

Museum of The Riverina Collection Management Policy

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Policy owner: Manager Community Services
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The Museum of the Riverina was established through a partnership between the Wagga Wagga City Council (Council) and the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society. A formal agreement was developed whereby the Society leased its land, buildings and collection at the Willans Hill site to Wagga Wagga City Council for a 25-year period effective from August 2024.

The Museum operates a second site, the Historic Council Chambers, adjacent to the Wagga Wagga Civic Centre. This building was the former Town Hall, Council Chambers and administrative offices of Wagga Wagga City Council. This site was opened as a museum site in February 1999.

Purpose

This policy determines the parameters and guidelines for the acquisition, conservation, interpretation and deaccessioning of the permanent collection holdings of the Museum of the Riverina.

This policy is to be applied to all objects acquired by and accessioned into the Museum of the Riverina permanent collection holdings.

Ownership of Collection

All accessioned collections located at the Museum of the Riverina's Botanic Gardens site acquired before the 30th June 1999 shall be deemed the property of the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society and subject to management by the Museum of the Riverina as detailed in the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society lease agreement with Wagga Wagga City Council effective from 12 August 2024. All accessioned collections acquired by the Museum of the Riverina from July 1999 onwards shall be deemed the property of the Wagga Wagga City Council.¹

All moveable heritage collections located within the Historic Council Chambers site is deemed to be the property of the Wagga Wagga City Council.

¹ Part of lease agreement between Wagga Wagga City Council and Wagga Wagga & District Historical Society

Scope

Although the Museum carries the name *Museum of the Riverina* it will not collect material from other towns in the Riverina. The geographic collection focus is the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area. Acquisition of new collection material will be conditional upon the Museum being able to adequately care for the items through the documentation of provenance, and resourcing of conservation and storage requirements of the particular object or collection offered to the Museum.

The exception to the above follows Wagga Wagga City Council's decision in 2021 to accept the donation of all winning portraits from the annual Bald Archy portrait prize and future winning portraits.

The choice of the annual winner of the Bald Archy portrait prize will be the exclusive remit of an anonymous judging panel to be appointed and coordinated by the Museum of the Riverina. The anonymity of the panel is integral to the element of satire associated with the award as the public judge will remain Maude the sulphur crested cockatoo.

Material offered to the Museum from surrounding shires is to be referred to the appropriate museum or historical society in those shires. All other material to be referred to place of origin.

Themes and Types of Objects and Collections

All themes which relate to the history and development of the Wagga Wagga local government area and its people. (refer to NSW Heritage Office list of Historical Themes Relevant to New South Wales as a guideline).

Annual acquisition of winning portrait from the Bald Archy portrait prize.

POLICY PROVISIONS

Professional ethics

The Museum of the Riverina recognises and supports the *Museums Australia Code of Ethics* (1999). These guidelines (available from the Museums Australia website www.museumsaustralia.org.au) inform professional museum and gallery practices and cover the following areas of activity:

- acquisitions to museum collections
- display of collections
- disposal of collections
- professional conduct

Acquisition

General principles

Selection criteria for accepting material into the Museum's permanent collection:

- a. The item relates to the City of Wagga Wagga, its history, development and people in a significant way.
- b. The item has a provenance that enhances its historical value.
- c. The item is in a good original condition, complete and unmodified.
- d. The donor or vendor has legal title to offer the item to the Museum.

- e. The item is not duplicated in the collection.
- f. The only time the Museum will accept material on loan is for temporary exhibitions with designated time periods.
- g. The Museum has adequate storage space to house the item.
- h. The Museum staff have sufficient time and resources to document the item. There are no restrictions whether legal, cultural or conservation which would prevent the item being placed on display. No item will be accepted with conditions attached eg a stipulation that the item must be placed on permanent display.
- i.
- j. The item is best suited for the collection and not that of another cultural institution.
- k. Acquiring the annual the winning portrait from the annual Bald Archy portrait prize

The **minimum** requirement for accepting new material into the collection is compliance with points **2.2.1 sections a, b, c & d** above.

Note: While the museum shall not actively seek to acquire Indigenous secret/sacred objects it might acquire objects to remove them from private collections or general circulation. This will be done in consultation with the material's traditional owners for the purpose of repatriation or to ensure appropriate care until repatriation is possible. The items will be stored in a way that respects their cultural significance.

Deaccessioning Criteria

Criteria for assessing whether an item should be considered for deaccessioning are:

- a. The item is not from Wagga Wagga but comes from another town, city or region.
- b. The item lacks local significance ie there is an absence of supporting information to enable proper identification or relevance to the collection.
- c. The item is in a poor physical condition ie irrevocably damaged or deteriorated beyond repair.
- d. The item falls outside the scope of the Museum's collection management policy.
- e. The item is duplicated in the collection and of a lesser quality.
- f. The item is not original ie a replica, copy or fake.
- g. The item is identified as a significant work health and safety risk
- h. The item is subject to a substantiated claim by Indigenous people for the restitution of sacred material.

Deaccessioning Procedure

The Museum shall prepare written documentation for each object being deaccessioned giving a reasoned recommendation stating why the item be formally removed from the collection (using the above deaccessioning criteria as a guide).

The documentation includes the Museum Manager's recommendation on disposal.

This recommendation should be forwarded to the Wagga Wagga District and Historical Society (if the item(s) falls under their ownership as it was collected prior to the 1999 lease agreement via a deaccessioning report and sign off must be received from a minimum of two executive committee members of the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society.

Council officers at the Museum (including casual staff and voluntary workers) and members of the Museum Advisory Committee, Councillors of the Wagga Wagga City Council or their families, are prohibited from acquiring any deaccessioned item.

Disposal of Deaccessioned Material

Once items are deaccessioned a decision must be made on an appropriate form of disposal. This should be investigated in the following order:

- Return to the donor
- Transfer to another collecting institution:
- The preferred form of disposal for material from another area would be to another cultural institution (ie Museum, Library, Archive or Historical Society) from where the item came.
- Sell at public auction or by tender: In the event of an object being sold the funds received will be used for caring for the collection.
- Destruction: Deaccessioned material to be destroyed only in rare and extreme circumstances ie item irreparably damaged, diseased, is no longer of historical, aesthetic, social or economic value or because it is dangerous to keep.
- Details of deaccessioned material must be documented in the Museum's collections management system (Vernon).

Loans

There are two types of loans, incoming and outgoing. In both instances the Museum would only consider accepting loans or granting loans if they are for exhibition purposes or bona fide research purposes with prescribed time periods.

When dealing with Outgoing or Incoming Loans the Museum use its standard loan agreements.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of museum staff to abide by the intent of this policy.

Reporting Requirements

Service and program levels will be reported through annual reporting processes in alignment with Council's Operational and Delivery Plans.

Legislative Context

- The Local Government Act 1993, (Section 8).

Related Documents

- Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
- Museums Australia Inc. Code of Ethics for Art, History and Science Museums (1999)
- The Burra Charter (2013)
- Significance 2.0 A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections (2009) – 2nd revised edition (or the most recent revised edition)
- Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society and Wagga Wagga City Council Lease Agreement 2024
- Terri Janke, First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, 2018

- Wagga Wagga City Council resolution 10th May 2021 accepting donation of Bald Archy acquisitive art prize collection of winning portraits and the ongoing management of the annual exhibition
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, New South Wales Historical Themes, (2001)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Museum	By museum Wagga Wagga City Council means a non-profit making, permanent institution, in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits, for purpose of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.
Collection Management	Collection management covers both the physical handling of objects and the documentation that goes with them. This is achieved by implementing a series of interdependent systems made up of standardised procedures.
Accession	This term refers to the mechanism by which an object or collection of objects is formally registered into the permanent collection holdings of the Museum of the Riverina.
Acquisition	This term refers to the administrative process of obtaining an object or collection of objects through donation, bequest, purchase or transfer.
Deaccessioning	Deaccessioning is the administrative process whereby an object or collection of objects is removed from the permanent collection holdings of the Museum of the Riverina. It is distinct from disposal which is the physical act of disposing of an object.
Provenance	Provenance is often the key to an objects historical significance and may be the main reason a museum acquires an item. Museums today encourage donors to provide as much information as they can about the item and who used it and how. Knowing the provenance of an item helps museums to understand its significance and make decisions about how to display and care for it so that its distinctive characteristics are preserved.
Moveable Heritage	<p>A term used to define any natural or manufactured object of heritage significance. Like other types of heritage, it provides historical information about people's experiences, ways of life and relationships with the environment. It also helps us to learn about people who may have been left out of written historical accounts, including women and community groups.</p> <p>Because movable heritage is portable, it is easily sold, relocated or thrown away during changes of ownership, fashion or use.</p>

Revision History

Revision number	Council resolution	Council meeting date
1	Res.No.02/1274	25 November 2002
2	Res. No.243/04	23 August 2004
3	Res: 09/077	27 July 2009
4	E-Team	3 June 2013
5	Res No: 13/224.1	26 August 2013
6	E-Team	1 August 2017
7	Res No: 17/279	28 August 2017
8	General Manager approval under Delegated authority	24 November 2021
9	Res No: 22/354	17 October 2022
10	General Manager approval under Delegated authority	24 June 2025
11	Res No: 25/215	21 July 2025