

# NEWS NOTES

Edited by Helen Yoxall

## **Australian War Memorial Research Centre**

*Correspondent: Paul Mansfield*

### ***Evaluation of the New Research Centre***

Evaluation played a key role in the development of the Memorial's new Research Centre, opened in November 1998. Now that the Centre has been open for some time, an evaluation is being planned. There are several questions the Memorial wants answered through the evaluation. Who is using the new online gallery and reading room? What collections and services do they access? How user friendly are the online databases? What problems, if any, are clients encountering? What is working well in the new Research Centre? What requires additional fine tuning? Two client surveys and a series of focus groups will form the bulk of the evaluation. The results will be used to further improve client services in the Research Centre, part of the Memorial's commitment towards continual improvement.

### ***Dunlop Collection***

The papers of Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop were transferred to the Memorial about five years ago. They amounted to over 110 archive boxes and include the diaries he kept as a prisoner of war of the Japanese on the Burma-Thailand Railway as well as a vast number of records documenting his university, sporting and medical careers, and his personal life. The records include diaries, photographs, film, sound material, patient case files, newspaper cuttings, copies of speeches and manuscripts. A guide to the collection was recently completed and will eventually be placed on the Memorial's website ([www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)). The collection is now being housed and conserved and will soon be available for researchers to consult. Microfilming of the diaries kept by Dunlop in the Second World War will commence shortly.

### ***Online Services***

Since the reopening of the Research Centre, the development of online databases and services has continued to improve access to the Memorial's collections. Expansion of interest in the website has been reflected in usage of the photographic and other databases, and increased enquiries via the site's Reference Enquiry Form. The Memorial's expanded photographic database in particular has proved a very popular point of entry and source

of information for researchers. The Roll of Honour and Commemorative Roll are also popular sites, available both to remote users and Memorial visitors through the Research Centre. The development of a "tiered access" model at the Memorial has been an important part of the Centre's strategy to manage this interest.

Digital scanning of another series - AWM133 (Nominal Roll of the Australian Imperial Force in the First World War) - has been completed, and testing will commence during 1999. It is expected this will be an important resource that will connect users more directly to service records, and to other relevant databases. Recently, the Boer War Nominal Roll, listing some 17,000 names and other details of those who served in the South African War of 1899-1902, has been added to the Memorial's intranet, and in late 1999 will be released on the internet version of the website.

## **Charles Sturt University Regional Archives**

*Correspondent: James Logan*

Archives staff have been preoccupied with a number of building and collection management projects for the period of January to June 1999. The start of the year saw the construction of new over-sized shelving to accommodate local government rate and valuation books, and standard-sized shelving to house university records. Work will continue throughout the year to re-organise repository space, including disassembling old shelving in our far back room and moving university records out into the main repository. At the end of the year this area will be taken over by the University's Art Curator for intermediate storage.

Over the summer of 1998-99, the Archives hosted another summer vacation research scholar, Madeline Denholm, who carried out a study of the effectiveness of the Murray Valley Development League as an environmental pressure group. The scholarship was funded by the University's Research Management Committee. The results of the study will form the basis of Ms Denholm's BA history Honours year at CSU. The Archives expects to host another scholar over the summer of 1999-2000. Meanwhile, the Archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga, Kay Judd, conducted her Edith Cowan University work placement at the Regional Archives over March and April, and has completed the graduate diploma course in archives and records. Our Archives Assistant, Wayne Doubleday, is still engaged with his graduate diploma course at Edith Cowan University, and the Archivist, James Logan, is completing his BA Honours year part-time at CSU.

From January to June this year, the Archives accessioned over 248 linear metres of records, the bulk of which originated from organisational units

within the University. Staff at the Archives hope to accession the remaining consignments of university records by the end of the year, and to manage them under the same accessioning system with the rest of the Regional Archives collection. Steady work continues with listing, with 98.3 metres processed so far this year - up 68.9 metres from this time last year. The number of search room retrievals was up 9.6 per cent from last year's figure, and there was a small increase in the quantity of records destroyed for the same period.

A great deal of work has been invested in updating and improving the Regional Archives website, which is now awaiting the final stages of QA perusal. The new website will contain more information and text about the functioning of the Regional Archives. On-line finding aids will be available, including the publication of our new *Regional Records On-Line Guide*. Archives staff have also spent many hours filing and boxing up the final photographs in the Archives' photograph collection. A rudimentary database has been set up to manage image descriptions, although most photographs from collections have only been described at the series level.

### **Edith Cowan University Archives**

*Correspondent: Ronald Hermann*

The current holdings at the University Archives have continued to expand and the archives have recently placed an embargo on the transfer of all temporary records until new shelving is installed. There have been more transfers to the archives this year than in previous years. Student Administration at Churchlands Campus has recently transferred in excess of 300 boxes to archives. The boxes contain student files from 1991 - 1996. Other campuses such as Joondalup Campus also have space problems and want to transfer records to archives. Any new large consignment/s are currently stored in the University store until additional space or shelving is found. There is at present no archive shelving left and all three repositories are full to capacity. The draft working party on the university archives has been submitted and the final report on the future of the archive will be submitted to the Executive Directorate in September 1999.

### **John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library**

*Correspondent: Lesley Carman-Brown*

Researchers in Canberra and Perth continue to work on identifying research material for inclusion in the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) Electronic Research Archive (ERA) which was launched through the internet in July, following migration to new software. Essentially ERA enables us to enhance access to records, often including

the contents of individual records and series of records, while maintaining the context in which those records were created. Permission has been sought from copyright owners, where material is not in the public domain, and where it has been included in ERA. This is an ongoing process. A record of all correspondence with copyright owners has been maintained and is readily accessible in the JCPML records management system. As part of the development of ERA a remote scan station was configured during February-March for use by JCPML staff to scan in over 3,000 documents from the local office of the National Archives of Australia. There are currently over 10,000 image and text files in ERA.

As well as digitizing the collection a number of other focal areas have been developed including: identifying further oral history interviews for the JCPML to undertake, completing a survey of theses submitted to Australian universities that are related to John Curtin and his times, locating film and sound recordings from the ABC Archives, and following up a number of leads to individuals who may still have material which is not yet in the public domain.

In July the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library received a donation of research papers from Mrs Hazel Hawke which has been significant in developing the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library collection in one of its focal areas, namely the prime ministership as an office. These papers document Mrs Hawke's time at the Prime Minister's Lodge and include a comprehensive set of speeches that she delivered during this time (1983 to 1991). Other papers in the donation include photographs and correspondence. Mrs Hawke has chosen to donate these papers to the JCPML in order to keep the papers within Western Australia, where she was born and raised. Mrs Hawke is also undertaking a major oral history for the JCPML.

As part of her strong interest and involvement with community and social issues, Mrs Hawke has also worked collaboratively with Curtin University of Technology to instigate the Hazel Hawke John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library Scholarship. Both of these initiatives were announced on 5 July when Mrs Hawke delivered the second JCPML Anniversary Lecture, introduced by the JCPML Patron, the Hon. Gough Whitlam. This function attracted more than 270 guests.

During July the JCPML was also very pleased to have been involved in the development of the Sir Charles Court Leadership Program, a joint initiative of the John Curtin Centre and the History Teachers' Association of Western Australia. Approximately 30 year 10 history students participated in this program and attended a talk by archivist Kandy-Jane Henderson on archival records and were given a demonstration of the electronic archive.

The educational program continues to receive very favourable feedback with both teachers and students giving it a rating of excellent. This year we again held a Professional Development Day for the History Teachers Association and were involved in two workshops - one on our proposed new educational resource and the other on our new educational program for years 9 & 10 society and environment students. Developing an educational resource which is applicable to the national curricula has been a major undertaking for the JCPML this year. It has been favourably reviewed by HTAWA and will be ready for sale by September.

Our major exhibition, John Curtin: A Man of Peace, A Time of War, was refurbished in February and continues to attract visitors. The JCPML made a successful application for a Federation Community Project grant to fund a new exhibition for 2000.

A new online exhibition was developed and went live on 5 July. The JCPML website has also been updated to make information more readily identifiable and easily accessible by users. Our web address for those wishing to check out new developments or access our Electronic Research Archive is: <http://john.curtin.edu.au>.

## **City of Sydney Archives**

*Correspondent: Mark Stevens*

This report covers the year ending 30 June 1999. The main development has been the implementation of the archives restructuring project foreshadowed in our report last year.

On 1 March 1999 the City of Sydney Archives opened for business in new premises on level 1 of Town Hall House, the Council's administrative base in downtown Sydney. Most of the archival records in custody were transferred to the Government Records Repository (GRR) at Kingswood in western Sydney. About 20% of the records have been retained, including those most heavily used by public researchers. Records sent to the GRR are retrieved and delivered to Town Hall House as required, and are not accessible for research at Kingswood. The City pays the GRR fees for storage and retrieval services. The records are stored in archival-quality environmental conditions.

Helen Robinson and Susan Kennedy were appointed as temporary archivists for several months each and they carried out much of the work necessary to the success of the project. In particular, they re-boxed as many permanent records as possible into archival-grade boxes, and undertook a container-level inventory of all our records including assigning unique container identifiers to permit precise retrieval from the GRR. Our plan to have all archival records re-boxed within three years has fallen victim to budget cuts.



Taking a break from the restructuring project (December 1998).  
L-R: Susan Wright (Document Technology Manager, responsible for the Archives and Records business teams), Helen Robinson, Angela McGing, Susan Kennedy, Ross Connell, Renato Perdon. The poster in the background is from our very successful July 1998 exhibition to mark the centenary of the Queen Victoria Building.

The new premises in Town Hall House are fitted out to a much higher standard than our previous warehouse accommodation, and we are very pleased with the effect. Space is at a premium however, making it difficult to undertake sizeable processing tasks. This could become more of a problem if public access demand continues to increase and we need room to expand public facilities.

The new arrangement has ensured the Council's archives are stored in appropriate conditions, that access services are more conveniently located for researchers, and that the Archives team is better able to interact with the rest of the Council administration. It has also resulted in significant ongoing reduction in the costs of funding the archives program.

Over the next twelve months we anticipate working with State Records to resolve issues arising from the extension of coverage of the State Records Act 1998 to local government. These include recordkeeping compliance matters as well as 'ownership' and funding of the archival program.

The table on the next page shows the levels of demand to which we responded during the year.

Item	1997	1998	1999
Lending transactions	8,749	4,930	6,009
Records accessioned or destroyed (metres)	1,078	1,575	1,855
Responses to research enquiries	894	909	1,341
Research visits	326	341	786
Records in custody at end of the year (metres)	8,654	7,952	6,595

A high proportion of our research visitors, and of our written research enquiries, continues to be from property owners and agents (architects, strata managers, lawyers, environmental consultants etc) who need evidence relating to City buildings and properties (drawings, site histories, contamination surveys, consent parameters and so on). Use of the Archives by college students began to increase markedly during the last three months of the year, reflecting our more convenient new location and the availability of the enhanced Sydney Reference Collection mentioned in our report last year. We expect students will become a significant group of users from now on.

This year we provided help to a number of film production companies, including *The Matrix*, *Mission Impossible II*, and the IMAX film *Sydney - A Story of a City*. Look out for our contributions (and our credit lines!) if you see any of them.

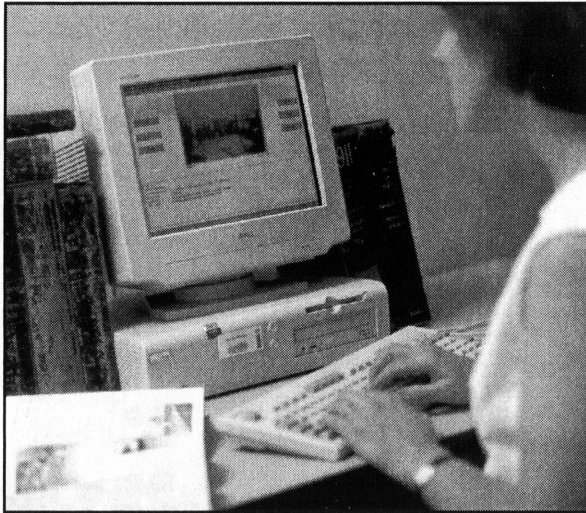
The increase in public access demand (research enquiries up 47% and visits up 130%) reflects a generally higher level throughout the year plus a very sharp upturn for the last quarter when we moved to Town Hall House. This increase can be expected to continue during 1999-2000 and raises questions about how we will be able to meet it within available resources and still keep up work in other areas, especially archival documentation.

The restructuring project, and before that the competitive tendering project, have combined with increasing access demand to place most documentation work on hold for the last two years, so that there is a lot of catch-up work necessary. We will be trying to make some progress during 1999-2000, particularly with updating function and activity documentation and working towards internet delivery of our Tabularium system using active server pages technology.

During the year we made a useful start with some imaging projects. As part of the restructuring project we microfilmed some series that are heavily used by researchers but bulky to store and handle. This project will continue, on a reduced scale in the future. We also developed a project to digitally image building application plans, funded by a fee levied on applications. This project was deferred by Council management, but could go ahead

from mid 2000. We have also begun digitally imaging our photograph collection with the aim of delivering internet access within the next few months. Completion of this project will take several years. We propose to extend it to include images held in other units of the Council, not only those in Archives custody.

At the end of the year we welcomed back Renato Perdon who had been on sick leave for fifteen months from April 1998.



Our new digital photograph management and access software 'Perfect Pictures' was installed in early 1999. An initial batch of 5,000 images has been scanned in (loaded) and we are part-way through the indexing of them. The photograph shows Angela McGing checking an image using the viewing module.

## **Mortlock Library of South Australiana**

*Correspondent: Roger André*

The J.D. Somerville Oral History collection has embarked upon two new projects. A partnership with the National Library's Oral History Section will contribute interviews with notable South Australians to the long-standing *Eminent Australians* interviewing program. Sculptor and artist John Dowie has graciously agreed to be the first interview for the joint project.

The Minister for the Arts and the Status of Women, the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, has provided funding for interviews with 10 South Australian women who are recent recipients of Australia Day and Queen's Birthday honours. One of the women celebrated in the project creates most of the



tactile books used by visually impaired children in South Australia. Another is world-renowned for her contribution to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) research.

After the death of Don Dunstan in February 1999 the Oral History Officer drew upon established contacts among local broadcasters to add a range of retrospective and memorial recordings about the former premier to the Somerville Collection.

A recent purchase for the Pictorial Collection has been a presentation volume of fifty South Australian views, some taken by Captain Sweet, which was assembled and given to Mabelle Annie Brassey on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1887 during a visit to South Australia with her parents, Lord and Lady Brassey, who called in whilst sailing around the world for the third time on their yacht *Sunbeam*. The volume, bound with gold tooled moroccan leather, is in excellent condition. Lady Brassey, who died prematurely at sea shortly after leaving Australia on this trip, wrote two books about their sailing: *Voyages around the world* and *A voyage in the Sunbeam* - a popular success which is still enjoyed today.



Adelaide from the Post Office Tower, ca 1887.  
(*Brassey Album*, Mortlock Library of South Australiana, B63015)

A very different item has been the purchase via funds provided by the generosity of the Friends of the State Library, of a superb caricature by Lionel Coventry of the well known South Australian sportsman, journalist and radio commentator, Victor York Richardson.

Also contributed by the Friends have been a 1937 linocut by May Voke and a 1885 watercolour of Brownhill Creek by Reverend Alfred Sells.

Volunteer indexing of a massive nineteenth century collection of Piper Bakewell and Piper's legal documents has been completed. Further notable accessions of business records have been records of merchants and importers G & R Wills, 1848-1987, and records of Coldstream Refrigeration Limited, 1920-1965, while personal manuscripts have included Esther Pocock's 1884 diary aboard the *Hesperus*, recording verse composed by the crew.

## National Archives of Australia

*Correspondent: Malcolm Wood*

### *Exhibitions & Events*

The Michael Leunig exhibition, *The Happy Prints*, was opened with some pizzazz on 26 March by media personality, Andrew Denton, in the presence of the artist and an opening night crowd of about 150. Over the following 12 weeks the exhibition attracted up to 500 people on most weekends, many of whom came back a second or third time.

The day after the opening, Michael Leunig signed books in the Archives foyer. Several hundreds of fans turned up for what was to be an hour of book signing, but graciously Michael stayed for nearly two and a half hours!

A Back to East Block day on 21 March drew an appreciative crowd of more than 600. Some looked for their old office space, others took guided tours or looked at a special video of Canberra in the days when the building was built.

A very successful Family History Fair was held on Sunday 18 April with abundant information for the novice genealogist. 683 people visited the National Archives to:

- listen to hourly talks about records of interest;
- visit the conservation clinic;
- learn how to use our database and website;
- talk to reference officers in the orientation centre;
- tell us what records they think we should keep; and
- visit booths of the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra, the Canberra and District Historical Society, the Military History Society, the Canberra Heritage Library and a number of archival product suppliers.

The Archives was delighted with the success of the day and plans to hold further activities for genealogists later in the year.

Actress Chantal Contouri opened the exhibition, *Chops and Changes: food, immigrants and culture* on 15 July, charming the opening night audience with personal stories of her 1950s childhood in Adelaide.

Curated at the South Australian Migration Museum, *Chops and Changes* celebrates Australian society and culture through our changing diet over the last 50 years. In keeping with the maxim 'you are what you eat', the exhibition provides a colourful look at the impact of immigration in the 1950s and 1960s and its effect on Australian cuisine. The exhibition will remain on show in our gallery until Sunday 7 November 1999.

The actual Tattersall's lottery barrel from which the marbles were drawn for the 16 national service ballots for the Vietnam war is now on show in the Treasures Gallery in the National Archives. It is part of an evocative display about conscription which also includes letters and telegrams of protest from Australians, along with a letter from US president Lyndon Johnson, thanking John Gorton for his commitment of troops and promising to buy Australian sugar in return.

### **Publications**

The National Archives has won *The Australian's* award for excellence in educational publishing for *Convict Fleet to Dragon Boat*, a CD-ROM that provides a 'confronting and personal look at Australia's multicultural development'. Produced in association with Ripple Media and the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia, *Convict Fleet to Dragon Boat* was developed with the assistance of the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.

### **PhotoSearch**

A recent addition to the Archives' website is PhotoSearch, a database of photographic captions and images. PhotoSearch currently contains approximately 100,000 photographic captions and 4,000 images, just a small proportion of our total photographic holdings. Users of PhotoSearch can choose to browse captions and images by subject, or search by keyword. The images currently available depict many aspects of Australia and Australian lifestyle from the 1850s to the 1990s and include prominent figures in politics, sport and the arts, as well as images of places and events. Captions and images are continually being added to the database. If researchers retrieve a caption without an accompanying image, they can request that the image be digitised and placed on PhotoSearch by completing and submitting an online form. There is no charge for this service. PhotoSearch can be found on the Archives' website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).

### ***Professional Development***

During May and June the Access and Information Services Section conducted the third of its professional development training programs for reference staff - History and Historical Method: World War II to Vietnam. One hundred participants attended the two-day course which was delivered by Dr Michael McKernan and presented five times in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. Staff from several state and local government archival institutions accepted the invitation to participate, and over 90% of participants rated the course as excellent or very good. The module is part of an ongoing program of professional development designed to develop and improve a range of skills specific to the needs of the National Archives' reference staff. An outline of the program appears in an earlier issue of *Archives and Manuscripts*.

### ***Bringing Them Home Indexing Project***

The Archives received \$2 million over four years as part of the Commonwealth Government's response to the *Bringing Them Home* report. The funding was provided from July 1998 to index, copy and preserve Commonwealth records relating to Indigenous people to assist them in linking up with their families and communities.

We have reached the end of the first financial year of funding. During the year we have recruited indexing teams in Darwin and Canberra and have checked through over 3 500 files for names, indexed 49 000 names and entered approximately 29 000 of these on the newly developed database. Although only a proportion of records likely to hold names has been indexed, the index is already achieving its aim of helping to link up families. We know it has assisted in at least one reunion - the woman concerned had been searching for her mother for over 50 years.

### ***Development of Standards and Record Keeping Systems***

During 1998-99 the Archives made significant progress towards the development of standards and guidelines to help agencies adopt best-practice recordkeeping systems. Some of these are discussed below.

### ***DIRKS Methodology***

One initiative, which is being pursued in collaboration with the State Records Authority of New South Wales, is the preparation of an online manual to help agencies systematically review their existing recordkeeping practices or develop new ones consistent with the Australian Standard on Records Management (AS 4390).

Based on the methodology for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems (DIRKS) outlined in AS 4390, the manual provides a systematic

approach for agencies to identify their recordkeeping requirements (based on a rigorous analysis of business functions, activities and the regulatory framework); assess existing policies, practices and systems against these requirements; develop or refine strategies to satisfy these requirements; and implement and review improvements. The manual will assist agencies to devise and implement agency-specific solutions to their recordkeeping needs, including developing business classification schemes, preparing function-based records disposal schedules, or selecting and implementing records management software.

### ***Recordkeeping Metadata Standard***

A significant achievement was the publication in June of the *Recordkeeping Metadata Standard for Commonwealth Agencies*. This standard, which is available on the Archives website, specifies the descriptive information that should be captured in the recordkeeping systems used by Commonwealth agencies. Compliance with the standard will assist agencies to manage their electronic records effectively and to maintain the meaning, authenticity, security, accessibility and usability of those records over time.

### ***CRS Manual***

As part of a major review of the CRS System, the Archives has developed a new set of descriptive standards for achieving archival control over Commonwealth records in agency or archival custody. This in turn necessitated a substantial revision of the CRS Manual. The new edition of the CRS Manual includes explanations for a significant number of new descriptive attributes for provenance, series and record items. It also includes changes to the way existing attributes are described and managed for data entry and retrieval. These additional and revised attributes have been incorporated into a new and much improved automated system for documenting the existence of archival records. This system has replaced the RINSE and ANGAM II databases, which were implemented in the late 1980s.

### ***Agency Promotion and Training***

The Archives recently formed a section tasked with promoting modern recordkeeping practices within government. Promotion and marketing of best practice recordkeeping is one component of an overall Archives initiative to assist agencies to adopt modern recordkeeping practices suitable for the 21st century and essential for the online initiatives of government.

### ***General Disposal Authority Project***

Earlier this year the National Archives finalised an arrangement to purchase a whole-of-government licence for the Commonwealth of the State Records

---

Authority of NSW's Keyword AAA (KAAA) Thesaurus. With the acquisition of this product a decision was made to redevelop the current set of General Disposal Authorities (GDA) in order to produce one disposal authority linked to the KAAA business classification terms. Work began on this project in February and is expected to take a year to complete. The methodology being employed in developing the new disposal authority is based on the Australian Records Management Standard AS 4390. The analysis also incorporates the new Archives appraisal guidelines and disposal procedures.

## **Public Record Office Victoria**

*Correspondent: Ian MacFarlane*

Public Record Office Victoria's new \$ 32 million Victorian Archives Centre in North Melbourne is close to completion and official handover perhaps as early as September.

Strategies continue to be developed for the move of up to 75 kilometres of records in the holdings from the Laverton Base Repository to the new centre. The ARAD (Appraisal, Review and Documentation) project has written up more than 800 series appraisal reports and has progressed well into the documentation phase.

The Victorian Electronic Records Strategy Project (VERS) was launched on March 31 by Mrs Lorraine Elliott, MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Arts. Mrs Elliott said the project was a first for Victoria. No other government has come up with a solution to the problem of long-term preservation of electronic data, and it has generated considerable interest in Australia and overseas, she said. Copies of the final report can be purchased from Public Record Office Victoria for \$9.50.

The three Search Rooms welcomed 23,633 researchers (4,930 first-timers) between July 1998 and June 1999. Public Access staff handled over fifty thousand enquiries, and more than 79 thousand copies of documents were provided.

Agency Services continues to initiate and implement large records disposal projects for agencies like the Legal Aid Commission and Melbourne Water. Disposal schedules for the Casino and Gaming Authority, and another for the Department of Treasury and Finance have been endorsed in principle by the Public Records Advisory Council, and referred to the disposal sub-committee.

Over two kilometres of records were transferred to the Office during the financial year. These included records from the Departments of Natural

Resources and Justice, Yarra Valley Water and the City of Melbourne. Records processing work on 1.7 kilometres of records transferred in previous years, and 400 metres from the present consignments, continues.

In the financial year to June 1999, the Issues Office received 77,534 requests and issued 76,082 items. Only 2% of the requested records were not in the holdings.

A service previously provided by the Building Services Agency (BSA) has joined Public Record Office Victoria's repertoire of enticing research sources. A quarter of a million architectural plans, once the preserve of the Public Works Department, are now accessible through a searchable database. Although some restrictions apply, most plans are available.

The Office's trainee archivists funded by Aboriginal Affairs Victoria began their training in June 1999. In addition to absorbing the mysteries of archiving, the trainees will be involved in research among aboriginal records and in the organisation of Koorie Forums, part of the Victorian Government's response to the *Bringing Them Home* report.

The *My Heart Is Breaking* national touring exhibition, now in its third year of touring, has featured at four venues in the City of Hume, which encompasses several outer Melbourne suburbs between June and July. The exhibition has now been seen by 170,000 people.

Public Programs has been involved in various seminars recently, as well as the launch of the latest installment of *Immigration to Victoria: index to inward overseas passenger lists: British ports 1860-69*. Work has also continued on the Founding Documents website project coordinated by National Archives of Australia. The project involves all the state archives and the Northern Territory. The website will be released in June 2000, and focuses on the birth certificate documents of each state and of our federated nation.

## Queensland State Archives

*Correspondent: Shiranthi Siyambalapitiya*

The first half of 1999 has been an exceptionally busy period for Queensland State Archives. Almost all staff were involved in testing and implementation of the newly designed electronic system as well as the new records management system. Some of the highlights of this period have been the formal completion of the Automation Project and a number of significant changes to staffing.

The Automation Project was formally completed on 30 June. During the past two years, the Project team managed by Shauna Hicks has been actively involved in the planning, tendering, designing, testing, evaluating and

implementing of an electronic system which would meet the requirements of Queensland State Archives. As a consequence, an electronic system - 'Archives One' is now in operation at Queensland State Archives. Remaining and continuing tasks of the project include the preparation of a public search module, ongoing system support, enhancements to the system, data conversion, data clean-up work, training and preparation of procedure manuals and a range of other related tasks. These tasks are now the responsibility of Jackie Bettington who has been appointed as the Acting Manager of the Automation Project. A number of interstate archival/ records authorities have also shown interest in the new system.

There have been a number of changes to staffing during this period. Cameron Borg from the Rockhampton Public Library joined Public Access branch in March as a temporary archivist. Laura Morales, Eilean Craig and Nicola Forbes joined the permanent staff. Also, in February Joanne Anthony and Fiona Gaske resigned from QSA, to accept positions with the Aboriginal Welfare Fund and John Oxley Library respectively. In March, Ross Harrison-Snow resigned from QSA after about seven years of valuable service. Tim Godfrey has accepted a position as the University Archivist at University of Technology, Sydney. Vivienne Larking has accepted a position as the Marrickville City Council Archivist. In July Shauna Hicks resigned from QSA to accept a position as the Assistant Director, Collection Review at National Archives of Australia. We wish them all well.

The work of all areas of Queensland State Archives during this period has been affected by the staffing changes and the Automation Project. Normal day to day work particularly in the areas of Arrangement and Description and Transfers was postponed for a period. Using 'Archives One' - the new system, all areas of work are slowly being restored to their normal levels of processing.

Transfers for the first quarter consisted of 45.77m of permanent records, 0.5m of temporary records, 13 films and 666 microforms. A significant collection of Queensland road maps from Main Roads Department, marriage registers and adopted children register from the Registry of Births, Tribal Boundary Maps from Families, Youth and Community Care Department and some pre 1925 Agenda and Minute Books from Mulgrave Shire Council were some of the major transfers.

A note on appraisal work - thirty five disposal authorities were approved. Some major schedules among those were:

- Pre 1925 records of the (greater) Brisbane City Council
- Australian Financial Institutions Commission and Queensland Office of



Financial Supervision in preparation for proposed transfer of State functions to Australian government agencies

- Gold Coast Institute of Technical and Further Education

*The General Records Disposal Schedule for Local Government Records in Queensland* was updated, redrafted and copies of the draft have been forwarded to the local authorities in Queensland for comment.

The staff of Public Access have also been busy with seminar presentations, field trips to regional Queensland, Saturday openings of the Public Search Room and preparation of exhibitions. In April, a successful field trip was made to Townsville and Mt Isa by Nola Fulwood in conjunction with National Archives of Australia, Queensland Regional Office staff Sharon Pheeley and Greg Cope. All three enjoyed the North Queensland hospitality. Nola Fulwood and Greg Cope undertook a full day seminar at Bundaberg for the Family History Society in March. Public Access staff continue to be in demand as speakers for groups up north and in the southeast of the state. Talks have also been given to the Australian Map Circle Conference in Brisbane and the Queensland History Teachers' Association. QSA was also represented at the Society of Australian Genealogists "Showcase" in Sydney in May. Saturday openings of the Public Search Room continue to be popular, and our regular seminar programs are continuing. The exhibition currently on display is *Heritage in your hands*.

Finally, for the past two years, a number of Queensland State Archives' staff together with ASA members [Qld Branch], have been actively involved in organizing the Australian Society of Archivists' Conference. The Conference, which was held in Brisbane at the end of July, has been a rewarding experience for all of us.

## **State Records (New South Wales)**

*Correspondent: Martyn Killion, Executive Officer*

### **State Records Act**

In the last News Notes, we reported on the *State Records Act 1998*, most of which came into operation within the NSW State Government on 1 January. The exception was Part 4, concerned with the transfer of records as State archives, which came into operation on 1 July.

As mentioned in our previous summary of the Act, our jurisdiction has been expanded to include local government, universities and the public hospital system. These organisations have been covered by the disposal and estray provisions since January, while the remainder of the Act will apply to them from January 2000. The requirements for public offices under the key records

management standards authorised under the new Act are also being phased in, with those that are easier to meet being introduced earlier in the process.

### ***New newsletter***

*Now and Then - News of the Past, Present and Future* from State Records is our new quarterly publication for our public clients. It provides news about our services, activities and events, newly received State archives as well as information about our on-line and hardcopy tools and publications to help members of the public understand and use the archives.

*Now and Then* is distributed free of charge to public libraries and to local and family history societies around New South Wales, as well as to archives institutions and interested other organisations around Australia. It is also available on our Web site and in our Search Rooms. To have your organisation added to the mailing list contact the Publications Officer at State Records, PO Box R625, Royal Exchange, NSW, 1225 or e-mail: [puboff@records.nsw.gov.au](mailto:puboff@records.nsw.gov.au).

Individuals can have *Now and Then* posted to them. The cost of this service is \$15.00 for two years.

### ***Government Recordkeeping Manual***

State Records' Government Recordkeeping Manual, available in hard copy as a two volume set and in hypertext form on our Web site, was launched by the Hon. Bob Debus, M.P., Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts, in December 1998. We are very pleased to note that the Manual was a winner in the 3rd annual Phyllis Mander Jones Awards, winning the category of 'publication making the greatest contribution to archives or a related field in Australia written by or on behalf of a corporate body'. The judges also commented on 'the excellent content and presentation of the Manual, and felt it would make a very valuable and lasting contribution to both government and non-government archivists'. The manual is a work in progress, with new components being added regularly.

### ***Rationalisation of accommodation***

During the period January to April 1999, approximately 5kms of State archives were moved from the State Archives Building in The Rocks to the Western Sydney Records Centre at Kingswood. Two kilometres of records remain in the State Archives Building, consisting chiefly of heavily used, uncopied records from the colonial era, such as early education records and some Colonial Secretary's correspondence.

The relocation was part of a program to rationalise our accommodation and reduce the high rental cost of our accommodation in the Rocks building. The relocation also allowed us to consolidate for the first time many split

and related series currently stored in different locations, enabling better and more efficient access. A summary list of the records that were relocated is available on our World Wide Web site.

Construction commenced in February of the Kingswood Stage 5 archives storage building, which will have a capacity of 80 km and will cost around \$5.9M over three years. Planning has reached an advanced stage for a new conservation laboratory, also to be constructed at the Western Sydney Records Centre, along with accommodation for staff and functions to be relocated from the CBD.

## **University of Melbourne Archives**

*Correspondent: Suzanne Fairbanks*

At the University of Melbourne Archives the first half of 1999 has been dominated by the move of our entire collection into a newly refurbished repository in Brunswick and the subsequent move of our reference service into the Archives and Special Collections Reading Room in the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne, Parkville Campus.

The move of our 12.5 kilometres of records into the new repository was accomplished by mid January 1999. Following a hectic settling down period, the new facility was officially opened by Mrs Lorraine Elliott MLA, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Arts, in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alan Gilbert on 6 May 1999. Response from visitors to the new repository has been enthusiastic, and the University has been congratulated on the facility with its enhanced standards of environmental control, increased storage capacity and very welcome processing space.

In early April, the Archives also moved its reference service which had been maintained in the old Barry Street office throughout the relocation of the collection. Due to the creation of the Archives and Special Collections Division within the University of Melbourne Library in 1998, the Archives reference staff and service moved with Special Collections staff into the refurbished Reading Room on the third floor of the Baillieu Library.

Since both moves, the University Archivist, three senior archivists, an Archives Repository Officer, Administrative Officer and a temporary archives assistant have been working between two locations. Staff of the Reading Room have been preoccupied with making the changes necessary to run a reference service with a remote repository. A major revision of reading room rules and procedures commenced, and researchers are becoming familiar with a next-day retrieval service. Special Collections and Archives reference staff have been trained in each other's procedures and finding-aids, and the retrieval and return service between the two locations, run by the Library's General Service Unit, has proved extremely reliable.

With little time to settle from our move, staff in Brunswick have immediately embarked on a full working program. As anticipated, the opening of the repository in larger premises has led to an increased transfer rate of records from the University, business and private donors. Arrangement and description of records has been reactivated and staff have undertaken a range of projects to aid recovery from the move. A database containing descriptions of all framed artworks and photographs has been completed pending their conservation assessment. During the move, the need to assess the condition of all nitrate and acetate photographic negatives in the collection became evident. A second project has commenced to identify negatives, to facilitate their assessment by the University's conservators, and to remove any danger from deteriorating nitrate. Disaster recovery planning is underway, as is a project to upgrade the data on the Accessions Database which is now available to the public on the Web as a reference tool [<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/collections/archives/archgen.html>].

Finally, a senior staff member has been engaged in preparing a major exhibition, *Your Greatest Challenge: a selection from University Archives sources for the Second World War period*, to mark the 60th anniversary of the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939.

## University of Wollongong Archives

*Correspondent: Michael Organ*

The University of Wollongong is currently implementing the Canoncentral Electronic Management System throughout campus, and the Archivist is involved in ongoing discussions with Administration to ensure that the new system will comply with the various tenets of the New South Wales State Records Act, as recently passed. Prior to this, university records were not classified as State records.

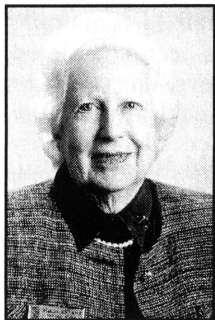
The Archives is also party to a \$600,000+ ARC grant submission seeking to create a regional 'Virtual Archives Network', involving five New South Wales regional universities. The project is the initiative of Professors Hagan and Wells of the University of Wollongong Department of History & Politics. If the submission is successful, it will allow the university archives involved to make copies of material available to external users via an online Web interface.

Since the end of 1998 the University Archives has been 'full', and faces a number of difficulties associated with the lack of storage space which normally enables it to accept donations and ongoing institutional deposits. Discussions with the State Records Office with regards to regional archival repositories in New South Wales may offer a partial solution to the storage problems, though local solutions are also being investigated.

## State Records Office of Western Australia

*Correspondent: Tom Reynolds*

### Honour for ex-State Archivist



*(Photograph by Des Birt)*

We are pleased to report that Margaret Medcalf, former State Archivist and Principal Librarian of the Battye Library from 1971 to 1989, has received an Order of Australia Medal: General Division in the Queen's Birthday Honours (June 1999).

Margaret's career started in 1955 when she was appointed to the Archives Branch of the Public Library of Western Australia. From 1971 she served in the dual role of State Archivist and Principal Librarian of the J.S. Battye Library of West Australian History with the Library and Information Service of WA until her retirement in 1989. In 1991, she was made a Fellow of the Library Board.

During her professional career, Margaret has been involved in many organisations, including President of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia (1972-73); inaugural convenor of the Perth Branch of the Australian Society of Archivists (1981-85); President of the Australian Library and Information Association (WA Branch) in 1982, founding member in 1982 and, in 1988-89, President of the WA Branch of the Records Management Association of Australia. Margaret served as a member of the WA Heritage Committee (1980-91) and was appointed by the WA Government to the Government House Foundation (1987 through to the mid-1990s).

In recognition of her service and distinguished contribution to librarianship, archives, records management and bibliography, Margaret has received the following awards: Fellowship of the Australian Library and Information Association, 1986; Honorary Life Member of the Australian Society of Archivists, 1989; Honorary Life Member of the Oral History Association (WA Branch); Honorary Associateship of the WA Museum for her contribution to the Museum's Maritime Archaeology Advisory Committee and, in 1995, she was appointed a Fellow of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society Inc.

The year Margaret retired from the Library and Information Service of WA, she was elected to the positions of President, and Chairman of Council, of the Royal WA Historical Society Inc. (1989 to 1991), followed by a further three years as Chairman of Council for that Society.

Margaret is a charter member, and has over 26 years involvement with, the Perth Club of Zonta International, a worldwide community service organisation of executives in business and the professions. In Paris last year, she was appointed Chairman: Archives and History for Zonta International 1998-2000, serving a worldwide membership of over 36 000 executives advancing the status of women.

The State Records Office of WA would like to congratulate Margaret on her Order of Australia Medal, and wish her continued success.

### *A New Name, a New Face*

The Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Peter Foss, opened the new State Records Office at a ceremony on 7 April 1999 in the Alexander Library Building. The ceremony was well attended by invited guests and dignitaries, who stayed after the formal speeches for socialising in a specially set-up marquee area.

The new Search Room is located on the Ground Floor of the Alexander Library Building, and is accessible via the James St Mall entrance and through the State Reference Library. The Search Room itself is far more spacious than its previous incarnation on the Fourth Floor, and can comfortably accommodate up to 40 researchers at any one time. Government archives on microfilm and microfiche have also been relocated to a designated microforms viewing area near the Enquiries Desk and reference staff are on hand to assist users of this area when the need arises.

State Records Office staff are now located in new offices on the Mezzanine Floor overlooking the Search Room, but contact details remain the same as prior to the move.

During the opening ceremony, Minister Foss also officially conferred a change of name upon the Public Records Office of WA to the State Records Office of WA.