

Designing the Archive, Adelaide SA, 21-25 October 2019, presented by the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA), Archive and Records Association of New Zealand Te Huinga Mahara (ARANZ), the International Council on Archives (ICA) and the Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives (PARBICA).

I feel extremely privileged to have been a recipient of the 2019 Sharman Award and attend the international archive conference which occurred on the traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains.

As a regional member of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) with limited professional development opportunities within reach, I have been provided with the most exceptional opportunity to learn, network and be inspired!

Attending the conference in the centenary year of State Records South Australia was an additional bonus as this was the first government archive in Australia and appointed the first government archivists.

Pitjantjatjara artist, Audrey Brumby, who was involved in designing the conference logo was in attendance and conference delegates were able to observe her at work and purchase her creations. It was a special addition to the conference, and I purchased a small artwork which will hang on the wall in my home and always remind me of my experience at DTA2019 in Adelaide.

From the first Keynote Speaker, Associate Professor Michelle Caswell *Appraisal as a Political Strategy: Centering Our Values on the Oppressed*, my mind was opened to many new thoughts and ideas. I had not considered the influence on history by dominant groups of people (mostly white males) deciding how history should be remembered and documenting only what they found to be important and relevant. Michelle's talk was exceptional and thought provoking.

PARBICA (Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives) presented a workshop on identifying vital records for government departments – identifying those records a government organisation would require for business continuity after an event. This workshop has provided me with tools to audit and assess vital records within my Local Government organisation.

My aim was to attend sessions not only related to my role in Local Government recordkeeping and information management, but to my work with the Sale Historical Society, and my personal interest in preserving history. What I did not expect was to be inspired in a whole new area of history...indigenous history. The sessions I attended covered not only indigenous Australians but also indigenous Americans, Canadians, Norwegians and more.

The *Cultural sustainability and security through archives* session truly opened my mind. Bronia Kornhauser and Anthea Skinner from MAMU (Music Archive of Monash University) spoke about cultural continuity after tsunamis, earthquakes and bushfires. The archive holds instruments, videos, photos, slides, books, field notes, textiles costumes, masks, artefacts and more from around the world. The items held by the archive can allow a community destroyed by a natural disaster to rebuild their cultural heritage and ensure their traditions continue in music, dance and performance.

The *Cultural sustainability and security through archives* session also included three speakers from the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia who spoke about the National Movement for Awareness of Orderly Archiving in Indonesia. This is an experimental program to recharge the Indonesian Government Agencies commitment to archiving and to improve the reputation of Archivists who are considered inferior and are generally ignored. Not only are formal regulations needed, there is a need for emotional support to create quality, pride, hope and solidarity. A mascot (Si Antri) was created and used to promote the program. This brought back a memory of when my team created a mascot to promote the organisations new Electronic Document Record Management System many years ago.

The *Digitisation Strategies* session included speaker Inga Bolstad *Re-designing the National Archives of Norway*. 90% of the Norwegian population use digital solutions to communicate with Government agencies. The National Archives of Norway have created an online platform for all sectors wanting to share historical data. I found most interesting the National Archives are actively recruiting staff with experience in other industries to ensure a broader knowledge and skill set outside of archiving.

I was excited to learn of the Aboriginal History Archive at Victoria University. *Indigenous knowledge: a trigger for changes in archival practices* presented by Julie Fenley has inspired me to look more into the work of Australian Aboriginal Gumbainggir activist, academic, writer and actor Gary Foley.

Throughout the conference I was pleased to learn about and hear stories of research and projects to gather, protect and make available records and artefacts of indigenous communities worldwide. For me, one clear message came out of the conference. There is a need worldwide to make communities more aware of archives and history and to provide better and easier access.

I believe I was truly privileged to receive the Sharman award for this International conference and to have the opportunity to meet archivists from Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Pacific Islands, and many other countries, and to chat candidly to Denver Beanland, Chair of the National Archives Advisory Council, about the differences and likeness between Archivists and Historians.

Michelle Page-Cook
Senior Information Officer, Wellington Shire Council
Assistant Archivist, Sale Historical Society