

## News Notes: Feature Article

# Topham Treasures: A Review of the City of Adelaide Collections

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This paper concentrates on what is being done to develop the various collections of archival materials kept by the City of Adelaide. It uses a range of performance indicators to determine how the Council's own in-house, full-bodied archives centre has been travelling, and where it is going in light of the pressures, priorities and challenges that the digital environment presents. It examines in detail the City Archives' most recent achievements and the strategies it is adopting to build on these in order to confirm and cultivate its continuing survival as one of the nation's leading municipal archives.

In July 1978 the Adelaide City Council (ACC) appointed an archivist to sort out its vast and inchoate mass of historic records. Eight years later the Council significantly widened its commitment to preservation of its heritage collections by establishing a purpose-built archival facility in Topham Mall beneath one of the City's busiest multi-storey car parks.<sup>1</sup>

This paper looks at the role and responsibilities of ACC Archives and assesses where it now stands in relation to wider trends and its own established set of performance goals and indicators.<sup>2</sup> It focuses on what the Archives has achieved during the past five years, and identifies the key priorities and pressures currently confronting it in its role as custodian of the City's treasures. Finally it considers how the Archives is responding to these pressures and where it is heading in terms of meeting the challenges and opportunities that the digital age presents for preservation of the Council's collections of archival and cultural heritage materials.

## **Background**

In 2003 the ACC Archives celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Its survival can be attributed in large part to two separate but inter-related factors. First there has been the predominantly utilitarian administrative imperative of managing and providing access to the organisation's non-current business records. But an equally important influence that should not be overlooked, has been the generally positive support of the Council – the Lord Mayor and Councillors – for preserving and promoting the City's rich collections of archival materials. Adelaide is the oldest municipality in Australia, having been formed in 1840. The Council has mostly been mindful of its heritage and supported its preservation. This really goes back to the 1920s with the establishment of a municipal museum in the Adelaide Town Hall responsible for collecting historic records and memorabilia relating to the City, including the Colonel Light and Queen Adelaide relics some of which are still on public display in the Town Hall.<sup>3</sup> The Council's commitment continued, intermittently but consistently, to the present day, culminating in the mid 1980s with the creation of the City Archives as part of the Topham Street Car Park Redevelopment Project.

This is the only purpose-built local government facility in Australia dedicated to the preservation of municipal archives and museum items. It comes complete with its own specialised storage repositories, conservation laboratory, reproduction services area and public search room.<sup>4</sup> During 2002 the Council allocated additional resources and space to its Archives, and at the same time embarked on a proactive program of

historic displays intended to showcase many of the City's historic treasures.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Central to the character of the City of Adelaide is its cultural landscape and the role heritage items and collections play in defining this. Cultural heritage provides links with the past that establish and reinforce the community's sense of identity. It creates and nurtures a historic consciousness that allows a new dimension to be attributed to present and planned initiatives by providing a perception of context and perspective.

ACC recognises that it has an active role to play in preserving the past. This means ensuring survival of the City's cultural heritage, which includes its documentary heritage. This goal is embodied in its commitment to supporting an in-house archival function for the purpose of managing the City's archival records and other historic collections and making them available for continuing business, educational and recreational purposes. These collections comprise a diverse range of cultural materials including many volumes, files and documents, photographs, maps and plans, audiovisual media, sculptures, statues, works of art and artefacts.

Primarily, the City Archives is responsible for preservation and management of the Council's non-current and archival records. It currently holds over 5000 meters of predominantly paper-based records dating back to the establishment of the Council in 1840. These are records of the Council relating to its activities and the history of the City of Adelaide that have been deemed worthy of permanent preservation. They include the business records of the Council, and in particular those of its old Town Clerk's Department and City Engineer's Department, which span more than a century of administrative activity. They also include approximately 12 000 photographs and a large collection of early maps and plans, notably the City's building application plans and the City Engineer's construction plans covering a wide array of engineering projects and infrastructure dating back to the mid nineteenth-century.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to these archival records the Archives also has custodianship of the City of Adelaide Civic Collections. These comprise a number of discrete collections of historic and cultural materials including the:

- Council's former Museum Collection dating from the mid 1920s
- Oral History Collection (1971-1999)
- Cotton Collection (nineteenth-century maps and plans)
- Queen Adelaide Collection (memorabilia presented to the Council by Buckingham Palace)
- Colonel Light Collection (letters, diaries and artefacts of the City's founder)
- Gifts Collection (sometimes called the Protocol Collection)
- Artworks Collection (consisting of over 400 paintings, sketches and lithographs)
- Outdoors Collection (mainly statues, sculptures, fountains and plaques).

The Civic Collections contain more than 3000 items ranging from photographs and personal letters from historical figures to numerous works of art and grandiose Victorian statues. Much of this material was presented to the City by visiting dignitaries, benefactors or sister cities, or was acquired on account of its historical, cultural or sentimental value to the City.<sup>6</sup>

Archives manages the preservation, storage, access, promotion and display of all these materials. It also carries out conservation treatments on items that are damaged or deteriorating. Although most of the mid nineteenth-century paper records are in astonishingly good condition for their age, there are nonetheless sizeable chunks of correspondence that have suffered from being stored for over one hundred years in a variety of unsatisfactory conditions in and under the Adelaide Town Hall. This resulted in some of the paper records being exposed to the ravages of mould, insect infestations, water and salt damp damage with dire consequences for their longevity. It is the role of the Archives' conservator to undo this damage, to reverse the harmful effects of careless custodianship, and to implement measures to arrest any further deterioration of the collections.

## Goals

The City Archives currently has five key goals consistent with its mandate to preserve its multiple collections for posterity. These are:

1. To develop and implement policies and procedures for the ongoing preservation of its collections.
2. To develop and implement strategies to improve access to its collections and services.
3. To develop programs for the ongoing digitising of its collections.
4. To develop options for optimising storage space of its collections.
5. To develop programs to use its collections to promote and contextualise contemporary ACC initiatives and projects.<sup>7</sup>

## Condition indicators

The following conditions provide a snapshot of the status of the Council's collections:

### *Reference and access enquiries*

These have increased significantly during the past five years as a consequence of greater emphasis on marketing and promotion of the collections. The number of public enquiries has risen from 2114 in 1999/2000 to 2768 in 2003/04, an increase of almost 31%.

Statistics indicate the numbers of users of these collections and the types of items they request to see. The Archives periodically undertakes an analysis of who its major categories of customers are in order that its services may be better tailored and made more responsive to their needs. A summary of user statistics for 2003/04 shows a healthy level of activity:

- Public enquiries – approximately 30 to 40 per week.
- 40% of these are for maps and plans, 30% for documents, 20% for photographs, 10% other records (eg oral history tapes).
- Search room users – 1376.
- Record items requested by public – 6021.

- Records copied – 900 plans, 100 maps, 80 photos, 4500 pages of documents.
- Website visits – approximately 1500.
- Revenue generated from sales of archival reproductions – \$20 000.
- Approximately 80% of Archives' customer enquiries are from Adelaide and South Australia, the remainder being from interstate and overseas.<sup>8</sup>

Enquiries can be broken down into the following categories:

- 30% were from architects, engineers, planners and property developers seeking access to the Archives' unique collection of City of Adelaide building plans which can be of use in developing construction work and environmental, residential and commercial design projects.
- 20% were from students, teachers and educators wanting to access materials which would assist them to prepare assignments and course work for use in the City's numerous educational institutions.
- 10% were from tourism and hospitality industry operators wanting to use archival materials to publicise cultural tourism, develop City tours and produce promotional and decorative marketing materials highlighting the City's historic attractions and distinctive cultural heritage.
- 10% were from conservation specialists and heritage consultants needing to consult a range of archival records when preparing conservation plans for historically important City sites and buildings.
- 12% were from building owners, interior decorators and designers interested in renovating and restoring properties who obtain information from old plans, photographs and other records to assist them with their projects.
- 8% were from real estate agents, valuers and property managers wanting plans of properties for maintenance or

valuation purposes, or to find out about their history and former uses to assist in preparing marketing and sales portfolios.

- 5% were from lawyers and insurance assessors who rely on the evidence contained in archival records to prepare reports or cases requiring litigation.
- 3% were from media representatives seeking to use archival material as part of their presentations for the printed or visual media.

### **Cataloguing and backlog**

The present status of collections is as follows:

- About 45% of the archives descriptive documentation has been transferred from the old manual accession registers to the electronic database (TRIM). Accessioned items currently account for 4600 linear meters of repository space shelving (approximately 85% of total storage capacity). There is about 500 meters of unaccessioned material which has yet to be processed and documented by the archivist.
- Civic Collection items (over 3000) are all accessioned and are listed in a manual catalogue which has now been transferred to the Archives' electronic database (TRIM). Images of Civic Collection items are also being progressively entered into the database. About 10% of Civic Collection items that have been photo-documented have been posted to the Website together with selected descriptive information transferred from the database.
- The Oral History Collection, which consists of 110 taped interviews and their corresponding transcripts, is catalogued manually. There is also a comprehensive finding aid available in the form of a publication called *City Memory*.<sup>9</sup> Digitisation of the old cassette tapes has begun with the assistance of new technology now available at the State Library of South Australia. The Archives is aiming at getting up to six tapes digitised per year, depending on the availability of funding.

- Only a small percentage of the photographic collections (approximately 20%) have been entered into the database with strong reliance still having to be placed on the manual catalogues when searching for items.

The total backlog of all collection items not yet processed stands at about 10% of the Archives' overall holdings, which is quite acceptable given the level of resources and trained archival staff available.<sup>10</sup>

### ***Collections surveyed by a trained conservator***

Conservation activities may be divided between 'preservation', referring to environmental and physical conditions in which records are kept or stored, and 'restoration and repair', referring to the highly specialised and delicate work of restoring items to as close to their original condition as possible. The latter in particular requires highly developed technical skills which can only be provided by someone who has had the requisite training and experience as a professional conservator.

To date, approximately 80% of the total number of collection items in the custody of the City Archives has been surveyed and a program developed to address preservation needs. This is an ongoing process which commenced twenty years ago with the appointment of the Archives' first conservator. The process has been interrupted at times by the difficulty in recruiting trained conservators. There is currently only one tertiary institution in Australia which offers a training course in conservation of cultural materials (the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne) and graduates are in high demand from the country's many cultural organisations. The Council had to resort to recruiting a conservator from overseas because of the shortage of trained professionals available domestically.

### ***Collections in need of conservation***

About 20% of the total workload of materials conservation treatments has been completed on those collection items which have been identified as needing attention. This too is an ongoing, and at times extremely painstaking, process. Conservation work is highly skilled and labour intensive and it is usual for archives and other cultural institutions to have a substantial backlog of materials awaiting conservation treatments.

During 2003/04 the conservator carried out a total of seventy-six individual conservation treatments involving the repair, restoration or stabilisation of documents of artefacts. A program of inspecting, treating and re-housing the entire Civic Collection was commenced with new purpose-designed boxes being provided for the storage of many items.<sup>11</sup>

The Council's policy on access to its archival collections states that access will be refused to items which are in such poor physical condition that their use would be detrimental to their preservation. Similarly, the policy of the Archives is not to copy documents and photographs that are too frail or fragile until such time as some appropriate conservation treatments can be carried out on them. This is standard operating policy for archival and manuscript collecting institutions: preservation of materials has to take precedence over their availability for use in situations where such materials are unique and irreplaceable – at least until such time as they can have some appropriate conservation treatments applied to them.

Around 5% of the collections held at the City Archives are inaccessible to users on account of their degraded physical state, including large slabs of the Town Clerk's correspondence files, one of the principal and most prized series of records held by the Archives. Numerous maps, plans, photographs and other documents from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are also at risk of despoiling, or worse still disintegrating altogether, unless they can be soon stabilised, de-acidified or otherwise rescued from their current state of degeneration. Many Civic Collection items are also in need of effective conserving or servicing.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Environmental conditions***

About 80% of all collection materials are stored in high standard archival environments designed to maximise their preservation and prevent their physical deterioration. Main features of these storage areas are:

- A fully atmospherically controlled environment set at a constant range of 18 to 22 degrees centigrade and up to a maximum of 50% relative humidity to provide a stable storage medium in which to preserve paper-based record items.
- Monitored security and fire alarm systems together with an automatically triggered pressurised fire extinguishing gas system (FM 200) which will not damage paper records.

- Annual fumigation of storage repositories via the high pressure fire extinguishing system (to prevent infestations of vermin, particularly silverfish).

All records decay over time. However the rate of decay varies greatly according to the stability of the environment in which they are stored and the way in which they are cared for. The City Archives is a purpose-built facility constructed to internationally recognised standards for the long-term preservation of archival materials. Both temperature and humidity levels are constantly maintained within strict parameters within the storage repositories and these are routinely monitored by the conservator to ensure there are no major fluctuations.

Approximately 90% of the total holdings are stored on quality steel shelving, either standard or deep width, of which 75% is mobile compactus designed to optimise storage space within the repositories. There are seven deep roller plan storage cabinets (mounted on rails) housing an extensive collection of City Engineers' drawings, together with eighteen multi-draw slide out steel map cabinets, although to date only about 10% of the entire collection of maps and plans is housed in these cabinets; another 5% are kept in steel hanger plan cabinets, with most of the remainder (building plans) being stored in large envelopes filed on shelves.

### ***Electronic access***

Electronic access has revolutionised the way the archival profession makes known the contents of its collections to the wider world. It has enabled information and images of significant materials to be made accessible to a much broader range of users than ever before. Collections are able to be accessed speedily and remotely enhancing their relevance, popularity and useability within the community.

Public access to the Archives' collections is being greatly widened by electronic means through the provision of online access to the databases and catalogues, finding aids and to images of selected archival documents, maps and photographs.

Public access to the Archives' services and assistance is being improved by providing online:

- enquiry and records requesting services

- records reproduction ordering services
- access to advice about conservation issues.

Overall, electronic access to information about the contents of the collections now stands at about 60%. The objective is to have all items in the collections accessioned electronically and to enable the databases to be searchable on the Web. Thus far almost 45% of the 6500 archival accessions are now entered into the TRIM database which is about to become accessible to the public via the website. About 5% of the photographic collections either are already on the website or will be accessible through it in the near future.<sup>13</sup>

Electronic access is now provided to most items in the Civic Collections and can be reached via the Archives' website. Digital images of these items are being progressively added to the site with about 10% of the contents of the Civic Collections now able to be viewed online.<sup>14</sup>

## **Achievements**

Main achievements since 2001 can be categorised as follows:

### ***Displays programs***

The Council's unique heritage collections are being widely showcased by the Archives. A dynamic ongoing program of public displays of selected collection items has been devised. Displays are presented in both the traditional three dimensional static 'panel and cabinet' type medium and as online exhibitions linked to the City Archives website.

The Archives aims to prepare three major external displays per year and three smaller internal ones. The programs provide the community with the opportunity to see many of the pieces providing tangible links with the foundation of the City and its subsequent history. Major programs are:

- Development of a series of ongoing public displays at the Council's Customer Centre and Archives entrance to exhibit items, many for the first time.
- Presentation of a series of external displays in conjunction with other Adelaide cultural institutions including the South Australian Museum, State Library and History Trust.

- Posting a descriptive catalogue and image gallery of the collections on the Archives' website with a view ultimately to presenting digitised three dimensional 'fly around' panoramic images of some items.
- Creation of online exhibitions of collection materials centred around particular themes and specific occasions.

Wherever possible these displays have been developed to coincide with particular events, activities or celebrations of significance to the City, or to highlight current Council projects or initiatives.

### ***Storage programs***

It is one of the inescapable facts of life that archival and museum collections tend to grow exponentially and over time outgrow the facilities which have been made available. The Topham facility is currently approaching its optimum capacity being about 90% full of materials. This has necessitated a number of new storage initiatives to relieve pressure on the high-grade archival storage areas. These are:

- Annexing space adjacent to the Archives formerly used by the Council's photographer, installing a connecting doorway and compactus shelving in which to store unprocessed records and some artefacts.
- Conversion and fitting out of an off-site two-storey warehouse (the Council's former Sturt Street Works Depot) as a storage venue for temporary retention records and oversize Civic Collection items.
- Continuing to remove records deposited in the Archives' repositories of temporary retention status, so as to free up these high-grade storage areas for storage of permanent retention materials only.
- Creation of a secure storage vault within one of the Archives repositories in which to keep high value/high risk security collection items.

***Conservation programs***

The City Archives is fortunate to have its own trained conservator who is capable of providing the range of skills needed to look after the diverse collections.

The term 'preservation management' encompasses many different aspects of caring for materials. The Archives' preservation management strategy includes conservation treatments, integrated pest prevention, strict environmental monitoring, disaster preparedness, safe handling procedures and effective recording processes.<sup>15</sup>

The conservator has developed a preservation strategy that adopts a holistic approach to managing the collections. In addition to the paper-based archival documents, the conservator has responsibility for implementing a conservation program for a host of cultural materials across the Council, including the historic paintings and other items on display within the Town Hall, and the Oral History Collection.

Major conservation activities currently being progressed include:

- Carrying out a collection survey to identify and assess the state of the items to prioritise those most in need of conservation actions.
- Implementing an ongoing program of conservation treatments for damaged or deteriorating records and artifacts.
- Re-housing and re-labelling of many Civic Collection items.
- Re-equipping the conservation laboratory and extending it to provide a matting and framing service for reproductions of historic maps, plans and photos.
- Developing a program of collaboration on conservation issues with external state-based heritage organisations to share resources, expertise and services.
- Developing a program of internal (ACC staff) and public conservation clinic services to promote the function and its role.
- Drafting disaster preparedness and response plans and training staff accordingly as part of best practice preservation management of the collections.<sup>16</sup>

### **Access programs**

In addition providing storage and preservation of the Council's archival collections the City Archives also regulates public access to them and provides reference and reproduction services.

The Council provides various levels of public access. Outdoor items such as public statues, sculptures and fountains, which are part of the Civic Collections, are of course highly accessible. Those items on permanent display in the public areas of the Town Hall (mostly in the Queen Adelaide Room, the Colonel Light Room and the Council Chamber) are also able to be freely viewed by the public as part of the ongoing Town Hall Tours program.

For archival items not on display in these publicly accessible areas the Council provides controlled access via its Archives. The objectives are stated in the Council's Public Access Policy as being:

- to provide a public access policy consistent with State and Commonwealth standards and within the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1999* and *Freedom of Information Act 1991*
- to make available to the public all Council records which are more than thirty years old.

Access to record items less than thirty years old is generally closed with the exception of records the public inspection of which is a legal right under the *Local Government Act 1999*, and requests under the *Freedom of Information Act 1991*. Access is provided at the Archives search room which is open to the public during normal weekday working hours. Record items are made available for research or viewing under closely supervised conditions and with the assistance of the archivist. Civic Collection items stored at Archives are generally available for public inspection upon appointment with the curator.

The Archives' strategy for developing public access services aims to achieve three key objectives, these being:

- to promote the existence of the collections and the services
- to improve access to the collections and the services

- to control access to the collections to ensure their continuing preservation.

The Archives' access and communication programs have all been directed towards achieving these objectives. To date, the principal outcomes of these programs have been:

- Marketing and promotion of the Archives' collections in a range of popular printed and visual media.
- Development of a website that includes a comprehensive guide to holdings and services.
- Distribution of an 'archives kit' to local educational institutions comprising information about the collections and facsimiles of collection items.
- Introduction of a schedule of public tours of the City Archives to coincide with State History Week.
- Publication of a series of six brochures describing the collections and the services available.
- Development of a range of user reprographic services including the reproduction of large format plans and the matting and framing of items.
- Implementation of electronic access services to catalogues and images registered in the Archives' electronic database (TRIM).
- Publication of new finding aids including a series of Source Sheets to help researchers quickly identify records relevant to their projects (to date, 42 Source Sheets have been produced for subjects about which the Archives commonly receives enquiries from the public).
- Installation of a CCTV system to monitor and record activity in the search room, entrance lobby and public counter.

Access programs are about identifying and implementing ways to make collections more accessible without compromising the overriding need to ensure their preservation. They are intended to result in a wider range

of collection materials being able to be made available to the public, either physically in the Archives' search room or digitally on its website.<sup>17</sup>

### **Key priorities**

A key focus area for the immediate future is to continue to improve access to the collections, and especially electronic access to provide users with the option of remote searching, requesting and copying of documents. Major preservation priorities include pursuing further rationalisation of the collections through internal disposal and de-accessioning programs in order to optimise storage, and developing a strategy for long-term preservation of electronic records to ensure the continuing survival of the Council's digital documents.<sup>18</sup>

There is also some scope for developing commercial opportunities through the marketing and sale of collection reproductions. Moreover, there are plans to encourage some measure of commercialisation of the Archives' conservation services by making its expertise and infrastructure in this area available to other local archival and cultural organisations on a fee-for-service basis in order to generate some measure of cost recovery and resource sharing for this function.

In future greater efforts should be made towards making smarter use of the Council's cultural and archival resources by capitalising on opportunities to use these materials to contribute to issues of significant public interest and debate, for example the long-standing public debates over the redesign of Adelaide's Victoria Square, the status of the Adelaide Park Lands, the upgrading of North Terrace and redevelopment of other prime City sites, and Aboriginal heritage issues. These resources should also be employed more extensively to support Council business processes and projects such as site history evaluations, heritage protection appraisals, assessments of the structural integrity of City buildings and infrastructure.

Efforts should also be directed towards developing ideas for using the City's archival materials more creatively to communicate the uniqueness and importance of Adelaide's heritage and historic attractions. In this regard the link between promoting and preserving evidence of Adelaide

as a historically important city, and the role that the City's archives can play in achieving this outcome needs to be fully explained and exploited.

### **Pressures**

The major pressures impacting on the operations of the City Archives may be summarised as follows:

#### ***Funding***

The City Archives' storage areas are now more than twenty-five years old. While much of the hardware and systems that support it are still sound and serviceable there is a need to upgrade some infrastructure items such as the fire extinguishing system, the security access system and parts of the compactus shelving. This all costs money and requires expenditure over and above the Archives' annual operating budget. Being part of the Council's Information Management Business Unit, which includes IT services, helps not only with procurement of new technology but also when Archives needs to draw on that department's substantial budgetary allocation in situations where there has been underspending on IT projects. This generally means that towards the end of each financial year Archives may be able to draw on any unspent IT finances to fund particular projects or much needed resources.

#### ***Insufficient storage***

The City Archives is rapidly running out of storage space. Despite launching some of the initiatives intended to alleviate this pressure (such as the creation of an off-site temporary retention records repository) the situation is nevertheless fast becoming critical. Contrary to what was widely predicted some years ago, the move to electronic recordkeeping does not appear to have resulted in a significant reduction in the volume of paper-based hardcopy records being generated within the Council (of the 9000 odd new files created within ACC during 2003-04, more than half were hardcopy files). This has put pressure on the Archives as the majority of its holdings are records created within the organisation. To address this situation the Council's Property Services have been asked to look at allocating additional space for the Archives' use. Some scope may also exist for collaboration with external agencies like State Records on storage arrangements.

### **Archiving of electronic documents**

Archiving electronic records with the assurance that they can be recovered again in the future (when all the present day hardware is long gone) is an issue which is currently confronting archivists around the world. To avoid becoming a victim of what has been termed the 'digital dark age' the Council's Archives is working on developing a strategy based on the VERS (Victorian Electronic Records Strategy) model for capturing and preserving electronic documents that is not dependent on a particular computer system (hardware or software).

### **Planning**

The strategic direction of ACC Archives' collections is increasingly being driven by the demands of the digital age and the opportunities modern technology offers to widen the accessibility of collection items and improve the delivery of collection services. The acquisition of new technology by the Archives, including wide-format digital scanners and printers, has allowed the trend towards digitisation of collection materials to proceed at a steady pace. It has also opened up new horizons for preserving, accessing, displaying, marketing and promoting the collections.

The fortunes of these collections are inextricably linked to the ACC's prevailing policies and priorities, recently proclaimed in its new *Strategic Management Plan 2004-2007*.<sup>19</sup> This document sets out a number of high-level goals aimed at stimulating the City's population growth, towards which all ACC initiatives and activities are meant to be directed. Archives has a small but relevant role to play in achieving at least two of these goals: firstly, by helping to attract visitors to the City's cultural and heritage resources and, secondly, by contributing to the City's appeal as an interesting place to study and learn.

Within this organisational context the scope to develop the Council's archival collections has been consistently and clearly articulated in the Archives' Annual Business Plans.<sup>20</sup> These key documents identify the issues confronting the collections and consider where they are heading in terms of meeting the challenges and opportunities that the digital age presents for the management and preservation of archival materials. They plot a course for building a more creative, innovative archival function that is acknowledged for its achievements within the organisation and

the community. Much has been achieved during the past five years but there is still much more to do.

## Endnotes

1 The Topham carpark and ground floor malls were constructed by the Adelaide City Council during 1986-89. This was done by closing Topham Street which once ran between Waymouth and Currie Streets in the heart of Adelaide's business district. Topham Street was named after Thomas Topham Petheridge, of Plymouth, England, who owned much of the land in this area during the 1840s. Prior to this it had been an extension of Leigh Street (now one of the City's premier historic attractions, and the new home of State Records Research Centre). During the nineteenth century a timber yard and an army barracks stood near the southern end of Topham Street, right where the City Archives is now situated.

2 The direction taken by ACC Archives during the past five years was mapped out in three key internal reports: (1) *Corporation Archives. Current Status and Future Direction* (2001) looked at where the Archives was positioned within the organisation and what was needed to move it forward; (2) *Civic Collection. Report on Options Available for Displaying Items* (2001) examined ways of promoting and exhibiting more of the collection to the public, including online means; and (3) *Report on Conservation Services* (2002) reviewed the options available for developing this role.

3 For details see Robert Thornton, 'Rose-Tinted Images. The Photographic Archives of the City of Adelaide', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 28, Nov 2000, pp. 46-57.

4 Robert Thornton, 'City of Archives - reflecting on the 25th anniversary of the Adelaide City Archives', *Australian Society of Archivists Bulletin*, No. 4, Oct 2003, pp. 29-33.

5 Details of these two key Council departments can be found in the City Archives' brochures *The Town Clerk's Department. Organisation, Functions and Records* (ACC, 2001) and *The City Engineer's Department. Organisation, Functions and Records* (ACC, 2001).

6 For details see the brochure *Civic Collection. A Guide to the Contents* (ACC, 2003).

7 Adelaide City Council (ACC) *Records and Archives Business Plan 2003-04*.

8 *ACC Records and Archives Annual Report 2003-04*.

9 See Karen George, *City Memory. A Guide and Index to the City of Adelaide Oral History Collection* (Corporation of the City of Adelaide, 1999).

10 *Annual Report 2003-04*.

11 *ibid*.

12 As one of its special operating projects for 2004-06 the Archives has engaged a part-time contract photographer to take images of selected Civic Collection items in order that they may be posted to the Archives' website. At the same time this has provided an opportunity for the conservator to assess the condition of items and to embark on a comprehensive re-housing operation.

13 *Annual Report 2003-04*.

14 *ibid*.

15 See the City Archives brochure *Preservation Management. A Guide to Conservation* (ACC,2004).

16 *Annual Report 2003-04*.

17 *ibid*.

18 *ibid*.

19 *Strategic Management Plan 2004 - 2007* (ACC, 2004) pp. 11-15.

20 *Records and Archives Business Plan 2004-05* defines the business outcomes that the Archives has set out to achieve during the forthcoming year, the measurable rate of progress, milestones reached and expected time of delivery. The plan is automated and is updated via the Business and Risk Management database linked to the Council's intranet.