

**“The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library”**  
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## **Introduction**

This paper describes the history of the project to establish the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library at Deakin University’s Geelong Waterfront Campus. It builds upon and updates a previous paper on this topic.<sup>i</sup> It provides a brief summary of why the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library was established and the journey of building support for the concept within the University. The importance of linking the prime ministerial library with the teaching, learning and research programs of the university is highlighted.

When Alfred Deakin was Prime Minister, there was no National Archives of Australia to collect and manage the official records of his terms of office. Rather the papers were held by the National Library of Australia or other public institutions, or by Deakin’s family. Therefore, the Deakin initiative attempts to bring together, in a virtual space, some of the more important documents from the periods that Deakin was in office.

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library drew upon the vision and success of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, and it is appropriate to formally acknowledge the support provided by staff of this library.

## **Why Alfred Deakin?**

In 1901 Australia’s six separate colonies came together as a Federation and, with the swearing-in of the new Commonwealth Government, the modern Australia was born.

The first Commonwealth Attorney-General was Alfred Deakin, the man who had worked for over 10 years to realize this dream of a new federated nation. He would go on to lead the nation through three terms as Prime Minister and would shape the foundations of much of the social and political structures we enjoy today. He was an extraordinarily important Australian, but one whom the general population is sorely ignorant of his contributions.

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library is an initiative to bring together and preserve for future generations much of the history of the events of his time. A keen observer of the characters and events, a legendary negotiator and debater and a prodigious writer, Deakin became the voice of the Federal Movement’s ideals. His foresight in the formative years of this young country is evident today in Australia’s policies, laws, institutions and values.<sup>ii</sup>

## **Establishing the Concept**

Deakin University was established in 1974 and was the first Australian University to be named after a politician.<sup>iii</sup> In the Parliamentary debate of the Deakin University Bill in 1974, Alfred Deakin was described as “a significant figure in Australian history and played an important part in the development of a national spirit and Federation. It is certainly not inappropriate that a university should be named after a figure of such importance in the development of Australia. He valued scholarship. I am sure the Deakin University will not suffer from being named after a man of his calibre.”<sup>iv</sup>

Lindsay Thompson, the Minister for Education said in the same debate said of Deakin, "He was an outstanding orator, a distinguished writer and a man of exceptional intellect, and it is most fitting that his name should be honored in this way because he was an eminent Victorian and Australian."<sup>v</sup> “If the fourth university of Victoria, the Deakin University, makes as great a contribution towards learning and the development of this country as did the man after whom it has been named, it will be a university of which the State will be proud.”<sup>vi</sup>

It is because of this legacy that Deakin University is honouring the memory of Alfred Deakin and the contribution that he made to the federation of Australia and the foundations of most of the modern forms of government that we know today.

It was fitting that in 2001, the Centenary of Federation, Deakin University announced publicly its plan to develop a Prime Ministerial Library in honor of Australia's Voice of Federation. The idea of creating the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library didn't commence in 2001 though, although it was recognized that because of the Centenary of Federation, the interest of Australian would be focused on this remarkable man and his achievements.

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library grew from a very humble concept of a 'Deakin Room' in 1994. The notion of a 'Deakin Room' did not carry with the University Executive of the time and the idea was shelved until my appointment as University Librarian in 1996. The concept of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library developed throughout 1997, identifying the fact that physical archives on Alfred Deakin were scattered throughout Australia, primarily located at the National Library of Australia, but with materials also being held in the Victorian Parliamentary Library, the Public Records Office, Victoria and the National Archives of Australia as well as the myriad of private collections still held by the family and others.

The objectives of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library are to:

- Celebrate Alfred Deakin's contribution to the nation

- Build and display a unique collection of material on, by and about Alfred Deakin and his family
- Provide innovative research services for scholars undertaking research on either Alfred Deakin, the Federation Movement, the development of the constitution of Australia and all the social and economic policies put into place by the Victorian Government and Federal Government during Alfred Deakin's term as a politician
- Further scholarship on these matters
- Provide an educational outreach, especially to school children, on this important part of Australia's history
- Reconstruct Alfred Deakin's Walsh Street Library.

### **Links to the Academic Program**

It has been important, from the beginning, to align the project with the academic programs of the University. Alfred Deakin was a man of remarkably diverse interests and talents. These included law and legal institutions, public policy and governance, imperial relations and defence policy, journalism, literature, spiritualism, and regional development. Deakin University's education programs and research interests, to a remarkable extent, mirror these interests and the diversity of its namesake's contribution to Australian political, legal and cultural life.

For these reasons, the University's Vice-Chancellor announced that the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library Project will expand to embrace an Institute named after Alfred Deakin that would reflect and advance these areas.<sup>vii</sup> The Library will be central to, and part of, the Alfred Deakin Institute, which will be located at the University's Geelong Waterfront Campus. The teaching programs that are proposed to be located within the Institute include: Bachelor of Laws, Bachelor of Arts (International Relations), Bachelor of Public Policy and Governance, Bachelor of Arts (Police Studies), Bachelor of Journalism, and associated combined awards.

Research areas within the Alfred Deakin Institute will include: Citizenship and globalisation, International regulation and relations and corporate citizenship and governance.

The University is proud to be playing its part in ensuring a strong democratic society, by celebrating and promoting awareness of Alfred Deakin's contributions.

### **Support Structures**

To formalize the University's intention to celebrate its connection to Alfred Deakin, the Alfred Deakin Commemoration Committee (ADCC) was established

in 1999, chaired by the Deputy Chancellor, Dr Pauline Turner. The Committee reported to the Vice-Chancellor. Its terms of reference were to:

1. Make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor on ways in which the University can commemorate the life and work of Alfred Deakin.
2. Oversee the initial development of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library.
3. Generate ideas for submissions for funding to assist with the establishment of this Library and the ongoing commemoration of Alfred Deakin's contributions to the Federation of Australia and the political and social development of the nation.
4. Help the University establish partnerships that will help commemorate Alfred Deakin.
5. Ensure that all the projects are absorbed into the mainstream of University operations by December 2001. (It was the intention of the Committee to disband at the end of 2001. However, the Committee has had its terms of reference extended to the end of 2003, after the launch of the Alfred Deakin Digital Archive on 24 September, the centenary of Alfred Deakin's appointment to his first term as Australian Prime Minister.)

The creation of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library was not the only focus of the Commemoration Committee, but it was a major part. It has mainstreamed a number of commemorative initiatives: all campuses of Deakin University have a significant building, road or space named after Alfred Deakin; ten Alfred Deakin Medals are awarded each year to outstanding graduate students; and in 2003, it was agreed that the University Council may grant the title of Alfred Deakin Professor to a member of the academic staff of the University in recognition of the staff member's outstanding, sustained contribution to furthering the aims of Deakin University in relation to research. Four Alfred Deakin Professors have thus far been named.

From the ADCC's deliberations other projects were initiated. The concept of a digital archive of Alfred Deakin's papers had become a possibility as a result of emerging information technologies. In 1999, with Deakin University as the lead institution, an Australian Research Council (ARC) Research Infrastructure, Equipment & Facilities (RIEF) Grant Application was made to seek funds to create a digital archive of material on Australian Prime Ministers. The intention was to build upon the work of the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library and digitize material on Paul Keating that was donated to the University of New South Wales Library, and to digitize the Alfred Deakin material held by the National Library of Australia. Although this RIEF Grant Application was not successful, it created a foundation for the partnership with the National Library of Australia to create a digital archive as part of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library.

Also during 1999, a successful grant application was made to the Centenary of Federation for the “Alfred Deakin: The Voice of Federation” traveling exhibition. The \$165,000 grant enabled the design and production of a stunning exhibition and CD-ROM on Alfred Deakin that toured Victoria as part of the Centenary of Federation celebrations.<sup>viii</sup> Over 40,000 people visited the exhibition in 2001.

An Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library Appeal Cabinet was formed to plan the fundraising and associated activities that needed to be undertaken to make a good idea turn into a reality. This Cabinet has deliberately been kept small (3 people) so that it was able to convene meetings with relative ease. The Chair of the Appeal Cabinet was Mr. David Morgan, who was Deputy Chancellor at the time. A fundraising company was contracted to undertake a market analysis of potential financial support for the project and to assist in the initial stages of the fundraising project.

Early in the establishment of the prime ministerial library concept, the ADCC realized the project needed a champion to be patron of our cause. The University is indeed grateful and fortunate that Sir Zelman Cowen, who is also patron of the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library at the University of South Australia, agreed to become Patron of the project. Sir Zelman is passionate about Alfred Deakin and his role in Australia's history. He also shares an important date with Deakin. 7 October 1919 was the date of Sir Zelman's birth and Deakin's death, only a few miles apart at St. Kilda.

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library Appeal Cabinet was to be supported by an Appeal Board. The Appeal Board comprised members of the community who had indicated significant interest in the project, a willingness to provide financial support themselves, and a willingness to ask others to contribute. It was a loose collection of individuals who have been briefed on our project, and been briefed in the art of asking for donations. The fund raising strategy developed was to secure Federal and State Government funding first, and then to seek top up funding from philanthropic trusts, and corporate and individual donors. Unfortunately, to date, the University has been unsuccessful in securing government financial support, so the members of the Appeal Board have not been asked to “swing into action”. This is not an uncommon situation for most Australian prime ministerial library projects. The future of the Appeal Board is in question, given the recent appointment in 2004 of a Development Manager to the University's Marketing Division, who will be responsible for public fund raising.

Another great wealth of support has been provided by members of Alfred Deakin's family. They are very supportive of the project to commemorate their great and great, great grandfather, and the University has been able to bring them together as a family on more than one occasion during 2001, the Centenary of Federation and in 2003. The University's activities have heightened the families' awareness and their commitment to helping commemorate the important role that Alfred Deakin played in the formation of Australia.

## **Partnerships**

It is not possible to create a Prime Ministerial Library without the support of many others. Deakin University Library has been fortunate to establish a partnership with the National Library of Australia to digitize the Deakin papers held there. The National Library of Australia, for the Centenary of Federation, undertook the digitization of the Barton papers that represent the public record of the first Prime Minister of Australia. The Alfred Deakin project builds upon this expertise of the National Library of Australia in creating the digital archive of the Alfred Deakin papers.

The generosity of the Victorian Parliamentary Library is recognized in Annual Reports of Deakin University Library, and their generosity extends to donations of books and pamphlets relating to the history of Victoria and the Commonwealth during Alfred Deakin's period, and offers on long-term loan of memorabilia relating to Alfred Deakin. The items from the Victorian Parliamentary Library are providing the foundation of the recreated personal library of Alfred Deakin.

Finally, and perhaps of most importance, is our partnership with the Deakin family. Already Deakin University Library has received significant donations of books owned by Alfred Deakin. Various members of the family have indicated that they are natural hoarders and have a wealth of material on their famous forbear. Through the ability to digitize material, the University can provide access to resources that will remain in the family. We feel extremely lucky to be able to gather together, for the benefit of all Australians, information on Alfred Deakin that would never have been placed in the public domain. It is difficult to stress the importance of maintaining close and appropriate relationships with the families of the individual honoured in a special person library so that these personal and private resources can be made accessible.

## **The Physical Library**

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library, when it moves to its own special purpose space, will ensure that Deakin University's Waterfront campus is a magnet for researchers and visitors alike. It will be a lasting legacy for all Australians to the importance and excitement of Federation, which the recent Centenary of Federation celebrations have highlighted. As a nation we have not tried to understand our historical roots that shaped our democracy. This Library will provide a much-needed focus on these important events of over 100 years ago and present these in ways that are easily accessible to school age children as well as scholars and researchers. By understanding the foundations of our multi-cultural democracy, Australian citizens will be better equipped to participate in shaping tomorrow's future.

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library will blend the historic past with the most advanced technological developments to create a unique, publicly available

space for education and research in an exciting and architecturally acclaimed restored woolstore on the foreshore of Corio Bay. The recreation of Alfred Deakin's Walsh Street study will transport visitors to Victoria in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It is envisaged that historical displays will feature the story of Federation told through Deakin's involvement, and furniture and household items that were owned by the Deakin family, giving an insight into the life and times of this great Australian. The historic precinct of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library will feature the study and books that Deakin would have read for leisure and for his journalistic and parliamentary endeavours, and provide access to the leather bound research material in the legislative records of both the Victorian and Australian parliaments of the period.

In juxtaposition to the historic precinct will be the very latest research facilities that use Internet and www-based technologies to provide access to the resources of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library and Digital Archive regardless of the location of the searcher.

The physical library will also house the "Alfred Deakin: The Voice of Federation" exhibition. Other exhibitions and displays of interpretative information and personal items will be mounted to enable members of the public to understand the important contribution of Deakin, and help interpret political and social development in a contemporary context.

The Library, in total, can be described thus:

## **1 The Alfred Deakin Digital Archive**

Two digital archive collections of material relating to Alfred Deakin have been created, sourced from both the public and private domain. The major collection is from the Alfred Deakin Papers, housed at the National Library of Australia.<sup>ix</sup> The overall objectives of this project are to:

- To digitise a selection of the material from NLA MS 1540;
- To improve end-user access to NLA MS 1540 by delivering digitised selections and the finding aid to users, via the web (ie the NLA catalogue and delivery system for digitised collection material, the DU interpretive website about Alfred Deakin and Australia's Prime Ministers' portal); and
- Support DU's development of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library.<sup>x</sup>

The following series from MS 1540 were selected for digitisation, and the status (as of 25 June 2004) is indicated.

[Series 2](#): Diaries, 1884-1916 [completed]

[Series 15](#): Prime Minister, 1903-1904, 1905-1908, 1909-1910 [completed]

[Series 7](#): Journalism [completed]

[Series 11](#): Federation delegate, 1880-1900 [completed]

[Series 16](#): Leader of the Opposition, 1904-1905, 1908-1909, 1910-1913 [in progress]

[Series 14](#): Barton Government, 1901-1903 [in progress]

[Series 19](#): Family papers {[selected photographs only](#)} [completed]

In all, over 3,700 images have been made accessible via the digital archive. Most images are being made from the original document, but some are being taken from microform copies.

The Deakin University contribution to the digital collections, by comparison, is very small, containing just over 90 images.<sup>xi</sup> This collection contains many images of pictures from the Deakin family albums as well as of memorabilia collected by Deakin University.

## **2 Internet site**

The two digital collections are brought together in an overarching interpretative web site housed at Deakin University.<sup>xii</sup> This site is also linked to the Australia's Prime Ministers site maintained by the National Archives of Australia<sup>xiii</sup> and the other Australian prime ministerial libraries and collections. The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library site includes a biography of Alfred Deakin, a useful timeline and resources page to assist researchers.

## **3 Alfred Deakin's personal library and study**

Once the Library is relocated into its special space, the intention is to recreate Alfred Deakin's extensive personal library of books and magazines to form a representation of his reading preferences. This will allow interpretation and research into the nature of reading at this point in Australia's development, and its importance to informed democracy. Deakin's recreated personal library will be housed in a replica of his study. Deakin University students, in Museum Studies and Australian Studies programs, will have opportunities to participate in the identification, acquisition, indexing, and curation of this collection as part of in-service opportunities.

## **4 Specialised reference collection**

A reading room with open access will provide a specialised reference collection, informed by the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library Collection Policy. This reference and reading collection will contain material relating directly to Alfred Deakin, his life and times including the federal movement and the Federation of Australia and the social and political development of Australia during Deakin's lifetime. It will also include research material on the growth of the nation, the constitution and the republican debate. The reference collection will support the teaching, learning and research of specific disciplines within the University's faculties.



## **5 Public programs**

The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library aims to offer a series of public programs, in particular an education program, for schools, public lectures and other events. A submission has been developed for funds to create education modules linked to the school curricula, using the resources in the digital archives, for online delivery to primary schools in the first instance. Deakin plans to capitalise on its strengths in distance and online education to fully exploit the digital collections on Alfred Deakin.

### **Staffing**

The question of recurrent funding is one that plagues all persons who are establishing new facilities such as special person libraries. Fortunately, the plan is to develop the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library either adjacent to, or part of, the existing Deakin University Waterfront Campus Library in Geelong. In this way, it will be possible to capitalize on the staff that are already employed to provide services at that location. The University Library is already served by a specialist librarian who has skills in historical and manuscript collections, and preservation. Already, librarians are rostered to the information desk of the Special Collection and, although it is planned to extend the hours of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library to those of the existing Special Collection (which currently houses the material on by or about Alfred Deakin), it is expected that the additional staff hours can be provided from the Library's normal recurrent budget. Similarly, existing cataloguing and acquisitions staff will be used to prepare the collections of the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library.

### **Collection Policy**

The collection is focussing on Federation, the growth of the nation, the Constitution and the republican debate. It is a scholarly research facility that will draw together historical and contemporary material that examines the Federation Movement, the formation of Australia's constitution and its impact on the Commonwealth of Australia, the republican debate and the Office of Prime Minister. The Library will celebrate the significant contribution Alfred Deakin made to the social and political evolution of Australia.

There will be an historical and contemporary focus to the collections, both physical and virtual. The University continues to acquire (within budget) everything by, about or owned by Alfred Deakin, or by and about his family. Alfred Deakin's three daughters married into the Brookes, White and Clarke families and they are interesting families in their own right.

### **Observations and Lessons Learnt**

Australian prime ministerial libraries do not enjoy the same level of financial support or historical interest as do the presidential libraries in the United States, after which these are modeled. There, presidential libraries are covered by legislation<sup>xiv</sup> and the libraries are created to house the official archives of the respective administrations. In Australia, the official records are required to be deposited with the National Archives of Australia (since 1910) and before that with the National Library of Australia. Australia's prime ministerial libraries, therefore, do not contain the official records, but the more personal collections of the namesake.

An interesting comparison is that all Australian libraries are sponsored by universities. In the United States, many presidential libraries were established in the President's home town or where he was born, without any link to an academic or research program. However, recent changes to the legislation covering presidential libraries have set the scene for future presidential libraries to be located on college or university campuses with the programmatic activities and facilities potentially separate from the library itself.<sup>xv</sup> These observations add weight to the fact that the prime ministerial library needs to be closely aligned with the academic program of the university that is hosting the facility if it is to be successful and sustainable.

On reflecting on the advancement from the idea for an Alfred Deakin Room in 1994 and where we are today, I conclude:

- Success is easier (but still not guaranteed) if the special person is famous, apolitical and dead.
- Everything takes longer than you expect. Plan to spend years, not months, on developing the concept and delivering on the vision.
- It is vital to keep everyone informed and feeling enthusiastic about the project (especially the family of the special person after whom the library is named). This is also very important because of the point above. Failures in raising funds can put a dampener on any project, so it is important to maintain the passion and keep stating, internally and externally, why it deserves support.
- Raising money in Australia is very difficult, due to the lack of a strong philanthropic culture. Fund raising strategies need to be considered and decisions made as to whether to employ professional fund raisers.
- Target all philanthropic trusts to be approached at the "same time", i.e. with a consistent approach.
- Corporate sponsors require a business case aligned to their particular interests. One size will not fit all!
- You need passion for the project.
- You need to convey that passion and "infect" others.
- You need influencers who can open doors.

In addition, perhaps the most importance thing is to believe that libraries and archives can make a difference in our democracy. The Case Statement for the Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library uses a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt,

*“It seems to me that the dedication of a (presidential) library is in itself an act of faith. To bring together the records of the past and to house them in buildings where they will be preserved for the use of men and women in the future, a nation must believe in three things.*

*It must believe in the past.*

*It must believe in the future.*

*It must, above all, believe in the capacity of its own people to learn from the past so they can gain judgment in creating their own futures.”<sup>xvi</sup>*

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<sup>i</sup> McKnight, Sue, “Turning a Good Idea into Reality: The Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library”, in Jeremy, Jenni (ed), *Someone Special: Issues in the development of person specific libraries, archives and collections. Proceeding of a national conference presented by The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, 18-20 October 2001*. University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003. pp.16-26.

<sup>ii</sup> La Nauze, J.A., *Alfred Deakin : a Biography*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1965.

<sup>iii</sup> Hay, Roy, et al, *Breaking the Mould: Deakin University, the First Twenty-Five Years*, Deakin University, Geelong, 2002. p.11.

<sup>iv</sup> Fordham, Robert, Victoria. Parliamentary Debates. Legislative Assembly. 20 November 1974, p.2440.

<sup>v</sup> Thompson, Lindsay, Victoria. Parliamentary Debates. Legislative Assembly. 12 September 1974, p.188.

<sup>vi</sup> *ibid.* p.191.

<sup>vii</sup> Professor Sally Walker, Vice-Chancellor, Deakin University, from the text of a speech delivered at the launch of the Alfred Deakin Digital Archive, Victorian Parliament House, 24 September 2003.

<sup>viii</sup> A web version of the “Alfred Deakin: Voice of Federation” exhibition is available at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/alfreddeakin/exhibitions/index.htm> (accessed 25 June 2004)

<sup>ix</sup> National Library of Australia. Guide to the Papers of Alfred Deakin (Finding Aid), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms1540> (accessed 25 June 2004)

<sup>x</sup> National Library of Australia. Digitisation Project Brief – Papers of Alfred Deakin, [http://www.nla.gov.au/digital/deakin\\_brief.html](http://www.nla.gov.au/digital/deakin_brief.html) (accessed 28 June 2004)

<sup>xi</sup> Deakin University Library. Alfred Deakin collection list, <http://library.deakin.edu.au/search/i?SEARCH=vdu.ms0001> (accessed 28 June 2004)

<sup>xii</sup> Alfred Deakin Prime Ministerial Library, <http://www.deakin.edu.au/alfreddeakin/> (accessed 28 June 2004)

<sup>xiii</sup> National Archives of Australia. Australia’s Prime Ministers, <http://primeministers.naa.gov.au/> (accessed 28 June 2004)

<sup>xiv</sup> United States. Congress. Presidential Libraries Act Amendments 1986

<sup>xv</sup> Wilson, Don W., “Presidential Libraries in the United States: Personal Monuments of National Treasures?” in , Jeremy, Jenni (ed.) *Someone Special: Issues in the development of person specific libraries, archives and collections. Proceeding of a national conference presented by The*

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*Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library, 18-20 October 2001*, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2003. pp.2-9.

<sup>xvi</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt, on the occasion of the dedication of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York, 30 June 1941 as quoted by Don W. Wilson, *ibid*, p. 9.