

International and Domestic Engagements Policy

POL-C-059

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1. Title

International and domestic engagements 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 international and domestic engagements policy outlines the Museum's high level principles for developing a forward program and guides the program's contribution to respond to strategic commitments.

3.2 Purpose

This policy defines the principles for the Museum's International and Domestic Engagements (IDE) program. The program focuses on:

- domestic and international touring exhibitions
- offsite exhibitions
- partnerships underpinned by memoranda of understanding and related outputs
- capacity-building initiatives, including staff exchanges
- the Museum's relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), including the suite of graphic panel displays
- other soft power initiatives
- international relations and cultural advice.

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
- 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.

The Strategic Plan 2018–22 outlines a clear vision for a domestic and international touring exhibition program evident across the five key streams of endeavour. Specifically the plan refers to meaningful engagement with all Australians reaching national and international audiences. A strong international and domestic engagement program will be pivotal in meeting the vision and mission statements.

- Vision statement: To be a trusted voice in the national conversation, and recognised as one of Australia's premier cultural destinations exploring Australia's past, illuminating the present and imagining the future.
- Mission statement: The Museum's mission is to bring the world's cultures to Australia and present Australia's history and culture to the world.

The Master Plan to 2030 delivers an inspired vision for the 21st century and beyond – a national museum at the crossroads of material and digital realms, embracing both. Relevant to the international and domestic engagements function, key elements of the master plan envisage a Museum in 2030 which:

- takes the Australian story nationally and internationally through its travelling exhibitions, Defining Moments schools programs and online platforms to ensure everyone has access to our history and culture, wherever they are
- showcases the Australian narrative through its international touring program linked to Tourism Australia and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) initiatives, with special emphasis on the Indo-Pacific
- enhances commercial operations to raise additional own-source income and develops collaborative partnerships with public and private interests to maximise resources.

The fundamental responsibility of the Museum is to tell the story of life in Australia within the broader context of the human and natural history of life on earth. The Museum's international program takes great Australian stories to the world, and brings the best of global collections to Australian audiences. Acts of cultural sharing bring nations and people together, and reveal the essential human values that connect all nations. The dialogue between countries about shared creative endeavour and enterprise brings opportunities and mutual advantage.

4. Principles or guidelines

In developing and delivering the IDE program, the Museum observes the following principles. These principles will shape the program at a whole-of-program level to ensure a balance across the individual activities and objectives.

All activities under the IDE program will contribute to building the Museum's profile and brand nationally and internationally, with audiences, the media, whole of government, private sector, potential partners, and with peers in the cultural sector. The range of activities contributes to the Museum's reputation as a world leader.

4.1 National Historical Collection

The IDE program forms a fundamental component of the Museum's strategy to provide access to the National Historical Collection. The program opens up the Museum's collection to audiences across the globe through online resources, digital content and outputs, loans, exhibitions and international partnerships. Travelling exhibitions will aim to draw on the National Historical Collection extending the reach through domestic and international tours.

4.2 Exhibition content

The Museum develops and tours exhibitions which are in accordance with the Museum's requirements under its Act. These broadly cover the following areas and may be delivered independently or with partners:

- Indigenous knowledges
- Australian social and environmental history after 1788
- Australian identity, people and cultural history.

For the international program the Museum presents the story of the Australian nation to the world. The Australian continent is home to the world's oldest continuous human cultures in place – the story of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia that stretches back at least 65,000 years. Australia is also a nation composed of peoples from more than 200 countries around the world who have chosen to make the Australian continent their home over the past 250 years. Altogether, this is a remarkable story, one which the Museum's international program contributes to the wider global storytelling of human action and experience across time.

4.3 Engaging with our audiences

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.

4.3 Reaching audiences across the country and across the globe

Domestically, the Museum aims to travel to each state and territory at least once every two years. Internationally, the Museum will take great Australian stories to the world with a wide remit. However, particular focus will be on the Asia-Pacific region, followed by Europe and North America, as well as aligning with countries in focus as part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade soft power strategy.

4.4 Support Australia's soft power activities and contribute to cultural diplomacy initiatives

The IDE program will drive the Museum's soft power initiatives, facilitating cultural diplomacy objectives that expand international understanding and appreciation of Australian history and experience, distinction and innovation, particularly in the area of Indigenous culture and histories.

Cultural engagement and exchange is important in advancing Australia's own national interests, building ties and connections with economic and strategic partners abroad. The Museum recognises the strength of connecting our different yet complementary arts and cultural communities, to amplify their intrinsic, strategic and economic values. The program enables the Museum to be a core participant in this field.

4.5 Create, encourage and cultivate partnerships

Partnerships are a critical principle for the IDE program with an aim to establish meaningful and long-lived partnerships contributing to a sustainable program. The Museum has shown its commitment to two-way dialogue with partners and a willingness to learn from them.

Through collaborative partnerships with communities, state-based counterparts, international peers, private sector partners and others, the Museum will strengthen the program, extend the reach, create opportunities and maximise resources. Partnerships create opportunities for fostering people-to-people links enhancing bilateral cultural capability. Partnerships also inform co-creation of content in a participatory model with communities of interest.

4.6 Take the Lead

The IDE program will seek to optimise intellectual property in the development and delivery of touring exhibitions through thought leadership. The Museum will apply business experience, explore new and innovative models of delivery and lead the way for the sector, identifying commercial opportunities in sharing these experiences and new modes of thinking with partners. The deep content resources of the Museum can help to exploit business opportunities in the broader knowledge economy in this transformative age.

5. Parameters

5.1 Sustainable funding and revenue

The IDE program needs to be sustainable to the Museum's ongoing funding and resource base and commit to opportunities for growing own-source revenue.

The IDE program will contribute to the Museum's own-source revenue income and develop collaborative partnerships to maximise resources. Travelling exhibitions and other activities will be funded through a range of avenues including hire fees, grant funding, sponsorship and fee for service. The program will also provide commercial opportunities, such as a merchandising suite to generate a revenue stream to the Museum and expand the Museum's brand nationally and internationally.

The Museum will endeavour to run the IDE program largely on a cost-neutral basis. This will not always account for Museum staff time or development costs, but rather for hard costs incurred in the delivery of the products.

5.2 Schedule

The Museum will develop and maintain a three- to five-year forward schedule for its travelling exhibitions program. This forward schedule may change to respond to events of national significance or other opportunities that may arise throughout that period. The schedule will be an active document.

The schedule for other activities such as partnerships and capacity-building programs are assimilated into the program as opportunities are both identified and sought.

6. Travelling exhibitions and other outputs

The IDE team will consider ideas and projects across the Museum as opportunities to develop into a travelling exhibition product or other output for engagement with audiences in the IDE program. Travelling exhibitions may travel in the form that they are exhibited in Acton. Temporary exhibitions will be evaluated against the principles and parameters set out in this policy for suitability for the IDE program. Components of the permanent galleries may also be suitable to repurpose into a touring product, either as an exhibition output or for intellectual property, such as interpretation framework or a multimedia asset. Digital content may also be appraised for suitability to be repurposed into the IDE program. Integration of education components and programming components will also be considered.

The Museum's travelling exhibitions will predominantly fit within the following key categories:

- graphic panel exhibition
- medium object exhibition – 2D objects only
- medium object exhibition – 2D and 3D objects
- large object exhibition.

The categorisation of travelling exhibitions enable the Museum to tour a range of exhibitions in terms of scale and content, to a variety of venues across Australia and the world, and provide a framework to strategically plan the forward program.

7. Definition of terms

Hire fee

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

Travelling exhibition

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

Offsite exhibition

An exhibition which travels to a single venue outside of the Museum's Acton site.

Venues

Galleries, museums, libraries, visitor centres, halls and community centres where travelling exhibitions of offsite exhibitions are displayed.

Soft power

The ability to influence the behaviour and thinking of others through the power of attraction and ideas.

International exhibition

An exhibition which is displayed in a country other than Australia.

8. Definition of responsibilities

Executive

Executive Management Group are responsible for all final decisions concerning the Museum's IDE program.

Head, International and Domestic Engagement

Responsible for the development and delivery of the approved IDE program.

9. References

National Museum of Australia Act 1980 (Cth)

National Museum of Australia, Strategic Plan 2018–22

National Museum of Australia, Master Plan to 2030

National Museum of Australia, International Strategy 2017–2021

10. Implementation

10.1 Coverage

This policy applies to all areas of the Museum.

10.2 Other related policies

Audience development policy

Collections development policy

Communication policy

Interpretation policy

Outreach policy

Research and scholarship policy

Sponsorship and development policy

10.3 Exclusions

None

10.4 Superseded policies

This policy supersedes:

Former policy/ies title	Version number	Version date	Council approval date
Permanent gallery exhibitions policy POL-C-038	2.0	19 Nov 2007	19 Jul 2006
Temporary and travelling exhibitions policy POL-C-013	1.0	8 Apr 2006	22 Feb 2005

10.5 Monitoring

The Assistant Director, Public Engagement and Head, International and Domestic Engagement monitors the implementation of this policy.

A range of KPIs will be established, including targets set in the PBS, corporate plan, as well as other internal targets. A series of measures may include visitation, audience response, geographic reach, number of venues, number of travelling exhibitions, and revenue generated.