

Fundraising Appeal

To develop a community museum

After securing our new home at *History House* in 2022, The Bendigo Historical Society is seeking support for the vital next stage in our development.

History of Bendigo Historical Society – brief overview

Founded in 1935, The Bendigo Historical Society has been quietly growing its collection of artifacts, photographs, family papers and business records as a way for us to share our understanding of Bendigo's past with future generations.

In the time between 1974 and 2020, the collection has grown to over 40,000 items, with almost 30,000 catalogued and the majority stored to national standards. The Society engaged many volunteers to undertake this vital 'backroom' work (currently over 6,000 hours each year) which ensures the preservation of significant material for future generations.

A permanent home for BHS has been elusive. Various places have been used by the Society to meet and to store the growing collection. In 2022, a generous local benefactor provided BHS with an opportunity to have a new permanent home at 11 Mackenzie Street, Bendigo; called *History House*. This arrangement will see BHS have a rent-free building to house and manage the collections as well as set up displays for the public. However, BHS is responsible for all other operational costs, which includes the internal building fit out, exhibition curation, design and installation and visitor and staff facilities.

Our aim is to develop a community museum at History House that showcases our significant collection and brings the community of Bendigo and its region together by telling the stories of our shared history.

Project description

With its collections of over 40,000 items the BHS has an ideal opportunity to display and tell lively stories about some of the region's rich historical material dating back to the 1850s.

The *History House Museum* (HHM) will be a non-profit permanent facility administered by the Bendigo Historical Society (BHS) committee in the public interest. The primary function of the HHM is to be the public 'face' of the BHS, available for visitors and locals alike.

Funding amount

BHS is seeking sponsorship of \$80,000.

The modern exhibition space will be developed to use industry standard showcases, design, graphics and multimedia. New and exciting themes are being developed. BHS can fund part of the project, such as curation and design, however the cost of infrastructure is beyond our resources.

Case for support

Despite surveys and reports showing a large and diverse range of Bendigo residents are very active in local history, Bendigo has never had a permanent history museum. Over the years some temporary displays have been mounted at various sites, but the lack of a well-equipped central museum facility has led to inefficiencies and frustrations. It is clear that Bendigo has a growing tourism market keen to learn about history and heritage. Bendigo and surrounding district have such a rich history that can sustain a permanent space to tell local stories that can entertain and educate in equal measure.

Many other similar sized Victorian cities (such as Ballarat and Geelong) have a successful and popular history museum in one form or another. The proposed *History House Museum* is located in the Bendigo

Arts precinct, a popular destination for tourists with its extensive range of heritage buildings as well as one of the best regional art galleries in Australia.

With financial support, The Bendigo Historical Society can develop and deliver a new attraction for Bendigo that will add to the rich fabric of cultural tourism and heritage that makes Bendigo a premiere tourist destination and a great place to live. Developing the *History House Museum* represents a collective commitment to a community in the present and for the future.

Timeframe

Project start: April 2024

Project end: February 2025

Benefits to the community

Volunteerism is the lifeblood of community organisations, and volunteers are key to the Bendigo Historical Society. The Society is run by passionate volunteers who carry out many public programs each year, including history walks and public lectures. Our volunteers also produce a monthly newsletter that has become a trove of significant stories about Bendigo's history and the people involved. However, the most valuable long-term work that volunteers do at BHS is creating catalogue records and –just as importantly– using that information to prepare items for display in order to share knowledge and research.

This proposed museum at *History House* therefore has a critical role in the community by conserving, sharing and developing Bendigo's identity and sense of place. It can connect people to important stories and traditions and enable us to experience a little of the lives of others. The community-strengthening role of the museum has the potential to connect it with a range of community development programs, from schools and education, to supporting diversity and multiculturalism. A sustainable future for Bendigo's community museum depends on it being embedded as a vital and necessary community resource.

Community Partnerships

Social

Local volunteers learn valuable skills in relation to the BHS and its significant collection, by creating catalogue records of all the over 40,000 items. Developing an online database will enable our volunteers to be at the forefront of collection management practices in small heritage collections.

Computer and digitisation skills will be developed or enhanced to assist the selection and display of historical items for the public in the museum. This museum work will also provide for great social interaction and collaboration for volunteers interested in the history of Bendigo. Stories can be researched, shared and validated with others before being used in displays. Bendigo Historical Society has a new headquarters in the Arts Precinct. Volunteers will enjoy being part of this vibrant part of the City while greatly assisting in bringing the Bendigo collection to the world.

Community

Local museums are able to provide a sense of community and place by celebrating a collective heritage, offering a great way to get to know the history of a particular area. As mentioned earlier, the community museum will play a significant role in capacity building and community strengthening.

Education

Learning is not limited to the classroom. Museums are important educational environments and offer a considerable learning potential across many age groups. Collections exhibited in museums provide students with a tangible connection with time, places, events or people and allow them to experience how history and our cultural heritage unfolded. Learning in museums helps students understand the historical value of objects, respect diverse cultures and understand multiculturalism.

For many years, BHS has been awarding a cash 'history prize' to several outstanding primary and secondary school students. It has been important for BHS to remain connected to the education sector and help promote the study of history. We feel assured that many local schools will take advantage of the *History House Museum* when it is established. We have had early discussions with some secondary students regarding their help in producing multimedia and online content using the collections. Use of Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok has been highlighted by students as opportunities for BHS to reach a wider audience, especially young adults.

Economic development

Museums have always been tourist destinations. Most museums have developed from being repositories of knowledge and objects to having a multifaceted, outward looking role as hosts that invite visitors inside to wonder, encounter and learn. Bendigo has a number of significant visitor attractions. BHS believes that a well-designed, fully operating *History House Museum* will add to the offer for both locals and tourists alike.

Exhibition themes

BHS has begun developing concepts for the first 4 exhibition themes at History House. The collections are strong in each of these potential thematic areas. Expert outside assistance will also be drawn upon to help develop themes including: '**Quartzopolis**' - rich stories told about miners who descended on the goldfields to find their fortune. **The Bendigo Creek** - a timeline of Bendigo, including indigenous stories. **Living in Bendigo** - stories about ordinary people who toiled in the mines, foundries, shops, businesses, factories and homes to transform this quiet valley into a thriving city. **Town and Country** - a deeper understanding of how Bendigo developed into a civic powerhouse.

Museum development team

Bendigo Historical Society also has a number of volunteers with a deep knowledge of the collection and Bendigo history in general. Over the past ten years, BHS volunteers have assisted galleries and other museums to access and borrow objects from our collection, including the National Museum of Australia and our 2021 exhibition *Bendigo and the 1960s* which coincided with the Bendigo Gallery's Mary Quant exhibition from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Heading up our team is a retired museum director and curator with over 35 years of experience in Victorian museums, libraries, and collections.

Sponsorship opportunities

BHS would like local sponsors and supporters to play a very important role in developing a community museum for Bendigo.

A new industry standard space is being designed to showcase the remarkable historical artefacts in the collection. High quality exhibition cases, multimedia, graphics and lighting will be used in this new venue that will become part of Bendigo's Arts Precinct.

All sponsors will be recognised in many highly visible ways, such as in media attention, publications used by tourists and locals, and use of the History House for special events.

BHS will work in close partnership with sponsors to maximise and enhance their profile across target demographics in addition to a tailored benefits package.

Major Benefits include:

- Participation in exhibition openings
- Opportunity to entertain at additional event(s)
- Sponsor family day
- Special tours and private viewings
- 25 percent off exhibition-related materials

Recognition includes:

- Exhibition wall text at entrance
- Invitations to exhibitions & events
- Exhibition brochure and merchandise
- All media activities and press materials with logo in press kit
- Exhibition catalogue and corporate statement with logo insert in exhibition catalogues
- BHS exhibitions web page and social media opportunities
- Exhibition education materials
- Annual reports

COST OF SPONSORSHIP

BHS will contribute up to \$15k. A range of packages are available for potential sponsors. A modern exhibition space will be developed with new and exciting themes established. Sponsors will also be able to support thematic areas that best suit their goals.

Supporter	\$500-\$1000
Bronze	\$5000
Silver	\$10000
Gold	\$20000

Sponsorship can be broken down into smaller sums over 2-3 years.

We'd be delighted to talk to you about any sponsorship opportunity you felt could be to our mutual benefit. BHS is a registered charity for taxation purposes.

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