

DRAFT Archives Collection Management Policy

Purpose

The Archives Collection Management Policy details the City of Sydney's ("City") commitment to maintaining its archives and provides a standard and accountable framework for the acquisition, arrangement and description, storage and management of archives in the City Archives ("Collection"), and its use by staff and the public.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- members of the public or organisations who offer archives to the City
- members of the public or staff using items from the Collection.

The City's Records Management Policy outlines the responsibilities of staff and contractors in creating records of the City's business, including those that will become part of the Collection.

Definitions and interpretation

Term	
Archive	means a record that has been identified as having permanent value for retention as part of the Collection.
City archive	means a City of Sydney business record which is not designated as a state archive , but has been determined by the City Archivist to be a record of permanent value.
City of Sydney business record	means a record, in any format, created, maintained or received by the City in the course of its business operations. A small percentage will be determined to have permanent value and will form the core of the Collection.
Community archive (or "acquired archive")	means a record that has not originated from the City's business but has been acquired from a member of the public, a community group or an organisation operating within the City's local government area (or otherwise associated with the area) through purchase or donation and accepted into the Collection.

Term	
Deaccessioning	means the process by which items are permanently removed from the Collection.
Ephemera	means information originally designed to be useful for a short time e.g. pamphlets, posters, tickets, menus, postcards, badges, and stickers, a selection of which is retained as a community archive .
Record	<p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by the City in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of business (as defined in AS ISO 15489-2002 Records Management Part 1: General) (b) any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means (as defined in the State Records Act 1998 (NSW)) (c) metadata (being descriptive information that gives a record context and meaning). <p>A record includes, without limitation, City of Sydney business records.</p>
State archive	<p>means a record designated as a state archive, under a relevant retention and disposal authority issued by the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW, due to its state or national significance.</p> <p>The criteria for determining what should be State archives in retention and disposal authorities can be found in the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW's Building the Archives Policy.</p>
Sydney Reference Collection	means a collection of published material on the City's local government area and wider Sydney.
Trigger	means an event from which a date for transfer (or change in status) to archives is calculated, examples of which include: the date a key decision was made in the business process or the last significant action taken on a record.

Policy statement

Commitment to keeping the Archives in the City's control and custody

The City affirms the role of archives as articulated in the preamble to the Constitution of the International Council on Archives, which states:

“Archives constitute the memory of nations and societies, shape their identity and are a cornerstone of the information society. By providing evidence of activities and decisions they provide continuity to organizations and justification of their rights, as well as those of individuals and states. By guaranteeing citizens' right of access to official information and to knowledge of their history, archives are fundamental to democracy, accountability and good governance.”

The City recognises its Collection is an important asset and has made a long-standing commitment to keep and maintain the Collection under our control and custody and to continually grow the Collection.

As part of this commitment, the Archives team:

- manages the Collection according to industry standards
- aims for openness and transparency with due consideration to privacy and confidentiality when making archives in the Collection available to the public
- employs professionally qualified staff and experienced archivists
- maintains a volunteer workforce supervised by archivists to catalogue and transcribe archives and conduct research
- ensures [State archives](#) are managed in line with the State Records Act 1998 (NSW) (“State Records Act”).

Framework for managing the Collection

The City Archives Collection

The City keeps and maintains the Collection, which comprises items under three broad categories:

- City of Sydney business records
- Community archives
- Sydney Reference Collection.

A digital-first approach

Where items have been created digitally, but exist in both physical and digital form, the Archives will take custody of the digital formats but will, in exceptional cases, take custody of the archive in both formats. Examples of such exceptions include when the physical version has a structural or aesthetic element that is not present in the digital version (as is the case for some publications).

When records are considered to be in the Collection

All records created or maintained by the City that are identified as having permanent value are considered to be in the Collection on the date that is 10 years after a designated [trigger](#) for that series of records takes place. Some records of high community interest and low risk, or which is already in the public domain, may become part of the Collection and available to the public before they are 10 years old.

For records to become part of the Collection there does not always have to be a physical transfer. For example, digital records can remain in the system they were *created in, and have a change in status only*.

[Community archives](#) (archives not originating from the City), are considered to be in the Collection from the date the City receives them.

Once an item has been identified as being in the Collection:

- it is protected and cannot be added to, amended, or destroyed
- if physical, it must be viewed in the Archives Search Room and it cannot be taken outside the Archives Search Room by staff or researchers (except for copying or storage purposes or as part of a loan agreement)
- it can be copied under the exemption in Part 3, Division 5 of the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth).

City of Sydney business records with permanent value

The City uses legally-binding disposal authorities issued by the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW to determine retention periods for [City of Sydney business records](#).

The main disposal authority the City uses is the *General Retention and Disposal Authority – Local Government Records* (being Part 2 of GA39).

City of Sydney business records that are of permanent value and are part of the Collection include:

- records designated as [state archives](#)
- records designated as [city archives](#)
- major publications produced by the City including those printed or released to the public digitally (e.g. via the City's websites).

Acquisition of community archives

Assessment of suitability

Items offered to the Archives are assessed against [criteria and conditions for suitability](#) to determine if they will be accepted into the Collection. The following factors are also considered in determining if the item is appropriate for the Collection or more suitable for collection by other institutions:

- provenance
- condition
- quality
- format
- nature or subject matter.

Transfer of ownership

The City's preferred approach for the acquisition of physical items into the Archives is by transfer of ownership. In circumstances where physical ownership cannot be transferred and the items provide exceptional historical value or insight for a subject not currently represented in the Collection, the Archives team may choose to copy some physical items and return the originals to the donor. These arrangements are to be detailed in a donor agreement between the City and the donor.

Purchase

On rare occasions where an item is of particularly high interest or value, the City Archivist may:

- authorise the purchase
- make recommendations to the Manager, Information Management or the Chief, Data and Information Management for the purchase of such item.

Actions taken in such transactions must be in line with the City Delegations Register and all acquisitions must be documented by way of a transfer agreement and follow the City's procurement practices and policies as well as the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW).

What is collected from the public, community or other organisations

The criteria for acquiring physical and digital items for the Collection from the public, community or other organisations may include:

- items documenting and providing a unique insight into social, community, business, or personal activities that occur within the City's local government area
- items of significant historical, cultural, or public interest, with regard to any of the following criteria:
 - items resulting from activities within the City's local government area – primarily since the inception of City of Sydney Council and particularly if they record involvement with the City
 - items generally about the local government area but not directly involving the council
 - items referencing people of significance from the City's local government area
 - items of significance to the local area but which originate in neighbouring local government areas
 - items that enhance the scope and understanding of the Collection or have a significant relationship to other items in the Collection
- selected [ephemera](#) that provide an insight into the diverse and changing character of the City's local government area and the everyday concerns and conditions of the City's residents, businesses, and community groups.

Items collected may include documents, photographs, publications, and other material in physical or digital format.

What is not collected from public, community, or other organisations

The criteria for items (physical and digital) that are not considered for the Collection can include:

- items that are already represented in the Collection that are of a similar or better standard or quality
- copies of items where the donor is retaining the original – exceptions may be made by the City Archivist where an item of particular significance is not otherwise available
- items that already exist in other cultural collections or better meet their collecting scope of that collection
- artefacts or objects which may be more suitable for a museum collection
- published items such as newspapers, news clippings, or journals readily available elsewhere
- copies or collations of copies of items that exist in other collections

- items or collections that are available for purchase, with the exception of publications for the [Sydney Reference Collection](#) or [material of particularly high interest or value](#)
- items in poor physical condition or of low digital quality, such as low resolution images
- large collections where the quantity involved is not practical for the City Archives to manage indefinitely
- items in a format not suitable for long-term preservation
- items with a low level of data quality or accuracy
- unidentifiable photographs or close up photographs taken of people without consent obtained to use their image
- unsolicited donations that do not meet the Collection criteria – these may be returned to the donor or, if no contact information is provided, disposed of.

Exceptions

Exceptions may be considered by the City Archivist for items of particular significance despite a failure to meet the general criteria to be included in the Collection. Exceptions can include:

- digital photographs at low resolution where no other copy exists
- published items containing significant annotation relevant to the collection, or items such as newspaper clippings, etc. which reflect a particular topic related to the City
- non-archival items which may otherwise be of significance to the Sydney local government area (on some occasions these may be referred to other areas for assessment and possible collection, such as the Civic Collection)
- items of significance that may not otherwise be considered for collection but are at risk of loss
- artefacts and objects that are small and are closely associated with archives in the Collection.

Sydney Reference Collection – published works

The Archives team also collects published material such as books and journals relating to aspects of the local government area, which form part of the Sydney Reference Collection. The scope may more broadly relate to Sydney rather than just the City's local government area. Acquisition of items (physical or digital) may include:

- non-fiction works where the key subject matter is related to the City's local government area, or more broadly to Sydney
- publications from other organisations
- biographies of Sydney personalities

- periodicals relating to or originating in Sydney
- fictional works based mostly in Sydney
- fiction and non-fiction written or edited by a local resident of Sydney
- publications produced by local businesses.

Deaccessioning from the collection

Where items no longer fall within the collecting criteria outlined in this policy, they may be deaccessioned by the City Archivist.

Deaccessioning will only happen if items meet any of the following criteria:

- they are no longer required as State archives under a disposal authority
- they do not fall within the acquisition criteria of this policy
- they are in such poor condition that the allocation of resources for continuing storage and conservation is not warranted
- it is impractical to store them
- they duplicate another record in the Collection and are of lesser significance or in poorer condition than the other record
- they can be better managed by another organisation
- they are transferred to other responsible organisations when council boundaries change
- they are irreparably damaged, destroyed, lost, or stolen with no prospect of retrieval
- their ownership is disputed
- they are available in another format and can be authorised for destruction under the relevant retention and disposal authority. Methods for disposal of deaccessioned archives are determined by the City Archivist and may include, where relevant:
 - return to the donor
 - donation or transfer to another suitable collecting institution
 - destruction.

Provision of access to archives

Wherever possible the Archives team provides access to the Collection. Equitable access to information and historical resources can stimulate curiosity, encourage innovation and growth, accountability and good governance and allow communities to feel connected. It provides opportunities for discovery, knowledge and learning, and enables the celebration of identity and the diversity of our history and culture through citizens participating in research and historical cultural production.

Digital access

The City is committed to making its archival resources available via its website wherever possible to enhance public access. The Archives team actively pursues the digitisation of the archives to encourage self-service. Both descriptive information and digital images are made available in the archives catalogue.

Search room access

Access to view physical archives is provided through the Archives Search Room at Town Hall House. Access is by appointment only. All visitors to the Archives Search Room must agree to conditions of access and visitors may be asked to show photographic identification.

Access to original archives are restricted once digitised copies are available. Any exceptions must be approved by the City Archivist.

Access directions and restrictions

All records that originated from within the City that are in the Collection are covered by access directions under the Part 6 of the State Records Act.

Access directions under the State Records Act that close archives to public access do not prevent entitlements for access under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (NSW) or other legislation. Special access, such as access to personal information for research purposes, requires approval by the City Archivist.

Access restrictions as part of donor conditions may occasionally apply to archives that have been acquired from the public. Some restrictions (or the redaction of certain content) may also be applied to meet obligations under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act* (NSW) or *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) and other relevant legislation.

Promotion and display of the Collection

The Archives team promotes its existence and access to its Collection in many ways, including offering exhibitions, presentations and through social media. Presentations may be provided to community groups by arrangement if they are within the local government area and within normal business hours.

The Archives team welcomes visits by community groups by appointment.

Arrangement and description of archives

The arrangement and description of the Collection must conform to the Australian Series System for Archives Control and relevant standards and guidelines by the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW.

The Archives team maintains a system for controlling the Collection that conforms to relevant industry standards and legislative requirements to enable effective management, preservation and access of the archives.

Storage, conservation, and preservation of digital and physical archives

The storage of the Collection conforms to relevant standards issued by the State Archives and Records Authority of NSW, including the Standard on the physical storage of State records.

Some archives may be withheld from public access to ensure their safe custody and proper preservation. These archives are not open to public access under the State Records Act while the direction is in force (see s.59 of the Act). An archivist can restrict access due to conservation issues for individual records. The City Archivist has the authority to restrict access to an entire series of archives.

If archives are restricted due to conservation issues, the City Archivist may, in exceptional circumstances, approve a request from a member of the public willing to pay for conservation treatment. The City Archivist determines the appropriate level of conservation work required for the record to be safely viewed or copied.

Loan of archives to other organisations

The City Archivist has the authority to determine if it is suitable to loan items from the Collection to other approved organisations for exhibition or other purposes. Three months' notice must be provided for a loan and it must be to one venue only. Applicants for the loan of the original archives must enter into and meet all of the conditions and obligations set out in its archives loan agreement with the City.

Responsibilities

City staff and Councillors

Responsibilities for City staff and councillors for making and keeping records and acquiring, designing or reviewing business systems containing records are outlined in the City's Records Management Policy.

Archivists will:

- assist in the acquisition, design, and review of business systems when the systems may contain records required as state archives or city archives
- appraise City records, including those in decommissioned business systems so they can be either transitioned into the Collection or recommended for destruction (which is to be authorised by the City Archivist)
- describe and manage archives in accordance with relevant standards and legislative requirements, or supervising volunteers to do the same
- provide access to archives
- determine whether to accept small donations (less than one standard archive box)
- determine whether archives are closed to public access due to fragility.

City Archivist will:

- determine which records are of permanent value as [city archives](#)
- decide whether to accept larger donations (more than one standard archive box)
- decide whether to purchase items for the Collection within their financial delegation
- recommend purchase of items for the Collection over their financial delegation
- determine exceptions to the acquisition criteria for particular items or sub-collections
- authorise special access to items that is contrary to access directions, such as for academic research purposes
- close an entire series or group of archives to public access due to their fragile condition
- authorise the loan of archives to other organisations, such as for exhibition purposes
- authorise the disposal of the City of Sydney business records which are of temporary value
- authorise deaccessions that result in the removal and disposal of items from the Collection.

Note: The destruction of State records that are deaccessioned from the Collection will be undertaken in accordance with both this policy and the Records Management Policy and procedures.

Manager, Information Management and Chief, Data and Information Management will:

- approve the purchase of items for the Collection in line with the Delegations Register.

References

Laws and standards

- State Records Act 1998 (NSW)
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW)
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)

Policies, procedures and guidelines

- Records Management Policy
- Records Management Procedures
- Access to Information Policy
- Information Access Guidelines
- State Archives and Records Authority of NSW:
- Standard on Records Management
- Standard on the Physical Storage of State records
- Policy on Digital Records Preservation
- General Retention and Disposal Authority – Local Government Records
- History Policy
- Cultural Policy

Approval status

This policy was approved by Council on [insert date].

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Janet Villata, City Archivist
Owner	Janet Villata, City Archivist
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council