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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
APPLIED SCIENCE (MATERIALS CONSERVATION)  
-CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION

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" A DISCUSSION PAPER BASED ON SIX MONTHS EMPLOYMENT AT  
THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM, SYDNEY - WITH PARTICULAR  
REFERENCE TO PREPARATION FOR THE ABELAM GALLERY."

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To the Conservation community of Sydney, I also wish to express my appreciation for their interest and willingness to help. The level of co-operation and communication is very encouraging for the profession.

## SUMMARY

From November 30th, 1981 to May 28th, 1982 I was employed at the Conservation Laboratory of The Australian Museum. I also completed a contract for Australia Post, under Sue Walston's supervision, for two weeks in July 1982 and worked on two private projects at Conservation Art and Library Services, Leichhardt. During my time at The Australian Museum preparation for the opening of a major gallery, "The Abelam - a people of Papua New Guinea" was concluded. A large proportion of my work at the Museum was related to this event.

The Australian Museum places a high priority on environmental monitoring of storage areas and one of my duties was to participate in this monitoring programme.

Shortly before the opening of the new gallery, flooding was discovered in two showcases in the Aboriginal Gallery affecting some sixty artefacts. The entire conservation staff was involved in emergency procedures, removing the objects to a stabilising environment until further work could be carried out. As the work load occasioned by the Abelam Gallery eased, I was placed in charge of the follow-up work on the flood-damaged artefacts.

The contract with Australia Post was to prepare moulded fibre-glass backings for a collection of Aboriginal bark paintings. This plus my work at Conservation Art and

Library Services, a private conservation laboratory, have provided interesting perspectives on the differences between the public and private sectors.

Overall, my experience over the last nine months has been quite diverse, encompassing preventive, remedial and cosmetic conservation, practical and administrative work.

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