

## COLLECTION POLICY

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Extract of *History Trust of South Australia Act 1981*

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this collection policy is to document the rationale underlying the collection of historical objects by the History Trust of South Australia.

Procedures and practices relating to the acquisition, documentation, handling, storage, interpretation, preservation and disposal of objects by the History Trust of South Australia are contained in the accompanying Collection Management Procedures and Guidelines document.

## 2. Statutory responsibilities of the History Trust of South Australia

The History Trust of South Australia was established by the Government of South Australia under the *History Trust of South Australia Act 1981* (see Appendix A). Among the functions of the History Trust listed in the Act are the operation of museums and the collection, care and exhibition of objects of historical interest.

The preliminary section of the Act includes the following definitions:

**museum** means premises in which objects illustrative of, or relevant to, the history of the State are cared for and exhibited (whether or not the premises are devoted exclusively to the care or exhibition of such objects);

**object** includes a document, picture, specimen or artefact (but does not include an item as defined in the *Heritage Places Act 1993* or the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988*);

## 3. Collection aims

The History Trust of South Australia (The Trust) will build collections of objects that can be used for interpretation, exhibition and research about South Australian history. Collectively, the Trust's collections are known as the State Historical Collection. The collection will as fully as possible represent the depth and diversity of South Australia's history, while recognising that there are many other private and public custodians of the State's moveable heritage. The collection of the National Motor Museum has a national focus.

## 4. Collecting criteria

The Trust maintains primary collections of significant objects (core collections), along with secondary collections (resource or non-core collections).

The Trust will only acquire objects into its collection for which clear legal title is established, and in line with relevant legal obligations and current best practice standards regarding the acquisition of cultural material. Research into the provenance, including source, history and prior ownership of an item will be conducted when necessary to establish relevant information prior to consideration of acquisition.

Collecting criteria for the core collections relate to the concept of significance. For the Trust, an object is considered historically significant if it is important to the history of South Australia. This importance can be determined in relation to a particular place or region within South Australia, or to Australian history in general. It includes contemporary collecting. A useful reference is *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* by Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, 2009.

The Trust is not obliged to accept or retain material that is not, in its opinion, of sufficient historical or cultural interest to justify preservation. Core collection objects should only be acquired if they meet one or more of the criteria for significance. For the National Motor Museum the reference to the State's history will encompass a national focus.

The following criteria are used to determine significance:

- a) objects associated with people, events, places and themes in the State's history
- b) objects which are valued by sections of the South Australian community for social, economic, cultural, religious or spiritual reasons
- c) objects which demonstrate important social customs
- d) objects which were once commonly available and represent changing trends in the social patterns of daily lives
- e) objects which were designed, or manufactured or used locally
- f) objects which demonstrate important social or technological changes
- g) objects which demonstrate excellence in design, style, craftsmanship, or technical achievement
- h) objects which are the first or last of a series.

Six additional criteria are applied where objects meet any of the above criteria

1. extent of accompanying documentation and provenance
2. condition and integrity of the object
3. cost of preserving and storing the object
4. relationship to other objects which reinforce its significance
5. availability in other collections elsewhere
6. potential for interpretation.

## **5. Collecting areas**

The Trust is comprised of a Directorate and three divisions: the Migration Museum, the National Motor Museum and the South Australian Maritime Museum.

Directorate and divisional collections are managed with reference to the Trust's Collections Policy and specific collecting areas relevant to the goals and objectives of the Directorate and each division.

### **5.1 Directorate**

Directorate collects objects which represent the history of South Australia. This includes, but is not restricted to, the following sub-areas: community and cultural life; working life; home life; South Australia in war and peace; government, politics, rights and citizenship; building the state; industry, business and trade; interaction with the environment; and science, technology and innovation.

Collecting sub-areas include objects relating to:

- urban and rural community and cultural organisations, including sport and recreation, music and the arts, and the environment
- childhood, including documents, equipment, clothing, toys and games
- male and female dress including day wear, recreational, special occasion and work clothes, and accessories
- paid and unpaid work across all industry sectors in urban and rural areas
- the material life of mutual benefit organisations including trade unions and friendly societies
- domestic labour and domestic life across all social groups and classes in urban and rural areas
- participation of South Australians in wars, anti-war protests and celebrations of peace

- individuals and organisations who have contributed to government, politics, rights and citizenship in South Australia
- South Australian companies, their operations and founders
- South Australian scientific, industrial and environmental discoveries, innovations and processes.

Current priority areas for the Directorate collection are objects relating to:

- the working lives of South Australians, including work clothes
- the changing nature of work and industry
- the changing nature of domestic labour and family life
- diverse community activity concerning politics, rights, citizenship and the environment
- the material life of South Australian companies, large and small.

## **5.2 Migration Museum**

The Migration Museum collects objects which represent the diverse cultures of South Australia. Cultural diversity is broadly defined to include geographic origin and/or place of residence, cultural and linguistic background, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status and age. It can also include social, cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices.

Migration Museum collection focus areas include objects:

- demonstrating the impact of non-Indigenous settlers upon the Indigenous people of South Australia, including efforts at reconciliation;
- brought to South Australia by settlers, immigrants and refugees;
- made and/or used in South Australia which reflect settlement patterns;
- indicating the contribution of immigrants to South Australian creative and economic life;
- representing the personal experiences of migrants and refugees , including diaries, photographs, tickets of passage, identity papers, certificates;
- representing continuation of cultural heritage and changing cultural practices in South Australia, including rites of passage;
- relating to South Australian immigration agencies, immigrant accommodation and aid organisations;
- illustrating Australian and South Australian government policies which have had a direct impact on South Australia's immigration history and cultural diversity;
- reflecting both positive and negative cultural affirmation and discrimination, such as documents relating to multiculturalism, citizenship and naturalisation, as well as those relating to racism;
- relating to the archaeology and history of the Migration Museum site, including the history of Adelaide's Destitute Asylum.

Current priority areas for the Migration Museum collection are objects:

- reflecting the experiences and impact of recent arrivals to South Australia, including refugees and asylum seekers;
- promoting an understanding of contemporary cultural diversity, such as the collection of community banners;
- reflecting government policy relating to migration since 1972;
- demonstrating the diversity of migration to South Australia during the nineteenth century;
- relating to the migration in the first half of the twentieth century of people considered outside the scope of the White Australia Policy.

### **5.3 South Australian Maritime Museum**

The South Australian Maritime Museum collects objects which relate to South Australia's maritime history including its oceans and inland waterways. It also collects objects that relate to the broader history of the Port Adelaide area.

The Maritime Museum's collection focus areas include:

- water craft of particular significance to South Australia.
- objects linked to the life of commercial seafarers—now and in the past
- ship fittings such as wheels, blocks, lights, binnacles, furniture and figureheads connected with South Australian vessels
- ship models reflecting vessels significant to South Australia
- photographs and film relating to the State's maritime history
- marine art with a specifically South Australian connection
- nautical instruments—particularly those with provenance to local vessels
- objects including tools and personal effects which relate to working lives in maritime trades and industries
- recreational and leisure objects associated with the sea and rivers
- objects relating to South Australian shipping lines and maritime unions
- objects which relate to the history of South Australians' involvement in the Navy and HMCS *Protector*
- objects associated with South Australian lighthouses

Current priority collecting areas for the South Australia Maritime Museum include objects which:

- relate to sealing and whaling in South Australia;
- illustrate ongoing Indigenous connections to South Australian oceans and waterways;
- are linked to European exploration of the Australian and South Australian coastline and waterways;
- reflect the experience of 19th century migrant voyages to South Australia;
- relate to women in maritime history including industry and recreation;
- promote an understanding of other cultures' maritime traditions and involvement in maritime industries;
- reflect Port Adelaide's industries (including copper smelters, sugar mills, timber yards, wool stores, flour mills) or are linked to its hotels, Missions to Seamen, and the Torrens Island Quarantine Station

### **5.4 National Motor Museum**

The National Motor Museum collects objects that represent Australian motoring history.

National Motor Museum collection focus areas include:

- motor cars, commercial vehicles and motor cycles that have been used on Australian roads or have a significant link with Australia or Australians;
- objects relating to the sale, use and maintenance of motor vehicles in Australia;
- objects relating to the Australian motor and associated industries, and in particular those related to South Australian motor industries;
- objects relating to vehicular based motor sport in Australia and its Australian participants elsewhere;
- objects relating to the social and economic history of motoring in Australia;
- books, magazines, photographs and ephemera relating to the history of motoring in Australia or any Australian role in overseas motoring history;
- objects relating to the history of the National Motor Museum site, including the history of the Peerless Roller mill and the Randell mill and of the Birdwood Mill Museum.

Current priority areas for the National Motor Museum collection are:

- objects which reflect recent advances in technology in minimising the environmental impact of motoring;
- objects that document the end of mass production of vehicles in Australia in the second decade of the twenty-first century;
- contemporary vehicles which reflect recent trends in motoring in Australia.

## **6. Collecting decisions**

Decisions about the acquisition of objects are made by divisional curatorial committees with reference to this policy.

The documentation and care of objects in the Trust's collections will be conducted according to the Trust's Collections Management Procedures and Guidelines.

The Chief Executive Officer may from time to time exercise the right to direct acquisition of relevant significant objects.

## **7. Access to the Trust collections**

The Trust is committed to providing access to its collections. It recognises that access is an integral part of managing the collections and includes: providing information and, when possible, physical access to the collections; sharing collection information with other agencies; lending objects to other institutions and appropriate organisations; interpreting and displaying the collections; training front of house staff in the interpretation of objects on display; and providing access to the collections online.

There may be times when access to the collections is restricted. This may be due to the preservation needs of the object, cultural sensitivities, copyright or licensing restrictions, or resource constraints.

## **8. Preservation and storage**

The Trust seeks to meet the highest preservation standards for all objects in its collections. Storage of collection items is determined, as far as possible, by the preservation requirements of the objects.

## **9. Deaccessioning and disposal**

The Trust is not obliged to retain material that is not, in its opinion, of sufficient historical or cultural significance to justify preservation.

Deaccessioning is the process by which objects in the Trust collections are deregistered, documentation appropriately amended and the objects made ready for disposal. The Trust will from time to time deaccession objects from its collection as part of collections management. Deaccessioning should not be based upon personal taste, professional fashions or fads, or consideration of financial gain.

Disposal is the process used by the Trust to remove surplus objects from its possession. Deaccessioning and disposal will be conducted according to the procedures contained in the Trust's Collections Management Procedures and Guidelines.

Proposals for deaccessioning of objects from the Trust collections will be presented by the Chief Executive Officer to the History Trust of South Australia Board for approval.

## 10. Deaccessioning criteria

In order to be considered for deaccessioning, an object or group of objects must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 1) The object is not relevant to the purposes of the Trust
- 2) The object has deteriorated beyond practical conservation
- 3) The object lacks historical authenticity or physical integrity
- 4) There is a better or duplicate example available
- 5) Retention of the object has significant storage implications
- 6) There is an alternative or more appropriate custodian for the object.

In extraordinary cases objects may be deaccessioned at the discretion of the Board of the Trust for compassionate reasons.

If an object accepted into the Trust's collection under the Federal Ministry for the Arts Cultural Gifts Program is no longer relevant to the Trust's collecting policy, the object may be transferred to another recognised museum and the donor informed. The object may not be returned to the donor.

## 11. Codes of ethics

All members of the Trust staff are bound by the *Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector* (2010).

Curatorial staff and volunteers are also bound by the Museums Australia (MA) *Code of Ethics for Art, History and Science Museums*:

<http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/userfiles/file/Governance/maethics.pdf>

The Trust endorsed *Continuous Cultures Ongoing Responsibilities* (Museums Australia, 2005) as policy at its meeting in March 2001. Curatorial staff and volunteers should therefore familiarise themselves with this document and follow its recommendations;

[http://www.nma.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/3296/ccor\\_final\\_feb\\_05.pdf](http://www.nma.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/3296/ccor_final_feb_05.pdf)

Curatorial staff should familiarise themselves with the Australian Government's 'Australian Best Practice Guide to Acquiring Cultural Material'.

## Appendix

### Extract: *History Trust of South Australia Act 1981*

## Division 3—Functions and powers of Trust

### 13—Functions

The functions of the Trust are—

- (a) to carry out, or promote, research relevant to the history of the State; and
- (b) to accumulate and classify data on any subject of significance to the history of the State; and
- (c) to accumulate and care for objects of historical interest; and
- (d) to exhibit objects of historical or cultural interest; and
- (e) to maintain registers of objects of historical significance to the State; and
- (f) to manage and administer museums and other premises that are vested in, or placed under the care, control and management of the Trust; and
- (g) to accredit or otherwise to evaluate museums, and to advise the Minister on the operation of museums and on the allocation of funds or other forms of assistance that may be available for the promotion or development of museums; and
- (h) to disseminate, or encourage the dissemination of, information relevant to the history of the State; and
- (i) to encourage the conservation of objects of historical significance to the State; and
- (j) to advise the Minister on the conservation of objects in the ownership or possession of the Crown that are of historical significance to the State (and, as appropriate, to assume the management of such objects); and
- (k) to carry out any other functions assigned to the Trust under this or any other Act or by the Minister.

### 14—Powers

- (1) The Trust has, in addition to any other powers conferred on it under this or any other Act, all the powers of a natural person.
- (2) The Trust may, for example, do any 1 or more of the following (subject to this Act):
  - (a) engage agents, consultants or other contractors;
  - (b) enter into other contracts, agreements or arrangements;
  - (c) acquire, hold, take on hire, lend, exchange or dispose of objects, works or collections of historical or cultural interest;
  - (d) acquire, hold, deal with or dispose of—
    - (i) licences; or
    - (ii) intellectual property (including patents and copyright); or
    - (iii) any other property (whether real or personal); or



- (iv) any interest in such property;
  - (e) accept grants or obtain financial sponsorship from any person or body;
  - (f) carry on advertising and promotional activities;
  - (g) conduct events and establish, operate, manage or make available venues and other facilities (including facilities for food and liquor) on premises of the Trust;
  - (h) regulate and control admission to any venue for any events or activities conducted or promoted by the Trust, and charge and collect fees for admission to any such venue;
  - (i) grant for fee or other consideration advertising or sponsorship rights or other rights, licences or concessions in connection with events or activities conducted or promoted by the Trust;
  - (j) publish or produce books, programs, brochures, films, souvenirs, information and other things relating to events or activities conducted or promoted by the Trust;
  - (k) sell or supply food and drink (including liquor), books, programs, brochures, films, souvenirs and other things in connection with events or activities conducted or promoted by the Trust;
  - (l) grant or dispose of rights to televise, broadcast or record any events or activities conducted or promoted by the Trust;
  - (m) restrict, control and make charges for the use of official insignia;
  - (n) take out policies of insurance in its own right or on behalf of the State;
  - (o) participate (whether as a member or otherwise) in, or otherwise be involved in the activities of, national or international organisations or associations involved in historical or cultural activities, or the promotion of such activities;
  - (p) give or contribute towards prizes in competitions designed to encourage activities of an historical or cultural nature within the State or make grants and give other assistance for such purposes;
  - (q) enter into any partnership or joint venture arrangement;
  - (r) form, or acquire, hold, deal with and dispose of shares or other interests in, or securities issued by, bodies corporate, whether within or outside of the State;
  - (s) borrow money and obtain other forms of financial accommodation;
  - (t) act as trustee on behalf of another person in connection with the performance of its functions under this Act.
- (3) However, the Trust must not, without the approval of the Treasurer, exercise a power referred to in subsection (2)(r) or (s).
- (4) The Trust is not obliged to accept or keep material that is not, in its opinion, of sufficient historical, cultural or other interest to justify its collection or preservation under this Act.
- (5) The Trust may exercise its powers within or outside of the State.