POLICY NO:	2020/11	SUBJECT:	National Audiovisual Collection Accessioning Policy
DATE OF ISSUE:	20 August 2020	**DATE OF EFFECT:**	20 August 2020
APPROVED BY:		General Manager, Collection	
STAFF AFFECTED:		All NFSA staff	
CONTACT OFFICER(S):		Chief Curator, Curatorial and Accessioning	
SUPERSEDES POLICY NO:		NFSA Accessioning Policy 2017/03	

Policy Control Sheet

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Name: NFSA Accessioning Policy

Location: All NFSA Sites

Owner: Curatorial and Accessioning

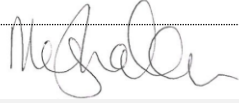| CHANGE HISTORY			
Version	**Date**	**Amendment**	**Author**
Revision 1	5 April 2017	Content review for currency Reformatting	Manager, Data Management Senior Manager, Collection Stewardship
v.1.1	1 May 2017	Added section on Copyright Contact | Changed Data Enrichment to Data Quality | Removed Collection Discoverability | Rechecked all references in Annex A | Re-sequenced to improve document structure |	Senior Manager, Collection Stewardship
v.2	3 May 2017	Finalised for CEO sign-off	Senior Manager, Collection Stewardship
v.2.1	3 May 2017	Proofed – minor corrections to punctuation and formatting.	Manager, Data Management
Revision 2	1 June 2020	Update reflecting Mediaflex enhancements and new organisational structure	Chief Curator

CONSULTATION		
Version	**Date**	**Group/s**
Revision 1	March – April 2017	Data Management Senior Manager, Collection Stewardship
v.1.1	10 April – 2 May 2017	NFSA Leadership Group
Revision 2	1 June – 18 August 2020	Curatorial and Accessioning

APPROVAL
2

Title: General Manager

Name: Meg Labrum

Signature: Date: 20/08/2020

NFSA Policy documents are managed by the Governance Section. Please submit all requests for changes to the Governance Section and owner of the policy, Changes will be issued only as a complete replacement document. Recipients should remove superseded versions from circulation.

Contents

1.   Introduction

The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) is responsible for the development, preservation, interpretation and presentation of the national audiovisual collection and its associated documents and artefacts. Its vision is to be Australian's Living Archive with a purpose to Collect, Preserve and Share as legislated by the *National Film and Sound Archive of Australia Act 2008* (Cth).[1]

Spanning across generations and genres of audiovisual history, the collection consists of 3.372 million items[2] captured on over 50 format families, in a range of digital and analogue formats.

The catalogue provides the documented evidence and formal record of the works that are part of the national audiovisual collection, their holdings and their provenance. It is the principal avenue for information about the collection thereby integral to supporting curatorial investigation, client access, preservation prioritisation, storage needs, collection auditing and valuation. Each record within the catalogue provides a detailed description of a collection work so that it can be readily identified, located and retrieved on request.

The collection catalogue resides within the NFSA collection management database system: Mediaflex.[3] The catalogue consists of records each containing metadata fields arranged in a specific sequence that provide a logical progression of information.

Each field is completed by entering data in a standardised manner to ensure maximum accessibility. Creating entries for the catalogue is known as *accessioning*. Accessioning is both a science and an art in that it involves both the process of developing rules and practices (the science) and applying rules to the needs of the collection (the art).

The information preserved about a collection item gives the work its depth of meaning and value.[4] The catalogue record serves a range of purposes and, at the NFSA, is at the core of its audiovisual archiving workflows.

The national audiovisual collection and its associated documents and artefacts require a skilled yet practical approach due to the expansive range and increasing volume of audiovisual works produced and acquired. Through this policy and its operational application, the NFSA's leadership as an authoritative source of Australian audiovisual information will continue to grow, both nationally and abroad.

2.   Scope

This policy articulates the information management principles by which the national audiovisual collection will be accessioned. It supports and is guided by the NFSA Collection Policy, Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) guidelines and the NFSA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)and informs the NFSA Data Entry Guidelines and Accessioning Procedures. This policy applies to all NFSA Staff.

The NFSA has taken responsibility for a range of additional collections including the Non-Theatrical Lending Collection and the Film Australia Collection, each managed in separate and tailored database systems. These collections are currently catalogued within their own established standards in parallel to this policy.

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[1] https://www.legislation.gov.au/Series/C2008A00014

[2] NFSA Annual Report, 2015-2016

[3] In 2010, the NFSA introduced Mediaflex by Transmedia Dynamics (TMD) as its computer based collection management system. It consists of a suite of database modules used to provide archive specific business functions in an integrated manner and support both physical media and digital content. For further in formation see: http://www.tmd.tv/

[4] Buck, R and J Gilmore, *The New Museum Registration Methods*. American Association of Museums: Washington, 1998

3.   Review Schedule

This policy is current from the time of its endorsement and will be reviewed every 3 years by the Chief Curator, Curatorial and Accessioning.

4.   Accessioning in the Audiovisual Context

The NFSA applies the term *audiovisual* as a collective expression for moving images and/or recorded sounds embodied in any medium now known or yet to be invented. It includes both analogue and digital formats and the technologies by which their content is reproduced and disseminated.

An audiovisual work may be created, produced, released, published or broadcast in an original or in multiple versions or languages. A work may also be comprised of a single or multiple items carried on single or multiple carrier formats. In all instances, each work requires its own detail of information.

The term *accessioning* is defined as the process of creating catalogue records by entering descriptive and technical information about works, items and collections, as well as assigning a subject notation, into the collection management system.

Audiovisual works and their associated documents and artefacts require a specific approach to accessioning that captures both the intellectual details of the work as well as the technical information that describes each item format and its carrier. The record also needs to capture the technical quality of each item within a work including any preservation treatment or restoration undertaken to account for any changes that may have been made to the work.

To this end, the audiovisual catalogue has a data model and record structure that supports information for each work, expression, manifestation and item[5] of the creative work at both the broad as well as the segment level of content description. The ability to represent the relationships between each entity is integral to providing a full record for audiovisual works.

Whilst the nature and characteristics of audiovisual works are unique yet variable in complexity, accessioning this media requires a significant degree of understanding, expertise and experience including an appreciation for screen and sound culture.

5.   The Curatorial and Accessioning Team

At the NFSA, the Curatorial and Accessioning Team (CAT) is primarily responsible for establishing accessioning standards, creating catalogue records as well as packaging all collection items for permanent storage.

When creating catalogue entries for collection works, NFSA accessioners ensure that users are able to:

- locate a collection work;
- identify and distinguish between two different items with similar characteristics;
- select a work appropriate to their needs; and
- gain access to the work.

While accessioning has rules, practices and standards that guide the process, the role of the accessioner is also to understand the nature of the creative work both in terms of content and format.

Drawing on their experience or that of others, they apply their skill through balancing the rigour of cataloguing rules and precedence with the needs of the collection item in hand when creating the catalogue record for that work in Mediaflex.

Accessioners undertake their work based on reasonable effort for reasonable result and in consideration of the following:

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[5] IFLA Study Group, *Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records: Final Report*. Munich : K.G Saur, 1998. (see: http://www.ifla.org/en/publications/functional-requirements-for-bibliographic-records)

- Who will use the work and how will they be able to locate it in the catalogue?
- What are the most applicable access and index terms to describe the work?
- What sort of work is it and what information is available about it, internally and externally?
- How does the work relate to other works in the collection?
- Is the work published, unpublished, broadcast or electronically distributed?
- What is the work's cultural significance?
- What is the condition of the work?

Accurate catalogue records are a foundation of data quality management and while accessioners will draw on all possible information from the item in order to create an authoritative record of the work, they may also use other reliable sources of information to verify the quality of data entered into a catalogue record.

The CAT team helps to provide an ongoing program of accessioning training across the organisation. This specialised training supports staff in their accessioning responsibilities and promotes an understanding of how catalogue records are structured, the importance of data entry, packaging and labelling standards and the ability to follow established procedures when accessioning collection works.

6.   Types of Works Accessioned

The NFSA collection consists of Australian and international audiovisual works as set out in the NFSA Collection Policy. The NFSA also collects documentation and artefacts that support the audiovisual collection. These works provide contextual information reflecting the time and place in which that audiovisual work was created and how it was experienced.

The types of collection works catalogued include:

- original works;
- final productions;
- material generated through the production process;
- commercially released material;
- publicly broadcast material;
- works developed or created to promote final productions
- material that documents the work of production companies or performers; and
- unpublished audiovisual and documentation works.

These collection works are:

- made by Australian artists and technicians;
- produced in Australia;
- set in or tell stories about Australia;
- made by Australians overseas; and/or
- strongly connected with Australia.

Audiovisual works are also created on a range of digital and analogue media. These may include: film, tape, disc, digital files, websites, photographic, paper-based, textiles and vintage equipment.

To date, the NFSA's collection contains over 50 format families, each consisting of technical information unique to its media that needs to be documented in the cataloguing record.

7.   Collection Categories

The NFSA catalogue uses three levels of collection categories to describe its holdings, namely:

- preservation;

- duping; and
- access.

Collection management practices prefer that a preservation category item of an analogue work remain in storage for security and longevity reasons. The nature of audiovisual media is such that multiple copies can be made of an original work, thereby limiting the movement, handling and usage of the preservation category item.

Whilst the NFSA seeks to acquire originals where possible, the first example of a work received by the NFSA is categorised and accessioned as the preservation copy which can later be reclassified once an original or better quality copy is acquired.

8.   Deaccessioning

In accordance with the NFSA Collection Policy and Collection Deselection Procedure, material may be permanently removed from the collection. Approved recommendations for deselection result in an item being deaccessioned from the collection. This entails changing the status of the item record and recording the disposal method used but not the deletion of the record from the catalogue. In this way, a record of the item's existence in the collection remains documented in perpetuity even though the item itself may have been removed from the holdings.

9.   Key Data Fields

A catalogue record is created for each work accepted into the collection. Each catalogue entry consists of an intellectual description of the content of the work, a subject notation to identify the genre of the work and a technical description of the format of the work.

The following tables illustrate the key metadata fields of information completed for each work, as applicable, thereby ensuring a standardised and meaningful catalogue record of the work:

INTELLECTUAL DESCRIPTION	
Title	Country of Origin
Owner	Language
Additional Title	Place Type
Copyright Status	Place
Cultural Status	Matrix Number
Medium	Catalogue Number
Sub-Medium	Date Type
Genre	Date From and Date To
Form	Credit Name
Version	Credit Role
Summary	Related Titles
Episode Number	Credit Name
Colour	Credit Role
Duration	Related Titles

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION
Media Type
Item Format
Audio
Format
Usage
Analogue Technical Information ***Depending on format selected, specific data fields will need to be completed***
Digital Technical Information ***Depending on format selected, specific data fields will need to be completed***
Copy History
Format Tech Code
Record Label
Acquisition
Carrier: Condition | Treatments | Quantity

10.   Sources of Information

The primary source of information to complete the catalogue record comes from the item itself as presented in hand (physical works) and in accompanying metadata (digital works). This includes any permanent labels, packaging material, containers, or accompanying textual information. Secondary sources of information are only used to verify missing or contradictory data.

11.   Catalogue Language

Whilst the NFSA accessioning language remains English, all works in hand in non-English languages are accessioned in language of origin and to the extent that Mediaflex is able to support the language script. Translated titles may be used where they are formally accepted and can be verified.

12.   Levels of Description

The NFSA's current practice is to create individual catalogue records for items in the collection. Whilst all records consist of the key data fields, in some instances a streamlined approach to accessioning multiple works which form part of a collection can be taken ensuring an acceptable level of description is maintained.

Major factors that affect accessioning levels include:

- whether the work is commercially published, produced or released;
- whether the work is unpublished;
- the types of demand expected;
- potential risk to collection works; and
- the nature of an acquisition.

13.   Types of Title Records

It is mandatory to select a Title Record type to create a catalogue record. Titles are created for individual works whereas Series Titles are created to describe audiovisual works that share a collective title whilst capturing the individual title of each episode such as in the case of television or radio series.

14.   Version of a Work

When a work has been deliberately created with major changes (e.g. re-edited version of a film, different performances of a musical work, different mix of a sound recording, extra tracks or features), it is NFSA practice to create a separate catalogue record to distinguish each version of a work from the original.

15.   Restricted Works

Restrictions may be applied to collection material which contains sensitive, secret or sacred material, or which may have access restrictions placed upon it for a range of reasons. Restriction information is included in the catalogue record and may relate to an item or a work and all its items. For Indigenous collection works, a cultural status is assigned for each work.

16.   Provenance

The provenance of a collection work provides important information relating to the attribution and understanding of how the work was originally acquired for the collection. Where possible, the catalogue record will always reference the acquisition record giving a clear audit trail as to the provenance of the collection work.

17.   Censorship

The NFSA does not censor any content and will capture all information in the catalogue record as it appears on the work in hand. Mindful of individual sensitivities and public perception, the NFSA places a disclaimer on the front page of the its online catalogue to inform users of the type of content they may come across when searching the collection.[6]

18.   Copyright Contact

The NFSA captures the copyright contact details for each work in its catalogue record as known at the time the work is accessioned. It is recognised that through the life of the collection work, this information is likely to change and amendments are made as required.

19.   Data Quality

It is recognised that NFSA catalogue records reflect generations of accessioning standards that have changed over the years. Through the NFSA Data Quality Framework, catalogue entries provide collection information that is correct for its holdings. It also enables the ability to improve consistency across the catalogue through targeted projects more so than upgrading each individual record to current-day data standards.

Where possible, accessioners enhance catalogue entries to provide an increased level of information that improves identification and accessibility to the work.

Data corrections are undertaken by Accessioning Officers on an ongoing basis. The NFSA also engages the public to assist with data corrections through its email service available on every record that appears on the online catalogue. Once the suggested correction is confirmed, the catalogue record is amended accordingly.

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[6] See: www.nfsa.gov.au

20.   Standards

Drawing on a range of international cataloguing standards (see: Annex A) used in audiovisual archives and libraries in particular, the NFSA has developed its own set of accessioning practices and documentation that best suits the diversity and the complex nature of audiovisual, document and artefact works. Each established, amended or newly introduced NFSA accessioning practice is referenced against international standards to ensure alignment with other professional bodies.

21.   Data Entry Guidelines

The NFSA Data Entry Guidelines (DEGs) represent the guiding practice for the description of the intellectual content of the work. They identify the descriptive fields of information used in the catalogue record and the manner in which data needs to be entered in each field. Standardised data entry reflects data quality and facilitates retrieval of data and information about a work.

The DEGs are the key reference resource for cataloguing and are maintained in a database for organisation-wide accessibility. They are revised as required, in consultation with key staff who have a role in accessioning.

22.   Accessioning Procedures and Guides

The NFSA has developed a series of Accessioning Procedures which identify the standardised process of accessioning different formats of audiovisual works and their related documentation works. They outline the specific data fields in the catalogue record for each format, and give details on how to package and label collection works prior to storage.

Similarly, Accessioning Guides refer to the specific genre of material to be accessioned such as advertisements, oral histories and television news. These documents are to be used in conjunction with the DEGs and, as such, are maintained in the same database.

23.   Authority Control

The NFSA employs the use of authority records in its accessioning practice to standardise data entry for:
- person and organisation names;
- company labels; and
- collections.

Authority files are also linked to their related data field in the catalogue record. Maintaining the authority files is an ongoing process of validation and checking of newly created entries to ensure that they meet data entry standards.

The names authority files contain the accepted form of entry and enable accessioners to distinguish between similar or identical names so that the correct entity can be accredited to the work.

The company label authority file comprises authority records for record labels which are the brand created by companies that specialise in manufacturing, distributing and promoting sound recordings.

The NFSA does maintain a list of collection names that have been assigned at the point of acquisition and linked to the catalogue record. Collection names are used sparingly.

Authority control is also exercised within the catalogue record itself where data fields are supported by controlled terms to be used which have been drawn from international standards or established by the NFSA.

This functionality further enhances data entry consistency across a range of highly used fields such as: role codes, country names, language, genre, form, format and technical codes.

24.   Relating Collection Works

Works in the catalogue are linked to each other where a direct relationship exists such as in the case where the collection holds both the audiovisual work and its supporting documentation. Connecting works in the collection by nesting or relating their records enhances accessibility and offers a complete depiction of all the content held that relates to a collection work.

25.   Collection Profiling

Assigning key indexing terms to a work provides additional access points into the collection as well as a means to support collection profiling and analysis. The NFSA controls its categorisation of a work into four metadata fields of objective description:

- to describe the content of a work, a medium and sub-medium is assigned to the work; and
- to describe the expression of the work, the genre and form of the work is identified.

These terms are controlled through a system authority file.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identifiers are specifically assigned in each instance a work contains indigenous content.

ANNEX A

- Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules
  http://www.aacr2.org/

- Association of Moving Image Archivists, AMIA Compendium of Moving Image Cataloguing Practice. 2001
  http://www.amianet.org/sites/all/files/Comm%20-%20Cataloging%20-%20Compendium.pdf

- Association for Recorded Sound Collections. Rules for Archival Cataloguing of Sound Recordings. 1995
  http://www.arsc-audio.org/committees/cataloging-committee.html

- International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, The IASA Cataloguing Rules. 1999
  http://www.iasa-web.org/cataloguing-rules

- International Council of Archives – Committee on Descriptive Standards
  http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/home.htm

- International Federation of Film Archives, The FIAF Moving Image Cataloguing Manual. 2016
  http://www.fiafnet.org/pages/E-Resources/Cataloguing-Manual.html

- International Federation of Library Associations. Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records. Final Report. 1998
  https://www.ifla.org/publications/functional-requirements-for-bibliographic-records

- International Federation of Library Associations ISBD (NBM): International Standard Bibliographic Description for Non-Book Materials. 1987
  https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbd/isbd-nbm_1987.pdf

- International Standard Audiovisual Number http://www.isan.org/

- International Standards Organisation. Geneva https://www.iso.org/home.html
  - ISO 639: Language Codes
  - ISO 3166 : Country Codes
  - ISO 1570-2:2007 : Information and documentation – International Standard Audiovisual Number (ISAN)

- Library of Congress. Archival Moving Image Materials: A Cataloguing Manual. 2000
  https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/amimupd.html

- Library of Congress www.loc.gov
  - Authorities
  - Standards
  - Value Lists for Codes and Controlled Vocabularies

- Metadata Standards: a comprehensive list of metadata schemas:
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata_standard

- National Library of Australia, Cataloguing Standards
  http://www.nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/services/cataloguing/standards/

- Online Audiovisual Cataloguers. Cataloguers Network
  http://olacinc.org/

- Society of American Archivist. Describing Archives, a Content Standard, 2013
  http://files.archivists.org/pubs/DACS2E-2013_v0315.pdf