



Council Adopted Policy

GALLERY COLLECTIONS POLICY

Responsible Officer	Manager, Corporate & Community Services	Policy Number	C:13
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Applicable Legislation			

1. PREAMBLE

With the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery now successfully established and entering a new growth phase, it was timely to conduct an extensive review of the Collections Policy (2005). While most of the previous policy has remained unchanged, new sections and policies have been added to manage the expanding functions and responsibilities of the Gallery to the collections, artists and communities it serves.

Of particular significance is the addition of a new collection area: the River Murray. The Gallery Management Committee recognised the opportunity to contribute to regional and national debates on art by developing a collection that is specific to the region as well as the nation. The import of the River and its estuaries cannot be overstated, and to this end, the Gallery aims make its collection the pre-eminent River Murray collection in Australia. The scope of this collection area is outlined in the Acquisitions Policy below.

2. VISION STATEMENT

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery encourages participation in and appreciation of the visual arts by people of all backgrounds, cultures and levels of artistic experience by presenting diverse exhibitions to inspire, challenge and promote an understanding of how we and others see the world.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery was established by a resolution of the Rural City of Murray Bridge ("Council") and opened to the public on 24 October, 2001. The Gallery exists to collect, display, interpret and care for in perpetuity art objects and supporting material relevant to its collections for the benefit of the public. The Gallery is not-for-profit entity and is supported financially by Council. It receives additional financial support from Commonwealth and South Australian Government arts agencies, and corporate and private donations.

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery has been endorsed as a public gallery with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status by the Australian Taxation Office. The Gallery is therefore eligible to receive donations of cash and cultural objects (i.e. works of art) under the Commonwealth Cultural Gift program.

A requirement for receiving gifts of a cultural nature as a Deductible Gift is that the objects fit within the guidelines of the Murray Bridge Regional Gallery Collections Management Policy.

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery Strategic Plan 2005 – 2008 states two of its goals as to “build, catalogue, and maintain a permanent collection of high value and cultural significance” and “achieve class ‘A’ status to allow access to national touring exhibitions” (p. 5). This policy document has been developed with those goals in mind.

This Policy document includes guidelines of objects to be collected, with an awareness of the enhancement of existing collections, their ongoing value to the collections, and the relevance to the region and its communities.

4. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Gallery is managed on a day-to-basis by the Director, an employee of the Rural City of Murray Bridge. The Director reports within Council to the Manager, Corporate and Community Services.

The Gallery Management Committee assists the Director in the management of the Gallery, and advises Council on Gallery business. (Further information on the Gallery Management Committee is available in the separate document, *Terms of Reference – Murray Bridge Regional Gallery Management Committee*.)

5. ETHICS

The Gallery is guided by the ethics and professional codes of conduct set forth by Museums Australia, the National Association of Visual Artists, and the International Council of Museums.

6. DEFINITIONS

<i>Access</i>	includes physical, intellectual, emotional, and cultural access to the collections
<i>Accession</i>	the formal process of accepting and recording an object as part of the permanent collection
<i>Accessions Register</i>	the formal record of objects that legally belong to the Gallery, that is separate from the Loans Register
<i>Acquisition</i>	an object, or collection of objects, acquired by the Gallery in accordance with the acquisitions policy, at one time from a single source, as part of an addition to the permanent collection; the appropriate transfer of legal title to the Gallery of an object or objects acquired by gift, purchase, bequest, exchange, transfer, or any other method which transfers clear title to the Gallery

<i>Authority list</i>	a list of standard forms of headings, index terms, cross references, etc, that are used for collections documentation and information retrieval
<i>Collections</i>	those discrete groups of objects which have been acquired and accessioned under the relevant section of the acquisitions policy, eg, the River Murray, and conserved in perpetuity for the public's benefit
<i>Communities</i>	groups of people with defining characteristics, eg, cultural background, gender, special needs, age, language, socio-economic background, etc, whilst recognising that an individual may belong to several communities simultaneously
<i>Deaccession</i>	the formal process of removing permanently an object or objects from the Gallery's collection
<i>Disposal</i>	the physical permanent removal of an object or objects from the Gallery by way of sale, donation, exchange or destruction
<i>Gallery staff</i>	includes paid and voluntary personnel
<i>Loan</i>	<i>Inward loans</i> are those objects which enter the Gallery for a fixed term for the purpose of display or research. Inward loans are not accessioned into the Gallery's permanent collection, but are recorded in a separate Loans Register. <i>Outward loans</i> are those objects from the Gallery's permanent collection which are lent on a fixed term basis to other public institutions for the purpose of display or research.
<i>Murraylands</i>	the region defined by the boundaries established by the Murraylands Development Board as at January 2007
<i>Object</i>	a general term used to refer to any artwork or archival material accessioned into the permanent collection; or any supporting documentation or items that accompany or explain the collection
<i>Permanent Collection</i>	the collective term that refers to all objects acquired and accessioned by the Gallery in accordance with its acquisitions policy and held in perpetuity for the public's benefit

7. ACQUISITIONS POLICY

The Gallery shall collect objects that meet the requirements of the following four collection areas:

7.1 The River Murray

This collection may be developed under the following guidelines:

- (1) Artworks in any medium or style that portray some natural, environmental, cultural, social, economic and/or political aspect of the River Murray by mid-career or senior artists of widespread regional, national or international significance; or emerging artists who demonstrate outstanding talent.
- (2) While the focus of this collection shall be post-1960 artworks, artworks from earlier periods may be collected if they are deemed by the Director and the Gallery Management Committee to complement and explain the contemporary collection, and are artistically and historically significant.
- (3) This collection encompasses the entire length of the River Murray, from source to mouth, and its estuaries; it may include the Darling River at the discretion of the Director and Gallery Management Committee.
- (4) The quality of all artworks for this collection should be of a very high standard as generally agreed by industry experts.
- (5) Relevant records, archives, supporting documentation and complementary objects that explain and strengthen this collection area and aid research may also be collected.

7.2 Art of the Region

This collection may be developed under the following guidelines:

- (1) Artworks of a high standard in any medium or style and of any period that portray some aspect of the natural, cultural, social, economic or political environment of the Murraylands region of South Australia; or
- (2) Artworks of a high standard in any medium or style and of any period that are of significant historic or archival value to the residents of the Murraylands region.
- (3) All artworks for consideration are to be qualified as to their significance and suitability by the Director and the Gallery Management Committee.

7.3 Regional Artists

This collection may be developed under the following guidelines:

- (1) Outstanding artworks in any medium or style and of any period by artists living and/or working or who formerly lived and worked in the region with demonstrated deep connections to the region, may be acquired for the collection on the recommendation of the Director in consultation with the Gallery Management Committee.

7.4 Contemporary Australian Art

This collection may be developed under the following guidelines:

- (1) All artworks should be by professional Australian artists; and

- (2) Artworks collected should have regard to building and strengthening the existing collections; and
- (3) Be a work believed by the Director and /or Gallery Management Committee to be of significance in the history of Australian Art.
- (4) Artworks relating to Australia produced by significant professional international artists may be acquired only if they complement the existing collections, and only at the discretion of the Director and Gallery Management Committee.

8. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Collections Management Policy provides guidelines for the good and ethical operation of the Gallery.

8.1 Acquisition

- (1) Artwork proposed for acquisition shall meet the guidelines of the acquisitions policy and be of use to the Gallery in the foreseeable future.
- (2) Acquisitions are made by the Director in consultation with the Gallery Management Committee within the guidelines of the acquisition policy, and with such specialist advice as each party deems necessary.
- (3) An artwork shall be authentic, and solely the work of the artist, or artists for a group work.
- (4) Every effort to establish provenance and clear title from when the artwork was produced will be made prior to acquisition.
- (5) The work shall be free of any legal restrictions.
- (6) An artwork may be acquired from areas outside of the acquisitions policy only if it is deemed by the Director to have a special relationship to existing holdings, and the acquisition meets with the approval of the Gallery Management Committee.
- (7) The Director and Gallery Management Committee shall give careful consideration to all current and future implications of any display conditions and/or restrictions placed on an acquisition by a seller or donor, before it is acquired. It is preferable for the Gallery to acquire artworks that are unencumbered by any such restrictions or conditions.
- (8) The condition of the work shall be reasonable, safe to person and property, and not impose any undue conservation obligations on the Gallery.
- (9) In acquiring a work, the Gallery shall give consideration to the care and conservation of the work in perpetuity.
- (10) Current storage and display conditions must be suitable to the work.
- (11) Where the method of acquisition is by purchase, the Gallery shall pay no more than fair market value.

- (12) The price paid by the Gallery for acquisitions and the market value of objects in the permanent collection, shall not be made public for security reasons.
- (13) The Gallery shall not knowingly acquire Indigenous artworks of a secret/sacred nature.
- (14) All proposed acquisitions shall be presented to the Gallery Management Committee for its approval at regular committee meetings.

8.2 De-accession & Disposal

The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery holds that there is a strong presumption against de-accessioning objects from its permanent collection. De-accessioning of any previously accessioned object held by the Gallery may occur only when the object meets one or more of the following criteria:

8.2.1 De-accessioning criteria

- (1) The object is not within the Gallery's collections mandate;
- (2) The object cannot be given appropriate care by the Gallery;
- (3) The object is damaged beyond repair;
- (4) The object is significantly inferior in quality to a similar object within the collection;
- (5) The object has been stolen with no hope of return;
- (6) The object is of no significant historical, artistic or archival value;
- (7) The object is deemed by the Director and Gallery Management Committee to be not complementary to existing holdings; and/or
- (8) The object is subject to restitution claims or was acquired by unethical means.
- (9) Notwithstanding the above, the Gallery must have clear title in the object in order for the object to be de-accessioned.

8.2.2 Any recommendation for de-accessioning shall:

- (1) Be initiated by the Director and/or Gallery Management Committee;
- (2) Give due consideration to any legal or ethical restrictions surrounding the de-accessioning of the object; and
- (3) Take the form of a report to the Gallery Management Committee.
- (4) In all cases, the Director and Gallery Management Committee shall give due consideration to the long-term impact of de-accessioning the object on the collection and the communities that the Gallery serves.
- (5) If any doubt exists as to the desirability of de-accessioning a particular object, an independent opinion shall be obtained from a suitably qualified independent art historian or other disinterested art industry professional.
- (6) Where an accessioned object was sourced from the artist, donor, bequest or institute, the acquisition source, or their estate, shall be informed in writing of the Gallery's intention to de-accession the artwork.

- (7) A de-accession recommendation must be fully endorsed by both the Director and Gallery Management Committee before being submitted to Council in the form of a report. Council must pass the de-accession recommendation for it to become final and for the disposal process to proceed.

8.2.3 After approval for deaccessioning is granted:

- (1) A permanent record of the de-accessioning shall be made against the object in the Gallery's Accession Register by a fully-trained, permanent Gallery staff member. The object's accession number must never be reused.
- (2) All other documents (catalogue worksheet, correspondence, research material, photographic images, etc) shall be compiled and placed in a separate De-accession Records file, including details of the new owner.
- (3) Copies of all documents shall be made, and shall accompany the object on disposal where appropriate.
- (4) The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery will retain all proceeds gained from the de-accessioning of an object. Monies or proceeds received shall be held and used by the Gallery solely for the benefit of the collections, with priority given to new acquisitions to that same collection.

8.3 Disposal

Once de-accession is approved according to the Section 8.2, disposal may be by:

- (1) Return to the donor or artist, or their estate;
- (2) Exchange, gift or sale to another institution;
- (3) Public tender, auction or sale; or
- (4) Destruction or recycling.

8.4 Documentation

- (1) Only fully-trained, permanent Gallery staff members and Gallery Management Committee members who are directly involved and properly trained in the management of the collection, shall fully document the process of acquiring and accessioning an item into the permanent collection (or de-accessioning and disposal, as the case may be).
- (2) A Certificate of Donation shall be completed for each object where applicable.
- (3) Each item shall be presented to the Gallery Management Committee by the Director for its consideration before being accepted for acquisition. The presentation shall take the form of a written report that documents the object's relevance to the existing collections, addressing such points outlined in the acquisition policy.

- (4) On acceptance of an acquisition, the object will be accessioned into the permanent collection expeditiously, following all due procedures.
- (5) Once clear title has been transferred to the Gallery, an entry shall be made in the Accession Register and the object given a unique number, a catalogue worksheet completed using terms from the authority list, photographed, and any necessary conservation work performed.
- (6) In the event that the acquisition is refused, the decision and grounds for refusal shall be recorded and filed along with the acquisition report, in a file separate from the Acquisitions Register, and the object shall be returned to the owner expeditiously.
- (7) Where possible and applicable, the Gallery shall seek to obtain copyright permission for non-commercial purposes from the copyright holder. The copyright status of each object shall be recorded in its documentation.
- (8) Paper and digital copies of each accessioned object's documentation shall be kept in perpetuity, with a complete back-up copy stored off-site.
- (9) The object is then either stored or displayed.

8.5 Care of the collections

- (1) The Gallery's storage, conservation and display restrictions must be considered before the acquisition of an object.
- (2) Upgrading and maintaining storage conditions and conservation standards shall be a priority.
- (3) Staff and volunteers shall be trained in the correct handling and storage of objects.
- (4) Housekeeping is to be efficient and regular. This includes checking for pests and atmospheric deterioration. Fumigation will be carried out annually or as needed.
- (5) Light (lux and UV) and climatic conditions (relative humidity, temperature) will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure a stable, appropriate environment.
- (6) Archival quality materials will be used for conservation, preservation and storage.
- (7) Only authorised staff is permitted access to storage areas. Members of the public are permitted access to storage areas only with the Director's expressed permission.
- (8) Regular inventories shall be conducted of the collections and compared against the Accession Register, noting any change in the condition and location of artworks.
- (9) Any conservation work is to be conducted at the earliest possibility according to the conservation priority level.

8.6 Access

The Gallery supports and encourages the right of its communities to gain access to the Gallery's collections and temporary exhibitions.

8.6.1 The Gallery shall make its collections and space accessible by:

- (1) Displaying the permanent collection as space allows;
- (2) Developing exhibition programs that are inclusive and representative of as many of the Gallery's communities as possible over time;
- (3) Providing public programs and education aimed at expanding knowledge and understanding of the collections, temporary exhibitions, and art in general;
- (4) Answering questions about the permanent collection and loan artworks held by the Gallery, and providing access to non-confidential documentation relevant to the collections when requested;
- (5) Providing *bona fide* students and artists with appropriate access to material that they require for their research. Such requests should be put in writing to the Director, stating the purpose of research and access required. Access to certain confidential material may only be granted with the Chief Executive Officer's written consent; and
- (6) Maintaining publicised opening hours.

8.6.2 Access to the collections shall be granted under the following conditions:

- (1) Admission to the Gallery is free of charge, except for the occasional temporary exhibition;
- (2) Members of the public may access only non-confidential information and records on the collections;
- (3) Members of the public are not permitted to photograph, touch, move, or modify any artwork under any circumstance, unless there are signs stating otherwise;
- (4) Access to any confidential or sensitive material is at the discretion of the Director and may require the written consent of the Chief Executive Officer. All access is subject to the relevant Federal, State or Local legislation, (e.g. Privacy Act 1988)

8.7 Loans

A loan agreement form outlining the conditions of the loan, signed by both lender and borrower, must accompany all loans. A separate Loans Register shall be kept to document all inward and outward loans.

8.7.1 Inward loans

- (1) The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery may receive artworks for display or storage at the Director's discretion.
- (2) The Director may accept incoming loans for limited periods. The Gallery Management Committee will be advised of all incoming loans at a regular committee meeting and will have the power of veto if the conditions of loan are not satisfactory to the Gallery.

- (3) An incoming loan agreement must be completed and signed by the Lender and the Director.
- (4) Documents and photographs offered for copying and return, if appropriate, may be accepted.
- (5) All inward loans will be subject to the same care as artworks in the permanent collection.
- (6) Conditions of display, insurance and transport arrangements will be agreed upon by the parties and closely monitored by the Gallery.
- (7) Each inward loan agreement will specify a loan period of not more than three (3) calendar years. After such time the loan agreement will be reviewed, and the loan extended or revoked at the discretion of the Director.
- (8) The Gallery will not accept artworks on perpetual loan.

8.7.2 Outward Loans

- (1) The Murray Bridge Regional Gallery is committed to making its permanent collections available for loan to other non-for-profit galleries and authorised organisations only, for display and research purposes, providing that the conditions of loan are satisfactory to the Gallery. Loans to individuals are not permitted under any circumstances.
- (2) The borrower and the Director along with the Gallery Management Committee shall agree upon time limits.
- (3) Each outward loan agreement shall specify a period of loan of not more than three (3) calendar years. After such time the loan agreement will be reviewed, and the loan extended or revoked at the discretion of the Gallery Director and Gallery Management Committee.
- (4) Each loan shall be accompanied by an outgoing loan agreement and a condition report.
- (5) A condition report shall also be completed by the borrower on receipt and dispatch of the loan.
- (6) Conditions of display, insurance and transport arrangements shall be agreed upon by the parties and closely monitored by the Gallery and borrower.
- (7) The borrower shall not be permitted to modify, repair or adapt any object loaned by the Gallery without the expressed written consent of the Gallery Director, and only under the terms determined by the Gallery Director.
- (8) Under no circumstances shall the Gallery lend artworks in perpetuity.
- (9) All outward loans will be noted in each object's accession file, and the Gallery's annual report.

8.8 Copyright and Photographic Reproduction

- (1) The Gallery and its users are subject to the Copyright Act 1968 and its amendments.
- (2) Photography of any artwork, permanent or temporary, is prohibited, except with the expressed permission of the holder of the

copyright, or as otherwise allowed by the Act that meet the conditions of “fair dealing”.

- (3) The Copyright Act allows for the photographing of work under certain conditions, e.g. “fair dealing” for purpose of research or study. In such cases, a form must be completed by the requester and signed by the Director prior to the work being photographed.
- (4) The Gallery may photograph artwork for documentation and insurance purposes, and for the promotion of its permanent collections and exhibitions in accordance with Copyright Act.
- (5) Flash photography by the public is not permitted under any circumstances.

8.9 Volunteers

- (1) The Gallery recognises the invaluable service volunteer staff provides to the effective operation of the Gallery, and it aims to provide suitable recognition, training and support for its volunteer staff.
- (2) Gallery volunteer staff is recruited and managed under Council's Volunteer Policy (2005) and the Volunteer Handbook (2007).

8.10 Conflict of Interests

8.10.1 Gifts, loans, favours, or other personal benefits

- (1) Gallery staff and Gallery Management Committee members must not accept gifts, loans, favours, or other personal benefits that may be offered to them by external parties in connection with their work at the Gallery.
- (2) Any gift given as a professional courtesy must be received on behalf of the Gallery.

8.10.2 Personal use of the Collections by staff

- (1) Under no circumstances are any Gallery staff, Gallery Management Committee members, Council employees, Elected Members, or their relatives, friends or associates to make use of or borrow the Gallery's collections, permanent or temporary, or any of the material held by the Gallery, for personal advantage (*bona fide* Gallery-based research use excepted).

8.10.3 Private collecting

- (1) Paid gallery staff and Gallery Management Committee members are strongly dissuaded from competing with the Gallery in the acquisition of objects or in their private collecting.
- (2) Where private collecting conflicts with the Gallery's collections areas, an agreement between the Gallery and the individual should be written and strictly followed.

8.10.4 Other conflicts of interest

- (1) Should any other conflicts of interest arise, the interests of the Gallery shall take precedence.

9. POST IMPLEMENTATION ACTION

Electronic PDF version will be kept on the Rural City of Murray Bridge web site for public to view.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in the month of May and at the first meeting of a Council following a periodic election. Council may revise or review this policy at any time.

Endorsement by Council on 5 November, 2007

Revision 2 – 304.3.1 – 5/11/07