

1. BACKGROUND

The Coonamble 'Museum Under the Bridge' (the Museum) is the former police barracks which was built in 1886. The original brick stables with stalls and feed boxes are one of only two remaining in New South Wales.

This Policy will guide the continued acquisition and maintenance of the permanent collection of historic artifacts stored and displayed at the Museum. The Collection is required for the Museum to remain a tourism product and to continue to provide museum services.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The Museum aims to maintain a collection of local history and displays part of that Collection as a unique tourism product. The Museum stimulates thought, study and interest in the culture and history of the Coonamble Local Government Area (LGA) through the conservation, exhibition and interpretation of objects documents and photographs committed for safe repository and public access.

3. POLICY

3.1 Statement of Purpose and Scope Collection

The Coonamble Museum Under the Bridge Collection Policy ensures that limited resources are used efficiently to collect, preserve, research, appropriately exhibit and provide public access to artifacts and archives. These artifacts and archives may include physical objects, and objects which are paper based and photographic, enabling the Museum to illustrate the history of nature and mankind within the LGA.

Items collected by the Museum will relate to the development of the LGA, will have contributed significantly to the history of the LGA and will have relevance to the identified themes. All Collection items should endeavor to relate to known specific persons, particular localities, or documented events.

3.2 Identified Themes

The Museum will collect and conserve documents, photographs and objects relevant to the Coonamble LGA and the following identified themes, from the earliest possible date to the present time.

- Rural life and agriculture – technologies and social history.
- Domestic life.
- Urban matters – local businesses, health and community groups.
- War service – of local men and women and its local impact.
- Indigenous history.

- Cultural objects – domestic, trade, ceremonial, and artistic objects.
- Transport documentation and items.
- Archival material, photographs, information, correspondence and communications.

3.3 Access

The Museum aims to provide maximum possible access to the Collection. Regular opening hours will allow public access to the Museum exhibitions, education facilities and archives. Public access to any stored Collection items will be arranged with relevant Council staff.

4. ACQUISITION

Accessioning is the formal process of accepting items into the Collection. The Museum shall acquire objects for the permanent Collection by donation, bequest, or transfer.

4.1 Significance Assessment

Significance assessment must be undertaken by analysing the object, understanding its history and context and identifying its value for the community.

This process will define the meaning and value of an object and establish its significance in relation to other objects. It helps demonstrate why an object is sufficiently important to be in the Museum's Collection. The process involves considering an item against a standard set of assessment criteria.

Not all objects are significant, or sufficiently significant to merit inclusion in the Collection. This process can also provide well-reasoned arguments for declining a donation or deaccessioning an object.

Coonamble Museum shall continue to enhance the Collection by acquiring:

- Objects that conform with the identified themes.
- Only those donations which are provided without conditions.
- Information and photographs relevant to the history of the LGA to the present day, with reference to family history and local businesses.
- Oral and written histories of local relevance.

4.2 Acquisition Criteria

The significance of an item will be assessed with reference to relevant criteria, including:

- **Relevance:** The Museum only collects objects that relate to the Museum's objective or identified themes.

- **Significance:** Priority is given to objects which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value.
- **Provenance and documentation:** Priority will be given to objects where the history of the object is known, and associated documentation or support material can be provided
- **Condition, intactness and integrity:** The condition of the object must be taken into consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the Collection.
- **Interpretive potential:** Objects that tell a story that adds to the interpretation of the Museum themes will be prioritised.
- **Rarity:** Objects will be prioritised if they are rare examples of a particular kind of object.
- **Storage:** The object can only be accepted if it conforms with the Museum's storage and display resources.
- **Representativeness:** Objects may be prioritised if they are an excellent representative example of a particular kind of object.
- **Duplications:** Duplicate objects will not be accepted unless with particularly strong provenance.
- **Legal requirements:** The donor can demonstrate clear legal title.

It is not necessary for evidence of all criteria to justify an object's significance, although all criteria will be considered. An object may still be significant if only one or two of the criteria apply.

4.3 Acquisition Procedure

Communication with a potential donor is very important. The following procedure is to be followed when considering the acquisition of an object.

- Issue the donor with written confirmation of receipt of the object, including the object description, donor's name and contact details, date of item receipt, as much information about the provenance of the item as possible, a clear statement to the effect that the item will be accorded the same degree of care as the Museum's Collection, and that the item must be assessed according to this Policy to determine whether it is an appropriate acquisition into the Collection, the name of the person who received the item.
- Tag the object with the appropriate receipt or record number.
- Undertake all appropriate research and investigation about the object.
- Convene a panel of three relevant Council staff to assess the item according to the Museum's Collection Policy, specifically the Acquisition Criteria. This assessment and the reasoning for the assessment outcome must be recorded appropriately.
- If the item is not accepted, it should be immediately returned to the owner with an explanation of the decision. If the item is accepted, this decision must also be communicated to the owner with a message of gratitude.
- If the item is accepted, a **Deed of Gift** must be completed and signed by the donor and an appropriate Council staff member. As the formal process whereby

ownership of the item is transferred from the donor to the Museum, the Deed of Gift must also be appropriately recorded and filed.

- The newly acquired object must be appropriately catalogued as part of the Collection.

5. COLLECTION CARE

5.1 Documentation

It is critical that the Museum maintains an effective documentation system. All documentation will be made and recorded with respect to Council's Records Management Policy.

On obtaining ownership of an item, it is entered into the Collection Catalogue with as much detailed information as possible, and a photograph is taken of the object. The object is then either stored or displayed.

Recording of information should be simple, straightforward, and legible. Documentation should be of archival quality and filed for future reference.

5.2 Storage and Conservation

The Museum must maintain high standards of Collection care and storage. Once an item is accepted, initial conservation procedures are required to be undertaken before the item can be included in the Collection. Items should be temporarily stored in an environmentally sound area to await cleaning, fumigation and 'first aid' conservation if necessary. Maintaining storage and conservation work areas is a high priority. The following storage requirements are to be met:

- Storage areas must remain clean, secure and sealed against the weather. Temperature and relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible and access to storage areas is to be controlled. Temporary storage is to be organised as required. Objects must not be stored on the floor.
- Ultra-violet light should be excluded from storage areas and when storage areas are not in use, lights must be turned off.
- Archival quality storage materials should be used for all significant material.
- Storage areas must be regularly checked for pests, atmospheric deterioration and other potential problems.
- Untrained personnel should never attempt to clean, treat or restore Museum objects.
- Staff working at the Museum should always follow procedures for correct handling of objects.

6. DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL

Deaccessioning is the formal removal from the Collection of an object that is no longer considered of relevance. It is a process that is to be carried out with as much care as the process of accessioning an object into the Collection.

Deaccessioning can occur when:

- An object does not comply with the current Collection Policy of the Museum.
- An object is damaged beyond repair.
- The conservation and storage costs for an object are beyond the means of the Museum.
- An object is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the Museum already owns.
- An object lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the Collection.
- A substantiated request for the return of the object to its original owner/donor is received. This could be the return of sacred material to Indigenous peoples.

6.1 Deaccession Procedure

The object identified for removal from the Collection must come before a panel of three relevant Council staff for consideration with close reference to the Acquisition Criteria and the reasons for decommissioning above. A cooling off period of 12 months will be instituted before final disposal.

The deaccession of any object shall be appropriately documented, recorded and communicated. This final disposal may be by return of the item to a donor or their family, by transfer to another appropriate organisation or by disposal or recycling.

7. LOANS

Loans may be either inward or outward loans. Decisions about loans are to be made by a panel of three relevant Council staff. All loans need to be assessed with considerations including transport requirements, display capacity of the Museum, condition of the object and completion of legal loan agreement covering insurance and time of loan.

7.1 Inward Loans

Generally, the Museum does not accept any objects on loan. However, for small exhibitions, some objects may be borrowed from lenders (individuals or institutions) for a prescribed period of not more than six months. The following procedure is to be followed when managing inward loans:

- The loan shall only be accepted for a specific exhibition or research, and for fixed period of time.
- Inward loans shall be recorded in a dedicated Loans Register

- A representative of both the Museum and the lender will be required to sign an agreed inward loan form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement which will record the terms and conditions of the loan.
- The Museum agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own Collection.
- Loans shall remain in the possession of the Museum for the time specified on the form.
- The Museum can request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording renewal must be signed by a Museum Officer and the lender.

7.2 Outward loans

The Museum may lend an object to other professionally managed museums or organisations for a specific period. Outward loans request must be assessed and approved by a panel of three relevant Council staff. The following procedure is to be followed when managing outward loans:

- The Museum will lend objects to other museums and organisations holding collections. It will not lend to private collectors.
- Borrowers and a representative from the Museum will be required to sign an outward loan agreement form. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement which will record the terms and conditions of the loan.
- The borrower must exercise care in the handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.
- The maximum loan period is six months. Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.
- Objects cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of the Museum.


Loans will remain in the possession of the borrower until returned to the Museum.

8. RELATED POLICIES

- Records Management Policy.
- Volunteer Policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed once every three (3) years or sooner if deemed necessary.

Title: Museum Under the Bridge Collection Policy		
Department: Economic Development & Growth		
Version	Date	Author
V1	October 2021	P Goldsmith
Review Date: September 2024		
Amendments in the release:		
Amendment History	Date	Detail
Adopted by Council	28 October 2021	Resolution 2021/203
Annexure Attached:		
Hein Basson General Manager	 29-10-2021.	