understandably reluctant to allow the drama and complexity of the relationship between Whites and Aborigines to divert attention from this focus.

The title of the fifth panel was 'Collecting the Territory'. Foelsche was an assiduous collector of Aboriginal artefacts and specimens of the Territory's natural history. Wherever possible, he recorded Aboriginal names and uses for each specimen. Some of Foelsche's ethnographic portraits were displayed in the sixth panel. His interest in the Indigenous people of the Territory was profound and he collected photographs of more than 250 people.

The final panel points out the significance of Foelsche's photographic legacy. The importance of his images was immediately acknowledged by his contemporaries and they were used to promote the Territory in the southern colonies and overseas, most notably at the Paris Exhibition of 1877–78. They are now an invaluable record for historians and other persons interested in knowing what Australia's 'Top End' was like in the nineteenth century.

The exhibition was situated on the mezzanine floor of the library which, as the user of a walking frame, I find a little cramped when there is a crowd. In spite of the limited space, the exhibition was an attractive and appropriate tribute to a man whose contribution to the early development of the region had many positive aspects and whose photographs are as highly valued today as they were when they were first produced.

Knowing and feeling the past

Shauna Bostock-Smith

Australian National University

'Captured: Early Brisbane Photographers and their Aboriginal Subjects'
Michael Aird, curator
14 March – 22 June 2014, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane City Hall, Queensland. Entry: free

For almost 30 years my friend, Aboriginal anthropologist and curator Michael Aird, has built up a vast collection of historical photographs of early Aborigines, and his expert knowledge has enabled him to curate many successful exhibitions. Recently he brought together photographs of Aboriginal people who were in the Brisbane central business

district in the 1860s and 1870s for the exhibition *Captured: Early Brisbane Photographers and Their Aboriginal Subjects* at the Museum of Brisbane.

Captured was a temporary exhibition that was housed in the Museum's Clem Jones Gallery. The gallery was officially named after a former Lord Mayor of Brisbane, but the Clem Jones Gallery is referred to by the museum's staff as 'the document room' because the room is dedicated to ongoing exhibitions documenting Brisbane's history. At approximately 10 meters by 10 meters, the room is quite small as far as museum spaces go.

Nevertheless, this small room was able to contain the entire exhibition which showcased more than 50 original *carte-de-visite* photographs and more than 180 digitally reproduced images of the Brisbane Aboriginal community from the 1860s and the 1870s. The photographs and images were the work of four early Brisbane photographers – John Watson, William Knight, Thomas Bevan and Daniel Marquis – and these four photographers were featured because the majority of photographs taken of Aboriginal people during the 1860s and 1870s can be attributed to them.

Similar to postcards, *cartes-de-visite* were small photographs mounted on thicker paper card that were invented in Paris in the mid-19th century. Collecting them became such a popular craze that it quickly spread all over the world. People collected not only *carte-de-visite* photographs of themselves, but also photographs of royalty, political leaders, famous people and exotic races. Photographs of Australian Aborigines were in high demand. The photographs in *Captured* not only recorded the presence of Aboriginal people in Brisbane's central business district, they also raised questions about their participation in these indoor, at times elaborately staged, and often technically time-consuming photographic appointments.

A prominent, central feature of the exhibition room was a small replica of a likely photographic studio from that time. Made to look like it was more than 150 years old, the walls of the structure were wood paneled with open-sided visible beams that were true to the early Queenslander style of architecture. Peeking through a window hole at the front visitors were able to see the photographer's images of Aboriginal people superimposed over an image of the Brisbane landscape at that time. As a Brisbane local I was delighted to recognise the old Windmill (that still stands today) perched on a hill that was completely free of high-rise buildings.

Cleverly, the little studio replica also provided extra wall-space for the exhibition. Attached to the outer walls of the room, and on one side of the replica, were glass-topped viewing cases that contained the real highlights of the exhibition: the original *carte-de-visite* photographs; a beautiful,

hand illustrated, incredibly detailed mid-19th century collector's album; other original (non-*carte-de-visite*) photographs; and various ephemera of the time. More research information and photographs were mounted on the back and other side of the replica studio, and this created a square, walk-around pathway that conveniently entered and exited to and from other museum exhibitions.

Good historical exhibitions make you learn something you did not know before; better historical exhibitions generate an emotional response or make you feel something for the subject/s. This exhibition does both. Apart from learning about Brisbane's early history, this exhibition invites the visitor to engage with the humanity of its Aboriginal subjects, rather than look upon them as objects of the past. The small size of the room and the preferential treatment of the *carte-de-visite* and other small original photographs, combined with the cautious sizing of image reproductions, ensured that the photographs did not lose their dignity or overpower the exhibition. These subtle choices simplified, yet at the same time enhanced, this exhibition.

Many times during my visit I found myself leaning over the glass top display cases, staring into the subject's eyes, examining every detail of the clothing they wore, and wondering what life was like for these real life, flesh and blood Aboriginal people, who were witness to such remarkable changes to their surroundings and way of life in such a short of amount of time.

The Chinese in Sydney, then and now

Shirley Fitzgerald

Independent Historian, Sydney

'Celestial City: Sydney's Chinese Story'
Nicola Tefler, guest curator
29 March –12 October 2014, Museum of Sydney. Entry: adult $10, family $20, concession/child $5

The usually stern entrance to the Museum of Sydney was festooned with colourful 'oriental' umbrellas and the opening of the exhibition was awash with colour and joy as the lion dancers and musicians did their Chinese Sydney thing. Visitors to the museum were confronted by a lush Chinese 'market garden' in the forecourt of the museum, and the first