

## Viewing records in the research centre

### Ordering a record using RecordSearch

To order and view records in a research centre you must be registered as a researcher. To register, Go to [Help with your research](#) and then to RecordSearch, In the top right of the screen select 'Login' then select 'Register' to enter your details. A login name and researcher card number will be generated.

When you visit a research centre for the first time, you will be asked for photographic [identification](#) so that we can verify your identity before issuing a researcher card to you. Your researcher card must be presented each time you visit a research centre, and each time original records are issued to you.

Once you have identified an item on RecordSearch, check the access status. If this is shown as **Open** or **Open with exception** select 'Issue to research centre'. A 'Request for Issue' screen will appear showing your name and researcher card number and the details of the record. Print this request and lodge it with the reference officer on duty. When you submit your request, find out if the record is held onsite. If it is held offsite, or is in special storage (eg low temperature) there will likely be some delay, depending on the location and type of storage.

If you are using RecordSearch outside of a research centre, you can print and mail the 'Request for Issue' to us in advance of your visit, or use our online form to submit an [advance request to view records](#).

### Applying for access

If a record you identify has an access status of Not yet examined or Closed, or the item is not listed on RecordSearch, you will need to apply for access.

#### Why do I need to apply for access?

Under the Archives Act, all records must be examined before they can be released to the public.

#### How do I know if I need to apply for access?

You need to apply for access if:

- the record is listed on RecordSearch but has an access status of **Not yet examined** (meaning it has not yet been examined for sensitivities)
- the record is listed on RecordSearch with an access status of **Closed** (which means that the record consisted entirely of exempt information or the information was not in the open access period), or
- the record is not listed on RecordSearch.

### How do I apply for access?

You can:

- submit an access application through RecordSearch, by selecting 'Request copy' or 'Issue to research centre' on the item details screen, or
- if you are unable to submit an application online, please [contact us](#) with your request for access to a record.

If you intend on submitting applications for more than 25 items, or are undertaking a major academic or publishing research project, please contact our Reference Service beforehand, to discuss the timeframes you are working to and which application you would like processed first.

### What if the records are Open with exception or Closed?

If you submit an application for access for a record that is **Open with exception** or **Closed**, we will re-examine the exempt material to see if it still requires exemption.

You might find it helpful to discuss the nature and extent of the exemptions with reference staff before you submit an application for access to determine whether the exempt information is likely to be relevant to your field of interest and whether you would like us to re-examine it.

### Is there a limit on the number of applications I can submit?

The *Archives Act 1983* does not impose a limit on the number of applications submitted by an individual. However, amendments to the Archives Act which take effect on 25 April 2019 allow the National Archives to unilaterally extend the period for notification of a decision (known as the 'consideration period', which is initially 90 business days) when an applicant has current applications for more than 25 items. The consideration period can also be extended with the applicant's agreement in other circumstances. This ensures the National Archives' resources are used equitably to service applications from all researchers. For further please see Amendments made to the access provisions of the *Archives Act 1983*.

### How long does the examination of records take?

While most examination is completed within a month, it may take up to 90 business days or longer to examine some files. We will let you know if there are delays. If we have not given you a decision within 90 business days or within the extended consideration period as notified, we are deemed to have made a decision refusing to grant you access and you may appeal. See *Fact sheet 12 - What to do if we refuse you access* for further information.

## **How will I know the results of my application?**

We aim to notify applicants of our decision within 90 business days, but the time this takes depends on the volume and type of records you have requested, the amount of exempt information they contain, and whether the advice of other agencies about potential sensitivities is required. If we withhold access to information on a record, we will provide you with a written statement of reasons explaining why we refused access. In most cases the Act gives you the right to appeal against our decision.

## **Viewing audiovisual records**

### **ABC, SBS or Film Australia records**

If a digital reference copy already exists, we will make the item available in the Sydney, Canberra or Melbourne research centre. If the research centre chosen is not where the item is stored/housed, a delivery (and postage?) charge will be incurred to cover the cost of transferring the item to the research centre of choice. Refer to our [copying charges](#).

If a reference copy does not exist, you may inspect the original by looking at the canister or other delivery medium. Access to the content cannot be provided due to copyright and preservation reasons (under section 40(5) of the Archives Act). Please approach the relevant agency for access and copies.

### **Non ABC, SBS or Film Australia records**

If a digital reference copy already exists, we will make the item available in the Sydney, Canberra or Melbourne research centre. If the research centre chosen is not where the item is stored/housed, a delivery (and postage?) charge will be incurred to cover the cost of transferring the item to the research centre of choice. Refer to our [copying charges](#).

If a reference copy does not exist, we will produce a copy for a fee. Refer to our [copying charges](#).

## **Additional information**

- *Fact sheet 10 - Access to records under the Archives Act*
- *Fact sheet 3 - Research centre rules*