

Museum acquisitions and de-accessioning



Policy title	Museum Collection Management
Policy owner	Museum Director
Prepared by	Museum
Approved by	Director City Wide Services
Date approved	
Version	1
Category	Administration Governance
Keywords	Acquisitions, museum, de-accessioning, collection.
Revision date	2023
Amendments	
Relevant strategic direction	Vibrant and Activated Public Places
Relevant legislation/codes	<i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW)</i>
Related policies/documents	Code of Conduct
Related forms	Gift Acknowledgement Form

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Part A Preliminary

1 Objectives

- 1.1 The purpose of the policy is to provide a framework for the process by which the Museum acquires and de-accesses objects in the Collection.

2 Principles

- 2.1 Council commits itself to the following principles:
 - 2.1.1 Reflecting the historic, cultural and social development of the City of Newcastle.
 - 2.1.2 Providing the community with opportunities to engage with Newcastle and the Hunter region's history and movable cultural heritage.
 - 2.1.3 Enhancing the community's awareness, understanding and appreciation of history, contemporary society and science.

3 Commencement and interpretation

- 3.1 The policy is effective from December 2017.
- 3.2 Unless the context determines otherwise:
 - 3.2.1 **Collection** means all accessioned objects contained in the Museum or to be acquired for the Museum's Collection.
 - 3.2.2 **Museum** means the Newcastle Museum.
 - 3.2.3 **Object** means a three dimensional artefact but also includes books, photographs, natural history, archeological material and paper based records.
- 3.3 Unless stated otherwise, a reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of the policy.

Part B Areas of collecting

4 Major areas of collecting

4.1 The Museum aims to collect:

4.1.1 Objects that have a proven association with a known individual, event or period in the history of Newcastle and the Hunter Region that is considered significant with emphasis on the subthemes of:

- (a) The City and its Environment focusing on the land and how it has been changed by the people both pre and post white settlement, geological, pre-white settlement aboriginal culture, convict and white settlement, city/suburban change and growth, natural disasters and transport.
- (b) Newcastle on the World Stage focusing on Newcastle and Novocastrians in a broader context i.e. migration, war, organisations, belief and belonging, nationally and internationally significant Novocastrians.
- (c) Work focusing on industry and employment in Newcastle, i.e. coal, manufacturing, industry, health, volunteerism, education, service and retail industries, and tourism.
- (d) Leisure focusing on music, sport, performing arts, beach culture, pubs, general entertainment.

4.1.2 Objects that are valued by the community for their religious, cultural, spiritual, educational or social associations.

4.1.3 Objects that demonstrate a degree of technical or creative achievement for their time and that were developed within the region.

4.2 The Museum acquires individual pieces as representatives of a range of objects that demonstrate principal characteristics of a range of human activities relevant to the region's past or present. The Museum collects rare or uncommon objects that fall within the collecting themes and satisfy other Collection Management Policy criteria.

Part C Acquisition and de-accessioning

5 Criteria for acquisition

5.1 The Museum must only acquire an object for the Collection if the object is:

5.1.1 relevant to the Collection including one of the subthemes of collecting;

5.1.2 unencumbered to allow the title to transfer to Council and without conditions and/or restrictions on how they may be displayed or used by the Museum

5.1.3 able to be cared for and stored appropriately by the Museum;

5.1.4 complete to the extent that an observer could visualise a past custom or activity with which the object was associated. WH&S must be considered in the acquisition of objects for the Newcastle Museum. Objects that could be physically dangerous to our staff, volunteers and visitors should undergo a high degree of scrutiny by museum and NCC staff;

5.1.5 should be supported by clear documentation that defines its historical significance or association.

5.2 Collecting of Aboriginal objects will be in accordance with Museums Australia's Indigenous heritage policy. No sacred items will be collected and Aboriginal keeping places will be prioritised for ownership of Aboriginal objects. All collecting activity and collection management processes to be in accordance with the ICOM Code of Ethics, Combating Illicit Trade and within the framework of the NSW Heritage Office's Movable Heritage Principles.

6 Approval for acquisition

6.1 If the value of the object to be acquired exceeds \$150,000.00 (or an amount increased by regulation 163(2) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (NSW) from time to time) the Museum Director must seek advice from the Managers of Governance and City Wide Services as to the appropriate approval process for acquisition.

7 Acquisition process

7.1 If the Registrar or Curator considers that an object is appropriate for acquisition by purchase, donation or bequest, they will report to the Museum Director recommending that the object be acquired.

7.2 The Museum Director will:

7.2.1 review the report of the Registrar or Curator against the major areas of collecting provided in clause 4 and criteria for acquisition provided in clause 8; and

7.2.2 make a recommendation on the acquisition of the object.

7.3 If the Museum Director recommends the acquisition of an object, the Registrar or Curator may acquire the object in accordance with Council's procedure.

7.4 If the Museum Director does not recommend the acquisition of the object, the Registrar or Curator must not acquire the object.

Part D De-accessioning process

8 Criteria for de-accessioning

- 8.1 The Museum may only de-accession objects if it is established that the object:
- 8.1.1 is inconsistent with this policy or was erroneously included in the Collection;
 - 8.1.2 lacks historical authenticity or physical integrity;
 - 8.1.3 has a more appropriate custodian for the object
 - 8.1.4 is damaged or suffered serious deterioration in condition.
 - 8.1.5 is an obvious duplication or repetition of an object already in the Collection
 - 8.1.6 has significant storage implications due to size or WH&S hazards

9 De-accessioning process

- 9.1 If the Registrar or Curator considers that an object is no longer appropriate to the Collection, they will report to the Museum Director recommending that the object be de-accessioned.
- 9.2 The recommendation will include:
- Accession number (if applicable) and name of the object
 - History of the object's acquisition by the division
 - Donor name and number (if applicable)
 - Reasons for deaccessioning
 - Proposed method of disposal
 - Copy of the catalogue or database entry (if applicable)
 - Records, such as letters, of consultation with donor and community stakeholders
 - Purchase receipt (if applicable)
- 9.3 The Museum Director will:
- 9.3.1 review the report of the Registrar or Curator against the major areas of collecting provided in clause 4 and criteria for de-accessioning provided in clause 11; and
 - 9.3.2 make a recommendation on the de-accessioning of the object.
- 9.4 If the Museum Director recommends the de-accessioning of an object, the Registrar or Curator may de-accession the object in accordance with Council's procedure
- 9.5 If the Museum Director does not recommend that the object be de-accessioned, the Registrar or Curator must not de-accession the object.

10 Guidelines for de-accessioning

- 10.1 When de-accessioning objects, the Museum Director must:
- 10.1.1 make reasonable efforts to ascertain whether or not the Museum is legally entitled to deaccession and dispose of an object or group of objects.

- 10.1.2 All proposals to de-accession objects are approached with caution, well researched and are consistent with Clause 11.
- 10.1.3 Objects accepted under the Cultural Gifts Program, under Subdivision 30-A of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, must not be returned to the donor. If the Newcastle Museum, which accepted the Cultural Gifts Program donation, fundamentally changes its core collection policy, then the donation may be transferred to another recognised museum. The Museum should inform the donor of the transfer.
- 10.1.4 Full records are kept of any object disposed of and of the process undertaken.
- 10.1.5 If an object willed or bequeathed to the Museum does not fit within the collecting criteria of the Museum it will be offered back through the executors to heirs of the estate.
- 10.2 All proceeds gained from de-accession must be used for the acquisition or maintenance of the Collection.

Part E Management of Objects

11 Collection Management

- 11.1 Council must manage the Collection in accordance with any collection management procedures approved by the City Wide Services Director.

12 Loans

- 12.1 Outward loans of the Museum collection are to be encouraged.
- 12.2 The borrower must complete a Loan agreement agreeing to the Museum's terms and conditions.

Part F Other

13 Conflicts of interest

- 13.1 Conflicts of interest must be identified, declared and managed in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- 13.2 This includes all Council Officers immediately identifying any actual or perceived conflicts of interest to the Museum Director or to the City Wide Services Director in the case of the Museum Director.
- 13.3 Council Officers who fail to declare conflicts of interest may be in breach of the Code of Conduct and may be subjected to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Award.