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## **HISTORY MADE IN MALLALA**

Mallala Museum is keeping its history alive with the creation of its very own cultural heritage wiki website at <http://www.nowandthen.net.au>

The **Now and Then** site was launched today (Tuesday 15 September 2009) at the Mallala Primary School, South Australia, by local MP Steven Griffiths.

Since March this year, the Mallala and Districts Historical Committee and its Museum have been working with the Collections Council of Australia to pilot the use of wiki technology.

Margaret Birtley, CEO of the Collections Council of Australia, said that the **Now and Then** wiki was a 'first' for the Australian collections sector.

"The Museum is pioneering twenty-first century technology for sharing Australia's past and promoting broad participation in recording and recounting the town's history," she said.

Mr Griffiths congratulated Mallala Museum, the Collections Council of Australia and the AuDA Foundation for the initiative.

"*Wikipedia*, the world's most well known wiki, relies on the efforts of millions of volunteers from around the world. By contrast, the beginnings of this wiki have been powered by the efforts and enthusiasm of local volunteers in this community – population just 500," he said.

The **Now and Then** wiki will extend the work of the Mallala Museum and other historical groups in the district, by recording, preserving and sharing the town's heritage and collections – in the online environment and for a world-wide audience.

Thanks to this project, the Mallala Museum now has a wireless broadband connection and a laptop computer. Many of the residents working on the project have a long and deep knowledge of the area. Some have learned to use computers and the internet for the first time through their involvement in the project so far.

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### • LINKING THE NATION'S MEMORY

The Collections Council of Australia Ltd is supported by the Cultural Ministers Council.

The office is hosted by the Libraries Board of South Australia.

Following computer training at the Gawler Volunteer Centre, the volunteers have prepared content for the wiki.

This innovative community heritage website now includes some 80 articles relating to the town's buildings, people, stories, heritage items and history. The wiki format allows anyone to add their own memories to Mallala's history using the wiki and also other contemporary "Web 2.0" technologies such as blogs, Flickr and YouTube.

Ms Birtley encouraged the many residents, friends and fans of Mallala and Districts to add and edit content on the wiki.

"This site will allow you to build a record of your past to share with the generations of tomorrow, allowing the story of your region, past and present to evolve in a vibrant and dynamic way," she said.

Mallala Museum recently (May 2009) received the accolade of South Australian finalist in ABC Radio National's Regional Museums Award.

The Collections Council works to encourage care and use of the nation's collections so that they will always inspire, amaze, inform and delight Australians and the world. It is Australia's national peak body representing the shared interests of archives, galleries, libraries and museums. The organisation was initiated by the Cultural Ministers Council.

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