Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society

**Collections Management Policy**

**Version 0.5**

**OCT 2020**

Revision History

This table is to record the document’s history as changes are made during the project life. As each version is drafted and submitted for acceptance, update the version number and record in the table the changes made to the prior version.

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Document Acceptance and Release Notice

This is Version 0.4 of the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Collections Policy. It was adapted from the Museum and Galleries NSW Template written by Kylie WINKWORTH, 2005.

The Collections Policy is a managed document. Changes will only be issued as a complete replacement document. Recipients should remove superseded versions from circulation. This document is authorised for release once all signatures have been obtained.

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**Other projects or documents that this document is dependent upon**:

1. CR&BBHS Heritage Strategy A Vision for the Future 2019
2. CR&BBHS Action Plan
3. Assessment of the Collection (so as to prioritise items for saving/recovery)
4. Disaster Response Plan
5. Disaster Recovery Plan
6. Identification of the skills of current Museum volunteers
7. Identification of current volunteers who can assist in a disaster
8. Museum’s Display Procedures

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# Introduction and VIsion

Heritage will be an integral part of ensuring the CRBBHS is a vibrant and dynamic leading regional heritage organisation.

Our residents will have a strong sense of belonging and will value the region as a unique place to live and work because of its valuable aboriginal and non-aboriginal heritage. Principles of sustainability will guide heritage leadership and management decisions to help retain a rich variety of social, economic and environmental outcomes.

Our Collection is a ‘memory storehouse’ benefiting the community and its visitors by conserving the heritage of the district and keeping it relevant to changing needs.

ThisCollection Policy is a public document that guides the management and development of the Collection. It outlines why, what, where, how and when the Society collects, and how and why items may be de-accessioned**.**

# Purpose of our collection

To enrich people’s lives through art, history, and culture.

# History of the Museum

The CR&BBHS was formed in 1977, meeting in members’ homes. When a collection was started, acquisition depended on the rented premises available, so no real policy was developed until by the 1980s it was plain that the town had outgrown its police station, and in 1985 a new brick Courthouse leaving the old Courthouse and police residence free. Attorney-General, the Hon. Terry Sheahan, handed the old police building to the Historical Society as a permanent home for its collection.

It was 10 years before the Society’s building moved to its *present* site, next to the Town Water Gardens. At which time the Department of Education offered Nelligen’s former one‑room schoolhouse dated 1960. Subsequently the two buildings were roofed as one.

The Old Courthouse is listed on the Local Environment Plan as a heritage item. The building and its Collections are owned by the CR&BBHS. The land is owned by the Eurobodalla Shire Council and leased to CR&BBHS on a long-term basis and at low cost.

The heritage listing requires CR&BBHS to seek ESC approval via Heritage Advisor liaison for any proposed alterations, internally and externally, which may impact physically or visually.

As a former police residence as well as Courtroom, the building layout is primarily domestic in nature, ie small rooms with corridor access. This impacts on content and exhibition format; currently specific permanent themes, eg hospital, school, retail, First Nation, are allocated to each room, with some space used for temporary displays. Visitors have commented that our themes are easy to follow and assist in access.

# Guiding Principles

We believe in:

* Preserving, interpreting, and making universally accessible the Museum’s collections.
* Celebrating Australian ingenuity, creativity, and craftsmanship.
* Imparting a deeper understanding of the South Coast’s history and heritage.
* Collecting artefacts of strong historical merit for our community.
* Assuming a special responsibility for serving the heritage and history of our community.
* Using the Collection as a resource to print, publish and upload material that assists the aims and objectives of the Society.
* Provide a place for research relating to any aspect of the Society's activities.
* Valuing the contributions of the Museum’s volunteers.
* Achieving and maintaining high standards of professionalism.

# Core VAlues

We strive to advance:

* Professional stewardship and collection care.
* Accessibility (physical, intellectual, aesthetic).
* A welcoming environment.
* Recognition of quality.
* A heightened sense of discovery and curiosity.
* A commitment to teamwork.

# Key Themes

1. Early settlement, and development of the district.
2. South Coast maritime heritage – which includes, but is not limited to, boatbuilding, oyster farming, regattas, beach culture, fishing, the Batemans Marine Park and marine science.
3. Domestic life – social history
4. ‘Lest We Forget’ memorabilia – general and local service
5. Keeping Place – First Person artefacts and material in partnership with Batemans Bay Aboriginal Land Council.
6. Rural industry heritage which includes, but is not limited to, farming, dairy, market gardening, orchards, forestry, and timber mills.
7. Environmental heritage – both natural and built which includes, but is not limited to, families, industries, skills, significant trees, and planting, associated with that heritage.
8. Temporary exhibitions reflecting contemporary events, that are important to the Nation, the State of the community.
9. Travelling exhibitions from other collecting institutions.

# Acquisitions and Accessions

1. The Society has identified **priority themes,** and this policy will be regularly reviewed under the requirements of the Strategic Plan in place at the time.
2. The Museum will acquire objects for the collection through donation, bequest, purchase, or exchange. The Curator will ascertain that acceptable conditions for acquisitions have been met and will recommend the acceptance of materials into the collections. The museum will *only* acquire objects that can be properly stored, documented and managed.
3. The Museum subscribes to a policy of selective acquisition in order to strengthen the collections. The Museum seeks acquisitions of quality through a program of active donor cultivation. Objects acquired by the Museum will meet the following criteria:
   1. Acquisitions must reflect the Museum’s Mission Statement and collecting goals as set forth in the Acquisitions Plan.
   2. The object must have aesthetic merit, a potential for research and scholarship, and be of heritage, historical or cultural significance.
   3. The object must be in acceptable condition for exhibition or possible to conserve with the existing financial resources of the Museum. An object in unsatisfactory condition for exhibition that requires extensive conservation will be considered if a monetary donation specifically for its treatment is also provided as part of the gift.
   4. The Museum must possess the resources to provide proper care and storage of the acquisition.
   5. The donor must have legal title to the object(s) and the full power and authority to transfer the work to the Batemans Bay Heritage Museum and the object(s) cannot be subject to any liens, charges or encumbrances, and cannot have been imported or exported into or from, any country contrary to its laws.
   6. The Museum must attempt to acquire all object donations and purchases without restrictions as to use, exhibition, publication, deaccession, or any other future disposition. All negotiations with potential donors will be performed in an unbiased, truthful and objective fashion, making clear all provisions of acquisition and potential future disposition of offered objects. If a restricted acquisition is considered important and beneficial to the Museum, the issue must be presented to the Management Committee for approval prior to acquisition.
   7. The Museum seeks to secure exclusive or non-exclusive copyright license for all acquisitions. For a donor who is also the maker of the object, a nonexclusive copyright agreement for non-commercial use will be sought if transfer of copyright is not part of the donation.
   8. Museum volunteers will not provide any object authentication or appraisal values for any acquisition. The donor is responsible for making arrangements and paying for the services of the appraisal.
   9. The Museum is under no obligation to accept a bequest of personal property for the permanent collection. Bequests will be considered in the same manner as gifts and the Museum may choose to accept only a portion of the bequest if the object(s) do not meet acquisitions criteria. Bequests of personal property may also be sold at auction with the proceeds deposited to the Museum’s accounts if these actions are approved by the executor of the estate.
   10. The Museum may also accept fractional gifts or purchase objects from a private owner at less than their appraised fair market value (bargain sale) if approved by the Management Committee. Fractional gifts and bargain sales must comply with current Taxation regulations.
   11. Documentation for every acquisition is maintained by the Museum. This consists of all correspondence, a Deed of Gift or invoice and purchase order as required, and other documents pertaining to the transfer of title and delivery of an object to the Museum. This documentation is required for all non‑monetary donations. 1
   12. The Museum does not consider the collection objects as financial assets and the collection may not be converted to cash for operating or capital needs.

# Deaccessions

The Museum periodically evaluates its collections to refine and expand the quality of its holdings. Through the judicious process of evaluation and deaccessioning, the Museum strengthens its ability to serve its audience(s) and practice good collections stewardship. All prospective deaccessions will be reviewed and approved by the Director with appropriate input from the Curator. All prospective deaccessions are presented to the Management Committee for approval. If any Management Committee member requests a further discussion about an object recommended for deaccession, it is placed on the agenda of the next Management Committee meeting.

Upon review and approval for deaccessioning, the object is considered to be removed from the permanent collection of the Batemans Bay Heritage Museum.

Any object or collection of objects considered for deaccessioning must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. The object is no longer relevant or useful for research, exhibition, or educational activities of the Museum.
2. The object is no longer relevant to the Museum’s mission and is outside the scope of the Museum’s collections and Acquisitions Plan.
3. The Museum does not possess the resources to provide proper care and storage of the object.
4. The object is an unnecessary duplicate in the collection; other examples of superior quality and/or provenance will be retained.
5. It has been determined the object is a fake or forgery (noting that some fakes and forgeries may still meet the Museum’s Collection policy).
6. It has been determined that the Museum does not hold legitimate title to the object.
7. The object has deteriorated beyond repair and is no longer useful for research, exhibition, or educational purposes.
8. The object has been determined to be a threat to the health and safety of staff and visitors.
9. It has been determined that the object is cultural property or other material that must be returned to the original owner, the owner’s descendants, or other claimants as determined by a legislative mandate.

Deaccessioned items are not returned to donors under any circumstances. Once an object is given to the Museum, the donor has relinquished legal title to it.

Objects approved for deaccessioning will be disposed of as follows:

* Added to the Museum’s collection of props and supports for the Society’s outreach programs;
* Transferred to exchanged or sold to a more appropriate not-for-profit institution;
* Sold at public auction; or
* Disposal by destruction in case of extreme poor condition (e.g. mould, insect damage, and thus of such little value it is unable to sell at auction)

In no case will any object be transferred, sold, or exchanged to a member of the staff or Committee member, current or past, or to their immediate family or representatives either directly or at auction.

All proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be deposited in the Museum’s accounts. The proceeds should not be applied to the operating expenses of the Museum but rather furthering the objectives of the Museum.

The accession number for a deaccessioned object is retained; the legal status of the object is updated on all relevant documents and in the collections management system.

# Documentation

1. The Collections Volunteers are responsible for the documentation of every object in the museum’s collections. This provides intellectual and physical control over the collections; the documentation will always be increasing as the collections and their use continues to grow. Original acquisition documents and catalogue records are maintained in a secure database whose access is restricted to volunteers only.
2. The types of files Collections Volunteers maintain are: acquisitions, loans, objects in temporary custody, deaccessions, conservation, and object files. The object files contain research, correspondence, and records of use for an object, including conservation, exhibitions, condition reports, and rights & reproductions.
3. Every object added to the Museum’s collections is assigned a unique, primary identification number. The object will be marked with this number using reversible methods according to current techniques used in the museum field. acquisitions are given priority for data entry into the collections management system.
4. The Museum is in the process of entering every object into a collections management system which is a relational database that links all of the above-mentioned documentation in an electronic format. Digital images for identification purposes are linked to each object as part of this process.
5. In order to maintain control over the location of all objects at the Museum, a tracking form is completed every time something is relocated, and this information is updated in the collections management system.

# Collections Care

* The Curatorial and Collections volunteers collaborate closely on the care of the collection. They adhere to established standards for handling, packing, storage, protection, preservation, and conservation treatment of collection objects.
* Preventive conservation efforts include regular monitoring of all collection environments, including storage and exhibit spaces.
* Collections volunteers strive to store objects in the best environment possible. Due to budgetary restraints, objects are given the highest priority for stable environmental storage based on their value, importance for future programming initiatives, and sensitivity to temperature and humidity conditions.
* As objects are entered into the database, the location is tracked as artefacts are relocated.

# Loans

## A. Incoming Loans

* The Museum borrows objects from individuals or institutions for the purposes of exhibition, education, or research. In most circumstances, the loan period will not exceed one year
* Extended loans are reviewed annually, and a new loan agreement must be renewed each year by both parties, unless a longer duration has been approved by the Committee.
* The Museum does not accept loans with an indefinite duration and does not provide free storage for lenders when the loan is of no benefit to the Museum.
* Collections volunteers will maintain detailed records including an appropriate loan agreement form, condition report, and photographs of the object(s) on loan. In the circumstance of special exhibitions organized by another museum or corporation, the Museum will follow the terms of the exhibition contract.
* All objects on loan to the Museum will be exhibited, stored and managed in the same manner as similar objects held in the permanent collection or in accordance with the lender’s requirements as set forth in the loan agreement.
* All borrowed objects will be returned to the lender using the same or similar packing materials to the address specified on the loan agreement form.
* It is the lenders responsibility to notify the Museum if a change of address or change in ownership occurs during the loan period.
* All loans will be insured under the Museum’s insurance policy for the value declared by the owner and mutually agreed upon by the Museum, unless insurance is waived by the lender.

## B. Outgoing Loans

* The Museum may lend objects to other museums or suitable institutions for exhibition, education, and research purposes where such loans are in the Museum’s best interest and further the Museum’s mission.
* The Museum does not lend objects to private individuals.
* All loan requests are reviewed by the Curating volunteers.
* Loan requests are presented to the Management Committee with staff either recommending or not recommending the loan. The Management Committee has final approval or disapproval.
* Loan requests that are received without sufficient time for review, approval, and staff preparation will be denied, exceptions can be made under certain circumstances.
* The Collections volunteers manage the correspondence and documentation for outgoing loans.
* All loan requests will be reviewed using the following criteria:
  1. Loan requests must be made in writing and the requesting institution must provide an acceptable facilities report in which they disclose information regarding the museum building and exhibition space, environmental controls, fire protection, security, handling and installation methods, and insurance coverage.
  2. The object(s) requested for loan must be stable for travel and exhibition. Under certain circumstances an object may be loaned if examination and conservation by an approved conservator takes place at the borrower’s expense. These loans must be approved by the Management Committee.
  3. The borrower must demonstrate that the purpose of the loan provides enhanced scholarship and an opportunity for public enrichment in accordance with the Museum’s mission.
  4. The requesting institution must be able to meet all requirements as set forth in the Guidelines for Borrowing Institutions.
  5. The Museum charges a loan fee on a per-object basis. Additional loan fees will be charged if a request is extended or if additional venues are added to a traveling exhibition that has already been released for loan. The loan fee may be waived at the discretion of the Management Committee and in circumstances where a reciprocal loan has been negotiated or the Museum is a venue for the exhibition that includes the object(s). All expenses for the loan will be paid for by the borrower

## C. Abandoned Property

The Collections volunteers will maintain records for all unclaimed or “old” loans if any are found during the collections inventory. This designation is for objects that are known to be on loan to the Museum and the Museum has lost contact with the lender. The Museum will make a good faith effort to re-establish contact with the lender or the lender’s heirs. If all attempts at re-establishing contact fail, the Museum will claim title to the abandoned property in accordance with the laws of NSW.

Once title has been claimed, the object will either be accessioned or disposed of at the Museum’s discretion.

# Access to Collections for Research and Study Purposes

1. Most museum collections and related documentation will be made available for legitimate study, inquiry, and examination by responsible parties. Access to the collections is contingent upon volunteer availability during the time access is requested and the extent of the materials requested. Objects or records deemed too fragile will be withheld from outside researchers. Access to materials from the Museum Archives must be requested in advance. Individuals who are interested in scientific analysis of any collection items should contact the Curator for special access. The Museum requests a complimentary copy of any materials published in connection with the object(s) researched.
2. Access to objects on loan to the Museum will be governed by the same policies as long as written permission from the owner has been secured.
3. Researchers who would like access to specific objects from the collections and the corresponding documentation must write for permission in advance. If access is approved, the Curator (or a designated representative of the Management Committee) will provide access to the object(s) and/or documentation. Certain sensitive information, such as value or donor, may be restricted at the discretion of the Curator. If the object is currently on exhibit, it will not be removed from exhibition. Researchers will be advised to schedule their visit when the exhibition has ended or closed, at a time convenient to Museum volunteers. A volunteer will always accompany the researcher. In some instances, if a researcher requires extended access to the collections a fee may be charged at the discretion of the Committee. There will be a nominal fee per page for photocopies or digital scans of documentation; a staff member will make all copies or scans.
4. Batemans Bay Heritage Museum strives to make the collections on exhibit accessible to all who visit the museum in compliance The Batemans Bay Heritage Museum’s Access for All approach. Not all structures in the Museum can be retrofitted for accessibility due to their historic significance; visual references are provided when possible for exhibitions that are not accessible.
5. The Museum reserves the right to deny access to anyone behaving in an inappropriate or unruly manner and whose actions threaten the safety of visitors or objects in the collection.

## A - Photography, Filming, and Sketching

* Visitors to Batemans Bay Heritage Museum are allowed to use small handheld cameras with no tripod or monopod. Photography may be prohibited in special exhibitions and flash photography may be restricted in some exhibitions. All photography is limited to personal use. Any professional photography or filming requires prior written permission for special access and must be obtained from the Management Committee.
* Visitors are allowed to make sketches of works of art using a graphite pencil.

## B - Rights and Reproductions

* Requests for high resolution images of Museum objects for publications must be submitted in writing. The Museum charges reproduction rights and use fees and requires that publishers use the credit lines as provided. Batemans Bay Heritage Museum assumes no responsibility for clearing any rights regarding such reproduction and the requestor shall be responsible for any copyright clearances applicable to the reproduction of images.

## C - Product Development

* Access to objects from the collection for product development will be coordinated through the Management Committee. Fees and terms for use and access will be determined on a contractual basis. Objects will be handled by staff members for product development and licensing initiatives. Any method of reproduction that requires direct contact with a collection object must be approved by the Curator.

# Cultural Property

* Batemans Bay Heritage Museum owns a small collection of Aboriginal materials and acknowledges its responsibility to comply with laws relating to their protection and return to cultural owners as appropriate. The Museum does not hold any human remains.
* Batemans Bay Heritage Museum will not knowingly accept any object that has a questionable provenance or that is suspected to have been illegally imported or stolen. As of the compilation date of this policy, the Museum is unaware of owning any property that could be considered to have been taken illegally from its owner.

# Risk Management and Insurance

* The Museum has a responsibility to identify and try to eliminate risks to the collection. This includes securing collections from theft, vandalism, and accidental damage by providing sufficient security devices during exhibition design and installation and by providing sufficient volunteers to patrol the exhibitions.
* Risks are mitigated through proper climate control, infrastructure maintenance, and skilled object handling. Batemans Bay Heritage Museum has a written Disaster Preparedness Plan and can respond to emergencies related to natural disasters, mechanical system failures, and bomb threats or terrorism.
* The Museum works closely with local emergency services to be prepared in the event of an occurrence.

# Legal and Ethical Restrictions

1. Museum Committee Members and volunteers who engage in personal collecting must avoid conflicts of interest. Such conflicts can be avoided by full and open disclosure, by advance consultation in the event of a contemplated course of action that may give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest, and by recognition of the fiduciary duty owed to the Museum by Committee Members and volunteers.
2. In an attempt to avoid conflicts, the Curator will contact all board members to inform them of the Museum’s intention to bid on an object(s) through an auction or a dealer. Under no circumstances should Committee Members bid on the same object(s) that is desired for the Museum collection.
3. The Museum has right of first refusal for any object that is sought as part of its Acquisitions Plan that has been purchased by a volunteer. The volunteer will be compensated for the purchase price of the object.
4. Bequests and personal gifts from family members are exempt from this policy, as are objects purchased prior to the person’s starting at the Museum.
5. Personal collections may not be stored on the Museum’s premises unless for a specific purpose such as a loaned object for exhibition or proffered donation, or for study purposes.
6. Personal objects for office decoration will not be insured by the Museum.
7. Committee members, volunteers, or their immediate families may not purchase or receive by trade or transfer any objects that have been deaccessioned by the Museum.
8. Museum volunteers will not provide value estimates or appraisals to potential donors, visitors, or general inquiries via phone or email.
9. Volunteers will not authenticate works of art. Any statement of value or authenticity is for internal purposes as part of the acquisition process or for collections research.

# Public Disclosure

* The Collections Management Policy of Batemans Bay Heritage Museum will be made available to any requesting party. Appropriate portions or summaries may be a part of all collection transaction documents. The Management Committee and all volunteers will be provided with a copy of the Collections Management Policy

# Glossary

**Accession:** The process of adding an acquisition to the Museum’s permanent collection.

**Acquisition:** An object or work of art that belongs to the Museum.

**Bargain Sale:** An object or work of art that is sold to the Museum for less than its fair market value.

**Bequest:** An object or work of art that is specifically mentioned as a gift to the Museum in the donor’s will.

**Deaccession:** The process of removing an object or work of art from the Museum’s permanent collection.

**Disposal:** The method used to remove an object from Museum property.

**Found in Collection:** An object or work of art in the Museum collection where the source of acquisition cannot be identified after thorough research has been completed.

**Fractional Gift:** An object or work of art with a fractional proportion belonging to the Museum and the remaining portion belonging to the donor or their estate.

**Incoming Loan:** An object that belongs to an individual or institution that is on loan to the Museum.

**Non-accessioned acquisition:** An object or work of art that has not been added to the Museum’s permanent collection. Used for a variety of purposes such as Exhibition Use or Teaching.

**Outgoing Loan:** An object that belongs to the Museum that is on loan to another institution or individual (for conservation purposes).

**Temporary Custody:** An object on loan to the Museum as a proffered donation while awaiting the acquisition process to be completed.

**Undocumented object:** An object found within the Museum’s holdings that requires further research to determine how the Museum acquired it.