

South Australian Museum

Collections Policy and Procedure

2018 – 2023

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Table of Contents

1	The South Australian Museum	4
1.1	Purpose and Vision.....	4
1.2	Functions	4
1.3	The Collections.....	4
1.4	Policies and Procedures	5
1.4.1	This document.....	5
1.4.2	Collection Management Plans	5
1.4.3	Other Museum policies and procedures affecting Collections.....	5
2	Scope of the Collections.....	6
2.1	The State Collections.....	6
2.1.1	Service Materials Collections.....	6
2.2	Collections Focus.....	7
2.2.1	Collection Priorities.....	7
2.2.2	Research Priorities.....	7
2.3	What the Museum does not collect.....	8
2.4	Consultation with other collecting bodies	9
3	Collections development.....	9
3.1	Item Entry	9
3.2	Accessioning.....	9
3.2.1	Accessioning authority.....	9
3.2.2	Significance	9
3.2.3	Due diligence	10
3.2.4	Permits.....	10
3.2.5	Bequests	10
3.3	Custodial or Repository Care.....	11
3.3.1	Ancestral Remains.....	11
3.3.2	Custodial Care	11
3.3.3	Repository Care.....	11
3.3.4	Repository of Last Resort.....	11
3.4	Deaccession and Disposal of Collection Items.....	12
3.4.1	Authorisation and Advice.....	12
3.4.2	Criteria for Deaccession.....	12
3.4.3	Exchange	12

3.4.4	Disposal	12
4	Collection Information.....	13
4.1	Documentation.....	13
4.1.1	Restricted Material	13
4.1.2	Documentation of Donor Information	13
4.2	Reproduction and Copyright.....	13
4.3	Collection Audit and Valuation.....	13
5	Collection Access.....	14
5.1	Museum Staff Access.....	14
5.2	Researcher Access.....	14
5.3	Commercial Access.....	14
5.4	Loans	14
5.4.1	Responsibility for Loans	14
5.4.2	Loan of Cultural Items	15
5.4.3	International Loans	15
5.4.4	Internal loans	15
5.4.5	The Nagoya Protocol.....	15
5.5	Destructive Analysis	16
5.5.1	The Australian Biological Tissue and Marine Mammal Toxicology Tissue Collection	16
5.6	Exhibition, Display and Outreach	16
5.6.1	Cultural Objects.....	16
5.7	Digital and online access	17
5.7.1	Restrictions on Sensitive Data.....	17
5.8	Induction and Training of Staff.....	17
5.9	Restricted Material.....	17
6	Collections Care and Conservation.....	17
6.1	Conservation	17
6.2	Storage and Security	17
7	Policies, Standards & Guidelines	18
7.1	Legislation and Government Documents	18
7.1.1	South Australia	18
7.1.2	Commonwealth	18
7.2	International Conventions and Treaties.....	18
7.3	Other Publications	19
8	Policy review.....	19

9	Definitions.....	19
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1 The South Australian Museum

1.1 Purpose and Vision

The Purpose and Vision of South Australian Museum (The Museum) is

To inspire in all people a wonder and curiosity about life on Earth

We will use our world class collections to create and share new knowledge, focussing on Australian Aboriginal and Pacific cultures, Earth and Life Sciences ¹

1.2 Functions

Established and governed by the *South Australian Museum Act 1976 (SA)*, the Museum is a legislated body within the state of South Australia. Among its functions are

*to carry out, or promote, research into matters of scientific and historical interest; and
to accumulate and care for objects and specimens of scientific or historical interest;
and
to accumulate and classify data in regard to any such matters; and
to disseminate information of scientific or historical interest ²*

1.3 The Collections

The Museum's collections underpin the purpose, vision and strategic endeavours of the Museum and enable the performance of its functions.

The Museum has been collecting cultural material and natural history specimens on the behalf of the people of South Australia since its inception in 1856. The Museum retains the State Collections in perpetuity.

The Museum collections include historic records in the form of cultural items and archival documents that record first contacts and early interactions between Australia's Aboriginal and European cultures. The natural history collections include unique minerals from sites now altered by mining activities, and animal specimens that represent populations or species that have become extinct since European settlement. Specimens accumulated by the Museum provide a long-term record of organismal response to pollution and environmental change.

The Museum holds over 5 million objects in its collections. While all the Museum collections encompass material of both state and national significance, of particular note are:

- The most representative collection of Australian Aboriginal material in the world
- The most important historical Australian entomological collection in the world
- One of the largest wildlife tissue banks in the world
- The most important Ediacaran fossil collection in the southern hemisphere.

1.4 Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures which regulate management of the Museum's collections are:

1.4.1 This document

This Collections Policy and Procedure outlines collecting priorities and collection management practices for the Museum's collections over the next five years, 2018-2023, in accordance with the Museum's *Strategic Plan 2014- 2020*.

1.4.2 Collection Management Plans

Under this Policy are the individual Collection Management Plans that detail collection-specific issues, practices and direction. The Collection Management plans are the responsibility of the Collections' managers and will be updated every three years.

1.4.3 Other Museum policies and procedures affecting Collections

Other Museum policies and procedures which have bearing on the treatment of the Museum's collections are as follows:

- Access to Personal Information – Policy and Procedures, 2015
- Acquisition and Inward loan of cultural objects flowchart, 2016
- Collection Audit - Position Statement, 2007
- Collections - Loans Procedures, 2008
- Collections Access Procedures, 2009
- Collections Conservation and Preservation Strategy 2004–2006
- Collection Priorities 2014-19
- Commercial Loan Form, Revised 2010.
- Copyright – Policy and Procedures, 2015
- Cultural Objects Committee Terms of Reference, 2016
- Cultural Rights and Consultation policy, 2016
- Destructive Analysis Policy, 2016
- Heritage Collection Asset Register and Reporting Procedures, revised 2017
- Item Entry & Exit Form, 2002
- Loan Non-commercial Form, Revised 2010.
- Loan of Cultural Objects Policy, 2016
- Management and Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Burial Goods Policy
- Museum Strategic plan 2014-2020
- Preventive Conservation - Guidelines for Front of House, 2008
- Preventive Conservation - Guidelines for film crews and photographers, 2008
- Preventive Conservation - Managing Functions in Galleries and Public Spaces, 2008
- Provenance and Due Diligence checklist for acquisition or inward loan of Cultural objects, 2016
- Risk Management Framework
- Valuation of Collections, 2016

2 Scope of the Collections

The Museum has two classes of collections:

State Collections which are the aggregates of accessioned collection items of scientific or historical interest vested in the Museum Board

Service Materials which are aggregates of items held by the Museum for the purpose of public education and interpretation. Although documented and tracked, these items are not accessioned and are not part of the State Collections.

2.1 The State Collections

The South Australian Museum's Collections, the State Collections, are grouped into four disciplines:

Biological Sciences

- Australian Biological Tissue Collection
- Herpetology
- Ichthyology
- Mammalogy
- Marine Invertebrates
- Ornithology
- Parasitology
- Terrestrial Invertebrates

Earth Sciences

- Mineralogy
- Palaeontology

Humanities

- Ancestral Remains
- Archaeology
- Australian Aboriginal Cultures
- Secret/Sacred
- World Cultures

Information Services

- Archives
- Australian Polar Collection
- History of Science
- Library
- Museum Heritage Collection

2.1.1 Service Materials Collections

As well as the State Collections the Museum also maintains collections intended for educational, informational and exchange purposes. Material in these collections are managed and cared for by the Museum but the material is not accessioned into the State Collections.

These collections include collections held by the Museum's Education and Information Centre. Other collection areas may also hold Service Materials for education purposes.

2.1.1.1 Mineralogy Exchange Collection

The Mineralogical collection also maintains a small Exchange collection. This comprises mineral specimens that are either multiples or are not of good enough quality to be registered and incorporated into the State Collections. The Mineralogical Exchange Collection is used to acquire material for the State Collections through exchange. Material is added to or exchanged from the Mineralogy Exchange Collection on the authority of the Senior Collection Manager.

2.2 Collections Focus

The Museum was established to collect for the benefit of all South Australians. The state of South Australia continues to be the priority area for collection development and outreach.

Although the Museum is a state institution, its collections of the natural and Aboriginal heritage of Australia extend beyond the South Australian borders. The Museum's collections are of global significance, a component of a dispersed worldwide collection of natural history and anthropology. Similarly the research undertaken at the Museum, which relies upon the collections, has global reach and significance.

Criteria for accepting new collection items are set out below:

2.2.1 Collection Priorities

Based on collection strengths, together with contemporary research, interpretation and education priorities at state and national levels, the Museum's collections focus on:

- Australian Aboriginal Culture and archaeology
- Natural diversity and representativeness
- Cultural diversity and representativeness
- Southern oceans
- Arid zones
- Polar exploration and History of Science
- Australian Palaeontology
- Australian Mineralogy
- Genetic resources

Collections from both inside and outside South Australia are essential for a full understanding of regional phenomena, for comparative scientific or cultural study, for interpretive purposes or when such items have become part of South Australia's history or culture. Areas of particular interest include Australasia, Antarctica, South East Asia and the South West Pacific.

Collection Priorities are set for individual collections by the appropriate Collection Manager in consultation with the Museum's researchers and relevant external stakeholders. These priorities for each of the State Collection are described in the Museum's *Collecting Priorities*.

2.2.2 Research Priorities

The Museum's Strategic Research Objectives are set by the Museum's Research Institute, with the approval of the Museum Board. The Museum's collections support these priorities and objectives:

- The Tree of Life – discovering and documenting our biodiversity
- Biogeography – how has geography shaped out biodiversity?
- Evolution in Action – discovering the processes responsible for animal diversity and adaptation
- The Geological Chemistry of the earth
- Mineral Diversity
- Australian History
- Material Culture and Art
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Museology

Biological specimens collected as a result of specific research projects are accessioned into the State Collections to provide vouchers which are a permanent confirmation of the identity of study species.

The Museum maintains an active program of collections development in areas of zoological, geological, Australian Aboriginal cultures and cultural diversity in order to reinforce its position as the key resource for these items.

The Museum collaborates with government, educational, commercial and community entities which carry out the collection of specimens that record regional animal diversity as part of generating environmental data.

2.3 What the Museum does not collect

The Museum will not acquire any item illegally obtained, removed or imported items and will abide by the guidelines provided by the 1970 *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* as well as those pertaining to the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*.

The Museum also recognises it is bound by the terms of the *Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (Cth)*³.

The Museum will only collect for the State Collections, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, material to which it can acquire legal title and only once satisfied:

1. the material has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws; and
2. the material has not been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of applicable national or international laws, regulations or treaties.

The Museum will not collect ancestral remains or burial goods.

Items otherwise eligible for addition to the Collections may be declined for collection or accession should they be of a sensitive or physical nature which cannot be appropriately accommodated within available resources.

The Museum normally will not acquire any item with conditions placed upon its acquisition, storage or display except in the case of custodial care, statutory obligations or community sensitivities.

2.4 Consultation with other collecting bodies

The Museum respects the collecting interests and catchment areas of other museums and collecting institutions. Other than in exceptional circumstances the Museum will not collect items that are core to the collection priorities of allied collecting institutions. The Museum will consult with these bodies where there are overlapping interests and refer items to more appropriate institutions where relevant.

3 Collections development

3.1 Item Entry

All items deposited with the Museum for the purposes of donation, sale, loan or identification will be receipted in writing.

The Museum's *Item Entry and Exit form* encapsulates the procedures and responsibilities for both donor and the Museum for acceptance of items in to the Museum's collections.

The Museum will take the same care and precautions for the protection of the item(s) whilst they are in its custody as it does for those in its permanent collections.

3.2 Accessioning

3.2.1 Accessioning authority

Decisions to accession material into the Museum's Biological, Geological and Library collections are made by the appropriate Collection Manager informed by the Museum's *Collecting Priorities*, advice from the relevant Museum researchers and this document.

Decisions to accession material into to the Museum's Cultural collections must be submitted to the Cultural Objects Committee for approval.

Decisions to accession material into the Archival collections are made by the Museum Board following the recommendation of the Head of Information Services.

3.2.2 Significance

Significance criteria, based on guidelines provided by the Collections Council of Australia⁴, summarised in the Museum's *Collecting Priorities* document and articulated in detail in each Collection Management Plan, will be used to inform an acquisition process.

Items will be assessed against one of four primary criteria:

- historic,
- artistic or aesthetic,
- scientific or research,
- social or spiritual.

Comparative criteria will be used to evaluate the degree of significance including:

- provenance including authenticity and due diligence,
- rarity or representativeness,
- condition or completeness,

- interpretive capacity.

A 'statement of significance' will accompany any requests to the Museum Board for funding in support of acquisitions.

3.2.3 Due diligence

The Museum exercises due diligence before acquiring material, complies with all legislation relating to the collection of items and legal limitations on the acquisition of material, and abides by international conventions to which Australia is a party.

When acquiring items the Museum researches the item's provenance, consistent with the Federal Ministry for the Arts' *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*⁵. Due diligence also extends to thoroughly evaluating and acting upon any new information that raises questions about the provenance or authenticity of previously acquired objects. The Museum pays particular attention to provenance information associated with periods of conflict.

To establish the provenance and authenticity of a cultural item or collection and the veracity of the title held by the donor or vendor, the Museum will undertake thorough research and due diligence before proposing the item for. The Museum adheres to Australian and International museum best practice in this matter, including the Australian Government's *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*⁶, Museums Australia *Code of Ethics*⁷ and the ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums*⁸.

Should new information come to light regarding Museum collection items that calls into question aspects of provenance or ownership, the Museum will immediately take action to resolve any uncertainties. The Museum is committed to making information about its collections, and the process by which it acquires material for its collections, available to the public.

Museum staff abide by the International Council of Museums and Museums Australia codes of ethics with regard to collecting practices and procedures.

Staff responsible for provenance and due diligence research must provide information listed in the *Cultural Objects Committee Terms of Reference* and *Provenance and Due Diligence checklist for acquisition or inward loan of Cultural objects*. For assistance with the requirements of these policies staff should refer to the *Acquisition and Inward loan of cultural objects flowchart*

3.2.4 Permits

Animals shall be collected according to the legislative requirements of the relevant jurisdiction. The Museum will also operate in accordance with requirements of the "Wildlife Animal Ethics Committee", in collaboration with the Department for Environment and Water (DEW) and the Royal Zoological Society of SA Inc.

The Museum will accept voucher specimens with relevant data provided by persons undertaking taxonomic, ecological, biogeographical or physiological studies on non-domestic animals in South Australia, as required by DEW.

3.2.5 Bequests

The Museum's collections have been greatly enriched by many generous bequests of material over its history. While recognising the generosity of donors the Museum has no obligation to collect

material which has been bequeathed without prior discussion or to collect additional material along with previously negotiated bequests⁹.

3.3 Custodial or Repository Care

On occasion the Museum may be requested to take custodial care of items on behalf of an individual, community or organisation. These are arrangements intended to ensure the security and integrity of items and are separate arrangements to those for loans.

Such items are not formally accessioned into the State Collection and are not considered part of the State Collections.

In agreeing to provide custodial care for items the Museum undertakes to provide the same level of care for them as for accessioned material as stipulated in the Museum's policies and procedures.

3.3.1 Ancestral Remains

No further Aboriginal ancestral remains, ancestral remains or burial goods will be accessioned into the State collections.

The management and repatriation of ancestral remains and burial goods is regulated by the Museum's *Management and Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Burial Goods Policy*.

3.3.2 Custodial Care

On occasion the Museum may be requested to take custodial care of items on behalf of an individual, community or organisation.

Such requests may include, but are not limited to, ancestral remains and secret/sacred items.

Requests to care for ancestral remains are made to the Head of Humanities.

Requests for the Museum to take custodial care of cultural items(s) should be made in writing to the Museum's Cultural Objects Committee who will review the request in the light of the *Cultural Objects Committee Terms of Reference* and the *Loan of Cultural Objects* policy.

3.3.3 Repository Care

On occasion the Museum may be requested to act as a repository for biological or mineralogical specimens for the duration of a particular research project. Request for the Museum to act as a repository for such material should be made in writing to the Head of Research and Collections.

Agreements to act as a repository for biological or mineralogical specimens will usually be conditional on the Museum being the intended recipient of the material once the research project has completed.

3.3.4 Repository of Last Resort

On occasion the Museum may function as a repository of last resort. The Museum may be requested by Aboriginal communities or be required by law to act as a custodian for items which would not ordinarily be stored by the Museum. Such requests will be handled in the manner outlined in the *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*¹⁰.

Similarly the Museum may on occasion be requested by Government departments to store biological or mineralogical material which would not otherwise be suitable for collection.

3.4 Deaccession and Disposal of Collection Items

There is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Museum's collections.

3.4.1 Authorisation and Advice

The decision to dispose of an item, whether by exchange, sale, donation or destruction, is the responsibility of the South Australian Museum Board¹¹. Such decisions will be guided by the advice of Museum staff with relevant professional expertise. This advice will be provided via the Head of Research and Collections.

In the case of cultural objects additional advice will be provided by the Cultural Objects Committee and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee. The disposal (sale, destruction, exchange) of significant Aboriginal objects is governed by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*.

3.4.2 Criteria for Deaccession

Deaccession can be considered on one or more of the following grounds:

- The item is to be repatriated,
- The item is to be exchanged,
- The item is destroyed or damaged beyond repair,
- The item poses a danger or health risk,
- The item does not fall within the Collections Policy,
- Full title in the item cannot be established,
- The item is proved to be a fake,
- The item will be more useful as service material.

Full records of deaccessioned items will be retained in perpetuity.

Deaccessioned material may, upon request, be retained within the custodial care of the Museum. See section 3.3.

3.4.3 Exchange

In the case of exchange, evidence must be provided that the item(s) are already adequately represented in the collection by duplicate material, or that the item(s) being received in exchange enhance the collection overall to an extent that compensates for the loss of the item(s) being deaccessioned.

3.4.4 Disposal

Once an item has been approved for disposal priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain. It will be offered first, by exchange, donation or sale, to recognised museums or collecting institutions before disposal to other interested parties is considered. In cases in which an arrangement for the exchange, donation or sale of the item is not being made with an individual museum or collecting institution, the collections community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the item. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed.

4 Collection Information

4.1 Documentation

Evidence of the identification, condition, history, or value (scientific/cultural/financial) of an object, specimen or collection, when recorded in a permanent manner, enhances the overall value of the item.

Written registers and other paper based accessions records are to be conserved and backed up by digital means in perpetuity.

The Museum currently uses Axiell EMu as its collections management database. Where possible collection items should be accessioned and registered directly into the database.

4.1.1 Restricted Material

Where items in the Museum's collections or under the Museum's care have cultural restrictions imposed on them, such as for Secret/Sacred material or Ancestral Remains, the Museum's respect for those restrictions will extend to the management of digital information and images related to those items.

4.1.2 Documentation of Donor Information

The Museum's collections have been vastly enriched over time by the generosity of donors. Requests for privacy or acknowledgement by donors will be recorded and respected.

4.2 Reproduction and Copyright

The *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)* and its amendments together with Museum policy will govern reproduction and copyright pertaining to Museum collections¹². Further details of the Museum's copyright procedures may be found in the Museum's *Copyright – Policy and Procedures* and the *Access to Personal Information - Policy and Procedures*.

In keeping with the South Australian Government's *Open Data Declaration*¹³ the museum will, when appropriate and possible, use the suite of Creative Commons licences when publishing digitised collections online. The Museum is committed to the principles of open access, including the use of open licences and open formats in an effort to make collections more discoverable, accessible and useful.

4.3 Collection Audit and Valuation

The regular valuation of the collections of the Museum Board is mandated by the Treasurer's Accounting Policy Framework III. Valuation of items are based on market value (Heritage collections) together with a cost of recovery valuation applied to all non-Heritage collections¹⁴. Values are provided (to Shared Services) of all items newly accessioned into collections on a quarterly basis in accordance with the Museum's *Heritage Collection Asset Register & Reporting Procedures*.

Collection Audits will accompany and complement the valuations process. The collection auditing processes of the Museum are currently (September 2018) being reviewed and will be updated and refined in the light of advice from the Auditor-General's department.

Unless nationally accredited to do so, Museum staff are not authorised to give valuations to external parties. Museum staff are also not authorised to assist in the disposal of private property, or to express opinions regarding the merits of business firms.

5 Collection Access

The South Australian Museum encourages the widest possible access to the collections entrusted to its care.

5.1 Museum Staff Access

All people having professional access to the collections shall adhere to the Museum's *Collection Access Procedures*. Staff, volunteers, researchers and honoraries of the Museum will at all times adhere to the Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Service. Those in curatorial sections of the Museum who are responsible for, or work on, the Museum's collections must declare any collecting interests that may create a conflict of interest with their duties at the Museum.

5.2 Researcher Access

Subject to specific policy restrictions (e.g. ancestral remains), the Museum has a responsibility to provide access to both national and international researchers and actively make loans and exchange specimens and data across Australia and the world.

5.3 Commercial Access

The Museum acknowledges the interests of commercial users wanting access to collection items. Commercial use of the collections will be considered, provided that such use does not compromise the integrity and/or preservation of the items in question, nor expose the museum to the risk of loss of its reputation, or of intellectual property rights that might pertain to interpretation of the objects.

5.4 Loans

In endeavouring to provide the widest possible access to the collections, loans to and from the Museum are encouraged.

Loans, both commercial and non-commercial, will be available to institutions and Aboriginal communities rather than individuals.

The loan period must be fixed and must not exceed five years for scientific specimens and two years for cultural collections. In exceptional circumstances Type specimens may be sent to other museums or similar institutions for not more than one year. Loans may be extended subject to receipt of a written application not later than one month before the expiration of the initial loan agreement.

Loans will be fully documented utilising the Museum's *Commercial loan form* and *Non-commercial loan form*. Specific conditions pertaining to individual loans will be articulated in the accompanying loan forms.

5.4.1 Responsibility for Loans

The management of loans, outward, internal or external, is the responsibility of the relevant Collection Manager who is responsible in turn to the Head of Research and Collections, the Director and the Museum Board. The Collection Manager may consult with conservation, curatorial, research and exhibitions specialists where appropriate to ensure the preservation and integrity of the item(s) is upheld at all times.

5.4.2 Loan of Cultural Items

Any inward loans of Cultural items may only proceed following additional approval by the South Australian Museum Cultural Objects Committee¹⁵.

Prior to approving loans from other institutions the Committee must be satisfied that that the loaning institution is able to provide satisfactory evidence regarding provenance and ownership of loaned items. Details of the evidence required are set out in the loan assessment criteria in the *Loan of Cultural Objects Policy* and the *Provenance and Due Diligence checklist for acquisition or inward loan of cultural objects*.

Any outward loan from the Australian Aboriginal Culture or Australian Archaeology collections must comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*

5.4.3 International Loans

Sending and receiving loans across international borders is done within the guidelines and permits of Australian Legislation such as the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (Cth)* and the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*

The Museum also adheres to the applicable international agreements on international trade or exchange of such material e.g. the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)* and *Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act 2013 (Cth)*. The museum maintains registration with such international agreements where appropriate (e.g. registration with CITES as a recognised research institution).

More details regarding loans from international institutions are set out in the Museum's *Loan of Cultural Objects Policy*.

5.4.4 Internal loans

To ensure the safety and integrity of the State Collections material from those collections transferred within the Museum for Research, Exhibition, Display, Education or other use will be treated and recorded as an internal loan and managed using the Museum's loans policies and procedures.

5.4.5 The Nagoya Protocol

The *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization*¹⁶ is a global agreement that implements the access and benefit-sharing obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was adopted in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010. Australia signed the Protocol in January 2012, and is developing its approach to implementation and ratification¹⁷. The Protocol could have a significant effect on the administration of tissue "grants" from the Museum's genetic resources collection (ABTC) and other collections. The Museum's procedures for the management of biological collections, and in

particular the Australian Biological Tissue Collection, will be continually updated as the requirements of the Nagoya Protocol for Australian Collecting institutions become more evident.

5.5 Destructive Analysis

While conscious of its obligation to ensure the integrity and security of the collections, the Museum recognises that destructive analysis of collection items or preferably of subsamples of collection items may be required for research purposes. Details of the processes followed for destructive sampling of any collection item can be found in the Museum's *Destructive Analysis Policy*. All destructive analysis will be undertaken in a manner that causes the minimum damage to the collection item.

Any destructive sampling of Aboriginal objects in the Australian Aboriginal Culture or Australian Archaeology collections must comply with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*.

Consistent with the *Management and Repatriation of Ancestral Remains and Burial Goods Policy*, the Museum Board will not carry out or approve the conduct of invasive research on any ancestral remains, modified remains or burial goods in its care.

5.5.1 The Australian Biological Tissue and Marine Mammal Toxicology Tissue Collection

In contrast to the Museum's other collections the material within the Australian Biological Tissue Collection and the Marine Mammal Toxicology Collection have been collected for the express purpose of destructive sampling.

Accordingly authority to grant permission to destructively sample material from the Australian Biological Tissue Collection and the Marine Mammal Toxicology Collection is delegated by the Board to the Collection Managers of those collections, acting with the advice of the Museum's research and senior collections staff.

5.6 Exhibition, Display and Outreach

Museum staff interpret the collections and communicate with visitors and remote users through galleries and exhibitions, publications, demonstrations, education, events, outreach and online.

As part of its vision to use the world class collections to create and share new knowledge, focusing on Australian Aboriginal and Pacific cultures, Earth and Life Sciences¹⁸ the Museum will maintain displays of the collections in the Museum's galleries and exhibition spaces.

While on display or exhibition material will be maintained to the same standards of care as in the rest of the Museum's storage facilities.

Material on display or exhibition remains under the authority of the appropriate Collection Manager. Any changes to the display or exhibition of collection items must be discussed with the Collection Manager.

5.6.1 Cultural Objects

The Museum will work with communities to ensure that cultural sensitivities are respected and ensure that access is available through appropriate mechanisms. All consultation with communities shall be in accordance with the Museum's *Cultural Rights and Consultation policy*.

5.7 Digital and online access

In an effort to widen access to collections data and minimise direct handling of items, both the retrospective and ongoing digitisation of collections data are priorities. Actions 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of the Museum's Strategic plan articulate the Museum's determination to establishing a strategy for digitising collections to facilitate access to information by all users, in-house or online¹⁹.

The Museum will endeavour to provide timely, effective and useful access to collections data online and in galleries targeting the needs of diverse users. The Museum collaborates with other museums and collecting bodies in order to improve the delivery of public collections information services by using networked electronic media to link collections. The Museum is committed to national and international initiatives including the Global Biodiversity Information Facility ([GBIF](#)), the Online Zoological Collections in Australian Museums ([OZCAM](#)) and the Atlas of Living Australia ([ALA](#)).

5.7.1 Restrictions on Sensitive Data

The Museum will continue to place appropriate restrictions on access to data that may be sensitive for cultural, environmental or other reasons.

5.8 Induction and Training of Staff

Museum staff are trained in the Museum's policies and procedures and are obligated to be familiar with the relevant state, national and international policies that apply to the collection items under their care. New staff are explicitly under the supervision of more experienced staff to be fully trained in all procedures relating to their areas of responsibility. Training of staff is directed at ensuring full understanding and commitment to the policy reasons that drive Museum procedures.

5.9 Restricted Material

Where items in the Museum's collections have cultural restrictions imposed on them, such as for Secret/Sacred material or Ancestral Remains, access to those items will be restricted accordingly.

6 Collections Care and Conservation

6.1 Conservation

The Museum is committed to providing access to the collections while preserving them in perpetuity. All conservation work for the Museum is undertaken by ArtLab Australia. The Museum's conservation and preservation strategy is based on three program streams:

- Preventive conservation, including Integrated Pest Management (50%),
- Exhibitions and loans (25%),
- Remedial treatment of specific items (Collections Treatment Program) (25%)²⁰.

The model reflects the Museum's strategic objective to focus on broad-scale preventive conservation management of its collections.

6.2 Storage and Security

The Museum will maintain its collections in storage facilities that meet the highest standards, informed by world's best practice. Collection management at the Museum will constantly seek ways to make improvements, as outlined in the Museum's *Strategic plan 2014-2020*

Security of the Collections will be guided by Collection Management Plans developed for each major collection by its Collection Manager. These plans will detail specific controls regarding access, loans, handling, storage environment and pest management consistent with this Collection Policy. The efficacy of these plans will be reviewed every five years.

The Museum ensures that preventative conservation practices are followed at all times to ensure the safety of the collections whether in storage or on display or exhibition.

7 Policies, Standards & Guidelines

The South Australian Museum is committed to measuring its Collection Management Policy Document and practices against world's best practice, aiming for continual improvement²¹

The Museum is committed²² to achieving excellence in collection management and museology practice as defined by industry accepted professional codes and standards. This Policy conforms to the relevant provisions of the following legislations, codes, standards and conventions:

7.1 Legislation and Government Documents

7.1.1 South Australia

- Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988.
- South Australian Museum Act 1976
- Cabinet Administrative Instruction No.1 of 1989, reissued as the Information Privacy Principles Instruction in 1992 (IPP).
- Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector (2015)
- "Declaration of Open Data." Government of South Australia, September 2013.
- State Records Act 1997 – "Operational Records Disposal Schedule" 2001/47 version 1, Department of Premier and Cabinet – Arts SA, South Australian Museum, October 2003

7.1.2 Commonwealth

- Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act 2013
- Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986
- Attorney General's Department, Ministry for the Arts, 2014, Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material
- Department of Arts, 2016, Cultural Gifts Program Guide
- Australian Government Policy on Indigenous Repatriation

7.2 International Conventions and Treaties

- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (Amendment) 1979
- Convention on Biological Diversity 1992
- Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, 2011
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* – article 12

7.3 Other Publications

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library, Information and Resource Network Protocols, 2005 (<http://atsilrn.aiatsis.gov.au/protocols.php>)
- CIDOC - The International Committee for Documentation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) "Statement of principles of museum documentation" (<http://network.icom.museum/cidoc/>)
- Collections Council of Australia, 2008, National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries - Version 1.0
- Heritage Collections Council, 1998, "re Collections: Caring for Collections Across Australia", Canberra
- International Council of Museums, Code of Ethics for Museums, 2003 (www.icom.org)
- Museums Association UK, 2007, Code of Ethics for Museums (www.museumsassociation.org)
- Museums Australia, 1997, "Museums and Cultural Diversity".
- Museums Australia, 1998, "Taking the time: museums and galleries, cultural protocols and communities - A resource Guide".
- Museums Australia, 1998, "Caring for our Culture: National guidelines for Museums, Galleries and Keeping Places", DCITA, Canberra
- Museums Australia (Inc), 2005, "Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities, principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage", Canberra.
- SPNCH, 1998, "Guidelines for the Care of Natural History Collections" (www.spnhc.org)
- Gordon McKenna & Efthymia Patsatzi (Eds), 2011, "SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard", MDA, Cambridge, 4th Edition
- Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, 2008, "Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections." Collections Council of Australia.

8 Policy review

The Museum will review its Collections Policy at least every five years. The next review to be presented to the Board will be in 2023 or before.

For each collection, the collections strategies and action plans will be reviewed and updated at least every three years by collections staff as part of the Museum's performance management process.

9 Definitions

Accessioning – The formal process of accepting and recording an object or specimen as a collection item. Upon formal accessioning an item is part of the 'State Collection' as defined in the South Australian Museum Act 1976.

Ancestral Remains - include the whole or part of human skeletons, individual bones or fragments of bone and teeth; soft tissue including organs; samples of hair taken from individuals both deceased and living at the time of the removal; and casts taken from any of these. Ancestral remains does not include modified remains.

Aboriginal Ancestral Remains – As defined by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (SA)

Aboriginal object – as defined by the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA).

Bequest – An acquisition involving an individual transferring title of an item to the institution upon his or her death, through a will.

Burial goods: are objects that as part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture are reasonably believed to have been entombed with individual ancestral remains either at the time of death or later.

Cultural Gifts Program – A federal program offering tax incentives to encourage people to donate cultural items to public art galleries, museums, libraries and archives in Australia.

Custodial Care – Item or group of items that are temporarily cared for by the Museum on behalf of a community group or other institution.

Deaccessioning – The formal process of removing an item permanently from the collections.

Destructive Analysis – Scientific analysis of a Museum collection item which results in the destruction of some or all of the item.

Digitising – The conversion of analogue items to a digital file form. In a Museum context this includes, but is not limited to, conversion of register data from paper registers to electronic databases and the generation of digital images of collection items

Donations – An item that is given to the Museum without encumbrance.

Due Diligence - The requirement that every endeavour is made to verify the accuracy of information before deciding on a course of action, particularly in identifying the source, history and ownership of cultural material.

Item – The general term used for an object, artefact, record or specimen. Aboriginal objects of significance are protected by the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*.

Item Entry – The arrival of items into the custody of the Museum. At this stage items either proceed to be accessioned into the State Collections or are not accessioned by the Museum but retained temporarily in the Museum for a specific purpose such as attribution, authentication, identification, and examination for possible gift, exchange or purchase.

Loans – temporary transfers of collection items from the Museum, or temporary transfers of similar items to the Museum for stated Museum purposes, or purposes approved by the Museum. The transfers do not involve a change of ownership.

Lot – The term used to define a group of specimens recovered from the same location at the same time. These groups are often stored and documented together.

Modified remains - are objects which incorporate human hair or bodily material which is not obviously recognisable as being human hair or human bodily material.

Museum – means the South Australian Museum under the *South Australian Museum Act 1976*.

Provenance – The proven or documented place of origin, use, history and ownership of an object.

Record – Records relating to recording unique identifiers, provenance, source, description, date and location. In terms of Archives a record is defined by the State Records Act as encompassing all formats, maps, drawings.

Registration – The process of entering a museum item into the recording systems of a museum by assigning a unique number, physically numbering the object, recording that number in a register (physical or electronic) and noting its details.

Restricted Material – A collection item, image, data or information, to which unrestricted access may cause offence or endanger the safety or sanctity of that item, image, data or information or of a locality from which the material came, or the cultural safety of the community from which the material originates or the cultural safety of the person accessing the material

Service Materials – Assemblages of items held by the Museum for the purpose of public education and interpretation. Although documented and tracked, these items are not accessioned and are not part of the State Collections.

State Collections – The aggregates of accessioned collection items “of scientific or historical interest vested in the Museum Board”. *South Australian Museum Act 1976* (SA)

Taxon – A named biological entity within the hierarchy of biological nomenclature (e.g. a species, a genus, a family, an order)

Type Specimen – A zoological or mineral item that serves as the basis for the name of a taxon.

Voucher Specimen – A zoological or mineral item that is collected and lodged in the Museum for the purpose of vouching or confirming its identity when referred to or examined in another study such as a biological survey.

Endnotes

¹ South Australian Museum, “Museum Strategic Plan 2014-2020” (Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 2014), sec. 2.3.1, M:\Strategic Plan 2014-2020\SAM Strategic Plan 2014-2020.pdf.

² “South Australian Museum Act 1976,” SA § (2002), sec. 12,
<https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM ACT 1976/CURRENT/1976.21.AUTH.PDF>.

³ “Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act,” Cth § (2013),
<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2013A00012>.

⁴ Roslyn Russel and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* (Rundle Mall, SA: Collections Council of Australia, 2009),
<https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1761/f/significance-2.0.pdf>.

⁵ Ministry for the Arts, *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material* (Barton, ACT: Ministry for the Arts, n.d.), <https://www.arts.gov.au/file/133/download?token=BXRn3fdM>.

⁶ Ministry for the Arts.

⁷ Museums Galleries Australia, “Museums Galleries Australia Code of Ethics,” 1999,
https://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/SubmissionsPolicies/ma_code_of_ethics_1999.pdf.

- ⁸ International Council of Museums, “ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums” (Paris, 2017), <https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf>.
- ⁹ South Australian Museum Act 1976, sec. 13 (4).
- ¹⁰ Ministry for the Arts, *Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material*.
- ¹¹ South Australian Museum Act 1976, sec. 13 (2) (c,d,e).
- ¹² South Australian Museum, “Access to Personal Information - Policy and Procedures” (Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 2015).
- ¹³ Hon Jay Weatherill M, Premier of South Australia, “Declaration of Open Data” (Government of South Australia, September 2013), https://digital.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/content_files/declarations/Declaration-of-Open-Data.pdf.
- ¹⁴ Aon Risk Solutions, “South Australian Museum, Valuation of Collections,” August 3, 2016.
- ¹⁵ South Australian Museum, “Cultural Objects Committee Terms of Reference” (Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 2016).
- ¹⁶ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing,” 2011, <https://www.cbd.int/abs/text/default.shtml>.
- ¹⁷ “The Nagoya Protocol in Australia” (Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, 2012), <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/9fc06ac0-f5af-4b47-a80f-d9378088d743/files/nagoya-factsheet.pdf>.
- ¹⁸ South Australian Museum, “Museum Strategic Plan 2014-2020,” 1.
- ¹⁹ South Australian Museum, sec. 2.4.
- ²⁰ South Australian Museum, “Collections Conservation and Preservation Strategy 2004–2006” (Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 2004).
- ²¹ South Australian Museum, “Museum Strategic Plan 2014-2020,” sec. 2.4.1.
- ²² South Australian Museum, sec. 2.3.1.