

Public Exhibition - Draft Archives Collection Management Policy

File No: X002609.001

Summary

The City of Sydney manages a large and diverse archive of items including documents, maps and photographs. It also selectively acquires archives from other institutions and individuals when they have a relationship to the City's local government area.

This year, the City introduced a new archives management system, 'Archives and History Resources', to manage and provide public access to its collection of over 1 million items. The system is a significant improvement in the provision of public access. Users can find archives within the system and, if they are digitised, can download them without the need to submit a request to the City.

The greater visibility resulting from the release of this system means that, for the first time, the City needs to have a separate and robust collection management policy to explain its full range of archives policy positions.

The new policy:

- educates the community and staff about the purpose and value of the City Archives;
- informs them about what steps the City takes to identify, safeguard, and preserve archival resources;
- supports equitable access and the 'right to know' by defining why certain information is released to the public;
- provides the criteria and conditions for the acquisition of records from the community.

The principles in the policy are in line with the City's obligations to manage archives in accordance with the State Records Act 1998.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the draft Archives Collection Management Policy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report for public exhibition for a minimum of 14 days;
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor editorial amendments prior to the exhibition of the draft Archives Collection Management Policy;
- (C) should no amendments be required following public exhibition, Council adopt the draft Archives and Collection Management Policy as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make and approve minor housekeeping and editorial amendments to the adopted Archives and Collection Management Policy, as may be required from time to time.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Archives Collection Management Policy

Background

1. The City of Sydney manages its own archives and selectively acquires from other institutions and individuals when they have a relationship to the City's local government area. However, the City has never had a formal Archives Collection Management Policy.
2. Key archival principles and policies have until now been incorporated within the Records Management Policy. During the review of the Records Management Policy in 2018, it was determined that a separate publicly available policy was required.
3. The release of Archives and History Resources, the City's new archives management system, has led to greater public access to the City Archives. With increased opportunities for self-service, it is important to communicate a clear policy position particularly in relation to what records are released and why.
4. The draft Archives Collection Management Policy, in similar fashion to the Information Access Policy, is directed toward the community and, as such, needs to be endorsed by Council.
5. In particular, the Policy provides an open and transparent framework to:
 - (a) communicate the scope of the Collection and how permanent value is determined by the City;
 - (b) identify that records will be considered to be part of the City Archives Collection 10 years after the designated trigger date. Provisions in privacy legislation provide exemption for information in an archive. Provisions in copyright legislation enable more information in archives to be available for access and reproduction;
 - (c) specify the City's unique collecting parameters for archives acquired from the community. Communicating the criteria for collection enables the public to understand when the City will consider their donations or offers of purchase. Having documented and endorsed criteria also assists the City's archivists decide what to accept into the collection and communicate the reasons for these decisions. Collection policies are common in collecting archives and libraries for these reasons; and
 - (d) outline how access to the City's Archives will be provided.
6. The Policy will be supported by associated staff processes and procedures.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

7. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 10: Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships - Objective 10.5.2 - Action 2 of the City's Delivery Program 2017- 2021 states: Public access to information - Provide clear, accurate and accessible information about our operations, policies, projects and programs to the community. The Policy sets out the principles by which the City intends to achieve this objective.
 - (b) Direction 7: A Cultural and Creative City. Provision of greater access to the City's archives enables users to see, appreciate and share the diversity of community traditions, lifestyles and heritage.

Risks

8. The adoption, publication and application of the policy will support transparency and consistency in the exercise of the City's archival and information access functions and will consequently reduce risks arising from the exercise of those functions. Access decisions expressed in this policy state what has been existing practice for many years.

Social / Cultural / Community

9. Members of the community will be clearly informed regarding the purpose of the City Archives, what is involved in managing the collection, its collecting parameters and the reasons behind what is released to the public.

Budget Implications

10. The implementation of this Policy will not require any additional resources.

Relevant Legislation

11. State Records Act 1998 (NSW).
12. Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).
13. Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW).
14. Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).
15. Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).

Public Consultation

16. Feedback will be sought from the community via public exhibition of the draft Archives Collection Management Policy.

SUSAN PETTIFER

Director, People, Performance and Technology

Janet Villata, City Archivist