

The National Archives digitisation service

Digitisation of collection material has become an accepted practice of collecting institutions all round the world. The National Archives digitisation service makes our unique collection accessible to all at a time or place of their choosing. Importantly it also reduces handling of the collection, thereby helping preserve it for future generations.

The National Archives has been digitising records and making them available on its website since 2001. Now, over 27 million images of archival records are available online for viewing through the Archives online database RecordSearch. New images are made available each week.

The national digitisation service, launched in February 2007, provides online access to records held in the Archives collection across Australia and features both on-demand and proactive digitising.

Digital images of records are linked to contextual information in RecordSearch. This information identifies the Commonwealth agency that created a particular record, and provides other information including the date range, access status and the location of the original record.

Generally digital images are presented in two sizes – a smaller viewing image and a larger image suitable for printing. Images are optimised for online viewing and provide an accurate representation of the original.

On-demand service

Through the on-demand digitisation service, researchers can request images of paper files up to A3 size that are available for public access and listed on RecordSearch. The service is not available for records larger than A3, boxes of cards, microfiche, audiovisual records and records in more specialised formats.

The service provides a scanned image of each page of the requested record. The digital image will be made available through RecordSearch. There the digital image can be viewed online, downloaded and printed.

We do not guarantee continued access to digital images, as very occasionally they are removed from RecordSearch for operational reasons. To ensure your continued access, we recommend you download, save and, if you wish, print the images once available.

Copying charges for requests are set according to the average size of files in the series to which they belong. For more information please see *Fact sheet 51 – Copying charges*.

We do not provide copies of records on CD through the on-demand service. To order a high-resolution digital copy, use the [Photographic Imaging Order Form](#).

Ordering an online digital copy

Identify and order records you want digitised through RecordSearch. Use NameSearch if you are looking for records about an individual.

When you have located a record in RecordSearch, select the 'Request copy' button on the 'Item details' page in RecordSearch and pay for your order through the secure Ecommerce facility. We will acknowledge receipt of your order by email (if an email address is provided).

Requests for online copies of records that have already been cleared for public access (ie Open and Open With Exception) will be available within 30 business days. You will be notified by email when the online copy is available for viewing.

Some items (records with an access status of Not Yet Examined – NYE) will need to be cleared for public access before a copy can be requested. In such cases, submit an application for access by selecting the 'Request copy' button on the 'Item details' page in RecordSearch and following the instructions on screen.

Copies of defence service records with an access status of NYE can be ordered and paid for through Ecommerce. Online copies of NYE items may take up to 90 business days from the paid request being received by the National Archives.

Proactive digitisation service

Under the proactive digitisation service, the National Archives digitises collection material and makes it available for viewing through RecordSearch without cost. Through the proactive service the National Archives digitises every item in a series. For example, the whole series of those who served with the First AIF – series B2455 – has been digitised.

Researchers are welcome to nominate record series for proactive digitisation. To nominate a series, contact the National Reference Service with the series title and number. We assess all nominations against selection criteria to ensure that high-use, high-value or at-risk material is digitised first.

Printing images

We recommend that you download the images you require and print them from image software, rather than printing directly from your web browser.

If you wish to reproduce material from our collection, you need to comply with the provisions of Australian copyright legislation. Refer to *Fact sheet 8 - Copyright* for more information regarding copyright.

Digitisation standards

Fujitsu fi-6770 document scanners are used to digitise the records. Bound and fragile items are scanned using an overhead digital scanner or camera system to ensure that these items are not damaged through the scanning process.

The National Archives RecordSearch images are scanned at 200ppi. A standard of approximately 2338 pixels along the longest edge for an A4 size sheet of paper is used. The pixel dimensions are then relatively larger or smaller depending on the size of the original. Images will display on our website at 72dpi regardless of the resolution at which they were captured.