



Version Control

Version	1.3
Approved by	Executive
Approval date	15 September 2020
Document owner	Executive Director Collections and Research
Next review date	June 2023
Availability	Public
Contact for queries	Western Australian Museum Mail: Locked Bag 49, Welshpool DC, WA 6986 Phone: +61 8 9431 8413 Email: reception@museum.wa.gov.au Website: www.museum.wa.gov.au



Contents

1	Policy Statement.....	5
2	Background and Rationale	5
3	Scope and Application	6
3.1	Application to Staff.....	6
3.2	Scope of Collections	6
4	Definitions.....	6
5	Related Legislation and Authority	8
5.1	Relevant Policies	8
5.2	Legislative Framework.....	8
6	Acquisitions to the Collection	9
6.1	Selection Criteria, Collections Focus and Sustainability	9
6.2	General Criteria to Apply to Acquisitions	10
6.3	Significance Criteria.....	10
6.4	Principles for the Acquisition of Items into the Collection.....	10
6.4.1	Geographical Emphasis on Collecting	10
6.4.2	Collecting for a Purpose	11
6.4.3	No Duplication	11
6.4.4	Resource Implications	11
6.4.5	Conservation Requirements	11
6.4.6	Items from Living Cultures (including archaeological items)	12
6.4.7	Collecting Animals	13
6.4.8	Sustainability	13
6.4.9	Gifts and Bequests	13
6.4.10	Deposition of Types.....	13
6.4.11	Lodgement of Voucher Specimens.....	14
6.4.12	Exceptional Collecting of Primary Evidence.....	14
6.4.13	Acquisition of Gifts by Museum Staff	14
6.4.14	Acquisitions Outside the Collections Policy	14
7	Access to the Collections, Data and Information	14

7.1	Right of Access.....	14
7.2	Publication of Information or Data	14
7.3	Access to Research Data and Restricted Data and Information	15
7.4	Publication of Customarily Restricted Material.....	15
7.5	Loans Protocols (Outgoing and Incoming).....	15
7.6	DNA and Biologically Active Compounds	15
7.7	Charging for the Provision of Data, Information and Services	16
7.8	Field Notebooks and Images	16
7.9	Records of Transactions.....	16
8	De-accessioning, Disposal and Transfer of the Custodianship of Collection Items. 16	
8.1	De-accessioning Principles.....	16
8.2	De-accessioning by Curatorial Departments.....	17
8.3	De-accessioning Decisions by the Executive Director, Collections and Research... 17	
8.4	Legal or Other Powers of Disposal	18
8.5	Purchase of De-accessioned Items	18
8.6	Income from Disposal of Collection Items.....	18
8.7	Items of Special Significance to Western Australia	18
8.8	Transfer of Cultural Material and Human Remains	18
8.9	Aboriginal Secret/Sacred Material and Human Remains	18
8.10	Exchange of Items.....	19
9	Responsibility for the Collection.....	19
9.1	Role of the Trustees	19
9.2	Curatorial Responsibility for Collection Items.....	19
9.3	Responsibility for Collections Policy Implementation	19
9.4	Security of the Collections	20
9.5	Security of Types.....	20
9.6	Collection Valuations	20
9.7	Audit and Stocktake Procedures	20
10	Sources, Standards and Guidelines	21
	Appendix 1 – Natural Sciences Collection Policy	23
1.	General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	23
2.	Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	25

Appendix 2 – History Department Collection Policy	31
1. Rationale	31
2. Collection Strategy	32
2.1 Determinants for Acquisition	32
2.2 Acquisition Procedure.....	32
2.3 Collection of Associated Material/Information	33
2.4 Accessioning of Objects	33
3. Research/Interpretation	33
3.1 Research Strategies	33
3.2 Analytical Context.....	34
4. Access.....	34
4.1 Accessibility.....	34
4.2 General Access to Objects/Information	34
4.3 Access for Research Purposes	34
5. Exhibition.....	35
6. Other Objectives.....	35
Appendix 3 – Anthropology and Archaeology Department Collection Policy	36
1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	36
2. Specific Strategic policies on Collections and Research.....	36
3. Access Protocols	38
3.1 Overarching policy document is:.....	38
3.2 Secret and Sacred Collections	38
3.3 Ancestral Remains Store	38
Appendix 4 – Maritime Archaeology Department Collection Policy	40
1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	40
2. Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	41
Appendix 5 – Maritime History Department Collection Policy	44
1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	44
2. Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research	44

1 Policy Statement

The Western Australian Museum's Collections Policy details collecting priorities. The first part of this Policy covers Museum-wide collections directions that underpin the mission and strategic plan of the Museum. Five appendices (1-5) detail individual departmental collection/acquisition policies and practices.

The Museum is opposed to indiscriminate acquisition or destruction without a purpose and requires that there be a purpose behind every addition to, and every removal from, the collections. The main emphasis is on improving the scientific, cultural and interpretive value of the collections in support of specific Museum programs.

2 Background and Rationale

The Western Australian Museum first opened in 1891 and has since made a major contribution to the collection, conservation and research of the State's natural and social history, its maritime heritage and the cultural heritage of Indigenous communities. The Western Australian Museum is established under the [Museum Act 1969](#) (WA) ("*Museum Act*") and is a statutory authority within the portfolio of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

Collections, curation, research and the Museum's wider public programs are inseparable. Through research the collections provide a reference resource against which we build and modify our knowledge and understanding of the natural and cultural world. The collections are part of the State's and Nation's heritage and play an integral role in international collaboration in the sciences and humanities. The collections both document the world's natural and social environment and are used to understand those environments.

The collections are an essential part of Australia's future as they provide the raw material from which researchers can establish the extent and nature of biological, geological and cultural diversity, how these have changed with time, and how they may be sustained in the future. The Museum uses and understands its collections within their national and international contexts and by doing so assists the public to better understand the State and its place in the world.

The collections encompass biological, geological, historical and cultural material from the State, the Nation and around the world. However, finite resources dictate that a more focussed approach to collections is required if the Museum wishes to continue collections development in areas of expertise and strength, to support historically important collections and, at the same time, develop or initiate those of contemporary relevance.

3 Scope and Application

3.1 Application to Staff

This Policy applies to all staff whose place of work is at the Museum, whether directly employed by the Museum itself, other public agencies or the private sector. It also applies to all volunteers at the Museum, Honorary Associates, Research Associates, Fellows and the members of the Board of Trustees. Throughout this Policy, references to “Museum staff” and “staff” refer to all the categories of persons previously mentioned.

3.2 Scope of Collections

The State Collection comprises items in the following curatorial departments:

- Anthropology and Archaeology
- Aquatic Zoology
- Earth and Planetary Sciences
- History
- Maritime Archaeology
- Maritime History
- Terrestrial Zoology.

The specific acquisition policies of the Museum relating to natural and cultural items are incorporated in the strategic policies of each Curatorial Department (see Appendices 1-5).

4 Definitions

In this Policy the following terms have the meaning here given to them:

Accessioning - is the formal process of recording an object, specimen or specimen lot as a collection item and assigning to it a unique registration number with appropriate documentation.

CEO - refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the Museum (referred to as the “Director” of the Museum in the *Museum Act 1969*).

Collection - refers to the Museum’s Collection of acquired items but does not include items on loan or held in custody on behalf of a third party.

Collections Committee - refers to a Committee of the Museum established under section 9 of this Policy.

Collection items - are items, including images, with provenance and associated data, that have been accessioned into the Museum’s collections.

Core data - are the basic item-related data and provenance, comprising item registration number, current identification (name), collection locality details (including geographical co-ordinates if available), or donor, exchange details, purchase details and price (if applicable), date of acquisition, and the habitat related to the item (if applicable).

De-accessioning - is the formal process of removing an accessioned item, or items, permanently from the collections.

Disposal - is the permanent removal of either de-accessioned or unaccessioned items from the Museum's custody.

Exchange - is the transfer of ownership of items (or parts thereof) from the Museum's collections to another party and receipt by the Museum of an item, or items, from that party to enhance the representation of its collections. Exchange is a method of acquiring items not easily obtained by any other means and may, or may not, require de-accession.

Item - The general term used for an object, artefact, record, image or specimen (specimen lot). A reference to a single item includes references to multiple items as appropriate.

Items placed in the custody of the Museum - are items that are not owned by the Museum but are left temporarily in the Museum for a definite purpose (e.g. for attribution, authentication, identification, exhibition, examination, or on approval for safe keeping, possible gift, exchange or purchase).

Loans - are temporary transfers of Collection items (or parts thereof) from the Museum, or temporary transfers of similar items to the Museum, for stated Museum purposes, or purposes approved by the Museum. Loans do not involve a change of ownership.

Research data - are supplementary, item-related data usually relating to specific research projects, and information resulting from the analysis and interpretation of data requiring professional expertise, judgment and interpretation that may be either published, or available in the form of unpublished reports or other written technical advice on a discretionary basis.

Restricted data - are those data that have been given to or obtained by the Museum in confidence, are of a religious, sacred, or secular personal nature, or are related to the precise location of protected rare and endangered species, or important cultural sites, or material deemed to be sensitive.

Restricted material - is a collection item or image, or item of data or information, unrestricted access to which may cause offence or endanger the safety or sanctity of that item, image, data or information, or of a locality from which the material came.

Service materials - are assemblages of items held by Museum curatorial departments and the Museum's regional sites for the purposes of public education and interpretation. These items are not accessioned and are not part of the collections.

Systematic Zoology - is the comparative study of living and fossil species and includes taxonomy, the science of classifying organisms. It encompasses discovering and describing biological diversity and past and present distributions, applying an unequivocal system of scientific nomenclature, elucidating evolutionary relationships between taxa and constructing hierarchical classifications that reflect these relationships. Similar principles apply in the non-living world to systematic studies in mineralogy and petrology.

Type Specimen - A type specimen is a zoological, palaeontological, mineral or meteorite specimen used as the basis for the scientific description of a new taxon.

Voucher Specimen - A voucher specimen is a zoological, palaeontological or mineral item which is collected and lodged in the Museum for the purpose of vouching for (i.e. confirming) its identity when referred to or examined in another study (e.g. biological survey) or specific research (e.g. physiology, anatomy).

5 Related Legislation and Authority

5.1 Relevant Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other Museum and Departmental (DLGSC) policies. Of particular relevance are the:

- *DLGSC Code of Conduct*
- *Conservation Policy*
- *Conflict of Interest Policy*
- *Intellectual Property Policy*
- *Loans Policy and Procedures*
- *Fieldwork and Distance Driving Safety Policy*
- *Records Management Policy*
- *Exhibition and Engagement Planning Committee Terms of Reference*
- *Strategic Plan 2014-2025.*

All relevant documents are available on Pulse. Museum staff who have a question about the impact of another Museum policy (for example, the Conflict of Interest Policy) on this Policy should contact the Manager Strategy & Performance for advice.

5.2 Legislative Framework

The Museum is governed by a Board of Trustees, appointed by the Governor of Western Australia. The Trustees are the Accountable Authority for the purposes of the *Financial Management Act 2006* (WA).

In addition to the *Museum Act*, the Museum administers the *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* (WA) and related regulations. On behalf of the Commonwealth Government, the Museum also administers sections of the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*.

As set out in the *Museum Act*, functions of the Museum pertaining to the Collection (see section 9) are:

- to encourage, and to provide facilities for the wider education of the community of the State, through the display and other use of the collections and through knowledge derived from the collections;
- to make and preserve on behalf of the community of the State, collections representative of the Aboriginal people of the State, the history of the exploration, settlement and development of the State, the natural history of the State and such other collections which the Trustees think necessary for the wider understanding of those matters and for the educational function of the Museum;
- to preserve on behalf of the community any remains, wreck, archaeological or anthropological site, or other thing, whether in the place where it is discovered or elsewhere, which in the opinion of the Trustees is of special national or local interest;
- to aid the advancement of knowledge through research into collections and into such other matters as the Trustees think relevant to that purpose and by publishing the results of research.

6 Acquisitions to the Collection

6.1 Selection Criteria, Collections Focus and Sustainability

Diminishing resources and space have caused the Museum to re-evaluate its position within the wider scientific and cultural communities. Increasingly, the Museum is co-operating with like institutions world-wide to minimise overlaps in research and collections development, and to work more collaboratively to ensure the efficient use of limited resources. Based on collections strengths, research expertise and public programs, the Museum's collections focus on:

- Natural diversity and representation in aquatic, terrestrial, subterranean and geological environments;
- Material related to the State's social and economic history, and the representation of its social and cultural diversity;
- Western Australian ethnology, Aboriginal Cultures;
- The Maritime record.

Criteria and general principles, including significance, pertaining to the selection of items for the Museum's collections are stated below, together with specific criteria identified at the individual collection level (see Appendices 1-5).

6.2 General Criteria to Apply to Acquisitions

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the following criteria apply to all collections:

- Items may be acquired by donation, bequest, exchange, purchase, or field collecting activities;
- Items will only be accessioned into collections if accompanied by adequate documentation, e.g. provenance, contextual and/or scientific data.

6.3 Significance Criteria

Significance is generally assessed against one or more of the following four primary criteria:

- historic significance
- aesthetic or artistic significance
- scientific, technical or research importance
- social or spiritual significance.

Comparative criteria set out below are used to evaluate the degree of significance:

- provenance
- representation
- originality or rarity
- research value
- condition, completeness and integrity
- interpretive potential.

Understandings of significance may be applied differently by the curatorial departments and are further articulated in the Appendices to this Policy.

6.4 Principles for the Acquisition of Items into the Collection

The following principles are to guide decisions made about the acquisition of new items into the Museum's collections. The Departmental Appendices 1-5 are to be interpreted in a manner consistent with these principles and this Policy in general.

6.4.1 Geographical Emphasis on Collecting

Strong emphasis is to be given to collecting items relating to Western Australia, extending into areas with natural or cultural affinities. However, material may be obtained from other areas for comparative purposes where this enhances understanding of Western Australian collections.

6.4.2 Collecting for a Purpose

The Museum is opposed to indiscriminate acquisition or destruction and requires that there be a purpose behind every addition to, and every removal from, the collections. The main emphasis is on improving the scientific and interpretive value of the collections in support of specific Museum programs.

6.4.3 No Duplication

As a general principle, the Museum must avoid the duplication of items already held in the Collection and there is a presumption against acquiring items that are identical to another item already in the Collection. Indiscriminate duplication with other collecting institutions should be avoided.

6.4.4 Resource Implications

Staff must consider, prior to making an acquisition, whether their Directorate and Department is able to meet any financial or other resource implications associated with the acquisition (including its storage and ongoing conservation and management) within the Museum's approved budget allocations for the financial year and into the future.

Where this is not the case, the acquisition must be referred to the Executive Director, Collections and Research who may approve or not approve the proposed acquisition or refer it to the Collections Committee pursuant to section 9 of this Policy.

6.4.5 Conservation Requirements

New acquisitions to the Collection must be conserved in line with Museum's *Conservation Policy* and have a conservation report prepared either before or at the time of acquisition. If staff from the Department of Conservation are not available to prepare the report it shall be prepared by curatorial staff.

Due Diligence

a. General Principles

The Museum exercises due diligence before acquiring material and complies with all legislation relating to the collection of items and legal limitations on the acquisition of material, as well as abiding by international conventions that Australia is a party to.

When acquiring artefacts, the Museum researches the item's provenance, consistent with the *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material* (Ministry of Arts, 2014). Due diligence also extends to thoroughly evaluating and acting upon any new information that raises questions about the provenance or authenticity of previously acquired objects. The Museum pays particular attention to provenance information associated with periods of conflict.

The Museum does not seek to acquire for its collections, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any material unless satisfied that it can acquire legal title to the material in question.

The Museum does not acquire any material unless it is satisfied that it has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's law.

The Museum does not acquire archaeological material where there is any suspicion that the circumstances of the recovery of the item involved a failure to follow appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the appropriate authorities.

The Museum does not acquire biological material or geological material that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of applicable national or international laws, regulations or treaties. Museum staff abide by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Codes of Ethics with regard to collecting practices and procedures.

The Museum is committed to making information about its collections, and the process by which it acquires material for its collections, available to the public.

b. Relevant Legislation

Particularly relevant to the Museum's collecting activities in this regard are the:

- *Museum Act 1969 and Museum Regulations 1973 (WA)*
- *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018 (Cth)*
- *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973 (WA)* (administered by the Museum) and subsidiary regulations
- *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (Cth)*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)* and the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950 (WA)* and subsidiary regulations
- *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995 (WA)*
- *UNESCO 1975 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)*
- *UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*
- *UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.*

6.4.6 Items from Living Cultures (including archaeological items)

The Museum will accept cultural items the owners of which are still living only in compliance with the wishes of the owners, and on being satisfied that they clearly understand the implications of the Museum accepting the material involved. Appendix 3 – Anthropology and Archaeology contains more information on the handling of such material.

6.4.7 Collecting Animals

Animals shall be collected according to the highest principles of humane, scientific and ethical conduct under the auspices of a recognised Animal Ethics Committee, and under the terms of licence agreements issued by the relevant authorities which include the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions and the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

6.4.8 Sustainability

The Museum will endeavour to minimise any negative impact on the natural and cultural environments that may be brought about in all of its operations. For the Museum, sustainability involves using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs. Sustainability requires simultaneously meeting environmental, economic and community needs.

The Museum endorses Museums Australia's *Museums and Sustainability: Guidelines for Policy and Practice in Museums and Galleries* and promotes sustainability in all aspects of its collecting, collections management and interpretation. It aims:

- a. for sustainable collecting practices in conjunction with community needs and other collecting organisations and individuals;
- b. to ensure that the growth of collections and de-accessioning of items from collections is managed in the context of agreed sustainability goals;
- c. to minimise any negative impact on the natural and cultural environments that may be brought about in all of its operations.

6.4.9 Gifts and Bequests

Gifts and bequests offered to the Museum should be accepted only if they conform to this Policy. The Museum usually only accepts donations, gifts and bequests unconditionally. Gifts or bequests that include special conditions should be refused if they are not in the best interests of the Museum and the general public. Improperly valued or attributed gifts and bequests should not be accepted into the collections, particularly when tax benefits are involved.

Gifts (other than those under the Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, Cultural Gifts Programs and the ATO Philanthropy Program) and bequests are only accepted into the collections accompanied by the Museum's approved Deed of Gift.

6.4.10 Deposition of Types

Authors are required to deposit Western Australian zoological and fossil type material in the collections of the Western Australian Museum under the conditions of the scientific collecting licences currently issued by the Department of Environment and Conservation and other licencing agencies.

6.4.11 Lodgement of Voucher Specimens

Persons undertaking taxonomic, ecological, biogeographical, anatomical or physiological studies on non-domestic animals in Western Australia will be encouraged to lodge in the Western Australian Museum voucher specimens of any taxa referred to in publications, with relevant data. Vouchers may, or may not, be accessioned into the collections depending on curatorial responsibilities, or on other scientific or legal requirements by lodging individuals, organisations and institutions.

6.4.12 Exceptional Collecting of Primary Evidence

In exceptional cases an item (or items) without provenance may provide such an inherently outstanding contribution to knowledge that it would be in the public interest to preserve it. The acceptance of such an item into the Museum Collection should be the subject of a decision by the Executive Director, Collections and Research on advice from specialists in the discipline concerned and without national or international prejudice.

6.4.13 Acquisition of Gifts by Museum Staff

Special care is required in considering any item, whether for sale, as a gift, or as a tax-benefit gift, from members of the Trustees and Museum staff, or the families and close associates of these persons. Such gifts should only be accepted in a manner consistent with the Museum's *Conflict of Interest Policy*.

6.4.14 Acquisitions Outside the Collections Policy

The acquisition of items outside the scope of this Policy should only be made in exceptional circumstances. The Executive Director Collections and Research should consider the professional opinions available to them and the views of all interested parties. Consideration will include the significance of the item, including its context in the relevant areas of cultural or natural heritage, and the special interests of other museums collecting such material. However, even in these circumstances, objects without a legal title should not be acquired.

7 Access to the Collections, Data and Information

7.1 Right of Access

The Museum will give access to the collections and associated 'core' data to those who reasonably seek it, according to guidelines set down periodically by the Executive Director, Collections and Research. For specific Departmental access protocols see Appendices 1-5.

7.2 Publication of Information or Data

The Museum places a priority on obtaining, verifying, analysing and publishing information pertaining to its collections. Although the Museum's entire database is

currently not open to the public, the Museum endeavours to publish (in the public domain) or give public access to as much information and collection data as it can, or as is appropriate. The Museum will not accept responsibility for the use and interpretation of such published information and data by others. The “Western Australian Museum” must be acknowledged as the source of the information or data.

7.3 Access to Research Data and Restricted Data and Information

The Museum will allow access to research data and restricted information only after specific prior approval has been obtained from the person or persons involved, or when it is completely satisfied that the items and related features and data subject to such restriction will not be harmed in any way through the disclosure of information.

7.4 Publication of Customarily Restricted Material

The Museum will not permit the publication or display of customarily restricted matters or items under its control except with the specific prior approval of the original customary owners, or on the advice of competent informants or consultants.

7.5 Loans Protocols (Outgoing and Incoming)

Loans of items from the Collection must be made in accordance with the Museum’s *Loans Policy*. Please refer to the Museum’s *Loans Policy* for further information on loans. The *Loans Policy* also states the conditions on which loans of samples for destructive analysis shall be made by the Museum.

7.6 DNA and Biologically Active Compounds

Museum specimens are a source of DNA sequences and may potentially contain biologically active compounds. Isolation of such sequences and compounds with a view to commercialisation is a growing area of research with complex legal implications not currently resolved in Western Australia. Until the legal implications are resolved and policies and procedures established to manage these arrangements, staff should ensure that specimens, or derivatives from them, are not provided to parties for such commercially orientated research. Where staff believe loaned specimens may be used to undertake such research they should approach the Museum’s Legal Policy Officer and discuss entering into an agreement with the borrower.

7.7 Charging for the Provision of Data, Information and Services

7.7.1 For “Non-Commercial” Purposes

It is a general function of the Museum to make public knowledge acquired through research into the Museum’s collections. However, when requests require staff to devote a significant amount of time, or use significant quantities of Museum materials, it is policy that a charge is made on a cost recovery basis (hourly or daily consultancy rates and replacement cost of materials).

It is important that potential clients are informed in advance of charges for services and materials. It is also important that discretion is exercised when charging for services. For *ad hoc* (non-routine) requests, approval to charge must be given by the Executive Director, Collections and Research.

7.7.2 Commercial

Individuals, institutions or companies that seek to use Museum data, information and services for commercial purposes must be charged. Staff time is to be charged at prescribed consultancy rates determined by the complexity of the work. Approval for commercial charges that apply to each curatorial department must be given by the Executive Director, Collections and Research.

Museum staff who undertake commercial consultancies that may potentially be in competition with commercial enterprise must ensure that there is no breach of Commonwealth Competition Policy and competitive neutrality. The Museum may not obtain competitive advantage in tendering by excluding costs such as overheads.

7.8 Field Notebooks and Images

Field notes and images with provenance and other associated data adjunct to the collections created by a Museum employee while undertaking work for the Museum are the property of the Museum and are regarded as collection items.

7.9 Records of Transactions

Records shall be kept of all transactions involving collection items accessioned and non-accessioned. These records are the property of the Museum and are to be retained and kept in accordance with the *Records Management Policy* and *Your Recordkeeping Responsibilities 2018*.

8 De-accessioning, Disposal and Transfer of the Custodianship of Collection Items

8.1 De-accessioning Principles

The removal and disposal of a collection item from the Museum Collection must only be undertaken with a full understanding of the significance of the item, its character (whether renewable or non-renewable), legal standing, and the attitude

of the community and stakeholders to it. Although one of the key functions of the Museum is to acquire items for the Collection and to hold them in perpetuity for the benefit and enlightenment of future generations, a decision to dispose of an item may be made in line with this clause (8) of the Policy.

8.2 De-accessioning by Curatorial Departments

Curatorial departments may make a decision to de-accession an item from the Collection on the following grounds:

- The item is to be repatriated;
- The item is to be exchanged for another item of similar significance;
- The item is destroyed or damaged beyond repair;
- Full legal title in the item cannot be established;
- The item is proven to be fake;
- The item may be more valuable for advancing knowledge by destructive analysis;
- The item will be more useful as service material.

Heads of Curatorial Departments may establish procedures relating to the de-accession of items under this clause and refer a decision relating to de-accession to the Executive Director, Collections and Research for approval.

8.3 De-accessioning Decisions by the Executive Director, Collections and Research

The Executive Director, Collections and Research may, in consultation with the responsible Head of Department, decide to de-accession an item from the collection on the following grounds:

- The item has significant storage and conservation requirements that outweigh its significance within the Collection;
- The item would be better preserved by another public institution or organisation;
- The item poses an unacceptably high Occupational Health and Safety Risk or risk to public safety;
- The item does not come under this Policy, i.e., it would not have originally been accessioned into the Collection if this Policy had been in force at the time it was accessioned;
- The general circumstances under which the item was originally donated to, or purchased by, the Museum;
- The item is of little significance;
- The item is duplicated within the Collection.

8.4 Legal or Other Powers of Disposal

Where the Museum has legal powers permitting disposals, or has acquired items subject to conditions of disposal, the legal or other requirements and procedures must be complied with fully. If there is any doubt about whether the Museum has powers of disposal in relation to an item, legal advice should be sought.

8.5 Purchase of De-accessioned Items

Museum staff, the Trustees, or their families or close associates, are not permitted to purchase items that have been de-accessioned from the Museum Collection for which they are responsible.

8.6 Income from Disposal of Collection Items

The Museum's collections are held for the benefit of the public and may not be treated as a realisable asset. Money or compensation received from the de-accessioning and disposal of collection items from the Museum's collections should be used solely for the benefit of the collections, and usually for acquisitions to that same collection, or for the conservation of other items in the collection.

8.7 Items of Special Significance to Western Australia

Collection items of special significance to Western Australia shall not be disposed of, except in the case of those that would be more appropriately transferred to and held permanently in another Western Australian public institution.

8.8 Transfer of Cultural Material and Human Remains

The relevant Head of Department is responsible for the transfer of custodianship of any registered cultural materials in the Museum's Collection. Since preservation of cultural materials is one of the primary functions of the Museum, any proposed transfer of custodianship of such material must take into consideration the long-term safety of the collection items. However, the Museum recognises that some cultural material in the collections may be of greater importance in the cultural context of its origin than it is as part of the Museum's Collection. In such cases, the Museum will negotiate with the party concerned about the possible transfer of custodianship of specific registered cultural material. Decisions in this regard are to be referred by the Head of Department to the Executive Director, Collections and Research for approval.

8.9 Aboriginal Secret/Sacred Material and Human Remains

Secret/sacred material whose traditional custodianship is uncertain will be held until consultation with relevant parties is undertaken. Advice received will dictate further disposition of such material. The transfer of Custodianship of registered

Australian Aboriginal secret/sacred material is a matter of negotiation between the Museum and the relevant parties.

8.10 Exchange of Items

Accessioned items (in their entirety) would require formal de-accessioning before being exchanged. However, where items are divisible without loss of scientific value (e.g. a meteorite, mineral, rock, fossil, or tissue sample) and used for scientific research or exchange purposes then this does not constitute de-accession since the main portion of the item remains accessioned in the Collection. Exchange is a mutually beneficial means of depositing material elsewhere and receiving material to enhance the collections.

9 Responsibility for the Collection

9.1 Role of the Trustees

The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the management of the Museum's Collection under the *Museum Act 1969* and the CEO shall report to them on issues of importance that relate to the Collection.

9.2 Curatorial Responsibility for Collection Items

Subject to the terms of this Policy and other procedures of the Museum relating to the Collection, Curators are responsible for the acquisition, registration, preservation and management of collections and associated data within designated fields.

9.3 Responsibility for Collections Policy Implementation

The Executive Director, Collections and Research exercises the following responsibilities for curatorial departments:

- The general implementation of this Policy and Appendices by Curatorial Departments;
- The periodic review of this Policy, to be at least every five years. Specific Departmental collections policies as outlined in the Appendices will be reviewed annually by Curatorial staff and changes to the Appendices shall be approved by the Executive Director, Collections and Research;
- Acquisitions to the Collection that have direct resource implications not previously included in the Museum's approved annual budget and/or an impact on the Museum's public profile and operations. Any such proposed acquisition must be referred to the CEO for approval;

- De-accessioning of items from the Collection undertaken under clause 8.3 of this Policy, in consultation with the responsible Curator and/or Head of Department.

The Executive Director, Collections and Research shall report on these matters to the Board of Trustees through the CEO as the CEO deems appropriate.

9.4 Security of the Collections

Curators, through their Head of Department, are responsible for advising the Executive Director, Collections and Research on security measures required for designated collections and ensuring that these measures are enforced to the extent it is within their power to do so.

9.5 Security of Types

Primary types (holotypes, cotypes, neotypes, lectotypes) shall be given special security, protection and restricted access within the Museum.

9.6 Collection Valuations

The Museum re-values its collections at least every five years in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements under Accounting Standard AASB 13 (Fair Value). The most recent valuation took place in the 2019-20 financial year.

The periodic valuations are carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced independent valuer, typically combining individual valuation of high value and/or iconic items with statistical sampling of remaining collection items. Individual items may be valued outside of this cycle for operational purposes (e.g., to establish insurance values for loans) or to value new acquisitions on behalf of a donor.

Museum staff shall not give monetary valuations or appraisals to the public of items within their official area of expertise unless there is a Museum related business need for them to do so (e.g., valuing an inward loan for insurance purposes).

9.7 Audit and Stocktake Procedures

Systematically sighting and verifying collection items as part of a regular stocktake is an important process in the overall care, management, custody and stewardship of cultural and scientific collections.

Treasurers Instruction 406, *Custody of Public Property*, paragraph 1 states that “Assets must be checked against the particulars recorded in the asset register or record of assets at such times as the accountable authority determines, with a complete check being undertaken at least once every three financial years”.

On 26 April 2019, the Museum obtained from the Department of Treasury a partial exemption from this requirement, subject to undertaking a risk-based and sampling approach to asset verification.

Research and Collections has implemented a planned program of audit and stocktake procedures covering all collections over a five-year cycle, including but not necessarily limited to:

- Complete full (100%) stocktake of all high value and iconic items;
- Complete full (100%) stocktake of all high value scientific specimens (holotypes);
- Random sampling of non-iconic/non-holotype material;
- Stocktakes targeted to items with special storage requirements (e.g. large specimen ethanol store), or where specific risks can be identified (e.g. historic firearms).

10 Sources, Standards and Guidelines

- International Committee of Museums (ICOM) - *Code of Ethics for Museums*
- *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*
- *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973 (WA)*
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (“The Hague Convention” First Protocol, 1954, and Second Protocol, 1999); Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO, 1970); Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (Washington, 1973)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (UN, 1992)
- Convention on Stolen and Illicitly Exported Cultural Objects (UNIDROIT, 1995)
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2001)
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, 2003)
- Australasian Institute for Maritime Archaeology (AIMA) Code of Ethics
- Australian Institute of Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) Code of Ethics
- Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities: Principles and Guidelines for Australian Museums Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage (Museums Australia 2005)
- Collections Council of Australia
- CIDOC, The International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-CIDOC)

- SPNH, “Guidelines for the Care of Natural History Collections” (www.spnhc.org)
- Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections (Collections Council of Australia 2009)
- *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*, (Commonwealth Ministry for the Arts, 2014)



Appendix 1 – Natural Sciences Collection Policy

1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

In the Natural Sciences (Terrestrial Zoology, Aquatic Zoology, and Earth & Planetary Sciences) the Museum will:

- a. Principally collect and research the natural heritage of Western Australia. However, as natural distributions may extend beyond the State's political boundaries, the scope of collections and research may extend outside the State in cases where strong natural affinities or conditions of special relevance exist. The most important external regions of natural affinity for the living fauna are the rest of Australia and the Indonesian/Papuan region from which much of our tropical element is derived. Some vertebrate groups and many invertebrates and fossils are of Gondwanan origin and their study requires a global perspective. Earth science studies in general also have a Gondwanan, global and temporal perspective.
- b. Produce an Operational Plan defining all activities on a project basis against which budgetary allocations can be assessed.
- c. Regularly review the performance and relevance of existing projects to any sub-program's objectives.
- d. Develop collections selectively in line with the Museum's general principles of acquisition. Only specimens that will improve the quality of collections or databases in terms of geographical, temporal, biological and geological representativeness will be collected. Duplication will only extend to the minimum number of specimens required for representation of variation or specific research requirements, specimen exchange and educational purposes.
- e. Give priority to obtaining specimens of taxa which are under-represented (including geographically) in the collections.
- f. Acquire specimens through purpose-driven and targeted fieldwork by staff, by soliciting donations, by exchange, or by purchase.
- g. Ensure that authors deposit Western Australian type specimens of animals and fossils in the Western Australian Museum, and forward two copies of relevant publications to the Museum Librarian.
- h. Only acquire and or import/export specimens in compliance with applicable State, national and international licence/permit requirements and conventions.
- i. Collect fauna and Earth science materials in compliance with permit conditions specified by licencing authorities, and, in the case of fauna, by an approved Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee and DEC collecting licences.

- j. Take into account costs, both immediate and ongoing, when adding to the collections, as well as constraints such as quality and quantity of storage facilities.
- k. Collect, prepare and preserve specimens so that their potential future research use is maximised.
- l. Collect frozen soft tissues and tissues stored in ethanol to accommodate requirements of modern biochemical and genetic research techniques. The costs of storing frozen tissue are significant and these collections will not aim to be representative of the fauna and duplicate the general collections, but will be made selectively, targeted at resolving known taxonomic problems. The tissue collections will be data based and related, where possible, to registered specimens in the collection. General principles covering destructive research are provided in the Loans Policy and Procedures section 5.3. In addition to these, the following specific policies will be applied:
 - All tissues will only be made available for research as formal specimen loans, conditional on any unused material being returned to the Museum if requested;
 - the provision of an undertaking not to pass tissue on to a third party;
 - payment of a fee to recover costs of acquisition and storage (may be waived in the case of collaborative research);
 - appropriate acknowledgement of the Museum in publications;
 - access to research results; and
 - acceptance of legal liability for potential danger posed by viral and other possible pathogenic contamination.
- m. Ensure that all the collections are accessible to the community within limitations set by maintaining their security, exercising control of the database, and availability of staff.
- n. Make loans of specimens to the heads of relevant research institutions or organisations (not to individuals). Loans will normally be made only to museums and other *bona fide* research institutions such as universities. Decisions on whether to lend specimens will take into account their significance, availability, and vulnerability to damage.
- o. Conduct research principally in systematics (see definitions 3.13), an important outcome of which is the provision of scientific names – a fundamental requirement for legislation, conservation and other fields of research.
- p. Encourage and solicit research on the collections by workers from interstate and overseas, particularly in those groups where the Museum does not have specialist staff.
- q. Publish the results of research in reputable refereed journals.

- r. Disseminate authoritative information derived by research through all available media and in forms that cater for the needs of the community at all levels.
- s. Maximise commercial returns that may be derived from consultancy services, collection databases and of image and artworks collections (provided in accordance with the Museum's collections and intellectual property policies).

2. Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

2.1 Department of Aquatic Zoology

The Department will:

- a. Encompass all the major groups of aquatic animals, including fishes, echinoderms, molluscs, crustaceans, worms, sponges, ascidians, bryozoans, brachiopods, and cnidarians* and some terrestrial groups such as land snails. (Groups not covered are protozoa, because of the substantially different approach required for their collection and preservation, and micro molluscs which are an area of expertise of other museums. For species conservation and storage rationalization purposes, the department **will not collect** multiple specimens of species that can be recognized *in situ* in the field. Specific specimens will be collected when experts have discretionary ability in the field such as hand collecting on SCUBA, but if collecting is destructive, e.g. remote equipment in deepwater, all material is retained with the intent of redistributing this to collections institutions.
- b. Concentrate collecting and research effort within the above groups on the following.
 - (i) Tropical and temperate reef fishes of W.A. and adjacent tropical areas, because of public and scientific interest in them.
 - (ii) Western Australian and New Guinea freshwater fishes, because of their taxonomic affinities. The W.A. fauna is also of particular conservation concern because of the progressive degradation of freshwater habitat.
 - (iii) Sponges of W.A. and adjacent tropical and temperate areas because of the current inadequate knowledge about their taxonomy, their economic importance due to their biomedical potential, and their ecological significance in marine communities.
 - (iv) Diversity of Australian reef crustaceans with particular emphasis on decapods crustaceans, because of their role in ecosystem functioning, economic and scientific interest, high diversity and poor regional knowledge.
 - (v) Australian barnacles (Cirripedia) because they are of economic significance as fouling organisms on ships and marine structures and are widely distributed around the continent.

- (vi) Marine molluscs of W.A. and adjacent tropical areas, because of public interest and the paucity of systematic knowledge, and because of evidence they provide on changes in climatic conditions.
 - (vii) Land snails, because of the paucity of systematic knowledge and they provide information on past climatic conditions and evolutionary mechanisms. Species of short-range endemism are of conservation significance.
 - (viii) WA marine resource species for which commercial fisheries exist or may potentially exist (e.g. oysters, prawns, giant clams, mussels, squids, octopus etc.) or which are vulnerable to exploitation by collectors (e.g. cowries).
 - (ix) Benthic marine invertebrates that are poorly known in the State e.g. bryozoans, brachiopods, or in areas where they have not been well collected e.g. sponges, ascidians, cnidarians and echinoderms.
 - (x) Introduced marine organisms and those whose change of geographic range indicates climatic change.
 - (xi) Deep water marine fauna of WA because of current inadequate knowledge.
- c. Continue to database collections and work towards a Museum-wide Collections Management Information System.
 - d. Respond to the public need for information, displays popular publications (including web sites) on topics of particular interest or concern, e.g. identification guides for aquatic animals, potentially dangerous marine animals and introduced species and animals of particular habitats. e.g. fauna associated with coral, animal gardens e.g. seagrass fauna, kelp fauna and reef fauna. These will also increase knowledge of the biodiversity of the State and potential threats and impacts.

**Currently marine mammals are included within the terrestrial vertebrates' sub-program of the Department of Terrestrial Zoology.*

2.2 Department of Terrestrial Zoology

The invertebrate sub-program will:

- a. Encompass all the major groups of terrestrial invertebrate animals of taxonomic, ecological or economic interest and hence of importance to the community, namely insects, arachnids and other arthropods.
- b. Concentrate effort within the above groups on the following:
 - (i) Native bees (chiefly Stenotritidae and Colletidae), because they include important specific pollinators of native plants and species which may have potential as pollinators of crops.

- (ii) Earth-borer beetles (Bolboceratidae) because of their importance to plant health through the dispersal of spores of beneficial mycorrhizal fungi.
 - (iii) Spiders, scorpions and millipedes of Australia, because of inadequate taxonomic knowledge, their ecological importance and public concern that some are potentially dangerous.
 - (iv) Ecology and biogeography of selected invertebrate groups.
 - (v) Ecology of invertebrates of remnant bushlands in Perth metropolitan, because of inadequacy of knowledge and their pivotal role in ecosystems.
 - (vi) Stygofauna and troglifauna of subterranean habitats, because their taxonomy is inadequately known and they provide information on relictual Tethyan taxa.
- c. Continue to database collections and work towards a Museum-wide Collections Management Information System.
 - d. Respond to the need for popular publications (or web sites) on topics of particular public interest or concern, e.g. identification of potentially dangerous animals such as spiders and scorpions, or economically or ecologically important insects.
 - e. As resources become available, increase the rate of development of collections of insects and spiders, because the taxonomy of both groups is seriously inadequate and they are of major ecological and economic significance.

The vertebrate sub-program will:

- a. Encompass all the major groups of terrestrial vertebrate animals of taxonomic, ecological or economic interest and hence of importance to the community, namely mammals (including marine mammals), birds, reptiles (including marine reptiles) and amphibians.
- b. Concentrate its collections and research effort on the following:
 - (i) Bats (Chiroptera) of Australia, New Guinea and the Oriental Region, because they have close natural affinities, their taxonomy is inadequately known and they provide information on the origins and affinities of the W.A. fauna.
 - (ii) Rodents of Australia, New Guinea and S.E. Asia for reasons as in (i) above. Approximately one third of the native mammal fauna are rodents.
 - (iii) All other native mammals of W.A., because their taxonomy is inadequately known, they provide information on the origins and affinities of the W.A. fauna, and because of public interest and concern for their conservation.

- (iv) Taxonomy and biology of whales and dolphins (Cetacea) of W.A. and adjacent seas, because of the 12500 km coastline of W.A. the Museum is well placed for this work.
 - (v) Taxonomy of Australian snakes, lizards, legless lizards (Pygopodidae) and frogs. W.A. has a particularly rich and scientifically important reptile fauna because of its size and aridity. There is particular public concern about potentially dangerous snakes.
 - (vi) Taxonomy of mangrove birds and seabirds of W.A. and adjacent regions. W.A. mangroves are extensive and ecologically fragile and a rich avian fauna is restricted to them. W.A. has a particularly rich seabird fauna and important breeding sites.
 - (vii) Dissemination of information on the birds of W.A. and Indonesia, particularly through publication of handbooks, because of public and scientific interest.
 - (viii) Ecology and biogeography of Australian reptiles for reasons as in (v) above.
 - (ix) Ecology of native vertebrates of remnant bushlands in the Perth metropolitan area. Their persistence is in jeopardy and is a matter of community concern.
- c. Continue to database collections and work towards a Museum-wide Collections Management Information System.
 - d. Respond to the need for popular publications (web sites) on topics of particular public interest or concern, e.g. identification of potentially dangerous animals such as snakes, or conspicuous ones such as birds, and information on endangered species and their habitats.

2.3 Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

The Department will:

- a. Encompass all fossils (including plants*), minerals, rocks, gems, meteorites and tektites (and related impactites). It will also incorporate sub-fossil remains of recently extinct fauna. The Department **will generally not collect** microfossils such as pollen spores and foraminifera. However, other microfossils such as microvertebrates and Early Cambrian small shelly fossils will be covered.

**Modern plants are the responsibility of the W.A. Herbarium (now part of the Department of Parks and Wildlife).*

- b. Concentrate its collections and research effort on the following.
 - (i) Mesozoic and Cenozoic echinoids (sea urchins) because of their scientific significance, application in dating rock strata and the insight they provide on evolutionary theory and the origins of the modern fauna and palaeoceanography.

- (ii) Mesozoic ammonites for reasons as in (i) above.
- (iii) Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic brachiopods for reasons as in (i) above.
- (iv) Paleozoic crinoids (echinoderms) and arthropods (including trace fossils), for reasons as in (i) above.
- (v) Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic molluscs, for reasons as in (i) above and because they provide information on past climatic and environmental conditions, particularly the Swan Coastal Plain.
- (vi) Cenozoic plants, because these rare fossils will be required for future research on the origins of the W.A. flora and current sites are not secure.
- (vii) Devonian fishes, because the best examples in the world occur in the Kimberley. They are important for developing evolutionary theory of early vertebrates.
- (viii) Mesozoic and Cenozoic vertebrates because of scientific and public interest (e.g., dinosaurs and giant sharks), and relevance to evolutionary and palaeogeographical theories of Mesozoic vertebrates.
- (ix) Pleistocene and Holocene mammals of W.A., because they provide information on the origins and former distributions of the present fauna and distributions of recently extinct species.
- (x) Develop collections of Precambrian stromatolites and Paleozoic fossils as resources become available, because they are extremely well represented in W.A. as compared with elsewhere and are of scientific importance.
- (xi) Minerals (including rocks and gems) of W.A., because of public and scientific interest and the significance of mineral exploitation in the State's economy. Particular emphasis is given to the acquisition, documentation and paragenesis (origin and evolution) of mineral species (and mineral suites/deposits) from localities in W.A. However, comparatively few mineral species are so far unique to Western Australia (<1%), and some known minerals have yet to be recorded from the State. Therefore, in order to provide comparative material for research and education, it is often necessary to acquire specimens of minerals from localities other than in W.A.
- (xii) Meteorites (vested in the Museum under the *Museum Act 1969*) because the Nullarbor Region is one of the most important areas of the world for meteorite recoveries. Because of their extra-terrestrial origin, meteorites (though named geographically) are not geographically classified and are therefore regarded as an international research resource. W.A. material will be made available for approved research projects by loan, gift for destructive research or, where appropriate, by exchange.

- (xiii) Australasian tektites, including australites (those found in Australia), originated from a giant asteroidal impact at an as yet unidentified site in Indochina. Tektites are incidental to collecting meteorites (e.g. from the Nullarbor) and are of scientific importance in understanding impact processes.
- (xiv) W.A. has many sites that have been recognised to varying degrees of certainty as of impact origin. Impactites (rocks altered as the result of impact processes) are important in determining the ages of impact structures and craters in W.A. This allows an estimation of the rate of potentially catastrophic impact with Earth over time.
- c. Continue to database collections and work towards a Museum-wide Collections Management Information System.
- d. Register all fossil, mineral, rock, gem, meteorite and tektite specimens.
- e. Respond to the need for popular publications (web sites) on topics of particular public interest, e.g. fossil guides, sites of geoh heritage interest in W.A. and items unique to W.A. Continue and strengthen public outreach programs in the Earth Sciences.



Appendix 2 – History Department Collection Policy

1. Rationale

1.1 General Statement

The history of Western Australia's peoples, and their interrelations with each other and with the environment, is fundamentally diverse. The Museum is committed to the collection of material that represents the multiplicity of Western Australia's social, cultural and environmental experiences.

The history collections of the Western Australian Museum will represent variations of:

- ethnicity
- gender
- class
- race
- age
- disability
- other social or cultural variations, including those represented by political and economic status
- environment

The Museum recognises the importance and significance of material being retained within the communities to whom it belongs, and to this end will actively encourage and assist the development of collections and the preservation of material culture by the communities themselves.

The History collection includes, for example, historical vehicles, agricultural equipment, costumes and textiles, furniture, arms and military history, numismatics and philately. It features collections reflecting the early Swan River Colony, convictism, Indigenous life, the story of migration, making-do, working life including gold mining history, the Arnott, Mills and Ware Cake and Biscuit Factory, domestic work, office work and various trades, as well as a significant collection of trade union banners. In 2009 the History department acquired the Edith Cowan University Museum of Childhood Collection, the most significant collection of childhood material culture in Australia.

1.2 Collection Aims

- To preserve and record the diverse social, cultural and environmental heritage of Western Australia.
- To represent the full range of social and cultural experiences in Western Australian life.

- To represent the broad environmental, geographic, economic and political range of those experiences, in both individual and group contexts.
- To document social, cultural and environmental change as experienced or resisted by diverse communities and the impacts of that change.
- To reflect contemporary issues in the diverse communities of Western Australia.
- To promote the active involvement of ethnic, migrant and minority communities in the work of the History Department.
- To redress the imbalance of the Museum's history collection which currently emphasises Anglo heritage.
- To redress the lack of social and cultural context of objects in the History collection.
- To build a public culture which reflects the cultural diversity of Australian society.

2. Collection Strategy

2.1 Determinants for Acquisition

The acquisition of material will be guided by significance assessment procedures outlined in the Heritage Collections Council's, *Significance: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Cultural Heritage Objects and Collections*, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001 and *Significance 2* by Collections Council of Australia, Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009 (as later amended). Procedures include provenance and due diligence as mentioned above in 6.4.6 and 6.4.7.

The Department will not acquire:

- Duplicate items, unless necessary for display purposes or for purposes of preservation where the material of the object is vulnerable. In these cases, only two examples of an object would usually be accessioned.
- Items which cannot reasonably be stabilised, conserved, stored, displayed or researched should not be accepted.
- Items in competition with other collecting institutions.

2.2 Acquisition Procedure

Every acquisition should be approved by an Acquisitions Committee comprising the History Department's curators and Registrar, and co-opted members as required.

Underpinning these procedures an active process of community consultation should be in place. Community consultation and involvement of members of relevant communities should be encouraged at all stages.

In cases where the regular Acquisitions Committee cannot determine if an object should be accessioned, or if reasonable concern exists regarding the political or other implications of the acquisition of an object, the case should be referred to one or more of the following:

- The Executive Director, Collections and Research.
- Representative authorities of the community concerned.

Since the collection of an object by the Museum implies that the object will be removed from its original or current context, it is recognised that in many instances it may be more appropriate for the object to remain within that context. The desire of a community to maintain its own objects or collections should be respected in all instances.

2.3 Collection of Associated Material/Information

The collection of an object implies a responsibility to acquire information associated with that object, including place, date and method of use, and preferably a detailed account of social and/or cultural context, both physical and non-physical.

Photographs, video and oral accounts should be collected in association with the object wherever possible.

2.4 Accessioning of Objects

In addition to normal Museum accessioning procedures, particular attention should be paid to the documentation of any restrictions of access, display or other use placed on the object by the donor or seller.

3. Research/Interpretation

3.1 Research Strategies

The History Department recognises the commitment to research required in the process of representing and recording cultural diversity. Its research strategies will therefore include:

- Consultation with communities, including public and individual meetings, discussion groups and other means of developing mutually productive and trusting working relationships.
- The documentation of immovable heritage or the facilitation of that documentation as appropriate (e.g. photo documentation).
- The facilitation of research projects targeting specific groups, using individuals drawn from those groups where appropriate.
- The utilisation of a broad range of resources including libraries, archives, video, oral recordings, photographs and other collections of material culture.
- The establishment of co-operative relationships with tertiary and other institutions undertaking research in the fields of history, environmental history,

ethnology, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, science and related fields.

- The inclusion of diverse views of the past and diverse ways of interpreting the past.

3.2 Analytical Context

The Department recognises the analytical complexities of interpretation and broader considerations of cultural diversity. It will maintain links with, and contribute to, the development of intellectual trends in this area.

4. Access

4.1 Accessibility

Education and outreach programs will be aimed towards improving access to the Museum's displays by and for specific groups.

The Department will publicise its activities as widely as possible, including relevant media advertising and direct contact with members of relevant groups.

Where possible, and when particularly relevant, the Museum will endeavour to present information in more than one language.

4.2 General Access to Objects/Information

It is recognised that objects pertaining to particular communities should be readily accessible by those communities. [Access in this instance implies the ability, with adequate notice, to see objects]. Access does not imply that standard museum practice, including conservation principles, can be overlooked.

Access to the Arms and Armour collection is detailed in departmental procedures that may be made available on request to the Head of Department.

4.3 Access for Research Purposes

Objects, associated documentation and the database of object information should be available to any member of the public who is undertaking research, subject to restrictions relating to confidentiality (such as cultural restrictions, donor's address, or purchase price) and the resource capabilities of the Museum.

When undertaking research, a member of the public, student or researcher, will at all times be supervised by a staff member of the Department.

Results of research undertaken should be made available to the Museum; the Department reserves the right to confirm the accuracy of data based on its collections.

The History Department will make public any research or research findings it has compiled (unless restrictions are applied by the subject/s of that research).

5. Exhibition

The History Department undertakes to represent the cultural diversity of Western Australia in its exhibition programs, and to represent communities with impartiality.

To promote appreciation of the material heritage of the diverse cultures of Western Australia, privately-owned objects will be borrowed where possible for exhibition.

Where appropriate the Department will consult with relevant individuals or communities to be represented in an exhibition and continue that consultation during the development and installation of that exhibition.

Where possible, the History Department will provide advice to community groups seeking to mount their own social/cultural history displays.

6. Other Objectives

The Department recognises the importance and significance of material being retained within the communities to whom it belongs and to this end will actively encourage and assist the development of collections and the preservation of material culture by the communities themselves.

Since the Department cannot practically develop or manage large object collections or research projects relating to the State's cultural diversity, it will establish links with similar institutions or individuals - local, rural as well as interstate. Co-operative programs will be sought with the latter.

As part of the continuing documentation of the State's diverse cultural, social and environmental heritage, the Department will, where possible, document immovable objects and structures, including buildings exteriors and interiors. It will also give due consideration to intangible elements of that heritage.



Appendix 3 – Anthropology and Archaeology Department Collection Policy

1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

In Anthropology and Archaeology, the Museum will:

- give priority to the cultural material representing traditional, historical and contemporary Aboriginal cultures, enhancing Aboriginal cultures of other states where appropriate or strategic to do so.
- actively involve staff in fieldwork to collect artefacts
- establish and maintain good rapport with communities whose cultural material is represented in the Museum's collections, involving them in issues of representation of this material and of their cultures in general
- ensure that research and collecting also encompass WA historic archaeology, as well as other world cultures especially those already represented in collections, e.g. SE Asia, the Pacific [including Papua New Guinea] and Africa
- ensure that collections are made accessible to researchers and relevant communities. Research results should also be made available to originating communities. Field collection and research should be informed by current best practice.
- collaborate with other Departments in interpreting and representing contemporary issues (e.g. sustainability, popular culture, multiculturalism, racism, environmental history) and cultural groups (e.g. Greeks, Italians, sporting groups, youth, etc.)

2. Specific Strategic policies on Collections and Research

The Trustees of the Western Australian Museum adopted the Museums Australia document "Previous Possession, New Obligations" as the policy document covering the broad range of activities relating to the management of Aboriginal collections. The Department also maintains more specific policies relating to the day to day management of its collections, including the foreign ethnographic and photography collections.

In regard to the Acquisition of Cultural Material:

- i. The Trustees and CEO will designate those staff members with responsibilities for acquiring cultural materials.
- ii. The highest priority for acquisition is Western Australian Aboriginal material. The Museum seeks to work with Aboriginal communities to ensure that the collection continues to be representative of Aboriginal people's experiences and reflecting traditional, historical and contemporary lifestyles, and the

dynamic and rich fabric of their culture. Collecting also focuses on changing significance of materials to source communities, role of individual artist and artisans, and various details of production: e.g. material, links with country, trade implications. This material may be acquired during fieldwork, through donation or purchased.

- iii. Western Australian Aboriginal and historic archaeological material is also a high priority. Collection of Aboriginal archaeological material is subject to the provisions of the *Aboriginal Heritage Act, 1972 -1980*, at least in so far as its collection can only be made with a permit issued under that legislation. In the past the Museum was the legal repository of all Aboriginal archaeological material collected between 1972 and 1995. Currently, in accord with administrative guidelines from the Department of Indigenous Affairs, Aboriginal communities retain archaeological material. More recently, collected Aboriginal archaeological material may also be lodged if that is the wish of traditional owners.
- iv. The Museum also has an extensive collection from world cultures. This collection represents many indigenous groups from around the world, but particularly South East Asia, Africa, Papua New Guinea and Oceania. We continue to conduct research elucidating these collections and add complementary items where possible. This research and collection is particularly relevant to Society and Environment secondary school courses, as well as to Western Australians who have come from these countries. This category may be collected on fieldwork, donated or occasionally purchased.
- v. The Museum would normally accept, but not actively seek, Aboriginal material from other Australian States. The Museum would, in some cases suggest that such material would be of greater use in another museum. This concerns donated material only.
- vi. The Museum notes the lack of representation of displaced First Nations Peoples in its collections. With the marked changes in demography of immigration and 'new' settler societies into Australia, the early collections of world cultures material assume an altered relevance.
- vii. The Museum seeks to collect items that reflect issues of globalised economies, appropriation of cultural iconography, popular culture, social issues such as forced resettlement, warfare, starvation, resilience. These items are sourced predominantly by donation. These are commonly items not produced in Western Australia.
- viii. The Museum also seeks to fulfil its wider cultural educational role by holding and displaying material relating to past societies such as Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. Such material may be purchased or accepted through donation (e.g. the Egyptian collection – research and collecting is enhanced by WAMCAES – WA Museum Centre for Ancient Egyptian Studies launched in 1999).
- ix. Departmental staff will consider the possibility of items deriving from the illicit trafficking of cultural property and review UNESCO lists of stolen cultural

property [<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/>] as part of Due Diligence and Provenance procedures/assessments. Where there is a concern over legal title not being established prior to donation specialist advice might be sought from the Museum's Legal and Policy advisor and the State Solicitor's Office

- x. The Department also collects items that reflect the history of the Anthropology & Archaeology department [e.g. outdated field equipment] and of the disciplines
- xi. The Museum may accept Aboriginal secret/sacred material to remove it from the commercial market. This category of material is the focus of current joint National/State repatriation programs.

3. Access Protocols

3.1 Overarching policy document is:

- (i) '*Previous Possessions, New Obligations*' adopted by the Trustees as Museum policy in 1993, which gives primacy to Aboriginal interests in collections of Aboriginal materials [including images]; The issues of cultural sensitivity that are embedded in the use of images relating to Aboriginal peoples are complex.
- (ii) The Museum requires anyone wishing to use an image of Aboriginal people or objects to obtain permission from the relevant community [or at the very least from WA Museum's Aboriginal Advisory Committee (WAMAAC)] before the image will be released.

3.2 Secret and Sacred Collections

The Australian Aboriginal Secret/Sacred collection is declared a limited access collection. Only those individuals with traditional rights of access to such material will be permitted entry. Others seeking entry must be supported by those with traditional rights of access.

The collection is housed in a special storeroom. All access to this store must be approved by the relevant Curator, Anthropology and Archaeology [male].

All visits to the store will be recorded in a register in that store.

3.3 Ancestral Remains Store

The Ancestral Remains store [Human Skeletal Material] is declared a limited access area. Entry to this store must be approved by the Head of Department, Anthropology and Archaeology.

Access to the collection is restricted to Aboriginal community representatives, scientific research workers whose programs are approved by relevant community, and staff or consultants working to prepare Ancestral Remains for repatriation.

The collection is housed in a special store, and all entry to the store by anyone other than department staff will be recorded in a register kept in that store.

The Museum subscribes to the CAMD (Council of Australasian Museum Directors) protocol on human skeletal collections.



Appendix 4 – Maritime Archaeology Department Collection Policy

1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

In Maritime Archaeology the Western Australian Maritime Museum will:

- 1.1 Principally collect and research the maritime archaeological cultural heritage of Western Australia in order to provide a comprehensive range of multi-disciplinary exhibitions and public activities representing Western Australia's maritime cultural heritage, to ensure that representative examples of the State's maritime cultural heritage are preserved and used by the general and scientific community for research, education and recreation; and, to manage the State's maritime cultural heritage sites for the benefit of the community.
- 1.2 The scope of the collection and research may extend outside the State in cases where strong maritime cultural affinities or conditions of special relevance exist. The most important external regions are the rest of Australia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean region and Europe from which comparable maritime cultural heritage material is derived.
- 1.3 Produce an annual Operational Plan that defines all activities on a project basis against which budgetary allocations can be assessed.
- 1.4 Regularly review the performance and relevance of existing projects to the sub-program's objectives.
- 1.5 Acquire maritime culture heritage objects through purpose-driven fieldwork by staff, donation by members of the public or other organizations, or if necessary by purchase.
- 1.6 Ensure that material is collected and documented in compliance with applicable Australian and international legislation and accepted codes of practice and ethics.
- 1.7 Only acquire and or import/export specimens in compliance with applicable State, national and international licence/permit requirements and conventions.
- 1.8 Not acquire foreign historic shipwreck artefacts held by private interests except in accord with relevant Australian legislation, international conventions and internationally accepted codes of ethics.
- 1.9 Take into account costs, both immediate and ongoing, when adding to collections, as well as constraints such as quality and capacity of storage facilities and conservation.
- 1.10 Ensure that historic shipwreck sites and associated material are conserved and protected as a cultural resource.
- 1.11 Maintain a comprehensive register of historic shipwreck sites and artefacts recovered from historic shipwreck sites in compliance with statutory requirements.

- 1.12 Maintain a comprehensive register of maritime archaeological sites and artefacts recovered from maritime archaeological sites in compliance with statutory requirements.
- 1.13 Ensure that all collections are accessible to the community within limitations set by maintaining their security, state of preservation and integrity, exercising control of the database and availability of staff.
- 1.14 Conduct research into maritime archaeological and maritime historical themes.
- 1.15 Encourage and solicit research on the collections by workers from interstate and overseas, particularly in areas where the Museum does not have specialist staff.
- 1.16 Publish the results of research in reputable refereed journals.
- 1.17 Disseminate authoritative information derived by research through all available media and in forms that cater for the needs of the community at all levels.
- 1.18 Maximize commercial returns that may be derived from consultancy services, collections databases and of image and artworks collections (provided in accordance with the Museum's collections and intellectual property policies).

2. Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

The Department of Maritime Archaeology will:

- 2.1 Collect maritime archaeological material associated with historic shipwrecks located in the Territorial and State waters of Western Australia in compliance with the Commonwealth *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976*, the State *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973*; the principles embodied in the AIMA/ACDO *Guidelines for the management of Australia's shipwrecks*; and, the UNESCO 2001 *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*.
- 2.2 Encompass all major types of wood, iron and steam historic ships/shipwrecks/relics¹; archaeological material from protected maritime archaeological sites²; archaeological material from maritime heritage sites³ with relevance to historic shipwrecks and/or historic ships and their activity on the coast of Western Australia.

¹ The terms 'historic ship', 'historic shipwreck' and 'historic relic' refer to wrecks/relics afforded protection under the State and Commonwealth Acts.

² A 'maritime archaeological site' is defined in Section 4 (1) of the State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973. It may be situated below low water mark, on or between the tide marks, or on land, or partly in one place and partly in another (see State Maritime Archaeology Act 1973 section 4 (2)).

³ A 'maritime heritage site' is an historic site not presently afforded protection under shipwreck legislation but deemed to be of cultural and historical significance in the interpretation of maritime cultural heritage, both for maritime history and maritime archaeology.

- 2.3 Endeavour to pursue the National Research Strategy proposed by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment as part of the National Historic Shipwrecks Program.
- 2.4 The Department shall concentrate its research, collection and general priorities on the following:
 - 2.4.1 Artefacts recovered from underwater shipwreck sites during the course of museum fieldwork—site inspection, survey, excavation and management.
 - 2.4.2 Artefacts and human skeletal material recovered from maritime archaeological sites on land.
 - 2.4.3 Artefacts recovered from maritime heritage sites associated with historic ships/shipwrecks.
 - 2.4.4 The encouragement of co-operative arrangements in maritime archaeological research and building of connections with institutions/organizations/individuals undertaking related fields of research.
 - 2.4.5 The maintenance of a comprehensive register/database of maritime archaeological and maritime heritage material in the following categories:
 - a. Artefacts recovered from State/Commonwealth protected shipwreck/maritime archaeological sites in compliance with statutory requirements of the Acts;
 - b. Artefacts recovered from unidentified shipwreck and/or maritime archaeological sites;
 - c. Artefacts recovered from unprotected, identified shipwreck sites (i.e. not yet within the legal time frame (75 years) for protection);
 - d. Artefacts submitted for identification and found to be associated with an historic shipwreck;
 - e. Historic relics' confiscated as a result of legal action; and
 - f. Objects associated with historic ships (e.g. lost anchors);
 - 2.4.6 Objects accepted as donations will only include the following categories:
 - a. privately registered under the Commonwealth and/or State Acts;
 - b. unregistered material donated under Amnesty arrangements;
 - c. objects having acquired protective status under the Commonwealth 'blanket legislation' (i.e. on attaining 75-year date);
 - d. objects having a significant social, cultural, historical or technological association with an historic shipwreck;

- e. objects in category (d) transferred by Deed of Gift from another museum and/or institution;
- f. anchors from non-historic underwater sites and/or designated moorings for use in public outreach display programs;
- g. replicas of shipwreck relics that may provide examples for comparative analysis and/or for display purposes; and
- h. objects legally acquired or donated for research, study and/or educational purposes.

2.4.7 The Department of Maritime Archaeology will not acquire foreign historic shipwreck artefacts held by private interests except in accord with relevant Australian legislation, international conventions and internationally accepted codes of ethics.

2.4.8 The department of Maritime Archaeology may purchase:

- a. registered historic shipwreck relics permitted for sale under the *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* that will significantly enhance the current research collections; and
- b. objects having a significant social, cultural, historical or technological association with an historic shipwreck, e.g. ship models.

2.4.9 As matters of general principle and priority, the Department of Maritime Archaeology will also:

- a. Develop a register of historic shipwreck relics for incorporation into a national database;
- b. Extend facilities for public access to the collections database;
- c. Respond to the public need for popular publications, web sites and lectures on topics of particular interest or concern;
- d. Respond to the public need for the inclusion of maritime archaeological material in regional thematic displays and public programs; and
- e. Comply with the comply with decisions and directions of the 1972 ANCODS Committee as applicable from time to time.



Appendix 5 – Maritime History Department Collection Policy

1. General Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

In Maritime History Department of the Western Australian Maritime Museum will:

- 1.1 Collect, research, conserve, and preserve ethnographic materials representing the maritime industries, communities, history and heritage of Western Australia to develop a comprehensive range of multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural collections for use by the general and scientific community for research, education, public programs, multi-media and recreation.

The scope of collecting extends to Indian Ocean ethnographic materials where these provide a broader context to Western Australia's maritime history and heritage.

- 1.2 Produce annual Operational Plans to define our activities and projects and use of resources in undertaking these activities.
- 1.3 Regularly review the performance and relevance of existing projects to the sub-program's objectives.
- 1.4 Take into account the priorities of the WA Museum, and commitments of the Department, including short, medium, and ongoing impact on resources, storage, and the exhibition potential/public program potential of materials.
- 1.5 Ensure that all materials are acquired, provenanced, and documented in compliance with applicable Australian and international legislation and professional standards of codes of practice and ethics.
- 1.6 Maintain a comprehensive register of maritime history and heritage artefacts acquired by the Department, including artefacts that may be borrowed or on loan to the Museum, in compliance with the WA Museum's statutory requirements.
- 1.7 Ensure that acquisitions, deaccessions, and care of the collections are informed by significance assessments.
- 1.8 Conduct and encourage maritime historical research for publication, exhibition, public programs, and assist the public with their general inquiries; and ensure that research represents significant stories and interests of our diverse and changing communities.
- 1.9 Disseminate authoritative information derived by research through all available media and informs that cater for the needs of the community at all levels.

2. Specific Strategic Policies on Collections and Research

The collecting policy of the Department of Maritime History is concentrated on developing the Department's Digital Research Database to build a comprehensive range of multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural collections as an integral element of

the Department's original research for publication and, subject to intellectual property and copyright policies, for use by the general and scientific community. The current research priorities are:

- Shipping movements, immigration, emigration, arrivals and departures, cargoes, trades and port services, with a specific focus on documenting images and documents, and collecting personal artefacts, oral histories, associated artefacts, etc.
- Documentation (including oral histories) of watercraft acquired by the WA Museum and privately owned (where the Museum regards this as being warranted and may present a viable alternative to acquisition) to establish the evolution of design, construction, use, and innovation of the State's watercraft designers, and builders.
- Maritime communities, organisations, industries (fishing, whaling, pearling), trades (watercraft design, construction, shipbuilding), lifestyles (working clothes, festivals, celebrations), commerce, and leisure, with a specific focus on documenting images and documents, and collecting oral histories and associated artefacts.
- Maritime engineering, science, technology and defence, with a specific focus on documenting images and documents, and collecting oral histories and associated artefacts.
- Other maritime related areas as may be requested by Museum management.