

---

# Civic Collection Policy

---

## Purpose

This Policy sets out the City's commitment to managing and developing the Civic Collection.

This Policy:

- underlines the significance of the Collection;
- articulates the principles and objectives for the management of the Collection in accordance with internationally recognised industry standards;
- maintains the integrity of the Collection;
- provides a transparent framework to guide decisions and actions for its care, management, use and development.

The Policy is supported by Guidelines which identify procedures for the acquisition, de-accession and disposal, use, display, storage, documentation, conservation and interpretation of items.

## Scope

The Policy applies to City of Sydney employees, contractors, volunteers and interns who administer, manage, care for, and use, (or assist in this process), a portfolio of buildings significant to the cultural landscape of the city, including Sydney Town Hall, Town Hall House, Customs House, town halls, libraries and community centres owned by the City of Sydney. Some of these buildings are identified on the NSW State Heritage Register and are subject to the provisions of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 in respect of movable cultural heritage.

The Collection is a significant financial asset of the City of Sydney and is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993 in respect of audit, security and risk management.

This Policy excludes the commission and management of works of art in the public domain or documentation that records the archival history of Council and its activities. The Code of Conduct establishes the ethical standards for transparency in all actions in respect of the Collection. The Gifts and Benefits Policy provides direction in respect of acceptance of gifts, including those presented in an official and ceremonial capacity.

The Collection:

- records and documents aspects of municipal authority associated with the evolution of Sydney;
- celebrates the civic history of the City and achievements which reflect its civic contribution to Sydney;
- seeks to extend the understanding of the City of Sydney's identity, community and diversity expressed in traditional cultural practices;
- recognises the importance of the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and emerging artists in enriching the past, present and future interpretation of the City through creative processes.

The Collection is a significant cultural asset to the City and is held in high esteem by the community. This Policy acknowledges the City's commitment to its ongoing care and development.

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Acquisition	The act of adding an item into the Movable Heritage Collection, using the accepted criteria for inclusion.
Association	The special connections which exists between a place and people. Disassociation of items (or elements of items) which compromises significance or integrity will be avoided.
City of Sydney	The local government area which is administered by the Council of the City of Sydney.
Civic	relating to a city or town, especially its administration duties or activities of people in relation to their town, city or local area
Collection	The Collection of the City of Sydney comprises items which have been deliberately retained and acquired to provide evidence of the history of the City of Sydney. This includes furniture, fixtures, fittings and furnishings related to specific City properties; artworks, decorative arts and historical items; plaques and memorials relating specifically to the civic history of City of Sydney; and ceremonial gifts presented to the City of Sydney.
Civic traditions	The practices which are significant to local government which are derived from historical precedents.
Ceremonial gift	An official gift intended for the City (and not an individual) received from a dignitary or delegates.
Conservation	The protection and care of tangible cultural heritage, including antiques, artworks, architecture, archaeology, and collections. It is the process of managing change to an item of significance in ways that sustain and enhance its known heritage values and reinforcing those values for future generations. Conservation activities include preventive conservation, examination, documentation, research, treatment, and education.
Cultural heritage	The values embodied in cultural heritage are identified in order to assess significance, prioritize resources, and inform conservation decision-making. It is recognised that values may compete and change over time, and that heritage may have different meanings for different stakeholders.
Deaccessioning	The process by which an item is recommended for removal from the collection and documented for transparency and audit requirements.
Disposal	The physical act of removing an item from the Movable Heritage Collection using the approved processes established in this policy.
Interpretation	All the ways in which information is communicated to people.
Integrity	The consistency of actions, methods and outcomes that respect authenticity.

Term	Meaning
Movable heritage	Any natural or manufactured object of heritage significance. Movable heritage may be an integral part of the significance of heritage places and is generally not fixed (but can be) or incorporated into the structure of the place, and historically associated with it.

## Principles

The City affirms the core principles which underpin the significance of the Collection as tangible evidence of the City's past and its future aspirations. It has historical and contemporary social, political, cultural and historical relevance to the people of Sydney and to the wider community and is strengthened by the documentation which identifies its context, relevance and provenance.

The management of the Collection upholds the following core principles:

- 1. Significance**  
 The Civic Collection will record, preserve and display tangible evidence of the historical and contemporary social, political and cultural heritage and diversity significant to the City of Sydney, including the traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to documenting the past, present and future of the City.
- 2. Context**  
 Movable heritage which enhances the historical and contextual significance of City properties should be retained in situ as the most appropriate conservation action for those items.
- 3. Development**  
 The City will support the development of the Collection through acquisitions which enhance its standing; and the rationalisation of the Collection through deaccession and disposal where such actions improve the integrity of the Collection. The development of the Collection will consider significance, relevance, context and provenance as key pillars for inclusion and exclusion of items.
- 4. Access**  
 The City has a responsibility to the citizens of Sydney to provide access to the Collection and to continue to actively develop and display the Collection, and to encourage further research to enhance its understanding and interpretation.
- 5. Cooperation**  
 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.
- 6. Accountability**  
 The City of Sydney respects the local and international conventions associated with the protection of movable cultural heritage and property. It is guided by 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.

## 7. Guidelines

Guidelines for the care and management of the Collection are provided in a separate document entitled [Civic Collection Management Guidelines](#).

### Responsibilities

The City of Sydney

The City of Sydney will employ a professionally qualified curatorial team (Curator and Assistant Curator) to develop and manage the Civic Collection.

Manager, Culture and Creativity

The Manager, Culture and Creativity oversees the management of the curatorial team.

Civic Collection Curator

The Curator oversees the implementation of this policy and the day-to-day management of the Collection. Specifically, this includes monitoring compliance with this policy using the accompanying Civic Collection Guidelines.

Civic Collection Curatorial Advisory Panel

The Curatorial Advisory Panel was established by a Resolution of Council in December 2006 to provide 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)
- Director, City Life (or nominee)
- Curator, City of Sydney Civic Collection
- at least two experts in the fields of art, Aboriginal cultural history and public historical display external to the organisation, appointed on the recommendation of the Chief Executive Officer.

The Panel meets at quarterly intervals during the calendar year. Meetings of the Panel are coordinated by the curatorial team.

### Implementation

The Director, City Life (or nominee) approves all acquisitions and deaccessions in relation to the Civic Collection, after consultation with the relevant officers in the City of Sydney. The Curator will be responsible for recommending the selection of acquisitions and deaccessions up to \$10,000. Recommendations for acquisitions and deaccessions of items valued over \$10,000 will be referred to the Curatorial Advisory Panel for endorsement.

The Curator evaluates all incoming and outgoing loans for approval by the Manager, Culture and Creativity and endorsement by the Curatorial Advisory Panel. All loans will be documented in the City's Records Information Management system and a record retained in the Collection database.

### Internal engagement

In addition, the Curator will consult with key staff as and when required where architectural design, conservation and restoration works, maintenance and cleaning programs and upgrades to interiors and furnishings impact on the storage, presentation and display of the Civic Collection. 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.

## Consultation

The Curator referred the Curatorial Policy internally within the City of Sydney organisation and consulted with Governance, Public Art, Community Engagement, Archives, Protocol, Creative City, Events and Major Festivals, Civic Functions and Libraries. The Curatorial Advisory Panel was also consulted.

## References

<b>Laws and standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New South Wales Local Government Act (1993)</li> <li>• United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</li> <li>• International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics</li> <li>• International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Burra Charter</li> <li>• NSW Heritage Act 1977</li> <li>• NSW Heritage Office Principles (Movable Heritage)</li> <li>• National Standards of Museums and Galleries</li> </ul>
<b>Policies, procedures and guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Civic Collection Management Guidelines</a></li> <li>• Curatorial Advisory Panel Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Gifts and Benefits Policy</li> <li>• History Policy</li> <li>• Records Management Policy</li> <li>• Public Art Policy</li> <li>• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols</li> </ul>

## Approval status

The Chief Executive Officer approved this policy on 29 April 2020.

*P. M. Barone*

## Approval history

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy (Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection)	16 May 2016	Approved by Council/Endorsed by the Executive	2016/304006
Review	29 April 2020	Full review. Endorsed by the Executive.	2020/193335
Next review	14 Sept 2023		

## Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Curator, Civic Collection
Owner	Director City Life
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	Chief Executive Officer