**Archival passenger records to go online**

Family historians and other researchers will have greater access to archival records following a new partnership being negotiated between the National Archives of Australia and Ancestry.com.au. The new partnership was announced at the International Council on Archives (ICA) Congress in Brisbane today (23 August).

‘This is a first for us and will mean the people of Australia will have easy online access to records that were previously difficult to find,’ said David Fricker, Director-General of the National Archives. ‘Without a partnership such as this, providing such access would be a long-term project for us and costly.’

Ancestry.com.au will create an index and digitise the records of passengers who arrived in Western Australia between 1897 and 1963. This included most people arriving in Australia by ship, even if they travelled on to other ports.

These records currently have no complete index so anyone searching for information needs to know where a person arrived in Australia and the approximate date.

‘This project is the first of its kind for the Archives and will include the records of the millions of passengers arriving in Western Australia by ship and aircraft during this period,’ said Mr Fricker. ‘We are negotiating to have records available on both the National Archives and Ancestry websites, providing a much-needed resource for family historians and others.’

Passenger arrival records are an excellent source of genealogical information.  They usually include information such as name, nationality, race, age, sex, place of embarkation, occupation, name of the ship and date and place of arrival.

Ancestry.com.au is one of Australia’s leading family history websites  and offers members access to 1 billion searchable records. It is part of a global network of Ancestry.com websites.

“We are excited to be working with the National Archives of Australia to provide Australians with greater access to these key records which document the arrival of millions of people to the shores of Australia during the twentieth century,” said Brad Argent, Content Director, Ancestry.com.au. “These records offer us a unique insight into the travels of our ancestors, providing us with links to a land beyond the one we call home today.”  
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