

MEDIA RELEASE

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Images

Left: Kapunda footballer, James Smith Pearce, 1879, B 7437

Right: Ian McKay of North Adelaide marks over Pat Hall of Norwood, Grand Final 1952

Background: Spectators at a football match, 1923, PRG 280/1/41/116

Football exhibitions draw record crowds to the State Library of South Australia

The two recent football exhibitions at the State Library of South Australia have drawn record crowds with over 66,000 visitors during the exhibitions' two-month run.

The exhibitions – **Straight through the middle: Football in South Australia** and **In a league of its own: Celebrating 140 years of SANFL¹** – told the stories through the years of a game that has captured the hearts of the community and provided an insight into social change in South Australia.

It was a delight to see the exhibition spaces continually filled with visitors. Comments from visitors, many who had travelled from the country, were overwhelmingly positive with expressions of gratitude for the chance to relive the memories, see their football heroes and learn more about the history of the much-loved game of football.

Commenting on the record numbers **Alan Smith**, Director State Library of South Australia, said “We are thrilled with the response and enthusiasm from the public to the football exhibitions. It has allowed us to introduce the State Library to a new audience.”

¹ South Australian National Football League

One of the many highlights of the exhibitions was the connections visitors made through the displays of football memorabilia including photos and archival footage. One such connection was a visitor from country South Australia who came to see the **Straight through the middle** exhibition. Just as she walked up the stairs she saw film footage of her late husband who had played for Balaklava against Hummocks United at Lochiel in 1969. She was overwhelmed with what she saw as she had never seen him play.

“This shows the real value of the role the Library plays in sharing the stories from the collections of the State Library and connecting them with the community. Our exhibition program is one of the ways we can bring those collections to life and make meaningful connections with the past and present-day,” said Alan Smith.

The State Library was pleased to have partnered with SANFL and the SANFL History Centre to present these extremely successful exhibitions.

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