

AUSTRALIAN LESBIAN AND GAY ARCHIVES (ALGA) COLLECTION AND ACCESS POLICY

1. GENERAL OUTLINE

1.1. ALGA collects, preserves and arranges information and materials in any medium by or about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) people, organisations and communities in Australia, past and present. We collect materials that are primarily about or which otherwise reflect on or have impact on the experience, history, lives, heritage and interests of LGBTIQ people.

1.2. ALGA collects, preserves and arranges selected information and materials in any medium in specific areas that relate to LGBTIQ issues, such as, but not limited to, sex education, feminism, civil liberties, discrimination and HIV/AIDS. The collection also includes selected material which best reflects societal attitudes toward broader aspects of sexuality, especially toward sex roles and sexual discrimination.

1.3. The materials collected include, but are not limited to:

- a) newsletters, publications, ephemeral matter (posters, flags, banners, badges, leaflets, postcards, etc), journals, newspapers and other records from LGBTIQ organisations or individuals;
- b) journals, newspapers, comics, ephemera and other records of LGBTIQ (or LGBTIQ-linked) commercial organisations (clubs, businesses, etc);
- c) published and unpublished works of artists, writers, poets, musicians and researchers; photographs; tapes; CDs and DVDs; films; videos; diaries; scrapbooks; oral histories; audio/visual tapes, transcripts of presentations for LGBTIQ radio/TV programmes;
- d) personal collections;
- e) books and pamphlets;
- f) newspaper, journal and magazine clippings from mainstream and other non-LGBTIQ sources;
- g) transcripts of trials; government or other organisational reports.

1.4 Unique individual personal collections are welcomed. Where appropriate, these will be treated as a distinct item within the collection.

1.5. ALGA reserves the right to refuse to accept materials. We will endeavour to place offered material in or refer the donor to other archives or suitable organisations. We also reserve the right to de-accession materials collected. Where possible we will consult with the donor.

1.6. While historically significant, rare or special editions of books and other materials will be held in multiple copies, donations that duplicate the collection may be exchanged with other archives or libraries or sold with funds returned to ALGA to further develop the collection.

1.7. An important consideration in all acquisition decisions is that ALGA should be able to provide for the storage, protection and preservation of the current collection and provide the basis for further expansion. We also encourage donors of material to consider making a financial contribution, to reduce ALGA's costs in accepting and housing their donation.

2. FURTHER COLLECTION ISSUES

2.1. **Overseas material.** While we have some overseas material (which we will continue to hold) especially from early gay liberation days and before, or in an individual's personal collection, we no longer systematically collect international periodicals or material. The four exceptions are:

- a) Material in any format by an Australian LGBTIQ individual or group of people (eg, artist, singer, writer, photographer, sportsperson or team, researcher) some or all of whose works are released or published overseas;
- b) Significant periodicals from the US, UK and Canada;
- c) Selected material from New Zealand;
- d) Books and pamphlets

2.2. **Organisations' collections.** We request that organisations sort their materials prior to donation if at all possible, including indicating any limitation of access for any part of the collection (eg. membership lists). Digital versions of records will be accepted. ALGA reserves the right to retain only a selection of an organisation's donation (as per point 1.5 above). See Appendix 1 for a guide to organising the records.

2.3 **Photographs.** For issues concerning collection, storage and access, see the ALGA photograph collection policy, in preparation.

2.4. **Copyright and copying.** Copyright applies to the material in ALGA's collection. ALGA will discuss the question of copyright with each new donor and record details of copyright ownership in the agreement under which the donation is made.

Users of the collection are bound by copyright law including restrictions on copying and other uses of text, images and recording. (More information is available from ALGA and from www.copyright.org.au.)

In addition, photographs and other creative materials (music, film, etc) can only be reproduced with full accreditation and in a form (whether colour, black and white, in promotional material or for display, etc) agreed to by ALGA and, where required, the copyright holder.

2.5. **Access.** ALGA encourages donors to allow open access to material they donate. However, as each donation of materials is unique, ALGA will discuss the terms of the

donation, including issues of ownership, copyright and access (open, long or short term restrictions), etc, with each donor. The details will be included in a written agreement between ALGA and the donor.

Oral history (audio or printed), collected for research, donated by individuals or collected by ALGA or an oral history group, will only be available subject to written conditions agreed on between ALGA (or initial researchers) and the individuals concerned. Where earlier records have not been accompanied by written agreements, ALGA will endeavour to contact the interviewee. In the event that contact cannot be made (eg the interviewee is deceased or no current contact details known), ALGA will exercise its discretion regarding access and further use.

ALGA also reserves the right to restrict access to the collection over and above the conditions outlined above.

All users of the collection are bound by the conditions of access. This will entail signing the Archives Access Agreement and an access book, noting all collections used. Staff and volunteers are required to sign the access book and are similarly bound by the conditions of access, though not required to sign the access agreement. (See Appendix 2 for the ALGA Access Agreement, which includes a listing of responsibilities of volunteers and researchers.)

3. ALGA DOES NOT COLLECT

3.1. Certain sexually explicit material that it is illegal to possess in Australia.

3.2. HIV/AIDS material not covered by points 1.2 and 1.3 above. Such HIV/AIDS material will be directed to the Noel Butlin Archives Centre in Canberra.

3.3. Clothing. While we have a limited collection of T-shirts and other items, generally we cannot collect clothing. Donors of items such as performance costumes will be directed to an appropriate institution, such as the Performing Arts Collection at the Victorian Arts Centre, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney or state and national museums and libraries.

APPENDIX 1

GROUP RECORDS DONATIONS POLICY

* focus on records which show the group's origins, major changes in direction, significant achievements or major problems (answering questions such as: what was the impetus for the group's formation, who was involved, how did they go about it, how did it rate its success or failure in meeting its objectives).

* keep the records chronological where possible

* flag any material which should be kept confidential or restricted (if we come across mailing lists, for example, we put those in sealed envelopes, but it is obviously better if the donor can make those judgments - and we would rather not restrict access if there is no genuine need for it)

* a list of records is recommended (eg. a simple three column chronological list with date, description of the record - stating who from/to, and its purpose - and any comments on its significance).

* where possible include audio or visual records of your group (interviews with participants, photos or videos of events/people with accompanying description of who is depicted in them, when, photographer, whether copyright passes to the Archives, or if not, who has to be contacted for permission to peruse or display)

* we request that groups using the Archives consider contributing to the operating costs (one practical way of doing that could be that the records come to ALGA housed in acid free materials - storage boxes or whatever)

For space reasons, ALGA is unable to accept large volumes of all groups' physical records, so we ask that a group considering donating material think about selecting material that highlights the significance of their work: is it the first of its kind in Victoria? Or Australia? (our collecting is confined to Australian records). If selection of material is to be made, we would recommend omitting administrative records of the group's day to day operations, and focus more on the records which chart the group's reason for being, or changing direction, and significant events in its life. Minute books and newsletters would be a good starting point, timelines are invaluable. In saying that, we recognise that the detailed records often provide insights into individuals' experience of a group. It may be that a group choose to retain its records, giving ALGA only a selection, but advising ALGA of what is in the collection and how it can be accessed. We would of course not be constrained in accepting a donation of a large quantity of digitised records, if you had the resources to do that (at present ALGA doesn't have resources for large scale digitisation programs).

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ACCESS AGREEMENT

I.....

PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS

agree that in return for being given access to the facilities of the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives (the Archives) and the records deposited there, I will conscientiously observe the rules of the Archives and in particular:

1. I agree to abide by any conditions laid down by the Archives or by the depositor of material in the Archives in cases where I am granted access to records held by the Archives
2. I realise that the obligation is on me in all matters of copyright.
3. I agree to provide the Archives with a copy of any completed work (whether text, images, audio or video) which is based on my research at the Archives.

Signed:

Date:

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TWO PAGES

RESEARCHER INFORMATION

Contact details (please use block letters)

Full Name:

Address:

.....

State:..... Postcode:..... Email.....

Phone: (w) (h)

RESEARCH

1. Topic/Title:

.....

2. Description:

.....

.....

.....

3. Expected completion date:

4. Purpose of research: (please tick appropriate box)

Publication (book, article, radio or TV program, exhibition etc)

.....

Thesis or assignment (degree/course):

.....

Other (please specify)

.....

5. Affiliation (if any)

If you are using the Archives as a student or academic, or as representative of an organisation, please provide details of your affiliation. If you are an independent researcher, please indicate appropriately.

Student or academic

Institution:.....

Department/Faculty:

Supervisor if applicable:

Representative of an organisation (employee or volunteer)

Name of organisation

Address of organisation

.....

Independent (eg consultant, private researcher)

.....

6. How did you first hear of the Archives and its holdings?

.....

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL THREE PAGES AND SIGN FRONT PAGE

Responsibilities of Volunteers and Researchers

The following procedures are designed to enable you to help implement the preservation policy whilst you are undertaking any work with the collection and ensure that you do not unwittingly damage the items you are working with. These are standard procedures in archives, libraries, art galleries and museums.

Volunteers

1. Wear gloves when handling photographs, cloth or particularly fragile papers.
Ensure hands are washed and thoroughly dried before handling papers, books and periodicals. The oils on our hands build up on papers and objects and cause damage in the long term.
2. Use pencils rather than pens when working with the collection. If you inadvertently mark something, pencil is much easier to remove. This does not apply when labelling video and other tape, the dust from pencils can damage magnetic tape so a pen must be used.
3. Keep food and drink away from any part of the collection in the workspace. No food or drink should ever be taken into the archive. Crumbs and spills could do irreparable damage.
4. Discuss the particular preservation needs of the part of the collection you are working on with other volunteers. Volunteers who are working on re-housing the collection are encouraged to liaise with professional conservators where possible and to seek advice from our suppliers. Some ALGA volunteers have professional experience in archives and museums and are eager to answer questions and point you in the appropriate direction.
5. If you find that anything in the archive has become mouldy or damp it is essential that you act immediately to isolate the item from the rest of the collection. If you are not sure what to do, alert one of your fellow volunteers to the problem.
6. If you follow the above guidelines you should feel free to go and check out any part of the collection that interests you. However be careful to not over handle items and always ensure that you return things to their rightful place.

Researchers

The Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives invests a lot of time and money to ensure that the collection is accessible to the public now and in the future. We rely on people accessing our collection to help us to ensure its survival for future researchers by upholding the following guidelines.

1. Ensure your hands are clean and dry before you handle papers.
2. Wear white cotton gloves provided by ALGA to handle objects or fragile papers.
3. Keep food and drink away from any part of the collection.
4. If you are looking at photos or badges please don't remove them from their plastic pockets. Don't handle anything unnecessarily.
5. Put things back as you got them. Do not open more than one box at a time unless it is absolutely necessary to compare two items.
6. Use pencil, not pen, to make notes while you are working with the collection.
7. If you find something is damp or mouldy, alert a volunteer. The item needs to be isolated so that the problem doesn't spread.
8. Researchers who have the time can also aid the preservation of ALGA by undertaking very basic re-housing work on items they are accessing, for example removing papers from manila folders to acid free ones, replacing metal paper clips by plastic ones.
9. Keep a daily record of all files accessed, so that if material is inadvertently misfiled, we have a means of finding misplaced material.