

The appraisal of personal records of Members of Parliament in theory and practice

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The Australian Archives has an established records evaluation and disposal program incorporating well developed appraisal criteria and appraisal methodology. Its aim is to ensure that valuable Commonwealth records are preserved and records of temporary value are destroyed when they are no longer required by the public and the Commonwealth government. This disposal regime has been extensively applied to the records of Commonwealth departments and agencies but hitherto not to the personal records created and accumulated by members of Federal Parliament and senior Commonwealth public servants. In recent years the average size of collections of personal records received by the Australian Archives from these depositors has been increasing substantially. In response to this trend the Australian Archives has recently taken steps to ensure that its personal records resources are concentrated on those records of proven enduring value. This article explores a number of issues of theory and practice which the application of appraisal and disposal methodology to personal papers has raised.

A SCAN OF SEVERAL ARTICLES dealing with standard appraisal theory and methodology finds scant references to appraisal applied specifically to collections of individuals.¹ Terry Cook's RAMP study deals with the appraisal of personal information rather than of personal records, but is extremely helpful in defining values within personal records collections.² A number of journal articles from the United States deal specifically with reducing the bulk of collections of records from US Members of Congress.³ In the Australian context Graeme Powell, writing about the recordkeeping practices of Prime Ministers, provides a certain perspective on the values in personal records collections, but does not directly address the question of appraisal.⁴

Personal papers: records or manuscripts?

Before proceeding further, a potential problem of definition needs to be dealt with. Luciana Duranti refers to 'the historical dichotomy between manuscripts and records/archives, and between manuscript curators and archivists',⁵ in reference to the distinction between institutional archives and papers of 'individuals, families and voluntary and informal groups'. The focus of this article is on the collections of members of Parliament. These typically contain a mixture of material ranging from notes hand written by the depositor to copies of official reports and departmental files. Whether such collections are really 'personal papers' is a moot point. Aronsson refers to Congressional collections as 'hybrids, neither strictly archival nor strictly personal'.⁶

Graeme Powell draws a distinction between 'genuine private records' and 'the accumulations of semi-official papers, in the Prime Ministerial collections in Australian libraries and archives' and implies that the term 'personal' is misapplied to the latter type of collections.⁷ Powell places importance on content of the material that directly relates to the individual and a direct role of the individual in production of the records as the hallmarks of a truly personal collection.⁸ It is well documented that the records collections of members of national legislatures in western countries can be more the direct productions of staff of the offices than of the representative. It is even possible in such collections to identify groups of records that were maintained by individual staff members of an office.⁹ However, it is possible to be overly restrictive in the use of the term 'personal records'.

Chris Hurley provides a very interesting discussion of the problem of assigning provenance to records which overlap the two recognised records creators: human and corporate.¹⁰ He points out that in the case of a 'natural person' acting in a private capacity there is no such conflict of categories.

Once a person acts in an official capacity in an organisation it becomes an issue of drawing the boundaries between the personal records and the records of the organisation. The records from the Minister's office can be conceived of as the records of the Minister, Ms X, the records of the Office of the Minister for Y, or the records of Portfolio Z. The 'official person' is rarely the sole direct creator of the records under his or her immediate control.

In the case of a person acting in an official capacity it is legitimate not to restrict 'personal records' to those directly connected to the natural person, but to extend the term to include records accumulated or created under the direct authority of the person. This has been the approach of the Australian Archives in distinguishing personal from agency records. As Hurley points out, 'most prime ministers are not faceless functionaries: their personality and individual character are an important part of that knowledge about context which provenance provides'.¹¹ The experience of the Archives bears out that collections of parliamentarians, and particularly ministers, can reflect the personality of the depositor, in terms of the degree of organisation, the groupings of records and what records were seen as more important than others.

In this article the term 'personal records collection' is used in its broadest sense to refer to such material as documents, autograph manuscripts, copies of official records, publications, computer discs and photographs accumulated or associated with an individual, including in the course of and deriving from their holding public office. This has implications beyond a mere quibble over terminology. For the Australian Archives, and other institutions, designating these collections as personal records has exempted them from the rigorous records appraisal and disposal regimes applied to departmental records. Moreover, accepting that these are personal records collections, we find that we cannot apply the treatment methodologies developed for smaller traditional type manuscript collections. It has been pointed out that the personal records collections of elected politicians, involving as they do in their creation increasing numbers of staff, and tending towards larger quantities, are not suitable to be treated with the same detailed arrangement and description techniques as developed for smaller manuscript collections.¹² It leaves us with a problem of how to deal with these hybrid collections where a convergence of manuscript and archival/records approaches is required.

Personal records: what values?

The historical dichotomy referred to by Duranti, between manuscripts and records, is evident in the different approaches to the values of material in personal records collections. The literature that touches on values of personal records can be thought of in terms of two main approaches according to the emphasis placed on different values. The cultural/biographical approach is very much centred on the individual, and values records because of their direct relationship to the individual and a content which is revealing of the individual and his/her cultural setting. The historical/evidential approach is not so much concerned with the individual per se as the individual as office holder or actor in a particular sequence of events. These approaches are by no means exclusive and do overlap in many cases. The first approach is associated with the treatment of private manuscript collections, the second with collections of holders of public office. The collections of office holders have characteristics both of private personal papers and of the records of public institutions.¹³ This is true of collections of former ministers in the Australian Archives which include both private and official papers. This complicates the business of appraising the values of records in such collections, because they can be approached as if they were private manuscripts or as if they were collections of official records. Which view is taken of the records, and what values are sought in them, depends upon the goals and perspective of the organisation acquiring the records.

Graeme Powell's article on the records of Australian and British Prime Ministers exemplifies the biographical/manuscript approach to values in personal records collections. He emphasises the value of autograph manuscripts and laments the declining role of recent prime ministers in the direct creation of personal correspondence.¹⁴ The ideal collection is seen as one which documents the early life and career, family, personal relationships, thoughts, ideas and life outside politics of the depositor, as well as the official role of the individual.¹⁵ This is not to say that Powell ignores the value of information in such collections about the processes of government; he appreciates the light the collections can shed on government.¹⁶ However, he is clearly seeing the collections through the eyes of a prospective biographer more than through those of a student of public administration. This is not meant as a criticism. His viewpoint is legitimate, but not very helpful in dealing with collections almost devoid of explicit biographical evidence. A very noticeable trend in the collections of members of governments over the last one hundred years is the change from manuscript type collections, to

collections which are larger, the product of groups of people and which contain large amounts of material that may be found in agency records.

Exemplifying the other approach are several articles in *The American Archivist* cited previously, concerned with the records of members of the United States Congress. Lucas for instance proposes a list of six key aspects that characterise the value of a congressional collection.¹⁷ The list contains no reference to material which is strictly biographical. The only elements relating to the representative as an individual personality refer to 'his major legislative interests' and certain aspects of his interaction with his constituents. There is nothing very juicy for the biographer in this. Greene mentions the aspect of documenting the individual but puts more emphasis on the value of material that documents local issues and political processes, than on preserving 'biographical icons to the elected official'.¹⁸ Eleanor McKay concentrates on 'issues and problems of both regional and national concern' in discussing techniques of random sampling.¹⁹ The same perspective is expressed in a publication of the US National Historical Publications and Records Commission. In a list of the five important subjects which a Congressional collection documents, the 'life and career of the principal figure' comes last. The 'activity of a Congressional office' is what is considered most important for such a collection to document.²⁰

The problem of viewing the main value of collections of political representatives as being the documentation of processes of government is that those processes are broadly similar from one elected representative to another. With much similarity of process underpinning collections, the issue becomes how to define what value any single collection has. In fact, the emphasis on documenting processes can undermine the concept of a single collection having any value as a separate entity. For example, Greene and Aronsson propose an approach of documenting the entire state delegation to Congress by considering the individual collections as one group and seeking to eliminate overlap and duplication of issues and projects.²¹ Lucas prefers a different strategy, rejecting a centralised subject based collecting, and reaffirming the 'unique and enduring values' of each collection.²²

However, appraising each collection singularly raises other issues. There is a tendency in records appraisal in the context of Commonwealth records to emphasise the value of records which document policy decisions at the top of government. Terry Cook holds the view that there is a need to document the impact of government policy from the public's point of view rather than concentrating only on the government side of public policy: you need to trace a policy from inception to outcome.²³ The collections of members of parliament

contain material that documents the impact of government policies on particular groups and regions in the form of letters from constituents, representations from lobby groups and so on. Some of the American literature addresses the value of constituent correspondence as showing interaction between the public and the government.²⁴ Again, however, the mode of interaction between representative and constituents may not be particularly different from one member of parliament to another. What will more often differ is the impact of government policies on particular electorates. How to extract this sort of information from the mass of correspondence received by representatives is another problem. Some authors, taking a collection by collection approach, propose random sampling of groups of homogeneous records that would provide a valid basis for quantitative research on public opinion and the impact of policies.²⁵

Regardless of whether the strategy is to consider each collection separately or as a group, writers on the subject are in agreement that the bulk of recent collections makes them unusable and expensive to maintain. There is general agreement that material within collections differs in value, and that there is a need to pare down collections by doing more than just weeding out obviously ephemeral material such as housekeeping records, duplicates and published material. The task of appraisal of records collections which all to some extent document the same process of government is to identify what is unique. Lucas suggests that the two unique elements that justify the preservation of any single collection derive from the individuality of the Congress member (interests, style and contribution to government), and local concerns and issues in the constituency.²⁶ The experience of the Australian Archives bears out that these are aspects contributing to the value of a collection, but also cautions that they are not easy to discern in every collection. Whilst it is true that 'each office revolves around a single personality',²⁷ that personality may not be evident in the records. As Lucas herself says 'the substantive insights into the member of Congress . . . have been superseded or at least submerged by bulk and repetitiveness'.²⁸

Personal records service of the Australian Archives

The following description of the experience of the Australian Archives with collections of members of parliament will focus on the separate appraisal of collections, rather than on the macro appraisal (collegiate) strategy suggested by some of the writers mentioned. This is not because we would reject such an approach out-of-hand, but because of the practicalities of the situation. The Australian Archives has not to date found itself the custodian of the

collections of all of the senators from a state in a particular government, nor of all the ministers of any government. Therefore in its first steps towards the appraisal of personal records the Archives has looked within individual collections.

For some years now the Australian Archives has had a Personal Records Service. The service makes contact with potential depositors of records, arranges transfers of records and provides a retrieval service for depositors who wish to consult their records. The *Archives Act 1983* provides a specific basis for the Australian Archives to seek to have custody of personal records in that it includes under the definition of 'archival resources of the Commonwealth', 'records and other material as are of national significance or public interest and relate to a person who is or has at any time been associated with a Commonwealth institution' (s.2). The main aim in regard to personal records is to preserve valuable Commonwealth records. The Personal Records Service was established as a means to achieve this by providing an inducement to office holders in Commonwealth institutions to deposit records on a regular basis whilst still in office, or after leaving office. It is hoped in this way to prevent valuable Commonwealth records from leaving Commonwealth custody.

The Act does not limit the Australian Archives to seeking Commonwealth records only, but also allows it to take custody of private records or to acquire them on behalf of the Commonwealth by donation. In fact, private records can form a large part of collections, for example in the case of members of parliament who do not hold ministerial positions. Their constituent correspondence is considered to be their private property. The distinction between Commonwealth and private records is an important one in the administration of the collections.

Perspective of the Australian Archives

In terms of the distinction between the two approaches to the value of records discussed above, the Australian Archives has as its principal concern the records which document the process of government and the role of individuals in that process rather than records that have exclusively biographical interest. For this reason the Australian Archives would not accept private records from an individual who had no connection with the government of the Commonwealth and would not accept any and all private records from someone because the person had deposited official records with us. To be accepted as part of a collection private records must be related to and illustrate

the depositor's role in the government of the Commonwealth. Political party records, constituent correspondence and research material for a portfolio-related publication produced by a minister are examples of the sorts of private records in the personal records collections in the Australian Archives. As another example, a former Minister for Defence had been, prior to entering politics, a tutor in international relations at an academic institution. The Australian Archives has custody of his papers from that period, in recognition of the formative influence of his academic interests on his later handling of his portfolio as minister. Records such as private correspondence to acquaintances or family members do not generally form part of the collections.

This focus of the Australian Archives would translate into a justification somewhat along the following lines for preserving the collection of a particular former minister, namely that it would:

provide a good record of the relationship between his private office and his departments, the role of senior public servants and ministerial advisers in policy-making, and the policies, problems and pressures that a senior Minister and Prime Minister had to manage simultaneously.²⁹

Any collection of a senior politician or public servant that provides this sort of information is definitely worth preserving, even if it revealed little of the private person behind the public figure. This does not exhaust the interest of a collection for the Australian Archives. Any material shedding light on both official role and the private person has special value. It is arguable whether collections not containing private correspondence and writings are completely devoid of any perspective on the private person. By pressure of the demands of modern government most ministers are more accumulators of records than direct creators of records. Nevertheless, even an accumulation of records can reveal indirectly something about the individual. The very organisation, or lack of organisation, of the official records can reveal the professional attitudes and skills of the individual, e.g. what sorts of letters are signed by the minister and which by assistants, the sorts of subjects documented in subject files. All the same, the minister's presence as a unique personality in the machinery of public office can be ghostly indeed.

Impetus to appraisal: the trend to larger collections

In the last ten to fifteen years collections of records of members of parliament received by the Australian Archives have usually been of significantly larger size than was previously the case. The same trend in the collections of members of Congress in the United States is well documented in the literature as far

back as 1978.³⁰ The reasons are well understood: the increase in the role of government in social welfare programs generating large amounts of constituent casework for representatives; the revolution in information technology allowing easy production and reproduction of written materials; the larger number of staff employed by members of parliament and particularly ministers. The results are, in some cases, huge accumulations of correspondence with the public, publications and reports. The size of these collections makes access by researchers difficult. In many cases it is questionable whether the value of the records would justify the resources needed to arrange and describe them in detail.³¹

One would also have to question whether the material in such collections is of equal value. Baker claims to have been advised by archivists working with collections of senators that 'as much as 80 or even 90 per cent of a given collection is of marginal value',³² while McKay quotes research showing very low usage of case file material in collections from representatives.³³

Developing an appraisal methodology for personal records

With this sort of impetus the Australian Archives has been prompted to look at its own ways of handling personal records collections. The Australian Archives has well developed and tested appraisal criteria for the records of Commonwealth agencies. The results of systematic appraisal has been codified in a regime of disposal authorities that apply to specific agencies and general authorities that apply to all agencies.

The Australian Archives issues two small booklets which encourage depositors to cull from their collections some of the more obvious ephemera such as routine office administrative records and routine requests for information. Once records are accepted into custody the only culling that takes place is of duplicate publications.

To establish a basis for appraisal I firstly examined several collections in custody, targeting electorate correspondence as this was the single largest element contributing to size of collections.

My examination of constituent correspondence set out to establish whether it was possible to make a single disposal recommendation applicable to all constituent correspondence or whether the correspondence contained material of different values; and secondly to attempt to define the values present and specify the sorts of higher value correspondence that could be found.

The first striking aspect in the collections examined was the variety in arrangement of correspondence. The US literature discussed above distinguishes between casework correspondence, in which constituents write in with particular problems, and issues correspondence in which express people's views on various issues. In some collections all correspondence was kept alphabetically by name of correspondent and by year, regardless of the content. In some collections all material was kept according to subject, so that all correspondence on a particular subject was filed in the same folder with background material. In one case both correspondence and subject related material were maintained in alphabetical order, but some material was kept filed under the name of the correspondent and some was filed under the subject heading, all within the one sequence of files. Each office or representative had its own system.

The correspondence was examined against three of the established appraisal criteria applied by the Australian Archives to agency records that seemed to be most relevant to constituent correspondence: policy and precedent, display/intrinsic interest and research value.

There was no evidence of the development of government policy even in the correspondence of ministers and I was unable to identify any sequence of correspondence that resulted in a change to government policy. In reply to issues type correspondence members of the government or governing party would typically provide stock answers defending government policy. In one case it was evident that a form letter had been composed by the government and distributed to every member of the governing party to send out in reply to letters from the public on the issue. In only one case did a member of the governing party, but not a minister, engage in thoughtful correspondence with members of his electorate, at times supporting their criticisms of government policy. Some letters from interest groups did contain thoughtful and informed critique of government policy, but there was no evidence that such letters had any influence on the course of administration. I examined the correspondence of one representative from the period before he became a minister and from his time as minister. His replies to the public after he became a minister were no more thoughtful or informative.

I looked for items of intrinsic value, such as letters from prominent persons in the community (authors, historians etc.) commenting on government policy and found none even amongst the correspondence of the Minister for the Arts. It may be that the sample of correspondence was too small, or that such letters had already been removed and kept by the depositors.

In terms of research value, most of the letters were of the casework type, on such matters as local roads, allocation of government housing, and immigration matters. In general the correspondence revealed little about the depositors, their attitudes on issues, personal and policy interests, or influence on government policy. It appeared to consist mostly of standard replies drafted by staff. There was little to be seen of those 'unique personalities'. In only one case was the depositor visible in any significant way as an individual, due to the fact that he took the trouble to answer much correspondence personally and provided replies that were thoughtful and revealing of his own attitudes and interests.

The correspondence does, however, provide a lot of information about the electorate, containing a mass of individual details about constituents. I looked for concentrations of correspondence that reflected the situation of groups connected to a particular constituency and in only one case found anything approaching this: letters to an ACT representative at the time of transition to self-government reflecting community attitudes to the change and the particular problems encountered. There was interesting correspondence requesting assistance in migration matters, including representations from refugee associations, but this material was not concentrated in such a way that it would be easy to locate. Apart from this, letters from representative organisations were informative in summarising the impact of policies on certain groups.

There were no outstanding examples illustrating the operation of representative government. Any or all of the casework examined would have provided good examples of representation. As for statistical sampling, the format and variety of correspondence would make difficult any attempt to obtain a statistically useful sample.

In conclusion, there are records of value in the correspondence of members of parliament, more so in the issues correspondence than in the casework files, if you are looking for records which are informative as individual documents, not just as material for a statistical sample. However, the quantity of the correspondence and the often haphazard arrangement adopted in the office of origin, make it all but impossible for an appraiser, let alone a researcher, to locate material of value. Of the various arrangements adopted, correspondence organised by subject gave a fuller picture of the issue concerned because it was usually accompanied by background reference material. This sort of arrangement is more accessible for research purposes and facilitates the identification of material relating to more significant issues when the collection is being appraised.

Survey of Offices of Ministers

To learn more about the processes of accumulation of these and other records of members of parliament, staff of the Archives visited the offices of several ministers of the Keating Labor government. One finding of the visits was the great degree to which departments rather than the ministerial offices are involved in generating and maintaining records. Replies to correspondence, briefs and submissions are exclusively drafted and final copies filed by departments. Typically correspondence is received at the minister's office, sorted so that electorate correspondence is referred to the minister's electorate office and portfolio correspondence is referred to the Ministerial Liaison Unit in each department. The correspondence is sent to areas in the department for preparation of replies for signature. In most cases originals and replies are filed and maintained in departments. It is a similar case with ministerial briefings and Cabinet submissions with the departments taking a major role in drafting and keeping records.

As for records kept in a minister's office the situation varied, however, in most cases there was a policy of keeping as little as possible and using the department as an information resource. The situation varied greatly. One minimalist office claimed to keep no correspondence, briefings, submissions or policy files; advisers kept a small amount of reference material, the minister had 'no records'; the staff clerk kept an appointment register and some administrative records. Another office kept copies of all Cabinet submissions referred to the minister and all correspondence signed by the minister.

As for records generated, we asked in vain about documentary evidence of the process of policy formulation and canvassing of options that must go on in ministers' offices. It was reported that the dominant form of communication was informal. Cabinet submissions and policy issues were discussed at meetings or comments passed by brief notes attached to documents under discussion and later destroyed. In only one office did advisers record their opinions in formal minutes to the minister, and that only in some cases.

A finding of this sort inevitably brings to mind the infamous 'Sports Rorts' affair in which the Federal Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories came under criticism for failing to provide adequate documentation of the decision making process in her office leading to the allocation of grants to various sporting and cultural groups. It was not clear whether the minister's office destroyed records of the decision making process or failed to create any. Whatever the case the result was the same. Neither the Parliamentary

Committee nor the Auditor-General were able to substantiate claims of political bias because there was not enough evidence about the decisions.³⁴ The reluctance of ministerial offices to document discussions held and advice given within the office is understandable. They are not usually held to account, as Ros Kelly was, because the link between such deliberations and specific outcomes is rarely as obvious as in the 'Sports Rorts' case. In that case the Minister was involved to an unusual degree in detailed decision making about the allocation of grants. Instead of just considering submissions made by her department the Minister was deeply involved in the detailed process, with the department shortlisting and categorising grants according to their degree of eligibility. The culture that favours unrecorded deliberations in ministerial offices is not good news for archivists and historians seeking evidence about the process of government.

Conclusion: the future of appraisal of records of Parliamentarians

It is clear from our examination of collections in custody that the success of any attempt to systematically appraise and cull voluminous records of twentieth century political representatives is crucially dependent on the standard of physical and intellectual control imposed upon the records in the office of origin. Whatever strategy is adopted (collective appraisal, appraisal of individual collections or sampling), success is dependent on a certain minimum organisation of the records that separates different types of correspondence or identifies subjects. Where this is not present or when one suspects there are valuable records in a huge run of correspondence, one is left with the choice of taking or leaving all of it. Item-by-item examination of large collections is prohibitively resource intensive.

The staff of parliamentarians, especially ministers are busy dealing with the political needs of their employers and do not have the time for elaborate recordkeeping systems. They improvise, devising systems that allow short-term retrieval of records. Few have the time to consider posterity. The challenge for organisations such as the Australian Archives is to encourage better recordkeeping in the offices of Parliament, and to indicate in more detail the sorts of records that offices ought to be preserving. The United States and Canada are in advance of Australia in producing such guides for their political representatives.

Our survey of the offices of ministers has suggested that the problem may be solving itself, or at least changing form. The trend of maintaining the minimum of records in the representative's office and relying on the more

sophisticated control systems in departments, if it continues, will perhaps see the demise of the huge collections we have seen from representatives of the 1980s. There is already evidence that control of correspondence by departments means better control and accessibility. One department already images all ministerial correspondence and replies and can retrieve by name of correspondent. A future system will allow retrieval by key word search or by subject. We also learned of a system planned to contain images of Cabinet submissions and ministerial briefings which include annotations by the minister.

It remains to be seen whether the recordless minister's office was the product of a government long in office which had developed a good relationship with the bureaucracy, a trend that may be reversed by a new government with less experience of office, and less confident of the bureaucracy.

Endnotes

1. For instance the articles on appraisal in *Archivaria*, no. 33, Winter 1991–92, and no. 34, Summer 1992.
2. Terry Cook, *The Archival Appraisal of Records Containing Personal Information: A RAMP Study with Guidelines*, UNESCO, Paris, 1991.
3. Mark A. Greene, 'Appraisal of Congressional Records at the Minnesota Historical Society: A case study', *Archival Issues*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1994, pp. 31–43; Eleanor McKay 'Random Sampling Techniques: A Method of Reducing Large, Homogeneous Series in Congressional Papers', *The American Archivist*, vol. 41, July 1978, pp. 281–88; Lydia Lucas, 'Managing Congressional Papers: A Repository View', *The American Archivist*, vol. 41, July 1978, pp. 275–280; Richard A. Baker, 'Managing Congressional Papers: A View of the Senate', *The American Archivist*, vol. 41, July 1978, pp. 291–296; Patricia Aronsson, 'Appraisal of Twentieth-Century Congressional Collections', in *Archival Choices*, ed. Nancy Peace, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1984, pp. 81–101.
4. Graeme Powell, 'Prime Ministers as Recordkeepers: British Models and Australian Practice', in *The Records Continuum, Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years*, eds Sue McKemish and Michael Piggott, Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, Clayton, Vic., 1994, pp. 93–109.
5. Luciana Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', *The American Archivist*, vol. 57, Spring 1994, pp. 340–341. Aronsson op. cit., p. 81, refers to the distinction made by the Society of American Archivists between personal papers 'formed by or around an individual or family' and records as the 'cumulation of a corporate entity'.
6. Aronsson, op. cit., p. 81.
7. Powell, op. cit., p. 102: 'The bulk of his papers are not personal, but merely comprise letters from members of the public and interest groups which were handled by his private secretaries'; p. 99, 'It is essentially a personal rather than an official collection, for Barton accumulated very few official papers'.

8. *ibid.*, p. 106: Referring to the large collections of several recent Australian Prime Ministers 'they are not the papers of an individual Prime Minister . . . but the archives of a team of people who constantly surround the Prime Minister'. The distinction is implicit in Powell's categories of 'accumulators, communicators and recorders', p. 95.
9. See, for instance, the collection of former Prime Minister Bob Hawke in the Australian Archives, where several series have been created for the records of staff, e.g. CRS M3594 'Files, diaries, contact numbers and media guides from R. J. L. Hawke's Senior Private Secretary', and M358 'Invitations to and correspondence from the Prime Minister maintained by the Appointments Secretary'.
10. Chris Hurley, 'Problems with Provenance', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 23, no. 2, November 1995, pp. 234–59.
11. *ibid.*, p. 239.
12. For instance, Aronsson, *op. cit.*, p. 81; Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 279.
13. Aronsson, *op. cit.*, p. 81, says of congressional collections that they comprise 'characteristics of both public records and personal papers', these collections are hybrids being 'neither strictly archival nor strictly personal'.
14. For example, Powell, *op. cit.*, p. 106: records of recent Prime Ministers are likely to be 'far less personal than those of their predecessors' because they include the material of 'public servants, expert advisers, consultants, speech writers, secretaries and others all of whom collected and generated papers'.
15. *ibid.*, for example p. 96: the papers of Baldwin 'provide little information about the Prime Minister's early life, the years as a backbencher or in Opposition, personal relationships and life outside politics'.
16. *ibid.*, p. 105. The collection of William McMahon is given as an example of one which documents well the role of the individual in government.
17. Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 277: in summary they are: the structure, management and interrelations of the member's office and staff; the legislative process and the member's role and impact; role of the member's committee work; interactions with other Federal departments; interactions with constituents; local and regional history.
18. Greene, *op. cit.*, p. 32; p. 34, speaking of Karen Dawley Paul's *Records Management Handbook for United States Senators and Their Repositories*, he says 'in several instances her retention guidelines give disproportionate weight to the individual Senator rather than to documenting the office, the delegation, or the institution'; p. 35, 'The Society does not preserve Congressional collections principally as biographical icons to the elected official. . .'
19. McKay, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
20. *Congressional Papers Project Report*, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and The Dirksen Congressional Center, October 1986, p. 51: 'What then does a Congressional collection "best document"? The historical phenomenon for which a Congressional papers collection offers the best evidence is the activity of a Congressional office. The office is even more central to the evidence than the incumbent. While the office may bear the name of the incumbent and be coloured by his personality, the phenomenon is essentially a collective of organised interests and activities, initiatives and responses, in a complex political world. Although the principal may legally own the files, they are seldom autobiographical; but they do document the organised activities of a large number of greater and lesser staff members. . .'
21. Greene, *op. cit.*, p. 32 and 34; Aronsson, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

22. Lucas, op. cit., p. 280.
23. T. Cook, op. cit.
24. For example, Greene, op. cit., p. 36: as there 'may inhere in case files a pattern of public interaction with the federal government that in turn reflects aspects of public policy'.
25. McKay, op. cit., p. 285.
26. Lucas, op. cit., p. 279.
27. Aronsson, op. cit., p. 81 and 83.
28. Lucas, op. cit., p. 277.
29. Powell, op. cit., p. 105, referring to the collection of William McMahan.
30. For example, Lucas, op. cit., pp. 275–276; Baker, op. cit., pp. 291–92, gives some examples as does McKay, op. cit., p. 282.
31. The issue is discussed by F. Gerald Ham, 'Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance', in *Archival Choices*, ed. Nancy Peace, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA, 1984, pp. 133–47. On p. 137 he quotes studies which estimate that 'the cost of putting personal papers on the shelves may be between \$32 and \$88 a cubic foot'.
32. Baker, op. cit., p. 295.
33. McKay, op. cit., p. 284.
34. It is worth quoting from the report of the Auditor-General: (ANAO, *Audit Report no. 9, Efficiency Audit, The Community Cultural, Recreational and Sporting Facilities Program*, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, 1993, pp. x-xi):

The selection of projects to be funded is made in the Minister's office and no record is maintained, either in the Minister's office or in the Department, of the reasons for each decision. ANAO's concern lies not with the actual decisions but with the lack of documentation . . . Accurate and relevant information explaining the reasons for decisions is the key to effective accountability because it enables the public and those acting on behalf of the public to make informed decisions about the performance of officials. The role of the Minister's staff in the selection of grants appears significant. ANAO notes that if these staff exercise public power they should be held publicly accountable to the Parliament for the exercise of that power. ANAO's analysis does not demonstrate one way or the other that projects are approved on party political grounds . . . At the present time documentation is simply not available to answer such questions.

The Parliamentary Committee that subsequently investigated the matter concluded 'although there is an inference of bias, there is no reliable documentary basis for going beyond what the Auditor-General concluded', although 'the Minister's performance as a recordkeeper was seriously inadequate'. (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts, *The Community Cultural, Recreational and Sporting Facilities Program, A review of a report on an efficiency audit by the Auditor-General*. February 1994.)