

2025 Sharman Award Report

Telling Our Stories: Community, Connection, Resilience

By Andrew Craig

The 2025 Australian Society of Archivists conference was held in Sydney on 10th to 14th November 2025. I attended the 2 conference days at the Sydney Masonic Centre. Thank you to the presenters, the ASA team and the volunteers who made the conference possible.

Gailyn Bopp's keynote and Dr Kath Apma Penangke Travis's Lois Williams Memorial Lecture were both very engaging. For myself, the underlying theme between the two was the preservation of the culture associated/related to the archives material in addition to the physical preservation of the archives material itself. Gailyn's 'Acknowledge, Introduce and Announce Intentions approach' and 'Retrofit model', and Kath's 'HARTS model' both offer methods for ensuring future cultural connections are sustained to the past.

Dr Joanne Evans' keynote was also as engaging. It was interesting to see how archives field has evolved over the last 30 years. From finding jobs in the newspaper (I found mine online), to a \$50 CD (I have a 128GB drive which costs about \$50 and holds hundreds of CDs worth of data).

All the sessions I attended were well attended and informing. Although I tried to get to a session for each of the streams, I seemed to focus on the AI/Digital Records session's as those were more aligned to the issues I am facing in my recordkeeping role. To get AI to work effectively, it needs to be trained. It is mentioned that training AI will cause bias as there is bias in the archives collection. Can AI be trained on another archive collection with no bias (if such a collection exists) then applied to any archive collection? Data clean-up/metadata management, if not already, is likely to become a key function of archives/recordkeeping over the next few years to ensure the use of AI will meet relevant standards.

There will be no conference in 2026 due to a change of date. I look forward to 2027, wherever that will be held (Vote 1 for Adelaide or maybe a regional area like Ararat where we can do a tour of Aradale and J-Ward).