• Behind the scenes [1]
The Max Dupain Exhibition Negative Archive arrived at the Library in 271 boxes, containing over 30,000 items stored in thousands of envelopes and glassine bags. This important collection required rehousing, cataloguing and digitising as part of the long-term plan to ensure the material is accessible to the public.

This project has been made easier with the help of an outstanding team of volunteers: Linda Brandon, John McIntyre Grimau, Jean Hart, Cleo Lynch, Karen MacDonald, Zoe Middleton, Anne Munro, Paula Poropat, John Ryrie, Rosemary Shepherd, Peter White. Their task was to rehouse every negative into its own archival sleeve thus aiding its preservation and enabling safe handling.
Every volunteer was trained in the handling of negatives and photographic prints and were required to wear gloves before beginning their task. Each negative was carefully removed from its original housing, which could be a glassine bag, envelope or perhaps just loose in the box. The negative was placed in a transparent archival sleeve, with the volunteer checking the orientation of the image and ensuring the negative was inserted with the emulsion side down. A partial call number was written on the top of the sleeve and a new archival envelope was transcribed with the title and date information from the original housing. The negative (or negatives) were then grouped with the original housing to retain intellectual content for future cataloguing and attached to the new archival envelope.
Library volunteers Cleo Lynch, Anne Munro and Linda Brandon with the first complete box of negatives that have been rehoused and catalogued.

Since the original volunteers - Cleo, Linda and Rosemary - began the task on 6 December 2016, the team has grown, with people coming and going, and overall has contributed an average of 30 hours per week towards the project. During this period, more than 23743 negatives have been rehoused, equating to 83% of the collection, and 89% (1831) of photographic prints.

Library volunteers Zoe Middleton and John McIntyre Grimau get to work rehousing negatives

This is an amazing achievement by all and the Library greatly appreciates the dedication and enthusiasm of each volunteer. Not only does their contribution assist in the processing of collection material, it increases their knowledge of the Library’s collection which in turn helps them in other volunteer roles such as tour guides. We also hope they have enjoyed being in such close proximity to the wonderful work of Max Dupain.

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Links