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challenging ideas

## Preserving the Memory of Australia

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### Abstract

The memory of Australia reflects the diversity of its peoples, languages and cultures. It is the mirror of its society and cultural heritage. But this memory is fragile and increasingly mutable. Every day, irreplaceable parts of this memory disappear through the actions of natural and malign agents. Established in 1992 with Australian input, and growing in importance as a bulwark against the forces of social injustice, cultural cleansing and revisionist histories, the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme is designed to guard against this collective amnesia by preserving significant documentary heritage around the world and ensuring its wide availability.

The first national program to be formed, the Australian Memory of the World Program aims to establish and maintain the Australian Memory of the World Register, a Register of lost and missing documentary heritage, coordinate and propose nominations from Australia to the Memory of the World International Register, promote the program, and encourage and seek government and private sector sponsorship for specific projects and activities. Any Australian government, institution, organization, group or individual may submit nominations to the Registers.

The paper describes the history of and Australia's influential involvement in the Memory of the World programme at international and national levels, and the formation and content of Australia's registers of significant documentary heritage and lost and missing documentary heritage. It challenges ALIA members to support for the program, critique and nominate significant documentary heritage to the Registers.

### Introduction: threats to the civilising influence of history

*We are informed by our past; it is what makes us what we are, and points the direction to our future (Clare Martin, Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, quoted in The Weekend Australian Magazine, 6-7 March 2004, p.24)*

*Society, of course, has a vital interest in preserving materials that document issues, concerns, ideas, discourse and events. ...The ability of a culture to survive into the future depends on the richness and acuity of its members' sense of history (Task Force on Preserving Digital Information 1996: 1)*

These two quotes introduce one of the primary responsibilities of libraries: *preservation*. Preservation is based on the concept that, because man learns from the past, 'evidence of the past therefore has considerable significance to the human race and is worth saving' (Harvey 1993: 6). As well as this evidential dimension, preservation also has other dimensions – the intellectual substance of what we preserve, the pleasure, enjoyment or aesthetic reward we get from our cultural heritage, and the utility and economic sense of preserving some materials. Finally, as Brindley reminds us, 'there is no access without preservation' (Brindley 2000).

Preservation is worth doing, and some also suggest that it is a duty – we have 'a human obligation *not to forget*' (Agresto, cited in Harvey 1993: 7). Preservation is a professional imperative for libraries. This responsibility is not, of course, shouldered

only by libraries; other cultural heritage institutions such as archives, museums and art galleries also share it, although their perspectives may be different – Cloonan and Sanett observe that 'archivists and librarians view preservation through different lenses' (Cloonan and Sanett 2000).

However, this preservation role is not limited to cultural heritage institutions. Other new stakeholders are also starting to participate in preservation activities, as realisation slowly increases that the institutions traditionally charged with preservation responsibility are not able to continue this in the digital age without widening their range of partners in this endeavour. For example, individuals are storing an increasing portion of their social and personal memory on digital media and need to pay attention to its preservation. The rapid technological obsolescence of digital materials is heightening librarians' awareness of preservation and we are being reminded again of its importance. The reasons commonly given for digital preservation include economic rationales, such as not wasting 'the institutional and societal investment already made in digital resources' (Smith 2002: 135).

The 'enemies of books' come in many guises. All documentary heritage materials deteriorate – this is one of the natural laws that govern all that we do. (Documentary heritage materials are, broadly speaking, all material in libraries and archives.) They are inherently unstable, and start to decay from the time that they are created. There is little that we can do about this, our main response being to store these materials in cool, dry, clean and dark conditions (British Standards Institute 2000). This

passive strategy, often described as 'benign neglect', extends the useful life of traditional documentary heritage materials from a few years or decades to hundreds of years. Digital resources, which are being produced in ever-increasing numbers, are less robust, their preservation more problematic. Ensuring access to digital materials will require considerable ingenuity and significant resources, with no certainty of success. However, their preservation must be attempted if a balanced record of our society from the late twentieth century onwards is to endure.

In addition to natural deterioration caused by chemical and physical factors, natural disasters such as fires, floods and earthquakes cause damage, and these occur on a regular basis. A recent local example is the January-February 2003 bushfires in Australia, which resulted in the loss of irreplaceable significant archival material from the Mt Stromlo Observatory. Documentary heritage is also damaged or destroyed through accidents and natural disasters. In general, documentary heritage can be protected from the disastrous effects of these events if advance planning occurs, and when enough warning and sufficient resources are available (McIntyre 1985, Borchardt 1988).

Although inherent instability and the insidious impacts of accidents and natural disasters do their part to diminish our collective human memory, they are nevertheless part of the environment in which all documentary heritage is created and used. It is less easy to understand why documentary heritage is also lost due to its deliberate defacement and destruction. Referring to the war in the former Republic of Yugoslavia, Reidlmayer provides one tragic explanation:

Throughout Bosnia, libraries, archives, museums, and cultural institutions have been targeted for destruction, in an attempt to eliminate the material evidence – books, documents and works of art – that could remind future generations that people of different ethnic and religious traditions once shared a common heritage in Bosnia (Riedlmayer 1995: 82-84).

In this dark episode in human history, between May and June 1992 several libraries in Sarajevo were attacked and their contents destroyed or severely damaged: the collections of Sarajevo's Oriental Institute and six faculty libraries of the University of Sarajevo and were destroyed, Sarajevo's Municipal Public Library lost half of its 300,000 volumes, and the catalogue and ninety per cent of the collections of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina burned (Spurr 2004). Spurr has described the loss at the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina as follows:

Although a significant number of rare manuscripts and books were salvaged by the staff under daunting conditions (and collections of tertiary value, stored off site, were spared) ... as many as 1,500,000 volumes, numerous special collections, the greatest collection of Bosnian periodical literature since its beginnings in the nineteenth century, and the archives of the various ethnic and cultural societies that had been consolidated there at the time of the library's establishment [were destroyed] (Spurr 2004).

Lorkovic, from Yale University Library, describes the losses in detail in *American Libraries* (Lorkovic 1992: 736, 816). The response to this tragedy has been well-meaning, but insufficient and poorly coordinated.

Eleven years later, the extent of destruction to Iraq's archives and libraries is significant but difficult to estimate. Several international missions have been mounted but have gained only a partial and cursory picture because of the ongoing instability in that country. Arnoult, who undertook a survey in June 2003 for UNESCO, describes many examples of deliberate damage to and destruction of documentary heritage (Arnoult 2003). He noted that 'the fires [at the National Library] have been organised with a will to destroy as much as possible' (Arnoult 2003: 13). A joint Library of Congress and U.S. State Department Mission in November 2003 was able to visit the National Library and the House of Manuscripts (Deeb, Albin & Haley 2003). Their report describes the destruction of archives, soot damage to other materials, and over 40,000 documents damaged by water and showing extensive and active mould growth (the result of a failed rescue attempt). The manuscripts have been frozen, but there is still the long-term problem of how to dry them out and preserve them (Russell 2004). The most recent visit reported was in December 2003, by the USAID-SUNY Stony Brook University Program in Archaeology and Environmental Health Libraries. The USAID-Stony Brook team describe the looting and vandalism of documentary heritage in the universities they visited, and propose action to address the losses (Jones 2004).

## Australian losses

Documentary heritage materials in Australia are, of course, not exempt from the inherent instability of all such material. Australian material is also not exempt from other forms of loss. A UNESCO scoping document about lost and missing heritage in libraries and archives (Van der Hoeven & van Albada 1996) covered a time span of several millennia and many countries. Australia, with a short colonial history by comparison with longer-settled countries, has fewer and smaller collections of documentary heritage material and less loss of this material because of wars or civil disorder. But there is still a need for attention to be paid to its at-risk heritage.

Of less immediate impact, but potentially greater long-term consequence, is the deliberate removal of information from the public domain. One example is the shredding of the Heiner documents (records of interview and related material gathered by retired stipendiary magistrate Noel Heiner in the course of an aborted inquiry in late 1989 and early 1990) on the order of the Queensland Cabinet on March 23, 1990 (Australian Society of Archivists 1999). After the election of the first Howard Government in 1996, federal government agency web sites were removed while they were updated. In both cases, the administrations presumably found the information unpalatable. Fortunately Australian archivists widely publicised the former disregard of archival legislation, and in the latter case the potential exists for using a web-archiving approach such as PANDORA (<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/>) to counteract the tendency of incoming governments to remove the web sites of previous administrations.

Deterioration and loss of documentary heritage materials leads to the loss of memory, graphically described in terms such as 'an amnesiac society' (Sturges 1990) and, for digital materials, truly 'a digital dark ages' (Kuny 1997: 1). Again, Australia is not immune.

## The Memory of the World Programme

The urgency of the problem of memory loss has been recognised at international levels. One response is UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme established in 1992, with a significant amount of Australian input, to counteract the loss of documentary heritage

of world significance. The Memory of the World Programme, slowly growing in importance,

is a bulwark against the forces of social injustice, cultural cleansing and revisionist histories. The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme is designed to guard against this collective amnesia by preserving significant documentary heritage around the world and ensuring its wide availability ([http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm/en/index\\_mdm.html](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/mdm/en/index_mdm.html))

The Programme has two interdependent aims: preserving documentary heritage that has world significance, and ensuring enduring access to it. UNESCO's strategies to achieve these aims include raising awareness of the need for and importance of significant documentary heritage, protecting documentary heritage at risk, and raising revenue to further these strategies. Enabling mechanisms include establishing World, Regional and National Registers of documentary heritage of world significance, founding an International Advisory Committee, encouraging groups of countries and individual countries to establish Regional and National Committees to further the Programme's aims, strategies and mechanisms, establishing Registers of significant lost and missing documentary heritage, and undertaking pilot preservation and access projects. From its outset the Programme has made extensive use of the Internet to promote its activities, and of digitising to preserve and make accessible the world's significant heritage in documentary format.

The second of the Memory of the World Programme's two interdependent aims is to ensure enduring access to documentary heritage of world significance. This raises the question 'Preservation and access: what's the difference?' Although libraries advocate the widest availability and dissemination of information, the symbiotic redefinition of access as dependent on preservation is a recent occurrence. If we agree with Brindley's assertion that 'without preservation there is no access' (Brindley 2000) then a causal relationship exists between these two powerful concepts. The relationship is easy to demonstrate. The civilising influence of history, the cumulative memory in our archives and libraries, would not exist if archivists and librarians had not cared for this memory over time. Fortunately stewardship is a fundamental, if sometimes unfashionable, part of these professions' *raison d'être*.

But is the converse true? Is 'without access there is no preservation' demonstrable? We contend that it is. Access to documentary heritage raises awareness, not only of its existence, but also its worth, and assists us to identify deteriorating heritage in need of protection. In the narrower domain of digital preservation, magnetic signals need to be used – that is *accessed* – to refresh their strength. And their integrity needs to be checked to ensure that the number of digital *bits* in a file and the order of these bits stay the same over time.

## Documentary heritage and significance

The Memory of the World Programme focuses on documentary heritage, which is defined as comprising items that are moveable, made up of signs/codes, sounds and/or images, preservable (that is, the carriers are non-living), reproducible, migratable, and the product of a deliberate documenting process (Edmondson 2002: 8). This definition includes almost all of the material that resides in archives and libraries, but also recognises that some cultures and societies are more orientated towards documentation than others. The Memory of the World Programme therefore complements, and links to, other UNESCO programmes, recommendations and conventions. For example, the UNESCO *World Heritage List* (<http://whc.unesco.org/heritage.htm>) identifies buildings and sites that may also house documentary heritage or be related to its creation, and the *Recommendation on the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images* ([http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/cinema/html\\_eng/page1.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/cinema/html_eng/page1.shtml)) encourages the organised deposit of the world's film heritage in official archives. UNESCO's Programme to protect Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity ([http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/masterp/html\\_eng/index\\_en.htm](http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/masterp/html_eng/index_en.htm)) draws attention to the importance of the intangible heritage in enabling each people to assert its cultural identity, and humankind as a whole to maintain its cultural diversity.

The Memory of the World Programme proceeds on the assumption that there is documentary heritage of such intellectual value that it is deemed to transcend the boundaries of time and culture, that it should be preserved for present and future generations, and that it should be made accessible to all peoples of the world in some form. Although this contention is easy to make, significance is comparative and is often difficult to determine. Only the rigorous application of agreed criteria will result in credible documentary heritage being selected.

Only items or collections of *world significance* are acceptable to the Memory of the World Programme. To receive the appellation of world significance these items or collections must meet three tests. First, the item or collections must be *authentic* – that is, they must be what they purport to be, not copies, forgeries or hoaxes. Their provenance must be unchallengeable and an unbroken chain of custody must exist. Second, the item or collection must be of world significance. *The Memory of the World General Guidelines* (Edmondson 2002: 20) state that items or collections of world significance must be:

*unique and irreplaceable*, something whose disappearance or deterioration would constitute a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of humanity. It [or they] must have created great impact over a span of time and/or within a particular cultural area of the world. It [or they] may be representative of a type, but must have no direct equal. It [or they] must have had great influence – whether positive or negative – on the course of history.

Third, world significance must be demonstrated in meeting one or more of the following criteria: *time*, as every document is a creature of its time; *place*, as the place of creation is a key attribute of importance; *people*, as the social and cultural context of creation may reflect significant aspects of human behaviour; *subject and theme*, as the subject matter may represent particular historical or intellectual developments in natural, social and human sciences, politics, ideology, sports and the arts; or *form and style*, as the item or collection may have outstanding aesthetic, stylistic or linguistic value.

Finally, the following matters will also be taken into account: *rarity* – does the content or physical nature make the item or collection a rare surviving example of type or time?; *integrity* – within the natural physical limitations of carrier survival, is the item or collection complete or partial?; *threat* – is the item or collection's survival in danger?; and *management plan* – is there a plan which reflects the significance of the documentary heritage, with appropriate strategies to preserve and provide access to it?

## Enabling mechanisms

The Memory of the World programme has a range of enabling mechanisms. These include establishing an International

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Advisory Committee, establishing a World Register of Significant Documentary Heritage, establishing Regional Committees, establishing national committees and national Registers, establishing Registers of lost and missing documentary heritage, attracting sponsorship, and undertaking pilot projects.

The primary role of the fourteen-member International Advisory Committee (IAC) is 'to guide the planning and implementation of the Programme as a whole, assess items and collections nominated for inclusion on the World Register, and make recommendations concerning fund-raising, fund allocation and the granting of the Memory of the World label to projects' (Abiz 2004: 4). The IAC has met six times since 1993, most recently in Gdansk in June 2003, when it approved 23 collections from 20 countries to be added to the World Register. To date, the only Australian documentary heritage items to have reached this status are the *Endeavour Journal* of James Cook and the Mabo Case manuscripts, both in the collection of the National Library of Australia, which were inscribed on the World Register in 2001.

At the national level, 'it is recommended that a committee be appointed, firstly to identify the most significant documentary heritage, to select projects according to the criteria agreed upon and submit them to the IAC and, thereafter, to follow them up' (Abiz 2004: 3). National Committees have been set up in 53 countries and others are considering the creation of such a Committee. Jordan and Syria have indicated that existing national institutions are already performing the role of National Committees' (Abiz 2004: 3). The UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Committee was founded in December 2000 under the auspices of the Australian National Commission for UNESCO ([www.dfat.gov.au/intorgs/unesco/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/intorgs/unesco/)). Its membership 'represent the diversity of moveable cultural heritage in Australia, the strengths of its institutions in managing these resources and awareness of the significant challenges in keeping this heritage accessible' (Lyll 2003). The Committee comprises representatives from the archives, library, history, cultural heritage management, indigenous and academic sectors, the National Commission at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. Jan Lyll was elected Chair of the Committee, and Ray Edmondson Deputy Chair, at its first meeting. An office support function is kindly provided by the Australian National University Centre for UNESCO in Canberra.

For a small committee with limited funding, the Australian Memory of the World Program's have been extensive in its three years of operation. Its achievements include:

- Launching of the Program by Koichiro Matsuura, the Director-General of UNESCO
- Developing and expanding a web site ([www.amw.org.au](http://www.amw.org.au)) as the repository of the Australian Registers and as the principle means of communication
- Producing a brochure, with financial assistance from DFAT
- Calling for, assessing and inscribing items of World significance on the Australian Register
- Holding presentation ceremonies for custodians of material inscribed on the Australian Register. In 2001, the presentation of certificates was made by Greg Denning and in 2003 the Hon. Barry Jones presented certificates of inscription to custodians of the material admitted to the Australian Register.

The Australian Register ([http://www.amw.org.au/amow\\_reg.htm](http://www.amw.org.au/amow_reg.htm)) now comprises:

- Constitutional documents: an assembly of key items charting the development of Australian Democracy
- The archival records of the Australian Agricultural Company, the nation's oldest surviving commercial entity
- The Cinesound Movietone collection of weekly cinema newsreels from 1931 to 1975: a living record of Australia's life and times
- The *Endeavour Journal* of Captain James Cook
- The Mabo Case manuscripts
- The Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin Design Drawings of the City of Canberra.

At the time of writing (March 2004) a call for nominations to the 2004 Register was being made. The Australian Committee was at that time also considering whether there are items or collections of world significance and influence, which could be submitted for consideration by the IAC and inscription on the World Register. Nominations for the World Register closed in June 2004.

### Lost and missing heritage

The Register of significant documentary heritage material is the most public of activities of the Memory of the World Programme. The Programme is also concerned with lost and missing materials, although the reasons are perhaps less obvious. In the words of Ray Edmondson, a member of the Australian Memory of the World Committee,

developing a public record of this now inaccessible heritage is a crucial means of placing the *Memory of the World Program* in context, and is a precursor to the possibility of virtual reconstruction of lost and dispersed memory. (Edmondson 2002: 28).

The Australian *Memory of the World* Register includes a section listing lost and missing heritage materials. *Lost* material is where we have reliable documentation about its loss; *missing* material is where we can't be so sure about its loss. This material still needs to meet the definitions of significance. (More information is available in Harvey 2003).

Australia is the first country in the world to attempt a register of lost and missing documentary heritage, which is being developed by Ross Harvey, Anne Lloyd and Damian Lodge from Charles Sturt University' School of Information Studies. Australia appears to be the first country to develop such a register, so it is inventing a methodology. As well as working out how to proceed, many other issues also have to be resolved. Perhaps the most difficult of these is that of attempting to identify what isn't there: as described in the verse by Hughes Mearns,

As I was going up the stair  
I met a man who wasn't there!  
He wasn't there again today!  
I wish, I wish he'd stay away! (Hughes Mearns, *Antigonish* 1899).

A preliminary informal survey was undertaken to develop some starting points and plan a more formal approach to gathering data. The survey questions were emailed to nine people with a wide knowledge of Australian documentary heritage material. Two questions were posed:

- 1) Can you tell us about any collections or items which you think fit into the definition of lost or missing documentary heritage of significance? (Australian, that is)

2) Can you suggest anyone else we should contact?

Their responses helped to identify how to proceed. Before starting on large-scale surveys of libraries, archives and museums, what was labeled a *genre* approach was developed, using silent films as a test case. The silent film genre is well documented already (for example, Edmondson & Pike 1982). Australian silent feature films produced between 1900 and 1930 that are missing or for which only fragments exist were identified. For some of these significance was easy to determine, such as *The Story of the Kelly Gang* (1906), considered 'the progenitor of "bushranger" movies and a breakthrough of world significance in narrative filmmaking' (Edmondson & Pike 1982: 9). This film may have been the first full-length feature film in the world. This genre study can be read on the Australia's Memory of the World web site ([http://www.amw.org.au/rlmh/rep\\_0304.pdf](http://www.amw.org.au/rlmh/rep_0304.pdf)).

Another possible approach identified, but put on hold until resources are available to pursue it, is to list the major Australian disasters which are likely to have resulted in loss of documentary heritage material, and then to contact libraries and archives in areas that were affected.

In March 2004 a survey was sent to 581 archives. The survey asked these questions:

- Can you identify any significant Australian items, collections or materials that you think fit into the definition of lost or missing documentary heritage?
- Do you know the location of documentation about these items, collections or materials?
- Can you identify the last known location of these items, collections or materials?
- Can you suggest anyone else we should contact who can help us to identify Australian lost or missing documentary heritage?

Respondents who could identify relevant material were requested to provide whatever evidence they could about the item, including why they thought it was significant, and its last known location.

Preliminary results indicate that most respondents could not identify material that fitted the definition of national significance. Some exceptions to this were Governor Phillips Instructions (State Records New South Wales), the original signed Act of South Australia's constitution (State Records of South Australia), and the film and slides from the 1906 multimedia presentation 'Soldiers of the Cross' (Salvation Army). The items suggested by most respondents were of local significance, such as the marriage registers of parishes in New South Wales, and a run of a Manly daily newspaper. These responses have caused us to start to rethink our approach, on the basis that, as Anne Lloyd (one of the Lost and Missing Heritage project's researchers) put it, 'small groups together make a large story'. Some items suggested will be further investigated to determine their significance: an example is documents about the construction of Australia's first concrete bridge (Maryborough Historical Society, Queensland). Is this of national significance or is its importance more localised? Several suggestions were made that are likely to lead to genre studies, for example corporate records. We consider that this survey of archives has been successful because it has allowed us to refocus our lines of enquiry.

The next step may be a survey of libraries. Meanwhile, the authors welcome any suggestions of lost and missing documentary heritage material that could be considered for inclusion in the register.

## The importance of Australia's input into the international program

Australia has made a major contribution to the development of the international program. All programs require guidelines. In 1995, the original *Memory of the World General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage* were prepared, under the auspices of IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations), by Stephen Foster, Jan Lyall and Roslyn Russell (Foster, Lyall & Russell 1995). Edmondson has described these as a 'remarkable pioneering document [that] has served as a foundation for the subsequent growth of the Programme and the values it represents' (Edmondson 2002: 1). Both Lyall and Russell are now members of the Australian Program, with Lyall chairing its Committee.

In the following year, Lyall also prepared for UNESCO the document *Memory of the World: A Survey of Current Library Preservation Activities* (Lyall 1996). This survey of current library preservation activities and lists of significant documentary heritage held by major libraries throughout the world was intended to identify problems in various parts of the world, to identify the location of significant documentary heritage, and to obtain a snapshot of current preservation practices. Lyall concluded that 'preservation of nationally significant documentary heritage does not have a high priority for many libraries throughout the world' (Lyall 1996: section 3.1.1). She noted that

like all previous surveys, this one indicated that there is a large amount of highly significant documentary heritage material at risk. Indeed many of the figures indicate a deterioration from the 1986 UNESCO/IFLA/ICA survey. However, useful comparisons are difficult without having detailed knowledge of the institutions responding to the 1986 survey (Lyall 1996: section 4.1).

In 2002, Ray Edmondson, Deputy Chair of the Australian Memory of the World Program, revised the *Memory of the World General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage* (Edmondson 2002). The revised edition places greater emphasis on the selection criteria and nomination process for the Memory of the World Register, and contains less detailed information on preservation techniques because the need for this is, by now, more comprehensively served by other Memory of the World publications.

The Australian Memory of the World Program has been widely used as a benchmark throughout the International Programme. The web site is highly regarded and visits have been recorded from over fifty countries. Frequent use is also made of Australian approaches, such as the adoption of the *Model Terms of Reference for National Committees*. The contribution of individual committee members has been mentioned elsewhere in this paper, as has the development of a methodology for identifying lost and missing heritage.

## How ALIA members can contribute

All members and groups of ALIA – in fact, all information professionals – can assist in this important endeavour. ALIA members and groups should seriously consider how they can support the Memory of the World program. ALIA members are encouraged to identify documentary heritage of local, state and national significance in their collections and submit appropriate nominations to the Australian Program in 2005. Reviewing the existing items on the Australian Register ([www.amw.org.au](http://www.amw.org.au)) and looking at the nomination form is a good place to start. ALIA members are also encouraged to consider whether they can

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contribute to the identification of Australia's Lost and Missing Significant Documentary Heritage: the web site has a section describing the entries to date on the Program's provisional Register. Finally, ALIA members and groups can promote the Memory of the World Program through discussion, support for projects and – not least – preservation of Australia's documentary heritage. If we do not respond to this challenge, we will be doomed to live in a perpetual present.<sup>1</sup>

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### Keywords

Australia Memory of the World Program, Documentary heritage, Preservation, Significance, UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Simon Pockley for the term 'eternal present'.