

STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA COLLECTIONS POLICY

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State Library of South Australia

Collections Policy

Background

The State Library of South Australia is the preeminent collector of the documentary history of South Australia, preserved and made accessible for current and future generations.

As a major repository for South Australian published and non-government archival records, the State Library develops, interprets, and preserves a diverse collection to keep alive the memories and stories of South Australia.

The State Library also works collaboratively with the South Australian public library network to ensure the community has access to contemporary and historical reference and information services.

Through its collections the State Library gives all South Australians the opportunity to discover their past in order to inform the present and inspire the future.

Purpose

This Policy defines the principles and priorities that underpin State Library collecting practices and is published online to inform the community of our intentions. Our collection management activities are interconnected and include the initial stages of selection, acquisition, and description, through to preservation and access, as well as reappraisal and retention, and possible deaccession and disposal.

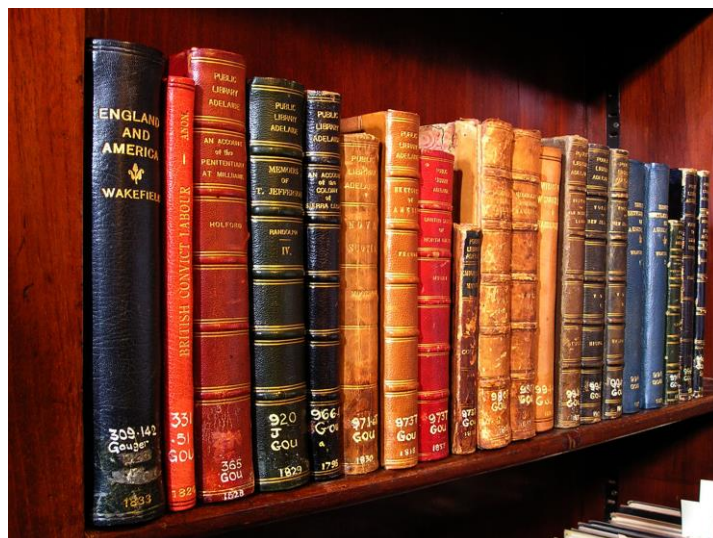
The State Library is guided by this Policy and will continue to develop collections that focus on content, regardless of format, and deliver benefits to South Australia. The approach will be periodically reviewed ensuring that it reflects modern collection management practice, changes in the contextual environment, content creation and publishing trends as well as community research needs that include new technologies and service innovations.



Costume designs for 1936 Centenary events, 1935-1936, Thelma Afford. SLSA PRG 689/1/27

History

The basis of the Library's collections was formed prior to the settlement of South Australia just two weeks after the passing of the South Australia Act by the British Parliament in 1834. A group of prospective colonists formed the South Australian Literary Association with the objective of cultivating and promoting knowledge throughout the colony. Robert Gouger and other members donated a collection of useful books that was brought to South Australia in December 1836. These books became the nucleus of South Australia's first public library collection and are held today by the Library as 'the Gouger Collection'.



Part of the Gouger Collection

Under legal deposit legislation dating from 1878 the Library is provided with, or may claim, one copy of every South Australian publication, irrespective of format. The Library may also claim items from interstate and overseas publishers, whose publications have particular relevance to South Australia.

Since the early 1900s the Library has also been entrusted with the records of thousands of businesses, organisations, and individuals; with a myriad of photographs; and with unique audio-visual material including film footage and oral histories. Pre-dating its South Australian responsibilities is the Library's role as a general reference library. Over time parts of the reference collection, including the Gouger Collection, have grown in significance to warrant long-term preservation.

Context

The State Library collections are fundamental to its purpose, enabling the fulfilment of its role as custodian of South Australia's stories. As a modern cultural collecting institution, the Library embraces technology to continually evolve its collection management practices and customer service experiences. The rapid growth of digital publishing and content creation requires continual

assessment in what and how collecting is undertaken to ensure that today's content is not lost to future generations. This, along with changing community expectations, demands that the Library strengthens its focus on the acquisition and delivery of digital content and electronic resources so that it can serve the community, regardless of time or location.

The State Library's participation in the [National edeposit service](#) (NED), launched in 2019, has enabled the deposit, management and discovery of published electronic material across Australia and will be further enhanced with the introduction of new tools to collect web content in future. The acquisition of material that is 'born digital' will continue to grow, requiring new workflows and practices which will be addressed through the introduction of digital preservation technology. This technology greatly improves the ability to acquire and care for material in digital formats, and provides a sustainable approach to digital collecting, preservation, and access.

Managing substantial collections requires the State Library to maintain currency and suitability of the metadata approach, therefore it will continue to adopt new standards to better enable automated tools to interrogate and reuse data. Measures will be implemented to ensure that the data that we create, and curate conforms to international standards. The State Library is also committed to maximising the exposure of its collections by working with partners and stakeholders to ensure data can be discovered through local, national, and international platforms.

The State Library's digitisation program operates within its financial capacity and is influenced by a heightened public expectation of online access as well as such factors as the deterioration of inherently unstable paper and other unsustainable analogue formats. Additional funding opportunities are being explored to increase investment in collection digitisation and, where practical, work with other collecting institutions to share expertise and infrastructure. The State Library is well positioned to take advantage of any future investment to increase its digital content.



Digitising collection items, 2020

The State Library recognises that it is the stories that make us what we are, as both a people and a state. The Library's collections will continue to be an essential resource for research into all aspects of South Australian culture, inviting the community to explore diverse stories of social, local, and family history. The State Library will collect material to meet the needs of its users including professional researchers and historians, secondary and tertiary students, librarians, as well as members of the general community. State Library users are diverse with some simply wanting to view collection items to better understand the history of the state, and others seeking to undertake extensive research and re-use collections to create new knowledge.

Legislative and Strategic Alignment

The Libraries Board of South Australia is a statutory authority operating under the provisions of the *Libraries Act 1982*; it administers the State Library and Public Library Services and is responsible to the Premier.

The [Libraries Act 1982](#) outlines the objectives and functions as:

- To establish, maintain and expand collections of library materials and collections of such materials that are of South Australian origin, or have a particular relevance to the State.
- To ensure that the community has available to it adequate research and information services providing access to library materials and information stored in libraries and other institutions both within and outside the State.

The Libraries Act also provides for compulsory legal deposit of all published material in all formats covered by the Act, including electronic publications.

The State Library Strategic Plan's mission is to '*ensure that current and future generations enjoy, experience and learn from our South Australian collections and world knowledge collected and preserved for their use; we will provide research and information services, events and programs to enrich access*'.

The State Library works to and supports SA Government mandates such as [The Declaration of Open Data](#) and [SA Government Open Data Principles and Framework](#), as well as internationally accepted standards and principles such the [FAIR data principles](#) recognised by the Australian National Data Service and the [Semantic Web](#) vision of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#).

The State Library provides access to collection material in accordance with the [Copyright Act 1968](#) privacy principles, cultural protocols, the access conditions nominated by depositors and donors and the Library's Copyright Determination and Risk Management Framework. The State Library supports the principle adopted by the National and State Libraries Australia (NSLA) that public domain works should be publicly accessible and available for re-use. The State Library also endorses the NSLA principle that in a democratic society, the public domain and copyright are of equal importance: both drive social and economic benefits through innovation and the creation of new knowledge.

Principles

The State Library has adopted a set of principles which underpin its collecting activities:

1. To actively build and manage sustainable collections that reflect diversity and provide opportunities to connect South Australians with not only their state, but also nationally and globally. To establish collections that enable South Australians to expand their knowledge of the past, present and future.
2. As a trusted custodian of South Australia's historical record; appropriately acquire, manage, and preserve collections for current and future generations to access, aspiring to excellence in both physical and digital preservation.
3. To ensure collections are open, discoverable, and easy to use, regardless of format, embracing new technologies and partnerships to highlight collections and stories, maximising access, and removing barriers to use where possible.
4. To acknowledge the fundamental role of Indigenous peoples in the history of South Australia and work to build respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities and embed culturally informed approaches in collection practices.
5. Continue to pursue the digital transformation of collections to better manage the valuable material held on behalf of the community and to maximise its availability to users.
6. As a major cultural institution and an active member of the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) community, work collaboratively with others, taking a cooperative approach in collecting activities and through participation in national initiatives that deliver efficiencies and better outcomes for the South Australian community.



Stone axe, part of Mountford-Sheard Collection, circa 1937.
SLSA PRG 1218/34/671B



Diary of W.A. Crowder, Overland Telegraph Line construction party, 1871-1872, in original canvas bag. SLSA D 8065(L)



Influenza quarantine camp in Adelaide, 1919. SLSA PRG 280/1/9/374



*Photo submitted to Remember my story - COVID-19
Family wearing home-made masks during COVID-19, 2020.
Photographer Linda Kennedy*

Partners

The State Library works in partnership with many other collecting institutions to ensure that South Australians have access to resources. In particular, the Library works with the South Australian Public Library Network, South Australian Museum, Art Gallery of South Australia, History Trust of South Australia, the South Australia Parliament Research Library, State Records of South Australia and the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia South Australian Branch to collaboratively collect materials for the benefit of the community. National partnerships include the NSLA consortium, the National Film & Sound Archive, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the National Archives of Australia.

The Library is a member of the National edeposit (NED) service, a national collaborative approach to capture, preserve and make available electronic publications that are subject to legal deposit legislation.

As a member of Trove Collaborative Services, the Library can help community partners maximise the amount of South Australian content added to Trove through the digitisation discount.

The Library is a signatory to The Australian Libraries Collaborative Collection (TALCC) agreement, a collaborative scheme which builds collection strengths in specified subject and/or classification areas to avoid unnecessary duplication and to promote preservation and access. The collecting focus of each library reflects what is most important to its jurisdiction, but together the members of NSLA contribute to a rich national documentary heritage.

Consortium procurement partnerships across the library sector support maximum access to electronically published information through initiatives such as national site licences and leveraging price discounts.



Clay tablet with cuneiform inscription, ca. 2400-2300 BC

Collection Management

The Library takes a whole of life cycle approach to collecting that involves selecting, appraising, and acquiring; describing and providing access; storing and preserving; reappraising and retaining, or deaccessioning and disposal.

The aim is to store and preserve materials in ways that ensure both current and future access in perpetuity. However, collection management includes a continuous process of reappraisal as collections are actively shaped and managed over time. Disposal may be in the form of transfer to a more suitable repository or repatriation to another jurisdiction.

A Collection Strategy Group governs the Library's collection related decision making. The Group meet regularly to discuss all aspects of collection management, making recommendations to the Director and Libraries Board as appropriate.

Collection Development

The Library's collections are shaped by legislation, bequests, community demand, historical collecting decisions, contemporary areas of interest, and the deliberate decision to complement the work of other collecting institutions. Collection material is selected based on established collecting policy and acquired in the format that best represents its creation and content while also taking into account the changing nature of publishing and the cost to acquire and preserve.

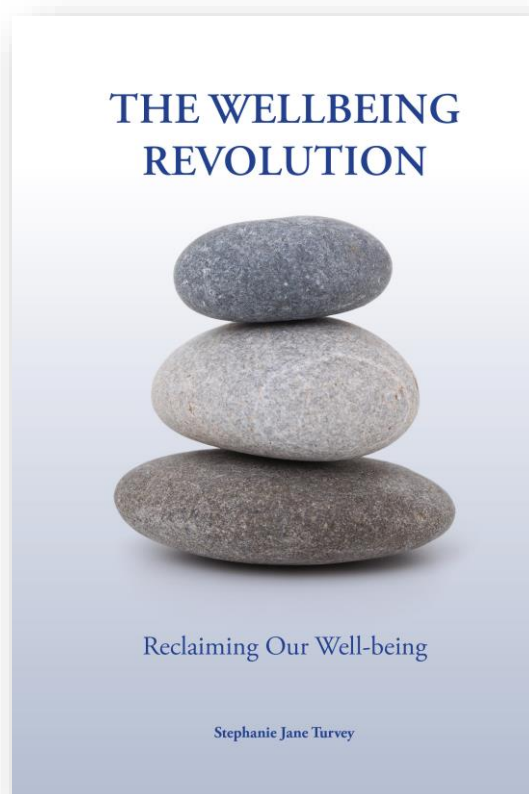
The State Library gives priority to selecting material that meets its legislative responsibilities, builds on collection strengths, and expands contemporary collecting. The collecting priorities are:

South Australian published material in accordance with legal deposit responsibilities. Material will be collected primarily in electronic format, with priority given to sourcing content that provides a record of information, discussion, and debate within the public sphere.

South Australian unpublished material and non-government records that document the diverse lives, activities, and achievements of South Australian people, as well as the places, events and ideas that shape our society.

Family History resources and tools that index primary reference sources for family historians, recognising increasing community demand for this content.

The wellbeing revolution: reclaiming our well-being,
Stephanie Jane Turvey, Adelaide, South Australia, 2019.



Rare or special material that provide fine, representative examples of the international history of writing, printing, and publishing.

Additions to named and special collections which align with the collecting strengths and have been the gifts of generous individuals or organisations.

General reference material through subscription or purchase that supports personal research across multiple disciplines and in areas of contemporary interest.

Collection decisions will be implemented in accordance with this Policy by librarians, archivists and/or curators with collection development expertise. The Collection Strategy Group will approve acquisitions and donations that have a significant impact on library operations.

Preservation

The State Library undertakes the management and preservation of all deposited materials, regardless of format, to enable long term community access to its collections. As a preservation library, vigilance is exercised in collection management, applying effective conservation treatments and provision of appropriate housing and storage so that future generations are as well served as the present one. Recognising that the preservation of information may be more important than the preservation of the artefact, the Library creates digital surrogates to ensure preservation and ongoing access to the content of its collections.



Conservation treatment

Access

The Library is a research and preservation library which aims to provide information as and when required by the community. Unlike museums and galleries, the Library's collections are subject to retrieval requests by the general public. The collections are described and stored in a way that supports continued community access, either through physical or online channels.

In addition to providing collection access through service points, the Library shares the collection with the community through online content, engagement activities including displays and exhibitions, and learning programs.

Deaccessioning and Disposal

The Library regularly reviews its collections to identify material that may no longer be required. While removing material from the collection is a time consuming and often difficult undertaking, it is required to ensure that space and other resources are available to collect and manage South Australian and other heritage items, and to ensure ongoing currency of information.

The Collection Strategy Group will consider the deaccessioning and disposal of material based on the principles of this Policy, with legislative obligations being the primary consideration.

Review

The Collection Strategy Group will review this policy in line with the State Library Strategic Plan.

Geoff Stempel
Director
State Library of South Australia
15 February 2021



Newton5c, part of Stan Ostoja-Kotkowski collection, 1992. SLSA PRG 919/107/504