

**Short Note**  
**TORRES STRAIT TO TASMANIA: NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT BUTTERFLY  
 COLLECTION HOUSED AT THE QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY,  
 LAUNCESTON**

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(with three plates)

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In 2019 the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston received a donation of one of Australia's largest and most significant private butterfly collections. The Lambkin-Knight collection, containing around 12,000 Australian including Tasmanian specimens, provides an invaluable reference point for butterfly identification, distribution and climate-change related research and has already resulted in over 30 scientific publications.

**Key Words:** Lambkin-Knight collection, butterflies, QVMAG, conservation, Tasmania.

### DONATION OF THE COLLECTION

In December 2019 the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) received as a donation one of Australia's largest private butterfly collections. The Lambkin-Knight collection has developed over a 45-year period, with the bulk of the collection coming from Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland. There are around 12,000 specimens representing over 300 species, and the collection includes paratypes, CITES listed species, extremely rare species and extinct species. The collection is spatially and temporally diverse and species-rich. The scientific and research potential of this collection is well established with over 30 publications already based on it. The provenance of each specimen, its rarity and representativeness, the quality of presentation, and its interpretive capacity make this one of Australia's most significant butterfly collections.

Dr Trevor Lambkin is a highly regarded lepidopteran taxonomist based in Brisbane and Ian Knight is a well-known collector of Australian Lepidoptera (both butterflies and moths) now based in northern Tasmania (pl. 1). Trevor and Ian saw the need for their collection to be lodged with an appropriate institution that could care for and maintain it in perpetuity and ensure that it was made available for biodiversity-related research. QVMAG were delighted to accept this wonderful donation and sincerely thanked the donors for their generosity.

This unforeseen acquisition poses an ongoing budgetary issue for the Museum as it is estimated that QVMAG will

need 16 purpose-built entomology cabinets to properly house the collection at a purchase cost of approximately \$58,000. However, thanks to the generosity of the Royal Society of Tasmania (Northern Branch), QVMAG Friends (<https://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/Support-Us/Friends>), Plomley Foundation and Australian Entomological Supplies, QVMAG has been able to purchase the first six cabinets already. Fundraising efforts continue.

### CONSERVATION VALUE

The Lambkin-Knight collection is an important addition to the QVMAG Natural Sciences entomology collection for two primary reasons. Firstly, it provides a high-quality reference collection of Tasmanian, mainland Australian and



Plate 1 — Donor and lepidopteran collector Ian Knight kindly helping to curate the collection after it arrived at QVMAG from Brisbane. (Photo supplied by author)

