

Commonwealth Bank Archives

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Summary Guide

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HOW TO USE THE ARCHIVES

The needs of most users are met using mail, email, phone, and fax, Contact details are set out above and for -

- **internal users** in the Commonwealth Bank Directory
- **external customers** in the Archives page on the Commonwealth Bank Internet site.

A small reading room is available during business hours for on-site inspections by prior arrangement.

This is a high-level list of what is in the Archives. It describes briefly all the materials held. The descriptions will be progressively expanded with greater detail in future editions. Our holdings include documents, publications, photographs, posters, brochures, objects, maps, and plans, some dating back to the 1850s as a result of amalgamations.

AMALGAMATIONS AND MERGERS

The Bank has been involved in many mergers, some of which have brought with them deposits of records pre-dating the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank itself. These include:

1913: State Savings Bank of Tasmania (1902-1913) incorporating:

- ▶ Post Office Savings Bank of Tasmania (1882-1902)

1920: Queensland Government Savings Bank (1916-1920) incorporating:

- ▶ Moreton Bay Savings Bank (1856-1865)
- ▶ Ipswich Savings Bank (1861-1866)
- ▶ Toowoomba Savings Bank (1862-1867)
- ▶ Government Savings Bank of Queensland (1865-1916)

1931: State Savings Bank of Western Australia (1926-1931) incorporating:

- ▶ Government Savings Bank of WA (1906-1926) which had previously incorporated
 - Post Office Savings Bank of Western Australia (1863-1908)

1931: Government Savings Bank of NSW (1871-1931) incorporating:

- ▶ Savings Bank of NSW (1832-1914) which had previously incorporated
 - NSW Savings Bank/Campbell's Bank (1819-1833) and
 - Port Stephens Savings Bank (1830-1832)

1989 : ASB Bank Ltd (1987-date), 75% holding expanded to 100% in 2000, incorporating:

- ▶ Auckland Savings Bank/ASB Trust Bank (1847-1987)
- ▶ Westland Bank
- ▶ Sovereign Ltd (1989-date)
- ▶ retail stockbroking and fixed income operations from Warburg Dillon Read (1997-date)
 - which had previously incorporated S G Warburg & Co and Dillon, Read, & Co.

1991: State Bank of Victoria/SBV (1842-1991) formerly

- Savings Bank of Victoria/SSB
- Commissioners of Savings Banks and
- Savings Bank of Port Phillip

2000: Colonial Limited, formerly Colonial Mutual (1873-2000) incorporating:

- ▶ State Bank of New South Wales (1931-1994), formerly the Rural Bank.
- ▶ Legal and General Australia (1953-1998)
- ▶ Prudential Corporation – Australia & New Zealand (1925-1998)
- ▶ Trust Bank (1991-1999) formed out of a merger between
 - Hobart Savings Bank/Savings Bank of Tasmania (1845-1991) and
 - the Tasmania Bank, formerly Launceston Bank for Savings (1835-1991)
 - which had previously incorporated Tasmanian Permanent Building Society

Most of the records inherited by the Commonwealth Bank as a result of mergers prior to 1965 are now to be found at the Archives of the Reserve Bank of Australia. The SBV archives are with the Public Record Office of Victoria and those of the Trust Bank are on permanent loan in Tasmania.

Information about our holdings and how to use them is set out under these headings –

: Commonwealth Bank Records..... p. 4

This includes records and other materials produced by or about the Commonwealth Bank and its subsidiaries since 1912. Some early records of the Commonwealth Bank (including records inherited from other banks before 1965) can now be found in the Archives of the Reserve Bank

<http://www.rba.gov.au/AboutTheRBA/Archives/index.html>

because they were transferred in 1965 to the newly formed Reserve Bank of Australia. Some pre-1965 material, however, e.g. property records, may still be found in the Commonwealth Bank Archives. Includes documentary materials, correspondence, board and executive records, legal matters, and mergers. Also reports, financials, staff records, projects, building records, plans, and photographs.

: State Bank of Victoria (SBV) Inheritance..... p. 5

In 1991, the Commonwealth Bank took over the State Bank of Victoria. The holdings of the State Bank's Archives (including materials dealing with its predecessors such as State Savings Bank, Commissioners of Savings Banks, and Savings Bank of Port Phillip) are kept on permanent loan in the Public Record Office of Victoria. State Bank materials acquired before and after the merger, including some materials not yet transferred to SBV Archives at the time of the merger, are listed under Records of Other Banks (below). Note : The Tricontental (Trico) subsidiary of SBV was not part of the 1991 merger. Some records relating to SBV's dealings with Trico are included in the SBV Inheritance, but the records of Trico itself are not.

: Colonial Inheritance..... p. 6

In 2000, the Commonwealth Bank took over Colonial Limited. As a result, three significant deposits of archives were inherited :

- Archives of The Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited,
- Archives of the State Bank of NSW (formerly Rural Bank of NSW),
- Archives of the Trust Bank (Tasmania).

The last named has been divided and are held in two places: the Archives Office of Tasmania in Hobart and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston. The Colonial and State/Rural Bank archives are being kept as discrete deposits within the Commonwealth Bank Archives. Materials acquired before or after the merger from these institutions or about them are listed under Records of Other Banks (below). For material acquired before or after the Colonial-Commonwealth Bank amalgamation in 2000 see Colonial Legacy Records ^{CBS 0031}.

: Records of Other Banks..... p. 9

This includes materials produced by and dealing with other banks gathered by the Commonwealth Bank Archives. It contains materials concerning State Bank of Victoria, Colonial Limited, State Bank of NSW, and Rural Bank of NSW which were still in use at the time of the merger and have since been transferred from the business into the Commonwealth Bank Archives. Also included are documentary materials relating to Post Office Savings Banks and State Savings Banks of Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Western Australia. Includes documentary materials.

: Note on Access..... p.10

Not all materials held in the Archives are freely available. Some things are restricted to internal use by the Bank itself. Other materials are highly restricted even within the Bank and are available within the Bank only with the consent of the responsible business unit.

COMMONWEALTH BANK RECORDS

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia opened for business in 1912. Initially, much of its work was carried on through post office agencies. Amalgamations with State Government Savings Banks resulted in much of the business moving into premises taken over as a result of these mergers. From the 1920s onwards, the Bank became increasingly involved in the execution of government fiscal policy, gradually developing the functions of a central bank. Diversification into trading, lending, and investment followed. In 1960, the central banking and note printing functions were separated to form the Reserve Bank of Australia and many records were transferred to the Archives of the Reserve Bank at that time (but some pre-1965 material is held here, including extensive property records). In the 1980s, the Bank embarked on a process of "corporatisation" within the Commonwealth Government leading to full privatisation in 1991.

CBA : HEAD OFFICE DEPARTMENTS CBS 0063

Look here for records dealing with policy, procedures and operational matters in head office departments within the Commonwealth Bank and used in the conduct of banking business. Includes the following records : board; legal; international; strategy and planning; marketing and communications; human resources; information technology; savings bank and general banking, including trading bank; and wealth management records.

Dates Held : 1892 – ct

CBA : BRANCHES AND AGENCIES CBS 0058

Look here for records dealing with policy, procedures and operational matters in branches and agencies of the Commonwealth Bank and used in the conduct of banking business. Includes the following records : branch records listed from A (Adamstown NSW) – Z (Zillmere Qld) which include depositors and signature registers, passbooks, statistical and general ledgers; photographic records of people, buildings and events in branches and agencies; and property files dealing with acquisition, construction, maintenance and disposal of buildings used to house branches and agencies.

Dates Held : 1892 – ct

CBA : PROPERTY, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND REALIA CBS 0059

Look here for records containing material on property and for photographs of persons, buildings, and events generated by or pertaining to the Bank's Head Office Departments and the Bank generally (excluding material concerning branches and agencies).

Dates Held : 1912 – ct

CBA : DOCUMENTATION CBS 0065

Look here for material circulated internally within or published externally by the Commonwealth Bank. Includes the following: advertising; product disclosure statements; terms and conditions; and descriptions and promotions of products and services. Also manuals, instructions, procedures, circulars, staff newsletters, CBA-TV and intranet communications.

Dates Held : 1913 - ct

STATE BANK OF VICTORIA (SBV) INHERITANCE

In 1990, the State Bank of Victoria was the longest surviving government bank in the country. Its origins belong to a period when Victoria (then known as the Port Phillip District) was still administratively part of New South Wales. In 1841, legislation was passed establishing the Savings Bank of Port Phillip as a government-controlled entity distinct from the Savings Bank of New South Wales. After the separation of Victoria from New South Wales in 1851, the Bank was divided on geographical lines and placed under the control of Commissioners of Savings Banks (1853). Chief amongst them was the Melbourne Savings Bank (1853-1896). In 1912, in response to the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank, Victorian government banking was restructured and the State Savings Bank of Victoria (SSB) set up. Long established in savings and school banking and in financing State development projects, the SSB branched out into general banking and international financial transactions in the 1960's. This culminated in new legislation in 1980 and a change of name to State Bank of Victoria (SBV).

The next decade was a tumultuous one when, with State Government encouragement, the Bank diversified into new areas of banking and investment and got into serious difficulties mainly through bad debts incurred by its subsidiary, Tricontinental. In 1990, its debts no longer serviceable by the Victorian Government, SBV was sold to the Commonwealth Bank (effective 1 January, 1991).

By 1990, SBV had a well established archives programme. Material held by the Archives of the State Bank of Victoria, including records of SBV's predecessors (State Savings Bank and Savings Bank of Port Phillip) are now to be found on permanent loan at the Public Record Office of Victoria

<http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/>

Prior to the 1991 merger, the Commonwealth Bank Archives collected information about other banks including the State Bank of Victoria and that material remains here. Subsequent to the merger, SBV material that was not part of the State Bank Archives at the time of the merger has come into the Commonwealth Bank Archives. All material from or about SBV held by the Commonwealth Bank Archives is listed in this Guide under Records of Other Banks ^{CBS 0066}.

COLONIAL INHERITANCE

These are the records, documentation and other materials that were accumulated as the "Colonial Archives" prior to the merger of Colonial Limited with the Commonwealth Bank in 2000. The Colonial Archives comprise two distinct bodies of material that were themselves gathered by the two entities that became one in 1994 as a result of the merger between :

- **Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited (CML)** : Established in Melbourne in 1873, CML rapidly opened offices in the other colonies of Australia. It soon extended its operations overseas to Fiji, the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). In the late twentieth century CML established businesses in Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Phillipines. In 1994, CML acquired the State Bank of New South Wales, which then changed its trading name to Colonial State Bank. CML was demutualised in 1996.
- **State Bank of New South Wales (formerly Rural Bank of NSW)** : In 1932, in the depths of the Depression, the savings arm of the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales was taken over by the Commonwealth Bank. The Rural Bank Department and the Advances to Homes Department were not merged and they recommenced trading as the Rural Bank of New South Wales in 1933. The Rural Bank was renamed the State Bank of New South Wales in 1981 and merged with CML in 1994.

Following demutualisation, CML became a wholly owned subsidiary of Colonial Limited. It (Colonial Limited) took over:

- **Legal and General Australia** (1956-1998),
- **Prudential Corporation – Australia & New Zealand** (1925-1998) and
- **Trust Bank** (1999).

Colonial Limited merged with the Commonwealth Bank in 2000.

Both CML and the Rural Bank had well established archives programmes. No formal amalgamation of these holdings occurred in the period from 1994 to 2000 and the Commonwealth Bank Archives inherited both as separate and discrete deposits, which they have remained.

Prior to the 2000 merger, the Commonwealth Bank Archives collected information about other banks including the Rural Bank of New South Wales and that material is held separately from the Colonial Archives. Subsequent to the merger, Colonial and Rural Bank material that was not part of the formed archives of the predecessor entities at the time of the merger has come into the Commonwealth Bank Archives. All material from or about Colonial or the Rural Bank held by the Commonwealth Bank Archives which was acquired before or after the Colonial-Commonwealth Bank amalgamation in 2000 is listed under Records of Other Banks ^{CBS 0066}.

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COLONIAL INHERITANCE continued

COL : OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES CBS 0075

Look here for records and documentation dealing with policy, procedures, and operational matters in Colonial Limited and Colonial Mutual. Included are sequences of records that exist as accumulations of: the Principal Board; the Boards of the Colonial Mutual branches; the Principal Office; the Branch offices; various business Departments of Colonial Mutual; subsidiaries of Colonial Mutual and Colonial Limited; professional and industry associations, and staff associations . Also included are Annual Reports; Statutory Returns; Articles of Association; material relating to staff superannuation ; and sequences of: legacy material acquired through acquisition of other businesses : State Bank of NSW, Prudential Corporation, Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York (Australia).

Dates Held : 1873 – 2000

COL : PROPERTY, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND REALIA CBS 0076

Look here for material on real property, realia (objects) and images of people, buildings, and events that was held within the Archives of Colonial Mutual/Colonial Limited. This Archive, now identified as the Colonial Inheritance, was incorporated into the Archives of the Commonwealth Bank subsequent to the Commonwealth Bank - Colonial merger in 2000. The sequence includes material from Colonial Limited, Colonial Mutual, State/Rural Bank of NSW, Scottish Amicable Life Assurance Society, and the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States [Australia]. Items include building plans, photographs and other records or documents about buildings; shields, cups and trophies; paintings; sculptures; items given as gifts or produced for promotional purposes; framed awards and certificates; signs, logos and plaques; office equipment and accessories; badges and medallions; branded clothing and accessories; banners; framed photographs and photographs in albums.

Dates Held : 1885-2000

COL : DOCUMENTATION CBS 0228

Look here for material circulated internally within and published externally by the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society Limited and its successor Colonial Limited. This material was originally accumulated as part of the Colonial Archives. The sequence includes material from subsidiaries and from the State Bank of New South Wales (acquired by Colonial Mutual in December 1994). Formats include paper, motion picture film, video tape, audio cassette and phonographic records. Material that was distributed internally includes:

- manuals, directories, instructions, training material, guidelines and procedures;
- rate tables and rate books;
- staff magazines and newsletters, reports and briefings to staff;
- recordings of speeches, television news broadcasts, product launches and presentations to the media, television commercials;
- reference material published by other assurance businesses or organisations.

Material published or distributed externally includes:

- advertising and promotional brochures and booklets,
- advertising posters, and
- prospectuses.

Dates Held: 1877 - 1999

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COLONIAL INHERITANCE continued

COL : STATE/RURAL BANK OF NSW RECORDS ^{CBS 0229}

The Archives of the State Bank of New South Wales (incorporating the Archives of the Rural Bank of New South Wales) were acquired by Colonial after the Colonial Mutual-State Bank merger in December 1994. These are primarily the Rural Bank Archives formed before the 1994 merger and kept intact since that date. For material acquired by the Commonwealth Bank Archives before or after the amalgamation of Colonial Limited with the Commonwealth Bank in 2000 (including Rural/State Bank estrays not in the Archives of the State Bank of New South Wales by that date) see Records of Other Banks ^{CBS 66}.
Dates Held: 1933 - 1934

COL : TRUST BANK (TASMANIA) RECORDS ^{CBS 0230}

The Archives of the Trust bank (Tasmania) were acquired by Colonial Ltd in a 1999 merger. These archives included records of :

- **Hobart Savings Bank/Savings Bank of Tasmania** (1845-1991);
- **Tasmania Bank, formerly Launceston Bank for Savings** (1835-1991) which had previously incorporated the Tasmanian Permanent Building Society;

The archives of the Trust Bank are on permanent loan, divided between the Archives Office of Tasmania in Hobart

<http://www.archives.tas.gov.au/>

and the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston

<http://www.qvmag.tas.gov.au/>

Records held in Hobart include those from :

- Hobart Savings Bank (records dated from 1845-1971);
- State Bank of Tasmania (records dated from 1971-1991); and
- Trust Bank (records dated from 1991-1997).

Records held in Launceston include those from :

- the former Launceston Bank for Savings (records dated 1835-c.1992);
- Northern Tasmanian Permanent Building & Investment Society (records dated 1858-1982); and
- Launceston Savings Investment & Building Society (records dated from 1867-1982).

RECORDS OF OTHER BANKS

Records and other documentary materials are held relating to other banks. Some, but not all, were merged with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia. This material includes information of a miscellaneous kind acquired about other banks operating in Australia and the Pacific. It also comprises estrays acquired from the business post merger including material from State Bank of Victoria, Colonial Limited, Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society, the State Bank of New South Wales, the Rural Bank of New South Wales, and Trust Bank (Tasmania).

OTH : OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES CBS 0073

Look here for records by and about Banks that have been amalgamated or have had dealings with the Commonwealth Bank - excluding the inheritance from State Bank of Victoria in 1991 and that from Colonial Limited in 2000. Includes records and/or documentary materials from :

- Government Savings Bank of New South Wales;
- Savings Bank of New South Wales;
- Government Savings Bank of Queensland and Queensland Government Savings Bank;
- Papua New Guinea Banking Corporation;

Types of records held include publications and distributed material, passbooks, signature and depositors' registers, and various ledgers.

Dates Held: 1832 - ct

OTH : PROPERTY, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND REALIA CBS 0074

Look here for material on property and images of people, buildings, and events in other banks. Also, includes realia (objects) and memorabilia. Items held include Rural/State Bank and Government Savings Bank of New South Wales plans and drawings, photographs of Government Savings Bank of New South Wales buildings and scanned images of other Banks amalgamated with the Commonwealth Bank.

Dates Held : 1832 - ct

OTH : DOCUMENTATION CBS 0070

Look here for material circulated internally within and published externally by banks and other financial institutions that have been amalgamated or had dealings with the Commonwealth Bank.

Dates Held : 1950 - ct

NOTE ON ACCESS

Not all records listed here are available for public use, for example :

- **Property records** may be restricted for internal Bank use. In those cases, access can only be obtained with the consent of the Bank's Property Division.
- **Employment records** are confidential. Apart from general information about employees derived from publicly available or published sources, information on former employees must be obtained by applying to the Bank's Human Resources Division and can usually be obtained only with the consent of the employee concerned.
- **Customer records** are confidential. The Archives does not systematically keep or supply information on Bank customers past or present. Some such information is held in the form of a small quantity very old sample ledgers, cancelled passbooks, etc. There is, however, a substantial amount of customer information in the inherited Colonial Mutual archive. Information on particular CML customers cannot be given out except with the consent of the customer concerned or his/her executors.
- **Internal procedures and circulars** are confidential. Access to these materials can only be obtained with the permission of the area of the bank responsible for the matters dealt with.