

## **HEATHER GARNSEY**

### **Title**

The Joint Copy Project – Making NSW Parish Registers Accessible to researchers

### **Summary**

In 1974 the Society of Australian Genealogists, National Library of Australia and Mitchell Library, forged a partnership to preserve original parish registers on microfilm to not only ensure their long-term survival, but to also make them more accessible to researchers. Forty years later, the project continues to deliver great results for researchers of NSW ancestry.

### **Abstract**

In 1974 the Society of Australian Genealogists recognised the importance of ensuring that original parish registers were preserved and made more readily available to researchers. Forming a partnership with the National Library in Canberra and the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the SAG began to approach original custodians of records from the major denominations and encourage them to participate in what was, 40 years ago, a bold initiative. Today, over 400 films and many digitised records have been created and released through this Joint Copy Project (JCP).

In co-operation with diocesan offices including the Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Uniting Churches, the JCP now makes available to researchers not only the historical records of most of the major Sydney and inner-suburban churches but also covers parishes as far west as Bourke and Barraba. It is a sobering thought that if the JCP had not done this work, the information contained in the original baptism, marriage and burial registers would have been lost for all time if destroyed by fire, flood or vandalism.

For researchers, the JCP offers a cost-effective alternative to purchasing BDM certificates, while also allowing access to microfilmed and digitised images of the original registers. An added advantage for family historians is that some of these registers contain information which was not sent through to the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

This session will explore the history of the JCP, demonstrate to researchers the value of this material and show how the JCP can be utilised by family and local historians.

### **Audience**

Intermediate – Advanced