



HISTORICAL SERVICES COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

D4-10

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Policy Owner: Director Community, Planning & Environment

Category: Strategic

Direction: 4. Our Social Vitality

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 Stanton Library Historical Services aims to collect, document, preserve and provide access to cultural, historical and educational resources, in a range of formats, which are relevant to past and present people, places and activities of the North Sydney Local Government Authority area.
- 1.2 All collection management will be conducted in accordance with the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, within the framework of the NSW Heritage Office Movable Heritage Principles and in accordance with State and Federal law and international agreements between Australia and other countries.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 This policy applies to the following collections managed by Historical Services:
 - 2.1.1 **David Earle Local Studies Collection** - Collection of reference and research resources, begun in 1974. David Earle was an active member of the heritage conservation movement of the 1970s and the North Shore Historical Society. He documented much of North Sydney's built landscape and took a keen interest in the establishment of Don Bank Museum.
 - 2.1.2 **Merle Coppel Oral History Collection** - Collection of interviews recorded with members of the North Sydney community. Merle Coppel was a dedicated local oral historian whose body of work from the 1980s forms the basis of this collection.
 - 2.1.3 **North Sydney Council Archives** - Stanton Library is the repository for a large number of primary records and inactive record series of North Sydney Council. In 1979, Council transferred some early records to the Library including rate and valuation books, minute books, engineering plans, and subject files. A significant body of Council records, covering the period 1903-1971, was discovered at the Central Depot in 1989 and

accessioned in 1991. These are collectively referred to as the 'historic archives'.

- 2.1.4 **North Sydney Community Archives** - Largely unpublished material forming part of the documentary heritage of North Sydney, collected since the 1980s. It is comprised of papers, photographs and some objects (realia) relating to defunct community organisations, individuals and families.
 - 2.1.5 **Don Bank Museum Collection** - Don Bank was acquired by Council in 1979 and opened as a local history museum in 1981. Objects and textiles collected by the North Shore Historical Society from 1970 onwards, and transferred to Don Bank Museum Trust in 1981, form the core of this collection. This collection passed into the ownership of Council with the dissolution of the Trust in the 1980s.
 - 2.1.6 **Sexton's Cottage Museum Collection** - Sexton's Cottage was acquired by Council in 1967, as part of St Thomas' Cemetery (now Rest Park) and opened as a local history museum in 1986. The collection includes research resources on the history of the Cemetery, remnants of monuments, and artefacts relating to the Cemetery and the history of Australian funereal practice.
 - 2.1.7 **Large Picture Collection** - Collection of historical and contemporary artwork and photographs acquired from various sources including Council activities, North Shore Historical Society donations and more recent donations and purchases. The North Sydney Art Prize has been a rich source of acquisition. These are acquired in consultation with the Arts and Culture team.
 - 2.1.8 **North Sydney Heritage Centre Collection** - Collection of historical and cultural artefacts acquired since 1999, stored at North Sydney Heritage Centre and the storage facilities at Council's Ernest Street Depot.
- 2.2 Material will be considered for accession if it meets one or more of the following primary criteria (as specified in Collections Council of Australia Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections):
- 2.2.1 **Historic significance** - associated with an important North Sydney person, group, event, place, period, activity, industry or theme.
 - 2.2.2 **Artistic or aesthetic significance** - depicts an important North Sydney place, person, period, activity, story, idea or event; or represents the work of an important North Sydney artist, writer, designer or creator.

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- 2.2.3 **Scientific or research significance** - supports research on an aspect of the natural, social or cultural history of North Sydney.
 - 2.2.4 **Social or spiritual significance** - embodies beliefs, ideas, customs, traditions, associations, practices, places or stories that are important for a particular group within the North Sydney community.
 - 2.3 The significance of the material will be assessed according to the following comparative criteria (in comparison to material already accessioned into the collection):
 - 2.3.1 **Provenance** - reliable information regarding the place of origin, and organisation/s or individual/s that created, collected, owned or used the material.
 - 2.3.2 **Rarity or representativeness** - unusual/unique material, or a good example of its type.
 - 2.3.3 **Condition or completeness** - original condition is generally preferable to material which shows repairs/alterations, unless this provides evidence of provenance.
 - 2.3.4 **Interpretive capacity** - relevance to Historical Services programs in terms of the material's historical, geographic, artistic or environmental context.
 - 2.4 Any decision to acquire material which meets the above criteria will also be based on the following practical considerations:
 - 2.4.1 Resources of Stanton Library Local Studies Assets budget (for material to be purchased)
 - 2.4.2 Ability of Historical Services to store the material in suitable conditions to ensure both preservation and public access

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Accessioning** is the formal addition of material to the Historical Services collections, which includes assigning an accession number, and recording details including the source, description and provenance of material in a register/database.
- 3.2 **Significance** refers to the historic, artistic, scientific and social or spiritual values and meanings that items and collections have for past, present and future generations of the North Sydney community.

- 3.3 **Transfer of title** describes the formal process of a change of ownership of material from an individual or organisation to North Sydney Council.

4. PROVISIONS

4.1 Methods of Acquisition

4.1.1 Purchase

- a) eligible purchases will only be considered if the vendor confirms that they have undisputed title to the material with full power to transfer such title to North Sydney Council, together with any rights of copyright or reproduction.

4.1.2 Donation/bequest

- a) eligible donations will only be considered if the owner/owner's authorised agent confirms that they have undisputed title to the material with full power to transfer such title to North Sydney Council, together with any rights of copyright or reproduction
- b) historical Services may reproduce donated material, without prior notification or consultation, in any medium, for the purposes of education, research/study, criticism/review, exhibition, and/or online publication. This permission does not extend to commercial use of material, nor does it authorise three-dimensional reproductions of non-pictorial artwork
- c) there is a presumption against any donation with attached conditions, unless the material is particularly significant according to above selection criteria
- d) historical Services reserves the right to decline any material offered for donation. In such cases, the owner and/or depositor will be notified and the material must be collected within 3 months, unless otherwise agreed. In the event of material not being collected within the agreed period, Historical Services reserves the right to dispose of the material as it deems fit
- e) in some cases, a donation may be eligible for tax deduction under the Cultural Gifts Program, which encourages private gifts of significant cultural items to public art galleries, museums and libraries by offering donors a tax deduction for the market value of their gifts under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*. Council is eligible for such donations. This is covered under the Council's *Donations Policy*
- f) in the case of bequests, Council will obtain a legal copy of the relevant section of the will

4.1.3 **North Sydney Council deposit** - Signed bound copies of all North Sydney Council minutes shall be deposited with Historical Services for archival purposes.

4.1.4 **Transfer** - Deaccessioned material from another recognised cultural heritage institution will be considered for acquisition in accordance with the above selection criteria.

4.1.5 **Field collection** - Material will only be acquired from heritage sites/buildings where removal would not diminish the significance of the site, unless the material is at risk of loss or destruction.

4.2 **Accession Process**

4.2.1 Evaluate potential acquisition according to the selection criteria.

4.2.2 Complete and sign object entry form, including signed transfer of title agreement in the case of donation/purchase/transfer.

4.2.3 Assign unique number to object or collection.

4.2.4 Record information on relevant database. Minimum information to include: accession number, brief description, condition, date of accession, method of acquisition, source and date of acquisition.

4.2.5 Mark or label object or collection with unique number.

4.2.6 Photograph object or collection, if practical and possible without infringing copyright.

4.2.7 Store or display object in appropriate environmental and security conditions to ensure both preservation and public access.

4.2.8 Record location of object or collection.

4.2.9 Retain any associated documentation/information in object history files, arranged in accession order.

4.2.10 Acknowledge donations in writing within one month of receipt.

4.2.11 Print and bind database records annually to form accession register, stored in fireproof safe.

4.3 **Collection Formats and Content** - Historical Services will collect material in the following formats:

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- 4.3.1 **Books** (fiction and non-fiction)/monographs/reports/unpublished original material, relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, and/or written by a North Sydney author(s).
 - 4.3.2 **Newspapers and periodicals**, past and present, published in the North Sydney LGA and/or featuring local area content, either in hard copy or microform.
 - 4.3.3 **Ephemera** relating to an individual, organisation, place, event or activity within the North Sydney LGA, including but not limited to pamphlets, posters, catalogues, event programmes, brochures, invitations, tickets, advertisements, business cards, and calendars.
 - 4.3.4 **Maps and plans** relating to the history and development of the North Sydney LGA, including but not limited to parish, tourist, survey, electoral, topographical, hydrographic, ward, street, subdivision and architectural plans.
 - 4.3.5 **Photographs** relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, in print or digital format, including postcards and transparencies.
 - 4.3.6 **Artworks** relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, and/or created by a North Sydney artist(s), including but not limited to paintings, drawings, lithographs, etchings and models. Historical Services shall endeavour to purchase at least one suitable work from the North Sydney Art Prize that conforms to the above criteria.
 - 4.3.7 **Oral history** interviews with people who have lived and/or worked in the North Sydney LGA, recorded either in analogue or digital format, with public access copies provided on CD.
 - 4.3.8 **Audio-visual** material relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, either in CD, CD-ROM, VHS or DVD format.
 - 4.3.9 **Databases** relating to the North Sydney LGA or for genealogical research, to complement the main Library reference collection, either in digital format (available online) or on microform.
 - 4.3.10 **Community archives**: unpublished material relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, and produced or collected by local individual(s) or organisation(s).
 - 4.3.11 **North Sydney Council archives**: The Council Historian, Historical Services Curator and/or Historical Services Librarian shall consult with

the Manager Customer Services and Records on the transfer of records. Archival records include but are not limited to: Council and Committee minute books, rate and valuation records, correspondence and legal documents, Committee and Officer reports, building and development registers/applications, subdivision applications, and any record that Council is required to keep permanently under the provisions of the *State Records Act 1998*.

4.3.12 **Artefacts** relating to any aspect of the North Sydney LGA, past or present, including but not limited to domestic equipment and furniture, costume and textiles, agricultural equipment, occupational/commercial equipment, toys and games, transport equipment and school equipment. Historical Services will consider the acquisition of Aboriginal cultural material of local significance provided the material is well provenanced and in consultation with the relevant Aboriginal community.

4.4 Collections Management

4.4.1 Conservation

- a) material will be stored and/or displayed in suitable environmental and security conditions to prevent or delay deterioration and damage
- b) the condition of material in storage and on display will be regularly monitored and managed
- c) if active conservation is required, advice will be sought from an accredited conservator, and all treatment will be documented in the object history file. Conservation treatment should be reversible where possible

4.4.2 Access

- a) public access will be provided to all collections, except where sensitivity or special conditions determine restriction, or where access may threaten the preservation of material. In such cases, copies, including digital versions, will be provided for research where possible and practical
- b) public access will be facilitated via the Heritage Centre enquiry desk, appointment with Historical Service staff outside of scheduled desk hours, online databases, Heritage Centre exhibitions and museum displays, and public programs

4.4.3 Inward loans

- a) historical Services aims to primarily use material from across all its collections for exhibition content. Objects will be considered for inward loan from an external organisation/individual when gaps exist in the interpretive potential of Historical Services' own collections
- b) the same care and precautions will be taken for the safe custody of inward loans as for items within the permanent Historical Services collections. Objects will be insured by North Sydney Council under the Industrial Special Risks policy
- c) inward loans will only be made for a fixed period and specific purpose. This period will be up to twelve months, or as determined by the Council Historian in agreement with the lender. Extensions of the loan period may be accepted if mutually agreed with lender. Material will not be accepted on indefinite or permanent loan
- d) an Inward Loan Agreement will be signed by both parties, one copy held by the lender and another by Historical Services. This agreement will indicate the purpose and proposed term of the loan, description of material, responsibilities for transport, conservation and security, and the insurance value for replacement/repair in the event of loss/damage. Condition of the material will be recorded and evidence of damage at the time of receipt reported immediately to the lender
- e) unless otherwise notified in writing, material will be returned only to the lender. If Historical Services' efforts to contact the lender within a reasonable period following the expiration of the loan are unsuccessful, and no special arrangements have been made for the return of the loan, then material will be placed in storage at the lender's risk and expense

4.4.4 Outward Loans

- a) Historical Services will consider lending material from any of its permanent collections to recognised cultural heritage institutions for exhibition or research purposes, on receipt of a written loan request. Material on loan to Council will not be lent to a third party.
- b) Historical Services will decide whether the material is suitable for loan according to the following criteria: availability over requested time period, condition, cost of conservation work if required, risk assessment (to object as well as borrower), ethical considerations (e.g. cultural sensitivity), proposed purpose of loan, and suitability of the borrower. Historical Services will advise the prospective borrower of the decision in writing
- c) borrowers will confirm their intention and ability to provide an acceptable level of care, security and safekeeping for material,

whether on display or in storage, and to conform to the specified conditions of the loan. Borrowers will not undertake any conservation treatment or invasive analysis of loaned material without prior consultation with Historical Services

- d) borrowers will undertake to acknowledge North Sydney Heritage Centre/Stanton Library as the source of material in any publications, and not to reproduce the material in any form without prior written approval from the Council Historian.
- e) loans will only be made for a fixed period and specific purpose. Loans will be offered for a period of up to twelve months, or as determined by both parties. Extensions of the loan period may be made if mutually agreed. Material will not be offered on indefinite or permanent loan
- f) an Object Exit Form will be signed by both parties, one copy held by the borrower and another by Historical Services. This form will indicate the purpose and proposed term of the loan, description of material, responsibilities for transport, conservation and security, and the insurance value for replacement/repair in the event of loss/damage. Condition of the material will be recorded at the time of loan
- g) an Inward Loan Agreement initiated by the borrower may also be used, provided all necessary terms are adequately covered

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 The Council Historian, or the Library Manager in the Historian's absence, has the authority to make any and all determination with regard to acquisition, retention, access and loans of material in the Historical Services collections.
- 5.2 The Council Historian, Historical Services Curator and/or Historical Services Librarian are responsible for all collections management activity outlined in the Policy.
- 5.3 The Director Community, Planning & Environment or appointed delegate is responsible for the administration and review of the Policy.

6. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Artwork Acquisition Policy
- Deaccession Policy Artwork and Cultural and Historical Collections
- Donations Policy
- Library Collection Development Policy

- Public Art Policy

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents/legislation:

- Income Tax Assessment Act 1997
- International Council of Museums, Code of Ethics for Museums, 2004
- NSW Heritage Office and NSW Ministry for the Arts, Movable Heritage Principles, 2000
- Russell, Roslyn and Winkworth, Kylie, Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections, Collections Council of Australia, 2009
- State Records Act 1998

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
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