

WESTERN PLAINS CULTURAL CENTRE POLICY

DUBBO REGIONAL GALLERY, MUSEUM & COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE
APRIL 2009

Dubbo City Council is committed to the development of Dubbo as a leading regional NSW city. As its many residents and visitors will testify, Dubbo is one of the State's most vibrant and progressive regional Centres. This has evolved from the balance of commerce, tourism, sport and culture.

The role of the arts and cultural heritage in Dubbo is crucial to the development of the city into the future, and has its foundation at the Western Plains Cultural Centre (WPCC). The Centre comprises a Gallery, Museum, and community arts Centre.

The WPCC Policy aims to provide a clear, sustainable and forward-looking framework of objectives and implementation strategies which unilaterally articulate Council's commitment to the vital role of art and heritage in Dubbo, and channel the means for this to take place. The Policy will guide and form the criteria for the assessment of all artistic programs.

The Policy encompasses a broad spectrum of activities which have been grouped into three key areas:

1. Collection Management
2. Education
3. Exhibitions

The Cultural Centre Policy has a three-year duration in order for strategies to be implemented in conjunction with Council's wider long term objectives for the City. At the conclusion of the three-year period the Policy will be subject to evaluation and review by the Council in consultation with the Advisory Board representing the community.

At its core, the Western Plains Cultural Centre aims to:

1. Create an active and dynamic cultural facility for the region;
2. Create a sense of place for the region's residents, workers and visitors alike;
3. Preserve collections as a cultural legacy for future generations; and
4. Inspire its audiences through artistic programming.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure a commitment to excellence, innovation and diversity in keeping with the aesthetic and cultural significance with the dynamic and experimental nature of contemporary Gallery and Museum practice.
2. To nurture the city as a creative environment in which opportunities for artists and their role in the community can flourish and expand.
3. To recognise that Dubbo consists of a number of diverse communities and where appropriate identify and involve communities in the creative planning process to encourage civic pride.
4. To increase understanding and enjoyment of the Cultural Centre and an awareness and appreciation of the significant benefits provided by a rich and diverse artistic environment.
5. To ensure recognition that the Gallery and Museum collections are a valuable and significant cultural heritage requiring best practise management.

1.0 COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

In establishing the Western Plains Cultural Centre, Council formally recognised the gallery and museum collections as public assets of great value and cultural significance requiring museological standards of management, care and conservation to ensure this unique cultural heritage will be preserved for future generations.

2. COLLECTION THEMES

WPCC shall acquire works of art and cultural objects;

- 2.1 The Dubbo Regional Gallery will actively collect artworks related to "The Animal in Art" And/or Artworks specific to and from the Dubbo Region
- 2.2 The Dubbo Regional Museum will develop its collection specific only to objects of significance¹ to the region.

Objects within the collection/s with no significance will be reviewed and appropriately deaccessioned according to the policy.

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposed acquisitions will be evaluated in terms of their adherence to the WPCC Collection Themes. Criteria for consideration include the proposed items potential to add strength or improvement to the collection, the physical and financial resources required for its care and preservation and its cultural, aesthetic and historical significance

WPCC Shall Not Acquire Works of Art and Cultural Objects:

- Which cannot be stored, handled, displayed, or cared for safely and securely within current resources;
- Where the validity of legal ownership is in question and cannot be transferred to WPCC;
- Where the object is considered secret or sacred by Indigenous peoples and is the subject of religious or cultural sanctions.²

4. ACQUISITION COMMITTEE

An Acquisition's Committee comprised of the WPCC Collections Officer, WPCC Curator, Representative of the WPCC Advisory Board, and Representative of the Friends of WPCC Inc shall be responsible for the review of all acquisitions proposals as prepared by the Collections Officer in the context of this Collection Policy; and in accordance with the WPCC Acquisitions Committee Charter in Appendix 1.

ACQUISITION PROCESS

All acquisition proposals shall be directed to the Manager for consultation with staff.

1 Significance will be established via Significance – a Guide to Assessing the Significance of Cultural Heritage Objects and Collection, 2001, developed by the Heritage Collections Council. The Heritage Collections Council is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments in partnership with the Museum sector

2 WPCC will liaise with the Dubbo Aboriginal Community Working Party on issues regarding Indigenous protocols for the Acquisition and Deaccessioning of Indigenous objects or art works into the collection.

Acquisitions should comply with the guidelines set down by the WPCC Collection Policy, and be justified by a written Acquisition Rationale. WPCC Manager is responsible for the development of an Acquisition Proposal Document for the consideration of the Acquisitions Committee. Acquisition proposals shall include the opportunity for relevant WPCC staff to review and respond in writing before progressing to the Acquisitions Committee.

All proposals shall proceed to the Acquisition Committee for consideration. WPCC Acquisitions Committee shall make a recommendation to approve or refuse acquisitions based on their adherence to the Collection Themes and Selection Criteria

WPCC Manager will report on Acquisition's Committee decision/s to the quarterly Advisory Board meeting.

DOCS will assess all acquisitions proposals for final approval

6. GUIDELINES

- 6.1 The Gallery and Museum collections will be structured and administered in accordance with museological standards and codes of conduct.
- 6.2 The Manager / Staff of WPCC will provide advice with respect to procedures for the acquisition of works of art and artefacts for the Collection and other matters relating to the Collection Policy.
- 6.3 An Acquisition's Committee comprised of the WPCC Collections Officer, WPCC Curator, Representative of the WPCC Advisory Board, and Representative of the Friends of WPCC Inc shall be responsible for the review of all acquisitions proposals as prepared by the Collections Officer in the context of this Collection Policy; and in accordance with the WPCC Acquisitions Committee Charter in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 Acquisitions, donations and bequests falling outside of the above policy criteria may be considered, however they will need to be supported and approved by the Manager WPCC, Chair, WPCC Advisory Board and Director Community Services. Acquisitions, donations and bequests falling outside of the above policy criteria will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.5 The WPCC recognises the artist's copyright and moral rights over an object or artwork. Where appropriate WPCC will seek permission for limited and specific rights to reproduce the work/s for promotional, documentation and educational purposes only.
- 6.6 The Collection will be properly documented to enable identification, informed management decisions and the provision of information to the public.
- 6.7 Where appropriate WPCC will seek in writing limited and specific copyright permission for the right to reproduce the work/s for promotional, educational, limited merchandising or documentation purposes.

7. PURCHASES

- 7.1 If an appeal is made to raise funds for a proposed acquisition, specifications will be made in the appeal documents on how the money raised will be used if the proposed acquisition does not proceed.
- 7.1 Only the Manager and/or Staff of WPCC have the right to reserve works and/or make an offer of purchase of an artwork or museum object.
- 7.3 If grants or other outside funds, including funds raised by the Friends of WPCC Inc, are used to purchase an acquisition, the Acquisition's Committee must approve any conditions in advance as per the above procedure.

8 BEQUESTS, GIFTS AND DONATIONS

- 8.1 The WPCC is under no obligation to accept an offer of a donation, gift or bequest. All proposals must comply with the criteria outlined in this policy.
- 8.2 WPCC shall take on full legal ownership of objects bequeathed, gifted or donated.
- 8.3 Anonymous donations will not be accepted by the WPCC.
- 8.4 The WPCC reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and access to the object.

9 INWARD LOANS

- 9.1 Works of Art or Museum objects offered to the Dubbo Regional Gallery Collection or the Dubbo Regional Museum Collection on a long term inward loan basis will only be accepted on the understanding that the work will eventually be permanently donated to the Collection of WPCC. Such An agreement shall be documented before the work is accepted for loan.
- 9.2 The conditions of loans made to and by WPCC shall be set out in the Loan Agreement Documentation

10 OUTWARD LOANS

- 10.1 All long term loans from the collection/s will be reviewed every 12 months
- 10.2 Loans from the collection are only made to galleries, museum or other venues that can furnish evidence that adequate security, environmental monitoring and insurance cover will be in place for the period of the loan. If WPCC is not satisfied that these are in place it reserves the right to recall the loan.
- 10.3 The conditions of loans made to and by WPCC shall be set out in the Loan Agreement Documentation

11 DEACCESSIONING

Deaccessioning is the permanent removal of an item from the Collection. Items can be removed because:

- The Object does not fit within the themes of the collection policy.
- WPCC does not have clear legal title.
- The object has deteriorated to a point that its viability is in question and/or it poses a risk to other objects or staff.
- The object is not provenanced to this region.
- It is a poorer quality duplicate of an item already in the collection.

The process of deaccessioning is undertaken in accordance with professional standards and ethics.

- 11.6 Council Staff, Advisory Board members or their relatives can not acquire deaccessioned items unless they were the original donor
- 11.7 If items are to be deaccessioned through sale by public auction, the proposed use of funds must be documented prior to sale.
- 11.8 Works acquired by donation through the Australian Governments Cultural Gifts Program shall not be considered for deaccession for a minimum of ten years (10) following their acquisition. These Items shall not be considered for return to the donor as they have already received the benefit of a tax deduction for the donation of the object.

DEACCESSION PROCESS

WPCC Manager is responsible for instigating the deaccessioning process. Research and documentation will be undertaken prior to recommending an object or artwork for deaccessioning.

Proposals for Deaccession will only be considered after a thorough consideration of their significance, condition and value to the collection. Proposals should comply with the guidelines set down by the WPCC Collection Policy, and be justified by a written Deaccession Rationale.

All proposed deaccessions shall proceed to the Advisory Board for preliminary consideration.

All proposed Deaccessions shall undergo a 12 month 'Cooling Off' period before proceeding to the Advisory board for final consideration

Once deaccessioned the object will be disposed of in the following order;

Object is offered back to original donor

Object is offered to another collecting institution with a more appropriate collection policy

Object is used as an interpretive or educational tool. This may involve destructive analysis, provided the potential for knowledge justifies the destruction of the object

Those objects with no educative value are placed for auction. All funds raised from the Deaccession of items will be used to fund the development of the collection

Discarding, recycling the object.
Destruction will only be permitted once all reasonable efforts have been made to dispose of the item through other methods or if the item is hazardous and poses a danger to other collections or to staff.

Policy Review Date: January 2011

APPENDIX 1: Western Plains Cultural Centre (WPCC) Acquisitions Committee Charter

The WPCC Acquisitions Committee shall comprise of, people with a knowledge and or awareness of Regional, State and National art practice and/or Regional history/ Heritage:

- A nominee from the WPCC Advisory Board
- A nominee from the Friends of WPCC Inc
- Manager, WPCC
- Collections Officer, WPCC
- Curator, WPCC

The WPCC Acquisitions Committee shall:

1. Meet in person where possible as required to review acquisition proposals. Collections Officer, WPCC will convene the meeting.
2. If not possible to meet in person, reviewing of acquisition proposals to be conducted by email, telephone and fax.
3. All proposed Acquisitions must be reviewed by all members of the committee. If a member of the committee is unable to participate, through unavailability or potential conflict of interest, they must nominate (in writing) a suitable replacement. The alternate delegate for each representative to be nominated and recorded at the Annual General Meeting of the WPCC Advisory Board.
4. Review the Collection Policy as it relates to Acquisitions and develop policy change recommendations as required.
5. Review all acquisition proposals as prepared by the Collections Officer in the context of the Dubbo Regional Gallery Collection Theme, the Dubbo Regional Museum Theme and the WPCC Collection Policy;

6. Make recommendation to support or reject acquisitions in light of its adherence to the Collection Policy and Themes;
7. The Collection's Officer to report on recommendations to Manager, WPCC and WPCC Advisory Board,
8. All Acquisitions proposals must be completed by the Collections Officer, WPCC
9. Responsibility of Collections Officer, WPCC to record all discussions and to report on these discussions to the Advisory Board at their quarterly meeting.
10. Respond and communicate in an efficient and timely manner at all times.

Version 2: April 2009

2.0 EDUCATION POLICY

The Cultural Centre is committed to the making, experience and understanding of art and heritage, specific to its relevance to contemporary society. The Centre acknowledges education as fundamental to its operations and activities, as the central ingredient to add value to the visitor experience.

The Cultural Centre will develop a range of strategies to:

- Recognise national developments in visual art and history education;
- Collaborate with professional educational associations and institutions; and cultural organisations;
- Provide a continuous program of education services for the general public and education groups; and
- Develop the Gallery and Museum Guides to maximise opportunities presented.

2.1.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation Strategies

Subject to available funding, a range of programs will be implemented that relate specifically to:

Professional development

- To service needs of arts/Museum workers in the region through:
 - Practical workshops
 - Master classes
 - Lectures – formal and informal
 - Artist talks
 - Business related projects

Leisure learning

- To service general visitors to the Centre by adding value to their experience through
 - Practical workshops
 - Lectures – formal and informal
 - Events

Educational institutions

- To service needs of the educational sector in:
 - Developing specific projects / exhibitions
 - Providing guided tours and support material

Exhibitions

- An information sheet and / or didactic panel providing an overview for all exhibitions at a minimum
- Develop an education kit for students at primary and secondary level for specific and appropriate exhibitions

Projects

- Produce and distribute a range of brochures and publications.

3.0 EXHIBITIONS POLICY

The fundamental role of the Western Plains Cultural Centre is to provide access to quality exhibition and cultural material. The artistic programs are developed and implemented to allow access to visual and cultural material that exposes the methods and meaning of artistic practice and the issues of cultural identity and/or place. The core objectives are as follows:

To provide a quality experience for the Dubbo regional community and its visitors through a regularly changing program of outstanding visual arts, crafts, design and Museum exhibitions of state, national and international prominence that contain either historical or contemporary content, and has cultural or regional significance.

To provide a program that will stimulate and promote local and regional cultural awareness, be both broad and responsive, and aim to cater for the needs and interests of all age groups, gender and cultural backgrounds.

To foster and support talented, emerging and professional artists from the region through exhibitions, and encourage innovative contemporary arts practice in all its forms through developing and showing solo or retrospective exhibitions of the highest standards in concepts, style and technique.

To develop a regular changing program for children that stimulates, informs, and nurtures appreciation for the visual arts.

The exhibition program will aim to support the Gallery's Permanent Collection by periodically mounting thematic group exhibitions based on the 'Animal in Art' theme, and support the Museum's Permanent Collection through the development of an exhibition program that reflects this region and its history.

3.1.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Centre will house a minimum of six separate exhibition halls related to one or more of the objectives above.

3.1.1 GALLERY

Regional Art Space

To support and foster talented and emerging artists from Regional Australia through a regular changing (8-9 weeks) exhibition program.

- Exhibitions by proposal open to all artists outside a metropolitan area;
- Exhibitions selected by a pre determined curatorial panel;
- Exhibitions will cover a range of art practices, themes and concepts; and
- Group or solo exhibitions shown.

Children's Gallery

To provide a regularly changing (12-16 weeks) program for children that is stimulating and informative. These exhibitions will nurture appreciation for all aspects of the visual arts, adopting a hands-on interactive approach, including but not limited to:

- Children's book illustration exhibitions;
- Focus exhibitions that contain either historical or contemporary content; and
- Exhibitions that cover a range of art practices, themes and concepts.

Focus/ Project Gallery

Smaller exhibitions with a quarterly turnover that stimulates and promotes local and regional cultural awareness including but not limited to:

- Local and interstate exhibitions;
- Solo exhibitions – local, regional and interstate artists;

- Focus exhibitions, including a variety of art practices, themes and concepts as well as new media & video works;
- Curated project exhibitions, including local, regional and interstate;
- Thematic group exhibitions, including community developed shows; and
- Selected survey exhibitions.

Main Gallery

- Major exhibitions which cater for a broad audience base, turning over 6-8 weeks including but not limited to:
- National, State and International touring exhibitions (at least 3 per year)
- Large scale theme based exhibition relevant to this region (at least 1 per year)
- Large scale in-house curated exhibitions (at least 1 per year)
- Exhibitions that support the 'Animal in Art' theme.

3.1.2 MUSEUM

Museum Focus Gallery

To show exhibitions that stimulate and promote local and regional cultural awareness, and reflect our social history, including but not limited to:

- Local and regional documented history exhibitions that reflect our multicultural society, with preference to exhibitions that address local Indigenous history;
- Touring social history exhibitions;
- Focus exhibitions developed around items held in the permanent collection;
- Curated project exhibitions that reflect local Indigenous and non Indigenous history; and
- Thematic group exhibitions.
- Exhibition period 12 – 16 weeks.

People, Places and Possessions: Dubbo Stories

A seven year exhibition based on the Museum Permanent Collection that:

- Tells the story of the region
- Creates a sense of place for the region
- Creates stories of the objects through people's stories
- Is a living Museum reflecting contemporary social history
- Is accessible for a general audience

3.1.2 FOYER DISPLAY CASES

The primary function of these spaces is showcase works from regional artists and regional arts groups for a three month period. Works will primarily be object based and will reflect the diversity of art practice within the region.