

Preservation Policy



Version: 2.0

Last Amendment: 25-10-2016

Approved by: Executive Council

Policy owner/sponsor: Executive Director, Library & Information Services

Policy Contact Officer: Manager, Collection Care

Policy No: PD/13 TRIM File No: 54771

Date approved: 30-08-2016

Next review: 30-08-2019

Policy Statement

This policy defines the Library's preservation and conservation framework, duties and responsibilities in caring for its collections. The policy establishes and directs the Library's efforts in ensuring the authenticity, integrity, provenance, longevity and ongoing accessibility of the Library's collections, encompassing original and published collection material in all non-digital formats, including corporate records.

It is a fundamental accountability document concerning one of the Library's core business functions supporting the need for current access to and use of collections, and ensuring the preservation and protection of the collections for future generations. The Policy supports the development of strategies and procedures that remove or minimise the potential for negative impact on collection access and use

Target audience

The Preservation Policy is intended for:

- Library staff engaged in making decisions and undertaking activities that may have an impact on the integrity and sustainability of the collection
- Users of the Library's collections

Operational requirements

i) Scope

This policy underpins all aspects of the Library's service delivery and applies to all physical collection materials, including corporate records, where the Library is required by legislation, determines by policy or selects to preserve and provide access to collection material and content.

It applies to all staff including ongoing, fulltime, part-time, casual, fixed-term and contract staff, volunteers, clients, consultants and service providers handling collection material. It emphasises the importance of long term preventive preservation measures including appropriate storage, environmental control, pest management and commitment to a program of manual handling and other training as appropriate for Library staff, volunteers, clients and contractors.

The preservation of born and turned digital collection material is outside the scope of this policy and is covered in a separate Digital Preservation Policy.

ii) Principles

The Library's underlying preservation principle is to aim to preserve all physical collection material in perpetuity, or for as long as possible, in its original format where practicable. Inherently unstable formats that have no preservation solution, such as audio tape, best practice duplication (usually digitisation) will be pursued to preserve collection content.

In general the Library pursues a preventive preservation approach to extending the useful life of collections aimed at managing the external causes of deterioration.

a) Preventive preservation

The physical well-being of the collections is supported by ongoing risk assessment targeting long term preventive collection preservation from a macro through to individual item level as appropriate. It will typically include, but not be limited to:

Collection level

- appropriate storage facilities for collections, onsite and offsite, that reduce risk of theft, vandalism and damage or loss during retrieval or storage
- new and remodelled facilities will meet engineering and environmental specifications for optimal storage
- appropriate environmental conditions in temperature and relative humidity, light exposure and air quality in storage, exhibition and display
- operation of an integrated pest management program
- a rolling cleaning program of collection storage areas, maintained by the Facilities & Built Infrastructure Branch using contracted cleaning staff trained and inducted by Collection Care
- shelves and storage areas are orderly and tidy; the location of collections clearly indicated by shelf and bay signs and location guides. This is a shared Library & Information Services divisional responsibility
- up to date Library-wide counter-disaster management plans and procedures are in place that ensure, as far as possible, the Library is in a position to prevent, react and recover from any natural or man-made disasters that may affect the collections

Item level

- appropriate containers and enclosures for collection items
- barcodes and embossed, stamped or handwritten ownership marks, as appropriate

b) Access and use

Preservation programs and activity support efficient, effective access to collection material and minimise risks to collection longevity including reading room use and access, digitisation activity, exhibitions and loans, and public programs including regional outreach.

Access and use is facilitated by:

- a culture of best practice in materials handling including regular manual handling training and guidelines for staff, users, contractors and service providers
- ensuring all staff are trained, able and ready to intervene when harmful practice is observed
- provision of appropriate containers and enclosures for collection storage
- provision of appropriate supports and related equipment in reading rooms, for digitisation and public programs, with guidelines on their use

- specialist support and advice for packing and moving items
- guidelines for the exhibition, display and outgoing loan of collection material to regional, national and international cultural organisations
- exhibition and display procedures and documentation which align with international best practice, principles and standards

Increasingly collections are captured as turned digital copies that assist in preservation, access and dissemination of collection content and so have a preservation function. The creation of a turned digital copy does not remove the need to preserve the item or collection in the original format where this is possible. Precautions are taken to avoid damaging or interfering with the physical integrity and historical authenticity of collections during digitisation.

Display and exhibition of collection material will be in accordance with the recommendations for exhibiting the Library's collections and subject to the Library's guidelines for support materials, handling of items, and for monitoring the condition of the material before, during and after exhibition.

Items will not be included in an exhibition where their display will cause further damage. Exhibition or loan of some collection items may be limited to duplicates or digital surrogates, or may be limited in duration at specified lighting levels and environmental controls according to international standards.

iii) Conservation

Conservation measures will be undertaken when an item becomes, or will otherwise become, unavailable for access or use because of its physical condition.

The physical state and likely deterioration of the item, in conjunction with its intrinsic value, rarity, current or likely level of future use, and its significance to the collection, to New South Wales, Australia or internationally, will be assessed and a decision taken as to the priority and extent of conservation treatment.

Assessment will involve consultation with relevant subject matter experts across the Library, or external expertise when required. Generally greater priority and resources will be devoted to items of high significance such as those on the Individually Valued Items list, items required for exhibition or loan, and the Library's Australiana collections including original materials, and the rare and named collections. The preferred approach might be regular monitoring of collection items rather than intervention.

Activities in the conservation treatment of collection items will be:

- fit-for-purpose, in line with the guidelines of the AICCM code of ethics and conduct
- documented in treatment proposals to be approved by the appropriate delegation and the Manager, Collection Care. Treatment proposals for highest value / highest significance items, as determined by Manager, Collection Care, will be presented to Collection Management Group and approved by the State Librarian
- supported by condition reports for key high value / high significance items, new acquisitions, items selected for exhibition or outgoing loan, or as required

Treatment proposals and condition reports will be entered in the Library's record keeping systems.

Responsibilities

The State Librarian and Chief Executive is responsible for authorising the policy including its conformity to legislative and other compliance requirements, and supporting relevant activities regarding specific policy implementation.

The Library's Executive Committee is responsible for communicating this policy effectively to managers and supervisors, and ensuring adequate staffing levels to support collection preservation and conservation activities.

The Manager, Collection Care, the Registrar, Senior Conservators and Collection Storage Coordinator are responsible for leading the implementation of this policy.

Relevant managers and supervisors are responsible for communicating this policy effectively to Library staff and managing processes relevant to this policy, ensuring work practices comply with this policy.

Library staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy. Any member of staff, volunteers, or the public can identify a conservation or preservation need.

It is the responsibility of Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders to report any incidents which may result in collection damage or impact on collection storage.

All inquiries relating to this document, or relating to specific projects, should be addressed to the Manager, Collection Care.

Related Key Legislation and Policy

The Library aims to comply with international preservation, conservation and information management standards.

Most relevant legislation:

- Library Act 1939 and Library Regulation 2010
- Work Health & Safety Act 2011
- State Records Act 1998

Relevant programs:

- UNESCO Memory of the World
<http://www.unesco.org>
- Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Scheme 2014
<http://arts.gov.au/collections/protection-of-loans>

Related and/or most relevant State Library and government policies:

- Access to original material and rare printed material
- Collection Acquisition Policy
- Collection Development Policy
- Collection Donations Policy
- Collection Storage and Access Policy
- Collection Storage and Service Delivery Policy
- Depreciation Policy
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Exhibitions Policy
- Incoming Loans Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Outgoing Loans Policy
- Records Management Policy

- Retention and Disposal Policy for Collection Material
- State Records standard
- Standard on the physical storage of State Records
- Work Health and Safety Policy

Other relevant Library guidelines, plans and standards:

- Collection Disaster Plan
- Collection Storage Standards
- Digital Collecting Strategy
- Business Continuity Management Plan
- Guidelines and Conditions for Outgoing Loans
- Information and Communications Technology Strategic Plan 2013-2017
- Privacy Management Plan
- State Library Code of Conduct
- Strategic Plan 2015-19
- Strategy and Action Plan to Support People with a Disability 2015

Premier's Memorandum:

- Premier's Memorandum No. M2000-15, Access to Published Information – Laws, Policy and Guidelines (library deposit)

Codes of practice:

- Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) Code of Ethics and Code of Practice

Definitions

Preservation activity: Activity applied to retard deterioration and extend the useful life of physical collection materials to ensure their continued availability including environmental conditions, storage and accommodation, physical protection, exhibitions and loan policies, manual handling, emergency planning, the provision and use of turned digital and other copies.

Conservation activity: Activity that is part of a total preservation program aimed at stabilising the physical condition of an item and maintain it in an unchanging state with the least possible intervention. It may include intervention techniques applied to physical objects to achieve chemical and physical stabilisation for the purpose of extending the useful life of library materials and ensure their continued availability.

Digital surrogate: Digital file created by reformatting a physical original eg, by capturing or scanning a paper document, photograph, audio tape or film original.

Digitisation: The process of creating digital files by scanning or otherwise converting analogue materials. The resulting digital copy, or digital surrogate, is then classed as digital material.

Enclosure: various types of protective containers constructed for temporary or permanent storage of collection materials, for example, boxes, folders, etc.

Integrated pest management (IPM): range of preventive measures to control pests that significantly reduces the need to use chemicals and provides the same, or better, protection for collections.

Intergenerational: ensures the storage of, and access to, the Library's collection (in any form), or treatment decisions, consider the rights of current and future generations of users.

Relative humidity: the amount of water vapour contained in the air at a particular temperature compared with the total amount of water vapour the air can hold.

Significance: the meaning and values of cultural resources that makes them important for individuals or communities. Significance is based on the historic, aesthetic, scientific and social values that cultural heritage material has for past, present and future generations.

Turned Digital: See Digital surrogate

Document history and version control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Brief description
2.0	30-08-2016	Executive Council	Revised Preservation Policy