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MEMENTO

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



AUTUMN -
WINTER 2005

Seven Little Australians

Russian Anzacs

Chinese records

Egon Erwin Kisch



MEMENTO



NAA: A1, 1912/20919

After Federation, many Chinese men attempted to bring their wives and children from China to Australia. In 1912 Sam Yin, a Brisbane businessman and naturalised British subject, submitted this photograph of his wife and son for that purpose. Our latest guide opens a window into our fascinating collection of Chinese records (see page 10).

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The National Archives is an Australian government agency.

Vale Laurie Aarons

Laurence (Laurie) Aarons passed away in February 2005 at the age of 87. His name is one remembered by many Australians. The child of political activist parents, Laurie was a long-term member of the Communist Party of Australia and served as its National Secretary between 1965 and 1976. His father, Sam, saw service with the International Brigades who fought against Franco's Fascists in the Spanish Civil War of 1936–39.

Not as well known is Laurie's role in later life as a researcher at the National Archives of Australia.

When the *Archives Act 1983* came into operation in June 1984, it provided access for the very first time to Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) records. The Communist Party, and those associated with it, had been a surveillance target of ASIO throughout the Cold War period, and Laurie Aarons (with prompting from son Mark) became one of the Archives' first researchers to seek access to ASIO records under the new Act. Laurie was, by then, in retirement and was keen to assemble a documentary record of the Communist Party of Australia that could be used to write its history.

Laurie was never entirely convinced that ASIO and the Archives were releasing all of the material they could. Determined to hold the Archives Act to its promise of public access to Commonwealth records, he relentlessly sought reviews of any decisions to withhold information from public release. The Archives, Laurie and ASIO met a number of times



at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal over such cases. For the Archives it proved an enormously valuable test of the strengths of the Act, and the Tribunal's judgments helped refine the scope of some of the exemption categories.

Laurie was held in very great affection by the reference staff who helped him. He was a unique researcher to the Archives because he was the subject of so many of the records he sought access to – from his World War II Army dossier to the nine ASIO volumes about him.

Laurie's access requests resulted in almost a thousand files – many of them comprising well over 100 pages – being released to the public. He blazed the trail for many later researchers and journalists wanting to access ASIO records.

(above) Laurie Aarons participating in the May Day March, Sydney, 1966. The numbers handwritten in blue onto the print were used by ASIO to identify those appearing in the photograph. Laurie is number '8'. NAA: A9626, 150



Magnificent seven

Seven Little Australians, episode 8, 'Yarrahappini': (left to right) Noel Campbell as Jacky, Mark Shields-Brown as Bunty, Tania Falla as Baby. NAA: C612, 'Seven Little Australians'

back on screen

In early 2003, the National Archives approached the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) to talk about preserving television programs from the past. The ABC had several possible choices but there was one standout candidate – *Seven Little Australians*. Rebroadcast several times since its premiere in 1973, the tale of Captain Woolcot's unruly seven is dear to the hearts of generations of Australian viewers. Technical staff at the ABC had been forced to stop broadcasting the series because it had deteriorated over time to show little more than a soupy, greenish haze. To all intents and purposes, the seven urchins were forever lost to the viewing public.

A lengthy examination by the Archives' audiovisual preservation team established that the series had many problems – green and grainy film stocks, colour fade, torn film frames and even a small bug embedded in the negative of the heart-wrenching final episode. Fortunately, however, the ABC many years ago had tra

into the Archives' custody, including the all-important negatives. These had been preserved in our film vault and were in near pristine condition.

Our preservation goal was to extend the life of the film components. As we had the original negatives, we were able to use them to make new, high-quality film components. This was an expensive exercise, but in the constantly shifting world of digital imaging standards, it is the only solid preservation backstop.

Hand in hand with extending the physical life of the series, we also had to think about its possible future use. Although we had successfully created new high-quality film components, the green-tinged master tapes necessary to broadcast the series remained unusable. Under the Archives Act, it would have been sufficient for us to have a simple videotape copy of the series available for viewing in the Archives' reading rooms. This would not, however, be much help to the wider viewing public.

The Archives' audiovisual preservation team decided to go a step further. Taking advantage of the pristine new film components, they created a new set of master tapes. Once the ABC saw the quality of the new masters, they went ahead with a re-release of *Seven Little Australians*. ABC shops are now able to sell VHS and DVD copies of the series that the ABC had previously rejected for broadcast.

As well as having an excellent preservation outcome for the National Archives, the project also proved a successful experiment for the ABC which initially had concerns about the small size of the market for Australian television re-releases.

And so it is that the unruly seven live on – preserved and held in the Archives' collection, for sale to the general public, and rebroadcast on ABC and cable television.



The untold story of Russian Anzacs

Dr Elena Govor is a Russian-born Australian writer and historian specialising in the history of Russian–Australian contact. She has been widely published in Russia and Australia. Her latest book, *Russian Anzacs in Australian History*, co-published by the National Archives and UNSW Press, uncovers a part of Australian cultural history that until now has been silent. It tells the story of the almost one thousand Russian soldiers who fought alongside other Australians in World War I as Anzacs.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.
National Security (Alien Control) Regulations

Form of Application for Registration
(For Alien Resident in Commonwealth)

This form is to be filled up (except as to signature at registration, and the Alien is to attend in person, with the (1) the member of the Police Force in charge of the Police Station, place of abode, and in his presence sign the application, and have an impression of his finger prints to be taken if required.

Name (In full) Alexander Egoroff (Surname is in italics) Egoroff
Nationality Russian Sex Male
Birthplace Chelengirov, Russia Date of Birth 23 November 1884
Place of abode Chelengirov, Russia Platov
Place of Residence (if any) Chelengirov, Russia
Occupation Farmer Married Single (Strike out the item that does not apply)
Date of entry into Commonwealth Early March 1917
Name of ship St. Mary
Port of Disembarkation Adelaide

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

Height 5 ft. 5 in. Colour of eyes Blue
Colour of Hair Gray Build Lean
Scars None None
REMARKS None
Finger prints: (To be taken by the member of the Police Force in charge of the Police Station) (To be taken by the member of the Police Force in charge of the Police Station)
Date of application 19th September 1918
Usual signature of alien Alexander Egoroff
(This space for officer use only)
Certificate issued—No. 8755
Date 19 9 18
Remarks as evidence of nationality produced.
Name of Alien Alexander Egoroff
Place of Residence Chelengirov, Russia
Signature of Police Officer Platov
Police Station Chelengirov, Russia

Alexander Egoroff's alien registration document. NAA: SP11/3, Egoroff A

Surprisingly, after those of Anglo or Celtic background, it was men born in the former Russian Empire that constituted the largest group in the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Uncovering these men's lives has been an act of monumental and painstaking research. Elena's book draws upon an extensive range of archival records, especially the World War I service records held by the National Archives. Elena managed to locate 969 men born in the Russian Empire who served in the Australian army, of whom 762 were on active service overseas. Of those, one in five (or 151 men) died while on duty. In many cases Elena found not just their names, but also enough facts to tell these men's life

The stories that emerge in *Russian Anzacs* date from pre-revolutionary Russia, through the devastation of war and revolution to the cultural diversity of modern-day Australia. Unlike many accounts of war, *Russian Anzacs* does not end when the fighting finishes. Instead, it passionately rediscovers ties, formerly severed, between the children and the grandchildren of Russian Anzacs and their Russian past.

In the course of her research, Elena scoured phonebooks trying to make contact with descendants of the Russian Anzacs she had uncovered. Some people she traced were completely unaware of their Russian heritage whilst some knew only a little about their family background.

Others had actively tried to find their Russian ancestors with varying degrees of success. A profoundly touching aspect of Elena's research is just how many Russian families have reconnected because of her efforts. Her book is richer too, because it includes the personal narratives of some of the descendants of the Russian Anzacs. Alexander Egoroff's story is a good example – a man on paper brought more fully to life by the memories of his children and grandchildren who, despite their best efforts, had lost touch with their relatives in Russia until they came into contact with Elena. The following story, recounted in Elena's book, draws on a mixture of official records and personal interview.

From Bestuzhevo to Blacktown: the Alexander Egoroff story

Alexander Egoroff was born in Bestuzhevo, Russia on 23 November 1880. Like many of his contemporaries, as a young man Alexander left the village where he grew up in search of a new life. He went first to Moscow where he trained as an agronomist, and later around 1905, he began to travel from one country to another before finally settling in Australia. He was not alone in his actions. In 1905, the renewed change in social and political conditions in the wake of the revolution, the end of the Russo-Japanese war and the completion of the trans-Siberian railway opened up the world for many Russians. The new railway made the trip to the East across Russia much easier. The new frontier attracted some families but it was mostly young men searching for adventure or different lives that took advantage of the new possibilities. Access to the eastern ports provided them with the opportunity to further roam the world and many did so, often ending up in Canada or Australia.

Alexander Egoroff arrived in Sydney, Australia in March 1909. Despite the many reports of favourable economic conditions in Australia at the time, life

was not easy for arriving Russians. Nearly all of them – educated intellectuals, professionals, peasants, labourers and seamen alike – had to engage in hard physical labour simply to survive. For some, enlistment in the army provided the only escape from unemployment and starvation. Alexander was better able to cope than many, being a thickset man used to working on the land. He worked as a gardener and in a sugar mill before joining the AIF on 7 July 1915.

Alexander's war experiences, like many Russian soldiers, differed little from the experiences of others in the AIF. In day-to-day trench life, Russianness, for the most part, was accepted as some sort of harmless peculiarity. In the face of death, Russians and other Australians were even mates – although sometimes it took time for this mateship to take root, and sometimes it only happened long afterwards. Alexander's granddaughter, Barbara Fox, recalls his memories of life in the trenches at the Somme in the winter of 1916–17 as told to her by Alexander's eldest daughter Lily:

'He said he had to sleep outside the trench as the Australian soldiers told him there was not enough room for him in the trench. It was snowing and his hands were stiff when he woke up.'

Barbara adds circumspectly, 'It could have been because he was Russian, but we do not really know'.

What we do know is that Alexander Egoroff bore no grudges and after the war he always celebrated Anzac Day. Even in the 1930s when times were very tough for him and his growing family, he would put on his best suit and head into Sydney for the reunion of his 17th Battalion. The men that he as a stretcher-bearer had carried off the battlefields, recognised him and showed their appreciation, even if sometimes he himself could not remember their faces. Together, every year, they would seal their comradeship with a drink.

After Alexander returned from the war permanently disabled from a gunshot to his left arm he managed to find work as a gardener and lived in Paddington, Sydney. He married Lillian Hampson on 10 July 1918, and then worked as a gardener at Mittabah near Exeter, NSW. In 1920, using money he obtained through a war grant, Alexander bought 10 acres of land at a soldier's settlement in Plumpton (just outside of Blacktown, Sydney).

The young family maintained contact with only a few other Russians. It was not a good time in Australia's history to admit one's Russianness, which tended to be



Alexander Egoroff soon after his arrival in Australia.

Courtesy of Alexander Egoroff's family

Alexander and Lillian Egoroff's eight remaining children at the dedication of the 'Alexander Egoroff reserve', Blacktown, Sydney, 2004.

(back row left to right) Peter (b.1927), Alexandra (b.1927), Mary (b.1925), Jean (b.1931). (front row left to right) Shirley (b.1934), Alexander Robert (b.1919), Nancy (b.1921), David (b.1929). Courtesy of Alexander Egoroff's family



Russian Anzacs

equated with radicalism. The process of applying for naturalisation, for example, was fraught. To be considered suitable, an applicant had to be recognised as Russian but had to also satisfy the police that they neither mixed with other Russians nor belonged to any Russian organisations. Many Russians, like Alexander, chose not to apply for naturalisation.

Alexander's wife, Lillian, suffered chronic illness requiring intermittent hospitalisation throughout their life together and in 1934, after the birth of their tenth child was again hospitalised. This time Lillian did not return home, remaining in care until her death in 1956.

For the rest of the 1930s, Alexander struggled to raise the children on his own while continuing to work their small farm. Because he had never been naturalised, when World War II broke out a few years later, he was required by law to register as an alien. His photograph was posted on the board at the local police station and he had to report there every week. When he became too ill to make the trip – he was dying of cancer and could not get out of bed – the police checked on him at home. Alexander died on 18 January 1940, still an alien.

At various times during the war years the younger Egoroff children were placed in

foster care. Three of the older children joined the army. The eldest son, Alexander Robert, was twenty years of age when his father died; and by the time the war ended he had two children of his own. Nonetheless, when he returned, he got all of his family back together, taking them out of welfare homes. His daughter Barbara remembers them all living together in their small house.

Alexander Egoroff's children all grew up Australians but they never forgot their Russian Anzac father. Unfortunately, however, they did lose contact with their relatives in Russia. After World War II, the family tried to find their Russian relatives in Bestuzhevo but had no luck. Meanwhile, Barbara, accompanied by her father, Alexander Robert, searched archives and recorded all the snippets of recollections and memories they could find about their family. When Elena tracked the Egoroff family down, she was so impressed with their thirst to rediscover the past that she suggested to Barbara that she compose a letter detailing all of the information they wanted to know. Elena then translated the letter and sent it directly to the village of Bestuzhevo. A few weeks later they received the following reply from Andrey Kovalenko, the grandson of Alexander's youngest brother:

'Perhaps I should again, as in my childhood, believe in Christmas miracles – on the 10/12/01 relatives from Bestuzhevo came to Moscow to our place with your letter. My grandfather Ivan Alexeevich Egoroff ... had searched for his brothers Alexander and Gavriil without success for a long time.'

In 2002 the Russian Egoroffs came to Sydney to meet their extended Australian family of more than 150 people. In the home of one of Alexander Egoroff's granddaughters, they had a family reunion which Elena attended as a friend and translator:

'While we watched [a] video about the old farmhouse in Bestuzhevo on a huge screen, I was translating the Russian comments to the family, and enjoying the faces of Alexander's children and grandchildren. They were discovering that mystical source of the Russian stream in their souls.'

Russian Anzacs in Australian History is published by UNSW Press in association with the National Archives of Australia. It retails for \$44.95 and can be purchased through our website at www.naa.gov.au, by phoning (02) 6212 3609 or emailing naasales@naa.gov.au.



Alexander and Lillian Egoroff's first-born Alexander Robert (b. 1919) and their fourth-born, Alexandra Egoroff (b. 1923) taken about 1942 in Sydney. Courtesy of Alexander Egoroff's family



Certificate of Naturalisation
Date
Remarks No evidence of nationality produced
Donat. I. C.

Russian Anzacs





Facelift for democracy

The National Archives' *Documenting a Democracy* website is having a makeover. First launched in 2000, the website was the product of an innovative *Centenary of Federation* project which made Australia the first country in the world to provide online access to its founding constitutional documents. In the rapidly changing world of website design and technology, however, it wasn't long before *Documenting a Democracy* began to show its age. The website now has a fresh new design and two other important new features.

One of the aims of *Documenting a Democracy* is to provide access to Australia's founding documents – not just to their content, history and significance, but to digital copies of the original documents themselves. Before launching the website in 2000 we scoured through each of Australia's government archives as well as many archival collections in the United Kingdom to find the original documents. But despite our best efforts, a small number of documents continued to elude us. Last year, most of these reluctant luminaries were finally unearthed in the UK National Archives in London and are included for the first time on the revised site.

The *Documenting a Democracy* website is a joint project between the National Archives and the state and territory archives. It originally featured documents showing the constitutional development of the Commonwealth, each state and the Northern Territory. Since then, the Territory Records Office of the ACT has been formed and a new section on the ACT has been developed for the *Documenting a Democracy* website.

The revamped website – and its new inclusions – will be launched in July 2005.



revving up! Online discovery for students

Many teachers have a passion for archival records but are frustrated by the difficulty of accessing them. Vrroom – short for 'virtual reading room' – is a new Archives' website for primary and secondary teachers and students that gives instant access to archival records. It offers an interactive online experience aimed at helping teachers teach and students learn about history, politics, communications and archives.

To create Vrroom, the Archives collaborated with teachers, students, curriculum developers, a research institution, and a web developer specialising in education and the arts.

While we set out to produce an online journey of discovery for teachers and students, creating Vrroom was a journey of discovery for us too.

Our original plan was to construct virtual stacks of records on vast topics, such as immigration, and to provide pathways into the stacks for students to discover records of interest through Research Modules.

We consulted teachers and although they liked the idea, especially for their advanced students, they also told us of a more basic need. Teachers know very well how to use primary sources in their classroom practice, but they desperately

need easy access to records on a range of topics. To meet this need, we devised two simpler components of Vrroom – Quick Picks and Document Studies. Searchable by subject and location, Quick Picks offer speedy access to individual records that can be printed out and used in the classroom. The other option, Document Studies, provides a set of records on a topic and lists key issues and ideas for discussion.

The test version of Vrroom is live at vrroom.naa.gov.au.

We invite you to road test Vrroom and we welcome your feedback.



Keeping it digital



The National Archives
digital repository.

Does your new personal computer have a floppy disc drive? Are you able to read that old university essay you saved in wordperfect software? Are you confident that you will still be able to view your digital photographs in 20 years?

If your answer to any of these questions is no, then you may understand the challenge of preserving digital records for future generations in an era of rapid hardware and software obsolescence. How do we avoid adding to the growing sea of digital records that are in danger of becoming future artefacts or curios for 'digital archaeologists'?

For some years the Archives has been working on an approach to digital preservation that provides ongoing access to vital digital records but that does not require a working museum of the technology used to create the records. Our aim is to save important digital records in formats that will remain accessible and readable over time.

Centre stage in our digital preservation approach is a software application called Xena – XML Electronic Normalising of Archives. This software converts digital records into a standardised format based on XML (eXtensible Markup Language) that does not depend on proprietary software or hardware to be read.

The Archives released the first version of

this year released Xena 2.0. Xena 2.0 has the impressive ability to convert a range of common office file types – including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, images, PDF and email – into a standardised format. Xena has been developed as an 'open source' application and is available to anyone via the open-source developers' website at www.sourceforge.net/projects/xena/.

The Archives has developed two other key applications that support Xena – Digital Preservation Recorder (DPR) and Quest (Query Electronic Storage). DPR gathers audit information as the digital records progress through the three separate processing facilities – quarantine, preservation and storage. Quest retrieves digital records from storage. Xena, DPR and Quest work together to ensure that digital records maintain their integrity and authenticity while undergoing virus checking, conversion to XML and eventual storage in a safe and secure repository.

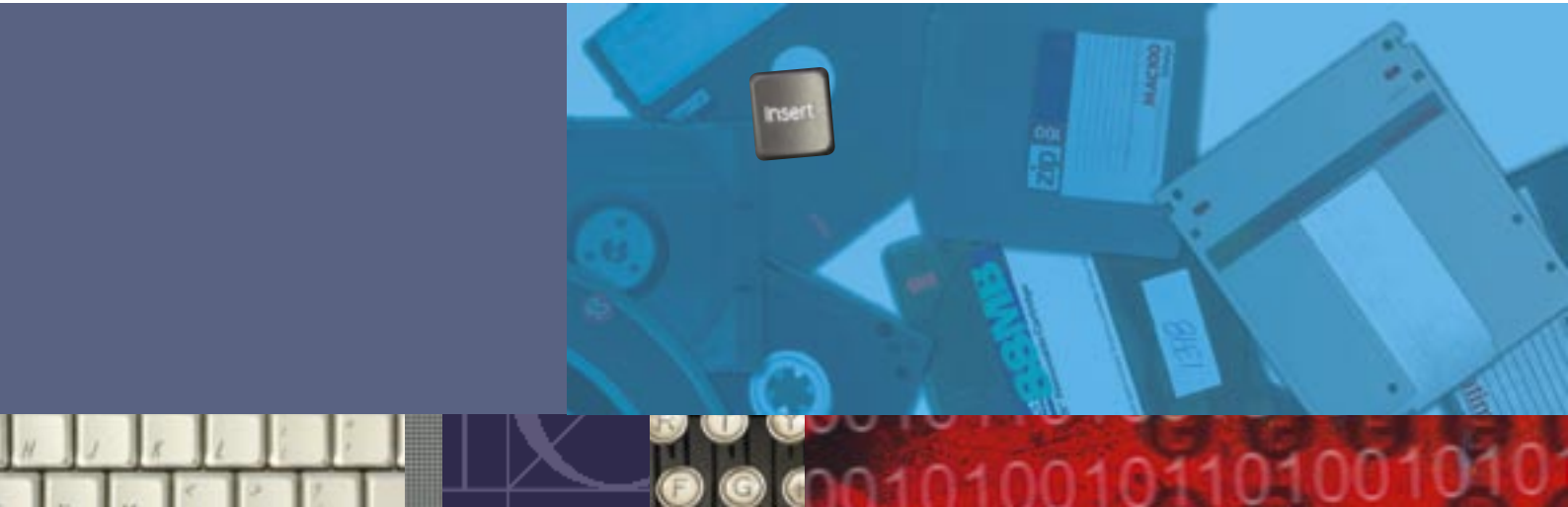
As part of our digital preservation project, the Archives also investigated options for a prototype computer room able to

accommodate the hardware necessary to process and store government records. It needed to be in an environmentally controlled and secure location completely isolated from other internal and external networks. By early 2005, we had built the computer facility and installed IT equipment uniquely configured for digital preservation. This specialised facility is the culmination of many years' research and development into sustainable digital preservation.

We are now testing the entire digital preservation process in our new facility. On completion of testing the Archives will be able to process transfers of digital records from Australian government agencies.

The Archives' digital preservation project is immensely important but it is only one component within the broader framework of government recordkeeping. The Archives provides a number of key recordkeeping policies and guidelines to help government agencies make and manage digital records as reliable sources of memory and evidence in support of efficient and accountable governance. Further information can be found at www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping.





Recordkeeping training

The National Archives offers a range of recordkeeping training to people working for Australian government agencies. Designing and Implementing Recordkeeping Systems (DIRKS) training dates for the second half of 2005 are listed below.

Introduction to DIRKS

20 July, Canberra

22 November, Canberra

DIRKS workshops

Step A 16 August, Canberra

Step B 20 September, Canberra

Step C 18 October, Canberra

For more information, please look under Recordkeeping – Training on our website at www.naa.gov.au or ring (02) 6212 3764 to discuss your needs.

Recordkeeping contacts

For advice on recordkeeping standards and guidelines, including DIRKS, appraisal and metadata

Tel: (02) 6212 3610

Email: recordkeeping@naa.gov.au

We  eeping

Making it macro

One of the most important responsibilities of the Archives is to identify, from the vast body of records created by government agencies, those records which are to be kept as national archives.

We are currently developing a macro-appraisal framework to help us identify these records. The framework will enable us to work with Australian government agencies to ensure that high value records are created, captured and retained as national archives.

Macro-appraisal uses a 'top-down' approach to analyse the comparative significance of the various functions performed by government. We are currently assessing the 300 major functions of the Australian Government in terms of their significance to the government and the community. To do this, we have collected data from nine key sources including annual budget papers and public opinion polls.

The Archives will use rankings identified through the research phase to set priorities for the appraisal of new records, for reviewing records in custody, and for providing recordkeeping advice and assistance to the agencies responsible for the most significant functions. The new framework will also assist the appraisal of functions performed by more than one agency. It will help identify those records that collectively form the best and most concise archival record of the Australian Government.

You can read more about the macro-appraisal project, including our research methodology and the provisional ranking of the various functions, on the recordkeeping section of our website at www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/disposal/appraisal/intro.html. We welcome your comments.

New guide to Chinese in Australia

In 1997, the National Archives published *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in New South Wales* by Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart which listed records on the Chinese in NSW, held in the Archives' collection. More recently, we commissioned Dr Paul Jones to write a broader guide about our records on the Chinese in Australia. The new guide describes records on policy developments and the day-to-day administration of the travel and settlement by people of Chinese backgrounds from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s.

Lured by discoveries of gold, from the mid-nineteenth century Chinese people began to travel to the Australian colonies to find work and make money. As supplies of gold became exhausted, they found other ways to earn a living – as market gardeners, servants and the owners of businesses both small and large. The Chinese quickly established rich and diverse communities within the wider British community in which they lived.

Threatened by increasing numbers of Chinese arriving on Australian shores, colonial governments began to restrict their immigration. Following on from these early restrictions was one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the newly created Parliament of Australia, the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*. This migration

from all non-European – but specifically Asian – countries.

The Immigration Restriction Act, together with several other pieces of legislation, formed the basis of what came to be known as the White Australia Policy. Not only did this policy significantly reduce Chinese immigration, it also placed restrictions on Australian-born Chinese wishing to re-enter Australia and prevented native-born Chinese living in Australia from applying for naturalisation.

Today, the government records created in the administration of the White Australia Policy can reap a fine harvest for genealogists and other researchers. For instance, Customs collectors across

the country kept careful records about the movements of Chinese people entering and leaving Australia. In order to be able to re-enter Australia, Chinese leaving the country had to apply for a Certificate Exempting from the Dictation Test (CEDT) and provide personal details and photographs. Records such as these, which are held in the Archives' collection, are a rich source of information about Chinese migrants and temporary visitors to Australia, as well as those who were long-term residents or Australian born.

The new guide will be published in June 2005. It can be purchased for \$10.00 through our website at www.naa.gov.au, by phoning (02) 6212 3609 or emailing naasales@naa.gov.au.

Form No. 51. **COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.** No. 111/106
DUPLICATE. *Immigration Restriction Act, 1901-1902 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, Clayton Turner Mason the Collector of Customs for the State of West Australia in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Samuel Thomas Fong hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be excepted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of 3 years from this date.

Dated March 1906 Clayton Mason Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION

Nationality <u>Chinese</u>	Birthplace <u>Geraldton W.A.</u>
Height <u>5 ft</u>	Complexion <u>Dark</u>
Build <u>Medium</u>	Hair <u>Black</u>
Particular marks <u>None</u>	Eyes <u>Dark brown</u>

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Full Face HS Profile HS

Date of departure 4/ May 1906 Destination Canton China

Ship Cathay Ship _____

Date of return _____ Port _____

Customs Officer _____

Little Sam Fong, born in Geraldton, WA, applied for a CEDT to allow him to re-enter Australia after travelling overseas in 1906. NAA: K1145, 1906/41

Kisch must land

Dr Heidi Zogbaum is a research fellow at La Trobe University where she also teaches central and east European history. Born and educated in Germany, she came to Australia in 1972. She has published widely on European and Mexican history. In her latest book, *Kisch in Australia: The Untold Story*, Dr Zogbaum draws on records held by the National Archives of Australia to uncover the reasons why the Lyons government attempted to ban Egon Erwin Kisch from entering Australia. The following story by Dr Zogbaum reveals what she found.

KISCH
PROTEST MEETING
STADIUM
DUDLEY STREET, WEST MELBOURNE
SUNDAY
NOV. 18
at 7.30 p.m.
KISCH MUST LAND



Egon Erwin Kisch on board the *Strathaird* before his leap to the wharf, Melbourne, 1934.

Private collection of Dr Marcus Patka, Vienna

In November 1934, Czech writer and journalist Egon Erwin Kisch made his spectacular entry into Australia – and into Australian history – by jumping overboard from his departing ship onto the Melbourne dock, breaking his leg in the process. Kisch had come to Australia to speak at a peace congress at the invitation of the Movement Against War and Fascism, a pacifist, communist front organisation. Although he had a valid visa stamped by the British Consul in Paris, upon arrival in Fremantle, Kisch was prevented from landing on the grounds that he was a ‘dangerous communist’. His ticket and passport were confiscated and he was made a prisoner on the *Strathaird* to

Kisch first came to the attention of the Australian government after the Investigation Branch – the forerunner of ASIO – saw an advertisement for the peace congress in a Melbourne newspaper and began to investigate the two overseas delegates, Gerald Griffin from New Zealand and Kisch from Paris. Based on information sent from Special Branch/MI5 in London, the outgoing Minister for the Interior, Eric Harrison, signed a ban on Kisch entering Australia. According to a mysterious British agent codenamed ‘Snuffbox’, Kisch had been refused entry to Britain the previous year because of ‘subversive communist activities’. Recently appointed Attorney-General Robert Gordon Menzies reconfirmed the ban.

When the *Strathaird* docked at Fremantle en route to Melbourne, customs officers searched Kisch’s luggage hoping to find communist propaganda material but only found travelogues from the public library of Paris. Besides speaking at the peace congress in Melbourne, Kisch was intending to stay a further two months to collect material for a travelogue on Australia to join his other famous books on the USA, China and the Soviet Union.

People in Perth who knew of Kisch’s arrival, and were waiting for him on the dock, were outraged at the high-handedness of the Lyons government. They alerted their friends in Melbourne, and the International Labour Defence – the Comintern’s (Communist International) legal arm – took



(right) Kisch (left) and fellow-delegate to the Melbourne peace congress Gerald Griffin (right). Under investigation like Kisch, Griffin missed his speaking engagement at the congress; he was given the language test in Dutch and sent back to New Zealand.

Private collection of Dr Marcus Patka, Vienna



(below) The writing on the wall.

Private collection of Dr Marcus Patka, Vienna



up Kisch's case. Joan Rosanove, a barrister with Communist Party connections, lodged a *habeas corpus* action on behalf of Kisch, and must have impressed on him that it was vital to stay in Melbourne to await the outcome of the case. Kisch decided to jump overboard in order to be arrested. This was courageous in a man nearly 50, a chain smoker and somewhat overweight. But instead of being hospitalised or jailed in Melbourne, Kisch was picked up from the dock, the *Strathaird* was recalled and he was bundled off to Sydney without medical attention. As it turned out, the court in Melbourne decided against him anyway.

Joan Rosanove arranged for the Kisch papers to be driven to Sydney. The case was heard before the High Court and Ju

that there was no case against Kisch. He made the crucial point that it had not been established that the information against Kisch came 'through diplomatic channels' in the British Empire, as the Immigration Act required. The ensuing Kisch legal saga revolved around the fact that the Australian government could not and would not reveal that their knowledge on Kisch all came from 'Snuffbox', who did not qualify for diplomatic status.

Kisch was finally allowed to land in Sydney, but his freedom was short-lived. On the dock, police were waiting to whisk the injured man off to undergo the 'living language' dictation test – part of the Immigration Act aimed at keeping those regarded as undesirable out of Australia. Kisch, like most central Europeans, spoke

half a dozen languages, but a fail-safe way was found to exclude him: he was administered the test in Scots Gaelic. Kisch's Sydney legal team, headed by AB Piddington, also known as the Red KC, challenged the validity of the language test and showed that even the administering officer himself did not understand it. When asked to translate the dictation, the officer stuttered: 'As well as could benefit and if we let her scatter to the bad'. To the amusement of the court, Piddington then read the correct translation: 'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'. The language test never quite recovered from this ridicule.

In the face of such embarrassment, and in order to make a solid case against Kisch, the Lyons government knew they

needed to produce more information on why Kisch had been banned from entering Britain. They were unable to and in February 1935, Thomas Paterson, Minister of the Interior, found himself pushed into a legal corner from which he could not extricate himself. Paterson agreed to pay Kisch's court costs if he would leave Australia.

The Kisch case became a public relations disaster for the Lyons government because Kisch, a master journalist himself, became the darling of the Australian press and the general public. Many ordinary Australians could not understand why Kisch, who came to Australia with a message of peace, was so relentlessly persecuted.

Kisch was one of the first journalists to reach stardom in Europe as a writer of incisive travelogues. An advocate in the fight against fascism, he also worked directly with Willi Muenzenberg, the propaganda chief of the West European branch of the Comintern, in his vast, international publishing empire. Kisch knew everyone worth knowing between Paris and Moscow, and he, in turn, was

widely known. And Kisch always used his fame wisely. A compassionate and committed man, he spent much of his time defending others, often through the International Labour Defence, which came to his aid in Australia. After he escaped Hitler's clutches because he had a Czech passport, Kisch spent months in Prague trying to help colleagues who were still trapped there.

It is unlikely that Kisch was a 'dangerous communist' as the Attorney-General claimed, although he was a foundation member of the Austrian Communist Party in 1918. After the horrors of World War I, he saw communism as the only guarantee for world peace, as did many other intellectuals at the time.

Despite having grave doubts about Stalin, Kisch remained a communist until his death. The Moscow show trials and party purges of the 1930s and Stalin's pact with Hitler in 1939 betrayed everything Kisch thought communism stood for. But, although he tried, Kisch found that he could not leave the party. Younger colleagues like Arthur Koestler and Manès

Sperber who had only joined in the late 1920s could still imagine life outside the party and shrugged off the label 'renegade'. But to Kisch, his whole life was bound up with the party. According to his biographer, Dr Marcus Patka, Kisch viewed the world with the eyes of a poet, hoping that better times would soon arrive. But they did not. Had he not died of a massive heart attack in March 1948, shortly after his return to Prague, he would have been strung up next to his close friend Otto Katz in Stalin's last 1952 party purges of the newly acquired East European satellite states.

Although the Australian episode was only a brief one in Kisch's nomadic life, it is better documented than any other. The Attorney-General's Department files held by the National Archives of Australia are an invaluable source. They contain a number of Kisch files, some of them hundreds of pages long. The records include official correspondence, secret service missives, newspaper clippings and several massive folders of letters in support of Kisch from the general public. A few key documents are missing, such as Kisch's immigration file, letters of support from friends abroad, and some of the secret service correspondence. However, the Archives has more open access records on Kisch than any other English-speaking country.



(left) Kisch (on crutches) and Griffin posing for the media in Australia.
Private collection of Dr Marcus Patka, Vienna

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SECRET

DECIPHER OF CABLEGRAM TO SNUFFBOX, LONDON, 20.11.34.

Reference to your telegram November 11th Kisch detained on arrival ship but released under writ Habeas Corpus. Later given dictation test and failed and will be charged on November 24th with being prohibited immigrant. Government very anxious to know for official use only if speeches or actions referred to in your telegram quoted were subversive or questionable.

(right) A cablegram from one of the many files on Kisch in the Archives' collection.



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Two-year-old Max Enright at the Archives' annual **Grandkids Day** in Canberra. Nearly 3000 children, parents and grandparents enjoyed an action packed program on the day. Grandkids Day encourages young people to explore our exhibitions and treasures in the collection.



Director-General Ross Gibbs, Minister for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Senator Amanda Vanstone and Professor Amareswar Galla (Australian National University) at the launch of **Making Australia Home**. This new service developed by the National Archives enables migrants and their families to locate and retrieve information about their arrival in Australia (see story on page 18).



Professor Dustin Griffin, grand nephew of Walter Burley Griffin, visited the Archives on a visit from the USA to look at the Walter Burley Griffin plans of Canberra.



Dr John Ainsworth next to a display about his grandfather Captain GF Ainsworth, who was the first Commonwealth Intelligence Officer appointed in Queensland. Dr Ainsworth is holding a cane once used by Captain Ainsworth. Concealed inside is a small silver revolver and blade. The cane is on loan from Captain Ainsworth's daughter, Mrs Beatrice Gaut, and will be on display in our Brisbane office until September.



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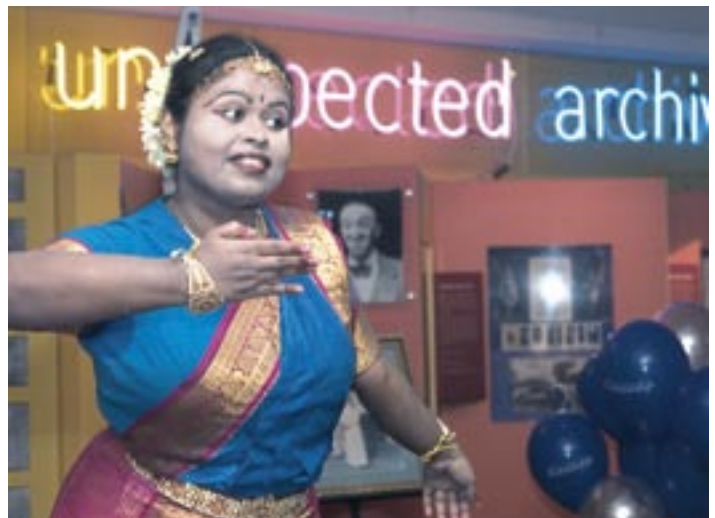
Artist Antonia Chaffey, the great-granddaughter of William Chaffey (on screen, left) in front of the interactive display 'Dreams' at the launch of **Just Add Water: Schemes and Dreams for a Sunburnt Country**. William Chaffey and his brother George (on screen, right) brought irrigation to Mildura in the 1880s. 'Dreams' tells the story of Antonia's return to Mildura over 100 years later and her artistic response to the transformed landscape.



Assistant Director-General Anne Lyons greeting Kelebogile Kgabi, Director, Botswana National Archives & Records Services and Luke Wanjau, Principal Records Manager, Botswana National Archives & Records Services. The **Botswana National Archives** visited the Archives to find out more about our recordkeeping systems.



Summer scholars Catherine Mann from the University of Sydney and Damien Williams from the University of Melbourne spent six weeks at the Archives in Canberra completing research projects based on records in our collection. Catherine located and identified various menus in the collection while Damien investigated child endowment policy. Their work will feature in our websites and exhibitions.



Despite the rainy weather, more than 450 visitors turned up at our Canberra building for the **Multicultural Family History Fair**. There was something for everyone – keynote speakers, citizenship ceremonies, dance performances, research talks, photographs, and advice from family history organisations.





Jay Arthur is curator of the National Archives' latest exhibition, *Just Add Water: Schemes and Dreams for a Sunburnt Country*. Currently on display at the Archives in Canberra, *Just Add Water* begins its national tour later in the year. In the following article, Jay guides us through the painstaking process of building an exhibition – from its conception to installation.

'Well, there it is. The topic has been chosen and the research is done. We have at our disposal folders and folders of fascinating material from the Archives' collection including a fantastic swag of photographs and a couple of great historic film clips from our film archive.

The *Just Add Water* exhibition engages with a crucial and very topical subject – water management in Australia. It explores the places where Commonwealth activity has intersected with water management over the last hundred years. From the designs and implementation of big infrastructure projects to the dreams of even bigger infrastructure projects that never happened. And of course, the unexpected finds – the heartbreaking letters begging Prime Minister Chifley to hold a day of prayer for rain and a range of idiosyncratic, boldly confident weather-forecasting booklets from our collection.

The challenge lies in working out how to display these schemes and dreams. An exhibition is a three-dimensional experience that visitors explore by moving around. The curatorial process involves transforming the piles of fascinating material – all of it two-dimensional – into an enjoyable, informative spatial experience.

The process of transformation begins with an 'exhibition geography' – a way of organising the material so that each item can find its logical place. The geography chosen for *Just Add Water* was the movement of water itself, which was then connected to relevant stories from the Archives' collection.

- Water falls from the sky – CSIRO's cloud seeding is part of a long tradition of trying to make it rain in Australia.
- Water collects in lakes and dams – dam-building schemes and dreams feature strongly in our collection.

- Water moves across the country – stories of river modification, irrigation works and dreams of very long canals wind their way through our files.
- Water sinks down below the earth to form groundwater – and is pumped up again by government bores.

The next step is to choose which of the hundreds of dormant stories in our collection to include – a step that is much harder than it sounds. The stories are developed and condensed into text panels illustrated by photographs. In *Just Add Water*, quotes taken from documents in our collection can be both seen and heard through text panels and audio material. We have also re-created some documents as facsimile files which are distributed around the exhibition space for visitors to browse.

Sometimes we need to borrow objects to help illustrate our stories. In *Just Add Water*, a huge 200kg rusty bore head accompanies the story about artesian



water exhibition



bores. The cloud seeding story is illustrated by a real cloud seeding torpedo and a pile of salt harvested from the Murray River lies next to the story about salinity.

Just Add Water also includes three interactive exhibits which fit within current debates about water management rather than focusing on historical stories.

One exhibit encourages visitors to respond to a question about a local water issue. Each time the exhibition moves to another venue, these answers will be passed on to the relevant local water authority.

Another exhibit, devised by CSIRO, asks visitors a series of questions about how they value water. The responses will be collected and used for research.

The third exhibit is a large interactive water management game. To play, visitors have to work out how to keep three different water system users happy, whilst simultaneously managing the system.

So how are these more contemporary exhibits relevant to the Archives?

The Archives' collection is not just a series of individual documents or even a series of documents about one topic. It's a dynamic collection of documents that interact with one another – the question, the answer, the proposal, the report, the drafts, the comments, the rejections, the acceptance. These documents provide us with a way of accessing the past – the arguments, debates and conversations about major and minor issues in Australian life over the last 100 years.

And the arguments, debates and conversations rarely end in the past. In relation to water management, for example, a whole range of digital and paper records about our most precious resource continue to accumulate; and some of them will end up in the Archives' collection. And when they do, they will connect with the documents and conversations already in our care – some of which feature in *Just Add Water*.

Including current debates in our exhibitions reminds us that the Archives is not a static historic collection, but a continuing collector of current issues. It alerts visitors to how essential the Archives is in recording the debates of contemporary society and highlights the continuing significance of our current collecting and preservation activities. Who knows, some of your responses to CSIRO's questions in *Just Add Water* may well end up in the Archives' collection!

(inset left) Mr Boots checks his rain gauge.
NAA: A613, K4/4/79/2

(inset right) Adelaide River, Northern Territory, 1974. NAA: A6135, K27/2/74/38

(large image) The grandchildren of the Administrator of the Northern Territory, CLA Abbott, playing with water, Toorak, Melbourne, 1950s. NAA: M10, 4/70

Memento survey results

Your responses to our *Memento* readership survey in the January issue were heartening and insightful, providing us with much positive feedback and many suggestions for future directions.

Some 1047 readers completed the survey – that represents about 16% of our total mailing list, and we thank everyone who took the time to respond.

Most gratifying was the result that almost everyone (99.8%) found *Memento* 'interesting' and 82% of respondents said that *Memento* was 'Directly relevant' or 'Relevant' to their business, area of study or interests.

Here are some interesting facts we gleaned from the survey.

Who are our readers?

51%	female
44%	male
5%	no response

Age

4%	are under 30
26%	are aged 31–50
53%	are aged 51–70
14%	are over 70
3%	no response

Your business or organisation

We asked how you would describe yourself or your business/organisation – here's what you said:

20%	genealogist
14%	retiree
11%	academic or professional researcher
8%	archive or archivist
7%	local or family history group
7%	gallery or museum
6%	library
5%	recordkeeping professional or records manager
3%	teacher
2%	professional society
1%	media organisation
1%	student
15%	other

Reason you subscribe

Slightly more than a quarter of respondents said they subscribe to *Memento* for personal reasons and slightly less than a quarter said they subscribe for professional reasons. A further 42% said they subscribe for both professional and personal reasons.

How long you've subscribed

48%	for over three years
20%	for 2–3 years
12%	for 1–2 years
5%	for less than 1 year
15%	are unsure

Proportion read

54% of respondents said they read 80% or more of each issue, and 23% said they read between 60% and 80%.

And the lucky winner is ...

Congratulations to Jo Vallentine of Mt Lawley who won a show bag of Archives' merchandise. Her name was drawn from a ballot of all who returned the completed survey.

New family history kit



The National Archives recently launched a new service for those who migrated to Australia in the twentieth century. *Making Australia Home* is a personalised service that allows migrants and their descendants to access information about their family's arrival and settlement in Australia. The documents that can be accessed include application forms, ship and airline passenger lists, entry permits, and accommodation and employment records.

How does the service work? Archives' staff respond to each individual request by undertaking a search of the Archives' collection database *RecordSearch* and providing customers with advice on the availability of records. For a \$25 fee, copies of documents can be mailed to them in a stylish and durable keepsake folder. The folder also contains information about other records in the Archives' collection that may be helpful for further family history research.

For an additional cost, it is possible to obtain high quality reproductions of photographs from the documents.

To request an order form or to find out more about the *Making Australia Home* service, please contact us by email at ref@naa.gov.au or by phone on 1300 886 881.



Exhibitions Events

**Just Add Water:
Schemes and Dreams
for a Sunburnt Country**
National Archives, Canberra
22 March to 31 July 2005



Courage to Care
National Archives, Canberra
13 August to 25 September 2005



**Beacons by the Sea:
Stories of Australian Lighthouses**
Cape Byron Lightstation, Byron Bay, NSW
12 February to 25 April 2005
Eden Killer Whale Museum, Eden, NSW
7 May to 26 June 2005
Lady Denman Heritage Complex, Huskisson, NSW
9 July to 28 August 2005



**It's a Dog's Life:
Animals in the Public Service**
Australian Museum, Sydney, NSW
19 March to 24 July 2005



**Unexpected Archives:
Introduced by Robyn Archer**
Bathurst Memorial Theatre
13 April to 15 May 2005
Shepparton Performing Arts Complex
18 May to 12 June 2005
The Capitol, Bendigo
15 June to 17 July 2005
Kyneton Arts Centre
20 July to 14 August 2005



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Speakers Corner. Bookings essential (02) 6212 3624.

- Virginia Hausseger, 22 May, 1 pm and 3 pm.
- Philip Adams, 22 June, 12.30 pm.
- Tom Frame, 21 August, 1 pm and 3 pm.

Just Add Water talks. Bookings essential (02) 6212 3624.

- Stefano di Pieri, 15 May, 1 pm and 3 pm.
- Dr Tim Sherratt, 8 June, 12.30 pm.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Archives' reading room. Open Saturday 7 May, 9 July, 3 September, 10 am – 4 pm.

Regional tour, 30 April – 5 May. Contact (08) 8409 8401.

Tasty Treasures, 21 May, 2–4.30 pm. Joint seminar about food and drink held at the State Library of SA. Bookings (08) 8207 7269.

Transport records seminar, 20 August. Contact (08) 8409 8401.

SA Family History Fair, 15 October, 10.30 am – 4 pm, (08) 8409 8401.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Bankruptcy and patent records, 12 May, 12.30 pm. Joint seminar held at the State Records Office. Bookings (08) 9427 3360.

Perth office introductory talk and tour, 3 August, 10–11 am. Bookings essential (08) 9470 7500.

TASMANIA

Antarctic Tasmania Mid-Winter Festival. Our Hobart office will be open 18–19 June as part of the Festival. View photographs and records from our Antarctic collection and newly discovered footage of Mawson's 1911–14 expedition. Contact (03) 6230 6111.

QUEENSLAND

Archives' reading room. Open Saturday 21 May, 18 June, 16 July, 20 August, 17 September, 10 am – 4 pm.

Free seminars at our Brisbane office. Bookings (07) 3249 4226.

- Preserving your family's history, 21 May, 10–11 am.
- A migration case study, 18 June, 10–11 am.
- American servicemen in Queensland in WWII, 16 July, 10–11 am.
- Treasures, 20 August, 10 am – 4 pm.

Documenting Italian Heritage, 5–8 May. Joint display at the Australian-Italian Festival in Ingham. Contact (07) 3249 4224.

Women in Queensland, 1890–1920, 11 June, 1–4.30 pm. Joint seminar held at QSA. Contact (07) 3249 4224 or (07) 3131 7777.

Regional tour, 29 July – 1 August. Contact (07) 3249 4224.

NEW SOUTH WALES

'Let's Have a Pot of Tea', 17 May, 10 am – 3 pm. Joint seminar on the history of tea and tea drinking held at History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney, \$16.50. Bookings essential (02) 9257 8002.

Society of Australian Genealogists Showcase, 27–28 May, 10 am – 4 pm. Visit our display and attend our lecture, Richmond Villa, Kent Street, The Rocks, Sydney. Contact (02) 9645 0141.

VICTORIA

Victorian Archives Centre reading room. Open Saturday 14 and 28 May, 25 June, 9 and 30 July, 13 and 27 August, 9 am – 4.30 pm.

Family History Feast on the Road, 14 May. Joint seminar held at the Old Shire Office, Warragul, \$10. Contact (03) 9348 5763.



At the end of the day, if it's worth keeping,



it's in the Archives

Archives Offices

CANBERRA

Queen Victoria Terrace, Parkes ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6212 3600 TTY: (02) 6212 3689

BRISBANE

16 Corporate Drive, Cannon Hill QLD 4170
Tel: (07) 3249 4226

SYDNEY

120 Miller Road, Chester Hill NSW 2162
Tel: (02) 9645 0100

ADELAIDE

78 Angus Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8409 8400

DARWIN

MELBOURNE

Victorian Archives Centre, 99 Shiel Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
Tel: (03) 9348 5600

PERTH

384 Berwick Street
East Victoria Park WA 6101
Tel: (08) 9470 7500

