

# **Southern Midlands Council**

## **Heritage Collections Policy**

**SOUTHERN  
MIDLANDS  
COUNCIL**



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Brad Williams – Heritage Project Officer

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# 1. Preamble

## 1.1. *Intent*

The purpose of this *policy* is to provide policy for the management of heritage collections, held by the Southern Midlands Council.

## 1.2. *Definitions*

**Borrower** – Any individual, group, or institution that borrows an *item* from the *collection* under the terms of this *policy*.

**Collection** – The Southern Midlands Council heritage collection, as defined by this *policy*.

**Conservator/Curator** – A professional Conservator or Curator with a level of experience and/or qualifications/affiliations sufficient to give advice on the conservation, storage or display of items.

**Council** – The Southern Midlands Council (SMC) or delegate, or the former Oatlands or Green Ponds Councils.

**Item** – Any item, object, artifact, photograph or document forming a portion of the *Collection* (may include the plural).

**Policy** – The *Southern Midlands Council Heritage Collections Policy*, including any amendments or revisions.

**SMC** – See *Council*.

## 1.3. *Staffing*

The collection is to be administered by a working group, comprising of:

- SMC General Manager
- SMC Heritage Project Officer
- SMC Records Officer
- An elected member of SMC
- A community representative

The *Working Group* is directly reportable to *Council*.

Day to day management of the collection is the responsibility of the SMC Heritage Project Officer.

Consultants (i.e. *Conservators/Curators*) may be employed where resources allow and at the discretion of the *Working Group*.

#### **1.4. Audit and policy review**

An annual audit of the collection is to be undertaken, which must include:

- Accession of any newly acquired items
- Check of the condition of all items
- Check of environmental conditions of storage facilities

This *Policy* should be reviewed every three years.

#### **1.5 Deviation from policy**

The terms of this *Policy* may only be deviated or amended if agreed to by majority of both the *Working Group* and *Council*.

## **2. General policies**

#### **2.1. Procedures manual**

This *Policy* is to be instrumented via a *Procedures Manual*, which details the conservation practices to be followed, including (but not limited to):

- Environmental conditions and maintenance regime of storage facilities
- Packaging, labelling and documentation
- Audit procedure
- Database/catalogue configuration/procedures
- Conservation regime

The *Procedures Manual* must include procedures specific to each of the *Collection Categories* where applicable. The *Procedures Manual* may be reviewed as often as required, with major review subject to Council endorsement.

Development, review and update of the *Procedures Manual* must have professional input from a *Conservator* or *Curator*.

#### **2.2. Accessioning**

Accession refers to the process of addition any *item* into the *collection*.

Council may accession any item into the collection by way of purchase, gift or by officially accessioning items already owned by Council. Temporary accessions may be via loan or lease of an *item* (2.2).

Items will only be purchased for accession into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under *Specific collection policies* (3)
- A budget exists for acquisition of the item
- Conservation requirements for the item can be met in perpetuity
- Agreement for accession is achieved by majority of the *Working Group*.

Gifts and donations will only be accessioned into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under *Specific collection policies* (3)
- Full and unconditional transfer of ownership is vested to *Council*
- The donor indemnified *Council* against any liability associated with any item

- Agreement for accession is achieved by majority of the *Working Group*.

Items which are already owned by *Council* will only be accessioned into the collection if:

- The item fits accession criteria under *Specific collection policies* (3).

### **2.3. Database**

A database (catalogue) of all items must be kept, and maintained on a regular basis (as per the *Procedures Manual*). Database fields are to be defined by the *Procedures Manual* and include specific fields for specific collection categories as appropriate.

### **2.4. Incoming loans**

*Council* may seek and accept incoming loans (or lease) of items under the following circumstances:

- An item would fit accession criteria under *Specific collection policies* (3).

And:

- That *Council* can demonstrate adequate provision for security and appropriate environmental conditions for the item, during transport, preparation and display.
- That *Council* agrees to abide by any and all conditions imposed by the legal owner of the item.
- That *Council* carries adequate insurance against loss or damage of the item.

Incoming loans are added to the database as a temporarily accessioned item, with the record made inactive upon return of the item.

### **2.5. Outgoing loans**

*Council* may allow outgoing loans from the collection under the following circumstances:

- The *borrower* will use the item for display in a temporary exhibition, which highlights the contribution the item makes to a place or theme
- The *borrower* can demonstrate a legitimate need to borrow the item for research which may contribute to a greater knowledge of the item, or category/theme to which the item relates

And:

- That the *borrower* can demonstrate adequate provision for security and appropriate environmental conditions for the item, during transport, preparation and display.
- That the *borrower* agrees to abide by any and all conditions imposed by the legal owner of the item.
- That the *borrower* carries adequate insurance against loss or damage of the item.

Third-party loans (i.e. the outward loan of a borrowed item) are not allowable.

*Council* reserves the right to refuse outward loan of any item.

## **2.6. Deaccession**

Deaccession refers to the process of removing any *item* from the *collection*.

*Council* may deaccession any item from the collection if:

- The reason for deaccession is allowable under the *Specific Collection Policies*

And:

- Agreement for deaccession is achieved by majority of the *Working Group*
- A report is endorsed by *Council* stating the intention to deaccession an item and the reasons supporting that intention.
- A six-month 'cooling-off' period applies from the decision to deaccession and actual deaccession of an item

Also:

- Any item to be deaccessioned must be offered to a relevant external not-for-profit institution free-of-charge in the first instance, provided that institution can demonstrate intent to display and maintain the item for public benefit.
- Should no external institution be willing to take an item deaccessioned from the SMC collection, that item may be disposed of by whatever means the *Working Group* see fit.
- No deaccessioned item may become the property of any elected member or staff member of Southern Midlands Council.
- Any funds obtained from the deaccession of any item must be used for a worthwhile purpose towards enhancing or promoting the collection.

## **2.7. Display and public access**

Council must endeavour to display items and provide public access to collections, for research and interpretive purposes, provided:

- Display and public access does not provide undue detriment to the condition of the item
- Council makes adequate provision for security and appropriate environmental conditions for the item, during transport, preparation and display
- Display/research is guided by professional input in the form of an interpretation plan, research design or similar document

Access via virtual means, i.e. internet or photographs should be considered as a means of facilitating research and interpretation.

Council should encourage use of the collection for publication purposes.

## **2.8. Insurance**

An indicative monetary value for each item considered to be worth in excess of \$100 must be recorded in the database, and Council must carry adequate insurance against loss of those items.

## **2.9 Disaster preparedness**

Council shall put in place a disaster recovery procedure, which addresses procedure for managing recovery and salvage of the collection in the event of disaster (i.e. damage to buildings housing the collection) and interim measures during repair. This may form part of the procedures manual.

## **3. Specific collection policies**

### **3.1. Collection categories**

The collection will be managed under the following categories:

- Archaeological artifacts
- Corporate
- Objects
- Photographs and art
- Documents

If an item does not fit within these categories, then it will not be collected or retained by Council, unless in exceptional circumstances agreed by the majority of both the *Working Group* and *Council*.

### **3.2. Archaeological artifacts**

#### **3.2.1. Accession**

Archaeological artifacts may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They derive from archaeological excavations initiated by Southern Midlands Council
- They derive from archaeological excavations on a Council owned site

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession policies (2.1).

Examples may be:

- Artifacts deriving from excavations at the Oatlands Gaol
- Artifacts unearthed during archaeologically monitored works by the Council works crew

#### **3.2.2. Deaccession**

Archaeological artifacts may only be deaccessioned from the collection if:

- It can reasonably be demonstrated that their future research or interpretive value unreasonably outweighs the required conservation resources.
- Better examples of an identical item are retained (provided items do not exhibit greater significance as a set/collection).
- Unprovenanced artifacts with no foreseeable research or display value.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the general deaccession policy (2.4).

### **3.2.3. Loans**

Archaeological artifacts may be loaned under the general loan policies (2.2).

## **3.3. Corporate**

### **3.3.1. Accession**

Items may be accessioned into the corporate collection under the following circumstances:

- They have a direct relationship with Southern Midlands Council (or the former Oatlands or Green Ponds Councils) as a governance body.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession policies (2.1)
- They are not required to be transferred to the Archives Office of Tasmania under the Archives Act (1983).

Examples may be:

- Mayoral regalia
- Awards and trophies presented to Council

### **3.3.2. Deaccession**

Corporate items may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- Documents are determined to be a state archive under the Archives Act (1983), in which case they be transferred to the Archives Office of Tasmania. An exemption from the act may be sought if it considered that the document is best stored, accessed and interpreted on Southern Midlands Council Premises.
- That it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that an item has no future research, interpretation or display value for Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the general deaccession policy (2.4).

### **3.3.3. Loans**

Corporate items may be loaned under the general loan policies (2.2).

## **3.4. Objects**

### **3.4.1. Accession**

Objects, which do not fit any other category defined in this policy, may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- That Council ownership is considered to be the most appropriate means of preservation and public access to the item.

- The item has a connection to a Council owned building, and/or may contribute to the interpretation or significance of that building

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession policies (2.1).

Examples may be:

- Honour boards
- Oatlands Court House furnishings
- Gaol fixtures which have interpretive potential

### **3.4.2. Deaccession**

Objects may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- That it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that an item has no future research, interpretation or display value for Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the general deaccession policy (2.4).

### **3.4.3. Loans**

Objects may be loaned under the general loan policies (2.2).

## **3.5. *Photographs and art***

### **3.5.1. Accession**

Photographs and art may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They depict a scene or event in the Southern Midlands municipal region
- They depict a prominent person with a connection to the Southern Midlands municipal region, or Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- That ownership by Council is considered the most appropriate means of preservation and public access
- Ownership of the item is clarified by the General Accession policies (2.1).

Examples may be:

- Early photographs of the Oatlands Gaol
- Photograph of the Prince of Wales' visit to Kempton
- Photographs of Councillors (cross referenced to Corporate Collection)

### **3.5.2. Deaccession**

Photographs may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- If a significant photograph may be better conserved and accessed via another public information repository (i.e. Archives Office of Tasmania, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery).

And:

- Deaccession complies with the general deaccession policy (2.4).

### **3.5.3. Loans**

Original photographs may not be loaned. Digital or photographic copies may be made available as deemed reasonable by the *Working Group*.

Art may be loaned under the general loan policies (2.2).

## **3.6. Documents**

### **3.6.1. Accession**

Documents may be accessioned into the collection under the following circumstances:

- They are original documents, which relate to the history of the Southern Midlands municipal region, or related theme, and that Council ownership is considered the most appropriate means of conservation and public access.
- They are published documents, which relate to the history of the Southern Midlands municipal region, or related theme, and that Council ownership is considered the most appropriate means of conservation and public access.
- They are documents, which relate to heritage projects within the Southern Midlands municipal region, or initiated by Southern Midlands Council.

And:

- Ownership of the item is clarified by the general accession policies (2.1).

But not if:

- They are required as part of Council's working records system.
- They are required to be archived under the *Archives Act DATE*.

Examples may be:

- Historic maps
- Early written accounts of the region
- Reports on archaeological excavations

### **3.6.2. Deaccession**

Documents may only be deaccessioned from the collection under the following circumstances:

- If a significant original or published document may be better conserved and accessed via another public information repository (i.e. Archives Office of Tasmania, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, State Library of Tasmania)
- If a particular published document is easily obtainable via another institution.

And:

- Deaccession complies with the general deaccession policy (2.4).

### **3.6.3. Loans**

Original documents may not be loaned. Digital or photographic copies may be made available as deemed reasonable.

Published items may be loaned under the general loan policies (2.2).