

Audience development policy

POL-C-003

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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.....	6

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1. Title

Audience development policy

2. Introduction

The National Museum of Australia 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 within the Federal arts portfolio. The Museum's new building on Acton Peninsula, Canberra, opened in March 2001.

3. Scope

The Museum seeks new ways to attract, maintain and increase diverse audiences and involve them with the Museum in an increasingly competitive environment. 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.

This policy covers audiences who visit the Museum's facilities in Canberra; audiences who access Museum content, programs, services and activities online; and members of the community who become involved with the Museum as volunteers, donors, sponsors or Friends of the National Museum. It also covers audiences who are not yet aware of the Museum's programs and activities.

This policy establishes the principles by which National Museum audiences are identified, serviced and increased. It incorporates aspects of three previous policies focused on access, community networking and networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

3.1 Purpose

This policy provides a framework for:

- developing and enhancing access to the Museum's exhibitions, programs and services
- reflecting Australia's cultural diversity in Museum collections and programs
- promoting the good standing and success of the Museum amongst the widest possible audiences through consultation with all communities
- assisting tourists to understand the Museum's role and to access its resources
- encouraging and supporting existing audiences to make more frequent use of Museum facilities and programs
- assisting underrepresented or disadvantaged audiences to overcome the real or perceived barriers currently discouraging their involvement with the Museum.

3.2 Rationale

An effective audience development policy underpins the Museum's strategic priorities. Both the Strategic Plan 2007–2010 and the Mission Statement identify 'engaging and providing access for audiences nationally and internationally' as key Museum activities.

The audience development policy guides the Museum in presenting exhibitions, programs and services which engage and satisfy diverse audiences and in turn maintain and increase the number of people who visit or are involved with the Museum.

4. Principles

4.1 Diverse audiences

The Museum caters for the diverse backgrounds, interests, outlooks and educational levels of Australians. Museum exhibitions, programs and services reflect the diversity of Australia's cultural, social and environmental history and experiences, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

4.2 Social inclusion

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

4.3 Representation

The Museum's collections, exhibitions and programs are developed to represent communities and regions across the country to maximise opportunities for visitors to connect to the Museum through recognising themselves, their culture and their life experiences.

4.4 Developing the collections

The Museum's Act requires the Museum to collect historical material that relates to Australia's past, present and future, including a collection of historical material relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Within this framework, the Museum aims to document and celebrate the distinctive characteristics and history of the nation, particularly through collecting programs focused on the peopling of Australia, the creation of culture and the building and development of Australia.

4.5 Accessible exhibitions, programs and services

The Museum seeks to provide access to exhibitions, programs and services which are developed with regard to audience and market research and structured to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

4.6 Workplace diversity

The Museum is an equal opportunity employer and aims to recruit staff who represent the diversity of Australian society. The Museum provides training to foster appreciation and understanding of the Museum's obligations within a culturally diverse community.

The Museum's Act also requires that 'Council shall pursue a policy directed towards securing, under the Council, the development and maintenance of the Gallery and the exhibition of historical material ... by persons who are Aboriginals, Torres Strait Islanders or descendants of Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders'.

4.7 Community and identity

The Museum aims to foster an appreciation of cultural identity and the aspirations of diverse groups. The Museum works to establish strong links with communities in the interpretation, documentation and preservation of their own cultural and natural heritage. It recognises that communities have the right to involvement in the interpretation of their culture and thus play a significant role in assisting the Museum to reflect Australia's cultural diversity.

4.8 Research

Market and audience research makes a significant contribution to understanding our audiences, particularly their behaviour, motivations and satisfaction levels. Programs are developed with regard to this research and evaluated to ensure a strong match between content and audience.

4.9 Consultation

Community consultation is used wherever practicable to ensure exhibitions, programs and services are engaging and meaningful for particular audiences. The Museum recognises that

local knowledge and cultural understanding is required before successful consultation can occur.

4.10 Balance

The Museum has finite resources and cannot serve all audiences equally at all times. The Museum balances resources between audiences who are relatively easy to reach and those who are more inaccessible, between programs which attract large numbers and others which meet the needs of minority groups, and between initiatives which seek to encourage repeat visitation by existing audiences and those which aim to attract new audiences.

5. Definition of terms

Access

The process by which the general public use the cultural and physical resources of the Museum.

Audience

The people who make up the Museum's various publics including all consumers or users of its products, such as visitors, researchers, volunteers, media, institutions, donors and sponsors.

Audience development

The long-term process of attracting and engaging target audiences and retaining them through strategic, dynamic and sustainable relationships.

Audience and market research

The discipline that includes visitor surveys, focus groups, interviews, segmentation studies and program evaluation (front-end evaluation conducted in advance of development, formative evaluation conducted during development or summative or remedial evaluation conducted after completion).

Community

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

Cultural diversity

The expression of life in Australia through ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, politics, philosophy, religion, community identity and subcultural identity. The term encompasses a philosophy that appropriately encourages maintenance of cultural identity whilst sharing common ideals and equality of opportunity.

6. Definition of responsibilities

Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships

Represents the Museum in managing the implementation of this policy.

Manager, Public Programs and Marketing

Assists the Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships in the implementation of this policy.

7. References

Annual Access and Equity Report, National Museum of Australia, 2004

Client Service Charter, National Museum of Australia, 2003

Disability Action Plan, National Museum of Australia, 1997

Mission Statement is also quoted - add to references?

National Museum of Australia Act 1980

Report against the Commonwealth Disability Strategy, National Museum of Australia, 2004

Strategic Plan 2007–2010, National Museum of Australia

8. Implementation

The operation of this policy is undertaken according to the guidelines set out in the audience development framework.

8.1 Coverage

Whole of Museum: exhibitions, programs, activities and operations.

8.2 Other related policies

Collections development policy
 Communications policy
 Cultural diversity policy
 Interpretation policy
 Learning and education policy
 Outreach policy
 Research and scholarship policy
 Sponsorship and development policy

8.3 Exclusions

None

8.4 Superseded policies

This policy supersedes in conjunction with the Outreach policy:

Former policy/ies title	Version	Version date	Council approval date
Access policy	1.0	Sep 1994	16 Sep 1994
Cultural diversity	1.0	Mar 1995	15 Mar 1995
Community networking policy	1.0	May 1995	17 May 1995
Networking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	1.0	Oct 1993	15 Oct 1993
Audience development policy	1.0	Apr 2005	25 Nov 2004
Audience development policy	1.0d	18 Mar 2010	25 Nov 2004

8.5 Monitoring

Implementation of this policy is monitored by the Assistant Director, Audience, Programs and Partnerships and Senior Managers of the Audience, Programs and Partnerships Division, in conjunction with Executive Management.

This policy will be reviewed in August 2012.