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Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW

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MEDIA RELEASE

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\$1.6 MILLION TO DIGITISE REGIONAL COLLECTIONS

The NSW Government has announced almost \$1.6 million in funding to assist regional arts, screen and culture organisations to digitise priceless collections and develop a state-wide regional digitisation strategy.

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Minister for Arts Don Harwin have announced investment into 11 projects under the Regional Cultural Fund (RCF) to make it easier for museum, art and other culturally important collections to be explored and enjoyed.

“Digitisation allows people to more easily access, learn from and appreciate NSW’s invaluable cultural assets,” Mr Barilaro said.

“Important and historically-significant collections can be found all throughout the state, and now through this program, these collections can be better preserved and made more widely available to local as well as international communities.

“Educators, researchers and tourists will all benefit,” he said.

Mr Harwin said that in addition to the 11 projects supported, further funding has been provided to determine a regional strategy for ongoing digitisation as a priority for the NSW Government.

“Broken Hill is a standout example of this funding in action. Home to diverse collections of national and international significance that are currently inaccessible, Broken Hill City Council will now undertake a two-year program to digitise more than 3,200 objects in the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery and the Albert Kersten Mining and Minerals Museum,” said Mr Harwin.

“They will also partner with the NSW Government, Museums and Galleries of NSW and Orange City Council to develop a prototype model and a business case for a single sustainable, regional digitisation strategy that will bring state-wide benefits.

“By preserving the past we are enabling opportunities for future generations to explore and enjoy NSW’s rich cultural wealth,” he said.

Bathurst District Historical Society will use funds to digitally preserve 250 large-scale at-risk images from its collection featuring soldiers from the Boer War, World War I, World War II, and local events and life going back a century.

Other projects will help preserve Aboriginal and European cultural heritage, digitise newspaper collections and provide employment opportunities.

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Digitisation Project Recipients

Albury & District Historical Society Inc., Revisiting the Albury District Crossing Place, Again and Again (\$68,877)

This project will enable the digitisation of two sets of microfilmed local newspapers (editions of the Albury Banner from 1881-1896 and the Border Morning Mail 1938-1942) onto the National Library of Australia's search engine Trove, to help fill some significant historical gaps in Albury's recorded history.

Bathurst District Historical Society, Digitisation of large photographs (\$2,000)

Bathurst's District Historical Society (BDHS) will preserve precious historical images from its extensive collection. Almost 500 images are too large for capture using conventional scanning or photography. Using specialist equipment, the BDHS will begin digitally capturing 250 of the most critically at-risk images for online community access.

The 500 oversized images belong to a collection of more than 22,000 held by the BDHS, with material relating to former Prime Minister Ben Chifley, the Boer War, World War I and World War II soldiers plus images from Bathurst Eight Hour processions from 1900-1930s, rural and city life, mining and farming.

Broken Hill City Council, Australia's first heritage-listed city goes digital (\$433,359)

Broken Hill is Australia's first heritage-listed city and home to diverse collections of national and international significance. A major four-stage digitisation project is underway to enable the public to access, learn about and engage with local treasures.

Stage one will see the BHP Billiton Foundation and Broken Hill City Council purchase a sophisticated Content Management System. NSW Government funding will contribute to stage two of the process, enabling the digitisation of collections from the Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery and the Albert Kersten Mining and Minerals Museum.

The final stages will see digitisation of the Outback Archives and a new interactive website enabling research and education activities.

Coffs Harbour City Council, Coffs Coast Heritage and Arts Digitisation project (\$510,000)

Coffs Harbour will install a platform enabling the digitisation, hosting and integrated discovery of museum, gallery and library local heritage and arts collections, while also inviting public participation in building and sharing knowledge of all forms of cultural heritage and arts.

The Council will also explore and implement new business models for hosting cultural heritage and arts content and extend digitisation activities within the community, such as local historical societies, schools and commercial enterprises.

Griffith City Council, Creating digital access to Griffith's Heritage (\$48,105)

Digitisation of early documents relating to the development of Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area will be an important addition to the state's online heritage. The library has a treasure-trove of original material; however, access is currently limited to in-house research.

By digitising the collection, Griffith City Library will provide access to the material through its online catalogue and contribute to the collections of the State Library of NSW and National Library of Australia.

Inverell Shire Council, Providing historical resource discovery and access through the Inverell Library (\$3,475)

Inverell Library will use a new scanner to digitise its large collection of historical and contemporary resources, including photographic negatives held by the Inverell and District Family History Group, who will partner with the Library in making the collection available online.

Millthorpe & District Historical Society Inc., Digitisation of Collection (\$45,883)

Funding will be used by the Historical Society's museum to fast-track digitisation of its extensive collection of local Aboriginal and European arts, artefacts, historical family records and large photographic collection.

Completion of the digitisation project will mean access to the collection by visitors, researchers, society members and the community; enhanced understanding of the collections and item categories, and better location knowledge and promotion of the collection to diverse audiences.

Museums & Galleries of NSW, Collections & Stories, community museums in NSW (\$93,750)

Museums & Galleries of NSW will take a state-wide approach to establishing digitisation infrastructure and capacity building for the community museum sector.

The project will boost online access to collection data through portals such as Trove, and (depending on findings of an initial planning stage) the creation of a website enabling audiences to discover and enjoy collections and find out about the organisations that house them.

Collections & Stories aims to reveal the strength and depth of NSW community-held collections by improving access and increasing significance assessment, documentation and digitisation skills across regional NSW.

Orange City Council, Sharing object stories and community conversations about objects and collections (\$71,000)

A regional museum officer will be employed to work with community museums and heritage organisations across Orange, Blayney and Cabonne Councils in documenting and digitising significant objects and collections.

Providing a focus for community engagement and public programs around distinctive stories from the region's villages, museums and historic places is a key aim as well as informing public programs, education initiatives and community storytelling. Building on the partnership with Sydney Living Museums, the project will devise programs and activities to share memories of objects, places and cultural traditions. Social media platforms will be used to record and share memories in local communities and with virtual tourists.

Tenterfield Shire Council, Museum digitisation program (\$2,457)

The Tenterfield School of Arts Complex tells the life story of Sir Henry Parkes and Tenterfield's role in the Federation of Australia. Public access to the School's collections, as well as local community museums will be enhanced by utilising an online collection management system which will enable the museums to store and share their collection information.

Warren Historical Society, Digital scanning & microfilm reader printer (\$20,000)

With the only scanner currently 125 km away, Warren Historical Society will purchase a digital scanner that can combine microfilm, microfiche and photographs for storage and printing. Digital storage and distribution will be immensely valuable to locals, particularly the local Aboriginal community wishing to preserve and share family history and heritage.

Digitisation Prototype Project

Museums & Galleries of NSW, Regional digitisation prototype (\$296,705)

With support from the NSW Cultural Infrastructure Program Management Office, Museums & Galleries of NSW is leading a project to develop a regional prototype digitisation model. M&GNSW are partnered for the project with Broken Hill City Council and Orange City Council. Outcomes of the prototype model will be used to develop a business case for a regional digitisation strategy.