

Use of the State archives collection 2006-07

The purpose of preserving the State archives collection is to make the records available to enrich the lives of people and communities, in NSW and beyond. Beyond their cultural value, archives help people to establish personal or family identity and entitlements.

Visitors to our reading rooms and website, and those who visit the regional and rural libraries and repositories holding copied parts of the collection and regional archives, use the archives for a variety of personal and professional research projects.

These researchers are then catalysts for taking the personal, community, state and national stories held in the archives to the wider public. They do this by passing on family histories, publishing local and community histories, writing novels based on historical facts or themes, curating exhibitions, and making films and documentaries.

State Records encourages research into, and use of, the State archives collection and or other original sources of archives, through sponsorship of the John and Patricia Ward History Prize, one of the NSW Premier's History Awards.

Researcher interests

Topics of interest

Researchers of the State archives collection were interested, amongst many other topics, in:

- 75th Anniversary of the Sydney Harbour Bridge
- History of education for the deaf people in NSW
- Louis Pasteur
- Effects of long term bereavement on parents who lost sons in World War I
- Graythwaite Convalescent Home, North Sydney
- 50th anniversary of the electrification of the railway over the Blue Mountains
- History of the archives in NSW



Emily Hanna, Senior Archivist, Public Access assisting researchers in the Western Sydney Reading Room



Family History Researchers



University of Western Sydney student

Archives helping establish personal identity and entitlements, or with healing process

Archives can provide essential evidence for establishing a person's identity or entitlements. They can also be part of a person's healing process after traumatic events affected them in their past. State Records assists people to locate details relating to their own lives, or those of family, subject to appropriate access procedures.

Examples include:

- Using school admission registers to prove they lived in NSW as a child (where their birth may not have been formally registered and they now need a passport).
- Investigating the health of their ancestors through hospital and mental health records to ascertain disease inheritance
- Identifying lost family through the records of child removal in the Aborigines Welfare Board records

The Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme, which is making extensive use of records of the Aborigines Welfare Board in the State archives collection, is a good example of the use of archives to establish people's entitlements on a larger scale.



Archives reaching a broader audience

Many people in the community, other than those who read acknowledgements at the front of a book or credits of a documentary, never realise that what they are reading or watching draws on information and evidence contained in the State archives collection or other archival resources. Similarly document-based materials included in museum exhibitions are often from an archival collection.



School children at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. From NRS12685 Sydney Harbour Bridge Photographs.

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Celebrating 75 years of the Sydney Harbour Bridge

The 75th Anniversary of the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge was the subject of much activity including articles, books, films, exhibition, memorabilia and souvenirs using records and images held as State archives. State Records has been a partner with the Historic Houses Trust and the Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW in the production of the exhibition and book *Bridging Sydney* which commemorate the anniversary and celebrate the place of the bridge in Australia's national identity. Film Australia also produced a film, *The Bridge*. Many organisations celebrated the 75th anniversary with articles, books or exhibitions. There was even an exhibition at Aberdeen Library in Scotland using images from the State archives collection, as many of the stonemasons were brought from Scotland by Dorman Long and Co to work on the Bridge.

Literary works

Publications that drew on the State archives collection included:

- Rosemary Annable, *A Setting for Justice: Building for the Supreme Court of New South Wales*
- Ann Stephen, Andrew McNamara and Philip Goad editors, *Modernism and Australia*
- Peter de Waal, *Unfit for Publication: NSW Supreme Court and Other Bestiality, Buggery and Sodomy Trials Volumes 1-3*
- Peter Spearitt, *The Sydney Harbour Bridge: A Life* (75th Anniversary edition).

Archives serving a variety of purposes

Archival materials, and particularly images, can be used for a broad range of purposes. This year archives were:

- in a documentary film *Using Fort Scratchley*
- in a permanent interpretive display at the former Randwick Naval Stores
- in informative panels on the buildings of the National Art School (former Darlinghurst Gaol)
- part of the set of the *Drought Breaker* at the Parramatta Riverside Theatre.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions that used material from the State archives included:

- Museum of Sydney, *Bridging Sydney*
- Museum of Sydney, *Homes in the Sky Apartment living in Sydney*
- Luna Park, Sydney Pty Ltd, *75 years Before The Bridge*
- Stanton Library, North Sydney Council, *The Shifting of Old North Sydney* exhibition and film
- Migration Heritage Centre NSW web exhibition, *Objects through Time*
- 100 years of Central Station.