



NATIONAL CENTRE for  
**AUSTRALIAN**  
**CHILDREN'S**  
**LITERATURE**<sup>Inc</sup>

# Annual Report 2017

FOR THE YEAR 1 JULY 2016 – 30 JUNE 2017

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For members, friends and supporters of  
The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc



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# ANNUAL REPORT

*1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017*



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Astra Lacis' artwork for My Dog short story by John Heffernan published in The School Magazine July 1997 and exhibited at the Civic Public Library

## Executive Summary

This year the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (NCACL) pursued a range of activities to deliver our vision —

*Our literary past, present and future are preserved in the Centre, through the stories that touched our hearts and stirred our imaginations as children. It documents and shares the creative process and inspires the next generation of readers with research collections, exhibitions and outreach activities.*

These are our objectives which guide us in achieving this vision —

1. to collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature;
2. to make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities, in recognition of our cultural heritage in children's literature;
3. to make the collection available to students, researchers and others interested and to assist them in their study and research;
4. to provide encouragement and inspiration for current and future authors and illustrators of children's literature; and
5. to assist in the recognition and contribution of Australian children's authors and illustrators to children's literature around the world.

In connection with these objectives the NCACL aims to:

- preserve the creators' works;
- nurture the children's literature industry;
- support future professionals in the children's literature industry;
- support the research community in Australia and particularly those engaged in researching children's literature;
- encourage reading in children; and
- celebrate children's literature.

This Annual Report outlines achievements and continuing pursuits to achieve our vision and objectives.

Our collections continue to grow through strong publisher, author, illustrator and private donor support throughout Australia and overseas. Significant collections of

authors' papers and illustrators' artworks have been added, with others scheduled to arrive. Research files continue to grow, both existing and new ones. New procedures for our research files have enhanced their growth and ensured earlier and easier access to these resources.

The Centre curated and delivered two major exhibitions, *Seeing Stories* and *Imagine if ...* over the past two years. These are in line with our objective to make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities, in recognition of our cultural heritage in children's literature. We designed and offered programs to reach different ages and to meet particular needs. These attracted over 1,400 people of all ages.

The Centre continues to increase its presence and reach into communities across Australia and overseas through its presence on Facebook, Twitter, its e-newsletter, e-journal and website. Our strong engagement through social media positions the Centre as a valued contributor to promoting Australian children's literature nationally and internationally.

Through donations under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, the Centre continues to collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature. Such donations strengthen the Centre's unique research capacity, potential for exhibitions and outreach programs. We continue to document these collections on our website, thus promoting the work of Australian creators of children's literature throughout the world.

This year's Annual Report highlights achievements as well as forecasts new and enhanced directions. Our aim is that the Centre is a place to share our stories, explore our cultural identity, and preserve our history so that children and adults can study and learn from it and be inspired by it, both now and in the future.

## Building the Centre as a National Institution

In last year's Annual Report, the Centre highlighted a series of actions to build the sustainability of the Centre and to continue developing it as a national institution. This year's Annual Report continues to pursue two broad objectives in our Strategic Plan:

1. to achieve financial sustainability, and
2. to grow the reputation and reach of the Centre so that a wider range of individuals and groups can access the Centre's services and products.

The Board progressed these objectives by pursuing the following activities:

- *securing income to develop the Centre and progress its core operations;*  
The focus continues to be on applying for grants and development of income streams that will enable the Centre to build its business capability.
- *establishing the Centre as a national institution;*  
Meetings with key stakeholders in this process have been held throughout the year.
- *building relationships with individuals and organisations to 'grow' the Centre's potential as a national institution;*  
Board members have progressed these relationships with targeted groups and individuals.
- *determining particular needs for the Centre's 'physical presence'.*  
Plans detailing future space requirements, resources required, activities projected and staff needed over the next 20-30 years have been developed.

New Centre collateral has been produced for meetings with individuals and groups. All individuals and groups pursued have offered general, often very enthusiastic, support for the concept of a fully realised National Centre for Australian Children's Literature. That is our goal.



## Expanding the Centre's Reach

The Centre continues initiatives to form links and partnerships and to build a consortia consisting of like-minded organisations. This consortium is designed to support further development and to secure the future of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature.

### EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

#### *Pursing links, partnerships and consortia*

NCACL Board members met with the National Capital Authority; Department of Communications and the Arts; CEO, Australian Library & Information Association; Director-General, National Library of Australia; The Children's Book Council of Australia's (CBCA) National Board and Branch Presidents of The CBCA; the Children's Publishers' Group of the Australian Publishers Association; Teacher Librarian Network (Sydney) of the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) & attendees of the national ASLA Conference.

#### *Appointing and renewing NCACL Ambassadors*

Chris Cheng has been appointed as the Centre's new Ambassador, with Jackie French extending her Ambassadorship. A Board member is managing the Ambassador program.

#### *Realising The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) partnership*

Celebrating a newly formed Partnership Agreement in December 2016, The NCACL and The CBCA agreed to hold a collaborative exhibition, *Imagine if ...* from 10 July – 30 August 2017, a total of 37 days. The CBCA Children's Book Week artwork and the Centre's artworks together offered 40 artworks by 19 illustrators. Planning began in December 2016. *Imagine if ...* will be reported in the NCACL's following year's activities.

### EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

#### *Collaborating on a national exhibition with the National Library of Australia*

The NCACL and the National Library are planning a collaborative exhibition to be held at the National Library of Australia's Treasures Gallery from August 2019 – January 2020.

#### *Continuing our mentoring relationship with Creative Partnerships Australia*

Board members continue to meet with the NSW & ACT Director of this organisation to gain advice and support.

#### Rare books by May Gibbs exhibited at the Canberra Museum & Gallery



## Enhancing our Collection & Providing Access

### We aim to:

- collect, preserve and document developments in Australian children's literature;
- make the collection available;
- enable research;
- inspire current and future creators;
- promote the recognition and contribution of Australian children's creators to the international field of children's literature and;
- recognise our cultural heritage.

Below are the strategies we have used to achieve these objectives.

### ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

#### *Growing the book collection*

The Centre added 1,924 books including 705 books from 26 publishers and their imprints; including 95 donations from 21 authors & illustrators; and 1,124 donations from 32 individuals & organisations. These included 240 translations in 33 languages, early and rare books as well as new works and different editions thus strengthening and/or completing the Centre's holdings for particular creators. The Centre's collection of translations began in 1979. In many instances, the Centre holds the only copy in Australia. The Centre now holds 3,741 translations in 58 languages.

**SEE** [Graph 1 Donations](#) | [Graph 2 Translations](#) | [Donations](#) | [National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Translations 1979 – 2017](#)

### ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

#### *Adding formed book collections*

The Centre proudly accepted two special book donations this year. Leanne Barrett, who collected contemporary Australian children's literature, donated her collection of 270 contemporary books which filled important gaps in our collection. Many of these books are personally signed by both author and illustrator. Jean Chapman's family donated 44 books with many books in this collection published between the 1950s-1970s, most of these now out of print and scarce.

**SEE** [Donations Leanne Barrett and Jean Chapman](#)

#### *Receiving donations to wish lists*

Our website wish lists for Colin Thiele, Hesba Brinsmead and Noela Young continue to attract books from private and institutional donors. These creators are deemed significant in the development of Australian children's literature.

**SEE** [Wishlists](#)

#### *Enhancing collection of translations*

Translations provide evidence that stories have universal appeal. Australian children's literature achieves significant numbers of these. The Centre began collecting translations in 1979 to mark the International Year of the Child and now holds 3,741 books in 58 languages or country of origin. The Centre has a record of the number and country of translation since 1979, making it possible to track the growth of translations from particular countries over the years. This year 240 translations in 33 different languages were added to the collection.

**SEE** [Translations of Australian children's books](#)

#### *Enhancing research files*

The Centre created an Australia-wide team of newspaper and other media material collectors to enhance building the Centre's existing 32 linear metres of research files. This strategy, managed by a volunteer, has significantly increased the depth and scope of this research collection.

**SEE** [Research Files](#)

## ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

### *Enhancing artwork donations*

Large collections of artwork by Dee Huxley, Alison Lester and Deborah Niland have been received by the Centre and are being prepared as donations under the Cultural Gifts Program.

**SEE** [Dee Huxley Artwork](#) | [Alison Lester Artwork](#) | [Deborah Niland Artwork](#)

### *Strengthening collections of artists' artworks and authors' papers*

Three authors, Wendy Orr, Libby Hathorn and Jennifer Rowe (aka Emily Rodda), have donated their papers and manuscripts to the Centre. Both the Orr and Rowe papers are additions to their papers held by the Centre. Libby Hathorn's collection represents her body of work over 40 years, including a collection of related artworks from her books.

The family of Narelle Oliver, author and illustrator of a large number of picture books, has donated her artwork collection to the Centre. A collection of preliminary artwork by Shaun Tan has been donated. These are all scheduled as future Cultural Gifts Donations.

### *Adding Cultural Gifts Donations*

The Department of Communications and the Arts has finalised three Cultural Gifts Donations to the Centre over the year. Ann James has donated the James Barrow artwork collection, and Books Illustrated has donated a collection of artworks by various artists. Graeme Base's donation has also been accepted.

**SEE** [John Barrow Collection](#) | [Books Illustrated Donation](#) | [Graeme Base collection](#)

### *Cataloguing and providing access to Centre resources*

There were 2,900 items catalogued by Centre volunteers, with support from the Library. This was an increase of 907 items compared with the previous year. Expert cataloguing provides freely available, worldwide online access to the Centre's book collection.

## ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION & PROVIDING ACCESS

### *Offering enhanced access to authors' papers & research files*

A finding aid for the papers of author Jane Carroll has been completed by a Centre volunteer while another volunteer determined the status of a large collection of rare books, as well as updated and created a large number of research files.

**SEE** [Jane Carroll Finding Aid](#) | [Author and Illustrator Index](#)

### *Donation by Leanne Barrett of signed contemporary books*







Viewer at Seeing Stories opening

## Promoting Engagement and Attracting Wider Audiences

### We aim to:

- make the collection available to the people of Australia, including all ages and all communities, in recognition of our cultural heritage in children's literature;
- make the collection available to students, researchers and others interested and to assist them in their study and research, and;
- engage a wider range of individuals and groups and enable access to the Centre's services and products.

### PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

#### *Documenting the Centre through film*

A series of 10 short films featuring the collections of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc have been created and added to the Centre's website. The Centre is deeply grateful to the Producer, Nalini Haynes, and the Editor, Edward Haynes, of Dark Matter Zine.

**SEE** [Videos about the Centre](#)

#### *Exhibiting May Gibbs at Canberra Museum & Gallery 16 Jul – 11 Sept 2016*

The Centre created an exhibition featuring its May Gibbs collection of rare books and ephemera at the Canberra Museum & Gallery running from 16 July – 11 September. Jane Brummitt, noted authority on May Gibbs gave a floor talk on Thursday 21 July at the Canberra Museum and Gallery Ramp Showcase which featured an exhibition of the NCACL's May Gibbs collection.

**SEE** [May Gibbs Exhibition](#) | [May Gibbs Event](#)

## PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

### *Promoting Seeing Stories exhibition 29 April - 26 August 2016*

The *Seeing Stories* exhibition attracted over 660 attendees including school groups from toddlers to year 12, writers, illustrators, tertiary staff and students, professional development groups and others. A dozen students in the University of Canberra Bachelor of Heritage, Museums and Conservation degree participated in curating this exhibition. The finale event held on 21 August during The CBCA Children's Book Week featured five children's book authors and illustrators, face painting, balloon modeling, and book sales by Harry Hartog Booksellers.

**SEE** [Seeing Stories exhibition](#)

### *Exhibiting The School Magazine at the Canberra Civic Public Library 23 September - 21 October 2016*

The Centre celebrated 100 years of *The School Magazine* with original artworks, special issues and ephemera in an exhibition at the Canberra Civic Library featuring a talk by the Editor, Alan Edwards, on 14 October. 'The School Magazine: Readers' Memories Celebrate Its Centenary' captured memories of those enjoying *The School Magazine* during their childhood.

**SEE** [The School Magazine exhibit](#)

### *Celebrating an evening with May Gibbs at ALIA House 11 May 2017*

Jane Brummitt, noted May Gibbs authority, spoke about May Gibbs as did Tania McCartney, on her to be published book about May Gibbs for young children. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of a 1915 preliminary artwork by May Gibbs for her published book, *Gumnut Babies*. Tania McCartney presented a handcrafted May Gibbs quilt which she had earlier won on a raffle but now donated to the Centre.

**SEE** [An Evening with May Gibbs](#) | [The Canberra Times article](#)

## PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

### *Curating & promoting Imagine if... exhibition January - June 2017*

The Centre partnered with The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) in exhibiting 40 framed artworks including 16 from The CBCA Children's Book Week Artwork Collection and another 24 works from the Centre's collection. Three display cabinets showed the creative process and one showed the CBCA Book Week merchandise from 1987-2017. The exhibition planning began in December 2016, with the exhibition running from 10 July - 30 August. Full coverage of *Imagine if ...* will be included in next year's report.

**SEE** [Imagine if ... exhibition](#)

### *Providing services & programs for study, research & professional development*

University of Canberra students, researchers, academics and members of the external community continued to use the Centre's resources.

**SEE** [Services to Clients](#)

### *Curating & categorising research material about authors' & illustrators' works*

The Centre created 26 new & updated 11 existing research files, now totaling 485 and extending over 32 linear metres. An independent assessor describes these as 'unique' and 'invaluable' material for research into Australian children's literature.

**Created:** Ian Abdulla, Deborah Abela, Goldie Alexander, Emma Allen, Felice Arena, Trace Balla, Jill Carter-Hansen, Meredith Costain, Alison Croggon, Aleesah Darlison, Pauline Deeves, Anh Do, James Foley, Leanne Hall, Jacqueline Harvey, Simmone Howell, Tom Jellett, Danny Katz, Heath McKenzie, Peter Macinnis, Marc Martin, Danny Parker, Alice Pung, Hannah Sommerville, Mitch Vane, and Fiona Wood. **Updated:** Freya Blackwood, Isobelle Carmody, Peter Carnavas, Gary Crew, Libby Gleeson, Sonya Hartnett, Alison Lester, Robert Newton, Narelle Oliver, Leila Rudge and Margaret Wild.

**SEE** [Author & Illustrator Indexes](#) | [Graph 3 New Research Files](#)



Tania McCartney wins May Gibbs quilt raffle

## PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

### *Promoting the Centre through websites, social media & published articles*

Authors, illustrators, publishers and reviewers visited and promoted the Centre on their websites and blogs. Articles about the Centre were published in professional journals in the field.

**SEE** [Jane Jolly's blog](#) | [Your Centre for Australian Children's Literature](#)  
| [Bookbird IBBY Organisation](#)

### *Reaching our audience through the Centre e-newsletter*

The Centre published four newsletters over the last year. These promoted events and provided news about the Centre's activities to over 800 people receiving these.

**SEE** [Centre Newsletters](#)

### *Publishing the Centre's online journal, Behind the Imagined*

Under new editorship, the Centre produced the first online issue of *Behind the Imagined* with four articles. The Centre's former print journal, *The Lu Rees Archives : Notes, Books and Authors*, began in 1981 as a paper copy which continued through issue 35 dated 2013. The purpose of the Centre's journal is to showcase and promote the Centre and its activities and to offer articles about Australian children's literature.

**SEE** [Behind the Imagined journal](#)





## Building Our Workforce

### We aim to:

- achieve a mix of paid staff, professional experts and volunteers which is coordinated, skilled and adaptable over time.

Presently the Centre relies on well-qualified and skilled volunteers. From the Centre's establishment in 1974, volunteers have contributed to our growth and development. The contribution of volunteers has increased yearly, reflecting a range of skills and knowledge required by the Centre. We gain our volunteers through direct recruitment for specific tasks, through the [Centre's website](#) online form and through word of mouth. The Centre acquires additional expertise upon request to organisations such as the University of Canberra, or where grants provide funds for specific purposes.

Over this year 47 volunteers donated 5,526 hours, the equivalent of four full-time staff. The [Volunteers' Contribution](#) provides further details.

## Conclusion

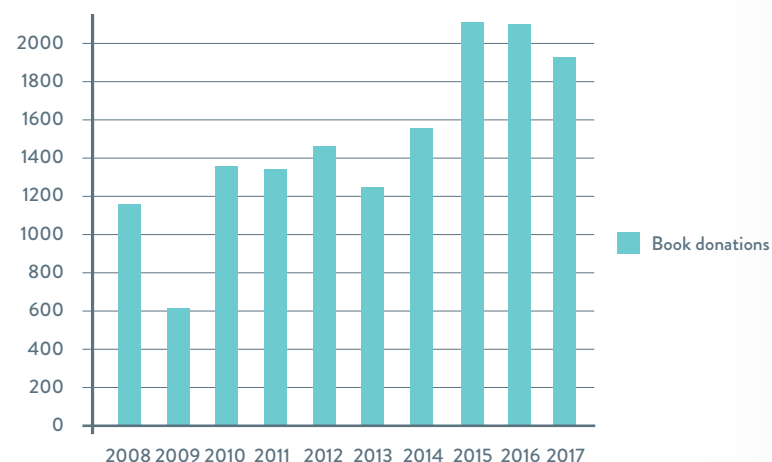
The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature has pursued initiatives designed to achieve our vision as a national centre. While the collections continue to grow, our events and exhibitions expand, and our presence reaches wider audiences, there is still a major task ahead. That task is to be recognised as the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature. Such national institutions exist in the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe. Australia should have a similar institution proudly occupying this international stage.



## Graphs

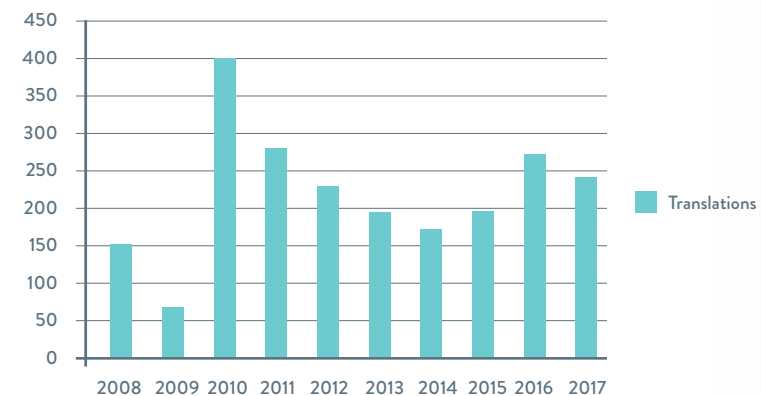
### Graph 1 Book donations

Book donations reflect Cultural Gifts, Australian publishing output, efforts to fill collection gaps, and solicited and unsolicited material.



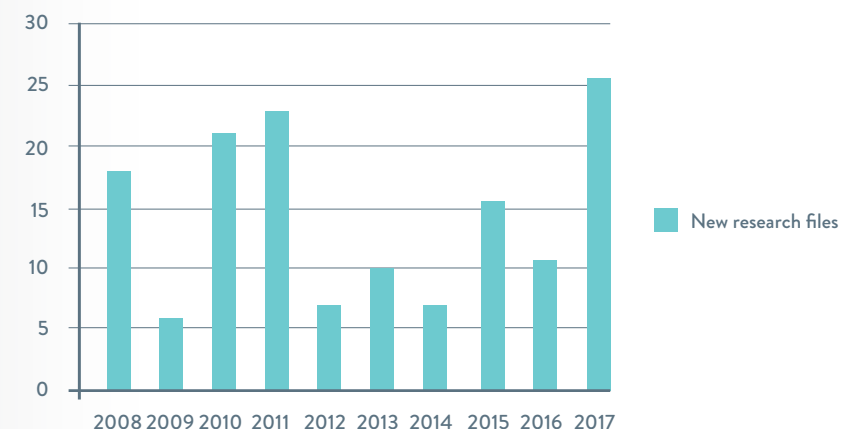
### Graph 2 Translations

Translations reflect donations by publishers, authors and illustrators with Cultural Gifts in particular years producing large numbers of translations.



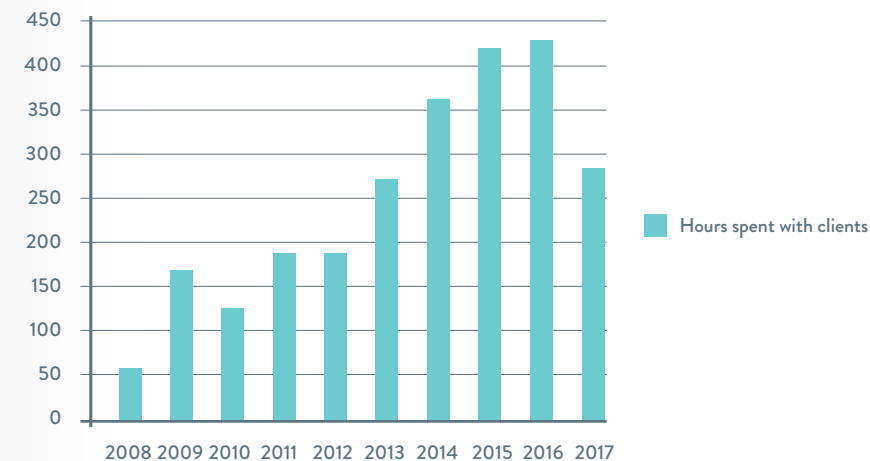
### Graph 3 New research files

File growth reflects priorities set by the Centre, demands from staff, students and researchers.



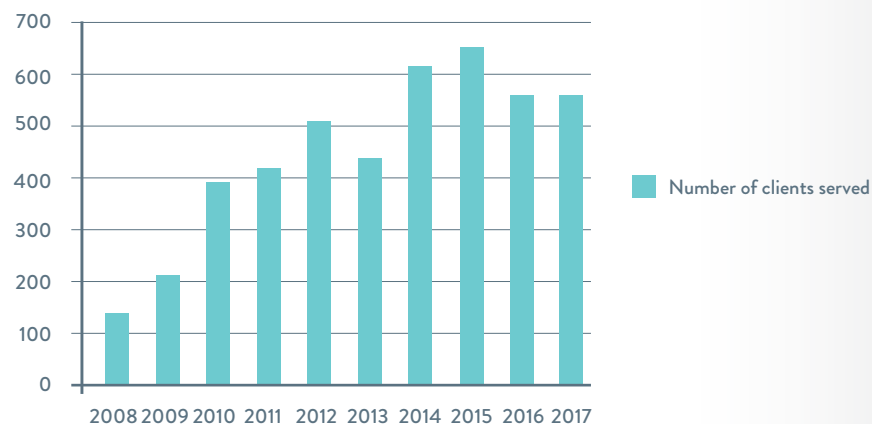
### Graph 4 Hours spent with clients

Hours spent with clients reflect enhanced access to the Centre's resources, greater diversity of resources and more sophisticated queries.



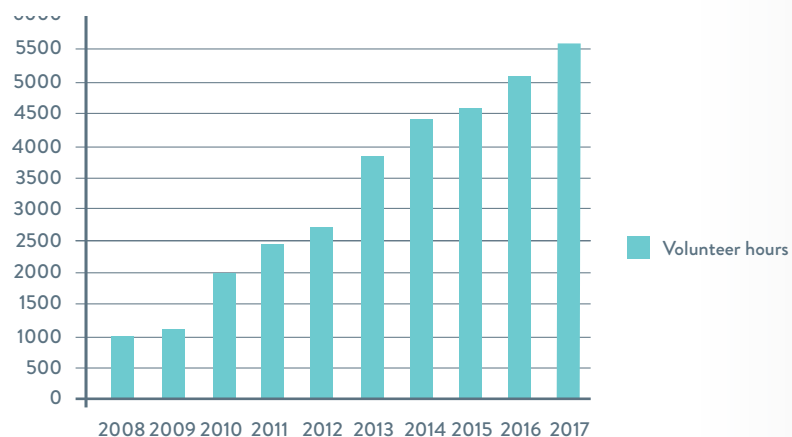
### Graph 5 Number of clients served

Numbers of clients served reflect academic programs and external engagement. Access is provided through face-to-face and electronic means.



### Graph 6 Volunteer hours

Volunteer hours reflect recurring activities as well as specific projects and tasks which vary from year to year.



*Sharing Our Nation's Heritage*

