

# Australian Mutuals History Archives Policy

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## 1. Introduction

This document is a statement of the role and objectives of Australian Mutuals History (formerly known as the Australian Credit Union Archives).

## 2. Historical and legal context

The Australian Credit Union Historical Co-Operative Archives was established by a Trust Deed executed on 1 July 1996. The Archives were re-named the Australian Credit Union Archives at a meeting of the Trustees on 15 June 2000. In 2017, the Archives was renamed Australian Mutuals History to reflect its broader collection focus (to now include mutual building societies and the customer owned banking sector).

The Trustees were vested with 'absolute management and entire control of the archives'<sup>1</sup> including 'collection, storage and retrieval' of the archives and 'recording and promoting the study and general knowledge of the history of the Australian Credit Union Movement'<sup>2</sup>. The Trustees were also responsible for agreeing to conditions for research use of the collection.<sup>3</sup> Trustees were also authorised to appoint an Archives Officer [later an Archivist]. In 2004 the Archives absorbed the assets of the Australian Credit Union Historical Co-Operative that had been established in 1985 and had begun collecting archival material.

<sup>1</sup> Trust Deed between the Australian Credit Union Historical Co-Operative Limited; Credit Union Services Corporation (Australia) Limited and National Credit Union Association Inc 1 July 1996, clause 7

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Clause 3

<sup>3</sup> Ibid clause 7

## 3. Purpose of the Australian Mutuals History

The role of Australian Mutuals History is to appraise, collect, document and preserve archival and other heritage material created by or relating to the credit union movement (since its commencement in Australia in 1946), mutual building societies and customer-owned banking sector.

The official records may be supplemented by personal records donated by individuals who have served the credit union movement, mutual building society or customer owned banking sector as directors or staff members, or have been members of a credit union, mutual building society or customer owned bank, provided that these records are appraised by the Archivist to be of archival value.

The Archives facilitates the use of this material for research and educational purposes. The Archives may instigate or participate in programs and publications designed to increase awareness of the history and traditions of the credit union movement, mutual building societies and customer owned banking sector using archival material.

The Archivist may also provide advice and guidance as appropriate on the management of current and secondary records within the credit union community and customer owned banking sector.

## 4. Authority of this Document

The Archives policy documents the framework in which the Australian Mutuals History functions. All practices and procedures must be in accordance with its provisions.

This policy was endorsed by the Trustees at a meeting held in December 2010, updated in April 2018 and re-endorsed in June 2018.

## 5. Position of the Archivist

The Archivist will be a person with tertiary qualifications in archives management or equivalent and eligible for professional membership of the Australian Society of Archivists Inc. who is appointed by the Trustees. The Archivist provides the Trustees with a detailed report at their regular meetings and communicates regularly with the Manager. The Manager has responsibility for financial and other administrative matters.

## 6. Recognised custodian

Australian Mutuals History is the official custodian of the archives of the Australian credit union movement and the customer owned banking sector in Australia. Material may only be removed from the Archives with the permission of and in accordance with conditions set by the Archivist.

## 7. Responsibilities of the Archivist

### 7.1 .Collection Development

The Archivist will use pro-active means to develop a comprehensive, growing and relevant collection by arranging transfers of archival material from eligible organisations and augment this collection by accepting donations from individuals.

The Archivist may decline material that is in poor physical condition such that it could affect the remainder of the collection or require that the material be treated by a professional conservator prior to transfer.

### 7.2 Appraisal

The Archivist should prepare disposal authorities of general and specific application that identify the records that are required as archives (see Acquisition Policy). The Archivist should decline material that is not identified as archives or which duplicates items in the collection.

### 7.3 Accessioning

The Archivist is responsible for accessioning material as soon as possible after acceptance into the Archives. The accession record should include the date of receipt; the provenance of the accession; a brief description of the accession; notes relating to the location of similar or related material, and contact details for the officer or person facilitating the transfer of the records.

### 7.4 Arrangement and Description

The Archivist is responsible for the arrangement and description of the archival collection. Arrangement and description includes:

- Registration of Accessions
- Registration of agencies, persons and functions
- Registration of series
- Description of individual items
- Recording the location of items

Arrangement and description should comply as closely as possible with the international and national standards for arrangement and description<sup>4</sup> together with ACUA's own policies and procedures. The detail of this task may, however be affected by availability of time and other resources.

<sup>4</sup> **International Council on Archives** ISAD (G): General International Standard Archival Description. 2nd Edition, 2000; ISAAR (CPF) International Standard Archival Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families 2nd edition 2004; ISDF International Standard for Describing Functions , 2008 and **Australian Society of Archivists Inc.** *Describing Archives in Context: a guide to Australian Practice* 2007

## 7.5 Preservation and Conservation

The Archivist is responsible for the preservation of the collection by the following means:

*Passive conservation* – use of acid free and other archival containers, fasteners; and copying deteriorating records onto more permanent media

*Active conservation* – authorising conservation surveys and restoration of individual or groups of items that require repair.

The Archivist is also responsible for ensuring that archival records in offsite storage and in the Archives office are held in optimal conditions with regard to temperature, humidity, pest control, and security, and for ensuring that rules for handling records are respected by staff, volunteers and researchers. The Archivist is responsible for disaster preparedness planning and recovery processes.

## 7.6 Records Management

It is the duty of the Archivist to ensure that relevant virtual and /or physical records are made, managed and kept in order to provide evidence of policy and other decisions and transactions of the Archives. It is of utmost importance that the records relating to the transfer of and access arrangements for archival records are held.

## 7.7 Making Records available for research

In order to facilitate research into the history of the credit union movement and customer owned banking sector, people who have been associated with it, the communities served by credit unions, customer owned banking and the financial industry generally the Archivist shall prepare guidelines and make records available for research in the Archives office provided that the records are available for public access.

The Trustees may at some time impose a fee for the use of research facilities <sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Trust Deed Op. Cit clause 7

## 7.8 Reference and Research

The Archivist may answer simple questions received from the credit unions, customer owned banks, the legal profession and members of the public, but generally not undertake detailed research for clients. Upon direction from the Trustees the Archivist may carry out research or work co-operatively with a researcher appointed to conduct a research project

based on the archives collection. Based on policy and current fee structures, research fees, copying and retrieval fees may be applied.

## 7.9 Outreach

The Archivist will build relationships with the credit union community and customer owned banking sector to identify and provide appropriate services to meet their information needs. The Archivist is responsible for the promotion of the archives in the credit union movement and customer owned banking sector and amongst historians' organisations using , but not restricted to the following - Newsletters and other publications, website, organising tours, presenting conference papers, preparing articles, participation in exhibitions and displays, and developing relationships with organisations with related goals and objectives.

## 7.10 Loan of archival records

The loan of archival records for research purposes is restricted and requires approval of the Manager on the recommendation of the Archivist. Materials may be loaned for

- Legal purposes - subpoena or discovery
- Exhibitions
- Conservation or Professional copying
- Under terms and conditions agreed by the Archivist.

## 7.11 Deaccessioning

The Archivist may on occasion de-accession material that has previously been accessioned into the collection. This may be based on re-appraisal of the material; or changes to the aims and objectives of the archives.

## 7.12 Management of volunteers, contractors, and professional placements

The Archivist may recommend to the Manager or the Trustees that contractors or volunteers be engaged for specific projects. The Archivist is responsible for the identification and assignment of tasks, ensuring that proper procedures and instructions are given, feedback, problem solving and performance management.

The tasks assigned should be appropriate to the skills and interests of the individual. Continued engagement of volunteers, contractors and archival students is based on the availability of suitable work and satisfactory performance.

## 8. Archives Policy Statements

Policy name	Date Approved/updated	Note	Location
Item Registration	30/7/2009 / updated 2017	Rules for registration of items in Archive Manager	G/Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017
Researcher Services	17/12/2009 / updated 2017	Incorporating reader registration form, manner of citing archives in published	G/Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017 +

		materials, papers and similar. Research desk rules and the procedure for recording a loan in Archive Manager	
Series Registration	14/4/2010 / updated 2017	Rules for registration of series in Archive Manager	G\Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017 +
Agency Registration	14/4/2010 / updated 2017	Rules for registration of Agencies in Archive Manager	G\Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017 +/
Person Registration	?/12/2010 /updated 2017	Rules for registration of Persons in Archive Manager	G\Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017 +/
Acquisition Policy	13/12/2011/ updated 2018	Approved by the Trustees	G\Procedures & Policies\Updated and New Policies 2017 +/
<b><i>Other key documents that regulate procedures</i></b>			
<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Description</b>		<b>Location</b>
Transfer Agreement	Completed by the CEO or delegate on the transfer of records. Provision for listing all of the records included in a transfer		G: Accessions/ACUA Blank Forms /ACUA Transfer Agreement.pdf
Private Deposit Agreement	Completed by donor - provision for listing all of the items included in the transfer		G: Accessions/ACUA Blank Forms /Private Deposit.pdf
Access Agreement	Completed by the CEO or delegate on the transfer of records – allows for authorising access records. Separate form for each accession. List at accession level		G: Accessions/ACUA Blank Forms /ACUA Access Agreement.pdf
Appraisal form	Details of material that requires appraisal and is not covered by an		G: Accessions/ACUA Blank Forms /ACUA appraisal form.pdf

	existing disposal authority		
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## 9. Privacy

The Archivist, contractors, and volunteers must at all times respect the privacy of directors, staff, volunteers, and members who are the subject of records held by the Archives, their families and heirs; and the donors of records. The Australian Mutuals History upholds the National Privacy Principles stipulated by the Privacy Act (Commonwealth) 1988 as amended and sundry state and territory instruments

The following arrangements to protect privacy are in place:

- Access arrangements are made with the transferor of records and are signed off by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate or when relevant by the private donor
- Series containing personal information e.g. Board Minutes, Board Papers, Board Committee Minutes, Loan records, Member Registers are unavailable for access for a minimum of 70 years
- 'Special access' may be granted for professional researchers and approved projects only by the Chief Executive Officer or senior delegate of the agency that created the records or its successor
- Oral History tapes are unavailable except as specified by Release forms
- Photographs are not available for reference or reproduction without the consent of all people concerned
- Information will not be passed to a third party without permission of the parties concerned
- Information concerning an individual will only be made available to a researcher; or reproduced by ACUA following written permission of the person concerned unless the facts are on the public record
- Only the Archivist and delegates have access to databases that assist with the identification of records
- Series and box numbering systems render the identification of material difficult to those unfamiliar with our systems
- Records are held in secure environments by our secondary storage provider – Grace Records Management and in the Archives office

## 10. Copyright

The Copyright of the material is vested in the organisation (e.g. credit union, customer owned bank or other industry body) that published the material, or in some cases by an individual author for a substantial period. The Archives will strive to protect the rights of the owners of the copyright in accordance with the Copyright Act (Cwlth) 1968 as amended.

Including:

- Completing a form under Section 49 when copied material is supplied to a client or when reproduction copies are made
- Acknowledging a person's right under the Act to copy 10%, an article or a chapter of a publication for private research purposes
- Drawing attention of researchers to copyright provisions
- Seeking legal advice when unsure of the provisions

- Taking reasonable steps to trace the ownership of copyright when reproducing or displaying material under copyright in its own publications

## 11. Definitions

### Accessioning

To take legal and physical custody of a group of records or other materials and to formally document their receipt; and to document the transfer of the records in a database of the archive's holdings. <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Based on Australian Society of Archivists Inc. *Keeping Archives III*. The Society, 2008 Op. Cit. p. 633

### Agency

An agency is a body that is generally regarded as independent and autonomous in the performance of its functions and creates and maintains records including archives. <sup>7</sup> Examples of agencies in our context are individual credit unions, mutual building societies, customer owned banks, NSW Credit Union League; AMInstitute; Institute of Credit Union Managers; Credit Union Dispute Resolution Centre

<sup>7</sup> Loosely based on *Describing Records in context* Op. Cit. P. 16 and *Keeping archives III* Op. Cit. 272

### Appraisal

The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations. <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Keeping Archives*. 3rd edition. Op. Cit. p, 633

### Archives

1. Records of organisations and individuals that have been selected for indefinite retention on the basis of their continuing value for legal, administrative, financial or historical research purposes

2. An organisation whose main function is to select, manage, preserve and make archival records available for research <sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 633

### Arrangement and Description

The process of organising materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials, and the process of analysing, organising and recording details about the formal elements about a records or collection

### Arrangement and Description

The process of organising materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials, and the process of analysing, organising and recording details about the formal elements about a records or collection of records, such as creator, title, dates, extent, and contents, to facilitate the work of identification, management and understanding. <sup>10</sup> **See also** Agency, Item, Series.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 634

### Conservation

Restorative action to treat damaged and at risk records. Conservation is one aspect of preservation<sup>11</sup>

## **Deaccessioning**

The process by which an archives permanently removed accessioned materials from its holdings. <sup>12</sup>

11 Ibid. p. 634

12 Based on *Keeping Archives*. Op. Cit. p. 635

## **Disaster Preparedness**

Preparing for minimisation of the effects of adverse events in the archives by assessing possible risks, identifying the most significant records that would have priority for treatment should a disaster occur, identifying partners who could assist in a disaster, training staff to act in an emergency and writing and maintaining a disaster preparedness plan.

## **Disposal Authority**

A document that sets out the name of record series and indicates whether the records are to be destroyed, retained for a certain period or be permanently held and managed as archives. Disposal Authority may be of general application e.g. *Records of Individual Credit Unions Required as Archives* or relate to a particular organisation e.g. ABACUS or a specific kind of record. E.g. Photograph Appraisal

## **Item**

An item is the smallest unit of archival description. Examples of items are a file, a folder of loose papers; a volume; and album of photographs; an individual photograph if not created or maintained in relation to other photographs; a bundle of cards; 3 dimensional object item such as a mug or a pen.

## **Personal Records**

These records are created or maintained by individuals and selected as archives because they supplement the official records. Examples of personal records included annotated sets of minutes; photographs; publications which fill gaps in official sets; passbooks chequebooks, memorabilia and memoirs. Personal records contrast to those made in the course of business by a person in his official capacity.

## **Preservation**

All actions taken to retard deterioration or prevent damage to cultural material. It involves controlling the environment and conditions of use, and may include treatment in order to maintain an object as nearly as possible in an unchanging state <sup>13</sup>

13 *Keeping Archives*. Op. Cit.p. 635

## **Series**

A group of records which result from the same business or recordkeeping activity , have a common system of control or relate to a particular subject or function , have a similar format, or have another relationship arising out their creation, receipt or use . <sup>14</sup> Examples of series include Board Minutes; Rules or Constitutions; Correspondence with the Registrar of Credit Unions; Member registers; annual reports; and publications.

14 Ibid. p. 636

## **Special Access**

Access that is granted to enable a person to use records that would otherwise be unavailable due to privacy, commercial in confidence or other concerns. Such access is



authorised by the Chief Executive Officer of the transferring agency (or its successor) and is usually given to legal practitioners; contractors preparing a history; scholars or similar.

<b>Australian Mutuals History Archives Policy</b>
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