



NATIONAL CENTRE for
**AUSTRALIAN
CHILDREN'S
LITERATURE**^{Inc}

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

For the year

1 JULY 2023 - 30 JUNE 2024

Prepared by Dr Belle Alderman AM, Director

For Members, Friends and Supporters and the
Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission



National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc

Annual Report 2024

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 National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc.

 @NatCentAusChLit

www.ncacl.org.au



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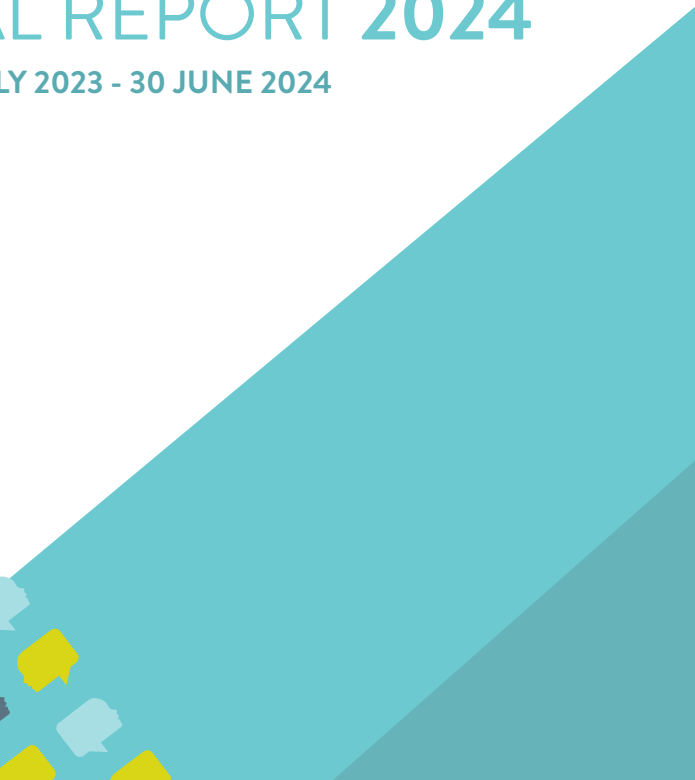




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50th Birthday event with Bob Graham speaking

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Annual Report celebrates our 50th birthday. Featured is our timeline which highlights our beginning, major developments and where we are now. Online communication, especially our website and social media, enables the Centre to erase physical barriers to accessing and promoting our resources worldwide. The Centre's collections and services are available 24/7.

The Centre's website has an international following with over 50,000 active users annually from the US, Japan, India, China, Brazil, UK, Bangladesh, Germany, Russia, South Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, France, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, Vietnam, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Netherlands, Ukraine, Argentina, Algeria and Egypt.

Repeat users number approximately 20,000. All State & Territory Departments of Education are registered users. Independent and private schools are also engaged in using the Centre's free resources.

The Centre's well-established social media presence, first established in 2014 on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), engages with over 10,000 followers. Our two years of monthly blogs have increased our involvement with creators, partners and friends. Other online offerings, available through our website, include our Annual Report, Behind the Imagined journal and newsletter. Our website continues to offer access to the Centre's collections—books including translations, artworks, and authors' papers and manuscripts. This year the Centre documented a publisher's and an organisation's papers including Working Title Press and IBBY Australia. In addition to University of Canberra students and staff, we have experienced an increase in researchers, academics and the community accessing the Centre's resources.

The ongoing growth and use of the Centre's four online databases and resources continue. These include the Cultural Diversity, Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource, Picture Books for Older Readers and our Verse Novels Resource. Over 1,400 books and related online resources are easily available and shared. The Centre's most frequently visited webpages relate to our latest database, the Picture Books for Older Readers. In excess of 40,000 Australian and international viewers visited this database the day after its launch. Each database continues to grow. These databases feed the international interest in Australian children's literature also evidenced by the continuing growth of Australian children's books in translation. The Centre continues adding translations to its collection and now offers one of Australia's largest such collections with close to 5,800 books translated into 100 different languages. Of special note this year is the growth of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander children's books in 30 different languages.

The last two years mark the Centre's continuing communication with the world through published articles, online presentations, interviews in national associations' journals, blogs and online symposiums.

As an Affiliate of the University of Canberra, the Centre's resources are valued for insurance purposes every three years. The Centre's collection was last valued at the end of June 2022. The Centre's collection was then valued at \$12,824,100.

A TIMELINE

50 Years of Achievements

- 1974 Children's Book Council of Australia ACT Branch establishes the national collection of Australian children's books—the Lu Rees Archives
- 1979 Collecting translations began
- 1980 Collection located at Canberra College of Advanced Education (now University of Canberra)
- 1981 Lu Rees Archives annual print journal began, now online and renamed Behind the Imagined
- 1988 Deductible Gift Recipient and tax-exempt charity status achieved
- 1991 Formal Agreements began with the CCAE, now the University of Canberra
- 1995 CBCA national body provided funding for part-time staff which ended in 2014
- 1997 Website created by University of Canberra students
- 2007 'Words ... Pictures ... Book!' first exhibition held
- 2012 Lu Rees Archives registers as an independent incorporated body in the ACT
- 2013 Annual reports began to Australian Government's Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC)
- 2014 Rebranding with new logo, tag lines and collateral
- 2014 Social media began: X (formerly Twitter) + Facebook (over 10K followers) plus e-newsletter (720 subscribers)
- 2014 Showcasing Treasures book published as the history of the Centre's development
- 2015 Name change from Lu Rees Archives to the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc to reflect our purpose

- 2016 Ambassadors appointed—Jackie French followed by Christopher Cheng in 2017
- 2017 Launched free-standing website; original website hosted by U of Canberra from 1997
- 2018 Sharing Stories exhibition, events and tour of International Board on Book for Young People (IBBY) international collection of books in translation
- 2019 Launched Centre's Cultural Diversity Database
- 2020 Launched Centre's Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource funded by the Australian Government
- 2021 Launched Centre's Verse Novels resource
- 2023 Launched Centre's The Barrumbi Kids website teaching resource
- 2023 Launched Centre's monthly Blog
- 2024 Celebrated Centre's 50th birthday



Life Membership presented by John Faulks to Rose Howes & Bob Graham



Blue Gum Community School exhibition opening

OVERVIEW OF ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Celebrated 50 years of achievements — opening event on 12 March 2024 attended by 85 guests, presentations on 11 March by Bob Graham and a Panel featuring creatives Ann James and Christopher Cheng, Allen & Unwin publisher Eva Mills, and Sally Allen, educator and teacher librarian, exhibition of 22 digital artworks by Shaun Tan in the Mura Gadi gallery

Announcement of Life Membership bestowed on Bob Graham and Rose Howes by the Centre for their exceptional contribution to the Centre

The Centre's new advocates include three, four and five year olds from the Blue Gum Community School

Enhanced knowledge and availability of online resources through databases

Offered events, exhibitions and educational engagements through the Centre's Facebook, X, online newsletter, e-journal, blog and website

Continued professional practice for Charles Sturt University Masters students and educational resources and services for University of Canberra's Cultural Heritage and Education students

Enhanced the book collection through donations from publishers, individuals, organisations and Centre purchases

Continued building collections of artworks, papers and manuscripts donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program plus outright donations

Created new and enhanced existing relationships with related organisations

OBJECTIVE 1

BUILDING THE CENTRE AS A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

Advocating for a national institution

The Centre received several visits from children aged three-five years in the Blue Gum Community School in Hackett, Canberra. They discovered the Centre and took on the challenge of 'advocating' for a national centre—a place to celebrate stories and creativity. They designed spaces and suggested activities they felt we needed. Ideas developed over many months and culminated in an exhibition of their ideas and artworks in the Mura Gadi Gallery at the University of Canberra. A web gallery of their work features on the Centre's website [here](#) and [here](#). The educational philosophy behind this advocacy appears in their teacher's blog '[A Permanent Home](#)'

Exhibiting, educating and engaging all ages

Material from the Centre's collection of Hazel Edwards' papers is on loan to the travelling *Juvenilia Exhibition: Early Works of Children's Authors & Illustrators* featuring Australian authors' and illustrators' works created as children.

At the Centre, changing book displays feature with [bibliographies](#) accessed from the Centre's website thus offering wide distribution. Bibliographies include NAIDOC Week, Gallipoli, Bushfires in Australia, Kindness and Empathy, Christmas Books, Graphic Novels, Refugees, Living Lives: Autobiographies, Biographies and Memoirs in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Database, Ten Australian Children's Books in Spanish for the Very Young, Trees and Their Importance. The Centre also loans its artworks to the University of Canberra Library's collection of books and story time sessions for children and its artwork feature at the University's Health Centre office for the benefit of children.

Enhancing the Cultural Diversity database

The [Cultural Diversity Database](#) featured over 420 titles by year's end. Searches are possible by author, title, publisher, publication date, audience, key concepts, annotations, with the capacity to share 'favourites' with colleagues and on social media. [Reviews and media coverage](#) offer positive comments.

Enhancing the Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples Resource

Funded by the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills and Employment in 2019, the [NCACL Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Resource](#) features books by and about Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. On its launch date on 22 July 2020, 327 titles featured for children aged from birth through primary years. This database now offers over 675 books for young people through secondary age. It continues to grow. This year over 400 University of Canberra Education students accessed this collection of books for their major assignment noting their own personal attitudes are now changed. Appearing here are [Comments and testimonials](#)

Documenting the ephemera collection

Publishers and organisations selectively promote authors' and illustrators' books by creating related ephemera such as toys, puzzles, games, maps, cups, plates and other items. The Centre's largest collection of ephemera relates to the work of May Gibbs. This collection occupies a four-drawer filing cabinet. Andy Griffiths donated a collection of ephemera based on his books.

OBJECTIVE 2

EXPANDING THE CENTRE'S REACH

Building collaborative relationships with like-minded organisations

The Centre has a continuing, long-standing relationship with The Children's Book Council of Australia and holds its artwork created from the 1980s for Children's Book Week. This year, the Centre continued to foster its formal relationships with the CBCA ACT Branch, International Board on Books for Young People – IBBY Australia, the Australian Library and Information Association, Canberra Society for Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Australian Children's Television Foundation, the Australian Children's Laureate Foundation, the Story Box Library and the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust. The Centre has collaborated and presented programs in conjunction with the University of Sydney's Foundation for Learning and Literacy for the third year. These relationships enhance common interests and collaborations and build collective strengths.

Promoting access to collections through collaborative initiatives

The Australian Schools Cataloguing Information Service (SCIS), which provides cataloguing records and services to all schools across Australia, created cataloguing records of books in the Centre's [Picture Books for Older Readers](#) database, thus promoting this Centre's resource. The [Story Box Library](#) offers readings and resources for Australian children's picture books and cross promotes books included in the Centre's Picture Books for Older Readers database.

Promoting the Centre through its Ambassadors Jackie French AM and Christopher Cheng

[Jackie French AM](#) and [Christopher Cheng](#) and continue their Ambassadorship roles and advocacy in various ways through their public voice of strong support, valuable networks, participation in events, publicising the Centre, donations and assisting with marketing initiatives.

Every Australian literary creation for young people requires a place to call home.
The Centre is that HOME.

—Christopher Cheng, author and Centre Ambassador

Education students study at the Centre



OBJECTIVE 3

ENHANCING OUR COLLECTION AND PROVIDING ACCESS

Growing the book collection

Several large donations of translations this year came from the following publishers: Allen & Unwin, HarperCollins and Scholastic. Over 300 Boogie Books, written and illustrated by children, were donated. This year the Centre added 1,564 books including 567 books from 25 publishers and their imprints. There were 100 donations from 23 authors & illustrators and 897 donations from 23 individuals & organisations. Donations included 134 translations in 46 languages, early and rare books as well as new works and different editions that strengthened and/or completed the Centre's holdings for particular creators. The Centre's expert volunteer, Angela Brown, found unique books for our Centre to purchase from the Canberra Lifeline Bookfair. In her blog, [Thrilling Finds for NCACL](#), Angela describes her work. Graphs showing the growth of book donations are presented at the conclusion of this report. Here is the [full report of donations](#) to the Centre this year.

Providing access to records of Australian organisations and authors

Guides to Australian publishing and promotional organisations reveal the history and development of Australian children's literature. Available from the Centre's website is the publishing archive of [Working Title Press](#) (active from 1997-2017) and the [IBBY Australia archive](#) which also includes the Book Bird national journal, posters and other items.

The [guide to author Patricia Gray's papers](#) published in 2024 is available from the Centre's full list of [Finding Aids](#)

Attracting specialist donations

In addition to the Cultural Gifts Program donations, the Centre is grateful for monetary donations which enable the Centre to pursue its goals. A number of significant items were also donated to the Centre. [The full list of donations](#) to the Centre this year is available. Donations are listed under sections titled 'Authors and Illustrators', 'Publishers' and 'Personal and Organisations' sections.

Authors and illustrators Tania McCartney, Matt Ottley and Lian Tanner donated collections of their books in English and translations. Emma Mactaggart from Boogie Books donated 384 books written and illustrated by children over many years, thus adding to the Centre's existing strengths in this area. Jane Brummitt donated her lifetime work documenting the life and work of May Gibbs and the story of Nutcote in a collection without equal. The Centre is grateful for the continuing donation of journals *The School Magazine*, *Magpies: Talking about Books for Children* and *Good Reading Magazine* which are well used.

Cataloguing and documenting our resources

There were 2,591 books catalogued this year providing freely available and worldwide online access to the Centre's book collection. [Research Support](#) provides details of access to our 57,000 strong book collection as well other Centre resources. Details of the Centre's [artworks](#) and [guides to authors' papers](#) are also available from the website.

Enhancing translations collection

Translations demonstrate that stories have worldwide universal appeal. Australian children's literature has a strong record of translations. The Centre began collecting translations to mark the International Year of the Child in 1979 and now holds 5,711 books in 100 languages or country of origin. This includes books in 30 Aboriginal languages. This year's translations, or English language editions other than Australian, numbered 134 in 46 languages. Andy Griffiths made a generous donation of 171 of his books in 26 languages this year. CAVAL, an external cataloguing service, catalogued 688 books in 37 languages for the Centre.

Details of the Centre's translations and overseas editions are available [here](#). Books in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language editions are available [here](#).

Building collections of creators' artwork

Cultural Gifts Program (CGP) donations submitted to the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program (CGP) include artworks by Bob Graham, Alison Lester, Frane Lessac, Deborah Niland and Leigh Hobbs. Two earlier donations remain under consideration by the CGP.

Curating research material about authors' and illustrators' works

The Centre documents the development of authors' and illustrators' creations through its Research Files. We also hold 'Pending' files which are preliminary collections of material as creatives' careers begin. Research files feature articles, reviews, research and other material about their work. These files have been judged 'unique and significant' by an external expert. The Centre is grateful for knowledgeable individuals across Australia who collect 30 different types of material for these files. By year's end, 14 new research files were created and listed on the website including: Connah Brecon, Marjorie Crosby-Fairall, Mandy Foot, Irma Gold, Graham Jessup, Margarete Lamond, Zanni Louise, Shirley Marr, Catherine Meatherington, Aura Parker, Andrew Plant, Craig Silvey, Jared Thomas and Cate Whittle. There are now over 600 [research files](#) dating from the 1950s.

'A book can change a child's life. A children's book can change the world'

– Jackie French, author-winning children's author and Centre Ambassador

OBJECTIVE 4

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTRACTING WIDER AUDIENCES

Reaching new audiences through the Centre's Blogspace

The Centre began blogs written by invited guests in February 2023. Their purpose is to promote the Centre's activities, attract new audiences and encourage support and donations. The Centre's blogs feature a 600-word inspirational activity with accompanying images. Blogger topics have included artists' challenges, professional work placements, May Gibbs ephemera, the Centre's Pixie O'Harris collection, challenges of translations, verse novels, internship experiences at the Centre, visual literacy in picture books, children as writers and illustrators and others. Authors of these [blogs](#) come from London, Canada and all over Australia.

Promoting the Centre on social media

The Centre's Facebook site has around 5,800 followers and the Centre's X (formerly Twitter) site has around 5,000 followers. Both began in 2014. The Centre's website, launched in October 2018, expands the Centre's reach and communicates with followers worldwide. The Centre is also actively promoted through its social media, online newsletters (vol 10 issue 3 and vol 11 issue 1 were published during the year), an annual journal *Behind the Imagined* and blogs.

- [Newsletters](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [X](#)
- [Blogspace](#)
- [Behind the Imagined](#)

Reaching diverse communities through presentations and publications

- Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research [ACLAR](#) describes the Centre as 'the premier national institution'
- 'Lifting the Lid on a Literary Treasure' Eduwebinar with Dr Belle Alderman AM and Dr Jennie Bales, 15 Nov 2023
- [Commemorative 50th Anniversary Issue](#) of *Behind the Imagined* journal Issue 7, 2024 created by Jane Carstens, Editor
- 'A look inside the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Inc (NCACL)' by Belle Alderman, pp30-33 vol 45 Issue 2, 2024 in INCITE, the Australian Library & Information Assoc e-journal
- '50 Years of the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature' 11 Feb 2024 by Ashleigh Meikle
- Canberra Times [tour of the Centre](#) 14 Mar 2024 (2 min 42 sec)
- 'The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature Celebrates 50 Years' by [Natalia Bragaru](#) in March 2024
- 'NCACL Celebrates 50 years of championing Australian Children's Stories' 26 Mar 2024 by Jason Roberts in [The Sector](#) Mar 2024
- *Behind Secret, Sealed Doors* by Emma Janssen, hardback book featuring the author's two children visiting NCACL; copies presented to attendees of NCACL's 50-year birthday celebrations
- 'Celebrating 50 years' CBCA Tasmania [Blogspot](#) 5 Apr 2024
- The Centre's monthly [Blogs](#) began 3 February 2022 with 28 published by the end June 2024

- Story Box Library links books in NCACL's *Picture Books for Older Readers* database that also appear in [Story Box Library](#)
- Images from the Centre's 50th [birthday celebrations](#)
- Picture Books for Older Readers: Exploring Visual Literacy – [National online presentation](#) as part of the Foundation for Learning and Literacy Symposium, September 2023

Delivering public exhibitions

- Juvenilia exhibition, travelled works created by Australian authors of children's books when they were children, including works loaned by the Centre, held at [Civic Library](#) August 2023
- Exhibition of the Centre's 22 Shaun Tan framed giclee prints in UC's [Mura Gadi Gallery](#) held from 19 February – 14 March 2024
- Shaun Tan Gallery '[Never be late for a parade](#)' and the Shaun Tan [virtual exhibition](#)
- Enthusiastic public response to the Shaun Tan exhibition [recorded here](#)

Providing services for study, research, professional development and promotion

The Centre served 558 clients for a total of 375 hours during the year, including University of Canberra students and staff, external researchers, writers, illustrators, publishers, educators and academics across Australia. These activities are documented in the [Client Services report](#) which identifies types of clients served and resources used.

Designing and providing internships and work experience

Charles Sturt University Masters student, Christina Bowman (TL at Hawker College) completed 70-hour professional work experience at NCACL as part of her Masters of Teacher Librarianship course; her placement featured valuable contributions to the Centre's database projects.

Reaching followers through the Centre's e-newsletter & Beyond the Imagined journal

During the year the Centre published [two newsletters](#) which publicised events, provided news about the Centre's activities and promoted funding campaigns. Those wishing to receive the Centre's free e-newsletter should contact <mailto:ncac@canberra.edu.au>



Ephemera collection sample

OBJECTIVE 5

USING OUR WORKFORCE

The Centre has well-qualified, skilled and committed volunteers. During this year, 39 volunteers donated 6,401 hours, the equivalent of 914 days or 3.6 full time staff. Volunteers assisted 558 clients and provided 375 hours of service as recorded in the Client Services 1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024 Report which outlines roles, responsibilities and tasks performed. Since the Centre's establishment in 1974, volunteers continue their major contribution to its growth and development.

Conclusion

The National Centre for Australian Children's Literature is committed to serving the needs of adults working and researching in this field, providing educational experiences for university students and also introducing future generations of young people to the creative process through the Centre's extensive collections.

We reaffirm 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.

This is a Centre that preserves the past, enriches the present and helps create the future of Australian children's literature

— Jackie French, author and Centre Ambassador

Shaun Tan exhibition



2015 - 2024

GRAPHS

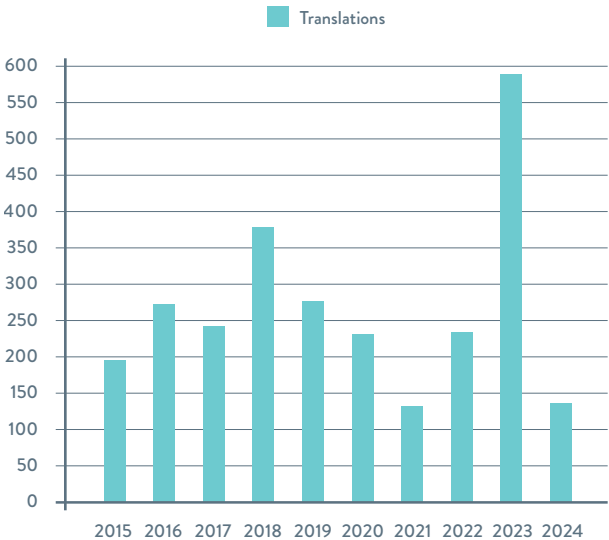
Graph 1 Book donations

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



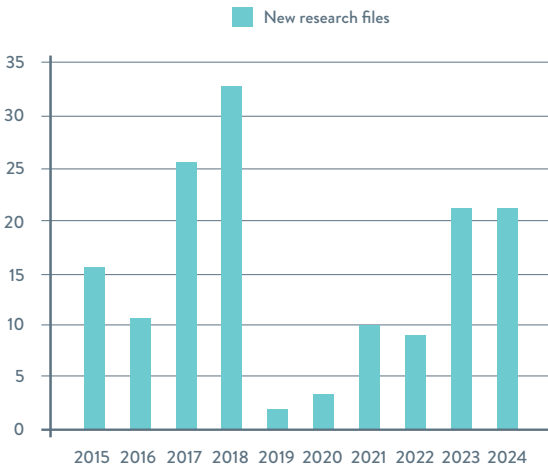
Graph 2 Translations

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



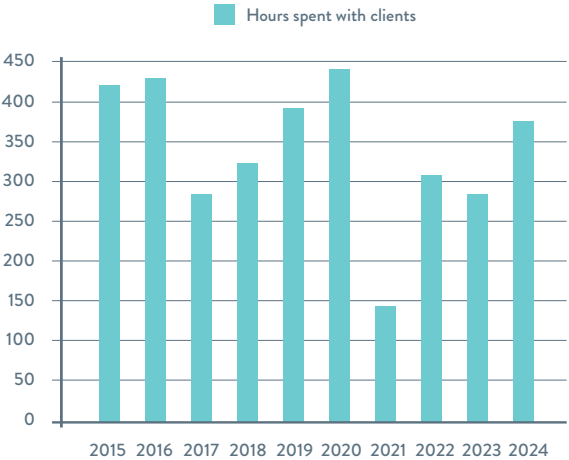
Graph 3 New research files

File growth reflects priorities set by the Centre.



Graph 4 Hours spent with clients

Hours spent with clients reflect enhanced access to Centre’s resources, greater diversity of resources and more sophisticated queries. COVID-19 severely restricted clients.



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.

