



City of
Townsville

City of Townsville Art Collection Policy

Local Government Act 2009

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Townsville Art Collection is recognised as a significant cultural resource of the city, primarily representing the development of art and craft in Australia.

It is a source of knowledge and is to be developed and managed as a cultural heritage collection to benefit, engage, educate and inspire the community and visitors within the region. Council is committed to the development, conservation and promotion of its Collection of art, craft and cultural material.

As a collecting institution representing the diversity of North Queensland communities and environment, it is the Council's responsibility to contribute to the conservation of the local history and heritage of the region. Council will shape the Collection through this policy and will increase the standing of the Collection by creating networks and relationships with professionals within creative arts sector, GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) sector, and governmental bodies locally, nationally, and internationally.

2. PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin this policy:

- The City of Townsville Art Collection belongs to the people of Townsville, is managed by Townsville City Council, and is part of the region's cultural identity.
- Council will take a strategic approach to the development of the City of Townsville Art Collection as expressed by the Collecting Priorities.
- Council will maintain an Art Acquisition Working Group to provide oversight of the implementation of this policy, and provide recommendations to Council in relation to the acquisition, deaccession, and disposal of art, craft, and cultural material.
- Council will be the decision making body in relations to acquisition, deaccessioning, and disposal of art, craft, and cultural material from the City of Townsville Art Collection.

3. SCOPE

This policy is intended to address all aspects of the acquisition, deaccession, and disposal of art, craft, and cultural material from the City of Townsville Art Collection and applies to all council officers and Councillors responsible for these functions.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Creative Director, Gallery Services is responsible for ensuring that this policy is understood and adhered to by all Council officers and Councillors.

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5. DEFINITIONS

Acquisition – means the collection of art, craft and cultural material whether by purchase (from private individuals, dealers, at auction), acquisitive prize, transfer, exchange, bequest, donation, by gift through the Taxation Incentives for the Arts Scheme or other method, is accepted into either Collection resulting in the transfer of the legal ownership, custody or control of Townsville City Council.

Art Acquisition Working Group – means an advisory group established by Council and comprised of the relevant Councillors, Council officers, and community representatives.

Art, Craft, and Cultural Material – includes all types of objects that can be created for an internal or external environment, including but not limited to: artefacts, art built-in, artist's books, carvings, ceramics, community art, drawings, ephemeral art, film, fountains, memorials, monuments, mosaics, multimedia, murals, paintings, photomedia, photographs, prints, public art, sculpture, street art, terrazzo, textiles and war memorial.

Authenticity – means having undisputed proof of origin that is supported by tangible evidence.

Collecting Priorities – means the Mayor Collection Area of art, craft, and cultural material for the City of Townsville Art Collection.

Collection – means the collection of objects which the Townsville City Council holds legal title and which have been formally accepted as comprising part of the City of Townsville Art Collection.

Community – means a social group of any size whose members may reside in a specific locality, share government, or have a common ethnic, cultural, or historical heritage. The term includes those who have common interests or form professional communities.

Conservation – includes all the processes involved in the care of an object or collection to retain its cultural significance.

Cultural Significance – includes all aspects of significance, also termed heritage significance, or cultural heritage values, especially used in the Burra Charter. This includes scientific and natural history collections.

Deaccession – means the process by which an object is permanently removed from a Collection.

Disposal – means the process by which any unwanted or deaccessioned object is disposed of from a Collection.

Documentation – means the process of record keeping for each object in a collection. Documentation includes accessioning, registration, cataloguing, digitising and research notes.

Due Diligence – means the requirement that every endeavour is made to establish the facts of a case before deciding a course of action, particularly in identifying the source and history of an object offered for acquisition or use before acquiring it.

Gallery/Museum – means a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and of its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment. For the purposes of this policy, Gallery Services of the Community

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Resources Section of Planning and Community Engagement Department Townsville City Council performs this function.

Manager – includes persons appointed to positions with the title, Team Manager, General Manager, Principal, Director and Chief.

Preservation – means all actions taken to retard deterioration of or prevent damage to cultural material. Preservation involves controlling the environment and conditions of use, and may include treatment to maintain an object, as nearly as possible, in an unchanging state. Preservation also includes activities taken to prevent or delay material becoming damaged i.e. preventive conservation.

Provenance – means the full history and ownership of an object from the time of its discovery or creation to the present day, through which authenticity and ownership are determined.

Restoration – means actions taken to modify the existing material and structure of an object to represent a known earlier state.

Significance – includes the meaning and values of an object 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 as outlined in the guiding industry document *Significance 2.0*.

Valid Title – means the indisputable right to ownership of property, supported by full provenance of the object since discovery or production.

Workers – includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of council.

6. POLICY

Council will maintain, develop, exhibit and conserve the City of Townsville Art Collection as a cultural resource of the city, representing the development of art, craft, and culture in Townsville, North Queensland, and Australia, as a source of knowledge, and as a cultural heritage collection to benefit, engage, educate, and inspire the community and visitors to the region.

6.1 COLLECTING PRIORITIES

Council recognises that the protection, restoration, conservation, exhibition, and the interpretation of arts, crafts, and cultural material in the Collection are significant to the understanding and respect for the city's and region's communities and culture.

The Council will enhance the City of Townsville Art Collection by the acquisition, preservation, conservation, and exhibition of materials relevant to North Queensland's art history, cognisant of the need to broaden the Collection to reflect the city's growth, place in the national and international scene, and cultural diversity. This will be done within the guiding ethical framework of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) *Code of ethics for museums*.

For the purpose of this policy, the Collection is divided into two Major Collection Areas, with eight Sub-Collection Areas. The Major Collection Areas identify the broad area of focus for the Collection. The Sub-Collection Areas reflect significant themes and priorities within the Major Collection Areas.

MAJOR AND SUB-COLLECTION AREAS

1. Australian Art:

- Art of North Queensland – This Sub-Collection Area focuses on art created in North Queensland including: historical, modern, and contemporary art, craft, and cultural

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material. This part of the collection will comprise of objects created by artists both indigenous and non-indigenous who live, or have lived, in North Queensland, or those who produced work during a visit to North Queensland, or work about North Queensland. All media will be collected.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art** – The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are one of the world’s oldest surviving cultures. The arts and craft created by this culture is unique and diverse and Council will collect works both traditional and contemporary art, craft, and artefacts from all regions across all media, styles, and themes, particularly focusing on art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander from the North Queensland region or about the North Queensland region.

Although contemporary art by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people is fully integrated into the sections of the Collection, it will be identified as distinct from other contemporary art. The Gallery will keep abreast of contemporary developments across all traditions, media, and styles.

- **Australian Colonial and Historical Art** – The Collection currently holds numerous artworks and artefacts, which reflect the colonisation, history, cultural traditions, and development of Australia, particularly Townsville and the surrounding region, across all media including artefacts, drawings, maps, paintings, photographs and prints. Council will continue to develop this Sub-Collection Area to ensure that there is a strong representation of our developmental history and influences, which inform who we are today.
- **Australian Modern and Contemporary Art** – Since the shift from the European influence in favour of a distinctly Australian painting tradition in the late 1800’s, Australian Modern and Contemporary Art has embedded itself into the popular consciousness within and outside of the art world. This Sub-Collection Area comprises the majority of the works held within the Collection and showcases various themes such as War Art, Portraiture, Landscapes, Flora, Fauna and Contemporaneous society across a diverse range of media. The Gallery will keep abreast of contemporary developments across all disciplines, media and styles and will continue to grow this substantial body of works.

2. International Art

A small but significant growth area of the Collection has been the acquisition of various international artworks that showcase the cultures and art movements of societies from around the world.

In line with Townsville’s vision and standing as the major metropolitan centre in Northern Australia, this Major Collection Area plays a vital role in the future growth and diversity of the Collection.

Recent donations to the Collection have seen the representation of significant artists and artworks from the United Kingdom, Europe, Americas and Central Asia. These works alongside the holdings of art from Asia, Melanesia and Polynesia combine to form an invaluable cultural asset and resource, increasing the appreciation of art and craft from culturally and linguistically diverse peoples.

Council will continue to develop this Major Collection Area by exploring opportunities for growth through initiatives such as Sister City relationships and project specific partnerships.

This Major Collection Area is categorised into four Sub-Collection Areas:

- American Art;

- Asian Art;
- British and European Art; and
- Pacific Arts (including Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia)

6.2 ACQUISITION OF ART, CRAFT AND CULTURAL MATERIAL

Council complies with the Australian Government's *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*.

All proposed acquisitions, by means of purchase (from private individuals, dealers, or at auction), acquisitive prize, transfer, exchange, bequest, donation, or by gift through the Taxation Incentives for the Arts Scheme, will be presented to the Art Acquisition Working Group by the Creative Director, Gallery Services and must be supported by a written report. The Art Acquisition Working Group will not consider any potential acquisition that has not been formally proposed in this manner.

All art, craft, and cultural material acquired by any means, should only be acquired (by any means) if authenticity is evident and valid title is held. Due diligence investigations must be carried out to establish (as far as possible) the full history of the object since discovery or production, to ensure the object has not been illegally obtained in, or exported from its country of origin or any intermediate country in which it might have been owned legally.

The Gallery is to require vendors, donors and their representatives to provide all available evidence and documentation of a work of art offered for acquisition, regarding its origins and provenance. If the Gallery is unfamiliar with the source of an acquisition it must, where practicable, consult with colleagues who have had prior dealings with the source or contact in question.

Council takes into consideration cultural sensitivities in its collecting and display of the objects. Sensitive material of sacred significance should be acquired only if it can be housed securely and cared for respectfully. This must be accomplished in a manner consistent with professional standards and the interests and beliefs of members of the community, ethnic or religious groups from which the objects originated, where these are known.

Complete records must be kept by Gallery Services of all acquisition decisions.

6.3 DEACCESSIONING OF ART, CRAFT AND CULTURAL MATERIAL

The decision to deaccession any object from the Collection must only be undertaken with the full understanding of the significance of the object, its character, legal standing and any loss of public trust that might result from such action.

All art, craft and cultural material proposed for deaccession will be presented to the Art Acquisition Working Group by the Creative Director, Gallery Services and must be supported by a written report. The Art Acquisition Working Group will not consider any potential deaccession that has not been formally proposed in this manner.

Deaccessioning will be an open and ethical process. In the case of donated art, craft and cultural material. Gallery Services must contact the living relatives to discuss the deaccession process.

Deaccessioning of an object is to occur only in the following instances:

- Lack of relevance to the Collection
- No evidence of clear legal title
- Theft or loss
- Damage or serious deterioration in condition
- Inferior workmanship
- Repatriation of cultural property
- Duplication

Complete records must be kept by Gallery Services of all deaccession decisions.

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6.4 DISPOSAL OF ART, CRAFT, AND CULTURAL MATERIAL

All art, craft and cultural material proposed for disposal will be presented to the Art Acquisition Working Group by the Creative Director, Gallery Services and must be supported by a written report. The Art Acquisition Working Group will not consider any potential disposal that has not been formally proposed in this manner.

The decision to dispose of any unwanted or deaccessioned object from the Collection must only be undertaken with the full understanding of the significance of the object. Council has an ethical and moral responsibility to donors and the community to ensure that unwanted or deaccessioned objects are disposed of ethically, and in accordance with the donor's instructions.

When disposing of unwanted or deaccessioned objects the following priorities must be applied:

- Return the object to the source if possible, unless otherwise instructed by the donor;
- Offer the object to another museum or collecting organization;
- Sell the object, by auction or tender – If the object was received by the council through a gift or bequest, then the proceeds of the sale of the object must be applied to the acquisition of alternative objects for the Collection, in all other cases the proceeds of a sale are to be applied to the acquisition of alternative objects for the Collection unless the council otherwise directs; and
- Destruction of the item.

Complete records must be kept by Gallery Services of all disposal decisions.

6.5 DISPOSAL OF ART, CRAFT, AND CULTURAL MATERIAL

The City of Townsville Art Collection will be stored and documented in a manner that is in line with national standards for museums and galleries, which enables access for exhibition, education, and research. The Collection records will be able to be accessed via an electronic database that is searchable by the public through the Council's website.

7. LEGAL PARAMETERS

Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 – Australian Government (1986)

Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 – Australian Government (1997)

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulations 2012

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Gallery Services: Visual Arts Strategy >> 2013-2016

Gallery Services: Street Art Activation Framework >> 2015-2018

Gallery Services: Art In Public Spaces Framework >> 2015-2018

Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material – Ministry for the Arts, Australian Government (2014)

Code of Ethics – Museums Australia (1999)

Code of Ethics for Museums – International Council of Museums (ICOM) (2013)

Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities: Principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage – Museums Australia (2005)

Australia Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material: Code of Ethics and Code of Practice – Australia Institute for Conservation of Cultural Material (11 October 2002)

National Standard for Australia Museums and Galleries: Version 1.4 - The National Standards

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Taskforce, Museums Australia (October 2014)

Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections – Collections Council of Australia (2nd edition 2009)

City of Townsville Art Collection Asset Management Plan

City of Townsville Art Collection Asset Register

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