Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

Information for the Staff of Churches and Parishes about
THE SYDNEY DIOCESAN ARCHIVES
& The Care of Parish Archival Records

Sydney Diocesan Archivist: Dr Louise Trott
BA (Hons), Syd.; Grad. Dip. Information Management-Archives Administration, UNSW; PhD, Syd.
e-mail: archives@sydney.anglican.asn.au
Telephone: 02 / 9265-1620
Facsimile: 02 / 9232-7841
Website: www.sydneyanglicanarchives.com.au

Postal Address: P O Box Q190, Queen Victoria Building Post Office,
Sydney, NSW, 1230

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The Archivist's Mission
Archivists ensure that records which have value as authentic evidence of administrative, corporate, cultural and intellectual activity are made, kept and used. The work of archivists is vital for ensuring organisational efficiency and accountability and for supporting understandings of Australian life through the management and retention of its personal, corporate and social memory.

[Australian Society of Archivists: www.archivists.org.au]
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A. INTRODUCTION
The Sydney Diocesan Archives is a department with which many parish offices and clergy within the Diocese of Sydney are familiar, particularly if their parish historical records and archives have been deposited into the Sydney Diocesan Archives. However, some other parishes and clergy are still unfamiliar with the work of the Sydney Diocesan Archives, and the services available, so this Information Sheet is designed to provide an outline of the role and work of the Sydney Diocesan Archives, and to provide guidance as to the care of parish records.

B. THE ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK & STAFFING

B1. The Diocesan Registrar, the Registry and the Archives
The Sydney Diocesan Archives falls under the authority of the Registrar of the Diocese of Sydney (as part of the Archbishop’s Office division), and is funded by the Endowment of the See, monies allocated on an annual basis to the Archbishop of Sydney to administer his staff and offices. Thus, the Sydney Diocesan Archives is principally funded and staffed to provide information storage & retrieval services to the staff of the Archbishop's Office, and the staffing levels of the Diocesan Archives reflect the needs of the Archbishop’s Office organisation. The Diocesan Archivist works closely with the Deputy Registrar, to provide Registry-based services to the Archbishop and his staff via the Diocesan Registry.

In reality however, the Sydney Diocesan Archives provides information storage and retrieval services to all of the offices and officers of the Diocese of Sydney, that is, to all diocesan divisions and organisations, and all parochial units

B2. Who is the Sydney Diocesan Archivist? How many staff work in the Archives?
Day-to-day organisation and control of the Sydney Diocesan Archives falls to the Sydney Diocesan Archivist. The Sydney Diocesan Archives is staffed full-time and is open for enquiries five days per week.

The current Sydney Diocesan Archivist is Dr Louise Trott, who has worked for the Diocesan Archives since May 1990. She was appointed Diocesan Archivist (full-time) in November 1996. Dr Trott studied Archives Administration at the University of NSW in 1986, and graduated in 1987 (Graduate Diploma in Information Management-Archives Administration). She has been a professional archivist since 1987. Dr Trott also holds the degrees of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Sydney.

She is currently Convenor of two networks of religious archivists within Australia: a) the Australian Anglican Archivists Network (hosted by the General Synod), and b) the Religious Collections Special Interest Group of the Australian Society of Archivists (ASA).

The Sydney Diocesan Archives has always been staffed by professionally qualified archivists.
For information about previous Sydney Diocesan Archivists and assistant archivists, see the Sydney Diocesan Archives webpage: ‘Previous Sydney Diocesan Archivists’:

The in-coming volume of work of the Diocesan Archives requires up to three archivists with administrative support, but limited funding allows for only one archivist, and no administrative support, with the occasional assistance of an experienced volunteer. Accordingly, the Sydney Diocesan Archives can only provide limited assistance for external enquiries.
B3. Where is the office and repository of the Sydney Diocesan Archives?
Of what standard are the physical facilities?

For many years (circa late 1970s-1999), the office and repository of the Sydney Diocesan Archives was located on Level 4 of the car park of St Andrew’s House. Between November 1999 and February 2000, the Sydney Diocesan Archives was moved to a new, and larger, purpose-built repository and office in the Phillip Street, St James area.

Although the Archives office and repository is at some walking distance from St Andrew’s House, the Diocesan Archivist is in daily contact with the staff of the Diocesan Registry. The specific location of the Sydney Diocesan Archives is not advertised for reasons of security and safety for the records and staff. However, when a researcher has been granted access to the Sydney Diocesan Archives, or arrangements with a parish have been made for the deposit of records, all relevant information about the location is supplied.

This new facility provides physical conditions superior to those previously available in the St Andrew’s House site, with a first class air-conditioning system (a temperature of 20 degrees centigrade within the repository, and 22 degrees within the office) and de-humidification system (a level of circa 55% relative humidity, plus or minus a couple of degrees). The repository has smoke alarms and a sprinkler system. The records are stored on fixed metal open shelving and within closed metal compactus units. The new repository provided increased storage capacity compared with the St Andrew’s House site, but seven years on we are running out of space again, so plans are under discussion to upgrade with new Dexion site-specific compactus units in order to maximize use of the available space.

B4. About the Sydney Diocesan Archives website, and other websites

You can learn more about the work of the Registry and Archives at the Sydney Diocesan Archives website:

http://www.sydneyanglicanarchives.com.au

For more information about the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, visit the new Sydney Anglicans Network Portal of the diocese: www.sydneyanglicans.net

You can also find the Sydney Diocesan Archives website via the Network Portal (http://www.sydneyanglicans.net). Look under the Organisations drop-down menu; there you will find Registry & Archives.

The websites for the Sydney Diocesan Archives and the Sydney Diocesan Registry share a joint homepage, via which access to the individual Registry and Archives departmental websites is possible. These websites were launched in late March 2007. Extra content is added to the Sydney Diocesan Archives website as required.

The Directory of Archives in Australia (a website hosted by the Australian Society of Archivists) contains an entry for the Sydney Diocesan Archives under “Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney” (http://www.archivists.org.au/directory/data/23.htm) [updated quarterly, next update June 2007].

For information about the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat, visit their website: www.sds.asn.au

Anglican Media hosts a password-access website for clergy, ministry workers and theological students in the Diocese of Sydney (www.hq.sydneyanglicans.net). Under the heading “Document Repository” there is a menu item entitled “Archives”. This PDF file provides basic contact information about the Sydney Diocesan Archives.

End of section B
C. THE NATURE OF THE COLLECTION

C1. Is the Diocesan Archives a public or private archive?
The Sydney Diocesan Archives is a private, ‘in-house’, business, and research archive, and, in general, houses only records created by the offices and officers of the Diocese of Sydney.

C2. Does the Diocesan Archives collect all records to do with the Anglican Church in Australia?
No, the Sydney Diocesan Archives collects only those records created by and within the Diocese of Sydney. The collection is essentially that of administrative records created by the offices and officers of the Diocese of Sydney, since the creation of the Diocese of Australia in 1836. However, there are some records in the collection which date from the late 1700s.

As each new diocese was created (from 1842 onwards), the new diocese assumed responsibility for its own records, from the date of creation of the diocese onwards. In as much as each Anglican diocese in Australia is financially and administratively independent, so too each Anglican diocese within Australia creates and cares for its own records and archives. There is no central Anglican archives or records centre in Australia.

Other organisations which are not purely diocesan, such as the General Synod, Church Missionary Society, and Bush Church Aid Society, employ their own archivists to care for and administer their archival records.

For more information on the Collection Policy and Holdings of the Sydney Diocesan Archives, see the webpage: Collection Policy and Holdings: http://www.archives.anglican.asn.au/index.php/p2/policy

C3. What kinds of archival records does the Sydney Diocesan Archives collect?
In essence, the Sydney Diocesan Archives collects those records created as a result of the administrative work of the offices and officers of the Diocese of Sydney. These records fall into three broad groups:

- Records created by the Archbishop’s Office Division (Archbishop, Registry, Professional Standards Unit, Assisting Bishops, Archdeacons, Area Deans, & Dean of St Andrew’s Cathedral).
- Records created by Sydney Diocesan divisions and departments, and organisations, such as: Sydney Diocesan Synod, Standing Committee of Synod, Sydney Diocesan Secretariat, Church Property Trust, Regional Councils.
- Records created by parishes and churches within the Diocese of Sydney.
- Records created by Sydney Diocesan organisations, such as: Anglicare (formerly Home Mission Society), Mothers Union, GFS (formerly Girls Friendly Society) and many other diocesan administrative bodies. The names of these organisations change periodically.

The Sydney Diocesan Archivist liaises with the officers of these departments (as necessary) to provide education about identification and preparation of records for disposal or deposit to the Sydney Diocesan Archives.

End of Section C
D. WHO USES THE SYDNEY DIOCESAN ARCHIVES?

D1. Who uses the Sydney Diocesan Archives? Diocesan staff

The Sydney Diocesan Archives provides, as its primary task, archival storage and retrieval services to the staff of the Archbishop’s Office division.

However, the actual work of the Sydney Diocesan Archives has always included the provision of information storage & retrieval services (and research) to many other diocesan administrative units and organisations, such as the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat, the Anglican Church Property Trust, Anglicare, the Mothers Union, GFS, Anglican Media, and many other diocesan divisions and organisations. Staff from these organisations visit the Sydney Diocesan Archives to undertake research to support their work.

In particular, the staff of the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat make frequent use of the services of the Sydney Diocesan Archives, with an increasing emphasis upon legal, property, and heritage enquiries, via the Legal Services and Parish Services divisions.

For more information on this topic, see the Sydney Diocesan Archives webpage: ‘Access - For Diocesan Staff’:
http://www.archives.anglican.asn.au/index.php/p2/diocesan_staff

D2. Who uses the Sydney Diocesan Archives? Parish staff

An additional and major role of the Sydney Diocesan Archives is to care for the archival records created by parishes and churches within the Diocese of Sydney. The Sydney Diocesan Archives has been collecting parish and church records since circa 1977, and now holds records created by approximately 250 churches, with about five new parish deposits per annum.

Parishes liaise with the Sydney Diocesan Archivist for on-going advice and assistance with records management and archival issues within the parish or church. The proper care of parish records is an important part of any risk management programme, and the legal responsibility for the care of the records lies with the Minister and the Churchwardens.

Parishes also contact the Sydney Diocesan Archivist to enquire about the suitability of their records for deposit into the Sydney Diocesan Archives. Once parish and church records have ceased to be either current or semi-current, they will be assessed as being worthy of permanent retention, or suitable for disposal. Many parish staff are uncertain about retention periods and how to assess records for retention or disposal, and the Sydney Diocesan Archivist provides guidance in these matters.

For those parishes undertaking a parish history project, the Parish Historian will make frequent visits to undertake research using the parish records, or to undertake contextual research using diocesan records, even if the parish records are still held in the Parish.

Parishes frequently refer to the Sydney Diocesan Archives for information about faculties, plans and specifications, to assist with proposed changes to the church, and new building projects.

D3. Who uses the Sydney Diocesan Archives? Historians, architects, and other research professionals

Other than Diocesan staff, professional historians and other research professionals account for the largest number of research visitors to the Sydney Diocesan Archives. Visiting researchers undertake research into the history of the life and work of Anglican Church, its clergy and lay participants, its land and buildings, its institutions and activities, and indeed almost any aspect of the life of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney.
Approximately 25-30 researchers per annum use the collection. Up to three months per annum (in total working days) is given over to provision of access to visiting researchers. These researchers include: academic, consultant & private historians; research assistants; PhD and Honours students of history and architecture; conservation architects and heritage consultants, and their research staff; archaeologists; stained glass artists; film and documentary makers; writers of academic books and journal articles; writers of fiction; and filmmakers, of both feature films and television documentaries.

The Sydney Diocesan Archives collection is a rich and, in many cases, unique source of information about the early history of the Anglican Church in Australia, the history of the Colony of NSW, and the history of the city of Sydney, both in terms of institutions and people. This collection is also a valuable resource for research into the role of the Anglican Church within the life and culture of the people of Sydney. The provision of access to researchers and historians, who undertake research leading to publication, is deemed to be an important means of making a contribution to the academic, social, cultural and historical development of Sydney and Australia.

For more information on this topic, see the Sydney Diocesan Archives webpage: ‘Access – For Academic Researchers & Historians’:

D4. Who uses the Sydney Diocesan Archives? Members of the public
The Sydney Diocesan Archives also receives a steady stream of enquiries from members of the public by telephone, email, facsimile, and post. Public enquiries most usually concern topics such as procurement of baptism certificates for forthcoming marriage to members of the Catholic Church; procurement of confirmation records for candidates for ordination; clergy biographical information; family history & genealogy; and church-run children’s homes. Beyond these topics, the members of the public seek assistance with a wide range of enquiries broadly connected with the Anglican Church and clergy in Sydney, in Australia, the Pacific region, and in the UK. Due to limited staffing, it is not always possible to answer all of these enquiries.

D5. Does the Diocesan Archives deal with family history enquiries?
The Sydney Diocesan Archives is principally funded to provide in-house services. Most of the pre-1930 parish baptism, marriage, confirmation and burial registers held in the Sydney Diocesan Archives have been microfilmed by the Society of Australian Genealogists, so most family history enquiries can be passed to that organisation (www.sag.org.au), or to the Family History Unit at the State Library of NSW (Mitchell Library). Other useful organisations for family history research include: NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages (www.bdm.nsw.gov.au); State Library of NSW (www.sl.nsw.gov.au); and State Records NSW (www.records.nsw.gov.au).

However, the Sydney Diocesan Archives will, as time permits, handle any family history enquiries of a more complex nature, which cannot be dealt with via the abovementioned organisations.

For more information on this topic, see the Sydney Diocesan Archives webpage: ‘Access – For Family Historians’:

End of Section D
E. DIOCESAN ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS REGARDING ARCHIVES

Prior to the creation of the on-line presence of the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney, the Acts of Parliament, ordinances and regulations concerning the Anglican Church of Australia in the Diocese of Sydney, were published in The Seventh Handbook (published by the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat, 1994). The information about archives and records is still current and applicable.

In that publication, on page 41, ‘Section 7: Parish Organisation and Administration’ provided guidelines with regard to ‘Section 7.17: Records and Historical Documents’ (Section 7.17), as follows:

‘The minister is responsible for the safe custody of church registers and records, other than current books of account, but if there is no minister this responsibility rests with the churchwardens. Access to important documents should be limited to authorised personnel only.

The churchwardens must provide the minister with sufficient means for the custody of all church registers and records. Space permitting, the Registrar accepts into the Diocesan Archives documents of historical interest, such as old registers, correspondence, photographs, historical surveys of parishes or other documents of interest.’

E2. Information available on the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat Website
The updated version of the information contained in The Seventh Handbook is now accessible on the new website of the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat (www.sds.asn.au). Since 1994 much of that information has been updated and replaced. However, with regard to the management and care of records and archives, the information remains current, and some of this information can be found on various web-pages, as described below. I can provide summary documents of this information, compiled specifically for the use of Parish staff.

Functions of the Minister (d)
Web link: www.sds.asn.au/Site/102992.asp?ph=cl
To find this page manually, go to the new SDS home page, and look under menu items: For Clergy / Appointment Duties and Responsibilities / Duties and Responsibilities of the Clergy. There you will find: “Functions of the Minister”.
Clause d) on this page explains that a Minister is obliged, by virtue of his license, to create and maintain registers in each church in the parochial unit, as defined (see below) in the Church Administration Ordinance 1990.

Church Administration Ordinance 1990 (Parts 3 (19); 4 (20); 6 (43); 11 (63)
Web link: www.sds.asn.au/site/102026.asp?ph=cl
To find this page manually, go to the new SDS home page, and look under menu items: For Clergy / Acts & Ordinances / Administrative Ordinances. You will see the ordinances listed alphabetically.

The Church Administration Ordinance 1990 commenced on 1st January 1991. Amongst many other matters, this ordinance sets out the responsibilities of the Minister and Churchwardens as regards the creation of, financial provision for, and care of parish records.
Particular attention should be paid to:

- **Part 3. Minister's Responsibility for Church Registers and Records**: 19. (1), (2), (3), (4), & (5) The minister must cause a register or registers to be maintained in each church in which, (and following):

- **Part 4. What are the Churchwardens' Functions?** 20. (1) (q) to provide the minister with sufficient means for the safe custody of all church registers and records:

- **Part 6. Other Officers, Offices and Organisations - Offices Within Groups and Organisations**: 43. (6) If any such organisation ceases to exist for any reason, its remaining funds and property (not being the subject of any trust) become the property of the church or parish, and its books and records must be given to and remain in the custody of the minister.

- **Part 11. Miscellaneous - Parochial Visits and Information etc**: 63. (1) (d) An Archdeacon or an area dean may from time to time visit the minister and churchwardens of a church or parish within his area for the purpose of being satisfied that - records are being maintained in accordance with this Ordinance and the law of the Church.

It should be noted, however, that this Ordinance is now somewhat outdated with regard to records management and archives administration in churches and parishes, as it does not account for the full range of church and parish records which should be retained as archives. It also takes no account of changes in privacy legislation. Therefore these clauses should be regarded as merely the **starting point** for the process of administration of records and archives within churches and parishes.

**E3. Privacy**

Diocesan documents about privacy, which are relevant to the Sydney Diocesan Archives, include:

- **Archbishop’s Office Privacy Statement**
  To find this page manually, go to the SDS Home Page and look under menu items: About Us / then look at the bottom of the page where you will see a button for Privacy / then select ‘Archbishop’s Office Privacy Statement’.

  This document notes the circumstances under which personal data is collected and retained by officers of the Diocesan Registry, Professional Standards Unit & Diocesan Archives.

- **Circular to Ministers, Churchwardens and Parish Councillors: Privacy Legislation - managing its impact on parishes**: 4 November 2002
  To find this page manually, go to the SDS Home Page and look under menu items: For Clergy / Circulars. This circular is listed in the 2002 group of circulars to parishes.

  Clause 3.6 “Church Registers and Archives” of this Circular warns parishes that they should not sell personal information copied from the parish registers to family historians – to do so might lead to a loss of the small business exemption from the Privacy Act 1988.

End of Section E
F. COLLECTION & STORAGE OF PARISH ARCHIVAL RECORDS

F1. What kind of archival records should parish staff collect and care for?

Virtually all of the records created by a church and parish can be viewed as records created to document an administrative activity, that is, to document the business of the church or parish in its day-to-day activities. The records are documentary evidence of the activities of the church or parish.

The following types and categories of parish records, as listed below, should be retained and cared for by parishes as archival records.

Please note that a parish collection may not include all of these records, but all of these records have formed part of a parish collection.

- Registers (Composite, Baptism, Marriage, Burial, Service, Confirmation, Cradle Roll).
- Committee minutes (e.g. Church Committee, Building Committee, Parochial Council, Parish Council, Annual Vestry Meetings, Churchwardens Vestry meetings, Choir, Mothers Union, Women’s Guild, Women’s Fellowship, Women’s Auxiliary, Ladies Guild, Ladies Working Society, Ladies Home Mission Union, Men’s Society, Temperance Society, C of E Boys Society, Girls Friendly Society, Youth Fellowship, Sunday School Teachers, Children’s Library, Tennis Club, Bazaar, Annual Tea).
- Correspondence (e.g. Rector, Secretary to Parish Council, Churchwardens).
- Financial records (e.g. Pew Rent Books, Cash Books, Ledgers, Annual Reports & audited statements, annual & monthly balance sheets of income & expenditure, Annual Parish Returns).
- Cemetery Trustees records (e.g. Minutes, financial records, correspondence, sectional plans).
- Records of Parishioners (e.g. Parish Rolls of names & addresses, District Visitors books).
- Legal documents (e.g. deeds, leases, mortgages for land & buildings).
- Licensing documents (e.g. licence & consecration of church, chapel, hall, multi-function worship centre, burial ground, columbarium etc.; faculties & associated correspondence, and sketches and designs of windows, plaques, furniture, flags, banners etc.).
- Parish newsletters, newspapers & magazines.
- Architectural Plans (including associated specifications & designs; also associated correspondence from Architectural Panels).
- Maps (showing dimensions and location of church and parish land, parish boundaries).
- Orders of Service (for induction of clergy, dedication of buildings, anniversaries of church and parish; special services for war, death of monarch, drought etc.; includes Souvenir Booklets).
- Commemorative scrolls ((often highly decorative, presented to clergy).
- Visitors Books and Attendance Books for special occasions.
- Photographs & slides; negatives; etching blocks.
- Audio and visual recordings.
- Collections of newspaper clippings.
- Any other ephemera or memorabilia you feel are significant for the history of your parish.

F2. How should parish staff look after archival records in the parish office / vestry / rectory?

As noted above, some parishes have perfectly adequate facilities for keeping their archival records within the parish. In physical terms, ‘adequate’ means that the records should be housed securely, and kept well away from casual browsers. Sometimes the records are physically housed in the Parish Office, the Vestry, the Rectory, or in the home of a concerned Churchwarden or parishioner. It is important that the Minister and Churchwardens are aware of the location and condition of the
parish records, and that the Minister appoints a suitable person to be ‘Honorary Archivist’ for the parish / church.

The most confidential records should be kept in the parish safe. Only the Rector or his nominee (the Honorary Archivist) should have the authority to grant access to the parish archival records, in order to protect the privacy of the information contained therein, and the physical condition of the records. In the light of recent privacy legislation, it is of great importance that access should be limited to authorised persons only. It is also crucial to protect older and more fragile records from damage by casual and unauthorised browsing. A locked cupboard in a secure office is an ideal environment in most parish offices.

F3. Dangers which threaten archival records

Many environmental elements have a negative impact upon archival records, and storage of archives should be allocated with these dangers in mind. The storage space should be away from light, dust, damp, heat, insects, water, and fire. Storage within a metal cupboard, or within secure boxes on fixed metal shelving (with a good overhang) is quite suitable. If the cupboard is made of wood, check the interior to make sure that there are no infestations of insects or wood-borers (which love to eat paper). Damp and mould are also very bad for your records. A regular and periodic check of the archival records stored in your church/parish is advised.

Records should be kept well away from food and drink, and sticky or dirty fingers. It is important to remember that paper needs to ‘breathe’, for it takes up and releases moisture as the temperature and humidity levels change. Documents should NOT be wrapped in plastics or foil, as these materials will trap moisture and cause the growth of mould. However, ‘oven bags’ are suitable for storage, because they are permeable membranes, and they allow the paper to ‘breathe’ in the same way as they allow food to ‘breathe’ in the oven. If your records have become mouldy, controlled and supervised exposure to sunlight for a few hours will help to kill the mould.

F4. Suitable Boxes: the Type 1 Box

Archival records should be kept in suitable boxes, and oversize volumes too large for a box can be wrapped. Archivists commonly use a box named the ‘Type 1 Box’, which can be purchased from the Government Records Repository in Sydney. The GRR website provides contact details, prices, and assembly instructions (pictures with text) for the Type 1 Box. The Type 1 Box is the correct size for fixed metal shelving and compactus; it is sturdy enough to provide suitable protection to the records and not fall apart during handling; and (when full) it is a suitable size and weight for the average person to lift. Boxes should not be over-filled or they will not close properly and will lose their shape.

Occupational Health & Safety guidelines should be observed when lifting boxes of volumes, files, and papers. In general, a box to be lifted and carried should not weigh over 16-20 kilograms. The GRR make a larger Type 2 Box, which can be useful for storage or larger items, but care must be taken not to make the box too heavy.

Albox make a Type 1 Box in polypropylene, which is good for area where damp or water is a problem.

My advice is that the Marbig and Officeworks ‘Archive’ boxes should be avoided. They are made of flimsy cardboard, the bottom falls out when the box is full (unless you tape it up before use), and the box is far too heavy to lift safely when full. Given that boxes of archival records are carried from storage to transport, and then transport to a new storage place, the boxes used should be sturdy enough and light enough to survive the process.

See the end of this document for website information for the GRR, Albox, and suppliers of archival supplies.
F5. Paper Conservation

The Sydney Diocesan Archives has an annual budget for a programme of specialist paper conservation. The priority of this programme is to repair and conserve the earliest and most significant records in the collection. In many cases this includes parish registers, some of which have been so badly damaged by insects, poor storage, and ill-informed previous conservation methods. They may be damp and mouldy, or are crumbling into fragments because they are brittle; the volume may be hard to open due to poor rebinding, and the pages may be cracking under the strain; the edges of the pages may be fraying due to overuse and the long-term action of acid from fingers; the iron gall ink may be eating through the paper.

The conservation programme brings new life to these records, enabling them to be brought out from a box, to be used again, and to be microfilmed for public access. This programme is another of the advantages to deposit of parish records into the Sydney Diocesan Archives.

The Sydney Diocesan Archives uses a specialist paper conservator, Heather McPherson, whose conservation studio is in Goulburn. Heather also works with the archival collections of the NSW Parliamentary Library, and the Australian Museum.

Parishes seeking advice about paper conservation (i.e. methods, costs) should contact the Diocesan Archivist for further information.

End of Section F.

G. DEPOSIT OF PARISH RECORDS & SUBSEQUENT ACCESS

G1. Is the Sydney Diocesan Archives the appropriate repository for parish and church records?

Administrative and financial records created by churches and parishes within the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney are deemed to be private, business records (as opposed to public and government), which belong to the Diocese of Sydney and its corporate and parochial entities. Churches and parishes also create other kinds of records which may not be strictly administrative, yet these records also provide important evidence of the activities of the church or parish.

The Sydney Diocesan Archives is the appropriate repository for all records deemed worthy of permanent retention created by offices and officers of the Diocese of Sydney.

Parishes are not obliged by ordinance to deposit their records into the Sydney Diocesan Archives, but many wish to do so.

Prior to the establishment of the Sydney Diocesan Archives in the late 1970's, some parish clergy (who were motivated by genuine concern for the safety of these records) deposited their parish records in other repositories. Thus, some parish records are held in the State Library of NSW (Mitchell Library manuscripts collection), and in the Moore Theological College Library, and a couple of other libraries in Sydney.

It is no longer appropriate to deposit parish records into public libraries; since 1977 the proper place of deposit has been and is the Sydney Diocesan Archives.

The Sydney Diocesan Archives has been collecting parish records actively since circa 1977, and now holds groups of records created by some 250 or more individual churches, both closed and current. The Sydney Diocesan Archives receives between five and thirteen new deposits of parish records per annum. Some of these deposits are additions to an existing collection, and others are the first deposit from a church/parish.

Many parishes have already deposited the majority of their archival records with the Sydney Diocesan Archives. Some other parishes, however, (such as St James’ King Street; Christ Church St...
Laurence; and St John’s Parramatta) have sufficient resources of funding, staff, and space, to enable
them to undertake the care of these valuable records themselves.
If a parish no longer wishes or in unable to care for the parish archives, if a branch church is closing
down, or if it appears that adequate storage and supervision cannot be provided for the church and
parish non-current records, the Rector and Wardens of that parish may decide to deposit the archival
records within the Sydney Diocesan Archives. This decision can reduce the danger of damage to or
loss of the archival records of the church/parish, in the event of fire, flood, and theft. It also relieves
the church of the role of provision of copies of baptism records, and the need to answer family
history enquiries.
Sometimes a rumour has circulated to the effect that the Diocesan Archives no longer accepts parish
records. It is important to note that the rumour is entirely inaccurate. It is likely that this rumour
arose from the fact that, in 1995/1996, due to a diocesan ‘budget freeze’, the Sydney Diocesan
Archives was obliged to limit its operations substantially for some 12 months. Whilst the Sydney
Diocesan Archives certainly operates with a limited budget, no parish or church is refused the
opportunity to deposit its records into the Sydney Diocesan Archives.
Please do not hesitate to contact the Sydney Diocesan Archivist for advice and guidance on deposit
of church and parish records, as deposits of parish and church records are actively welcomed.

G2. How does a parish or church prepare records for deposit into the
Sydney Diocesan Archives?
Prior to deposit of the records into the Sydney Diocesan Archives, the Honorary Archivist, or the
person to whom the task has been allotted, should contact the Sydney Diocesan Archivist to discuss
the matter.
The Honorary Archivist should then sort through the records, and make a list of what there is, and
what the parish would like to deposit into the Sydney Diocesan Archives, using the above-
mentioned list as a guide. This list will serve as documentary evidence for both the parish and the
Sydney Diocesan Archives of the items deposited.
Then the items should be boxed up (see paragraph about Type-1 boxes above), making sure that the
boxes are not to large and do not become to heavy.
The Sydney Diocesan Archivist can send you instructions on the preparation of a series and item
deposit list, and a box list.
Liaison prior to deposit between the Rector, Churchwardens and Parish Council ensures that there is
broad agreement with the decision to deposit, and that this decision is minuted in the Parish Council
Minute Book.
At this point, the Minister or a delegated person should contact the Sydney Diocesan Archivist to
make arrangements for deposit. It is usual that the Minister or authorised person brings the records
to the Diocesan Archives, and hands over the records to the Diocesan Archivist, accompanied by a
listing of those records deposited, and a formal letter of deposit from the Minister. The building in
which the Diocesan Archives is situated (St James’ Hall) has a private underground car park, where
a visiting vehicle may park for a short time.

G3. Access to parish or church records, subsequent to deposit in the
Diocesan Archives
The purpose of deposit is to place the records in a secure environment where they will be protected
in terms of both physical storage and confidentiality of content, and made available only for bona
fide research under controlled conditions. Once the parish has deposited its records in the Diocesan
Archives, these records cannot be moved in and out again, like a lending library, as this would compromise their security, and increase the risk of damage or loss.

However, the parish staff and/or parish historian are very welcome to make an appointment to use the records for research for as long and as often as is required. A research visit also enables the researcher to use other diocesan records which may have a bearing upon the history of the parish.

If the parish is holding a special celebration, such as a centenary, it is possible for certain registers to be loaned to the Minister for the duration of the celebration (e.g. a weekend), with the Minister assuming responsibility for their safety.

G4. Any other questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact the Diocesan Archivist if you need to assist or refer an enquirer (such as provision of a copy of baptismal record); to discuss the condition or storage of your parish records; to make arrangements for deposit of your records; to make arrangements for a parishioner to come in to undertake research on behalf of the parish; to arrange for a temporary loan of archival parish records for a special function / exhibition; or for any other advice or information you might require.

Although the Diocesan Archives might seem to be somewhat hidden away, its services can be extremely useful for parishes and clergy. The Sydney Diocesan Archives seeks to provide archival information, advice and storage services for all parishes, churches, and administrative units of the Diocese, and aims to provide as much of an ‘outreach’ service as possible!

G5. How to contact the Diocesan Archivist / How to book an appointment for research

Unfortunately, the Diocesan Archives is limited by financial constraints to one staff member only, even though there is enough work to keep three full-time archivists very busy. For reasons of funding and security, a ‘shop-front’ service is not possible. Accordingly, the Diocesan Archives is not open to the general public, or for casual visits, without an appointment. Access is strictly by appointment.

The Diocesan Archives can accommodate only one researcher at a time, and it is essential to book an appointment in advance, as demand for access is high. The Diocesan Archives may be closed to researchers from time to time, to allow for other tasks to be completed, or in case of staff leave entitlements.

However, you are most welcome to telephone or email the Diocesan Archivist and make arrangements for a mutually convenient appointment. Appointments can usually be made for any weekday. If your telephone call is not answered in person, please leave a recorded message on the Voice Mail service, and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Contact by email and fax are also possible. In many cases, an email might be the quickest means of contact.

Please allow for the fact that, due to the high volume of work, the Archivist will not always be able to attend to your enquiry immediately.

End of Section G
H. USEFUL LINKS in alphabetical order

Albox Australia  www.albox.com.au

Australian Society of Archivists  www.archivists.org.au

Archival Survival (suppliers of archival quality storage materials)  www.archivalsurvival.com.au

Archives Act 1983 (C’wth) (as amended)  www.austlii.edu.au

City of Sydney Archives  www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/AboutSydney/HistoryAndArchives/Archives


Moore Theological College Library  www.moore.edu.au/library

National Archives of Australia  www.naa.gov.au

NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages  www.bdm.nsw.gov.au

Society of Australian Genealogists  www.sag.org.au

State Library of NSW  www.sl.nsw.gov.au

State Records NSW  www.records.nsw.gov.au

The Archivist’s Toolkit (British Columbia)  www.aabc.bc.ca/aabc/toolkit.html


Zetta Florence (suppliers of archival quality storage materials)  www.zettaflorence.com.au
I. APPENDIX: DEFINITIONS & EXPLANATIONS OF ARCHIVAL TERMINOLOGY

These definitions and explanations have been adapted from those provided by the National Archives of Australia (NAA), and edited to reflect the Sydney Diocesan Archives. For the NAA FAQ webpage see: [http://www.archivenet.gov.au/FAQs/faqs_001.htm](http://www.archivenet.gov.au/FAQs/faqs_001.htm)

Although the NAA deals with government records, this information is applicable for the records of any large corporate organisation such as the Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney.

1. What are archives?
The term archives can mean:
- Records which are preserved permanently because of their enduring value.
- The building, room or storage area where archival material is kept.
- An organisation responsible for the care and control of archival material.

2. Are all records archives?
No. All archives are records, but not all records become archives. Government agencies, individuals, and private organisations create and accumulate records; these include registers, minute books, financial records, correspondence files and reports, maps, plans, photographs, films, videotapes, sound recordings, optical disks and computer databases. Some of these records may be destroyed once their usefulness for current purposes ceases. Those that are preserved because of their enduring value are called archives.

3. How are archives selected?
Only if records meet certain criteria are they considered to be of enduring value. For example, the National Archives of Australia identifies and selects records as archives if they possess one or more of the following values: administrative, research, evidential, legal, financial or display. It is one of the responsibilities of State and federal government archives to ensure that valuable government records are identified and preserved, and not damaged, lost or destroyed through carelessness, error or improper handling.

Almost every record created by a parish office is deemed worthy of permanent retention, as most parish records are created in response to a diocesan procedure, as set down by ordinances and regulations.

4. How do archives differ from library material?
Archives have unique characteristics which make them very different from books or journals in a library. Library material is usually published and is often held by other libraries or individuals; if it is lost or stolen it can usually be replaced. By contrast, archives are original records, often unique and usually irreplaceable. When you use an archival record you are often using the only copy that exists.

5. Why can't archives be browsed on the shelves?
Because of their age archives are fragile and the information they contain is vulnerable to damage or loss through constant or improper handling; thus strict rules govern their handling and use. For example, they are kept in environmentally controlled conditions to minimise their deterioration; they may not be browsed on the shelves as in a library; and they may not be borrowed. When requested by researchers, records are delivered to the reading area where they must be used under the supervision of the Archivist. In these ways archives seek to maintain and preserve the collections in their care for future generations.
6. Why are archives not arranged by subject?
Whereas books in a library are catalogued and shelved according to subject and other classification systems, archives are arranged to preserve their value as evidence. The two rules governing the arrangement of archives are:

a) That the archives of an agency or an individual not be mixed or intermingled with those of other agencies or individuals, and,
b) That archives should be maintained in the same sequence and filing system in which they were created and maintained.

This enables present-day researchers not only to use the information they contain, but also to understand something about the way the department which created them was organised and administered. To reorganise the records into a subject arrangement would destroy these contextual links and would diminish their value as a source of evidence and information.

The respect for provenance and original order in the arrangement of archives has implications for the way they are used for research. It is useful to remember that in most cases they were created to meet the immediate needs of agencies or individuals, not the diverse research needs of a wider community some years later. Because archives are not arranged by subject, finding the information you want will often be time consuming, but it can also be challenging and exciting.

7. Can I research archival records online?
The process of digitising archival records is still too expensive and time-consuming for most archives to be in a position to adapt so quickly. For larger institutions it is unlikely that a collection numbering many millions of existing records would ever be fully accessible online.

8. What does the Internet offer the archival researcher at present?
A lot. Some Australian archives already provide online research aids which mean that research can be planned ahead. Some profile their collections and promote events and publications; some use their web sites as a means of linking visitors with archives worldwide. Even if a web site is currently only giving addresses, phone numbers and opening hours this is a useful service.

End of Section I.