

Council Policy

POLICY TITLE:	ART COLLECTION - COUNCIL POLICY
RESPONSIBLE DIVISION:	Community & Development
RESPONSIBLE SECTION:	CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
LINK TO CORPORATE PLAN:	SA1 PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive Officer
AUTHORISED BY:	Ordinary Meeting of Council - 18 April 2012
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AMENDMENT DATE/S:	8 February 2012
DATE REVIEW DUE:	18 April 2024

POLICY OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE:

The objective of this policy is to establish principles that guide and direct the management and care of the Western Downs Regional Council Collection and to establish achievable collection development directions and goals that guide the collection building activities of the Western Downs Regional Council.

This policy outlines the management requirements for the Western Downs Regional Council Collection, inclusive of collection development strategies via acquisition and de-accession.

Statement of Purpose

The **mission** statement is:

Through people, objects and technology, Western Downs Regional Council will collect, preserve, interpret, and explore stories and experiences that entertain, engage and inspire our communities and visitors to enrich their understanding and appreciation of the Western Downs Region and themselves.

Western Downs Regional Council will forge an appreciation and understanding of our connection to the land by embracing and sharing our unique place and lifestyle.

The broad aims of the collecting policy of the Western Downs Regional Council Collection are to:

- Collect, conserve, research and document the visual arts and objects of historic or social significance to the region for the benefit of the Western Downs regional community and future generations.
- Collect and commission selectively, works of art which enhance the Council's buildings and precincts and the parks and gardens of the region's towns, to foster an understanding and appreciation of the visual arts, provide a sense of place and to build community pride.
- Build upon the present strengths of the Western Downs Regional Council Collection.
- Develop a collection of visual arts and social history objects that reflects the community's attributes and aspirations.
- Foster a broad understanding and appreciation of the visual arts through the inclusion and integration of examples from the traditional areas of art production, alongside new forms of artistic expression, and through the inclusion of significant examples drawn from or relating to the Western Downs region and South East Queensland.
- Bring together artworks and objects which demonstrate meaningful social and cultural interactions between the artist, their environment and their cultural background.

- Acquire artworks and objects of the highest possible standard and integrity, and prioritise those artworks and objects intended for regular exhibition and/or inclusion in specific programs within our regions galleries and corporate offices.
- Enhance access to the Western Downs Regional Council Collection through research, documentation and the use of new technologies.

ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE:

This policy covers the Western Downs Regional Council Collection, the management of the Collection, and development of the Collection. Furthermore, as Council is the legal owner of the asset, Council reserves the right to sell or gift the asset at any time.

Guiding Procedures

- Loan of Artworks from the Western Downs Regional Council Collection
- Acquisition of Artworks into the Western Downs Regional Council Collection
- Western Downs Regional Council guidelines and regulations regarding the sale and maintenance of assets.

Guiding Industry Standards

- International Council of Museums Code of Professional Ethics
- Australian Business Arts Foundation Sponsorship Guidelines
- Australian copyright law in the *Copyright Act 1968*
- The Department for Communication and the Arts Cultural Gifts Program Guide and Cultural Bequest Program Guide

POLICY:

Collection Management



The responsibility of the overall management of the Western Downs Regional Council Collection will be delegated to form part of the role of the Cultural Development Coordinator.

Council will support individual Local Gallery's in collection development objectives that are in line with this policy. Works shall remain in the communities from which they have been collected under the care of the local gallery, on the condition that the level of care required of this policy is upheld. The Cultural Development Coordinator will liaise with appropriate gallery representatives to assist where necessary.

Council will support work being on display in appropriate council facilities under the care of the Local Customer Service Contact Representative with the support of the Cultural Development Coordinator.

Acquisition

In developing the Western Downs Regional Council Collection through acquisition, Western Downs Regional Council will acquire works of high quality that enhance the programs of the regions galleries and serve the interests of Council and the broader community eg by raising awareness of the Western Downs Region as a destination for cultural tourism. The Collection needs to tell stories for a diverse range of visitors, including children.

The Western Downs Regional Council Collection shall be developed according to the following criteria:

- Aesthetic merit and quality
- Relevance to the Collection directions and/or exhibition program
- Building on existing strengths within the Collection
- Storage and display practicalities
- Significance to the cultural and social heritage of the Western Downs Region
- Reflective of the communities of the Western Downs Region, inclusive of Indigenous Australians

The Cultural Development Coordinator, working with a specialist Acquisition Advisory Panel will carry the responsibility for the identification and selection of works for acquisition in accordance with the Collection development themes outlined in this policy. Works will be purchased or commissioned with funds provided by the Council, or via an external funding body or grant or donation. Works will also be acquired through the Cultural Gifts program.

The Acquisition Advisory Committee

The Acquisition Advisory Committee will be directly responsible to the Cultural Development Coordinator. Its principal purpose will be to recommend to the Cultural Development Coordinator for the approval of Western Downs Regional Council: purchases and gifts for the Western Downs Regional Council Collection following the guidelines set out in this policy; the de-accession of artworks following the guidelines as set out in this policy; and to review the Western Downs Regional Council Collection Acquisition Policy every two years.

The Panel will be made up of the Cultural Development Coordinator, 2 Councillors, and up to 6 representatives from Western Downs Regional Galleries or Gallery spaces with an experience and an interest in visual arts. A nomination process will determine suitable representation from the various communities. With the Mayor or nominee to Chair the Panel and the Cultural Development Coordinator will act as the Executive Officer to the Panel.

The Acquisition Process

In recognition of difficulties surrounding the entire panel being available to make a selection at any given event or time, the selection decision can be made by a minimum of 3 panel members, to include at least 1 Councillor Representative from the Acquisition Advisory Committee, the Cultural Development Coordinator and a Community Panel Representative.

Information concerning new acquisitions will be made available to the media through the Cultural Development Coordinator's report recommendations when formally approved by Council, with due recognition given to donors and other supporters of the acquisition.

The Western Downs Regional Council Collection provides inspiration and aesthetic enrichment, it educates and enlightens, it builds greater understanding of others in the community, and it is a source of civic pride and identity. Collections are essential for the survival of the human fabric and its patterns. They hold the remaining traces and artefacts of the interactions and processes of life: they capture the knowledge that follows these events. For these reasons, Western Downs Regional Council shall aim to reflect the region's distinctive features by developing the Collection in the following key areas:



Western Downs Regional Heritage

One of the most important aspects of the Collection is its ability to articulate the social history of the Western Downs Region. A high priority is the on-going acquisition of objects, which reflect the social history of agriculture, business and commerce, industry, education, entertainment, childhood, domestic life, architecture, occupations and trades, government, military service, migrant heritage, customs and traditions, icons, and other relevant spheres of interest throughout the Western Downs region.

It is noted that it will not always be possible to add personal stories or histories, photographs and ephemera to the Collection for various reasons, but at the discretion of the Collection Manager and the Acquisition Advisory Panel such items may be recorded digitally for inclusion in displays, exhibitions and archives.

Western Downs Regional Artists

It is important that Collection development supports the artists of the region through the acquisition of high quality works. Original works of art across all media by artists, both historical and contemporary, who reside or have resided in the Western Downs region, will continue to be acquired. Of particular interest are works by artists who have received recognition, or had a significant local influence on other artists, or in some way, depict or document lifestyles, times, places, people and events of relevance to the region, significant issues such as water and the environment and build an understanding of the concept, connection to land.

De-Accession

The de-accession of an item from the Collection means that the artwork or object, either acquired or gifted to the Collection, may be disposed of for the benefit or improvement of the Collection. Integral to the process of collection development, the de-accessioning of a work or object from the Collection requires formal ratification by Council and is subject to strict guidelines and must conform to Council's policy for the disposal of assets.

Criteria for De-Accession of Works from the Collection

The de-accession of a work may be considered based on one or more of the following criteria.

The work or object is:-

- Able to be sold or gifted for the benefit of the Western Downs Regional Council collection
- Significantly lower in quality than other comparable works in the collection or these available through acquisition
- Difficult to maintain and its future is better preserved by a change of ownership
- Unable to be used in displays or exhibitions
- A duplicate (eg a print from the same state)
- A forgery, or has insufficient documentation or evidence to support its authenticity
- Irreparable damaged or damaged beyond the resources available to repair it
- Endangering other works in the collection or council property.
- Expensive to maintain to the point that it becomes a liability or means that the work can no longer be properly cared for or impacts upon the care of the collection as a whole
- Subject to repatriation to an indigenous community in possession of a valid claim
- Requires a disproportionate space to display or store

Terms of De-Accession

The Cultural Development Coordinator will submit a formal report to Council, including details of the artwork or object, the reasons for its de-accession, and the proposed method of disposal.

The Cultural Development Coordinator will make every reasonable effort to notify living donors, or the descendants of deceased donors, or trustees or executors of the estates of deceased donors, or corporations of the intention to de-accession a work of art or object. Where financial assistance has been obtained from an external source (eg public or private benefactors or grants), disposal of the work or object would normally require the consent of all parties or representatives who contributed to the original purchase. Respect for, and sensitivity to artists, makers, donors, and, where appropriate, their descendants, must always guide decision-making within the de-accession process.

No work acquired for the Collection with a restriction as to its retention may be de-accessioned while that restriction remains in place.



Method of Disposal

The procedure will be as follows:

- Review of the work and preparation of a Council Report for de-accession including recommendation by the Cultural Development Coordinator of the most appropriate means of disposal (eg public auction or tender) that best protects the interests of Council
- Approval of the de-accession by both the Acquisition Advisory Panel and Council
- Undertake disposal as recommended by the Acquisition Advisory Panel and endorsed by Council.

In the instance of a work found to have been falsely documented, described or attributed and/or a forgery and subsequently de-accessioned, additional consideration should be given to the protection of the public interest as well as that of the Council. Depending upon the manner and circumstances surrounding the acquisition of the work, consideration may be given to:

1. Rescinding the acquisition;
2. Donation of the work; or
3. Disposal by public auction or tender, provided that an error in the work's documentation, description or attribution will not thereby be perpetuated.

The Acquisition Advisory Panel or Western Downs Regional Council staff, past employees, or members of their families or close associates should not be knowingly permitted to purchase works that have been de-accessioned from the Collection.

Destruction of a work will be considered only if the work is deemed unsafe or has deteriorated beyond repair, and will require a recommendation from the Acquisition Advisory Panel and formal Council approval via a report from the Cultural Development Coordinator.

Proceeds of Sale

Proceeds received from the disposal of de-accessioned works shall be:

- Used in all circumstances for the acquisition of works
- Applied to the acquisition of works in the name of the fund or donor or the de-accessioned work
- Maintained separate and apart from recurrent or operating Council funding until spent.

Record of De-Accessioned Works

The Cultural Development Coordinator will maintain records of all de-accessioned works.

The accession number and all information concerning a de-accessioned work are to be removed from the Collection database and the accession number not assigned to any future acquisition.

Moral, Cultural, Copyright and Legal Rights

The consideration of the moral, cultural, copy and legal rights pertaining to the donors, vendors and makers of works is an important aspect of Collection management. The Cultural Development Coordinator and nominated staff will need to be conversant with the rights of individuals, communities and organisations and possess a thorough knowledge of and sensitivity to, the access, storage, display and the context provided for works.

It is recommended that Council staff keep abreast of industry standards and issues by maintaining regular contact with professional industry bodies and attend relevant conferences, seminars and workshops eg Museums Australia and International Council of Museums. The Cultural Development Coordinator should consult Council's legal advisors where doubts about the handling of issues, as they arise.

Loans

Outward Loans

The Cultural Development Coordinator is invested with the authority to approve of outward loans from the Collection. Implementation of this policy in respect of loans will be in keeping with Council procedures.

The lending of Collection works is to be encouraged as it serves to promote the Collection and the Western Downs Regional Council.

Incoming Loans

The request for loans of material for Council exhibitions from other public institutions, corporations and private collectors are to be authorised by the Cultural Development Coordinator. Such loans are to be sought with due consideration to potential risks and any envisioned restrictions, special conditions, etc and must meet all requirements to protect Council's interests.

Maintenance of Records

The Cultural Development Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the maintenance of all records pertaining to the Western Downs Regional Council Collection. Records to be kept include:

- Documentation relating to the acquisition of items, including Western Regional Council Acquisition Forms, all donor and vendor forms, receipts from purchases and valuations, auction catalogues, Council ratification reports, etc.
- Information relating to copyright, legal, moral and cultural rights and associated forms.
- Supplementary material, including artist statements (artistic and technical) and biographies, installation instructions, photographic documentation of the work and or information regarding associated exhibitions, exhibition catalogues and invitations, references to publications where the work has been referred to or reproduced, responses from contemporary artists and the community, and any other information which may assist with future research.
- Condition reports produced by the Cultural Development Coordinator and where necessary by consultant conservators.
- The Cultural Development Coordinator is responsible for the creation and alteration of all records. Until the acquisition of an Electronic Collection Management System, all hard copy information will be maintained in the current system of filing, commonly referred to as 'artwork files' or 'artist files'.
- The location of Collection works will be monitored at all times by the Cultural Development Coordinator.

Care of the Collection

Levels of care

All works in the Collection shall be the responsibility of the Cultural Development Coordinator.

The individual Gallery Supervisor's or nominated Senior Committee Member will monitor humidity and temperature levels in Collection Store and Gallery spaces, arrange fumigation and pest eradication as required; check security systems and report irregularities.

All works in the Collection shall be handled in the same manner no matter what financial value they have been assigned. All are to be treated with great care and with attention to the various handling requirements for different materials and media according to international museum standards.

All works to be packed and shipped by Council whether from the Collection or from lenders should be accorded the best level of care possible. Works in the Collection that are deemed to be extremely fragile and transport detrimental to their existence should be prevented from travel.



Inventories

A rolling stocktake of the Collection shall be undertaken once a year and a re-evaluation of the Collection will be undertaken every five years. Records determining the location of each work in the Collection will be maintained and monitored by the Cultural Development Coordinator on an ongoing basis.

Conservation

The ongoing conservation program for the Collection and the establishment of conservation priorities are to be managed by the Cultural Development Coordinator in consultation with the Acquisition Advisory Panel. Consideration is to be given to both conservation treatment for specific works and general preventative conservation treatments that will benefit the Collection as a whole.

Access to the Collection

Unrestricted access to the Collection is restricted to the Cultural Development Coordinator, individual Gallery Supervisor's or nominated Senior Committee Member and all other staff or volunteers and external visitors operate under the supervision of the Cultural Development Coordinator, individual Gallery Supervisor's or nominated Senior Committee Member.

The Cultural Development Coordinator, individual Gallery Supervisor's, nominated Senior Committee Member or nominated staff member, will accompany external visitors at all times. The Cultural Development Coordinator, individual Gallery Supervisor's or nominated Senior Committee Member will maintain a record of visitors to the Collection that records the visitor's name and organisation and the time of their visit.

Access to Collection records

The Cultural Development Coordinator may make limited public access to collection records available on request.

The Cultural Development Coordinator will assess the merits of each application using the following criteria as a guide:

- The nature and purpose of the request.
- The need to restrict access to sensitive or private material such as donor/vendor anonymity details; purchase price; valuation details, restrictions nominated by the artist/maker or donor/vendor as part of their moral or cultural rights.

RELATED LEGISLATION:

Nil.

RELATED DOCUMENTS (LOCAL LAWS, POLICIES, DELEGATIONS ETC):

Arts and Cultural Policy

ATTACHMENTS:

Nil.

DEFINITIONS:

The **Western Downs Regional Council Collection** (WDRCC) is in its infancy hence in a unique position to develop a truly representative collection of works reflecting acquisition criteria. The Western Downs Regional Council Collection is comprised of accessioned artworks and objects of historical or social significance to the region. Nevertheless, the Collection possesses a number of strengths, which should continue to be referenced within the future objectives of the Collection.

The Collection is preserved in perpetuity for the purpose of recording and documenting the cultural and social heritage of the Western Downs Region and for the enjoyment of current and future generations.

A **work** is an artwork or object of historical or social significance, which constitutes an individual item in the Collection.



Collection development is the process of acquiring, via acquisition or donation, additional works to add to the Collection and thus increase its size, breadth and significance, or through the de-accession of works of inferior quality, raise the profile of the Collection as a whole.

REVIEW TRIGGER:

- Western Downs Regional Council Collection Policy and Procedures to be reviewed every two (2) years.
- Change in community priorities or circumstances relating to this policy.

