

An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. The top half shows rolling green dunes under a clear blue sky. The bottom half shows a rocky beach with shallow water and seaweed. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the dunes, containing white text.

DEVELOP AND MAXIMISE THE VALUE OF VICTORIA'S HERITAGE COLLECTION



PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

STRATEGY

Continue to develop and strengthen the collections amassed over 150 years.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

During the year, Museum Victoria implemented a new Research Strategy and Action Plan (2005-2010), which will provide a new five-year focus for future Museum research.

The Museum continued to develop collections through a program of research, acquisitions and donations. Significant acquisitions made over the last financial year include: items associated with the Opening Ceremony of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games; archives and collection material from Kodak Australia; a field collection of marine animals from off the Western Australian coast; a large rock slab bearing crinoid fossils from the Permian age; and paintings by two well-known Papunya (Central Australian) Indigenous artists, with assistance from the Acquisitions Trust Fund.

Curatorial departments developed detailed plans to guide collection development in each discipline over the next ten years. The collection development plans will be available through the Collections and Research section of the Museum website.

During the year, Museum Victoria repatriated Aboriginal ancestral remains to Indigenous communities in Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand.

STRATEGY

Work with kindred organisations throughout Victoria to help raise standards of collection care.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

Museum Victoria's Roving Curator continued to support Indigenous communities with the preservation, protection and management of cultural heritage. The program also collaborated with the Public Records Office of Victoria and National Archives of Australia to deliver three Aboriginal community workshops (two metropolitan and one regional) on cultural materials and photographic archiving.

Museum Victoria staff helped to facilitate Handling and Storage of Collections workshops conducted by Museums Australia (Victorian Branch) at Melbourne and regional venues.

Museum Victoria staff gave professional advice on the collection management system EMu to meetings of Australasian users held in Melbourne, and North American users in Chicago, USA.

STRATEGY

Provide appropriate storage conditions to ensure the long-term survival of the collections.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

Museum Victoria continued to implement the current Collection Strategy and Action Plan (2004-2014), with major achievements in database management, electronic location and audit management, and registration of the State Collections during the year.

Collections were managed in line with legislative requirements, including the implementation of a risk-management program, with a review of existing disaster recovery plans, and collection security measures.

Funding for a number of collection management-related projects was received from external bodies including: Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS); Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Department of the Environment and Heritage; and CSIRO Marine and Atmospheric Research.

Museum Victoria took a lead role in the convening of an Arts Agencies' Collection Working Group, to facilitate information sharing among the various arts agencies and help develop collection-related standards and performance measures, along with other major co-operative strategies.

STRATEGY

Provide enhanced public access through a purpose-built storage facility.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

In March 2006, the State Government announced the purchase of 4.75 hectares of land adjacent to Scienceworks in Spotswood. This land is intended for future development of an Integrated Arts Agencies Storage Facility. Museum Victoria has taken over management responsibility for the land and is currently looking at options for the site in both the short and long-term.

Museum Victoria has refined a Business Case and developed a Functional Brief for the Spotswood site, with input from the Victorian Arts Centre Trust and Australian Centre for the Moving Image. This includes plans for a public-access collection storage facility that takes into account the long-term collection storage requirements of each institution.

The Museum's Manager of Collection and Research Facilities undertook a study tour to the United Kingdom, Europe and North America to investigate international best practice in viewable collection storage facilities.

Tours of the Scienceworks collection store and Pumping Station continued on a daily basis. Special interest group tours of the collection stores at Melbourne Museum were also held.

STRATEGY

Enhance our knowledge base through research, publication and collection database development.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

Museum Victoria implemented the 2005-2010 Research Strategy in the main areas of Sciences, Indigenous Cultures, and History and Technology.

The Museum completed the implementation of EMu, the organisation's integrated collection database. The multi-year implementation project involving the transfer of 51 separate collection databases from old systems into EMu was finalised in June. The EMu project now enters the operational phase, to take advantage of an integrated database of the collections for the first time in the Museum's history.

Projects were undertaken to enhance the data and other information associated with the Museum's collections of Australian coins and arms, as well as migration.

The Museum produced 97 refereed journal articles, reports, books and other publications.

STRATEGY

Expand the information available on the Internet.

ACTIONS AND RESULTS

The Pest and Diseases Image Library (PaDIL) website was completed, offering high-quality diagnostic images and information on pests and diseases. PaDIL is a Commonwealth Government initiative, developed by Museum Victoria, with support provided by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Plant Health Australia: www.padil.gov.au

The Museum also completed another new research and collection website: *Caught and Coloured: Zoological Illustrations from Colonial Victoria*. The project arose from the work of 2004 Thomas Ramsay Science and Humanities Fellow, Mr John Kean, and was generously supported by the Menzies Foundation. The website features material from Prof. Frederick McCoy's *Prodromus of the Zoology of Victoria* held in Museum Victoria archives and will be officially launched in August 2007: www.museum.vic.gov.au/caughtandcoloured

An additional 60,000 collection objects and specimens were electronically registered during the year. In the two years since a program of back-capture began, the Museum has added some 160,000 records into EMu, representing a substantial growth in total registration figures.



**CASE STUDY:
MARINE EXHIBITION
AND RESEARCH**



Poking around in coastal rock pools is a special experience for many young Australians. Everyone can relate to discovering starfish, chasing crabs and watching snails slowly create tracks in fine sand. However, many believe that Victorian coastal waters have changed significantly and that the diversity of marine life is increasingly under threat.

In response to this situation, the marine research team at Museum Victoria has developed a \$450,000 three-year program to assess the health of our rocky intertidal environments. This project is being undertaken in partnership with the Commonwealth Government's Natural Heritage Trust, Parks Victoria and the Victorian Environment Protection Agency.

By using scientific collections held by the Museum, scientists are aiming to find out what animals and plants should be living along our coastline and then compare these results to what is actually found there today.



The Museum's natural history collections contain a vast number of animal specimens, some dating back to the founding of the Museum and the Colony of Victoria. Many of the earliest marine specimens came from a reef in Brighton now overlain by a marina.

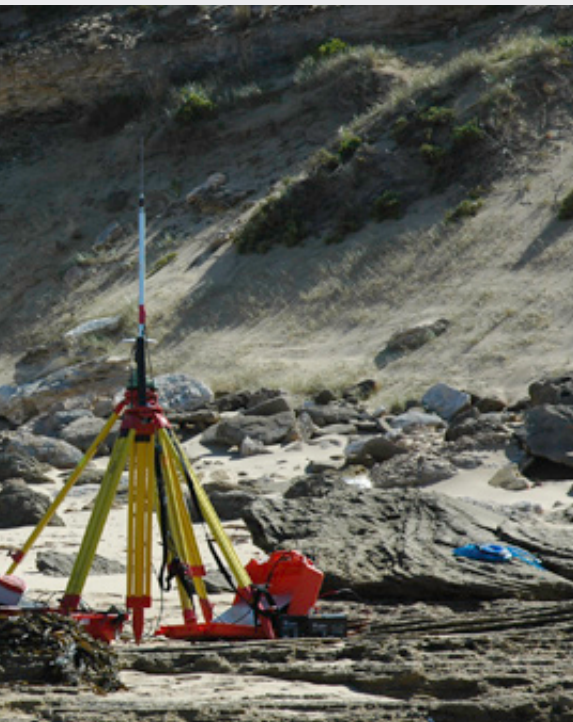
Today, many of our specimens come from oceanographic ships surveying sections of Australia's extensive marine realm. These collections are a 'biodiversity resource' that document the diversity of our natural heritage and assist conservation managers to protect our environment.

The coastal health project is one of several scientific studies run by Museum Victoria that uses collections to assist with the management of our environment. The National Oceans Office uses the data contained in the Museum's collections to help determine marine park boundaries and set conservation objectives in their Regional Marine Plans.

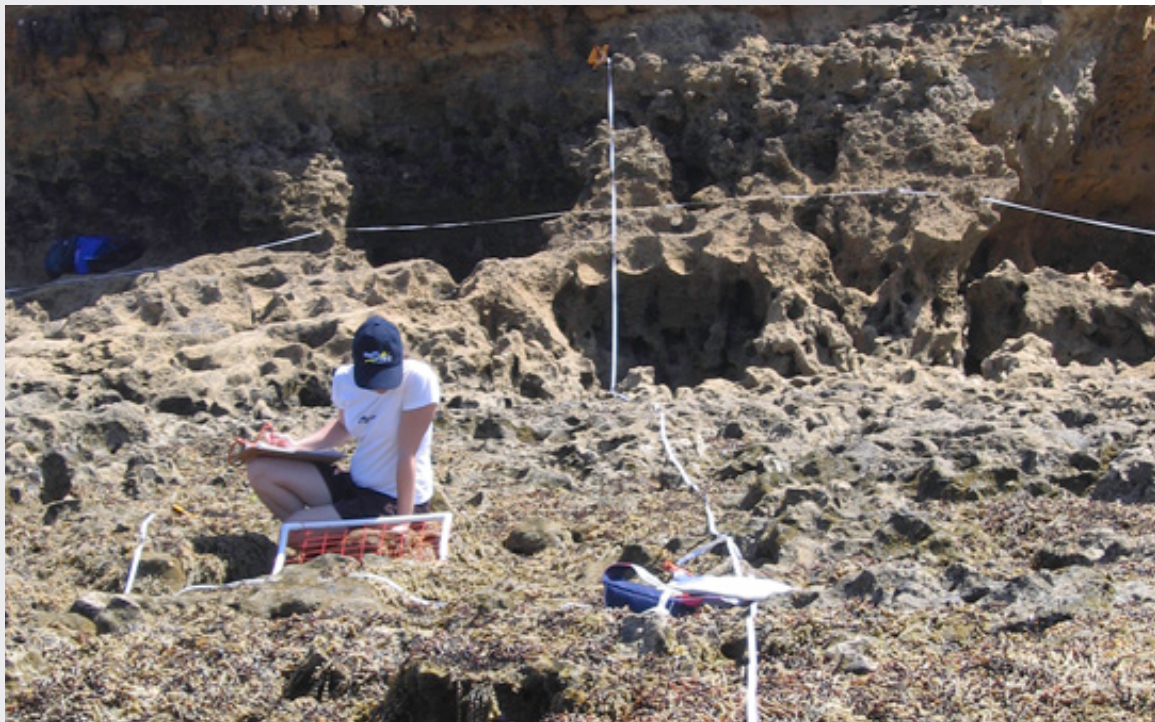
New animal pests and weeds arriving in Australia are initially identified by comparing them with a series of similar specimens in the Museum's collection.

Increasingly too, the collections are being used as a genetic resource by preserving the DNA of our native animals. Investigating the molecular world is providing new insights into the evolution and conservation of our unique fauna.

Some of the more interesting and spectacular specimens from the collection have been brought to life in a new exhibition, *Marine life: Exploring our seas*, which opened at Melbourne Museum in December. Displays include specimens ranging from tiny creatures found on our sandy beaches to the mighty giant squid and sperm whale of the deep-sea.



(Above left)
The Marine Sciences team
at Boags Rocks, Victoria.



(Above centre)
The Marine Sciences team using
surveying equipment to measure
reef topography at Point Nepean.

(Above right)
Marine Sciences team member
estimating the cover of the
brown alga *Hormasira Banksii*
within a quadrat at Point Addis
intertidal reef.

The marine environment is a rich and mostly hidden world that is fundamental to the balance of ecosystems all over the world. For this reason, the marine environment receives a great deal of care and attention from the Museum and is regarded as one of the Museum's primary subjects of interest.

RESEARCH

Museum Victoria is responsible for maintaining a collection of more than 16 million items. The collection is developed through research and acquisition and accessed by scholars and communities.

Information on Museum Victoria's collection and research focus, including details of current research programs and projects, is available on Museum Victoria's website.

Museum Victoria's research program is guided by a Research Strategy that outlines a five-year vision for research at the Museum (2005-2010).

Research projects were undertaken in the fields of Sciences, Indigenous Cultures, and History and Technology, in accordance with the Research Strategy Action Plan.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

In 2005/06, Museum Victoria researchers received funding support from a variety of sources including: the Australian Research Council (ARC); Australian Biological Resources Study; CSIRO; Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Department of the Environment and Heritage; The Ian Potter Foundation; The Menzies Foundation; The Myer Foundation; The Norman Wettenhall Foundation; and The University of Melbourne.

In March 2006, Museum Victoria submitted six ARC Discovery Grant applications, in addition to another four applications through other organisations. The Museum also submitted two ARC Linkage Grant applications in November 2005, plus another four applications in the next round in May 2006. The outcome of these latest applications is yet to be announced.

As part of the Museum's Work Value Review process, the title of Principal Curator was created to recognise the specialist skills and knowledge of senior curatorial staff. Dr Gary Poore was the first staff member to be classified at this level. Dr Poore also received a 2006 Museums Industry Recognition Award (MIRA) in recognition of his achievements.

Museum Victoria research workers and students were highlighted in the *Meet the Museum Scientists* lecture series held during National Science Week in August. The week also featured a presentation by Mr Rob Gell of the 2005 Crosbie Morrison Memorial Lecture, titled *Shoot the Messenger? Science, Media and Communication*. This presentation looked at different ways we can inform people about science, help make a positive difference to the state of the environment and people's lives, and move to a sustainable future.

GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISION HIGHLIGHTS

Two Honours, eight Masters and 23 PhD students were supervised by Museum Victoria staff.

Six scholarships were awarded in the 2006 round of the Museum Victoria 1854 Scholarship Scheme, originally established as part of the Museum's 150th Anniversary program. The awards were presented to five graduate students from the University of Melbourne and one from James Cook University for research programs in each of the three curatorial departments.

PUBLICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Museum Victoria continued to implement the Publications Strategy. This includes a program for publishing monographs and collections of articles on areas of research, particularly those subjects outlined in the Museum Victoria Research Strategy, along with non-specialist publications.

The latest titles to be produced under the Strategy include: *Phar Lap: A True Legend* (published October), *The Photographs of Baldwin Spencer* (November), and *Colliding Worlds: First Contact in the Western Desert, 1932-1984* (March).

The *Memoirs of Museum Victoria* Volume 62 (Numbers 1-2) was produced, featuring a series of scientific papers on fossil trilobites, sea-urchins and whales, and recent sea-stars and holothurians, by honorary staff and research students of the Museum.

Ninety-seven papers, reports, books and theses were produced, and 143 lectures and talks were presented.

HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

Through the History and Technology Department, Museum Victoria conducts research and develops collections that document Victoria's history in a national and international context, with the objective of facilitating the community's understanding of the past, and engagement with issues affecting our future.

HIGHLIGHTS

Curators undertook a wide range of research projects - many of these are expected to lead to publication and exhibition. They include: *Sustainable Water Practices; Women in Agriculture; Women and Cycling in the Late 19th and Early 20th centuries; Lives of Women in Melbourne's "Little Lon"; Glory Boxes, Memory and Material Culture; Immigrant Ships; War and Public Memory; History of Telegraphy; Development of Television in Australia; History of Computing in Victoria; the Royal Exhibition Building; Early Collectors of Indigenous Material in Victoria; and the Melbourne Observatory.*

Ms Carla Pascoe was awarded a PhD scholarship, jointly funded by the University of Melbourne and Museum Victoria, to undertake research on the history of childhood in 1950s Australia. This project will draw extensively on the Museum's Australian Children's Folklore Collection.

Museum Victoria, State Library of Victoria and the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archive have collaborated to undertake a survey of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender collections in Victoria. Undertaken in collaboration with the lesbian and gay community, the survey has identified gaps in public collections, located significant private collections and mapped out future collecting strategies.

Restoration of the Cowley Steam Roller commenced in the Scienceworks workshop in January. The repaired boiler had a successful steam test in May and the roller made its first public appearance for Museum Victoria at the Echuca Steam Rally in June. Full restoration will be completed by mid-2007. Manufactured in 1939 by Cowley's Eureka Ironworks at Ballarat, the roller is believed to be the last steam roller made in Australia.

Four projects were undertaken to improve the catalogue data and images for significant collections. These include the internationally important collection of Australian coins; items relating to Italian migration to Victoria (jointly developed with the Italian Historical Society); the Dimitrius Katsoulis collection of Greek shadow puppets; and the arms collection. These projects will allow for the development of online access to collection data and images of entire sub-collections.

A Classification Review Project created a new collection classification system on the EMu database. This system more accurately reflects the thematic basis of the collections, provides logical and consistent groups of records, and enables more effective information retrieval for staff and researchers.

Curators continued to provide extensive assistance to the Moveable Cultural Heritage Unit of the Department of the Environment and Heritage by helping with the assessment of requests for the export of significant cultural artifacts.

The History and Technology Department hosted two conferences with Monash University, a one-day conference on *Consumer Australia: an Historical Perspective*, and a research workshop to develop a collaborative research project on the Women on Farms Gathering Heritage Collection.

Following a detailed analysis of the Printing Equipment Collection, the Museum has deaccessioned 20 items from the collection and distributed the items to other heritage organisations. The analysis has also strengthened knowledge of the remaining collection, much of which had been transferred to the Museum from the Government Printing Office in the 1970s.

Significant acquisitions included:

- Items from the Opening Ceremony of the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, including the Flying Tram, costumes, models and original drawings.
- The collections and archives of Kodak Australia, which recently closed its extensive manufacturing plant in Coburg. This event brought to a close 120 years of photographic plate and film manufacturing in Melbourne and Australia.
- An 1850s steam-powered winding engine, the only surviving example from dozens of similar 'donkey engines' which once lined Melbourne's wharves and piers from the mid 1850s to the early 1900s. Purchased with the assistance of the Commonwealth Government's National Cultural Heritage Account.
- Items belonging to W.G. Spence (1846-1926), trade unionist and politician who founded the Australian Workers' Union in 1894. Spence was also a member for Darling in the first Federal Parliament and Postmaster-General in 1914-15.
- Items from the Jack Lee collection, Berrigan, NSW, including an itinerant worker's living van and a spike roller used for land clearing in the 1900s-1920s.
- The Omnicycle, an unusual treadle-powered adult tricycle made about 1880 and originally owned by a Geelong doctor. The Omnicycle has been restored to operating condition by a collector and was donated under the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program.
- A 1930s Morris Commercial Bullion Van used by the Note Printing Branch of the Commonwealth Bank was transferred from the South Australian Museum.

INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Through the Indigenous Cultures Department, Museum Victoria works with Indigenous peoples in Australia and the South Pacific to improve our understanding of Indigenous people and their cultures.

HIGHLIGHTS

Indigenous Cultures staff significantly contributed to the development and/or tours of the following Museum Victoria exhibitions and, where relevant, supporting catalogues: *Twined Together: Kunmadj njalehnjaleken*; *Colliding Worlds: First contact in the Western Desert 1932-1984*; *Biganga*; and *First Eleven: Aboriginal cricketers ahead of their time*.

In partnership with the Australian National University, the Indigenous Cultures Department organised a three-day national conference on *Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections* at Melbourne Museum in February.

In 2005/06, an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant was received for a project entitled *Oral Tradition, Memory and Social Change: Indigenous participation in the curation and use of museum collections*. The project will be undertaken by Museum Victoria staff in partnership with University of Queensland and Deakin University and will investigate how museums respond to indigenous community aspirations and how heritage collections contribute to the reinvigoration of indigenous people's identity.

Further fieldwork was undertaken on the ARC Linkage project *Anthropological and Aboriginal perspectives on the Donald Thomson Collection: material culture, collecting and identity*. Research was also carried out on the Fijian and Solomon Islands components of the International Ethnographic Collection.

Loans from the Indigenous Collection were also arranged for inclusion in the following external exhibitions: *Threading the Commonwealth* (RMIT Gallery), *One-talk Commonwealth Games Stamps* (East Gippsland Art Gallery), *People of the Cedar* (National Museum of Australia), and *13 Canoes* (South Australian Museum).

Long-term loans continued with the Krowathunkalong Keeping Place in Bairnsdale, the Bangerang Cultural Centre in Shepparton, the Warradjan Cultural Centre in Kakadu, Menmuny Community Museum in Yarrabah, and the Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre in Tennant Creek.

The Photographs of Baldwin Spencer, a volume of late 19th and early 20th century Central Australian ethnographic photographs, was published by The Miegunyah Press and Museum Victoria and launched in Bunjilaka in November. Work continues on a new publication of Donald Thomson's photographs of his trips to Central Australia in the 1950s and 1960s, also to be published by The Miegunyah Press.

Museum Victoria's Roving Curator Program continued to support Indigenous communities with the preservation, protection and management of their cultural heritage.

Museum Victoria's Family History Project continued to conduct research and consult with Victorian Aboriginal individuals, families and communities regarding the collation of family histories. The project also provided specific family history advice to a number of Aboriginal people and families.

Staff participated in the Pacific Islands Festival held at the Immigration Museum in February 2006. Unidentified elements of the Pacific collection were made available for the Pacific Island community to inspect and provide advice on. In this way the Museum was able to receive valuable information on at least nine previously unidentified objects, whose value has now been considerably enhanced.

Significant acquisitions during the year included two paintings by celebrated Papunya (Central Australian) artists, which date to the beginning of the Western Desert art movement, and an historical Victorian Aboriginal fibre basket dated to 1894. The Museum also acquired a small number of contemporary fibre works by Ngarrindjeri elder Aunty Lettie Nicholls.

There continues to be a very high demand for external access to the collections and for copies of photographs. Of particular note in this regard is an eight-part documentary series by Blackfella Films (working title *First Australian Nations*), and the series of multimedia, book and web-based projects developed by film producer Rolf de Heer in conjunction with his feature film *10 Canoes*, both of which draw heavily on the Museum's Indigenous Ethnohistory collection.

REPATRIATION

Museum Victoria was again successful in attracting funding from the Commonwealth Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (DoCITA) to support its ongoing efforts regarding the repatriation of Indigenous ancestral remains and secret-sacred objects to communities around Australia. This funding is due to cease in June 2007 and Museum Victoria is now actively consulting with Aboriginal communities, relevant museums and State and Commonwealth government agencies to investigate other means for meeting Indigenous community aspirations regarding repatriation, both locally and from overseas.

Ancestral remains were repatriated to Wamba Wamba and Dja Dja Wurrung traditional owners in Victoria (October and December 2005, respectively), Dharawal traditional owners in New South Wales (May 2006), and to Maori iwi in New Zealand via the Museum of New Zealand *Te Papa Tongarewa* (September 2005).

Museum Victoria renewed its agreement with the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs. This centre continues to store a number of secret-sacred objects on the Museum's behalf so that local elders can access objects for the purposes of assisting the repatriation process.

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SCIENCES

Museum Victoria aims to promote an understanding of the natural sciences, the human mind and body, and science communication.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sciences staff played leading roles in the development of the new exhibition *Marine life: Exploring our seas* at Melbourne Museum. Video segments in the exhibition feature the Museum's marine biology curators and collection managers, and the exhibition content has a strong research focus.

In 2005/06, major research grants were received from the ARC Discovery and Linkage Grant schemes. Departmental staff were successful in obtaining a Linkage Grant for a project entitled *Human induced changes in the genetic structure of amphibian populations* to be administered by the University of Melbourne. This project will produce one of the first predictive models of the impact of humans on the genetic structure of animal populations, focusing on frog populations in south-eastern Australia. A Discovery Grant was secured for the project *Novel Sodium Ion Channel Modulators from Australian Cephalopods*. To be administered by the University of Queensland, this project aims to investigate the nature of toxins in cephalopods, which efficiently block ion channels critical to the transmission of nerve impulses. Knowledge of these toxins can lead to safer and better drugs for the relief of chronic pain.

The Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS) also provided Museum Victoria with valuable additional funding support to carry out two projects: *An integrative approach to the revision of four genera of Australian lizards (Family Agamidae; Subfamily Amphibolurinae)*, which investigates the generic and species level relationships of three genera of Australian agamid lizards; and *Interactive keys and guide to non-asellote marine Isopoda of Australia*.

Staff were involved in major publications of both academic research and books for the general public. Major achievements include a paper published in the prestigious journal *Nature* on the venom systems of lizards and snakes by Dr Janette Norman (Senior Curator, Molecular Biology) who worked with Dr Bryan Fry (Melbourne University), and an article on the ecology of desert lizards by Dr Jane Melville (Curator, Herpetology) published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*.

Fieldwork relating to current palaeontology research was undertaken in the Kimberley region of Western Australia and resulted in many superb specimens of fossil fish from the Gogo Formation. Gogo sites are world famous for their perfect three-dimensional preservation of ancient fishes dating from around 380 million years ago. Dr John Long (Head of Sciences) published a 111-page paper on a new species of fossil fish from this area, *Onychodus jandemarrei*.

A team of marine biology staff participated in a research cruise aboard the CSIRO vessel *Southern Surveyor* in November-December to collect marine animals off the coast of Western Australia. Analysis of the collections will lead to a further understanding of the biogeography of Australia's marine environments and to improved knowledge about the distribution of marine fauna within Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone.

Marine biology staff, honorary associates and volunteers including a dedicated team of underwater photographers from Reef Watch Victoria, produced an updated version of *Nudibranchs and Flatworms: A Photographic Atlas for the Bass Strait Region*. The database covers more than 140 illustrated species, which represents about one-third of the 350+ known opisthobranch species of the region: http://researchdata.museum.vic.gov.au/marine/nudi_home.htm

Following completion of the Pest and Diseases Images Library (PaDIL) website, staff visited various scientific organisations to present talks on the new Australian biosecurity resource. Museum Victoria was contracted by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to manage the development of this resource. This process will utilise the Museum's collection resources as well as our scientific and software resources to produce a virtual product for an Australian and international audience.

Geosciences staff received a research grant from The Potter Foundation to facilitate a project that uses U-Th radiometric dating to determine the ages of crystallisation of secondary uranium minerals in northern Victoria. The project aims to determine whether the ages obtained reflect climatic variation in the region over the past 500,000 years.

Other major acquisitions for the Sciences collection included:

- A collection of six different faceted gemstones, including kornerupine, sinhalite, kyanite, sillimanite and chrysoberyl from Sri Lanka and Nepal. The specimens were selected on the basis of their size, rarity and lack of representation in the Museum's collections.
- A large, richly fossiliferous slab of early Permian sandstone (~280 million years old) from Western Australia, featuring about 100 crinoids (sea-lilies) and other marine invertebrate fossils (under the auspices of the Cultural Gifts Program).
- A field collection of approximately 130 complete fossil fishes and about 50 fossil crustaceans from Gogo, Western Australia.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The Museum achieved significant gains in the major projects identified in the Collection Strategy 2004-2014. The multi-year implementation phase of the EMu project, involving the transfer of 51 separate collection databases into EMu, was completed in June 2006. For the first time in the Museum's history we have integrated information on the State collections, thus representing a significant landmark for the Museum.

The Museum continued its major Collection Registration Project, registering over 60,000 items this year. In the two years since the back-capture program began, the Museum has added some 160,000 collection items onto EMu, representing a substantial growth in total registration figures. Collections that are now fully registered include herpetology, ichthyology, ornithology, mammalogy, minerals, meteorites, tektites and the Indigenous object collection.

The Museum continued to roll out the Wireless Inventory System for EMu (WISE) across the History and Technology collections, as well as beginning to apply it to other collection storage and display areas across the Museum. A further 16,500 objects were put on the WISE system, enabling real-time management of collection movement and locations, as well as providing an auditing capacity.

Ongoing enhancements were made to consolidate the security of the collections. Significant work was also undertaken to review the Museum's management of hazardous substances contained within collection material.

Collection managers and conservators made extensive contributions to several major exhibitions developed by Museum Victoria, including *Twined Together*, *Spirit of the Games* and *Colliding Worlds*, as well as several exhibitions currently under development.

CONSERVATION

A major conservation project was undertaken on Victorian historic banners in preparation for the *Victorian Trade Union Banners: A Proud Tradition* exhibition. The banners were collected from trade unions some 30 years ago and the conservation project has enabled the objects to be displayed in spectacular condition, considering the amount they were used in the Eight Hour Day processions across Victoria to the 1950s.

Conservation prepared and crated diverse collection material for multiple loans. These included indigenous objects for an exhibition associated with the film *10 Canoes* at Flinders University, Adelaide, and an exhibition of textiles from indigenous world cultures *Threads of the Commonwealth* at RMIT University, which was associated with the Commonwealth Games. Conservation also prepared and crated unique collection material, which was taken to various communities in Arnhem Land for research and consultation in the field.

Conservation staff initiated a review of Indigenous Cultures audio-visual and image collections to identify preservation issues and develop strategies to address them.

The first appointment of a Conservation Intern will provide specialist training in conservation of natural science collections. This appointment will add considerable expertise to preventive conservation of the Museum's science collections.

Conservators undertook several major professional development initiatives, including the completion of an advanced level metals conservation course in the USA, and participation in a specialist paper, book and image collection conservation forum in New Zealand. Conservation also hosted the 2005 AICCM Objects Conservation Symposium and workshops on conservation of modern materials/polymers led by Dr Thea Van Oosten of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Institute.

Restoration was undertaken on several of the Museum's major steam traction machines for use in *Machines in Action* days at Scienceworks and to feature in other major field days around Victoria.

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