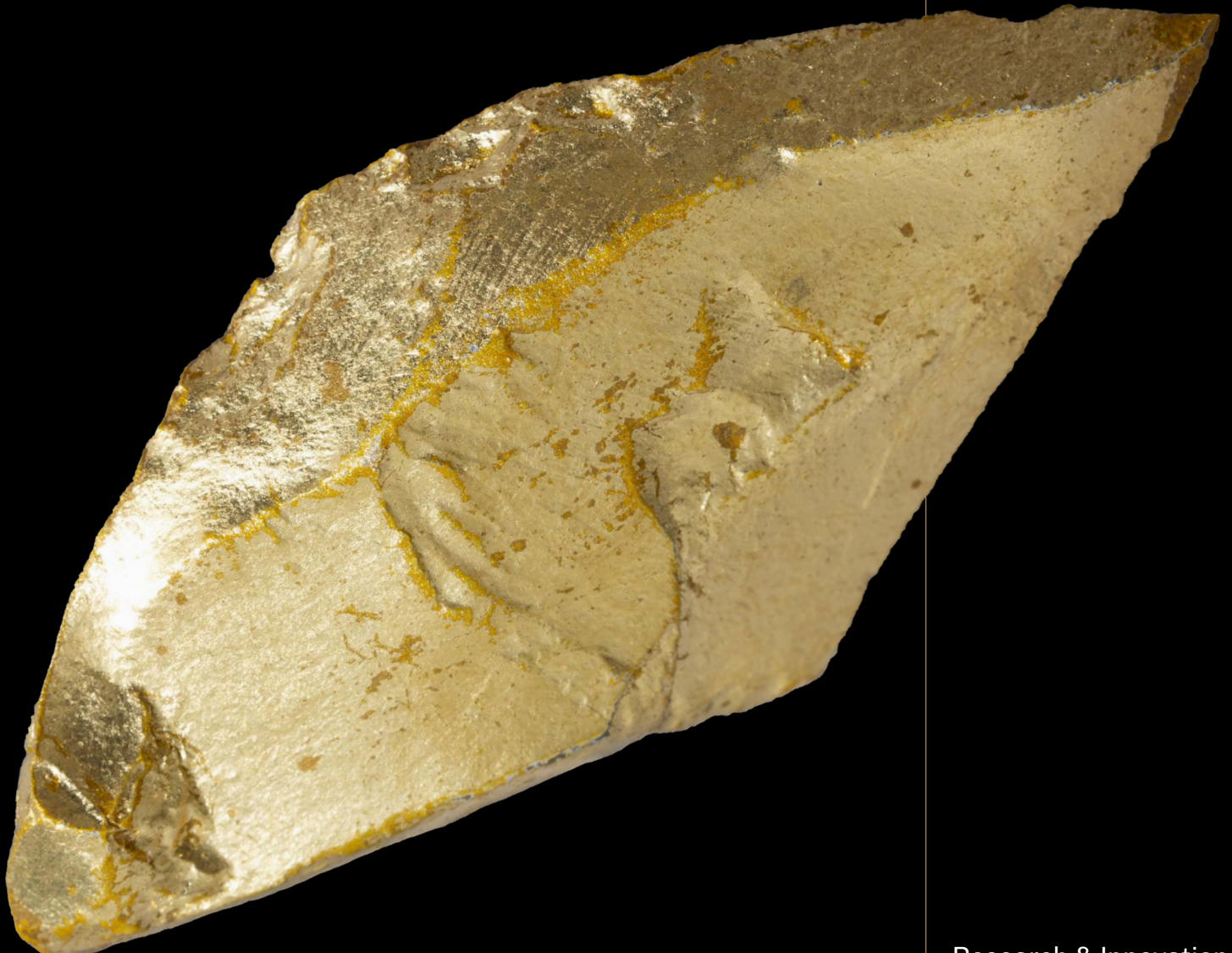


ANU Collections



Australian
National
University

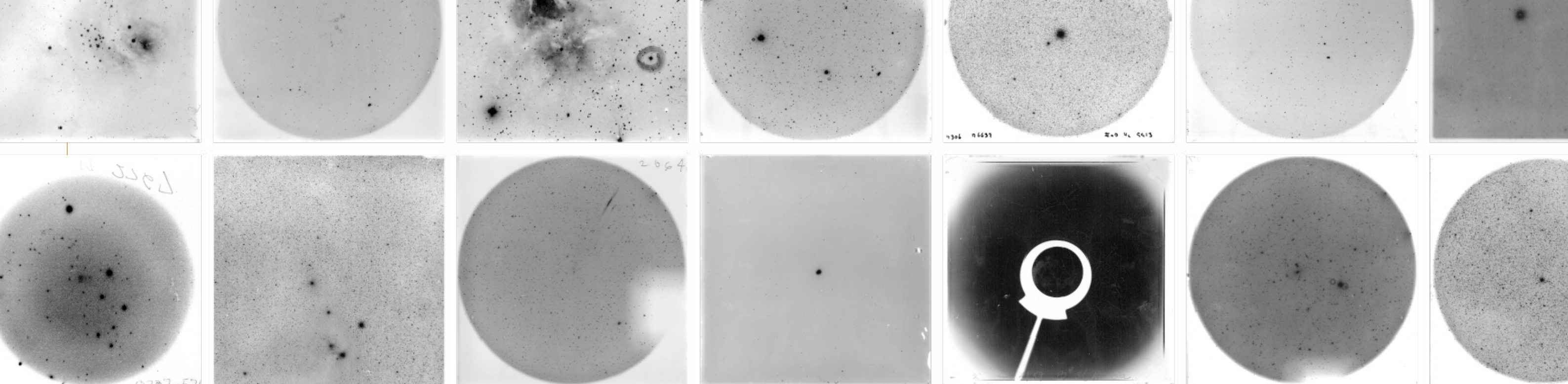
2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Research & Innovation
Portfolio

A photograph of a landscape. In the foreground, there are dense, bright yellow flowering trees, possibly Grevillea, with dark, thin branches. In the background, a tall, slender antenna tower or radio mast stands against a sky filled with soft, white and grey clouds. The tower has a few distinct sections and a pointed top. The overall scene is a mix of natural beauty and modern infrastructure.

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.



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

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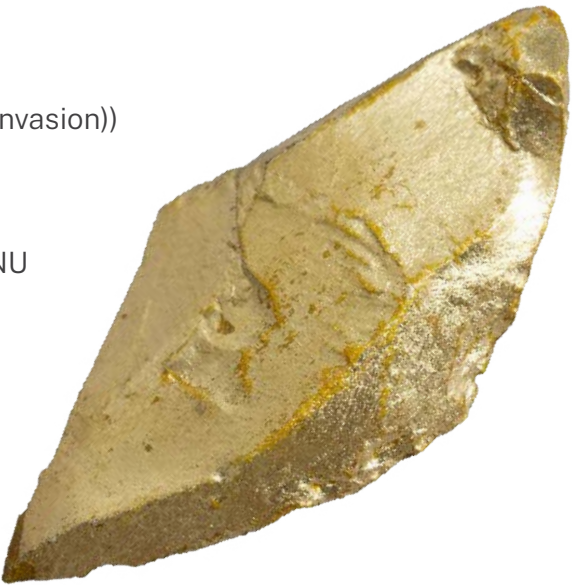
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Contributors to 2024 Annual Report

Thank you to the following people for their contribution to this edition of the ANU Collections Annual Report: Charlotte Forbes, Georgia Pike-Rowney, Rose Faunce, Kathryn Dan, Maggie Otto.

Cover Image

Lapides Aurata of Hartshorn (236 PI (Post Invasion))
 Aidan Hartshorn
 Red Hill Station NSW, Wolgal, Walgalu
 Exhibited in *ARTefacts* exhibition in the ANU Classics Museum.





STATEMENT FROM ANU FIRST NATIONS PORTFOLIO

The position of the First Nations Portfolio and ANU Collections is underpinned by the key principles outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP): self-determination, acknowledgement, respect (yindyamarra), and honouring and protecting First Nations Peoples' sovereign ownership of Country, Culture and Heritage.

The First Nations Portfolio is 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 seek 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 campuses.

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 into the perspectives, decision-making, management and repatriation of First Nations Ancestors, objects and cultural material.

To ensure the ongoing care, control and repatriation of current and future collections of First Nations 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 UNDRIP Article 12, community expectations, and national and international legislation and best-practice standards.

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, objects and cultural material.



INTRODUCTION

2025 In Review

Kathryn Dan

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS (UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST)

What is research without the infrastructure and material for the researcher to work on? The ANU has enormous strength in the museum collections that it holds. Many have been built from the early years of the University's foundation to align with areas of research, the University's national mission, and our motto 'First, to know the nature of things'.

Collections at ANU reach a level of maturity in 2025 - ten years since the University started to actively work on strengthening capacity in this important research facing work and taking steps to make the contents of collections more accessible.

Exciting highlights from the year include ongoing work with Indigenous communities such as the workshops and time spent by Wurundjeri family groups with the Isabel McBryde collection, and the Classics Museum's connection with contemporary creative works through the ARTefacts exhibition.

A significant step in the management and exposure of Collections was taken with the first implementation of a University-wide collection management system. Descriptive information on 5 collections has been added, with more to come during 2025. The results of this work will make material more readily usable for cross-disciplinary research and teaching, and ensures the University pays due attention to the materials in its care.

Several collections have managed relocation of material as hail-damaged buildings are repaired and facilities to care for the collection become stretched for capacity. Each move requires meticulous work with often fragile objects and attention to tracking movements so that no piece is damaged or lost.

Enormous thanks are due to the members of the Collection Advisory Group. Under the leadership of Professor Ute Roessner AM FAA, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research Initiatives and Infrastructure, the Group has provided sustained support and critical advice to collection managers and the Collections team during the year.

The University benefits greatly from the professional expertise of participants from the museums sector and key academic advisors. We look forward to receiving the expert advice of this group in the coming year.

None of the results reported here would be possible without the commitment and professionalism of Maggie Otto, Collections Advisor, and the collections staff spread across the university. They make these rich research resources visible and usable.

We are also indebted to those who enliven Collections through research and teaching. We look forward to building knowledge of the richness of ANU Collections through 2025.

About ANU Collections

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 Asia, the Pacific and Africa, artworks, antiquities, a herbarium, geological and archaeological samples, biological specimens, scientific instruments, mid-century furniture and a wood library.

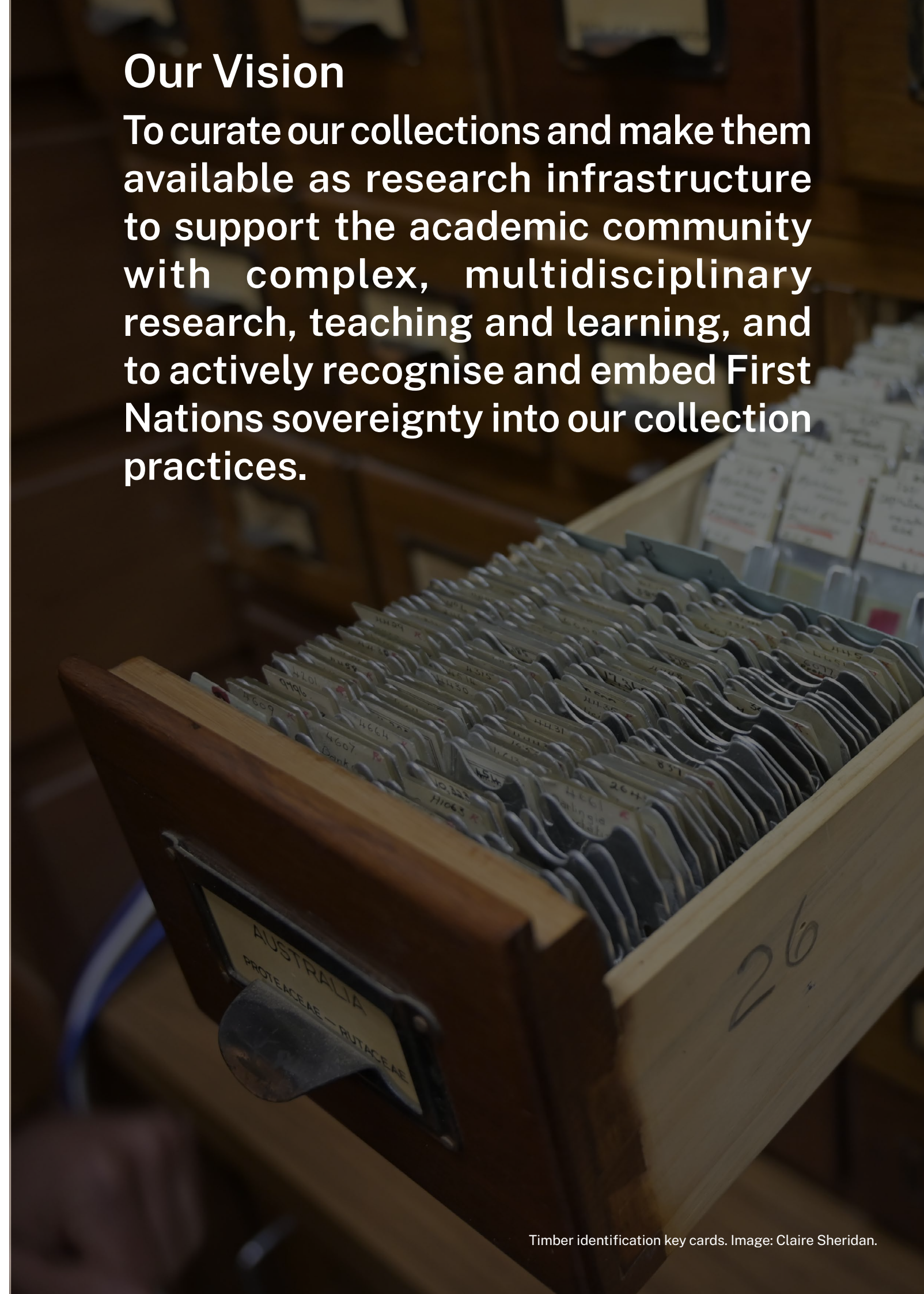
In many ways, these nationally and internationally significant collections represent untapped opportunities that — when curated and discoverable — can:

- 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 while 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 as 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 a research and teaching infrastructure.

Our 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.



Timber identification key cards. Image: Claire Sheridan.

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.

2024 Membership

Professor Ute Roessner AM FAA (Chair)	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Initiatives and Infrastructure)
Maggie Otto (Secretary)	Senior Collections Advisor (Acting), 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
Dr Katherine Aigner	Repatriation Fellow, School of Culture, History and Language College of Asia and the Pacific
Kathryn Dan	University Archivist, ANU
Dr Maya Haviland	Lecturer, Centre of Heritage and Museum Studies, ANU CASS
Paul House	Senior Community Engagement Officer, ANU First Nations Portfolio
Janey Wood	A/g Head, Collection Engagement National Museum of Australia
Dr Caroline Hughes	Executive Director, Collection Services Group, AIATSIS
Heather Bleechmore	Manager, Collections Care and Conservation, Australian Museum
Dr Caroline Hughes	Executive Director, Collection Services Group, AIATSIS
Corinna Paeper	Team Leader, National Research Collections Australia CMS, CSIRO
Dr Andrew Simpson	President, Council of University Museums and Collections (UMAC) within the International Council of Museums (ICOM)



Visitors of the ANU Classics Museum. Image: Jamie Kidston.



COLLECTION NEWS

ARTefacts Exhibition

Georgia Pike-Rowney

FRIENDS' LECTURER
AND CURATOR, ANU
CLASSICS MUSEUM

Julian Laffan

PHD CANDIDATE, ANU
SCHOOL OF ART AND
DESIGN

In October, a new exhibition *ARTefacts* opened in the ANU Classics Museum. The ARTefacts Project engages contemporary artists and scholars completing higher degree research in the creation of new works that respond to the collection of the ANU Classics Museum. Co-curated by artist, educator and PhD candidate Julian Laffan, and Friends' Lecturer in Classics and Classics Museum Curator Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney, the project enables participating artists to animate, activate and interrogate the collection through the lens of contemporary art practice and scholarship.

The exhibition displays the contemporary works throughout, and amongst, the ancient collection of artefacts in the museum, with the aim of creating a direct dialogue between ancient and modern works. The creative responses spark new questions and debates concerning material, meaning, value, and narrative. The aim of the ARTefacts project is to intentionally recontextualise artefacts in order to investigate the politics of identity and materiality from the perspective of makers. Within the museum context, creative practice as a research methodology connects contemporary artists, scholars and audiences with new dialogues, and thus, new futures, for ancient artefacts and collections.



This page: Vice-Chancellor Genevieve Bell attends the opening of *ARTefacts*. Image: Jamie Kidston. Left: *Spiralling*. Image: Harriet Schwarzrock.

Participating artists have been supported by the Friends of the Classics Museum Creative Bursary towards the new creative and written works. The exhibition launch event was supported by the Research School of Humanities and the Arts (RSAH).

The exhibition provides ANU students and visiting school groups the opportunity to reflect on a range of topical themes emerging through the new works, from problematic colonial collecting practices and the value of First Nations material culture, to gender and parenthood, tactility, and materiality. Contemporary works such as these opens the door to creative forms of response and academic engagement, now embedded in new courses offered by ANU Centre for Classical Studies. In Semester 2, 2025 a new course, CLAS2013 ‘The Muse and the Machine: The Arts, Technology and Society in Graeco-Roman Antiquity’, will be cotaught by Curator Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney and Dr Tatiana Bur, and feature opportunities for students to respond creatively to arts and technology in the ancient world.

The exhibition will run in the Classics Museum until March 2025, and is open during the regular museum hours of 9am-4pm weekdays (except public holidays).

Selected artworks from the exhibition



Lapides Aurata of Hartshorn **Aidan Hartshorn**

Red Hill Station NSW, Wolgal, Walgalu, 236 PI (Post Invasion)

Two variations of gilded and knapped stone from Red Hill station made in Wolgalu (Walgalu, Wolgal) Country, South-Eastern NSW. Gold, of little value in Wolgalu culture, is here expressing the disparity between the colonial fascination with gold, and the highly skilled art of stone-knapping. *[Latin construed in the neuter to express that stone-knapping is not a gendered activity in Wolgalu culture.]*

Spiralling **Harriet Schwarzrock**

2024 CE, laboratory glass tubing, ionised neon gas, electrical potential from highvoltage transformer.

These spiralling vials respond to an exquisite 8th century BCE bronze brooch (ANU Classics Museum 1980.12). The regularly twisting metal reveals the skill of the maker. Rather than solid bronze, these transparent tubular glass forms are hollow, encasing inert neon gas at a low pressure. Under certain conditions, these specially prepared contents have the potential to flicker and pulse, revealing a reddish neon glow.

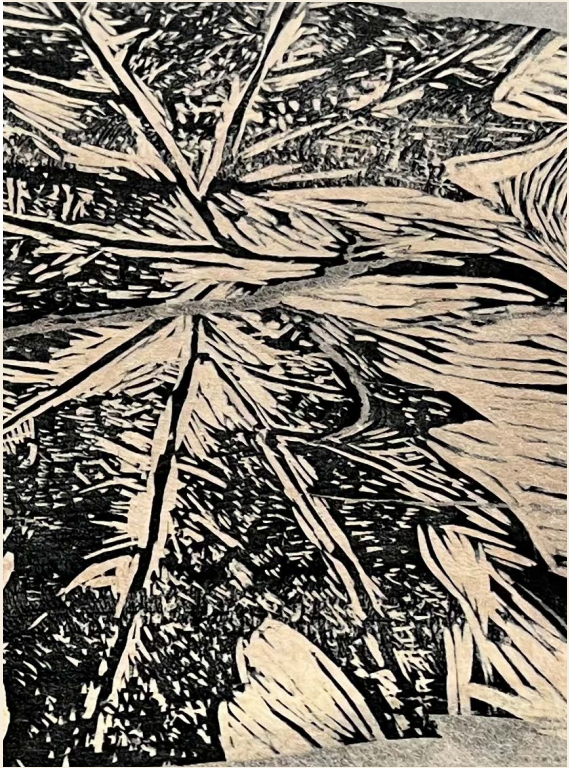


If only you could see what I have seen with your eyes.

Robert Nugent, 2024 CE

2024 CE, video loop 16'; stolen 1st century bronze portrait head, possibly of the empress Livia; excerpts from Dziga Vertov's *Man With A Movie Camera* (1929); eye acting: Georgia Pike-Rowney.

This short film responds to, and features, a bronze portrait head of a woman, possibly the empress Livia dating from the early 1st century CE, which was stolen from the ANU Classics Museum in 2004. Nugent imagines the object's, and Livia's, inner life—in her darkest moments she holds tightly to her memories of growing up in 1st century BCE Rome. With all Livia must have witnessed since then, Nugent imagines that being stolen from a cabinet at the ANU in 2004 would not have phased her. It would be nice to know what happened to her after that.



The Eye of the Tree: Reading with Platanus acerifolia

Julian Laffan

2024 CE, inked remnants from a Canberra street tree; London plane woodblock (*Platanus acerifolia*), printed on tengucho paper, waxed cord, perspex.

The artist responds to the adjacent wooden writing tablet (left, no. 14) dating from the 1st–2nd century CE (1973.01). The inscribing of Greek text into wax tablets pre-dates the technology of printmaking, with the later invention of the woodblock transforming how information could be replicated and shared. The woodblock is a memorial surface of inscription that communicates multiple stories: that of language, of learning and the life of the tree. The ancient tablet is likely made from a plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*) and this companion piece is made from a London plane (*Platanus acerifolia*) that was once a Canberra street tree. The grain of the timber is a visual record of time, connecting the past with the present.

Of Pots and Prams

Susie Russell

2024 CE, written response to a ceramic series by Wendy Wood from 1993 CE. Text and silhouette in vinyl.

In 1993, ceramicist Wendy Wood's modern terracotta vessels went on display in the ANU Classics Museum, joining the artefacts that had inspired their creation. To retell ancient stories and convey their emotional power, Wood photographed friends engaged in domestic life and labour, and strangers moving through public spaces in Canberra. Since their installation three decades ago, Wood's vessels have invited closer and second looks. Drawing upon visual conventions of kinship, navigating fatherhood, and the stroller as an object lesson, Russell reflects on the ways in which Wood's vessels—in particular the fragmented Attic lekythos depicting a 'mother pushing stroller, and walking child'—inspired her own second look at family, gender, and preciousness.



Wurundjeri Visit to McBryde Collection



Examining records at the National Library of Australia. Image: Maggie Otto.

Maggie Otto

ACTING SENIOR
COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

In May, the School of Archaeology and Anthropology was pleased to host a five-day visit from Wurundjeri representatives to the Isabel McBryde Collection.

The visiting group consisted of representatives of Wurundjeri family groups, cultural heritage staff from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and researchers from La Trobe University.

The purpose of the visit was to examine and digitise material from the Isabel McBryde Victorian Greenstone Collection. McBryde is an eminent Australian archaeologist who conducted extensive surface collection of greenstone axes and blanks from quarry sites across south-eastern Australia. One of the major quarry sites McBryde studied was Wil-im-ee Mooring (or Mount William) located near Lancefield, in central Victoria. The nationally heritage listed site was handed back to the Wurundjeri Traditional Owners in 2012.



Above: Visit participants (L-R) Paul Penzo-Kajewski, Rebekah Kurpiel, Allison Bruce, Jordan Spencer, Bobby Mullins, John Webb, Maria Daikos, Zara Lasky-Davison, Maggie Otto, Tony Finn. Image: Rebekah Kurpiel.

Below: Charlotte Forbes and Maria Daikos examine archival index cards. Image: Maggie Otto.

Over 50 boxes of material, including axes, glass slides, archival maps and photos were examined throughout the week. The La Trobe researchers also carried out pXRF (Portable X-ray Fluorescence) scanning, a technique that reveals the elemental composition of stone, and can provenance stone back to specific quarry sites. As part of an ongoing research project funded by Wurundjeri Corporation, the researchers have taken scans from axes recently collected from the site. This visit allowed the opportunity to also conduct scans on axes collected by McBryde in the 1970s and 80s.

The visit also included time at the National Library of Australia, to examine some of McBryde’s deposited papers, and the National Museum of Australia, to view some of the historical greenstone axes McBryde had included in her study. This was a very enjoyable portion of the week, and it was useful to gain an understanding of other material related to the collection that exists dispersed across other Canberra institutions.



This visit is part of a series of visits to the McBryde collection over the past several years, with the purpose of reconnecting this significant collection to the Traditional Owners from whose land the material was taken. These visits are made possible by the generous donation made by Isabel in 2021 to help fund the ongoing management of her collection. We thank Professor McBryde for her generous support and Dr Mary-Jane Mountain for facilitating the donation.

EMu Project Update

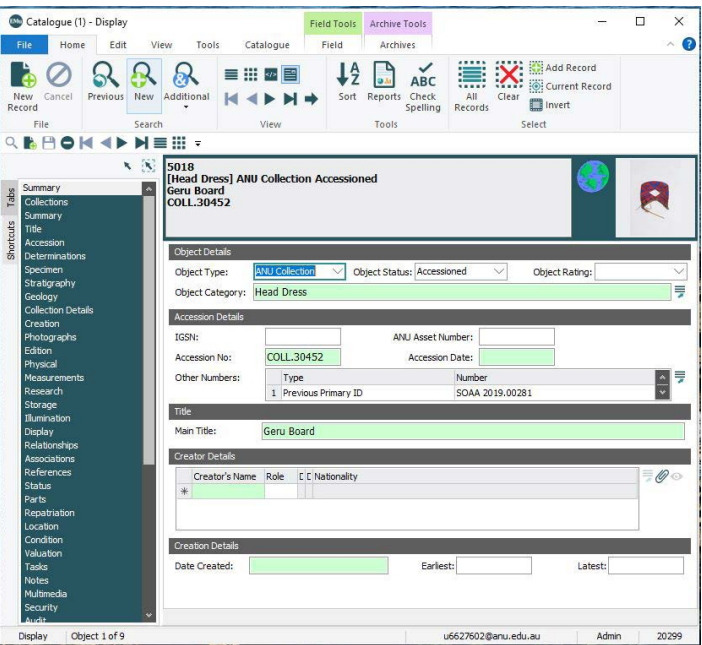
Maggie Otto

ACTING SENIOR
COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

Since 2015, ANU has been exploring options to procure a collection management system (CMS) to bring together the over 60 specialist collections held by Colleges and Service Divisions (not including the ANU Libraries and Archives) as well as the ANU Art Collection managed by Drill Hall Gallery. A CMS will allow ANU Collections data to be consistently managed and interoperable for the first time and will pave the way for increasing the discoverability of our vast and significant collection material.

This year has been a major step forward towards reaching this goal. Axiell's Emu was procured last year and 2024 has been spent working with the ANU ITS Research Stream to implement the software. After several months of user acceptance testing, in December we signed off on the final customised product, and the software will begin roll-out to users in early 2025. As of December, three collections (Tikopia and New Guinea, Classics Museum and Meteorites and Tektites) have been imported into the test database and are ready for immediate import into the final production database.

There have been many challenges in incorporating this software into the existing ANU IT infrastructure, and we are very appreciative of the work of ANU ITS, in particular the Research Lifecycle Squad, in working through and problem-solving this complex implementation.

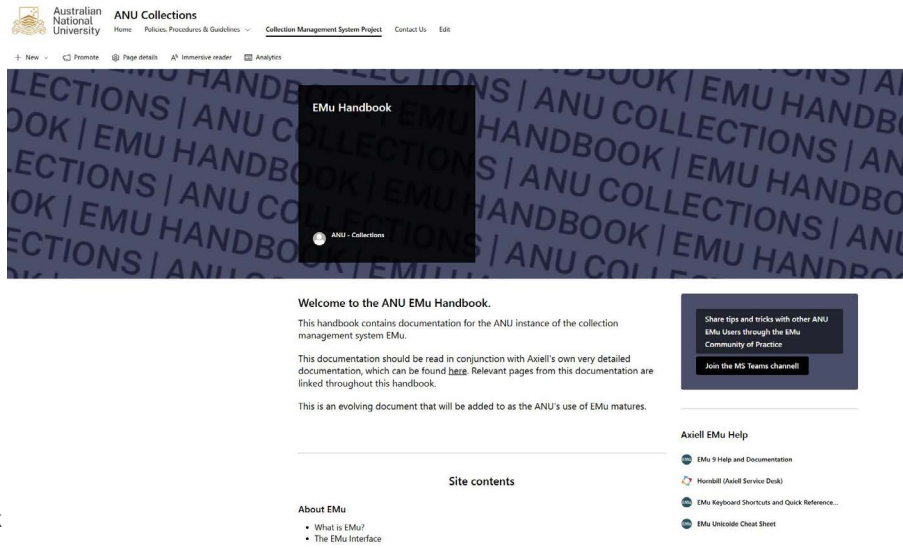


An object from the New Guinea Collection catalogued in EMu.

Thanks to the numerous Collections Managers who have assisted in the testing phase, particularly to Mikey Elliot from RSES collections, whose previous experience with EMu has been invaluable to this implementation.

With implementation imminent, 2025 will be focused on importing more collections into the system, training users and building the resources in the [ANU EMu handbook](#). We will also begin exploring the options for the public-facing side of the database.

You can follow the EMu project progress on the [ANU Collections Sharpepoint](#).



ANU EMu Handbook

2024 Project Updates

During 2023 Pilot Project

- Nine collections identified for priority migration. Data for these collections collated.
- ANU requested customisations built by Axiell, including:
- Addition of ANU Asset Number and IGSN fields.
- Conversion of accession number fields from atomic to table fields, to allow details to be attached to previous accession numbers.
- Creation of repatriation Tab, modelled off NMA repatriation tab.
- Development of auto-generated accession numbers.

February 2024

- Business case endorsed by ANU Research and Business Development Board

March/April 2024

- Developing workflow for migrating legacy data
- Consulting with collection managers on discipline-specific thesauri and controlled vocabularies
- Begin developing EMu handbook and user guide

September/October 2024

- On premise sever set-up
- User acceptance testing of ANU customised version
- ITS to explore virtual machine solution for using EMu on Macs
- Begin migration of high priority legacy data into test database

November 2024

- Finalise user acceptance testing ITS to explore remote desktop solution for using EMu on Macs
- Continue migration of high priority legacy data into test database

December 2024

- Signed-off on user acceptance testing
- Begin move to production environment
- Remote desktop implemented as solution for Mac access
- Procurement of Crystal Reports for development of custom reports
- Continue migration of high priority legacy data into test database

Italian Restitution: Language, History and Objects



Angel Leelasorn presenting.
Image: Jamie Kidston.

Georgia Pike-Rowney

FRIENDS' LECTURER
AND CURATOR, ANU
CLASSICS MUSEUM

On Tuesday 25th of June, the ANU Classics Museum, in collaboration with the Embassy of Italy in Canberra, hosted a special pedagogical research event for teachers and museum professionals: 'Italian Restitution: Language, History and Objects'.

The evening included a wonderful afternoon tea provided by the Embassy, followed by presentations on the relationships between restitution and the curriculum, language, ethics, law, digital fabrication, and pedagogy.

The presenters were Valentina Biguzzi (Education and Culture Attaché, Embassy of Italy), Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney, (Curator, ANU Classics Museum), Maggie Otto, (Acting ANU Senior Collections Advisor), and Angel Leelasorn (ANU MakerSpace Mentor and digital fabrication artist).

Right: Valentina Biguzzi presenting. Bottom: Georgia Pike-Rowney conducting a hands-on session. Images: Jamie Kidston.



Attendees also engaged in object-based learning experiences, and provided feedback for an ongoing research collaboration between the Embassy of Italy and the ANU Classics Museum. The results of this research are due to be published in a collaborative chapter titled "Practical Provenance: co-produced Italian-Australian object-based educational initiative exploring restitution in the Classics Museum at the Australian National University" (forthcoming 2025).

The event was hosted at the Official Residence of the Ambassador of Italy, designed by celebrated Canberra-based Italian mid-century modernist architect Enrico Taglietti. Taglietti's design echoes the Roman domus, thus a fitting space for a collaboration between the Embassy of Italy and the ANU Classics Museum. Our special thanks to Ambassador Paolo Crudele and his wife Sara for generously hosting the event.



The World in a Bowl

Rose Faunce

CURATOR, ANU
COLLEGE OF ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC ART AND
ARTEFACT COLLECTION

Object-based learning is an approach that draws on the pedagogies of experiential learning to develop analytical skills, lateral thinking and teamwork. Through hands-on interaction with physical or digital material, students are encouraged to explore, ask and answer questions about a chosen subject-matter.

Rose Faunce presented an [object-based learning workshop](#) as part of the program of events for *Immersia*, an annual festival held by the ANU School of Culture, History & Language to showcase the cultural and research diversity of the Asia Pacific region.

The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to explore, at first hand, the bowl, a simple material object utilised in most cultures of the world. Participants, working in groups, engaged with hand-crafted bowls from Groote Eylandt, Don Kai Dee (Thailand) Tikopia Island (Solomon Islands) and New Zealand. Borrowing from Martin Heidegger's philosophical musings on the jug, participants were asked to consider the elements that characterise the 'bowlness' of the bowl. The findings of group discussions were compared against information sourced on-line: photographs of the bowls were uploaded into an image search engine and queries were submitted to Chat GPT.

The workshop was held in the ANU School of Culture, History & Language Anthropology Lab. This space was established in 2024 to help make the material collected in the field by researchers accessible in a classroom setting.

It is hoped that this kind of hands-on learning experience will spare artefacts from being hidden away and forgotten and inspire a renewal of interest in students and the next generation of researchers.

Bowl, New Zealand, 1980s
Materials: stem of the Giant Tree Fern (*Dicksonia squarrosa*), pigments
Technique: carved, incised, painted
CAP 0560
Image: Maggie Otto



Benjarong (เบญจรงค์) bowl with cover, Don Kai Dee, Thailand, 1982
Materials: porcelain, mineral pigments, 24 karat gold
Technique: shaped, fired, painted, gilded
Gift of the School of Political Science, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University
CAP T59
Image: Kirsten Farrell



Bowl, Tikopia Island, Solomon Islands archipelago, 1952-53
Materials: wood
Technique: carved
Collected by New Zealand anthropologist Sir Raymond William Firth (1901-2002) and his assistant James Spilius who made several research visits to the region.
CAP 0582
Image: Maggie Otto

Banks Building Move

Charlotte Forbes

COLLECTIONS OFFICER,
RESEARCH SCHOOL OF
HUMANITIES & ARTS

In 2024, hail remediation work began on the School of Archaeology and Anthropology’s Banks building. This meant that the numerous large archaeology and anthropology collections housed in the building needed to be relocated.

The movement of eight large and highly varied collections that contain a range of objects including articulated animal skeletons, bark paintings, three-meter spears and several tons of archaeological material, proved to be a massive logistical task.

With assistance from the Senior Collection Advisor, Maggie Otto, and Operations Manager, Jane Coultas, the catalogues have been updated and storage conditions for fragile objects have been improved in the months prior to the relocation.

Our delicate and fragile objects from the zooarchaeological, Australian First Nations and Pasifika collections are now safely stored in custom frames and boxes, thanks to collaboration between collection staff, International Art Services and T.E.D. Fine Art Australia. These collections have been relocated and are now temporarily stored offsite for the remainder of hail remediation works.



In June 2024, two locations were secured on ANU campus to house the archaeological legacy collections and the bioanthropology collection during Hail remediation work. Installation of shelving and implementation of additional labelling not only assist with collection care but also ensure the collections remain accessible for research, display and education purposes.

Hail remediation work to Banks building remains ongoing into 2025 but continued feeding of the treasured lizards and turtles that call Banks home continues by ANU staff.

Relocation of articulated skeletons from Zooarchaeological collection. Fabrication of storage by T.E.D Fine Art Australia. Image: Maggie Otto.



Marie Reay object labels. Image: Charlotte Forbes.

Reuniting Lost Object Labels

Charlotte Forbes

COLLECTIONS OFFICER,
RESEARCH SCHOOL OF
HUMANITIES & ARTS

The Marie Reay and Robert ‘Bob’ Glasse collections consist of a variety of cultural material from Papa New Guinea collected by the ANU anthropologists from 1950 through to 1970. Artefacts in the collections range from Geru, or spirit, boards through to household objects and make up a large portion of the ANU Tikopia and New Guinea collection.

These two assemblages were once housed at the Australian Institute of Anatomy (AIA), a natural history and medical research institution, active from 1931 to 1985, which also housed the first national ethnographic collection in Australia. When the Institute was disbanded, many of the collections went on to form the basis of the National Museum of Australia’s (NMA) foundation collections, and material that had been contributed by ANU researchers was returned to the University. It now appears that original handwritten object labels became detached from some of these objects in the process.

In 2022, the NMA identified the Glasse object labels, and in 2024 the Marie Reay labels, and approached the ANU offering to transfer them to the ANU to reunite them with the associated artefacts. The labels have now been scanned and transcribed, saving for some very cramped handwriting. The labels were written in the field, sometimes on the back of scrap paper and film boxes and are the most detailed source of information about the objects. Matching the labels to the artefacts has provided rich information about the original language names, object makers and traditional ceremonies they were associated with and has vastly enriched the provenance of these objects.

ANU Collections

Snapshots from 2024



Chancelry display case. Image: Maggie Otto

A Glimpse of ANU Collections

This year ANU Collections established an exhibition case in the ANU chancelry foyer. Based around rotating themes, the exhibitions are changed quarterly and are an opportunity to showcase the wide range and high significance of collections held at ANU to chancelry visitors. This year the displays included an articulated mutton bird skeleton, a bronze Roman oil lamp, a piece of organ-pipe coral and a vase by artist Fiona Hall which she produced while a visiting fellow at SoAD.

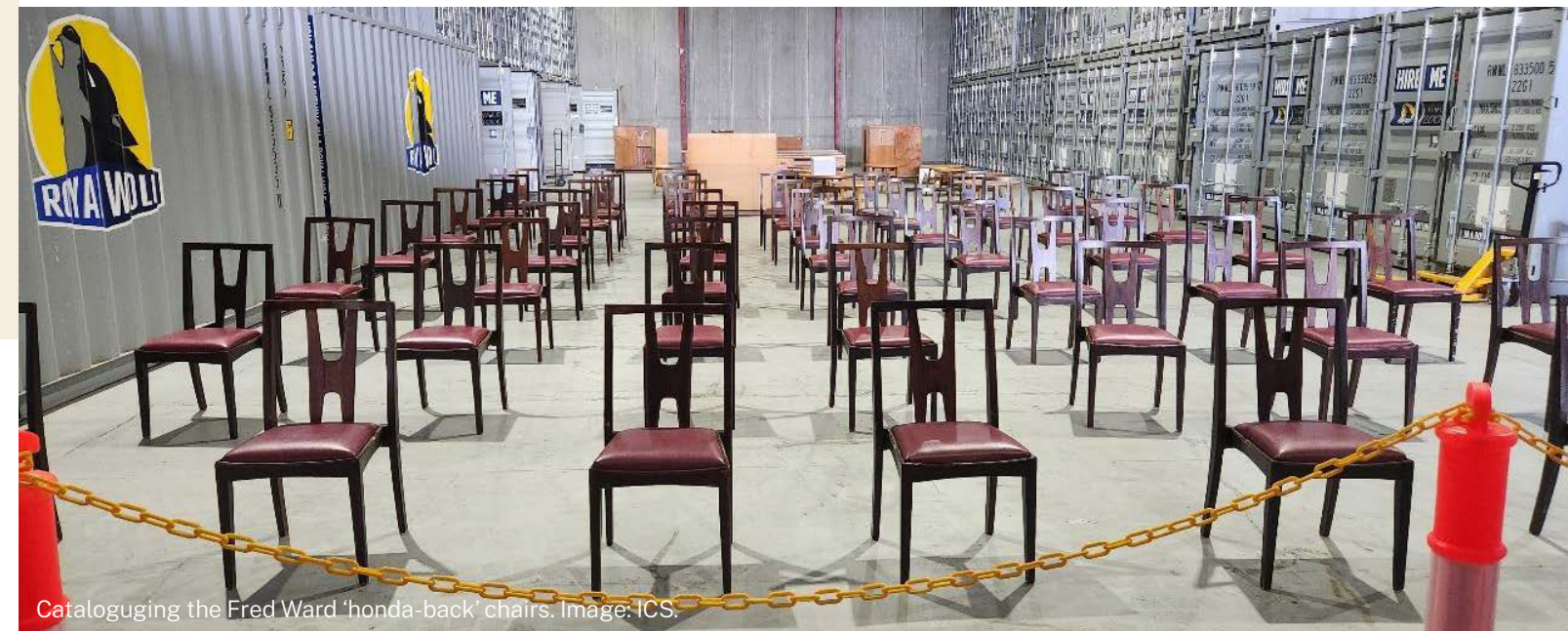
IN THE PRESS

“Bringing the past to light: lost treasures on campus” about the work of CAP collections curator Rose Faunce, ANU Reporter. [Read here.](#)

“More than museums: University collections key to unlocking knowledge” by Kylie Message-Jones (HRC), Australian Academy of the Humanities. [Read here.](#)

“Recognising the potential of university collections as research infrastructure” by Kylie Message-Jones (HRC), LSE Impact Blog. [Read here.](#)

“Georgia keeps the classics museum’s treasures alive” about Classics Curator Georgia Pike-Rowney in CityNews. [Read here.](#)



Cataloguing the Fred Ward 'honda-back' chairs. Image: ICS.

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Book Chapters

“Italian Restitution and the Australian National University’s Classics Museum: Realities and Opportunities” by Georgia Pike-Rowney and Maggie Otto in *Mediterranean Collections in Australia and Aotearoa: perspectives from afar*, Routledge (forthcoming April 2025)

Conference Presentations

“Developing an online catalogue for the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific collection,” presented by Rose Faunce, YiYa Liu and Michael Warren, *International Image Interoperability Framework (IIF) Australia Showcase* at the *Fantastics Futures* conference

“Ancient Coins in the Australian Context: The ANU Classics Museum and the ARTefacts project,” presented by Georgia Pike-Rowney and Aidan Hartshorn at *Coins of Ancient Greece and Rome: History Reception, Activation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium*

“Activating the Future of Classical Collections in Australian Universities: Case Studies from the ANU Classics Museum” panel featuring Georgia Pike-Rowney, Julian Laffan, Angel Leelasorn at the *Art Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference*

University House Heritage Furniture Update

In the 2020 Canberra hailstorm, University House, the treasured ANU landmark, sustained extensive damage. This included significant damage to its mid-century interior and iconic Fred Ward-designed furniture. Restoration and reconstruction of the buildings and grounds is ongoing and University House is scheduled to reopen in early 2026. In 2024, cataloguing and condition assessments were completed on the over 2,500 pieces of heritage furniture removed from the House following the hailstorm. This process allowed the architects and interior designers to prepare layout plans for the refurbishment. In 2025, work will begin on restoring and conserving the heritage furniture. Over half of the heritage furniture is scheduled to be returned back into the House, ensuring the heritage value of the interiors are maintained throughout the common areas, hotel rooms and student accommodation.

SELECTED EVENTS AND TOURS

“Italian Restitution: Language, History and Objects” a professional learning workshop for ACT school teachers, held in collaboration between the ANU Classics Museum and the Embassy of Italy, Canberra.

“Connect with the Collection of the College of Asia and the Pacific” hands-on learning workshop held by Rose Faunce for the 2024 *Immersia* festival.

“International Collaboration for Restitution of Artefacts,” presentation given by Georgia Pike-Rowney for the China Scholarship Council 2024 *Midwestern and Western China Double First Class University Leaders Training Program in Australia*.

Tour and hands-on workshop in the ANU Classics Museum for with the Hearing and Vision Team from the ACT Education Directorate

Interdisciplinary panel on the ethics of human remains in museum collections, chaired by Dr Georgia Pike-Rowney, Curator ANU Classics Museum, and panel members Associate Professor Krisztina Valter-Kocsi (Associate Professor of Anatomy, ANU Medical School), Dr Stacey Ward (Lecturer in Biological Anthropology in the ANU School of Archaeology and Anthropology) and Dr Lily Withycombe (Curator, National Museum of Australia) for the course *Life Love and Loss in Ancient Greece and Rome*.

“ARTefacts Project: Artists’ Talks and Reception” held in conjunction with the opening of the *ARTefacts* exhibition in the ANU Classics Museum



Classics Museum Relabelling Project

The 2024 hail remediation decant of the Classics Museum provided an ideal opportunity to update the labels of the museum. The existing labelling system had been in place for over a decade and common feedback was that museum visitors found the existing labels difficult to read and locate specific objects. Museum curator Georgia Pike-Rowney and Acting Senior Collections Advisor Maggie Otto implemented a new labelling system where objects are labelled with a number block which corresponds to vertical label stickers on the vitrine glass. Minor ammendments were made to the label text, including the inclusion of information about repatriated objects. The labels were also updated from the BC/AD date system to BCE/CE, a change the museum community had requested. To increase the accessibility of the labels further, RSHA Collections Officer Charlotte Forbes is currently developing a large-print booklet for the labels which will be available in hard-copy for museum visitors in 2025.

The museum has also gradually been updating wayfinding and introductory signage. Key to this is the new introductory panels, QR code panels guiding visitors to the online catalogue and donation pages and the installation of two new window stickers guiding guests into the museum from Melville Hall.



Classics museum vitrines boarded-up during hail works. Image: Maggie Otto.

Classics Museum Hail Closure

In 2024, the ANU Classics Museum was closed and the collection temporarily moved into storage during hail remediation work to the AD Hope building. During this time all objects were removed from their cases and vitrines and map of Rome were boarded up for protection during the roof works. While the move required alot of work, it allowed the museum vitrines to be fully cleaned while the objects were absent and prrovided an opportunity to safely install the new labelling system while the objects were not in the case. Special thanks to Sonja Sager and Benjamin Shingles from Drill Hall Gallery for their assistance in moving collection.



Right: New wayfinding signage installed in Melville Hall. Image Maggie Otto.
Above: New labelling system instuted in the Museum, using number block. Image: Charlotte Forbes.



UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

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’.

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.

ANU Meteorite and Tektite Collection

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The Meteorite and Tektite Collection comprises over 300 meteorites and 450 tektites. This collection contains large meteorite masses, meteoritic dust and polished thin sections from as early as the 1700s, and has representatives of chondrites, achondrites, iron meteorites, and stony-iron meteorites. The tektites are all Australites from the strewn fields in and around Oodnadatta, South Australia. A significant portion of this Collection was obtained by Professor John Lovering AO FAA FTSE. The Collection is a significant repository of scientific value for researchers to contribute to the scientific understanding of our universe and how planets are formed.

ANU School of Art & Design Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School of Art & Design Collection holds over 1000 objects comprising ceramics, glass, jewellery, gold & silversmithing, painting, photography, printmaking, bookbinding, typesetting & sculpture. Most of the Collection is made up of donated artworks from an extensive list of staff, students, visiting artists and H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellows since the establishment of the Canberra School of Art in 1976, many of whose artistic achievements are of national and international significance.

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 expanded rapidly and now includes wood samples from Australia and overseas, prepared microscopic glass slides, timber blocks 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 and Zoology Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

The ANU Zooarchaeology and Zoology Collection is a collection of mammal, bird, reptile, fish and invertebrate (shellfish) specimens. The Collection contains skeletal, skin and spirit 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, zoology, taphonomy, palaeobiology and human environments.

A number of 3D models of bones from this collection are available to view on the Skullbook Digital Bone Library.

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. Over the years, the Collection also inspired artists who created sculptures and prints reflecting the shapes and morphologies of pollen grains.

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 the College's research activities. As a foundational school of the University, the provenance of the Collection represents historical continuity and connection to the University's commitment to engagement with Asia and the Pacific. Many of these items are of great aesthetic, cultural and spiritual significance with some objects no longer produced by the cultures of origin.



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 complement 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.

ANU Classics Museum

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The ANU Classics Museum, established in 1962, displays a range of items that provide fascinating insights into the cultural practices of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. The collection, which is open to the public, spans the Mediterranean and beyond. It features examples of ancient art and objects of daily life from Greece and the Roman world, including Egypt and the Near East. The museum’s areas of strength include domestic items, writing and commemoration, southern Italian pottery, and drama. The full museum catalogue is available online.

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. Collection highlights are available to view online.

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 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 Dr Mary Jane Mountain, an archaeologist who has been associated with the ANU since 1979. 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.

Research School of Earth Sciences (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. The collection is of scientific and research significance as a major repository of material useful to the fields of paleontology, mineralogy, petrology, cosmochemistry, geochemistry, biogeochemistry and palaeoenvironments. The Collection continues to be used in publications and by researchers utilizing techniques such as MicroCT scanning and 3D modelling. The Collection is also used by researchers at other universities, museums and government agencies working in the field of earth sciences.

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.

SoAA Art and Objects Collection

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

The School of Archaeology and Anthropology 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 paintings, 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 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. 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.



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