

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Collect Today What Will Be Important Tomorrow

The Library aspires to enable Australians to understand their diverse social, cultural and intellectual histories by collecting and preserving Australian publications and unpublished collections—in print and digital forms—so that they can be enjoyed by current and future generations. It also aspires to build a rich collection of print and digital resources that enable learning, research and understanding of the Asia-Pacific region and Australia's place in the world. This policy expands on the Library's Collecting Strategy 2020–2021 to 2023–2024.

Purpose of the Collection Development Policy

The Library's Collection Development Policy defines the scope and nature of its collecting of Australian and overseas materials. It sets out the key principles that underpin the ongoing development of the Library's national collection, and from which the Library's decisions to acquire materials flow: why, what, when and how to collect. The policy covers materials of different types of intellectual, literary and creative content, in either published or unpublished form, across different formats, and delineates when the Library takes responsibility for the long-term preservation of and access to materials.

Background

The Library built its collections as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library from 1901 until 1960, when the National Library was formally established under its own Act. The majority of the collections were physically transferred with the opening of the [Library building in 1968](#). The history of the Library's foundation collections and subsequent collecting directions can be found at '[History of the Collection](#)', with an overview of [collection highlights](#).

Since 1960, the Library has regularly revised its collecting policy to reflect changes in the internal and external environment, taking into account trends and innovations in publishing and content creation, information technology and collection management, changing research paradigms, legal frameworks and social, political and cultural contexts.

As a living document, each iteration of the policy aims to provide guidance for staff, other libraries, users and the community on the Library's collecting activities across different formats and subject areas. The policy was revised in 2016; that revision introduced a set of common principles that applied across all collections, and across digital and physical materials. This revision of the policy maintains a strong, flexible framework for decision-making, and encourages staff to weigh and judge factors such as format, content, relevance and significance of materials against stated principles, considerations and priorities.

What is different about the 2020 revision?

This revision completes the integration of the 'continuum' collecting approach placed at the centre of the 2016 policy. Rather than being organised to reflect the Library's organisational structure, or by material format, the policy is now organised around three broad approaches to collecting: **comprehensive** collections, where relevant materials are acquired to the greatest extent possible; **representative** collections, where the Library selects a manageable amount of material to represent a type, creator or subject; and **selective** collections, where items of national priority or special significance are identified and collected, or where depth of collecting is prioritised above breadth.

This opens up the possibility of creating rich collections across priority areas, and reflects the positive and practical structures that enable this to be achieved.

The Contemporary Environment for Building Collections

The context for the creation, development, management, interpretation of and provision of access to collections continues to change for all major research libraries worldwide. In building its collection, the contemporary library must blend licensed, published, unique, online, physical and born-digital materials with an expectation about open access. In building collections, national libraries—including this one—must aim to build a collection that satisfies future researchers as well as current users.

Sustainability and Stewardship

- The policy defines principles by which to determine what the Library should acquire, what it should aim to preserve in perpetuity (i.e. what it should take stewardship of), and what it should provide access to through another trusted collecting institution or vendor. Access can take many forms, from the purchase of a licence that allows the Library's readers to access material through to arrangements with partner institutions for collaborative digitisation of material.
- The Library must balance its mandate to ensure treasured materials are preserved for the Australian people in the long term with the need for efficient allocation of resources, including minimising duplication of both storage and digitisation processes where material is already widely available. In affirming the Library's ongoing stewardship role, the new policy approach also underlines the importance of collaboration between institutions to develop secure, efficient and accessible collections for Australians. NED, the National edeposit system, is based on a successful collaboration of [National and State Libraries Australia](#) institutions.
- The Library must also determine whether it is able to guarantee long-term preservation of a work. For this reason, Australian resources acquired through licences are purchased with a perpetual licence when possible, which includes an agreement allowing the Library to obtain a copy of the files should the provider no longer be able to provide access. Although the Library aims to optimise discovery and access to materials not held in the collection and, when in scope, provide perpetual access to them, international licensing arrangements or copyright provisions may mean such decisions are outside the Library's control.
- The Library aims to preserve digital materials acquired for the collection when technologically possible, but the technology and system processes required to make these collections accessible to the public are not yet all well developed.

Volume and Variety

- The Library's collecting program is marked by rich variety and mass volume. Each year, the Library adds many tens of thousands of physical items and millions of digital files to its collections, encompassing a great diversity of material type, content, focus and subject matter.
- The ease of production and distribution of born-digital materials, whether published materials such as ebooks or unpublished materials such as photographic archives, has resulted in an exponential increase in material potentially available for the Library to collect. At the same time, individuals, organisations and government departments are divesting themselves of existing print collections, resulting in a sharp increase in offers and requests for the Library to house and preserve physical material, both published and unpublished, for long-term stewardship.
- This increased volume and variety, combined with declining staff and financial resources, has placed considerable strain on the Library's acquisition processes, ability to respond to offers within appropriate timeframes and capacity to collect proactively or fill collection gaps. The policy aims to support staff to connect strategic priorities with the operational environment

and to ensure the Library retains the capacity and capability to acquire, manage and make collections available in the current context.

Collaboration and Networking

- The collecting process now places a higher priority on collaboration internally between acquisitions staff across the Library and externally between collecting institutions. The organisational model adopted by the Library from 2020–2021 reshapes collection teams around processes and workflows (rather than format), the implementation of the structure embeds collaborative practices. The policy sets out the primary relationships of the Library with other Australian libraries and collecting institutions, while affirming the role of the Library in providing Australians with access to the resources they need to support their research, education, understanding and enjoyment. It provides a guide to enable a greater degree of cooperation in the development of collections in the national interest.
- The Library works collaboratively with other national, state and territory collecting institutions to ensure that together we:
 - build a comprehensive national collection that is accessible to all Australians
 - preserve the published output, intellectual and creative endeavour of Australian people and organisations
 - capture Australian voices published overseas
 - make the Library's holdings widely known and accessible
 - repatriate material digitally when appropriate.

Changing Nature of Scholarship

Changing research practices and the evolving nature of collection resources affect the type of material the Library can collect permanently, as well as shifting the paradigm from collecting to access, especially with resources from the wider world. The Library takes particular responsibility for stewardship of electronic resources in the humanities, social sciences and arts fields, but not in science and technology.

Shifting attitudes toward data sharing, methodologies in electronic research and the nature of academic discourse have implications for the Library's collecting. These also affect collaboration, with an increasing role for other trusted institutions and stakeholders in ensuring that data sets and the outcomes of research are preserved for the long term.

Integrating Physical and Digital Collections

The revised policy applies consistent criteria to the collection of works, based on the intellectual, creative, literary and social content of the material. The Library's preference is for materials to be in a digital format where available, but recognises that works may need to be represented in one format or another depending on completeness of content. The changing technology of library materials exists within a continuum of Australian life—discussion, debate, creativity, intellectual production and the recording of everyday life have been part of Australian society for centuries. Future users will be able to research these activities in the Library's collections across a range of communication technologies, from early Australian broadsides to twenty-first-century social media sites.

Legislative Framework for Published Materials (Legal Deposit Provisions)

The Library was separately established under the [*National Library Act 1960 \(Cwth\)*](#), which outlines the responsibility to create a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and

the Australian people. For this purpose, its collecting role is further defined in the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cwth), including provisions requiring Australian publishers to deposit a copy of their publications with the Library (legal deposit provisions).

From February 2016, legal deposit provisions have applied to both digital and physical publications, ensuring that the Library's comprehensive collections include forms of publication such as the internet and ebooks, as well as more traditional formats. More information about the legal deposit program, including information on what and how to deposit, is available on the Library's [legal deposit](#) webpage.

Developing Online Collections

The Library is committed to making its collections as accessible as possible. Digitisation, as well as aggregation of metadata, is critical to increasing discovery and use of the collections. To this end, the Library participated for many years in the Australian Newspapers Plan (ANPlan), leading a vibrant cooperative program with state and territory libraries and other organisations to collect, preserve and digitise Australian newspapers. While the group is no longer operating as a distinct entity, broader National and State Libraries Australia work ensures that national collaboration continues to have a major impact on collecting decisions. For other materials, the Library actively works to make more of its physical collections freely available online. The Library's [digitisation policy](#) and [corporate plan](#) complement this Collection Development Policy.

Acquisition and selection procedures for born-digital materials, including pictures and manuscripts, have been updated to include a risk assessment for any large acquisitions of digital material to ensure that long-term preservation issues are considered.

First Nation Australians (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Collections

Collecting of material created by and representing the views of Australia's First Nations Australians (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) has been a significant focus of the Library in recent years, and the Library has obtained rich archival, pictorial and oral history collections to support this aim. By their nature, the Library's earliest collections were limited to perspectives on Australian culture reflected through European tradition. Australia has also been recorded and reflected by First Nations peoples through artistic, cultural, social and intellectual expression and traditions, and latterly in written form. In the revised policy, the Library places a strong priority on collecting retrospective and contemporary material created by First Nations Australians.

PRINCIPLES

Purpose of Collecting

The Library collects documentary resources relating to Australia and the Australian people so that the Australian community—now and in the future—can discover, learn and create new knowledge. The Library's collections extend understanding of issues of contemporary significance, build strong community connections and underpin its leadership activities.

Scope of Collecting

The National Library of Australia's statutory role is to maintain and develop a national collection of library material, including a comprehensive collection of library material relating to Australia and the Australian people. This role is recognised through the National Library Act as well as the legal deposit provisions in the Copyright Act.

The collections aim to capture:

- contemporary Australian published output in all its form and formats
- a documentary record of Australia's diverse social, cultural, creative and intellectual histories • through the acquisition of published, special and unique materials that will support research and interpretation
- Australia's place in its geographical region, through the collection of materials specifically to support study of Asia and the Pacific (with a focus on Indonesia, China, Timor-Leste and the Pacific)
- materials from the wider world, with a focus on resources that underpin the humanities, arts and social sciences, and contribute to the interests of the Library's users and the research process.

The Library's staff uses the principles outlined in this policy to exercise appropriate judgement in building a national collection of physical and digital resources for the Australian community, now and into the future. The extent to which the Library can achieve these aims is constrained by available resourcing.

Ethical Collecting

In accordance with guidelines outlined in the [Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material](#), the Library exercises best ethical and professional practice and judgement in collecting cultural materials, including respecting First Nations' protocols, cultural restrictions and sensitivities. The Library undertakes appropriate due diligence, including provenance research, and is accountable and transparent in acquiring material by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange. The Library complies with Commonwealth governance, performance and accountability rules.

The Library ensures cultural material has been legally exported from its country of origin and intermediate countries. The Library does not acquire material where there is suspicion that it was obtained through unauthorised means or theft from individuals or other repositories. The Library reviews new information about an item in the institution's collection and undertakes further investigations, if required.

Comprehensive, Representative and Selective Collecting

The Library collects contemporary and retrospective material:

- **comprehensively**—for Australian published materials, based on the Library's legislative responsibilities to collect all Australian publishing in print or digital form
- **representatively**—where not all forms of published or unpublished materials can be captured and preserved, or when there is a need to represent a particular subject, person, group or issue
- **selectively**—acquiring materials and collections by applying knowledge of subjects, formats, people, places, events and issues of national significance, and exercising judgement based on the key principles for selection and stewardship.

Australian

The Australian collections include material created by Australians, whether locally resident or expatriate, created or published in Australia, or containing substantial content relating to Australia and the Australian experience.

The Library aims to comprehensively collect Australian publications in order to reflect the full diversity and range of Australian life depicted in the nation's published record, both contemporary and retrospective.

The Australian published collections comprise works that have been made available in some form to the public and contribute to the record of information, discussion and debate within the public sphere. While the Library prioritises the comprehensive acquisition of current materials, the full range of Australian published collections includes contemporary and retrospective books, journals, magazines, government publications, newspapers, maps, music and websites.

When it is not possible to acquire a copy of every publication, the Library collects a representation of the breadth and diversity of materials made available to the public, in a variety of formats, including ephemera, posters, websites, blogs and social media.

The Library intentionally acquires a wide range of unique materials documenting the lives and activities of Australian people, places and events that have shaped society. These include personal papers and archives, organisational records, pictures, oral histories and folklore recordings that support research, creative and interpretative use.

The Library also selectively acquires special or formed collections assembled by others and keeps them together to support research. These may be published or unpublished and have a particular research subject, such as the Crome Collection of aviation materials; a historical association, such as the Australian Inland Mission Collection; or a creative interest, such as J.C. Williamson's musical and theatrical materials.

Unique and special collections aim to support research, creative and public use by the Australian community. The Library promotes special collections as important sites of knowledge and as unique documentation of human endeavour: people, traditions, events, ideas and values, culture and the creative arts. The Library seeks to build representative collections over time, and to balance that activity against the need to collect selectively to ensure appropriate depth in the collection to satisfy the needs of future users. These collections also provide insight into the historical, social and political contexts of both their use and impact.

Overseas

The Library selectively collects overseas resources to enhance understanding of the Asia-Pacific region and to provide context for Australia's place in the wider world. Collecting from and about the countries of Asia and the Pacific is the Library's highest priority after its Australian collecting responsibilities, and the Library aims to maintain a level of curatorial focus on collecting from Indonesia, China, Timor-Leste and the Pacific. Works published in Asia and the Pacific are acquired in relevant languages. In addition to books, maps, journals, magazines and newspapers, selective collecting for this region may encompass pictorial and audiovisual material, ephemera and websites.

The Library also selectively collects Western-language works on Indonesia, China, Timor-Leste and the Pacific that have been published outside the region. These provide context for broader understanding of a country's development as well as its place in the world, and support research into Australia's relationships within the region.

The Library selectively acquires or provides access to publications from the rest of the world that provide an understanding of issues and topics affecting Australia. Collecting supports research in history, society and culture, especially in interpretation and analysis of global issues, current events and social trends. The preference is for works that analyse the social aspects of a subject and present subjects in a broad context. Overseas materials relating to Australia's history, society and development are selectively acquired but with a priority more closely aligned with Australian collecting.

The Library selectively acquires or provides access to international reference resources, preferably in digital form, to support research across multiple disciplines, especially in the humanities, creative arts and social sciences.

When overseas resources are freely available online, the Library will connect to online access rather than take responsibility for long-term stewardship of the materials.

Priorities

In selecting materials, priority is placed on building on the existing strengths of the Library's collections, to ensure rich and developed collections that exhibit range, depth and cohesion. The Library may also aim to fill specific gaps in the collection. Collecting primary sources and documentary heritage material is a priority.

Priority in Australian collecting is given to:

- national significance—materials that record the lives and activities of people and organisations of national prominence or influence
- national interest—people, places and events that reflect Australian society
- representation of the rich diversity of Australian society, in rural and regional as well as urban areas, and the experience and encounters of everyday life, including aspects of Australia that are inadequately documented
- representation of cultural and linguistic diversity, including materials in languages other than English
- material produced by First Nations Australians.

Priority in Asia-Pacific collecting is given to:

- materials from China, Indonesia and Timor-Leste
- materials from Melanesia—Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia
- resources relating to the 'modern era', as defined by each country
- works supporting research on history, politics, government, economy, culture, environment, social issues and intra-regional concerns.

Priority in collecting from the wider world is given to:

- material that provides a contextual understanding of Australia's history, society and development, from Indigenous people and places to European exploration and discovery to the present day
- works that address issues and topics affecting Australia, especially politics, history, government, international relations, the environment, energy and resources, economy, trade, First Nations Australians and the movement of peoples, demographic change, health trends, music and the arts, society and culture
- examinations of all aspects of the Australia-New Zealand relationship, and Antarctica
- reference materials that support research in the humanities, social sciences and the arts, and enhance Australian research endeavours.

Formats

The Library collects work in an extensive range of formats, ranging from printed books to handwritten manuscripts, photographs, maps, digital archives, ebooks and oral history and folklore recordings in analogue or digital form. The Library responds to the changing formats of publication, intellectual and creative endeavour by aiming to acquire and preserve works or collections in the format that best represents their creation and content. However, the Library also considers the cost and ease of preservation, as well as accessibility for users, when deciding on the best format to acquire.

While digital is preferred, in some circumstances the Library may acquire variant formats where imprints or copies have a higher content value or carry significant provenance or add other value. Multiple editions and versions of a work may be collected when there are variants, arrangements, additions, alterations or new or revised intellectual content.

Selecting Formats

Where a collection or work is available in more than one format, digital is preferred. In some circumstances, other factors may be taken into account in deciding which format other than digital might be collected:

- the format that represents the collection or work at its best, providing a significantly richer experience for the user
- how accessible the work or collection is and how best to support research
- how well and efficiently the format can be collected and preserved, for perpetuity, and the cost of doing so.

Additionally, for published materials, the Library considers:

- the format that best represents how the work was distributed to the public
- formats that reflect developments and trends in publishing
- that digital formats will be preferred whenever available.

Additionally, for archives and similar unpublished materials, the Library takes into account:

- the formats that most represent the working life, research, creative or intellectual processes of the collector or creator, or those that most effectively embody the subject.

Stewardship

The Library aims to store and preserve Australian materials in ways that ensure access for current and future generations in perpetuity.

Where collections or items are stored and preserved in other trusted national or international institutions, the Library may provide access to the resource without taking responsibility for its long-term preservation and access or acquiring a copy for the collection. Collaborative relationships are the usual mechanism to achieve this.

For overseas ebooks and other resources only accessible through the purchase of a licence, the Library will endeavour to obtain a perpetual access agreement.

For overseas journals, databases and newspapers, the Library may provide access through aggregated networks and does not commit to providing perpetual access.

Relationship with Other Collecting Institutions

The Library works with other collecting institutions to ensure that Australians have access to resources and that the national collection is acquired, stored, managed and preserved. As a member of National and State Libraries Australia, the Library is committed to collaborative collection development.

The Library works in collaboration with:

- the Australian state and territory libraries, to ensure the collection and long-term preservation of Australian library material
- the National Archives of Australia, recognising its responsibility for preserving Commonwealth Government records
- the National Portrait Gallery, recognising its responsibility for preserving the national collection of portraits
- the National Film and Sound Archive, recognising its responsibility for preserving the national audiovisual collection
- the ACT Heritage Library, to document Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory region
- other libraries, archives, galleries, museums and heritage organisations in the higher education sector and state, regional and local institutions where collecting interests connect.

First Nations Australians Collecting Principles

The Library recognises the importance of acquiring materials created by First Nations Australians and actively engages in this endeavour, whether acquiring materials for its own collection or working cooperatively with other institutions to create a national collection. As stewards of First Nations Australian cultural material, the National Library of Australia strives to:

- acquire published and unpublished material relating to all issues concerning First Nation Australians
- work in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) to support the acquisition and preservation of Indigenous language and related collections
- ensure that First Nations Australian knowledge, stories and voices in its collections are honoured, respected and made accessible in culturally appropriate ways
- establish and maintain the cultural safety of First Nations Australian material in its collection and of First Nations Australians accessing it
- ensure that culturally appropriate description and access conditions are applied to First Nations Australian material at the time of collection and establish principles to guide this process
- develop the breadth and depth of the Library's First Nations Australian collections
- ensure that First Nations Australian perspectives and cultural requirements drive the collection of First Nations Australian material
- anticipate the needs of future generations of First Nations Australians
- actively engage with First Nations Australian individuals, communities and organisations to help build relevant and well-understood First Nations Australian collections
- prioritise the collection of documentary heritage created by and relating to First Nations Australians, for the benefit of all Australians
- enable First Nations Australians to connect to information important to their lives, identities and cultural connections
- build a collection that is beneficial and relevant to First Nations Australians.

HOW WE COLLECT

The Library develops its collections by building strong community connections, engaging with issues of contemporary significance and undertaking leadership activities, including innovating to address the impact of changing technologies on collecting and acquisition processes.

This section of the policy addresses the strategies, methodologies and range of approaches that the Library uses to acquire material, but does not include procedures, systems and workflows that the Library uses internally to acquire materials. Current information on these processes for publishers, creators and donors is available through the Library's website, as well as related policy documents, including information about [legal deposit](#) and [donating to the collection](#).

Introduction

The Library builds its collection through a variety of means:

- legal deposit of Australian published materials under the *Copyright Act*. Since 2016, this Act has applied to both digital and print publications
- voluntary deposit arrangements, including, but not limited to, government publications
- purchase via library suppliers and agents in Australia and overseas
- direct purchase from authors or publishers, and through requests to purchase identified material
- donations from the public, through one-off offers of material and through public appeals, bequests, gifts and philanthropy
- donations under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, a tax incentive scheme for major donations of significant cultural materials
- commissioning of oral history and folklore interviews and photographs, via contracted interviewers, collectors and photographers, and through occasional, externally funded partnerships
- special collecting arrangements, such as the Library's office in Indonesia for collecting Asian materials, and consultation with First Nations Australian communities or individuals with the authority to speak for traditional owners
- licensing (including perpetual licences) and subscription arrangements with international and Australian suppliers of electronic materials and databases, where not available for purchase, or not selected for permanent acquisition and stewardship.

The Library maintains a collection 'wish list' of highly desired materials sought for the collection.

Ethical Collecting

The Library undertakes appropriate due diligence and is accountable and transparent in acquiring material by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, in accordance with the principles outlined in the Commonwealth Government's [Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material](#).

Relevant principles ensure that the Library:

- undertakes all acquisitions, whether by purchase, donation or bequest, according to the highest standards of due diligence, including ethical and professional best practice, and in accordance with applicable law
- respects First Nations cultural restrictions and acknowledges its legal and ethical responsibility to traditional owners

- ensures all cultural material acquired has been legally exported from the country of origin (and intermediate countries)
- does not acquire cultural material where there is suspicion that it was obtained through unauthorised means or theft from individuals or other repositories
- reviews new information about an item in the institution's collection and undertakes further investigations, if required
- is committed to transparency and accountability in relevant policies and procedures and in making information on new acquisitions available to the public. The Library makes its policy documents, together with periodic acquisition highlights, available on its website.

The Library undertakes its acquisition processes in accordance with the Commonwealth Government's governance, performance and accountability rules.

Legal Deposit

Under legal deposit provisions in the Commonwealth Copyright Act, the National Library is entitled to receive one copy of all library material published in Australia directly from the publisher, free of charge. Where material is published offline, for example print books, newspapers, magazines, journals, printed maps and music, or published USBs, CD-ROMs and multimedia DVDs, this material must be delivered to the Library within 30 days of publication. Online material, such as ebooks, websites, electronic sheet music or maps, must be delivered to the Library upon request. The Library works in close cooperation with Australian publishers, large and small, to assist them to meet these deposit obligations, and maintains the Australian International Standard Serial Number ([ISSN](#)) and International Standard Music Number ([ISMN](#)) agencies. More information, including information on what material is eligible, and how to deposit, is available on the Library's [legal deposit](#) webpage.

Purchase and Licensing of Collection Materials

The Library follows Commonwealth Government financial and procedural guidelines in all contractual, purchasing and licensing arrangements.

The Library purchases individual items for the collection through a variety of mechanisms, including auction, direct purchase from an organisation or an individual and through specialist vendors. The Library also purchases published materials through contractual arrangements with Library suppliers. These arrangements often involve developing profiles that specify groups of eligible materials for suppliers to deliver to the Library—for example, 'any book written by an Australian published in China'. Profiles are based on the principles and priorities determined in the Collection Development Policy.

Profiles are especially used in collecting overseas materials in order to define collecting priorities for and from different countries, and to acquire materials from overseas suppliers. The Library maintains a regional office in Jakarta, Indonesia, to facilitate the Asian regional collecting program.

Additionally, the Library seeks to selectively fill collection gaps for out of print and retrospective Australian publications, and nurtures relationships with collectors, antiquarian and second-hand dealers, small presses, auction houses, agents and other outlets, as well as the general public and organisations, to identify, select and acquire such materials.

Where materials are available on subscription but not available for acquisition into the collection—for example, electronic resources and databases—the Library aims to acquire a perpetual licence to guarantee ongoing access and long-term sustainability. In instances where the Library only provides access to a resource but does not take responsibility for its sustainability, the Library acquires a

licence limited for use. The Library sometimes enters into consortium licensing arrangements in collaboration with other trusted repositories.

Where a formed collection, archival collection or item of significant commercial value requires external valuation for purchase, the Library uses independent qualified valuers, as appropriate, to determine market value. The Australian Government also provides a list of registered valuers as part of its Cultural Gifts Program.

Donation of Collection Materials

Generous donations of collection material by individuals and organisations over decades have helped build the richness, diversity and depth of the [collections](#). The Library encourages offers of a wide range of collection materials, in accordance with the scope, collecting intent and priorities outlined below in 'What We Collect'. The Library accepts materials across the spectrum, from single items to lifetime or formed collections. The Library takes a long-term view of collection donations, and can accommodate shorter or longer timeframes as well as large collections in periodic instalments. [Guidelines for donors and collection donation forms](#) for registering offers are available on the Library website.

In accordance with its custodial role to provide long-term preservation of and access to materials, the Library can only accept materials to the Library as permanent gifts. The Library does not accept donations of material on permanent loan or a loan-for-copy basis.

The Library is not always able to accept offers, especially in areas where the Library's collecting is selective. Should materials duplicate existing items, or be outside of the policy, the Library may advise donors of alternative institutions or pathways that may provide an appropriate home for the material.

The Library particularly engages with the community to assist in locating volumes or issues in newspapers, magazines and journals that are missing from complete runs of periodicals, or where high use has rendered volumes at risk for long-term preservation. Occasional special projects and public appeals, such as for items required for digitisation—for example, *The Australian Women's Weekly*—or for ephemera collecting during federal election campaigns, depend on this approach.

The Library builds relationships with individuals, communities of interest and the research community to acquire collections of special and original materials of national significance. Donors typically include creators, collectors, executors, family members, copyright holders, agents or individuals acting with authority on behalf of an organisation or community. These relationships help the Library to identify rich and unique collections. Where possible, the Library works closely with and assists donors to organise, describe and document archival or large formed collections prior to transfer to the Library, at a level that enables a donated collection to be immediately accessible for research. The Library expects organisations and societies donating their organisational records to organise and document these in advance of deposit.

The Library asks donors to identify their relationship to the material in order to ascertain provenance, maintain rights agreements and access conditions and acknowledge donations appropriately. The Library respects privacy rights and obligations in requesting and storing personal information.

Donations under the Cultural Gifts Program

The Library appreciates, benefits from and works closely with donors wishing to gift culturally significant materials under the Australian Government's [Cultural Gifts Program](#). Information on how the Library acquires collections under this program is available on the website and outlines such requirements as minimum value and frequency of gifts, ownership of materials and copyright, valuation and acceptance of gifts.

Commissioning

The Library commissions oral histories, folklore recordings and some photographs, where oral or visual forms of communication capture people, places, events and experiences more appropriately than other forms of textual communication or publication. Typical examples may be the experience of immigration, natural disasters or generational change. The Library contracts specialist interviewers, and sometimes photographers, for such purposes. The Library provides recording equipment for oral histories it commissions and trains interviewers in methodologies appropriate to the medium and in accordance with Library systems and technology, often for use in the field.

The Library also enters into occasional partnerships with other government agencies to commission materials around particular subjects, such as the experiences recorded by the Forgotten Australians and Child Migrants project, and with universities under the auspices of the Australian Research Council and similar grants. These partnerships are normally facilitated by external funding and subject to formal agreements and contractual arrangements.

Copyright, Rights and Conditions for Access to Collections

The Library aims to make all collections and collection items as accessible as possible once deposited, while respecting the intellectual property, moral rights, cultural sensitivities and privacy of donors, creators and subjects. This includes cataloguing the materials and making them accessible on the Library's website and through the Library's services.

While the Library permanently owns its collection materials, copyright normally remains the intellectual property of creators and publishers. The exceptions are where copyright is transferred to the Library by agreement; remains the intellectual property of the Library, for example in a commissioned oral history; or is acquired by the Library as part of the purchase, for example in the case of some photographs. The Library endorses the [position statements on copyright](#) prepared by National and State Libraries Australia.

The Library prefers that donors do not place unnecessary restrictions on access to and research use of unpublished collections. However, donors are able to specify terms and conditions of access and use of their collection materials in the Library's rights agreement at the point of acquisition, including restricting access to sensitive material for an agreed duration. The Library makes materials available for use and for public use in accordance with these rights agreements.

Access conditions agreed to by creators and donors and other ethical considerations are especially important. The Library takes into account that rights to use First Nations Australian cultural material may be held by an individual, but traditional ownership of that cultural knowledge is often held at the community level. In some cases, permission to use cultural information should be in the form of written permission from relevant individuals or organisations with cultural authority.

WHAT WE COLLECT

The Library seeks to build **comprehensive** collections where relevant materials are acquired to the greatest extent possible; **representative** collections where the Library selects a manageable amount of material to represent a type, creator or subject; and **selective** collections where items of national priority or special significance are identified and collected, or where depth of collecting is prioritised above breadth. This section of the policy is arranged in sequence from comprehensive to selective, recognising that such a continuum is neither fully linear nor completely exclusive. Web archiving for example, falls midway along this imaginary line, and is by turns comprehensive, selective and representative.

Introduction

Published and Unpublished Material

The Library, and librarianship more broadly, has long drawn a methodological distinction between what is defined as belonging to a published collection and what is considered unpublished. Unpublished collections are called variously 'special collections', 'non-book collections', 'archival collections', and 'local collections' among others; the variety of naming is evidence of definitional difficulty. Almost all of the so-named collections contain some published material.

On the other side of the divide, the modern publishing environment is not only highly diverse, facilitating individual and niche publishing, but in itself blurs the space between private correspondence and public circulation. Publishers include commercial publishers, private individuals, clubs, churches, associations, societies or organisations and any person, group or organisation that makes material publically available. Defining and distinguishing a 'publication' can be challenging in this environment—particularly in dealing with social media networks or books produced for a highly limited audience, such as a memoir intended only for family members. The Library's published collecting balances comprehensive aspiration against the potential flood of works that are highly limited in their circulation, while noting that automated solutions continue to resolve the dilemma. For the purposes of collecting, the main criteria for determining if an item is published is whether it is (or would be if it were published in a different place or time) subject to legal deposit.

The Copyright Act states 'Persons publishing certain literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works in Australia must deliver copies of the works to the National Library.' Section 29 notes that 'a work, shall be deemed to have been published if, but only if, reproductions of the work or edition have been supplied (whether by sale or otherwise) to the public'.

The comprehensive collection of Australian published material is a key statutory responsibility of the National Library. The Library collects comprehensively those materials which are covered by legislation under the Copyright Act. Legal deposit, as defined in the Act, applies to all Australian print and electronic publications, including books, journals, magazines, newsletters, reports, sheet music and maps. Websites and public social media, which are also included in the definition, are collected selectively. Legal deposit applies to any Australian person, group or organisation that makes this material available to the public for sale or for free.

Comprehensive Collecting

For all published Australian materials, the Library's collecting aims to be sufficiently comprehensive that researchers interrogating the collection could extrapolate an understanding of the entirety of published Australian output. When possible, comprehensive collection of Australian publications is

achieved by acquiring a copy of every published work. When it is not possible to collect every work, a combination of comprehensive and representative collecting approaches is used, minimising collection gaps in subject matter, format type, author group or other category of material. For example, the Library collects a sampling of catalogues from Australian art exhibitions, rather than attempting to collect each one produced. In a similar way, acquisition team resources are likely to be more strongly allocated to seeking out works which are poorly represented in the collections, than towards ensuring complete compliance for high-volume publication programs such as mainstream romance fiction.

Books

Definition and Scope

In the context of Library collections, 'books' refers to standalone textual or other literary works which have been made available to the public, including ebooks, printed books and any emerging forms of book publication. In the Library, book publications are technically termed 'monographs', to distinguish these from serial periodicals, and are often uniquely identified by an International Standard Book Number (ISBN).

Context

The Library's comprehensive collection of Australian books dates from the earliest published mentions of the continent through to the present day. Along with the serial and newspaper collections, this extensive corpus documents the development of Australia as a modern nation through the complete published record.

Published books both shape and mirror Australian culture, creating common experiences, passing on knowledge and reflecting debate and diversity, through fiction and non-fiction, poetry and prose, scholarly and popular books. Books have endured as the principal format for published material through centuries, evolving through various technologies, from old and modern bindings to ebook formats. Since the introduction of the Copyright Act, the Library has had the legal right to claim printed material published in Australia as legal deposit; since February 2016 this has included the online publishing landscape, and digital is the preferred format.

Collecting Intent

The Library seeks to comprehensively collect Australian book publishing. This collection is intended to fully record the literary, intellectual and artistic contributions to public discussion that occur through book publication. This is chiefly achieved through collecting a copy of each Australian book with original content that has been made available to the general public. This collection covers all subject areas, genres and disciplines.

Books distributed only to a defined audience, such as those produced for a family, community or organisation, are also selectively collected where they add to the social, cultural and historical understanding of Australia, especially around topics and communities that are otherwise underrepresented in the Library's collections.

The Library also seeks rich representation of Australian literary culture in its collections and, to this end, may acquire variant printings or signed or annotated copies. A sample of highly limited book editions and artists' books are collected in order to reflect Australia's literary, artistic and book-making culture. Where resources allow, a small sample of printed blank or template volumes such as diaries, calendars or student workbooks may be collected to reflect this aspect of Australia's print culture.

Priorities

Even in a comprehensive collection, the Library makes prioritisation decisions in allocating resources to acquiring material. The Library's highest priority for Australian book collecting is to ensure the diversity and breadth of the Australian published record is adequately represented; focusing on collecting from First Nations Australians, and from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, will be a key factor in these decisions.

The Library also recognises the importance of Australian publishing imprints to Australian literary culture and society. Collecting this material is a responsibility of the Library.

As a national institution, the Library places priority on detailed coverage of people, places and events of national scope and impact, including variant copies and editions of works of enduring literary influence.

Periodicals, including Newspapers, Journals and Magazines

Definition and Scope

Periodicals broadly include all those publications that are published at recurring intervals. The term is used here generically to include newspapers, scholarly journals, magazines, gazettes, newsletters, reviews, digests, yearbooks and occasional papers published in series, either in print or digitally. The Library technically uses the term 'serials' for such publications, because these are normally published at intervals under the same title but in a new edition and on a continuing basis. They are typically referenced by volume, number, date or issue and uniquely identified by an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).

In the context of Library collections, this section covers all periodical publications that are available to the public; they are considered to have been 'made available to the public' where they are offered for sale, distributed to subscribers or made freely available. Where circulation is restricted in some way (e.g. a newsletter restricted to members of a professional association) collection is out of scope for the published collections, but may be in scope for other parts of the collection.

Context

Every year, the Library collects hundreds of thousands of issues of ongoing Australian periodical publications, from major metropolitan newspaper editions through speciality magazines and academic journals to community and organisational publications.

Through regular publication, periodicals provide a unique long-form view of Australian culture. Whether through regular reporting of corporate or technical information, or tracking changing fashion, technology and research, periodicals document both change and constancy over time.

In cultivating ongoing audiences, periodicals also provide insight into the development of Australian identities and communities, whether geographic, linguistic, cultural, professional, religious or interest based. At the same time, national newspapers and popular magazines showcase the issues, opinions and events that capture the whole nation's attention, bringing these diverse communities together.

Collecting Intent

The Library seeks comprehensive coverage of Australian periodicals, reflecting the significant diversity of Australian life, research and reporting, as well as the preoccupations, interests and events that unite the nation.

Given the number of these published in Australia each year, it is not feasible to collect every publication that may qualify as an Australian serial. In choosing what to collect, the Library emphasises collection of all publicly available periodicals with substantial original content reflecting Australian life, culture, research, public policy or governance, and aims to ensure that all aspects of serial publications are represented in the collections. In the case of newspapers, comprehensive collection is undertaken in collaboration with Australia's state and territory libraries.

The Library comprehensively collects all issues of titles that have been selected for inclusion in the collection, ensuring a long view of the changing format and content in that publication.

Priorities

The Library prioritises collecting periodicals with Australian content above those with exclusively overseas-created content. As with other collections, original and unique content is prioritised over publications comprised of content already published elsewhere. Publications with significant textual or artistic or other creative content are prioritised over those with a purely administrative function.

In acquiring retrospective serials, the Library seeks to fill gaps in existing serial collections, sourcing individual issues to ensure a complete run of each collected serial title. Priority is also placed on acquiring retrospective issues of serials that reflect aspects of Australian culture or life that is underrepresented in the collection.

Collaboration and the Australian Newspaper Collection

The Library was, for many years, a member of the Australian Newspapers Plan (ANPlan), alongside state and territory libraries. While the group is no longer operating as a distinct entity, broader National and State Libraries Australia work ensures that national collaboration continues to have a major impact on collecting decisions. Under ANPlan, the National Library agreed to take responsibility for collecting and preserving newspapers of public record, including national newspapers, subject-based newspapers, First Nations Australian newspapers and ethnic and linguistically diverse newspapers. These newspapers are collected comprehensively, while other Australian newspapers are collected selectively, according to the priorities listed in this section, along with consideration of Library user requests.

Government Publications

Definition and Scope

Government publications include material published by all levels of government in Australia including Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments. This comprises a wide range of material, including books, serials, websites, maps, ephemera and posters.

Context

Australian lives are shaped by the decisions, policies and services provided by government agencies. Government publications constitute a significant proportion of Australian publishing and play a diverse range of roles in Australian society:

- promoting discussion and debate around public policy, e.g. discussion papers
- delivering accountability and reporting, e.g. Treasury reports or Australian Bureau of Statistics publications
- providing guidance and advice, e.g. pesticide information booklets
- documenting research and development

- chronicling artistic and cultural expression
- recording heritage and creating new knowledge.

Libraries have traditionally provided a key access point for government publications which, when published in hard copy, can be costly and difficult to obtain. As policies and services change, publications can quickly disappear from circulation. Library collections ensure a comprehensive record of the published output of government is retained, and made accessible, in the public interest.

Much government publication takes place online, whether through downloadable documents or through websites more generally. With almost universal internet access in Australia, these publications are easily accessible without a mediating institution such as the Library. However, there are challenges for the long-term preservation of this material, which can disappear extremely rapidly and entirely, particularly in times of frequent changes to the machinery of government. Through collection of such material, the Library performs an essential role in preserving and ensuring enduring access to government information, whether electronic or hard copy.

Collecting Intent

The Library aims for comprehensive coverage of Commonwealth, state and territory government publications in order to provide future access to the complete record of Australia's civic functioning. The Library's ability to achieve comprehensive collection, particularly of material published online, is highly dependent upon both the technologies available to collect the material and cooperative arrangements with government publishers. The Library collects digital versions of government publications by preference; to achieve comprehensive coverage of state and territory material, collaborative arrangements and responsibilities are pursued with state and territory libraries.

Where comprehensive collecting is not possible, the Library seeks to collect material in accordance with the priorities outlined in the principles, and places the highest priority on Commonwealth Government material.

Priority material includes major policy initiatives, parliamentary publications and the output of public agencies with significant publishing responsibilities, such as the Commonwealth Scientific Information and Research Organisation and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Local government publications are collected selectively where they are substantial and reflect aspects of Australian life or culture, contain significant artistic, research or literary material, or shed light on the development of broader Australian public policy. Local government materials are primarily the responsibility of state and territory governments to collect. However, online local government material (websites) will be collected where it is efficient to do so as part of broader bulk website collecting.

The Library is often able to provide greater access to collected government material, especially that which was freely available at the time of publication, than to commercial material. To facilitate networked access to collected government material, electronic copies will be preferred to printed copies. However, this preference must be balanced with ensuring cost-effective collection and preservation of material. Priority is placed upon collection of material at risk of disappearing or where major changes are likely to occur, such as during machinery of government changes and events.

Collaboration

The Library works with state and territory libraries to ensure collection, description, access and preservation of government publications. This collaboration ensures a shared responsibility, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency for all Australian libraries, and reducing burden on publishers by focusing on the deposit of digital material through the National edeposit (NED) service.

The National Archives of Australia retains responsibility for preserving Commonwealth Government records. To ensure efficient and effective collecting activity in both institutions, the Library may collaborate with the archives where the institutions' collecting responsibilities intersect.

Music

Definition and Scope

The Library collects Australian published and unpublished music scores, covering a range of musical styles, historical and contemporary music.

'Music scores' is the term used generically to describe all types of 'notated' music: sheet music, full and vocal scores, parts, albums and anthologies, song and hymn books, commentaries that include printed music and educational resource kits, some which come with accompanying audio and mixed media.

Unpublished music manuscripts, either in the hand of the composer or copyist, digitally notated music and facsimile reproductions are acquired as papers of the composer. The Library also collects personal archives, websites and oral histories relating to Australian composers, performers and music organisations; ephemera and photographs capturing musical performance and the music trade; unpublished audio recordings of folk music and dance; and wider music-related resources to support research and study. These other types of music materials are governed by the principles set out in those sections of the policy.

Context

The Library aspires to comprehensively collect sheet music and scores published in Australia and to build a representative collection drawn from all music created by or for Australians, or that has an Australian context or association, past and present. The collection as a whole documents the role, place and history of music in Australian society, from European settlement to the present, and by its nature supports research leading to creative work, performance and scholarship.

The Library formerly acquired formed collections of historical European music, often in editions and bound volumes of the type imported into Australia in the nineteenth century, such as in the Helm Collection, as well as music created in the region. The Library no longer actively collects overseas music.

The Library does not normally acquire sets of contemporary performance materials, which are the responsibility of specialist music libraries in teaching institutions or organisations that support professional performing ensembles, such as Symphony Services International.

Collecting Intent

The Library aims to comprehensively collect sheet music and scores published in Australia, in all languages and formats and across all genres and styles of music.

This includes variant editions, as well as copies of items where these contain particular provenance, annotations or distinguishing features. The Library also comprehensively acquires Australian Music Centre publications for research, access and preservation.

The Library endeavours to acquire music published overseas by Australian creators (composers, arrangers and lyricists) comprehensively, as well as overseas music that has some aspect of Australian content or association, or that relates to events of direct interest to Australia. For the purpose of understanding the history of musical culture in Australia, the Library selectively collects overseas music that was popular or performed in Australia during specific time periods, including

overseas music distributed in Australia by Australian agents. The Library will selectively add to such collections, in particular where there is an association with an Australian performer, composer or collector, or supplement existing series, for the purposes of research. The Library may selectively collect music scores from the wider region, specifically to support the study of the Asia-Pacific. It also provides access to international collections of music scores through eResources and subscription-based services.

The Library may acquire unpublished Australian music as part of a personal archive, and these personal archives may include music recordings. The Library collects as a priority music created by First Nations Australian musicians and diverse cultural communities in Australia.

Collaboration

The Library's role in acquiring music scores is complemented by the National Film and Sound Archive, which aims to collect, preserve and provide access to moving image and recorded sound material and associated historical documentation representing the output of Australia's diverse music and radio industries. The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies also has a rich archival collection of First Nations Australian traditional music and dance recorded in the field. In cooperation, the Library actively collects music composed by, about or in collaboration with First Nations Australian musicians, as well as particular First Nations Australian music played by First Nations Australian musicians through its Oral History and Folklore program.

Maps

Definition and Scope

The Library's map collections comprise a variety of cartographic and geospatial materials produced by private cartographic publishers and all levels of Australian government. The terms 'maps' or 'mapping' may be used to describe all types of cartographic and geospatial media, including topographic and other thematic maps in print and digital form, hydrographic charts, real estate plans, atlases and gazetteers, globes and cartographic games and source material such as aerial photographs.

Context

The Library hosts the largest cartographic collection in Australia, from the earliest published depictions of the continent through to the present day. A large proportion of current mapping is produced and published in series (maps of the same type covering a defined area), often by government agencies responsible for property administration and planning, environment, land and water resources, tourism, transport, sciences, primary industries, political boundaries and so on.

Some unpublished or manuscript mapping is also collected, particularly that of individuals or agencies who have created or used maps as part of their life and work. The collecting of cartographic literature, books, serials, websites and other materials is governed by the principles set out in those sections of the policy.

The Library collects digital map products generated by government and commercial suppliers, along with the metadata needed to archive and access mapping in this form. Increasingly, Australian government mapping is made available on the web and so is periodically collected via the Library's web archiving activities, to document the content as it changes over time.

Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) databases intended for use in the creation of maps are generally not collected. The Library negotiates with data creators and map producers to ensure ongoing archiving and future access to some spatial data and products.

Geospatial Positioning System or Global Positioning System (GPS) products and databases in proprietary formats—intended for use with mobile navigational devices, for tracking, location and other synchronous and positional application—are not collected.

Collecting Intent

As part of its national heritage responsibilities, the Library collects, preserves and makes accessible maps and other geospatial materials relating to Australia's documentary interests. The collection comprises historical and current cartography relating to Australia and other nations, with particular emphasis on countries and regions during periods of Australian engagement with them.

The Library seeks to comprehensively collect all forms of Australian cartography and the cartography of Australia and its territories. In doing so, it comprehensively collects all maps in a given series, ensuring full geographic coverage. The Library also aims to be comprehensive in its collection of the mapping of South Pacific and Timor-Leste, and representative in its collecting of the mapping of Indonesia and China. In all current cartographic acquisitions, including legal deposit, and in some historical acquisitions, the Library prefers digital formats.

Maps of South-East Asia and other regions in which Australia has clear historical, commercial, diplomatic, military or other significant interest are now selectively collected, where previously these were collected representatively.

Also collected selectively are maps and cartographic products that demonstrate changes in cartography—for example, science, techniques and styles—over time.

Collaboration

The Library works with state and territory libraries to ensure collection, description, access and preservation of government mapping. This collaboration ensures a shared responsibility, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency for all Australian libraries.

The National Archives of Australia retains responsibility for preserving Commonwealth Government records. To ensure efficient and effective collecting activity in both institutions, the Library may collaborate with the archives where the institutions' collecting responsibilities intersect.

Websites

Definition and Scope

The Library's websites collection comprises a variety of online publishing, including news sites, blogs and social media, as well as organisational, educational and commercial websites. Ebooks and electronic journal documents made available via the web are collected in accordance with the collecting policies for books, journals and government publications. Web applications that are not publications, such as banking and booking services or purchasing applications, are not collected. The Library does not intentionally collect illegal material published on the web.

Context

The web is one of Australia's most significant and influential publishing platforms. Since the mid-1990s, Australians have used it to publish information, commentary, discussion and debate on cultural, social and political issues. Content published on the web ranges from the deeply scholarly to the popular, from in-depth research and commentary to accounts of daily life.

The National Library commenced archiving websites in 1996; its selective web archive, under the designation 'PANDORA', was one of the earliest public web archives in the world. Ensuring that this

collection is publicly accessible has been core to the Library's approach to web archiving from the inception of the program. To extend collecting towards a comprehensive scale, in 2005 the Library commenced capturing annual snapshots of the .au domain.

Unlike print-based publishing, online publication takes place in a highly dynamic, interactive and largely unmediated environment, often blurring the lines between publication and communication. This poses particular challenges for collecting institutions, including how to accurately archive a rapidly changing medium and how to distinguish publication from other web uses, such as commerce or private communication. Web publications disappear quickly, posing real risk that crucial parts of Australia's early twenty-first-century documentary history will be lost altogether.

The scale of online publishing requires automation to capture material, using various harvesting methods and tools. While reliance on this technology is essential to building a comprehensive collection, the complexity of online publishing means that there remain significant technical limitations on what can be collected. So, while a website may be collected, it may not be complete or fully functional within the archived collection.

For all these reasons, collecting websites is both a critical activity for the Library and a highly challenging one.

Collecting Intent

As a core aspect of collecting Australian publishing, the Library has a responsibility to create a comprehensive collection of Australian web publications. The Library's web archiving activities are designed to be as comprehensive as possible, providing researchers with a collection that accurately represents the breadth and interconnectivity of the web and its content, and replicates its depth and dynamism through coverage of selected high-priority subjects.

The interconnected and fast-changing nature of web publishing poses significant challenges to this aim; it is impossible to preserve in an archive all Australian web publishing exactly as it appeared at every moment in time. For this reason, the Library approaches web collecting through three types of activity:

- regular 'snapshots', at least annually, of the entire Australian .au web domain, to capture the diversity of Australian life, people, places, events and ideas at a selected period in time
- thematic collections with focused coverage of selected events, issues and sectors, to capture matters of national significance, e.g. coverage of federal election campaigns and disasters such as the 2019–2020 bushfires
- scheduled and timely archiving of selected websites of high value or that change rapidly, such as news websites, to capture changing content in a meaningful way.

Priorities

In selecting websites, issues, events and sectors for more in-depth coverage, the Library applies the priorities specified in the principles section of this policy. In addition, priority is given to:

- discussion, debate, research and commentary about or contributing to the formulation of Australian public policy
- the diversity of cultural, social, research and business publishing on the web
- 'grey literature'—information and works produced by all levels of government, academia, business, peak organisations and industry not controlled by commercial publishing and usually only available online.

The Australian Domain Collection (.au)

The Library undertakes regular (at least annual) collections of all websites published in the .au domain, which is sometimes called a whole-of-domain harvest. The priority in undertaking these collection events ('snapshots') is to capture comprehensively the breadth and diversity of Australian web publishing at any one time. The domain harvest is scoped and executed to maximise collection of what is actually published on the .au domain. The Library's domain-harvest collections represent the most accurate and comprehensive record of Australian online publishing at a specific point in time. To ensure breadth, the Library captures websites at a relatively high level, collecting most but not necessarily all content from each site. As a capture of the Australian domain takes several weeks to complete, this collection does not capture all, or even most, version changes to websites within the domain.

Australian web material is increasingly published outside the .au domain, often on large international self-publishing platforms. The Library collects web material published via selected international platforms when it can automatically or semi-automatically be identified as Australian. Platform collecting augments the domain collection in building a broad representation of Australian web publishing.

Thematic Web Collecting

The Library creates focused, curated web collections relating to priority events and issues or content produced by selected sectors. Events covered include national political and cultural events, as well as events within or influential upon scholarly and research communities.

Thematic collections ensure a documentary record of changes in Australian policy and culture, as well as memorable moments in Australian history. Such collections also represent areas of Australian life documented primarily through the web and less well represented through other forms of publication. By focusing on a defined topic, they also capture the interactivity of web publishing and the way related websites influence each other.

Thematic collections of web content aim to provide comprehensive coverage of relevant web publications, to a complete or almost-complete depth. Collection frequency will be determined by the nature of the collection and will be carried out as necessary to ensure thorough topic coverage. While thematic collecting is curated, it also effectively uses technology for the automated bulk harvesting of curated seed lists of URLs.

In addition to the priorities articulated above in the principles statement, issues selected for thematic coverage will include matters of public policy debate, as well as issues affecting First Nations Australians; culturally and linguistically diverse communities; rural and regional populations; and economic, social, business and research communities. Selection of issues for coverage in themed collections is also influenced by the ease and resource intensity of archiving sites, and is subject to the Library's available technology and expertise. Thematic and selective website collecting is not restricted to websites from the .au domain, but includes material considered Australian as articulated in the principles statement and as allowed by the legal deposit provisions of the Copyright Act.

Selective Website Collecting

The Library selects high-priority websites for thorough collection. This includes sites that cover the activities and views of organisations, individuals and communities who contribute to public debate and shape Australian policy and society; sites that provide commentary, journalistic coverage, research or debate on political, social and cultural affairs; and sites that provide research and scholarly resources. Timely collection is particularly important for selective collecting, to ensure that records

are kept of rapidly unfolding events. In addition, scheduled selective collecting is used to capture frequently changing content considered of significant value, such as that on news websites.

Social Media

The Library collects some social media, as it does other types of online material where it is located on a standard website platform. However, social media that is dependent upon specific and proprietary platforms require methods other than the harvesting employed for websites and web documents.

Social media also provides collecting challenges in respect to distinguishing publication from personal communication. For this reason, and the technical difficulties in collecting from social media service platforms, social media is not collected comprehensively.

Collaboration

The Australian Web Archive results from a collaborative effort with other cultural institutions, including state and territory libraries. Where possible, the Library actively seeks partnerships with trusted institutions to increase efficient collection of web materials.

Ephemera, including Broadside and Posters

Definition and Scope

‘Ephemera’ is a term used generically to refer to transitory works. Ephemera is typically produced during the course of everyday social life to convey topical and timely information about places, people, events or moments in time. This kind of material tends to be produced for a specific audience and immediate purpose rather than for long-term use and retention.

The Library collects physical-format contemporary and retrospective ephemera, to document Australian social, political, cultural, performing and sporting life. This material is mostly printed on paper but includes some objects (memorabilia such as hats, badges or T-shirts used, for example, in electioneering, community dialogue, celebration or protest). The evolution of ephemera means that producers now embrace websites, electronic flyers and social media; web archiving, including whole-of-domain harvests, now plays a significant role in building the Library’s ephemera collection.

The Library also collects broadsides—these, historically, communicated a message in writing, announcing, for example, events, proclamations or advertisements—and posters, on which the message is conveyed through concentrated visual impact, accompanied by text. Posters often have significant or memorable artistic and graphic design features, but they are ephemeral in nature, purpose, print production and information. They are often mass-produced, rather than unique pictorial works.

The Library also collects ‘street press’ publications, pamphlets and zines under the category of ‘periodicals’, although these share some of the attributes of ephemera, with their topicality and ephemeral nature.

Context

The Library collects, organises and preserves ephemera as a significant part of its documentary record of historical and contemporary Australian life. It is typically used to inform, promote, advertise, entertain, advocate or express opinion, for example, in support of a social or political campaign or a performance.

The vast quantity of ephemera produced by the Australian community, and lack of specific legal deposit provisions for printed material that does not meet the definition of ‘published’, mean that

the Library's ephemera collecting is representative and selective. Documents such as leaflets, flyers, advertising materials and menus are intended for short-term use and enjoyment, and to be discarded after use; they are therefore at high risk of disappearing from the documentary record. Ephemera can display a wide range of production and aesthetic values, and reveal diverse printing technologies and production decisions over time. The variable quality of the artefacts (which range from single loose sheets to silk programs) may demonstrate high levels of artistic creativity by unacknowledged creators, making determination of copyright status and ownership difficult.

Collecting Intent

Where the Library identifies topics of high priority or national interest, the Library aims to collect as comprehensively as possible. For example, the Library collects federal election campaign material across all candidates, electorates and parties comprehensively. The Library also collects, as comprehensively as possible, printed programs, handbills and flyers pertaining to national performance arts organisations and international tours; artists identified as nationally or internationally significant; and events, festivals and celebrations of national interest.

In other instances, the Library aims to acquire a representative sample of material pertaining to geographic regions (for example, the Great Barrier Reef), travel (for example, eco-tourism), sport (for example, Olympic and Paralympic games), identified cultural groups (for example, refugees), social movements (for example, Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander land rights) and political opinion or issues of current and past public debate (for example, the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey).

The Library selectively collects samples of other types of ephemera such as trade catalogues, invitations, advertising material, menus and other items representing social diversity. Ephemera can often fill subject gaps in the wider collection, in particular with regard to emerging issues of regional or community concern that might not otherwise appear in published form.

The same collecting intent applies to posters and broadsides, which can reveal Australian issues and concerns in a concentrated visual format, though they are not always created primarily as works of artistic expression.

Collaboration

The Library is highly dependent on active engagement and donations from the general public and collectors in acquiring ephemera, particularly relating to special events, the performing arts, public discourse and campaigns.

The Library collaborates with a range of cultural collecting institutions, including the state and territory libraries, other national institutions and performing arts organisations. The Library does not collect ephemera in audiovisual form; this is the responsibility of the National Film and Sound Archive.

Pictures

Definition and Scope

The Pictures Collection comprises material in a range of visual media, documenting Australian life.

The largest component of the collection is photography, featuring in many formats ranging from the earliest daguerreotypes of the mid-nineteenth century to contemporary digital image files.

The collection also includes prints in many media, including engravings, etchings, lithographs and woodcuts. Paintings, watercolours, drawings, sketchbooks, cartoons, posters, postcards and objects

are among the many other formats represented. The range and variety of media in the collection is a reflection of visual culture and technology across Australian history.

Context

The Pictures Collection is a representative visual record of Australia's people, places, events, history, society and culture. For the period up to the mid-nineteenth century, the geographical focus of the collection encompassed European exploration of the South Pacific and Australia and the departure of convicts and settlers from Great Britain. The collection continues to record the activities of Australians overseas, especially in Papua New Guinea, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and Antarctica.

The Pictures Collection includes many significant works of art. However, works are selected for their documentary, representational or historical content and research value, not primarily for their artistic merit or aesthetic significance.

The Pictures Collection is an aggregation of visual media selected and acquired individually and as collections, large and small, of materials accumulated and kept together because of their provenance (such as the Ducie Collection of First Fleet art), creator (for example, the archive of photographer Wolfgang Sievers), or the interests of a collector (such as the Buckland Collection relating to railways in Australia).

The collection's major strengths in photography, prints, drawings and paintings were established through the acquisition of foundation collections assembled by E.A. Petherick (1847–1917), Sir John Ferguson (1881–1969) and Sir Rex Nan Kivell (1898–1977). The Nan Kivell Collection also includes significant pictures relating to New Zealand, reflecting the collector's birthplace and broader antipodean interest.

There is also a vast amount of visual material within manuscripts collections, including photographs, sets and costume designs, sketchbooks, albums and other artworks. These resources are usually retained and managed within the manuscript collection that provides their context and meaning. The Library also commissions photographs that support the Oral History and Folklore Collection, such as portrait photographs of interviewees and performance photographs.

Collecting Intent

The Library collects pictures of significant Australians as well as individuals and groups representative of different occupational, social or cultural experiences, and other pictures focusing on Australian social and cultural life. The Library collects these selectively, and prefers pictures that represent their subject matter with accuracy and detail, that can be dated and the people and places in them identified, or that typify phenomena best documented visually. The Library selectively collects works by professional artists and photographers of national significance whose work is documentary in nature. Some priority is given to acquiring pictures which complement other materials in the collection.

Most works acquired are representational, documenting major themes, events and social or environmental changes in Australia. Non-representational works may be acquired when they:

- reveal the social, cultural and ideological preconceptions and assumptions of Australian artists and photographers—especially those who have had some influence on the way that Australians look at their country or people
- represent the viewpoints or perspectives of significant groups within Australian society
- have been central to an event or public debate or cultural identity.

The Library holds historic collections showing First Nations Australians and other Indigenous people and communities as seen through European eyes, and continues to acquire these. The Library now gives priority to acquiring contemporary visual documentation created by First Nations photographers or artists of their communities, people, places, culture and society.

Strategic collecting of historic and contemporary pictures builds on strengths and fills in gaps in particular subject areas, to represent different perspectives on topics such as migration and diverse social life, industry and technology, the natural and built environment, environmental change, religion, travel, leisure, the arts, political and public life.

The Library also acquires, highly selectively, large archives or collections from individual creators, such as photographer Jeff Carter, or organisations, such as the Fairfax archive of glass plate negatives (1890–1948).

Collaboration

The Library recognises the collecting interests of other Commonwealth and state institutions, such as the Australian War Memorial's collections relating to Australian participation in wars and conflicts, and the interest of the National Film and Sound Archive in posters, stills and other visual material documenting Australian film, sound and broadcasting activities. The Library has considerable strengths in pictures of ships and shipping up to the early twentieth century, but the Australian National Maritime Museum is now the major collector of contemporary shipping images. The Library maintains a close relationship with the National Portrait Gallery and lending agreements with other cultural institutions. The Library works very closely with National and State Libraries Australia to address collecting and collection management issues for our extensive pictures collections.

Retrospective Published Australiana

Definition and Scope

This section of the policy is concerned with the acquisition of Australian books, journals, serials and other standalone texts or literary works that have been made available to the public and which, for various reasons, have not been acquired as part of legal deposit.

Context

The Copyright Act gives the Library the right to procure comprehensively the published output of Australia. Prior to the enactment of this legislation, the Library aimed to acquire the Australian published output both contemporaneously and retrospectively. Despite an ongoing aspiration of comprehensiveness, there are still items published either before the Copyright Act or prior to the establishment of the Library that are not held in the collection. There is also material published after 1968 that has not been acquired for various reasons, and which the Library may still claim. If a publisher no longer holds copies of material selected under legal deposit, or if that publisher no longer trades, then relevant material must be acquired through donations, purchase of used copies or other means.

Collecting Intent

The Library aspires to make available a comprehensive collection of Australia's published output, including collectable materials, but this is often constrained by resources, the rarity of the material and the cost and complexity of the market. Despite a long-term aspiration to a comprehensive collection of published Australian material, the Library's approach to retrospective printed Australiana is selective and must take into account the holdings of other publicly available collections. The Library prioritises

material that meets general research needs. Collecting rare and original works, along with publications of a type, subject or author community that is underrepresented in the collection, will take priority over content that is replicated in existing publications. The Library may prefer digital and digitised copies of material in circumstances where there is an advantage in making content available.

Collaboration

The Library collects with an awareness of the collecting intentions and strengths of our National and State Libraries Australia partners, and the holdings of other publically available collections of Australian materials.

Oral History and Folklore

Definition and Scope

The Library's oral history and folklore collections contain interviews with Australians, which ensure that their life stories, memories, perspectives and personal insights are captured. The collections are necessarily highly selective and primarily comprise audio recordings, although some video interviews are now included. There are three main components:

- extended, 'whole-of-life' biographical interviews with Australians who have achieved national prominence in a variety of fields
- 'social history' interviews, recording the memories and experiences of people who share a background or experience—for example, ethnicity, occupation, place of residence, experience of polio
- folklore recordings, which capture community cultural practices and traditions that reflect social, linguistic and ethnic diversity in Australia through song, music and dance, tales and stories, customs, beliefs, speech and other forms of cultural expression.

The oral history and folklore collections capture experiences that may not otherwise be recounted in written form, or document people, events or issues that may be marginalised or 'left out' of Australian history. The sound recordings themselves are the primary source, as these convey meaning through the sound of the voice, expression, silence and emotion, beyond words spoken. Oral history and folklore recordings are undertaken by specialist interviewers who are expert in their fields. Interviewees control access to their interviews and may impose access restrictions for a period of time, such as until their death. This encourages interviewees to speak frankly; they may reveal information and opinions not otherwise on the public record.

Context

Oral history activity in Australia proliferated with the availability of portable tape recorders in the 1950s. From the mid-1950s, the Library acquired oral history recordings from pioneering collectors, such as Hazel de Berg. The Folklore collection began with the acquisition of significant formed collections, dating from the 1950s, most notably that of John Meredith.

In 1970, the Library began its own active interviewing program with distinguished Australians, with the objective of developing strengths in fields aligned with the Manuscripts Collection and supplementing holdings of personal papers. In the 1980s, the Library's program broadened to include social history and folklore, and expert interviewers and collectors were commissioned to record in the field.

The collections also include a small number of historical broadcasts, public addresses, occasional lectures, talks, conferences and seminar proceedings, including recordings of significant events at the Library. National Press Club lunch addresses were regularly recorded from the mid-1970s to 1996.

The collection contains some 900 Press Club addresses, including some earlier recordings from the 1960s, acquired with other collections relating to prime ministers Menzies and Gorton.

Some sound and audiovisual recordings are acquired as components of personal or organisational archives. They include copies of radio and television programs, taped speeches, poetry readings and performance recordings.

Collecting Intent

The Library selectively records biographical interviews with distinguished Australians, often complementing other collections, such as Manuscripts and Pictures. The collection is strong in fields such as politics, public administration, the creative and performing arts, business, science, journalism, intellectual life, the environment and conservation. In some cases, follow-up interviews are recorded at later stages of an individual's life and career.

Social history projects interview a wide-ranging set of participants to gain insights from multiple perspectives. Some projects have concentrated on specific periods and events, such as life in 1938 or the 2003 Canberra bushfires, or on the experiences of particular groups, for example, the unemployed, drovers, members of religious orders, migrants and people who lived in Broken Hill. Commonwealth Government departments sometimes fund the Library to undertake major social history projects around nationally significant issues, such as the Cultural Context of Unemployment (1985), the Australian Response to AIDS (1992), Bringing Them Home (1998) and The Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants (2009).

The Library collects folklore selectively, contracting folklorists to record people around Australia at their homes, in community places and at festivals. The Library aims to represent a breadth of traditions to provide depth of understanding and knowledge and to support ongoing creativity. Holdings of traditional Australian music and song (sometimes called bush traditions) are strong, and a significant amount of material has also been recorded with First Nations Australians and culturally diverse communities. The Library focuses on vernacular and community traditions that are not well documented by the music and broadcasting industries.

Analogue to Digital, with Accompanying Data

Obsolescence in formats and playback equipment has required the Library to convert its analogue recordings to digital. The Library has completed digitisation of its entire Oral History and Folklore Collection and is well down the path of converting audio materials in the Manuscripts Collection. The digital copies have allowed the Library to develop an online audio delivery system. Digital audio, with accompanying metadata, is now the primary means of access. The primary audio recorded interviews are accompanied by time-pointed summaries and sometimes full transcriptions. This textual metadata is increasingly enabling refined searching of the content of interviews to support research and other uses of the interview content. A large proportion of openly accessible oral history and folklore audio is freely available online.

Collaboration

The Library's Oral History and Folklore Collection involves a high degree of collaboration. The collecting objectives and priorities of other organisations with large audiovisual collections are taken into account, including the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the Australian War Memorial, the National Film and Sound Archive, the National Archives of Australia, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and state and territory libraries.

Other cultural institutions, government departments and community organisations have also partnered with the Library to support the commissioning of oral history interviews. The Library participates as an industry partner in selected research funded by Australian Research Council grants, which includes oral history interviews. The Library also supports and encourages societies, professional organisations and community groups to initiate their own oral history projects by providing guidance on approaches and advice on technical standards.

Manuscripts

Definition and Scope

In a contemporary library context, ‘manuscripts’ is a broad term used to refer to:

- single original items, such as a letter or a diary, or an early draft work by an author or composer
- personal papers or organisational archives—collections that have been created or accumulated by an individual, family or organisation in the course of their lives, work and activities
- groups of primarily unpublished records that have been assembled by an individual or organisation.

Manuscripts may be handwritten, typescript or electronic and may include all kinds of written and other formats of records not usually made available to the public.

Manuscripts collections contain varied formats of material, both physical and digital. A lifetime personal archive may include correspondence—written by hand or email—diaries, blogs, photographs, research notes, literary, artistic or musical sketches and drafts, designs, leaflets and ephemera, maps, objects and annotated copies of published writings. Manuscript collections often contain sound and audiovisual material, such as speeches, performance recordings and copies of broadcasts.

While not all items in a manuscripts collection may be unique, archival collections have historical or evidential value in the content of individual items, as well as in the context and relationships existing between them. The integrity of the collection as a whole, and the order in which it was created, used and organised, is as important as the items within it. Manuscript collections are thus collected and described in terms of their provenance, creation, context and the relationships between constituent parts, rather than as individual items. As part of the acquisition process, the Library actively seeks lists, indexes and descriptions of the content from creators and donors. These are made available online as finding aids, to assist users to identify and access content within a collection.

Context

One of the first manuscripts acquired by the Library was the handwritten journal of Captain James Cook about his time aboard the *Endeavour*, purchased at a London auction in 1923 at the direction of Prime Minister Stanley Bruce. Chronologically, the earliest manuscripts in the Library’s collections are fragments of medieval liturgy acquired in formed collections. However, the greatest strength of the collection dates from the 1890s onwards, reflecting Australia’s development as a nation. They range from the earliest writings of Europeans voyaging to Australia; to the papers of Eddie Koiki Mabo and the legal team in the cases that resulted in customary native title to land being recognised in Australian law; up to recent, substantially digital, archives such as those of the former Greens leader Bob Brown. James Cook’s *Endeavour* journal and the Mabo papers were the first Australian collections to be inscribed on UNESCO’s international Memory of the World Register (in 2001).

The manuscripts collections, taken as a whole, reflect changing attitudes to the creation, acquisition and significance of archives as significant sources of documentary heritage. Increasing online

availability of catalogue records, finding aids and other descriptive lists for manuscripts collections has exposed the value and significance of these collections for research.

As writing has been transformed in the digital world, the nature of personal and organisational records is rapidly changing, leading to new challenges for individuals and organisations in maintaining and preserving archival collections. This has led to the Library receiving increased offers of both paper-based and electronic records, and needing to address the challenges of complex digital archiving.

While the Library endeavours to collect strategically across a wide range of social, intellectual, political, scientific and cultural activity to build representation, depth and strengths for research, collecting archives and manuscripts is necessarily opportunistic and reactive in this environment.

Collecting Intent

The Library's predominant focus is on collecting manuscripts and archives that document Australian life, people, culture, creativity, events and social change. Based on the priorities set out above in the principles, the Library focuses on collecting the archives of:

- Australians of national significance, either resident or expatriate
- non-governmental organisations of influence, especially those with national coordination or peak body responsibilities
- people or organisations with a focus on issues of national interest, community activity or social change.

Most acquisitions are of the personal archives of individuals. These may be distinguished Australians or leaders in their field, whose papers capture their lifetime of activity, creative or intellectual endeavour, or otherwise undistinguished individuals whose diaries and journals highlight revealing and important stories. Papers of an individual, family or interest group are also collected when the archive contributes to long-term understanding of a subject, aspect of social life or topic of national interest.

The Library has always collected manuscripts documenting historical movements, contested history or events of a national character—such as maritime discovery, European settlement, the gold rushes, immigration and cultural diversity—and continues to do so when retrospective collections or items are discovered.

The Library collects organisational records and the personal records of people active in social movements that have influenced and shaped Australian society, including on subjects such as immigration, environmental change, health issues and constitutional reform. The Library acquires material that documents Australia's relations with other countries and its geographical region to support knowledge of Australia's contribution or perspective in a global context. Existing collections are especially strong where Australia had colonial interests, such as in Papua New Guinea, or close cultural ties, such as with New Zealand, and across the history of exploration and continuing scientific and environmental endeavours in the Antarctic.

The Library endeavours to develop rich and diverse collections in specific subject areas to provide depth for research. The acquisition of related collections also enables sustained research. For example, the papers of Patrick White are complemented by those of composers Richard Meale and Peter Sculthorpe, directors Jim Sharman and Moffatt Oxenbould, artist Sir Sidney Nolan, actor Kate Fitzpatrick, his biographer David Marr and many others.

The Library aspires to include those who have so far been under-represented in the collection, for example, those of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, non-Christian faiths and First

Nations Australians. The Library assesses the likely research value of collections on offer as historical evidence and for their ability to support extended research in different subject areas.

Collaboration

The Library takes into account the collecting interests of other Australian libraries and archives, giving consideration to collection strengths. The Library prefers to maintain the integrity of an archive, and not to split or disperse collections across institutions.

The strongest collaboration is with the state and territory libraries of Australia, recognising their interests and collection strengths, as well as the convenience for many users in having unique archival collections located closer to the communities in which they were created. Local studies collections in public libraries, such as the ACT Heritage Library, and the archives in some regional universities are also important repositories for material relating to particular places.

The National Archives of Australia and the various state and territory archival authorities have statutory responsibilities for government records of their jurisdictions. Among Commonwealth collecting institutions, the Australian War Memorial is the principal repository for archives associated with Australian involvement in war and conflict, and the National Film and Sound Archive is an audiovisual archive that collects material documenting the broadcast, film, television and sound recording industries. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has strong collections, including audiovisual archives, about the cultures, traditions, languages and stories, past and present, of Australia's Indigenous peoples.

Several universities have large research archives. The Australian National University, for example, has strengths in business archives, the records of employer associations and trade unions, and Pacific research, as well as the records of individuals and organisations associated with the university. Other universities have prime ministerial libraries and research centres, such as the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library at Curtin University, the first to be established, which, as well as holding personal records of the Curtin family and copies of official records, has also collected the papers of his biographers, political associates and journalists of his era.

The Library takes account of these responsibilities and refers offers to other institutions when manuscripts are more appropriately collected elsewhere.

SELECTIVE COLLECTING: OVERSEAS PUBLICATIONS

Introduction

Overseas resources are selectively collected, reflecting the Library's commitment to inform and enhance Australians' understanding of their region and their place in the world.

Collecting material from and about Indonesia, China and the Pacific (including Timor-Leste) is the Library's next highest priority after its Australian collecting. This reflects Australia's strategic interests and geographical position within this region.

The Library selectively acquires or provides access to publications from the rest of the world that offer an understanding of global issues, current events and topics affecting Australia, including material about First Nations Australian presence and European exploration from colonisation to the present day. The focus is broadly on the social sciences and resources that contextualise Australia's history and politics, culture and society.

The Library collects or provides access in digital form wherever possible. This reflects the growth of readily available digital resources, including digitised materials, as well as changes in the cost of maintaining an overseas collection.

The Library does not collect narrowly with the aim of supporting particular scholarly interests, but aims to build collections useful to a broad cross-section of the community. The Library's constrained resources mean that it can no longer build, maintain or provide access to collections that align exclusively with the needs of academic researchers and students; it expects universities to meet these obligations.

The Library's rich overseas collections shed light and context on developments in Australia and on Australian engagement in the wider world. Australia-related overseas collecting focuses on materials that contextualise Australia's history, society, arts and culture, politics and the economy, from exploration and discovery to the present day. Collecting includes topics such as:

- European discovery and exploration of the region
- First Nations Australians
- the historical British and European institutions, ideas and influences that created Australia during the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Topics covered include but are not limited to politics and political ideas, economic history, religion, social issues, music and the arts, popular culture and everyday life
- wars and conflicts involving Australia
- Australia's humanitarian, defence and cultural engagements
- migration and diaspora
- aspects of the global economy relevant to Australia
- aspects of art and culture relevant to Australia.

Representative and Selective Collecting

The Library primarily builds its overseas collections on a selective basis, but aims to achieve representative or comprehensive coverage in selected areas and topics, especially in priority areas of collecting.

Topics and areas of specialty for in-depth collection take into consideration:

- current priorities identified in the Library's Collecting Strategy
- relevance of material to understanding Australian culture, life or society
- relevance of material to understanding social, political and cultural developments that provide context for Australia.

Overseas material is often acquired through contractual arrangements, where Library suppliers are requested to supply all relevant materials. These arrangements are based upon the principles outlined in this policy. In some cases, formed and special collections may be acquired where they significantly enhance research.

While the majority of overseas collecting is contemporary, retrospective materials are acquired to enhance under-represented topics and build research depth.

Collecting Priorities

The principles above outline the specific priorities for collecting in the Asia-Pacific region and from the rest of the world. The Library no longer purchases for ownership and preservation of overseas materials where it can provide sustained digital access and eResources through arrangements with vendors.

Individual country collecting is subject to change, according to social or political factors, changes in research focus and Library priorities and resources. The principles set out the range of criteria used to balance priorities and acquisition decisions, including ease, cost and sustainability of access to specialist resources and vendors.

Asia-Pacific Region

Definition and Scope

The Library's focus is collecting from Indonesia, China and areas of the Pacific (including Timor-Leste). The scope of collecting covers monographs, maps, serials and newspapers with a preference for digital format. Collecting may also include multimedia, pictorial works, ephemera and websites, acquired on a selective basis.

Context

The Library's Asia-Pacific collecting program builds collections for Australians to gain an understanding of their region and place in the world.

Subject areas fall within the broad areas of society, politics and culture with a focus on works that provide interpretation and analysis of issues, current events and social trends. Research level works and trade publications are acquired that treat subjects at an advanced or academic level. Such works may include social and cultural issues, political science, government and foreign relations,

Collecting Intent

The principle for acquisition is whether a work or collection provides context for a broader understanding of a country and its place in the modern world socially, culturally or politically. Collecting is also open to interdisciplinary topics that may not be easily categorised but that relate to one or more aspects of interest.

Priorities

Indonesia

The Library's Indonesian Collection is one of the strongest contemporary research collections in the world, built over 30 years via an acquisitions office in Jakarta. Publications documenting relations between the central government and the regions, including ethnic minorities, are acquired.

Of particular focus are sources that document elections and the democratic process since 1999. These include election ephemera, posters, pamphlets and realia. A representative selection of the literature of Indonesia is acquired, emphasising the modern period and including popular as well as literary fiction. Works on and in minority languages are acquired where available. Collecting on culture and the arts focuses on traditional forms that document indigenous groups and cultural heritage. Materials documenting popular culture and topical issues are selectively acquired. This includes selective web archiving in areas of interest. This material is added to the Internet Archive, rather than being retained as part of the Australian Web Archive.

China

The Library's Chinese collection is a rich source of information on the history, culture and current affairs of China.

Collecting focuses on the modern era, after 1911, with an emphasis on contemporary material. Significant works about earlier periods of China's history that provide context to the modern period may also be acquired. Collecting areas of interest are China's minority and indigenous groups, popular

culture and topical issues including the relationships mainland China has with its territories.

A representative sample of works on Chinese culture and the arts is acquired.

Resources providing background and commentary on China's relations with the wider world are collected both in Chinese languages and English.

The Pacific Region

The Library prioritises countries in Melanesia, focusing on Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia, as well as Timor-Leste. A strong emphasis is given to collecting of material from Papua New Guinea, reflecting Australia's historical links with that country, geographical proximity and important economic and development relationships.

Lower priority is given to the countries of Polynesia and Micronesia. Works about Hawaii are generally not collected, although the Library acquires Hawaiian-origin publishing on the Asia-Pacific region. The Library does not aim to duplicate the well-established collecting programs of the National Library of New Zealand and libraries in Hawaii that have strengths in Polynesia and Micronesia.

Collecting from the Pacific focuses on politics, foreign relations, economics, social and cultural issues along with a representative selection of works on the languages and literatures of the region. Works documenting popular culture and topical issues in the region are acquired. Resources are predominantly in English or French, with selected acquisition in the vernacular languages of the region.

The Library has taken an active interest in developing a research-level collection on Timor-Leste. The Library acquires commercially and non-commercially published books and journals, newspapers, government publications, maps and a broad range of materials representative of Timorese society and current affairs.

Collaboration

The Library works with other collecting institutions within Australia and abroad to ensure the continuing availability of Pacific resources in library collections. The Library holds over 40,000 reels of microfilm of manuscripts and archival records, mostly acquired overseas and primarily of Australian and Pacific interest. In addition to materials copied in the United Kingdom and Ireland by the Australian Joint Copying Project (1948–1993), records of Pacific interest continue to be digitised by the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau and acquired cooperatively. The bureau copies archives, manuscripts and rare printed material relating to the Pacific Islands to ensure preservation, and forms the most extensive collection of non-government primary documentation on the Pacific Islands available to researchers.

The Wider World

Definition and Scope

Collecting from the wider world builds on the Library's existing strengths in the social sciences, focuses on English-language materials and prioritises digital formats and access where appropriate.

The Library aims to develop breadth and depth in the Library's research collections, informed by, and responsive to, current and emerging research trends, as well as the anticipated needs of future generations of Australians.

Context

The Library selectively acquires or provides access to publications that offer an understanding of global issues, current events and topics affecting Australia, and geographical regions where Australia's

national, economic and strategic interests are clearly articulated, including material that documents the history of Australia's First Nations and European colonisation to the present day. The aim is to develop the strongest possible collection for the broadest cross-section of Australian society.

Collecting Intent

Collecting focus broadly falls across history, society and culture, acquiring current publishing that provides interpretation and analysis of global issues, current events and social trends affecting Australia. These include but are not limited to works on politics, history, government, international relations, the environment, energy and resources, the world economy, trade, the movement of peoples, demographic change, health trends, social issues, music and the arts. The Library exercises discretion to acquire works on new trends and developments as they emerge over time.

Research-level works and trade publications that treat subjects at an academic or advanced level are acquired. There will be a preference for works that analyse the social aspects of a subject and present subjects in a broad context.

Collecting

The Library's current resourcing environment necessitates reduction in collecting of overseas materials outside the identified priorities and countries.

Collecting from the wider world provides context for broader understanding of a country's development, in particular works supporting research into Australia's relationships within the region. This may include but is not restricted to:

- all aspects of the Australia–New Zealand relationship, and Antarctica . The Library's collecting interests in New Zealand are linked to the two countries' shared history of exploration and discovery, political institutions, economic development and relationships with indigenous peoples
- Japan's post Second World War development and connections with Australia
- contemporary strategic and regional issues relating to Korea
- material from South-East Asia, especially commentary on indigenous populations and social trends. Countries of interest include Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos, with less focus on Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam
- English-language works on subjects of topical interest to Australia and all aspects of Australia's relationships with countries of the South Asian.

When overseas resources are freely available online, the Library will support access rather than take responsibility for long-term stewardship of these materials.

Principles for Access to Overseas Published Ebooks and Archive Databases

Ebooks and archive databases (such as collections of digitised books) are generally acquired as Library assets and made available indefinitely. The Library will accept vendor permanent access arrangements to achieve this or, with the appropriate permissions, archive content in its own system.

Remote access to ebooks will be provided wherever possible for registered Library users within Australia. Ebook content is downloadable to user devices where the Library has licence permission to allow this.

Gratis ebooks made freely available on the web are collected and archived with the permission of the publisher or copyright holder, when they can be located. Where the work is deemed to be an orphan

work, the Library will take a risk management approach and may opt to acquire the item without permission. The Library will generally not link to a website in lieu of acquiring a gratis ebook.

Principles for Access to Electronic Journals

The Library seeks to provide access to journals in digital form rather than print. Where a journal is available in both print and digital format, digital access will be preferred to a print subscription. Electronic journals will be purchased either by direct subscription for single titles, through a vendor or as part of an aggregated journal article database if available. The Library prefers access via its current aggregator services over individual subscriptions to reduce duplication, acknowledging the presence of embargo periods in the current material becoming available. The Library will seek to avoid excessive title duplication between different aggregated journal article databases.

Print journal titles will only be acquired where there is no digital access alternative and where the content is deemed high priority, such as titles relating to Australia or, on a selective basis, published in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Library does not commit to providing perpetual access to current electronic journal content.

Principles for Access to Newspapers

The Library seeks to provide access to selected overseas newspapers in digital form, generally via an aggregated subscription database. No commitment is made to maintaining perpetual access to these titles. Print or microform newspapers will only be acquired where there is no digital access alternative and where the content is deemed to be of high priority, such as some Asia-Pacific newspapers.

Some overseas newspapers are collected and retained as primary sources for research. These titles relate to high priority countries in Asia and the Pacific, or cover historical periods or collecting areas of interest. The Library intends to reduce duplication of overseas newspaper content in various formats.