



# Collection Management Policy



<b>Draft policy submitted: 20 October 2020</b>
<b>Date approved: 24 November 2020</b>
<b>Date for review: 24 November 2024</b>

# CONTENTS

- 1 Purpose and Scope of the Collection Policy**
- 2 Collection History**
- 3 Mission Statement**
- 4 Code of Ethics and Legal Authority**
- 5 Collection Management Personnel**
- 6 Acquisitions**
  - 6.1 Method of Acquisition**
  - 6.2 Collection Aim**
  - 6.3 Collecting Areas**
  - 6.4 Collecting Criteria**
  - 6.5 Core and Non-Core Collecting**
  - 6.6 Collecting Process: Museum Collection**
  - 6.7 Collecting Process: Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection**
- 7 Cataloguing**
  - 7.1 Cataloguing Collection Items**
- 8 Loans**
  - 8.1 Lending: Outward Loans**
  - 8.2 Borrowing: Inward Loans**
  - 8.3 Managing Loans**
- 9 Collection Access**
  - 9.1 Making the Collection Available**
  - 9.2 Copyright**
- 10 Collection Documentation and Care**
  - 10.1 Collection Documentation**
  - 10.2 Conservation Aims**
  - 10.3 External Conservation Inquiries**
- 11 Deaccessioning and Disposal**
  - 11.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning**
  - 11.2 Managing Deaccessioning**
  - 11.3 Managing Disposal**
- 12 Insurance**
- 13 Co-Operation Among Institutions**
- 14 Legislation and Guidelines**
- 15 Disaster Plan**
- 16 Review**

## **1 Purpose and Scope of the Collection Policy**

This policy is designed to outline the procedures to be applied to the collection of the Museum of Fire as operated by its Executive Board of Directors. The Board of Directors has ultimate responsibility for the collection. However, the day-to-day development and preservation of the collection is delegated through the Museum CEO down to the curatorial team, which includes the curator, collection manager and the heritage and research officer.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Museum's procedures for collection management practises including acquisitions, cataloguing, loans, collection access, preventative conservation, and deaccessioning.

## **2 Collection History**

The Museum of Fire was established in 1975. The current collection has evolved from the efforts of Fire and Rescue New South Wales over a period of some 90 years to retain items of a heritage nature for future generations. It has been supplemented in more recent years by the efforts of many volunteer enthusiasts and the co-operation and generosity of other Government Agencies and Organisations. The Museum of Fire contains one of the most significant collections of firefighting equipment and ephemera in the world. The Museum's collection is made up of a substantial photograph and document archive, a reference library, movable objects, and historic appliances.

## **3 Mission Statement**

The mission of the Museum of Fire is to provide a unique experience for people to connect with the history, tactics, and challenges of firefighting in New South Wales by exploring the dynamic connections between past and present.

The Museum provides a not-for-profit, permanent institution dedicated to the acquisition, conservation, research and communication of fire, firefighting, and fire prevention, along with exhibits for the purpose of research, study, education, and enjoyment.

To this end, the Museum seeks to create an open, engaging, and relevant experience for all our visitors, providing every member of the community with fire education relevant to their age and social environment. Our purpose is to educate visitors about the uses, control, and history of fire.

## 4 Code of Ethics and Legal Authority

The Museum of Fire must act as a responsible custodian, aiming to preserve and guard the collection.

The staff, board members and volunteers associated with the Museum of Fire will conduct themselves and make decisions in the best interests of the institution. Individuals should discuss any potential conflicts of interest such as owning a heritage collection, antique store or business that might have dealing with the Museum, with the CEO. Where decisions involving conflicts of interest arise, the individual should withdraw from the discussion and decision making process. In these situations, the Museums interest will take precedence.

Museum staff, board members and volunteers will not divulge information of a sensitive or confidential nature relating to security arrangements, donations, planning or management. Objects, specimens or records belonging to the Museum will not be taken from designated Museum buildings without prior authorisation of the CEO.

To uphold its ethical standards

- The Museum of Fire will acquire cultural material in accordance with State and Federal law and International agreements to which Australia is a signatory
- The Museum of Fire will acquire objects having a legally clear title, in compliance with ethics codes and relevant documents
- The collection of material will always be conducted in accordance with the highest professional standards as set out in the *Documentation of Ethics* developed by Museums Australia and the International Committee of Museums *Code of Ethics*.
- The Museum of Fire will respect the provisions outlined in *Previous Possessions, New Obligations* and consult with indigenous communities when displaying, researching, and documenting Indigenous material.

## 5 Collection Management Personnel

The acquisition, preservation and documentation of the collection is the responsibility of the CEO of the Museum. Other individuals or groups will be involved in these processes according to program and procedural requirements. At all times, the CEO of the Museum is responsible to the Board and must have Board approval.

The role of the CEO of the Museum is to manage the Museum and ensure that all curatorial personnel are meeting the requirements of the job description.

The role of the curatorial team is to recommend and implement priorities, policies and procedures for collection development and management; to

implement and monitor registration and accessioning procedures according to accepted museum standards; maintain data entry and records maintenance of permanent and education collections; ensure adequate preservation and implementing preventative conservation standards for the collection; and to plan, coordinate, design and implement museum exhibits. The curatorial team is responsible for overseeing the management of the Museum's collection. The curatorial team is also responsible for bringing forth issues to be discussed and decided on by the Board where applicable.

All Museum of Fire staff will comply with the policies set out here and related procedures manuals for the processing, recording, storage and use of the collection.

All Museum Board Members and staff have a duty to ensure the long-term preservation of the collection.

The curatorial team is responsible for monitoring and securing advice on conservation guidelines and procedures. The CEO has the responsibility to report conservation concerns to the Board.

The CEO must be informed in a timely manner of any activities that affect the condition of the collection including exhibits, loans, storage, accidents or disasters, and all restoration and conservation treatments.

All curatorial team members are responsible for maintaining protection and security of the collection from damage, deterioration, or loss. Staff should regularly inspect items in the collection and report any security or preservation concerns immediately to the appropriate manager. Any loss must be documented and reported to the CEO.

Appropriate staff members will strive to establish and maintain high standards in conditions of storage, display, use and handling of the collection. Appropriate staff members will strive to provide safe and secure environments that will not contribute to deterioration of artifacts on display or in storage. Appropriate staff members will strive to provide safe and secure environments in and around the historical structures, which will not contribute to the deterioration of them or the contained artifacts.

Any staff member who has physical access to the collection must use appropriate care and handling techniques. Any staff member who provides physical access to the collection to a non-staff member is responsible for ensuring that the person understands and agrees to use appropriate care and handling techniques.

Staff responsible for a unit of the collection may delegate related tasks, but must remain fully informed of progress and completion.

Staff will comply with all Occupational Health and Safety guidelines and directions as determined by the CEO from time to time. All staff also have responsibility for their own safety and that of their co-workers and are required

to report any situation likely to be hazardous, to their supervisors. Artifacts having the potential to be hazardous to the public, museum staff, the environment or the collection will be properly handled and stored in accordance with existing safety regulations.

Each artifact must be described, in sufficient detail to enable the detection of any deterioration in its condition, before being integrated into the collection and before being loaned to or loaned from the Museum. This information will form part of the accession record for the artifact.

## **6 Acquisitions**

The Museum of Fire acquires a variety of objects that fit within the parameters of the Museum's mandate and are in accordance with the Collection Policy. Decisions regarding objects to be included in the Museum's collection must be made carefully as there are ongoing resource implications for storage, exhibition, and conservation. Each item must be assessed for its significance and relevance to the Museum's mission, which assists in acquisition decision-making and provides rationale for polite refusal.

### **6.1 Method of Acquisition**

The method of acquisition may vary according to the type of material or the circumstances. The following five methods are recognised as acceptable:

#### **1. Gift of Bequest**

Gifts of bequests may be accepted from any source, including staff members. Such acquisitions must be processed through the Museum's Gift Fund, in accordance with Australian Tax Office requirements.

There are five types of permitted gifts:

##### **a) Deductible Gift**

The Museum has been endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), which allows certain donations to the Museum to be claimed as tax deductions by the donor under certain conditions. Gifts of money totaling over \$2 in any one financial year, property owned by the donor for less than 12 months, or, property forming part of the trading stock of a business may be tax deductible to the Donor. It is the Donor's responsibility to comply with Australian Tax Office guidelines for the valuation of any property offered.

##### **b) Cultural Gift**

The Museum is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as a public museum. This allows the value of property, which has been owned by the donor for more than 12 months, to be

claimed as a tax deduction by the Donor. Such property must be valued under guidelines issued by the Tax Office and the Australian Government Department responsible for the Arts at that time, which requires the Donor to obtain valuations from Certified Valuers. The Museum may assist the donor in obtaining these valuations, but any costs are normally the donor's responsibility. Offers of any such donations should be referred to the CEO in the first instance.

c) **Cultural Bequest**

A Cultural Bequest is similar to a Cultural Gift, but refers to Testamentary Gifts which are made to the Museum as a result of a deceased person's will. The benefits and conditions are similar to those in the Cultural Gift Program previously described.

d) **Philanthropic Gift**

A Philanthropic Gift is similar to a Cultural Gift, but processed through the Australian Valuation Office rather than the department responsible for the Arts. Any such proposed donations must also be referred to the CEO.

e) **Free Gift**

Many small items may be passed to the Museum without any intention of the Donor seeking a financial or tax benefit. Museum documentation, however, must be in the same format as for processing Deductible Gifts (described above).

To comply with Australian Tax Office guidelines for accepting these gifts, the Museum has setup the Museum of Fire Gift Fund to which all donations of money or property must be credited. This fund is required to maintain a Register of Donations and a separate bank account for monetary donations, and to issue separate receipts for all such donations. Thus any item (money or property, whether for the collection of for other use within the Museum) which is donated to the Museum must in the first instance be recorded in the Gift Fund Register. 'Donations' made to obtain a benefit or service from the Museum (e.g. Sponsorship for an exhibit) may not be allowed as gifts but may be otherwise tax deductible for the Donor. The Donor should be issued with a receipt which must show the Gift Fund's name, a description of the donated items, and the fact that the receipt is for a gift. It is the donor's responsibility to obtain the value of such property if required. After acceptance into the Gift Fund the item is then passed onto the collection or otherwise dispersed, and an appropriate entry is to be made in the Register to reflect the action taken.

## 2. **Purchase**

Artifacts may be purchased for the collection from any source where provenance can be obtained. However, purchases from any associated members (e.g. FRNSW, HFEA or Museum staff) require the approval of the CEO.

## 3. **Exchange**

The exchange of artifacts between institutions is an established and useful means of developing and improving collections. Exchanges may be arranged by the CEO with the approval of the Board. Exchanges may be made provided that:

- a. The removal of material would not impair the collection in any functional way
- b. The removal will be approved through the deaccessioning process
- c. Both parties to the exchange are in full agreement about the nature, type, number and quality of the items to be exchanged, and the terms and conditions are agreed upon in writing. Both the acquisition and deaccession of artifacts exchanged will be documents for permanent records

Such exchanges should be treated as acquisitions and disposals, and processed in accordance with the relevant sections of this manual.

## 4. **Transfer**

The Museum may acquire artifacts from Fire and Rescue New South Wales or other government departments or agencies. The CEO must approve the transfer.

## 5. **Field Collecting**

Artefacts may be collected directly from their context in the field. These may be subject other provisions of a Heritage Research permit issued under the Special Places Protection Act.

In all cases:

- A clear title must be transferred to the Museum with appropriate documentation.
- Possession or transfer must not contravene any existing legislation or regulations.
- No conditions may be attached to limiting the Museum's use of the material, except with the approval of the CEO.

## **6.2 Collection Aim**

The Museum of Fire will acquire material representing the development and history of NSW firefighting as outlined in Section 6.3 and material which educates the community to the uses, dangers, control and prevention of fire, and its effect upon society and the environment.



The Museum of Fire is focused on collecting material for exhibition, research and educational purposes. The Museum will acquire objects that have both display and research potential and will seek to establish a collection that contains levels of information relevant to the researcher and casual museum visitor alike.

The Museum is committed to:

- Making the collection accessible through display, education, publication, research, web-sites, electronic media and other programs
- Providing conscientious and professional care for existing and future collections.
- Making accessible the collection on a loan basis, to other accredited organisations and individuals.
- Implementing and supporting the Museums Australia *Document of Ethics*, ICOM *Code of Ethics*, the National Museum of Australia's policy document *Previous Possessions, New Obligation*, with acknowledgment of the Heritage Collections Council's documents *Significance* and *Mapping Culture*, and other relevant policies.
- Being a valued part of the distributed national collection and seeking to enhance it
- Promoting a great awareness and appreciation of cultural and natural heritage within New South Wales and on a national level.
- Being the leading museum in the region and to contribute to the national significance of cultural and natural heritage in Australia
- Providing discovery and interactive areas for children to enhance their understanding of fire, firefighting and fire safety.

The development of the collection will meet both the immediate and the long-term objectives of the Museum as determined in a regular program review. In some cases, this development may be opportunistic to allow for the acquisition of artifacts and the documentation of events or phenomena when special opportunities arise that are not anticipated in the program. In some instances, information is acquired about artifacts that are not themselves acquired into the Museum's collection. These records may be considered to be part of the Museum's collection.

### **6.3 Collecting Areas**

The Museum of Fire collects information and cultural material relevant to the development and history of firefighting in New South Wales in the form of photographs, documents, objects, oral and written histories, audio, video and electronic media.

The Museum of Fire collects objects based on the following three themes:

1. Fire
  - a. Science of fire
  - b. Uses and impacts of fire; social, commercial, and, environmental

- c. Indigenous use of fire and cultural connection with the land
  - d. Fire extinguishment
  - e. Fire prevention and education
  - f. Fires which have occurred
2. Firefighting
- a. History of the Fire Brigades and firefighting
    - i. Firefighting, training, competition, sporting, social, political
    - ii. Salvage, rescue, HAZMAT and other related activities
    - iii. Administration
  - b. History of equipment
    - i. Fire engines and other mobile machinery
    - ii. Extinguishing equipment
    - iii. Rescue and HAZMAT equipment
    - iv. Uniforms and protective equipment
    - v. Buildings
    - vi. Logistics
  - c. Science of firefighting and extinguishment
    - i. Hydraulics
    - ii. Chemicals
    - iii. Environmental
3. Organisational
- a. Cultural objects related to the history of the Museum
    - i. Depictions of the Museum over time
    - ii. Community engagement with the Museum

These themes are developed in relation to the following firefighting services:

1. **NSW Private and NSW Government Firefighting Services:** The development of fire and rescue services in NSW, from colonisation to the present time.
2. **Associated NSW Government Firefighting Services:** For example, Rural Fire Service, National Parks, Forestry, Maritime, Railway
3. **Other Australian Firefighting Services:** Other State public and private agencies.
4. **Overseas firefighting Services:** Materials from such organisations should only be collected where it is desirable to depict contrast to equivalent material used in NSW/Australia, or, the item is similar to, and could thus be used to depict, material previously used but no longer available in NSW/Australia.

The Museum will, in its collecting, research and interpretation of its collection, reflect the diversity of ethnic and cultural groups, which comprise the population of Australia.

Priority themes such as those listed below may be addressed within the main topics:

1. **Women** – fire, in particular firefighting, is stereotypically viewed as a man's domain. In reality fire and firefighting have been extensively influenced by women. Women's contributions will be emphasised

where possible. Potential objects for collecting include domestic technology, clothes and personal effects

2. **Indigenous** – Indigenous interaction with fire and its relevance to Indigenous cultural identity will be one aspect of the collection and historical records maintained at the Museum. Potential objects for collection include mission related memorabilia, personal effects, and material gathered from authorised archaeological digs.
3. **Environmental Issues** – the impact of fire as a natural phenomenon and as a result of the presence of people and industry has been profound. The collection, where possible, will be developed to reflect these changes to the natural environment as well as the dangers of urbanisation.

## 6.4 Collecting Criteria

The Museum of Fire is responsible for collecting on an ongoing basis to develop and enhance the collection.

- Accepted items must have a distinctive and verifiable connection to the aims of the Collection Policy
- Documentation and provenance must be obtainable for all items
- The condition of the item must be complete, stable and safe and not cause any type of danger to staff, visitors or the collection
- Suitable storage and display conditions must be available for all items accepted
- No item will be accepted that has any conditions attached to it
- Items duplicating material in the collection will not be accepted unless with a particularly relevant provenance, of superior quality to the existing material or for hand-on display use.
- The Museum of Fire must be able to obtain clear legal title to the item
- The item must be obtained in a legal manner
- The item may not be illegal with regard to the laws of Australia (such as endangered species, hazardous materials, etc.).
- Long-term loans should be discouraged, except for unusual and rare items with a high level of significance to the collection.

Objects should not be collected:

- Simply because they are old, strange, unusual or promote nostalgic or sentimental response
- If they have attributes that are a threat to users or other elements of the collection (all aspects of Occupational Health and Safety in relation to the handling and storage of the item needs to be considered at the time of assessment)
- If there is a doubt as to ownership
- If restrictions are placed on the items use or disposition
- If they require or infer an undesirable commercial endorsement
- If they have doubtful associations to a theme, or doubtful authenticity
- If their acquisition or possession violates State, Federal or International laws and conventions

- If they are in poor condition and/or of dubious historical or physical integrity
- If they may become an expensive burden on the Museum in future in terms of availability of human and financial resources to acquire, document, store and preserve
- If they are already adequately represented in the collection
- The Museum of Fire will only acquire material that does not duplicate collections held in comparable museums, unless it is significant to firefighting in New South Wales

The decision of which objects will be accessioned into the Museum's collection will be made by the CEO and curatorial team. If the CEO and curatorial team disagrees, the final decision regarding what items are accepted into the collection resides with the Board.

The collection of the Museum will be representative and thematic. Where original objects are unobtainable for exhibitions, replicas, models, photographs or other graphic components may be considered as acceptable alternatives.

#### **Collecting priorities rubric:**

<b>Highly significant*</b>	<b>Significant</b>
Firefighting in NSW	Firefighting in Australia
Indigenous material from NSW associated with fire	Educational material on fire safety in NSW and Australia
<i>*Appropriate documentation and provenance are required to prove significance as outlines in 'Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections' (2009).</i>	

## **6.5 Core and Non-Core Collecting**

The Museum of Fire's collecting activities are broken up into four distinct collecting areas, two core and two non-core collections.

The two core collecting areas are the 'Museum Collection' and the 'Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection.'

The two non-core collecting areas are the 'Working Collection' and the 'Prop Collection.'

### **Museum Collection**

The Museum Collection consists of items donated to, or purchased by, the Museum of Fire. The Museum Collection is owned, controlled and managed by the Museum of Fire.

### **Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection**

The Museum of Fire is committed to assisting Fire and Rescue New South Wales in its compliance with the Heritage Act 1997. In some cases acts as the custodian of the Brigades collection, the Fire and

Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection, this includes the Heritage Fleet. Items belonging to the Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection that are transferred to the Museum of Fire are intellectually separated to the Museum Collection, as ownership of these items remains with Fire and Rescue New South Wales. However, while in the Museum of Fire's custodianship, this collection is afforded the same storage conditions, preventative conservation and other collection care as items belonging to the Museum Collection. Fire and Rescue New South Wales is at all times the decision maker as to what will be acquired and disposed of by the Museum of Fire in relation to the Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection.

### **Working Collection**

The Museum recognises the value of using artifacts in public and school programs. These programs require objects that can be operated or handled by staff, volunteers and the public. To fulfil this requirement the Museum has established a Working Collection. Artifacts accepted by the Museum specifically for use in the Working Collection will be identified on the Gift Agreement form with the sentence:

*'These objects are being accepted by the Museum to be used in demonstrations and other activities and may be considered expendable.'*

All artifacts acquired for the Working Collection must be registered and catalogued in accordance with museum standards. The collection record will indicate the designation of an object i.e. 'Museum Collection' or 'Working Collection'. If an object switches from one designation to the other, the reason for this change in status must be documented. The decision to designate an artifact for the Working Collection is based upon a number of facts taken collectively. Artifacts so designated must be

- Considered expendable
- Duplicates of other artifacts within the collection, except under special circumstances
- Safe to use
- Required to fulfill a program need

The decision to designate an artifact as part of the working collection will be made by the curatorial team with the approval of the CEO.

### **Prop Collection**

No material that is acquired as display aids, props, spare parts or for the purpose of analysis will be included within this Policy, these objects will be inventoried as part of the Prop Collection, as will any materials or equipment collected or purchased as set dressing.

## **6.6 Collecting Process: Museum Collection**

In order for an item to be assessed and accepted into the Museum Collection, the following processes should be followed.

**1. Initial Assessment**

When an item is offered to the Museum of Fire, a brief assessment should be made to see if it is likely to meet the Collection Policy.

**2. Collections Receipt**

A Collections Receipt will be issued at the time the item is delivered to the Museum, and will be signed by the staff member taking delivery. It will indicate that acceptance of the item will be subject to review under the Collection Policy.

**3. Object Information Form**

The donor should be requested to complete an Object Identification Form, which may give some background to the item, to assist with assessment and future recording.

**4. Gift Acknowledgement Form**

The donor will be requested to sign a Gift Acknowledgment Form. This document is a quasi-legal document that will stand up in a court of law. This document must include the following:

- a) A signature of the Donor, and preferably a Donor's witness.
- b) A physical description of the object, preferably with the inclusion of the Museum's interim acquisition number.

This document places the onus on the Donor to understand their surrender of ownership rights. This includes any intellectual rights associated with the item. To this end it is very important for Museum personnel to sit down with the would-be donor and fully explain the significance of the document and the conditions it entails. Although this process may be time consuming and even provide the opportunity for the donor to withdraw their offer, this explanation is worthwhile in the long-term. The Museum's possession of this document will secure its ownership of the object and establish its commitment and professionalism in the community.

**5. Assessment**

The curatorial team will further assess the item to determine its compliance with the Collections Policy and will then decide whether an object should be accepted or declined. The Donor will be advised on the decision taken.

**6. Gift Fund Register**

All items received into the Museum are to be recorded in the Gift Fund Register. The Register shows the details of the donor, the item(s) donated, and details of action taken.

**7. Acquisition**

Items which have been accepted into the collection will then pass to the curatorial team for progression to cataloguing. Any acquisition made by the Museum of Fire must be accompanied by documentation, either a signed Gift Agreement or equivalent document, which transfers

the title in the acquisition outright and irrevocably to the Museum of Fire.

## **6.7 Collecting Process: Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection**

The decision of what items are acquired into the Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection lies with Fire and Rescue New South Wales, not the Museum of Fire. However, the Museum is happy to provide assistance and guidance to the Brigade in line with its larger commitment to assisting Fire and Rescue New South Wales in its compliance with the New South Wales Heritage Act of 1997.

If Fire and Rescue New South Wales intends for the object to be under the custodianship of the Museum of Fire, the decision to collect this object should be undertaken in conjunction with the CEO of the Museum of Fire in order to ensure that the Museum has the space and resources to properly care for the object now and into the future.

Although the Museum of Fire may be the custodian for these objects belonging to the Fire and Rescue New South Wales Heritage Collection, Fire and Rescue New South Wales is at all times the decision maker as to what will be acquired and disposed of.

## **7 Cataloguing**

The curatorial team will ensure that all artifacts in the collection are as fully documented as possible, and that this work is done in accordance with best achievable museum practices.

Documentation is essential for collection development, research, preservation and interpretation. The Museum will use accepted and consistent standards, methods and procedures to document the collection.

Documentation will include all original documents, in written, electronic or graphic form, pertaining to the identity, provenance, legal title and other related information regarding significance, function, description, details of condition, operability, usage, history of ownership and alternations.

Any changes in the status of artifact, such as deaccessioning or transfer to the Working Collection, must be thoroughly documented. The reasons for the new designation must be recorded.

Legal and other significant documents dealing with acquisitions must be kept in duplicate, with one set in an off-site location. Delicate or perishable records should be copied for use so that the originals are preserved. Legal documents include those that give the Museum title to the artifact.

## 7.1 Cataloguing Collection Items

The process of cataloguing is accomplished by:

1. Assigning a unique number to the object
2. Recording the following information
  - a. The items name
  - b. Date of registration
  - c. The method of acquisition, along with donor name (if relevant)
  - d. A brief description of the item
  - e. The general condition of the item
3. Photographing the item for identification purposes
4. Recording the items physical location within the Museum

The recording and cataloguing work will be undertaken by the curatorial team.

## 8 Loans

It shall continue to be the policy of the Museum of Fire to borrow objects from other historic sites, museums, galleries, cultural organizations, and private sources for the purposes of exhibition or research. In addition, the Museum shall lend objects from its collection to responsible institutions for the purpose of exhibition or research. Inward and outward loans benefit the Museum as they create connections with other organisations.

- Specific terms of agreement between lender and borrower for incoming and outgoing loans shall be negotiated on an individual basis
- All incoming and outgoing loans must be approved by the CEO and curatorial team.
- Loans will only be made if and when a formal written loan agreement has been received. Photographs and a condition report must accompany this loan agreement.
- The Museum of Fire will not accept 'permanent loans'. All objects offered to the Museum permanently must be donated with full title.
- Copyright restrictions are to be observed at all times.

### 8.1 Lending: Outward Loans

- Objects from the Museum of Fire's collection may be loaned to other museums and institutions for a finite period of time
- All requests must clearly state in writing the intended use, including both exhibit and publication purposes and period of use
- Only loans to institutions with appropriate environmental conditions, security protection and insurance will be considered
- No loan request will be considered if it exposes the object to undue risk because of exhibit conditions, means of transport, or any other factor
- A thorough examination and assessment of the physical condition of the object must be made before formal approval is given. Any pre-



existing weaknesses, imperfections, deterioration, inconsistencies, fractures, tears, repairs or other alterations must be documented in a written report and photographed.

- The borrower will bear full cost of handling, crating, insurance, and transportation of objects, unless otherwise specified.
- The borrower shall, at their expense, insure the object, historic documents or reproductions being loaned against loss by fire, theft, malicious damage by third parties and other perils for the stated value and provide the Museum with satisfactory proof of such insurance. The insurance policy shall show that the Museum of Fire is the owner of the object, historic documents or reproduction
- The borrower may not clean, restore, or make any modifications to an object in any way, either for exhibit or research purposes.
- The borrower shall bear full responsibility for any object that is lost or damaged during transit or while in the physical custody of the borrowing institution.
- If damage occurs, the borrower must immediately notify the Museum and follow its recommendations. The CEO and curatorial team must be notified at the earliest possible date of the damage and the actions to be taken to correct the problem.
- In exceptional circumstances, Museum of Fire staff may be required to accompany items on loan whilst in transit and to unpack and pack items
- When the loaned object is returned to the Museum, it shall be the responsibility of the curatorial team to examine it for any changes in physical condition
- The borrower will be furnished with two condition reports. One is to be completed, signed, and returned upon the initial unpacking of the object. The second is to be completed and signed upon re-packing and returned with the object to the Museum
- Permission must be obtained from the Museum for the publishing of graphic material derived from historic documents, objects or reproductions on loan. Suitable credit must be given and a credit line must appear as follows: '... courtesy of the Museum of Fire.'
- No borrowed objects, documents or reproductions may be loaned to a third party
- Historic documents, objects or reproductions being loaned must be, upon reasonable notification, made accessible to Museum staff
- Loans for commercial purposes will involve a user fee
- All travelling exhibits from the Museum will be treated as Outward Loans
- The Museum reserves the right to cancel the loan agreement and recall the loan object, historic documents or reproductions.

The Museum may elect to loan or hire items from the Working Collection or Prop Collection. Such loans will be subject to a Loan Agreement drawn up between the Museum of Fire and the borrower. This document will determine the responsibility of each party related to fees and charges, duration, usage,

care of the items, transport, insurance coverage and any ongoing maintenance required.

## 8.2 Borrowing: Inward Loans

- Incoming loans shall be for a specific purpose and time period
- No inward loan will be accepted without documentation completed to the satisfaction of the Museum of Fire. Such a document must define/outline the following:
  - Name of Lender
  - Any conditions related to fees and charges
  - Duration of Loan
  - Any special care instructions for the item, along with any ongoing maintenance that the item may require
  - Transport
  - Insurance Coverage
- Inward loan documentation must include condition reporting
- Objects on loan shall receive the same care as those owned by the Museum
- If damage occurs to a loan object or group of object, it is the responsibility of the Museum of Fire to contact the lender at the earliest possible date. No conservation work may be undertaken without prior consent of the owner
- No modification of a loan shall be made by the Museum, unless it is of a cosmetic nature (e.g. matting or framing) and is carried out with the complete and written consent of the owner
- The Museum shall not borrow an object which is physically or chemically unstable and/or in need of conservation treatment
- Time limits will be agreed upon by both the Museum of Fire and the owner, as defined in the loan form
- Long-term or 'permanent' loans are to be executed only after careful consideration and full discussion by the CEO and curatorial team of the perceived advantages and disadvantages. The Museum will only accept such loans if there is reason to believe the object(s) will be frequently used or exhibited.
- The Museum will comply with all restrictions and considerations placed on borrowed objects
- Inward loans will be used to recognise the value in community based collections and to explore opportunities to work with the custodians of these collections in mutually beneficial ways
- When the Museum borrows material from another institution it will follow the procedures prescribed by that lending institution. When the Museum borrows material from individuals, or from institutions with no lending procedures or forms, it will follow procedures prescribed by the Museum of Fire for such transactions

## **8.3 Managing Loans**

The CEO or designate will be responsible for managing and monitoring all inwards and outward loans.

## **9 Collection Access**

### **9.1 Making the Collection Available**

The Museum of Fire will make the collection available in the following ways:

- Access will be provided first through information about the collection
- Physical access to parts of the collection may be provided through exhibitions and public programs
- More specific public access may not always be possible or indeed be the best means of access. Physical access to artefacts will be arranged through the CEO or designate, and is provided to:
  - Staff members whose program responsibilities require knowledge and use of the collection
  - Any person with a reasonable request for first-hand examination of material

In keeping with standards for preservation and preventative conservation of the permanent collection, access to all items will be controlled.

The collection storage sites shall be off-limits to the public and accessible only by the CEO and curatorial team or an individual designated by one of the above another staff members. All other staff and volunteers will have access to the collection storage facilities only when accompanied by one of the above staff members.

Access to objects as requested by qualified outside researchers may be granted by the CEO on an appointment basis. Such requests must be made in advance, or to the satisfaction of the CEO, and access must be supervised by the CEO or his/her designated representative. The Museum's human and financial resources may be restricting factors in the level of access which can be provided. Objects may not leave the Museum. The researcher may take photographs for private use only, but may not photograph the artifacts for any publication purposes. The Museum reserves the right to obtain free of charge copies of scholarly publications that result from the utilization of information and/or materials from the collection.

Collection records shall remain restricted in use to all individuals, both within and outside the Museum, with the exception of the CEO and curatorial team. Only the basic accessioning information shall be made available for viewing. Donor files, object appraisals or values, local records, and insurance records shall remain confidential.

## **9.2 Copyright**

When cultural material is accepted by the Museum of Fire, legal title must be transferred from the donor or vendor to the Museum of Fire. If copyright cannot be transferred at the time of acceptance, a limited licence to copyright may be provided until the copyright expiry date is due.

## **10 Collection Documentation and Care**

### **10.1 Collection Documentation**

The Museum of Fire's collection must be catalogued in the PastPerfect collection management software with all known information regarding the item's history. The curatorial team has responsibility for cataloguing items in accordance with national museum standards. All donors should be requested to provide as much information as possible to document in writing the historical background, associations and significance of the object(s) donated.

### **10.2 Conservation Aims**

The Museum acknowledges the inherent value of the artifacts and historical structures that make up its collection. They are material evidence of the natural and cultural environments that have existed within the country and as such are irreplaceable. It also recognises that a balance must be struck between preservation of the collection for the future, and its use for research, exhibition and education purposes. Achieving a balance between care and use of the collection is the shared responsibility of all Museum staff.

This policy and its spirit will be applied when conserving, restoring or otherwise intervening directly (making physical changes) or indirectly (environmental changes) with the artifacts and historical structures that make up the collection. Artefacts and records will be located at all times in environments which are conducive to their preservation.

The Museum of Fire will aim to provide the best physical care of the collection in accordance with the best achievable museum standards. These include:

- Implementing and monitoring preventative conservation methods
- Temperature levels between 18-25°C
- Relative humidity levels between 50-60%
- Utilisation of appropriate storage equipment and furniture
- Restricted access to storage areas and maintenance of security measures
- Regular pest monitoring and control
- Light exclusion (e.g. A brightness of no greater than 50 lux and 75 microwatts per lumen of UV content for sensitive material)
- Pollution and dust exclusion

- Not items or other material to be stored in the collection storage areas without the express approval of the CEO
- Development and implementation of a Disaster Preparedness Policy
- Handling of items by trained staff only to ensure the safe use and transit of items
- Archival and preservation quality material will be used at all times for conservation, preservation and storage

Conservation and restoration treatments will follow a course of minimal intervention in the fabric of the object. Whenever possible, reversible techniques and materials will be used in treatments or when any physical change is made to an object, including the attachment of accession or catalogue numbers, or mounting for display.

Restorations will be historically accurate, while not being deceptive as to originality. Restoration will be easily detectable, although not necessarily conspicuous.

### **10.3 External Conservation Inquiries**

The Museum will not normally give out advice on, or undertake, conservation treatment as a result of a public inquiry. Such advice, if given, will be limited to preventative measures. When the information is within the area of professional expertise of the advisor, exceptions may be made in the following circumstances:

1. It can be reasonably ascertained that the person can carry out the treatment in a competent and ethical manner
2. The inquiry comes as the result of an emergency situation

The Museum may refer an inquirer to outside agents to have a treatment carried out. Whenever possible, the names of two or more agents should be offered to the inquirer.

The Museum will at no time take responsibility, financial or otherwise, for the outcome of conservation activities carried out as a result of an inquiry or referral. In all cases this will be communicated to the inquirer.

The Museum will not carry out conservation treatments for the public. Exceptions may be made for the following circumstances:

1. In response to an emergency situation
2. In extraordinary circumstances, such as revenue generating opportunities, at the discretion of the CEO

Whenever possible, the Museum will cooperate with other heritage institutions and levels of government in matters relating to conservation and preservation.

## **11 Deaccessioning and Disposal**

In order to maintain the collection in accordance with the Museum's goals and priorities it may be necessary or desirable to dispose of artifacts. Any decision to dispose of an artifact in the collection is subject to internal review. The artifact and the process of deaccessioning and disposal will be thoroughly and uniformly documented and undertaken in accordance with the highest professional standards and ethics.

Following the approval of the Board the permanent removal of any artifact may be carried out. This procedure must be documented, so that the reasons for such action can be known in the future. These records will be retained by the Museum.

### **11.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning**

The deaccessioning process can only occur when the material is legally owned by the Museum of Fire and conforms to the following criteria:

- The curatorial team determines an artifact has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it no longer serves a useful purpose
- The artifact no longer meets the criteria of the current Collection Policy
- Lack of documentation or provenance
- There is superior material with identical provenance within the collection
- When an item presents a hazard to the curatorial staff or poses a preservation threat to other elements of the collection
- The curatorial team determines an artifact is redundant, or otherwise is no longer considered significant to the Museum, and its removal will not impair the collection
- The Museum is incapable of providing the conditions necessary for minimum curatorial care required by an artifact
- When the potential for gaining knowledge by destructive analysis justifies the loss of the object
- Art artifact has been stolen, with no hope of return
- The artifact has been acquired illegally or unethically
- It can be shown that other bodies or governments have a right to the material.
- Any other circumstances, presented by the CEO and approved by the Board

The Museum will not normally deaccession artifacts at the request of the Donor.

The deaccessioning procedure must be fully documented, with the reasons for actions taken and all documentation retained. Following approval of the Board, deaccessioning and disposal may take place.

## 11.2 Managing Deaccessioning

The deaccessioning of an artifact will be initiated by the curatorial team and CEO and must be approved by the Board.

The artifact will be fully researched to ensure it is not subject to any condition established at the time of acquisition which may affect its deaccessioning, to ensure the Museum has clear title, to ensure it has no other operational value within the Museum, and to ensure that its disposal does not violate any existing laws or regulations (for example, the Income Tax Act [Section 207.3] regarding deaccessioning certified cultural property within five years of its certification).

The permanent removal of any artifact from the collection must be documented, so that the reasons for such action can be known in the future.

The Museum must have clear title to all objects considered for deaccessioning. For poorly or undocumented objects, the Museum must demonstrate due diligence and document the exploration of ownership and provenance.

## 11.3 Managing Disposal

The CEO will recommend to the Board the most appropriate means of disposal

a) **Donation or Exchange to another Institution.**

Any artifact will first be considered for donation, transfer, or exchange to another appropriate public institutions within NSW, then within Australia, before going beyond to another county if deemed appropriate. Recipient institutions will normally incur all transportation costs.

b) **Sale.**

An artefact may be sold by negotiation or auction. The sale price will reflect current fair market value. If an object has no market value it may be sold for scrap value. Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned artifacts, less the cost of sale, will be used for improving the collection or supporting its preservation. Artifacts may not be sold, or otherwise given, to board members, staff or their relatives.

c) **Research.**

Deaccessioned artefacts may be retained by the Museum for research including destructive analysis or other uses, provided the potential for gaining knowledge justifies the loss of the artefact.

d) **Destruction.**

Disposal of an artefact by destruction is the final alternative and will be permitted if all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of objects through other methods or if the object is hazardous and poses a danger to other part of the collections or to staff or visitors

e) **Return to the Donor.**

On recognition of its custodial responsibly and public trust, the Museum may endeavour to notify donors of its intention to deaccession or dispose of an artefact. However, the item should not be returned to the donor if it is an artefact for which a tax benefit was previously obtained by the Donor in respect to its donation

f) **Return to Fire and Rescue New South Wales.**

Those items which are deemed to be owned by Fire and Rescue New South Wales must be returned to the Brigade.

## **12 Insurance**

The Museum will carry insurance deemed appropriate by the Board. All insurances held by the Museum must be reviewed regularly by the Board as required, but at least once every year.

The Museum carries the following types of insurance

1. Fire and other loss insurance
2. Workers Compensation and equivalent Volunteer Workers cover
3. Liability insurance covers any action for which the Museum could be considered liable, including negligent acts by staff to the property of others
4. Fire and Rescue New South Wales shall be responsible for the insurance of their collection in the custody of the Museum, including movable objects and the heritage fleet.

Insurance for traveling and temporary exhibitions displayed and circulated by the Museum in other institutions should be provided by those institutions.

## **13 Co-Operation Among Institutions**

The Museum of Fire will encourage the development of public collections in other institutions by offering advice as requested and by co-operating, to the extent practicable, with the collecting activities of other public institutions.

The Museum will cooperate with other museums, institutions and agencies in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and conflict in collecting.

With the approval of the CEO, Museum staff may assist other heritage organisations or government departments in identifying, authenticating and appraising artefacts.

Appraisals of artifacts will not be permitted for purposes unrelated to the activities of the Museum.



## **14 Legislation and Guidelines**

The Museum will be developed and maintained in accordance with all relevant current Commonwealth, State and Local Government legislation and policies, and professional guidelines, including the latest equivalents of:

- NSW Heritage Act 1997
- Firearms Act 1996
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- State Records Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 1989
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- Commonwealth Copyright Act 1968
- Archives Act 1983
- Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986
- Commonwealth and New South Wales Government policies relating to the Arts, Cultural Institutions, and Affirmative Action
- International Conventions on the ownership and trading in cultural property
- Guidelines in museum practice endorsed by Museums Australia, Australian Museums Online, and other similar professional advisory bodies.

## **15 Disaster Plan**

The Museum will develop a Disaster Plan to cover procedures to be followed in the event of a major incident within, or outside of, the grounds or buildings, which may require the protection, recovery or salvage of Museum equipment or artifacts.

Such events may include fire, water damage, explosion, civil disturbance, gas leak, earthquake, chemical spills, building or artifact degradation, damage caused during movement or transportation of items.

## **16 Review**

As the collection constantly evolves and the direction of the Museum of Fire alters, so too must the Collection Policy. This Policy is subject to review every four years. However, if deemed necessary, it will be reviewed at an earlier date.