

2021 MARGARET JENNINGS AWARD PROFILE

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Tell us how you first got involved in the archival profession?



I commenced the CSU Master of Information Studies with the ultimate goal of working in archives because I've always had a love of history and a dream of working with old things. I did my professional placement in the local studies area of a public library where I got the opportunity to do some hands-on work with a collection and learnt a lot from the fantastic archivist who supervised me. From there I took a role on a digitisation project for an independent school archive which was a great opportunity to work with another type of unique collection.

What has surprised you most about the profession?

The variety of organisations with archival collections and the wide range of collection types has been surprising to me. One of the best things I've found about working in the profession is that working with a collection gives you the opportunity to become really familiar with and close to it – even if it's an area you hadn't thought about working within. Being able to build that sense of connection to any collection has really helped me to provide the most valuable service to a range of different users.

If you could change one thing about archival practice, what would it be?

I would love to see a greater awareness of the importance of records management and an understanding of what archivists and records managers actually do within an organisation. Particularly within non-government archival settings, collections can easily become very separate and hidden from the wider organisation and the public. Archivists can advocate for preservation and promotion of their collection but support like funding and resourcing often needs to come from a higher level within the organisation.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about studying in the area

If you know you're interested in the area then just go for it – even if you don't know exactly what area of records management or archiving you want to work in. I found that as I was studying and learning more about the different roles and types of collections, I was able to get a sense of the professional direction I wanted to head in. There are so many different opportunities and if you have that passion for records management then you'll definitely find the profession rewarding.