Archives Collection Management Policy

Purpose

This policy details the City of Sydney's commitment to maintaining the City Archives Collection and provides a standard and accountable framework for acquiring, arranging and describing, storing and managing items in the collection, and their use by workers and the public.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- members of the public or organisations who offer items to the City of Sydney
- members of the public or workers using items from the collection.

Our Records Management Policy outlines the responsibilities of workers in creating records of the City of Sydney's business, including those that will become part of the collection.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Archive	A record that has been identified as having permanent value for retention as part of the City Archives Collection.
Archives and History Resources catalogue	The system used for managing the City Archives Collection and for making it available online.
City archive	A City of Sydney business record which is not designated as being required as a state archive, but has been determined by the city archivist to be a record of permanent value due to its significance to the City of Sydney.
City Archives collection	The full set of City of Sydney business records kept as archives, community archives and the Sydney Reference Collection.
City of Sydney business record	A record, in any format, created, maintained or received by the City of Sydney 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 as state archives or city archives.
Community archive	A record that has not originated from City of Sydney business but has been acquired from a member of the public, a community group or an organisation operating within our local area (or otherwise associated with the area) through purchase or donation and accepted into the collection.
Deaccessioning	The process by which items are permanently removed from the collection.

Term	Meaning
Employee	All City of Sydney employees including permanent (whether full-time or part-time), temporary, casual employees and apprentices.
Ephemera	Information originally designed to be useful for a short time. For example, pamphlets, posters, tickets, menus, postcards, badges, and stickers, a selection of which is retained as a community archive.
Items	Individual archives, individual community archives and individual books in the Sydney Reference Collection.
Record	(a) Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by the City of Sydney 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). A record includes, without limitation, City of Sydney business records.
State archive	A record designated as being required as a state archive, under a relevant retention and disposal authority issued by State Records NSW, due to its state or national significance. The criteria for determining what should be state archives in retention and disposal authorities can be found in the State Records NSW Building the Archives Policy.
Sydney Reference Collection	A collection of published material on the City of Sydney local area and wider Sydney.
Trigger	An event from which a date for transfer (or change in status) to items is calculated. Examples include the date a key decision was made in the business process or the last significant action taken on a record.
Worker	All Employees, agency contractors (labour hire), work experience students and volunteers.

Policy Statement

We are committed to keeping the City Archives Collection in the control and custody of the City of Sydney

We affirm 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."

We recognise our collection is an important asset and have 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 City Archives team:

- manages the collection in line with industry standards
- aims for openness and transparency with due consideration to privacy and confidentiality when making items 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 items and conduct research
- ensures records required as state archives are managed in line with the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*.

We recognise and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their histories and cultures

The City acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of our local area, and their continued connection to Country.

Out management of the City Archives reflects the City's vision for reconciliation and is guided by the Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, and an ethical commitment to safeguard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's rights to their heritage and culture.

Our archival collection contains limited 19th century records that specifically refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities given responsibility was largely with the state government, rather than at a local government level.

Some interactions undoubtedly took place between council officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in this period, but the archives are largely silent about them. Past archival selection and descriptive practices may also have contributed to these silences.

From the 20th century onwards the City Archives holds records relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in relation to City functions.

The City has an ongoing commitment to identify records about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities in our collection. We will describe new holdings (eg titles, descriptions, subject tags) using culturally competent descriptive practices and in a way that will facilitate ongoing access. We will continuously review past holdings to ensure descriptions meet current standards.

Some records held by the City Archives contain images or language and sentiments about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that may be considered offensive by today's standards. It is recognised that publishing such items can contribute to ongoing trauma and racism experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, it is important not to remove these items from our collection as they provide evidence of past attitudes and injustice. When material of this nature is identified, we will provide warnings and context to accompany the records.

In support of truth-telling, we welcome consultation and feedback on our descriptive practices and encourage people to exercise their 'right of reply' to items in the collection.

We encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use our archival holdings and services. We seek to create meaningful links with communities and assist individuals to access records of their cultural heritage and historical experience.

Framework for managing the collection

The City Archives collection

The City of Sydney keeps and maintains the City Archives collection, which comprises items under 3 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, City Archives will take custody of the digital formats but we 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 City Archives 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.

All items in the Archives & History Resources catalogue are considered to be in the City Archives collection. 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 (items not originating from the City of Sydney), are considered to be in the collection from the date we receive 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 reading room and it cannot be taken outside the room by workers or researchers (except for copying, preservation, exhibition 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

We use legally-binding disposal authorities issued by State Records NSW to determine retention periods for City of Sydney business records.

The main disposal authority we use is the *General Retention and Disposal Authority: Local Government Records* (GA39).

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

- records designated as <u>state archives</u>

- records designated as <u>city archives</u>

- major publications produced by us including those printed or released to the public digitally (for example, through our websites).

Acquisition of community archives

Assessment of suitability

Items offered to the City Archives are assessed against our <u>criteria and conditions for suitability</u> 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

Our preferred approach for acquiring physical items into the City 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, we 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 of Sydney 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 to purchase the item.

Actions taken in such transactions must be in line with our <u>delegations registers</u> and all acquisitions must be documented by way of a transfer agreement and follow City of Sydney 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 in <u>City of Sydney local area</u>

- items of significant historical, cultural, or public interest, with regard to any of the following criteria:

- items resulting from activities in the City of Sydney local area – primarily since the inception of City of Sydney Council and particularly if they record interactions with us
- items generally about the local area but not directly involving the City of Sydney Council
- items referencing people of significance from the City of Sydney local 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 local area and the everyday concerns and conditions of local 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 suitable 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 the collecting scope of those collections
- 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.

Acquisition exceptions

Exceptions for acquisition of items for the collection may be approved 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 annotations relevant to the collection, or items such as newspaper clippings, which reflect a particular topic related to the City of Sydney

- non-archival items which may otherwise be of significance to the local 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

- donations of culturally significant material that falls outside the collection scope defined in this policy

- artefacts and objects that are small and are closely associated with items in the collection.

Sydney Reference Collection – published works

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

- non-fiction works where the key subject matter is related to the local area, or more broadly to Sydney

- publications from other organisations

- biographies of Sydney personalities

- periodicals relating to or originating in 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 items 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 items

Wherever possible the City 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

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

Reading room access

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

Access to original items is restricted once digitised copies are available. Any exceptions must be approved by the city archivist.

Access directions and restrictions

All City of Sydney business records that are in the collection are covered by access directions under Part 6 of the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW).

Access directions under the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW) that close items 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.

The public has a right under the *State Records Act* to access any records that fall within an open access period under Part 6 of the act.

Access restrictions as part of donor conditions may occasionally apply to items 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 1998* (NSW), *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth) or other relevant legislation.

The City Archives team may determine access restrictions for community archives if not otherwise specified in the donor agreement or where there is no donor agreement.

Copyright

The City Archives team is committed to protecting copyright. Records originating from the City of Sydney are generally shared under a creative commons licence which allows non-derivative, non-commercial use, free of charge, providing attribution is given to the City of Sydney.

Community archives may have a range of copyright conditions. Copyright notices are provided on the website and in the reading room. It is the user's responsibility to determine and abide by any copyright conditions.

We will modify or remove items from public view in the Archives & History Resources catalogue if copyright is inadvertently breached.

Promotion and display of the collection

The City Archives team promotes visibility of, and access to our collection in many ways, including exhibitions, presentations and social media. Presentations may be provided to community groups by arrangement if they are held online or in the local area and within normal business hours.

We welcome visits from community groups by appointment.

Arrangement and description of items

The arrangement and description of the collection must conform to the Australian Series System for Archives Control and relevant standards and guidelines by Museums of History NSW.

The City 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 items.

Storage, conservation, and preservation of digital and physical items

The storage of the collection conforms to relevant standards issued by State Records NSW and Museums of History NSW, including the standard on the physical storage of state records.

Some items may be withheld from public access to ensure their safe custody and proper preservation. These are not open to public access under the *State Records Act* while the direction is in force (see section 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 items.

The city archivist determines the appropriate level of conservation work required for the record to be safely viewed or copied.

Loan of items 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 items

must enter into and meet all of the conditions and obligations set out in an archives loan agreement with the City of Sydney.

Responsibilities

City workers and councillors

Responsibilities for City of Sydney workers and councillors for making and keeping records and acquiring, designing or reviewing business systems containing records are outlined in our 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 of Sydney archives

- appraise City of Sydney 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 items in line with relevant standards and legislative requirements, or supervising volunteers to do the same

- undertake consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other communities regarding the selection, description of and access to records about them

- provide access to items

- determine whether to accept small donations (up to one standard archive box)

- identify and manage privacy and copyright for catalogue items and information requests

- determine whether items 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)

- establish privacy and copyright principles and rules for the collection

- manage consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other communities regarding the selection, description of and access to records about them

- 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 items to public access due to their fragile condition

- authorise the loan of items 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 line with both this policy and the Records Management Policy and procedures.

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

- approve the purchase of items for the collection in line with the delegation registers.

Consultation

Key stakeholders, including relevant managers in the History team, Curatorial team, Data and Information Services, the Executive and Legal and Governance were consulted when developing this policy. There was also consultation with the Indigenous Leadership and Engagement team, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and the Information Protection Coordination Group (IPCG).

The initial policy was open for public comment from Friday 15 May to 12 June 2020 through the City of Sydney website. Key industry and community stakeholders were contacted by email or through society newsletters and online forums.

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 and Procedures
• Records Management Policy
• Records Management Procedures
• Access to Information Policy
• Information Access Guidelines
• EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols
• Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan
State Records NSW and Museums of History NSW: • Standard on Records Management • Standard on the Physical Storage of State records • Policy on Digital Records Preservation

Policies and Procedures
• General Retention and Disposal Authority – Local Government Records
• History Policy
• Cultural Policy

Review period

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

Approval Status

Council approved this policy on 13 May 2024.

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	July 2020	Approved by Council	2020/261628
Reviewed	13 May 2024	Inclusion of statement about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander archives Minor stylistic and other changes such as new definitions	2020/365490
Commence Review Date	13 August 2027		
Approval Due Date	13 May 2028		

Ownership and approval

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