

Northern Territory Library Content Strategy

JANUARY 2016





Above: Digitising collection material (2017)

Front cover: Collection item - Sam Calder's flying log book (World War II) and medals, 1939-1945, manuscript and medals

Introduction

The Northern Territory Library has a strategic mission to collect, grow and energise the knowledge of the Northern Territory for current and future generations.

This Content Strategy defines the principles which inform the Library's decisions about what we will collect, and what content we choose to license and provide access to; what we will digitise; what content we will create; how we will make our content accessible; and how we will support other organisations and communities to develop their own collections.

The Northern Territory has a long and rich tradition of stories and knowledge, from those of the Indigenous peoples of this country, to those of more recent pioneering and immigrant communities. The Northern Territory Library aims to comprehensively collect the documentation of this history in all its forms, including all information published in and about the Territory. This includes the collection, in print and/or digital form, of published books and journals, newspapers, ephemera and grey literature, maps, photographs, websites, multimedia items and personal and organisational archives, including contemporary and historical content.

The Northern Territory Library was formed in 1980 and collects knowledge and stories about the Northern Territory to preserve and make this information accessible now and into the future. Our collecting mission is mandated by the ***Legal Deposit (Publications) Act 2004***. Former administrative arrangements mean that some of the Northern Territory's older historical documentary materials are held at the State Library of South Australia or the National Library of Australia in Canberra. This means that the Northern Territory Library's collection and collecting focus is complementary to the collection and collecting policies of other cultural institutions within the Territory and elsewhere.

Information is collected for the benefit of our wide range of clients including students, historians, researchers, journalists, cultural tourists, creative writers and artists, and anyone else with an interest in Territory history and culture.

What we collect

The Library collects documents which record the Territory experience and tell the stories of the Northern Territory and the people who live here. We aim to build a comprehensive and cohesive collection of items which document the individuals, groups, events and organisations significant to the Northern Territory. The Library collects contemporary and historic material, in all formats, through a combination of legal deposit, purchase and donation.

Specifically, the Northern Territory Library collects: items *about* the Territory, written [*created*] by a Territorian, published in the Territory, or containing information that *is significant to the Territory* [original emphasis].

The current Northern Territory Library collection is eclectic, with a broad range of materials providing primary and secondary sources of information. For example, the collection includes:

- A handwritten Second World War diary describing the Bombing of Darwin firsthand
- Novels by contemporary bestselling Territorian writers
- Print and digital copies of Territory newspapers
- Unique early photographs of the Goyder survey expedition of 1869
- The personal papers of ex-Lord Mayor and Territory icon Dr Ella Stack
- Digital copies of press releases and government publications
- Children's picture books written and illustrated by Territorians

These few examples help to illustrate the scope and flavour of the collection, which has been developed in recent years with an emphasis on post-war and contemporary collecting, particularly as the Territory's history has meant that many earlier materials are in collections in Adelaide and Canberra. Increasingly, some items are born digital and are unavailable in paper form.

Exceptions to the scope of the Library's collections include government records (which are the province of the Northern Territory Archives Service) and most physical objects and non-documentary artworks (which are more fully collected by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory).

Further information can be found in the Library's Collection Development Policy.

Content

What we digitise

The Library will make as much of its printed and physical collections available online as possible through an active digitisation program. We will prioritise the digitisation of materials relating to the Territory, pictorial materials and other parts of the collection of wide community interest. We will focus also on materials that support our learning and exhibition programs, and where access to digital copies rather than the physical copy is preferable for conservation reasons.

Content we provide access to

Whilst the Library focuses its collecting activities on Northern Territory materials, it seeks to connect Territorians to a wider world of information through:

- Providing access to a range of eResources, including ebooks, online newspapers and magazines and databases of journal articles.
- Providing an inter-library loan service which enables Territorians to request library materials from across the country.
- Supporting public libraries to build strong collections through the Library Resource Allocation, providing a Territory wide collection which can be accessed by all through the Connect NT program.

The Library also provides a specialised Parliamentary Library Service and ensures access to a range of content that support members of the Legislative Assembly and their staff to perform their parliamentary duties.

Content that we create

In seeking to build our knowledge of the Territory and its history, the Library adds value to its collections by creating a range of content:

- Guides which describe the Library's collections and enable people to access and use them more effectively.
- Specialist resources and reference tools which support research into Northern Territory history, such as the Military Units database.
- Providing overviews of key aspects of Territory history to student and general audiences, including participation in collaborative knowledge tools such as Wikipedia.

Collecting Indigenous material

Understanding Aboriginal culture and history is fundamental to understanding the Northern Territory story. The Library will recognise, share and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, culture and history and ensure that our protocols regarding access to such materials reflect best practice, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and intellectual property rights. The Library endorses the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of lands in the Northern Territory and acknowledge that there are distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural differences, beliefs, values and languages. The Library strives to ensure that our collections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander materials are comprehensive, inclusive and reflective of all perspectives.

What we support other organisations to collect

The Library recognises that for Territorians to have access to the content they need – whether Territory related or for formal education, literacy and skills development, personal interest and lifelong learning, health, government and financial purposes, or simply for recreation and enjoyment – requires many institutions and communities to develop collections.

We will work in a collaborative fashion with other collecting organisations, sharing skills and infrastructure to support the widest dissemination of information. We will work particularly closely with the Territory's network of public libraries, school libraries and government libraries to provide access to collections through a shared Library Management System, and with public libraries to support the development of a high quality Territory wide borrowing collection.

We will also provide training and advice on digital collection management to libraries, other cultural institutions and to the public, in order to assist with getting as much Territory content online, in a form appropriate to long term preservation, as possible.

The Library also recognises the need for Indigenous communities to develop collections of significant historical and cultural materials which are owned and managed by communities, who can determine who has access to what information. We support this through the provision of Community Stories software and training, which provides a platform for developing a local digital keeping place for community content.

Making our collections accessible

The Library will continue to make innovative use of digital technologies to maximise the accessibility of our collections, across the Territory, the country, and the world. We will ensure that our collections are as findable as possible through major online discovery tools such as Google, Trove and Wikipedia. We will also maximise accessibility by providing our content for free, and by make it as re-usable as possible through the most generous possible Creative Commons licensing.

At the library at Parliament House we aim to showcase collections through a series of exhibitions, both large and small. Each year, several new and unique exhibitions are curated from the Northern Territory Library's collection materials, helping to expose the collections and take these Territory treasures out of the vaults. Much original scholarship also takes place as these exhibitions are put together, helping to form new and accessible additions to the collection themselves.

Building our collections – how you can help through donations

Much of the most interesting material in our collections comes from donations: a generosity that is evident both within Territorians, and from those who may have left the Territory but take away with them memories, but also photographs, diaries, films, ephemera and the like. They may represent the history of an individual or family, or the records of an organisation.

Whether it's a box of old photos under the bed or newer ones on a hard drive, historic film footage, filing cabinets full of papers in a store room or some old reports on a bookshelf, please get in touch if you're thinking about finding a new home for them: call us on 08 8999 7177 or email

ntl.info@nt.gov.au.

Donating collections to the Northern Territory Library means they will be preserved in climate controlled conditions and made accessible to curious minds. They may be digitised, and end up in one of our exhibitions or illustrating someone's book. By donating you will be contributing to preserving the Territory's history and telling its story, now and into the future.



Collection item: *A hand-drawn map, probably by an Australian school child, in the mid-1870s. It features the region Alexandra Land for the Northern Territory; a name which was in disuse by the 1880s.*