

Education and learning policy

POL-C-020

Version 2.2 26 November 2010

Contents

1. Title	3
2. Introduction	3
3. Scope	3
4. Principles or guidelines	4
5. Definition of terms	5
6. Definition of responsibilities.....	6
7. References.....	6
8. Implementation.....	6

ID	POL-C-020
Version	2.2
Version date	20 January 2010
Type	Council approved
Approval date	18 March 2010
File	
Availability	Public and all staff
Keywords	Education, learning, continuous learning, lifelong learning, inquiry learning, multiple intelligences, outreach, professional development
Responsible officer	Assistant Director, <i>Audience, Programs and Partnerships</i>
History	This policy supersedes: Education policy approved by Council 28 July 2005 Education and learning policy version 2.0, August 2008 Education and learning policy version 2.1, 25 May 2009
Review date	August 2012
Related documents	
Contact	National Museum of Australia GPO Box 1901 CANBERRA ACT 2601 Tel: (02) 6208 5000 Email: information@nma.gov.au Website: www.nma.gov.au

1. Title

Education and learning policy

2. Introduction

The National Museum of Australia (the Museum) is a major cultural institution charged with researching, collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical material of the Australian nation. The Museum focuses on the three interrelated areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Australia's history and society since European settlement in 1788 and the interaction of people with the environment.

Established in 1980, the Museum is a publicly funded institution governed as a statutory authority in the Arts portfolio. The Museum's building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra opened in March 2001.

3. Scope

Formal and informal activities based on education and a commitment to continuous learning are delivered at Acton, around Australia and occasionally internationally.

Education and learning based activities include programs at Acton based on exhibitions and collections for visiting school groups, adults, young people and families; teacher and pre-service teacher professional development activities; education resources in print and electronic formats, outreach programs and activities for school and community groups using the website and other communication methods. They may also include international partnerships from time to time.

Education and learning based activities focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Australia's history and society since European settlement in 1788 and the interaction of people with the environment. These activities relate primarily to the Museum's collections and permanent and temporary exhibitions. Increasingly, they also relate to content created for the Museum's website.

3.1 Background

Since the Acton facility opened in 2001, the number of visiting school groups using education and learning programs has steadily increased each year with the majority of schools coming from New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Queensland.

In 2008, a new approach to public programs was developed to better reflect the Museum's priorities of research and collections. Learning is at the heart of this approach - audience research shows that it is the primary reason people visit the Museum. Public programs for adult audiences (symposia, lectures, workshops, public conversations and tours) and programs for families with children (delivered in school holidays), apply best-practice concepts of learning. Evaluation has shown that audiences are responding positively to this new strategy.

3.2 Description

This policy establishes principles to guide the Museum's approach to education and learning.

3.3 Purpose

This policy provides a framework within which the Museum:

- promotes continuous learning as an organisation-wide principle
- strives to provide lifelong education and learning opportunities for local, national, and international audiences
- engages with communities through education and learning activities

- maintains a sound working knowledge of school curricula and other education frameworks and policies which relate to the Museum's collections, exhibitions and web content
- establishes partnerships with local, national and international education providers, including cultural institutions, education authorities, tertiary institutions and others
- keeps abreast of national and international education and learning theories, trends and strategies
- uses technology in innovative and creative ways, including internet, and video-conferencing to reach national and international audiences.

3.4 Rationale

The Museum's Act requires that the Museum disseminates 'information relating to Australian history and information relating to the Museum and its functions'. An effective education and learning policy is essential to the Museum's strategic objectives in particular, 'Enhance national and international profile', as described in the Museum's *Strategic Plan 2007–2010*.

4. Principles or guidelines

4.1 Continuous (or lifelong) learning

The Museum aims to provide formal and informal education and learning opportunities to support continuous or lifelong learning and acknowledges that learning occurs at all stages of life.

4.2 Diversity of learning styles

The Museum acknowledges that children and adults learn in different ways and strives to use a wide range of learning styles including visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic and verbal/linguistic styles. Interpretative strategies and formats are varied to cater for this diversity and include hands-on and active learning, especially in relation to object or artifact interrogation, performance and role-play, and print.

The Museum strives to allow children to make decisions in relation to their learning, sometimes referred to as 'free choice learning', but within a structured format with specified learning outcomes.

The Museum supports intergenerational learning and actively encourages interaction between parents, grandparents, carers and children and young people.

4.3 Inquiry learning

The Museum supports and promotes inquiry learning which encourages audiences, particularly school students, to reach their own conclusions about the subject matter being investigated, based on sound research and evidence. This educational process empowers students to express well-informed views.

4.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education

The Museum sees the development and dissemination of programs and curriculum resources related to Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as one of its key education and learning priorities. In doing so the Museum will be cognizant of commonwealth and state and territory education department initiatives, and where possible, align its activities to support these.

The Museum is also committed to providing opportunities for audiences, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to learn about and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contemporary issues. The Museum consults with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and education providers in the development of Indigenous programs and projects.

4.5 Federal and state/territory government educational initiatives

Over the next 3-year period the Australian Government will be pursuing a national curriculum agenda. The Museum and other major cultural institutions are well placed to become education providers for the new curriculum, especially in the areas of history, the arts and science. In addition, the Museum is also intent on aligning itself with the government's digital education revolution policies and initiatives as they relate to museum content.

It is also increasingly a Museum priority to partner with state and territory education departments in providing online content and teaching and learning resources for schools.

4.6 Education and learning partnerships and leadership

The Museum seeks to maintain its position as a leader in the development of exemplary teaching and learning activities and resources through reciprocal relationships with a range of organisations such as education departments, teacher associations, cultural institutions, including remote and regional institutions and providers of education services, education publishing houses, private education companies and others.

4.7 The role of technology

The Museum maximises teaching and learning opportunities through the innovative and creative use of information and communication technologies, including catering to regional and remote audiences. As noted above, the Museum expects to deliver more education content online through its website and through other online portals, including the joint Australian governments' *National Digital Learning Resources Network initiative*.

4.8 Professional development of teachers

The Museum strives to provide best practice professional development for teachers and pre-service teachers working in formal institutions such as schools and universities. It works closely with stakeholders in key areas of endeavour such as Indigenous histories and cultures and Australia's social history.

5. Definition of terms

Continuous (or lifelong) learning

The notion that the education of an individual begins at birth and continues throughout life.

Education

The knowledge or skill developed by an active, engaging and enlightening learning process which helps to shape a maturing individual.

Inquiry learning

The process of critically analysing evidence to reach well-informed judgments.

Learning

The active process of acquiring knowledge or skills through study, experience or teaching, leading to potential long-term changes in attitudes, values and behaviour.

Multiple intelligences

Different ways of demonstrating intellectual ability including visual/spatial, verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist.

Outreach

A range of programs and activities generally experienced away from Acton which connects the Museum with local, regional, national and international audiences.

Professional development

Continuous process of improvement that develops skills and increases knowledge.

6. Definition of responsibilities

Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships

Manages the implementation of this policy.

Manager, Education

Assists in policy implementation.

Manager, Audience Development and Public Programs

Assists in policy implementation.

7. References

Strategic Plan 2007–2010, National Museum of Australia

8. Implementation

A range of Museum guidelines, procedures and reporting requirements guide the implementation of this policy.

8.1 Coverage

Covers programs, projects and activities such as schools and public programs, community-based projects, travelling exhibitions and print and electronic publishing.

8.2 Other related policies

Audience development policy
Communications policy
Cultural diversity policy
Interpretation policy
Outreach policy
Public programs policy
Publishing policy
Travelling and temporary exhibitions policy

8.3 Exclusions

None

8.4 Monitoring

Implementation of this policy is monitored regularly by the Assistant Director and Senior Managers of the Audience, Programs and Partnerships Division, in conjunction with Executive Management.

This policy will be reviewed in August 2012.