

Q ANZAC 100 Research Hub

Collection appraisals

Records and memorabilia from the First World War are valuable resources, providing unique insights into an individual or family's experiences of wartime. Assessment or appraisal is an important step in the collection management lifecycle.

First World War material will most often be found in:

- private collections
- collecting institutions such as historical societies, galleries, and civilian and military museums
- returned services organisations
- public libraries.

Why appraise?

Careful consideration at the start will help to:

- identify items of value and significance
- ensure that physical collections are appropriately preserved
- ensure that digital items are stored on stable platforms
- facilitate collection development and curation
- make collections accessible for future generations.

What is a collection?

A collection may be one item, or multiple items, and may comprise multiple formats. A collection may comprise:

- original material (such as letters, diaries, and postcards)
- published material (such as books, posters, sheet music, maps).

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | www.slq.qld.gov.au/preservation



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Appraisal criteria

When assessing First World War collections, various criteria can be applied. Essential criteria will differ for everyone and will depend on your collecting intent.

To be considered for the John Oxley Library collection at State Library of Queensland, collections must have relevance to Queensland and its history. This includes material that documents:

- people, places or events within Queensland
- experiences of Queenslanders outside the state.

In appraising First World War collections you may look for:

- a detailed record of Queensland military experiences at home and overseas
- an in-depth picture of life for Queensland families and citizens who remained at home
- records of individuals whose experiences are representative of a time and place, before, during and after the First World War.

In general, collections are appraised for:

- research and information value
- historic associations
- uniqueness and rarity
- social and cultural significance.

Additional factors can also be considered, such as:

- aesthetic style
- provenance and level of contextual information accompanying the material
- physical condition of the material
- interpretive potential of the material
- storage requirements
- extent of material — how much of it there is
- accessibility of material in the future
- future importance of the material
- regional coverage

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- coverage of topic within an existing collection
- collections which are otherwise inaccessible
- collections which may be at risk
- collections not already digitised elsewhere.

You might also aim for:

- a balanced spread of geographic locations
- a diversity of first hand and commemorative experiences
- a variety of formats, both digital and physical
- discovery and exposure of local stories.

Original materials

Original materials include manuscripts, business/organisation records, personal papers, letters, diaries, maps, photographs, artworks, realia, film/video footage, oral histories and digital stories. In assessing original materials you may prefer:

- **manuscripts** and **personal papers** that provide research value beyond the scope of a family group, and detail the lives and experiences of people of historic interest
- records of **businesses** and **non-government organisations** operating within Queensland that significantly contributed to the Queensland experience of the First World War
- **photographs** with accompanying information and provenance in formats including negatives, slides and prints
- **artworks** (all formats) with representational and informational value pertaining to the First World War, and with secondary consideration of aesthetic appeal
- **realia** such as medals and uniforms, especially if they form an integral part of or provide contextual information about a broader collection
- **motion picture footage** not previously broadcast or widely distributed
- **oral histories** in digital formats and of adequate sound quality, in preference to reel-to-reel or cassette tape recordings.

Published materials

Published material may include monographs, maps, serials, newspapers, ephemera, posters, music scores, audio-visual and self-published material. In assessing published materials you might consider:

- material which fills identified collection gaps

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- family histories or personal stories which have been professionally produced as a publication and reflect the wider context of the First World War in Queensland
- variant editions, adaptations, translations, compilations, e-books, audio books and websites.

Content suitability

As collections can contain multiple items in multiple formats, you may assess items which are not suitable or desirable for acquisition. Depending on your collecting intent, you may choose to reject items or collections if they comprise:

- material already digitised by other organisations
- reproductions of original materials
- official records created by government departments or agencies
- research notes, indexes and lists taken from existing collections that do not contain significant original content
- dossiers of documents related to family members, unless they relate to original material in the collection
- items with limited copyright permissions and significant access restrictions
- objects that are not contextualised by accompanying information or collection material
- receipts, invoices and other basic financial records
- footage where a copy is already held at the National Film and Sound Archive
- film which has undergone significant deterioration
- recordings with significant access restrictions or uncleared copyright
- anonymous or uncaptioned photographs.

Collection appraisal is an important stage of collection development. Through a careful and informed process of assessment, you can develop your collection and build a valuable legacy of Queensland participation in the First World War.

Records and memorabilia from the First World War can be valuable sources and provide unique insights into an individual or family's experiences. Assessment or appraisal is an important step in handling heritage collections.

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