



**Prahran Mechanics' Institution
and Circulating Library**
(from 23 February 2022)
PMI Victorian History Library Inc.



Annual Report

2021

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Contributors to the PMI Victorian History Library Inc. Annual Report 2021

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 Ellen Coates – Collections Librarian and Volunteer Coordinator
 Riannon Berkeley – Library Officer (Grants and Events)
 Ben Quin- Committee Treasurer
 Mike Trickett – Secretary, Cinema and Theatre Historical Society
 Gary S Bester – Treasurer, Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria
 Dr Donald Barker – President, Victorian Rail History Library

1. Acknowledgement of Country

PMI Victorian History Library Inc. acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which this report was written.

The PMI Victorian History Library Inc. is located on lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation.

We pay our respects to elders past and present.

Sovereignty has never been ceded, it always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

We also acknowledge First Nations people's rich history of knowledge keeping and knowledge management that is an inspiration to us all.



2. President's Report

As the year 2021 neared its end PMI was moving steadily to its new incorporation under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. The incorporation will mark a major milestone in our history that reaches back to the mid nineteenth century. By the time of the 2021 AGM in May 2022, the Prahran Mechanics' Institution and Circulating Library will be known by its new name PMI Victorian History Library Inc. It was the wish of the State Government that PMI move away from its own Act of Parliament and seek incorporation.

The Committee knew the process of moving from our Act to an incorporated association would be complex requiring expert advice. Sharrock Pitman Legal was engaged on 30 May 2021 to assist in the process of the incorporation and the subsequent actions.

The Committee discussed the first draft of the constitution in June 2021 and adopted a timetable, including a process of consultation with members. The Committee sought written and verbal feedback. A Zoom Q & A consultation with members was held on 27 October and feedback considered by the Committee. The constitution was formally adopted by the Committee on 9 December 2021 and passed on to the lawyers to register PMI as an association with Consumer Affairs Victoria. The Committee will become a Board in the new year.

Following incorporation there are further steps including reaffirming the existing, or being granted a new Australian Business Number (ABN), transferring assets, identifying and amending the numerous PMI registrations.

During 2021 the Committee met 11 times. This frequency of meetings reflects the challenges we faced during the year – COVID-19, major renovations to our two Chapel Street properties and the departure of the Secretary/Librarian in November.

At the Annual General Meeting held on 16 June, Isabella Webster was elected to fill the vacancy resulting from the resignation of Tim McKenna at the beginning of 2021. The Committee met on 24 June to elect officer bearers. Michelle Negus Cleary was elected President; Mike Scott was elected Vice President and Ben Quin was elected Treasurer.

With the guidance of the President, in February the Committee engaged Lane Commercial to manage the properties at 259 and 261 Chapel Street, Prahran. The arrangement with the previous property managers Fitzroys was cancelled. Lane Commercial advised the Committee to commence renovations on the properties to make them sound and more attractive to tenants. Selling the Chapel Street properties was discussed by the Committee, but the properties could not be sold while we operated under the existing PMI Act, unless the Victorian Parliament gave permission for this to occur. Selling the properties could only be done once we are incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and once the PMI Act has been revoked by Parliament.

In May 2021, Heads of Agreement were approved for the lease of 259 Chapel Street to Connections, and 261 Chapel to Daily Jocks. Both leases were dependent on the completion of refurbishment. Connections began trading at 259 Chapel Street from early December.

Quotes were sought on the refurbishments of 259 and 261 Chapel Street with demolition works commencing at 261 Chapel in May 2021. The quote by In-Line Projects was accepted by the Committee on 30 September for building works at 259 and 261 Chapel Street. The works in 259 Chapel were completed by October and the new tenant had moved in and was trading. The building upgrade works for 261 Chapel Street were started in early November 2021 and to be completed in April 2022, with the tenant commencing their retail fit-out works immediately after and their lease beginning from 18 April 2022.

In the early part of 2021, the Committee examined ways in which governance could be improved. One of the first steps was the adoption of a Committee Charter and a Conflict-of-Interest Declaration.

Despite the challenges throughout the year, loans from the Library were back up to the levels achieved in 2019. Hours of opening were adjusted in response to the various COVID lockdowns.

The collection increased by 1,120 items and of these about half were donated. As the collection increases it is expanding to improve coverage of religion and minority voices.

During COVID lockdowns, click and collect proved popular. Membership rose by almost 100 on 2019 levels. We retained the services of 24 volunteers.

The Friends of PMI continued their work and held book sales when possible. Working largely from home the Friends worked on their database of historic places in Victoria. When complete, it will be a searchable database of every town in Victoria and the historical sites and organisations that can be found there.

Services in the Library have been improved by PMI being successful in receiving grants totaling over \$21,000 to cover improved lighting over the shelving and reception area, automatic hand sanitizer dispensers, four laptops and funds to conduct a children's historical creative writing competition.

An area of success was the conduct of Zoom events which were extremely well attended. Subjects included talks on the history of ships, trams and trains as well as several trivia nights for members.

Financially, PMI remains solid with a strong asset base despite the contrary winds of COVID-19 and having the two Chapel Street properties vacant at times during the past two years and having to provide COVID-19 Rent Relief to the third tenant. JobKeeper during 2020 and the first part of 2021 supported the deficiencies in PMI's income.

Staffing was stable until the resignation of the Secretary/Librarian Steven Haby on 29 October 2021. Since Steven Haby's departure, Ellen Coates took on extra duties. The Committee took on operational duties pending the appointment of a Chief Librarian. In reviewing staffing, the Committee approved the creation of a position of Administration Assistant to take some of the operational load from the Chief Librarian.

The Committee authorised the creation of a pool of casual employees which could fill in to ensure there were adequate staff on the premises during the days the Library was open.

Following the commencement of the Chief Librarian, the Committee is committed to reviewing the staffing structure.

PMI is pleased to continue hosting the Cinema and Theatre Historical Society of Australia (CATHS), Mechanics Institutes of Victoria (MIV) and the Victorian Railway History Library (VRHL). Their reports and reports relating to PMI operations follow.

The Committee extends its thanks to the staff, volunteers and Friends for their loyalty and commitment to PMI during a turbulent year. In particular Ellen Coates, whose substantive position is Collections Librarian, stepped up following the resignation of Steven Haby. The combination of paid staff, volunteers, Friends and donors makes PMI a vibrant and continuing service to the Victorian community.

3. Objects

In 2021 the Association is established to be a charity and public library (endorsed as a deductible gift recipient under item 12.1.2 of the table of cultural organisations set out in section 30-100 of the ITAA) pursuing the following charitable objects:

- (a) to provide a circulating and reference library which includes works on the history of the State of Victoria and in particular the history of places in the State of Victoria; and
- (b) to organise and conduct educational activities for the benefit of the Members of the Association and for the general public;
- (c) to encourage, facilitate and promote historical and educational research;
- (d) to act as trustee and to perform and discharge the duties and functions incidental to acting as a trustee where this is incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objects; and
- (e) to do such things as are incidental or ancillary to the attainment of these objects.

4. Library Operations

4.1 Collections

Collections at the PMI faced another challenging year in 2021. But unlike 2020 at least staff had some practice in working from home, so the pivot was not as dramatic, and staff were allowed onsite to run click and collect during all lockdowns which made a massive difference.

As a whole the collection has grown both numerically and in depth in 2021. The lockdowns enabled the Collections Librarian to begin working through some of the backlog, but also to institute some new initiatives aimed at increasing the diversity of the collection. This has included: building new relationships with minority bookshops such as Hares and Hyenas (which specialises in queer material) and Amplify Books (which specialises in Black, Indigenous People of Colour [BIPOC] material), working with minority religious groups to include their stories, actively collecting ephemera, reaching out to First Nations groups and immigrant groups. This is all part of ensuring that as complex a picture of Victoria's history is collected as possible.

One major shift that this approach has entailed is the way in which the Library catalogues and purchases our fiction collection. Many minority groups are writing their stories in fiction before they write them in nonfiction. We, therefore, expanded our subjects when cataloguing fiction and took a more focussed look at the fiction collection, and as such our play and poetry collection is growing too.

Another key part of this project has been diversifying the Library's religion collection. The PMI holds a significant quantity of material on Christian religions, including a lot of church histories. We are lacking, however, in histories of other religions and their places of worship. In 2021 the Collections Librarian began a project to reach out to the peak bodies of all the major religions, and some of the minor ones, to ensure their stories are collected. The outcome has been histories from the Buddhist Council of Victoria- in ephemera form- several general Buddhist histories and one local temple history, several mosque histories, a number of Templer histories, the development of histories from the Hindu Council of Victoria, and a relationship with the Zoroastrians who are writing their history specifically for the PMI's collection. In the spirit of equality non-religious organisations such as the Atheists Society and the Pastafarians were also contacted. The Pastafarians are working on a history for the Library. These new relationships will not only add increased complexity and diversity to the collection, but will also build connections for the PMI with these communities going forward.

This focus on minority voices will be a key plank in the new collection policy that the Collections Librarian began in 2021 and hopes to have completed by the end of 2022.

In between lockdowns and with the help of the Friends all of the books stored in the compactuses in stacks were moved to help accommodate the growing collection. Housing the physical collection is an ongoing project and 2022 will see more

movements and arrangements to make it as accessible as possible for staff and members and to ensure that it all fits.

Not only the physical collection has space issues. Over 2021 the Library hit the capacity of the electronic server. There was an explosion of digital material, a trend that is unlikely to dissipate. We are looking at ways of upgrading the server to better serve the electronic collection and, crucially, to enable flexibility and expansion as we move to collecting more digital material including movies. There should be more news on this in 2022.

The other key area where the collection has grown overall in is COVID collecting. In 2021 the first books about COVID were being written. As well as actively seeking these out, the Library worked on a project of finding other ways to document the COVID world. This was part of recognising that we were living 'History' with a capital H and needed to preserve the present as best as possible for future Victorians. Contemporary collecting is not something the Library does very often, so it was uncharted territory. The key planks in the strategy were to ask members to keep any relevant material they received, especially ephemera, and utilising our periodical collection. This strategy has led to the collection of vaccination stickers and notifications as well as other general ephemera such as notices, brochures, articles and even one COVID themed Christmas card. Used the indexing of periodicals from historical societies across Victoria has ensured that any local COVID stories, no matter how trivial, are indexed. Finally, every one of the Library's notices has been kept; every sign changed and every density limit displayed. These will be added to our archival collection. With all these strategies, as we move into 'COVID-normal' the Library will hopefully have a multi-faceted depiction of Victoria's COVID experience in the collection. More of the 'traditional' material such as books are expected to become available in 2022.

In relation to collections in lockdown, the key difference to 2020 was that we had some chance to plan and that we were allowed onsite to run click and collect. Click and collect operated two days a week and it was great being able to actually help members. Staff scanned material, answered questions, did research, posted a lot of books, and had rows of bags filled with books all lined up for members to collect (see some photos in the photo spread). In providing this service the Library supported a wide range of people; from heritage consultants and architects, to family historians, to fiction writers, to historians, to historical societies to people who just like reading about history.

Staff continued working from home most of the time over 2021 and a lot of cataloguing was done. Working from home also saw the return of Clementine the Highland Cow - highlighting various areas of the collection - and the continuation of the PMI's blog 'Instituting the Past'. The blog was again used to explore the cataloguing work and also to provide an information resource when the books were not accessible. 2021 also saw the introduction of the Friday Riddle - exploring places around Melbourne. Finally in 2021, the PMI's Instagram account was launched, which was primarily used to explore new books in the collection. These fun side projects encouraged engagement with the PMI and the collection and helped provide a bright spot during lockdowns.

Ephemera: There was an increase in active ephemera collecting over 2021. While travel was not as possible, material was not picked up in person, although there were some active call outs for ephemera. As well as putting out a COVID call out, the Collections Librarian emailed every municipal council in Victoria asking them to send in the ephemera for their local areas. Twenty-eight councils sent material, which is an invaluable addition to the collection. A call out was also made through our newsletters for theatre programs and a large donation was received - special archive boxes have been purchased for housing them.

Periodicals: A long-term periodical project was completed in 2021. Since 2020 staff have been working to rehouse the periodicals in new boxes. Jake, one of our volunteers, has been the lead on this project and in 2021 we finally finished. The periodical collection is now housed in smaller, archive safe boxes and each box is labelled with exactly what is in the box. All records are also updated on the catalogue. This change is better for the periodicals, will help ensure their longevity, and make the collection much safer for the staff to access from an OH&S standpoint. (See Jake with the last box in the photo spread.)

Heritage Studies: Each year staff go through every council in Victoria to source any new heritage and conservation studies. In 2021 our volunteer Keith led the project, which resulted in hundreds of heritage and conservation documents added to the collection.

Donations: 2021 was again a year of increased donations. The donation list in the statistics section shows that material has been donated from an incredibly wide range of sources. Some of this material is offered, others have been sought out. The PMI retains its place as the library of last resort, with several public libraries weeding their collections. This included a large donation from Moreland Libraries and ongoing donations from Bayside Libraries. Donations form an essential part of our collection and thanks are conveyed to everyone who donated material to the PMI in 2021. While 2021 was not an easy year, many exciting things happened in the collections, and staff look forward to 2022 and the new opportunities it will bring.

4.2 Volunteers

Volunteering at the PMI in 2021 was another year of ups and downs, interrupted by lockdowns and COVID more generally. It was also a year of connections, of dynamism and of community. Thanks are conveyed to all the volunteers for their support and hard work throughout 2021. In another year of 'unprecedented times,' it has made all the difference to all staff at the PMI. The weekly updates and the resultant interactions with volunteers during lockdowns were a highlight of the Volunteer Coordinator's working week, while working from home.

In 2021 the PMI volunteers completed 3180 hours, equating to 133 days, or 19 weeks, or 5 months. This is a phenomenal effort.

In 2021 the Friends of the PMI worked from home and put in 1805 hours, largely working on the database of historic places in Victoria. When complete it will be a

searchable database of every town in Victoria and the historical sites and organisations that can be found there. In 2021 the Friends focussed on finishing one region so the data can be uploaded and any kinks ironed out. Bellarine is almost complete. The Friends also held their book sale in April which raised a phenomenal \$5175. In 2021 a new Friend was also welcomed - Gail Evans joined in January. Her background is in public relations, publicity, and event management for a variety of institutions including the State Library of Victoria.

The Friends are ably led by Wendy Eldridge whose contribution to the PMI cannot be overstated, as well as the dedicated team. Thanks are conveyed to Wendy Goodwin for her eagle eye over the Australian history books for sale, Jenny Chapman for her amazing book relocation skills, Jenny Campbell and for their book sale and database contributions, Amanda Witt for her help with stacks and Robyn Jones for her book sale contributions.

Thanks are conveyed to all our volunteers; your contribution is much appreciated both in 2021 and ongoing.

Our general volunteers include: Liam Baker- shelving and fixing call numbers; Sonya Cameron- unfailing work on indexing the ephemera collection; Chi Lai Cheng- shelving, weeding and book sourcing; Aaron Edwards- periodical indexing and cataloguing; Lyn Firminger and Tim McKenna- book indexing; Pat Galvin- minute book indexing; Pamela Lee-shelving and weeding; Jake Macdonald- completing the periodical box move, periodical indexing and the periodical audit; Keith McLean- sourcing heritage studies and social media; Marie Pernat- sorting Dewey number and library subjects; Anita Petering- periodical indexing and book displays; Elena Semenova- old periodical indexing, donation sorting, Envrio stories downloading and indexing, shredding and NLA booklist sourcing; Siti Suryanata- book repair, call numbering and bringing in our honorary volunteer - guide dog puppy Paula.

In addition there are three stalwart book carers - Irene Robinson for book care and sending photos of Wally the Wombat; Kevin Powell for book care and call numbering work; and Jill Irvine for book care work.

Sadly in 2021 the Library lost one of our book carers. John Merry passed away on 7th January 2021. He was 83 and had been a volunteer since 2006.

John specialised in dust jackets and stamping. We will miss his sense of humour, his help with the quiz each week and his dedication to his volunteer work. See the photo gallery for the picture of John with his cake when he came to the Library to volunteer on his 80th birthday.

In 2021 a number of volunteers reached the five- and ten-year volunteer milestone.

10 years: Pat Galvin who began volunteering at the PMI in 2010. Pat has helped index the archives, and over the last few years has been the lead in the project to index our minute books. This is near completion and when finished the books, which are an incredibly valuable record of the PMI's own history, will be keyword searchable by members. Pat says he enjoys these projects because he gets involved in all the stories of everyone who has been at the PMI over the years.

5 years: Wendy Goodwin and Robyn Jones both joined the Friends of the PMI in 2016. Over that time, they have worked on seven large book sales, the Library's visit to Clunes, the Victorian History Roadshow in 2019 and several smaller book sales. Their work with the Friends is an ongoing valuable contribution to the PMI.

Lyn Firminger began volunteering at the PMI in 2015 as an indexer. She has indexed 21 books and helped to write our indexing policy and guide, which is an ongoing process. To index a book Lyn reads the book and then determines the names and subjects which are important, it can be a very time consuming task. Lyn's work has made the small stories of Victoria infinitely more discoverable.

Kevin Powell began volunteering in 2017. As part of our team of book carers he has been involved in the end processing of 6184 books and periodicals. Kevin is also an enthusiastic participant in the quiz on a Thursday afternoon, and helps with call numbering. Along with the other book carers, Jill and Irene, over 2021 Kevin came in an extra day a week to help catch up on the back log of end processes left over after the long lockdowns.

Thanks are conveyed to all five- and ten-year recipients.

Several volunteer projects were completed in 2021: periodical box move, fixing the Dewey numbers and subjects for river and creeks and street directories, moving stacks, sourcing 2021's heritage studies, indexing books and sorting the books donated by Moreland Libraries.

2021 was a good year for indexing the back issues of periodicals giving Elena, one of our volunteers, the time and inclination to index the following: Garden History, Australian Heritage, University of Melbourne Collections, PROV Journal, Colac Family History Group Newsletter, Altona-Laverton Historical Society Newsletter, Red Cliffs Historical Society Newsletter, Beacon the Journal of the Ambulance Historical Society of Victoria, Jesse Street Women's Museum Newsletter, NAVA Newsletter, Insite Newsletter, Australian Society Newsletter, Trolley Wire, Electric Traction, Light Rail and she began work on the Rotary Club of St Kilda.

National Volunteer Week celebrations also resumed in 2021. The Library ran a social media campaign across the week with videos from our volunteers exploring the work they do at the PMI. A compilation of the videos is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4PL3zyCU0I>

Thank you to all our indispensable and dedicated volunteers. See some photos of the volunteers across the Library in the photo spread.

4.3 Events

Due to the uncertainty around COVID-19 and what that might mean for lockdowns, restrictions, and density quotients, the PMI ran predominantly virtual/online or outdoor events throughout 2021. Throughout the year over 482 people attended our events and \$5470 was raised (mainly through the book sale).

Children's historical creative writing competition

All costs involved in administering the competition, prizes and publication of the books were proudly funded by the Victorian Government in the form of a Children's Week grant received by the Library in September 2020. This funding was designed to run a Children's Writing Competition to coincide with Children's Week (last week of October – first week of November 2020). However, the lack of lead up time meant that we did not receive enough involvement. The Victorian Department of Education was flexible in allowing us to roll the competition (and any entries received thus far), over into the first quarter of 2021 to attract more entries. The final iteration of the competition ran from the 1st of February – 1st of April, with winners announced on 30th April 2021.

The topic of the competition was as follows:

We believe that sharing stories with friends, family and role models can help us to feel safe, and, also help people into the future remember the important and interesting things that happened to us. So, we are asking for children over the summer, or when school returns, to: Type up a story told to you by a grandparent, parent, carer, aunty, uncle or elder, about their friends when they were your age. What kind of adventures did they get up to? How were things different then? What made their friendships special?

The aim was to nurture safe environments where children could share stories with other generations in their families and record these micro-histories in a published form.

Special guest judge Rafael S Ward and the Library Officer (Grants & Events) judged the entrants. The individual winning stories were collated into a manuscript, an ISBN application made, and the manuscript given to Robert Dora to design the cover and book layout. The local Prahran SNAP printing published a limited print run of the book. This book is now included in the collections of the PMI, State Library of Victoria and National Library of Australia.

Four entrants aged 4-12, were awarded \$100 dollars each, posted written feedback and a printed copy of the book titled 'Friends from the past: Entries from the PMI Victorian History Library's Creative Writing Competition for Children 2020-21.' Congratulations to the winners Caelen, Elliot, Erin, Oscar.

Australian Heritage Festival Walks

Steve Stefanopoulos volunteered his time and knowledge of the local area to lead two groups on 21st and 27th of April from 11am – 12pm on a walking tour of Chapel Street Prahran and High Street Armadale. These walking tours engaged participants, fundraised \$295 for the PMI and attracted a good attendance of 13 and 14 people.

Series of Virtual Slide nights

In the first half of the year Steven Haby, Secretary Librarian, organised the content for, and ran a series of successful slide nights on a variety of topics using the Zoom platform:

- Trams attracted over 70 attendees.
- Ships attracted over 30 attendees.
- Trains attracted over 90 attendees.
- A reprise of a talk given to the Port Melbourne Historical Society on the history of the CAC/Comair bus which was built at Fishermans Bend attracted 20 attendees.
- Melbourne 'as it was' from the 1970s – 1980s including numerous aerial images taken by photographer Robert J. Moss, the father of one of our members and images from the Victorian Department of Education.

Series of Trivia nights and an afternoon book chat

In the second half of the year the Library ran a number of Trivia nights. Themes were picked to tie in with our library collection, the AFL Grand Final and the Olympics. Ellen Coates, Collections Librarian and Volunteer Coordinator created and hosted the trivia nights – researching images, anecdotes, questions and creating very engaging PowerPoint presentations for each trivia quiz. The Library Officer (Grants & Events) managed the technicalities of Trybooking and Zoom.

Ellen prepared four rounds on each trivia topic beginning with Easy and progressing through Medium and Hard to Evil. Many laughs were shared, and good sportsman like banter enjoyed throughout. Positive feedback was often received after our trivia nights, with comments via email about the quality of the questions, and general enjoyment of the event. Some of the feedback from our early quiz was that the questions were slightly too hard, considering this, Ellen made the questions simpler. By the time we reached our final Eclectic sports trivia night we feel that we had got the right balance. The poll conducted after the Eclectic sports trivia night in September was overwhelmingly positive with 100% of respondents saying they would attend another PMI event and recommend a PMI event to others.

Other events included:

- 16 June, the 2020 AGM, followed by our Victorian History Easy to Evil Trivia Night with 33 attendees.
- 18 August, our Natural History Trivia night with 40 attendees.
- 29 September (to build on the approaching AFL Grand final excitement), the Eclectic Sports Trivia night.
- 06 October, afternoon historical book chat where people could come along and chat about what they were reading or researching and ask each other questions. Special thanks to Wendy, head of the Friends of the PMI Victorian History Library, who largely hosted this event.

Virtual Writer in Residence

The UNESCO City of Literature Melbourne Office received a grant to run a Virtual Writers in Residence Program in November of 2021, and they sought applications from organisations who would like to 'virtually host' writers to achieve three tasks: A social media takeover, a written piece, and a virtual presentation. The PMI applied and was selected to take part and nominate which writer we would like to work with.

We were lucky to be paired with Karys McEwen (who also works as the Librarian at Prahran High School). As this was a strictly virtual residency, all meetings and activities took place on Zoom. Karys created content and posted across our social media weekly, to target the audience of students and educators. Karys is currently working closely with the Collections Librarian and the Library Officer (Grants & Events) to create a Reference Guide (interactive PDF) leading students and educators to different key parts of the PMI Library collection.

An online forum (on Zoom) is planned for February 2022, to introduce educators to the PMI's resources. Karys is working to recruit panellists who work in the education and/or library field to take part in a live Q&A and explore what resources are available at the PMI for educators and students to use.

Looking forward

As we reach the end of 2021, we are planning our first in-person onsite event in two years to take place during the Midsumma Festival running between the 23rd January and the 13th of February 2022. Dr Graham Willett, Lead Author and researcher of 'A History of LGBTIQ+ Victoria in 100 Places and Objects' commissioned by Heritage Victoria, will give a presentation about creating this report and key research findings. Dr Graham Willett is an Historian, University Lecturer and Committee Member of the Australian Queer Archives and the PMI Victorian History Library is very excited to have Dr Willett presenting in our 2022 event program.

4.4 Grants

2021 was a busy and successful of grants year for the PMI. Grant applications were more targeted, resulting in our successful applications totalling \$21,018.90. These funds have enabled the PMI to: upgrade the lighting in the main library area; purchase four laptops and associated equipment to support the volunteers and staff; run a Children's Historical Creative Writing Competition, and protect our community with two automatic hand sanitizing stations.

Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions – Successful \$11,400

In late 2019 early 2020, two lighting designers who had a reputation for designing lighting for libraries were sourced to seek comparative quotes to upgrade the lighting in the main PMI library on level 1 of the building. The lighting was no longer fit for purpose and not strong enough in some spaces.

In March 2020 the Secretary/Librarian applied to the Minister for the Department of Jobs, Precincts & Regions to be considered for the Funding Program: Mechanics' Institutes Grants 2020-2021. The PMI was successful and awarded \$11,400 (excl. GST) to redo the lighting in the Library with the project to be concluded by 31st March 2022. The Melbourne Athenaeum was also successful in receiving funding and a lovely newspaper article including both organisations was in The Age newspaper on the 18th June 2021 and can be accessed using this link:

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/mechanics-institutes-get-help-in-drive-to-enrich-people-s-education-20210617-p581sv.html>

Perpetual's 2022 IMPACT Philanthropy Application Program – Not yet assessed

Perpetual manages the investments of numerous philanthropists. Perpetual has encouraged the PMI to apply for its Impact Funding Program. Final funding decisions will be made by the 30th of June 2022. The Library Officer (Grants & Events) wrote and submitted the PMI's application forward in December, with significant support from our Treasurer and Vice President. The complexity and scope of this grant (\$42,350.00) was to upgrade the PMI computer server, Library Management System, computer equipment, and data storage offsite.

Families and Communities Federal Grant Program: 2021 Volunteer– Successful \$5,000

In April the Library Officer (Grants & Events) approached the office of Dr Katie Allen MP for Higgins to endorse the PMI's application for funding. The PMI received an enthusiastic response. Dr Katie Allen gave the PMI's volunteer program her endorsement which opened up the application process for us. The PMI provided Dr Allen's panel with a written expression of interest and was selected to formally apply for funding through the Federal grant stream for \$5000 through the Our Community Portal. In December the PMI was advised that our application was successful and awarded \$5000 towards purchasing laptops/computer equipment and book trolleys that will benefit our volunteers. Dr. Katie Allen indicated her interest in visiting the PMI in early 2022.

Community Bank Windsor: August– Successful \$3,300

The PMI has a positive and ongoing relationship with the Windsor Community Bank (formerly the Bendigo Bank) which has funded marketing, disaster management and upgrades to our website across a number of years. We applied for the August 2021 round of grants, requesting up to \$5000 to provide three laptops to support staff or volunteers when working from home or socially distanced onsite.

The PMI was awarded this grant in late 2021 to assist in purchasing laptops to reconnect staff and volunteers retuning to the PMI, and to allow for flexible work practice. This funding in tandem with the Federal Grant (above) should allow for the purchase of four laptops, associated software, carry bags, mice and keyboards.

Australian Museums and Galleries Award (AMAGA) awards

The PMI nominated the Friends of the Library and the PMI in the 'organizational' and 'individual' categories respectively for these awards. These awards are for professional development opportunities, and provide recognition for the work of the PMI and our Volunteer Program. The Friends of the Library were shortlisted but neither they nor the PMI were winners on this occasion.

City of Stonnington Community Adaptation and Resilience Building Grants - \$1,318.90

The Library was successfully funded for the cost of renting and servicing two automatic hand sanitizer stations (one on each level) of the PMI for 12 months. This helps keep the PMI community safe whilst re-opening after the COVID lockdowns and restrictions of recent years. In July both stations were installed by Initial Hygiene which also will help us cut back on waste and expenditure of buying and disposing of individual hand pump bottles.

2020 Children's week grant funded by the Victorian Government -\$1000 (Remounted 2021: Further information see event report)

This funding was received in September 2020 to run a Children's' Writing Competition to coincide with Children's Week (last week of October – first week of November 2020). However, the lack of lead time meant that the Library did not receive enough involvement. The Library was pleased to have received this grant, that fully funded all aspects of this event, and the flexibility of the Victorian Department of Education which allowed us to roll the competition over into the first quarter of 2021 to attract more entries. The final iteration of the competition ran from the 1st February - 1st of April with winners announced on 30 April 2021.

5. Financial Report

Financial Position year ended 31/12/2021

The library relies on membership subscriptions, grants, book sales, but mostly from rent on our buildings in Chapel Street and from returns on our investment funds. The Chapel Street buildings only had one of three tenancies let during the 2021 year, so rental returns are well below where they need to be but higher than 2020 – \$41,692 compared to \$34,087. Thankfully the investments returned consistent income for the 2021 year amounting to \$35,153, and the unrealised gains of \$214,174 after a poor year in 2020 were very welcome. All expenses were consistent with the previous year and in line with expectations except for land tax. Unfortunately, it came to light that we had been underpaying this cost in prior years. The outstanding amounts have been recorded in these accounts and taken up as a creditor and they will be fully settled in the 2022 calendar year.

Balance sheet

At end of year, we had \$80,247 in cash reserves and we were owed \$8,852 from the Australian Tax (ATO) for franking credits. Our investments via the Perpetual platform were valued at \$1,518,621 at year end, achieving a return of 20.33% for the year after a disappointing return of 0.65% in the previous year. Our buildings at 259-261 Chapel Street are currently in the balance sheet at \$4,700,000 however these are currently being renovated and at year end we had spent \$106,116 on renovations to make the buildings more rentable. We also fully own the library building which is recorded in the accounts at value of \$4,234,090, however we did spend \$874,556 on renovations in previous years prior to opening. It is anticipated that both buildings will be revalued to current market value in the audited accounts. We also ended the year

with \$70,023 in creditors mostly from the land tax and all debts with the ATO are in order and were settled in early 2022.

Year end result

There was a loss of \$26,728 for the year compared with a loss of \$52,048 in the previous year. In 2020 the loss was not as dire as it could have been due to COVID support from all tiers of Government and the loss in 2021 was helped by a healthy investment market.

Going forward

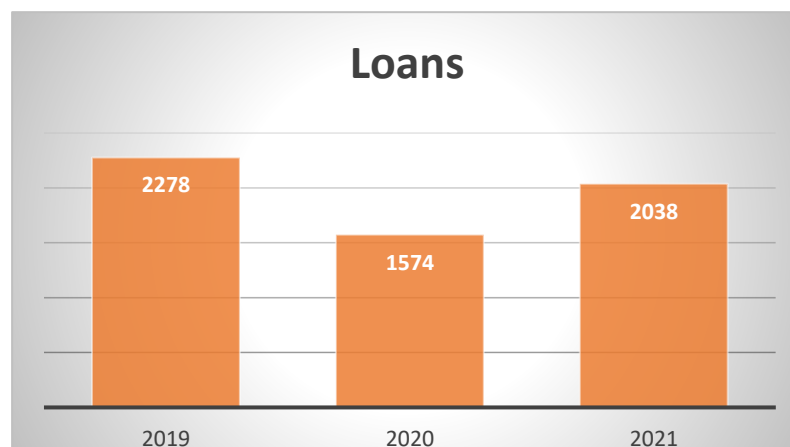
More funds have been spent in this current year to bring the Chapel Street buildings up to standard and the results look fantastic. As a direct result we have been able to secure two solid tenants for the street level tenancies and once the standard rent-free period is over, we will be receiving a healthier \$14,500 per month. This together with investment earnings will help cover costs, however we still need to find other sources of funds so we can run the library at increased levels. The focus of the Board in 2022 is to try and develop these income channels.

2021 Annual accounts

These are currently with the auditor and will be sent to all members once the auditor signs off.

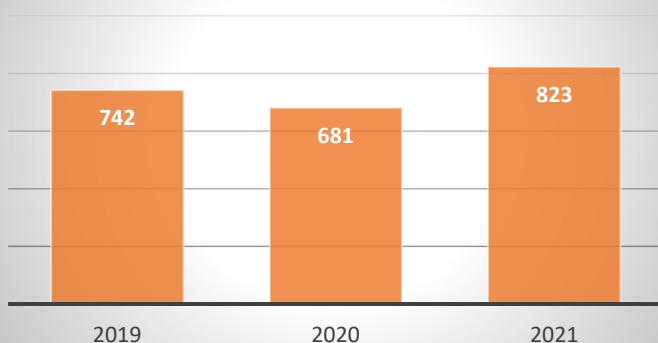
6. 2021 Statistics

6.1 Loans

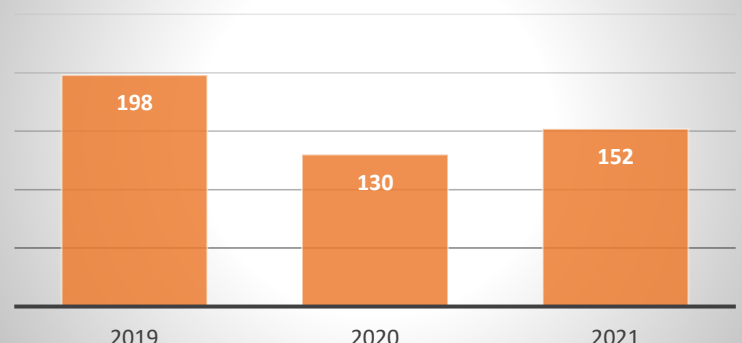


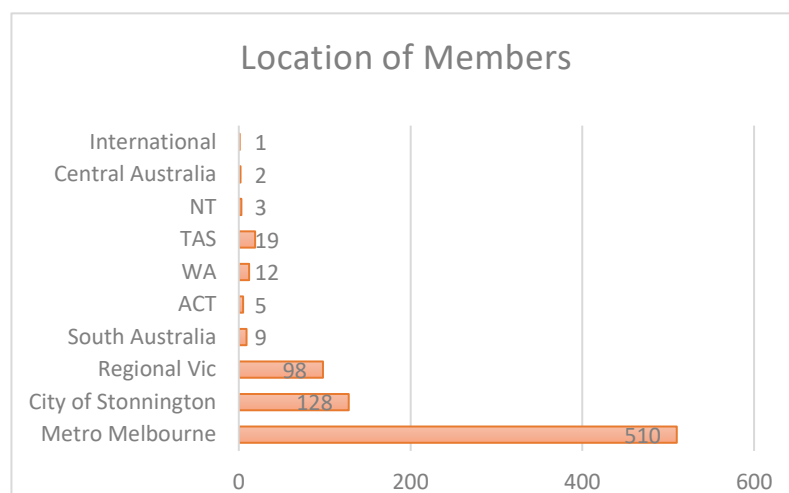
6.2 Members

Active members

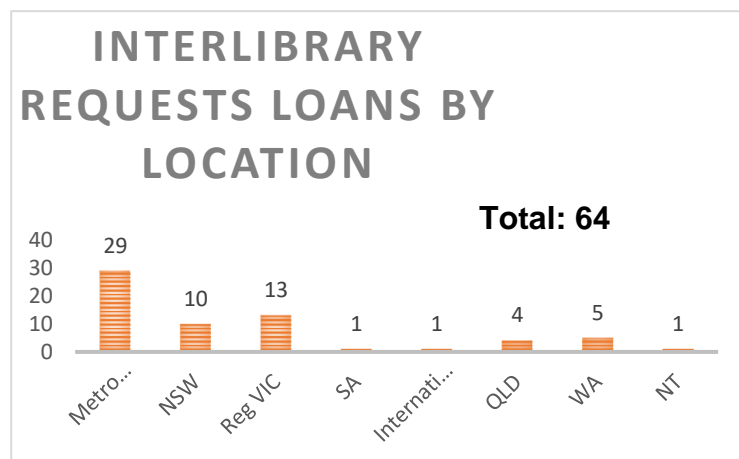
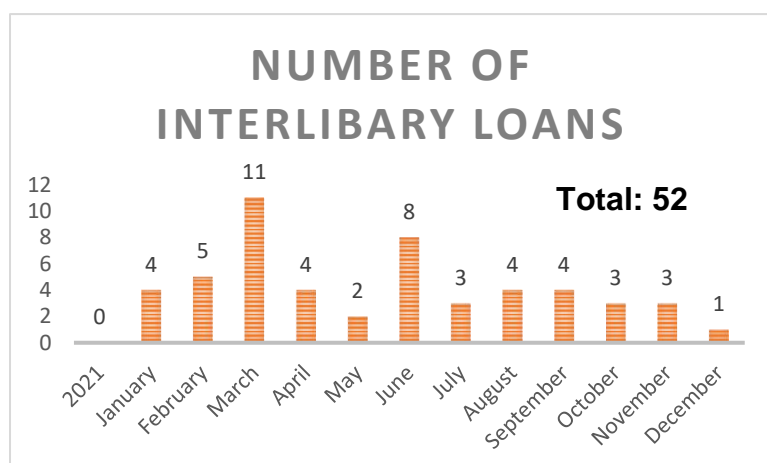


New Members





6.3 Interlibrary Loans

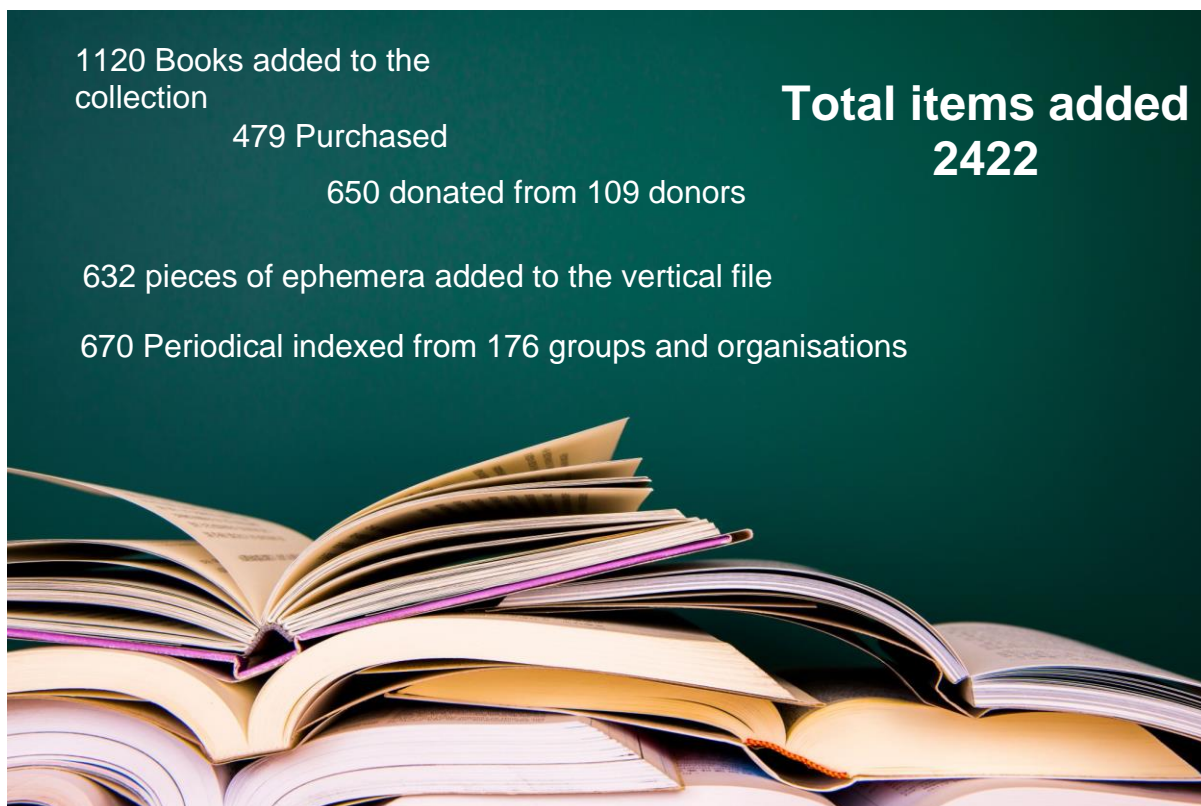


6.4 Volunteers



6.5 Collections

Items Added



1120 Books added to the collection

479 Purchased

650 donated from 109 donors

Total items added 2422

632 pieces of ephemera added to the vertical file

670 Periodical indexed from 176 groups and organisations

Prizes collected from:

Victorian Premier's Literary Award, Victorian Community History Awards, National Biography Award, Age Book of the Year, Miles Franklin, Stella Prize, Australian Book Industry Awards, Indie Book Awards, PMI Victorian History Library's Creative Writing Competition for Children 2020-21 (funded by Children's Week Grant)

Donors

Aaron Edwards
 Adrian Turley
 Amanda Witt
 AMHA
 Anne Hillier
 April-Kaye Ikin
 Auburn Uniting Church
 Australian Garden History Society
 Backwords Gallery
 Ballarat Fly Fishers
 Bayside Gallery
 Bayside Libraries
 Berwick Mechanics' Institute
 Bill Garner, Sue Gore and Kacey Sinclair

BRAC
 Brimbank Council
 Bud Townsing
 Catanach's Jewellers
 Charles Lewis
 Cheryl Threadgold
 Christine Ruff
 Cinema and Theatre Historical Society
 Circus Fans of Australasia
 City of Boroondara
 City of Whittlesea
 Claire Barton
 Colin Davis
 Council of Estonian Societies in Australia
 Craigieburn War Memorial
 Dan Coates
 David F. Radcliffe

David Jellie	Moreland City Libraries
Dawn Dickson	Pam Jennings
Deborah Towns	Parade College Library
Dianna Wells	Pat Khune
Dora Family	Paul Fearon
Doris Frank	Penny Woodward
Eaglehawk Parish	Peter Goodison-Jones
East Gippsland Family History Group	Peter Jones
Emu Valley Cricket Association	Philip J Powell
Eric Tibballs	Phillip Schudmak
Essendon Historical Society	Quang Minh Temple
Estate of Graeme Connelly	Ray Richardson
Estate of John Merry	Riversdale Golf Club
Estate of Wilma Farrow	Robert Gribben
Family History Connections	Ronald J Gunn
Geoff Earney Frei	Sally Edwardes
Geoff Greaves	Sally Romano
Harcourt Heritage Centre	Sheryl Ward
Hawthorn Tram Museum	Sineke Winter Belgraver
Heather Redmond	Singer Car Club of Australia (NSW)
Iola Mathews	St Monica's College Epping
Irene Robinson	Steve Stefanopoulos
Isaac Douglas Hermann	Steven Haby
Ivan Smith	Temple Society Australia
James McBride-White	Tim McKenna
John L Torpey	Tony Coates
Judith Buckrich	Tony Tibballs
Ken James	Victorian Provincial Baseball League
Kevin Powell	Victorian Railway History Library
Kew Historical Society	Walter and Eliza Hall Institute
Landsborough Historical Group	Warrnambool RSL
Lang Lang Football Club	Wedderburn Historical Records Museum Inc
Latrobe Valley Enterprises	Wendy Baille
Marilyn Kenny	World Ship Society (Victorian Branch)
Marist-Sion College	Yarra Plenty Regional Library
Marjorie Porter	
Mary O'Callaghan	
Mary-Louise Phillips	
Melbourne Athenaeum	
MG Kenny	
Milton Biddle	
Mirek Kurcki	
Mistry Family	

6.6 Grants

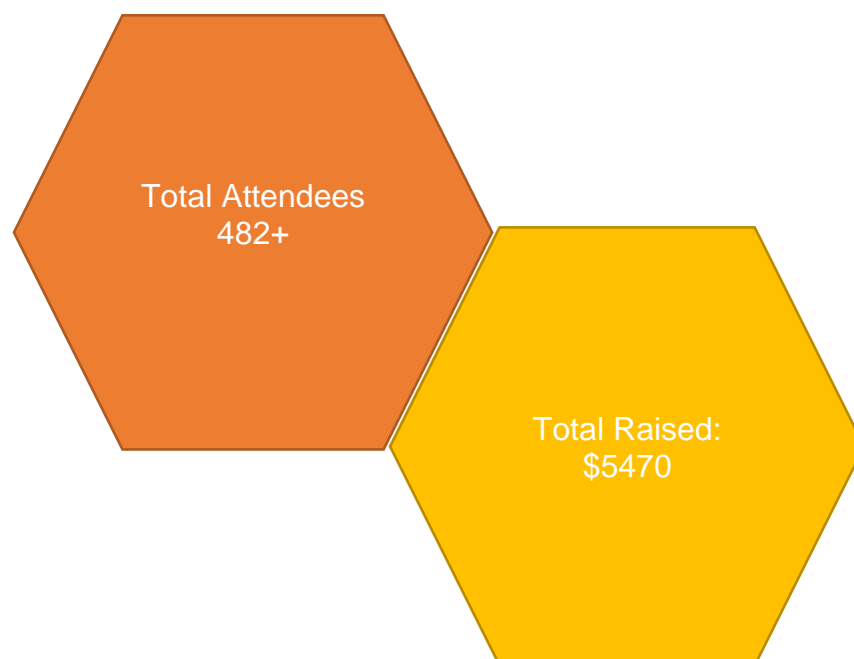
Funds awarded 2021

Grant	Project	Funding Awarded	Project Timeframes
Department of Jobs Precincts Victoria	Redoing the lighting in the main library part of the PMI.	\$11,400.00	June 2021 – 31 March 2022
City of Stonnington Adaptation and resilience	2 Automatic hand sanitiser stations provided by Initial Hygiene.	\$1,318.90	April 01 2021 – 28 February 2022
Windsor Community Bank Grants	Supporting the purchase of 4 laptops, mice, keyboards, 2 bags and Microsoft office Pro.	\$3,300.00	08 October 2021 – 31 March 2022
Families and Communities Program 2021 Volunteer Grant. Dr Katie Allen, local MP for Higgins, endorsed PMI to be able to apply for this Federal Grant	Supporting the purchase of 4 laptops, mice, keyboards, 2 bags and Microsoft office Pro.	\$5000.00	02 December 2021 – 31 December 2022



6.7 Events

Event	Details	Participants	Revenue
AGM 2020 (held 2021) (Zoom)	16 June 2021	33	Free event
Eclectic Sports Trivia (Zoom)	29 September 2021	26	Free event
Afternoon Historical Book Chat	06 October 2021	17	Free event
Victorian History Trivia – Easy to Evil (Zoom)	16 June 2021	33	Free event
Natural History Trivia Night (Zoom)	18 August	40	Free event
Trams (Zoom)		70+	Free event
Ships (Zoom)		30+	Free event
Trains (Zoom)		90+	Free event
Fishermen's Bend (Zoom)		20	Free event
Melbourne 'as it was' 1970s-80s (Zoom)			Free event
Children's Historical Creative Writing Competition	Over a few months	6	Free event
Australian Heritage Festival: High Street Armadale Walk	27 April 2021	14	\$145
Australian Heritage Festival: Chapel Street Heritage Walk	21 April 2021	13	\$150
Friends Booksale	17 April 2021	90	\$5175



7. Photos

7.1 Collections



International Women's Day Display



NAIDOC Week Display



Click and Collect



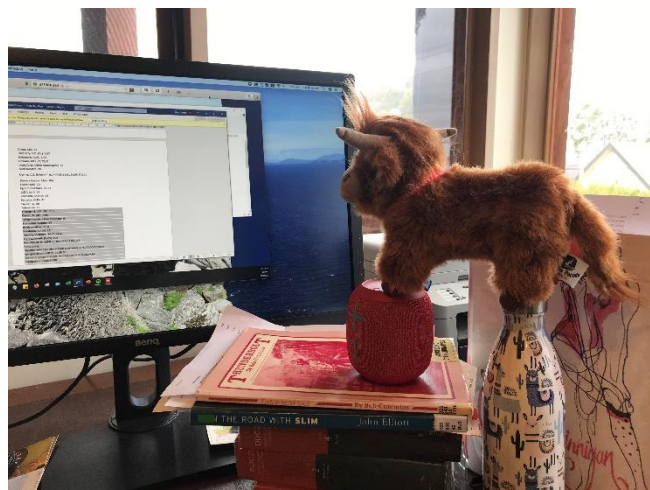
Clementine helping move stacks



Ephemera from Moreland



Zoroastrian Books



Clementine working with Ellen from home

7.2 Volunteers



Jake with finished periodical boxes



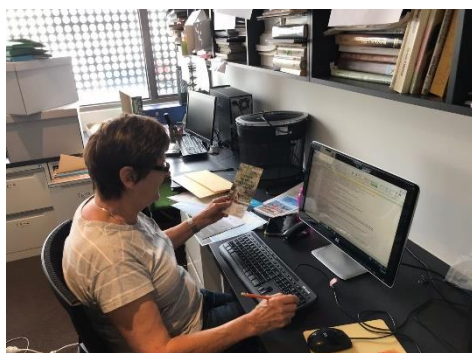
Liam and spine labels



Siti



Pat



Sonya



Marie



Book carers



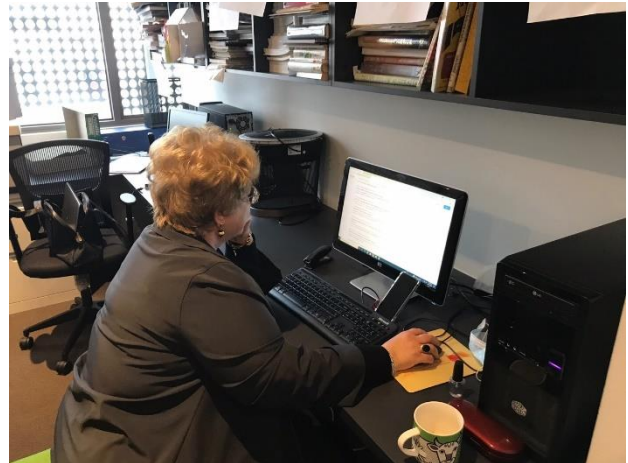
Vale John Merry



Friends and Ellen on Zoom



Elena, Siti, Kevin, Sonya and Marie-Volunteer function



Elena

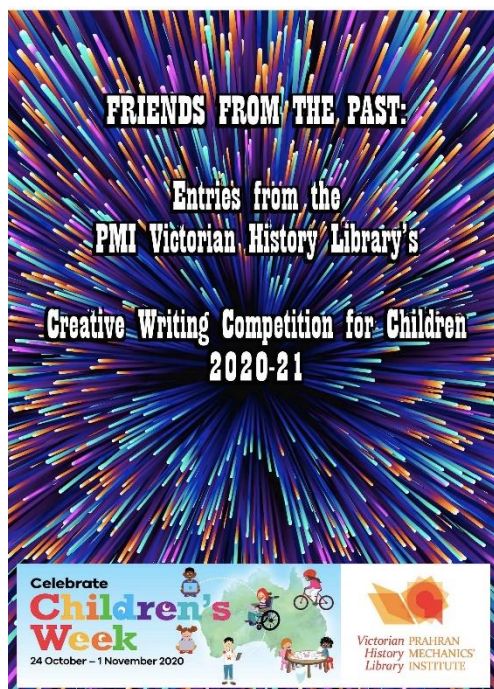
7.3 Grants and Events



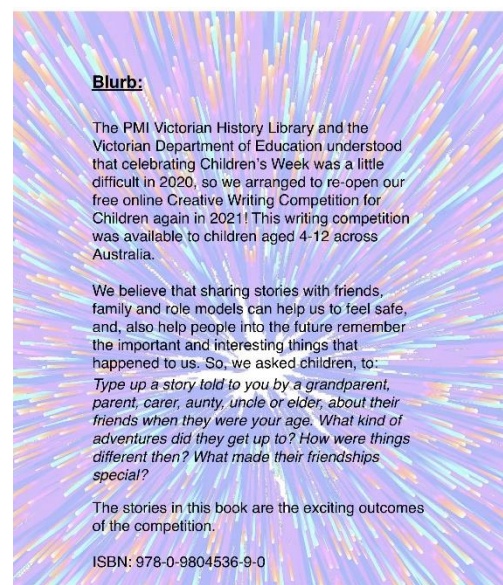
PMI Trivia night slides



Hand Sanitisers bought with Stonnington Grant.



Front cover Children's week writing competition book



Back cover Children's week writing competition book

8. Reports from Associated groups

8.1 Cinema and Theatre Historical Society

I am pleased to be able to report that the CATHS Archive continues to function strongly here at the PMI. Our Archive Team is generally in attendance on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, from 8.00AM to around 3.00PM.

The past year has been a trying one, due to lockdowns and other restrictions, but we have managed to further increase our holdings and add considerably to our cinemas and theatres database.

Having remote access to our listings on the PMI server has meant we have been able to continue working on our files from home, even when the PMI was in full lockdown. This has meant much of the time in home lockdown was able to be spent productively updating and adding to our records.

Our physical holdings housed at the PMI are quite extensive, with several dozen folders of material catalogued by town and suburb for the thousands of cinemas and theatres throughout Australia, with particular emphasis on Victorian venues. Our current priority is the digitization of all of our pictures and documentation to provide online access for research.

We believe we have close to 100% of all venues which screened films on a commercial basis now listed, as well as in excess of 10,000 photos and other paper based material. We justifiably believe we have the largest collection of such material in Australia.

We are continually updating our internet database, providing an online search facility for the general public, as well as for researchers looking for theatre and personality details. Our venues database is also available to PMI visitors on the "public access" computers in the main library.

No report would be complete without recognizing the assistance, advice and cooperation we receive from the PMI staff. The friendship and camaraderie makes attendance a pleasure.

Mike Trickett
Secretary-CATHS

8.2 Mechanics' Institutes Victoria

2021 followed on like 2020, we had periods of activity and many months of inactivity due to Covid 19 and long periods of lockdown.

However on a positive note we did manage to secure library grants for ten Libraries totalling \$100,000.00 along some funding for MIV itself. We are appreciative of the support that the Victorian Government and Minister Shaun Leanne has given to Mechanics Institutes.

Digitisation of Institutes' records was difficult during the year but we did manage to process some. Lockdowns and distance restrictions meant that some of the persons scanning the records found other employment and when we were able to access records they were no longer available.

Useful Knowledge continued with three issues but the time frames were sometimes longer than we would have liked.

The Mechanics Worldwide Conference in Edinburgh was held on 15 October, 2021 but was done remotely and included several papers from Australia including Jim Lowden (MIV) Ellen Coates (PMI) and James Baker (Melb Ath.).

We are also pleased to receive the extensive works of Philip Candy and these are currently being worked on to be able to be added to our MIRC collection.

At our AGM in November, 2021 we saw the retirement of Jim Lowden from all involvement with MIV due to health reasons. His involvement is greatly missed and we wish him all the best for the future.

Once again we are most grateful to the Prahran Mechanics' Institute Committee (Board) and staff for hosting ongoing MIV activities, our meetings and our collection of digital and monographs records dealing with the history and management of Mechanics' Institutes.

Gary S Bester
MIV Treasurer

8.3 Victorian Railway History Library

Now in its second year of existence the immediate tasks of the library have been achieved. The library is on a sound financial footing and all assets have been removed from the Newport Rail Museum.

The library is attended by volunteers on Wednesday mornings and a steady stream of users of the collection and of borrowers is noted. The resources of the library were used by a research student from Melbourne University for his thesis on the outer circle railway. This thesis is available in the library.

The easing of COVID restrictions will allow for the resumption of book sales. The library will have a stall at the Diamond Valley Model Railway Exhibition over the Easter weekend.

Continuing progress has been made with the book covering, data entry and cataloguing although the COVID situation in 2021 has meant that less days than expected have been spent in the library.

The book binding programme led by John Anderson, and ably assisted by the other members of the library team, has been a particular success. Following on from the 80 volumes of journals bound in 2020, another 80 were completed in 2021 and an additional 72 are scheduled for binding in 2022.

I would like to thank the library team, John Anderson, Milton Biddle, Peter Bronstring, Chris Carter, Peter Cherny and Ian Deans for their contribution and dedication over the past difficult year.

Dr Donald Barker
VRHL President