

## Editorial

With the advent of Web 2.0 it is now possible to create archives shaped with a very different approach to those governing traditional archival practices. Steve Bailey in *Managing the crowd* (London, Facet Publishing, 2008) has offered a provocative and speculative glimpse into a very near future where much of the work currently done by recordkeepers is rendered superfluous by the rise of Web 2.0 technologies and user participation. Many of the tasks previously undertaken by a group of trained professionals, such as arrangement and description, could be substituted by the efforts of an army of volunteers appending their own descriptive metadata. This kind of approach, which developed in the online world of social networking and tagging, has already been applied to the creation of actual online archives. Bob Pymm's article, 'Archives and Web 2.0', looks at the example of an electronic archive that swiftly took shape in the years following the terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September 2001. Pymm examines the September 11 Digital Archive to consider both the successes of the approach taken to its formation and management, and to probe its limitations. Among the possibilities raised by this kind of approach in Pymm's view, is that the traditional gatekeepers to archival and heritage collections could indeed be sidelined in order to allow a more diverse range of views to gain a foothold and be represented.

With more and more of our archival collections now making their way into online environments, there are a range of ethical considerations that need to be confronted, not least of which pertain to the availability and use of records relating to Indigenous people. In 'Australian Indigenous knowledge and the archives', Sue McKemmish, Shannon Faulkhead, Livia Iacovino and Kirsten Thorpe report on the main findings of *Trust and Technology: Building Archival Systems for Indigenous Oral Memory*. In the wake of the apology to the Stolen Generations and the renewed energy for reconciliation, the authors propose an action agenda for the Australian archival profession. Their proposals seek to extend the rights of Indigenous people in relation to the archival record, to make archival collections more responsive to their needs by yielding

power to them in the form of rights and recognising them as co-creators and co-owners of the records that relate to them.

In her article 'Overview of archival and records management developments in the ESARBICA region', Segomotso Masegonyana Keakopa surveys many of the recent developments in archives and recordkeeping in eastern and southern Africa. As Keakopa explains, many of the challenges confronting recordkeeping professionals and archival institutions in this region today are the legacy of post-colonialism in the countries she examines. One the main challenges Keakopa identifies for the profession and national archives is that of tackling the management of electronic records without diminishing their more traditional role in the management of existing collections. To this end, she proposes that recordkeeping professionals need to forge partnerships with a range of stakeholders in the region.

Sadly, in a world where political action on human-induced climate change seems to be stalling rather than rising to the challenge, Matthew Gordon-Clarke and Simon Shurville seek to draw attention to the very real prospect that many archives in the Pacific region will soon be facing disaster and peril. Their contribution to this issue, 'To take up arms against a sea of troubles', seeks to urge the archives profession in the south Pacific region to start the thinking, conversations and consultations that will need to take place in order to respond effectively when the inevitable happens and national archives are swamped by rising sea levels. The central remedy that they consider in this article is the identification, arrangement and management of safe havens for archives that are considered to be most at risk of being submerged along with the low-lying islands and nations that they serve.

In her book review for this issue, Shauna Hicks looks at *The intimate archive*, by Maryanne Dever, Sally Newman and Ann Vickery. It gives me great pleasure to reproduce the introduction from their book in this issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*. The *The intimate archive* considers a range of issues surrounding the authors' research into the personal lives of three Australian women: Marjorie Barnard, Lesbia Harford and Aileen Palmer. As Hicks observes, the book articulates many thought-provoking ideas and issues that will be familiar to archivists and other researchers who have ever worked with personal papers.

Some of you may recall that in 2009 a group was convened to review the future direction of *Archives and Manuscripts*. The outcome of the review forum, which took place in Melbourne on 30 July, was a report making 22 recommendations to the ASA Council. The report has now been considered by Council and the vast majority of the recommendations have either been agreed to, or agreed to in principle. Shauna Hicks, as the ASA's Managing Editor, and I are in the process of implementing many of these recommendations, which are all aimed at maintaining and improving the journal's relevance to the membership of the society and the broader profession. One of the ways that this will be achieved is by ensuring that the quality of papers published in the journal are of a high standard so that *Archives and Manuscripts* is perceived by the archival community as being on a par with, if not better than, peer journals such as *Archivaria* and *American Archivist*. Since becoming editor I have generally been heartened to receive positive feedback about the quality of the journal, and by its A rating in the Excellence in Research in Australia (ERA) rankings released earlier this year. Beginning with the May 2010, the journal has successfully adopted a double-blind peer review process to ensure that the standard of papers published in the journal remains high.

To maintain a diversity of content that appeals to a broad readership, the journal will also continue to publish review articles, cases studies and other invited contributions from a variety of sources which will not undergo a double-blind review. Articles of a more speculative nature and contributions such as opinion pieces which are likely to generate debate within the journal and the archival community will be considered, as will contributions from the Pacific and South-East Asia and further afield to broaden the journal's outlook. I am always open to suggestions in this regard so please let me know what you would like to read.

Another major initiative for the journal is a transition to an electronic form of publication, alongside a print version for those who express this as their preference. At present, we are working toward making this transition in 2011. Shauna Hicks and I are currently researching a number of options for how to make this happen over the course of 2010, in particular inviting expressions of interest and requests for

proposals from academic and commercial publishers to provide more information to evaluate the merits of self-publishing or partnership with others. Ultimately, we also hope to have all back issues of the journal made available online, and their contents indexed, and will likewise be exploring options over the coming year for how this can be done.

While the name *Archives and Manuscripts* will be retained as the title, the journal will soon adopt a new sub-title to identify its distinctive Australian/Australasian source. To this end we will be polling the membership with three preferred sub-titles in the near future.

Finally, as part of the journal's renewal, membership of the Editorial Board will be expanded and more international members will be invited in order to raise the journal's profile. Linda Bell recently retired from the board and a number of new members have recently joined including Shadrack Katuu, a records consultant based in Johannesburg in South Africa, as well as Dr Joanne Evans, Stephen Yorke, and Toby Burrows. Stay tuned for more news.

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