

Post Exhibition - Archives Collection Management Policy

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Summary

This report seeks Council approval for the City of Sydney Archives Collection Management Policy.

The Archives Collection Management Policy details the City's commitment to maintaining its archives and provides a framework for the acquisition, arrangement and description, storage and management of archives in the City Archives and its use by staff and the public. It also outlines the criteria for collecting archives from the community to enhance the City's archival collection.

The City's Archives hold over 12,000 shelf metres of archives dating back to the establishment of Council in 1842. The collection contains a wide range of material including documents, photographs, building plans and maps. Over a million items have been catalogued to date with more than 450,000 available digitally. The Archives capture and document the business, social and community history of the City of Sydney and its communities. The Archives provide a valuable and popular resource to the community, with over 200,000 page views of the online catalogues in June 2020.

Approval was given by Council on 6 April 2020 to publicly exhibit the draft Archives Collection Management Policy, with documents being placed on public exhibition from 15 May to 12 June 2020.

Consultation included online engagement, a media release and direct email to 20 cultural and community groups. The opportunity to submit a response was also communicated on the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) online forum and in the Professional Historians Association (PHA) newsletter early in the public exhibition period. Members of the public were able to comment through Sydney Your Say or directly to City staff.

During the exhibition period, five written and online submissions were received.

Submissions were complimentary and supportive, indicating the Policy is clear and comprehensive. One organisation indicated their satisfaction with the City's move to more online access.

Following analysis of the public exhibition consultation, minor amendments to the draft Policy were incorporated. Some comments were more procedural or not accepted. A summary of feedback and responses is available at Attachment B.

Recommendation

It is resolved that :

- (A) Council note the submissions and feedback received through the public exhibition process as shown at Attachment B to the subject report;
- (B) Council adopt the Archives Collection Management Policy, as amended, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report;
- (C) Council note that people and organisations who made submissions will be notified of the adoption of the Archives Collection Management Policy; and
- (D) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make and approve minor housekeeping changes and editorial amendments to the adopted Archives Collection Management Policy, as may be required from time to time.

Attachments

Attachment A. Archives Collection Management Policy

Attachment B. Summary of Feedback and Responses

Background

1. Approval was given by Council on 6 April 2020 to publicly exhibit the City's first draft Archives Collection Management Policy.
2. The documents were on public exhibition from 15 May to 12 June 2020. Five written and online submissions were received during the exhibition period.
3. Submissions were complimentary, indicating the Policy was clear and well expressed. One organisation in particular indicated their satisfaction with the City's move to more online access.
4. Submissions have resulted in some minor adjustments to the Policy, shown in mark ups in Attachment A.
5. Some suggested amendments were not accepted as they related to procedural matters or were inaccurate. See Attachment B for details of feedback and responses.
6. The State Archives and Records Authority of NSW (SARA) provided several comments and suggested amendments. These resulted in some minor changes to the Policy. In the main, their recommendations related to the suggestion that the City should enter into a distributed management agreement for the records it holds that are required as State archives. This would result in the transfer of control of these archives to the State Archives. The City would retain custody. This has far reaching implications and therefore the City Archives needs to ensure any agreement will be cost effective, beneficial to the public and advantageous for the City. Discussions on this matter are likely to be lengthy and should not hold up the implementation of the Policy.

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

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 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.
 - (b) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships - Objective 10.5.2 - Action 2 of the City's Delivery Program 2017-21 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 principles by which the City intends to achieve this objective.

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 for releasing information 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. The Archives Collection Management Policy was placed on exhibition from 15 May to 12 June 2020. Submissions could be made in writing or via the City of Sydney website online form, telephone or email.
17. A link to the draft Archives Collection Management Policy on the Sydney Your Say website was distributed via direct email to 20 cultural and community groups. The opportunity to submit a response to the policy was also communicated on the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) online forum and in the Professional Historians Association (PHA) newsletter early in the public exhibition period.
18. The City of Sydney advertised in the Sydney Morning Herald on Monday 18 May regarding the public exhibition of the draft policy.
19. During the consultation period, the Sydney Your Say website was visited 363 times (299 unique visits), and the public exhibition documents were downloaded 129 times.
20. Over the public exhibition period, the City received a total of five submissions. These submissions were from:
 - (a) Museums and Galleries of NSW
 - (b) Society of Mary - Marist Archives, New Zealand
 - (c) Glebe Society of NSW
 - (d) State Archives and Records Authority of NSW
 - (e) Society of Australian Genealogists.

21. As a result of the feedback received during the public exhibition period, minor changes and additions have been made to the draft Archives Collection Management Policy as marked in Attachment A.
22. Some feedback was not incorporated. A response will be communicated to those organisations. See Attachment B for a summary of feedback and responses.

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