

[National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grants: What next?](#)

How to Prepare

The aim of a *Preservation Needs Assessment* is to now look at the physical condition of a collection, the suitability of current housing and storage facilities and to make recommendations for the development of a conservation program. Before the assessor arrives to begin the *Preservation Needs Assessment*, the following steps should be taken:

Finding an assessor

- An experienced, qualified conservator/consultant should undertake the *Preservation Needs Assessment*.
- Request to see a CV, ask for references from previous clients and where possible, ask to see an example of their previous work.
- Check that the assessor carries appropriate insurance.
- Brief the assessor by putting together a formal document which should include the name of your organisation, the project title, date, author of brief, contact details for the organisation. It should also include some background information about your organisation and the aims of the project.
- Ensure that the assessor consultant is aware that the assessment is expected to result in a report with an action plan and prioritised recommendations.
- Physically isolate the collection items or clearly identify them before the assessor arrives. Arrange a suitable working space. Valuable time is lost when objects and documentation cannot be found or working space is inadequate.
- Gather together all documentation for the collection. Include the CHG application, the CHG offer letter, catalogues, details of provenance of material, and transcripts of interviews about the stories associated with the collection. Give these documents to your assessor before they visit.
- Contact people who can provide information to the assessor where necessary and make sure they are available for consultation.
- Make sure that the assessor has full access to the collection for the time that he or she is conducting the *Preservation Needs Assessment*.
- The outcome is a report that enables an organisation to prioritise conservation work and develop a suitable conservation program. AICCM have developed a *Preservation Needs Assessment Template*. This template must be

followed by all conservators preparing a *Preservation Needs Assessment* for a CHG recipient.

Cost Estimate

- A *Preservation Needs Assessment* usually involves a conservator carrying out a site visit (2 days) to assess the condition of the collection and the environmental conditions of the storage facility. They then collate the information and produce a report (4-5 days).
- The *Preservation Needs Assessment* will cost approximately \$5000 (ex gst) depending on the amount of material you are having assessed. Travel and accommodation costs will add to the professional fees if the assessor does not live locally.
- Ask for a written quote that details the components such as on-site visit, travel costs and report preparation. Remember that the NLA has provisions to support further funding for travel.
- If the assessor requires some funding up-front, only make a partial payment (50%). Retain the final payment (50%) until you've had a chance to read the draft report and ensure that it meets your requirements.

Source: <https://www.nla.gov.au/awards-and-grants/chg>

ART GUARDIANS have provided assessments to Museums, Art Galleries, Cultural Centres, Historical Societies, Heritage Homes, Government Archives and Public Repositories. ART GUARDIANS prepare a thorough review of collections and deliver state-of-the-art reports according to the standards set by the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM).

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