

Media Release



State Library of NSW and Wikipedia unite in Australia's first GLAM residency

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Wikipedia is set to experience a dramatic increase in Australian content with the State Library of NSW becoming the first Australian cultural institution to engage a GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) Wikipedian-in-residence.

According to Alex Byrne, NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive: "There's limited Australian content on Wikipedia compared to USA and Europe, and we want to provide more. The Wikipedian-in-residence will enable local knowledge to be more easily accessible on one of the world's most popular websites."

Over a 14-week residency Wikipedian Gillian White will equip 20 library staff with the skills to create and contribute authoritative content to Wikipedia on the significant people, places and events in NSW and Australia.

"Librarians are a natural fit with Wiki as they are trained professionals with a passion for sharing knowledge, and appreciate the importance of referencing credible sources within their online contributions – it's not commonly known that Wikipedia articles and edits must be accurately referenced," says Ms White.

The newly trained library staff will be using the State Library's extensive collections on Australia and its region to contribute valuable content to Wikipedia articles on the Blue Mountains, the convict era, WWI servicemen, Indigenous sacred sites, and many others.

"The State Library is committed to making content from our significant collections more accessible, more discoverable and re-usable, and the GLAM Wikipedian-in-residence project is an important step to the Library becoming a key global resource," says Alex Byrne, NSW State Librarian & Chief Executive.

Under the State Library's Digital Excellence Program, supported by the NSW Government, around 300 to 350 newspaper titles are being digitised for public access over the next four years. The Wiki trainees have started creating Wikipedia articles for each newspaper title as they become available online on Trove [<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>].

"The newspaper articles are already demonstrating fantastic results," says Ms White. "In fact, a library staff member created a completely new article listing non-English-language newspapers in NSW, which is a great resource for communities."

The existing Wikipedia article on the First Fleet currently receives around 25,000 hits per month. "As custodian of nine of the 11 surviving First Fleet journals, the State Library will play a vital role in bringing this locally-held knowledge to the world in the coming months," says Dr Byrne.

The GLAM Wikipedia-in-residence project is a state-wide collaboration between the State Library, the NSW public library network and Wikimedia Australia. As part of her residency, Ms White will engage with librarians across the state to provide knowledge on the Wikipedia environment and editing skills so they can contribute relevant content on their local area.

In addition to the GLAM Wikipedian-in-residence, the State Library is also contributing articles and out of copyright images to Wikimedia Commons.

Wikipedia is a free, volunteer-written encyclopedia containing around 24 million articles in 25 different languages. In 2010, the British Museum became the first cultural institution to appoint a Wikipedian-in-Residence, with the Smithsonian Institution and Palace of Versailles following suit.

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Vanessa Bond, Media & Communication Branch, State Library of NSW
(02) 9273 1566, 0411 259 898, vbond@sl.nsw.gov.au