

Editorial

I am very pleased to introduce *Provenance* 2021, the nineteenth issue of the free online journal published by Public Record Office Victoria (PROV).

Extended closures and lockdowns in Victoria, and Melbourne in particular, over the last 18 months or so have provided challenges for the ways in which PROV has been able to facilitate access to records in the collection, and the ways in which researchers have been able to continue their archival research. PROV has been able to respond to some requests for access remotely, and various programs to increase accessibility have continued, including digitisation for online access through the PROV catalogue, volunteer projects such as indexing and records transcription, and staff projects such as improving the quality of metadata in the online catalogue and creating new online guides. Even without the option or ability to personally visit the Victorian Archives Centre in North Melbourne, Ballarat Archives Centre or Bendigo Regional Archives Centre these initiatives will continue to assist researchers to locate and access relevant records, as well as to understand the context of their creation and significance.

The information and knowledge that archivists provide about the material they manage can impact on the history that is written through the ways in which those sources are understood. In his forum article, 'Restoring the archival perspective: "parish and township plans" at Public Record Office Victoria', PROV's senior collections advisor, Charlie Farrugia, draws on his work with this popular yet relatively poorly understood part of PROV's collection to show how important an understanding of the context of the creation and management of collections is to maximising their research potential. Farrugia highlights the 'parish and township plans' as records worthy of study in themselves, rather than as merely sources for obtaining information, such as land selection numbers, that help to locate other records relating to land ownership and use. We hope that other archivists will be inspired to contribute to an ongoing discussion about the relationships between archival sources and the history that is written about and with them.

Several articles in this year's issue address topics that highlight sensitivities and ethical considerations that may arise with the use and re-use of historical materials in different contexts, and a number of authors share the methodological approaches that underpin their research work and the stories these present. We see how newspapers and other published sources can provide both a springboard into archival collections and clues as to where to take the next research steps. As the articles

show, multiple sources working together can enable a fuller interpretation and contextual understanding of historical events from different standpoints.

The three peer review articles in this issue come from early career researchers who are exploring new and innovative research that illuminates the potential of Victoria's state collection. In 'Policing gender nonconformity in Victoria, 1900–1940', Adrien McCrory provides an important contribution to the understudied history of trans and gender diverse people and their experiences with the criminal justice system in Victoria and Australia. He shares insights into a methodological approach for locating case studies that demonstrate the ways in which people who presented as another gender from which they were assigned at birth were policed and criminalised during the first four decades of the twentieth century. The ways in which gender nonconformity were handled by the justice system in the past provides context and background for improving contemporary understandings of the issues facing some members of the trans and gender diverse community today.

Catherine Gay's article, 'Matters of life and death: girls' voices in nineteenth-century coronial inquest files', shows that records of legal inquiries undertaken to establish a cause of death can also provide a unique view into a child's life. In part a response to an article published in the 2020 issue of *Provenance*—"Untimely ends": place, kin and culture in coronial inquests' by Andrew J May, Helen Morgan, Nicole Davis, Sue Silberberg and Roland Wettenhall—Gay argues for the value of nineteenth-century inquest records as a resource to locate the often overlooked and hidden voices of girls, particularly at a time when many children did not survive to adulthood. Her work demonstrates these records' potential to reveal not only adult priorities and preoccupations (e.g., with an ideal type of girlhood) but also the roles and experiences of girls through family relationships, play, work and school.

Rebecca Le Get's article, 'Therapeutic labour and the sanatorium farm at Greenvale (1912–1918)', is based on research into the operation of Greenvale Sanatorium, established north-west of Melbourne in 1905 as one of a number of dedicated government-constructed sites for the isolation and treatment of patients suffering tuberculosis. Using original records at PROV, such as the 1918 Greenvale Sanatorium Royal Commission, Le Get argues that Greenvale's administrators developed what was probably the first sanatorium farm to operate in Australia, with farm-based work being undertaken by patients at a scale not seen in similar institutions. Le Get demonstrates that farm labour played an important role

both in patient therapy and in the daily operation of the institution, including maintaining its financial viability. Further, she shows that the scope and scale of agricultural work undertaken during the operation of the sanatorium in the early decades of the twentieth century has contributed to the contemporary landscape of the site.

In the forum section, Christina Twomey's article 'Nasty talk' examines a confronting story: the vicious assault and killing of Mary Kennedy by her husband in 1851. Later convicted of murder, Patrick Kennedy's execution in Melbourne was attended by a large crowd of 800 people, predominantly women. Inquest and trial documents, combined with newspaper accounts, graphically reveal the intergenerational impact of family violence. Twomey highlights Mary's story as worthy of re-examination in understanding the legacy of domestic and gendered violence in Australia's history.

In 'Affect and the archive' Amanda Lourie reflects on the emotional impact of the physicality and content of the historical records she works with as a non-Aboriginal historian of Indigenous-settler relations. Although not usually included as part of academic or public history writing, the sensory experiences of archival discovery can influence how historians work; for many, these experiences are part of the allure of archival research. Lourie draws attention to the personally affective nature of both the content of records—the thrill of discovering new evidence or a person's handwriting, for example—as well as the experience of working with historical material itself, such as the smell, feel and appearance of an original record from the past, and the emotions these experiences can promote. She also draws attention to the impact that records can have on Aboriginal people, for whom the same archive can represent a history of control and surveillance and, in some cases, trauma.

David Radcliffe highlights the sometimes overlooked contribution of contracting firms who were involved in the construction of Victoria's infrastructure—bridges, roads, railway lines and wharves—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using documents at PROV and local historical societies as well as digitised newspapers, 'Ross, Fraser and Patience: infrastructure builders at the turn of the twentieth century' traces the work of Scottish immigrants who operated a number of infrastructure companies in Melbourne between 1886 and 1912, constructing numerous specialist structures for the Victorian government, including the Point Gellibrand Pile Lighthouse that operated off Williamstown for more than 70 years from 1906.

I hope that you enjoy reading the current issue of *Provenance*.

Tsari Anderson