



# ‘Two Rosellas’, watercolour by Neville Cayley, 1889

**Client** Private client

**Services** Paper Conservation

## Overview

This watercolour was painted by Neville Henry Cayley, the first in a line of famous Australian bird artists. His son, Neville William Cayley, became a noted author, artist and ornithologist, particularly famous for “What Bird is That?” Australia’s first comprehensive bird field guide, published in 1931.

## Condition

“Two Rosellas” was fully adhered to an acidic mount, which had likely contributed to its overall yellowing and discolouration. Some areas of media and coating were cracking and flaking, particularly around the rosellas’ upper bodies. Surface dirt, insect accretions, foxing and losses to the paper support also added to the overall poor condition and appearance of the artwork.

## Treatment

The aim of treatment was to improve both the stability and aesthetic appearance of the artwork. Firstly, any loose surface dirt was removed, followed by extensive media testing. The acidic backing was then removed by hand allowing the artwork to undergo aqueous treatment. Friable media was consolidated prior to washing to prevent further loss and the artwork was washed on a low pressure table. During washing the coating was rehydrated to reduce the cracking and improve adhesion.



*After treatment*



*Before treatment*

Aqueous treatment dramatically improved the appearance of the artwork. As the soluble discolouration was drawn out of the paper support the artwork lightened, making the subtlety of hues more visible and creating a greater depth of field. Inpainting and retouching also helped to reintegrate the media losses.

***Treatment Summary***

- Performed surface cleaning
- Tested media
- Removed backing
- Consolidated media
- Performed aqueous cleaning on suction table
- Reduced stains
- Applied archival backing
- Retouched where required



*After treatment detailed*



*Before treatment detailed*