

The Francis Forbes Society

For Australian Legal History

The Society is honoured that on **Wednesday 23 August 2023**, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC will present the **2023 Forbes Lecture**, speaking on Vice Regal intersections with the Supreme Court, in anticipation of the Court's bicentennial celebrations next year. The Lecture will be chaired by the Hon James Allsop AC, President of the Forbes Society. The Lecture will be held in Banco Court starting at 5.15pm. The Forbes Society, and the annual Forbes Lecture sponsored by the Society, are named for Francis Forbes (1784-1841), the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW, 1824-1837.

No registration is necessary for in person attendance – for online viewing please register here: [2023 Forbes Lecture](#). After registering you will receive an email confirmation **which contains the viewing link** (joining with camera and sound is disabled for events such as this).

The Society is very grateful to Chief Justice Bell for his permission to use Supreme Court facilities.

We draw attention to the forthcoming Conference **“Enduring Courts in Changing Times”** from **8 to 10 September** at Banco Court, or online. The Conference is being organised by the Australian Academy of Law, the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and the Australian Law Journal to mark the forthcoming 2024 bicentenaries of the Supreme Courts of New South Wales and Tasmania. Click here for [Conference tickets \(via eventbrite\)](#) or a link to the [Program](#)

New event: We are pleased to advise of a new tutorial in our program, on **24 October 2023** by **Megan Cameron** (University of Sydney). Megan will speak on the work of magistrates in early colonial New South Wales.

Megan is a PhD candidate at the Sydney University law school. Her thesis is about the magistrates of the early colony (1800-1835). Her project received funding from the Forbes Fund in 2022. Megan is examining the powers given (and taken) by magistrates, and their interaction with three convict rebellions: the Vinegar Hill rebellion of 1804, the Ribbon Boy rebellion of 1830, and the Castle Forbes uprising of 1834. In examining those three rebellions, Megan will show how magistrates had both power which was given to them (through their commission of the peace, and their oath of office), and power which they took (powers derived from statute, and from the personal gravitas of each magistrate). The work will show that magistrates had a substantial degree of personal power, which they exercised particularly in relation to convicts in the early colonial period.

On 1 November 2023 **Dr Jessica Lake** will speak on her research ‘The Slander of Women’ which also received funding from the Forbes Fund in 2022.

Membership renewal for 2023 and supporting the Francis Forbes Fund: A renewal / application form is available here [2023 - 2024 Forbes Membership](#). Memberships are renewed annually and will run to 30 June 2024. Please return a completed renewal / application form to the address on the form or email to membership@forbessociety.org.au.

The Society is dedicated to studying and documenting the history of Australian law. Its membership includes legal practitioners, academics, journalists and students. Benefits of membership include timely notification of legal history events *via* updates emailed to members from time to time and opportunities to obtain discounts on publications from time to time published or arranged by the Society. The Society encourages **donations** to the **Francis Forbes Fund** - members know that one of the Society's objects is to encourage and promote research into Australian legal history, and it maintains a fund for that purpose to which donations may be made.

Francis Forbes Fund grants for 2023: Grants from the Fund for **2023** will support:

- *University of Technology Sydney* - Dr Alecia Simmonds 'Race, Legal Status and Subjecthood in Defamation Actions Across the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries'
- *Australian National University* - Dr Susan Bartie 'Contribution of Solicitors-General to the field of Australian law and environmental politics'
- *Macquarie University* - Dr Henry Kha 'Wife sales and legal responses in Colonial Australia'
- *Deakin University* - Associate Professor Gabrielle Wolf 'European Medical Émigrés in Tasmania and the Law, 1933-1946'

In addition, the Society supports an annual **Essay prize** for the best paper presented at the ANZLHS Conference, judged by a panel appointed by the Editor of law & history. **Other projects supported by the Fund** – grants from the Fund in **2022** support:

- *University of Adelaide* (Associate Professor Robert Foster) 'Reconciling with the Frontier', which is to produce a digital map of frontier conflict in 19th century South Australia, including First Nations stories and oral history accounts;
- *Australian Catholic University* (Dr Jessica Lake) 'The Slander of Women', which will examine why and how the Australian colonies reformed defamation laws in the nineteenth century to make it easier for women to bring claims and better protect their reputations;
- *University of Sydney* (Megan Cameron) an examination of the work of magistrates in early colonial New South Wales (from 1788 until 1835); and
- *University of New South Wales* (Associate Professor Marina Nehme) A study of the legal history of proprietary companies.

In **2021** grants from the Fund included the support of projects at a number of universities: *University of New England* Dr Patrick Graham – 'Sir John Latham and constitutional autochthony'; *University of Southern Queensland* Professor Antony Gray and Associate Professor Marcus Harmes – 'The History of Judicial Independence in New South Wales'; *University of Sydney*: Digitisation of letters from solicitors, barristers and law students to the University of Sydney Law School Comforts Fund during the Second World War (Tony Cunneen); further support for 'Dynamic and Principled: The Influence of Sir Anthony Mason' (Professor McDonald, Dr Chen, Dr Gordon); *Monash University* Professor Tamara Walsh and Associate Professor Dominique Allen – a research project about the history of human rights complaints in federal law.

The Society supported the publication by the 2019 Forbes lecturer, Professor Anne Twomey (Sydney University) of Pitt Cobbett's grand opus 'The Government of Australia' through the Fund. The book *The Constitution and Government of Australia, 1788 to 1919* by William Pitt Cobbett and edited by Anne Twomey was published by Federation Press in October 2019.

The Society encourages **donations** to the Francis Forbes Fund to enable us to continue to support such worthy projects. All donations to the Forbes Fund of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible. There is provision for a donation on the membership renewal form, or there is a separate form for donations here [Forbes Donation Form 2023 - 2024](#) and on the web site forbessociety.org.au at DONATIONS

To note for the diary

23 August Her Excellency the Hon Margaret Beazley AC KC will present the 2023 Forbes Lecture

8 to 10 September "Enduring Courts in Changing Times" conference presented by the Australian Academy of Law, the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and the Australian Law Journal at the Supreme Court in Sydney

24 October Megan Cameron (University of Sydney) 'The work of magistrates in early colonial New South Wales'

1 November Dr Jessica Lake of ACU (Melbourne) 'The Slander of Women'