

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Australian
National
University





The Australian National University acknowledges, celebrates and pays our respects to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people of the Canberra region and to all First Nations Australians on whose traditional lands we meet and work, and whose cultures are among the oldest continuing cultures in human history.

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STATEMENT FROM ANU FIRST NATIONS PORTFOLIO

The position of the First Nations Portfolio and ANU Collections is underpinned by the key UNDRIP principles based on Self-Determination, Acknowledgement, Respect (yindyamarra) and Honouring, Protecting and First Nations People Sovereign ownership of Country, Culture and Heritage.

The First Nations Portfolio working with other ANU First Nations representation in sharing the responsibility for leadership, protection and management of ANU First Nations collections.

The First Nations Portfolio and ANU Collections seeks to maintain a committed and ongoing partnership with First Nations communities that presents an opportunity to reframe the ANU as a world leader in the Management and Repatriation of First Nation Ancestors, Objects and Cultural material.

The First Nations Portfolio and ANU Collections will endeavour to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure professional engagement and culturally appropriate collection, care and control processes are applied to all First Nation cultural heritage material, housed in ANU Colleges, Schools, Institutes and Centres across all campus'.

The First Nations Portfolio and ANU Collections will work with First Nations communities to ensure free, prior and informed consent, sovereignty, and culturally safe practices are embedded in perspectives, decision making and management to support the Repatriation of First Nations Ancestors, Objects and Cultural Material.

To ensure the ongoing care, control and repatriation of current and future collections of First Nation cultural heritage material, the First Nations Portfolio supports the development and implementation of policy, guidelines and procedures by ANU Collections in a manner consistent with items set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) such as Article 12, First Nations community expectations, worlds best practice and aligning with national and international legislation standards and responsibilities.

In the spirit of Yindyamarra, the First Nations Portfolio looks forward to supporting the empowerment and self-determination of First Nations communities in their leadership, protection and management of Old People, Cultural Objects and Material.

Letter from the Chair, ANU Collections Advisory Group

Professor Ute Roessner AM FAA

Academic Director, Research Initiatives and Infrastructure, ANU Research & Innovation Portfolio

It has been one of the greatest pleasures to take on the role of Chair of the Collections Advisory Group from Douglas Robertson earlier in the year when I joined the ANU. Since then, I have been able to learn so much about our collections – special thanks particularly to Claire Sheridan for introducing me to the world of collections.

Now that the year has come to a conclusion, I would like to thank all the members of the Collections Advisory Group for their continuous support, contributions and guidance. Special thanks go to our outgoing member and long-time chair Douglas Robertson, as well as Tim Senden, Andrew Young and Elizabeth Minchin. We welcome a number of new members to the Group – Professor Dorrit Jacob (ANU), Bruce Goring (ANU), Heather Bleechmore (Australian Museum) and Caroline Hughes (AIATSIS) – and we look forward to working with everyone next year.

Managing, cataloguing, maintaining and ultimately using our collections is of great importance for all ANU research and teaching activities. It is important to note some of the great achievements in 2022 and thank everyone who has supported and contributed to these achievements. These include the outstanding work which allowed the recognition of three new ANU collections and the completion of projects that embedded these and other collections in research and teaching across ANU Colleges and Schools. The Collections team has also been able to grow their partnership with, and is now receiving strong support from, the ANU First Nations Portfolio. This partnership is particularly important as we strive to embed First Nations sovereignty into our collection practices going forward.

Last but not least, thank you to our wonderful collections team and the many academic and professional staff across the University working on or with collection material. We are looking forward to continuing developments and achievements in 2023.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

At the Australian National University, collections are valuable assets that support the research, teaching and engagement activities of the Institution.

In addition to the significant material held by the ANU Archives, ANU Library and Drill Hall Gallery, the University holds over 50 research, teaching, and heritage collections. These include First Nations Ancestors, objects and cultural material as well as cultural material from the Asia Pacific and Africa, artworks, antiquities, a herbarium, geological and archaeological samples, biological specimens, scientific instruments, mid-century furniture and a wood library.

In many ways, these nationally and internationally significant collections represent untapped opportunities that – when curated and discoverable – can:

- be re-examined and actively built upon by researchers, students, Australian First Nations and Asia Pacific communities to allow for complex, multidisciplinary research and teaching;
- promote cross-College, cross-Portfolio and cross-Institution collaboration and engagement;
- Allow the ANU to connect to rich networks of multi-generational stories – regularly featuring distinguished researchers, collectors and thought-leaders who have contributed significantly to their discipline; and
- Present a tangible connection to the University’s past – a window to explore and understand world-class research, teaching, design and innovation.

Since 2015, the University has been actively working to strengthen its capacity to curate, manage and reimagine its diverse collections as research and teaching infrastructure.

VISION

To curate our collections and make them available as research infrastructure to support the academic community with complex, multidisciplinary research, teaching and learning, and to actively recognise and embed First Nations sovereignty into our collection practices.

2022: A year in reflection

2022 proved to be an incredibly active year for the ANU Collections Community, with a strong focus on activating our collections for research and teaching, while also looking to the future and asking the question “*what’s next?*”.

We have had a number of ‘wins’ this year – several successful digitisation projects, a large-scale deaccession project, several loans, a visit from the High Commissioner of the Solomon Islands, as well as extensive public programming and engagement opportunities that heavily feature ANU Collections. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Collection Managers and the broader ANU Collection Managers Network for their enthusiasm, support, patience, and commitment during 2022. The University’s achievements in this space would not be possible without the dedication and support of those championing Collections!

During 2022, the Research Initiatives and Infrastructure team spent considerable time looking to the future of Collections at ANU. What steps do we need to take to ensure that the University meets its Vision for Collections? How can collection work be better supported moving forward? How can we work more closely with our partners across – and outside of – the University to activate collections in research and teaching?

In answering these questions, we settled on several key priorities that will be the focus of 2023:

1. Improve the University’s capacity to manage its significant collections and orphaned research material.

The Research Initiatives and Infrastructure team will be working closely with our partners across the University to ensure that there is stronger centralised support for the management of collections across Colleges and Divisions. This step is vital if the ANU is

meet its Vision for Collections.

2. Improve the management of the University’s collections.

The Research Initiatives and Infrastructure team will support the pilot and implementation of a University-wide Collection Management System. Supported by the ANU Digital and Services Board, Axiell’s EMu will be rolled-out during 2023 for testing. The implementation of a Collection Management System is a critical step in building the University’s capacity for managing its significant collections, and will streamline work for our Collection Managers.

3. Lay the foundational work of embedding First Nations sovereignty into collection practices.

We have formed a strong partnership with the ANU First Nations Portfolio, who are working with us to ensure that First Nations Peoples sovereign ownership of Country, culture and heritage is embedded into the way First Nations Collections are managed and used. The work that is required in this space is extensive and will take time, but is vital, both for the ANU and for communities around Australia.

4. Find innovative and collaborative ways to advance collection activation and engagement.

Building off the exceptional work in 2022, we will continue to enhance physical and digital access to our collections, with a strong focus on research and teaching outcomes, as well as cross-College and cross-Institution collaboration.

I am incredibly proud of the work that my colleagues and I have accomplished, and I look forward to taking these exciting new steps in collection management and activation in 2023.

Claire Sheridan

SENIOR COLLECTIONS ADVISOR
Research Initiatives and Infrastructure
Research and Innovation Portfolio

ANU Collections Advisory Group

The Collections Advisory Group was formed in 2017 to provide advice and recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) on the management and use of Collections. This advisory body plays an instrumental role in supporting the University's mission to manage its diverse collections in-line with industry best practice standards. The Group consists of internal and external stakeholders, including AIATSIS, the Australian Museum, CSIRO and the National Museum of Australia.

The ANU would like to thank outgoing members Dr. Douglas Robertson (previous Chair, Collections Advisory Group), Professor Tim Senden (Director, Research School of Physics), Andrew Young (CSIRO), and Elizabeth Minchin (ANU, CASS).

Current Membership

Professor Ute Roessner AM FAA (Chair)	Academic Director, Research Initiatives and Infrastructure, ANU
Claire Sheridan (Secretary)	Senior Collections Advisor, Research Initiatives and Infrastructure, ANU
Professor Dorrit Jacob	Director, Research School of Earth Sciences, ANU
Peter Geerdink	Associate Director (Infrastructure and Planning), Facilities and Services, ANU
Maggie Otto	Collection Officer, Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ANU CASS
Kathryn Dan	University Archivist, ANU
Anna Edmundson	Lecturer, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, ANU CASS
Gwen Horsfield	Head of Advancement (University-wide), ANU Advancement
Bruce Gorring	Director, National Indigenous Business Development Hub, ANU First Nations Portfolio
Dr. Ian Coates	Head, Collection Development and Information, National Museum of Australia
Heather Bleechmore	Manager, Collections Care and Conservation, Australian Museum

ANU Collection Managers Network

The Collection Managers Network is a collaborative 'community of practice' dedicated to the best-practice management and use of ANU Collections. Run by the Senior Collections Advisor, the Network meets quarterly and provides a platform to discuss the University's collections, understand the challenges that are being faced by collection managers and seeks to increase cross-College and cross-Institution collaboration.

Currently, membership includes academic and professional ANU staff from College of Arts and Social Sciences, College of Asia and the Pacific, College of Science, College of Engineering and Computer Sciences, College of Health and Medicine, Facilities and Services, Scholarly Information Services, as well as from external organisations such as CSIRO, Australian Research Data Commons, Australian Museum, Geosciences Australia and the Australian War Memorial.

2022 Presentations

Speaker

New RSHA Collections Website	Maggie Otto (ANU)
CAP Art and Artefacts Collection – Conservation Project	Rose Faunce (ANU)
Zircon Collection & AusGeochem Database	Emily Robson (ANU)
CSIRO Australian National Wildlife Collection	Tonya Haff (CSIRO)
Historic Furniture Collection – Cataloguing and Deaccessioning Project	Claudia Reppin (ANU)
Overview of Geosciences Australia Collection & Google Arts and Culture	Steven Petkovski (Geosciences Australia)
MSO Photographic Plates Collection – Digitisation Project	Brad Tucker (ANU)
Collections and Copyright	Roxanne Missingham and Heather Luckie (ANU)



List of recognised Collections

The University has identified over 50¹ specialist research, teaching and heritage collections across its Colleges and Service Divisions that can be governed by the ANU Collections Policy and Procedure.

Since 2015, the ANU has been working to improve the management of its collections so that they can be reimagined as research and teaching infrastructure and made accessible to Australian First Nations and Asia Pacific communities. As part of this process, the University has been assessing each of the identified collections and going through a process of formal recognition as 'University Collections'.

Three new collections were recognised in 2022: the ANU Zooarchaeology Collection, the SoAA Art and Artefact Collection and the Seed Collection.

¹ This number is subject to change as collections are identified, merged or transferred to more appropriate institutions.

ANU Design Unit Furniture Collection

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The ANU Design Unit Furniture Collection is a working collection of mid-century modernist furniture. The Collection was designed between 1954 - 1977 by the ANU Design Unit - a majority of the pieces were manufactured locally, with select pieces crafted by members of the Design Unit such as Hans Pillig. Many of the pieces are attributed to renowned Australian designers Fred Ward and Derek Wrigley. The Collection has local and national significance as an important example of integrated Australian mid-century design. Globally it is the only known example of furniture designed in-house by a university design unit. The collection demonstrates the value of 'total design' awareness and the commitment to excellence from the University's inception.



Arm Chair designed by the ANU Design Unit 1954-1977, Facilities and Services.

UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

Selection of Wood Blocks in the ANU Xylarium Collection, College of Science (Claire Sheridan 2022)

ANU Xylarium Collection

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The ANU Xylarium is one of Australia's only actively curated wood collections. From the first samples collected in 1926 for wood identification, science and teaching, the Collection has rapidly expanded to include wood samples from Australia and overseas, prepared microscopic glass slides, timber display pieces and physical index cards that are central to wood identification. The Collection has strong research significance with the potential to contribute to work in wood anatomy, archaeology, anthropology, furniture and decorative arts conservation, art history and forensic science.

ANU Zooarchaeology Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES & COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The ANU Zooarchaeology Collection is a collection of mammal, bird, reptile, fish and invertebrate (shellfish) specimens. The Collection contains skeletal specimens of native Australian, common domesticated and introduced fauna, and a variety of species from across Southeast Asian and Pacific regions. The Collection is pivotal to the teaching and research activities of several archaeology sub-disciplines, including zooarchaeology, taxonomy, taphonomy, palaeobiology and human environments.

Asia Pacific Maps Collection

SCHOLARLY INFORMATION SERVICES

The Asia Pacific Maps Collection is made up of more than 40,000 topographic, cadastral, aeronautical, tectonic, thematic and tourist maps and bathymetric charts. The Collection covers the world, with emphasis on Asia, Australia and the Pacific. The Collection is the largest University-held Asia Pacific map collection in Australia, with holdings that compliment those of the National Library of Australia. Through digitisation work and material archiving, the Collection serves as a primary repository for the University's rich past and is a resource for current and future research and teaching across disciplines and regions.

Australasian Pollen and Spore Collection

COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Australasian Pollen and Spore Collection, originating from 1966, is the largest collection of modern pollen and spores from the Australasian and Pacific region, amounting to over 15,000 specimens. This Collection utilises the unique morphologies of pollen and spores to identify plants to various taxonomic levels. This scientific reference Collection is used as a comparative tool by researchers worldwide, playing a major role in attracting funding for several research projects in fields such as palaeo-environmental research, respiratory health and allergens, and the geographical origin of honey. The online catalogue of the Collection is freely accessible via apsa.anu.edu.au.



Pollen slide, Australasian Pollen and Spore Collection, College of Asia Pacific (Ulrike Proske 2022)

Over the years, the Collection also inspired artists who created sculptures and prints reflecting the shapes and morphologies of pollen grains. Most of this artwork is on display in the H.C. Coombs Building where it forms part of the CAP Art and Artefacts Collection.

Biological Anthropology Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Biological Anthropology Collection consists of casts and skeletal specimens that represent human and non-human primates. This Collection is a source of biological and anatomical data and information about human and hominin skeletal variation and morphology that characterised humans and our ancestral species over the past 8 million years. This Collection is significant, as it is actively used in research and teaching within Bioarchaeology, Skeletal Biology, Forensic Anthropology, Palaeoanthropology and Primate and Hominid Palaeobiology.

CAP Art and Artefacts Collection

COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The College of Asia and the Pacific's Art and Artefact Collection contains significant cultural material from Australia, Asia and the Pacific, and forms an important record of College research activities. As a foundational school of the University, the provenance of the Collection represents historical continuity and connection to the University's continuing commitment to engagement with the Asia Pacific region. Many of these items are of great aesthetic, cultural and spiritual significance with some objects no longer produced by the cultures of origin.



A pair of gold earrings (2006.06) from the ANU Classics Museum Collection, College of Arts and Social Sciences.

Historic Keyboard Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Historic Keyboard Collection is a unique collection of period instruments as well as custom-built copies of historical instruments, which includes: a clavichord, three harpsichords, and numerous square, upright and grand pianos. The collection also includes two organs, and a Mellotron M400. The Collection has strong historic significance due to its connection to the cultural history of Australia, the ACT and the many people who established the Keyboard Institute at ANU. This collection has a high degree of research significance as the instruments are played and studied by students at the School, as per the original intention, as well as by visiting artists.

Isabel McBryde Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Isabel McBryde Collection is a collection of archaeological material held by the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. McBryde was a highly respected academic at ANU for twenty years and is best known for her work on exchange networks, her promotion of Indigenous heritage and her influence in training a whole generation of Australian archaeologists. The Collection holds a high level of historical significance due to its association with one of the Australia's foremost archaeologists. The collection contains a highly significant assemblage from McBryde's Victorian Greenstone Project, as well as excavated material and the associated documentation from other sites across Victoria, ACT and South Australia.

John Mulvaney Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The John Mulvaney Collection consists of archaeological material acquired by pioneering Australian archaeologist, John Mulvaney. The Collection contains material from some of the most important and influential excavations Mulvaney conducted and was associated with. The Collection holds historical significance to the ANU due to Mulvaney's long association with the University and his position as Foundation Professor of Prehistory in the Arts Faculty. Of particular significance is the Mungo Peel, which is one of three latex stratigraphic peels taken by Mulvaney and shows the section of a trench wall exposed by the excavations at Lake Mungo in 1974.

Mary Jane Mountain Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Mary Jane Mountain Collection consists of archaeological and research material from Mary Jane Mountain, a retired archaeologist who has been associated with the University since 1979.

China in the World Art Collection

COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Australian Centre on China in the World (CiW) Art Collection has a high degree of artistic and aesthetic significance and houses diverse works including glass, photography, prints, furniture, maps, posters, calligraphy and sculptures. Displayed throughout the Centre, these pieces were selected to compliment the award-winning architectural design of the building. As the hub for China studies at the ANU, CiW aims to foster cross-campus, national and international research collaborations that promote greater understanding of the Chinese world – the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and the Chinese diaspora. The CiW Art Collection aims to further strengthen this connection through the support of arts and culture relating to China and its region.

Classics Museum Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Classics Museum was established in 1962 at ANU and houses over 600 significant artefacts. From the wider Mediterranean world – from Britain to the Near East region – each of these items has a story to tell about how it was made, how it was used and the context in which it was used. The Collection has strong research significance with the potential to contribute to work in Classics and Ancient History, Archaeology, Art History and Visual Arts.

Mountain's primary research contribution is her work at the Nombe Rock Shelter in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea and the collection contains the complete assemblages of material collected from this site across four excavation seasons. This Collection has high research significance and contains archaeological evidence for:

- Continuous human activity at the site from the early-mid Holocene;
- Episodic human occupation during the Pleistocene (dating back to c. 25,000 cal BP); and
- Human interaction with multiple species of extinct megafauna, including three new species only documented at this site.

Mount Stromlo Photographic Plates Collection

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The Mount Stromlo Photographic Plates Collection consists of several thousand glass plate negatives. These images are some of the oldest of the Southern night sky, starting in the 1920s and are historically connected to Mount Stromlo Observatory's history of astronomy. The Collection includes negatives taken by notable astronomers such as Professor Jeremy Mould, Ken Freeman, Bart Bok and Gerard de Vaoucoulers. Other photographic plates are associated with high profile astronomy research programs. For example, the MACHO project involves the search for dark matter which includes one of the first detections of a planet orbiting another star, measurements of the Magellanic Clouds, measuring the size of the Universe and the rotation of galaxies, and even tracking the first satellites put in orbit. This Collection holds a wealth of scientific data and research potential – most notably, presenting a historical baseline to allow for looking at long-term changes in astrophysical objects such as exploding stars or moving objects in our solar system – while also maintaining a powerful connection to a historical site of local and national significance.

New Guinea Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

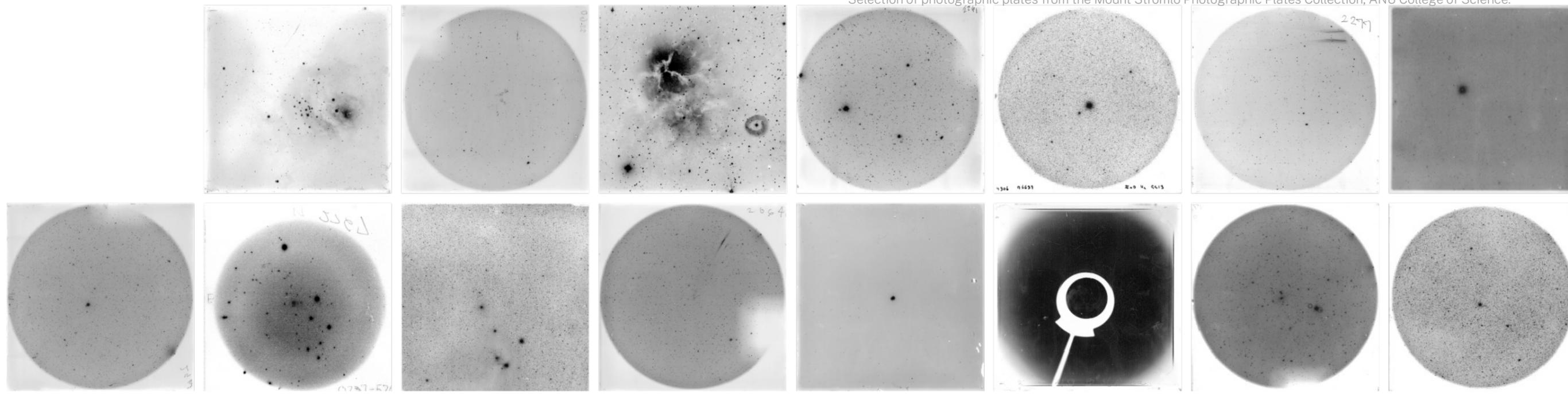
The School of Archaeology and Anthropology's New Guinea Collection is of historical and scientific significance as a representation of early anthropological and archaeological research in New Guinea and surrounding regions. It consists of 1,040 objects collected in the 1950s and 1960s, primarily from the Papua New Guinea (PNG) Highlands, as well as PNG's New Ireland province, Baliem Valley and Bokondini in Papua, Indonesia and a small amount of material from the Torres Strait. The Collection contains material from leading figures in the emergence of both disciplines in the region, including Marie Reay, Ralph Bulmer, R.M. Glasse and John Barnes in Anthropology, and Sue Bulmer in Archaeology. The Collection provides opportunities for new research on the material culture of the region and opportunities for collaboration with Indigenous groups and independent Pacific Island nations.

RSES Collection

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The RSES Collection consists of rocks, minerals and fossils that have been collected by and for the Research School of Earth Sciences and the former Geology Department, since the establishment of the Australian National University. The collection is of scientific and research significance as a major repository of material useful to the fields of paleontology, mineralogy, petrology, astronomy, marine science, geochemistry, biogeochemistry and palaeoenvironments. The Collection continues to be used in research (several fossils have been MicroCT scanned, with 3D modelling of the jaw of a placodem fish) and is involved in partnerships with other Universities.

Selection of photographic plates from the Mount Stromlo Photographic Plates Collection, ANU College of Science.





Canarium indicum seed, ANU Seed Collection, College of Asia Pacific (Kim Grant 2022)

Seed Collection

COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Archaeology and Natural History (ANH) Seed Collection is a scientific reference collection of seeds and nuts from the Australasian and Pacific region, amounting to approximately 850 specimens. Many specimens were collected by researchers, while other samples are herbarium specimens or were purchased and/or donated from external organisations in Australia. The Collection includes samples from upwards of 30 countries. This Collection utilises the specific characteristics of seeds to identify the plant origin and potential use of seeds and nuts found in archaeological excavations and in environmental archives. Comparative collections like this one are a critical tool for archaeobotanical, (palaeo)ecological and agricultural research. The Collection is currently being digitised and it is planned for it to have an online presence by mid-2023.

SoAA Art and Artefact Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School of Archaeology and Anthropology (SoAA) Art and Objects Collection contains 320 artworks and artefacts which have been acquired by the School since the early 1970s. The Collection contains a diverse array of artworks and objects, including a collection of early Papunya Tula boards, WEH Stanner's collection of Nym Bandak Masonite board paintings, a collection of Warlpiri shields presented to the school by Gough Whitlam, a collection of Indian wax casting tools and a donated collection of classical antiquities. The collection reflects the evolving teaching and research priorities of the school throughout its history.

Tikopia Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Tikopia Collection consists of approximately 550 cultural objects collected by James Spillius from the Island of Tikopia, Solomon Islands in 1952 and 1953. These objects include wooden bowls, headrests, tapa beaters and clubs, palm leaf mats, fishing equipment, weaving equipment and shell adze blades. This Collection provides new research opportunities on material culture of the Western Pacific, the history of the Collection and the collectors, the ethics and contemporary significance of material culture collections and on developing collection management practices in consultation with independent Pacific Island nations.

University House Heritage Collection

UNIVERSITY HOUSE & FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The University House Heritage Collection comprises 4000 pieces of bespoke mid-century furniture. This collection was designed and commissioned specifically for University House by Fred Ward between 1949–1953. In 2022 a small sub-collection of memorabilia associated with the history of the House was included. The collection has a high-level of historic significance to the University as it was one of the first planned buildings and consequently is an integral part of the University's design history. As well as displaying the work of notable Australian designer Fred Ward, the collection also features Australian entrepreneurs and textile artists Catherine Hardress (also known as Catherine Hardess) and Edith Grove. University House is an outstanding example of mid-century, integrated design.

Wilfred Shawcross Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Wilfred Shawcross Collection is a collection of archaeological, photographic and research material collected by Wilfred Shawcross who held various teaching and research positions at the ANU between 1973 and 1993. The archaeological material is from a 1992 Gerroa Field School, and has research potential for an archaeologist studying Indigenous occupation patterns along the south coast of New South Wales. This site has since been destroyed, making this intact collection significant. The photographic, archival and research material has strong historic significance, recording the University's involvement in key archaeological research at Lake Mungo, as well as the history of teaching in the Archaeology Department.



**COLLECTION
NEWS**

Photographic Plates from the 1960s given new life

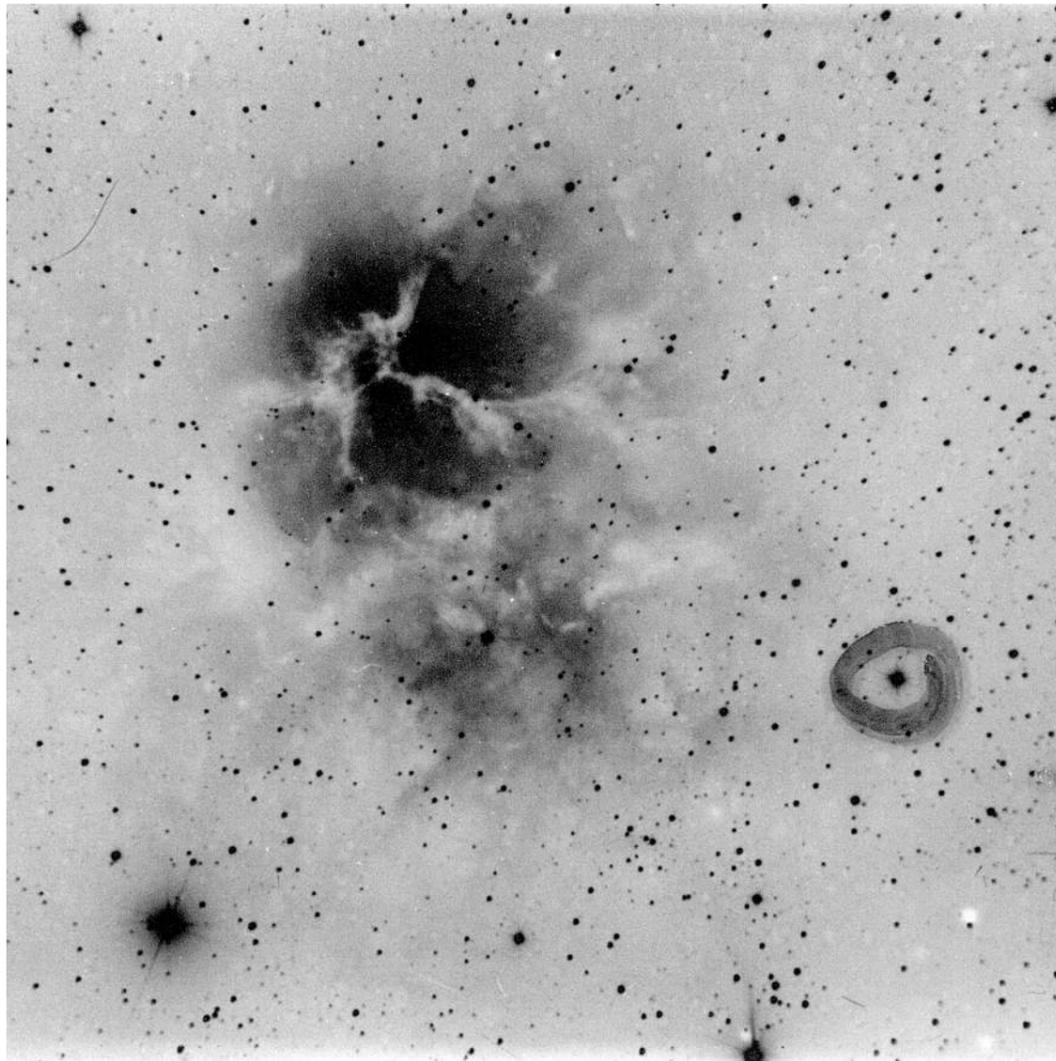
Dr. Brad Tucker

Research School
of Astronomy and
Astrophysics
ANU College of Science.

The Mount Stromlo Photographic Plate Collection consists of many thousands of glass plate negatives, taken of the Southern night sky over a period of four decades from the 1950s. As the first major observatory in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere, these photographic plates are unique as examples of a complete assemblage of glass negative astrophotography used for scientific research in Australia and the rarity of astrophotography captured in the Southern Hemisphere. It is understood that these plates represent the world's only collection of photographs of the Southern sky between 1953 and 1968, and the first (and oldest) images taken of large parts of the southern skies. Analysis of this historical imagery has a scientific purpose – it can be utilised to establish the long-term trajectory of distant objects in our Solar System and can then be compared with contemporary observations to recognise new or changed objects.

In 2019, the Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics (RSAA) and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) co-funded a project with the aim of cataloguing and digitising a section of the Photographic Plates Collection in order to compare the images with current-day observation data. This pilot project looked at 1200 plates created from Mount Stromlo's Uppsala Telescope. As these plates were created as part of a systematic survey of the southern sky taken in 1957, they are most likely to have captured objects of current interest and would complement the data gathered during more recent survey projects.

This pilot project was successfully completed during 2022. The selection of glass plates were catalogued, digitised and uploaded to the SkyMapper Database – making the data immediately accessible for researchers. Researchers are now able to examine the movement of objects in the southern sky across several decades, rather than just a few weeks or years. With a global push for institutions to digitise their glass plates, the project has also allowed the ANU to create a strong methodology for digitising historical astrophotography in a highly accurate and cost-effective manner.



One of 100,000 glass plate negatives from the ANU Mount Stromlo Observatory, Mount Stromlo Photographic Plate Collection (ANU College of Science).

Collections in Conversation: The Timber Detective Agency

Professor Kylie Message-Jones

Humanities Research Centre
ANU College of Arts and
Social Sciences.

Dr. Katrina Grant

Centre of Digital Humanities
Research
ANU College of Arts and
Social Sciences.

Claire Sheridan

ANU Collections
ANU Research & Innovation
Portfolio

During 2023, the ANU Humanities Research Centre, ANU Centre of Digital Humanities Research and ANU Research Initiatives and Infrastructure joined forces to develop the *Collections in Conversation* podcast. This podcast is an experiment in using ‘narrative journalism’ to explore the extraordinary objects in the University’s collections and the incredible stories they can tell about Australia and its relationships across the world. These are the stories of the things that university researchers collect, preserve and study.

Universities are full of objects, from animal skulls to furniture, ancient vases to libraries of wood. Some are on public display, but over the past 70 years much of this material culture has found its way into boxes in storerooms, demountables, labs and ancient professorial lounges in the university that we work at every day. These collections tell us about humanity and our pursuit of knowledge: our discoveries, teaching, omissions, disagreements, biases, and connections with communities.

The first series – *The Timber Detective Agency* – uses the ANU Xylarium as a lens to explore the stories hidden within the University’s Collections. The podcast examines the way collections can be used to tell stories and connect people and disciplines together in interesting and surprising ways.

The *Collections in Conversation* Podcast will be released in early 2023.

Handing on the Torch: Curatorship of the ANU Classics Museum

Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Minchin
Dr. Georgia Pike-Rowney

School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences.

Since its inception in 1962, the ANU Classics Museum has been curated by a series of extraordinary women such as Professor Beryl Rawson, Dr Ann Moffatt, and most recently, Professor Elizabeth Minchin. These women undertook the role of curator in addition to full-time teaching and research, and very often in a voluntary capacity. Now, for the first time in the museum's history, a dedicated curatorial role has been established through the philanthropic support of the Friends of the ANU Classics Museum. This position, the Friends' Lecturer and Curator of the ANU Classics Museum, has been taken up by a former student (at both undergraduate and doctoral level) of Elizabeth's, Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney.

Georgia's first experiences with objects from the ANU Classics Museum occurred during a course devised and taught by Elizabeth, 'Artefacts and Society in the Greco-Roman World'. In this course, students were able to handle ancient artefacts and learn about daily life in Ancient Greek and Roman society. Georgia remembers the experience vividly:

'Elizabeth handed me a lovely Roman red slip-ware dish – and asked me to turn it over. She indicated some splotchy marks on the base of the dish, and asked me to place my fingertips onto these marks. These were the fingerprints of the potter who had dipped it into the red slip 2,000 years ago. It is the kind of experience that provides a direct connection with a person who lived so many centuries ago. I have never forgotten it.'

Through her new role, Georgia is now developing programs that will provide the same kind of hands-on engagement with ancient artefacts for ANU students, school students and teachers, community groups, and visitors. She is also encouraging a wide range of disciplines to consider the application of the Classics Museum collection in their research and teaching. An evening for staff and HDR students from the newly merged School of Medicine and Psychology provided attendees with the opportunity to handle many items, including an ancient bronze surgical implement, glass and ceramic unguent bottles, and a fragment of a marble sculpture in the form of a big toe.

In the Centre for Classical Studies, replacing that specific course that allowed students to engage with the collection, objects from the museum will be embedded into all Classics courses, including Ancient History, Latin and Ancient Greek. And artefacts from the ancient Mediterranean world will feature in courses in other disciplines such as Art and Design, Museum Studies, Art History and Curatorship. These hands-on experiences are supplemented by the extensive online catalogue of the entire collection which, thanks to support from the DVC (Research & Innovation) and the School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics, was launched in 2020.

The process of passing on the curatorial torch from Elizabeth to Georgia is ongoing. One of the first steps was to work together cleaning the museum cases, opening up the cabinets and allowing Georgia to familiarise herself with the collection. In this informal manner, Elizabeth shares stories and experiences about the objects and the people that have cared for them over the museum's 60 years. In time, Georgia will pass the torch to another, and will share stories about the objects and about her predecessors, so that the museum's long history of careful academic curatorship might be maintained into the future.



Friends' Lecturer and Curator, Dr. Georgia Pike-Rowney (left) standing alongside previous Curator of the ANU Classics Museum, Professor Elizabeth Minchin (right).

A visit from the High Commissioner, Solomon Islands

Maggie Otto

Research School of Humanities and the Arts, ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences.

On the 30th of June, the School of Archaeology and Anthropology had the pleasure of welcoming the High Commissioner of the Solomon Islands, His Excellency Mr Robert Sisilo, and his deputy, Mr Trevor Ramoni, for a visit to the Tikopia Collection.

The collection consists of approximately 550 objects collected by James Spillius from the Island of Tikopia, Solomon Islands in 1952 and 1953. Spillius was working as a research assistant for anthropologist Sir Raymond Firth, who was conducting fieldwork on Tikopia, sponsored by the Research School of Pacific Studies. The collection includes 250 wooden and textile objects such as wooden bowls, headrests, tapa beaters and clubs, palm leaf mats, fishing equipment, weaving equipment and 300 shell adze blades.

Not only are these significant cultural objects in their own right, they have immense historical significance due to their association with Firth's ground-breaking research on Tikopia. This collection provides new research opportunities on:

- Material culture of the western Pacific;
- The history of the collection and collectors;
- The ethics and contemporary significance of material culture collections; and
- Developing collection management practices in consultation with independent Pacific Island nations.

The High Commissioner's visit was organised by Dr. Guillaume Molle, the collection manager Maggie Otto, and Dr. Charles Radclyffe. The event also included presentations of ongoing analyses of the Tikopia shell adzes assemblage. It offered the opportunity to further discuss engagement with Pasifika communities, and future outputs and collaborations with the Embassy and the Honiara museum. Tagio tumas to the High Commissioner for this important visit!

Collection Manager Maggie Otto showing His Excellency Mr Robert Sisilo and Deputy Mr Trevor Ramoni the Tikopia Collection, College of Arts and Social Sciences (Dr. Charles Radclyffe 2022).



The Graeme Clarke Hands-on Teaching Collection

Dr. Georgia Pike-Rowney

School of Literature,
Languages and Linguistics,
ANU College of Arts and
Social Sciences.

Emeritus Professor Graeme Clarke has generously donated over 450 fragments and objects as a new hands-on teaching collection to enhance the educational outreach activities of the ANU Classics Museum. The items stem from excavations conducted by Professor Clarke at Jebel Khalid in Syria, a Hellenistic site on the banks of the Euphrates River, undertaken from 1986-2010. The objects that make up the teaching collection are those that were approved for removal to Australia by a panel of experts in Syria who examined each item. This process has ensured no items of significance or value left the country.

The items donated by Professor Clarke include ceramics (small vessels, amphora handles, fragments and sherds), metals (weapon heads, small domestic objects, and fragments), stone and plaster (sculptural fragments in marble, tesserae from mosaics), and glass (fragments and small vessels). While the individual items are of little financial value or consequence, their educational value is incalculable. In addition to these items, Prof. Clarke has donated site maps from the excavations, which will allow students to learn how to identify the original context of an object in the site. The site drawings are by the late architect Dr Barry Rowney, father-in-law to new Classics Museum Curator Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney.

Highlights of the hands-on collection include; a Parian marble toe (a fragment of a larger than life-size sculpture); a fragment of a ceramic child's toy horse; a bronze lamp lid in the shape of a crocus; and fragments of fine Nabatean pottery.

The hands-on collection has been named in Professor Clarke's honour, and will be housed in a bespoke object based learning room adjacent to the Classics Museum.

This room will undergo renovations early in 2023 in order to appropriately house the collection, as well as provide infrastructure and materials for hands-on learning activities, and a collection of reference texts. The Major Reports of the excavations at Jebel Khalid have been published in 8 volumes (6 are complete with two volumes forthcoming). These volumes will be generously purchased for the object-based learning room by the Friends of the Classics Museum. The renovations will also include an updated set of museum cases devoted specifically to the display of student curatorial projects, creative responses, and temporary exhibits. The renovations of the room and the adjacent museum cases is generously funded by the Classics Endowment.

Georgia will now be making use of this generous donation to develop hands-on educational programs. School students will be invited to visit the museum and undertake hands-on workshops in the new object-based learning room, and she will also take items out to schools. Thanks to Professor Clarke, many new generations will be engaged in the material culture of the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds.

(Right) Curator Georgia Pike-Rowney hosts 'A Night at the Museum' tour and hands-on experience for the ANU School of Medicine and Psychology in the Classics Museum. Participant is handling a ceramic Hellenistic unguentarium.

(Below) Ceramic vessel from excavations at Jebel Khalid, from the Graeme Clarke Hands-on Teaching Collection, ANU Classics Museum Collection, College of Arts and Social Sciences (Maggie Otto 2022).



Digitising the ANU Seed Collection

Kim Grant

School of Culture, History and Language, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific

The digitisation process has been one of the more glamorous aspects of managing the ANU Seed Collection. What often looked like mundane little packets of seed during the cataloguing process, exploded into interesting textures, colour, iridescence and vibrancy under a stereoscope. Who knew that these benign little seeds were in fact so interesting once zoomed in!

The process of digitising the Seed Collection is the second phase of this Collections' management process. We catalogued all samples first, capturing as much data as possible from various sources about each sample. Digitising the collection has been a wonderful aspect of bringing the seeds to life. We took to a stereoscope in the Archaeology and Natural History (CHL, CAP) Lab to capture all samples small enough to fit under a stereoscope. This was a time consuming process as there are hundreds of samples to photograph. Once captured, the quality of the photos was assessed and touched up where necessary but as this is a scientific collection, we wanted to maintain an original and realistic capture of each sample.

Currently we are in the middle of photographing the larger seeds using a DSLR which requires a completely different range of skills and equipment. Seeds are set up in a camera tent in a purpose-built 'stage' that props the seeds up, and then photographed under the natural light that comes into the lab in the morning. Images are captured, viewed and touched up where necessary to retain realistic imagery.

Once the Digitisation Project is complete, we will create a website that will house the Seed Collection images and data, and make it available online and to the public. We hope to complete this work and make the Collection accessible during 2023.



Photographing seeds using a Stereoscope
(Kim Grant 2022)



Anacardiaceae *Dracontomelon dao*, photographed using a DSLR (Kim Grant 2022)



Polygonaceae *Rumex brownii* seeds as viewed under a stereoscope (Kim Grant 2022)

#ANUrehommed

Claudia Reppin

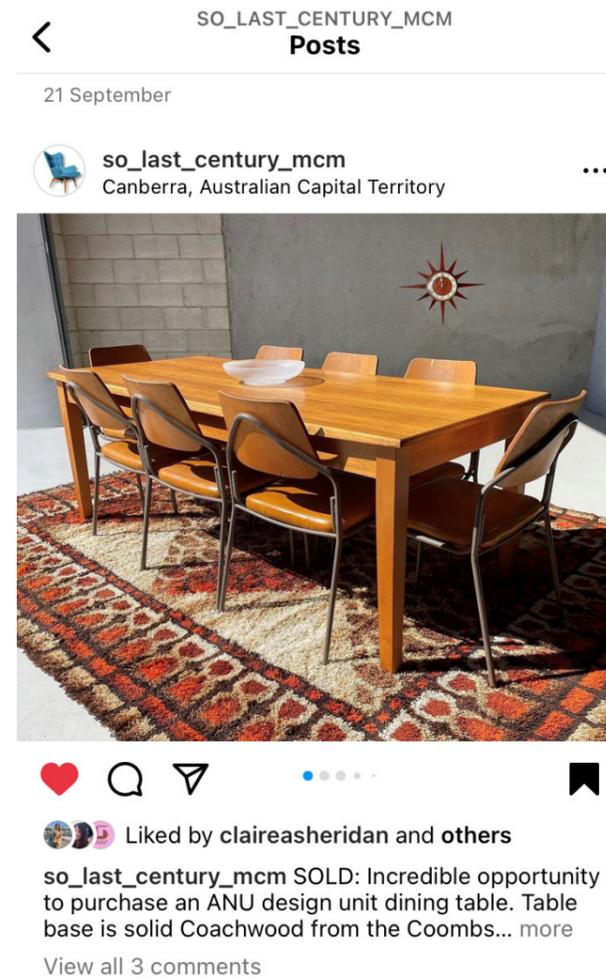
ANU Facilities and Services

During the summer of 2021-2022, a large-scale accession project was undertaken to catalogue, photograph and collate the Design Unit Furniture Collection (DUFC). 1265 pieces of furniture –excluding the collection already in use on Campus –were located across multiple shipping containers, Spring Valley Farm and the A D Hope basement. Of these 1265 pieces 480 were kept in the Collection and relocated to the furniture store. The remaining 785 were approved for deaccession¹ and subsequent sale. As part of this process, Professor Matthew Brookhouse (ANU Fenner School of Environment and Society) identified the Australian timbers used in several key furniture pieces. July was dedicated to forging partnerships with furniture dealers So Last Century MCM and Good as Old, and by August online interest for the sale was heightened. The furniture, which was sold under this partnership, was released in stages with stage one selling out within 48 hours. The remaining two stages sold out in four weeks.

As of December, 250 pieces were sold via the ANU or through a partnership with So Last Century MCM and Good as Old. Alongside these sales, 25 solid timber pieces were donated to the School of Art & Design for teaching purposes. A further 15 document organisers will be repurposed by the ANU Thrive Team – Engagement and Success, as insect hotels and planters to be used in gardens across the Acton Campus.

The furniture has travelled far and wide finding new life across Australia. Under the hashtag #ANUrehommed, the furniture pieces can be shared digitally with the world in their new homes. Being revitalised and customised to fit the needs of their new custodians, the furniture has been widely adored and appreciated and has reinforced just how special the furniture collection is.

¹ Furniture pieces were nominated for deaccession if they met one or more of the following criteria: duplication, under-use, deterioration and storage.



Deaccessioned items were sold through So Last Century MCM's Instagram page and website under the hashtag #ANUrehommed (Alex Csavas 2022).



Deaccessioned furniture was also sold via the Good as Old Instagram page using the hashtag #ANUrehommed (Sarah Busby 2022).

(OPPOSITE PAGE) Professor Matthew Brookhouse identifying Australian timbers used in the Design Unit Furniture Collection, using the ANU Xylarium Wood Identification Cards (Claire Sheridan 2022).

Deaccessioned Design Unit Furniture Collection
bookshelves reused at SNAP Collective in Fyshwick
(Claudia Reppin 2022)



A Design Unit bedside shelf, originally used in Bruce Hall, found a new home! (Annette Simon 2022).

Project Update: Cataloguing the Isabel McBryde Collection

Charlotte Forbes

Collection Assistant,
School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences

During 2022, work commenced to rehouse and catalogue the School of Archaeology and Anthropology's Isabel McBryde Collection.

The collection was assembled by archaeologist Professor Isabel McBryde, during her career from 1960 to the early 2000s. McBryde is one of the founding archaeologists for Australian prehistory and has made considerable contributions to the preservation and protection of Indigenous Australian cultural heritage. The collection includes excavated material, such as the assemblage made for McBryde's Victorian Greenstone Project, as well as maps, archival documents and glass slides.

This year, a significant portion of the collection has been reboxed in order to improve the physical storage of the material. Alongside this, a detailed digital collection catalogue has been made which has improved the documentation of the Collection and will make it more accessible in the future.

This work has been undertaken by Collection Assistant Charlotte Forbes, an undergraduate archaeology and environmental studies student. This project was made possible by the generous donation made in 2021, by Professor McBryde for work to be undertaken on her collections. We thank Professor McBryde for her generous support and Dr Mary-Jane Mountain for facilitating the donation.



Buyers of the deaccessioned Design Unit pieces (in this instance, the Design Unit Lab Drawers) shared how they styled the pieces in their homes using the hashtag #ANUrehome (Tara Searle 2022).

Activating the Design Unit Furniture Collection

Claudia Reppin

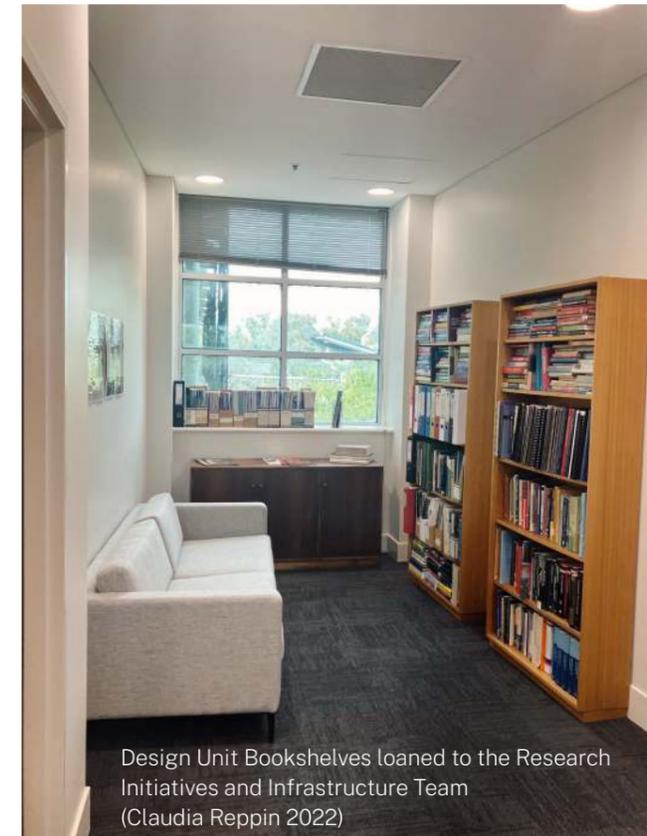
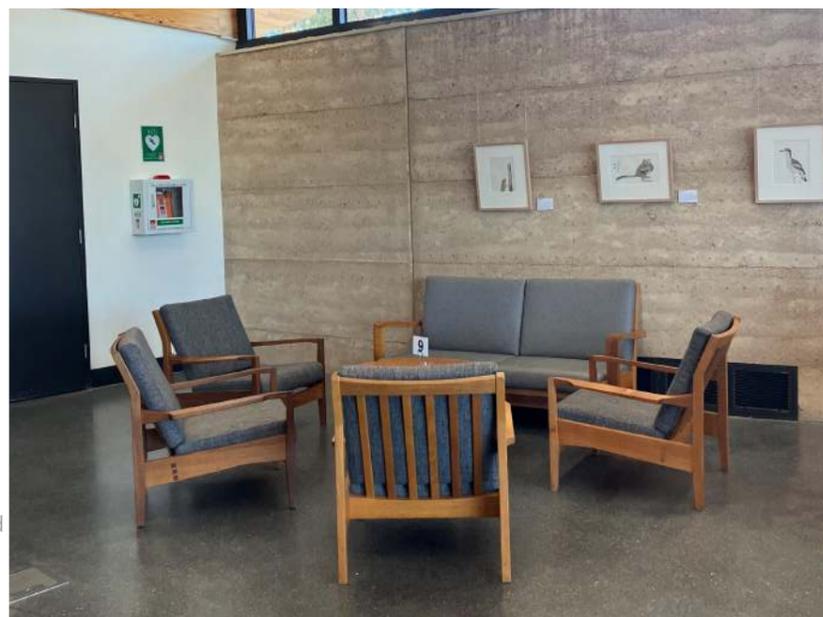
ANU Facilities and Services

2022 was a rewarding year for the Design Unit Furniture Collection, with 169 pieces loaned and 15 pieces going on display. Ensuring that the Furniture can be used and admired across the ANU Campus by students, staff and the public is a vital component of this Collections significance and management, and ensures that the legacy of the ANU Design Unit lives on. One of the largest loans was for the newly opened Wildbark Learning Centre – a nature-based learning centre located at Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary. The loan encompassed 50 pieces of restored furniture; 49 pieces restored in-house and 1 outsourced, with all the upholstery commissioned externally.

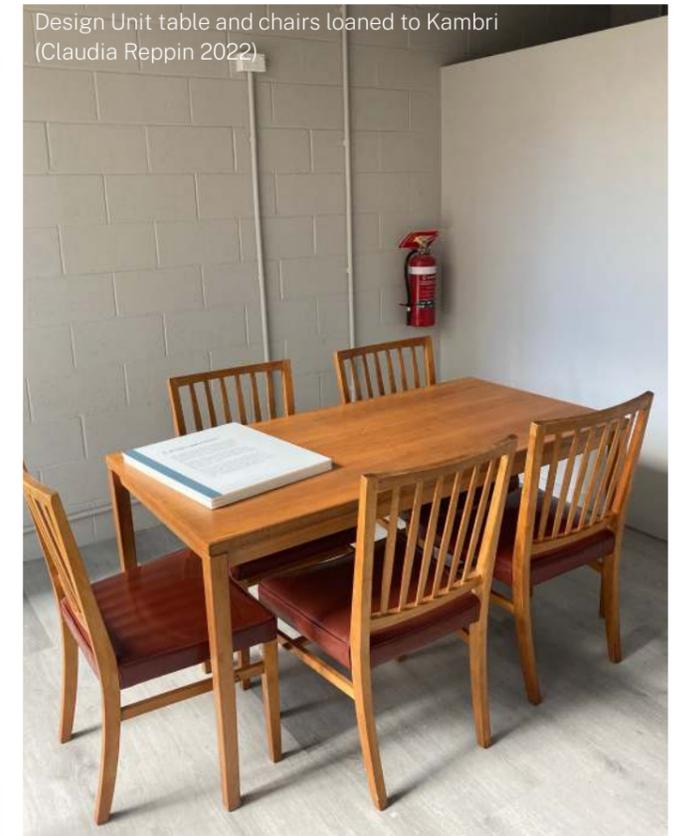
In addition to internal and external loans, 2022 comprised of numerous opportunities for the public to engage with this significant Collection. In May, a co-production between BBC and Stan for a TV series titled *Ten Pound Poms* hired a number of pieces of the Collection for set dressing. In July, the Australian Centre on China in the World loaned furniture for a retrospective exhibition 'China & ANU at 75'. In September, the Menzies Library displayed a Derek Wrigley designed table, affectionately referred to as the 'Queen's table'. The table was used when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II signed the visitor book at the opening of the R G Menzies Library in 1963. With the Queen's passing the table went on display along with the visitor book.

More recently, and in exciting news for the University House Heritage Collection, a Fred Ward designed H-back chair has been donated to the Canberra Museum + Gallery. This chair will be a permanent fixture in a new gallery opening February 2023.

Design Unit Furniture Collection pieces loaned to Wildbark Learning Centre at Mulligans Flat (Claudia Reppin 2022).



Design Unit Bookshelves loaned to the Research Initiatives and Infrastructure Team (Claudia Reppin 2022)



Design Unit table and chairs loaned to Kambri (Claudia Reppin 2022)



Fred Ward H-back chair delivered to Canberra Museum + Gallery for display in their new exhibition space (Claudia Reppin 2022).



Australian
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Contact us

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FRONT COVER IMAGE:

Painted horse head from the Graeme Clarke Hands-On Teaching Collection, ANU Classics Museum, College of Arts and Social Sciences (Maggie Otto 2022).