

Temporary and travelling exhibitions policy

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Contents

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

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1. Title

Temporary and travelling exhibitions 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

3.1 Background

From 1994-1996, a program of small to medium-sized temporary and travelling exhibitions was coordinated by the Museum as part of the Museum's outreach strategy, with an aim of providing access to the Collection. This exhibition program was reduced in 1997 as resources were required to focus on the permanent exhibitions for the new building on Acton peninsula.

Since the Museum opened at Acton, the Museum has concentrated on managing the permanent galleries and establishing our temporary exhibition program at Acton.

3.2 Purpose

This policy defines the principles for the Museum's temporary and travelling exhibition program. The program focuses on developing exhibitions which draw on the Museum's collections, and then travelling these exhibitions widely to regional, remote and metropolitan venues.

3.3 Rationale

The *National Museum of Australia Act 1980* states that the functions of the Museum include:

- to exhibit, or to make available for exhibition by others, historical material from the National Historical Collection or historical material that is otherwise in the possession of the Museum:
 - to exhibit material, whether in written form or in any other form, that relates to Australia's past, present and future
 - from time to time as the occasion requires, to exhibit, by itself or in collaboration with others, in Australia or elsewhere, material, whether in written form or in any other form and whether relating to Australia or to a foreign country.
- to conduct, arrange for or assist in research into matters pertaining to Australian history
- to disseminate information relating to Australian history and information relating to the Museum and its functions.

4. Principles

In developing temporary and travelling exhibitions, the Museum observes the following principles:

4.1 Exhibition content

The Museum develops temporary and travelling exhibitions which are in accordance with the Museum's requirements under its Act 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.

4.2 National Historical Collection

Travelling and temporary exhibitions form a fundamental component of the Museum's strategy to provide community access to the National Historical Collection. Each exhibition will aim to draw on the National Historical Collection.

4.3 Temporary galleries

Temporary exhibitions are developed for temporary galleries located within the Acton facility. Exhibitions may be developed in-house, in collaboration with other entities, be commissioned or brought in.

A temporary exhibition may also become a travelling exhibition in part or in whole.

The Museum may buy-in completed exhibitions or commissioned exhibitions, when appropriate, for display in its temporary exhibition spaces.

4.4 Travelling exhibitions

Travelling exhibitions may travel in the form they are exhibited at Acton.

Travelling exhibitions may include programs such as a web presence, publications and programs for schools and the general public.

The Museum will focus largely on smaller travelling exhibitions (of less than 300 square metres), however, once every two years the Museum may develop a larger exhibition (of approximately 300–500 square metres) for the Temporary Gallery, which will then travel to metropolitan venues and larger regional centres.

Travelling exhibitions vary in size and content to allow the Museum to tour to a wide variety of venues, for example a non-museum venue where the internal air-conditioning, temperature or humidity is not controlled.

The Museum may apply a hire fee for venues to exhibit Museum exhibitions. These fees may vary according to the size and content of the exhibition.

The Museum aims to travel to each state and territory at least once every two years.

4.5 Market and audience research

Temporary and travelling exhibitions are developed with regard to market and audience research and evaluated to enable a match between content and audience through the identification of target audiences. Audience research and evaluation may take place prior to the development of the exhibition, during development or after it has opened.

4.6 Exhibition standards

Temporary and travelling exhibitions are developed and designed to be consistent with the presentation and standards of the Museum's permanent galleries. Buy-in exhibitions are also evaluated for consistency with these standards.

4.7 Funding

The Museum will fund its temporary and travelling exhibitions, when appropriate, through grants and external support.

4.8 Schedule

The Museum develops and maintains a five-year forward schedule for its temporary galleries and travelling exhibitions program. This forward schedule may change to respond to events of national significance.

5. Definition of terms

Audience

The people who make up the Museum's public including all consumers or users of its products such as visitors, researchers, volunteers, media, institutions, donors and sponsors. In the case of temporary and travelling exhibitions, this includes the people who are potential or actual visitors to the exhibitions.

Buy-in exhibitions

These are complete exhibitions developed by an external body and using content and collections that are often largely sourced from outside of the Museum.

Hire fee

A fee charged by the Museum to venues to display a travelling exhibition.

Temporary exhibition

An exhibition to be displayed for a limited time in the Museum's Temporary Gallery, Nation Focus Gallery or Gallery First Australians Focus Gallery.

Travelling exhibition

An exhibition which travels to venues outside of the Museum's Acton site.

Venues

Galleries, museums, halls and community centres where travelling exhibitions are displayed.

6. Definition of responsibilities

General Manager Operations

The General Manager represents the Museum in managing the implementation of this policy.

7. References

Client Service Charter, National Museum of Australia, 2003

National Museum of Australia Act 1980

Report Against the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs Access and Equity Report, National Museum of Australia, 2004

Strategic Plan 2004-2007, National Museum of Australia, version 1.2, 2004

8. Implementation

The Temporary and travelling exhibitions policy will be implemented and managed by the Manager *Exhibitions*.

8.1 Coverage

Temporary and travelling: exhibitions, programs, activities and operations.

8.2 Other related policies

Audience development policy
Collections development policy
Communication policy
Interpretation policy
Outreach policy
Research and scholarship policy
Sponsorship and development policy

8.3 Exclusions

None

8.4 Monitoring

Implementation of this policy is monitored by the General Manager *Operations* and Manager *Exhibitions*.

This policy will be reviewed in December 2008.