

MEDIA RELEASE

20 June 2017



T-shirts, ties and telephones – ordinary objects make priceless possessions

The items a person collects can reveal a lot about them, and in ***Finders Keepers: Collectors and their Stories***, a new exhibition now open at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (MoAD), the stories of five fascinating Australians are revealed through their collections.

These collections are diverse, rich and often surprising—the cherished mementoes of Australia’s first Indigenous parliamentarian Neville Bonner, T-shirts and badges of protest from activist Anne Picot, ties collected by former National Party leader Tim Fischer, souvenirs of Old Parliament House acquired by Senator Kay Patterson and parliamentary telephones rescued from the scrapheap by technician Neil Baker.

Dedicated to the act of preserving and collecting, *Finders Keepers* tells stories about the ideas, movements, individuals and events that have shaped the nation through five personal collections donated to the museum.

“At MoAD, we collect objects, both ordinary and extraordinary, that tell stories about our history, culture and identity. In *Finders Keepers*, these objects take us on a journey through Australia’s democratic history,” says Ms Daryl Karp, Director of MoAD.

“This exhibition also marks an important milestone for the museum. With 269 objects, *Finders Keepers* is the most comprehensive display of material drawn from MoAD’s own collection to date.”

Dr Kate Armstrong, curator of *Finders Keepers*, says the exhibition asks visitors to think about why museums collect, why we collect and what our collections say about us.

“*Finders Keepers* highlights a very human passion - collecting things that are important to us. It also reflects on the function and responsibility of museums to collect, preserve and display. In *Finders Keepers* visitors will be able to appreciate the diverse scope and nature of collections, how the ‘formed’ collection has value in its own right and how collections can promote the preservation of stories,” she says.

Finders Keepers reveals the collector in us all and offers visitors the opportunity to share their own collection story. Families can explore the exhibition with MoAD’s new Collector Kits. This backpack activity accompanies the exhibition with a suite of hands-on, experiential activities for children and families.

Finders Keepers: Collectors and their Stories is now open at the Museum of Australian Democracy, which, in 2017, celebrates the most significant object in its collection – Old Parliament House – and with it an important 90-year chapter in Australia’s history.

The Museum of Australian Democracy celebrates the spirit of Australian democracy and the power of your voice within it. Open 9am to 5pm daily. Entry to *Finders Keepers* is free after museum admission. For more information visit www.moadoph.gov.au.

Ends

For further information, interviews or photo opportunities, please contact Alice Brown: alice.brown@moadoph.gov.au, (02) 6270 8120 or 0410 997 741.

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INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES:

- Kate Armstrong, *Finders Keepers* exhibition curator, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House
- Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House