

FRIENDS OF THE NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE INC. NEWSLETTER

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Annual General meeting

The Annual General meeting was held on 15 November, both in person and online. Reports presented by our Chair Professor Bruce Scates, the ANU University Archivist Kathryn Dan and Colleen McEwen are included in this newsletter.

Patrons of the FNBAC: Professor Joy Damousi AM, FASSA, FAHA, Hon. John Faulkner, Hon. Ros Kelly AO and Professor Simon Ville FASSA, were confirmed with gratitude for their continuing support.

The following officers and committee members were elected at the AGM:

Chair: Professor Bruce Scates

Deputy Chair: Joshua Black

Secretary: Ewan Maidment

Treasurer: Maggie Shapley

Committee members: Debra Leigo, Colleen McEwen, Carol McNally, Anne Piggott, Michelle Staff and Pierre van der Eng

Ex officio: Kathryn Dan (ANU Archivist)

Public Officer: Carol McNally

Conservation Fund (Standing) Committee: Professor Mark Wilson and Associate Professor Keturah Whitford, both from the ANU College of Business and Economics, and Carol McNally from the Friends Committee, convened by Colleen McEwen.

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content and for the establishment of a women's studies course amongst other things. Thirty students even stayed overnight, staging a sit-in. This protest was sparked by the realisation that despite Sir John Crawford and Dr H. C.

After the AGM, Carly Johnson, an ANU student in her final year of a Science/Arts double degree, presented her research on historical student activism at the ANU, based on an earlier presentation to a leadership symposium hosted by Wright Hall at the Mt Stromlo Observatory.



Kathryn Dan, Carly Johnson and Bruce Scates at the AGM Student Activism at the Australian National University

The Australian National University is uniquely situated to draw attention to a number of tertiary education and social issues through the activist efforts of the student body, due to the university's prime location in Canberra, the national capital. It is the only university in Australia to be instituted by a Commonwealth Act of Parliament.

Following the passage of the *Australian National University Act* in 1946, the university was established as a postgraduate research institute until 1960 when ANU amalgamated with the Canberra University College to welcome undergraduate students for the first time. Over the next decade, while ANU grew rapidly establishing two more research schools, this time was relatively uneventful in terms of large student protests.

This all changed in April 1974, when 100 students occupied the Chancery building following a University Council meeting in protest of a lack of representation on university council bodies, limited student feedback in class

'Nugget' Coombs's efforts to involve students in the government of the University, during their time as Vice Chancellor from 1968 to 1973 and Chancellor from 1968 to 1976 respectively, students continued to feel that they did not have true power and influence on university policy. In

The Making of the Australian National University, by ANU historians S. G. Foster and Margaret M. Varghese, it was suggested that the 1974 protests may have occurred due to the ongoing momentum of student activism at ANU in general throughout the early 1970s.¹ Leading up to this time, protests against the Vietnam War and conscription were also staged, to be covered later.



Students occupying the Mills Room in the Chancelry, April 1974 (ANUA 226-303).

The 1974 Chancelry occupation was a direct result of students' perceived powerlessness felt in relation to course content and methods of assessment. There were large differences across the departments of the time, with Chairman of the Students' Association Education Committee Julius Roe remarking that psychology students in particular were expected to recite textbook information, had their initiative stifled and 'were assessed like the reflexive rats they studied'.¹ In contrast, the staff in the History Department at the time encouraged student participation and students were offered the opportunity to have a say on the lecture program and assessment types. The stark differences led students to question why this collaborative approach couldn't be implemented across all departments.

Following the Chancelry occupation and overnight sit-in, the students presented the Council members with several demands, including for course content to be controlled equally by staff and students, the ability to choose means of assessment, repeat lectures and tutorials to put an end to overcrowded classrooms, and the establishment of a Women's Studies course, with content decided by the women of the University. The Board for the School of General Studies, which undergraduate students were associated with, met with around 300 students in a serious negotiation to work out how the student demands from the Chancelry occupation could be implemented. Over several

months, ongoing talks and negotiations took place as proposals were circulated to faculties, departments and back. In the end, a Women's Studies course was established and offered for the first time in 1976, students were well-represented on committees, although still limited in their ability to make change, and examinations were being administered alongside other methods of assessment, such as papers and tutorial performance.¹

The 1974 occupation resulted in positive outcomes for several of the student demands, and greatly affected the university leaders. R. M. Williams had taken over as Vice Chancellor from Sir John Crawford in 1973, but only remained in the role for two years, which were extremely turbulent due to the ongoing protests and demands of students. Leslie Finlay (Fin) Crisp was the first professor of political science at the Canberra University College which became part of ANU in 1960. Crisp was severely disappointed with the student unrest throughout the 1970s, and stated during a keynote lecture in 1974 that these students were 'Marxists with Grammar School accents', 'disaffected darlings' and 'gravediggers of academic freedom' amongst other terms.^{1,2} His views were not aligned with those in power at the time, stating the 'Vice Chancellors will sell us down the river'. Sir John Crawford and Dr Coombs were more supportive of student activism, with the latter saying 'I believe in controversy within the university' and that he preferred 'impolite' activism over apathy.¹ Overall, this protest was crucial in the development of ANU, and served as a blueprint and inspiration for a similar movement 20 years later.

In 1973, university fees were abolished for all students and from 'the early 1970s to the late 1980s, Australian universities were financed without any direct contribution from students'.³ In 1987, John Dawkins (Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training) met with economist and now Emeritus Professor Bruce Chapman and asked him to prepare a report 'outlining the costs and benefits of ... the introduction of a user-pays higher education system' in Australia.¹ The so-called Dawkins Revolution provided a cause that students could direct their energy towards. As the Labor government had previously abolished fees in the 1970s, many saw the proposed return to a user-pays model and the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) as a betrayal of Labor principles.

While the reintroduction of fees via HECS attracted student protest across the country, including at the ANU, it was a later development that saw the arrival of a new era of student protest which had national importance. On Thursday 15 September 1994, approximately 500 students stormed the Chancelry building and began an occupation

ongoing 'No Fees' movement and the announcement of a proposal to introduce a \$9,000 up-front fee for Legal Workshop, as well as upfront fees of \$4,000 for postgraduate students generally.⁴ The Legal Workshop course was effectively compulsory for law students wanting to practise. Speaking to an informer via email who was loosely involved in the protest and asked to remain anonymous, I was told that 'as a result of the occupation, ANU students managed to stop both the up-front Legal Workshop fee and general postgraduate fees with the support of other rallies around the country, so it was a local and national win'. Unfortunately for those involved in this protest, governments later reintroduced fees and students were unable to maintain ongoing 'independent unco-opted movements again and again'.

To provide additional context to the environment surrounding the second occupation, HECS had been in place for five years in 1994, and universities had been slowly moving towards a 'user-pays system'.⁴ At the beginning of the year, the Labor government of the time announced postgraduate courses would be deregulated, allowing universities to charge upfront fees. Shortly after this announcement, the ANU Vice-Chancellor Deane Terrell announced the introduction of postgraduate fees, and the No Fees Campaign soon began in response. The anonymous informer stated that ANU Students' Association were 'Labor-aligned' in 1994, and consequently 'not interested in supporting the protests, [doing] whatever [they] could to co-opt the cause and demobilise the students so that its people could "negotiate" with the Chancelry and the federal government, i.e. their own people'.

Apart from the aforementioned protests about tertiary education issues, the ANU community has also been heavily involved in larger social movements and student activism, particularly around overseas conflicts.

The Vietnam War and Australia's involvement became a focal point of protests, particularly surrounding the issue of conscription, which was eventually abolished by the Australian Labor Party in 1972. An image of Megan Stoyles, an ANU student who graduated in the late 1960s made headlines worldwide after she was pictured wearing a 'Make Love Not War' t-shirt while demonstrating against US President Lyndon Johnson during his visit to Canberra during the Vietnam War.⁵ Vietnam Moratorium marches took place in the early 1970s, and ANUSA asked for all lectures to be cancelled on the 6 May Moratorium Day in 1970 so that students could attend.⁶ The largest occurred in May 1971, when approximately 800 demonstrators set off from ANU towards the city centre (Civic), where a 'sit-in' was temporarily held on Alinga Street near Garema Place.⁷ This protest ended in several hundred arrests, including ANU students and schoolchildren, under the *Commonwealth Public Order (Persons and Property) Act*.

Police asked the protestors to move on as they were

creating an obstruction, but faced resistance and after two final warnings, they moved through the crowd. In the end, 190 demonstrators were arrested (and 187 charges laid), which was according to the *Canberra Times* 'more than twice the number arrested at any previous demonstration', with 'two-thirds ... charged with obstruction, and about one-third with failing to disperse, all under the new *Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act*'.^{7,8}

Student activism and protests have coexisted with the Australian National University since its establishment in 1946. Students are often the first to question and challenge social norms and injustices, from the lack of student representation in university governing bodies, to the implementation of course fees, and Australia's involvement with the Vietnam War.⁹ I believe the ANU student body and wider community will continue to stay involved in both local and national movements, leveraging its location in the capital city to draw attention both to affairs of the tertiary education sector and also global issues more broadly. This year's encampment at the Australian National University was a prime example of this, drawing widespread media coverage and attention to their chosen form of protest.

Carly Johnson, ANU student

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See also:

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Archives Annual Lecture

On 14 November, Professor Katerina Teaiwa of the School of Culture, History and Language in the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific presented the 2024 Archives Annual Lecture, reflecting on her process of exploring several archives and collections connected to Australia's long history of phosphate mining in the central Pacific.



University Archivist Kathryn Dan and Professor Katerina Teaiwa with Pacific scholars after the lecture

Bruce Scates thanked all staff who had made the event possible including Archives staff, the division's Communications team and University Librarian Roxanne Missingham. In thanking Katerina, he said 'we have circled the Oceanic Island of Banaba (Kiribati), your ancestral home and a place steeped in stories. We have witnessed the trauma of its transformation to a gutted and industrialised landscape, a site of 'rust and decay' ... but you also signal agency, generations of resistance to exploitative colonialism ... 'Justice, healing and repair' and in that lies the hope of environmental and cultural renewal'. The recording of her lecture 'Islands, Archives and Ancestors' is at: <https://archives.anu.edu.au/news/2024-anu-archives-annual-lecture-professor-katerina-teaiwa-now-available>.

Chairperson's report 2024

Labour historians are well aware of the power of precedent, custom and practice. In keeping with former years, the 2024 Chair's report began with an outline of the year's activities, and highlights, and this served to acquaint new and prospective members of the committee to our work. And – as in former years – we acknowledge the Friends' secretary, Ewan Maidment, for compiling much of the data referred to herein.

The Friends currently have 70 members, a very slight decline on last year's tally. Five members, who were unfinancial by more than two years and could not be contacted as their email addresses had expired, have been removed from the membership register. In August, notifications were sent to the remaining unfinancial members with the *Newsletter*.

Sadly, Dr John Dargavel, a lover of trees and great Friend of the Archives, died in Melbourne on 23 July 2024. John was Vice-President of the Friends from 2006 until 2018 when he moved to Melbourne. A long-term researcher at the NBAC, John tracked down records of timber companies, resulting in several collections of company records being acquired by the Archives, including those of J Wright and Sons. He will be much missed.

The FNBAC Patrons are Professor Joy Damousi AM, Hon. John Faulkner, Hon. Ros Kelly AO and Professor Simon Ville. We are grateful to them all for their continuing support and we take this opportunity of acknowledging Joy's presence and thank her for joining us online from Melbourne.

The FNBAC committee members in 2024 were: Bruce Scates (Chair), Joshua Black (Vice-Chair), Ewan Maidment (Secretary), Maggie Shapley (Treasurer), Emma Cupitt (Newsletter Editor), Debra Leigo, Colleen McEwen, Carol McNally, Anne Piggott, Pierre van der Eng and Kathryn Dan (ex-officio). Carol McNally is the Public Officer. Colleen has continued her magnificent work as Convenor of the Conservation Fund. Emma Cupitt resigned from the committee in July due to travel and other commitments. We are very grateful to Emma for her fresh contributions to the Friends activities and especially for her work on the Newsletter. Maggie Shapley kindly took over the Newsletter editing following Emma's resignation. Thanks to those who served on the Friends' committee in 2024, its officers and committee members and our auditor, Betty Ferguson.

Committee meetings were held quarterly in 2024, in March, July, September and November. All were hybrid meetings, i.e. in-person and via Zoom. The Friends are very grateful to Kathryn Dan, the University Archivist, who attends every committee meeting ex-officio, for kindly hosting all the Friends' meetings held during the year.

The FNBAC Conservation Fund Committee members were Colleen McEwen (Secretary), Carol McNally, and Professor Mark Wilson and Associate Professor Keturah Whitford, both from the ANU College of Business and

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Economics. One company ledger and four pre-Federation minute books and were repaired by Art & Archival in 2024 (see separate Conservation report).

Following the 2023 AGM, on 27 November last year, Katie Wood, from La Trobe University, Eric Fry Labour History Research Grant recipient in 2023, spoke about her research work on the *History of Women in the Australian Metal Trades 1888–1951*. Carly Johnson continued that tradition of a post AGM speech and on behalf of all the Friends, the warmest welcome was extended to Carly. It's tremendously exciting to hear how young researchers are exploring the archives and the new insights they offer into our holdings.

The Chair extended an equally warm welcome to Dr Michelle Staff, another Early Career Researcher and our colleague from the School of History. Michelle had expressed an interest in joining the committee and her experience with the Australian Dictionary of Biography would be invaluable to the Friends. Whilst in the way pre-empting the result of fiercely fought elections for office holders, the Chair hoped Michelle might join us in some capacity or another. Generational renewal, he noted, was one of the most urgent challenges facing the Friends.

The Chair noted that the Friends were formed in response to proposed cuts to the Archives in 1997 and he feared under the euphemistic guise of 'Renew ANU' we face similar challenges again. The Friends committee sent a submission to the ANU Vice-Chancellor on 30 October, regarding the adverse impact of the University's *Organisational Change Proposal Research and Innovation October 2024* on the administrative arrangements, operations and staffing level of the ANU Archives.

Those changes include a proposal to cut Archives staff by two, disestablishing two positions in the ANU Archives, namely the Archives Assistant and the Archives Repository Assistant. Our submission argued that such were not 'surplus' to the Archives operation. We all value these individuals' work and have benefited immensely from their contribution. The Chair proposed that further action regarding organisational change be taken up as an agenda item towards the close of the meeting and a detailed and productive discussion ensued. Specific proposals included further appeals to the Friends' Patrons and supporters and a possible approach to local members Andrew Leigh and Katy Gallagher.

Defending the Archives necessitates building up the Friends, an ideal segue to the next item in this report, our membership and donation campaign. In early September a fourth round of nine letters (two to businesses and seven to trade unions) were sent out seeking FNBAC institutional membership and/or donations to the Conservation Fund. In response, so far, the NSW Nurses & Midwives Association joined the Friends, as an institutional member, and made a

substantial donation to the Conservation Fund, for which we are very grateful.

The Chair alluded to the social and education activities pursued by all the unions whose records are held in our Archives. He noted the strength of print culture in the labour movement – and that age-old appeal of labour activists (captured in LF Crisp's foundational work) 'Remember the Literature, Comrades'. He then outlined the Friends' own publications. Emma Cupitt edited the Friends' Newsletter No. 54, December 2023, and prepared No. 55, which was completed and distributed by Maggie Shapley. No. 54, published in December after the last AGM, included the FNBAC's *Statement in support of The Voice* signalling the way the Friends can engage with contemporary issues, and the lessons we might draw from history and the Archives. It was a point, the Chair noted, vividly illustrated by the Annual Lecture by Professor Katerina Teaiwa held just the evening before. 'Islands, Archives and Ancestors' was a powerful affirmation of the value of the archives in these challenging times.

In closing the Chair thanked all the Friends members for their support throughout an eventful year.

Professor Bruce Scates, Chair, FNBAC

University Archivist's Report 2024

In 2024 the ANU Archives made substantial and important additions to its nationally significant research collections, provided a high level of service to researchers, and engaged with collection donors highlighting the value of what the Archives holds and makes accessible. Achievements are due to the professionalism and commitment of the Archives staff. Repository management and availability of preservation standard storage continues to be a challenge and the overall context of budgetary constraint and organisational change for the University has been testing. The Archives will enter 2025 with changes in staffing and reporting lines.

Supporting research use

Numbers of researchers visiting the Archives in Canberra and usage of items from the archives continue to be steady and in line with previous years. By the end of October 2024, 939 researchers had used 19,394 items. These figures reflect use of physical items in the reading room. Many users can find information and conduct research independently using the increasing numbers of items that have digitised and made accessible to the world via the University's Open Research Repository. At present the number of Archives items available in this way is around 135,000. The Archives works with the Library's Digital Scholarship team to ensure priority material can be digitised and made available. In 2024 the following were

added to Open Research:

- Photographs from the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows including images of formal and social occasions, buildings

and members from lodges across Melbourne and regional Victoria – around 1000 photographs (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/316194>)

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- Over 1000 photographs relating to the operations of Burns Philp which had interests in shipping, agriculture, insurance, manufacturing and retail in Australia and the Asia Pacific region and was one of Australia's longest running companies.
 - Australian Mercantile Land and Finance Company photographs from the 1920s to the 1970s showing staff, buildings, livestock and the business and social activities of the company. This significant Australian agricultural company acted as pastoral financier, stock and property agent and wool broker across the eastern States since 1863 (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/272466>)
- Australian Natives Association, one of Australia's longest running Friendly Societies – photographs from the 1870s to the 1980s. (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/313695>)
- Recordings of the Canberra School of Art's 'Art Forum' seminar series of lectures and presentations. More than 500 recordings include talks by significant artists and art historians William Yang, Tracy Moffatt and Pierre Ryckmans (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/313630>) • ANU Design Unit drawings relating to furniture, architecture and industrial design for the ANU campus between the 1950s and 1970s featuring designers Fred Ward, Derek Wrigley and Hans Pillig (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/733714469>) • Photographs from Corona Station, one of Australia's largest pastoral stations near Longreach, Queensland, owned by the Australian Agricultural Company from 1912 to 1980. The collection includes photos of Aboriginal stockmen and housemaids (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/272489>)
- Australian Agricultural Company Annual Reports from 1825 to 1900 providing insight into the company's sheep cattle and mining operations across Australia (<https://hdl.handle.net/1885/245451>)

The priority copying of audio-visual format material continues to be a focus and involves Archives staff in listing and preparing material for digitisation.

Archives staff assisted researchers by handling around 600 reference enquiries. Enquirers may be referred to online resources such as digitised material, finding aids or online exhibitions, or they may arrange to view records in the Archives Reading Room. Enquirers this year included a

steady number of local and family history researchers, PhD candidates from ANU and other universities, undergraduate students, academic researchers, heritage architects and law firms. There were requests for permission to use material in publications and exhibitions, multiple uses of records from pastoral stations and Tooth and Company hotels, and a visit from the Kioloa Rural Fire Service to view archives about the ANU Kioloa campus. Two subject guides were added to the website this year:

[Australians in the Spanish Civil War](#) and [Communist and Socialist publications in the ANU Archives](#)

Adam Matthew Digital, publisher of digitised primary sources, included material from the ANU Archives in their publication 'The Transformation of Shopping: Department Stores, Social Change and Consumerism, 1830–1994'. Records from James McEwan and Co., McDowell's Ltd, Marcus Clark and Co. and the Shop Assistants' and Warehouse Employees Federation of Australia are included. The product, supporting new audiences for the Archives, is published at:

<https://www.amdigital.co.uk/collection/the-transformation-of-shopping-department-stores-social-change-and-consumerism-1830-1994>

Engaging with teaching and building research skills

Archives staff made presentations on archival literacy and sources for study in subjects covering history, economic history, sociology, gender and sexuality, and Pacific studies. The Research Centre for Deep History included the ANU Archives in their Indigenous Family History Research Residential. Together with colleagues from the Menzies library, PARADESIC and the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Archives staff presented to summer school students from the University of Papua New Guinea in February about research sources at the ANU. In May Archives staff presented information about Papua New Guinea related archives at the '[Many Strands, One Basket](#)' seminar and dialogue in the College of Asia and the Pacific. Staff also participated in the [Southeast Asia Resource Showcase](#) promoting archival material that supports research in the field of Southeast Asian studies.

New accessions and collection management It is important that the Archives continue to build and manage collections by acquiring material within collecting policies, describing what is held to make it accessible, and prudently managing preservation storage facilities. In 2024 the Archives sought donation or received these records:

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- Documents relating to Manfred Station in far western NSW

- Papers relating to the wool industry and peak bodies • Macquarie Textiles records

Pacific Research Archives

- Wal Ambrose, Pacific archaeologist
- Jim Specht, Pacific archaeologist

- Sione Latukefu, Tongan historian and theologian • Irwin papers on Papua New Guinea rubber plantations • Niel Gunson, Pacific historian and family historian • Research papers of Gerard and Marion Ward • Michael Allen, anthropologist

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- Grant McCall, anthropologist working on Rapanui and Eastern Polynesia
- Roderic Lacey, field research including photographs • Sarah Walls recordings of interviews with Kanak independence leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou
- Photographs and diaries from Ian Tedder relating to the Solomon Islands

University Archives

- Photographs and other records from the John Curtin School of Medical Research
- Papers of Nigel Lendon, artist and Deputy Director of the Canberra School of Art
- Barry Smith, historian
- Margaret Steven, historian
- Winifred Mumford archaeological map

Archives processed and made accessible via the Archives public catalogue included:

- James Sinclair, Pacific scholar and former Kiap ANUA 547 (1,191 items)
- Harold Brookfield, Pacific geographer ANUA 599 (94 items)
- Solomon Islands Languages Collection ANUA 449 (25 items)
- Donald Denoon, Pacific historian, academic and novelist ANUA 411 (355 items)
- Dorothy Shineberg, Pacific historian and academic ANUA 484 (363 items)
- Charles Price, demographer ANUA 72 (1,092 items)
- Australian Forestry School photo album ANUA 800 (366 items)
- Australian Agricultural Company (Australian Office) Z629 (1,013 items)
- Foxlow Station deposit, Deposit 107 (303 items) • Clark and Barwood Lawyers, Colac Victoria, Deposit 69 (8670 items)
- Australia Japan Business Cooperation Committee, N285 (226 items)

The Archives has benefitted greatly from name indexing work being undertaken by Paula Waring on Australian Agricultural Company records. This is very valuable for accessibility and would not be possible without this voluntary contribution.

Public events and exhibitions

The ANU Archives and Friends of NBAC were delighted that Professor of Pacific Studies, Katerina Teaiwa delivered the annual ANU Archives lecture on 14 November. An interdisciplinary scholar, artist and award winning teacher of Banaban, i-Kiribati and African American heritage, Professor Teaiwa spoke on 'Islands, Archives and Ancestors'.



University Archivist Kathryn Dan, Professor Katerina Teaiwa and University Librarian Roxanne Missingham

The ANU Archives had significant engagement with the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo) in their bicentennial year. The initial AACo deposit was taken into the Noel Butlin Archives Centre collection in the 1950s. Over the last year several Archives staff have worked with and advised AACo about options for celebrating this significant year. An extensive exhibition covering the history of the Company was on display in the Menzies Foyer and Archives Reading Room from March to August. Curator of the onsite exhibition, Rachel Armstrong, also travelled to Rockhampton in May to install and host an exhibition about the company at Beef, the major industry event for the Company. This display featured original records and attracted substantial interest from AACo executives and visiting politicians. As a consequence of this outreach activity, the ABC television Landline program featuring AACo included footage of the archives at ANU and an interview with Rachel on 6 October 2024. The online version of the exhibition contains substantial content about the history of the Company.

<https://archives.anu.edu.au/exhibitions/200-years-australian-agricultural-company>

Archives' staff member, Rachel Armstrong with AACo team



in front of display timeline, at Beef Australia, May 2024

The second major exhibition of 2024 commemorates the 175th anniversary of AMP (Australian Mutual Provident Society formed 1849). The company has taken a great interest in the use that can be made of the archives they donated in 2022 and, together with the AMP Foundation,

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has supported digitisation of their archives with financial donations. In November AMP Ltd held a special staff meeting, including an online ‘walk through’ of the exhibition and a celebratory cocktail party with supporters. The physical exhibition is complemented by the online version: <https://archives.anu.edu.au/exhibitions/175-years-amp>



Mt Stromlo celebrates the 125th year of the Canberra Solar Observatory in 2024. The Canberra Museum and Gallery has borrowed material from the Archives for an exhibition and the Archives will launch its own exhibition in March 2025. Archives staff also provided information to support the naming of buildings on campus in honour of women associated with the University. The naming of the Pauline Griffin Health and Wellbeing Centre was announced on 30 October.

Kathryn Dan, University Archivist

Conservation report

This report covers the period from the last AGM, until October 2024. Established in February 2009, the Conservation Fund supports the restoration, repair and stabilisation of fragile records in the Archives collection. Listed on the Register of Cultural Organisations (ROCO) in 2011 it is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) under Section 30F of the *Income Tax Assessment Act*, allowing donors to receive an income tax deduction for donations. The Friends is also registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission

(ACNC). The Fund is managed by a committee with members Professor Mark Wilson and Associate Professor Keturah Whitford from the ANU College of Business and Economics, Friends Committee member, Carol McNally and me as administrator. I would like to thank Mark, Keturah and Carol for their continued support.

Following the success of the fund-raising program undertaken in 2023 another round of requests for donations, and an invitation to join the Friends, were sent to a number of businesses and trade unions in September. We continue to primarily rely of the generosity of members to add a donation to the Conservation Fund when renewing their membership or making a one-off donation. In addition to donations to the Fund money from the Friends’ general account is sometimes allocated to boost restoration efforts.

The focus of our conservation activities since 2009 has been primarily on Pre-Federation Australian Trade Union minute books list on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. To date 38 records have been restored at a cost of \$40,816.70. The current balance of the Conservation Fund is \$2,903.

Restoration work on the following five items was completed in the last twelve months – Minutes of the Journeymen Coopers’ Society of Sydney and Vicinity meetings 1886–1896 (NBAC E100/1) Cost \$1,320; Minutes of Special Meetings Sydney Warf Labourers’ Union 1889–1904 (NBAC Z248/95) Cost \$1,430; Minutes of Meetings of the Australasian Society of Engineers 1890–1892 (NBAC N367/1) Cost \$1,210; Record Book of the Black List Committee of the Operative Stonemasons’ Society of NSW (NBAC T46/19) Cost \$1,320; and the Squires Brewery Ledger 1828–1829 (NBAC N417/677) Cost \$1,320. Another selection of records in need of restoration has been identified by the Archives and the Conservator is currently preparing quotes.

Colleen McEwen, Committee member

Friends’ submission to ‘Renew ANU’

The following submission was made in response to the

Organisational Change Proposal Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation Portfolio) impacting on the operations of the ANU Archives.

Established in October 1997 the Friends work to help preserve and extend the Noel Butlin Archives Centre (NBAC), foster a sense of involvement with, and understanding, of the collections, objectives and operations of the NBAC, and publicise resources and facilities of the NBAC and stimulate awareness, within the community of the NBAC.

With the growth of the Archives to include the University Archives, the Pacific Research Archives and the National

AIDS Archives Collection, in addition to the Noel Butlin Archives Centre's archives of business and labour, so too, the support of the Friends has broadened to encompass all collections managed by the ANU Archives.

The Friends has an engaged and active membership including academics, students (both located in within Australia and overseas), past researchers and members of the public who support the Archives' work. Our four Patrons, Professor Joy Damousi AM, The Honourable John Faulkner, The Honourable Ros Kelly AO, and Professor Simon Ville, are all great supporters of the Archives

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recognising its importance in preserving one of Australia's premier collections of historical records.

Specific Friends' activities undertaken to assist the Archives include the establishment of a Conservation Fund in 2009 to support the restoration, repair, stabilisation and copying vulnerable records in the collection, and co presenting the annual ANU Archives Lecture delivered by a prominent researcher.

Significance of the ANU Archives for research and scholarship

The ANU Archives is widely regarded as being of unparalleled national significance as the largest non government archives in Australia, covering four principal collecting areas:

- significant Australian companies, trade unions and professional associations
- collections from and about the Pacific Island nations and states
- documentary history of HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and
- the National University and its predecessors.

The importance of three collections, 19th century trade union minute books, the archives of the Australian Agricultural Company 1824–1995, and the collections of Professor Frank Fenner, have been recognised by UNESCO and listed on the Memory of the World Register. The Archives is highly regarded attracting both international and Australian based users across a range of disciplines providing rich sources of research material. Records found in the Archives have been used in multiple scholarly publications, heritage assessments, documentary films and social and family histories.

Change Proposal

While the Friends appreciate that the University is facing the need to make difficult budgetary decisions, we fear that several of the proposed changes will have significant consequences on the work of current and future scholars.

The following comments address our most pressing concerns:

Disestablish two archival positions

Reducing the staff numbers from 7 to 5 will have a detrimental impact on the Archives operations. Archival records are primarily held in remote storage areas and when material is requested by a researcher, or for digitisation, exhibition or loans to other institutions, it is these two junior officers who retrieve the material and deliver the records and reshelve the items after use. They also carry out reading room services including invigilation and oversee the issuing and return of material to researchers; they repackage material for preservation; physically manage the space in the repositories, including listing, boxing, labelling and shelving new deposits of records. Considering the Archives holdings amount to over 20 shelf kilometres of records, the work of these two officers underpins reliable operations and disestablishment will directly impact on the research use of the archives. As the tasks undertaken by these junior officers will still need to be carried out to ensure essential research services are delivered, senior staff will be required to take over these responsibilities. The flow on effect will be a curtailment of the normal duties of these seniors, wasting their professional knowledge and expertise on performing low level work.

Change in the reporting line from the University Librarian to Pro-Vice Chancellor Research Infrastructure

It is recognised that moving the reporting line from the University Librarian to Pro-Vice Chancellor Research Infrastructure will provide advantages and synergies through the alignment of the archives, considered to be a significant piece of research infrastructure for humanities and social sciences, with other research infrastructure. However, it is important to recognise that the special nature of records, in regard to their uniqueness, their evidentiary function and how they are organised, makes them quite a distinct cultural resource not to be merged with other ANU

collections.

While some synergies are recognised, the proposed change to the reporting lines sever links with areas critical to the functioning of the Archives. These include using the current transport infrastructure to retrieve and return records from the reading room to the remote repositories, and the use of shared spaces e.g. the exhibition areas. Current professional links between the library and archives staff supporting the research community and sharing knowledge and experiences to address common problems will also be lost. Significant implications for the Archives of proposed changes to two other areas within the Library

that currently provide critical services – the Digital Scholarship team and Communications team – are discussed below.

Forecast of significant reductions in the Digital Scholarship team

It is forecast that significant reductions will be made to the Digital Scholarship team who undertake the digitisation of archival material. In recent years the majority of digitisation work undertaken has been sourced from the ANU Archives and any reduction in services will have consequences for the future operations of the Archives.

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Digitisation is an activity undertaken by most Australian and international archival institutions. Copying high value/high use records and making them available on the Universities Open Research repository means that many enquiries can be carried out online using the digitised archives rather than the researcher visiting the Archives.

As well as delivering efficiency dividends, digitisation enables the Archives to promote its holdings and services through online exhibitions e.g. the recent exhibition launched to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Australian Agricultural Company used a wide variety of digitised images from the archival holdings.

Disestablish the Library Communications team

The Communications team provides significant support in publicising activities of the ANU Archives including exhibitions, outreach, social media, webpages and important events such as the Annual Archives Lecture which is jointly organised by the Archives and the Friends. Reading the Proposal document, it is not clear how the communications role will be resourced and managed after the organisational change is implemented and how the important work of the Archives will be made visible.

Transfer the Records team to Legal, Governance and Risk under the Chief Operating Officer portfolio

While there are management synergies between records and archives it is appreciated that responsibility for current records creation, use and management (particularly electronic records managed by the ERMS and data management generally) goes far beyond the responsibilities of the Archives and are more appropriately attached to an area whose focus is on developing and supporting a university-wide culture of accountable and efficient administration. The FOI function, which has a strong link to the legal obligations of the University is also far more appropriately placed in an area focused on legal and governance management.

However, if the archives and records function is to be split, careful consideration needs to be given to how these areas will work together. To ensure that valuable archives of the University are not destroyed, the ANU Archivist, responsible for the management of the ANU Archives, should retain the role of overseeing records disposal i.e. the legal process under the terms of the Commonwealth *Archives Act 1983* to determine the fate of the records, whether they should be permanently retained or destroyed when their administrative use ends.

Conclusion

The above comments from the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre are submitted in response to the Organisation Change Proposal Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation Portfolio). We believe that the ANU Archives makes a considerable contribution to the teaching and research roles of the University, and to its Australian and international standing in holding such important historical collections, and that their operations would be significantly compromised particularly by the reduction of staffing numbers by nearly 30%. We strongly urge the review to take the implications noted above into consideration when making final decisions on a new organisational structure.

The Chair of the Friends, Professor Bruce Scates FASSA, from the School of History, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences, would be pleased to talk to the members of the review team to provide further details of our concerns.

30 October 2024

Since this submission was made, the University has issued an Implementation Plan, confirming the disestablishment of two positions from the Archives, the change to reporting lines, the disestablishment of the Library Communications team and a significant

reduction in the Digital Scholarship team.

Additional reporting line changes are also included: the University Archivist's new title Associate Director, Archives and Collections, reflects that the Senior Collections Advisor now reports to the position. The Records team will report to the Director, Governance and Risk with the exception of one Records Management Officer who will report to the Senior Archivist. The plan which is proposed to commence on 4 December is available here:

<https://www.anu.edu.au/news/all-news/implementation-plans>.

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