



Tale of one city – interactive and online

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IT WILL contain the bloody history of Toongabbie, the inside story of Arthur Stace and pinpoint the Enmore home once inhabited by Mick Jagger's mum.

A new online "dictionary of Sydney", to be launched today, aims to bring together local knowledge and university scholarship into a minutely detailed story of the city, accessible to anyone with a computer.

"There will be something on every suburb," said Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, the City of Sydney council historian who is helping to co-ordinate the mammoth project.

"You never know what stories people are going to come up with."

Ms Fitzgerald has been work-

ing with a team from the council and several universities to build up a reservoir of information.

The dictionary may be similar to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, for which hundreds of people contribute information each day.

Members of the public will be encouraged to submit suggestions, but they will have to convince a panel of historians that their story is accurate before it is included.

"There is a heap of people who want to get their information about Sydney from the internet, not from books – it's not going to replace books of course," Ms Fitzgerald said.

"Because it is online, there are no size limits, and the thing can just keep growing."

The University of Sydney's Pro-

fessor Stephen Garton, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and actively involved in the project, said the concept of producing an interactive city history in online form was a world first.

"It will be unusual or unique in terms of city histories," Professor Garton said.

"There will be a lot of large interpretive essays; there will be a lot of rich material, but also digital maps where people can navigate around quite easily through images."

The website, found at www.dictionaryofsydney.org, currently holds only the bare bones of the idea, but it is expected to grow rapidly once word is out.