

# Shoalhaven City Council Art Collection – Acquisition and Collection Management

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## 1. Purpose

The aim of this Policy is to establish administrative guidelines for a purposeful, consistent approach to acquisition of works and management of the Shoalhaven City Art Collection.

## 2. Statement

The title shall be the “Shoalhaven City Art Collection – Acquisition and Collection Management Policy” and will be owned and managed by Shoalhaven City Council.

The Shoalhaven City Art Collection has been established to:

- Collect contemporary and historical works of visual art of demonstrable excellence by artists of significance with an emphasis on Australian artists and artists who have a connection to the Shoalhaven.
- Enrich, educate and inform the community of Shoalhaven City and its visitors in quality visual arts practice in Australia,
- Stimulate awareness and appreciation of the visual arts
- Strengthen an historical, social and locally relevant visual arts resource
- Establish a valuable collection of Regional significance and National interest

### 2.1. Scope

The Policy for acquiring art is to further develop the present strengths of the Collection, especially by seeking works that are of local, national and international significance. All artworks selected, acquired or commissioned by Council will contribute towards the development of a unique and distinctive collection and will give priority to acquiring works of art that satisfy one or more of the following scoping statements:

- 2.1.1. Relate to the Shoalhaven region, by Australian artists, particularly those who have a proven record of practice and development of their art form and who are represented in public collections or who have received recognition through awards and prizes
- 2.1.2. Build upon strengths and fill gaps in the current holdings of the Shoalhaven City Art Collection, as well as develop the representation of artists already held, in order to create a comprehensive, though specifically oriented, collection.
- 2.1.3. Artworks by local Indigenous artists, particularly those who have proven development and commitment to their art form or represent a significant group or time
- 2.1.4. To consider exceptions where the works are significant and relate to the current policy

### 2.2. Background

The Art Collection of Shoalhaven City Council has been gradually acquired over many years . The Shoalhaven Arts Board, after its inauguration in 1998, created Guidelines and a single Policy to inform acquisition. With the establishment of the Shoalhaven City Arts Centre in 2004, the Policy was amended to recognise the significant loans and donations added to the organisations collection.

In early 2008, Shoalhaven City Council’s Art Collection was divided into two (2) separate Collections to distinguish between a primary Collection with works of significance titled “The

Shoalhaven Regional Gallery Collection” and a secondary Collection with works of significance titled “The City Collection” which included gifts to the City of lesser artistic, historic or monetary value (as identified at the time of the audit).

The collection was brought back together in 2014 as the ‘Shoalhaven City Art Collection’ and following the purchase of Vernon Collection management system in 2016, the Collection is documented and available through the online collection platform on the Regional Gallery website.

Collecting activities are often cost prohibitive, however, the Collection does not seek to cover a complete range of art. Following an audit of both Collections conducted by external art consultants in 2012/13, the objective to define the focus of the Collection has led to the merger of both Collections and determined six (6) primary collecting areas:

1. Australian Landscape
2. War and Peacekeeping
3. Australian Contemporary
4. Indigenous
5. Secular and Religious
6. Ceramics

### 3. Provisions

#### 3.1. General

- 3.1.1. The Collection is managed by Council’s Manager – Arts and Culture.
- 3.1.2. Council will contribute an annual budget allocation for adequate maintenance and acquisition of new works in the Shoalhaven City Art Collection. Unexpended annual funding will be accumulated in a suspense reserve to form a growing resource.
- 3.1.3. All works shall be placed on a database and insured in accordance with Council’s asset management plans and catalogued with details including title, image, size, and medium, artist, and provenance, date of acquisition, acquisition status, value, location and description.
- 3.1.4. The services of professionals in the field will be obtained for conservation, valuation, restoration and museum standard pest treatment.
- 3.1.5. “The Shoalhaven City Art Collection” will be stored at the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery, Nowra or as permanent exhibition throughout Council’s City Administrative Centre, Nowra, or in a separate suitable location as deemed necessary.
- 3.1.6. Acquisition of artworks will be directed by this Policy and the following considerations:
  - The artwork’s current and future relevance to the Collection
  - Local significance
  - Significance of the artist
  - Historical and/or cultural value
  - Cost and/or value for money
  - Available funding
  - Advantageous opportunities

- Current and future conservation and storage needs against the resources available for the Collection.

3.1.7. Vendors / Donors will be informed that conditions or constraints applied to the donation which would affect the management and use of the object will not be accepted as part of the donation or bequest and that the artwork/s becomes the property of Shoalhaven City Council and subject to its prevailing Policy.

3.1.8. Council will ensure that the provenance of any works, whether purchased or donated, is fully established and that the vendor/donor is legally entitled to convey full title of the works to the Shoalhaven City Art Collection.

### **3.2. Gifts and Donations**

3.2.1. Artworks can be accepted into the Collection in the form of donations and bequests. The works must correspond with the details of the Collection Policy as part of acquisition procedure.

3.2.2. With consideration to insurance and risk requirements, artworks may be temporarily accepted by Council for the purposes of consideration of a donation or purchase, formal assessment of a work or to seek valuation of a work prior to acquisition.

3.2.3. The Shoalhaven Arts Board will accept donations and bequests under the Cultural Gifts Program which fulfil the requirement of the Collection Policy.

3.2.4. Objects outside the scope of this Policy and gifted to Council through national and international relations will be registered as Council assets in place of being accessioned.

3.2.5. On rare occasion, when a unique bequest, which falls beyond the general guidelines is offered, the Shoalhaven Arts Board may deliberate over the acceptance of such a bequest and its capacity to honour any stated provenance. In this event, the Shoalhaven Arts Board will make a special recommendation to be ratified by Council.

3.2.6. Donations of money, grants or art works will be receipted within the convention and standards of the Australian Taxation Act.

### **3.3. Loan Items**

3.3.1. Council's formal Artwork Loan Agreement is to clearly and contractually specify the conditions of any loan to or from the Collection and to be signed by relevant parties. The Agreement outlines detail relating to the term of loan, ownership, responsibilities, conservation, security, maintenance, insurance and date of return.

3.3.2. Items offered for loan are subject to the selection criteria and procedure contained in this Policy and do not warrant automatic inclusion into the Collection.

3.3.3. No loan of artworks will be accepted into Council's custody until such time as the matter has been formally considered and resolved by the Shoalhaven Arts Board to accept the works. Works accepted on loan will be maintained, insured and administered as collection items, however, Council does not own the items. Any valuation of the Art Collection should delineate between the value of the Collection owned as distinct from the value of the Collection administered. Works on loan for specific exhibition purposes are not included in this clause.

3.3.4. Works on loan should not be lent to other institutions or individuals without the written consent of the owner of the work.

3.3.5. Requests for loans of works from the Shoalhaven City Art Collection by other institutions for the purposes of exhibitions, research or other short-term projects are

to be considered and approved / rejected by the Manager – Arts and Culture. The request, decision and rationale are to be reported to the Arts Board at the next available meeting.

### **3.4. Conflict of Interest**

- 3.4.1. Acquisition of works for the Shoalhaven City Art Collection will be in accordance with this Policy. At all times, Council and Shoalhaven Arts Board members are to declare any conflict of interest prior to deliberations on the acquisition of artworks.
- 3.4.2. Purchase or acceptance of donations from current full-time Council officers or Shoalhaven Arts Board members will not ensue without first obtaining an independent valuation of the work and ratification from the responsible delegated Council authority.

## **4. Procedures**

### **4.1. Selection Procedure**

- 4.1.1. All proposed acquisitions, whether by purchase, gift, exchange or loan will be appraised by an Acquisition Sub-Committee comprising:
  - A Councillor member as nominated by Council
  - Manager – Arts and Culture, Shoalhaven City Council
  - Two Shoalhaven Arts Board representatives (one with visual arts background) as nominated by the Board and
  - An invited/co-opted member of the arts community who possesses knowledge of Australian Art
- 4.1.2. Acquisition appraisals will be consistent with this Policy.
- 4.1.3. Works not accepted into the Shoalhaven City Art Collection may be considered for inclusion and registration as a Council asset without being accessioned as part of the Collection.
- 4.1.4. The Sub-committee may present the opportunity for specialist outside expert comment on proposed acquisitions.
- 4.1.5. All proposals and recommendations shall be in a written report and will include details of:
  - The artist's name
  - Residential status
  - The title and image of the work
  - Date of execution
  - Medium and size
  - Method of acquisition
  - The vendor or donor
  - The provenance of the work
  - Price, valuation or insurance value if a gift or a loan
  - Current condition

as well as a statement setting out the reasons for acquisition, its place in the collection and its merit as a work of art in its own right.

- 4.1.6. The Manager – Arts and Culture, on the advice of the Arts Acquisition Sub-Committee, will present a recommendation to the Shoalhaven Arts Board for its consideration and adoption
- 4.1.7. Acknowledging that some artwork is sacred and restricted, only works intended for public display or approved for display in consultation with appropriate representatives and communities will be considered for acquisition.
- 4.1.8. No acquisition will be made which compromises or jeopardises the financial viability of the Collection budget.
- 4.1.9. The Shoalhaven Arts Board will not accept any work which bears any unreasonable or inappropriate restrictions on its display, storage, maintenance and provenance.
- 4.1.10. The Board will be mindful of Australian or international laws or covenants that restrict or govern the acquisition of cultural material.

#### **4.2. Accession**

- 4.2.1. Newly acquired works are to be registered in the Collection Management System on receipt by the Shoalhaven Regional Gallery. Registration and catalogue data include:
  - Issue of a unique identifier number
  - Photographic image of work
  - Information regarding materials, technique and provenance
- 4.2.2. File and document numbers of related documents such as Acquisition Agreement, Loan Agreement, Maintenance Schedule and Condition Report must also be entered into the database.

#### **4.3. Deaccessioning**

- 4.3.1. The process of removing or disposing of works in the collection, otherwise known as deaccessioning, will not be undertaken for any reason apart from:
  - Lack of relevance to the Collection
  - Duplication of another object in the collection
  - Requirement of prohibitive conservation work and/or the work is beyond repair
  - The work has already been destroyed, lost or stolen
  - Cannot be suitably stored
  - Should be returned as restitution of cultural property
  - Subject to legislation which prevents Council holding title to it
- 4.3.2. For deaccessioning to proceed, the Board must receive written recommendation and formally determine to deaccession the work. The report will clearly state the reason for disposal and include:
  - Object unique identification number;
  - Description;
  - Photograph;
  - Advice on legal status (if available);
  - Any written specialist advice;
  - Impact the action would have on the collection; and
  - Suggested method of disposal

- 4.3.3. Where deaccessioning is approved the order of priorities for removing the work from the collection shall be:
- Donated works returned to the original donor / artist or next of kin
  - Donated works offered as a donation to another cultural institution, or works that were purchased are offered for sale to another cultural institution based on current valuation.
  - Works sold at auction and the proceeds of the sale reinvested into the collection acquisition fund.
- 4.3.4. For items that have already been destroyed, lost or stolen, the deaccessioning process must also be completed. The Board will then determine whether reasonable steps, if economically viable, have been taken to locate/recover /restore the work.
- 4.3.5. After a 2-month interval (cooling off period) works which have previously been presented to the Arts Board for deaccessioning and rejected, may be re-submitted for consideration and further determination by the Arts Board.
- 4.3.6. Where artworks have been donated to the collection, the donor, or where feasible the next of kin, should be offered the opportunity to have the work returned to them. All reasonable effort should be made to contact the donor or next of kin to discuss the deaccessioning of the work. Works purchased via a collective (group) donation do not fit this category.
- 4.3.7. Procedural guidelines for each method of disposal and/or removal of artworks must be clearly defined, implemented and proceed in full public knowledge. Evidence of compliance should be attached to deaccessioning documentation.
- 4.3.8. Archived records documenting deaccessioned work will be permanently stored within Council.

## **5. Implementation**

The City Lifestyles Directorate of Council will administer this policy.

## **6. Review**

To be reviewed within 1 year of the election of a new Council.