

Policy

Collection Policy - Tweed Regional Museum

Version 1.4

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Division:
Section:
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Historical Reference:

Sustainable Communities and Environment
Inclusive and Creative Communities
Council Policies/Protocols/Procedures
See Version Control

Tweed Shire Council is committed to using plain language so that our documents and publications are easy to understand.

Collection Policy - Tweed Regional Museum

Policy objective

The Collection Policy guides the decision-making process for shaping the collections of Tweed Regional Museum ('the Museum').

The Collection Policy is a set of principles that guides collecting, loans and de-accessions.

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

The Collection Policy shall be reviewed every five years for its relevance and accuracy in relation to the International Council of Museums Code of Ethics for Museums¹ and within the framework of the NSW Heritage Office Movable Heritage Principles², and to ensure strategic collecting priorities reflect the changing nature of the Tweed.

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

- enrich knowledge, understanding and experience of the history of the Tweed Region
- contribute to and foster critical historical and cultural debate
- create a sense of place
- interpret thematically the history and development of the district
- conserve heritage for the benefit of the community and future generations
- contribute to the development of an outstanding museum for the Tweed Region
- provide an educational and research facility for the community

Definitions

Not applicable.

Policy background

This policy was originally developed in consultation with Kylie Winkworth, Museum Consultant, with members of the Historical Societies of Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki & South Arm, the Tweed Regional Museum Advisory Committee and officers of Tweed Shire Council. Minor updates related to the appointment of a Museum Director and reformatting were undertaken in 2013.

Nature of the collection:

In 1999 the historical societies at Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki and South Arm began working together to create a single sustainable regional museum for the Tweed operating over three sites, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding with Tweed Shire Council in 2004.

¹ *Code of Ethics for Museums*, International Council of Museums, 2002

² *Movable Heritage Principles*, New South Wales Heritage Office & NSW Ministry for the Arts, 2000

The Collection of Tweed Regional Museum was created in 2004 by an amalgamation and transfer of ownership to Council of the collections of the historical societies of Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki & South Arm.

Each separate collection evolved over time and a range of factors lead to the shaping of the collections as they are today. Over many decades, museum volunteers in the Tweed Shire have built an outstanding cultural resource about the people, places and history of the area. This includes significant object and photograph collections as well as archives, research files and oral histories.

This Collection Policy aims to enhance strategically the depth and importance of the Collection by approaching collecting in a manner that reflects the Tweed Region as a whole, single entity.

The Collection Policy of Tweed Regional Museum will have a primary focus on collecting for exhibitions, educational purposes, research and archiving.

Policy

General principles

All collecting activity and collection management processes will be conducted in accordance with the ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums*³ and within the framework of the NSW Heritage Office *Movable Heritage Principles*.⁴

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 Tweed Region.

The Collection will reflect traditional, recent and evolving areas of the history of the Tweed Region and its cultural diversity and personal histories.

It is recognised that Tweed Regional Museum is not solely a collecting institution so this policy must be applied in the context of the broader mission of the Museum as an educational and research facility and a community space.

The Collection Policy is to be applied in the context of the collections of other museums, galleries, libraries, keeping places, archives and heritage organisations in the district and in New South Wales and neighbouring southeastern Queensland.

The Museum recognises that there are alternatives to collecting which will be considered in cases where collection is not appropriate.

The Museum will actively pursue non-collecting initiatives, such as assisting the community to document and care for heritage collections in their original context, and by collecting electronic and/or duplicated copies of materials held in other institutions or in private collections.

³ op. cit.

⁴ op. cit.

No objects shall be acquired from significant heritage sites and buildings where acquisition and removal would diminish the significance of the place, except in circumstances where the object is at risk.

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

Materials will only be acquired when the Museum can provide appropriate resources and storage to ensure their safety.

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

No materials should be acquired with conditions or restrictions on the way they might be used or displayed in the future.

The Museum does not accept conditional donations. In some cases the proposed donation may be eligible for tax deductions under the Cultural Gifts Program. The Cultural Gifts Program encourages gifts of significant cultural items to public art galleries, museums and libraries by offering donors a tax deduction for the market value of their gifts, under Subdivision 30-A of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

Acquisition principles

Objects are considered for acquisition where they fall into the following categories; three dimensional objects, documents and printed material, original artworks, original maps, original photographs, engravings, film footage, born digital materials and images that depict or are associated with people, places and events significant or unique to the Tweed Region's history (hereafter referred to as 'Objects').

The Museum collects Objects that are relevant to the Tweed Region, with an emphasis on items provenanced to the Region and related to people closely associated with the area at key periods in history.

The Museum also collects in areas of its curatorial expertise, such as maritime history, river transport and the development of dairying.

The Museum will only acquire Aboriginal cultural Objects of significance to the region in circumstances where the object is provenanced and in consultation with the Aboriginal Community.

To be considered for acquisition by purchase or donation, an Object must be of a quality and condition that is relevant to this Acquisition Policy.

Acquisition is dependent on the availability of support documentation or other evidence of the provenance of the Object.

In some exceptional cases, Objects may be acquired without provenance to a Tweed Region family, place, person, institution or firm if the Object was typically used in the Tweed or if the Object elucidates taste or style associated with or unique to the Tweed Region.

Objects without provenance in rare circumstances will only be accepted where they assist in the interpretation of the Region's history, via one of the identified criteria and/or have an educational role.

Acquisition criteria

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

Criteria 1 – Historic

Being an Object provenanced to the Tweed Region during one of the six major chronological phases of the history of the Region:

- natural History
- pre European contact, mapping and colonisation to 1844
- the arrival of the cedar getters, selection and the development of primary industry and the growth of towns and villages 1844 -1900
- Federation to the end of the Wars 1901 – 1945; Federation, local government, the depression and wars
- Post War transformation of the Tweed Region 1946 – 1980; including migration, beach culture and the alternative movement
- the migration to the coast, 1981 onwards. Including the development of coastal communities, retirees and Sea Change

Criteria 2 - Thematic

Within the historical scope, the Museum has an interest in particular themes, against which Objects may be considered for collection including:

- natural Environment: geology, geography, climate, topography
- industry: agriculture, pastoralism, forestry, tourism, fishing
- people, events, leisure, sport, religion and culture of the district
- Aboriginal history
- South Sea Islander history
- the built environment, towns and villages
- land development and environmental change
- maritime and river history
- radio and communications – a specialist collection at Murwillumbah
- photography
- children's and women's history
- government and the border zone
- health and services
- law and order
- the Tweed Region and wars
- locally invented, made and improvised objects

The Heritage Collections Council significance assessment method and criteria will be used as a general framework for assessment against criteria of proposed acquisitions.⁵

⁵ Russell & Winkworth, *Significance*, Heritage Collections Council and Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, 2001

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
- interpretive potential

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.

Caution and transparency are essential in the de-accessioning process.

During ongoing consolidation of the Collection, Tweed Regional Museum 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 Museum.

In the longer term, de-accessions will be minimised through careful, 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
- poor condition and lack of provenance or documentation
- duplication in the Museum Collection or other relevant collection
- inability to safely store and manage the Object
- acquisition of a like Object of greater significance rendering earlier acquisition redundant

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.

Loans principles

Loans may only be made or accepted for fixed periods and for specific purposes.

No objects will be accepted on indefinite or long-term loan.

Loans will be accepted/permitted for a period of up to twelve months for the purposes of exhibition or research to /from appropriate institutions, or as determined by the Museum Director.

Loans will be accepted or made on a case-by-case basis, ensuring all loans are returned by the date indicated on the loan documentation.

With the agreement of both parties, loans can be re-negotiated prior to the return date.

The Museum reserves the right to request an Object's return if the need arises.

Procedures

Acquisition procedure

- The first point of contact is the Museum Director.
- The potential Donor will be required to record the history, associations, context and significance of the object by completing a *Proposal for Donation Form*.
- An interim *Object Receipt* will be issued if an Object is agreed by the Senior Museum Curator to be received for appraisal and consideration.
- The Museum Director will appraise the Object against the Acquisition Criteria for its suitability to the collection. The Museum Director may also seek consultation with members of Tweed Shire Council, members of the Historical Societies, and/or with appropriate experts and colleagues.
- The Museum Management Committee will accept or declined the Proposal for Donation based on the recommendation of the Museum Director.
- On approval of the proposed donation by the Management Committee, the donor is required to sign a *Gift Acknowledgement Form* that assigns legal ownership for the Object to the Museum.
- Upon handover of the Objects to the Museum, the items are subject to a *Condition Report* and assessed for conservation.
- A *Letter of Thanks* is issued to the donor.
- The Object is recorded in the Collection Management System and allocated an accession number.
- The Object will be numbered, photographed and catalogued and contextual information collated and added to the Collection Management System.

De-accession procedure

- An accessioned Object must meet one or more of the De-accession Criteria above to be selected for de-accessioning.
- A report outlining the reasons for de-accessioning will be prepared by the Museum Director and presented to the Museum Management Committee.
- The Museum Management Committee will formally endorse/not endorse de-accessioning, on the recommendation of the Museum Director.
- There will be a 'cooling off period' of 90 days before disposal.
- If de-accessioned Objects are sold, the proceeds go into acquisition funds.
- The accession number of de-accessioned Objects will not be reused.

The following methods of disposal are in order of desirability:

1. Return to the donor or donor's closest family.
2. Transfer to another museum or appropriate institution.
3. Change of status to Education Resource.
4. Sell/Auction.
5. Destroy or recycle.

All disposals will be executed in accordance with Tweed Shire Council *Disposal of Assets Policy*.

No staff, committee members or volunteers may benefit or in any way acquire Objects that have been de-accessioned unless these persons are the original donor or donor's family (as referred to in part 1 above).

Loans procedures

Inward loans procedure

- All inward loans will have the appropriate documentation completed.
- The *Inward Loan Agreement* will be completed in duplicate, one copy being held by the lender, and the other by Tweed Regional Museum.
- The *Inward Loan Agreement* will indicate the agreed value and condition of the material for replacement or repair in the event of loss or damage.
- A photograph of the material will accompany the *Inward Loan Agreement*, and a copy of the *Condition Report - Loans* will be completed for each object.

Outward loans procedure

- All outward loans will have the appropriate documentation completed.
- 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 material for replacement or repair in the event of loss or damage.
- A photograph of the material will accompany the *Outward Loan Agreement* and a copy of the *Condition Report - Loans* will be completed for each object.

Research collection strategy

Over the years, the historical societies have amassed and filed a large collection of ephemera, secondary sources, copied items and oral histories that is an irreplaceable and valuable research resource.

While the physical nature of these files does not warrant accessioning into the Collection proper, the materials as a whole warrant the status of a Research Collection, and access, and future inclusions will be managed to maintain the accessibility of the collection for research and ensure its appropriate use.

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

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

Material may be included in the Research Collection without provenance to a Tweed Region family, place, person, institution or firm if the material contains information associated with or unique to the Tweed Region.

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.

Areas of research interest include people, companies, institutions, public agencies and families that elucidate or exemplify some aspect of Tweed Region's history whether typical or exceptional and records relating to births, deaths, marriages, cemeteries, shipping lists, 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 sound and significance is dependant on their being one part of a body of associated research material.

Research collection procedure

Additions to this collection are made only where the donor agrees the material can be placed on general access and permission for all forms of use and reproduction of this material for research, publication or exhibition is granted upon donation via completing the *Research Collection Receipt* and/or an *Oral History Release Form*.

Education resources strategy

An item not considered appropriate for formal acquisition to the Collection or Research 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
- will not be stored with acquired Objects
- can be disposed of at any time without following the guidelines set out in the De-accession and Disposal Policy.

Education resources procedure

- Education Resources will be numbered and recorded in the Education Resources Register.
- Each Education Resource will be physically numbered in the same manner as objects.
- The Education Resource numbers will be identified by the prefix 'E' appearing before the number.
- If Education Resources are disposed of, this information should be recorded in the Education Resources Register.

References

Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, *Acquisitions and Donations Policy*, website, 2006

ICOMOS Australia, The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter), Canberra, 1999

ICOMOS International Tourism Committee, *International Cultural Tourism Charter*, 2002

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

NSW Heritage Office and NSW Ministry for the Arts, *Movable Heritage Principles*, 2000

Museums and Galleries NSW, *MGnsw Collection Policy Template*, 2005

Newcastle Regional Museum, *Collection Policy*, website, 2006

NSW Heritage Office, *Local Government Heritage Guidelines*, 2002

Russell R & Winkworth K, *Significance, a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, Heritage Collections Council and Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, 2001

Schultz, R, *Collections Policy*, St George Regional Museum, Hurstville City Council, 2002

Winkworth, K & Rennie SJ, *Rethinking the Collection – MGnsw Collection Policy Explanatory Notes*, Museums and Galleries NSW, 2005

Winkworth, K, *Tweed Regional Museum Strategic Plan*, Tweed Shire Council, 2004

Related legislation

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

Moveable Heritage Principles, New South Wales Heritage Office & NSW Ministry for the Arts, 2002

Compliance

Not applicable.

Forms

Not applicable.

Review period

The Collection Policy - Tweed Regional Museum shall be reviewed every five years for its relevance and accuracy in relation to the International Council of Museums Code of Ethics for Museums and within the framework of the NSW Heritage Office Movable Heritage Principles, and to ensure strategic collecting priorities reflect the changing nature of the Tweed.

Useful links

[Home | Tweed Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au)

Version control

Version #	Summary of changes made	Date changes made
1.0	New Policy	Adopted 14/12/2005
1.1	Adopted by Council	Adopted 28/11/2006
1.1	Proposed minor amendments to Policy section. Appendices (forms) removed.	Adopted 28/11/2015
1.2	Incorporated into new policy template	20/06/2013
1.3	Reviewed as part of Policies Review and no changes required.	16/6/2022
1.4	Reviewed to remove reference to Tweed Regional Museum Advisory Committee, adopted by Council	18/07/2024