

Cooking for Copyright Day 31 July

Captain Cook, Jane Austen and Banjo Paterson trapped by Australia's Copyright Laws

Monday 27 July 2015, Canberra: The National Library of Australia has approximately two million unpublished works in its collection, including handwritten letters from Jane Austen, Prince Albert, Captain Cook, Charles Darwin, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, Dame Nellie Melba, Henry Lawson, Elizabeth Macquarie, Christobel Pankhurst and Banjo Paterson.

Yet none of these can lawfully be digitised and shared with Australians on the web because of our archaic copyright system. Unlike Canada, the US, UK and all of the EU countries, which have copyright terms for unpublished works that are in line with those for published works, in Australia copyright for unpublished works lasts forever.

And it's not just the National Library, this affects every library, museum, archive and historical society with items from before the 1950s. For example, the Australian War Memorial has diaries, letters, sketches from soldiers who died in World War I. Often publication on the web is the only way to connect descendants with these family records. The State Library of South Australia collection includes the records of Holden motor company, including company records, correspondence and engineering design drawings, from 1853. These national treasures are trapped by Australia's outdated copyright laws.

To raise awareness of the issue and lobby for change, FAIR (the campaign for Freedom of Access to Information and Resources) has announced Cooking for Copyright Day on Friday 31 July, using vintage Aussie recipes from unpublished letters, diaries and manuscripts for lamingtons, canteen biscuits and carrot marmalade to drive the copyright reform agenda.

Sue McKerracher, spokesperson for FAIR, and CEO of the Australian Library and Information Association, said, 'We'd like the same copyright terms for unpublished works as for published works (70 years after the death of the creator). Then our libraries, museums and historical societies could put these treasures on the web for family historians, researchers, and everyone else who is fascinated by our social history.'

FAIR has delved into library and museum collections across Australia and posted more than 20 handwritten recipes to its website – effectively contravening the current copyright law. It's asking Australians to cook one of these recipes – or choose an old favourite – and post a photo to facebook or tweet with the #cookingforcopyright hashtag.

Sue McKerracher again, 'We will put all the images together, create a buzz on social media, and deliver them to the Attorney General, who has the unenviable task of unravelling the current copyright regime.'

Contacts: **Sue McKerracher**, CEO ALIA, 0404 456749 sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au
Trish Hepworth, Australian Libraries Copyright Committee, 0490 466112
phepworth@nla.gov.au

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About FAIR

FAIR stands for **F**reedom of **A**ccess to **I**nformation and **R**esources. The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) created FAIR to give people a way to support all kinds of libraries. FAIR lobbies for well-funded libraries, copyright law reform, the digitisation of our history, evidence-based policy making, lifelong learning and qualified library staff in schools. FAIR was created by ALIA to bring together all of its advocacy work. www.fair.alia.org.au

About the Australian Library and Information Association

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is the professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector. With 5,000 members across Australia, we provide the national voice of the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services, through leadership, advocacy and mutual support. www.alia.org.au