

Federation University Australia

Historical Collection

Significance Assessment



Students and researchers using the Historical Collection in the Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre Reading Room

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Appendix

Regional Thematic Study: Mapping Historical Collection Items to Victoria's Framework Themes

Author

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1. Executive Summary

Federation University Australia (FedUni) has a long and eventful history in regional Victoria, dating back to the discovery of gold and the founding of Ballarat. Its precursor, the Ballarat School of Mines (SMB), was established in 1870, originally to educate miners, and later expanding its syllabus to include trades and arts. Over a century later, in 1976, SMB became an Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), which merged with the University of Ballarat in 1998. In 2014, the University of Ballarat and the Gippsland Campus of Monash University merged to become Federation University Australia.

The surviving record of this history (approximately 32,000 items) is now deposited in Federation University Australia's Historical Collection (Historical Collection), administered by the University's Library Services. In 2016, the curator of the Collection proposed an independent report on the collection, to provide a basis for designing collection strategies, and further understand the values, meaning and importance of the collection.

In 2017, the author was engaged by the University's Library Services to write a significance assessment of the Historical Collection, using the Collection Council of Australia's 2009 *Significance Assessment 2.0* (Significance 2.0) guidelines and Heritage Victoria's 2010 *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes* (Framework). Both of these methodologies are accepted and widely used within the cultural heritage sector.

The significance assessment involved historical research into the organisation, and analysis of the collection using four primary significance criteria:

- Historic significance
- Artistic or aesthetic significance
- Scientific or research significance
- Social or spiritual significance

A summary of the significance assessment (Statement of significance) concluded that the Historical Collection is of national significance, and therefore part of the Distributed National Collection (DNC). In 1998, the Heritage Collections Council defined the DNC as 'the sum of all heritage collections of significance to the nation' (Heritage Collections Council, p. 36).

The Historical Collection is intimately connected to the story of Federation University Australia, and embodies the cultural heritage of the university and the communities it serves. For most of this long history, the university and its precursors have collected a wide range of materials that record its development, and the work and achievements of its staff and students. This material, now designated as the Historical Collection, is unique in Australia for its breadth and focus on education and mining, and the social and industrial history of the central Victorian goldfields (Extract from the Statement of significance, p.19).

The significance assessment makes three recommendations:

1. Review the role of the Historical Collection and, more broadly, the Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre (GBRC), in the context of the Library's and FedUni's strategic priorities.

As the profile, reputation and use of the Historical Collection continue to grow, there is also increasing demand for Library Services to service and manage that growth. Therefore, it is important to question and review the purpose and operations of the collection (and the GBRC), both as the repository of FedUni's historical record and as a research collection.

2. Set collection management priorities.

As the operations of the Historical Collection and the GBRC become more complex and challenging, it is important that Library Services reviews current expenditure, policies and procedures, and guidelines.

3. Improve collection storage and preservation of the collection.

The collection store is overcrowded, causing access and retrieval problems, as well as potential damage to collection items. In particular, the plan cabinets containing large format items are full to capacity. It is recommended that the GRBC submit a grant application to the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants Scheme to fund a Preservation Needs Assessment (PNA) of the collection, which will identify specific preservation needs and actions.



Geoffrey Blainey visits the Historical Collection storeroom at the opening of the Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre (Cat. no. 12074.14)

2. Introduction

What is significance?

'Significance' refers to the values and meanings that items and collections have for people and communities. Significance helps unlock the potential of collections, creating opportunities for communities to access and enjoy collections, and to understand the history, cultures and environments of Australia. (Significance 2.0, p.1)

Assessing the values and meanings of collections and individual objects involves research and analysis, and the application of a set of primary criteria including historic, artistic, scientific and social or spiritual values. Significance, however, 'is not an absolute state—rather, it is relative, contingent and dynamic. Views on significance depend upon perspective and can change over time.' (Significance 2.0, p.vii)

What is a significance assessment?

We cannot keep everything forever. Therefore significance assessment is vital to make the best use of our scarce resources for collecting, conserving, documenting and digitising our collection materials. (Significance 2.0, p.vii)

A significance assessment will help explain the value and meaning of a collection or item and provide information for its management and interpretation. The significance assessment method can be applied to single items or collections when it becomes impractical to assess single items.

When assessing significance, it is vital to understand, respect and document the context of cultural materials—the events, activities, phenomena, places, relationships, people, organisations and functions that shape collection materials.' (Significance 2.0, p.vii.)

Use of the Heritage Council of Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes, which 'functions as a checklist of big historical stories', further enables the broader context of cultural materials to be investigated: 'Thinking outside the immediate purpose of each object is the way to connect the object into the big ideas of history, to put local history in the state or national perspective.' The Framework statement of purpose (p. 1) is summarised as follows:

- Highlights what is distinctive about Victoria and increases awareness and appreciation of the State's heritage.
- Ensures heritage objects, places and events can be understood, assessed and presented within the context of a broad theme, rather than as singular items of interest.



Methodology

The significance assessment of the Historical Collection broadly follows best practice standards and procedures set out in two key collections management guides:

- The Collection Council of Australia 2009, 'A. Single item significance assessment', p. 23, 'B. Collection significance assessment', p. 26, *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*.
- Heritage Council of Victoria 2010, 'Regional Thematic Study, Mapping Collection Items to Framework Themes', *Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes*.

The significance assessment process involved the following:

- Study of the collection contents using the Victorian Collections and GBRC Accessions spreadsheets.
- Study of collection documentation located in the GBRC, from the founding of the SMB in 1869 to the present.
- Desktop exercise, mapping 121 collection items into historical themes identified in Heritage Victoria's Regional Thematic Study, Mapping Collection Items to Framework Themes (Framework).
- Comparing the Historical Collection with early colonial museums, Australian Schools of Mines and other regional Australian universities.
- Assessing the collection using the primary and comparative criteria recommended in Significance 2.0.
- Examining the overall condition of the collection and storage facilities.
- Preparing a list of recommendations relating to the management and preservation of the Historical Collection.
- Consulting with individuals with knowledge of the collection, and other experts.

This significance assessment refers to the Historical Collection only, and does not include the Art Collection or the Library Research Book Collection.



Pioneer x-rays conducted at the Ballarat School of Mines, 1896 (Cat. no. 3659)

Description of the organisation and its collection

Federation University was established by legislation passed by the Victorian Parliament in 2013, which merged the former University of Ballarat and Gippsland Campus of Monash University. FedUni is the only regional and metropolitan, multi-sector university and the third oldest site of higher learning in Australia. FedUni offers access to higher education, TAFE, vocational training, and research.

The Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre, located in the E.J. Barker Library at FedUni's Mount Helen campus, was established in 2010, and is named after the former University of Ballarat's inaugural Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Blainey. It houses a supervised reading room, office, and collection storage facility managed by one full-time curator.

The GBRC provides access to three discrete collections:

- The Federation University Australia Library Research Book Collection, consisting of the Geoffrey Blainey Mining Collection, the Creedy Collection of Important Economic Books, and the University Research Collection.
- The Federation University Australia Historical Collection, containing a wide range of objects. These include documents, books and photographs, scientific instruments, and textiles, dating from the opening of the School of Mines and Industries and Library and Museum of Ballarat in 1870, and the University's predecessor institutions.
- The Federation University Australia Art Collection of predominantly Australian painting, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. The earliest work dates to 1879, and the collection also includes material from the Ballarat Technical Art School, founded in 1907. The collection contains works by Australian artists as well as staff and students. The Ballarat Teacher's College collection formed the nucleus of the Art Collection when it moved to Mount Helen in 1970, and was supplemented by later acquisitions.

3. History and significance of the organisation and its collection

Historical overview

The first School of Mines (Royal School of Mines, Kensington) was opened in London in 1851, for the study of mineralogy and metallurgy. This model soon spread worldwide, leading to the establishment of Australia's first, the Ballarat School of Mines, in 1870. The technical and training needs brought about by the gold mining boom, and a change in attitudes to education, resulted in the expansion of the SMB syllabus, from mining and metallurgy to trades and other services.



Ballarat School of Mines Lydiard Street South, c. 1901 (Cat. no. 490)

The origins of the University of Ballarat lay in the 1870 opening of the School of Mines Ballarat. The School of Mines, widely known as SMB and today the TAFE campus of the University, is Australia's third oldest tertiary institution preceded only by the University of Sydney (1850) and the University of Melbourne (1854). (*Lines of Succession*, 2012 p.3)

The University of Ballarat (UB), established in 1994, was the successor to diverse educational bodies, dating from the founding of Ballarat School of Mines. These include SMB's tertiary division, the Ballarat Institute of Advanced Education, which was opened in 1970 at Mount Helen, then merged with State College Victoria, Ballarat (Ballarat Teachers' College) and became the Ballarat College of Advanced Education in 1976. In 1990, Ballarat College of Advanced Education affiliated with the University of Melbourne and became Ballarat University College. In 1998, UB merged with SMB TAFE to become a multi-campus and multi-sector university, providing both vocational and higher education.

The Gippsland Campus of Monash University was established in the mid-1990s, after the University amalgamated with the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education (GIAE) in Churchill. The GIAE traces its origins to the Yallourn Technical School, founded in 1928, to train workers for the Yallourn Power Station. In 1958, it became the Yallourn Technical College, and, in 1968, the higher education component moved with the GIAE to its current location in Churchill.

The Historical Collection contains a wealth of material collected over its 147-year history of technical and tertiary education in regional Victoria. Its collections and objects are primarily associated with the University of Ballarat and its predecessor institutions, originating with the Ballarat School of Mines. The collection also contains a small number of objects relating to the Gippsland and Berwick campuses.

Holdings include original letters and documents, books, photographs, early scientific instruments, and other important objects relating to the Victorian goldfields and founding of Ballarat. They also include historical records of early technical education in Australia and the development of technical and tertiary education in the twentieth century. The Historical Collection also contains a small group of objects, which survived the 1959 closure of the Ballarat School of Mines Museum—one of the earliest museums established in Australia, and second in Victoria to the National Museum of Victoria (Melbourne Museum), founded in 1858.

The history of the collection's transition from the Ballarat School of Mines Museum in 1870 to the Historical Collection in 2018 is summarised in the following two sections of this report.

Ballarat School of Mines Museum

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, museums played an important role in the teaching of science and arts. The first School of Mine (Kensington) developed from the Museum of Economic Geology, which provided students a place to study mineralogy and metallurgy.

The Ballarat School of Mines was formally established following a resolution of the Ballarat Mining Board in October 1869, with Victorian Supreme Court Judge and Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Sir Redmond Barry, elected first President of the Provisional School Council. The resolution proposed the establishment of a formal technical school in Ballarat, teaching mine management, engineering, geology, and metallurgy. The resolution also recommended that 'a museum of minerals, models and plans be established and that contributions thereto be solicited.' (Perry, p. 4)

In 1870, premises for the SMB, the old Court House (built 1856-57) had been secured, and administrative arrangements put in place, including 'a small room to serve temporarily as a museum' (Perry, p. 9). Sir Redmond Barry formally opened the SMB on 26 October 1870. Later that day the provisional constitution was adopted at a meeting of the Governors and subscribers, stating that:

the name or title of the school to be “The School of Mines and Industries and Library and Museum of Ballarat” but in legal and other documents it may be cited as “The School of Mines, Ballarat.” (Perry, p. 12)

The museum prospered under the expert guidance of successive curators including its champion, Professor Ferdinand Krause, and generous donors. The museum collection continued to expand, and, in 1885, the museum moved into its third and final home, the old Wesleyan Church (built 1856), adjacent to the School of Mines in Lydiard Street.



Ballarat School of Mines Museum, c. 1889 (Cat. no. 4739)

For the following eighty years, the museum played a central educational role in the history and development of the Ballarat School of Mines, and was also a popular local and tourist attraction.

The museum contained a rich and diverse collection of geological, mineral and fossil specimens; models of mines and mining machinery; Aboriginal and ancient Egyptian artifacts; WWI objects; and numismatic and other historical materials. The collection highlighted the importance of practical and applied education in post-Chartist Eureka Ballarat, and the role of alumni from goldfields around the world, who promoted and developed the collection through generous and significant donations.

However, in 1959, the museum was closed and its collections dispersed, or allegedly destroyed. Historian Anne Beggs Sunter (1994) provides one of the only references to these events:

In that year [1959], the new Principal Harry Arblaster had ordered the Museum to be cleared for a student lounge, and most of the priceless collection of minerals, Aboriginal artifacts, war relics and reproductions of classic sculpture were dumped down the School's battery. (pp. 60-61)

Federation University Australia Historical Collection

While little is known or documented about what remained of the Ballarat School of Mines Museum collection, some objects survived, others were returned or donated back to the collection, or went into storage at the SMB Lydiard Street campus. In the early 1980s, there was renewed interest in SMB history, and these objects formed the basis for a new museum, The School of Mines and Industries Ballarat School Museum, which was officially opened in 1982. This museum was closed around 1995, and a part-time curator appointed to document and box the items. In 1998, the curator surveyed the collection and recommended setting up a permanent storage and work area at the Mount Helen campus. As a result, material was progressively moved to a dedicated store in the E.J. Barker Library at the Mount Helen campus.



Julie Millowick. University of Ballarat Historical Collection, 2008 (Cat. no. 11793)

The collection has expanded over time to include material from FedUni successor institutions: University of Ballarat; Ballarat School of Mines and Industry; Ballarat Teachers' College; State College of Victoria, Ballarat; Ballarat Institute of Advanced Education; Ballarat College of Advanced Education; Ballarat University College; Wimmera Institute of TAFE; Monash University Churchill campus; and Federation University Australia.

In 2000, a part-time curator was appointed to catalogue and sort material, which had been moved from the SMB Lydiard Street campus to the E.J. Barker Library at Mount Helen, forming the nucleus of the FedUni Historical Collection.

In 2010, the Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre was established as part of a major refurbishment of the E.J. Barker Library. This included a supervised reading room for FedUni and State Library of Victoria research material, and a secure, environmentally controlled collection storage area. One full-time curator is responsible for operating the GBRC, including collection management and access, and is supported by a small team of volunteers and periodic contract staff.

The Historical Collection is now widely recognised for its historical and research importance, and is accessible to students, staff and the public. GBRC has won awards for making the collection accessible on Victorian Collections, Museums Australia's free web-based collection management and publishing system. 2017 statistics reveal that the Historical Collection achieved 22,048 page views (7.9 percent of all views), and 5,204 views (1.9 percent of all views) for the Art Collection (Manager, Victorian Collections, Museum Australia Ltd. 16.1.2018). This represents almost 10 percent of total Victorian Collections usage in 2017. GBRC statistics reveal a total of 135 'signed in researchers' to the reading room and 185 volunteer placements (as of 3.11.2017).

The GBRC 2017 draft collection policy review (Federation University Report 2017, 'Historical Collection Scope') states that the collection 'was established to develop and maintain a permanent collection of historical items that illustrate and record the history of Federation University Australia.' The document goes on to describe the Historical Collection as:

one of Australia's oldest University Collections, and items have local, state and national significance. The Collection maintains a diverse holding of historical items of enormous cultural and research importance, which contribute to the nation's story and the nation's shared heritage collections. The Collection dates from the planning for, and establishment of, the Ballarat School of Mines from 1869. The Collection's roots are with the Ballarat School of Mines Museum, established in 1870. (p. 1)

Collection overview

Technical and tertiary education in Victoria:

- Foundation documents relating to the establishment of the University of Ballarat
- Principals' Correspondence, 1914-1990
- Chairman's Books, 1922-1970
- Historical and contemporary records and photographs relating to university staff and students
- Ballarat Technical Art School and Junior Technical School student work and folios
- SMB examination papers and results, 1898-1950
- SMB Student's Magazine, 1898-1965
- Objects and documents relating to mining and metallurgy; post-World War II electrical and mining engineering; and civil engineering from its early beginnings to the 1970s
- Important scientific instruments



Drawing from the Antique, c.1920 (Cat. no. 4247)

Victorian Goldfields:

- Early Victorian Gold licenses
- Miner's Rights issued to Ballarat pioneer James Oddie
- Early geological surveys of Ballarat, assay and analysis reports
- Mining equipment and models including a safety cage (c. 1873), and Edward's Ore Reduction Furnace (c. 1924)
- Balances



Gold License, 1852 (Cat. no. 8127)

Ballarat School of Mines:

- Foundation Documents, including 44 planning documents and original correspondence relating to the establishment of the Ballarat School of Mines in 1869/70, including letters from Sir Redmond Barry and tenders for the refurbishment of the old Ballarat Circuit House
- Council Minute Books, 1870-1970
- Letter Books, 1856-1959
- Visitor's Book, 1878-1895
- Invoice Books, 1870-1899
- SMB library items

Ballarat School of Mines Museum:

- *School of Mines Ballarat Donation Book*, which records donations to the museum from 1 January 1878 to 1 May 1896.
- Curator's letter books containing copies of correspondence from 23 July 1878 to 7 January 1892, and 10 February 1892 to February 1913.
- *Register of Specimens*, mineral and fossil specimens donated to the museum.
- *Museum Catalogue Geological Section School of Mines Ballarat*, register of rocks and fossils including metamorphic, igneous, pyroclastic, ores, and mineral specimens.
- W.H. Courbold collection of mineral specimens recovered from a mineshaft by a team of geologists (c.1982), now located at the Faculty of Science and Technology (not catalogued into the Historical Collection).

Historical themes

Understanding the historical themes of the collection in the broader context of Victoria's heritage is important to the process of assigning significance. Heritage Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes 'aims to ensure that objects, places and events can be understood, assessed and presented within the context of a broad theme, rather than as singular items of interest.' The Framework (p. 3) further states that:

these places and objects offer insights into the complex cultural layering and connections that give Victoria a sense of historical continuity, as well as its distinctive character. Applying the framework to these places and objects assists in understanding their multi-dimensional values, and provides a broader context to understand and appreciate their significance.

The Framework comprises nine main themes, with sub-themes addressing natural, historical and Aboriginal cultural heritage:

The nine themes highlight places and objects that express important processes and activities in the state's historical development, culture and identity. Some of these processes relate Victoria to a much bigger picture ... As a former British colony, Victoria was part of the worldwide process of European colonial expansion in the 19th century. This explains many features of the early economy, geared to the export of raw materials. The transfer and adaptation of European beliefs, ideals and institutions also created a distinctive culture in Victoria. Gold and its legacy is another example of a story that has worldwide context and potential world heritage significance. (p. 5)

A desktop mapping exercise was carried out to gain a preliminary understanding of the relationship between these historical themes and the contents of the Collection. Time constraints prevented a larger scale exercise, which would yield more reliable data. However, while the sample size was small (121 items), the results give an early indication of a thematic cross-section of the Collection. Results were collated as follows:

| Theme no. | Theme title | No. of items | Percentage |
|-----------|---|--------------|------------|
| 2.1 | Living as Victoria's original inhabitants | 1 | 1% |
| 2.2 | Exploring, surveying and mapping | 2 | 2% |
| 4.5 | Gold mining | 11 | 9% |
| 5.3 | Exhibiting Victoria's innovation and products | 11 | 9% |
| 6.4 | Making regional centres | 20 | 17% |
| 7.2 | Struggling for political rights | 5 | 3.5% |
| 7.4 | Defending Victoria and Australia (Boer War; WWI; WWII; Vietnam) | 13 | 11% |
| 8.2 | Educating people | 53 | 44% |
| 9.2 | Nurturing a vibrant arts scene | 5 | 3.5% |

Based on the sample survey, approximately 94 percent of the collection consists of material relating to five historical themes (Framework, p. iii-iv):

- Theme No. 4: (9%) *Transforming and managing land and natural resources* 'critical to understanding how occupation and use of the land, and exploitation of its natural resources, have changed Victoria and produced its varied cultural landscapes.'
- Theme No. 5: (9%) *Building Victoria's industries and workforce* 'embraces the development of Victoria's industrial and manufacturing base, and the development of service industries.'
- Theme No. 6: (17%) *Building towns, cities and the garden state* 'covers the development of goldrush cities....and the distinctive heritage of our country towns'
- Theme No. 7: (15%) *Governing Victoria* 'covers the phases of government in Victoria's history, as well as the varied heritage associated with defence, law and order and local government.'
- Theme No. 8: (44%) *Building community life* 'highlights the role of churches, schools, hospitals and community halls in transferring old-world belief systems, ideals and institutions to the new colonial offshoot.'



Preparing the site of the student amenities building, with Tree of Knowledge at right, Mt Helen Campus, c. 1971

Significance criteria

The assessment criteria are a broad framework of cultural and natural values relevant to the whole spectrum of collections in Australia. The criteria help tease out how and why the item [or the collection] is significant. (Significance 2.0, p. 10)

The assessment criteria consist of four primary, and four comparative criteria, which are used to describe how and why a collection or item is important:

Assessment against the criteria feeds into the statement of significance, helping to synthesise the meanings and values of the item or collection. (Significance 2.0, p. 38)

Primary criteria:

- Historic significance
- Artistic or aesthetic significance
- Scientific or research significance
- Social or spiritual significance
-

Comparative criteria:

- Provenance
- Rarity or representativeness
- Condition or completeness
- Interpretive capacity

Significance assessment: primary criteria

| Criteria | Statements | Sources & references |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Historical Significance</p> <p>Is the item or collection associated with an important historical event? Did it contribute to changing the course of national history or have an impact on the development of Australia or a part of Australia Is the item an outstanding example associated with an important event, person, place, period, activity, industry or theme? Is the work an outstanding example representing the course or pattern of Australia's natural or cultural history? Is the item or collection associated with a pivotal discovery or innovation in the history of science, technology or design in Australia?</p> | <p>1. The Historical Collection is intimately connected to FedUni, and represents an important part of its culture. Library Services describes its purpose and significance as being: 'to develop and maintain a permanent collection of historical items that illustrate and record the history of Federation University Australia. It is one of Australia's oldest University Collections, and items have local, state, and national significance.'</p> <p>2. The collection contains material evidence of 147 years of technical and tertiary education in Australia, and of the social and economic development of regional Victoria. Collection strengths relate to Victoria's historical themes, <i>Building community life</i>, which 'highlights the role of churches, schools, hospitals and community halls in transferring old-world belief systems, ideals and institutions to the new colonial offshoot'; and <i>Building towns, cities and the garden state</i>, which 'covers the development of goldrush cities...and the distinctive heritage of our country towns.'</p> <p>3. The 'collections are of relevance to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the University of Ballarat in that they represent the history of teaching and research in various departments within the institution; 2. Ballarat, Victoria and Australia in that the School of Mines founded in 1870 was the first technical institution founded in Australasia; and some parts of the collection may also prove to be of international significance. <p>4. The collection's link to the former museum building, located in the School of Mines Lydiard Street precinct, places it in a wider historical context, which is described in Rowe and Jacobs (2016, p.344): 'The School of Mines Campus ... has significance as the oldest physical legacy of a School of Mines in Australia, possibly the oldest physical legacy of a School of Mines in the southern hemisphere, and a notable and rare grouping of institutional buildings that reflect the evolution and development of the site from 1858 until the second half of the twentieth century.'</p> | <p>1. Assessment of author, and Federation University Australia Library Services, Draft Collection Policy, Scope, 2016.</p> <p>2. Assessment of author, Heritage Victoria Framework of Historical Themes, 2010.</p> <p>3. Assessment of Ramsay, G. Report on the survey of the collections held on the Mt Helen Campus of the University of Ballarat, 1998, p. 6.</p> <p>4. Assessment of School of Mines Lydiard Street campus by Rowe & Jacobs, <i>Conservation Management Plan</i>, 2016.</p> |
| <p>Artistic or aesthetic significance</p> <p>Is it well designed, crafted or made? Is it a good example of a style, design artistic movement or an artist's work? Is it original or innovative in its design? Is it beautiful, pleasing, or well-proportioned? Does it show a high degree of creative or technical accomplishment? Does it depict a subject, person, place, activity or event of interest or importance</p> | <p>1. The collection contains Ballarat Technical Art School student work and folios, which represent an important part of the story of tertiary art and design education in the early twentieth century. While the SMB curriculum included art subjects since the 1880s, it was not until 1907 that the Technical Art School was established. A diversity of subjects was taught, including decorative and pictorial art, building construction, architectural drawing and design, carpentry and manual training, and millinery and dressmaking. The School embraced innovative teaching styles such as 'educational sloyd', a system of handicraft-based training, which included intellectual, moral and practical principles. There are three complete folios of work from the 1930s, which contain examples of drawing from the Antique and other curriculum subjects such as commercial art.</p> | <p>1. Assessment of author.</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Scientific or research significance</p> <p>Does the item or collection have outstanding potential to yield information or knowledge that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history?</p> | <p>1. The Historical Collection 'contains approximately 4,000 books, 12,000 documents, 12,000 objects and 4,000 photographs, and is used by students, staff and members of the broader community. Items held include primary source materials such as manuscripts, plans, photographs, scientific instruments, teaching aids and ephemera, which demonstrate the evolution of teaching styles, programs and the experiences of staff and students through the years.'</p> <p>2. The Historical Collection is now widely recognised for its historical and research importance, and is accessible to students, staff and the public. GBRC has won awards for making the collection accessible on Victorian Collections, Museums Australia's free web-based collection management and publishing system. 2017 statistics reveal that the Historical Collection achieved 22,048 page views (7.9 percent of all views), and 5,204 views (1.9 percent of all views) for the Art Collection (Manager, Victorian Collections, Museum Australia Ltd. 16.1.2018). This represents almost 10 percent of total Victorian Collections usage in 2017. GBRC statistics reveal a total of 135 'signed in researchers' to the reading room and 185 volunteer placements (as of 3.11.2017).</p> <p>3. The research value of the collection lies in its holdings of primary source material relating to the history and development of technical and tertiary education in Australia, from its beginnings to the present. The collection also contains source material relating to the development of the Victorian goldfields and founding of Ballarat.</p> | <p>1. Federation University Australia Library Services, Draft Collection Policy, Scope, 2016.</p> <p>2. Assessment of author.</p> <p>3. Assessment of author.</p> |
| <p>Social or spiritual significance</p> <p>Is it of particular value to a community or group today? Why is it important to them? How is this demonstrated? How is the item kept in the public eye, or its meaning kept alive for a group?</p> | <p>1. The Historical Collection is highly valued by the local community as evidenced by its inclusion into the <i>Inaugural Ballarat Treasures Register</i>. The collection 'contains correspondence relating to the beginnings of the Ballarat School of Mines. Some of the earliest items in the collection include photographs, map/plans, scientific instruments, books, enrolment details, and biographical records. It includes original documents by Sir Redmond Barry, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Henry Sutton, and R. M. Sergeant.'</p> <p>2. The Historical Collection is now widely recognised for its historical and research importance, and is accessible to students, staff and the public. GBRC has won awards for making the collection accessible on Victorian Collections, Museums Australia's free web-based collection management and publishing system.</p> <p>3. The collection had its genesis in the former Ballarat School of Mines Museum, one of the earliest university museums in Australia. The collection contained 'a rich and diverse collection of geological, mineral and fossil specimens; models of mines and mining machinery; Aboriginal and ancient Egyptian artifacts; WWI objects; numismatic and other material'. While the Museum no longer exists, surviving documentation has the potential to tell many stories: that of its origins, growth and development; the story of its demise, although little is on the official record; and, more broadly, how we value the historic record, and how those values have changed over time.</p> | <p>1. City of Ballarat, statement for inclusion of the Historical Collection into the Inaugural Ballarat Treasures Register, 2007.</p> <p>2. Assessment of author.</p> <p>3. Assessment of author</p> |

Significance assessment: comparative criteria

| Criteria | Statements | Sources & references |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Provenance</p> <p>Is it well documented or recorded for its class or type? Who created, made, owned or used the item or collection? Is its place of origin well documented? Is there a chain of ownership? Is the provenance reliable? How does the provenance shape the significance of the item or collection?</p> | <p>1. The collection is well-documented, with 47 percent of the collection fully catalogued (12 percent available online); 31 percent uncatalogued but entered onto spreadsheets and accessible; and a further 22 percent uncatalogued and not entered onto spreadsheets, but accessible in box order. GRBC documentation protocols ensure that individual items are tested for provenance, and associated information is recorded on worksheets. There is a high level of reliability in the process of documenting the provenance of the collection.</p> | <p>1. Assessment of the author, and consultation with the curator.</p> |
| <p>Rarity or representativeness</p> <p>Does it have unusual qualities that distinguish it from other items in the class or category? Is it unusual or a particularly fine example of its type? Is it singular, unique, or endangered? Is it a good example of its type or class? Is it typical or characteristic? Is it particularly well documented for its class or group?</p> | <p>1. The collection holds a diverse range of rare material, which tells an uninterrupted story, contained in successive episodes of the history of Federation University. Examples includes letters from SMB inaugural President and Victorian Supreme Court Judge, Sir Redmond Barry; pioneering x-ray tubes and x-rays made by SMB metallurgist J. M. Sutherland; early Victorian gold licenses; and Miners' Rights issued to Ballarat pioneer James Oddie. Significant collections include the Foundation Documents that record the founding of the Ballarat School of Mines in 1869; a complete century (1870-1970) of Council Minute Books, recording the growth and development of the SMB, and its involvement in local, state, and national life; and the largely undocumented Principals' Correspondence (1914-1990), which records the daily life of the institution, providing rare, unfiltered access to people and events, ranging from the operations of SMB during wartime, to the polio epidemic in the 1950s.</p> <p>2. Few other collections in Australia contain such a longstanding record of nearly 150 years, accumulated in one place, and in the same physical and social setting.</p> | <p>1. Assessment of author.</p> <p>2. Assessment of author.</p> |
| <p>Condition or completeness</p> <p>Is it in good condition for its type? Is it intact or complete? Does it show repairs, alterations or evidence of the way it was used? Is it still working? Is it in original, unrestored condition?</p> | <p>1. The overall condition of the collection is stable, and the storage facility provides secure, museum standard environmental conditions. However, there are a number of important items, which are actively deteriorating, and require a range of minor and major conservation treatments.</p> <p>2. The collection is essentially in original, unrestored condition, which contributes significantly to its integrity, provenance and research potential.</p> | <p>1. Assessment of author.</p> <p>2. Assessment of author.</p> <p>3. Assessment of author.</p> |
| <p>Interpretive capacity</p> <p>How is it relevant to the organisation's mission, purpose, collection policy and programs? Does it have a special place in the collection in relation to other items or a collection theme?</p> | <p>1. The Collection Policy 'aims to enhance the depth and importance of the Historical Collection by guiding the strategic development and management of the Collection to reflect the University as a whole, and ensuring that rigorous, ethical and accountable standards are applied to the Collection. It also aims to maintain the standing and reputation for integrity and excellence of the Collection within both the University and the broader communities, national and internationally.'</p> | <p>1. Federation University Australia Library Services, Draft Collection Policy, Objectives, 2016.</p> |

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| Does it help to interpret aspects of its place or context? | | |
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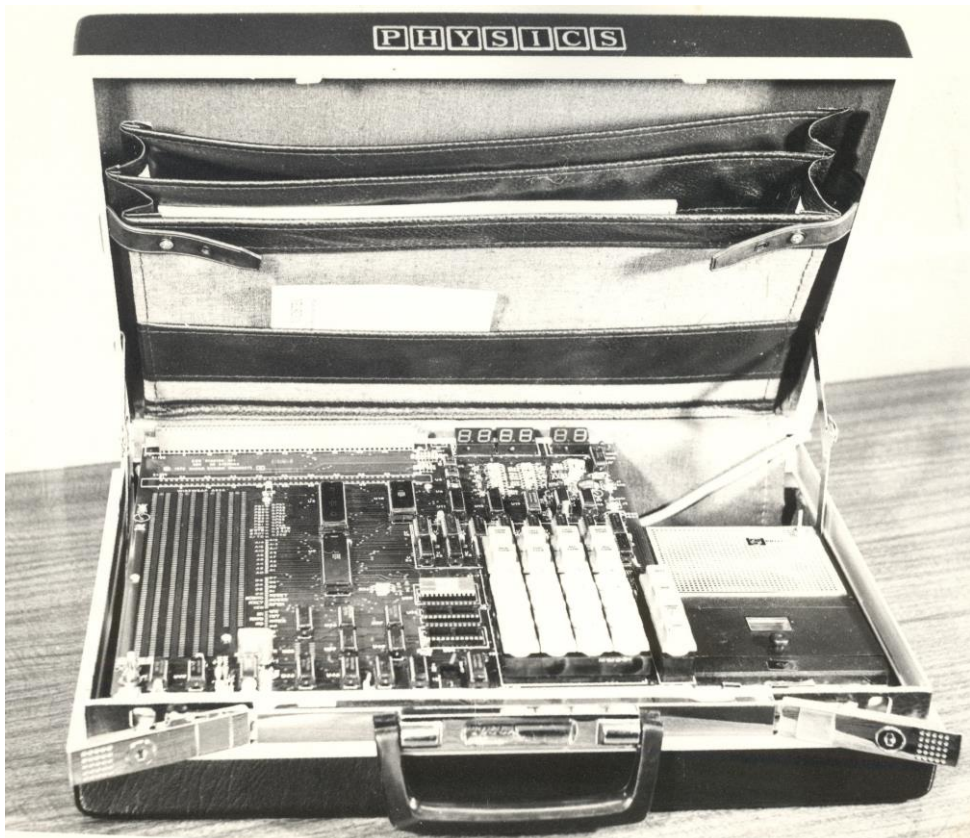
Comparative collections

The Historical Collection traces its origins back to the founding of the Ballarat School of Mines Museum in 1870, therefore ranking it as the second university museum established in Australia, behind the University of Sydney’s Nicholson Museum in 1860. It is now no longer possible to compare the Ballarat School of Mines Museum with its colonial contemporaries, which would also have included the University of Sydney’s Macleay Museum, founded in 1887, because the collection was largely dispersed or destroyed in the 1960s. A few objects survived, however, and, in 1999, the University of Ballarat set up a project to ‘locate and document those items of relevance to its history’ (Ramsay 1999, p. 2)—establishing what is now known as the Historical Collection.

Of the ten Schools of Mines established in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, few survived, and several amalgamated with other educational bodies. Only one retained its original name, the Western Australian (WA) Schools of Mines in Kalgoorlie. While none had museum collections comparable to the Ballarat School of Mines, the WA School of Mines still maintains a mineral museum and a small collection of historical items.

FedUni is a member of the Regional Universities Network, which is made up of six universities, with headquarters in regional Australia. Of these institutions, there are two collections in evidence: the University of Southern Queensland’s Historical Archives Collection (2006) and the FedUni Historical Collection (1870).

With no comparable collections discovered amongst its precursor or contemporary counterparts, the FedUni Historical Collection stands out as unique in Australia.



4. Statement of significance

The statement of significance is a summary of the significance assessment, which can be used as a defining statement about the collection, and for management purposes such as policy development and grant applications.

The Historical Collection is intimately connected to the story of Federation University Australia, and embodies the cultural heritage of the university and the communities it has served for nearly 150 years. For most of this long history, the university and its precursors have collected a wide range of materials that record the university's development, and the work and achievements of its staff and students. This material, now designated as the Historical Collection, is unique in Australia for its breadth and focus on education and mining, and the social and industrial history of the central Victorian goldfields.

Holdings include original letters and documents, books, photographs, early scientific instruments, and other important objects relating to the Victorian goldfields and founding of Ballarat. They also include historical records of early technical education in Australia and the development of technical and tertiary education in the twentieth century. The diversity of this material, which expresses richly layered connections between the university, its place, and its community, defines the significance of the collection.

The collection contains a rich source of material evidence reflecting nearly 150 years of regional history in Victoria. It is important to understanding the historical context, origins and influences of the university, and is therefore a valuable research and educational asset. Also, holdings of staff and student records make it an important genealogical resource for the community. With no comparable collections discovered among its precursors or contemporary counterparts, the Historical Collection stands out as unique in Australia.

Assessing the collection against the primary and comparative criteria demonstrates and validates its ranking as being of national significance. The Collection Council of Australia's threshold for designating national significance status is reached when a collection is assessed as nationally significant for meeting more than one of four primary criteria:

- Historic significance
- Social significance
- Scientific or research significance
- Artistic or aesthetic significance

The Historical Collection has been assessed as meeting two primary criteria for national significance (historic significance and scientific or research significance), and two primary criteria for local and state significance (social or spiritual significance and artistic or aesthetic significance). The collection can therefore be designated as having national significance status, and part of the Distributed National Collection, which is defined as 'the sum of all heritage collections of significance to the nation.' (Significance Assessment 2.0, p. 3)

5. Physical description of the Historical Collection

Physical description

The Historical Collection contains a wide range of objects and material types including:

- Aboriginal objects
- Photographs, books and documents
- Maps
- Scientific and laboratory equipment
- Mining-related teaching models
- Textiles and other miscellaneous items (e.g., honor boards and trophies)

It is estimated that there are approximately 32,000 items in the collection consisting of:

- 4,000 books
- 12,000 documents
- 4,000 photographs
- 12,000 objects

Of these, approximately 15,000 items have been fully catalogued, including 4,085 items accessible on the Victorian Collections database. A further 10,000 items have not yet been catalogued, but are numbered and entered into an acquisitions spreadsheet. They are also physically accessible. Approximately 7,000 items identified for inclusion into the collection have not been numbered and are accessible in box order. This material includes the Principals' Correspondence collection dating back to 1914.

GBRC places a high priority on making the collection available to researchers and the public through the Victorian Collections database. Items uploaded onto VC are also harvested by the National Library of Australia's free search engine Trove, which further extends access to the collection. The portability of this system also enables records to be uploaded into the FedUni library catalogue.

Storage

Since 2010, the Historical Collection has been housed in a secure purpose-built, environmentally controlled and monitored storage room, adjacent to the curator's office and reading room. The room is set up with standard museum storage furniture, including shelving units, compactus, plan cabinets, and vertical storage racks.

Also, a changing selection of Historical Collection items is displayed in cabinets located around the Mount Helen campus, and several items are on loan to the Ballarat Observatory and Creswick Museum.

The store accommodates the Historical Collection and the Art Collection. However, the Art Collection and approximately 50 percent of the Historical Collection are scheduled for relocation to the State Library of Victoria's Ballarat Offsite Storage (BOSS2) in 2018. This move will significantly improve storage conditions and enable collections processing work to be carried out in the store, rather than the office and reading room, which is the current necessity.

The cataloguing backlog of approximately 7,000 items further adds to access and storage constraints. In addition, plan cabinets containing large maps and plans are extremely overcrowded, compromising the condition of these vulnerable items, and making access and retrieval hazardous and time-consuming.

Collection items are individually numbered, located, and accessed using the GBRC Storage Locations Guide, which enables timely retrieval and returns to and from the store. The curator monitors cleaning and pest control requirements.

Condition of the collection

The overall condition of the collection is stable, and the storage facility provides secure, museum standard environmental conditions. Access protocols ensure that items are catalogued and used with due diligence. However, a backlog of uncatalogued material and material waiting to be returned to storage is causing an overcrowding problem. This poses a significant threat of physical damage to collections and individual items.

To comprehensively understand and scope the conservation requirements of a collection of this size and significance, a Preservation Needs Assessment is recommended. A PNA would enable GBRC to identify risks to, and develop short and long-term preservation strategies for, the collection.

6. Recommendations

Arising from the research for the significance assessment, three key recommendations have been identified:

1. Review the role of the Historical Collection and, more broadly, the Geoffrey Blainey Research Centre, in the context of the Library's and FedUni's strategic priorities.

As the profile, reputation and use of the Historical Collection continue to grow, there is also increasing demand on Library Services to service and manage that growth. Therefore, it is important to question and review the purpose and operations of the collection (and the GBRC), both as the repository of FedUni's historical record and as a research collection.

- How do Library Services and the University value the collection?
- Is there a future for the collection, and what does it look like?
- How and where does the collection fit into the strategic priorities of Library Services and FedUni?

2. Set collection management priorities.

As the operations of the Historical Collection and the GBRC become more complex and challenging, it is important that Library Services review current expenditure, policies and procedures, and guidelines.

- Does the budget meet the requirement for current staffing and operations?
- Does the role of the curator need to be reviewed?
- Is the current collections policy in alignment with the Library's strategic priorities for the collection?
- Is there a set of operational guidelines for the reading room, use of collection, and security?

3. Improve collection storage, and preservation of the collection.

The collection store is overcrowded, causing access and retrieval problems, as well as potential damage to collection items. In particular, the plan cabinets containing large format items are full to capacity. It is recommended that the GRBC submit a grant application to the National Library of Australia's Community Heritage Grants Scheme to fund a Preservation Needs Assessment (PNA) of the collection, which will identify specific preservation needs and actions.

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8. Consultation register

| Name | Role | Key points |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Clare Gervasoni | Curator, Art and Historical Collections, FedUni | Third curator (post-1960) Eric had ongoing discussions with the Curator about all aspects of the project. |
| Leeanne Pittman | Director, Library Services, FedUni | Eric and Clare met with Leeanne to discuss feedback and progress of the draft significance assessment (9.1.18). |
| Kay Steele | Manager, Research and Strategic Projects, Library Services, FedUni | Eric and Clare met with Kay to discuss feedback and progress of the draft significance assessment (9.1.18). |
| Robert Hook | Former Pro Vice-Chancellor Finance, University of Ballarat (FedUni) | Robert had administrative responsibility for the collection and move to Mount Helen. Eric and Clare met with Robert and discussed his role in saving the collection and allocating funds for its curation and re-housing (15.1.18). |
| Jenny Levison | Former Curator, Art and Historical Collection, FedUni | First curator (post-1960) employed by Robert Hook in 1987. Eric and Clare—phone conversation with Jenny to discuss her impressions of the period, and her role documenting and boxing the collection when it was located at Lydiard Street (15.1.18). |

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| Gail Ramsay | Former Curator, Art and Historical Collection, FedUni | Second curator employed by Robert Hook (after Jenny Levison). Email correspondence regarding Gail's role surveying the collection and report recommending its relocation to Mt Helen (16.1.18). |
| Graham Hood | Former lecturer, School of Science and Engineering, FedUni | Scientist and science lecturer with expert knowledge of scientific instruments and related material in the collection. Eric met with Robert to discuss contents of the collection relating to science (25.10.17). |
| Professor AJS Spearing | Director, Western Australian School of Mines, Kalgoorlie | Eric had phone and email contact with Sam regarding the WA School of Mines museum and collection (16.-17.1.18). |
| Elizabeth Marsden | Collections Manager, Sovereign Hill Museums Association | Eric visited Gold Museum storage with Elizabeth, also had phone conversation regarding contents of collection and how it compares with the Historical Collection (29.6.17; 29.1.18). |
| Belinda Ensor | Manager, Victorian Collections | Email correspondence regarding Historical Collection usage statistics of Victorian Collections (16.1.18). |