



Collections and Content Strategy 2020

The stories and voices of all Victorians



**STATE LIBRARY
VICTORIA**
What's your story?



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Front cover: Robert Gray, spectators at the Australian Open, 1981

Inside cover: Terry Denton, finished illustration from the book *Home is the sailor* (detail), 1988, Scholastic Dromkeen Children’s Literature Collection

Preface

Photo by Andrew Lloyd



State Library Victoria's collections and content are a unique lens on the stories and voices of all Victorians, past and present. We preserve Victoria's memory for current and future generations to connect with their past and learn for their future. For the Library to contribute to creativity, learning and the generation of new knowledge, we need to respond to changes in the collecting environment and to evolving community expectations.

This strategy and its guiding principles set a pathway to 2020 for active and responsive collecting and connecting, a pathway that involves our community and evolves our practices, while reconfirming our commitment to being the trusted carers for Victoria's cultural heritage.

The Library is reassessing its collecting as publishing and communications transition from print to digital. While digital content such as ebooks, digitised collections, apps and social media open up possibilities for increasing access beyond the physical walls of the Library, we are also faced with challenges about how to collect, store and make this content easy to find and use.

The needs and expectations of our customers are changing with a growing emphasis on online and mobile delivery, and a trend towards open access approaches to information. The Library is responding by making our collections more open,

accessible and connected. We are seeking out partnerships and collaborations that will enhance pathways to knowledge for our community.

At the same time, we have a strategic intent to better meet the needs of particular communities such as young learners and families, culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD), and Victorians in outer metropolitan and regional areas.

Libraries are no longer the sole collectors and keepers of content. We are reconsidering our role in a world of new makers, collectors, curators and disseminators of content. We are exploring how to better engage with the community through their content and expertise.

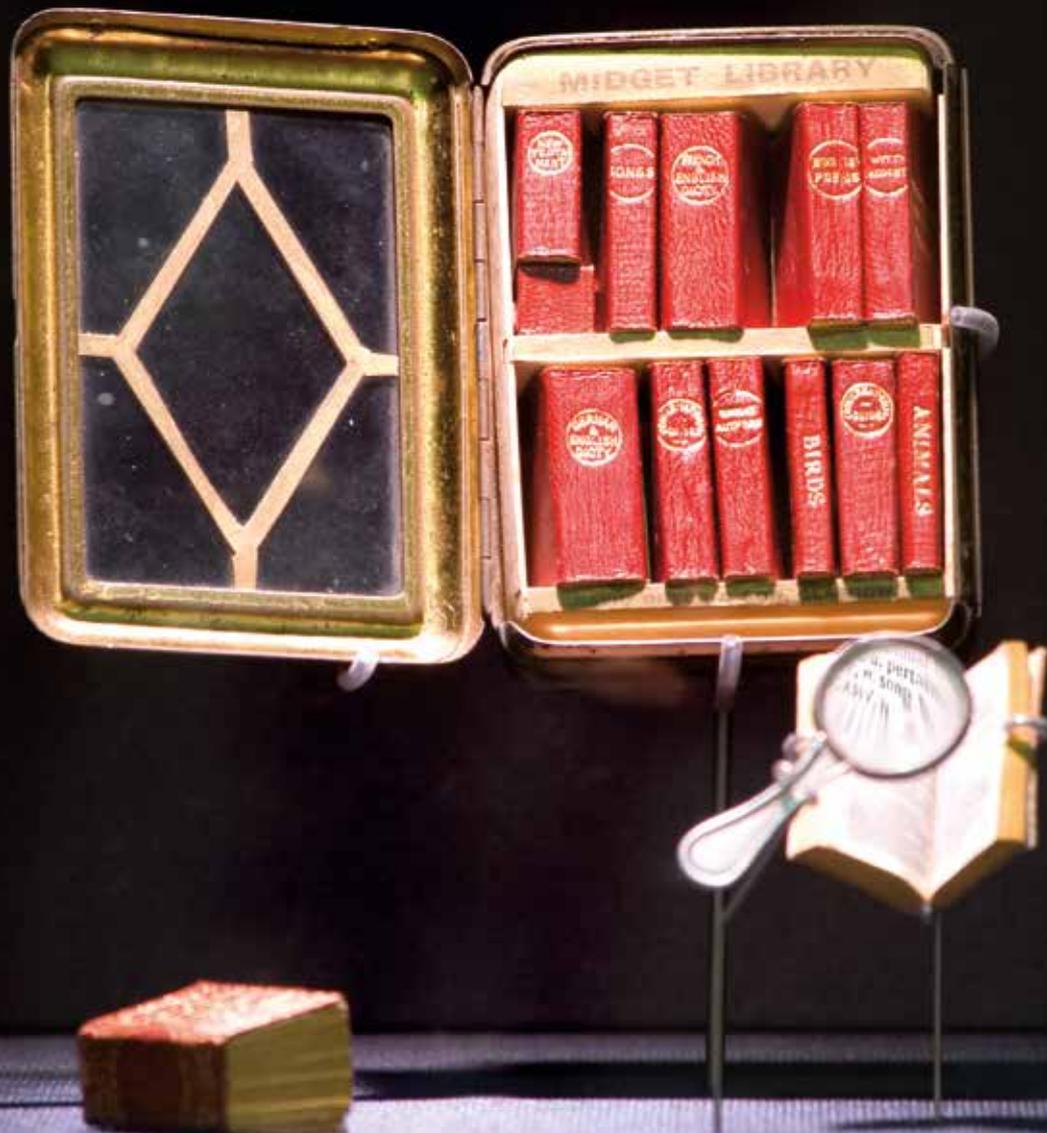
To ensure we spend our funding wisely we must make considered choices about what we collect and how we manage the life cycle of collections, from selection and acquisition through to description, discovery, storage, preservation, digitisation, access and use. By enhancing our legal deposit options, attracting more philanthropic funding for collections, and building strong relationships with our generous donors, we can continue to grow the State Collection for the people of Victoria.

Justine Hyde

Acting Chief Executive Officer
and State Librarian

Introduction

Below: Midget Library, published by David Bryce & Sons, Glasgow, c. 1895



'We are a place where all Victorians can discover, learn, create and connect. We are a cultural and heritage destination for Victorians, and a catalyst for generating new knowledge and ideas.'

State Library Victoria

When Sir Redmond Barry established the Melbourne Public Library, as the State Library was known at its foundation in 1854, he conceived of it as 'the people's university' – a place where the world's knowledge and information would be freely available to all citizens of the growing colony of Victoria, regardless of their social status or financial resources.

This defining concept has guided the Library through our history, re-emerging in different expressions over the years but remaining fundamentally the same – providing Victorians with ready access to a continually expanding world of knowledge.

The State Library was one of the first free public libraries in the world and now features one of the great collections, built over the years through careful acquisition and generous donations.

We are a place where all Victorians can discover, learn, create and connect. We are a cultural and heritage destination for Victorians, and a catalyst for generating new knowledge and ideas.

The State Library makes a major contribution to the continuing development of a knowledge- and creativity-based economy for Victoria, and a socially and culturally rich society. We are an important information resource that inspires Victorians to learn and create.

We reach out to and engage with an increasingly diverse community of all ages – from researchers, students, families, young and lifelong learners, culture seekers, creatives, and regional Victorians.

State Library Corporate Plan 2013–16

The Library's purpose is:

To inspire all Victorians throughout their lives to connect with their past and learn for their future.

Our Corporate Plan 2013–16 includes the strategic aim:

To create and curate unique, compelling collections and content that inspire curiosity and discovery.

We will know we have achieved this when:

- we are known through our collections and content as a centre of creativity and knowledge
- the riches of our collections are opened up to a wide range of audiences
- our collections are used to create new knowledge
- our communities create their own content.

Our Collections and Content Strategy 2020 sets out a plan for achieving these aims.

‘Today there are over two million books and serials, one of Australia’s largest newspaper collections, hundreds of thousands of pictures, maps, manuscripts and artefacts, as well as material in digital and multimedia formats.’

Our collections and content

When the Library opened its doors it had a respectable collection of 3846 volumes, most of which had been personally selected by Sir Redmond Barry. Today there are over two million books and serials, one of Australia’s largest newspaper collections, hundreds of thousands of pictures, maps, manuscripts and artefacts, as well as material in digital and multimedia formats. With over 150 years of energetic collecting the Library has built a vast and diverse collection that covers an enormous range of subjects and areas of interest, along with collections that are unique to our Library.

Our role in developing, maintaining and preserving a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Victoria and the people of Victoria is mandated in the *Libraries Act 1988*. This focus on documenting Victoria’s social and cultural development is evident in many of the Library’s early acquisitions. In 1879 a display at the Library included hand-tinted lithographs by Eugene von Guerard, 112 volumes of Victorian pamphlets, accounts of early settlers collected by Charles Joseph La Trobe, the Burke and Wills expedition records and early issues of the *Melbourne Advertiser*.

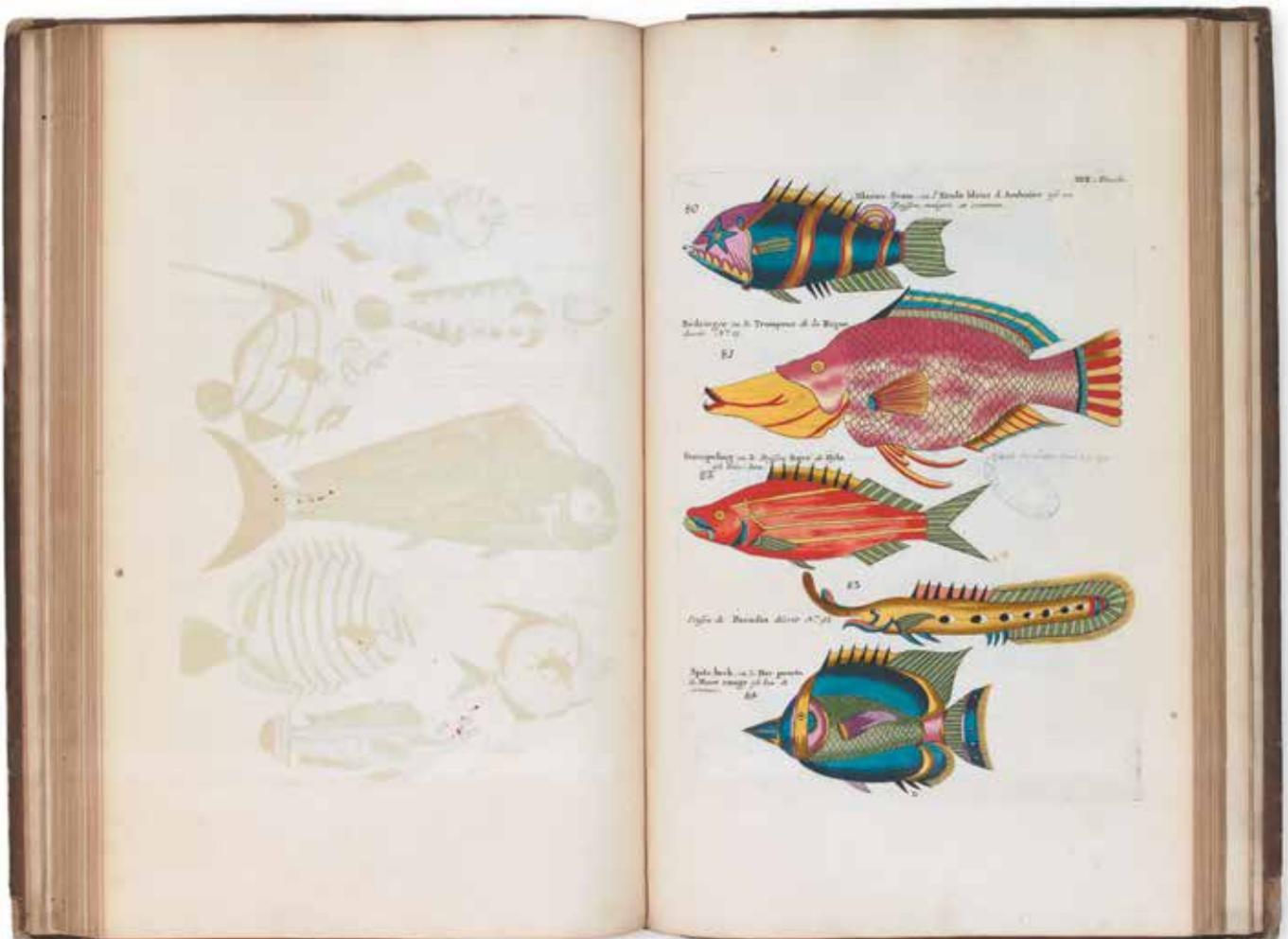
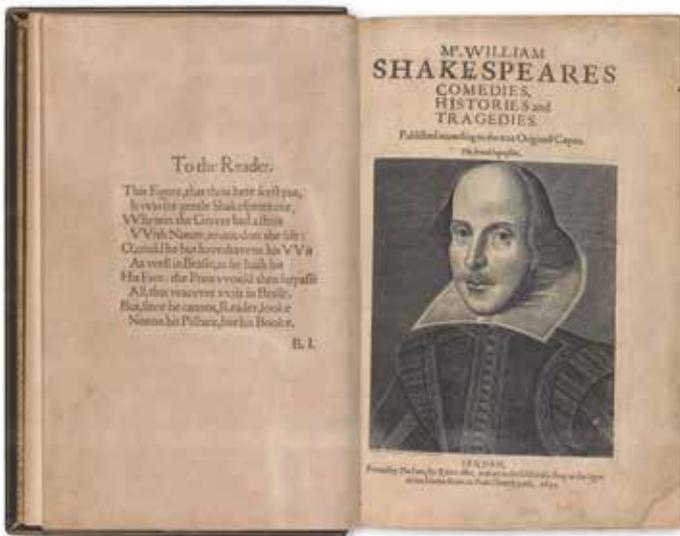
The introduction of the Copyright Protection Act in 1869, a precursor to our current Legal Deposit provisions, required the publisher to lodge a copy of every book, magazine, pamphlet and map published in Victoria.

The Act also included newspapers published in Victoria. The very early introduction of this Act has meant that the Library’s collection quite comprehensively reflects the publishing activity of the state.

Donations and bequests are the source of many of the Library’s most significant collections. Sir Redmond Barry was a master of soliciting gifts of books and other material from government and private sources in Britain and other countries, including 3622 volumes of patents presented by the Commissioner of Patents in London. The Alfred Felton Bequest in 1904 enabled the Library to acquire a number of medieval manuscripts and rare, early printed works that form part of the History of the Book Collection.

The Moir Collection, donated in 1958, was one of the finest private libraries of Australian literature and the largest single donation of books that the Library has ever received. Our outstanding collection of children’s books and original picture book illustrations is largely attributable to two major acquisitions: 25,000 Australian and New Zealand children’s books acquired from Ken Pound in 1994 and the more recent donation of the Scholastic Dromkeen Children’s Literature Collection in 2012.

The development of the collection is testimony to the skills and stewardship of library staff and the generosity of donors in giving their personal collections for public benefit.



Top left: William Shakespeare, *Mr William Shakespeares comedies, histories and tragedies*. Published According to the True Original Copies, the Second Impression, London, Tho. Cotes for Robert Allot, 1632

Top right: Historiated initial, probably from a Choir Psalter (detail), Italy, Lombardy, first half of 15th century

Above: Louis Renard, *Poissons, ecrevisses et crabs de diverses couleurs et figures extraordinaires*, Amsterdam, Chez Reinier and Josué, 1754

Collections and Content Strategy 2020



Photo by Andrew Lloyd

Above: State Library Victoria CEO and State Librarian, Sue Roberts, reading at the Children's Book Festival 2014

Scope

This strategy defines the purpose, vision, guiding principles and strategies that will shape our collections and content to the year 2020. As they are central to many of the State Library's activities, this strategy is interdependent on these other State Library strategies and plans:

- Digital strategy
- Digitising strategy
- Storage strategy
- Community engagement strategy.

Purpose

We believe that current and future generations of Victorians should have equal access to knowledge and information. The community is creative and curious. Through our collections and content they can:

- explore, enjoy and enrich their lives
- learn and empower themselves
- contribute to the Library and to the Victorian community.

Vision

Our collections and content inspire learning and creativity. We are a pathway for exploring the world's knowledge and connecting with the global community. We cultivate Victoria's memory and heritage to provide a unique lens on the stories and voices of all Victorians and to reveal Victoria's place in the world.

Guiding principles

Open access for everyone

1

Our aim is to make our collections and content open, free, discoverable and easy to use, whether this is online, on our shelves, or within the community. The possibilities for using our collections and content are endless. Our aim is to find new ways to share our collections and remove barriers to their use. We work with our community to understand their needs and advocate for their access. Our expert staff enable access to our collections and content.

Active and responsive collecting

2

The scope of our collections and content is deep and rich, while also being diverse and varied. We actively nurture and build on our collecting strengths as we respond to emerging topics, formats and social interests. Our expert staff connect people to the best ideas and information the world offers, within and beyond our collections. We collaborate with other cultural institutions to ensure our collections are complementary.

Preserving Victoria's cultural heritage

3

We are the trusted keepers of Victoria's cultural heritage through our collection of personal, social and publishing history. We care for Victoria's memory for current and future generations to connect to their past and look to their future. We are a centre of excellence in preservation, storage and conservation. Our practices reinforce the important role of Victoria's Indigenous and culturally diverse communities in the state's heritage and in its future.

Involving our community

4

The true value of our collections and content is in their use for learning, creativity, inspiration and the generation of new knowledge. Our digital transition is key to encouraging use and connecting the community to our collections and content, particularly for regional Victorians. By using and sharing our collections and content, our community will help connect us to the world. We invite people to help shape our collections by sharing their knowledge and personal stories to reflect the diverse lives and experiences of all Victorians.

New ways of working

5

By embracing new technologies and evolving our practices we can enhance access to and use of our collections and content. We are a leader in digital library developments, while also learning from the experiences of other cultural institutions. We will continue the transition from print to digital. We support our staff and help our community to adapt to new technologies and practices.

Meeting legal, ethical, cultural and financial responsibilities

6

We meet legal and ethical collecting responsibilities and adhere to Australian and international standards, guidelines and conventions, while advocating for changes to these that will benefit our community. We manage our collections in accordance with cultural protocols. Our approach to collecting is financially sound and sustainable.

Our collection strengths

Victoria and Australia

Our comprehensive Victorian and Australian collections are our most significant strengths.

Our priority is to collect both contemporary and historical material that is representative of all Victoria's diverse communities across a range of formats from books and journals, archival collections of diaries, letters, photographs and oral histories, to digital images, files and websites.

The collection acknowledges the contribution Victoria has made in shaping Australia socially and culturally, especially in the fields of Australian history and literature.

The strengths of our Victorian and Australian collections are:

- archival collections preserving the documentary heritage and visual history of Victoria; they include unpublished personal and organisational papers and records, paintings, posters, architectural plans, objects and photographs
- a comprehensive collection of Victorian publications and websites through Legal Deposit
- a major research collection on Australian history, literature, politics and sport
- Victorian government and parliamentary publications and law reports
- a significant collection of photographs, documents and books on Victoria's Aboriginal culture and history
- one of the largest newspaper collections in Australia

- significant ephemera collections documenting political activism and theatre history in Victoria
- a large collection of Australian maps with comprehensive coverage of Victoria.

Published and archival materials are collected in any format within the following criteria:

- published in Victoria (Legal Deposit)
- by or about Victorian people and organisations
- on a subject of social, political, cultural, religious, geographical, scientific or economic significance to Victoria
- about the discovery, exploration and settlement of Victoria and first contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people
- selectively (across all formats, including newspapers and maps) on Australian subjects of social, political, cultural and historical significance.

Materials generally not collected:

- government records that are held by the Public Record Office Victoria and the National Archives of Australia
- collections or individual items offered on long-term loan
- archival collections that primarily consist of copies, research notes, press or newspaper clippings and secondary published materials.

'Our priority is to collect both contemporary and historical material that is representative of all Victoria's diverse communities across a range of formats.'



Above: Commonwealth Office of Education, What does your neighbourhood need? Discussion poster No. 55, 1950, Riley and Ephemera Collection

‘Significant collecting priorities for the Library are works that highlight the history of the book as both a mechanism for communicating ideas and as an object, showcasing the art and design of book illustration and production techniques.’

Below: History of the Book Collection viewing



Arts, popular culture and history of the book

This collection covers the visual and decorative arts, photography, music, theatre, dance, film, radio and television. Although international in scope the collection has a strong focus on Australian artists and a particular emphasis on Victoria. Popular culture is strongly represented in areas such as local and international rock and popular music, film studies, photography, graphic novels, comic books and zines.

Significant collecting priorities for the Library are works that highlight the history of the book as both a mechanism for communicating ideas and as an object, showcasing the art and design of book illustration and production techniques.

This collection includes:

- a research collection that includes the visual and decorative arts, recorded music and the performing arts such as theatre, film and television
- a major collection of exhibition catalogues, invitations, press clippings and other ephemera focused on Australian art and artists
- an extensive popular culture collection that includes popular music, comics, graphic novels and zines
- popular music genres with an emphasis on independently produced Victorian rock music

- a collection showcasing the art of writing and books from clay tablets to contemporary deluxe editions, including medieval manuscripts, early printed works such as the Nuremberg Chronicle, private press editions and artists' books
- a collection of rare works including first editions by significant literary authors and foundation works about Australia and Victoria, or with unique physical characteristics or important provenance or association
- a research collection of children's literature including a comprehensive collection of Australian children's literature, rare works dating back to the 16th century and selected reference material.

Materials collected:

- history, philosophy and theory of the visual arts, music and the performing arts
- exhibition ephemera relating to Australian artists, galleries and art societies
- Australian comics, graphic novels and zines
- rock music independently produced in Victoria
- private press publications and deluxe limited editions
- Australian artists' books
- books with certain rare or unique physical characteristics such as fine binding or important provenance or association
- significant Australian literary works and first editions
- Victorian and Australian children's books and selected reference material.

World knowledge

Our extensive world knowledge collections cover the social sciences, humanities, government and law, science and technology, enabling Victorians to discover and learn about the world and Australia's place in it. Our priority is to bring the world to Victorians through print and electronic resources delivered onsite and online. We build on our existing strengths and embrace new fields of knowledge.

We have been building world-standard niche collections for more than 150 years. These strengths are reflected in the size and depth of our collections. A sample of our historic and current collections are:

- 19th-century research collections in British colonial history, British India, government publications, scientific works, travel and exploration, plus contemporary journals
- large 20th-century collections in history, biography, politics and war, especially if Australia was involved, including both World Wars and the European Holocaust

- contemporary collecting in humanities and social sciences, history and politics, reflecting the role of Australians in world events and issues of importance to Australians.

Along with our extensive world knowledge print collections we provide access to diverse electronic resources for researching, creating and exploring. We emphasise:

- humanities – architecture, history and war, biography, language and literature
- law and government – major world issues of human rights, politics and military science, historical and international government publications
- science and technology – general information on computer science, health and engineering
- social sciences – anthropology, economics, business, sport, psychology and sociology.

Material we do not generally collect:

- textbooks
- scientific and technical works.



Above: Robert Thornton, 'Tulips' (left), 'The Blue Egyptian Water Lily' (right), *New illustrations of the sexual system of Carolus Von Linnaeus ... and the Temple of Flora, or Garden of Nature*, 1799–1807, publisher T Bensley

'We have been building world standard niche collections for more than 150 years. These strengths are reflected in the size and depth of our collections.'



'Along with our extensive world knowledge print collections we provide access to diverse electronic resources for researching, creating and exploring.'



Above: Raimund Stillfried, portraits of Japanese women in traditional dress, 1876, published by Stillfried & Anderson, Pictures Collection

'The collection aims to reflect the increasing ethnic diversity of the Victorian community.'

Family history

The Family History Collection has an emphasis on resources published in a range of formats for Victoria, other Australian states and territories, New Zealand and many countries of origin for Australia's immigrants. The collection aims to reflect the increasing ethnic diversity of the Victorian community. Our family history resources are reputed to be the best in the southern hemisphere and extend as far back as 1500AD. We have a dedicated Family History & Newspaper Reading Room for research. In many cases exploring family history leads to more specialised resources in the Victorian and Australian collections, such as manuscripts, maps, newspapers and photographs.

The collection includes:

- birth, death and marriage indexes for all Australian states
 - commercial directories
 - ships' passenger lists for all Australian states
 - Australian electoral rolls to 2008
 - convict and pioneer listings
- 'how to' guides for family history research
 - census records for Australia and the UK
 - family history journals
 - English parish register transcripts
 - overseas government publications
 - UK record society publications
 - military history publications
 - heraldry and peerage.

Materials we do not generally collect include:

- individual biographies, although some will be collected for the world knowledge, and Victorian and Australian collections
- individual family histories, both published and manuscript, although some will be acquired for the Victorian and Australian collections
- pedigree charts.



'The efforts and generosity of these collectors has allowed us to acquire research collections in areas that would generally be beyond the capacity of the Library.'



Above: WG Alma, model for the sword suspension illusion, c. 1975–80

Opposite: Ida Rentoul Outhwaite, *The Fairy on a Bat*, 1916, gift of Joyce and Courtney Oldmeadow, 1978, Scholastic Dromkeen Children's Literature Collection

Collectors and their collections

Many of the Library's most unique collections are the lifetime work of a number of individuals or organisations with varied interests and an enthusiasm and dedication for collecting. The efforts and generosity of these collectors has allowed us to acquire research collections in areas that would generally be beyond the capacity of the Library.

Some of these collections are:

- [WG Alma Conjuring Collection](#) of magic books, magazines, photographs, posters, detailed research files on individual magicians, and other magic memorabilia, including small tricks and models
- [MV Anderson Chess Collection](#), one of the largest chess collections in the world with books, magazines and tournament reports; it includes a leaf from 'The game and playe of the chesse', published by Caxton in 1483
- [Tim and Margaret Bourke Bridge Collection](#), one of the world's largest collections of books and magazines on the card game of contract bridge, and predecessors bridge, whist and auction bridge
- [Riley Collection of Political Ephemera](#) created by Frederick Riley, unionist and politician, which includes handbills, flyers, leaflets, posters, badges and stickers
- [Scholastic Dromkeen Children's Literature Collection](#) of original artwork, preliminary sketches and dummy books for many Australian children's picture books. Founded by Joyce and Courtney Oldmeadow the collection was donated to the Library by the Trustees, Scholastic Australia, in 2012.



Material collected:

- Australian and selected international material on magic as a performing art
- Australian published works and selected international published works on chess, including tournament reports
- formed collections or personal libraries put together by an influential collector or formed around particular collecting themes or topics that complement the Library's collecting strengths
- Victorian political ephemera
- original artworks, preliminary sketches and dummy books for Australian children's picture books.

Strategies

Guiding principle	Strategy
Open access for everyone	Prioritise our collection management practices such as accessioning and cataloguing, with our highest use, unique collections and target audiences – including regional, CALD and young learners
	Align our digitising processes and criteria with our target audiences, usage trends, historical significance and preservation considerations
	Align our open access collections and storage choices with our highest use collections – world knowledge, arts and family history – and improve how we measure use in these collections
	Implement a dedicated space for parents and children in a ‘family zone’ and investigate the development of a lending collection for young learners
	Increase access to content by developing application programming interfaces (APIs) for our collections
	Enhance browsing and discoverability of our physical collections by creating a central collections zone with new signage and display
	Improve access to our physical collections by streamlining our collection request processes
	Enhance browsing and discoverability of our digital collections through new curation technologies, mobile apps, digital exhibitions, and by developing new search interfaces
	Increase prominence of digitising on demand as a means to access collection items

'These strategies will embed our guiding principles by setting priorities for our work through to 2020. We will develop a framework of policies, processes, workflows and measures to evaluate our success.'

Below: Mrs William W Dobbs, the Press Dress, 1866, Realia Collection



Guiding principle	Strategy
Active and responsive collecting	Develop a strategy for collecting digital 'news' content including social media, blogs and other non-mainstream publications
	Develop collection strengths in historic and contemporary resources relating to regional, CALD, Indigenous and young learner audiences
	Foster partnerships with international, national and state institutions to connect with their content and collections
	Support staff in developing and maintaining collection expertise Develop and implement a proactive collecting plan to acquire the archives of key Victorian photographers, writers and political identities
Preserving Victoria's cultural heritage	Pursue changes to the Libraries Act to allow digital legal deposit and to enable flexibility in collecting, preserving and providing ongoing access to collections and content
	Monitor developments in legal deposit legislation worldwide to identify and implement best practice
	Expand our ability for depositors and publishers to deposit digital content and implement a digital preservation system Investigate and implement new preservation strategies and practices for the care of the physical collection
Involving our community	Develop measures for engagement, creative output and knowledge creation from our collections
	Develop a social media strategy for enhancing sharing and awareness Build on our community connections generated through exhibitions and programs

Guiding principle	Strategy
	<p>Develop a strategy for engaging with self-published and early career Victorian authors, artists and musicians to include their ebooks and other works in our collections</p> <p>Enable crowd-sourced digital content and curatorial input through new website functionality</p> <p>Build on our existing relationships with Creative Fellows, Collection Advisory Committees and donors for input and assistance</p> <p>Develop an integrated approach to working with our volunteers to help build and maintain our collections and content</p>
New ways of working	<p>Collect new formats such as born digital, and enhance the tools to support this, such as a digital preservation system</p> <p>Continue to develop smarter and more efficient ways of managing our processes</p> <p>Digitise our unique collections to allow innovative ways of curating and delivering content</p> <p>Provide opportunities for our staff and community to build their digital literacy skills</p>
Meeting legal, ethical, cultural and financial responsibilities	<p>Review our acquisitions budget to align it with this strategy</p> <p>Increase our total budget for collections and content acquisitions through fundraising, philanthropic and Library Foundation financial support</p> <p>Focus our philanthropic funds towards high-value and unique collection items</p> <p>Continue collaborative efforts with National and State Libraries Australasia and other partners to advocate for changes to copyright, legal deposit legislation, and publishing and licensing contracts, to improve access to information</p>

Key performance indicators

We measure our collections and content performance annually against these indicators:

- items added to the collection that explore and celebrate our heritage
- new acquisitions electronically registered to agreed standards and targets
- acquisitions and deaccessions in accordance with collection development policies/strategic directions
- loans from the collection to non-government organisations/agencies
- programs including community engagement programs, touring programs/exhibitions, programs delivered in outer metro/regional areas, and education programs.

Inside back cover:

Terry Denton, finished illustration from the book *Home is the sailor* (detail), 1988, Scholastic Dromkeen Children's Literature Collection

Back cover: Rennie Ellis, young Collingwood supporters, c. 1996



