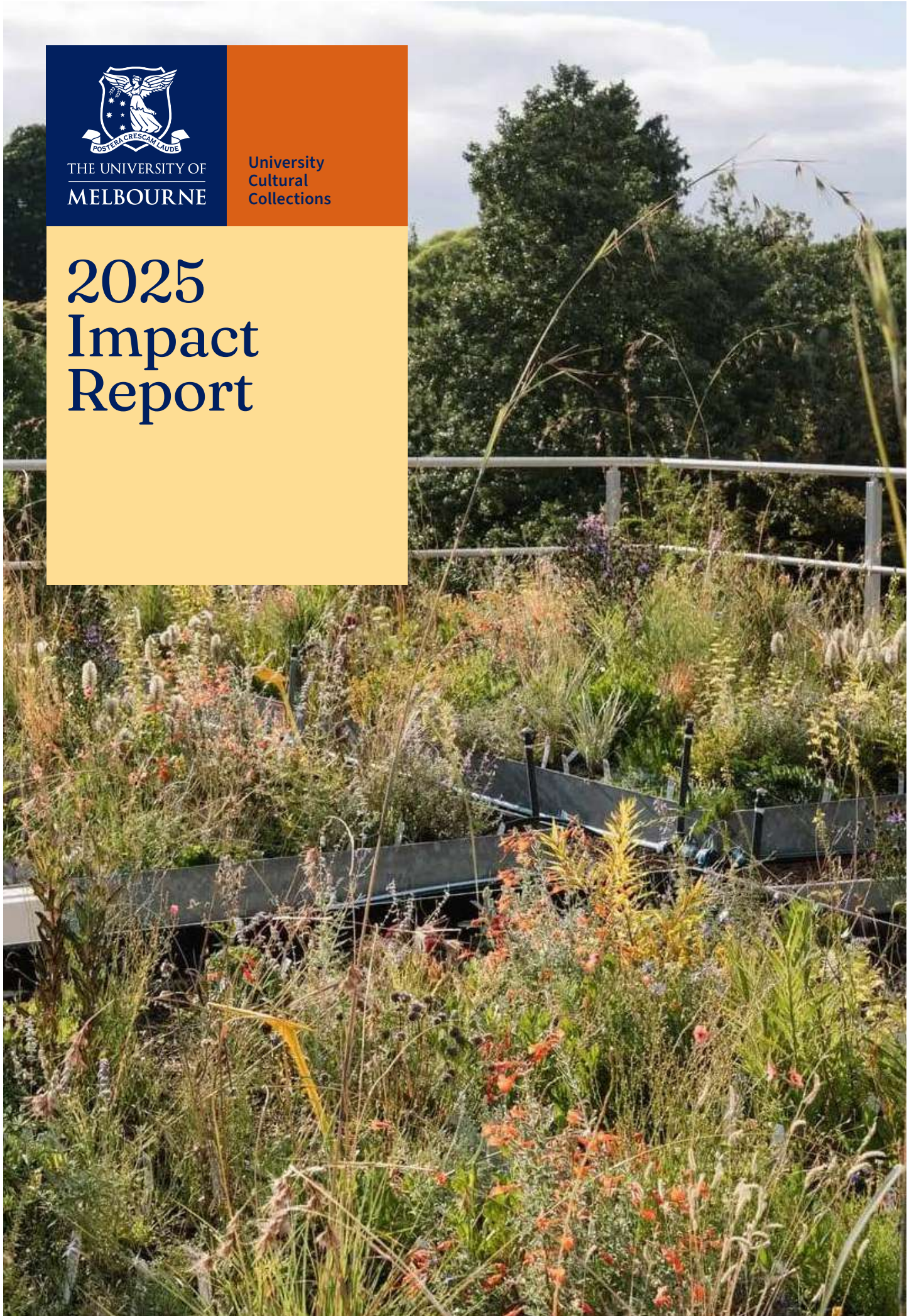




THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

University  
Cultural  
Collections

# 2025 Impact Report



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# Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners..



Smoking Ceremony, Wurundjeri and Indigenous Community Preview, Tuesday 27 May, 65,000 Years: A Short History of Australia Art, Photo: James Henry

# Collections Snapshot

Below is a summary of the University Cultural Collections and responsible faculties and departments covered in this report:

## Faculty of ScienceFaculty

F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences Collection; Tiegs Zoology Museum; University of Melbourne Herbarium; School of Chemistry Collection; Burnley Campus Archives; Creswick Campus Historical Collection; Ed Muirhead Physics Museum; Dookie Campus Historical Collection; Veterinary Science Anatomy Collection.

## Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy & Pathology; Medical History Museum; Henry Forman Atkinson Dental Museum; Anatomy & Neuroscience Collection; Department of Microbiology Collection.

## Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Engineering and Information Technology Collection.

## Student & Scholarly Services

UoM Archives; Architecture, Building & Planning Library Rare Material Collection; Southbank Library Special Collections; International House Collection; Law Rare Books Collection; Prints and Drawings Collection; Rare and Historic Maps Collection; Rare Music Collection; Rare East Asian Collection; Rare Books Collection

## Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

Musical Instruments Rare and Historic Examples; VCA Film and Television Archive.

## Faculty of Arts

Visual Cultures Resource Centre

## Faculty of Business and Economics

Moniac Economics Model Machine

See the 2025 Museums and Collections Impact Report for collection highlights across the year from the Museums and Collections department, including the University Art Collection, Indigenous Art & Culture Collection, and Grainger Museum Collection.

## Faculty of Science

There are eight formally recognised collections in the care of the Faculty of Science, and one collection in the process of recognition, spanning more than 160 years of teaching and research across a wide range of scientific fields, including geology, horticulture, chemistry, zoology, botany, forestry, physics, and agriculture.<sup>1</sup> The collections comprise an estimated 220,104 items, demonstrating the historical, scientific, and cultural significance of the University’s world-class teaching facilities and the evolution of science in Victoria..

## Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences collections reflect the history of Australia’s largest and most significant aggregation of health researchers, covering a broad spectrum of health, from biomedical science to anatomy, pathology, dentistry, medicine, and neuroscience. The collections comprise approximately 114,943 items, reflecting the University’s vital role in advancing health research and medical innovation.

## Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) collection captures the history of engineering at the University of Melbourne from 1861 to the present. The FEIT collection comprises 5,404 items to date, demonstrating the University’s extensive legacy in the study and teaching of engineering and its contributions to contemporary technological, economic, and social innovations.

## Student & Scholarly Services

The Student and Scholarly Services Department is responsible for one of the largest groups of collections at the University of Melbourne, comprising the University Archives, Architecture, Building and Planning Library Rare Material Collection, Southbank Library Special Collections, International House Collection, and Law Rare Books. Special Collections consist of the Rare East Asian Collection, Prints and Drawings, Rare and Historic Maps, Rare Books, and the Rare Music Collection.

## Faculty of Fine Arts and Music

The Faculty of Fine Arts and Music Cultural Collections encompass audio-visual materials from Australia’s oldest continuing film school, as well as rare and historic musical instruments and objects. Recognised for their social, historical, and aesthetic significance, the collections demonstrate the University’s contribution to cultural development and advancement through filmmaking and music education.

## Faculty of Arts

The University of Melbourne’s Visual Cultures Resource Centre (VCRC) holds one of the largest collections of art reproductions in the Southern Hemisphere, with nearly half a million items, including slides, prints, films, and books. It serves as a non-lending, research-only library for the School of Culture and Communication, providing dedicated viewing spaces. The VCRC supports teaching, learning, and research, allowing for the study of the reworking and installation of artworks over time and enabling students and practitioners to engage with material culture.

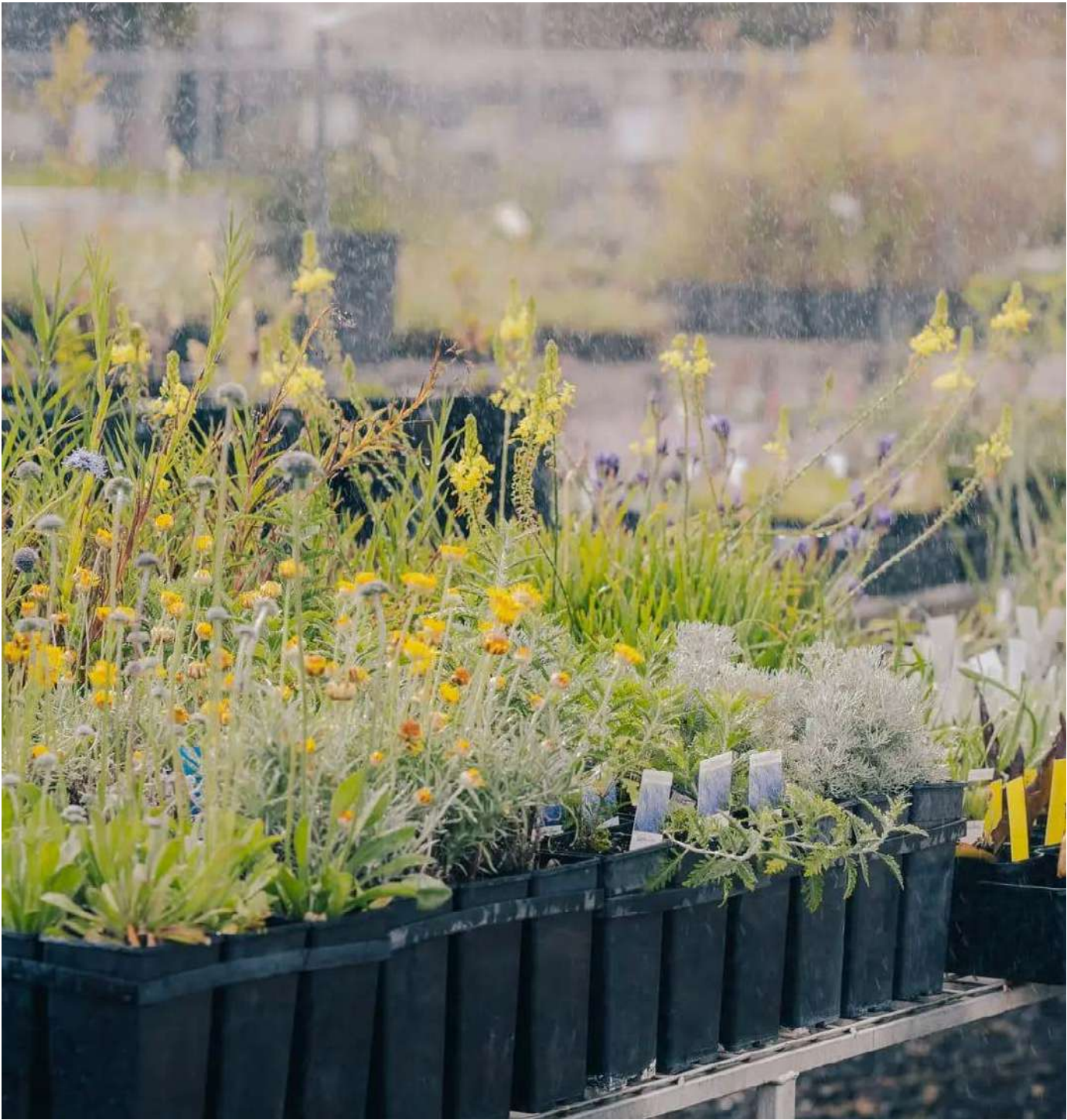
## Faculty of Business and Economics

The Monetary National Income Analogue Computer (MONIAC), in the care of the Faculty of Business and Economics, was invented in 1949 by New Zealand engineer and economist Alban William Housego 'Bill' Phillips and purchased by the University in 1953. Also known as the 'Phillips Machine' and the 'Financephalograph', MONIAC is a hydraulic analogue computer designed to model the macroeconomic calculations that determine the functioning of the economy and is one of five known to exist today.

[1] The Burnley Campus Archive is in the process of being formally established as a University Cultural Collection and recognised for its significance and ongoing value.

# Introduction

As custodians of some of the oldest and most significant collections of their kind in Australia, the University of Melbourne has recognised from its inception that museums and collections play an integral role in defining a world-leading global university.



Burnley Campus Archives, Melbourne Arts Precinct Plant Trials. Photo: Sarah Pannell

The University Cultural Collections are valued at over **\$474M**, with 60% of this value attributed to the collections featured in this report. Our rich cultural assets have reached students and broad audiences around Australia and the world through research, object-based learning, publications, exhibitions, film projects, events, and loan programs. Below are some of the collection highlights of 2025:

14,897+

students engaged in object-based learning

92

subjects drew from University Collections

Over

909,934

items held in University collections

85 exhibitions and  
49 publications

featured collections

44,400+

accessed collections in person or online

# Educational Excellence

## Teaching, Learning and Academic Engagement

The University Cultural Collections continue to inspire innovative, multidisciplinary teaching and learning experiences that advance the University's academic mission.



The Faculty of Science collections supported meaningful engagements with culture, science and history across the year. The Herbarium engaged 1,495 students through formal academic programs, tours, and object-based learning, supporting seven subjects from the Faculty of Science and the Victorian College of the Arts. The Herbarium's Volunteer Program shaped employment pathways for 24 student volunteers, with over 816 hours invested in curated training. The Burnley Campus Archive provided several PhD candidates with images and access to historical material, and the School of Physics Museum collection supported object-based learning for students, with many unique historical assets remaining in working order. Additionally, the Veterinary Anatomy Teaching Collection engaged over 300 students in object-based learning as part of the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program.

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) collection offered students exceptional opportunities to discover the historical and contemporary impacts of engineering and technology in our everyday lives. The FEIT collection created interdisciplinary academic engagement opportunities for 82 students across six subjects, with focus areas spanning arts, digital and data literacy, game design, human-centred design, robotics, advanced mechatronics, and cultural materials conservation.

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry, and Health Sciences (MDHS) collections inspired new teaching and learning experiences and increased engagement, reaching approximately 3,350 students through tours, seminars, and educational experiences. Over 770 secondary and tertiary students participated in tours at the Harry Brookes Allen Museum, including 40 students from the Master of Cultural Materials Conservation program. MDHS collections introduced new object-based learning initiatives in collaboration with the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, with medical objects utilised in the Advanced Treatment capstone subject. 36 students engaged in object-based learning with MDHS collections through the Faculty of Arts Knowledge, Learning, and Culture program, and approximately 2,500 students participated in the Arts Teaching Innovation program with assessment outcomes inspired by selected collection objects. Additionally, two Conservation students completed internships at the Harry Brookes Allen Museum, where they rehoused and photographed 105 historical skeletal pathology specimens.

Archives and Special Collections saw a 40% increase in academic engagement compared to the previous year, expanding collaborations with faculties, students, and educators through object-based learning, internships, and associated programming. Academic initiatives focused on achieving University objectives of inclusivity, cultural competency, and cross-disciplinary partnerships. 71 subjects were supported across the faculties of Arts; Fine Arts and Music; Architecture, Building and Planning; Education; and Engineering and Information Technology, with 680 collection items embedded into accredited learning experiences for 4,417 students.

Archives and Special Collections outreach programming comprised 29 events, drawing over 1,600 participants in 2025. Outreach initiatives saw 60 students attend *Ink and Memory* workshops in the Baillieu Library, which aimed to break down barriers of entry to higher education through hands-on learning with materials from the Rare Books and East Asian collections.

Additionally, Southbank Library Special Collections continued to be highly used for teaching and learning, supporting six subjects from the faculties of Arts; Fine Arts and Music; and Architecture, Building and Planning, engaging 254 students. New interdisciplinary collaborations saw graphic design students draw inspiration from the rich collection of typographical specimens and related materials. These materials showcase historical typefaces, letterform structures, and experimental presentation formats used to inform student outcomes.

# Collection Development

## Acquisitions, Gifts, Bequests and Purchases

Significant additions through gifts, bequests and purchases reflect a commitment to enhancing the University’s collections as a living and evolving cultural legacy for current and future generations.

The University Cultural Collections are developed and managed in accordance with the Minimum Standards for the Management of Cultural Collections and the University Collections Policy (*MPF1309*).

Developments in the Faculty of Science collections focused on addressing the global challenges of our time. The University’s Botany Foundation provided essential funding for the curation of the Herbarium’s bryophyte collection through the Sarafis Research Fund. This support enhanced collection development and management for use in plant sciences research and education for biodiversity and climate change adaptation. The 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences to Professor Robson for his development of metal-organic frameworks (MOFs). Professor Robson devised an entirely new class of solids that have been developed into gas and energy storage devices, catalytic reactors, and other potentially revolutionary products. The MOF models were acquired by the Chemistry collection and displayed at the School of Chemistry. Burnley Campus Archives also acquired new artefacts and documents relating to the Burnley Horticultural College.

MDHS acquired 188 collection items aimed at raising awareness of the enduring achievements and social impact of medical research and teaching at the University. 35 artworks were acquired for the *Cultural Medicine: The Art of Indigenous Healing* exhibition at the Medical History Museum funded by the generous gift of Hugh Taylor AC and Elizabeth Dax AM. The curation was led by Western Aranda Elder and artist, Judith Inkamala, Leanne Thorpe, and others, with selections including artworks by Deanne Gilson, Cassie Leatham, and purchases from Kaiela Arts, Shepparton, Iltja Ntjarra Art Centre, Barkley Regional Arts, Tennant Creek, and Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre.

MDHS purchased Brook Andrew’s *The Nations Series*, 2016, to accompany the re-installation of *Scientific Racism* at the Harry Brookes Allan Museum, a component of the exhibition *65,000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art* exhibition held at the Potter Museum of Art, 30 May to 23 November 2025. MDHS Museums also acquired the *Kaiser I Hind Medal*, 1926, awarded to Professor Effie Stillwell (1877–1950) for her service as a medical missionary in North India from 1905 to 1937; a gift of photographs and tools from the family of Alix Minna Craig, one of the first female dentists in Australia, graduating in 1924; and a package of motion sickness preventative tablets used by the US Army on D-Day, 6 June 1944, to alleviate sea sickness and originally sourced from the Australian Aboriginal medicine, *Duboisia myoporoides*.

Additionally, the Department of Microbiology and Immunology Cultural Collection was transferred to the Medical History Museum in 2025. This collection includes instruments, medals, plaques, photographs, and documents that chronicle the evolution of microbiological research and education and the personal legacies of prominent figures in the field.

Southbank Library Special Collections acquired 76 items into the collection, and the Law Rare Books Collection acquired *My Lord Coke’s Institutes*, *The Institutes of the Lawes of England*, authored by Sir Edward Coke (1552–1634), published between 1628 and 1644. *The Institutes of the Lawes of England* is one of the most significant and influential works in the history of common law. The version, abridged and signed by J. Lockyer in the 17th century, was donated to the University by Suzanne M. Reid.

Archives and Special Collections acquired 41 items of significance in the service of enriching the experience of students and academics through engagements with cultural heritage. Highlights include the Lewis Family Archive Collection, 1890 – 1944, family correspondence related to post-emancipation Jamaica; Mike Parr’s drypoint series *Hysteria*, *Sado-masochism*, *Hunger (The Illusion of the end)*, 1995; Alessandro Sanquirico, *Raccolta da Varie Decorazioni Sceniche. Per p.i.r. Teatro della Scala*, 1832, papers of the Victorian Trades Hall Council; the *Gang of Four Trial - Press Exhibition* photographic collection, 1981; Lucas van Leyden, *The promenade*, 1520; Henry Hardie Kemp architectural drawings; an Italian lectern missal leaf, c. 1480; and a complete 3rd state edition of Jacques Callot’s *Miseries of War* series, 1633.



New acquisition to the Rare Books Collection, Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison, *How will they know there's no-one left*, Arten, North Fitzroy, 2025, Rare Books Collection

# Digital Collections and Innovation

## Cataloguing, Digitising and Discovering Collections

Ongoing efforts to digitise collections continued, supporting collection management and enhancing access, discovery, and global reach.

The Science Faculty collections made significant progress this year, with major strides in auditing, cataloguing, digitisation, and record enhancement across multiple collections. The Ed Muirhead Physics Museum collection commenced a comprehensive collection audit, with over 40% of the collection now catalogued. The F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences Collection is building on the momentum of its 2025 cataloguing launch, with continued efforts towards the goal of a complete collection catalogue by the end of 2027. Essential cataloguing continued for Burnley Campus Archives, with 5,406 items now featured on **Victorian Collections**.

Museums and Collections supported a high-level audit of the Dookie Campus Historical Collection and reorganisation of the archives, including critical rehousing. Additionally, an audit of the historical farm machinery and teaching equipment was completed, and collection records were enhanced as part of the collection valuation. Data enhancement work continued alongside collection valuations of the Tiegs Zoology Museum and Veterinary Anatomy Teaching Collection for educational use. A Laboratory Officer has been engaged to further the cataloguing and digitisation efforts of the Veterinary collection.

The Herbarium currently hosts an impressive 41,135 specimens in online collections, including 50% with images. Of these, 40,515 are available on the Atlas of Living Australia, actively strengthening the University's research capacity and global engagement. In addition to the 5,746 specimens digitised

as part of the Atlas of Living Australia Biodiversity Data Mobilisation Grant received in 2024, the Herbarium digitised 4,810 specimens with contributions from the student volunteer program. The Faculty of Science also invested in a high-end medium format digital camera system designed for precision photography, allowing the Herbarium to capture extremely fine detail for scientific and archival imaging.

In 2025, the Herbarium integrated the Hespi AI pipeline into its digitisation workflow, which uses computer vision and language models to automatically extract biodiversity data from specimen labels. Developed by University researchers from the School of Biosciences and Computing and Information Systems, this innovation significantly accelerates data capture and improves access to information recorded in natural history collections. The Herbarium received support from the McCoy Seed Fund to mobilise data for 12,500 specimens from the Graptolite collection, held at Museums Victoria, extending the Hespi AI pipeline's application for the first time. University-industry partnerships of this kind are essential for tackling the large-scale digitisation of science collections, unlocking the vital research data needed to understand global biodiversity, and responding to ongoing loss and habitat destruction.

The FEIT Collection advanced its digital collections by cataloguing rock art photographs and documenting significant sites in Cape York that have been inaccessible to Indigenous communities for over 40 years. High-quality photographs and scans were also created, enhancing the collection management of around 150 items.

MDHS and FEIT Collections provided critical support for the development and implementation of the University's Nexus Digital Asset Management (DAM) system procured in 2025 as part of the Cultural Collection Nexus Program. The Program is a collaboration between the Enterprise Services Group, Student and Scholarly Services, and Museums and Collections aimed at developing a cross-collection search that supports access to all University Collections through a shared interface.

Generous support from the Russell and Mabe Grimwade Miegunyah Fund enabled the digitisation of 10% of the Visual Cultures Resource Centre collection in 2025. For the first time, the Courtauld portion of the collection was made available digitally for researchers, educators, and students in Australia and internationally. The digitised collection has inspired academic engagement and broadened its reach and appeal. For instance, the academic article *Whatever happened to Giorgione's Paris?* (Anderson, J. & Brown, J. Colnaghi Studies Journal, 17 October 2025) was a direct result of the digitised letters and photographs from the Courtauld collection. This initiative also enabled the Collection to engage with Master's students in 2025 through the Grimwade Conservation internship program.

The Miegunyah Fund allowed International House to digitise and frame high-quality reproductions of historically significant photographs and architectural drawings from the collection for long-term display. Interpretive labels were also developed to accompany the reproductions. Content features the Ian Clunies Ross Wing, for example, showcasing mid-century modernist architecture, which is often used in teaching and learning subjects across design, history, heritage, and architecture.

The Medical History Museum continued to prioritise digitisation and improve access through focused cataloguing and formally accessioning previously unregistered items, ensuring objects are recorded, digitised, assessed, and rehoused to support sustainable long-term care. The Miegunyah Fund supported the digitisation of 35 artworks for inclusion in the exhibition catalogue, *Cultural Medicine: The Art of Indigenous Healing*. The images are also published online for use in teaching, learning, and research.

In late 2024, MDHS Museums became key partners in a research initiative that united experts from the University of Melbourne (UoM), Deakin University, and the University of Western Australia. This initiative aimed to revolutionise the management and discoverability of cultural collections by building an AI-powered digital infrastructure. In 2025, the project met with the Australian Research Data Commons and received confirmation of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy funding of up to \$5 million available over two years, pending co-investment from partner universities and institutions.

Archives and Special Collections ran a pilot project in 2025 exploring the use of generative AI in the management, access, and description of archival collections, with support from the Miegunyah Fund. Three case studies were undertaken, including the transcription of handwritten documents, the conversion of legacy typescript finding aids, and the transcription and structuring of handwritten annotations on archive

boxes. During the project, 20 finding aids, with 15,331 rows of structured data, were converted to new items in the online catalogue that are now searchable and more easily accessible. The case study developed a tool that will continue to be used for the remaining finding aids. For the transcription of handwritten documents, Archives and Special Collections are seeking partnerships with digital humanities researchers and across cultural institutions to develop Australian-based, open-source tools to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Costings and project codes can be found on the **Archives Github page**.



Archives and Special Collections  
Reading Room

# Transformational Research

## Collection Access and Global Engagement

The University Cultural Collections drive meaningful connections and research outcomes through collaborative events, activations, and visitor experiences with local and international communities.

The Science collections continue to demonstrate international impact, underpinning critical research in biodiversity, taxonomy, and conservation while enriching teaching and learning across disciplines. The Herbarium welcomed over 350 visitors through tours and faculty-led events. The collection was cited in 11 publications and attracted over 19,025 downloads via the Atlas of Living Australia. The Herbarium Collection online attracted 16,842 global users, with roughly 30,000 views.

The Burnley Campus Archive facilitated research, teaching, and public programming through a range of activities and collaborations. Research support was provided to garden and landscape designers, the Burnley Gardens Committee, and the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, and essential contributions were made to guided tours, talks, workshops and events at Burnley Gardens. Filming took place on site for *The Horti-Culturalists*, highlighting James Hitchmough, a former staff member and designer of the Burnley Grasslands. In addition, Burnley contributed to external scholarship, including the Kew Historical Society article, *Oaks, Flowering Apples & Stonework*, by Verna Rieschild, which explored the work of former student and noted garden designer, Edna Walling. The Dookie Campus Museum and collection also remained a highlight for alumni during reunions and individual visits throughout the year.

Additionally, the University of Melbourne Herbarium and the Tiegs Museum welcomed 80 visitors to *Behind the Science Lab Experiences* as part of the Science Festival 2025. Guests explored the Herbarium to learn how BioSciences students and researchers study flora and fauna, including the discovery of new species, and visited the Tiegs Museum to see animal specimens, ranging from an extinct moa to a chimpanzee skeleton signed by Jane Goodall. While physical access to the Creswick Campus Historical Collection was impacted by maintenance and rectification works on the Creswick Library building, the Victorian Collections platform provided opportunities to share the collection online, reaching 684 views and 606 unique users. The School of Physics Museum hosted the lecture series *Unravelling the Universe: From Ancient Skies to the Quantum Future*, which addressed the complex legacy of archaeoastronomy and the future of quantum physics in celebration of the UN's International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.

The FEIT collection engaged 207 participants through visits, events and programs across the year. Research support was provided for 12 public enquiries, two media enquiries, and University publications, including 16 e-news features and two Pursuit articles. 74 students participated in FEIT collection tours during Melbourne Connect Innovation Week and at the Baillieu Library in 2025. The FEIT collection collaborated with the Faculty of Arts on the *Being Human Festival*, with 48 participants attending collection tours as part of the **Melbourne Public Humanities Initiative**. Additionally, 85 visitors accessed the collection as part of an alumni reunion.

The new Medical History Museum at 233 Bouverie Street reopened in September 2025 with a series of University and industry events over the ensuing months attended by 167 guests. Events included the Festival of Health Sciences on 27 October, the Heal 2025 Conference on 28 October, and the National Health and Innovation Precincts Summit on 1 December. University tours supported interdisciplinary reach across faculties and departments, including with Asialink; the Melbourne Grammar School; Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research; and Advancement, Communications and Marketing. An estimated 2,000 visitors participated in Open Day at the Harry Brookes Allen Museum. Additionally, MDHS Museums supported *International Truth-Telling Solutions: Beyond Dhoombak Goobgoowana*, held in the Arts West building in November 2025. This symposium brought together leading figures from the fields of history, health, education, legal reform, land justice, and cultural revitalisation to address the practical applications and implications of truth-telling for public institutions and policymakers. The MDHS exhibition catalogue, *Cultural Medicine: The Art of Indigenous Healing*, was launched at the event. As a result, Dr Jacqueline Healy spoke about the collection on **Late Night Live**, by **ABC Radio National**.

MDHS also made important contributions to *Dhoombak Goobgoowana: A History of Indigenous Australia and the University of Melbourne, Volume 2: Voice*, co-edited by Dr Ross L Jones, Dr James Waghorne, and Professor Marcia Langton AO. The publication draws from MDHS collections, with chapters by Dr Jacqueline Healy, Director MDHS Museums; Rohan Long, Curator Harry Brookes Allen Museum of Anatomy and Pathology; and Dr Rita Hardiman, Associate Professor, Melbourne Dental School. MDHS collections were also featured in articles published on **ABC Science** and on the **Science Show by ABC Radio National** about photographs of the extinct Nullarbor barred bandicoot that were found in the Harry Brookes Allen Museum storeroom. MDHS have continued to improve online access to collections in collaboration with Advancement, Communications and Marketing. A new **MDHS Museum website** was published, and the collection is now featured across on the **MDHS Intranet Staff Hub site**, supporting greater visibility for both staff and the public.

The Archives and Special Collections Reading Room and Virtual Reading Room supported 1,325 access requests for 770 unique visitors in person and online. Archives and Special Collections partnered with the Melbourne Rare Book Fair again in 2025, hosting an exhibit at Wilson Hall, satellite events within the Baillieu Library, and work-integrated learning opportunities for students, which attracted 3,500 attendees to the University. Archives and Special Collections facilitated two collection-based research fellowships, including the relaunch of the Joyce Thorpe Nicholson Creative Fellowship, awarded to Monique Grbec, who will draw on the Nicholson collection of feminist publishing to create a game, bringing new insights to the material. The Redmond Barry Fellowship, co-funded by the State Library of Victoria, was awarded to Dr Brendan Casey for a project using the Rare Books collections to explore the vital role of independent poetry journals in shaping Australia's literary culture.

Additionally, Archives and Special Collections contributed to the Analog Art Program, in partnership with the Public Gallery Association of Victoria and nine other arts institutions, as part of a statewide initiative to foster screen-free activities and deepen engagements with the collections. As custodians of the personal papers of Malcolm Fraser, Archives and Special Collections partnered with the Melbourne School of Government and Trinity College to present a symposium reviewing the legacy and record of the Fraser government, marking the 50th anniversary of the inauguration. The symposium brought together academics, journalists, politicians, and public servants in two days of discussion and debate. It featured on the **ABC Radio Big Ideas** program and is **available online** as part of the collection.

# Connecting Industry and Community

## Exhibitions and Loans

Exhibitions and loans continued to play a vital role in connecting the Cultural Collections with communities, fostering student-centred storytelling and strengthening interdisciplinary collaborations.

The Faculty of Science collections are exhibited across permanent and semi-permanent displays, including selected items from the F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences Collection in the main foyer of the McCoy Building, the Veterinary Anatomy Teaching Collection displays in the WEBs building, and other campus displays featuring the School of Chemistry collection.

The Ed Muirhead Physics Museum features 142 objects in dedicated displays for object-based learning. The Dookie Campus has commenced a refresh of its museum displays, enhancing the presentation and accessibility of the collection. The F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences collection loaned geological specimens for *The Grand Tour* exhibition at the Noel Shaw Gallery, Baillieu Library.

Interdisciplinary artist Keg de Souza and sculptor Francis Carmody commenced the first artist-in-residence program by the Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation (MAP Co) at the Burnley Campus studio. The artists are working with researchers in the Faculty of Science and drawing from the collection to create works that give a creative voice to the **Melbourne Arts Precinct Plant Trials** and related concerns around ecological sustainability and renewal. Residency outcomes will be displayed in the project gallery at the Potter Museum of Art in 2026.

The Melbourne Arts Precinct Plant Trials is a partnership between Burnley Campus, MAP Co, Development Victoria, design practice Hassell, plant practice Super Bloom, and international horticulturalists, James Hitchmough and Nigel Dunnett.

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) collection added 12 collection displays in 2025, bringing the total to 55 across Parkville campus. This curatorial initiative features 176 items, 12% of the collection, interpreting generations of students, knowledge, and ideas imbued with contemporary significance. A highlight is the new Melbourne Connect display showcasing student work in Games Design led by Prof Martin Gibbs at the School of Computing and Information Systems. The Games were selected from the Cybernetic Futures Showcase 2025 held as part of Melbourne Design Week. A curated selection will be added to the Engineering and Information Technology Cultural Collection. The accompanying labels describe the creative intent and student reflections on their learning and experiences.

‘... Our game balances mechanics, aesthetics, story, and technology to encourage meaningful play, rewarding not only efficiency but also bold, well-timed decisions.’  
– Designers of *Galactic Greenhouse*

*The Grand Tour* exhibition at the Noel Shaw Gallery, Baillieu Library, features student work from the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, including a multimedia installation of Mount Vesuvius erupting. The installation recreates a design developed in 1775 by Sir William Hamilton, originally inspired by Pietro Fabris’ painting *The Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1767. The 250-year-old design used clockwork and candlelight to simulate flowing lava and explosions. The new version uses LED lighting and electronic controls built by students in The Creator Space, bringing the historic design to life with modern technology.

The inaugural exhibition, *Cultural Medicine, The Art of Indigenous Healing*, launched the re-opening of the Medical History Museum on 25 September 2025. The exhibition explores traditional Indigenous healing practices as they relate to the past, present, and future. It features examples from Indigenous communities across Australia, presented through contemporary art, alongside materials from the Medical History Museum collection. MDHS Museums loaned 30 items from the collections to support *65000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art*, at the Potter Museum of Art. MDHS Museums also loaned collection items for display in *Ritual Eternal* at Project8 Gallery, 2 August – 13 September 2025; and the *Swinging Sixties* exhibition at the Old Treasury Building, 20 October 2025 – 20 October 2026. The Harry Brookes Allen Museum displayed over 1,000 items in two gallery spaces in the Medical Building, and work commenced in late 2025 to revitalise displays in the main gallery.

Archives and Special Collections delivered and contributed to a series of exhibitions to grow audiences and increase impact. *The Assemblage: Recent Acquisitions* exhibition at Noel Shaw Gallery, Baillieu Library, from August 2024 to June 2025, attracted 54,973 visitors, averaging 371 per day. *The Grand Tour* exhibition at the Noel Shaw Gallery, Baillieu Library, from June to December 2025, saw 38,324 visitors and was embedded in learning activities for three subjects, reaching 280 students.

Additionally, Archives and Special Collections loaned 85 items for exhibition at internal and external institutions, including *SCIFI: Mythologies Transformed*, Science Gallery, 3 Aug 2024 – 31 May 2025; *80 Years of Liberalism and Australia's First Lady: Dame Patty Menzies*, Robert Menzies Institute; *Jan Learmonth: Passage*, Gippsland Art Gallery; *65,000 Years: A Short History of Australian Art*, Ian Potter Museum of Art; *The Dismissal: Words That Made History*, Museum of Australian Democracy; *Learning from the Arts of East Asia*, Arts West; *Illuminating Minds*, Old Quad, as well as academic-led displays at Arts West and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology.



*Vesuvian Apparatus*, 2025, multimedia installation based on William Hamilton (designer) and Pietro Fabris (artist), 1775 (in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology). Photography by Christian Capurro

# Collection Conservation

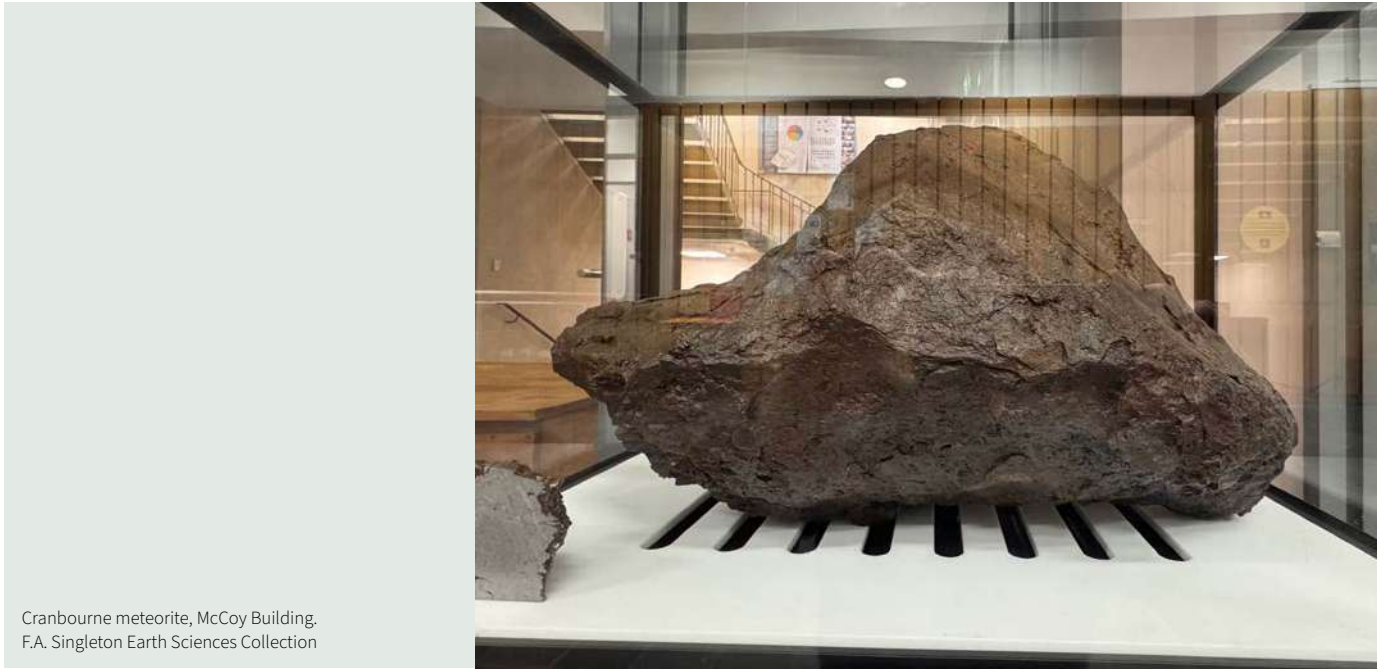
## Caring for Collections

Conservation priorities across collections were undertaken in collaboration with the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation and with generous philanthropic support from the Russell and Mab Grimwade Miegunyah Fund to ensure the University’s cultural assets can be appreciated both now and for future generations.

The F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences Collection collaborated with Grimwade Services to implement the best modern and current conservation practices for the treatment and display of the Cranbourne meteorite. Discovered southeast of Melbourne in 1923, this meteorite fragment is one of the most scientifically and historically valuable items held by the University. Composed of octahedrite iron, it is one of 13 fragments of the meteorite that are now housed in museums around the world. The project funding supported photography, documentation, research and analysis, as well as the delivery of a purpose-built case for display as a centrepiece in the McCoy Building foyer.

The Herbarium successfully secured funding to support conservation and housing work by Grimwade Conservation Services for forty papier- and fabric-mâché models in the School of BioSciences Botanical Model Collection. The botanical artworks are teaching resources made by renowned German (Briedahl) and French (Deyrolle, Auzoux) model makers in the late nineteenth century, from materials including papier-mâché, fabric-mâché, and gelatine. The artworks depict plants, fungi, and bacteria to demonstrate anatomy, morphology, and life cycles, and are widely used in exhibitions and teaching.

Highlights of the Medical History Museum’s relocation to a newly refurbished building include the restoration and reinstallation of the historic Savory and Moore Pharmacy and 19th-century display cases. The heritage pharmacy was donated to the University by the Wellcome Trust in 1971. The display cases were donated 1963 and originally commissioned for the Melbourne International Exhibition at the Royal Exhibition Building (1880 – 1881). A video documenting the technical skill and historical knowledge of the dismantling and reassembly of the pharmacy and cases will be available in 2026.



Cranbourne meteorite, McCoy Building.  
F.A. Singleton Earth Sciences Collection



Savory and Moore heritage cases, *Cultural Medicine: The Art of Indigenous Healing* exhibition, Medical History Museum, September 2025

# Strategic Initiatives

## Evolving Collection Priorities and Projects

Projects and collaborations with internal and external partners supported the University’s core strategic ambitions and aimed to make the most advantageous use of the collections in the University’s interest.

### The Significance of the Burnley Campus Archive Collection

For the first time, a significance assessment was undertaken of the Burnley Campus Archive, and a collection valuation was completed to determine the cultural, historical, scientific and artistic value of the collection. This process underpins informed strategic decision-making and will support its current and future prioritisation of the collection as a unique set of assets for teaching, learning, research, and student engagement across the country and around the world.

### The Re-Opening of the Medical History Museum

The Medical History Museum reopened to the public on 25 September 2025 at 233 Bouverie Street, Carlton, following a 15-month closure and a three-year redevelopment. The upgraded facility offers street frontage and improved visibility, access to teaching spaces, a state-of-the-art collection store, a loading bay, and archival storage, all on one level. The relocation involved extensive planning and logistics, including auditing, transporting, and temporarily storing the collection, as well as dismantling and restoring the Savory and Moore Pharmacy and heritage display cases.

Supported by dedicated staff and ongoing donor contributions, the relocation project significantly enhances the museum’s capacity for preservation, research, and public engagement.



Cultural Medicine: The Art of Indigenous Healing exhibition, Medical History Museum, September 2025

### The Evolution of Engineering Education

A historically significant mathematical instrument was recognised in 2025 in the School of Mathematics and Statistics. The Payne-Coradi parabolograph, designed by Professor Henry Payne, Dean of Engineering from 1910 to 1931, and made by the mathematical instrument maker Gottlieb Coradi, Zurich, was first displayed at the Third International Congress of Mathematicians in Heidelberg in 1904. The instrument uses adjustable mechanical linkages to draw parabolic curves for technical drawings or graphing mathematical functions.

Before Payne arrived in Melbourne in 1910, there had been a heated debate around the role of mathematics in engineering education. Founding professor William Kernot had resisted attempts by lecturers, such as Bernhard Smith, to expand the course’s mathematical component. When Payne arrived in 1910, he moved promptly to strengthen laboratory work in prime movers, mechanical engineering, and hydraulics, and introduced electrical engineering. The School of Mathematics and Statistics and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology are collaborating to develop further interpretation of the mathematical instruments displayed in the Peter Hall Building, demonstrating the value of adopting a holistic approach to the University’s cultural collections.

### Baillieu Library Special Collections Priority Project

In 2025, a major funded project to audit the Special Collections in the Baillieu Library was finalised in readiness for storage uplift. The Baillieu Library Special Collections Priority Project will see collections rehoused with fire protection, security and environmental controls commensurate with their significance. More than 8,000 hours were put into the audit by both ongoing and casual staff. The team stabilised more than 25,000 items and constructed custom housing for over 200 non-standard items requiring special care, including porcelain figures, fans, mugs, musical instruments, flags and furniture. Ultimately, more than 300,000 items were inventoried and readied for the relocation. Priority project funding enabled Archives and Special Collections to gain a complete understanding of its holdings for the first time in 65 years. This achievement will serve as a framework for collection care and development over the next 5 to 10 years, positioning the Special Collection for sustainable growth.

### Indigenous Records Discovery Project

The Indigenous Records Discovery Project was established in 2024 to identify, describe, and enhance access to the Indigenous records held by Archives and Special Collections. In 2025, Archives and Special Collections evolved the project into business-as-usual work. The Discovery Project continues to support the University’s truth-telling initiatives, including the digitisation of Finance Committee minutes and the University correspondence series. Archives and Special Collections provide extensive research support for access to the Indigenous Collections in the care of the Museums and Collections department, as well as other University and external researchers seeking access to archives. New and meaningful examples include community requests to discover and disclose cultural heritage from the Kimberley, land rights in Arnhem Land, diverse record sets documenting the Wave Hill walk-off in 1966 and the historic 1975 handover of native title to the Gurindji Traditional Owners.

Through support from the Miegunyah Fund, Archives and Special Collections investigated the potential use of generative AI to evidence wage theft in pastoral records, while aligning with best practice in data sovereignty. The work is grounded and enriched by collaborative partnerships with the Indigenous Collections team in Museums and Collections, Indigenous communities, and others with cultural ties to the collection records. Archives and Special Collections engaged with the Indigenous Data Network through a case study of their self-assessment tool, feedback sessions with Jumbunna Institute UTS related to the Aboriginal History Archives and the Tandanya Declaration, and an emerging collaboration with the Australian Research Data Commons.



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