

# The David Scott Mitchell Fellowship



The David Scott Mitchell Fellowship was established through a generous benefaction from the late Mr Edward John Merewether, great-great-nephew of David Scott Mitchell in the centenary year of Mitchell's bequest of his internationally renowned collection now held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

David Scott Mitchell, who was born in Sydney in 1836 and never left Australia, was this country's greatest book collector and cultural benefactor. On his death in 1907, he bequeathed his entire collection of 40,000 books, manuscripts, maps and pictures relating to Australia and the Pacific to the Public (now State) Library of New South Wales for the people of this state.

The conditions of the bequest were that his collection should be housed separately and known as the Mitchell Library, and should be available to the public on conditions similar to those of the Library of the British Museum, now the British Library. Mitchell also provided a munificent endowment of £70,000 to fund additions to his collection.

Mitchell's bequest established the serious study of Australian and Pacific history as a pursuit open to anyone with the curiosity or inclination to investigate the primary and secondary source material available in the Mitchell Library. The Library's collections have grown continuously since then and today Mitchell's 40,000 printed books, for example, have increased to almost 600,000.

John Merewether, who died in 2008, was a longstanding supporter of the Mitchell Library, who contributed to the Library in many ways including generous donations of valuable historical family memorabilia and documents associated with the Merewether and Mitchell families. In addition, with his former business partner, the late Mr Edward Bagot, he presented the architectural archives of their practice.

As a Library Volunteer, from 1986 to 1998 he contributed freely of his time in assisting with the arrangement and listing of Library architectural and other original materials collections. This work resulted in improved access and preservation. Mr Merewether was associated with the Friends' of the State Library (formerly The Library Society) since its inception in 1983, and served several terms as a member of its Committee. He was also a generous donor to the State Library Foundation since its inception in 1988 and is recognised for his contributions as a Life Governor of the Foundation.

The principal purpose of the David Scott Mitchell Fellowship is to encourage and support the use of the Mitchell Library's collections for the study and research of Australian history in writing and publication amongst scholars, researchers and the wider community, including internationally. The Fellowship is awarded annually by the Library Council of New South Wales through the Library Council Fellowships Committee. Applications are called from suitably qualified people through public advertisement in the print media and relevant websites. The award for the Fellowship in 2011 is \$12,000. It is envisaged that the Fellowship will extend over a twelve-month period and would not necessarily be the successful applicant's sole source of income.

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The successful applicant will be paid in two instalments: the first on taking up the Fellowship; and the second on the production of a progress report at mid-term. It is expected that at the conclusion of the Fellowship, the Fellow will make two presentations about their project. One will be to Library staff, and the other will be a public lecture. It is also expected that the Fellow will provide a summary of the project - be it a textual description, a bibliography, a podcast, an e-resource, or whatever format is considered appropriate – to be loaded onto the Library’s Fellowship pages on its website. This will provide a permanent record of the legacy of the Library’s Fellowship program.

The Fellow will be given an initial orientation and introduction to the Library and its facilities and will be allocated certain access rights and privileges to assist in their research at the Library. They will report to the Mitchell Librarian and/or the Senior Curator, Mitchell Library with other designated Library Services staff available to assist with their day-to-day needs and enquiries while using the Library’s collections.

The administration and conditions of the Fellowship within the Library will be similar to those for the Library’s current award and honorary research fellowships: the C.H. Currey Memorial Fellowship, the Nancy Keesing Fellowship, the National and State Libraries Australasia Honorary Fellowship and the Library Council of NSW Honorary Fellowship.