

How we cleaned and housed 6,567 PLIC files to archival standards



The cleaning of the PLIC files began in 2009 as a project for volunteers who were undertaking work experience at the National Archives. Due to the condition of the files, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to improve the condition of each file and house them in archival quality folders.

Training was given to each volunteer before they started work on the files. This ensured they had the necessary skills to surface clean the files, removed metal fastening safely from the files and to rehouse them in 2 flap archival folders securing the pages with a plastic ended treasury tag.



The files had been assembled and contained a range of documents and forms. Each had a front cover sheet in brown Manilla paper with the file number and claimant name written in wax coloured pencil. The covers were heavily soiled with soot and dust particles, and some files were extremely curled in the top left hand corner.



All the covers and pages of the files were cleaned with smoke sponges. The documents on the files were all secured with brass fasteners (butterfly clips) and a cardboard rivet (2cm in diameter).

Brass fasteners were commonly used for securing multiple sheets of papers together, the legs or 'tines' are of different lengths and the brass is a soft metal which is easy to bend.

All the files were housed in archival folders and the pages secured with plastic ended treasury tags in preparation for digitisation.