

# Collecting Strategy



The National Library of Australia acknowledges Australia's First Nations Peoples – the First Australians – as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and gives respect to the Elders – past and present – and through them to all Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Cover images (clockwise from top left): Louise Whelan, *Susan Ainge and her Daughter Feeding the Cattle on their Property, Coonamble, New South Wales, 6 July 2011*, [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-152348586](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-152348586); *Papers of Bessie Rischbeith, 1900–1969*, [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-250831564](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-250831564); Mervyn Bishop, *Charles Perkins Shaking Hands with Members of the National Aboriginal Congress, Canberra, 1978*, [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-153510174](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-153510174); Anna Zhu, *Diaries, 2008*, [nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2988779974](http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2988779974).

## Purpose

In accordance with the *National Library Act 1960*, the Library collects documentary resources relating to Australia and the Australian people so that the Australian community—now and in the future—can discover, learn and create new knowledge.

## Mission

We collect today what will be important tomorrow.

## Principles

The National Library of Australia is a world-leading and respected custodian of Australia's published, written, oral, visual and digital heritage. We ensure Australian history, culture and knowledge is sustained for all Australian people, both now and in the future.

The Library enables the creation of knowledge. It develops, curates and preserves an astounding and diverse collection that inspires, delights and educates Australians.

This strategy outlines the Library's priorities for collecting, operating in conjunction with the Collection Development Policy, and identifying the areas for sustained focus over the next four years.

1. As the National Library of Australia, we will sharpen our focus on collecting Australian material and material with Australian content, and look to strengthen collecting in identified priority areas.
2. Our collecting will also reflect our place in the world, regionally and strategically, with a curatorial focus on Indonesia, China and the Pacific. We will significantly reduce overseas collecting that does not have Australian content.
3. Collecting will be increasingly digital, where possible, to enable effective, efficient and sustainable collection building, storage and accessibility.
4. Collecting will be collaborative, recognising the strengths and interests of other national and state cultural institutions, while capitalising on current arrangements and exploring new opportunities for a shared national collection.
5. The Library will be responsive to the challenge of collecting new and emerging formats quickly, and provide associated tools and technology to leverage this capability as part of the national digital cultural network.

## Priorities

### NATIONAL COLLECTING

#### 1. Legal Deposit

This is a mandated function under the *Copyright Act 1968*. The Library aims to comprehensively collect Australian publications in order to reflect the full diversity and range of Australian life depicted in the published record. When it is not possible or practical to collect every Australian publication—for example, ephemera, posters and websites—the Library collects a representation of the breadth and diversity of materials.

## 2. Australiana: Material by Australians and about Australia

The Library will continue to collect primary material that is of national significance, selectively acquiring a wide range of unique materials documenting the lives and activities of Australian people, places and events that have shaped society.

To improve the range and representation of the Library's collection, the Library also intends to strengthen its thematic collecting focus. Identified priorities include (but are not listed in priority order):

- increasing and improving representation of **Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities**. As opportunity allows, the Library will actively engage with these communities, noting the development of a representative and deep collection will evolve over successive plans
- ensuring the perspectives and stories of **rural and regional communities** are included in the collection
- increasing awareness of **active citizenship and representative democracy by documenting individuals and communities who have sought to bring about social and political change**. This will reflect a range of ages and voices, including for example movements for equality and broader political reform
- collecting that documents **Australia's involvement in and contribution to science and technology over time**. This could range from world-leading technological innovations and contribution to scientific endeavour, involvement in space programs and the way that technological change has impacted on the everyday lives of Australians over time
- collecting that documents the **relationship Australians have with the environment**, for example responses to natural disasters, climate change etc.
- seeking materials in a way that ensures **gender parity** across all these collecting areas.

## INTERNATIONAL COLLECTING

Overseas resources are selectively collected to inform and enhance Australians' understanding of their region and their place in the world.

### 3. Asia-Pacific Region: Indonesia, China and the Pacific

Collecting material from and about Indonesia, China, and the Pacific (including Timor-Leste) is the Library's next highest priority after its Australian collecting. This reflects Australia's strategic interests and our geographical position within this region. This is subject to change according to social or political factors and the Library's priorities and resources. The focus of this collecting is predominantly related to social sciences, history and politics, culture and society.

**Indonesia:** The Library's Indonesian collecting program (predominantly in Indonesian languages) recognises the country's regional significance, and a strong collecting program facilitated by the Library's regional office in Jakarta since the 1970s.

**China:** Reflecting the strong Australia–China bilateral relationship that is based not only economics and trade but also community and cultural links, the Library collects material from and about China.

**Pacific:** The Library prioritises countries in Melanesia, focusing on Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia as well as Timor-Leste. The Library does not aim to duplicate the well established collecting programs of the National Library of New Zealand and libraries in Hawaii, which have strengths in Polynesia and Micronesia.

#### 4. The Wider World

The Library selectively acquires, or provides access to, publications that offer an understanding of global issues, current events and topics affecting Australia, and of geographical regions where Australia's national, economic and strategic interests are clearly articulated, including material that documents the history of Australia's First Nations and European colonisation to the present day. The aim is to develop the strongest possible collection for the broadest cross-section of Australian society. In the current resource environment, this necessitates a reduction in the collecting of overseas materials outside the identified priorities and countries.

