

Northern Territory Archives Service

Donating Community Archives

Why preserve archives

The social, economic, religious and political life of the community is reflected in the records created by people in their daily lives and in records resulting from the activities of business, trade unions, churches, community associations, political parties and other organisations. Archives are unique records which have continuing value.

The NTAS acquires both government and community archives that have significance to the Northern Territory. The Northern Territory Archives Service preserves community archives as part of the archival heritage of the Northern Territory and provides a resource for the study and understanding of our past.

Why donate your archives

There are many benefits from placing archives in the custody of the NTAS, including:

- Permanent preservation in a nationally recognised cultural heritage collection;
- High level of protection against theft, damage, destruction or loss;
- Collection management provided by professionally qualified staff;
- Availability of archives to researchers in Darwin and Alice Springs;
- Storage and preservation as a free service to the community; and,
- Environmentally controlled storage facilities

What archives may be donated

Community archives consist of personal archives or archives of organisations. Personal archives are collected from the Northern Territory community. These archives are deposited by individuals who have been active in the Northern Territory. Archives of organisations may include the archives of community groups and organisations, businesses and companies, churches and missions, political parties, trade unions and professional associations, and sporting clubs.

Types of personal archives may include:

- Diaries and manuscripts;
- Letters and personal papers;
- Photographic prints and slides; and,
- Scrapbooks and maps.

Types of archives of organisations may include:

- Reports, correspondence and policy files;
- Minutes of meetings;
- Newsletters and journals;
- Legal documents; and,
- Plans and posters.

The NTAS does not seek to collect published library material, museum artefacts or objects. If you are considering donating material to the NTAS, please contact our staff for advice.

Preparing community archives for donation

When preparing archives for donation, it is important to preserve the context of how and why the records were created. Care should be taken not to disturb the original order of documents. A lack of original order will diminish their historical and evidential value. Information about the identity of people and the dates of records are of particular importance to the research use of archives. Please contact the NTAS for advice when preparing archives for donation.

Donation agreements

Donors are required to sign an agreement with the NTAS when donating archives. The donation agreement sets out the terms of the donation and provides clear directions with respect to copyright, access and use of the records.

The Donation Agreement ensures that both parties are aware of their rights and obligations and protects their interests, while assisting in the future administration of the archives. A copy of the Donation Agreement, including a list of the archives donated, is provided to the donor when the archives are processed.

Bequests

Donors may choose to bequeath their records as part of their estate to ensure that their records are preserved in the long-term. Donors considering a bequest may wish to consult the NTAS regarding any conditions relating to the access and use of the records.

Research access to community archives

When archives are donated to the NTAS public access to the collection is negotiated. The majority of community archives are available on open access; however donors may negotiate to restrict access to their archives for a certain period of time where the collection may contain sensitive information.

Restrictions may be applied to research use, copying, or publication and are included in the Donation Agreement.

Contacts

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