

Copyright records

Administration of copyright in Australia

Between 1869 and 1899, all Australian colonies, with the exception of Tasmania, introduced legislation enabling authors and artists to copyright their literary, musical and artistic works. The colonial governments established agencies to administer the legislation and maintain registers of copyright. These records came under Commonwealth control from 1 January 1907 when the *Copyright Act 1905* came into effect. Under the 1905 Act similar registration with the new Commonwealth Copyright Office was required to establish copyright, but this was discontinued under a new Copyright Act from 1968.

Holdings of copyright records

Records of copyright registration are held by a number of National Archives offices. The records include applications for copyright (including in many cases a copy of the literary script, musical score, artwork or photograph for which copyright was sought), registers of copyright, and indexes to the registers. Some of the works registered include literary and dramatic works, publications, photographs and musical scores by noted authors and artists from Australia's past.

A comprehensive listing of records about copyright held by the National Archives can be found in the National Archives research guide, [A Nation's Imagination: Australia's copyright records, 1854–1968](#). The guide is available for browsing in all research centres.

A selection of the record holdings relating to copyright is included in the table below. Unless otherwise indicated records are held in the National Office, Canberra.

Selected literary, dramatic and musical copyright records

Commonwealth

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
Applications for literary and dramatic copyright (with exhibits)	1907–69	A1336
Registers of literary copyright	1907–69	A1957
Printed copyright indexes	1907–15	A1960

New South Wales

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Registers of inward letters on copyright (records held in Sydney Office)</u>	1879–96	SP1006/6
<u>Registers of proprietors of copyright (records held in Sydney Office)</u>	1879–1907	SP1006/7
<u>Literary copyright files</u>	1906–43	A1718

Victoria

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Volume of copyright exhibits, B series (with index)</u>	1870–81	A1188
<u>Literary copyright exhibits, B series</u>	1870–1911	A1786
<u>Registers of proprietors of copyright, B series</u>	1870–1911	A2389
<u>Victorian literary copyright applications, B series</u>	1907–20	A1720

Queensland

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Literary copyright files</u>	1887–1907	A1716
<u>Register of copyright – books, dramatic pieces and musical works (records held in Brisbane Office)</u>	1877–1907	BP5/10
<u>Name and subject index – copyright of books, dramatic pieces and musical works (records held in Brisbane Office)</u>	1877–1907	BP5/11

South Australia

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Applications – literary, dramatic and musical productions, pictures (records held in Adelaide Office)</u>	1878–1906	AP476/4
<u>Register of copyright of literary, dramatic and musical productions, lectures (records held in Adelaide Office)</u>	1878–1906	AP494/9
<u>Name index of applications for registration of literary, musical and dramatic copyrights (items held in Adelaide and Canberra)</u>	1916–36	A1961
<u>Titels and subject index for literary, musical and dramatic copyright registration (items held in Adelaide and Canberra)</u>	1916–36	A1962

Western Australia

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Literary copyright files (first series)</u>	1889–95	A1722
<u>Register of copyright, numerical series (records held in Perth Office)</u>	1891–1907	K17
<u>Literary copyright files (second series)</u>	1897–1907	A1723

Selected artistic copyright records

Commonwealth

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Applications for artistic copyright (with exhibits)</u>	1907–69	A1861
<u>Registers of fine arts copyright</u>	1907–69	A1958

New South Wales

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Proprietors in copyright in paintings, drawings, works of sculpture, engravings and photographs (records held in Sydney Office)</u>	1879–1908	C2229
<u>Registers of proprietors of copyright in fine arts (records held in Sydney Office)</u>	1879–1906	SP1006/8
<u>Artistic copyright files</u>	1892–1906	A1717

Victoria

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Registers of proprietors of copyright, C series</u>	1870–1910	A1187
<u>Artistic copyright, C series</u>	1871–1913	A1719

Queensland

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Name index to copyright works of art (records held in Brisbane Office)</u>	1890–1908	BP5/12
<u>Fine arts copyright files</u>	1892–1906	A1715

South Australia

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Applications – paintings, drawings, works of sculpture, engravings and photographs (records held in Adelaide Office)</u>	1880–1908	D4477
<u>Register of copyright in paintings, drawings, works of sculpture, engravings and photographs (records held in Adelaide Office)</u>	1880–1908	AP494/10

Western Australia

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Register of copyright, numerical series (records held in Perth Office)</u>	1891–1907	K17
<u>Fine arts copyright files</u>	1896–1906	A1721