
1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the management of heritage collections, held by the Southern Midlands Council, in accordance with current best practice in the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector.

2. OBJECTIVE

- To provide clarity on what Council will collect as a collecting body.
- To provide guidelines for accessioning items into and deaccessioning items from the collection.
- To ensure transparency and accountability around the management and auditing of the collection.
- To support online and exhibition based exposure of the collections

3. GENERAL POLICY OPERATION

3.1. Staffing

Day to day management of the collection is the responsibility of Council's Heritage Collections, Exhibitions and Data Officer.

Any variation to this policy is to be overseen by Council's Arts Advisory Committee.

Consultants (e.g. Conservators/Curators) may be employed where resources allow and a clear need is demonstrated.

3.2. Procedures Manuals

Specific procedures manuals may be developed at the discretion of Council's Heritage Collections, Exhibitions and Data Officer. These may include (but not be limited to):

- Environmental conditions and maintenance regime of storage facilities.
- Packaging, labelling, conservation and documentation procedure.
- Inward and outwards loans procedures.
- Audit procedure.
- Database/catalogue configuration/procedures.
- Disaster preparedness.

3.3. Collection Management and Information Retrieval System

A database (catalogue) of all items must be kept and maintained on an ongoing basis.

3.4. Audit

An annual audit of the collection is to be undertaken, which must include:

- Accession of newly acquired items in a timely manner.
- Check of the condition of all items identified as at high risk of deterioration.
- Check of the condition of a representative sample of all items.
- Check of environmental conditions of storage, display and exhibition facilities.
- A check-list report of item and environmental conditions

3.5. Accessioning

Accession refers to the process of addition any item into the collection.

Council may accession any item into the collection by way of purchase, gift or by officially accessioning items already owned by Council. Temporary accessions may be via loan or lease of an item.

Items will only be purchased for accession into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under Specific Collection policies (4.1-4.5).
- A budget exists for acquisition of the item.
- Conservation requirements for the item can be met in perpetuity.

Gifts and donations will only be accessioned into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under Specific Collection Policies (4.1-4.5).
- Full and unconditional transfer of ownership is vested to Council.
- The donor indemnified *Council* against any liability associated with any item.

Items which are already owned by Council, or generated by Council activities, will only be accessioned into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under Specific Collection Policies (4.1-4.5).

3.6. Incoming loans

Council may seek and accept incoming loans (or lease) of items under the following circumstances:

- An item would fit accession criteria under Specific Collection Policies (4.1-4.5).

And:

- That Council can demonstrate adequate provision for security and appropriate environmental conditions for the item, during transport, preparation and display.
- That Council agrees to abide by any and all conditions imposed by the legal owner of the item.

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- That Council carries adequate insurance against loss or damage of the item.

Incoming loans are added to the database as a temporarily accessioned item, with the record made inactive upon return of the item.

3.7. Outgoing loans

Council may allow outgoing loans from the collection under the following circumstances:

- The borrower will use the item for display in a temporary exhibition, which highlights the contribution the item makes to a place or theme.
- The borrower can demonstrate a legitimate need to borrow the item for research which may contribute to a greater knowledge of the item, or category/theme to which the item relates.
- That it is not feasible for the borrower to utilise a copy.

And:

- That the borrower can demonstrate adequate provision for security and appropriate environmental conditions for the item, during transport, preparation and display.
- That the borrower agrees to abide by any and all conditions imposed by the legal owner of the item.
- That the borrower carries adequate insurance against loss or damage of the item.

Third-party loans (i.e. the outward loan of a borrowed item) are not allowable.

Council reserves the right to refuse outward loan of any item.

3.8 Deaccession

Deaccession refers to the process of removing any item from the collection.

An item may be deaccessioned from the Corporate, Objects, Photographs and Art and Documents collections if:

- The reason for deaccession is allowable under the Specific Collection Policies (4.1-4.5).

And:

- Agreement for deaccession is achieved by majority of Council's Arts Advisory Committee.
- A six-month 'cooling-off' period applies from the decision to deaccession and actual deaccession of an item.

Also:

- Any item to be deaccessioned must be offered to a relevant external not-for-profit institution free-of-charge in the first instance, provided that institution can demonstrate intent to display and maintain the item for public benefit.



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- Should no external institution be willing to take an item deaccessioned from the SMC collection, that item may be disposed of by whatever means the Arts Advisory Committee see fit.
 - No deaccessioned item may become the property of any elected member or staff member of Southern Midlands Council.
 - Any funds obtained from the deaccession of any item must be used for a worthwhile purpose towards enhancing or promoting the collection.

An item may be deaccessioned from the Archaeological collections at the discretion of the Heritage Collections, Exhibitions and Data Officer as per the Specific Collection Policies (4.1-4.5).

3.9. Disaster Preparedness.

A disaster recovery procedure shall be put in place, which addresses procedure for managing recovery and salvage of the collection in the event of disaster (i.e. damage to buildings housing the collection) and interim measures during repair.

4. SPECIFIC COLLECTION POLICIES

The collection will be managed under the following categories:

- Archaeological artefacts
- Corporate
- Objects
- Photographs and art
- Documents

If an item does not fit within these categories, then it will not be collected or retained by Council, unless in exceptional circumstances agreed by the majority of the Arts Advisory Committee.

4.1. Archaeological artefacts

Accession

Archaeological artefacts may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They derive from archaeological excavations initiated by Southern Midlands Council.
- They derive from archaeological excavations on a Council owned site.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession Policy (3.5).

Deaccession

Archaeological artefacts may only be deaccessioned from the collection if:

- It can reasonably be demonstrated that their future research or interpretive value unreasonably outweighs the required conservation resources.
- Better examples of an identical item are retained (provided items do not exhibit greater significance as a set/collection).
- Unprovenanced artefacts with no foreseeable research or display value.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the General Deaccession Policy (3.8).

4.2. Corporate

Accession

Items may be accessioned into the corporate collection under the following circumstances:

- They have a direct relationship with Southern Midlands Council (or the former Oatlands or Green Ponds Councils) as a governance body.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession Policy (3.5).
- They are not required to be transferred to the Archives Office of Tasmania under the Archives Act 1983.

Deaccession

Corporate items may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- Documents are determined to be a state archive under the Archives Act 1983, in which case they be transferred to the Archives Office of Tasmania. An exemption from the act may be sought if it considered that the document is best stored, accessed and interpreted on Southern Midlands Council Premises.
- That it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that an item has no future research, interpretation or display value for Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the General Deaccession Policy (3.8).

4.3. Objects

Accession

Objects, which do not fit any other category defined in this policy, may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:



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- That Council ownership is considered to be the most appropriate means of preservation and public access to the item.
- The item has a connection to a Council owned building/site, and/or may contribute to the interpretation or significance of that building/site.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession Policy (3.5).

Deaccession

Objects may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- That it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that an item has no future research, interpretation or display value for Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the General Deaccession Policy (3.8).

4.4. Photographs and art

Accession

Photographs and art may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They depict a scene or event in the Southern Midlands municipal region
- They depict a prominent person with a connection to the Southern Midlands municipal region, or Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- That ownership by Council is considered the most appropriate means of preservation and public access
- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession Policy (3.5).

Deaccession

Photographs may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- If a significant photograph may be better conserved an accessed via another public information repository (i.e. Archives Office of Tasmania, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery).

And:

- Deaccession complies with the General Deaccession Policy (3.8).

4.5. Documents

Accession

Documents may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They are original documents, which relate to the history of the Southern Midlands municipal region, or related theme, and that Council ownership is considered the most appropriate means of conservation and public access.
- They are published documents, which relate to the history of the Southern Midlands municipal region, or related theme, and that Council ownership is considered the most appropriate means of conservation and public access.
- They are documents, which relate to heritage projects within the Southern Midlands municipal region, or initiated by Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession Policy (3.5).

But not if:

- They are required as part of Council's working records system.
- They are required to be archived under the Archives Act (1983)

Deaccession

Documents may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- If a significant original or published document may be better conserved and accessed via another public information repository (i.e. Archives Office of Tasmania, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, State Library of Tasmania)
- If a particular published document is easily obtainable via another institution.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the General Deaccession Policy (3.8).

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Heritage Collections Procedures Manual
- Archives Act (1983)
- Risk Management Policy
- Artist in Residence Policy
- Asset Management Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy



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6. DOCUMENT ADMINISTRATION

This Instruction is a managed document and is to be reviewed every three years or as directed by the General Manager.

This document is Version 2 effective 21 April 2021 and will be reviewed in 2023. The document is maintained by the Heritage Projects Program for the Southern Midlands Council.