

# La Perouse Museum Collection Policy

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## 1. Introduction

The La Perouse Museum Collection Policy is a public document based on nationally accepted principles and protocols, that guides the management and development of the Collection. It outlines why, what, where, how and when the Museum collects, and how and why items may be deaccessioned and disposed of.

The Collection Policy incorporates a number of specific collection-based activities, as follows:

- Acquisitions (section 11)
- Documentation and Assessment (section 12)
- Conservation (section 13)
- Loans - general (section 14)
- Inward Loans (section 15)
- Outward Loans (section 16)
- Deaccessioning (section 17)
- Disposal (section 18)

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## 2. The Museum's Vision and Mission

Randwick City Council's vision for the Museum <sup>1</sup> is that it be:

*A recognised and significant regional museum exploring Australia's past and connecting with the present to create pathways for the future.*

The Museum's mission <sup>2</sup> is:

- To be a Museum that recognises and promotes the local, national and international significance of its location to the Indigenous community and Bidjigal elders<sup>3</sup>
- To be a Museum that is inclusive, committed to a collection and exhibition program for a diverse audience.
- To provide custodianship to the valuable collection of the Museum.
- To strive for the highest calibre in all that the Museum offers – public programs and facilities.
- To be a unique and valued social and corporate event venue within a spectacular historic landscape and dramatic ocean views.
- To create a valued community hub and a place of community pride where the facility is constantly utilised and supported by the local community.
- To recognise and value the Museum's significant collection and how it both reflects and interprets regional and national history.

The Museum Collection is a source of knowledge, ideas, stories and memories. It is developed and managed as a State and community resource. It is used and interpreted to inspire, educate and inform the

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<sup>1</sup> Randwick City Council, *La Perouse Museum Business Plan 2017 – 2027*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> At the Randwick City Council Ordinary Council Meeting of 29 September 2020, Council resolved to amend the Mission and Vision of La Perouse Museum for the purpose of the Collection Policy to acknowledge the First Nations people of La Perouse and Randwick



community and visitors, and to contribute to the conservation and understanding of the history and heritage of the district.

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## 3. Policy Context

This Policy and any associated procedures should be implemented in the context of the Museum's Vision, Mission, core guiding documents, and all relevant plans and policies of the Randwick City Council (RCC) and the Museum. The principles of this Policy will also adhere to the 2017 Management Agreement between Randwick City Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW,

The Collection Policy is developed within the framework and adheres to the principles and obligations of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW) and Randwick City Council Lease Agreement (2017) and Management Agreement (2017). New acquisitions, conservation work, and other collections-based activities undertaken by Randwick City Council are annually reported to the Minister via NPWS as per Management Agreement (2017) obligations.<sup>4</sup>

The core guiding documents include:

Business Plan:

Randwick City Council, *La Perouse Museum Business Plan 2017 – 2027*.

Conservation Management Plan:

Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants (2009), *La Perouse Headland Botany Bay National Park: Conservation Management Plan*. Prepared for the NSW Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water / Parks and Wildlife Group / Sydney Region (3 volumes).

Lease of the building:

'General Commercial Lease', executed between the Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and Randwick City Council.

Management Agreement relating to the Museum Collection:

'Management Agreement: La Perouse Museum, 1542 Anzac Parade, La Perouse', executed between the Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and Randwick City Council with effect from 26 October 2017.

Relationship with the Friends of the Laperouse Museum Inc.:

'Memorandum of Understanding between Randwick City Council and Friends of the Laperouse Museum Inc., 2018'.

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## 4. Historical Context

### 4.1. The Museum and its Governance

The Museum was initiated by a group of Australian citizens and French residents in Australia who, in July 1984, formed the Lapérouse Association for the Australian Bicentenary (LAAB). Their collective efforts led to the Museum being opened on 23 February 1988 as a NSW Bicentennial Council project jointly with the LAAB and support from the French Government.

To house the Museum, the NSW Government made available (through the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)) the 1882 Cable Station building in Kamay Botany Bay National Park. The NSW Department of Public Works restored the building exterior while the LAAB carried out the interior renovations and décor of the south wing specifically to house the Lapérouse Museum collection.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Management Agreement: La Perouse Museum, 1542 Anzac Parade, La Perouse.' Section 1.1. Current reporting period is End of Financial Year as at 3 June 2020

From the time of the Museum's opening until 26 October 2017 the NPWS held responsibility for the management of the site and for maintenance of the Museum building and infrastructure, including the Museum Collection.

In October 2017, NPWS and RCC entered into a formal arrangement whereby RCC has leased the Museum and the surrounding headland precinct for 21 years from 26 October 2017 with the option to extend the lease for a further 21 years. Interdependent with the Lease agreement, the Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and RCC have entered into a Management Agreement that defines RCC's rights and responsibilities in relation to the Museum Collection.<sup>5</sup>

Governance and decision-making for the Museum is through the Curator La Perouse Museum and RCC, with advice from its appointed advisory body, the La Perouse Museum and Headland Trust.

In March 2018, RCC appointed a professional Museum Curator, who is assisted by a part-time temporary Curatorial Assistant (as at the time of this policy) and support staff for front-of-house services via its Cultural Events and Venues team.

The activities of the Museum are supported by the Friends of the Lapérouse Museum, an incorporated volunteer membership association with a particular interest in the French themes and programming.

## 4.2. The Museum Building

The 1882 Cable Station building, as part of the Kamay Botany Bay National Park, is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register and has ID number 5061543 in the State Heritage Database.<sup>6</sup>

The current Conservation Management Plan describes the building thus:

The former Cable Station that now houses La Perouse Museum is a two-storey rendered masonry building situated on a grassy knoll of La Perouse Headland facing north overlooking Frenchman's Bay. The orientation of the building is attributed to the positioning of the telegraph cable which came ashore at Frenchman's Bay. Designed by the Colonial Architect's office the building has a single storey veranda on its northern facade and a U-shaped plan. Originally symmetrical the building has had additional bays added to either end of the building.<sup>7</sup>

The Cable Station building was used for a variety of purposes prior to becoming a Museum, as shown in this timeline:

- 1881-82 The two-storey brick Cable Station was built to house the operations of the submarine telegraphic link between Australia and New Zealand, and housed staff from two companies that laid the submarine cable. The lettering on the front of the building combines them as E.E.A.C.T.C. or The Eastern Extension Australasian and China Telegraph Company.
- 1903: Yarra Bay House completed as a larger Cable Station; telegraph services moved there. La Perouse Cable Station now offices for EEACTC staff
- 1916-17 The building became redundant for telegraphic services.
- 1919 The building may have been used as an office by the Land Survey Department.
- 1920 The building provided accommodation (until at least 1933) for nurses working at the nearby Coast Hospital at Little Bay.
- 1939 The building provided accommodation for soldiers.
- 1944-87 The building became a Salvation Army refuge for women and children.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Management Agreement: La Perouse Museum, 1542 Anzac Parade, La Perouse.' The Minister administering the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* and RCC executed this Agreement on 5 September 2017, with effect from 26 October 2017.

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageltemDetails.aspx?ID=5061543>

<sup>7</sup> Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants (2009), *La Perouse Headland Botany Bay National Park: Conservation Management Plan*. Prepared for the NSW Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water / Parks and Wildlife Group / Sydney Region (3 volumes)

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## 5. History and Significance of the Collection

### 5.1. History of the Collection

The inaugural collection was primarily curated by Commandant François Bellec, Director of the Musée de la Marine in Paris. Some objects were on permanent loan, while others were bought with donations from the Museum's founding sponsors, in order to present exhibitions that specifically told the story of the achievements of Jean-François de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse, and to a lesser degree other French navigators in the Pacific and their role in the exploration of the Australian coastline.

After the Museum's 1988 opening, the exhibition focus eventually expanded as community interest grew in wider local stories and histories. New storylines were added, relating to the environmental, social and cultural histories of the La Perouse area and its people, including the Aboriginal communities in the region. Accordingly, the collecting focus began to expand and has continued to do so.

All of the items acquired for and by NPWS prior to 26 October 2017 (the Commencing Date of the Management Agreement) are owned by the Minister on behalf of the State of NSW.<sup>8</sup>

The Management Agreement requires RCC to manage these items and places strict conditions and obligations on RCC in that regard.

The Management Agreement also entitles RCC to develop its own collection for the Museum.

The Museum Collection therefore includes two distinct and major Sub-Collections that reflect the two separate phases of acquisition and the corresponding two owners:

- The **State Sub-Collection** is of items owned by the Minister that were acquired prior to 26 October 2017
- The **Council Sub-Collection** is of items owned by RCC and acquired after 26 October 2017

The current Management Agreement between Randwick City Council (leasee) and the owner NPWS (NSW) outlines the possibility of the Minister requesting the transfer of all objects acquired by Council during or at the termination of the Lease. Whilst this possibility is remote and will be reviewed, this obligation means in principle that RCC must manage the Museum's Council Sub-Collection in alignment with the State Sub-Collection.

A further implication of the Management Agreement is that RCC should not mix (in documentation or physically unless for exhibitions) the Museum's Council Sub-Collection with any other Council collection that may be identified or initiated in the future (e.g. RCC's collection of sporting trophies and civic memorabilia that are displayed at its Randwick headquarters).

### 5.2. La Perouse Museum Collection Statement of Significance (June 2019)

*"First Peoples living around Guriwal, or Botany Bay, in January 1788, were the very first to engage with the white settler. Although the English relocated to Sydney Harbour within days, French expeditioners sojourned six weeks. They bequeathed names to landscape features, and later to streets and the suburb of 'La Perouse'.*

*The La Perouse Museum was established for the Australian Bicentenary to tell the story of French Pacific expeditions, with particular reference to Australia<sup>9</sup>. The French Government provided part-funding as a gesture of perpetual friendship. Some of the inaugural collection was owned by the Musée de la Marine in*

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<sup>8</sup> See §4.1(c) and §4.2(a) of the Management Agreement.

<sup>9</sup> The Friends of La Perouse Museum further add "The La Perouse Museum was established in 1984-1988 by the late Pierre Roussel and his fellow committee members of the Laperouse Association for the Australian Bicentenary (LAAB) as the contribution of French residents in Australia and the French Government to Australia's celebration of the bicentenary of European settlement" 26 February 2020

Paris and was on loan to the La Perouse Museum. In 2008 the Musee was planning a large exhibition on Laperouse (France) and formally requested the return of the loan. NPWS returned the loan items in 2008.<sup>10</sup>

While a small Aboriginal community and art display was presented in one Museum room by the La Perouse Land Council between 1988 and 1997, across town the massive bicentennial Powerhouse Museum highlighted La Perouse in its social history displays.

The Museum is located in a late 1800s Cable Station, which, from 1919, was used to accommodate soldiers, nurses, mothers and children, and as a government office. The area supported market gardens from 1800 and a terminating tram service between 1902 and 1961. It also became the only officially recognised continuing Aboriginal district of Sydney, an unemployment camp during the Great Depression and a migrant camp after WWII. Under the management of the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service collecting expanded just over twenty years ago to reflect many of these other important and ongoing phases in this area. This accumulated collection is known as the State Sub-Collection.

The five collecting themes are not exclusive from each other and are in many ways closely interconnected. Of the five themes 'Aboriginal History and Culture' is most significant. The shell craftwork in the collection, for example, was first synonymised with La Perouse by Sydney day-trippers and, through the innovative work of some families, has become iconic to this area and to the artists of the La Perouse Aboriginal community. The role of technology in creating connections, in this case the two-way tourist trade made possible by the tram service, relates to such achievements – just as it did when the international telecommunications cable came ashore in 1876 and, when Governor Arthur Phillip and Jean-Francois de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse, used state of the art navigational instruments to pinpoint this precise Antipodean location a century earlier.

In 2019 the social significance of the site, the Museum and its varied collection is evident in stakeholder group activity and high local engagement with exhibitions. While the French connection remains strong, the voices of other communities have strengthened. The 'Local History' themed sub-collection is nascent but provides the best platform to capitalise on social significance and to explore all other themes and significance criteria i.e. artistic/aesthetic, research/scientific, and particularly historic and spiritual. This theme also provides the best place for reconciling claims of regional, national and international levels of significance.

These collection strengths provide a base from which new managers, Randwick City Council, can build the Council Sub-Collection to both embrace and transcend local significance”.

Source: Significance International, A Significance Assessment of the Collection of the La Perouse Museum. A report prepared for Randwick City Council, June 2019.

Note that, at the time of writing in November 2019:

- The Museum collection consists entirely of items within the State Sub-Collection; and
- No acquisitions have been formally accepted into the Council Sub-Collection.
- The State Sub-Collection also holds replica items which may need to be reclassified as Education or Support Collections and re-catalogued as such in Object Files and on eHive.

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## 6. Purpose of the Collection

The Museum Collection is an asset of the Local, greater Sydney and South-Coast communities, and to National and International audiences.

It provides a means to ensure that the Museum's vision and mission are achieved.

More specifically, the Collection can:

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<sup>10</sup> Email from NPWS Curator to La Perouse Museum Curator via NPWS Manager Sydney South Area Ben Khan, 3 June 2020

- support the Museum’s exhibition, interpretation and educational functions
- be used by RCC and others to create displays, exhibitions, publications and virtual experiences
- inform and inspire the work of creative practitioners, historians and researchers
- enrich relationships between RCC and its stakeholders
- stimulate visitor engagement, stakeholder commitment and philanthropic donations

Acquisition into the Collection can help preserve items of significance that relate to the Museum’s themes.

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## 7. Key Themes

RCC has approved five themes for the operation of the Museum. These guide community engagement and interpretive programs such as exhibitions, as well as collection development:

- The Traditional Custodians and the Aboriginal Community of Guriwal La Perouse
- The French connection from Lapérouse (with sub-themes of Colonialism and First Contact)
- Science and Communication (including the story of the Cable Station)
- Environment
- The broader Social History of La Perouse and the connection to the history of Randwick as a wider relevant community

For the purposes of collection management and development, RCC uses short thematic titles that align with these broader umbrella themes. These collection themes for the Museum are:

- Aboriginal History and Culture
- French Connections and First Contact
- Science and Communication
- Environment
- Local History

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## 8. La Perouse Museum and the Traditional Custodians of Guriwal La Perouse

The La Perouse Museum acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of this region; the Museum being situated in an area with a long - and ongoing - Aboriginal connection and significance. In all collection-based activities, where appropriate the Museum will seek to consult with the local Aboriginal Community via the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council.

This is particularly important regarding potential Acquisitions of any Aboriginal Material Culture to the Council Sub-Collection. The Museum may also play a role in supporting the Community in their ongoing care, security and interpretation of community-based heritage and cultural material.

See Section 11.6 regarding Acquisitions Approval and obligations to the Traditional Custodians and Aboriginal Community of La Perouse.



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## 9. Relevant Legislation and Published Guidelines

The Collection will be managed and developed in accordance with State and Federal law and international agreements between Australia and other countries.

This Policy is aligned with the standards and best-practice principles that are provided by the following publications:<sup>11</sup>

Australian Copyright Council (2017), 'Galleries & Museums: Introduction to Copyright'.

Buck, Rebecca A. and Jean Allman Gilmore (1998), *The New Museum Registration Methods*, American Association of Museums, Washington.

Heritage Collections Council (2001), *Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections*, Heritage Collections Council, Canberra.

International Council of Museums (2013), *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*.

Janke, Terri (2018), *First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries*, Australian Museums and Galleries Association, Canberra.

Ministry for the Arts (2015), *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

NSFMAG Taskforce (2016), *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*.

NSW Heritage Office and NSW Ministry for the Arts 2000, 'Movable Heritage Principles'.

Russell, Roslyn & Kylie Winkworth (2009), *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*, Collections Council of Australia, Adelaide.

Simpson, Shane (2008- ), *Collections Law: Legal Issues for Australian Archives, Galleries, Libraries and Museums*, Simpsons Solicitors, Sydney.

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## 10. Collection Development Principles

RCC will develop the Council Sub-Collection by:

- developing specific collection policies for sub-sub-collections as appropriate;<sup>12</sup>
- acquiring additional items in accordance with the Acquisitions Policy (section 10);

and, when appropriate, by:

- removing items from the Council Sub-Collection in accordance with the Deaccessioning Policy (section 16).

The Museum may develop non-collecting initiatives, such as assisting members of the community to document and care for their heritage collections in their original context of use.

The Museum may work in partnership with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council, libraries, galleries, archives, heritage and community organisations in the region such as Historical Societies, Friends of Lapérouse Museum Inc., where possible and appropriate, so as to:

- strengthen relationships between collections
- complement the collections in other museums, galleries, libraries and archives in the region
- explore ways of working co-operatively to collaborate on strategic collecting of particular themes and priorities

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix A provides references to the online locations, where available, of these resources.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix B provides suggestions for other sub-collections and sub-sub-collections that can be identified in the Museum Collection.

In developing the Council Sub-Collection, the Museum will actively engage with other collections-based organisations in the Local Government Area (including, for example, Randwick and District Historical Society Inc., Cape Banks Family History Society Inc., the Bowen Library, and the RCC's corporate and public arts collections).

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## 11. Acquisitions Policy

### 11.1. Acquisition Principles – State Sub-Collection

The State Sub-Collection is a 'closed' collection. RCC is not able to acquire items for this Sub-Collection. The Ministry and/or NPWS may make extraordinary submissions for new acquisitions to the State Sub-Collection, via the RCC Curator; and must adhere to the Criteria specified in 11.3.

### 11.2. Acquisition Principles – Council Sub-Collection

RCC may acquire items by:

- gift (in the form of a donation, bequest, exchange or transfer)
- purchase
- commissioning
- field collection

Items can be in physical or digital format. Physical items can be two-dimensional or three-dimensional.

RCC will accurately and fully document all acquisitions using the most comprehensive version of eHive, to facilitate identification, provenance and research, as required by the Management Agreement,<sup>13</sup> and make part of this data available for public access and interaction.

### 11.3. Criteria for the Acceptance of Items

RCC will develop the Council Sub-Collection by acquiring items that are:

- Relevant to the Museum's themes

and that demonstrate at least one of the following attributes:

- An association with the La Perouse area
- An association with the Cable Station building or the Kamay Botany Bay National Park
- Relevant significance as an item of cultural heritage
- Complementary or supplementary to an existing item in either the State Sub-Collection or the Council Sub-Collection (i.e. the proposed acquisition will help to fill a gap in the collection as a whole)

### 11.4. Conditions for the Acceptance of Items

When considering an item that might be acquired for the collection, RCC should ordinarily be able to answer all these questions positively:

- Is legal title to the item available to RCC?
- Is the item available to RCC without encumbrances or conditions?
- Is the donor aware that the legal transfer of title means that the donation is now property of RCC (as per Sections 4.3 (e) and 4.3 (f) of the Management Agreement)
- Is the provenance of the item clearly documented?
- Are adequate and appropriate storage facilities available for the item?

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<sup>13</sup> See §4.3(j) of the Management Agreement.

- Is the condition of the item such that RCC can adequately conserve and care for it?
- Is the item a worthy example of its type?
- Does the item have the potential to be used in the research, exhibition, communication and interpretation activities of the Museum?
- Does RCC have the resources required to house and maintain the item for posterity?
- Is the donor aware that as per the 2017 Management Agreement (Sections 24.1) the Minister may request transfer of objects acquired by Randwick City Council to the Council Sub-Collection, to the State Government prior to the time of termination or at the expiry of the Management Agreement?

### 11.5. Criteria for the Rejection of Items

The following will not ordinarily be acquired for the Collection:

- Objects offered as loans where the legal title is retained by the lender / owner
- Hazardous materials
- Items in poor condition, unless there are compelling reasons for acquisition (such as undisputed provenance to the Cable Station building)
- Items offered conditionally
- Items where the donor or vendor does not hold clear legal title
- Items from significant heritage sites and buildings where acquisition and removal would diminish the significance of the place; except in circumstances where the object is at risk
- Items for which copyright and reproduction rights cannot be obtained
- An item that duplicates another item already in the Collection (unless the proposed acquisition is more significant than the item(s) already in the Collection, for example, where the proposed new acquisition is better provenanced or is in better condition) unless required for object rotations for conservation purposes.

RCC does not accept 'permanent loans'. Items offered with that condition will not ordinarily be considered for acquisition until this condition is removed.

The Museum will not acquire or be involved in moving historic buildings.

### 11.6. Acquisition Approval

The Curator will submit a regular Acquisitions Report to RCC detailing proposed Acquisitions and any rejected Acquisition proposals.

Each proposal for acquisition is considered and may be approved by RCC on the recommendation of the Museum Curator.

The Curator will also present the Acquisitions Report to the Museum's Advisory Body – the La Perouse Museum and Headland Trust – for tabling.

The Curator will notify the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council of any potential acquisition of Aboriginal material culture before inclusion in the Acquisitions Report.

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## 12. Documentation and Assessment Policy

The Museum will keep accurate, up to date and detailed records using the most comprehensive version of the eHive cataloguing system and in accordance with the provisions of the Management Agreement, for both the State Sub-Collection and the Council Sub-Collection.

The Museum will establish and maintain detailed information within eHive (and/or in paper-based object files) for significant items and for all new acquisitions.



The Museum will prepare a Statement of Significance for all new acquisitions, using the guidance provided at Appendix C of this Policy document.

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## 13. Conservation Policy

### 13.1. Conservation Principles – State Sub-Collection

The Management Agreement provides guidance for conservation of items in the State Sub-Collection:

§4.3(b) requires RCC to ‘keep safe, secure and maintain the Museum Collection Items in accordance with museum standard conservation measures for storage and display’.

§4.3(c) requires RCC to ‘ensure that the Museum Collection Items are preserved and protected from damage (including during any refurbishment or renovation of the Museum)’.

§4.3(d) requires RCC to ‘notify and obtain the Minister’s written consent to any proposed object conservation treatment to be carried out on any Museum Collection Items which are owned by the Minister’.

§4.3(l) requires RCC to ‘comply with the Conservation Management Plan in respect of the Museum Collection Items’. [The Conservation Management Plan is defined on p. 6 of the Management Agreement as being ‘the plan for the Park which applies to the Museum as adopted by the Minister (and as amended from time to time with the Minister’s approval)’.<sup>14</sup>]

§4.5(b) states that RCC must not ‘tamper with, damage or attempt to conserve any Museum Collection Item owned by the Minister ... without the written consent of the Minister...’.

In 2015, RCC commissioned a *Preservation Needs Assessment* that provided advice on items in the State Sub-Collection and also on the environment of the Museum building.<sup>15</sup> That advice should be revisited and updated before any conservation activity is undertaken and following the completion of any upgrades to part or all of the Museum building.

### 13.2. Conservation Principles – Council Sub-Collection

RCC has a duty to preserve and conserve the Council Sub-Collection to professionally recognised standards.

As mentioned in section 12.1, the advice provided by the 2015 *Preservation Needs Assessment* should be revisited and updated following the completion of any upgrades to part or all of the Museum building.

### 13.3. Conservation Policy Statements

The following policy statements identify RCC’s responsibilities to the entire Museum Collection in general terms.

#### 13.3.1. Preventive Conservation

Preventive practices ensure that collections are monitored so that potential conservation issues are prevented or easily contained. Measures include:

- monitoring of light levels to ensure that items are not exposed to high levels of ultra-violet or infra-red radiation and to rest light-exposed sensitive items through a system of object rotation

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<sup>14</sup> The current Conservation Management Plan is: Jill Sheppard Heritage Consultants 2009, *La Perouse Headland Botany Bay National Park: Conservation Management Plan*. Prepared for the NSW Department of the Environment, Climate Change and Water / Parks and Wildlife Group / Sydney Region (3 volumes).

<sup>15</sup> Anne Cummins, September 2015, *Preservation Needs Assessment on the Historical Collection, Laperouse Museum*, La Perouse, for Randwick City Council, Sydney Artefacts Conservation.

- measuring and controlling relative humidity and temperature (this is currently not viable prior to the Museum's upgrade)
- monitoring biological pests by adopting appropriate housekeeping practices
- use of archival quality storage and display materials to offset the effects of intrinsic and external pollutants
- regular preventive conservation cleaning and building maintenance to minimise chemical and biological attack
- use of appropriate practice and materials for handling, moving and packing collection items

### 13.3.2. Active Conservation

As resources for conserving the Collection are limited, items needing conservation treatment should be prioritised against the following criteria:

- significance
- risk to other collection items (e.g. in the case of insect infestation)
- fragility
- display (i.e. some items need to be stabilised before they are put on display)

### 13.3.3. Disasters

Subject to the requirements of the Management Agreement in relation to the State Sub-Collection, and noting that the Agreement includes specific guidance in relation to *Force Majeure* events,<sup>16</sup> items damaged by natural disasters will be promptly treated by a conservator, and removed from affected areas where practicable.

RCC's Emergency Management plans should be regularly exercised and reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate for the Museum building and collection.

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## 14. Loans: General Policy

All items entering or leaving the Collection on a temporary basis will be accompanied by appropriate documentation and state the responsibilities of both the lender and the borrower concerning the use, care, maintenance and insurance of the items. This document is referred to as a Loan Agreement.

An Outward Loan is the loan of a registered item from the Museum Collection to another organisation for a purpose independent from the Museum, usually for public exhibition, and held at a site or venue not part of, or the responsibility of, RCC.

An Inward Loan is the loan of an item or collection of items, not owned (as part of the State Sub-Collection) by the Minister or (as part of the Council Sub-Collection) by RCC, borrowed from an institution or individual and held on the Museum premises or other premises under the responsibility of RCC.

Items may be borrowed for exhibition, display, photography, reproduction, research or, by special arrangement with the lender, for interactive use including use in education programs.

Short-term loans are generally of less than 12 months' duration and are usually associated with exhibitions, public programs or research.

Long-term loans are generally of 12 months' duration or more.

RCC may arrange long-term loans of items for display where required. These may be negotiated as renewable loans, providing that ownership remains with the lender.

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<sup>16</sup> See §30 of the Management Agreement.

Outward loans are rarely a solution to Museum storage issues. (If items are no longer required for the Council Sub-Collection, they could be considered for deaccessioning in accordance with the section 16 (Deaccession Policy) and for disposal in accordance with section 17 (Disposal Policy)).

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## 15. Inward Loans Policy

### 15.1. Inward Loans: Principles

The Management Agreement entitles RCC 'to enter into new Inward Loan Agreements with lenders if the Manager so chooses...' <sup>17</sup>

All inward loans will be for the purpose of display in the Museum, or for a particular exhibition or activity, or for specific research purposes. Loans no longer required for the purpose for which they were borrowed will be returned.

RCC may borrow items from private individuals, historical societies, museums, art galleries, libraries and other appropriate organisations.

No item is to be accepted on loan as a convenience or favour to the lender, either individual or institutional.

No loan will be accepted unless RCC can provide agreed storage and/or display conditions for that item whilst it is on loan, with the Lender on a case-by-case basis.

RCC will respect the conditions set out in a Loan Agreement and will give loaned items the same care and treatment it provides for comparable items in the Museum Collection.

The loan period will be specified in the Loan Agreement and will coincide with the proposed use of the item.

Loan documentation can only be initiated by RCC staff.

### 15.2. Inward Loans: Conditions

Loan Agreements, signed by both parties (RCC and the lender), must be completed for all items borrowed. Copies of the Agreement should be held by RCC and the lender.

Unless the lender elects to maintain their own insurance cover, RCC will cover each loan under its collections insurance policy. RCC insurance will not include consignment or transit of objects, unless specifically agreed in writing beforehand. Valuation will be provided by the lender. For insurance purposes assessment will be based on current market value. A Full Schedule of Loans to the Museum will be made available to RCC Insurers once the object(s) are under the care of RCC.

All loans will be processed and managed by Museum staff.

RCC will comply with the requirements of the lender regarding insurance, transport, packing, administration fees, care of the items, copyright and reproductions, and any other matters covered in the loan agreement.

RCC will not restore, repair, clean or alter items on inward loan in any way without prior permission from the lender.

If loans require conservation, including pest treatment or mounting in conservation mats and frames for exhibition, the proposed method of treatment and costs are to be agreed with the lender and RCC in writing beforehand.

An item on loan to RCC may not leave the Museum or other RCC premises without the express written permission of the owner.

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<sup>17</sup> See §4.1(e) and §4.4(b) of the Management Agreement.

Loans must be returned to the owner at the owner's request even if the agreed loan period has not expired.

The credit line for inward loans will read as specified by the lender on the Loan Agreement.

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## 16. Outward Loans Policy

### 16.1. Outward Loans – Policy for the State Sub-Collection

RCC must 'obtain the Minister's or the Minister's Representative's written consent to any Outward Loan of collection items owned by the Minister'.<sup>18</sup>

If the Minister provides written consent for the Outward Loan of an item from the State Sub-Collection, sections 15.2, 15.3 and 15.4 of this document provide guidance for good practice.

### 16.2. Outward Loans – Policy for the Council Sub-Collection

RCC may lend items from the Council Sub-Collection for the purpose of exhibition, research or demonstration/performance, as long as the items are available (i.e. stable, in display condition, and not designated for immediate use).

All borrowers must complete a Facility Report detailing security arrangements, environmental conditions, insurance cover, and personnel qualifications.

Borrowers should forward loan requests in writing to the Museum Curator well in advance of the proposed commencement date.

All outward loans require the approval of the Museum Curator. Certain outward loans may also require approval by RCC.

The Museum Curator may recommend loans for a period of up to three years. The option for loan renewal or extension is at RCC's discretion.

RCC may lend items from the Council Sub-Collection on a renewable long-term basis to private companies or individuals on terms agreed by both parties.

### 16.3. Outward Loans: Conditions

No item shall be lent where RCC considers the safety of the item cannot be assured.

The Museum Curator will process and manage all loans.

The borrower will insure the items for the amount specified on the Loan Agreement. This cover must be door-to-door and all risk. The borrower will be asked to provide evidence of the cover before the items leave RCC premises.

RCC may charge the borrower a reasonable loan administration fee, which will reflect the number of items in the loan and the amount of administrative time required of Museum staff to arrange the loan.

It is expected that all reasonable costs associated with the loan will be the responsibility of the borrower, including photography, conservation costs, insurance, packing, transport, display requirements/supports and security, unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Long-term loans will be subject to periodic inspections by the Museum staff. All loans will be subject to inspection at loan renewal.

No item will be lent without the completion of an Outward Loan Agreement signed by both parties (the RCC and the borrower). Copies of the Agreement should be held by RCC and the borrower.

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<sup>18</sup> See §4.3(i) of the Management Agreement.

The Museum Curator is responsible for determining whether handling procedures at the borrowing institution meet RCC's requirements, and hence whether installation will be the responsibility of the borrower. Otherwise items will be installed at the loan venue under the supervision of RCC staff.

Items on loan may not be modified, conserved or in any way altered without the express written permission of the Museum Curator or other responsible RCC staff.

Members of the public may photograph loaned items on display for non-commercial private purposes, provided that display cases are not opened or items handled, and provided that the conservation conditions accompanying the loan are not contravened.

All requests to photograph Museum items on loan for publication purposes must be referred to the Museum Curator.

RCC may withdraw items from loan if any of the conditions of the loan agreement are not met by the borrower. Such termination would be without prejudice to any of RCC's rights in respect to a possible insurance claim or any other matter.

#### **16.4. Outward Loans: Fees**

RCC will not apply additional loan fees to loans between cultural institutions who request items for short term public display or public exhibition purposes. In these instances, borrowing organisations will be expected to cover freight, packing, condition reporting, insurance and other necessary preparatory costs and conservation costs on return.

Loan fees should be negotiated with organisations where the loan is for a commercial purpose, private exhibition or commercial benefit to the borrower. Fees should be negotiated in addition to maintenance, conservation and cleaning as well freight, packing, condition reporting, insurance and other necessary costs.

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## **17. Deaccessioning Policy**

### **17.1. Deaccessioning Principles – State Sub-Collection**

RCC must not 'remove or dispose of any Museum Collection Item owned by the Minister ... without the written consent of the Minister...'.<sup>19</sup>

If the Minister provides written consent for deaccessioning of an item from the State Sub-Collection, sections 16.2, 16.3, 16.4 and 16.5 provide guidance for good practice.

### **17.2. Deaccessioning Principles – Council Sub-Collection**

RCC is committed to ensuring that the Collection is preserved for future generations.

RCC will endeavour to retain all items that are aligned with the key themes set out in section 8 and that demonstrate cultural significance.

Items that are not required for Museum exhibitions and programs may be stored rather than deaccessioned.

Despite the three preceding paragraphs, situations may arise where the integrity of the Council Sub-Collection is best served by enabling the removal of an item from the Collection via a well-considered decision to deaccession.

Reasons to consider deaccessioning may include:

- The item does not contribute to the objectives of the Museum or RCC

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<sup>19</sup> See §4.5(a) of the Management Agreement.

- RCC is unable to care for the item to accepted museum standards
- Research reveals that the item lacks cultural significance against any criterion

Section 16.4 lists the formal criteria against which deaccessioning can be proposed.

The same care must be applied to the assessment of items recommended for deaccessioning as to those proposed for accessioning.

Deaccessioning is a process that can lead to the removal of an item from the collection. It follows that only items to which RCC has legal title can be deaccessioned. For avoidance of doubt, items received on a temporary basis (such as via a loan) do not require deaccessioning as they are not owned by RCC.

### 17.3. Deaccessioning Policy: General

Proposals for deaccessioning must be assessed on the basis of the criteria set out in section 16.4 and must meet at least one of them.

Recommendations for deaccessioning may be based on information received via consultation (including with the former owner or their immediate family, if appropriate and if they can be located).

Recommendations for deaccessioning should be prepared by the Curator (or another responsible member of RCC staff or a Museum volunteer) for consideration by RCC.

The Curator is required to submit recommendations for deaccessioning to RCC for approval.

The Curator, when making a deaccessioning recommendation to RCC, will also recommend the proposed method(s) of disposal, and the priority in which different methods should be used.

Only RCC can approve the deaccessioning and means of disposal of an item.

RCC should not act unilaterally but should be guided in each deaccessioning decision by due diligence advice received from the Curator.

RCC will document all deaccessioning decisions, and all consequent disposal activities. At a minimum, deaccessions should be documented via the Minutes of meetings of RCC, and in the catalogue database(s).

### 17.4. Criteria for Deaccessioning

Items may be removed from the Collection when one or more of the following conditions apply:

- a) The item is a duplicate of one that is:
  - already held in the Collection;
  - in better condition and / or holds greater significance; or
  - is no longer required for display rotation (for conservation reasons).
- b) The item is subject to contractual donor restrictions that RCC can no longer meet.
- c) The item can no longer be suitably maintained / used / stored by RCC.
- d) RCC has discovered that the item was originally acquired unethically or illegally.
- e) An Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or other community / cultural group has laid claim to the item, and RCC is willing to acknowledge the merits of their claim for repatriation.
- f) A rightful owner has laid claim to the item, and RCC is willing to acknowledge the merits of the claim for restitution.
- g) The item has been damaged or has deteriorated, and the costs of conservation outweigh the value to the Collection.
- h) The item is inherently hazardous or contains hazardous materials.
- i) The item has been lost or stolen, and RCC (and its insurers) has determined that recovery is highly unlikely.



## 17.5. Cooling-off period

To avoid hasty decisions based on whim, rapid changes in fashion and taste, or pecuniary motivation, RCC may require a cooling-off period of 12 months between a decision to deaccession, and any implementation of that decision.

The cooling-off period is, however, inappropriate when RCC must respond with alacrity – for example, when a hazardous item needs to be removed quickly because of the danger it represents to people (visitors and staff) and perhaps to the environment.

A cooling-off period is likely to be recommended when deaccessioning is recommended for reasons relating to criteria (a) to (c) in section 16.4.

A cooling-off period is likely to be superfluous or inappropriate when deaccessioning is recommended for reasons relating to criteria (d) to (i) in section 16.4.

The Curator, when making a deaccessioning recommendation to RCC, will also recommend whether a cooling-off period should apply, and what the duration of such a cooling-off period should be.

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# 18. Disposal Policy

## 18.1. Ethical Disposal from the Collection

RCC acknowledges that, in accordance with the Museums Association's *Disposal Toolkit: Guidelines for Museums*,<sup>20</sup> ethical disposal has the following characteristics:

- It is determined within the framework of this Policy and contributes strategically to the development of the Collection.
- It is done on the advice of a range of people (not an individual).
- It is done with the intention that, wherever possible, items remain within the public domain.
- It is unlikely to damage public trust in the Minister, NPWS or RCC.
- It is likely to increase the public benefit derived from the Museum Collection.

## 18.2. Options for Disposal

When formal approval has been given to deaccession an item from the Collection, and depending on circumstances, it may be:

- transferred to the Museum's 'reserve' or 'education' collection for use as exhibition dressing or for interpretive or educational purposes;
- offered to another organisation by gift, transfer or exchange;
- repatriated or restored to a rightful claimant;
- returned to the donor / previous owner (or their descendants);
- sold;
- recycled; or
- destroyed.

## 18.3. Disposal Principles – State Sub-Collection

RCC must not 'remove or dispose of any Museum Collection Item owned by the Minister ... without the written consent of the Minister...'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See the revised edition (2014), p. 7, available via: [www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal-toolkit](http://www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal-toolkit)

<sup>21</sup> See §4.5(a) of the Management Agreement.

If the minister provides written consent for disposal of an item from the State Sub-Collection, section 17.1, 17.2, 17.4 and 17.5 provide guidance for good practice.

## 18.4. Disposal Principles – Council Sub-Collection

The Management Agreement is silent with regard to disposal of items acquired by RCC, except that §24 carries the implication that all items acquired by RCC for the Council Sub-Collection will be retained throughout the Term of the Agreement.

Should RCC decide that disposal of an item from the Council Sub-Collection is required, it would be consistent with the tone of the Management Agreement to notify the Minister of RCC's intention to dispose of an item from the Council Sub-Collection.

The following paragraphs provide guidance for good practice by RCC.

- No employee or volunteer of RCC, or any person associated with the Friends of the La Perouse Museum or the La Perouse Museum and Headland Trust, should receive an unfair advantage if purchasing the item.
- Where RCC has acquired items subject to conditions of disposal, these must be complied with.
- Where RCC has received financial assistance for acquisitions from an outside source, disposal may require the consent of all parties who had contributed to the purchase or controlled the funding.
- Where a donor received a financial benefit from their donation of item(s),<sup>22</sup> RCC will not ordinarily dispose of such item(s) by return to the donor or their descendants.

## 18.5. Allocation of Funds

Any monies received by RCC from the disposal of deaccessioned items should be used for the benefit of the Museum Collection, that is, for the acquisition, conservation, interpretation, documentation or display of other collection items.

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# 19. Managing the Collection Policy

## 19.1. Development and Ratification of this Policy

This Collection Policy is based on a template written by Kylie Winkworth with Museums & Galleries NSW, 2005. This document was initially prepared for RCC in 2019 by Significance International Pty Ltd. Funded through an Australian National Maritime Museum Grant, the Policy was expanded and adapted by the Curator La Perouse Museum in consultation with RCC and with input from NPWS (NSW) and the La Perouse Museum and Headland Trust (2019). RCC holds all copyright of this document.

At the Ordinary Council meeting of 29 September 2020, Council endorsed the La Perouse Museum Collection Policy (2020) as a publicly accessible Policy guiding current and future La Perouse Museum collecting activities; and was then recommended for Public Exhibition.

## 19.2. Revisions to this Policy

RCC will review this Policy every five years, or sooner if required.

## 19.3. Access to this Policy

The Collection Policy is a public document that is readily available in the Museum for inspection by visitors and volunteers, and via the websites of RCC and the Museum.

The Collection Policy should be referenced in any Volunteer Strategy developed by or for the Museum.

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<sup>22</sup> For example, a tax deduction under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.



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## B. Collection Sub-Collections: thematic categories

The main body of this Policy provides guidance in relation to two major Sub-Collections that are defined by ownership:

- The State Sub-Collection of items owned by the Minister and acquired prior to 26 October 2017
- The Council Sub-Collection of items owned by RCC and acquired after 26 October 2017

This section details the classifications by media, and categories and sub-categories that will be used when documenting the existing collections and new acquisitions to the Council sub-collection.

Many other sub-collections can be defined, including by material type, period, provenance (including creator, collector, donor), and theme. These categories can be adjusted from time to time in relation to RCC's and the Museum's particular needs, and in response to the findings from further research into the Collection.

This Appendix provides two indicative lists of such other sub-collections. (Further or different subdivisions of many of these categories would be possible.)

### **Sub-collections defined by the material and media of each item:**

- Archaeological finds
- Art
- Books and other printed literature
- Ephemera
- Manuscripts
- Material culture
- Models and replicas
- Natural science
- Photographs

### **Sub-collections defined by themes, sub-themes and sub-sub-themes:**

- Aboriginal History and Culture
  - Aboriginal history in the La Perouse area
    - Traditional Custodians in the area
    - The current Aboriginal Community of Guriwal La Perouse
  - Aboriginal culture in the La Perouse area
    - Art
    - Boomerang making and demonstrations
    - Ceremonies
    - Education
- French Connections
  - French expeditions in the Pacific and of the Australian coast
    - The Laperouse expedition
    - Other French expeditions
    - (Colonial arrivals and impact in the La Perouse area)
  - French connections and engagement with the La Perouse area
    - French tourism to the La Perouse area
    - Official visits to La Perouse by representatives of the French government (including the French Navy); gifts and presentations associated with such visits

- Science and Communication
  - Science
    - Navigational history
  - Communication
    - Telecommunications
    - The Cable Station (up to 1917)
- Environment
  - Ecosystems in the area
    - Local flora
    - Local fauna
    - Local geology
  - Environmental history (land)
    - Bare Island
    - Kamay Botany Bay National Park
    - La Perouse area
  - Environmental history (water)
    - Botany Bay
    - Rivers, creeks and water storage
- Local History
  - The Cable Station building
    - Land Survey Department
    - Accommodation – for soldiers
    - Accommodation – for nurses
    - Salvation Army period
    - NPWS period
  - La Perouse Museum
    - History of the Museum
    - Exhibitions and events (documentation)
    - Publications (including brochures and Annual Reports)
    - Visitors' Books
  - La Perouse area
    - People and communities
    - Places
    - Activities (including sport and recreation)
    - Events and ceremonies
    - Organisations (e.g. churches, clubs)
    - Transport
    - Trades and businesses
    - Tourism
  - Maritime history of Botany Bay
    - Fishing
    - Vessels
  - Randwick
    - History of the Randwick Local Government Area
    - History of the Randwick district and its communities

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## C. Significance Assessment Criteria

Significance assessment is the process of researching and understanding the meanings and values that items and collections have for people and communities.

Australia has a well-recognised system for assessing the significance of Movable Cultural Heritage. The system is set out in two complementary publications:

*Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage items and collections*, (Heritage Collections Council, Canberra, 2001) ([PDF version](#))

*Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*, by Roslyn Russell & Kylie Winkworth, (Collections Council of Australia, Adelaide, 2009) ([PDF version](#))

The Australian approach uses eight significance criteria (or key values) to help reveal and describe how and why an item is significant or insignificant. Within this framework an object is significant only if one or more of the four Primary criteria is demonstrated:

### PRIMARY CRITERIA

**Historic.** An item or collection may be historically significant for its association with people, events, places and themes. Historically significant items range from those associated with notable people and important events, to items of daily life used by ordinary people. They include items that are typical of particular activities, industries or ways of living. Historically significant items may be mass produced, unique, precious or handmade.

**Artistic or aesthetic.** An item may be artistically or aesthetically significant for its craftsmanship, style, technical excellence, beauty, demonstration of skill, and quality of design and execution. Artistically or aesthetically significant items may be unique or mass produced.

**Scientific or research.** An item or collection may have research significance if it has a major potential for further scientific examination or study. This criterion tends to apply chiefly to biological, geological and archaeological material, but may also apply to documentary collections (e.g. archives and photographic material).

**Social or spiritual.** Items have social significance if they are held in community esteem. This may be demonstrated by social spiritual or cultural expressions that provide evidence of a community's strong affection for an item or collection, and of how it contributes to that community's identity and social cohesion. Items may acquire social significance with the passage of time and through particular events or activities that demonstrate present-day community esteem. Some items have intrinsic spiritual qualities for particular groups of people and belief systems, and are referred to as sacred items. Social or spiritual significance is only for living, contemporary value, and is always specific to a particular identified group of people; if the social value has ceased to exist, the item may nevertheless hold historical significance.

The four Comparative criteria aid the significance research and decision-making process, especially in regard to degree of significance:

### COMPARATIVE CRITERIA

**Provenance.** Provenance means the chain of ownership and context of use of an item. Knowing this history enables a more precise assessment. Provenance is central to establishing historic and social significance. An item may be significant because its provenance – a documented history of its existence, ownership and use – gives it a context in society at large, or in the more personal world of a known individual.

**Rarity or representativeness.** An item may be significant either as a rare, unusual or particularly fine example of its type, or because it represents a particular category of items, or activity, way of life or historical theme. It is possible for an item's significance to be rated as both rare and representative.

**Condition or completeness.** An item may be significant because it is unusually complete, or in sound, original condition (that is, possesses intactness or integrity). Changes or adaptations made in the working life of an item do not necessarily diminish significance, and in fact are also recognised as an integral part of the item and its history.

**Interpretative capacity.** Items and collections may be significant for their capacity to interpret and demonstrate aspects of experience, historical themes, people and activities. Some items may have very limited significance under the primary criteria but are significant for their potential to enable the owner to interpret and illustrate particular themes, people or ideas.

The ten-step process of research and the eight criteria used together according to the *Significance* publications is sometimes known as the 'significance assessment methodology'.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

After a ten-step process of research that includes consultation with knowledgeable people, the assessor records which criteria (or values) apply to the item or collection. The resulting significance is the sum of all applicable values and is expressed in a lucidly written 'Statement of Significance' (SOS), which is signed and dated.

It is important to note that perceptions and information change such that an item assessed as insignificant may be found to be of significance in the future, and vice versa.

Depending on the audience the SOS may identify:

- The relative *degree* of significance (High / Medium / Low).  
Notes: an item lacks significance if no Primary Criteria are met. In this scenario an SOS is still prepared. (It may be thought of as a Statement of Insignificance, until such time that circumstances change and the item / collection is found to have acquired significance.)
- The *level* of significance (local / regional / state / national / international).  
Note: this is a bureaucratic threshold often required in applications for public funds.

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