

Council Policy – NB-P-15

Northern Beaches Cultural Collection Management and Gifts Policy

Introduction

Northern Beaches Council is the custodian of a diverse cultural collection that includes artworks, public art, civic ephemera and local history items that directly relate to the Northern Beaches area and its communities.

A **cultural collection** is a collection of authentic objects, both natural and man-made, which have historic, aesthetic, scientific, artistic, research, technical, social or spiritual significance. This comprises objects of all types, including and not limited to antiquities; archaeological, ethnological and paleontological material; art; digital and multi-media works; and archives including written, sound, photographic and film objects.

The Cultural Collection encompasses a series of existing sub-collections including the Manly Art Gallery & Museum Collections, the Local Studies Collection, the Community Art Collection and the Civic Collection. It consists of many items of local, state and national significance, which document the unique social, artistic, cultural and local governance history of the Northern Beaches. It includes many nationally significant artworks and an unparalleled assemblage of historic material relating to both local beach culture and the history of surfing.

Policy Statement

Northern Beaches Council will build and maintain a cultural collection that preserves and expresses local identity and creates community well-being and connection to place on the Northern Beaches. As a resource the Collection will be used to:

- Enrich knowledge, understanding and experience of the Northern Beaches area and its communities
- Create a sense of place
- Conserve significant heritage and artistic expression for the benefit of the community and future generations
- Contribute to the development of an outstanding art gallery and museum for the area
- Interpret the history, development and significance of the area and its communities
- Contribute to and foster historical and cultural debate
- Provide an educational, research and display facility for the community.

Scope of Policy

This policy is the Northern Beaches Council reference for collection development and is a public facing document published on Council's website. This policy is applicable to all Northern Beaches Council employees, casual employees, contractors and volunteers. All references to 'employees' within this policy should therefore be read to include volunteers and contractors, as well as paid employees. The policy is essential for employees with collection development responsibilities aligned to their roles.

Principles

- Council will undertake targeted and coordinated collecting of cultural material to enhance the depth and value of its collections
- Council will only acquire items, including accepting gifts, bequests and donations, that fulfil its acquisition criteria and the generic requirements of relevance and provenance
- Council welcomes financial gifts for general purposes that support the overarching aims and objectives of the Northern Beaches Cultural Collections
- Artworks, objects or cultural material will only be acquired when Council can provide appropriate resources and storage to maintain and care for them
- No artworks, objects or cultural material will be acquired with conditions or restrictions on the way they may be used or displayed in the future
- No artworks, objects or cultural material will be acquired from significant heritage sites where removal will diminish the significance of the object or the place, except in circumstances where the object is at risk
- No artworks, objects or cultural material will be acquired that relate to Aboriginal heritage on the Northern Beaches. Aboriginal people are the cultural owners and managers of items or objects relating to their heritage, and as such, any cultural material offered to Council will be referred to the appropriate custodians
- Council will maximise the opportunity for access to, and use of, its cultural collections by the community
- Council will encourage interaction and connection with local communities, cultural organisations and the general public through its cultural collections
- Council will document its cultural collections to a standard that ensures it can consistently record the nature and location of its items
- Council will allow the temporary loan of items both into and from its collections, subject to the safety and security of the item being assured and appropriate documentation undertaken
- Council will seek to provide appropriate conditions at all times for the display and storage of its collections, including appropriate environments and housing materials
- De-accessioning of items from Council's collections is acceptable, subject to strict adherence to criteria and detailed documentation
- Disposal of an item in Council's collections will only be undertaken where it is de-accessioned, or has never been accessioned, and will follow strict disposal procedures
- All collecting activity and collection management processes will be conducted in accordance with the [ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums](#) and within the framework of the [NSW Heritage Office Movable Heritage Principles](#), the [Library Council of NSW Standards and Guidelines for NSW public libraries](#) and the [Australian Copyright Council Moral Rights](#).

Collection Development – Acquisitions

Acquisitions into the Cultural Collection can be made by donation, bequest, or through purchase or commissioning. Civic or ceremonial gifts awarded to or received by Councillors and staff in the course of their duties, may be considered for inclusion in the Collection. Items can only be purchased if funds are available in Council's budget or funds are made available through a financial gift or bequest. If there are no funds available in the current budget, a Report will be submitted to Council seeking funding.

To be eligible for acquisition into the Collection, an item must meet the essential acquisition criteria listed below, as well as the specific acquisition criteria relevant to the sub-collection category to which it will belong. The Community Arts & Culture and Library Services Executive Managers will oversee all acquisitions that are considered significant to their sub-collections.

Essential Acquisition Criteria

To be considered for the Northern Beaches Cultural Collection all items must meet the essential acquisition criteria. Incomplete items or works will not be considered.

1. Demonstrable significance for the Northern Beaches community
2. Comply with the stated purpose and key collecting areas of the Collection
3. Unconditional donation or purchase that has valid and clearly verifiable legal title
4. Whole, complete and finished item
5. Established and verifiable provenance
6. Acceptable standard of physical condition, presentation and format
7. Resource implications such as staffing, storage or display requirements are satisfied
8. There are no unreasonable or inappropriate restrictions on display of the item
9. Council can loan the item
10. That copyright agreement is not unreasonable
11. That Council can de-accession the item.

Specific Acquisition Criteria for each Sub-Collection

Manly Art Gallery & Museum Collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Works of high quality by significant Australian artists, both historical and contemporary, in a range of mediums 2. Significant artworks by artists associated with Manly and the Northern Beaches area that document the social, cultural and artistic history of the region 3. Objects for the Museum that reflect and expand on the knowledge of Australian beach culture, with specific reference to the role that Manly and the Northern Beaches area has played in this history 4. Permanent public artworks within the Northern Beaches area, acquired and managed according to the Northern Beaches Council Public Art Policy 2019.
Local Studies Collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Items that have a distinct and verifiable connection to the Northern Beaches 2. Items that contribute to an understanding of people, life or the environment of the Northern Beaches in the past or the present 3. Items that improve the existing research and reference collections currently used by the community 4. Items deemed to be rare and/or have been assessed by experts as having local significance.
Community Art Collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Works of high quality by local artists for display within Council-owned buildings across the Northern Beaches, including community, civic and administrative spaces.
Civic Collection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An item of visual art, ephemera or memorabilia gifted to a Council representative in the course of official Council business (See also– Council’s Code of Conduct) 2. Framed photographs or ceremonial documents, such as scrolls and certificates, generated by the Northern Beaches Council, awarded to Northern Beaches Council or which represents a major Northern Beaches event, activity or initiative such as ‘Sister Cities’.

Collection Management and Gifts Guidelines

Guidelines to be used in conjunction with this Policy outline the decision making processes that shape the cultural collections of Northern Beaches Council. These Guidelines should be used as a reference document and may be amended through internal processes by senior management based on advice from Council's professional cultural officers.

The Guidelines provides a set of principles to manage:

- **Collection development** – purpose and priorities of the Northern Beaches Collection and its various sub-collections
- **Acquisitions** – purchases, commissions, donations, long-term loans
- **Gifts** – acceptance of financial gifts, including donations of material associated with the Commonwealth Government's [Cultural Gifts Program](#) which provide tax incentives to encourage gifts of culturally significant items from private individuals to public collections
- **Preservation and care** – documentation, conservation, storage and security
- **Access** – digital and physical access through exhibitions, loan agreements, publications, public programs and research.

Policy application

This policy applies to all employees, agents, officers, councillors and committee members of Northern Beaches Council and the general public.

References and related documents

Northern Beaches Council (2018) Public Art Policy

Northern Beaches Council (2018) Movable Heritage Policy

Northern Beaches Council (2018) Draft Northern Beaches Coast Walk Strategic Plan

Connected Through Creativity; Northern Beaches Council Arts and Creativity Strategy 2029

Northern Beaches Council (2018), Community Strategic Plan SHAPE 2028

Northern Beaches Council Policy Framework

Definitions

- **Authentic:** Of undisputed origin and supported by evidence; genuine.
- **Acquisition:** Acquiring or gaining possession of an item or collection.
- **Burra Charter:** Charter developed and adopted by Australia ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which establishes nationally accepted principles for the conservation of places of cultural significance.
- **Collection:** A body of acquired items held by a collecting organisation, or the accumulated items held by a collector.
- **Collection policy:** A publicly accessible document that guides the development and management of an organisation's cultural collection, specifying why, what, where, how and when it collects, and how and why items may be deaccessioned from the collection. The collection policy includes a range of clauses or policy statements that provide an ethical framework for making sound decisions about the development and use of the collection.
- **Criteria (or assessment criteria):** A broad framework of cultural, aesthetic and natural values used in the significance assessment process to draw out or elucidate how and why the item or collection is significant.

- **Deaccession:** To de-register an item from a collection. Deaccessioning is the process of de-registering an item from a collection for clearly stated reasons, and disposing of it in accordance with approved policies and procedures spelt out in the collection policy or in a separate deaccessioning policy.
- **Documentation:** The process of record keeping for each item in a collection. Documentation includes registration, cataloguing and research notes.
- **Interpretation:** All the ways of presenting the significance of an item or collection, from simple object labels to exhibitions, education programs and web-based resources.
- **Moral rights:** Protecting the personal relationship between a creator and their work even if the creator no longer owns the work, or the copyright in the work. Moral rights concern the creator's right to be properly attributed or credited, and the protection of their work from derogatory treatment.
- **Movable heritage:** Any reasonably portable item or collection of historic, aesthetic, scientific or social significance.
- **Provenance:** The documented chain of ownership of an item or collection, or more broadly the life history of an item including previous owners, origin, and context of use.
- **Significance:** The meaning and values of an item or collection, or what makes it important. Significance is the historic, aesthetic, scientific and social values that an item or collection has for past, present and future generations.

Responsible Officer

Executive Manager, Community, Arts and Culture

Review Date

June 2026

Revision History

Revision	Date	Status	TRIM Ref
1	5/11/2018	First draft Northern Beaches Cultural Collection Management and Gifts Policy	2018/700784
2	29/4/2019	Approved Northern Beaches Cultural Collection Management and Gifts Policy	2019/243423
3	28/5/2019	Adopted by Council	2019/247884
4	12/02/2021	Amendments made for Public Exhibition in March 2021	2021/091664
5	11/05/2021	Amendments made following Public Exhibition in March 2021	2021/334783
6	25/06/2021	Amended version Adopted by Council	2019/247884
7	26/03/2024	Policy reference number applied – NB-P-15	2019/247884