

# Collections – outward loan of historical material policy

POL-C-036

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## 1. Title

Collections – outward loan of historical material 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 building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra, opened in March 2001.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to the outward movement of historical material from the National Historical Collection, otherwise referred to as 'outward loans'.

### 3.1 Description

This policy provides a set of guidelines and conditions for the loan of historical material that enables maximum access to the National Historical Collection, while also acknowledging and balancing the preservation needs of the collection.

### 3.2 Purpose

The objectives of this policy are to:

- display objects from the Museum's collection to the widest possible audience;
- make the collection available to other participating museums and similar institutions as part of the Distributed National Collection; and
- provide appropriate conditions and controls under which other organisations may borrow historical materials for the purposes of exhibition, research and operational use.

### 3.3 Rationale

Under sub-section 6(1)(b) of the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980* a function of the Museum is:

to exhibit, or to make available for exhibition by others, historical material that is in the national historical collection or otherwise in the possession of the Museum.

In sub-section 7(2)(b), the Act further empowers the Museum:

to lend or hire out or otherwise deal with historical material.

This policy provides the basis for implementing this function.

## 4. Principles or guidelines

### 4.1 Approvals

Loans will be made only in accordance with this policy as approved by the Director from time to time. The Director as delegate may add special conditions to loans as required, provided they are not at variance with these conditions.

#### 4.2 Loan assessment criteria

The Museum will generally lend objects from its collection to other organisations, provided that:

- a) the Museum receives an application for loan in writing twelve months prior to the object leaving the Museum; in special circumstances approval may be given by the Director to process loan requests with less notice, however this may incur a late fee of AUD \$150 per object;
- b) the borrower meets the following: loan costs; valuation (if required), conservation treatment, crating and transport, courier costs;
- c) the object(s) to be borrowed is(are) in a suitable condition for loan or can be conserved or treated to bring it(them) to a condition suitable for loan
- d) the object(s) to be borrowed is(are) available for loan;
- e) the borrower can provide appropriate security, environmental and display/storage conditions for the object(s) to be borrowed;
- f) the borrower agrees to comply with any specific conservation instructions the Museum may impose;
- g) any interpretation of the object(s) by the borrower in displays and display material, publications or research is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Museum; and
- h) any other requirements specified under the loan agreement can be satisfied by the borrower.

#### 4.3 Loans for other purposes

Under certain circumstances the Museum may lend objects from its collection to organisations for valuation, conservation or restoration. Such loans will be of the shortest duration possible and subject to the same terms and conditions as for standard loans.

#### 4.4 Loans to private organisations and individuals

- a) The Museum will lend to private organisations provided the use of the material is consistent with the Museum's public purpose and responsibility, and the borrower is able to meet the general requirements set out in this policy statement and the Conditions of Loan.
- b) The Museum will not lend to private individuals except with the permission of the Director and only then in accordance with Section 4.2 and the Conditions of Loan.

#### 4.5 Loans associated with commercial activities

Loans to shows, fairs, conventions and other commercial ventures may serve promotional as well as educational purposes and may be subject to a loan fee.

#### 4.6 Loans to public corporations

Loans to public corporations are generally restricted to the display of objects in public areas.

#### 4.7 Loans for travelling exhibitions

Loans for travelling exhibitions will be approved if the Museum is satisfied that all venues conform to the required minimum standards of security and care and that the proposed method of transport will not expose the objects to damage.

#### 4.8 Third parties

The Museum will not permit borrowers to lend objects borrowed from the Museum to third parties.

#### 4.9 Material not available for loan

The Museum does not normally lend the following classes of material:

- a) objects of great fragility;

- b) original audio/visual material;
- c) human skeletal material;
- d) secret/sacred material;
- e) objects that are required for display by the Museum over the period of the proposed loan; and
- f) objects which are classed as iconic by the National Museum of Australia.

#### **4.10 Maximum loan period**

Objects from the Museum's collection will normally be lent for a period of up to one year. The loan period may be extended on application subject to the borrower satisfying the Museum that acceptable standards of care are being met.

#### **4.11 Operational use restrictions**

The Museum will not lend objects for operational use except with the permission of the Director and only then if the proposed usage is in accord with the purposes for which the object was originally designed, built or subsequently modified. Objects will not be lent for operational use if such use would lead to the degradation of the object beyond normal wear and tear.

#### **4.12 Specific requirements**

The Museum has specific requirements in relation to:

- a) use of couriers
- b) insurance
- c) copyright and reproduction
- d) loan documentation.

#### **4.13 Disputes**

In cases of dispute over the fact of a loan or conditions imposed, the Council of the National Museum of Australia will determine the issue in dispute.

## **5. Definition of terms**

### **Delegate(s)**

Whomsoever is delegated by Council under subsection 7(2)(b) of the *National Museum of Australia Act 1980* to approve outward loans of historical material.

### **Outward loan**

A loan of material from the National Historical Collection or of other material owned by or in the custody of the Museum to another institution, generally for the purpose of public exhibition.

### **Standard loan**

Those loans which clearly fall within the general operation of this policy.

### **Non-standard loans**

Loans of an unusual nature that do not clearly fall within this policy.

## 6. Definition of responsibilities

### Council delegations

Under this policy, Council delegates to the Director and the Assistant Director, Collections, Content and Exhibitions the authority to approve loans.

### Director

The Director has the discretion to approve standard and non-standard loans or those that fall outside the normal guidelines. Delegation to decline loan requests rests with the Director.

### Assistant Director, Collections, Content and Exhibitions

Has delegated authority from Council to approve standard loans.

### Manager, Registration

Has delegated authority from Council to approve standard loans.

## 7. References

RA Buck and JA Gilmore (eds), *The New Registration Methods*, American Association of Museums, Washington, 1998.

Conditions of Loan, National Museum of Australia.

*Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)*, 1975.

*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.*

*Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Act 1986*

## 8. Implementation

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the related procedures, as approved by the Director from time to time, and set out in the Conditions of Loan.

### 8.1 Coverage

The outward loan of National Historical Collection objects and other material owned or in the care of the Museum.

### 8.2 Other related policies

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secret/sacred and private material policy

Cost recovery and charging for goods and services policy

### 8.3 Exclusions

Outward loan of material from the Education Collection.

### 8.4 Superseded policies

This policy supersedes:

Former policy/ies title	Version no.	Version date	Council approval date
Outward loan of historical material policy	1.0	May 1995	May 1995
Collections – outward loan of historical material	2.0	24 May 2006	May 2006

### 8.5 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed in November 2013.