

## Commonwealth Film Unit

The Commonwealth Film Unit operated from 1940 until June 1973. The Unit was also known as the Film Division. Until 1950 it was part of the Department of Information and from 1950 until 1973 it was part of the Australian News and Information Bureau. In 1973 the Film Unit was superseded by Film Australia.

The Commonwealth Film Unit, which operated from Sydney, was the successor of the Cinema and Photographic Branch located in Melbourne. The Film Unit was created in 1940 to coordinate government and commercial film activity and to mobilise the production of film for the war effort. While the Melbourne branch continued processing non-theatrical film, by the late 1940s the Sydney branch was the focus of all film production. In 1954 the Melbourne branch closed. The Unit's records are held in the Sydney Office of the National Archives.

### Film holdings

Some film among the Unit's film collection is kept as tri-separation positives (ie in cyan, magenta and yellow), made largely contemporaneously with the actual production to ensure preservation of the colour of the film. Where only the tri-separation positive exists special arrangements will need to be made to help you view the film. Please ask our staff for assistance.

### Series containing film holdings

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Film of visit of Deputy Prime Minister Forde to London and UN Conference, San Francisco</u>	1945	SP1202/2
<u>Film negatives, fine grains and duplicating negatives of 'Australian Diaries' (b/w)</u>	1946–70	C20
<u>Training films, alphabetical</u>	1946–75	C4365
<u>Tri-separation positives and colour copies of 'Australian Colour Diaries'</u>	1954–73	C26
<u>Tri-separation positives of film productions, FP [Film Production] prefix</u>	1955–65	C23
<u>Footage Library material, master set, alphabetical series</u>	1960–	C4446
<u>Training films</u>	1946–75	C4365
<u>Decimal currency films</u>	1963–66	C2927

## File holdings

The file holdings of the Commonwealth Film Unit include post production scripts and film production files. These can assist in understanding the development and final form of the film, and may include information such as production notes, distribution arrangements and special screenings. Administrative files can also be used to find details of staff, management, finance or equipment.

### Series containing file holdings

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1940–46	SP109/14
<u>General correspondence files</u>	1948–64	ST3469/1
<u>General correspondence files, FD [Film Division] prefix</u>	1962–69	SP1716/1
<u>General correspondence files, FD [Film Division] prefix</u>	1962–	SP1673/1
<u>Correspondence files, FD [Film Division] prefix</u>	1962–	C133
<u>Outward correspondence and working papers</u>	1945–46	SP109/15
<u>Film production files, FP [Film Production] prefix</u>	1945–65	SP1265/1
<u>Post production scripts</u>	1946–	C1136
<u>Various volumes, folders &amp; files of material relating to Australian National Film Board</u>	1957–73	NA1980/33
<u>List of correspondence files and copies of articles on Stanley Hawes and the Commonwealth Film Unit</u>	1964–71	C134
<u>Folders of minutes and agenda papers of Australian National Film Board meetings</u>	1965–72	C135

## Sound holdings

Sound holdings include musical scores, musical recordings and audio location recordings. The range of recordings is diverse and includes classical theme music, interviews with prominent Australians and the opening of Sydney's Gladesville Bridge in 1964.

### Series containing sound holdings

Title or description of record	Date range	Series number
<u>Sound recordings (music)</u>	1946–68	C3214
<u>Sound recordings (music)</u>	1946–68	SP999/1
<u>Original music master 17.5mm, 35mm and 1/2 inch sprocketed magnetic film</u>	1947–65	C4663

<u>Music scores, FP [Film Production] prefix</u>	1947–67	C4482
<u>Orchestral parts, FP [Film Production] prefix</u>	1947–67	C4485
<u>Location (audio) tapes and documentation, film productions</u>	1960–	C4290
<u>Original music master 17.5mm, 35mm and 1/2 inch sprocketed magnetic film</u>	1965–78	C4664

**Please note:** the National Archives does not provide copies for sale of ABC, SBS or ScreenAustralia items.

To purchase copies please contact the relevant organisation directly.

Copies of ABC, SBS and ScreenAustralia items can be made available for viewing in the National Archives' Sydney research centre.