

Special Collections

Conditions of Use



The Special Collections area in the Mitchell Library Reading Room is a space reserved for the use of original material and rare printed items. This includes manuscripts, pictures, oral history, maps, rare printed items and realia. These collections are irreplaceable heritage material which is unique, significant, but also often fragile.

The Conditions of Use ensure that our collection items are preserved appropriately and available for future generations.

You will need a Special Collections Library card to access this material.

Where appropriate, Library readers are expected to have consulted other relevant resources first, including published items (print and online), guides and indexes or surrogates (digitised, online, microform) prior to requesting the original material. If your research does then require access to the original item, please consult with Library staff.

Requesting material

- Please present your Special Collections Library card when requesting material.
- For original material and rare printed items, fill in a stack slip for each item you require. If you require a number of manuscript boxes or pictorial albums, fill in a stack slip for each box or album. There is a limit of six items at a time.
- Most other printed items can be requested electronically via the catalogue.
- If you need to request other published items to use in conjunction with special collections material, you must request this from Special Collections desk staff.
- Some material has special conditions of use and some requires permission to access. Please contact the Library via the Ask a Librarian service (via the Library website) before your visit.
- If the item you want is located in offsite storage, you may request it in advance via the Ask a Librarian service or request a number of boxes / albums on one offsite request slip. Material requested from offsite will be available after 4 pm the next working day. Deliveries from offsite are not available on weekends and public holidays.

Issuing Special Collections material

- Material will generally be issued one box, folder or item at a time. Keep material in the same order and in the same folder as it is issued.
- If you require more than one item at a time to enable comparisons, please consult with Library staff at the Special Collections desk.

Security of the collection

- Surveillance cameras are positioned throughout the Special Collections area to ensure the security of the Library's collections.
- Original material will be weighed in your presence before it is issued to you. The weight will be recorded. You must return the material to the Special Collections desk after use and wait while the material is weighed again and the weight recorded. The Library will retain a record of any discrepancies.
- The following material will be weighed: all manuscript material, albums and boxes of pictorial material, boxed printed material, and selected rare books items.
- Staff may direct you to use a particular table, to change seats or to move material for collection security reasons.
- Material must not be removed from the Special Collections area.

- Material issued to you must not be used by another client without consultation with staff at the Special Collections desk.
- Viewings of high security items are conducted as supervised viewings by Library staff.
- No other material may be used in the Special Collections area without the permission of Special Collection desk staff.

Care of Special Collections material

- No food or drink is permitted within the Special Collections area
- No bags of any sort are permitted within the Special Collections area (including handbags, camera bags, laptop bags etc)
- Correct handling requirements as specified in the guide *Techniques for Handling Special Collection Items for Clients and Staff* must be followed. Copies of this printed guide are available at the Special Collections desk.
- Please use clean dry hands (alcohol hand wipes are available on the Special Collections desk). In some instances you will be asked to use gloves to handle the collection for its protection. Gloves will be provided.
- Only pencils may be used in the Special Collections area. Ink, pens and highlighters are not permitted.
- Do not make marks on documents or take notes on top of materials.
- Do not use post-it notes to mark pages. Acid-free paper markers are available for use.
- Do not touch the surface of an item unnecessarily.
- Items must not be taken out of plastic sleeves if provided.
- All documents must rest on the table when being examined. Staff can supply book rests, cushions or supports to safely support items while being viewed.
- If you need any help handling the material due to size, weight or fragility please ask staff for assistance.
- The following items are supplied for your use to protect the collection so please ask staff for access to: weights, item supports, cushions, gloves, alcohol hand wipes, and acid free paper markers.

Copying material including use of cameras and phones

- You are responsible for observing the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) with respect to materials in copyright. The reproduction of in-copyright material is only permissible where it constitutes fair-dealing for the purposes of research or study, or where a rights owner has granted explicit permission.
- Before you make or request copies of material, please speak to Library staff. Items may have copying restrictions in place that have been specified by the donor. Such restrictions will always be honoured by the Library.
- The physical condition and preservation needs of an item will also be considered.
- You may be permitted to make copies of an item using your own equipment such as a camera or phone, however approval to do this must be obtained from Library staff, by submitting a "Copying by readers using their own equipment" form.
- When using your own equipment:
 - Flash must be switched off on all devices.
 - Tripods may be used after checking with staff. Tripods must not be placed on or directly over an item.
 - A camera bridge and adjustable height table are available for use on request.
 - Hand-held scanners and flat-bed scanners are not permitted.
- Original materials cannot be copied on photocopiers.

If you have any questions regarding the collections or appropriate use of the collections, please ask staff for assistance.