we are finding that increasingly local councils are not supporting their local community event organisers, or that gathering organisers are having difficulty remembering from whence they came, preferring corporatisation over culture. This means that their communities ultimately lose a unique feature of their identity, and lost opportunities for tourism and dollars spent in the local area. Those that work with the cultural organisations enjoy continued active support and a greater degree success.

There is good news, we are supporting a new Scottish event being held in Quirindi, New South Wales on 28 January 2017 (with the support of the local council and community organisations).

## **Events**

There are a number of iconic events that reflect our Scottish heritage from both our Scottish as well as Australian roots, viz. Burns Dinner, Lachlan Macquarie Birthday, St Andrews Day, and Scottish Heritage Week (Sydney). We have decided to incorporate a Burns event in Scottish Week rather than to hold it a week before the Macquarie dinner.

## **Scottish Week**

It was a pleasure to have as our Honoured Guests for Scottish Week 2016, Sir Malcolm and Fiona MacGregor of MacGregor. To start, we were hosted by Co-Patron of Scottish Week, Rosemary Samios, at a reception to introduce our guests to Australia, and by Frank and Suzanne Davidson and Susan Cooke who prepared a wonderful dinner. We were privileged to hear two excellent lectures on different aspects of Scottish history by Professor Elizabeth Ewan, of the University of Guelph, Canada, and Dr Alison Holland, of Macquarie University. A major initiative was the Highland Festival at St Leonard's Park, North Sydney, managed by Nea MacCulloch. Feedback about this event was excellent.

The Clans and Families forum attracted a good deal of interest on topics presented by our Honoured Guests, the MacGregors, Dr Matthew Glozier, President of the Sydney Society of Scottish History and Stephen Szabo, Secretary of the Australia Heraldry Society, as well as a general discussion on the theme of working together. There is a report later in this newsletter from the forum. With a boat trip up the Parramatta River, we had an excellent tour of the Parramatta old city precinct with

guide Brian Powyer, President of the Parramatta Historical Society and National Trust board member. This included a presentation about the Aboriginal heritage of the area by Kerrie Kenton of the Darug people.

The annual Tartan Day Kirkin' o' the Tartan service was held at Hunter Baillie Presbyterian Church, Annandale. Sir Malcolm has reported back to the Scottish Government that the Scotland Australia Cairn, Mosman, is in good order. We thank Mosman Council for their continued support. The week concluded with the Parliamentary lunch hosted by The Hon. David Elliott, MP. Thank you to Barbara Gurney for publishing the program.

It was a very busy week and I am sure that the MacGregors enjoyed the rest and hospitality of Clan Gregor's Overseas Representative, Frank McGregor in Tasmania in the week following. I should add that the support of Frank McGregor and Ken and Fae McGregor in Sydney helped to make the week a great success.



Scotland Australia Cairn inspection, Mosman, 2017 (picture: M Buchanan)

#### St Andrew's Day and Kirkin' o' the Tartan services

The St Andrews Kirkin' o' the Tartan services in Sydney (St Stephens Uniting Church) and in Canberra (Presbyterian Church of Saint Andrew) are important services commemorating the time following the Battle of Culloden when wearing the tartan had dire outcomes. Thank you to the Ministers, Church Elders and Congregations, Choirs, Clan and Council members, and Pipers for enabling this important event each year.

#### Scottish Week 2017

You are all invited to participate in Scottish Week 2017 (23 to 27 June) with our Honoured Guests, John and Elizabeth Macleod of Raasay.

### **Scotland Clans and Families Forum**

At our last meeting, the forum welcomed the new Chair of the Scottish Clans and Families forum, Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs, and the New Zealand representative to the network. The forum considered aspects of Scotland's Year of Heritage, History and Archaeology for 2017 and future years' programs.

### **Thank you Sponsors**

We thank Emirates Airlines for their generosity in providing the prize each year for our major fundraiser, a return trip for two to Glasgow.

### **Thank you Members, Patrons and Liaison Officers and Committee**

I wish to thank Council members generally for continuing to support what we are doing and will do in the future in relation to Scottish heritage and culture in Australia.

Thank you to the Council's Patrons, Committee and Liaison Officers for their support and effort in 2016. In particular, I wish to give special mention to both Nea MacCulloch for her initiative during Scottish Week events and to super seller, Susan Wanless, who continued her enthusiastic approach with the Emirates raffle.

We encourage our members to participate and to provide ideas for projects and articles for the newsletter.

Slàinte

Malcolm Buchanan  
President