

Wellington City Archives Policy

Mission Statement

To preserve the corporate memory of Wellington City Council so it may better serve the public.

To collect and preserve the unique documentary heritage of Wellington and share it with the public.

1. Background

This policy establishes the framework for the operations and development of Wellington City Archives. All archives practices and procedures must be in accordance with the provisions outlined in this policy.

Wellington City Archives was established in 1995, as an in-house Archives, to preserve records of permanent value created by the Wellington City Council, its predecessor organisations, associated bodies and individuals associated with the Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1974.

On July 1, 2003 its mission was expanded to include the collection of the archives of significant Wellington organisations and individuals following a decision by the Council's Economy and Arts Committee¹ establishing a Community Archives policy.

2. Definitions

In this policy and in any regulations or procedures made in accordance with this policy:

Access means the granting of permission to examine and study records held by the Archives and to extract information from them, under the conditions set down by the Archives. It does not imply any right to reproduce in any medium or format or to remove from the Archives premises.

Appraisal (to appraise) means the process of determining which records are to be retained as archives and which will be destroyed.

Archival value means those qualities possessed by records on account of which they are deemed worthy of permanent preservation for administrative, evidential, legal, financial, historical, cultural or other reasons.

Archives includes all non-current records created, received or accumulated by Council staff in the course of their official duties, and collected records which are deposited in the custody of the Archives for permanent preservation.

Archivist means the person appointed by the Wellington City Council to take responsibility for the care, control and custody of the archives of the Council, or such other persons as may from time to time be appointed to carry out the duties of archivist.

¹ Minutes of Council Economy and Arts Committee, 8 April 2002

Arrangement and Description This describes the process of physically organising records in accordance with the archival principals of provenance and original order, including boxing, labelling and shelving, and the process of recording standardised information about the arrangement, contents and formats of the records.

Artefacts means three-dimensional objects. Artefacts considered as coming within the scope of this policy include those created or used by Wellington City Council or Wellington City (including gifts to the Mayor or City) and not those collected for decorative, artistic or cultural purposes only.

Collected [archives and/or artefacts] means archives or artefacts which have been donated to, or purchased by, Wellington City Archives by external entities and not created or used by Wellington City Council or related organisations.

Disposal refers to the final decision concerning the fate of the records, i.e. destruction, transfer to inactive storage or to archives.

Non-current records includes all records which are not required for the conduct of current business or for frequent reference.

Records includes all files, documents, paper, maps, plans, sound recordings, video tapes, cinematographic film, slides, photographs, pictures, publications, electronic records or other medium of recorded information or any copy thereof.

Related organisations means organisations such as WCC Trusts, Council-controlled organisations (CCOs), and certain partnerships or major sponsorships in which Wellington City Council has a major financial interest.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Archives is:

- 3.1 To collect, store and arrange non-current records of permanent value created or used by the Wellington City Council and related organisations in order to meet the Council's long-term information needs and ensure that it meets its statutory obligations in relation to records retention and access.
- 3.2 To provide Wellington City Council with advice on information management, especially relating to retention and disposal of records.
- 3.3 To provide staff of Wellington City Council with access to, or information from, archival holdings.
- 3.4 To care for artefacts made, created or used by Wellington City Council which are deemed to be worthy of permanent preservation.
- 3.5 To collect archives relating to the social and economic development of Wellington city in order to:
 - Foster an understanding of local history
 - Preserve information about the history and development of Wellington and the people involved
 - Provide educational and academic resources
 - Promote tourism through attracting researchers
- 3.6 To provide the public with access to, or information from, archival holdings.

- 3.7 To display, or by other appropriate methods, proactively share the contents of the Archives with Wellington City Council staff and the public.

4. Acquisition

4.1 Archives

- 4.1.1 The Archives will acquire records created and used by Wellington City Council and related organisations via a transfer process at the end of the records' current life.
- 4.1.2 The Archives may acquire records created by Wellington organisations which have played a significant role in the life and/or development of Wellington, including:
- Businesses
 - Sport and recreation organisations
 - Ethnic and cultural organisations
 - Religious organisations
 - Educational organisations
 - Individuals
- 4.1.3 The Archives will not attempt to acquire material which falls within the collection policy of other archival institutions in Wellington.
- 4.1.4 Until the backlog of unprocessed archives is substantially reduced, the Archives will refrain from adopting a proactive role in the acquisition of community archives. It will, however, consider acquisition of archives which are:
- a) under threat of damage or destruction
 - b) offered to the Archives by their owners
- 4.1.5 All collections considered for acquisition under the Community Archives policy will be assessed by a Consultation Group.
- 4.1.6 The Consultation Group is appointed by Wellington City Council to provide independent advice on the appropriateness of acquisition proposals put forward by Wellington City Archives and to act as a consultative body in relation to community liaison or policy issues. It will consist of one representative from each of the following sectors or interest groups:
- Professional archives users/researchers
 - External professional archivists
 - Local history groups
- Members will be appointed for an initial term of two years and reviewed towards the end of that term. Particular consideration should be given to replacing the local history group representative, in order to widen involvement of the community.
- 4.1.7 The Consultation Group will meet at least twice a year.
- 4.1.8 Potential Community Archives accessions will be assessed by the full Consultation Group against the following criteria:
- Organisations must have maintained their principle operations within the boundaries of the current Wellington City

- Organisations must be significant contributors to the life and development of the city within their sphere of activity

Priority will be given to archives:

- at risk for environmental or other reasons
- belonging to organisations which have, or are about to, cease to exist.
- belonging to organisations or individuals which have had a close association with Wellington City Council, its predecessors or associated organisations such as trusts, council-controlled organisations, significant sponsorships by Council.

4.1.9 All accessions considered must have donor agreement to:

- Transfer of ownership to Wellington City Archives
- Allow appraisal and disposal by Wellington City Archives of non-archival material, according to professional archival standards and ethics
- Provision of open access.

4.2 Artefacts

4.2.1 The Archives may acquire artefacts of significant historical interest created or used by Wellington City Council and related organisations.

This includes gifts of artefacts or artworks given to the Mayor or City. Such gifts, although at times given to an individual, should be considered as being given to the organisation, Wellington City Council.

4.2.2 The Archives may retain artefacts of significant historical interest which are closely associated, or have an integral relationship, with records collected under the Community Archives programme.

4.2.3 Where Wellington City Archives becomes aware of other artefacts associated with an organisation from which it is receiving archives, it will in the first instance advise the Museum of Wellington City and Sea.

5. Appraisal

5.1 The Archives will appraise records according to accepted archival principles of provenance, evidential and informational value and in accordance with Council retention schedules, the Public Records Act and the Local Government Schedule.

5.2 Records may be disposed of where they are deemed to have no administrative value (decided in conjunction with Council staff), and no archival value as defined in the Public Records Act and the Local Government Schedule or, in the case of collected archives, where they are deemed to have no archival value as defined by accepted archival professional standards.

5.3 The Archives will be responsible for the physical destruction of all records approved for disposal.

5.4 The Archives will appraise artefacts for their intrinsic or other values.

6. Arrangement and Description

All records brought into archival custody will be arranged and described according to archival principles to the extent necessary to make them available for research. This will include compilation and maintenance of finding aids and other resources to facilitate their use.

7. Preservation

Wellington City Council will provide and maintain appropriate facilities and resources necessary to ensure the preservation of the archives.

8. Access

- 8.1 Access to the archives will be administered in accordance with archival principles, the available resources, legal and ethical obligations and the physical integrity of the materials.
- 8.2 The Archives will make archival material available both to Council and the public impartially, within the constraints of the conditions set out in this section.
- 8.3 Access by the public and Council staff to records held by Wellington City Archives will be provided in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, the Public Records Act and approved Council policies and procedures.
 - 8.3.1 Archives will be made available for research by staff and the public under conditions which ensure their preservation and which comply with any restrictions placed on them.
 - 8.3.2 Access to archives may only be restricted or withheld to prevent physical damage to the records or to protect personal, confidential or commercially-sensitive information.
 - 8.3.3 Where a Council officer wishes to place a restriction on access to Wellington City Council archives, written approval to do so must be sought from the City Archivist with reasons clearly stated.
- 8.4 The Archives may, at its discretion, lend Wellington City Council archives to Council staff for a defined period of time.
- 8.5 Archives will not be lent to individuals or institutions outside the Wellington City Archives for purposes of research. The City Archivist may allow movement of archives, to approved institutions, for purposes such as conservation or exhibition.
- 8.6 Access by the public to unpublished material in the Archives will be granted only after the user has signed an Access Agreement and agreed to abide by its conditions.