



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# Tatura Museum Conservation Project

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### Project leads:

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## Conservation project planning begins



*Image: The project team reviewing and discussing the items in the collection for conservation works on 16 March 2022.*

On 6 October 2022 Heritage Victoria Living Heritage Grant representatives Evelina Ericsson and Anne-Louise Muir met with the Tatura and University of Melbourne representatives to formalise the Living Heritage Grant agreement timeline and deliverables. It was acknowledged that the works to be undertaken require the items to be transported to the University's conservation labs in Melbourne and agreed that the project would commence in early 2023.

A full project plan was completed and approved by Heritage Victoria on 8 December 2022 and a formal Permit Exemption approving the conservation works to proceed was received on 16 December 2022.



This project is supported by the Victorian Government through the Living Heritage Grants Program.

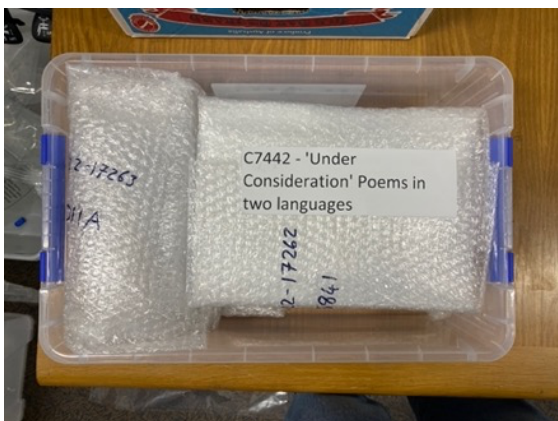
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## Transporting items to Melbourne

On the 14 February conservators Noni Zachri and Larry Edwards travelled to Tatura to inspect, pack and transport all items for conservation treatment to the Grimwade Conservation Services lab in North Melbourne. Each piece was photographed, condition reported and labelled, and then individually packed for transport. Paper and 3D items were packed in rigid plastic boxes, while large flat items were wrapped in acid free tissue and bagged in polyethylene plastic in preparation for freezing.



*Images: Conservator Larry Edwards prepares textile works for transport.*



*Images: paper items are wrapped and placed in rigid plastic boxes for transport to Melbourne.*

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## Textiles conservator: Larry Edwards

Specialist textiles conservator Larry Edwards with work with Dr Reyhane Mirabootalebi on the conservation of all textiles work in the Tatura Museum Conservation Project. Larry has extensive experience in textiles including skills in construction, costume research and materials innovation. Prior to completing a Master of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne he was the Head of Wardrobe for Cirque Du Soleil for 10 years, Owner and costume maker for his own children's costume business, and Principal Dresser for Phantom of the Opera. Larry has a Master of Education and Diploma of Costume for Performance and is a former sessional lecturer in arts education at RMIT.

Supported by Reyhane, Larry will complete several tasks including cleaning and repairs.



### **Treating garments for insect attack – freezing and cleaning**

As a first step in the conservation treatment of all textiles works, each item was wrapped individually and bagged in polyethylene plastic and placed in a freezer to eradicate insects. The items were kept for 14 days at -21 degrees Celsius and then removed and acclimatised for 24 hours. After acclimatising, they were removed from their bags and prepared for individual treatment by first cleaning. Before cleaning, each item was thoroughly inspected for stability. Gentle vacuuming supported by the use of brushes and tweezers removed evidence of insect attack and debris. The inside of pockets and seams of a number of items had significant debris accumulation, but have now been thoroughly cleaned.



*Image: Conservator Larry Edwards prepares to remove items from the freezer.*





*Images: (l to r) brush vacuuming a wool coat, and post cleaning hanging in the labs*



*Images: (l to r) before and after cleaning of inside of pocket of wool knit jacket*



*Images: (l to r) images of debris inside wool coat pockets which has since been removed*

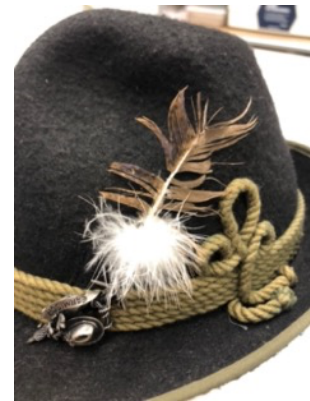
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## Repairing holes in knitted jacket, a broken feather and tie loss

Work has begun to repair damage caused by pests. Sample wool has been sourced for material and colour matching to repair holes in a brown wool jacket. A broken feather shaft has been carefully repaired over a period of weeks, and a child's tie with significant loss to the neck is currently pinned and tacked to netting as conservators assess and source the best threads to begin repairs.



*Images: Conservator Larry Edwards reviewing wool samples as he prepares to repair holes in the woollen jacket.*



*Images: (L to r) before, during and after repairs to the feather shaft.*



*Images: Woollen child's tie is stabilised (work in progress)*