

## The National Archives collecting policy

Many people approach the National Archives wishing to deposit records into our collection. However, as the National Archives is limited in the types of records it is able to collect we may not be able to accept your records. The *Archives Act 1983* sets out the role and responsibilities of the National Archives, which includes defining our collecting policy.

### Our collecting policy

Most collecting institutions have a collecting policy that outlines the sorts of materials they are interested in acquiring. The National Archives collects official Commonwealth government records, and the personal records of governors-general, prime ministers, ministers, federal and High Court judges and some senior Commonwealth public servants, whose records complement the official record.

Commonwealth records are any records that a Commonwealth government department or agency has created or kept in the course of carrying out its business. They may include official files or correspondence, registers, manuals, maps, plans, photographs, or even electronic records. The National Archives uses a system of appraisal to determine which records should be kept in archival custody and which can be retained by the agency that created them. To find out more about how we decide which records to keep in the national archival collection see; [How we select national archives](#).

### Making sure records are where they belong

Former public servants often find, after they resign or retire, that they have some records relating to their work at home. These may be records that really should have remained with their employer, but for one reason or another have ended up in private hands. It is not usually appropriate for such records to remain outside the Commonwealth's control.

If you have records in your possession you think might be Commonwealth records that should be in the custody of the Archives or a government agency, please contact the [Agency Service Centre](#).

If the records are private records, or records from a non-Commonwealth institution (such as a state or local government agency or a private company), a number of other collecting institutions may be

interested in acquiring them. The table below may help you to find an institution that is interested in your records.

Alternately, it may be more appropriate to retain significant private records (such as photographs, diaries, invitations or awards made to family members) in your family archives. See our advice on [preserving information](#).

## Other collecting institutions

Type of record	Institution	Contact details
State or territory government records, or records relating to state or territory identities, places or events	State or territory government archives or libraries	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>
Local government records, or records relating to local identities, businesses or events	Local government archives, local libraries or museums, local history societies	Check the local telephone directory
Non-Commonwealth records relating to national identities, events or issues	<a href="#">National Library of Australia</a>	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>
Records relating to Indigenous people or communities	<a href="#">Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies</a>	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>
Records relating to women or women's organisations	<a href="#">Australian Women's Archives Project</a>	The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010
Private records relating to war or armed conflict	<a href="#">Australian War Memorial</a>	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>
Company, business or union records, or records relating to business or union identities	<a href="#">Noel Butlin Archives Centre</a>	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>
	<a href="#">University of Melbourne Archives</a>	University of Melbourne Archives, PARKVILLE VIC 3010 Tel: (03) 8344 4122
Scientific records	<a href="#">Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre</a>	The University of Melbourne, PARKVILLE VIC 3010 Tel: (03) 8344 3304
School records or memorabilia	School archives	Contact the relevant school
Non-Commonwealth audio-visual material	<a href="#">National Film and Sound Archive</a>	See <i>Fact sheet 2 - Addresses of other archival institutions</i>

In addition, many smaller archives collect in specific subject areas. Examples are the Estonian Archives in Australia, the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives and the Victorian Arts Centre Performing Arts Museum. Professional groups such as doctors and nurses associations often have their own archives. Museums may also be interested in records of specific people or subject areas. Most universities have archival collections, and their libraries often collect in particular subject areas. Many religious communities also keep their own archives.

The Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) compiles the Directory of Archives, which lists Australian organisations with archival holdings and provides information about their collecting interests.