

Program: Community Lifestyle
Date of Adoption: 22 July 2026
Resolution Number: ORD-2026-156
Review Date: 22 July 2030

Scope

This document addresses the acquiring, documenting, managing, and disposing of Mackay Regional Council (MRC) museum collection objects. The policy applies to all MRC Staff and visiting researchers who have a role in the use and management of the MRC Museum's Collection.

Objective

To provide a framework to assist MRC Staff to effectively manage the MRC Museum Collections. This Policy will assist in building relevant and significant collections, ensure their continued conservation and preservation, and enable the museums to continue to provide engaging and relevant interpretation of the region's history to a wider audience

Policy Statement

MRC is responsible for the development of the Museums Program across the region and the care, conservation and interpretation of MRC's museum collections. Council also owns a corporate memorabilia collection.

This Policy must be read in conjunction with CS115.01 Museum Collections Corporate Standard.

Council considers that to the extent this policy engages and limits, or potentially limits, any human rights, that limitation is reasonable in that it is proportionate and justified.

This process to remain in force until otherwise determined
by Mackay Regional Council

Contents

1.0	Principles	3
1.1	Acquisition of objects.....	3
1.2	Deaccession and disposal of objects	3
2.0	Complaints	4
3.0	Definitions	4
4.0	Review of Policy	5
5.0	Reference	5
6.0	Attachments	5

1.0 Principles

1.1 Acquisition of objects

The Collection Management Committee will assess objects against the following acquisition criteria before acceptance into Museum Collection.

All recommendations of the Collection Management Committee will be tabled as an agenda item of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategic Advisory Committee.

1.1.1.1 *Relevance* – MRC only collects objects that relate to their museums' purpose and key collecting areas.

1.1.1.2 *Significance* – priority is given to objects which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research or social/spiritual value.

1.1.1.3 *Provenance and documentation* – priority will be given to objects where the history of the object is known and associated documentation and support material can be provided.

1.1.1.4 *Condition* – badly damaged material or items in poor condition will not normally be accepted into the collections

1.1.1.5 *Interpretive potential* – objects that tell a story which adds to the interpretation of the museums' key themes will be prioritised.

1.1.1.6 *Rarity* – objects may be prioritised if they are rare examples of a particular kind.

1.1.1.7 *Representativeness* – objects may be accepted if they are an excellent representative example of a particular type of object.

1.1.1.8 *Duplications* – objects which duplicate an item already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and/or historic value.

1.1.1.9 *Legal requirements* – objects will only be accepted when the donor/vendor has legal title to the object, and which do not contravene copyright or relevant legislation (e.g. CITES, *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* etc).

1.1.1.10 *Capacity* – objects which exceed the storage and collections care capacity of MRC or which require extensive conservation treatment will not normally be accepted

1.2 Deaccession and disposal of objects

MRC recognises that the deaccession and disposal of objects from the collection is an essential part of effective collection management. Any decision to deaccession and dispose of an object will be exercised with caution and following accepted museum industry standards.

2.0 Complaints

Any complaints in relation to a decision or a service arising from this policy will be assessed and managed in accordance with MRC's Administrative Action Complaints Policy, a copy of which can be found on MRC's website.

When an individual feels that they are the subject of MRC's failure to act compatibly with human rights, they can make a complaint directly to MRC. These complaints will be assessed against the Human Rights Act 2019.

Complaints may be made as following:

In writing to
Chief Executive Officer
Mackay Regional Council
PO Box 41
MACKAY QLD 4740

Via Email - complaints@mackay.qld.gov.au

In person at the following MRC Client Services Centres:

- MRC Mackay Office – 73 Gordon Street, Mackay
- MRC Sarina Office – 65 Broad Street, Sarina
- MRC Mirani Office – 20 Victoria Street, Mirani

3.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Accession shall mean the process of formally transferring title or ownership from the providing source to MRC.

Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategic Advisory Committee (ACHSAC) shall mean an advisory committee to Council.

Acquisition shall mean the act of gaining possession of the object by purchase, award, gift exchange, donation bequest or commission.

Bequest shall mean the bestowal by will of privately owned objects to MRC.

Collection shall mean an identifiable selection of objects having some significant commonality. This could be by donor, subject matter or theme.

Collection Management Committee shall mean a committee which consists of the Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs, Museum Co-ordinator, a Councillor, other Council Staff or museum representatives with appropriate qualifications.

Conservation shall mean the processes for preserving and protecting objects from loss, decay, damage or other forms of deterioration, usually undertaken by a qualified professional conservator.

Copyright shall mean statutory legal right to print, publish, perform, film or record material.

Council shall mean the collective body of all elected representatives of Mackay Regional Council, as constituted under the Local Government Act 2009, responsible for governing the local government area and making decisions in the public interest.

Councillors shall mean an elected representative of Mackay Regional Council.

Deaccession shall mean the process of removing an object permanently from the collection and the recording of the disposal/removal of an object from the collection when it is sold, donated, destroyed, or lost.

Donation shall mean the process of transferring ownership of an object without any payment or consideration. Donations are to be appropriately documented.

MRC shall mean the Mackay Regional Council

Staff shall mean all persons employed by Mackay Regional Council on a permanent, temporary, casual basis or otherwise engaged by Mackay Regional Council including those under a contract of service.

4.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

- The related documents are amended or replaced; or
- Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than four (4) years.

5.0 Reference

- Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027
- Mackay Regional Council Arts and Culture Strategy 2025 - 2030MRC Policy 042 – Asset Management Policy
- MRC Policy 059 – Receipt of Donations
- MRC Corporate Standard 115.01 Museum Collection Management
- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics
- National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries

6.0 Attachments

1. MRC Corporate Standard No. 115.1 – Museum Collections.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
1	New		ORD-2022-339	23.11.2022
2	Review/Update		ORD-2026-156	22.07.2026

Program	Community Lifestyle
Date of Endorsement	22 July 2026
Review Date	22 July 2030

1.0 Scope

This corporate standard applies to all Mackay Regional Council Staff and visiting researchers

2.0 Objective

To provide guidance on the implementation of the MRC's Museum Collection Policy.

3.0 Reference

- Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027
- MRC Policy 115 - MRC Museum Collection
- Mackay Regional Council Arts and Culture Strategy 2025 - 2030
- MRC Policy 042 - Asset Management
- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics
- National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries
- Significance 2.0 - a guide to assessing the significance of collections

4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Accession shall mean the process of formally transferring title or ownership from the providing source to MRC.

Arts and Cultural Heritage Strategic Advisory Committee shall mean an advisory committee to Council.

Acquisition shall mean the act of gaining physical possession of the artwork or object by purchase, award, gift exchange, bequest, or commission.

Bequest shall mean the bestowal by will of privately owned cultural items to MRC.

Collection shall mean an identifiable selection of objects having some significant commonality. This could be by donor, subject matter, or theme.

Collection Management Committee shall mean a Committee which consist of the Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs, Museum Co-ordinator, a Councillor, other MRC Staff or museum representatives with appropriate qualifications.

Conservation shall mean the processes for preserving and protecting museum items from loss, decay, damage, or other forms of deterioration, usually undertaken by a qualified professional conservator.

Copyright shall mean statutory legal right to print, publish, perform, film or record material.

MRC shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

Core collection shall mean those collections that have been formally accessioned and which adhere to the collecting aims of Mackay Regional Council.

Council shall mean the collective body of all elected representatives of Mackay Regional Council, as constituted under the *Local Government Act 2009*, responsible for governing the local government area and making decisions in the public interest.

Councillors shall mean an elected representative of Mackay Regional Council.

Deaccession shall mean the process of removing a museum item permanently from the collection and the recording of the disposal/removal of a museum item from the collection when it is sold, donated, destroyed, or lost.

Donation shall mean the process of transferring ownership of an object without any payment or consideration. Donations are to be appropriately documented.

ELT shall mean the Executive Leadership Team. This team consists of the CEO, Directors and Executive Officer

Museum shall mean a not-for-profit public institution (library, museum, art gallery) in the service of society and of its development, which is open to the public, and which acquires, conserves, research, communicates and exhibits, for purposes of study, education and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment, and which also adheres to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics

Reserve Collection shall mean a collection consisting of items which have not undergone the formal accession and documentation processes followed with the core collection, and which may be used for handling, research, or other education purposes. Items included in the Reserve Collection generally will not meet significance criteria and are not intended to be held in perpetuity.

Staff shall mean all persons employed by Mackay Regional Council on a permanent, temporary, casual basis or otherwise engaged by Mackay Regional Council including those under a contract of service.

Volunteer shall mean all persons not employed by Mackay Regional Council but are engaged under a volunteer program.

5.0 Standard Statement

This standard provides clear procedural direction for the management of MRC Museum collection and must be read in conjunction with COU115 Museum Collections Policy.

6.0 Collection Management Committee

- The decision to acquire objects offered to MRC Museum collections is the responsibility of the Collection Management Committee.
- All decisions made by the Committee will be documented and retained.
- The Committee will meet as required.
- All recommendations of the Collection Management Committee will be tabled as an agenda item of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Committee.

7.0 Acquisitions

7.1 Method of Acquisitions

- MRC will accept items by gift, donation, bequest, or purchase.
- MRC will only accept loaned materials for specific short-term education and exhibition purposes of an identified duration.
- MRC will only collect objects and materials relevant to the acquisition criteria as outlined in Section 7.2.
- MRC will not accept conditional gifts.
- MRC may accept items which will not be formally accessioned into the core collections, but which may form part of a reserve or corporate collection.

7.2 Acquisition criteria

The Collection Management Committee will consider the following criteria before approving the acquisition of an object:

- *Relevance* – MRC only collects objects that relate to their museums' purpose and objectives as outlined in the Museum Policy.
- *Significance* – priority is given to objects which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, scientific/research, or social/spiritual value.
- *Provenance and documentation* – priority will be given to objects where the history of the object is known, and associated documentation and support material can be provided.
- *Condition* – badly damaged material or items in poor condition will not normally be accepted into the collections.
- *Interpretive potential* – objects that tell a story which adds to the interpretation of the museums' key themes will be prioritised.
- *Rarity* – objects may be prioritised if they are rare examples of a particular kind.
- *Representativeness* – objects may be accepted if they are an excellent representative example of a particular type of object.
- *Duplications* – objects which duplicate an item already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and/or historic value.

- *Legal requirements* – objects will only be accepted when the donor/vendor has legal title to the object, and which do not contravene relevant legislation (e.g., CITES, *Shipwrecks Act 1976 etc*).
- *Capacity* – objects which exceed the storage and collections care capacity of MRC, or which require extensive conservation treatment will not normally be accepted.

8.0 Legal / Ethical obligations

- MRC will acquire collections in accordance with State and Federal law and the international agreements between Australia and other countries (e.g., UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property).
- MRC will only acquire collections having a legal and ethical provenance.
- MRC acknowledges that its collections and collecting activities may be controlled by legislation such as the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*, *Weapons Act 1990*, *Weapon Regulations 2016*, *Explosives Act 1999*, *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018*, and the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*.
- MRC museum Staff and Volunteers are aware of, and have access to, the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums.
- MRC is aware of, and makes available to its museum Staff and Volunteers, industry guidelines such as the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries, and Continuous Cultures, Ongoing Responsibilities.
- MRC does not intend to acquire or display secret/sacred objects or human remains and will support the principle of repatriation wherever appropriate.

9.0 Collection care: documentation, conservation & storage

9.1 Documentation

MRC museums aim to maintain an effective and up-to-date documentation system.

Donor forms, registers, and catalogue information will be maintained for the collection.

An efficient backup system of documentation will also be maintained.

9.1.1 *Documentation and Process for Donation of Objects to MRC*

The following process will be observed when objects are offered for donation:

- Prospective donors will be given an offer of donation form to complete, requesting information on history, use, provenance, condition, and ownership of the object offered. Photographs of the object/s should also be obtained.
- The Collection Management Committee assesses the donation offer based on the criteria outlined in Section 7.2.
- If an object is declined, a letter of thanks will be issued by the Museums Co-ordinator to the potential donor with an explanation as to why the object was declined.

- If an object is accepted, two copies of a donor form will be completed. One is retained by MRC and the other by the donor. A letter of thanks will also be provided to the donor by the Museums Co-ordinator.
- The object is entered into an Accession Register and formally catalogued.
- MRC may hold an object offered for donation for the purpose of assessment. In this instance a receipt will be offered to the owner of the object, a copy of which will be retained by MRC. This does not constitute a donation, and the object will only be held for a stipulated period to reach a decision on its acquisition.

9.2 Storage and conservation

MRC aims to provide the best possible care of its collections. This is done with an awareness of the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries.

- Staff and Volunteers will be trained in all relevant procedures and practices in accordance with accepted museum industry standards.
- Housekeeping will be efficient and regular and will include checking for pest activity and environmental deterioration.
- Temperature and relative humidity will be monitored and kept as stable as possible, and exposure to UV light will be kept to a minimum or excluded where possible.
- Access to storage areas will be controlled.
- Archival quality storage materials will be used whenever possible.
- The advice of a qualified conservator will be sought when necessary.
- Any conservation work will only be undertaken by a qualified conservator or under their guidance.
- Restoration, as understood in conservation practices, will only be undertaken when it is necessary to secure the ongoing preservation and interpretation of an object, and where it can be safely undertaken without significant loss to the original fabric of the object. There must be sufficient evidence of a known previous state.

10.0 Deaccessioning and disposal

MRC recognises that the deaccession and disposal of objects from the collection is an essential part of effective collection management. Any decision to deaccession and dispose of material will be exercised with caution, transparency, and following accepted museum industry standards.

10.1 Criteria for deaccession

Objects will be considered by the Collection Management Committee for disposal under the following criteria:

- The object is outside the scope of MRC's mission and collection policy.
- The object condition has deteriorated beyond usefulness, the object has been damaged beyond repair, or the object condition poses a risk to other objects or human safety.

- Understanding and knowledge of the object significance or authenticity has changed, and it is no longer considered relevant to the collection.
- The object is unnecessarily duplicated in the collection.
- In response to a substantiated request for its return to the original owner.

10.2 Deaccession procedure

- Objects identified for deaccession will be considered by the Collection Management Committee with reference to the criteria outlined in Section 10.1.
- After a decision to deaccession has been made, objects will be held for a further three months before proceeding to disposal.
- MRC Staff, Volunteers, and their families are prohibited from purchasing, or otherwise obtaining, a deaccessioned object.

10.3 Disposal procedure

The disposal of objects will always be undertaken with complete transparency with preference to the following order:

- Return to the donor or donor's family.
- Offered to another museum or collecting organisation.
- Transferred to an educational/handling or corporate collection within MRC.
- Donated to a recognised charitable institution.
- By sale or auction through a reputable auction house. In this instance all funds raised are to be used for other acquisition or collection care projects, and not for general MRC operational purposes.
- Destroyed or recycled.
- All objects identified for deaccession will be fully documented prior to disposal and the deaccessioning process recorded. The objects disposal is to be recorded in the catalogue, object file, and other relevant records.

11.0 Loans

11.1 Loan procedures

- MRC will lend and borrow material from its own and other collections to help meet its purpose. No object will be accepted as a convenience or favour to the lender.
- MRC will not enter into permanent or indefinite loans.
- Loans will be administered with separate forms for inward and outward loans.
- The maximum loan period is 12 months.
- Responsibility for insurance of object on inward and outward loan will be at the borrowing organisations expense with a copy of the insurance document to accompany the loan form.
- Loans (inward and outward) can only be negotiated and entered into by the Museums Co-ordinator and Senior Co-ordinator Community Programs.

11.2 Inward loans

- Inward loans will only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for an identified duration.
- Inward loans will be recorded on a Loans Register.
- The Museum Co-ordinator and the lender will be required to sign an inward loan form. Each party will hold a copy of the agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.
- Loaned objects shall remain in the possession of MRC and at the specified premises for the duration of the loan, unless otherwise agreed with the lender.
- MRC may request to renew loans if required. Documentation recording renewal must be signed by the Museum Co-ordinator and the lender.
- MRC will provide appropriate storage, handling, and display of the object/s while in its care.

11.3 Outward Loans

- MRC may lend objects to other museums and organisations holding collections. It will not lend to private collectors.
- Borrowers and the Museums Co-ordinator will be required to sign two outward loan agreement forms. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan.
- The borrower must provide appropriate handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.
- The loan may be subject to the borrower completing a venue report to demonstrate their ability to meet the requirements of object care and security.
- The borrower will provide a secure display and/or storage area.
- The maximum loan period is 12 months. Application for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.
- Objects cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of MRC.
- MRC may refuse a request to loan an object if it is impractical due to size and transport constraints, or if the condition of the item may be negatively impacted by transportation, display, and handling.
- Costs relating to transport, packing, insurance etc will be met by the borrower.
- MRC requires sufficient notice of a request to borrow an item from its collection, normally six months.

12.0 Oral History Projects

- An Oral History Agreement is signed by the person interviewed, which clearly states the purpose and intended uses of the interviews and what copyright provisions apply.
- Staff or Volunteers undertaking oral history projects will be provided with appropriate training in the conducting of interviews and use of equipment.
- MRC abides by the Guidelines of Ethical Practice of the Oral History Association of Australia.

13.0 Access

- MRC will make its collections accessible to the public through regular opening hours.
- MRC collections and archival materials are accessible for research purposes by appointment.
- MRC museum Staff and Volunteers may undertake research requests for members of the public. A fee for this service may apply.
- Digital images of objects in the collection may be produced on request for a fee, based on Council's adopted fee structure.
- Full acknowledgement must be given to MRC and the relevant MRC museum in any publications using or referencing objects from the collection.

14.0 Review of Standard

This corporate standard will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

- The related policy documents are amended or replaced; or
- Other circumstances as determined from time to time.

Notwithstanding the above, this standard is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than four (4) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
1	New		ORD-2022-339	23.11.2022
2	Review/Update		ORD-2026-156	22.07.2026