

Outreach Policy

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1. Title

Outreach 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 history and culture, 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 Commonwealth arts portfolio. The Museum's new building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra, opened in March 2001.

3. Scope

The Museum acknowledges the primacy of national audiences and strives to ensure that its range of exhibitions, programs and services are developed within a national framework. Outreach encompasses a wide range of activities including print and electronic publishing on the Museum's website, public and schools programs, community-based projects and travelling exhibitions, some of which will be the subject of other policies.

3.1 Background

The Museum delivered a range of outreach programs in the mid 1990s, with emphasis shifting to travelling exhibitions and the website in the years after opening.

3.2 Purpose

This policy provides a framework within which the Museum:

- engages with communities
- ensures a national and international focus for the Museum's programs, activities and services
- communicates the Museum's vision and mission to develop and sustain new audiences
- enhances public awareness of the Museum and its aims and objectives
- provides access to Museum programs for audiences unable to visit Canberra
- builds relationships with state and regional museums and galleries and other national organisations through partnerships
- strengthens sponsorship and marketing opportunities through increasing access to national audiences.

The policy also outlines the principles which guide the Museum's outreach activities.

3.3 Rationale

The Museum's Act stipulates that 'the Museum shall use every endeavour to make the most advantageous use of the national collection in the national interest'. As a national institution, the Museum is responsible for engaging national audiences and delivering outcomes to all Australians as described in Museum's Strategic Plan for 2007–2010.

4. Principles or guidelines

4.1 Leadership

The Museum plays a leadership role in the building of networks, that facilitate partnerships, collaborations and alliances with other national and state organisations and with regional and remote communities. The Museum complements the activities of other outreach providers.

4.2 Social inclusion

The Museum aims to provide equitable access to resources for audiences regardless of their location, education level, age, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability or language. Exhibitions, services and programs are developed within a socially inclusive framework.

4.3 Consultation and research

Consultation and research form the basis of outreach initiatives to ensure programs and activities are relevant to identified target audiences or participating communities.

4.4 Audience development and outreach

The Museum undertakes a mix of outreach activities to enhance public awareness of the Museum and to increase the number of visitors, users and supporters. The Museum also takes into consideration people who are not traditional Museum visitors.

4.5 Reciprocal relationships

The Museum seeks reciprocal relationships with communities, and aims to represent all Australians in Museum programs and to share Museum resources and skills with remote, regional and urban Australia.

4.6 Representation

The Museum aims to represent the experience of all Australians in outreach programs and activities as much as possible to increase the ways in which visitors and users connect to the Museum.

5. Definition of terms

Outreach

Programs and activities generally experienced away from Acton which connect the Museum with local, regional, national and international audiences – including print and electronic publishing, public and schools programs, community based projects, and travelling exhibitions.

Outreach provider

Local, state or national organisations which support communities around Australia through sharing resources, delivering programs or undertaking projects.

Audience

People who make up the Museum's public including all consumers or users of its products, visitors, researchers, volunteers, media, institutions, donors and sponsors.

Community

Groups of people who share characteristics or bonds such as ethnicity, religion or experience of a place, location or event.

6. Definition of responsibilities

Assistant Directors share responsibility for the implementation of this policy across the Museum.

7. References

National Museum of Australia Act, 1980

Strategic Plan, 2007–2010, National Museum of Australia, version

8. Implementation

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

8.1 Coverage

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

8.2 Other related policies

Audience development policy
Collections development policy
Cultural diversity policy
Interpretation policy
Research and scholarship policy
Travelling and temporary exhibitions policy

8.3 Exclusions

None.

8.4 Monitoring

Implementation of this policy is monitored regularly by Assistant Directors.

This policy will be reviewed in March 2012.