

Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Curatorial Policy is to establish general guidelines for the on-going curatorial management of the Civic Collection in accordance with accepted collection management practices. The policy provides a rationale for the acquisition, display, storage, loan, conservation and disposal of items. The policy also addresses curatorial criteria specifically relevant to Sydney Town Hall with particular reference to its unique collection of furnishings, artworks and historical items

2. THE CIVIC COLLECTION

The purpose of the Civic Collection (Collection) is to preserve the tangible evidence of the civic history and everyday traditions significant to the history of the City of Sydney and its civic properties, including Sydney Town Hall.

The Council of the City of Sydney manages a portfolio of buildings significant to the cultural landscape of the city. Some of these buildings contain items of historical and decorative significance that relate to their function and decoration or furnish those buildings. For the purposes of this policy, the term Civic Collection refers to items of movable heritage with contextual significance to the buildings in which they are located or significant to the community for their associations with the civic history of the City of Sydney. This includes furniture, fixtures and furnishings related to specific civic properties; artworks, decorative arts and historical items; memorials relating specifically to the civic history of City of Sydney; and civic gifts presented to the City of Sydney.

The Civic Collection has social, political, cultural and historical relevance to the people of Sydney and to the wider community. The Collection is held in high esteem by the community for its significance, associations and heritage values. The Collection does not seek to duplicate collections in other public institutions committed to recording the cultural heritage of the city. Rather, it seeks to capture the essence of the 'everyday' life, look and feel of the City by extending the boundaries of traditional collecting and using these items to enhance the presentation of the City's civic buildings.

Sydney Town Hall is an iconic landmark in the heart of the Sydney's central business district and is regarded as one of the most significant Victorian buildings in Australia. It is the premier showcase for the historical documentation and display of the civic and ceremonial life of the City of Sydney.

The City of Sydney employs a professionally qualified Curator to develop and manage the Civic Collection. The City of Sydney recognises the support provided by the Friends of Sydney Town Hall for curatorial projects and public education about the Civic Collection.

3. DEFINITION

Civic Collection	Items of movable heritage with contextual significance to the buildings in which they are located or significant to the community for their associations with the civic history of the City of Sydney. This includes furniture, fixtures and furnishings related to specific civic properties, artworks, decorative arts and historical items; memorials relating specifically to the civic history of City of Sydney; and civic gifts presented to the City of Sydney.
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4. PRINCIPLES

- The City of Sydney currently maintains a collection of over 3,000 items including works of art, historical items, furniture and furnishings and gifts presented to the City in the course of official civic and ceremonial duties.
- The Council of the City of Sydney has a responsibility to the citizens of Sydney to provide access to this Collection and to continue to actively develop the Collection, and to document significant civic events in the history of the City.
- First and foremost, the City recognises its responsibility to preserve, display and record objects and artefacts which belong to the City and to present this Collection in Sydney Town Hall and other City venues for residents, workers and visitors.
- The Collection is of significant historical, cultural and social value and, as a major financial asset of the City of Sydney is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 in respect of audit, security and risk management.
- The City of Sydney works co-operatively with collecting institutions at national, state and local government levels, and seeks to demonstrate leadership in the development of curatorial policies and practices for local government and/or similar organisations.
- The City of Sydney respects the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics; the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter; NSW Heritage Office Principles (Movable Heritage) and the City of Sydney Code of Conduct in all activities associated with the curatorial management of its Collection.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Policy are:

- to manage and develop the Collection through acquisition, commission, donation and management in accordance with standard procedures and requirements;
- to display and interpret the collection for the benefit of the people of Sydney, its workers and visitors;
- to provide acquisition, display and disposal strategies for the collection as a whole, and for each of the categories:
 - furniture, fixtures and fittings;
 - artworks, decorative arts and historical items
 - civic memorials;
 - architectural features, fabric and fittings.

6. CURATORIAL ADVISORY PANEL

The Curatorial Advisory Panel was established by a resolution of Council in December 2006. It provides professional expertise and support to the City of Sydney in curatorial matters.

Convened by the Curator, the Curatorial Advisory Panel comprises the following members:

- The Lord Mayor (or nominee)
- Chief Executive Officer (or nominee)
- Manager, Culture and Libraries
- Curator, City of Sydney Civic Collection

- two experts in the fields of art and public historical display external to the organisation, appointed on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer.

In addition, consultation with the Design Director, City Historian, Creative Director Events, Facilities Manager in the Property and Asset Management Unit, the Civic Functions Manager, the Protocol Manager and the Venue Manager, Sydney Town Hall Management and other relevant City staff may be necessary from time to time.

7. GENERAL COLLECTION GUIDELINES

7.1 Acquisitions

Acquisitions may be made by way of donation, purchase, commission, transfer, exchange, or bequest. Acquisitions may also be generated by Council or received as gifts in the course of official duties.

The criteria for acquiring items for the Collection are as follows:

- the object is of social, historical or cultural significance to the City of Sydney;
- the item has a distinct and verifiable connection to the City of Sydney and/or its civic properties;
- the item enhances the scope and standing of the Collection;
- the item is in good condition;
- the item can be conserved, stored and catalogued;
- the legal title of the item can be transferred to the City of Sydney and the item is free of any financial or legal encumbrances;
- the item has a clearly established and verifiable provenance;
- the item does not duplicate existing material in the Collection; and
- the item enhances the interpretation of existing items or has a significant relationship to other items in the Collection.

The Curator will be responsible for selection of acquisitions up to \$10,000. Recommendations for the acquisition of items valued over \$10,000 will be referred to the Curatorial Advisory Panel for endorsement.

7.2 Deaccessioning

An item may be nominated by the Curator for deaccessioning if it meets any of the following criteria:

- the item does not fall within the acquisition criteria;
- the item has only ephemeral relevance to the City of Sydney;
- the item is in poor condition and is considered to have insufficient significance to warrant the allocation of resources for continuing conservation and/or storage;
- the item serves no specific purpose, is unsuitable for and is not required for retention for research or reference purposes;
- the item duplicates another item in the Collection and is of lesser significance than its duplicate; or
- the item is irreparably damaged, destroyed or stolen with no prospect of retrieval.

Recommendations for the deaccessioning of items valued over \$10,000 will be referred to the Curatorial Advisory Panel for endorsement.

Decisions to deaccession items under the value of \$10,000 are at the discretion of the Curator subject to the methods of disposal set out below. These will be reported to the Curatorial Advisory Panel quarterly.

The documentation of an item recommended for deaccession must include a full record of that item and photographic documentation suitable for permanent archiving.

7.3 Disposal

The methods for disposal of deaccessioned items may include:

- donation, transfer or sale to an institution where that item can be demonstrated to have relevance;
- donation or sale (where appropriate) to its donor or creator;
- sale on the open market; and;
- destruction where no other option is suitable.

Councillors, Council staff, Curatorial Advisory Panel members and their families are prohibited from acquiring deaccessioned items from the Collection by any means.

7.4 Display and use of the collection

The Curator will manage the display of items from the Collection in all City properties, in consultation with relevant staff. Wherever possible, and particularly in Sydney Town Hall, furniture, fixtures and furnishings are to be retained in the locations for which they were originally intended. The Curator will consider the preservation and safety requirements for Collection items when selecting public spaces for their display.

From time to time, as part of broader celebrations or commemorations, the Curator will manage an exhibition of the Collection in Sydney Town Hall or other civic buildings.

Items from the Collection will also be displayed through the provision of loans to external institutions, either in their public spaces or for specific temporary exhibitions.

7.5 Access and interpretation

Access to the Collection will be provided through the furnishing of public spaces in civic properties, temporary exhibitions, publications and web-based media. Access to items in the Collection will also be provided to the public through the following initiatives:

- open days;
- guided tours, in association with the Friends of Sydney Town Hall;
- lectures and seminars;
- web services;
- publications and printed brochures; and
- exhibitions.

Items not on public display may be accessed for research purposes in consultation with the Curator.

7.6 Loans

The City may accept incoming loans and offer items as outgoing loans when appropriate. The duration of each loan will be determined by the circumstances and can be extended or discontinued when necessary. Decisions concerning long term loans will be made in consultation with the Curatorial Advisory Panel.

All loans of Collection items are subject to the conditions of loans set out in the standard loan agreements issued by the City of Sydney. The Curator will maintain an up to date register of loan items (incoming and outgoing), including the duration of each loan and the location of the item.

The City of Sydney does not accept in-coming items as permanent loans, nor does it issue items to another party on permanent loan.

7.7 Valuation and insurance

The Collection will be valued at intervals not exceeding five years and recorded on the City of Sydney asset register.

The Collection will be insured under the City's insurance portfolio for property and transit risks.

7.8 Storage

The Collection will be stored in an environment that is consistent with accepted museum standards of preservation in respect to temperature, light and humidity.

7.9 Conservation

The condition of the Collection will be assessed and reviewed on a five yearly cycle. The Curator will manage a schedule of conservation treatment for all items in the Collection.

7.10 Documentation

Collection items will be recorded in a permanent archive. Collection documentation will record essential information relating to the description and imaging of each item and its history, location, provenance, valuation, conservation and condition. Information on this database will be maintained by the Curator, regularly updated and stored in an alternative backup.

7.11 Copyright and reproduction

The moral rights of artists will be respected and upheld in any display, publication, reproduction or promotion which features his/her work. The information provided about an item will acknowledge the name of the artist, the title of the work, the date of the work, its medium and where appropriate, the donor.

Photographic reproduction of any item from the City of Sydney Collection must acknowledge the City of Sydney and may be subject to permission from the artist (or their estate).

8. SPECIFIC COLLECTION GUIDELINES

8.1 Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings

Civic Buildings

In respect to civic buildings with significant collection items of furniture, fixtures and furnishings, the City of Sydney will respect the integrity of those collections and their architectural associations. Where possible, the City will endeavour to retain items in their original context in situ.

Collection items which are not significant to the furnishing of civic buildings will be recommended for transfer to other civic places or recommended for disposal in accordance with General Collection Guidelines.

Sydney Town Hall

The interior of Sydney Town Hall is significant as an intact example of late nineteenth century architectural decoration. It derives much of its influence from the neo-Classical style, with some fine examples of late nineteenth century decoration derived from the Aesthetic and the Arts and Crafts movements. Furniture, fixtures and furnishings significant to the interpretation of these spaces and which maintain the continuity of the presentation and function of these spaces will be retained in situ wherever possible. Items from Sydney Town Hall will generally not be removed to furnish other civic buildings.

Acquisition

Acquisitions of furniture, fixtures and furnishings for civic buildings must respect and complement the historical integrity of the architecture of each building and their existing collections. Where possible, original elements should be reinstated and reproduced to match original elements. Acquisition of furniture, fixtures and furnishings is made in accordance with clause General Collection Guidelines.

Display and Use

Furniture that does not satisfy current functional requirements or standards of Occupational Health and Safety may be replaced with furniture that meets operational needs, while still respecting the architectural environment in which it is housed.

The use of significant collection items as functional furniture will consider:

- ergonomics and comfort;
- the condition and fragility of items and consequential conservation requirements;
- technological restrictions which impact on the integrity of items;
- equitable distribution across City properties and sites; and
- the alternatives of reproductions and custom built solutions.

Significant furniture from Sydney Town Hall, which is replaced for reasons of occupational health and safety, will be retained as part of the Collection and strategies developed for its long term safe-keeping. Display and use of furniture, fixtures and furnishings is in accordance with General Collection Guidelines.

Disposal

Disposal of items of furniture, fixtures or furnishings will be conducted in accordance with General Collection Guidelines.

8.2 Artworks, Decorative Arts and Historical Items

The collection of artworks comprises paintings, decorative arts, sculpture, historical items, contemporary artworks including video and mixed media, and nineteenth century artworks of European and English origin acquired by civic officials.

Acquisition

The acquisition of artworks, decorative arts and historical items for the Collection are made in accordance with the General Collection Guidelines. Specific priorities for the acquisition and commissioning of artworks include the following:

- artworks by Sydney artists, including established and emerging artists, about Sydney;
- artworks by local Indigenous artists or artworks that interpret the indigenous cultural history of the City of Sydney; and
- contemporary artworks across all media reflecting aspects of city life.

Display and Use

Display and use of artworks, decorative arts and historical items is in accordance with General Collection Guidelines.

Disposal

Disposal of artworks, historical items and decorative arts will be conducted in accordance with the General Collection Guidelines for disposal.

8.3 Civic Memorials

Civic Buildings

Civic officials have a strong tradition of commissioning and recording significant aspects of civic history in written form and presenting that information for display in buildings in the form

of memorial tablets, commemorative plaques, awards and civic memorials. Such items are generally affixed to the external or internal fabric of the building as permanent installations.

Sydney Town Hall

Sydney Town Hall has a large collection of civic memorials comprising foundation stones and commemorative plaques, which record the construction of the building, as well as honour rolls to the former Mayors, Lord Mayors, Councillors and civic officials who have contributed to the life and development of the City of Sydney.

The Collection includes a diverse range of in excess of 500 plaques, memorials and awards. These include:

- portraits, sculpture and plaques of civic leaders and honour rolls;
- plaques and tablets which record the contribution of individuals and organisations to major events and historical anniversaries in the City of Sydney;
- war service memorials;
- foundation stones which record the architectural history of Sydney Town Hall; and
- tributes to individuals associated with Sydney Town Hall.

Items of outdoor sculpture and public memorials (other than those relating specifically to Sydney Town Hall) are subject to Council's Public Art Policy and are managed by the Public Art Program Manager.

Acquisition

The creation of plaques and memorials in all civic buildings is a form of public acknowledgement and/or recognition. Recommendations for the installation of a plaque or historic memorial for commemorative events significant to the City of Sydney should be submitted to a review process through the Curatorial Advisory Panel in the first instance. Any application for the commission, design and installation of new plaques and memorials in Sydney Town Hall must be endorsed by Council. Designs for new memorials must respect the tradition for commemorating civic history in written form.

The placement and location of plaques in civic buildings, particularly Sydney Town Hall, is also subject to this policy. Any new request for a permanent memorial which results in changes to the building fabric requires the most careful consideration and in general should not be approved.

Other than Lord Mayoral portraits and inscriptions on the Mayoral Honour Roll, no further memorials to individuals will be considered for installation and/or display in Sydney Town Hall. Commemoration of the contribution of individuals to the City of Sydney may be made through alternative methods, including the presentation of awards, at the discretion of Council.

New Memorials

The criteria for commissioning new memorials for Sydney Town Hall are:

- **Major Events**
Significant major events and major anniversaries celebrated by the City of Sydney are commemorated in the form of memorials in Sydney Town Hall.

The criteria for determining the eligibility of an event for recognition includes:

- the significance of the event in the historical framework of the City of Sydney and, in some cases, of the nation;
- the impact of the event on the City of Sydney;
- the uniqueness of the event; and
- the emotional response of the people of Sydney to the event.

- Portraits and Sculpture of Civic Leaders**

One image rendered in a two-dimensional or three-dimensional manner in a permanent form of each serving Lord Mayor is to be added to the Sydney Town Hall Collection at the expiration of their final term of office. The acquisition of these items will be made at the discretion of Council and in consultation with the individual (or their representative) consistent with the acquisition policies and general guidelines.
- Mayoral Honour Roll**

The chronological record of Mayoral and Lord Mayoral terms is located on marble tablets in the Level 1, Druiitt Street Northern Crush Space. It is a permanent historical record in Sydney Town Hall which will be maintained and updated as required using the traditional methods consistent with the existing honour roll.
- War Service Memorials**

Tributes to the engagement of troops in activities central to the defence of Australia and/or Sydney have been erected in Sydney Town Hall. All future requests for new war service memorials will be referred to relevant authorities. Individuals or units will no longer be commemorated as separate entities but may be eligible for civic awards, at the discretion of Council.
- Recognition**

Civic Honours provide for the recognition of individuals, military units and organisations in respect of their outstanding contribution to the City of Sydney. Such contributions are recognised through presentation of honours such as the Key to the City, Freedom of the City medallions, plaques, certificates, and the City of Sydney flag on the recommendation of Council in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Display and Use

The architectural fabric of Sydney Town Hall was designed to accommodate the display of plaques and tablets using decorative plaster mouldings, roundels and niches. The intention was to use the building to document the chronological history of the city and to incorporate its living history into the fabric of the building. These features should continue to be used for the placement of new plaques.

The design and location of memorials in Sydney Town Hall will respect the hierarchical framework and the architectural integrity of the building. This hierarchy acknowledges the public accessibility of spaces in Sydney Town Hall and the significance of those spaces. Plaques and memorials commemorating major events are placed in the most significant public spaces.

Disposal

With the exception of the photographs acquired for the ephemeral portrait collection, all historical memorials will be retained in perpetuity.

8.4 Architectural Features, Fabric and Fittings

The City of Sydney manages a property portfolio that contains significant heritage buildings. Within these buildings are architectural features including architectural items, fabric and fittings that have been identified in Conservation Management Plans as having exceptional and high levels of significance. Strategies for the care and management of these items are embedded in the policy sections of these Plans. All architectural fixtures, fittings and significant contents must also be subject to regular curatorial review in consultation with property managers.

Sydney Town Hall

Sydney Town Hall, in particular, is recognised as a major heritage landmark in the City of Sydney and is valued by the community for its architectural significance. Furniture, fixtures and furnishings in Sydney Town Hall that have been identified in the Conservation Management Plan as having significance are subject to curatorial review in respect of cleaning regimes, conservation and/or repair, and proposed alterations.

Collection items of movable heritage are associated with significant fixtures and fittings in Sydney Town Hall and include the following:

- stained glass windows, leadlight, etched glass panels;
- floor mosaics, tiles, parquetry;
- cedar joinery and carvings;
- coats of arms in all media;
- wall and ceiling decoration including painted, gilded, stencilled and papered effects;
- light fittings;
- decorative sandstone, marble or other decorative stonework and fireplaces; and
- plasterwork.

Acquisition

Introduction of new elements including furniture, fixtures and soft furnishings which impact on any of the above-mentioned elements will be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Sydney Town Hall Conservation Management Plan and in consultation with the Curator and other relevant Council staff.

Disposal

The Curator will be consulted regarding items considered for disposal, to ensure that items are disposed of or stored in an appropriate manner.

Building fabric from Sydney Town Hall, which is removed in the course of refurbishment or restoration works, may be considered for acquisition into the Collection, in accordance with the General Collection Guidelines.

8.5 Official Gifts and Corporate Items

In the course of official duties, the Lord Mayor and Councillors may exchange gifts with visiting officials as a gesture of goodwill and hospitality. Gifts are also exchanged as part of Sister City and Friendship City relationships. Acceptance of gifts in the course of official duties may be considered for acquisition into the Collection.

Official gifts which commemorate events of significance to the City of Sydney are retained in the Collection to ensure that they are recorded, preserved, cared for and displayed in accordance with accepted museum and gallery standards for public collections.

Acquisition

The acquisition of gifts into the Collection will be in accordance with General Collection Guidelines. Minor gifts and corporate items will be registered on an inventory maintained by the Curator. An award or certificate accepted by a Council representative in the course of official Council business may be displayed in civic sites. Awards and certificates not required for display will be submitted for permanent archiving. Artwork commissioned for a specific Council event may be displayed in a civic property. Acquisition of such artwork is subject to the General Collection Guidelines.

Display and Use

Items from the Collection of Civic Gifts and Corporate Items will be displayed in public areas of City properties wherever possible.

Disposal

Gift items in the Collection that do not meet the General Collection Guidelines will be recommended for disposal. Gifts recommended for disposal may be offered to national, state or local Government repositories, donated to non-profit or charitable organisations, or destroyed in an appropriate manner. Those gifts for disposal that have been marked with inscriptions will be recorded prior to destruction. Gifts will not be sold.

REFERENCES

Related Policies and Procedures

- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics
- International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter
- NSW Heritage Office Principles (Movable Heritage)
- City of Sydney Code of Conduct
- City Art Public Art Strategy

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Review Period

Director City Culture and Community will review this policy every four years.

Next Review Date

September 2014

TRIM Reference Number

Document number: 2009/275351-01, 2009/111038

AUTHORISATION

Approved by Council on 6 December 2010

Resolution of Council

6 DECEMBER 2010

ITEM 8.7 DRAFT CURATORIAL POLICY OF THE CIVIC COLLECTION 2010 (S070612)

It is resolved that Council adopt the amended draft Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection, as shown at Attachment A to the memo dated 2 December 2010 from the Director City Culture and Community and circulated prior to the meeting of Council.

Carried unanimously.