

Education and learning policy

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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 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

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

Education and learning based activities include programs at Acton for school groups, adults, young people and families, education resources in print and electronic formats, outreach programs and activities for school and community groups using broadcasting, website and other communication methods. They also include an increasing number of international partnerships.

Education and learning based activities focus on the Museum's three themes: 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. These activities are derived primarily from the Museum collections and permanent and temporary exhibitions.

3.1 Background

Since the Acton facility opened in Canberra 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 and Victoria.

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
- establishes partnerships with local, national and international education providers, including other cultural institutions
- keeps abreast of national and international education and learning theories, trends and strategies
- uses technology in innovative and creative ways, including the Internet and broadcasting 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, 'engaging national audiences', as described in the Museum's *Strategic Plan 2004-2007*.

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, performance, print and broadcasting.

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 enables audiences, particularly school students, to reach their own conclusions about the subject matter being investigated, based on sound research and evidence.

4.4 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The education and learning programs relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are guided by the Department of Education, Science and Training's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy:

www.dest.gov.au/archive/schools/indigenous/aep.htm

The Museum is 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 Government educational initiatives

The Museum's education and learning activities incorporate the broad principles of Federal Government initiatives such as civics and citizenship and the values in education program.

4.6 Education and learning partnerships and leadership

The Museum seeks to lead in the development of exemplary education and learning activities and materials through reciprocal relationships with other cultural institutions, including remote and regional institutions and providers of education services.

4.7 The role of technology

The Museum maximises education and learning opportunities through the innovative and creative use of information and communication technologies, especially in catering to regional and remote audiences.

4.8 Giving a voice to young people

The Museum provides opportunities for young Australians to research issues affecting them, and facilitates the dissemination of their views on these issues.

4.9 Professional development of educators

The Museum strives to provide best practice professional development for educators working in formal institutions such as schools and universities.

5. Definition of terms

Continuous (or lifelong) learning

The concept 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 skill 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

Experienced away from Acton, Canberra, outreach programs and activities connect the Museum with local, regional, national and international audiences. Outreach includes public and schools programs, print and electronic publishing, community based projects and travelling exhibitions.

Professional development

The continuous process of improvement which increases the skill and knowledge levels of individuals.

6. Definition of responsibilities

General Manager *Public Programs and Audience Development*

Manages the implementation of this policy.

Manager *Schools Programs*

Assists in policy implementation.

Manager *Public Programs and Events*

Assists in policy implementation.

7. References

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

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, Department of Education, Science and Training, <www.dest.gov.au/archive/schools/indigenous/aep.htm>, June 2005

8. Implementation

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
Communication policy
Cultural diversity policy
Interpretation policy
Outreach policy
Public programs policy
Publishing policy
Temporary and travelling exhibitions policy

8.3 Exclusions

None

8.4 Monitoring

This policy is monitored regularly by the General Manager *Public Programs & Audience Development*, Manager *Schools Programs* and Manager *Public Programs* in conjunction with Executive Management.

This policy will be reviewed in January 2008.