

Northern Territory Archives Service

Donating Community Archives

Why preserve archives

The social, economic, religious and political life of the community is reflected in the records created by people in their daily lives and in records resulting from the activities of business, trade unions, churches, community associations, political parties and other organisations. Archives are unique records which have been selected on the basis of their continuing value for legal, administrative, financial, scientific or historical research purposes.

The NTAS acquires both government and community archives that have significance to the Northern Territory.

Why donate your archives

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

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

What archives may be donated

Community archives consist of personal archives and archives of non-government organisations. Personal archives are created by individuals who have been active in the Northern Territory. These include war veterans, Cyclone Tracy survivors, local personalities, politicians, and members of the general public who have experienced life in the Territory. Types of personal archives may include:

- Diaries and manuscripts,
- Letters and personal papers
- Photographic prints and slides,
- Scrapbooks and maps, and
- Oral history recordings and transcripts.

Archives of organisations may include the archives of community groups and organisations, businesses and companies, churches and missions, political parties, trade unions and professional associations, and sporting clubs.

Types of archives of organisations may include:

- Reports,
- Minutes of meetings,
- Correspondence,
- Policy files,
- Journals,
- Legal documents,
- Plans and posters,
- Photographic prints and slides.

The NTAS does not collect published material, works of art, artefacts or objects. Before being accepted in the collection, archives are appraised by archivists for their significance to the Northern Territory. If you are considering donating archives to the NTAS, please contact staff for advice.

Preparing community archives for donation

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

Donation agreements

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

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

Bequests

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

Research access to community archives

Public access and copyright of community archives is determined with the donor at the time of acquisition and is recorded on the donation agreement. The majority of community archives are available on 'open access', however donors may negotiate to restrict access to their archives for a certain period of time where the collection contain potentially sensitive information.

Location

Archives are collected, preserved and made accessible in two regions of the Northern Territory. Archives repositories and public reading rooms are located in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Contacts

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