

NEWS NOTES

Edited by Judy Seeff

The State Archives of Western Australia

Correspondents: Anne Gill and Gerard Foley

During the last twelve months, the State Archives of Western Australia has been involved in two exciting projects: the Supreme Court Records Project; and the production of a Genealogical Research Kit. These two projects have culminated in the launch of two important publications.

Order in the Court

Over the last two years, the records of the Supreme Court of Western Australia have been rescued from imminent danger of destruction. For many years they had been stored in vaults beneath the Supreme Court building, where conditions had deteriorated badly. There were problems with flooding, damp on the walls and extensive mould growth, as well as outbreaks of vermin such as rats, mice, cockroaches and book lice.

Following fumigation and cleaning, the records were transferred to the optimum storage conditions in the Alexander Library Building. Records transferred include files and registers relating to grants of probate and letters of administration, divorce, bankruptcy, civil and criminal cases, naturalisation, newspaper registrations and conscientious objectors. Many records series date from the foundation of the Swan River Colony. They are among the most important documents extant in Western Australia, and as such, constitute one of the most significant transfers to the State Archives in recent years. The records have already been in great demand by researchers.

In order to finance the project, some funding has been provided by the Crown Law Department, at the instigation of the Chief Justice. In September 1989, the Law Society of Western Australia provided a grant for further processing, microfilming and the compilation of a guide. *Order in the Court: A Guide to the Records of the Supreme Court of Western Australia* was launched in September 1990.

Access to Ancestors

Recently, the State Archives of Western Australia published a kit of genealogical and historical source materials on microfilm. Titled *Access to Ancestors*, it will put historical documents detailing the history of Western Australia within easy reach of researchers throughout Australia and overseas.

Access to Ancestors was launched by the Hon. Bob Pearce, Minister for the Environment, representing the Minister for the Arts, at an afternoon tea held in the Alexander Library Building on 12 July 1990. The Registrar General of Western Australia, Mr Don Stockins and Mrs Raema Gooch, the President of the Western Australian Genealogical Society, contributed to the success of the launch by outlining to those assembled, the significance of the Kit to researchers. The resulting publicity has already brought in orders.

Part 1 of the kit, which is available for purchase now, comprises microfilms, microfiches and an attractive guide. It contains public records dealing with immigration to Western Australia in the nineteenth century and includes passenger lists, convict records, naturalisation records and general registers of births, marriages and deaths. Also included are records of the inward correspondence of the Colonial Secretary's Office, detailing the early administration of the Colony. All these records date from the founding of the Swan River Colony until Federation.

Access to Ancestors will appeal to historians, genealogists, biographers, writers, journalists and other researchers. Through a process of preservation, greater dissemination of Western Australian historical information can occur. The kit will ensure that this State's historical records can be utilised for as long as people want to investigate their past.

Australian War Memorial—Research Centre

Correspondent: Anne-Marie Schwirtlich

Information Services

The volume of requests from researchers (around 30,000 requests for information received annually) led the Memorial to revise its policy on handling written enquiries. From 1 May 1990, the Australian War Memorial ceased undertaking detailed research on behalf of our users.

We still respond to enquiries about whether we hold specific items ("Do you hold the unit war diary for X Unit?", "Do you hold item X donated by Y?"), we provide source analyses or bibliographies if they are readily available and we will make copies for enquirers if they can provide a full archival or bibliographic citation. In other circumstances, we recommend that enquirers arrange to visit us to undertake the necessary research, or appoint a research agent.

On June 5, the Research Centre was temporarily closed to all researchers, and all staff re-located, to allow asbestos lagging on the pipes to be removed, and to permit air-conditioning installation to proceed. The Research Centre re-opened for business in September.

Printed and Written Records

The project to review and standardise collection descriptions for all Private Records is four fifths complete—over 4,500 entries have been edited or prepared, and loaded onto the Private Records database; under 1,000 remain to be completed. The database was made available to the public, via a terminal in the Research Centre reading room, in December 1989.

Since our last report, a major effort has seen information about Official Records, at both series and item level, contributed to Australian Archives' Australian National Guide to Archival Material (ANGAM). Over 230 series (the information is in skeletal form for many series) and over 50,000 items, have been loaded onto Australian Archives' databases. The Memorial acquired on-line access to the databases in October 1989. An article about this co-operative venture appears elsewhere in this issue.

Important Official Records series for which arrangement and documentation has been completed include: Northern Command Registry files (AWM 60); Reports of Proceedings, HMA Ships and Establishments (AWM 78); Naval historical collection (AWM 124); Naval Historical Section Research files (AWM 188).

Two other documentation projects of note have been undertaken. The Memorial's extensive holdings of troopship serials (some 800 titles of these bulletins or newspapers, prepared by soldiers who were in transit to or from battle zones during the 1914-1918 War, are held) were sorted, arranged, housed and inventoried on the Memorial's in-house database. Preliminary sorting of the Memorial's extremely insignificant aerial photograph collection has begun.

Notable additions to the collection include the papers of Sir Albert Coates, surgeon on the Burma-Thailand railway; the papers of Chief Physiotherapist, Alison MacArthur-Campbell; the collection of Col. W. W. Leggatt, Commanding Officer of Sparrow Force; and twelve volumes of World War Postal History (consisting of postcards, envelopes and stationery).

Photographs, Sound and Film

The Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War 1939-45, sponsored by News Limited, has now entered its third year of recording. To date, 560 hours of 445 interviews have been recorded. The first

100 interviews, fully indexed and with bound transcripts, were made available to researchers in September.

In August, work commenced on placing the core photograph collection on laser disc. The system is scheduled to be available to researchers in mid-1991.

Over the last twelve months, 6657 images were assessed, of which 1152 were deemed suitable for inclusion in the photographic collection. During this period, 15077 nitrate negatives were duplicated onto Kodak 4168 film.

The outstanding acquisition in the sound area was that of 25 hours of tapes recorded by the late Brigadier Sir Frederick Galleghan, about his military service from 1912 to 1942.

Australian Archives

Correspondent: S. B. Skrzypek

Mr George E. Nichols has been appointed Director-General of the Australian Archives. Mr Nichols, formerly First Assistant Secretary, Corporate Services Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, took up his position as Director-General on 2 August 1990.

As from 1 July 1990, the Australian Archives commenced charging for certain records' storage related services. Charges are applied to records of short-term value and those whose value is still to be determined. Permanent-value records and those to be retained for more than 25 years will continue to be exempt from charges. Regulations under the *Archives Act, 1983* were made to enable the new charges to be levied.

On 26 June 1990, the Executive Council approved regulations to exempt public and university archives and libraries from the spent convictions' provisions contained in a June 1989 amendment to the Crimes Act. The Australian Archives had previously made a submission to the Privacy Commissioner seeking such an exemption. As a result, Commonwealth records more than 30 years old are exempt from the convictions provision.

The booklet, *Just for the Record . . . : How to Destroy Records as a Normal Administrative Practice*, has recently been issued by the Archives' Records Evaluation and Disposal Program. This booklet provides advice to agency officers about the procedures for disposal which apply where destruction can be considered to come within the category of normal administrative practice. It has been designed in order to promote self-help in the same way as the advice provided through the Archives' *When it's Gone, it's Gone!!!* booklets concerning the disposal of electronic records.

In accordance with the Archives' goal of improving service delivery to clients, which includes increased client accessibility to records in custody,

the Archives has distributed microfilm copies of the following records to all its regional offices:

- Register of British Ships (1927–1982)—the whole register is available to the public as a result of the Registrar of Ships agreeing to public access being given to those records less than 30 years old. Copies of the microfilm have also made available to the Australian National Maritime Museum;
- South African War records (1899–1903)—these records held by the Victorian Regional Office and previously controlled as MP744 were converted to the Commonwealth Record Series system of control before being copied.

Following the considerable interest generated last year, reproductions of what are believed to be the first Australian Christmas cards, featuring wildflower designs by Helena and Harriet Scott, which were submitted for copyright registration in 1879, will again be produced for sale this Christmas. Sets of notelets featuring wildflower designs by the Scott sisters, and designed as a companion product to the cards, will also be sold through retail outlets and the Archives regional offices from September 1990.

ACT Regional Office

The Australian Archives held its first major exhibition of records from its holdings, in the new Parliament House, in May 1990. The exhibition, *A Love Affair with Sport*, featured records on Australian sport from 1920 to 1960. The exhibition was opened on 14 May by Senator the Hon. Nick Bolkus, Minister for Administrative Services.

West Australian Regional Office

The Regional Office assisted the Library and Information Services of Western Australia, by arranging for participants of the Library and Information Services' course on Archives Administration, to spend a morning at the Australian Archives' East Victoria Park facility. The participants were given a tour of the facility, and a demonstration of two of the Archives' databases: the Records Information Service, which contains information about agencies and their records; and the Australian National Guide to Archival Material II, on which access decisions have been made.

Victorian Regional Office

The personal papers of the Minister for Resources, the Hon. Alan Griffiths, MP, and five former members of the Federal Parliament, have been transferred to the Australian Archives in Victoria. The personal papers of Mr Ernest P. Eltham, Director Industrial Training, Department of Labour

and National Service, in the post-war period, were also transferred to the Archives in Victoria.

Wollongong University Archives

Correspondent: Annabel Lloyd

Over the past year, the Wollongong University Archives has continued to diversify, while ensuring its central duty to maintain its archival collections does not suffer.

In January, the Archivist was appointed, on a trial basis, to the position of Co-ordinator Special Collections. This has resulted in the Archivist assuming responsibility for the supervision of the audio-visual staff and Rare Book and Thesis collections. The primary responsibility, however, remains the Archives. As part compensation for the increased administrative work-load, casual assistance for one day a week has been guaranteed for the duration of these arrangements. An History Honours student has been appointed to the position, and is assisting with listing and arrangement of the Archives' extensive left-wing publications collection.

The Archives' major project for the past year has been the processing of records of the NSW Chamber of Manufacturers. This diverse and important collection is the largest acquired record group held by the archives, occupying 85 shelf metres and comprising 61 series. The records contain a wealth of information on a variety of topics relating to the development of Australian manufacturing industries. They cover the period 1912 to 1970.

After the inventory listings and descriptive notes were completed, it was decided to compile a *Concise Guide to the Records of the NSW Chamber of Manufacturers*, which was published at the end of August 1990. The aim of the guide is to introduce researchers to the scope of the Chamber's records, and to provide an overview of its administrative structure.

To this end, this guide differs from previous guides produced by the Archives, and is basically a compilation of the series descriptions accompanying the inventory listings. Indexed subject listings to selected series are included as Appendices. Institutions or persons requiring complete inventories are invited to contact the Archives. The lists are kept on an IBM-compatible Micro-soft WORD disc, and the Library is investigating the possibility of making copies of the disc available.

The Archives mounted a successful photographic exhibition, on the changing face of the Illawarra, for University Week, in May.

John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

Correspondent: Shauna Hicks

In July, Kathy Frankland, Ros McCormack and Shauna Hicks attended a Disaster Preparedness Workshop organised by the Queensland Division of AICCM in association with the ACLIS Queensland Conservation Committee, and held at Australian Archives, Cannon Hill. Participants learned how to handle flood damaged records including books, manuscripts, microform, computer software and photographs. The hands-on approach was a real learning experience, and all participants left with the intention of compiling a disaster preparedness plan for their archives or library.

Processing of the Australian Labor Party—Queensland Branch records has finally been completed by Kathy Frankland. The collection occupies just over 50 shelf metres. Kathy and Helen Cole have been appointed to the ALP Centenary Committee which is expected to make extensive use of the collection.

Preservation work on the Tarong Station records is now finished, and a start has been made on the arrangement and description of the collection. Work is continuing as usual on the Methodist Church records. Enquiries for Church records are responsible for the bulk of all written enquiries received by the Manuscripts and Business Section of the Library.

An important recent acquisition was some of the records of the Fraser Island Defenders Organisation.

Kerri Williams has been appointed on a part-time basis to assist with the copying of records in the collection.

Archives Office of Tasmania

Correspondent: Ian Pearce

On 1 July 1990, legislation was proclaimed which formally separated the Archives Office from the State Library of Tasmania, to which it had been attached for the past 40 years.

This has occurred as part of a major re-organisation of the Tasmanian Public Service during the last year, which, amongst other things, has reduced the number of government departments from 52 to 18. Currently the Archives office is one of a number of discrete units (the State Library is another) within a much expanded Department of Education and the Arts. A high degree of flexibility for administrative re-location has been one of the outcomes of the re-organisation.

We have not physically moved, as part of these revised arrangements, but have become "co-tenants" with the State Library of the Existing building complex. We did, however, close during last April, for a major

refurbishment of public and staff areas in this building. Although it was rather chaotic at the time, this has resulted in more effective use of available space and a considerably improved working environment for both the public and staff.

Another building project, which will be going to tender later this year, is an expansion of the Archives Office repository at Berridale. This expansion will be linked to the existing building and provide storage for both temporary and permanent records.

BHP Archives

Correspondent: Fiona Reid

The re-structuring of archives and records management functions at BHP has placed both under the supervision of the Corporate Archivist, within the Corporate Information Services department. This change has resulted in a shift in direction for records management, to emphasise the importance of general disposal schedules. With all departments in BHP House moving to a new building during 1991, a program of basic training in disposal will also be offered to help departments with the relocation.

Partly in anticipation of a large influx of records during the move, the SCR repository has been expanded, with the lease of the building next door to our current accommodation in South Melbourne. This additional space will give Archives and SCR a combined area of some 8,000 m².

The restructuring has also resulted in BASIS development being hived off from Records Management to another department in Corporate Information Services. BHP will be getting Release L of BASIS late in 1990. The enhancements should make Archives' use of its databases markedly simpler.

Within Archives, major re-drafting of procedures and forms has been undertaken. This proved necessary given our increased familiarity with quirks of the automated system.

The Archives has increased in size, and is now at full staff capacity, i.e.: the Corporate Archivist; three Archivists; an Archives Assistant, running the Semi-current Records repository; a Clerical Officer and a part-time Library Technician to process published material.

Processing this year has included two of our larger groups of records, those of the old Head Office Correspondence Department (some 40 m appraised to July), and records of Port Kembla Steelworks Industrial Department, 1935-1970. Over 60 m of these records had been appraised by July 1990. When processed, they will provide a valuable picture of

industrial relations in Australian Iron & Steel Pty Ltd steelworks and collieries for this period.

Procedures for processing photographic material have been changed, to allow the registration of "series". This should speed processing of the backlog of photographs. Storage of photographs has also been upgraded.

Conservation work completed this year has included de-acidification of minutes of Board meetings, for BHP and its major subsidiaries, and interleaving with acid-free tissue. The second stage of a three-year microfilming program for these minutes and Board papers has been completed. All minutes are now on microfiche, as well as Board papers to 1974. A collection of over 300 glass-plate negatives of Port Kembla Steelworks, dating from the 1920s and 1930s, has been cleaned. Prints and copy negatives are being made from these, to make the images available to researchers.

In June, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of BHP's Newcastle Steelworks, Archives prepared an exhibition of documents, museum items and photographs. This was displayed at the Steelworks, at an official function attended by the Governor-General and BHP executives, past and present. It was also displayed at an open-day for Steelworks' employees, before returning to Melbourne to be set up in BHP House.

Also in June, Archives hosted a field-work placement from the Diploma of Archives and Records at the University of Melbourne.

During August and September, Narelle Crux attended the SAA Conference in Seattle, and visited a number of BHP centres in the US to see their records management and archives programs.

Charles Sturt University Archives

Correspondent: Alan Ives

When the new University was created in the second half of 1989, the Archives Advisory Committee decided that the Archives' former name, the Riverina Archives, needed changing to reflect the larger area served by the parent institution and by the Archives. The Interim Board of Governors of CSU—two of whom are also on the Archives Advisory Committee—decided that the Archives would be the Archives for the whole University. One aspect of the Archives' wider role will be the appointment to the Archives Committee, of representatives from Bathurst and Albury.

Under the new and still developing administrative structures for CSU, the University Archives is answerable to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Collins, at Mitchell Campus in Bathurst. How readily this arrangement will work remains to be seen, but there are clear indications of considerable interest in Bathurst in the University Archives,

remembering that the Archives is now to serve them as well as the University campuses in Albury and Wagga Wagga.

Another change deriving from University status was clearly spelt out by Dr Blake on a visit to the Archives in July 1989: the Archives will have a role with respect to Honours Students and later Post-graduate Students, and a role with respect to the much greater level of research carried out in and by a University when compared to a College of Advanced Education.

The CSU Archives occupies the Blakemore building on "South Campus" of CSU in Wagga Wagga. The building contains five kilometres of shelving at present, as well as about 10,000 maps mainly housed in map cabinets, a large collection of regional newspapers and extensive photographic collections principally from the Daily Advertiser newspaper. A recent accession brought these holdings of negatives, dating from 1964 to April 1989, to close to one million.

With respect to the future, and planning for a branch of the Archives in Bathurst, the boundary in terms of bringing records to Wagga Wagga is now the Lachlan River, from where one of its tributaries begins near Gunning. Then as far as Condoblin, and in a straight line across to the South Australian border, south of, and thus not including Broken Hill. It will, in future, make sense, to take records created north and north-east of this line to a CSU Archives repository in Bathurst.

The CSU Archives has only three staff at present. With over 3,000 users a year since 1987—20,000 since mid-June 1983—more staff is needed. However, volunteers provide some relief to busy fulltime staff by sorting and filing index cards, or introducing novice family historians to the initially alien world of research.

Of some significance to the Charles Sturt University, and particularly to its burgeoning Archives, is the fact that the 1992 Conference of the Australian Society of Archivists will be held in Wagga Wagga. The conference is due to take place between 24 May and 31 May 1992 in the CSU Convention Centre and elsewhere as necessary. A program of interest to professional archivists, related professional groups, Local Government staff, family historians and local/regional historians will be provided. It is likely that more than one overseas archivist will attend the conference, which will have associated with it a group of workshops. One workshop will be concerned with paper conservation. Mr John Davies of the Archives Office of New South Wales has agreed, in principle, to lead this workshop. This will be the first time that this event has not been held in Canberra or a State Capital city.

The Archives continues to serve the needs of family historians, in conjunction with the Wagga Wagga and District Family History Society. The society holds all its functions and meetings in the CSU Archives.

The Archives is being utilised more and more by groups of school students—some of whom have been heard to say that research in the Archives is fun! In August 1990, the South Wagga Wagga School will have a display in the foyer of the Archives building. The public will have the opportunity to help in the identification of people in old photographs, preparatory to those pictures being used in the school centenary book in 1992.

Northern Territory Archives Service

Correspondent: Baiba Berzins

A survey of records holdings in 154 Northern Territory Government and municipal agencies and record-keeping units was carried out in January to March of this year to identify the quantity and types of records held. A survey has also been carried out on behalf of ACLIS (NT) of the preservation state of NT library and archives collections and their conservation needs.

A General Disposal Schedule of Human Resource Management records has been compiled as well as a manual for Transfer and Lending procedures.

The current exhibition, *Administrators in the NT*, displays documents and photographs relating to the Territory's executive head during the decades of the twentieth century.

Graduate Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records, Monash University

Correspondent: Sue McKemmish

Our Department has recently changed its name and become part of a new Faculty of Professional Studies.

Two new elective subjects are being developed for the second year of the Master of Arts (Archives and Records) program.

The Community Information subject will focus on archival and record-keeping needs and services in the community at large, including record-keeping in community organisations, archives in a multicultural society, the archives of women's and minority groups, oral history and documentation programs, and the community involvement programs of government, corporate and collecting archival institutions, as well as the role of public libraries and museums. It will aim to develop the skills required to provide community-based records and archives services.

Business Records Management will examine the essentials of business record-keeping, with an emphasis on medium and larger-sized companies, covering document control, selection of storage media, appraisal and

disposal, control of the archival document, establishment of organisational archive and document imaging, with an emphasis on managing electronic records. It will present techniques for investigating and assessing record-keeping systems and strategies, and methods for subsequent actions.

In keeping with one of our primary aims, to integrate theoretical studies with practical work and exposure to the real world of archives and records, both subjects will include a program of field-work, visits, guest speakers and work experience.

Other electives already offered in the second year of the program include Issues in Archives and Records Management, which provides an opportunity to investigate topical issues in depth; The Impact of Technology on Archives Materials; and Source Materials for Australian Studies.

From 1991, archivists, records managers and practitioners working in related fields, e.g. librarians or public historians, will also be able to enrol in individual subjects on a non-degree, sessional basis. A fee will be applied to such enrolments.

A brochure providing more information about our teaching programs is now available (from The Chairman, Graduate Department of Librarianship, Archives and Records, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, 3168).

The first graduate of the Master's program will be Normal Houghton, archivist at the Geelong Historical Records Centre. Norman's thesis is a comparative study of the use of archives at the Public Records Office, Victoria (Laverton Search Room), the Geelong Historical Records Centre, the La Trobe Library and Melbourne University Archives. Other research underway includes an examination of the treatment of archival material held by museums in Victoria, a survey of the introduction of new record-keeping technologies, a study of survey methods for documenting hospital records and a case study of disposal practices in a government agency. The results of work undertaken during the program by two of our students, Irene Kearsey and Gavan McCarthy, have recently been published in *Archives and Manuscripts*.

University of Western Australia, Special Collections

Correspondent: Erin Fraser

In 1987, a new section called the Fine Arts, Architecture and Special Collections (FAASC) was established within the Reid Library. The section is divided into two separate areas. Firstly, there is an open access area which includes an audio-visual centre and an extensive collective of monographs, serials and reference materials relating to art and architecture.

The other area is a restricted access area which houses several collections. These include manuscripts, rare books, Australiana, theses, the University Collection, the William Riley Collection of Somerset

Maugham and the Erulker Collection. The latter was assembled by David Solomon Erulker and was considered the largest privately-owned collection of books, documents and manuscripts on the subject of Indian maritime history.

An exhibition of the literary manuscripts of Robert Drewe was held from May through July, 1990. Notes and working drafts of all the author's major works including his most recent book, the *Bay of Contented Men*, were on display.

Other notable items in the manuscript collection include exercise books containing the various drafts of A. B. Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, and the papers of Eric G. Turner, Professor of Papyrology, University College, London, 1950-78.

ANU Archives of Business and Labour

Correspondent: Michael Saclier

The Australian National University marked *Sixty Years of Higher Education in the ACT* on 16 September. This event took the form of Open Days at the University in which the Archives participated. Our involvement related to the use of archival resources for both teaching and research and included displays of items from our holdings, directed towards specific themes.

The Archives has recently commissioned a conservation survey which will include assessment of the storage environment and of the condition of records. The resulting report is expected to be the basis for the development of a planning strategy for the preservation management of our holdings and for a program of conservation requirements.

Much of our ongoing work has been geared to coping with a large influx of records resulting from trade union amalgamations. The genesis of new, larger unions has seen considerable quantities of records transferred to archival custody as the component parts divest themselves of their former identity. The consequent need to monitor administrative changes has greatly increased the workload.

Our twice yearly newsletter ABLative now records such transfers, incorporating a listing of accessions to our holdings for each six-monthly period. This means that users can be provided routinely with up-to-date information on our holdings. All records can be retrieved for use except where noted otherwise.

Our updated, consolidated *List of Holdings* is programmed for production by late 1990.

Apart from the volume of records transferred from existing depositors, significant new transfers have been negotiated, notably from the Builders

Labourers Federation (Head Office and ACT Branch), and a large volume of records from the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union (Federal and NSW Offices), one of the largest unions in the country.

Queensland State Archives

Correspondent: Linda Bell

Members of staff are currently juggling management programs such as Structural Efficiency, Programme Management, Staff Appraisal, Management Training and Development, and Performance Planning and Review, which leave little time for "real" work.

The Court Reporting Bureau transferred a large quantity of court transcripts covering the period 1956-1973, in June this year. Eventide, at Sandgate, transferred the admission registers of Dunwich Benevolent Asylum for 1882-1905, after a long period of negotiation. A substantial quantity of extremely valuable records of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, relating to Aborigines and Islanders, going back to the late nineteenth century were received very recently.

A special grant was received this year to microfilm 5,000 badly damaged Railway Department rollingstock drawings. The drawings required extensive repair before they could be encapsulated and microfilmed.

Conservation staff spent three intensive weeks in May drying out and repairing case files from the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, which fell victim to the flood in Charleville.

The recent purchase of a new Minolta DR1600 camera for 16 mm microfilm will mean increased production, and a number of long-awaited in-house projects will come to fruition.

User Services staff hosted a one-day seminar for the Master of Local History students, and an evening lecture and tour for anthropology students from the University of Queensland, to introduce them to the sources available.

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody has generated a substantial amount of activity in the file-issue section.

A submission was made through the Library Board of Queensland to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission concerning Freedom of Information legislation.

Three new staff positions, for two archivists and an executive secretary, have been approved and recently filled. The additional staff should mean that our backlog of unprocessed records will be diminished, in the relatively near future, or will at least stop growing.

Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

Correspondent: Warwick Hirst

The Italians in New South Wales Project, a joint collecting venture between the Italian Historical Society of NSW and the State Library, continues to enrich the Library's collections. Recent acquisitions include the records of the National Italian-Australian Women's Association (NSW Branch), 1984-1990; the 12.5 kg scrapbook of Thomas Marinato depicting aspects of the social and maritime history of Watson's Bay and Sydney; the papers of the Lorenzi family, including photographs of their restaurant "La Veneziana", a popular meeting-place of the Italian community, c. 1950-1976.

To promote the Project, the Library, through its Public Libraries Branch, has organised for the distribution to the 89 Library Services throughout NSW, of copies of Dino Gustin's book on Mama Lena, *70 anni di ricordi in due mondi/70 years of life in two countries: Italy and Australia* (1987), generously donated by the author.

A most significant acquisition has been the records of the Rosemary Creswell Literary Agency, 1979-1989. This collection consists of the complete business archives of the Agency from its foundation. The records include correspondence files, financial records, publishers' catalogues and other more fugitive items relating to all aspects of the book trade, reviews and photographs.

Other recent acquisitions have included further papers of Elizabeth Jolley; the records of the Public Service Association of NSW, amounting to 900 boxes; the papers of Sir Charles Moses, former General-Manager of the ABC, and Secretary-General of the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union; and the papers of the popular radio personality, "The Immortal" H. G. Nelson, including material relating to his cult radio programme *This Sporting Life* on 2JJJ-FM.

The Regent Hotel of Sydney has funded the employment of an archivist by the Library beginning in February 1991, to survey the Hotel's records, establish a system for the regular transfer of non-current records to the Library, and to process them. This will include the transfer to video-disk of photographs and other selected items needed for reference at the Hotel.

Two further manuscripts guides have recently been published: *Guide to the papers of Lachlan Macquarie and the Macquarie Family* and *Guide to the Angus & Robertson Archives*. These, together with previously published manuscripts guides, are available for purchase from the Library Shop for \$8.50 plus postage, with the exception of that for Angus & Robertson, which retails for \$17.50 plus postage.

Two exhibitions were opened in the Mitchell Galleries earlier this year.

Kid's Stuff: Favourite Australian Children's Book from the Last 100 Years, the State Library's contribution to International Literacy Year 1990, opened on 10 April and extended until 5 August. Featuring original manuscripts, artwork and letters of both classic and contemporary children's authors, *Kid's Stuff* included manuscripts and correspondence from the recently acquired Archive of P. L. Travers, Australian-born editor of the *Mary Poppins* books.

The Waratah and the Thistle: The Story of Angus & Robertson, drew on the Library's two major collections of A & R Records. Original artwork, portraits, manuscripts and letters of A. B. Paterson, Henry Lawson, Miles Franklin, C. J. Dennis and others, through to Xavier Herbert and contemporary writers Thomas Keneally and Elizabeth Jolley, were exhibited from 1 May until 29 July.

Several municipal councils have now requested that their records held in the Mitchell Library be returned to Council custody. It is Library policy to accede to such requests as it is more appropriate that these records be held locally, where they were created. To date, records have been returned to Campbelltown and Fairfield.

Work is proceeding on the development of a database for pictures records in the Mitchell Library. Investigations are moving in two directions, using as their bases the AWAIRS FINE-ART system originally devised by AWA for the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, and the video-disk technology pioneered by the Laser Disk Studio of the former New South Wales Government Printing Office.

The AWAIRS FINE-ART system is being revised and amended as the descriptive and subject parameters are refined for access to and management of the Library's Pictures Collections. A Specification document has been prepared by the Data Processing Unit in association with Pictures Section staff. The final version of the system is still a little way off, but we are getting there. Eventually it is intended that it will be possible to undertake an on-line search of the Mitchell Library's collections of printed books, maps, manuscripts and pictures, on different databases, but the same access points.

The other major development in the automation of pictorial records is occurring with the photographic collections. Previously one of the most difficult areas of the collection to search, particularly for glass negatives, a revolution has occurred through the use of video disk technology.

The Library's first venture into this field was the filming on disk, and associated indexing, of 7,000 images copied by Alan Davies, now Curator of Photographs at the Library, for a project funded by the NSW Bicentennial Council. This disk is entitled *At Work, At Play*, and displays images gathered in NSW country districts dated before 1939. The success of this project was such that the Library decided to proceed with the copying and indexing

of 40,000 photographic negatives from its own collections: Hood, Hall and Foster (all Sydney, c. 1920-1950); Holtermann (New South Wales and Victorian towns, c. 1873-1875); and Hurley (Antarctic and World War I, 1914-1915). In addition, the 200,000 images which comprised the NSW Government Printing Offices' collection of photographs have been transferred to four separate disks, which should be available later this year. Images Now, the Library's commercial photographic processing unit, incorporates the Laser Disc Studio of the Government Printing Office.