

Central Coast Council

Cultural Collections Policy

JULY 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Collections of the Central Coast Council are a source of knowledge, stories, memories and identity for the municipality. They are developed and managed as a resource to inspire, educate and inform the community and visitors and to contribute to the preservation, development and interpretation of the Council's past, present and future.

This document is a statement of policy for the development and management of the Council's Cultural Collections (the Cultural Collections). It supports the Council's vision to be 'a vibrant, thriving community that continues to draw inspiration and opportunities from its natural beauty, land and people and connected by a powerful sense of belonging' (Central Coast Strategic Plan 2014–2024) by developing and maintaining collections of local, state and national significance which:

- a. Place an emphasis on items that have a connection to the Central Coast region of Tasmania.
- b. Enrich the cultural lives of residents and visitors to the Central Coast.
- c. Promote cultural and economic development, and contribute a sense of identity and place to the region.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a suitable and appropriate framework is in place for the management of the Cultural Collections. It details the guidelines and processes for the acquisition, maintenance and deaccessioning of all materials for the Council collections.

This policy is designed to ensure that:

- a) The Council advances its vision to enhance and develop the Cultural Collections.
- b) The Council applies rigorous and ethical museum standards in the recommendation, consideration, assessment and negotiation of all aspects of collection management (acquisitions, deaccessioning and disposal).
- c) Acquisitions to, and deaccessions and disposals from, the collections are considered and approved in accordance with the delegated authority.
- d) Staff have clear procedures regarding interactions with vendors, artists, donors, gallerists and auction houses.

These objectives are to be achieved by ensuring that the Council:

- a) Acquires materials that fit within its collecting priority areas.
- b) Obtains valid title to material acquired for the Collections.
- c) Avoids any act or omission that may compromise its position and reputation for integrity.

3 SCOPE

The Council has five Cultural Collections, which are the Central Coast Museum and Archive Collection, the ArtEx Collection, the Fine Art Collection, the Scientific Collection, and the Public Art Collection.

This policy applies to the first three of these Cultural Collections. The Public Art Collection will be outlined in a separate policy due to the specific requirements of Public Art.

The Council recognises and follows the *International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums*.

3.1 The Central Coast Museum and Archive Collection (previously the Ulverstone Museum Collection)

Formed in 1991 as a repository of items and information about local and family history in Ulverstone, and later the Central Coast. Today it consists of over 10,000 pieces as well as 24,000 photographs. It includes paintings, works on paper, tools, textiles, furniture, and multimedia.

3.2 The ArtEx Collection

Since 1988, the Council has supported the Rotary Club of Ulverstone West ArtEx prize. The winning works are chosen by a panel of external judges appointed by the Rotary Club. As part of the agreement with this organisation, the winning work has been acquired by the Council and displayed in Council buildings including the Administration Centre. This Collection has its own history and context and stands as a Collection distinct from the Fine Art Collection.

3.3 The Fine Art Collection

The Fine Art Collection is a recent addition to the Cultural Collections, formed in 2022. The Fine Art Collection consists of works by Central Coast artists and/or works relating to the Central Coast region of Tasmania. In addition, works that are: (i) by artists who are exemplary, prominent, influential and/or renowned and acquisition of the artwork will enhance the overall quality of the Collection; or (ii) of outstanding artistic merit and rate highly in terms of aesthetic, cultural, spiritual and/or historical significance; or (iii) rate highly in terms of national, state or regional significance, will also be collected.

The first pieces accessioned were three works commissioned as part of the Hive cultural precinct development by Central Coast artists Troy Ruffels, Louise Daniels and Annie Hay. The first donated piece was from North-West Tasmanian artist, Kit Hiller.

3.4 The Science Collection

The Science Collection was established in 2022 with the increased science focus that resulted from the inclusion, in Hive, of a science centre and planetarium. The collection includes scientific instruments, including but not limited to microscopes and telescopes. The collection is divided into two categories: (1) Objects registered as Museum objects, which are suitable for exhibiting or research; and (2) objects that can be used in educational programs that are

of little or no value for exhibiting or for research, for which normal wear and tear during their use in such programs is deemed acceptable.

3.5 The Public Art Collection

The Public Art Collection encompasses all art installed in public space owned, managed, or maintained by the Council. The Public Art Collection is outlined in a separate policy due to the specific requirements of Public Art (see the Central Coast Council's Public Art Policy).

4 *STANDARDS (INCLUDING RELEVANT LEGISLATION)*

This Policy was developed in accordance with:

4.1 Relevant Legislation

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Firearms Act 1996*
- Significance 2.0 2009 Significance 2.0 | Office for the Arts
- National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries (National Standards) 2023
National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries – Australian Museums and Galleries Association Inc (amaga.org.au)

4.2 Related Policies/Documents

- Central Coast Arts and Culture Strategy 2023
- Central Coast Public Art Policy 2023
- Employee Conflict of Interest:
<https://centralcoastcouncil.squarespace.com/s/Conflict-of-interest-Policy-Final-Aug-2019.pdf>

5 *DEFINITIONS*

Central Coast: The part of Tasmania defined as the Central Coast local government area.

Council: The Central Coast Council, which is the governing body of the Central Coast local government area.

Interpretation: All the ways of presenting the significance of an item or collection, from simple object labels to exhibitions, education programs and web-based resources.

Donation: The gratuitous transfer of property and title of the donation.

Purchase: Items acquired from dealers, commercial galleries, shops, private individuals and companies for the purpose of acquisition and accession into the Collection using funds allocated for that purpose.

Commission: Items acquired as a result of contracting an artist to produce a work for the Collection. The terms and conditions of acquisition will be outlined in the acquisition proposal

approved by the relevant representative of the Council and the contract established between the Council and the artist.

Policy Period: Five years from the date of publication of this document.

6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Council employees shall refrain from personal activities that would conflict with proper execution and management of the Council's Cultural Collections Policy.

Council staff members purchasing work for their own private collections must ensure their interest does not conflict with the interests of the Council in the process of acquisition. The Council's Employee Conflict of Interest Policy provides guidance for recognising and disclosing any conflicts of interest.

6.1 Manager Arts and Culture

The Manager Arts and Culture is primarily responsible for the implementation and adherence to this Policy.

6.2 Curator

The Curator is the primary role responsible for the development and management of the Cultural Collections. The Curator is also responsible for the analysis, review and interpretation of the Collections with an aim to present a balanced view of the history and culture of the community.

6.3 Acquisition Committee

The Acquisition Committee consists of the Manager Arts and Culture, Curator and individuals with specialised knowledge as required. It will assess the proposed acquisition against relevant criteria in accordance with this Policy. All recommendations and subsequent decisions will be documented and retained by the Council.

7 POLICY STATEMENT

The development of our collections is essential to ensure that the Council's artistic and cultural assets remain vibrant and active. The Council will acquire items that fit within the identified collecting areas and works will be selected on the basis of the significance of the item and/or the specific quality of the item.

8 ACQUISITIONS AND COLLECTING PRIORITIES

The Council will ensure that all acquisitions are negotiated and managed on terms that are ethical, honorable, responsible and visible to public scrutiny and will maintain the Council's reputation for collecting excellence in the community. In developing its collections, the Council will make every effort to ensure that it acquires items with valid title and established provenance, that are authentic, and that have not been illegally obtained.

8.1 The Central Coast Museum and Archive Collection

Geographical area – The existing Museum Collection (as inherited from the previous Ulverstone History Museum) is primarily focussed on the Ulverstone area. The Central Coast Council covers a much wider geographical area – from Cuprona in the west to Turners Beach and Kindred in the east, Penguin in the north to Loongana and Nietta in the south. Consequently, there will be a greater focus on collecting from areas within this wider region. However, any objects or stories deemed to be of sufficient quality and importance from Ulverstone should also be accessioned.

Time period – The existing Museum Collection focusses almost entirely on pre-1950 objects. However, as the Collection overall is intended to cover the period from c.1820 to the current day, the priority for this policy period is to primarily collect objects that are post-1950. However, any objects deemed to be of sufficient quality and importance from before that year should also be accessioned.

8.2 Fine Art Collection

Geographical area – The collecting focus of the Fine Art Collection will be works by artists from the Central Coast region or else works depicting and/or relevant to the Central Coast region. Works of exceptional quality or artistic importance from outside this region that significantly increase the cultural value of the Collection will also be considered for acquisition.

Time period – To present a proper survey of the fine arts in the region, it is intended that the Collection will include historical and contemporary examples. The Council encourages the collection of contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal art. See 9 for further reference regarding historical Tasmanian Aboriginal artefacts.

8.3 Science Collection

The collecting priority is for objects mainly from the Central Coast but more generally from North-West Tasmania, because of Hive being a leading institution of its kind in this part of the State. Objects of scientific significance from other parts of the State may be collected if (1) they relate to objects already in the Collections – for example, to enable other objects to be interpreted in context; or (2) relate to topics in which Hive specialises, including but not limited to astronomy.

Objects collected for educational purposes relate to both the above and to educational programs (for example, science workshops) that Hive operates, either by contractors or Hive staff.

8.4 Public Art Collection

For Public Art collection priorities, refer to the Public Art Policy.

9 MATERIAL NOT TO BE COLLECTED

The Council will not collect the following:

- a) Buildings that should be left in situ.
- b) Tasmanian Aboriginal artefacts, without consultation with appropriate Tasmanian Aboriginal community representatives.
- c) Farm and industrial machinery and large-scale transport items.
- d) Explosive devices, functional weapons.
- e) Biological material (including flora and fauna) or skeletal remains, without consultation with appropriate scientific professional.

10 OTHER ACQUISITION CRITERIA

10.1 Provenance and documentation

When considering acquiring material for the Cultural Collections, the Council will practice, and be prepared to show that it has practiced, the highest standards of due diligence. As a general principle, the Council will not acquire material through any means or methods unless it can acquire valid title. To establish the provenance of the material and the veracity of title, the Curator will carry out thorough research before proposing the material for acquisition in accordance with best practice and provenance policy and procedures.

10.2 Condition and Care

The Council will consider the factors that may impact on the condition, care and preservation of the material prior to its acquisition, including any issues or unusual costs in relation to:

- a) The current condition and/or long-term care of the item;
- b) The storage and movement of the item, including but not limited to long-term storage issues and costs and workplace health and safety issues; and
- c) Documentation, display and loan.

10.3 Relevance

The Council will collect objects only that further the Council's objectives and relate to the Council's purpose, and key collecting priorities.

10.4 Significance

For The Central Coast Museum and Archive Collection and Fine Art Collection, priority is given to items that reflect one or more of the criteria in *Significance 2.0*: primary criteria, being historic, artistic or aesthetic, scientific or research, and social or spiritual; and comparative, being provenance, interpretative potential, rarity or representativeness, and condition or completeness. For Science Collection, priority is given to items that reflect the criterion of

historic, scientific or research significance. The highest priority will be given to objects that are in good condition and that have interpretative capacity (refer to Significance 2.0).

11 DUPLICATIONS

Objects that duplicate items already in the Collections will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and/or historic value. In such a case the first example may be considered for deaccessioning.

12 CONDITIONAL ACQUISITIONS

As a rule, the Council does not accept acquisitions that carry restrictions or conditions. Donors and vendors must relinquish all proprietary rights to the material other than copyright (if applicable). In extraordinary circumstances, exceptions may be made by the Council, on the recommendation of the Acquisition Committee. These exceptions may include custodial arrangements legally negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

13 METHODS OF ACQUISITION

Items shall be acquired through the following methods:

- a) Donation (including gifts, bequests and donations through the Cultural Gifts Program);
- b) Purchase;
- c) Commission; or
- d) Any other transaction by which legal title to an item passes to the Council.

14 ACQUISITION APPROVAL PROCESS

Offers of donations or bequests do not warrant automatic inclusion into the Cultural Collections. The following three step authorisation process will be used in the approval of acquisitions to the Cultural Collections:

14.1 Assessment

The appropriate officer responsible for the relevant Collection, in consultation with the Acquisition Committee and/or professional consultant(s) when required, will assess all Acquisition Proposals and make considered recommendations to accept or refuse items. Proposed items will be assessed on their merit taking into account the Council's objectives and the Acquisition Priorities and Other Criteria outlined in this document. Objects to be considered for acquisition will be physically sighted and assessed by the relevant officer prior to acquisition.

14.2 Recommendation(s) and Approval

Recommendation(s) for acquisitions to the collection shall be approved by the Manager Arts and Culture who has delegated authority to approve Acquisitions within established delegation

limits. All proposed Acquisitions with a purchase price over the Manager Arts and Culture's delegations must be referred to the Director Community Services. The Council reserves the right to not accept objects offered as gifts or donations.

15 COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The Council aims at all times to maintain an effective documentation system according to Australian National standards and practices for galleries and museums in relation to documentation and record-keeping procedures (refer to National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries 2023, Standard A2.4).

A Collection Management System (CMS) shall be maintained as a central catalogue in which all relevant details of individual items are recorded including accession number, title, maker, photograph, description, condition and provenance details, and location.

Documentation shall be completed and retained in relation to all items including:

- Acquisition assessments
- Donation forms
- In-house condition reports
- Loan forms
- Legal paperwork relating to copyright and/or restrictions on use of items.

Donor forms, receipts and catalogue information will all be kept at Hive.

Audits and condition reporting of 25 percent of one Collection shall be undertaken by qualified staff at least once every five years. It may be necessary, under extraordinary circumstances, to undertake audits or condition reports at other times.

Firearms, including longarms, pistols and handguns, fall under the *Firearms Act 1996*. The Curator, as the responsible member of staff, must hold the required Firearms Licence. Any organisation possessing firearms made after 1900, or other than that specified in Exemption Number 4 of the Firearms Act, must apply for an exemption (see Tasmanian Police Firearms resource sheet: <https://fas.police.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/23.-Genuine-Reason-8-Show-or-Exhibition.pdf>). Regardless of exemptions collecting organisations are obligated to ensure all firearms (and prohibited weapons) are appropriately stored and displayed as specified in Section 85 of the Act.

16 STORAGE AND CONSERVATION

The Cultural Collections shall be conserved in accordance with accepted contemporary National best practice and standards applicable to safe and appropriate storage, management and handling procedures (refer to National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries 2016, Standard A4.3).

- a) Staff and volunteers shall be given appropriate training in handling procedures.

- b) The Council shall provide as secure an environment as possible for storage, transportation and display of the collections.
- c) Storage areas must remain clean, secure and sealed against the weather.
- d) Temperature and relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible.
- e) Access to storage areas is to be controlled by the Curator.
- f) When storage areas are not in use lights must be turned off.
- g) Archival quality storage materials should be used for storage of all accessioned collection material.
- h) Storage areas must be regularly checked for pests and other problems.
- i) Objects are not to be stored on the floor.
- j) Conservation work and treatments will be performed only by a qualified professional Conservator. Untrained personnel should never attempt to clean, treat or restore museum objects.

17 LOANS

17.1 Loan procedures

- a) Loans greater than two years will not be accepted by the Council.
- b) The Council will lend and borrow material to help meet its stated purpose.
- c) The maximum loan period is five years.
- d) Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.

17.2 Inward loans

- a) Inward loans shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for fixed periods of time.
- b) Inward loans shall only be accepted where it can be established that the lender is reputable and holds valid title to the item(s).
- c) Inward loans shall be recorded in a Loans Folder.
- d) A representative of both the Council and the lender will be required to sign an agreed Inward Loan Form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.
- e) The Council agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own collection.

- f) Loans shall remain in the possession of the Council for the time specified on the form.
- g) The Council can request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording renewal must be signed by museum staff and the lender.

17.3 Outward loans

- a) The Council will lend objects to other museums and organisations holding collections. It will not lend to private collectors.
- b) Borrowers and a representative from the Council will be required to sign two outward loan agreement forms. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record condition of the loan and the period of the loan.
- c) No object will be loaned by the Council unless the safety of the item is assured and adequate security, environmental conditions and standards of care are evident.
- d) It is expected that the borrower will exercise the same standard of care for borrowed items as it does for its own collection in accordance with established best practice and professional gallery standards (refer to National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries 2016).
- e) Outward loans are subject to the borrower agreeing to the conditions specified in the Council's Outward Loan Agreement.
- f) All costs associated with the outward loan will be the responsibility of the borrower. These costs will include transport and insurance.
- g) The borrower will provide a secure display and/or storage area.
- h) Objects cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of the Council.
- i) Loans will remain in the possession of the borrower until returned to the Council.
- j) Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.

18 DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL

18.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning

An item may be deaccessioned from the Cultural Collections if:

- a) The Cultural Collections policy has been revised since the item was acquired and/or the Collections Priorities have been refined or altered.
- b) It does not meet the criteria associated with the artistic or aesthetic significance or historical significance for the Council's Collections (as defined in *Significance 2.0*, Part 7: National and international Significance – Primary Criteria (p.49)).

- c) It is damaged beyond repair.
- d) The conservation costs for the item are beyond the means of the Council.
- e) The storage requirements are beyond the means of the Council. It can no longer be stored due to its size or special climate requirements.
- f) It is of a similar, or closely similar, example of which the Council possesses better examples.
- g) It is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the museum already owns.
- h) It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification, or to establish its relevance to the collection.
- i) It is incorrectly identified or attributed or is a forgery.
- j) A substantiated request for the return of the object to its original owner/donor is received.
- k) It can be proven that the item was obtained unlawfully.
- l) It has been lost or stolen.
- m) It is of a hazardous nature and may pose a serious WHS risk to staff and visitors.
- n) It is subject to legislation that prevents the Council from displaying it or having title to it.

18.2 Exclusions from deaccessioning

Items that will not be considered for deaccessioning include:

- a) Those subject to a trust or other legal impediment or have conditions attached expressly or by implication which prohibits deaccessioning.
- b) Those that may, by law, be required to be retained or otherwise dealt with in accordance with heritage, archival or other similar legislation.
- c) Those acquired less than five years prior to the time of proposed deaccession.

18.3 Deaccessioning procedures

- a) Formal deaccessioning can occur only if the object is owned by the Council.
- b) The object identified for deaccessioning from the Cultural Collections must come before the Acquisition Committee for consideration with reference to the criteria stated above.
- c) The object identified for de-accessioning must be held for a six-month 'cooling off' period before it is finally disposed of.

- d) Elected members of Council, Council staff, volunteers, committee members and their families are prohibited from purchasing, or otherwise obtaining, a deaccessioned object.
- e) Any funds acquired from the sale of the deaccessioned item must be used for acquisitions or care of the Cultural Collections.

18.4 Disposal Procedures

In priority order the object must be:

- 1 Returned to the donor or family (donation), with the exception being donations made to the Council under the Federal Cultural Gift Programme as donors have already received the benefit of a tax deduction for the gift.
- 2 If after a thorough search (documented) this is impossible, the object should be:
 - a) Transferred to another appropriate institution;
 - b) Used as an educative/interpretive tool;
 - c) Sold by public auction, where appropriate; or
 - d) Destroyed or recycled, if appropriate.

Every effort will be made to notify any living donor whose gift has been approved for deaccessioning prior to disposal.

18.5 Records of Deaccessioned Objects

All records of deaccessioned objects and the circumstances of its deaccessioning and disposal will be marked clearly and kept on file for future reference.

The Accession Number of a deaccessioned object must not be reused.

19 WINDING UP PROCEDURES

In Tasmania, Local Government is made up of 29 councils, each responsible for a municipal area. The principal legislation establishing the powers and functions of councils is the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The Central Coast Council is a corporate body and it is the Council as a whole that constitutes the legal entity.

When considering winding up, the priority would be to keep the Council's Cultural Collections together, rather than separating the objects within these Collections.

The Cultural Collections, consisting of acquired objects that have been formally catalogued, and those awaiting cataloguing in a collection management system, shall be dealt with in priority order as follows:

- 1 Any item that is on loan shall be returned to the lender;
- 2 All items within the Collections owned and any other associated assets, records, files, equipment and electronic data shall be given or transferred to a similar institution or another Council as determined by the Central Coast Council; or
- 3 If the above options are not possible, then consideration will be given on separating objects within the Collections in consultation with a suitably qualified industry professional.

14 REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every five years by the Council, unless organisational and legislative changes require more frequent modification/s.

Date of approval: 17 / 07 / 2023

Approved by:

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Barry Omundson
GENERAL MANAGER