



CONTEXT

The Wollongong Art Gallery (WAG) art collection includes Australian First Nation art, Early Australian art, Contemporary Australian art and Asian art, ceramics and objects. The collection acquisition and development functions are outlined in the Wollongong Art Gallery Acquisition and Collection Management Policy (Parent Policy). This Wollongong Art Gallery Acquisition, Collection Conservation and Maintenance Procedures document (Procedures) sets out the steps WAG will follow and factors it will consider when developing, caring for, documenting and making accessible, the works in its collection and care.

These Procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Parent Policy.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

1. Authority

Wollongong City Council has established the Policy, an annual budget for developing the WAG art collection and a separate budget for maintaining and preserving the collection asset. The Policy and associated budgets have been established by Wollongong City Council to provide protocols, procedures, instructions and responsibilities on the development, maintenance and preservation of the WAG art collection and art related assets.

The WAG Program Director is responsible for monitoring and reviewing all aspects of WAG's collection development and management processes and for making recommendations to Council management in this regard.

2. Objective

The objectives of the Policy and Procedures documents are to ensure that WAG:

- develops the art collection using specialist knowledge and in line with the collection priority areas outlined in the Policy.
- manages and safeguards the collection while ensuring its accessibility for present and future generations.
- maintains its standing and reputation for integrity and excellence with the public, museum and gallery sector.

These objectives are to be achieved by ensuring that WAG:

- applies sound collection development principles as practiced within the art gallery sector and outlined in the Policy.
- applies the principles of risk mitigation and management in caring for its collection and making it accessible to the public.
- demonstrates and contributes to research to inform industry best practice in the care and management of its collection and works in its care.
- avoids any act or omission that compromises WAG's position and reputation for integrity in public administration.

3. Application

The Policy and Procedures documents apply to all activities relating to the development, management and care of the collection and works of art in WAG's custody.

4. Principles

WAG will develop its collection with the objective of acquiring works of merit within the four collection focus areas outlined in the Policy and manage its collection in a manner that balances the long term preservation and integrity of individual works and the collection, while providing accessibility for the community. This approach reflects the principal objectives, defined in the Policy.

WAG will ensure the collection and works in its care are managed on terms that are ethical, sustainable and visible to public scrutiny and will maintain WAG's standing and reputation for excellence by the general public and in the museum and gallery sector nationally.

WAG will not acquire or exhibit an object in breach of Indigenous spiritual and cultural sanctions, which can be attached to certain objects in Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or other Indigenous people's cultures.

WAG is committed to facilitating and supporting a sound understanding of collection development and management principles among those who work with and around artworks. WAG recognises this as a fundamental strategy in managing risks to the collection. WAG and its staff will be informed by its collection and contribute to contemporary research and thinking about collection management.

5. Acquisition

WAG will develop the collection in line with the principles set out in the Policy. Criteria for the acquisition of artworks will include the following considerations:

- Works of art in good condition will be given priority for acquisition.
- Works will only be acquired across the four recognised collecting areas as identified in the Policy.
- Works acquired through purchase, gift - either as donation or through the Cultural Gift Program – must be formally recommended by the WAG Program Director in consultation with professional gallery staff and recommendations sent for procurement approval to the appropriately delegated Council officer.
- The provenance of any works, whether purchased or donated, must be fully established to ensure the vendor/donor is legally entitled to convey full title of the works to WAG and that there are no constraints applied by the vendor/donor which would affect the management and use of the object.
- To mitigate against risk or fraud, the provenance of any works, whether purchased or donated, must be fully established. This will ensure the authenticity of the artwork and that the vendor/donor is legally entitled to convey full title of the works to WAG and that there are no constraints applied by the vendor/donor which would affect the management and use of the object.
- All new acquisitions are required to be accessioned into the WAG collection catalogue and added and recorded in the Council asset register within the year of acquisition. A bi-annual valuation process by an approved third party valuer is undertaken through Council's Insurance and Risk business unit to ensure the collection asset register and valuation are current.
- There may be instances where WAG chooses to make important acquisitions outside the guidelines of the Policy, under the recommendation of the Program Director. For example when opportunities arise which represent exceptional value or are unlikely to be repeated. Any opportunity to acquire an important work of art will be given full consideration and assessed in the context of WAG's long term aim to maintain its status as the custodian of one of the finest regional art collections. This will include a prompt response from the relevant delegated Council Officer/s.
- Where items are available for accession in circumstances that are exceptional to the Policy, the nature of these circumstances and the rationale for divergence from the Policy will be fully assessed and documented (including the final decision).

Purchasing

Works may be acquired within Council's annual budget allocation for acquisition.

- At the time of acquisition, the costs associated with valuation, conservation, preparation, presentation and storage will be estimated and considered as part of the cost of acquiring the work.
- The nature of the arts sector is such that purchase of artworks may on occasion require expedient response to ensure WAG is in a position to acquire rare or important works of art within the time frames that they are available. Council systems and processes will support the expedition of purchase in these circumstances.

Gifts and Donations

Gifts and bequests must meet the guidelines for procurement and be formally recommended by the WAG Program Director in consultation with professional staff.

- WAG will be attentive to regulations and procedures of the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts and Cultural Bequests Program when considering any gift proposed through this scheme.
- Conditional gifts should be discouraged and, other than in exceptional circumstances, donors of works of art relinquish all rights to the object.
- Art works offered for donation may be declined on the basis of such considerations as conservation and storage when appraised in the light of the resources available to WAG.

Loan Items

- Works accepted on loan should never be deemed part of the permanent collection but should be maintained and insured as all works in the collection. Works on loan should not be lent to other institutions or individuals without the written consent of the owner of the work.
- Works may be accepted on short term loan at the Program Director's discretion where they provide benefit to the exhibition program and related special projects.

6. Deaccession

WAG will only deaccession Art Works if it is established that the Art Work:

- is inconsistent with the Policy
- has no clear legal and equitable title
- has been lost or stolen
- has its authenticity proven to be in question
- is damaged or suffered serious deterioration in condition
- is an obvious duplication or repetition of an Art Work already in the collection.

The WAG Program Director, in consultation with professional staff, can make recommendations for the deaccession of work to the relevant delegated Council Officer/s for approval.

Deaccession of artworks must comply with Council's asset disposal procedures and protocols. All collection artworks acquired through the Australian Taxation Office Cultural Gifts Program must comply with ATO requirements and work acquired through this program must NOT be returned to the donor or the donor's next of kin when deaccessioning.

7. Conflicts of interest

All Council staff are required to declare any conflict between their private interests and their public duty as officers of Council. Council's Code of Conduct will be followed in identifying and managing conflicts of interest.

In acquiring and exhibiting works, the interests of WAG will be the sole consideration. At all times Council and WAG staff shall ensure that they do not place themselves in a situation involving conflict

of interest with WAG and are to declare any conflict of interest prior to deliberations on the acquisition of artworks.

WAG will not purchase or accept donations from current fulltime WAG or Council staff whether they are the author of the work, without first obtaining an independent valuation of the work and ratification from a responsible delegated Council Officer and in line with Council's Code of Conduct.

WAG officers purchasing work for their own private collections must ensure their interests do not conflict with the interests of WAG or the collection in the process of acquisition.

8. Education and advocacy

WAG will ensure staff have appropriate training in and understanding of, collection acquisition and management principles to ensure the effective stewardship of the collection.

WAG is committed to fostering and promoting expertise in the following areas:

- Principles and practices of meritorious collection development
- Principles and practices of preventive conservation
- Documentation and management procedures associated with relevant collection areas
- Cataloguing procedures
- Use of the collection management system
- Caring for all items in the collection, including currently known and later invented media
- Digital collection management, conservation and storage.

WAG encourages its staff to actively engage and participate in current research, analysis and debate regarding industry standards and practices for collection management.

WAG will advocate for the development and care of the collection and works in its custody by ensuring professional collection management and conservation expertise and advice is available to staff. WAG is also committed to advocating for the care of art and cultural heritage through the provision of training and education for artists, students, other gallery professionals and the public. WAG will promote the value of conservation and collection care, including preventive conservation, documentation, interpretation of artworks and artistic practice. Training and education are provided in multiple ways, including, but not limited to, talks, lectures, internships, tours, workshops, information on WAG's website, academic contributions and through other publications or forums as appropriate.

9. Caring for the Collection

While the care of artworks and cultural heritage is paramount, current best practice in collection care seeks to reconcile the desirability of long term preservation of collections with the need to reduce energy use and the carbon footprint of museums. In this context, sustainability should be taken into consideration when making decisions associated with caring for the collection.

10. Preventive conservation

WAG is committed to the practice of preventive conservation to proactively mitigate and manage the risks of deterioration to objects in its collection and care. To achieve this, WAG employs several core strategies regarding the condition assessment, storage, handling, packing and transportation, display and security of items. In addition, WAG will ensure the management of the gallery facility in accordance with sound and sustainable environmental controls and the development and implementation of disaster and emergency planning and response strategies.

WAG recognises that some collection works may not be able to be preserved for the long term due to the artist's intention, or the inherent nature or material composition of the items. WAG recognises and is committed to upholding artists' moral rights and the management, documentation and conservation strategies employed in relation to such works, will be considered on a case by case basis.

11. Environmental control

Environmental conditions are managed in accordance with best practice standards that address the need to reconcile the desirability of long term preservation of the collection with the need to reduce energy use and WAG's carbon footprint. This is undertaken to reduce the risk of damage to works in WAG's custody through fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity and through the introduction of pollutants. WAG will ensure its approach to managing environmental controls is informed by current best practice and standards as best as possible within the limitations set by the current WAG building. In accordance with its commitment to education and advocacy, WAG will ensure it remains informed of and actively contributes to current investigation, analysis and debate regarding optimal and sustainable conditions for the preservation of the art collection.

12. Installation and de-installation of works

WAG will ensure that the installation and de-installation of artworks is planned, scheduled and coordinated in order to identify and manage risks to both people and works and to ensure the sustainable use of resources. WAG will also ensure that works are only handled by appropriately trained and experienced people under appropriate supervision.

13. Display

In the design and implementation of display techniques, WAG will take into consideration the safety of the work and the public, the artist's display requirements and the audience's experience of the work. Where relevant, the artist/s or artist/s representative will be consulted to ensure the accurate display of their work. Display methods will reflect current industry standards in exhibition design, conservation and materials research.

14. Storage

WAG will maintain physical and digital collection storage. Physical collection storage areas will be maintained in accordance with sound and considered environmental control standards, utilising appropriate storage materials, furniture, systems and supports, storage layout, cleaning and maintenance schedules and traffic management practices to minimise risks to the collection and works in WAG's care.

Digital artworks are currently stored on storage media and/or Council's network storage. WAG has a commitment to work towards industry best practice through the establishment of a trusted digital repository.

15. Object handling

WAG will manage risks by ensuring considered planning of all artwork movements and the exercise of minimal and careful handling using appropriate equipment and techniques suitable to each material. WAG will use and authorise qualified and experienced handling staff and contractors in the handling of its collection and works in its care. Handling methods are reviewed and improved in accordance with industry standards, research, and technology developments.

16. Packing and transport

WAG will employ appropriate methods and materials in the packing and transport of works in its collection and care, including safe and secure digital movements of collection. WAG will also utilise appropriately qualified and experienced staff, contractors and carriers for the packing and transportation of works.

17. Conservation treatment

Conservation treatment of artworks is undertaken in accordance with the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) Code of Ethics and Code of Practice and will reflect WAG's respect for the artistic, physical, historic, aesthetic and cultural integrity of the object. Specialist conservators will be engaged to ensure the safety and maintenance of collection works as required.

18. Access

WAG will ensure that gallery spaces are controlled and managed in accordance with the principles of preventive conservation, risk management and security and will provide access to physical and digital storage. Staff, contractors, suppliers and any other parties working with and around artworks and other collection materials, or needing access to physical and digital collection storage, will be appropriately inducted, trained and/or supervised to minimise risks to the collection and other objects in WAG's care.

WAG facilitates access to the collection and other objects in its care for public engagement and for research through a range of programs, services and facilities, including:

- Display: Public exhibition of works of art, including incoming loans, through display in WAG's collection exhibitions, temporary exhibitions, touring exhibitions and any permanent displays.
- Outgoing loan: WAG maintains an active outgoing loan program, facilitating public access to the collection through displays at other venues.

19. Viewing works not on display

Members of the public, students, researchers, colleagues at other institutions, freelance curators and artists may request to view works in storage. WAG will only provide public and other access to collection works in storage on a case by case basis, considering ease of access and potential risks to the artwork or members of the public that may arise from the nature of the access conditions.

Digital access to the collection is facilitated through publishing in digital formats, including information and images of the collection on WAG's website. Digital access requests to view collection items will be considered on a case by case basis under the direction of the Program Director or curatorial staff.

WAG will not permit public or staff access to First Nation art and other materials, including access to images or digital media, in instances where it is not culturally appropriate or respectful to do so. Restricted objects can be accessed by WAG staff for work related requirements without prior consultation.

20. Collection Management System (CMS)

WAG utilises VERNON CMS an industry standard CMS to manage and maintain documentation. Documentation includes:

- cataloguing of artworks in the collection
- documentation relating to the transfer of possession and ownership, acquisition and accession, incoming and outgoing loans, collection valuation and insurance and location and inventory control and location history
- exhibition related records
- conservation, condition and treatment reports and associated analytical and research documentation and reports
- installation and handling instruction
- design schematics and instructions relating to the reproduction of specific works in the collection
- copyright licensing and other restrictions or controls
- associated files, images and references
- digital images, including identification, conservation or treatment and installation images
- video and audio relating to conservation, installation and artist interviews.

Information is entered and maintained in accordance with established procedures. The CMS is structured and managed to facilitate broad access to knowledge and research on works in WAG's collection and care, while ensuring respect for and compliance with security, risk management and confidentiality and privacy considerations.

21. Artwork identification

WAG will apply appropriate registration and collection management standards to ensure works of art in its care are able to be identified. Artworks and the data supporting or associated with them will be assigned a unique identifier. To facilitate the association between the knowledge of a work and the material object, digital object or its carrier, artworks and associated accessory components will be tagged, labelled, accession marked or otherwise identified and WAG will consider research and technology to improve the efficacy and efficiency of identification methods.

22. Photographic, video and audio documentation

WAG compiles documentation of artworks through photography, video and audio recording, including all new acquisitions and artworks in the existing collection. WAG also maintains photographic, video and audio documentation of selected exhibitions. This documentation includes installation views and photographic, video and audio documentation of artwork condition and conservation treatments. WAG also produces interpretive video, audio and software-based content that supports selected artworks in the collection and exhibitions.

23. Supporting materials

In addition to documentation on the VERNON CMS and the record keeping requirements of the Policy and Procedures documents, staff will maintain files, including primary research materials and other associated or supporting original documentation and materials. Files are maintained in accordance with established protocols and procedures.

24. Risk management

WAG is committed to undertaking strategies to identify, assess and manage risks to works in its collection and care. In addition to preventive conservation strategies, WAG will adopt a strategic and considered approach to managing risks in a sustainable, responsible and publicly accountable manner. An annual conservation budget of \$50K is allocated for preventative conservation, maintenance and repair. This budget is not available for out of schedule extraordinary occurrences or events such as damage caused by serious water ingress and flooding, as well as severe mould outbreaks and infestation, but rather for the ongoing maintenance and management of the collection.

25. Incident reporting and disaster response and recovery

WAG's Disaster Response and Recovery Plan provides a framework for the management of incidents affecting WAG's premises, services or holdings to achieve a response that is prompt, coordinated, targeted and effective.

Staff and volunteers are trained and required to report all incidents and risks to the collection and works of art in WAG's care promptly in accordance with established procedures and the Disaster Response and Recovery Plan. Prompt reporting contributes to WAG's ability to mitigate and appropriately address incidents and risk.

26. Display techniques

In accordance with preventive conservation principles display techniques and strategies are developed through the consultative exhibition development processes. Display techniques and approaches are informed by exhibition design, curatorial and conservation considerations and through consultation with artists and lenders.

27. Location control and inventory

The accurate location control and inventory of works of art is maintained through the implementation and monitoring of sound physical movements, procedures and protocols maintained in VERNON CMS.

To contribute to the accessibility of the collection, inventories of the collection are conducted on a cyclical basis. The inventory process enables WAG to ascertain and address the reliability and accuracy of location information and systems.

28. Insurance

The collection is indemnified against loss and damage to property by Wollongong City Council's Self-Insurance process. The collection is indemnified while in situ or in transit. This insurance also covers identified artworks on loan or in the custody of WAG.

Unless a lender elects to maintain their own insurance coverage, or does not accept the provided insurance cover, WAG will indemnify incoming loans for loss and damage through Council's insurance process for an amount agreed with the lender.

A bi-annual valuation process by an approved third party valuer is undertaken through Council's Risk and Insurance team to ensure the collection asset register and valuation are current.

29. Couriers and art transportation

WAG may elect to use couriers to oversee the transit and handling of artworks at both pickup and delivery points.

In determining requirements for and selection of a courier, WAG will consider:

- the value of individual objects and the overall consignment(s)
- the significance and fragility of the object/s
- any specific handling requirements
- complex works requiring specialist skills and oversite
- available staffing and contractor arrangements at the borrowing venue/s
- the number of objects comprising the consignment/s
- transport and other security arrangements in place.

The courier may be a WAG employee, or another person approved by WAG. Couriers will be appropriately qualified and experienced in art handling and transport procedures.

30. Hazardous materials

WAG will actively manage risks posed by a work of art in the collection or in WAG's care, that is suspected or confirmed to contain materials hazardous to other works, staff or members of the public. The presence of materials that pose a significant hazard will be a consideration in the acceptance of proposed acquisitions and incoming loans and may be a consideration in the deaccessioning and disposal of works from the collection.

31. Record keeping

In accordance with ECM record keeping and established procedures, staff will maintain records (paper based and digitised) related to the management of the artworks and archives in WAG's collection and care, including relevant documentation and supporting materials, decision making, evidence of risk management strategies employed and all relevant incident and condition reporting.

32. Internal audit and review cycle

The WAG Program Director will ensure that compliance with this policy is assessed as part of WAG's audit program. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with Council's Risk and Compliance's audit program.

33. Staff obligations

WAG staff involved in collection management activities are bound by Council's Code of Conduct and other relevant Council policies.

34. Copyright

Copyright protects artwork images from being copied or used in particular ways without the copyright owner's permission. WAG acknowledges that copyright of work in the art collection is held by the artist and/or the estate of the artist where the artist is deceased. Licence for use of images of collection artworks are done after negotiation and agreement with the artist, a relevant copyright agency or the artist's estate.

Where certain works are out of copyright and/or copyright is unknown WAG can use images of such works in a fair use manner for promotional and other activities.

35. Delegations and WAG staff

The WAG Program Director and appropriately delegated Council Officers are responsible for ensuring that the processes and documentation relating to the collection conform to all Council policies and that WAG staff understand and comply with the policies.

36. Functions and events

WAG will ensure staff and contractors involved in functions and events are aware of the risks to artworks that may arise during an event and trained in appropriately mitigating such risks. In consultation with appropriate collection management staff, sound planning and risk management and response strategies will be employed for all events and functions at WAG.

37. Exhibition lighting

Lighting levels for viewing and display require a balance between the best visibility of works and minimising risk through light damage which may cause colour change, fading and the embrittlement of media and supports. WAG will remain informed about contemporary conservation research and standards regarding light exposure and ensure decisions about lighting incorporate consideration of the immediate display requirements and the long term preservation and viability of the work. WAG has established LED display lighting in all its gallery spaces to mitigate ongoing damage from light and heat.

38. Integrated pest management

Utilising a holistic approach to mitigating risks, removing pests when identified and addressing the cause or point of ingress, WAG employs a Pest Management Procedure through scheduled pest management services aimed at reducing the possibility of pest presence in all areas in which artworks and archives are housed, stored or displayed.

In accordance with its commitment to integrated pest management WAG will employ sustainable pest management practices, including the use of non-toxic fumigation techniques wherever practicable.

39. Research

Research related to collection management is undertaken in areas that significantly contribute to the custodianship of the collection and works in WAG's care include:

- technical art history
- conservation materials and treatments
- conservation ethics and philosophy
- preventive conservation
- new approaches to collection management and conservation
- legal and ethical issues in the management of the collection
- risk identification, management and mitigation.

40. Review

These Procedures will be reviewed every two years or in line with the review of the parent policy (where applicable) and at other times as required. Changes to the Procedure that are consistent with the parent policy can be approved by the Manager Governance and Customer Service.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Community Cultural and Economic Development
Date adopted	28 September 2023
Date of previous adoptions	NA
Date of next review	28 September 2026
Responsible Manager	City Culture + Activation Manager
Parent Policy	Wollongong Art Gallery Acquisition and Collection