

Publishing policy

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Contents

1. Title	3
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Scope.....	3
4. Publishing principles.....	3
5. Publishing audience segments.....	4
6. Publishing standards.....	5
7. Publishing policy parameters	5
8. Certain publication types drive revenue generation.....	7
9. Publications are widely distributed.....	7
10. Definition of terms.....	7
11. Definition of responsibilities	7
12. References	8
13. Implementation.....	8

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1. Title

Publishing 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

3.1 Description

The publishing policy outlines the Museum's approach to printed and digital publications and describes the business rules and framework that govern publishing activity.

The management of published inventory is discussed in the publishing procedures.

3.2 Purpose

The publishing policy provides context for the Museum's publishing program and guides the program's contribution to respond to strategic commitments.

3.3 Rationale

The Museum aims to document, promote and share the distinctive characteristics and history of the nation. Supporting a dynamic publishing program – in print and online – is one way the Museum achieves its purposes. A key outcome of the publishing program is a greater knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Australian history. Publishing supports and enhances the Museum's diverse program and capitalises on its significant intellectual property.

The outputs of the Museum's publishing program include but are not limited to:

- a) National Museum of Australia Press (NMA Press) products. Publications – usually carry an ISBN or ISSN – for sale and/or distribution to the public through retail outlets, trade sales, worldwide distribution and digital publishing. Publishing products may include books, exhibition catalogues, magazine, journals, research reports, e-publications suitable for the Museum's (and others) websites, and publishing joint ventures.
- b) Corporate and compliance publications whose prime function is to meet legislative or corporate requirements and/or to support specific Museum programs. These may include annual reports, corporate and strategic plans, interpretation materials such as exhibition texts and guides, promotional materials and internal publications.

4. Publishing principles

The publishing program reflects the Museum's vision and mission statement and contributes to the achievement of strategic commitments by:

- meeting the needs of diverse audience groups by optimising and sharing the Museum's research and scholarship
- encouraging audiences to embrace lifelong learning by providing engaging and accessible interpretive information
- promoting awareness and understanding of the Museum's collections and themes
- contributing to the standing of the Museum as a centre of excellence for research and scholarship

- supporting Museum activities such as permanent galleries, exhibitions, learning/schools, Friends, outreach and commercial programs
- where appropriate, publishing commercially to raise revenue.

The Museum publishes quality works within the broad areas of:

- Indigenous knowledge
- Australian social, environmental and political history after 1788
- Australian identity, people and cultural history
- contemporary museological practice.

The Museum publishes works that are:

- based on, document or substantially feature the Museum's collections, programs and/or activities
- based on ideas and concepts that promote or provoke a better understanding of Australian history
- related to the Museum's content, themes, exhibitions, programs.

5. Publishing audience segments

Understanding that there is a wide range of audience segments, the Museum's publishing program shall respond to each primary segment with targeted publications.

There are five streams of publishing that the Museum will pursue. These include:

- a) **publishing that supports the Museum's program:** aimed at general audiences to engage readers with the Museum's collections, themes, programs and activities. Its aim is to offer general readers opportunities to better interpret and understand the Museum's collections and programs through books, catalogues, products, magazine, promotional collateral and other communication pieces.
- b) **digital publishing:** specifically aimed at reaching national and international audiences. Outputs may include websites, subsites, blogs, vlogs, e-zine and full-text publishing. As a principle, the Museum aims to parallel publish all content created physically in an appropriate digital format. However, some material will be developed specifically for digital publishing.
- c) **commercial publishing:** to promote the Museum's brand and intellectual property for commercial purposes. Commercial publishing may include joint ventures with external publishing houses and/or prominent authors or be aimed at particular markets, for example, children's publishing. Commercial publishing will retain links to the Museum's collections, content, ideas, themes and programs.
- d) **scholarly and academic publishing:** specialist publications aimed at engaging discipline-based or subject-specific readers with the Museum's scholarship across the broad spectrum of its professional activities. Outputs may include journals, research papers and transcriptions of lecture series or may include material published about the National Historical Collection.
- e) **corporate publishing:** responds to legislative or corporate requirements and aims to support best practice in corporate governance, compliance, transparency and disclosure.

6. Publishing standards

6.1 Museum encourages internal authorship

The Museum supports and encourages the development of a culture of internal authorship within the agency, particularly but not limited to an output of the Museum's research, curatorial, collection development and information, lifelong learning and outreach activities. The Museum encourages all staff to contribute ideas for original pieces for publication.

The Museum may also publish works by external authors. These may be commissioned works, document the output of conferences and symposia or may be through partnerships with other publishers and/or institutions. The Museum may consider unsolicited manuscripts where the content meets the objectives of the publishing policy.

6.2 Publications meet appropriate publishing standards

All publications shall be written, edited, designed and produced to the highest professional standards. The publishing program strives to maintain quality standards of writing and interpretation that are accurate, accessible to audiences and easy to understand. For each type of publication, production is guided by the most appropriate production values for the target readership.

Peer review of academic and research publications will occur where appropriate.

6.3 Copyright

Museum publishing practices and publications comply with Australia's copyright and moral rights legislation.

Copyright, citation and attribution, image reproduction, print and post-production standards will also meet the highest industry standards.

6.4 Publications comply with legislative requirements

Museum publications comply with all applicable Australian legislation. This includes but is not limited to defamation, privacy and the use of personal information. While not legislated, anti-plagiarism also falls within professional publishing standards.

The Museum holds all rights in any published material developed by staff as part of their work program. Please refer to the Museum's intellectual property policy.

The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* outlines the requirements relating to Portfolio Budget Statements, corporate plans and annual reports.

7. Publishing policy parameters

To ensure value for money and to underpin the Museum's investment in publishing, the following parameters apply to each category of material. This is with the aim of assisting NMA Press to sustain its program in perpetuity by managing Museum contributed financial subsidies, while optimising own-source revenue where appropriate.

Detailed procedures about the management of published inventory are further iterated in the publishing procedures.

A Publishing Steering Committee will meet every six months to guide and monitor the publishing program. The Steering Committee's scope, purposes, membership and operations are outlined in the Terms of Reference attached. Recommendations on whether or not to publish material are made by the Steering Committee based on a range of information upon

which sound decisions can be made. Final publishing decisions are made by the Editor-in-Chief (or their delegate).

The following section outlines the principles and business rules that apply to each category of publishing. The business rules set out below will ensure that all publication proposals are considered on an equitable basis with regard to achieving a breakeven on expenditure to projected revenues. In each instance, the breakeven is shorter than the expected shelf life. This is to ensure that the Museum recoups its investment at the front end of the publishing cycle. If a publication needs to be marked down or written off, the principle is that the Museum has recouped its costs.

At the end of each accounting period the CFO is required to make an assessment of fair book value. If the CFO considers that the fair book value is not representative, a net realisable value will be established. Cost price is determined on the lower of cost price or net realisable value.

The definition of the cost to recommended retail price (RRP) ratio is outlined on page 7. Again, using consistent measures of mark-up, the Museum can equitably assess whether a book represents value for money for both the consumer and the Museum. These ratios also loosely reflect what mark-ups private industry publishers might apply to new products.

- a) **Publishing that supports the Museum's program** will have a shelf life of up to two years. Breakeven must be calculated on a maximum one-year life, depending on the publication. Exhibition catalogues, for example, will generally only have a life for the period the exhibition is on show. Cost/RRP ratio is 1:5.
- b) **Digital publishing** will have a shelf life of up to two years. It is usually, but not always, a derivative of content prepared for other purposes. New content specifically for digital publishing will have a breakeven calculated on a one-year life. If monetised, cost/RRP ratio is 1:3.
- c) **Commercial publishing** will have a shelf life of up to two years, performance pending. Breakeven must be calculated on a one-year life. Cost/RRP ratio is 1:5.
- d) **Scholarly and academic publishing** will have a shelf life of up to 10 years. Breakeven must be calculated on a five-year life. Cost/RRP ratio is 1:3.
- e) **Corporate publishing** has nil financial value but potentially some brand value. Useful life is related to the type of material being published.

Publishing inventory will be accounted for separately to shop inventory and separate KPIs shall be established. Management of inventory is discussed in the publishing procedures.

Print runs will be split between the saleable and complimentary quantities allowing the full cost modelling to be amortised across the saleable component of the print run.

In preparing publishing proposals, all costs including direct costs, salaries and indirect costs (such as storage, distribution commissions or author royalties) will be used. The net costs (direct costs only) will be used to establish the RRP of a publication. This is to ensure there is full visibility of all costs being incurred on producing a publication but calculating cost price and RRP only on direct cost attribution.

Only the printing cost component of the publishing process will be capitalised.

The publishing procedures outline the process for internal sales to the shop and other internal business units.

Reprints will only be considered on the basis of at least 80% sell through within the return on investment (ROI) lifetime of each type of publication. For example, for commercial publications,

80% must have sold through in one year (the ROI period) before a reprint would be considered. Applications for reprints will be considered by the Publishing Steering Committee.

The Museum may engage a national and international distributor. Where possible it will also retain the rights to sell directly to wholesale and trade clients outside the distribution arrangements.

Certain types of publications may be published in full text, for example the Museum magazine. If this is the case, the Museum shall retain the current issue for its own purposes before releasing back issues to full-text publishing.

8. Certain publication types drive revenue generation

From time to time the Museum may consider publishing for entirely commercial purposes.

9. Publications are widely distributed

The Museum makes its publications available to the widest possible audience within Australia and internationally. This occurs through a range of marketing, distribution and sales strategies managed by the area responsible for commercial operations.

10. Definition of terms

Breakeven: refers to the breakeven point where projected revenues cover costs within the given shelf life for different types of published material.

Cost/RRP ratio: refers to setting retail prices for publications based on the basis of \$1 in cost to \$3–5 times the cost being reflected in the retail price, considerate of the type of publishing being undertaken.

Publication: refers to any published work and may include printed or digital material.

Publishing program: refers to the Museum's publishing activities.

Publishing Steering Committee: refers to the overseeing working group that guides, develops and monitors the Museum's publishing program. Details regarding the scope and operation of the Publishing Steering Committee are included in the attachment.

Publishing procedures: refers to the detailed description of operational requirements and processes related to the publishing program.

Shelf life: refers to the useful life of a publication and guides the frequency that might apply to different types of published material.

11. Definition of responsibilities

Editor-in-Chief: the Director or Deputy Director (or their delegate, such as Executive Management Group) are responsible for all final decisions concerning the Museum's publishing program.

Publishing Steering Committee: responsible for the strategic management, development and overall direction of the publishing program, and for making recommendations regarding the program to the Editor-in-Chief.

Head, Digital and Content Services and the Publishing Manager: responsible for the development and delivery of the approved publishing program.

Head, Commercial Operations and Retail Manager: responsible for publishing distribution, wholesale, trade and warehousing.

Chief Financial Officer: responsible for assessing fair value, impairment and net realisable values.

12. References

National Museum of Australia Act 1980 (Cth)

Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth)

Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)

Australian Privacy Principles, *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

13. Implementation

Coverage

This policy applies to all areas of the Museum.

Other related policies

Collection development policy

Intellectual property policy

Research and scholarship policy

Temporary and travelling exhibitions policy

Exclusions

None

13.1 Superseded policies

This policy supersedes:

Former policies title	Version number	Version date
Publications policy	1.0	18 Jan 1995
Publications policy	2.0	7 Apr 2005
Publications policy	2.1	3 Jun 2008

13.2 Monitoring

The Publishing Steering Committee with the guidance of the Assistant Director monitors the implementation of this policy.

ATTACHMENT A

Publishing Steering Committee Terms of Reference v 0.a

Function

The Publishing Steering Committee has oversight of the planning, development, implementation and measurement of the range of activities related to the publishing function. The Publishing Steering Committee will ensure that publishing priorities align with the Museum's Strategic Directions 2018–22, annual corporate plans, respond to a wide range of audience segments and promote the Museum's scholarship.

Terms of reference and key deliverables

The Publishing Steering Committee will perform the following roles:

1. plan and develop the outputs of the publishing function, taking into consideration all aspects of the Museum's program and operations (including financial situation) affected by the publishing program
2. ensure publishing proposals are relevant and appropriately researched, scoped and costed
3. with a view to continuous improvement, ensure the recommended publishing program addresses the brand, positioning and awareness of the Museum, responds to audience segments, offers recognition for the Museum's intellectual property, meets audience expectations and (where appropriate) increases revenue generation
4. prioritise an implementation schedule that considers all streams of publishing
5. provide information and recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief on new publishing proposals and the progress of publishing projects
6. design an evolving program of publications that is cost effective, efficient and provides the Museum adequate returns on investment and value for money.

The Publishing Steering Committee will deliver the following tasks:

1. consider publishing projects that fulfil the objectives of the publications policy, by increasing audience engagement with the Museum's intellectual property, and that actively work towards the Museum's aspirations expressed in Strategic Directions 2018–22
2. analyse publishing proposals, business cases, project budgets and content strategies to make recommendations about the forward publishing program
3. consult, where appropriate, with affected functional teams on publishing initiatives to embed the business rules for each type of publishing stream and revised publishing procedures
4. following each meeting of the Publishing Steering Committee, make forward publishing recommendations to the Editor-in-Chief (or their delegate)
5. oversee the implementation schedule of endorsed projects and initiatives related to the publishing program
6. provide regular performance reports to management on the progress and achievements of the publishing program
7. ensure that reasonable ROI is achieved so that the Museum realises a positive net return on publishing activities in either brand and positioning/goodwill/affinity or revenue.

Membership

Through the Chair of the Publishing Steering Committee, the Editor-in-Chief (or their delegate) will oversee the performance of the Steering Committee. Subject matter experts or occasional members may be seconded to the Steering Committee as required.

A/g Assistant Director, Public Engagement (Chair)
Director and Deputy Director (Editor(s)-in-Chief)
A/g Assistant Director, Corporate Services and Operations
A/g Assistant Director, Collections and Discovery
A/g Program Manager, Commercial Operations and Tourism
Chief Financial Officer
Head, Digital and Content Services
Head of Curatorial Centres
Publishing Manager (secretariat)
Retail Manager

Frequency

Meetings of the Publishing Steering Committee will occur every six months. Additional meetings may be scheduled as required.

Operations

The Steering Committee will be supported by a secretariat. The secretariat will issue agenda papers, proposals, meeting minutes and other papers required. The secretariat will submit papers from Steering Committee members as required. Agenda items shall be issued one week prior to meetings. Minutes and follow-up items shall be issued within one week of meetings.

Review date

The performance of the Steering Committee will be reviewed by Executive Management Group every two years in line with the periodic review of the publishing policy.