

SPY: Espionage in Australia – an exhibition about intelligence work at the National Archives of Australia

Spying existed since ancient times. Usually surrounded with mystique and conspiracy, the real stories of spies and intelligence agents are often stranger than fiction.

On 28th of November the “Spy: Espionage in Australia” exhibition was officially opened.

This fascinating new exhibition with an everlasting intriguing theme reveals the stories of secret agents and the curious history of espionage and counter-espionage in Australia, from the early days of our Federation through to the present day.



Espionage in Australia exhibit - Monitoring participants of the May Day march in 1966

Exhibits on display include genuine spy equipment, early code breaking machines, surveillance images and candid interviews with secret agents and ASIO officers.



Early machine for deciphering codes displayed in the “Spy: Espionage in Australia” exhibition

The opening ceremony at the National Archives of Australia was as intriguing and exciting as the content of the exhibition.



Traditional welcoming ceremony celebrating respect and care for the country

As The Australian reports, David Fricker spent a decade working for ASIO before he was appointed director-general of the National Archives in 2012. *“The veil of secrecy over our intelligence agencies means that most Australians are left wondering about the reality of intelligence and espionage,”* he says. *“They wonder what the agencies are up to and how much surveillance we are subjected to.”*



National Archives' director-general David Fricker addresses the audience at the opening ceremony

The director-general of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) Mike Burgess formally opened the exhibition. In his words, it is important to tell the stories of the men and women behind the work of the organisation that keeps Australia and Australians protected and safe.



The director-general of ASIO Mike Burgess officially declares the exhibition open

"The balance between public interest and security is incredibly important ... That's why exhibitions like this are good, to help people understand what we do and also to tell the story we operate under law," Mike Burgess highlighted.

The entertaining part of the opening ceremony included a special guest Marcus Graham, who starred as Andrew "Griff" Griffiths, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Home Affairs in the recent television series "Secret City".



Special guest Marcus Graham reveals amusing stories behind the Secret City scenes

To further spy-up the atmosphere, the original “Shadow” martini with vodka, gin and squid ink, famous drink ordered by James Bond.



Martini in James Bond style at the opening ceremony

The concept and realisation of this exhibition was a collaborative effort by the National Archives of Australia, Australian Government Visions of Australia, National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program and ASIO.



A glimpse of the new exhibition at the National Archives of Australia