



Australian Government
Australian Research Council



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**



ADI
ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE FOR
CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBALISATION



The **British
Museum**

Collecting the West: How collections create Western Australia

An Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project (2016-2020) LP160100078

University of Western Australia and Deakin University

in partnership with Western Australian Museum, State Library of Western Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, and British Museum

Project leaders: Alistair Paterson (UWA) & Andrea Witcomb (Deakin University)

BACKGROUND

Through a unique collaboration between Western Australia's public collecting institutions, the British Museum and an interdisciplinary team of researchers, the ***Collecting the West project*** aims to understand how practices of collecting and display created knowledge about Western Australia that shaped its social relations, mediated its relationship to the environment and produced its identity in Australia and overseas from pre-colonial times to the present. This understanding will be used to produce a new vision of how contemporary collecting and display practices could enable a new vision of Western Australia's place in the world to emerge, one that is better suited to the demands of the future.

We are seeking postgraduate students to join our great team of university and institutional researchers at UWA and Deakin University. The following PhD topics have been identified as integral to the ARC project *Collecting the West*, located within the Collecting the West work packages. We would love to explore these with you, and encourage you to apply for postgraduate funding if appropriate.

APPLICANTS: First step – contact Alistair Paterson or Andrea Witcomb

alistair.paterson@uwa.edu.au

andrea.witcomb@deakin.edu.au

Scholarships: We encourage students in the fields of history, archaeology, heritage, museum studies, and related fields to consider applying for an **Australian Postgraduate Award or other scholarships.**

2017 Australian Postgraduate Award (University of Western Australia/Deakin University), and Deakin University Postgraduate Research Scholarship and Alfred Deakin Institute Scholarships are now open for outstanding domestic students wishing to commence a PhD in 2017. Successful applicants receive a scholarship package of \$26,288 per annum with extra support for fieldwork. Deadline October 31st.

2017 Forrest Scholarships @ UWA Forrest Scholarship applications are now open for outstanding domestic and international students wishing to commence a PhD in 2017 at The University of Western Australia. Forrest Scholars receive a scholarship package worth over AU\$45,000 per annum (for up to four years). Deadline October 31st.

Work Package 1. COLLECTING HISTORIES

We will research the history of collecting past and present; identify and analyse the key drivers for collecting in WA; and research how collecting was shaped by scientific and cultural values and beliefs. We will use a series of case studies to retrieve the networks of institutions and individuals who created collections of Western Australian material; and examine how the resulting production of knowledge about Western Australia was manifested locally and in national and global arenas.

Suggested PhD topics:

- **'A critical history of how institutions and collections shaped collecting in Western Australia until 1950'** will examine collections such as WAM, Royal WA Historical Society, State Archives, Berndt Museum and New Norcia Mission (based at UWA, supervised by CI Gregory)
- **'How British collectors and institutions collected the West'** will examine the WA collections in Britain (based at The BM, supervised by PIs Hill and Sculthorpe)

Work Package 2. BLACK SWAN

We will investigate the contribution of WA collections by uncovering and analysing how WA— its landscape, societies, species, cultural practices and resources — have been visualised as unique and different over time, from the period of pre-contact, early explorers and colonialism to the post-war migration period and up to the present. We will explore how WA collections have embodied representations of place, people and experience; and identify the role of display in producing an image of WA in the public imagination both at home and abroad.

Suggested PhD topics:

- **'WA photography'** will explore and analyse the rich, disparate visual record of historical photo archives across POs, producing a history of photography in WA (based at UWA, supervised by CI Lydon)
- **'Displaying Western Australia'** will examine the ways the Australia's west has been conceptualized through a history display (PhD at Alfred Deakin Institute, and supervised by CIs Shellam & Witcomb)

Work Package 3. 2020 VISION: COLLECTING FUTURES

We will use the lens of past collecting and collections to explore the future for collecting institutions. How are current collections practices informed by the past? We will investigate new practices that aim to redefine our role and relevance for the community. Co-curation, the return of collections to communities, enhanced digital possibilities, collaboration and co-custodianship all make for a shifting social function of Western Australian collecting institutions. How can we redefine our collections so as to recast Western Australia's history and identity? What productive new pathways can be forged within the contemporary collecting landscape?

Suggested PhD topics:

- **'How have collections captured the lived experiences of West Australians?'** will examine the history and direction of museology in WA with an interest in vernacular collections, local and social histories, the role of trends in history such as oral histories and emerging concerns over identity and life in WA. There will be space to look at these questions from both institutional and individual collector's perspectives. (PhD at Deakin, supervised by CI Witcomb and CI Shellam)
- **'Changing ideas about Aboriginal collections in WA'** will examine the ways in which materials and sources related to Aboriginal people have been collected (based at UWA, supervised by CI Van Gent)