

PORT WELSHPOOL AND DISTRICT MARITIME MUSEUM COLLECTION POLICY

Policy Number	C73	Directorate	Corporate & Community Services
Council Item No.	3.2.1	Department	Community Strengthening
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1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to:

1. Provide guidance relevant to the Port Welshpool and District Maritime Museum (PWDMM) Collection (the Collection).
2. Ensure that acquisition and disposal of Collection items meet significance criteria through their relevance to the stated time-line period and to the planned themes of the site appropriate to the interpretation of the policy statement.

This policy is intended to be separate from, and implemented independently from, Council's Asset Disposal Policies.

PWDMM exists to promote awareness and understanding of the industrial and natural maritime history of the Port Welshpool area of South Gippsland from 1881 to the present~~2003~~, through the collection, preservation and communication of relevant material culture.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

PWDMM exists to promote awareness and understanding of the industrial and natural maritime history of the Port Welshpool area of South Gippsland from 1881 to the present~~2003 (cessation of the ferry service to Tasmania)~~, through the collection, preservation and communication of relevant material culture contextualised in its social and community perspectives. This policy particularly recognises the contribution of the Smith Family to the maritime history of the district including the fishing industry, and appropriate signage will be installed to accompany the collection.

The PWDMM Collection Policy provides information about the underpinning principals for:

- 2.1 Development of the Collection
- 2.2 Defining the range of objects the museum collects
- 2.3 Ensuring that a high standard of care of the current collection is maintained

3. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the intention of Council that acquisitions and any necessary disposals of the museum Collection at PWDMM are aligned with significance criteria through relevance to the stated time period and to the theme of the site. Themes are developed in order to interpret the following areas of South Gippsland regional history: Industrial and natural maritime history in line with the collection policy.

4. POLICY GUIDELINES

4.1 Method of Acquisition

- 4.1.1 Acquisitions to the collection may be in the form of donations or bequests, or by purchase or exchange. Purchasing will be in accordance with Council's procurement policy.
- 4.1.2 All decisions regarding acquisitions and de-accessioning (official removal from the collection) will be approved by Council in consultation with the Committee of Management and a museum professional.
- 4.1.3 If original objects are not obtainable for exhibitions; replicas, models, photographs or other graphic representations may be considered as viable alternatives.
- 4.1.4 An object will not be assessed as significant simply because of its age or monetary value.

4.2 Port Welshpool and District Maritime Museum will only acquire those objects that:

- 4.2.1 Are of significance to and fit with the theme of the PWDMM.
- 4.2.2 Can be appropriately cared for and maintained i.e. appropriately stored and conserved.
- 4.2.3 Will be exhibited in the foreseeable future even though no commitment can be made that any particular item will be permanently displayed.
- 4.2.4 Have adequate provenance to ensure their authenticity.
- 4.2.5 Have adequate provenance to ensure the legality of donation or purchase.
- 4.2.6 Are not restricted or encumbered as to their use i.e. by copyright, patent, trademark or due to any hazardous nature of the object.
- 4.2.7 Are not restricted or encumbered in their use through conditions set by the donor.
- 4.2.8 Do not duplicate objects already held in the existing collection, unless multiple examples of this object are necessary for display or the item for consideration is of superior condition or historic value than those currently in the collection.
- 4.2.9 Loans may be acquired only on a short-term basis unless the loaner is prepared to financially support the care and insurance of the item.
- 4.2.10 Objects may be collected for use as spare parts for the existing collection.

4.3 Documentation and Storage

South Gippsland Shire Council recognises that it is a custodian of the material culture entrusted to it for preservation for future generations. Council is committed to ensuring that the Collection is properly catalogued and appropriately stored to museum standards, subject to its resourcing and budgetary constraints.

4.4 Contractual Considerations

PWDMM will remain mindful of any legal restrictions and ethical guidelines, as set out in the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics, governing the acquisition of objects and will not acquire or exhibit an object in breach of these restrictions and guidelines.

A Donor Agreement Form must be co-signed by the Donor and an authorised representative of PWDMM in order to ensure the transfer to South Gippsland Shire Council of legal ownership of the object.

PWDMM will remain mindful that items in the Collection or being offered as a donation from a shipwreck are the property of the Australian Government and must be inputted into the Australian National Shipwreck Database. Items of Indigenous background are required to be registered with Aboriginal Victoria.

4.5 De-accessioning

4.5.1 Criteria for De-accession of Objects

A museum professional appointed by Council in consultation with the PWDMM Committee of Management may dispose of items in the Collection because they are:

- a. Not relevant to the functions and aims of the site.
- b. There is insufficient supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish relevance.
- c. Damaged beyond repair, cannot be appropriately cared for or infested and a potential risk to other items.
- d. Unnecessary duplicates thereof or they are inferior to other similar items in the current collection.
- e. Under exceptional circumstances, subject to a substantiated request for the return of the item to the original owner/donor.

4.5.2 Legal and Ethics

PWDMM ~~Committee of Management~~ will remain mindful of any legal restrictions and ethical guidelines governing the disposal of objects and will not dispose of an object in breach of these restrictions and sanctions.

4.5.3 Method of Disposal

Disposal of de-accessioned items will be carried out in one of the following ways:

- a. Return to the donor or donor's family and descendants if the donor is deceased.
- b. Offered to another museum or educational or cultural institution (not for profit).
- c. If neither of these options is successful, the item/s may be offered for public sale or auction/tender.

4.5.4 Proceeds from Sale

Proceeds from public sale/auction of collection items will be credited solely to collection funds and used specifically for collection maintenance and development.

4.5.5 Personal acquisition and de-accessioning

At no time will a Committee member, volunteers at PWDMM, persons connected with South Gippsland Shire Council or any person formally connected with PWDMM, be permitted to acquire a de-accessioned object directly from PWDMM or South Gippsland Shire Council unless they are the original donor or the family or descendants of the donor if the donor is deceased.

Council will ensure that reasonable efforts have been made between making the decision to de-accession an object and the disposal of that object unless emergency management is required due to public safety or damage to other collection items.

PWDMM Collection Policy will be reviewed four years after its adoption and every four years thereafter or earlier if required.

4.7 Loans Inward

South Gippsland Shire Council and PWDMM do not accept permanent loans unless the item on offer is assessed to be of particular significance to the permanent exhibition. Short-term loans may be accepted as necessary for temporary exhibitions. All inward loans will be for a fixed time and the conditions agreed to in writing on a Loan Agreement form. The loan agreement may include provision for the lender to assist with financial support of the item for transportation, restoration, storage, maintenance, insurance or care.

4.8 Loans Outward

South Gippsland Shire Council and PWDMM, in consultation with a museum professional, will assess outward loan requests from other institutions on individual merit. Borrowers will be required to sign a loan agreement which provides a condition report of the loaned item, length of loan period and any specific requirements regarding care during the loan period. The outward loan agreement may include provision for the borrower to assist with financial support of the item for restoration, storage, maintenance or insurance.

4.9 Winding up of Operations

In the event that South Gippsland Shire Council ceases the operation of the PWDMM, Council will dispose of the Collection and will remain mindful of any legal restrictions and ethical guidelines governing the disposal of the objects. South Gippsland Shire Council will not dispose of an object in breach of these restrictions and sanctions and will use the following means:

4.9.1 Method of Disposal

- a. Return to the donor or donor's family if the donor is deceased.
- b. Offered to another museum, educational or cultural institution which is not for profit.
- c. If neither of these options is successful, the item/s may be offered for public sale or auction/tender.
- d. At no time will a Committee member, volunteer at PWDMM, persons connected with South Gippsland Shire Council or any person formally connected with PWDMM, be permitted to acquire any object directly or through public sale from PWDMM or South Gippsland Shire Council.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

A failure to properly manage the Collection may lead to:

- a. Legal action against Council
- b. Loss of a valuable component of regional, state or national heritage
- c. Disputes over collection care resulting in litigation
- d. Disposal of items through damage
- e. Lack of community confidence in Council's custodial role over an important and significant part of local history
- f. Loss of Council's reputation in the wider museum and educational community

6. IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

All Committee of management members and volunteers PWDMM will be provided with a copy of this policy.

All donors of items will be provided with a copy of this Policy before donations are made and accepted.

Council will arrange insurance cover for the collection for values agreed between Council and the insurers.

7. DEFINITIONS

International Council of Museums Code of Ethics
The International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums was adopted in 1986 by ICOM and revised in 2004. It establishes the values and principles shared by ICOM and the international museum community. It is a reference tool translated into 36 languages and it sets minimum standards of professional practice and performance for museums and their staff.'
Significance
The National Museum of Australia describes significance as follows: “‘Significance’ refers to the values and meanings that items and collections have for people and communities. Significance helps unlock the potential of collections, creating opportunities for communities to access and enjoy collections, and to understand the history, cultures and environments of Australia.” The PWDMM collection consists of artefacts catalogued and held in trust for the community. These items are displayed for interpretation of the theme of the site in line with the collection policy. The collection includes outright donations to the site and loan items. Significance is determined by historical value and not numerical value.
Collection
The word collection refers to objects catalogued into the museum’s collection for display or interpretation.
De-accessioning
The process by which an object is permanently removed from the collection.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Council Policies and Strategies

Arts and Culture Policy C03 (2016)

Arts and Artefacts Collection Policy C69 (2018)

Coal Creek Community Park and Museum Collection Policy C05 (2016)

South Gippsland Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy 2017-2021

Legislative Provisions

- Local Government Act 1989 sections 3C, 3D, 3E
- Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968

- Victorian Information Privacy Act 2000
- Public Records Act 1973
- Code of Ethics for Museums (ICOM 2006)
- Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 Section 24
- Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978
- Museums Act 1983
- Heritage Act 1995
- Code of Ethics for Art, History and Science Museums (MA 1999)
- Firearms and Victorian Museums (MAVIC)