



Cultural Collections Management Policy

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1. Scope

The Cultural Collections Management Policy is a public statement of purpose and objectives of Council's collection management program.

The Policy covers Council's cultural collections currently held, and future collections of art, culturally significant objects, archaeology, civic & ceremonial material relating to the local government area of Parramatta. It includes principles for the management of the collection including acquisitions, documentation, access, loans, valuations, and deaccessions.

The Policy will be reviewed every two years in order to remain effective and comply with relevant legislation and professional standards, as well as the strategic collecting priorities of the City of Parramatta Council.

The associated document 'Cultural Collections Management Procedures' supports the Cultural Collections Management Policy outlining the processes that must be adhered to by staff and is to be used as the best-practice basis for Council's approach to cultural collections management.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to detail a set of principles for the management, acquisition, loan, donation, de-accession, valuation and access to items within the Cultural Collections.

The objectives for establishing the Cultural Collections are as follows:

- Build a repository of objects and knowledge which fulfils a series of significant themes and expresses the history and heritage of the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA) to its community and beyond;
- Help to capture and contribute to the cultural knowledge, scholarly research and experiences of people who have lived in the City of Parramatta, from the past to the present day;
- Manage, preserve and make the collections accessible to current and future generations in many forms.

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The Cultural Collection categories are defined as follows:

a) Culturally significant objects

A single object or group of objects which expresses the philosophy, spirit, intellectual, creative and customary response to living in the LGA and is deemed to be of cultural value by determining its provenance, history and meaning.

b) Archaeological artefacts

- A whole object or shard recovered from a specified archaeological context during an excavation in the LGA. An assemblage is a group of artefacts, recovered from the same excavation within the context of an archaeological site.
- Includes both historical (colonial) relics and Aboriginal cultural items, managed according to appropriate legislation and protocols for repatriation.
- Includes context records, interpretation reports, images and data that relate to the provenance and other information that will assist in the discovery and research of the significance of the artefact or assemblage.

c) Civic and ceremonial gifts

Refers to gifts of good will or culturally symbolic items offered to Council by government and business delegations during visits and engagements.

d) Artworks

Works of art including drawings, paintings, murals, sculptures, ceramics and digital media, which have been acquired by the Council through purchase, donation, by gift or acquisition through Council-managed art prizes, public art commissions and community grants for the public.

Artworks by artists of significance, with an emphasis on City of Parramatta artists or those with a connection to Parramatta.

Artworks which reflect the history and cultural diversity of the City of Parramatta and can be classified as 'moveable heritage'.

Artworks which may be displayed in City of Parramatta buildings as part of the Council's cultural public programming.

Does not include sculptures, monuments or event installations.

For general definitions of terminology, see **Section 4. Definitions**

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3. Policy

3.1 Management

The management of the City of Parramatta Council Cultural Collections is the responsibility of the Cultural Collections Officer, who will demonstrate the appropriate experience and qualifications in order to oversee the management of the collections to a professionally high standard.

Volunteers and para-professionals may occasionally be engaged to support the work of the Cultural Collections Officer, who will provide supervision and training. The Officer will also work closely with members of Council and agencies to fulfill combined objectives.

To assist in the management of the Cultural Collections, a Cultural Collections Review Panel comprising of specialist Council staff will provide additional support and advice for acquisition and deaccessions. This panel will include the Cultural Collections Officer, the Research and Collection Services Coordinator, the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Manager, the Group Manager City Experience as well as the Group Manager Cultural Strategy. Internal or external specialist advice in the areas of art and archaeology will be sought when necessary. Where funds are needed to acquire significant objects, the Cultural Collections Officer will make a submission to the Panel for consideration. The panel will also provide authorisation for deaccessions and disposals.

3.2 Handling, storage, access

A designated workspace, which is secure, appropriately lit, ventilated, as well as pest and climate-controlled is required for the physical handling of objects. Archival-quality materials such as papers, sleeves and boxes will be provided to aid conservation and long-term preservation. The provision of shelving along with allocated spaces for large objects will help to keep the collections intact and well organised.

The digital form of the collections, including images, other media and corresponding cataloguing systems will require ongoing storage space, in the Cloud and on premise; backups and regular monitoring of assets to ensure that they are complete, readable and preserved for the future. The digital formats will comply with Council copyright, privacy and access guidelines.

3.3 Cataloguing and documenting

The function of cataloguing an object enables information to be recorded about the origins, context, physical characteristics, condition and other details to help inform research, exhibition development, preservation, risk management and public access activities.

Further documentation, in the form of significance statements and long-form research features, gathers together known information about an object so that Council staff,

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the community and leaders may appreciate the ongoing value of the collection.

The lifecycle for the management of an object, from registration to de-accessioning will be recorded using Council data software and appropriate Council systems.

3.4 Acquisition

The Acquisition criteria are available in two parts:

- i. **Part A. Acquisition: General**, describes the process by which objects are obtained for the collection. Where there is an exception or additional criteria, refer to the specific collection categories listed below.
- ii. **Part B. Acquisition: Specific collection categories**, which provides further guidance.

3.4.1 Part A. Acquisition: General

Council will only collect objects, on a permanent basis, which meet one or more of the following category criteria:

- a) Culturally significant objects
- b) Archaeological artefacts
- c) Civic and corporate gifts
- d) Artworks

Provides evidence in the form of a written document, image or other reliable record of authenticity, source, quality and ethical provenance.

Enables Council to have unconditional legal ownership.

Objects may be acquired through purchase, gift, bequest, exchange or administrative transfer.

Council will accept a formed collection if it is largely consistent with the Acquisition policy. Items which fall outside the policy will be accepted in the interests of keeping the collection intact.

If, after assessment, there are adequate resources, funds and space for the sustainable storage of the object.

If a duplicate item already exists in the Council's Cultural Collections and the proposed acquisition is in a better condition or offers more reliable provenance, the new object will be acquired and the duplicate de-accessioned.

Objects will not be acquired from significant heritage sites, buildings and environments where their removal will diminish the significance of the space, unless the object or collection is at risk of being damaged or discarded.

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Objects offered outside of the four collection categories may be considered for Council's Archives and Local Studies Collections.

Council will only collect objects, on a temporary basis, that support the four (4) Cultural Collection categories in the form of research, promotional content, educational programs, exhibition displays and interpretive information. The items will be entered in the Prop Register with the intention of de-accession.

Note: Objects accepted into the Cultural Collections prior to July 1, 2018 were accepted before Council had formalised clear acquisition guidelines. If the objects do not subsequently meet the criteria of the policy, they will be entered in the Prop Register.

3.4.2 Part B. Acquisition: Specific collection categories

Acquisitions for specific collections will conform to the criteria in **Part A. Acquisition: General** as well as requirements for each collection below.

Archaeological artefacts

New archaeological artefacts will be acquired in the following ways:

- a) Council may acquire through mandatory acquisition for transfer, into the Collections through Development Application (DA) consent conditions.
- b) Archaeologists and/or developers may approach Council to lodge significant collections.

The decision to acquire new archaeological artefacts will be made by the Cultural Collections Review Panel to be formed by the City of Parramatta according to the following key criteria:

- a) Spatial parameters: artefacts that originate not only from the Parramatta Central Business District (CBD) but spaces in the City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA).
- b) Temporal parameters: the artefacts represent the historic lived continuum of the area, from the earliest periods of Aboriginal habitation to the recent past. When accessioning significant Aboriginal archaeological assemblages, the City of Parramatta Aboriginal Advisory Committee, the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP) and the Local Aboriginal Land Council will be consulted, as appropriate.

Research parameters: the excavating archaeologists should demonstrate the research potential of archaeological assemblages as part of a site characterisation document prior to acceptance of materials into the Cultural Collections.

Note: the current archaeological artefacts in the Cultural Collections largely focus on the Parramatta CBD, which reflects the significant historical settlement from the late 1780s.

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Council will undertake local Community Consultation regarding the potential acquisition or deposition of Aboriginal artefacts to stay On Country. Whilst the Archaeologist may lodge their own assessments, as part of the due diligence process, Council will follow up directly with any Traditional Owners or Custodians.

The process of acquisition and the requirements for preparing artefacts and related records for transfer are detailed in Cultural Collections Management Procedures.

Civic and Corporate gifts

If the object is transferred from a Council department to Cultural Collections, it must be accompanied by evidence in the form of a written record, image or other reliable data of authenticity, source, quality and ethical provenance, as applicable.

The object will not be accepted if it does not comply with Council's Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure.

Artworks

All objects will require a legal document transferring full rights of ownership to Council. Council will have exclusive irrevocable copyright licence of the works, however full copyright will remain with the creator of the object.

A certificate of authenticity must accompany any artworks donated by gift or bequest or transferred to City of Parramatta, upon approval.

Aboriginal works

Decorative ceremonial objects will be classified as archaeological artefacts and follow secret or sacred material protocols, as outlined in the 'City of Parramatta Council Archaeological Collection, Stage 2 Management Framework report'.

Contemporary Aboriginal works of art, such as drawings, paintings, murals and other forms of physical and digital media must be accompanied by documentation, which records information about the context for the work, the creator, and any special rights relating to display, copies, research and public access to the works in any form. The City of Parramatta will also apply best practices in recognition of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols.

3.5 Loans

For an **outward loan**, where an object from Council's Cultural Collections is loaned to an external organisation, appropriate documentation on the conditions, period specified, use, care, maintenance and insurance for the object will be created and agreed.

For an **inward loan**, where Council is being temporarily loaned an object for the purposes of display and interpretation, appropriate documentation on the conditions and return of the item will be agreed.

For an **internal-Council loan**, for example, where artworks or Cultural Collection objects are temporarily displayed outside the Cultural Collection storage area on

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Council premises, appropriate documentation on the conditions, period specified, use, care, maintenance and insurance for the object will be created and agreed.

The Cultural Collections Officer will review all loans at their 12-month period, as Council does not accept permanent loans.

Note: objects loaned to the Cultural Collections prior to 1 July 2018 were accepted before Council formalised the Interim & Permanent Collection Guidelines. Council is in the process of appraising these objects on their significance and ongoing management. Council has, and will continue to, assess legacy loans in an attempt to return to donors, or their descendants.

3.6 Donations, gifts, bequests

Donations, gifts and bequests will be accepted if they conform to the guidelines of **Part A. Acquisition: General**. Council reserves the right to accept or refuse such gifts as they occur.

'Gifts' are also defined as corporate gifts and will be accepted if they conform to the guidelines of **Part B. Acquisition: Specific collection categories**.

3.7 De-accessioning and disposal

The formal process of removing objects from the Cultural Collections, followed by disposal, requires careful assessment. Deaccessioning ensures that the collection remains focused on retaining and preserving significant objects.

The de-accessioning criteria are available in two parts:

- i. **Part A. De-accessioning: General**, describes the process by which objects are de-accessioned from the collection. Where there is an exception or additional criteria, refer to the specific collection categories listed below.
- ii. **Part B. De-accessioning: Specific collection categories**, which provides further guidance.

3.7.1 Part A. De-accessioning: General

Objects will be assessed for de-accessioning based on these guidelines:

- The object does not meet the current acquisition criteria.
- Is a duplicate of another object in the collection.
- The condition of the object has deteriorated to a point where conservation care becomes either prohibitive in cost or ineffectual and the cost exceeds the value of the object.
- The object is a cultural artefact which requires repatriation (see **Part B. De-accessioning: Specific collection categories**).

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- Has been assessed for exchange with a more appropriate heritage institution.
- The object or collection is found to have been stolen.
- The object is a duplicate of an original artefact and has no further research, education or interpretive value.
- A formal request has been submitted with significant reasons for returning the object to the donor or family.
- The object is no longer suitable due to restrictions on making it accessible in either physical or digital form to the public.

3.7.2 Part B. De-accessioning: Specific collection categories

De-accessions will conform to the criteria in **Part A. De-accessioning: General** as well as requirements for each specific collection below.

Archaeological artefacts

Council's archaeological collection rationalisation scheme ensures that research potential, public engagement and outreach are a key focus for maintaining the artefacts in the Cultural Collections.

Each artefact is defined according to five criteria of significance. Objects, which are identified for de-accessioning, demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Little or no archaeological research potential.
2. Common artefact types that are readily available across sites in the Parramatta LGA. Three good examples are to be retained.
3. No aesthetic value or ability to show insights into the past.
4. Highly corroded or contaminated, unidentifiable metal artefacts.
5. Small fragments with poor archaeological context

Artworks

Artworks will be reviewed once every three years and considered for de-accessioning if the following conditions are met:

- The artwork does not meet the acquisition criteria.
- The artwork has deteriorated beyond repair, see **Part A. De-accessioning: General**.
- Due to the weight or size of the artwork, City of Parramatta can no longer sustainably store the work

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- As well as applying the processes detailed in, City of Parramatta will provide the artist with an opportunity to remove the artwork.
- Where a physical artwork is authorised for destruction, a digital surrogate may be maintained in the database with the artist's permission, maintaining their moral rights under the Copyright Act 1968.

3.8 Access

Measures are undertaken to ensure that objects and the interpretation of their significance are made available by City of Parramatta to the public through exhibitions, educational programs, records and research through various channels.

3.9 Disaster Management

Business continuity and disaster mitigation strategies are implemented according to Council's Disaster Management Plan and Floodplain Risk Management Policy.

3.10 Valuation

Valuation of the Cultural Collections is necessary for insurance and auditing purposes. An insurance replacement valuation will be undertaken regularly for significant items and reviewed every two years for all other items, and entered into the cataloguing database, Vernon.

4. Definitions

Acquisition

A formal agreement for acquiring an object by way of donation, purchase, commission, transfer, exchange, bequest or receiving gifts in the course of official duties.

Accession

A group of records transferred at one time from the same source.

Artefact

An item that provides material evidence of the past, recovered within an archaeological context. Includes both Aboriginal 'objects' and historical 'relics'.

Collection

Permanent collection: All objects considered to be of historic, cultural and social significance that meet the acquisition criteria.

Temporary collection: Includes items that support the four Cultural Collection categories in the form of research, promotional content, educational programs, exhibition displays and interpretive information.

Conservation

Methods taken to restore the state of an object or prevent and delay its deterioration.

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De-accession

The formal process of removing an object from the custody of the collection register, catalogue or database after reappraisal.

Disposal

A range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions which include the retention, transfer, deletion or destruction of the object from the collection.

Movable heritage

A term used to define any natural or manufactured object or collection of heritage significance.

Preservation

Process and operations involved in ensuring the physical, digital and intellectual survival of objects over time.

Provenance

Refers to the source and arrangement of the original collection; identifying the original creator of a collection and how the collection came to be acquired.

5. Associated Documents

5.1 Referenced legislation, ethical codes, professional standards, policies

i. International, National, State, Local

- The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter
- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)
- NSW Heritage Office Principles (Movable Heritage)
- NSW State Heritage Register, Office of Environment & Heritage
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)
- Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)
- Museums Australia's Code of Ethics for Art, History & Science Museums 1999,
- Privacy & Personal Information Protection (PPIPA) Act 1998 (NSW)
- Privacy & Personal Information Protection (PPIPA) Regulation 2014 (NSW)
- Copyright Act 1968
- Copyright Amendment Act 2006
- State Records Act 1998

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- Local Government Act 1993
 - Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- ii. **City of Parramatta Council**
- Cultural Collections Management Procedures
 - Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure
 - Privacy Management Plan
 - Public Art Policy
 - Archives Management Procedures
 - Research Library Collection Management Policy

5.2 Context for the Cultural Collections

Parramatta is one of the most historically significant places in Australia. The original inhabitants of Parramatta were the Darug People, who were custodians of the land known as Burramattagal 60,000 years ago.

With the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, the fertile soil and river valley of Parramatta was established as the most suitable centre for the penal colony to settle and the rapid development of farms, buildings, infrastructure and industry soon followed. Parramatta prospered as a centre of early governance and administration and the Council formed in 1861 when Parramatta was incorporated as a municipality.

Successive waves of migration, along with local government strategies for production, housing, transport, the environment and recreation, have transformed the identity and fortunes of the City of Parramatta in vital ways.

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