

120,000 Photographs and still counting

The State Library of South Australia announces that more than 120,000 photographs from its collections are now out of copyright under Australian copyright law.

“The *About Time* History Month in May is an appropriate theme and timely for the State Library to announce this considerable benefit to the people of South Australia”, said Mr Alan Smith, Director of the State Library.

The State Library holds tens of thousands of unique photographs depicting the life and times in South Australia’s rich history, covering aspects of South Australia prior to 1955. Other collections renowned for their specific subject, geographical, or time period have previously been available online, however have required permission from the Library for further use.

For the past 12 months the State Library has been working on improving access to collections for customers, and removing copyright restrictions and process for re-use has been a priority. Catalogue searches for images in the historical Mount Gambier collection from the Arthur Studio, and the Arthur Searcy Collection from 1880 to 1930 are now all available online and copyright free. Other collections of interest to researchers, family historians and the media, such as the Murray River images by Godson, and the maritime images in the Arbon le Maistre- and Edwardes collections are copyright free. The Library is working towards having all images in these collections available online in the future. Historically collections and the creators of images have been protected from misuse, particularly in the digital environment by conditions of use. These [Conditions of Use](#) are now linked to the catalogue record and for more than 120,000 images will indicate Public Domain, the customers permission to easily access, use and reuse the images that have no known copyright restrictions.

As the custodians of South Australia’s history depicted in these images, the State Library requires acknowledgment, while the Library has obliged the donors and highlighted any sensitive requirements. Significantly there will be no need to seek permission from the Library to publish or re-use these photographs.

Chairman of National and State Libraries Australasia, Mr Alan Smith said “this initiative is supported by the National peak organisation and is a further step towards standard service delivery across the library sector, with our customers at the fore of our directions”.

Public domain material online will carry a Creative Commons – Public Domain CC logo indicating the work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law and it is important that our customers are aware that use of the images and re-publishing does not create a new copyright to that item.

“*About Time* celebrates our story and encourages the community to participate, visit and use the wealth of cultural and heritage aspects of our State, and the Library’s photographic collections are a part of this story that we are delighted to share and add to the mix” said Director Alan Smith.

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