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State Records
of South Australia



The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament

Collection Policy

Guideline

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Introduction

This collection policy defines the scope and nature of the collecting of South Australian parliamentary records within State Records with a view to providing:

- a practical interpretation of its legal obligations under the State Records Act 1997
- a public statement on State Records current collecting policies for South Australian records
- a guide for other Australian archival institutions to enable a greater degree of collaboration and cooperation in the development of collections in the State and national interest.

This policy will bring the following attributes to the collection of parliamentary records:

- clarity
 - the new process that is being introduced here – from the statement of appraisal values through to the operational selection policies – will bring greater clarity to the selection process. The quality of selection decisions will continue to depend on the skill and experience of those who are undertaking the work, but those archivists and others will have greater guidance than has hitherto been the case
- openness
 - this is the first time that State Records has exposed its selection work with regard to South Australian parliamentary records to consultation, and this policy seeks to explain the factors which have a bearing on selection decisions. We welcome comment about the directions and policy set out in this paper
- balance of collection themes
 - this policy seeks to reflect the breadth of interests within the research community.

Related documents

This paper is part of a documentation suite that also includes:

- *The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament: Collection Strategy* - the overarching strategy and vision with regard to this policy
- *The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament: Information Kit for Parliamentarians* - offers a resource for Members of Parliament wishing to transfer records to the custody of State Records
- *The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament: Staff Guidelines* - provides internal procedures and proformas.

Role of State Records

The role of State Records is to develop, promote, implement and monitor sound policies and practices that meet community and government expectations for the management, custody, disclosure and use of official records.¹

The objectives of the State Records Act are to ensure that records management in the South Australian Government is efficient and effective.

Cooperation with other institutions

In developing its own collections, State Records endeavours to take into account the collecting activities of other archival institutions interested in South Australian records. At present, various informal cooperative agreements covering specific categories of material are in place with different institutions.

Following consultation with the Mortlock Library of South Australiana, it has been agreed that State Records of South Australia should be the first point of contact for the acquisition of records created by Parliamentarians as part of their elected role.

For ephemera, publications and personal papers that are not working papers, however, enquiries should be directed to the State Library of South Australia.

The overarching criteria and regulations to these cooperative arrangements is the legislation governing State Records, the State Records Act.

Variation to this document

This document was endorsed by the State Records Council on 10 April 2001. This policy will be reviewed in 2002/03 and thereafter on a five-year cycle. The policy is, however, a working tool and this pattern of formal reviews will not prevent improvements being made in the interim.

¹ State Records of South Australia Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 1999.

Collection Policy Principles for Parliamentarian Records

Outlined below are *fifteen* principles that State Records will adhere to in its collection of South Australian parliamentarian records.

Principle 1. Parliamentarian records, for the purposes of the collection policy, are defined

South Australian parliamentarian records are defined as records created or received by the Parliamentarian in their role as a member of the Parliament of South Australia, (whether the Parliamentarian was born in Australia or is an expatriate, but is considered to be Australian).

Principle 2. The scope of parliamentarian records to be collected is clear

State Records of South Australia intends to collect records of Members of the Parliament of South Australia in their elected role. State Records will concentrate on collecting parliamentarian records that are relevant to an understanding of the history and development of South Australia as a State and the wider context, Australia as a nation. Such records should complement and supplement existing official records within the custody of State Records.

With regard to the acquisition of parliamentarian records, there should always be political neutrality in the acquisition and decision making process.

For detailed information on the collecting guidelines, please refer to page 10 below.

Principle 3. Parliamentarian records are acquired by transfer

Parliamentarian records will be acquired by transfer of custody. The purchase of material or the loan of records will not be accepted at this point in time. This principle is qualified by the ability of the Parliamentarian to recall the records as stated in Principle 7.

Principle 4. Parliamentarian records are accepted in accordance with section 27 of the *State Records Act 1997*

Section 27 of the State Records Act allows for records other than 'official records' to be accepted into the custody of State Records by its Manager. It is under section 27 that State Records has an option to accept the records of Parliamentarians. Once transferred to the custody of State Records, records management and archival principles will be applied to the parliamentarian records as though they are 'official records'.

Principle 5. Custody and ownership of parliamentary records is distinguished

State Records is the custodian of the parliamentary records it maintains within its collection. Ownership of the records resides with the Parliamentarian.

Principle 6. Deposit agreements are used

Deposit agreements need to be signed with each individual donor and should be drafted, particularly relating to access to the records, on a case-by-case basis. Once the archivist has established intellectual control of the respective records, the Deposit Agreement should be customised to reflect the needs and requirements of the donor and the interests of State Records as custodian of the records.

Principle 7. Rights of the owner are defined

The Parliamentarian can stipulate the conditions, as set out in a Deposit Agreement, (within reason and possibly with some negotiation involved) and have unrestricted access to their records. It is also conceivable that the Parliamentarian could recall their records, as the records are the property of the Parliamentarian.

Principle 8. Acquisition decisions are documented

Acquisition decisions guided by the collection policy shall be documented as such. The object of such documentation is to demonstrate the rationale and probity of the acquisition decision. It may be necessary to know in the future whether or why material should be retained and therefore the original decision needs to be explained and supported.

Principle 9. Sufficient control over parliamentary records is established and maintained

It is the responsibility of State Records to have sufficient and in depth physical and intellectual control over the records. Such control is achieved through documented arrangement and description and the development of finding aids such as guides.

Principle 10. Parliamentary records accepted under s27 of the *State Records Act 1997* are retained

Once State Records has acquired the particular parliamentary records, under section 27 of the Act, they will be deemed automatically as having permanent value.

Principle 11. Public access to parliamentary records is determined

The aim of this collection policy is to ensure as open access as possible to records in our collection.

The needs and requirements of all parties - the donors, members of the public and State Records - should be met when considering legal encumbrances.

Parliamentarians may make determinations that restrict access to their records held by State Records, after consultation with the Manager [Director] of State Records. This is usually done to protect privacy, commercial sensitivities, etc. Otherwise such records are normally open to the public to consult in the State Records Reading Room.

State Records will not collect records that need to be held permanently on restricted access.

Deposit Agreements entered into between State Records and Parliamentarians have a clause stipulating 'In the event of the death of the Depositor the records will become the sole property of State Records of South Australia and any copyright owned by the depositor will pass to State Records of South Australia'. The Manager [Director] of State Records should be responsible for determining access after the Parliamentarian's death (which will include administering any restriction agreed at the time of transfer).

Principle 12. The collection of parliamentary records may need to be considered in light of resource availability

State Records needs to operate within available resources. The cost of selection and storage therefore needs to be an explicit element in appraisal decisions and, as part of this, the rate at which State Records acquires parliamentary records needs to be carefully controlled. This new policy is prompted by the need to ensure that public money is being spent in a rigorous and accountable way on the selection of new records.

Principle 13. Responsibility for the processing of parliamentary records is assigned within State Records

It is considered that the section in State Records that would be most appropriate to take responsibility for the arrangement and description of such records on receipt would be the Consultancy and Education section. The nature of the work is part of their core functions. The monitoring of this policy will be the responsibility of the Records Policy section.

Principle 14. State Records Council will play a role regarding the collection of parliamentary records

State Records Council has a role to play with regard to the transfer of parliamentary records. The Council's role is enshrined in the State Records Act, in particular, section 27(1). This section of the Act stipulates that the Manager [Director] of State Records has to consult with the Council prior to the acceptance of records other than official records.

The way that this section of the Act would be applied would be that at its regular meeting, the Council would take into consideration various aspects of the proposed transfer including:

- the completed Transfer Proposal and whether record types identified are in accordance with the State Records Collection Policy for Records of Members of the Parliament of South Australia
- whether there are significant or enduring access restrictions proposed for the respective records

- possible provision for in part acceptance of the records, rather than as a totality, if some criteria are not satisfied regarding the collection as a whole
- the recommendation of the Manager [Director] of State Records in consultation with the State Records Council.

The view of the State Records Council on the intended acceptance in the custody of State Records of any parliamentary records needs to be documented and kept on file.

Principle 15. Parliamentary records are appropriately preserved

State Records undertakes to take all appropriate measures for the administration, storage and preservation of records in its custody.

Collection Guidelines for Parliamentarian Records

Guidelines for the collection of specific categories of material are outlined below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and it does not represent the gamut of parliamentarian records, rather it represents the categories of parliamentarian records that, in the opinion of State Records, most need clarification in terms of State Records collecting intentions. While providing an indication of State Records general collecting intentions in the areas covered, the guidelines are subject to individual judgement that will continue to play an important part in the selection process.

Specific types of parliamentarian records that State Records intends to collect

Comprehensive collection

The following types of records will be collected comprehensively – that is, in their totality in order to provide sufficient insight into the working life of the Parliamentarian, their interests, and in order to support extended research in different branches of scholarship by present and future researchers.

- Briefings
 - advisers and departmental – including annotated, non-file copies as well as those relating to electorate and party issues
- Cabinet records
 - substantially annotated copies only
- Correspondence
 - portfolio representations and correspondence registers relating to party matters and Parliamentary matters
- Newspaper clippings
- Parliamentary committee records
 - annotated versions including personal views and consideration of matters involved
- Electoral office records and party material
- Photographs
 - directly relating to official role
- Records of intrinsic value
 - records which have special display value because of their unique format or significance to a particular event
- Speeches
 - relating to Parliamentary matters.

Selective collection

Selective collection is defined as being at the discretion of the Manager [Director] of State Records in consultation with the State Records Council. While the state or national standing of the individual is a major factor, State Records will always assess the value of the records themselves as to their historical evidence and their ability (or not) to support extended research in different branches of scholarship.

- Subject Files and Indexes
 - relating to Parliamentary matters only. Such records could also include records of topical interest if considered to contribute to an understanding of the history and development of South Australian education and society. For example educational materials may be collected on topics such as AIDS, indigenous people of Australia and the debate on the republic
- Visit reports
 - relating to Parliamentary matters, but not including records of itineraries, proceedings of meetings attended nor travel arrangements
- Diaries (Journal)
 - relating to role as a Member of Parliament
- Diaries (Calendar)
 - engagement or appointment diaries with a particular topic/s, such as political or social issues, will be collected selectively in order to reflect changing social preoccupations or interests as documented by Parliamentarians
- Research Papers
- Ephemera²
 - material associated with specific events of state significance will be collected comprehensively, eg the republican debate
 - State election ephemera will be collected comprehensively, i.e. all materials associated with local and state elections, eg election posters.

Parliamentarian records that State Records does not intend to collect

- Appreciations, congratulations and condolences
- Administrative records relating to finance, staffing and office administration
- Publications such as annual reports and Hansard

² Only after first consulting with the Published Heritage Collections, State Library of South Australia. Ephemera are items of a transient nature and low value that are expected to have a brief currency. They are usually printed or manufactured in quantity for a specific event or activity and are intended neither to survive the topicality of that event or activity nor to survive as original records. They may be retained for their information or as graphic specimens particularly for exhibitions. Ephemera may include booklets, leaflets, handbills, posters, invitations, brochures, programs and cards.

- Advertising material
- Company information
 - State Records does not collect annual reports of publicly listed companies nor any operational records related to publicly listed companies
- Diaries that contain no information other than that usually associated with a diary (such as significant calendar events, mathematical information and other facts and figures) as they are considered to be items of stationery only
- Newsletters that are mainly of an administrative or social nature and primarily of interest to the society or group producing them, eg local churches, hobby groups, amateur societies, sporting groups, community service organisations, schools, etc
- Published material, eg books. Only primary resources will be collected.
- Publications of the State Government³
 - however, research papers and items of general interest and applicability may be collected
- Unannotated copies of Cabinet records⁴
- Departmental records, both file and non-file⁵
- Personal papers not directly associated with official role as Parliamentarian⁶

Collection of parliamentarian electronic records

Electronic records should be retained in a format that will ensure they are accessible, secure and useable for as long as they are required. Records created in this medium need to be captured, controlled, stored, accessed, and disposed of using the same principles as their paper-based counterparts. However, they need to fall within either the 'Comprehensive Collection' or 'Selective Collection' categories.

Glossary

State Records has produced an extensive Glossary of Records Management Terms. This can be accessed and downloaded from the Adequate Records Management, publications section of the State Records website, <http://www.archives.sa.gov.au>

³ Refer to the Published Heritage Collections, State Library of South Australia regarding secondary sources.

⁴ Refer to the Cabinet Handbook.

⁵ Parliamentarians are advised to return these records to the relevant department to be managed as official records in accordance with the State Records Act.

⁶ Refer to the Mortlock Library of South Australiana.