

Museum Collection Policy

Responsible Directorate:	<i>Community and Place</i>
Responsible Service Unit:	<i>Cultural Development</i>
Contact Person:	<i>Museum Curator</i>
Date of Approval:	<i>21vMay 2024</i>
Council Resolution No:	<i>CP03-05/24</i>

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Wanneroo (The City) is committed to the collection and management of material that represents the social and cultural experiences of its people and the stories of its places.

2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure appropriate management of the City's Museum and Community History collections, including collections development, care and conservation, documentation, and access.

It provides a thematic framework for the collection's strategic development and identifies how the collection is used to support exhibition and education programs, and community initiatives around history and culture.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to: -

- Govern the acquisition, deaccession and disposal of the Museum and Community History collections.
- Provide a framework to ensure that the collection remains responsive, manageable, sustainable, and relevant.
- Identify collections access principles to facilitate outgoing loans and access to cultural materials housed at the City of Wanneroo.

3. KEY DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Material: Includes cultural and Secret/Sacred objects, archives, photographs, visual artworks, documented performances, and documented knowledge.

Acquisition: The process of gaining legal possession of an item for a collection, through donation, purchase, bequest, transfer, subscription, copying or creation.

Conservation: All action aimed at safeguarding cultural material for the future, for the purpose of public access and understanding.

Deaccession: The formal process by which an item in an organisation's collection is removed from the collection.

Disposal: The formal removal of an item from an organisation's collection after a deaccessioning decision has been made.

Interpretation: A process involving both the organisation and its visitors in understanding and communicating the meaning and significance of objects, collections, and places. Modes of interpretation include tours, exhibitions, education programs, publications, social media, and websites.

Provenance: The full history and ownership of an item from the time of its creation or discovery to the present day, from which authenticity and ownership are determined.

Repatriation: The return of cultural material to its source community, country of original or former owners and descendants.

Significance: The historical, aesthetic, scientific or social values that a collection item, or an overarching collection has for past, present and future generations.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies the collection owned and managed by the City of Wanneroo as part of the Wanneroo Regional Museum (Museum) and Community History Centre collections.

The policy does not apply to items held in other City of Wanneroo collections such as the City of Wanneroo Art Collection.

5. IMPLICATIONS

This policy aligns with the following objectives within the **City's Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031**:

2 ~ A city that celebrates rich cultural histories, where people can visit and enjoy unique experiences.

2.1 – Valuing cultures and histories

6. IMPLEMENTATION

The Museum and Community History Centre are in a unique position to collect, interpret and share stories and objects that represent the diverse cultural and historical aspects of the City of Wanneroo region. The collections are shaped and enriched through community engagement and partnerships with individuals and groups. The collections and the stories they hold create the scaffolding for the Museum to deliver its learning and education programs and events, and to facilitate access to a breadth of knowledge of the Wanneroo region's storied past and present.

6.1 Assessment of cultural significance

All collection items or overarching collections will be subject to cultural significance assessments prior to their entry into or disposal from the collections.

Four primary criteria apply when assessing significance:

- Historic
- Aesthetic
- Scientific or research potential
- Social or spiritual

Four comparative criteria evaluate the degree of significance. These are modifiers of the main criteria. These include:

- Provenance
- Rarity or representativeness
- Condition or completeness
- Interpretive capacity

A major factor contributing to significance is regional relevance.

The object should:

- Have been made or used in the Wanneroo area or be comparable to a heritage object used in the region; or
- Have a proven association with a known individual, some event, or a period in the history of, or technology developed or employed in the region.

6.2 Acquisitions

Acquisitions may be made by

- Donation
- Purchase
- Bequest
- Transfer
- Subscription
- Copying
- Creation

All acquisitions will be subject to a process of due diligence to ensure that material acquired for the collection has clear proof of ownership and provenance to enable transfer of ownership to the Wanneroo Regional Museum.

Irrespective of the method of acquisition, the Museum will consider the relevance of the item to the Museum Collection Policy, the ethics of the acquisition and the assurance as to title and provenance.

The Museum and Community History Centre will not actively or knowingly acquire First Nations Secret/Sacred cultural material and implements its responsibilities to the care, handling, storage and/or return of Secret/Sacred cultural material held in collections.

In extenuating circumstances or where culturally appropriate, a shared custodianship arrangement may be entered into with relevant individuals, communities, or organisations. This may not translate to shared ownership but may translate to long term loans and custodianship through ongoing access to, and decision-making about, material held by the

organisation.

6.3 Deaccession

Deaccessioning is a necessary and appropriate tool in collections management. An object can be deaccessioned from the Museum's collection for the following reasons:

- The item does not comply with the current Museum Collection Policy
- The item is damaged beyond repair or conservation, or it requires conservation disproportionate to its level of significance.
- The item is duplicated within the collection and is assessed to be of low to no significance.
- The item is deemed to present a Workplace Health and Safety risk and cannot be rendered safe or secure.
- The Museum's possession of the object is inconsistent with applicable law or ethical principles, e.g., the object was, or may have been stolen or illegally exported or imported, or the object may be subject to other legal claims for return or restitution.
- Theft, or irretrievable loss
- Repatriation of cultural material to an Aboriginal group, community or individual.
- The item lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection.

Deaccessioning and disposal are not dependent on the method of acquisition. All collection items may be deaccessioned if they meet the above criteria.

Items may be recommended for deaccession and disposal by the Museum Curator or Community Historian and approved at the discretion of the Manager Cultural Development.

6.4 Disposal

Disposal of collection items must be executed through the following methods and in the following order.

- Offer item back to original donor or if the donor is deceased, their known family or next of kin.
- Donation to, or exchange with another public collection or organisation
- Sold at public auction or via reputable dealer.
- Disposed of as waste

City of Wanneroo Council Members, City employees or their family members are not eligible to purchase or acquire an object that has gone through the deaccessioning and disposal process, unless the item was originally donated by them.

6.5 Access

Collections items may be available for loan, research, education, public engagement, community initiatives or exhibitions with some exemptions determined by the Museum Curator or Community Historian.

All outgoing loan requests must be made in writing to the Museum Curator or Community Historian and will be assessed by the Collections Development Team. Loans may be refused if the item is fragile, culturally sensitive, already in use in current or planned exhibitions or if the appropriate conditions for the wellbeing and security of the item cannot be assured by the borrower.

Access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Materials by First Nations peoples will be facilitated by the Museum and Community History Centre with appropriate permissions from Traditional Custodians or Knowledge Holders. This includes loans, handling and use for the purposes of education or cultural practice.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Cultural Development service unit is responsible for the implementation of this policy and all associated procedures.

8. DISPUTE RESOLUTION (if applicable)

All disputes regarding this policy will be referred to the Director Community and Place in the first instance. If an agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be submitted to the CEO for a ruling.

9. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed every three years to evaluate its effectiveness, including measurement against annual key performance indicators. This may include, but not limited to:

- The Policy and accompanying processes are clear and provide adequate direction.
- The Policy and accompanying processes are being followed accurately.
- Regular collection reviews will be undertaken to ensure compliance with the policy.

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Firearms Act 1973
State Records Act 2000
Copyright Act 1968
Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018
Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972

11. REFERENCES

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries 2.0, 2023.
<https://magsq.com.au/national-standards/>

Significance and Significance 2.0, 2009. <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/museums-libraries-and-galleries/significance-20>

Spectrum 5.0. The UK Museum Collections Management Standard, 2017.
<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/>

ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, 2017. <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>

First Peoples: A Roadmap for enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries, 2018. <https://www.amaga-indigenous.org.au/>

12. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Manager Cultural Development

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Next Review	Record No.
4 May 2010 – CS07-05/10	March 2012	10/1348
21 August 2012 – CS05-08/12	August 2014	12/78892
30 May 2017 – CP06-05/17	May 2019	16/115936
13 November 2018 – CP12-11/18	November 2020	18/342453
November 2020	November 2023	18/342453v2
21 May 2023 - CP03-05/24	November 2026	18/342453V3