

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**  
Minister for Government Services  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples  
Minister for Prevention of Family Violence  
Minister for Women



Friday, 30 May 2025

## CREATIVE EXPLORATIONS OF VICTORIA'S HISTORY NOW SHOWING

The Allan Labor Government is celebrating Public Record Office Victoria's second creative in residence exhibition, *Rewind Forward*, which has opened at the Victorian Archives Centre Gallery.

At last night's launch, Minister for Government Services Natalie Hutchins congratulated the five Melbourne artists that have produced fascinating artworks inspired by their research into the state government archive – the largest repository of paper archives in the state.

Records of Victoria's history and the hard truths that sometimes lie between the pages of paper archives are prompting visual and conceptual artists to deliver critical and creative works inspired by what they uncover.

One of the pieces on display, from textile artist Shannon Slee, is a large piece of silk with 965 women's names sewn onto the fabric - a memorial for women who died as a result of an illegal abortion and whose inquest files are preserved in the state collection.

Celebrated comic artist, Sam Wallman, has found inspiration in the vast collection of black and white photographs which document a century of maritime labour at the Melbourne docks. The photographs capture wharfies' perilous work building wharves and hoisting cargo, inspiring a series of new illustrations.

The long history of Melbourne train and tram tickets caught the eye of artist Susan Fitzgerald, a graphic designer, who has reflected on the lost trade of the printing industry by recreating the art of once hand painted tickets.

Historical cases of punishment for gender non-conforming presentation found in prison registers, for 'impersonation', as it was often described, inspired artistic collaborators *Queer-ways* to recreate their 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century fashion choices in a mini display.

Visitors to the gallery can see the original records alongside the artworks. The public exhibition is free and open to the public at the Victorian Archives Centre in North Melbourne Monday to Friday and every second and last Saturday until November.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Government Services Natalie Hutchins

*"A growing number of artists in Victoria are turning to historic public archives for inspiration and it's incredible to see the creative responses of these artists to the archives held by Public Record Office Victoria."*

*"To be able to explore these beautiful visual histories in the same building as the original records is something truly special. Well done to all the artists involved."*