

VISUAL ARTS AND HERITAGE COLLECTION POLICY

VERSION NO.	1
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[Previous revision date]	NA	NA – first Visual Arts and Heritage Collection Policy

1. Purpose

This document outlines the Kingston City Council's policy for the acquisition, management, conservation, and deaccessioning of items in Council's Collections. It ensures that the Collections reflect and support the City's evolving cultural, historical and creative identity and that they are accessible, inclusive, and meaningful to the community.

The policy defines what Council collects and why and sets out the procedures for how items are acquired, cared for, accessed, and removed. It applies to:

- Council's Heritage Collection
- Council's Visual Arts Collection
- Monuments and Memorials on Council owned and managed land

It also ensures ethical and legal compliance, including alignment with protocols for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and Council's broader strategies.

2. Scope

This framework applies to all objects formally acquired into the Collections, as well as future acquisitions, through donation, purchase, commission, transfer, or other recognised means. It covers:

- Acquisition and accessioning
- Loans (inward and outward)
- Storage, documentation and conservation
- Access and display
- Deaccessioning and disposal

It excludes civic items such as mayoral robes, business records and civic plaques, which are managed under separate Council policies. This policy also excludes Public Art which is

captured under Council's Public Art Policy.

Additionally, Council has supporting Guidelines to operationalise this Policy. These Guidelines provide the framework and process to manage the Collections.

3. Governance Principles and Council & Wellbeing Plan alignment

This policy aligns with:

- Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029
- Arts and Cultural Strategy 2018–2022
- Library Strategy 2019–2030
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2022

It supports governance principles under the Local Government Act 2020, particularly the obligation to pursue outcomes for current and future generations.

3.1. Governance Principles

The relevant Governance Principle applicable to this Policy is:

Principle (b) - priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community, including future generations

This policy aligns with the Council & Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029, the City of Kingston Library Strategy 2019-2030, the Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2022 and has considered the overarching governance principles.

3.2. Council and Wellbeing Plan Alignment

Strategic Direction: Responsibly Governed

We are a transparent and efficient organisation that is accountable, responsive and cost-effective.

Strategy: Prioritise the current and future needs of the community through effective and sustainable long-term management and planning.

4. Collection Categories

4.1 Heritage Collection

Captures the history and development of Kingston across ten themes derived from the Thematic Environmental History (2022), including First Peoples, environment, European settlement, suburban development, civic life, culture and more. Items within the collection includes photographs, objects, documents, AV material and oral histories.

4.2 Visual Arts Collection

Comprises of contemporary and historic artworks that reflect Kingston's identity and features local artists, and community narratives. Development of the collection is guided by curatorial themes that are designed to foster a cohesive narrative across the collection.

4.3 Monuments and Memorials

Commemorative structures on Council or Crown land acknowledging significant people, events, and loss of life, particularly in war or conflict. Council holds custodial responsibility for the care and conservation of monuments and memorial structures.

5. Collection Management

5.1 Acquisition

Council acquires items by donation, purchase, commission, or through acquisitive prizes. Each item must meet legal, ethical, and significance criteria and align with collection themes. Priority is given to inclusive representation and interpretive value.

No conditional donations will be accepted. A conditional donation is a donation of an object or collection offered with specific terms, requirements, or restrictions set by the donor. These conditions may relate to how the item is used, displayed, stored, maintained, returned, or disposed of.

Conditional donations can limit the collecting institution's ability to manage its collection in accordance with professional standards, policies, and legal obligations. Legal ownership must be transferred via a Deed of Gift.

5.2 Assessment Criteria

Key criteria include relevance, significance, artistic integrity, provenance, condition, rarity, ethical standing, and display potential. Additional protocols apply to items of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

5.3 Approval Process

All items are required to be assessed against the acquisition criteria with advice sought from the relevant Advisory Committee, stakeholder group or consultative subject matter expert. The findings and recommendations of the assessment must be documented for consideration and approval prior to accession to the collection.

Items under \$50,000 may be approved by the Manager, Arts, Events and Libraries. Items above this threshold must go to Council for formal noting or decision. Conflict of interest procedures apply.

5.4 Documentation

All items are catalogued with detailed records on provenance, condition, location, and significance. The Arts, Events and Libraries Department manages collection documentation through a Collection Management System.

5.5 Storage and Conservation

Collection items are stored in several locations across Kingston. Storage areas must be secure, clean, pest-free and environmentally controlled. Objects are handled only by trained personnel and maintained according to conservation standards.

5.6 Loans

Council accepts only temporary loans (maximum 12 months) for research or exhibition. Permanent loans are not permitted. Loans must be documented and approved, with conditions agreed upon in writing.

5.7 Public Access

The Collections will be made accessible through physical exhibitions, online catalogues, educational programs and guided interpretation. Access design will consider inclusivity across age, gender, culture, ability and language.

6. Deaccessioning and Disposal

Deaccession may occur where an item:

- Is damaged beyond repair or unsafe
- Is no longer aligned with Council's values
- Lacks significance or documentation
- Poses ongoing conservation or cultural risk

All deaccessioning must be transparent, documented, and compliant with relevant protocols. Items may be returned to donors, transferred to institutions, sold, or destroyed. Proceeds support collection care.

Items under \$10,000 may be deaccessioned by relevant officers in consultation with experts. Items over \$10,000 must go to Council for formal noting or decision.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Heritage Specialist	Manages the Heritage Collection
Historian Librarian	Supports development, care, and records of the Heritage Collection
Visual Arts Coordinator	Manages the Visual Arts Collection
Curator and Collections Management Officer	Supports development, care, and records of the Visual Arts Collection
Head of Creative Activities	Policy manager and reviewer
Manager, Arts Events and Libraries	Policy owners and approver of acquisitions up to \$50,000 and deaccessions up to \$10,000
Councillors	Endorse high-value acquisitions (over \$50,000) and deaccessions (over \$10,000), adopt the Collections Policy, and refer all other collection matters to appropriate officers.

8. Related documents

8.1. Legislation

Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic)

Heritage Act 2017 (Vic)

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)

8.2. Documents and resources

8.2.1. City of Kingston Documents

- [Arts and Cultural Strategy](#) 2018-2022 (2018) City of Kingston
- City of Kingston Library Strategy 2019-2030
- Civic Recognition Fixtures Policy (2023)
- [Innovate Reconciliation Plan](#) (2022) City of Kingston
- Naming of Places Policy (2021)

8.2.2. Resources / External Documents

- [Australian Indigenous Visual Arts Codes and Protocols](#) (2016) NAVA
- [Code of Ethics for Museums](#) (2017) ICOM
- [Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities](#) (2005) AMaGA
- [First Peoples: A Roadmap for enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries](#) (2019) Terri Janke
- [Guidelines on Deaccessioning of the International Council of Museums](#) (2020) ICOM
- Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts (2007) Terri Jake
- [National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries V2](#) (2023) The National Standards Taskforce
- [Standards on Accessioning of the International Council of Museums](#) (2020) ICOM

9. Appendix 1. Definitions

Term	Definition
Acquisition	The acceptance, through donation, gift or purchase, of an item into a collection.
Accessioned	The act of recording the addition of a new item to a library, museum or other collection.
Collections	Kingston City Council's visual arts and heritage collections.
Contemporary	Refers to people and things from the same period or describing things that are happening now or recently.
Deaccession	To remove an object or objects from a collection.
Decommission	Refers to the formal process of removing a monument, memorial, public artwork or special item from its active status, essentially marketing its end of service in the public space.
Donation	The act of transferring ownership of an object or artwork from the donor to Council.

Term	Definition
Heritage	Heritage includes places, values, traditions, events and experiences that capture where we've come from, where we are now and gives context to where we are headed as a community.
ICOM	International Council of Museums, the international peak body for museums and galleries.
Inward Loan	The temporary bailment of an items from an external organisation or individual to Council for the purpose of research, copying, exhibition or display, where no transfer of ownership is involved.
Outward Loan	The temporary bailment of an item from Council's collection to an external organisation or individual for the purpose of research, exhibition, or display, where no transfer of ownership is involved.
Memorial	A statue or structure erected to remind people of a person or event, particularly when memorialising loss of life or property in war and conflict.
Monument	A statue, building or other structure erected to commemorate an individual or event.
Provenance	Refers to the documented history of ownership of an item from its origin or creation to its current ownership.
Public Art	Refers to Council's Public Art Collection which is governed by the Public Art Policy 2023–2028.
Significance	The values and meanings objects and collections have for people and communities.
Visual arts	The visual arts are an art form that create works that are primarily visual in nature, such as ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, designing, crafts, photography, video, filmmaking and architecture.

10. Appendix 2. Collection Development Guidelines

Heritage Collection Development

Thematic Framework (based on 2022 Thematic Environmental History):

- First Peoples
- The Environment
- European Settlement
- Connecting Kingston
- Agriculture and Industry
- Commerce and Trade
- Villages to Suburbs
- Civic Administration
- Community Life
- Leisure and Culture

These interconnected themes guide acquisition, display, and interpretation of items within the Heritage Collection.

Historical Period: The City of Kingston was formally established in 1994 but has a human history extending back at least 30,000 years. The Collection reflects all historical periods relevant to the geography and people of Kingston.

Geographic Relevance: Items must relate to the Kingston LGA or demonstrate significant relevance to its people and places.

Formats Collected: Includes objects, documents, photographs, artworks, AV material, and oral histories. All oral histories are governed by ethical guidelines and consent procedures.

Visual Arts Collection Development

The curatorial themes guiding the Visual Arts Collection are designed to foster a cohesive narrative across the collection, ensuring its relevance and resonance with the community.

Themes include:

- First Nations Culture
- Cultural Heritage (informed by the Thematic Framework of Heritage Collection)
- Cultural Diversity
- Coastal Living and Lifestyle
- Creativity and Sustainability
- Local Environment

Priority is given to artists who are local, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or reflect diverse lived experiences.

Monuments and Memorials

Monuments and memorials in Kingston reflect significant moments in local and national history, often in connection to war or civic recognition. These are managed as part of Council's cultural heritage obligations.

All works are assessed for social and historical significance, and conservation is undertaken by qualified specialists.

11. Appendix 3. Alignment with Sector Standards and Best Practice

This policy and operational framework has been developed in alignment with established national and international best practices for the care and management of collections. Council has referenced the following standards and resources:

- National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries (Version 2, 2023): Ensures Kingston's Collections meet sector-wide expectations regarding significance, documentation, preservation, public access and ethical management.
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums (2017): Provides guiding principles on acquisition, documentation, deaccession, and professional responsibility.
- Guidelines on Deaccessioning (ICOM, 2020): Shapes Kingston's deaccession procedures in line with international transparency and accountability standards.
- Protocols for using First Nations Cultural and Intellectual Property in the Arts (Terri Janke, 2007): Informs Council's culturally appropriate approach to First Nations material.
- First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries (2019): Supports best-practice engagement with Traditional Owners and reinforces respect for continuous culture.

- Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities (AMaGA, 2005): Affirms the value of partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in interpreting, managing and caring for cultural material.
- Australian Indigenous Visual Arts Codes and Protocols (NAVA, 2016): Guides the respectful commissioning and acquisition of artworks by First Nations artists.
- Victorian Government Legislation and Statutory Guidelines: Including the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Heritage Act 2017, and Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

Together, these references provide a foundation for Kingston's commitment to ethical, inclusive, and transparent collections practice, consistent with expectations of the sector and the community.