

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

Applies to:	Museum and Community Services Staff
Officer Responsible:	Program Leader Community Services
Associated Documents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation Form • Accession Form • De-Accession Form • Inward Loan Form • Outward Loan Form
Legislation:	As listed in the Policy
History:	<p>Version I – February 2005</p> <p>Version II – July, 2009 – Review</p> <p>Version III – March 2013 – Review</p> <p>Version IV – December 2018 - Review</p>
Council Meeting:	27 February 2019
Council Minute Number:	NOT_2702209 20/19
TRIM File Number:	ARC17/1784
Review Date:	January 2022
Reasons for Change:	To reflect current best practice standards in museum methodology and provide clear collection guidelines.

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

POLICY OBJECTIVE

The Collection Management Policy contains the philosophies, policies, procedures and practices for acquiring, documenting, securing, valuing and disposing of the collection objects of the Armidale Folk Museum, the Hillgrove Rural Life and History Museum and the Armidale Bicentennial Railway Museum.

The Collection Management Policy is a reference document that should be used in conjunction with the appropriate available professional expertise and resources.

PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTION

The purpose of the Collection is to create a set of physical and electronic resources that:

- Enrich knowledge, understanding and experience of the history of the Armidale Region
- Create a sense of identity and place
- Interpret thematically the history and development of the district
- Conserve and exhibit heritage for the benefit of the community and visitors
- Provide an educational and research resource for the community and visitors
- Contribute to and foster critical historical and cultural debate.

BACKGROUND

The story of Armidale's Folk Museum began in 1933 when the City Council sponsored a purpose built museum known as the Armidale Museum in Rusden Street. Focusing on technological and natural history it was seen as an important addition to the city's facilities for learning. It was closed during the Second World War with the building used for more pressing purposes. After the war the museum was not reopened.

The museum was rekindled by Eric Dunlop (1919-1974), Senior Lecturer in History and Social Science at the Armidale Teacher's College. The first exhibition opened in December 1955 in the old Literary Institute and highlighted the social and economic history of Armidale. The collection was amassed by the generosity of local residents with guidance from previous museum curators and was extended to include the Hillgrove Museum in 1976 and the Bicentenary Railway Museum in 1993.

Each separate collection evolved over time and a range of factors led to the collections as they are today. This includes significant objects and photographic collections as well as archives, research files and oral histories.

This Collection Management Policy aims to enhance strategically the depth and importance of the Collection by focusing on collecting for exhibitions, educational purposes and research.

COLLECTION GUIDELINES

All collecting activity and collection management processes will be guided by museum industry standards.

Objects considered for acquisition include:

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

- Three dimensional objects
- Documents and printed material
- Original artworks
- Original maps, photographs, engravings, and film footage
- Born digital material and images.

The Museum will undertake targeted and coordinated collecting in order to enhance the depth and value of its collection as a reflection of the history of the Armidale Region.

The Collection will reflect the social, economic, educational and agricultural history of the Armidale Region, highlighting personal histories.

The Collection Management Policy is applied in context of other local museums, keeping places, libraries, archives and heritage organisations in the region.

Management of acquisitions, temporary loans and de-accessions will be considered in the context of the digital age and contemporary technology utilised where appropriate.

Materials may be acquired as donations, bequests, purchases or transfers.

No materials will be acquired with conditions or restrictions on the way they might be used or displayed in the future. The Museum does not accept permanent loans in lieu of donation. Loans to the collection other than temporary loans for a particular purpose will not be accepted.

ACQUISITION PRINCIPLES

The item will be assessed for its relevance and capacity to fit the museums' purpose and key collecting areas.

Items will be considered that are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific, research, social or spiritual value.

The item must be relevant to the Armidale Region, with an emphasis on items provenanced to the Region and related to people closely associated with the area at key periods in history. Priority will be given to objects where the history is known and supporting documentation can be provided.

Priority will be given to rare or excellent representative examples of a particular type of object.

The condition of the object will also be considered, if it requires professional conservation treatment and the affordability of the associated cost.

Consideration will also be given to the resources required to adequately store, care and conserve the object.

ACQUISITION CRITERIA

Objects will be considered if they fall into the following identified criteria:

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

Historic

Being an object provenanced to the Armidale Region during one of the seven major chronological phases of the history of the Region:

- Natural History
- Traditional owners, Pre European contact and early settlement to 1837
- The establishment of New England as a Pastoral District; mapping, the border police and the township of Armidale 1838 – 1862
- Establishment of Armidale as a Municipality to the first world war 1863 - 1914; the first councils and local government
- Gold fever – how mining affected the communities of Armidale, Hillgrove and surrounds
- World War I and World War II 1914 – 1945; sorrow, celebration and social change
- Post War transformation of the Armidale Region 1946 – 1988.

Thematic

Within the historical scope, the Museums have an interest in particular themes, against which Objects may be considered for collecting, including:

- Aboriginal history
- Natural environment: geology, geography, climate, topography
- Industry: agriculture, pastoralism, mining, education, railway, tourism, local commercial businesses
- People, events, leisure, sport, religion and culture of the district
- The built environment, towns and villages
- Telecommunications
- Photography
- Women's and Children's history
- Local government
- Military and war
- Locally invented, made and improvised objects.

The Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material will be used as a general framework for assessment against criteria of proposed acquisitions.

The primary assessment criteria are:

- Historic significance
- Aesthetic significance
- Scientific or research significance
- Social or spiritual significance.

The comparative criteria are:

- Provenance
- Representation
- Rarity
- Condition, intactness, integrity

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

- Interpretive potential.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURE

The first point of contact is the Museum Team Leader. The Museum Team Leader will appraise the object against the acquisition criteria for its suitability to the collection.

On acceptance of the proposed donation the donor is required to complete and sign a Donors Form that assigns legal ownership for the Object to the Museum.

Upon handover the Object details are recorded on the Accession Form and assigned an accession number. The Object is then recorded in the Collection Management System.

A *Letter of Thanks* is issued to the donor.

Objects may also be acquired through purchase or transfer from other institutions using the Acquisition Criteria.

DE-ACCESSION PRINCIPLES

De-accessioning is the process of de-registering an Object from the collection for clearly stated reasons and disposing of it in accordance with approved policies.

During ongoing consolidation of the Collection, the Armidale Regional Council will undertake an active program of de-accessioning to ensure that materials held are only those relevant and appropriate to the future directions of the museums.

In the longer term, de-accession will be minimised through careful and strategic collection.

De-accession Criteria

The assessment criteria for de-accessioning are:

- Little or no relevance to the Collection Policy and Acquisition Criteria
- Little or no significance
- Lack of provenance or documentation
- Duplication in the Museum Collection or other relevant collection
- Poor condition
- Inability to safely store and manage the Object
- Acquisition of a like Object of greater significance rendering an earlier acquisition redundant
- Alternative or more appropriate custodian for the Object
- In extraordinary circumstances, for compassionate reasons.

In exceptional circumstances, items may be de-accessioned where the Object is of particular indigenous cultural significance and its return to the community will support the maintenance and renewal of cultural traditions.

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

De-accession Procedure

- An accessioned Object must meet one or more of the de-accession criteria above to be considered for de-accessioning.
- A De-accessioning form will be completed by the Museum Team Leader and provided to a panel of nominated members for consideration and approval.
- Once approval has been provided the catalogue records will be updated.

The Object will be disposed of by the following methods:

Managing Disposal

- Returned to the donor or donor's closest family
- Transfer to another museum or appropriate institution
- Change of status to Education Resource
- Sell/Auction
- Destroy or recycle.

If de-accessioned objects are sold, the proceeds go into the acquisition funds.

All disposals will be executed in accordance with the Armidale Regional Council *Disposal of Assets Policy*.

No staff or volunteers may benefit or in any way acquire Objects that have been de-accessioned unless these persons are the original donor, member of donor's family or legal executor.

CONSERVATION PRACTICE

Museum management should demonstrate a practical awareness of preventative conservation measures which impact on the display, handling, care, storage and display of objects either in the collection or on loan.

Museum management should establish and maintain a regime of regular monitoring of the collection and the Museum environs, aimed at maintaining an optimum standard of conservation environment.

A register of all conservation and treatment measures is to be maintained to identify the object, date and treatment works undertaken and by whom.

LOANS PROCEDURES

From time to time the museums may temporarily loan or borrow objects for a particular purpose. All loan transactions must complete the appropriate record keeping including a Loan Agreement Form and Loans Register.

Lending: Outward loans

- All outward loans will have the appropriate documentation completed
- The *Outward Loan Agreement* will indicate the details of the object loaned, loan purpose and period, object condition and any requirements and conditions

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

- The *Outward Loan Agreement* will be completed in duplicate, one copy being held by the borrower and the other by the Museum
- The *Outward Loan Agreement* will indicate the agreed value and condition of the object for replacement or repair in the event of loss or damage
- A photograph of the object will accompany the *Outward Loan Agreement*.

Borrowing: Inward Loans

- All inward loans will have the appropriate documentation completed
- The *Inward Loan Agreement* will indicate the details of the object loaned, loan purpose and period, object condition and any requirements and conditions
- The *Inward Loan Agreement* will be completed in duplicate, one copy being held by the borrower and the other by the Museum
- The *Inward Loan Agreement* will indicate the agreed value and condition of the object for replacement or repair in the event of loss or damage
- A photograph of the object will accompany the *Outward Loan Agreement*.

EDUCATION RESOURCES STRATEGY

An item not considered appropriate for formal acquisition to the Collection may be accepted as an Education Resource.

This includes items that:

- Have not been acquired by the Museum
- Do not meet the Collection Policy selection criteria for acquisition
- May be used as a 'hands on' or 'extra' in an exhibition or public program
- Can be disposed of at any time without following the De-accession or Disposal Policy guidelines.

Education Resources Procedure

Education resources will be numbered and recorded in the Education Resources Register.

RESEARCH COLLECTION STRATEGY

The purpose of the Research Collection is to accept and store ephemera, books, photographs, images, serials, journals and manuscripts relating to the history of the Armidale Region and provide access to this collection as an information resource and service.

Items accepted into the Research Collection may be originals or copies of the originals.

Though items accepted into this collection are not accessioned into the Museum Collection, they are assessed against the Collection Policy Acquisition Criteria as a guide. Material may be included in the Research Collection without provenance to an Armidale Region family, place, person, institution or business if the material contains information associated with or unique to the Armidale Region.

Areas of research interest include people, businesses, institutions, public agencies and families that elucidate or exemplify some aspect of Armidale Region's history whether typical or exceptional and

POL145 – CommServ – Museum Collection Management

records relating to births, deaths, marriages, cemeteries, council documents, postal directories, maps, oral histories, family histories and other similar items that would not be acquired in the Collection proper.

Original documents and images may in some cases be accepted into this collection where their condition is robust and they meet the criteria associated for the Research Collection.

REFERENCES

Museums & Galleries of NSW, *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*

International Council of Museums, *Code of Ethics for Museums 2002*

Museums Australia Victoria, *The Small Museums Cataloguing Manual 4th Edition 2009*

NSW Heritage Office, *Local Government Heritage Guidelines 2002*

Tweed Shire Council, *Collection Policy – Tweed Regional Museum Version 1.2*