

Title Selection - Overview

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How have newspaper titles and issues been selected?

Newspaper titles and issues have been largely selected by State and Territory Libraries as part of the national collaborative program. Selection has been a devolved process because:

- The large majority of Australian newspapers on microfilm are not owned by the National Library of Australia.
- It is important to get a combined judgement about the initial content of the service.

In 2005 the National Library of Australia began planning the newspaper digitisation program and provided some guidelines to State and Territory Libraries for the initial selection of newspapers. The main selection criteria provided to the State and Territory Libraries are outlined below:

- The newspapers must not have copyright restrictions i.e. anything before 1955 is suitable.
- The newspaper must exist on microfilm.
- The microfilm to be digitised must be of suitable quality and completeness.
- Each State and Territory must have equal representation.
- Newspapers with wide geographic coverage published before 1900 are of highest significance i.e. 'State' titles.
- The total pages selected for the 2007-2010 stage of the project to be funded by the National Library of Australia will equal 3.4 million.

On the basis of these Guidelines State and Territory Libraries each selected one major 'State' title for the initial content. Some libraries have or are arranging re-microfilming of titles prior to digitisation since the quality and completeness of the existing microfilm did not meet the guidelines.

In November 2007 the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation sponsored the cost of digitising the Sydney Morning Herald up to 1955 and creating microfilm (\$1 million).

This addition took the total page count up to 4.4 million for the 2007-2010 period.

After 1.5 million pages had been scanned it became clear in May 2008 that the number of pages on microfilm had been over estimated due to the variance between microfilms. Therefore in consultation with State and Territory Libraries a review of title selection took place from June – October 2008 in order to increase the number of titles selected. Several new titles were suggested and new estimates of number of images per microfilm were undertaken. The revised and extended title selection list (still amounting to 4.4 million pages, but now consisting of 91 titles) was made available to the public on 8 December 2008.

How will newspaper titles and issues be selected in the future?

Digitising 4.4 million pages is the short term objective. The National Library intends to expand the content of the service in the future. The long term objective of the program is to make

freely available all Australian newspapers published prior to 1955. The Library may also make available content published after 1954 if the agreement of the publishers is obtained. At this stage it is unknown what the total extent in number of pages this is, or the funding required or available. The National Library is in discussion with a number of organizations about a 'Contributor' scenario. The Library is encouraging organizations to suggest newspaper titles for inclusion that they can fund themselves. This would be 'Contributed' content. It seems likely that contributed content may be smaller 'regional' titles, that hold special significance to local communities and may be funded by councils, historical societies or sponsored by local businesses. In addition it is hoped that State and Territory Libraries may fund their own contributions which may be continuation of large 'State' titles. The Library is also keen to obtain further sponsorship for specific newspaper titles and issues.

Where can I see the list of titles selected?

All the information about specific titles is located on the ANDP website under the 'Selected Newspapers' tab.

http://www.nla.gov.au/ndp/selected_newspapers/

How do I suggest a title for selection?

Please contact us via the 'contact us' page on the website. Make sure to include your contact details if you want us to respond.

http://www.nla.gov.au/ndp/contact_us/