



Government of South Australia

GPO Box 2343
ADELAIDE SA 5001
Tel (08) 8204 8791
Fax (08) 8204 8777 DX:467
srsaRecordsManagement@sa.gov.au
www.archives.sa.gov.au

State Records
of South Australia



The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament

Collection Strategy

Guideline

October 2011

Version 4

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Introduction

This collection strategy for records of Members of the South Australian Parliament is the overarching document for the policy and associated guidelines for collecting records of past and present Members.

This strategy outlines short term (1-2 year), medium term (3-5 year), and long term (5-7+ year) initiatives.

Related documents

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

- *The Collection of Records of South Australian Members of Parliament: Collection Policy* - defines the scope and nature of the collecting of South Australian Parliamentary records within State Records
- *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.

Variation to this document

This document was endorsed by the State Records Council on 10 April 2001. This strategy may be reviewed from time to time.

Importance of Building such a Collection

State Records is the principal repository for records dating back to 1836 of the South Australian Government, both state and local. These records reflect how the Government has operated in South Australia. To complement these records, it is intended that State Records acquire a more personal account of the workings of the Government of the day, particularly at the higher echelons of Government, by widening our collection to include the acquisition of parliamentary records. State Records holdings in this area will complement and enhance the wider collecting arena of National Archives of Australia and the State Library of South Australia.

The Mortlock Library of South Australiana no longer accepts the records of Parliamentarians in their elected role. There has been consultation and agreement with the Mortlock Library, then, for State Records of South Australia to be the first point of contact for these records.

The Mortlock Library, however, continues to be the first point of contact for ephemera, published material, and personal papers that are not working papers.

The National Archives of Australia selectively collects Ministerial and Federal politician records.

South Australian Parliamentarian records will be collected under Section 27 of the *State Records Act 1997*.

Importance of managing the acquisition of parliamentary records

Every acquisition by an Archive must be undertaken responsibly and in an orderly fashion to avoid uncontrolled and uncontrollable growth in the collection. Every acquisition is a commitment by the Archives to the donor or creator, to the researcher and to the item itself. It is a commitment to control and document it; to protect, store and conserve it; and to make it available to interested researchers.

A collection policy defines the nature of the archives. It stipulates what the Archives will acquire, what limits it will set on acquisition and what types of material are of particular interest. The collection policy is a vital tool for staff responsible for, or involved in, acquisition as it guides their decision-making.

By defining the proposed scope and content of the collection, the policy should prevent capricious or inconsistent acquisition decisions. It should clearly minimise the extent to which subjective decisions are made. A clearly articulated acquisition policy also allows State Records a graceful means of refusing material unsuited to its collection.

The sheer volume of material produced by Parliamentarians makes it too costly for State Records alone to attempt to collect and preserve everything. State Records will, therefore, concentrate on collecting 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.

It is important to be selective and to have strict (although not inflexible) criteria for the collection of parliamentary records as archives.

The resulting collection aims to be a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, collection of parliamentary records capable of supporting and complementing State Records' primary holdings of official records created by government agencies.

Strategy

Short-term strategy (1-2 years) (2001-2002)

At present the collection strategy for collecting parliamentary records is passive – they come to us, and we have decided to accept them, but in an orderly, planned and appropriate way, and supported by a collection policy and related decisions. The short-term strategy is:

- a defensible and appropriate policy in place as a foundation for the acquiring of this collection as a complement to State Records holdings of ‘official records’, in accordance with section 27 of the State Records Act
- accompanying guidelines for the staff at State Records and for Members of the Parliament of South Australia
- a publicity leaflet directed towards Members of the Parliament of South Australia
- consultation with other collecting institutions and archival collections locally, interstate and overseas to ensure collaboration and not competition
- consideration of placing short articles (in appropriate journals, magazines or newsletters) describing our holdings and our acquisition interests or publicising a notable acquisition and at the same time including a plea for other material
- possible production of a short presentation that can be delivered with minimal work and alteration, to a wide variety of groups encouraging the donation or transfer of specified material.

Medium-term strategy (3-5 years) (2003-2005)

The medium-term collection strategy for these types of records could, and indeed should, become more proactive:

- the routine transfer of records is in place
- gaps in our collection are actively identified and records of prominent Parliamentarians or highlighting particularly prominent events in South Australian history are acquired
- the quality and range of the collection is actively assessed– emphasising complementarities in the collection, addressing gaps and disposing of those records that are surplus to our requirements. Assessing the collection might also include buying appropriate records to augment our collection
- exhibition/s of various types of parliamentary holdings are curated – either a stand-alone exhibition or as part of a larger exhibition. This strategy would also serve the dual purpose of informing the public of a significant part of our collection and would also be a strategy to engage parliamentarians to consider transferring their records to State Records of South Australia
- for exhibition purposes, State Records could take a lateral or longitudinal look at this collection, and/or highlight particular events or individuals.

Longer-term strategy (5-7+ years) (2005-2007)

In the long term State Records will aim to:

- mount regular displays regarding prominent Members of Parliament or involvement in prominent events, eg centenary of significant Members of Parliament, first woman member, etc
- ensure a web site presence for its parliamentary records holdings
- develop comprehensive and in depth finding aids
- give a presentation to Parliamentarians at Parliament House (eg once a year), possibly entitled 'What State Records can do for You', together with a publicity leaflet highlighting the rights and responsibilities for both parties to the agreement in storing and providing access to Members of Parliament records at State Records.

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>