

Locating a copyright owner

Locating the copyright owner or copyright owners can be difficult. On this page are some suggestions for locating copyright owners for different types of material. You should keep a record of all searches and attempts to locate the copyright owner/s, all correspondence with the copyright owner/s and all documents related to seeking permission.

Literary, dramatic and artistic works

- The first step should be to contact the publisher. Most publishers will have a website which will include information about requesting permission.
- If the publisher cannot give permission, they may be able to direct you to the copyright owner. The [Copyright Agency Limited](#) may be able to provide contact details for a copyright owner.
- The author, if they are the copyright owner, can also give permission. Try searching [Google](#) to locate contact details for the author.
- For artistic works, contact [VISCOPY](#) - the collecting society for visual artists - they may be able to give permission or assist in locating the copyright owner.
- For artistic works held in galleries or museums, contact the museum or gallery as they may be able to give permission or assist in locating the copyright owner.
- If the copyright owner has passed away, look for an estate webpage, as this may be able to provide information about requesting permission.
- Try searching [Google](#) for a web page or contact details of a copyright owner.

Musical works and sound recordings

- In the first instance contact [APRA/AMCOS](#) as they are often able to give permission on the copyright owner's behalf. If they are not able to give permission they may be able to provide contact details for a copyright owner.
- [PPCA](#) licenses recorded music & music videos for public performance, communication or broadcast.
- Try searching [Google](#) for a webpage or contact details of a copyright owner.

- To gain copyright permission to copy a sound recording, the following copyright works may require separate permissions:
 - Audio recording

Copyright in the recording usually belongs to the relevant record company. [ARIA](#) (Australian Recording Industry Association) may be able to provide a licence on behalf of the copyright owner of the audio recording.
 - Musical work (written composition)

Copyright in the musical composition usually belongs to the composer or arranger or the music publisher. [APRA/AMCOS](#) (Australasian Performing Right Association/Australian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society) may be able to provide a licence on behalf of the copyright owner of the musical work.
 - Literary work (lyrics)

Copyright in the lyrics usually belongs to the songwriter or the music publisher. [APRA/AMCOS](#) (Australasian Performing Right Association/Australian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society) may be able to provide a licence on behalf of the copyright owner of the lyrics.

Note: When you copy a sound recording you're not physically making a copy of the printed composition and lyrics but it is still considered to be a reproduction of the lyrics, the composition and the recording itself.
-

Films and television broadcasts



- Contact the film production company. If they are not able to give permission, they may be able to provide contact details for the copyright owner.
 - [ScreenRights](#) may be able to provide contact details for a copyright owner or a film production company.
 - Try searching [Google](#) for a webpage or contact details of a copyright owner or a film production company.
-

Government publications



- Consult the relevant Commonwealth Department to request permission to use copyright material owned by the Commonwealth. Many Australian government departments release their publications under [Creative Commons License](#).
- Where copyright is owned by a State or Territory, requests for permission are handled differently depending on what the material i.e. judgements/legislation or a government report, as well as the process used by each State or Territory.
 - [ACT](#)
 - [New South Wales](#) - No permission is required to reproduce NSW legislation and/or judgements.

- Northern Territory - No permission is required to reproduce NT legislation. For all other material [email the Office of Information Commissioner](#)
 - [Queensland](#)
 - [South Australia](#) - Allows non-commercial use only for your own personal use or within your organisation. For all other uses, permission is required from the relevant department, contact them via their [website](#).
 - [Tasmania](#) - Allows non-commercial use only. For all other uses, permission is required from the relevant department, contact them via their [website](#).
 - Victoria - Allows non-commercial use only. For all other uses, [permission is required](#).
 - [Western Australia](#)
 - [United States government creative works](#), including writing, images, and computer code, are usually prepared by officers or employees of the United States government as part of their official duties. A government work is generally not subject to copyright in the United States and there is generally no copyright restriction on reproduction, derivative works, distribution, performance, or display of a government work.
-

Unpublished material ^

- For unpublished material the first step should be to contact the author. If the author created the material as part of their employment, the employer may be the copyright owner.
 - Try searching [Google](#) for a webpage or contact details of a copyright owner.
-

Orphaned works ^

When the copyright owner of a work cannot be identified or located, the material is called an orphaned work. Orphaned works are still subject to copyright and cannot be used without permission. If you have an orphaned work and would like to use it in a way not covered above, [contact the Copyright Office](#).
