GWALIA COLLECTION POLICY

This Collection Policy will be implemented as guide for the development and management of Gwalia and the Shire of Leonora heritage collections.

Gwalia is owned and operated by the Shire of Leonora and operates under the guidance of the Gwalia Reference Group.

This Policy sets the parameters for collecting activity and is in accordance with the National Standards of Australian Museums and Galleries and the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter.

This Policy will serve as a guide for the management of the collection and will be a source of information for clients and stakeholders.

Approved
This Collection Policy was ratified by the Gwalia Reference Group on 10 May 2012.
This Collection Policy was adopted by the Shire of Leonora Council on 17 July 2012.

Contents

1. Vision
Be a best practice museum, working in partnerships to foster an understanding of the past, to enrich lives and provide a sense of place.

2. Mission
To conserve, explore and share the cultural heritage of Gwalia and Leonora.

3. Aim
Our aim is to:
3.1 integrate and manage our cultural heritage collections to industry standards;
3.2 interpret Gwalia to engage and inform visitors about life and mining in Gwalia in the context of Western Australian and Australian history, and particularly the history of the immediate region;
3.3 be a repository for items directly relating to mining activities (exploration, extraction, processing, rehabilitation and management), domestic life and commercial enterprises at Gwalia since 1896, together with recognition of the people and stories behind the collection;
3.4 provide a research and educational resource for the public;
3.5 be a repository for items relating to the wider Leonora area, including the town of Leonora, until such time as it is determined they should be transferred elsewhere. This collection will be called the Regional Leonora Collection to distinguish it from the Gwalia Collection.

4. Principal themes and storylines
Key themes and storylines are necessary to provide a focussed structure for the Collection.

4.1 Principal Theme 1: Gwalia
Storyline 1: The Mine Town
Storyline 2: Sons of Gwalia Mine(s)
Storyline 3: Transient nature of mining and ghost towns, with a focus on those within the Shire of Leonora.

4.2 Principal Theme 2: Regional Leonora
Storyline 1: Indigenous
Storyline 2: Pastoral
Storyline 3: Towns and settlements

5. Purpose of the Collection
The purpose of the Collection is to enable us to achieve our aims.

We will achieve this by acquiring, conserving and sharing:
5.1 extant buildings and structures from the Sons of Gwalia Mine and Gwalia community;
5.2 items (including but not limited to documents, books, textiles, photographs, artwork, machinery, equipment and furniture) related to these buildings and structures, and the people associated with them, as well as items relating to towns, settlements and activities within the Shire of Leonora.

6. Acquisitions
Acquisition is the process of obtaining legal possession of an item for the collection.

6.1 Acquisitions criteria
Proposed new acquisitions for the collection will:
6.1.1 have a clearly established provenance to Gwalia and will contribute to a site-specific collection (the Gwalia Collection) or have a clear connection with Regional Leonora;
6.1.2 be in good condition (see Section 6.2 below);

6.1.3   only be accepted if the donor has legal and ethical right to transfer ownership;
6.1.4   only be accepted without restriction.
6.1.5   be adequately displayed, stored and cared for;
6.1.6   not duplicate items already in the collection;
6.1.7   not endanger health and safety;
6.1.8   be significant.

6.2   Physical condition
Where possible, we will endeavour to collect items in good physical condition but damaged or incomplete items may be accepted provided that the:
6.2.1   item is only held until such time as a like or suitable replacement is acquired;
6.2.2   item can be used to provide spare parts for the restoration or repair of similar items;
6.2.3   item can be used safely for educational or public outreach activities;
6.2.4   item is of significance;
6.2.5   cost of conservation and care is not prohibitive. In cases where extensive conservation is required the donor may be asked to fund its conservation prior to transfer of ownership.

6.3   Accepting items for consideration
The Shire of Leonora may acquire items by way of donation, bequest, transfer or purchase.

We will not actively seek acquisitions for the Regional Leonora Collection until such time as we have the capacity and resources to effectively manage this collection.

The decision whether to accept an item is made by the Gwalia Reference Group.

If approached by a potential donor (phone, email, in person) staff and volunteers must redirect the enquiry to the Curator.

The Curator has authorisation to accept items for consideration with reference to the criteria above.

In the absence of the curator and if approached by a potential donor on site with the item in hand, staff and volunteers can determine whether to accept the item for consideration (referring to above criteria) and complete the official receipt.

An official receipt in triplicate will be completed on acceptance for every item to be considered for acquisition:
1.   one copy is given to the prospective donor;
2.   one copy stays with the item. This copy stays with the item until the acquisitions process is completed;
3.   one copy remains in the receipt book.

Suitable documentation is to be kept for transfers and purchases.

6.4   Considering items for acquisition
The Curator will prepare an acquisitions proposal for each item to be considered by the Gwalia Reference Group. The Reference Group will make a recommendation to Council as to whether or not to accept the item.

6.5   Acceptance of items
A duplicate donation form will be completed for each item acquired through donations and bequests, detailing contact details of the donor, provenance and significance. The form will be signed by the donor and curator:
1.   the original goes on file;

2. one copy is given to the donor, along with a letter of appreciation.

6.6   Accession register
An Accession Register will be kept recording the date, description of the item, accession number, method of acquisition and contact details of donor.

6.7   Catalogue of items
A cataloguing worksheet will be completed for each item (some fields may not be relevant).

This information is then entered into the electronic collections management database (MOSAiC).

6.8   Object files
An Object File will be kept documenting all research and transactions for each item.

6.9   Decline of offer
Where an offer is declined, a letter is to be sent formally notifying the prospective donor that the item does not meet the aims and collecting criteria and setting out the reasons.

If in possession of the Shire of Leonora, the item will be returned to the donor by a secure method.

7.   Loans
Short term loans can be entered into in order to further the aims of this policy.

Items will not be accepted on permanent or long term loans.

The Curator will prepare a Loan Request form for all inward and outward loans to be considered by the Gwalia Reference Group. The Reference Group will make a recommendation to the Shire of Leonora whether to accept the loan or not.

It is the responsibility of the Curator to ensure that all inward and outward loans are managed according to industry standards. One copy of each document (agreement, report etc) is given to the lender and borrower. The Shire's copy is placed in the relevant Loans File (Inward or Outward) and a duplicate copy of each document is placed in the Object File.

7.1   Inward loans
Inward loans will be accepted for exhibition purposes and for a period not exceeding three months with the possibility of a loan extension should it be required.

It is the responsibility of the Curator to manage the items on loan, overseeing the care of the item and to ensure that necessary documentation is completed.

7.2   Outward loans
Outward loans will only be made to collecting organisations (museums, galleries, archives, historical societies and other keeping places). Other organisations may be considered on a case by case basis.

Loans will not be made to individuals.

Outward loans will be made for exhibition purposes and for a period not exceeding three months with the possibility of a loan extension should it be requested.

7.3   Loan agreements
The lender and borrower will enter a Loan Agreement. The Agreement is to be completed prior to the transfer of items and is to be signed by both parties.

Loan agreements will be limited to three months and will stipulate transport, storage, maintenance, insurance and exhibition conditions. The date of commencement of the loan and the date of return will be clearly stated on the form.

The loan agreement will stipulate that the borrower will notify the Curator of any damage and will not have the item repaired without consent.

7.4   Condition reports
For each item loaned or borrowed, a Condition Report will be completed in duplicate at various stages of the loan process:
1. by the lender prior to despatch of item;
2. by the borrower on receipt of item;
3. by borrower prior to return of item;
4. by lender on return of item.

8.   Access to the collection
8.1   Telephone, email, fax & web enquires
All enquiries will be:
1. acknowledged and referred to the Curator;
2. responded to in reasonable timeframe;
3. entered into an Enquiries Register.

8.2   Physical access
Access to the collection is to be made by prior arrangement. It is preferable for visits to be arranged when the Curator is on site.

Searching aids will be made available to the researcher who can then request specific items for viewing. Staff will retrieve the items which the researcher may use under supervision.

Researchers are required to complete a User Registration Form prior to being granted access to items.

8.3   Requests for copies of material
Researchers may request copies of material by completing a Materials Request Form.

Requests will be determined by the Curator, taking into account such issues as copyright, ethics and condition.

A fee will be charged for the provision of copies of material.

9.   Conservation
Conservation applies to all items in the collection. Preventative conservation for buildings can be described as maintenance.

9.1   Preventative conservation
Preventative conservation will be carried out according to industry standards with regards to:
1. management of exhibition and storage environments;
2. cleaning and handling of items;
3. maintenance work to buildings, structures and large machinery.

The Curator is to ensure that staff and volunteers are adequately trained in preventative conservation methods and have the necessary resources to carry out the work.

9.2 Interventive conservation
Interventive conservation work will only be done by trained professionals in line with conservation principles and standards.

Statutory approvals will be sought prior to the commencement of work

10. Disposal and de-accessioning
Effective collection management requires the ability to dispose of items which are unable to be used now or in the future. This process is potentially controversial and must be carefully managed if it is not to create unwelcome publicity and deter donors and supporters.

Decisions to dispose of items will be made by the Shire of Leonora, taking into account the advice and recommendations of the Curator and Reference Group.

Items can only be disposed of in the following ways:
1. return to the owner or their successors (preferred method);
2. transfer to another collecting organisation or charity;
3. use for educational activities;
4. destruction of the object will only be considered as a last resort.

10.1 Disposal criteria
An item can be disposed of and de-accessioned if it meets the following criteria:
10.1.1 it does not meet the mission and aims of this policy;
10.1.2 it is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair;
10.1.3 the cost of conservation would be far in excess of the value of the item for display or research;
10.1.3 it has been stolen with no possibility of return;
10.1.4 the item is so lacking in provenance and documentation that it is of no value for display or use;
10.1.5 it can be replaced by a duplicate or better quality item;
10.1.6 it cannot be stored or cared for properly;
10.1.7 the collection includes a large number of identical or very similar items, far in excess of possible future requirements.

10.2 De-accessioning procedures
10.2.1 The Curator will prepare a De-Accessioning Proposal for consideration by the Gwalia Reference Group. The Reference Group will then make a recommendation to Council for decision.
10.2.2. A De-Accessioning File will be kept, containing the De-Accessioning Proposal and a photograph of the item. A copy of the relevant minutes of both the Reference Group and Council decision will also be placed on the file.
10.2.3 Electronic records of the item are not to be deleted but instead marked 'De-accessioned'.
10.2.4 A copy of the relevant documentation will be placed in the Object File and the Cataloguing Sheet marked 'De-Accessioned'.
10.2.5 A note is also to be made in the Accession Register that the item has been de-accessioned (usually a line through the entry with date and reason).
10.2.6 If the Council determines not to dispose of the item, a copy of the De-Accessioning Proposal and relevant minutes will be kept in the Object File for information.

11.   Winding up of operations

In the event of the Shire of Leonora determining that it can no longer be responsible for management of the collection and after due consideration by Council, the collection shall be distributed:

   (1) to an incorporated association or statutory body having compatible aims to this policy; or,
   (2) for charitable or benevolent purposes.

Under no circumstances shall any part of the collection be sold to individuals or profit making ventures.

12.   Disaster preparedness

A Disaster Plan will be prepared and adopted by the Shire of Leonora.

The Disaster Plan will direct the recovery and salvage of the collection in the event of a disaster.

The Disaster Plan will be updated every two years.

13.   Collection and policy review

13.1   This Collection Policy will be circulated to staff and volunteers, and made available to members of the public and potential donors.

13.2   This Collection Policy will be revised and updated annually.

APPENDIX 1- DEFINITIONS

Acquisition	The process of obtaining legal possession of an item through purchase, donation or bequest
Accession	The process of registering and cataloguing an item into a collection
Burra Charter	Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
Cataloguing	Recoding, filing and storing relevant information about an item.
Collection	Body of acquired items held by the organisation.
Collecting organisations	Museums, archives, art galleries, libraries and historical societies
De-accessioning	The process by which items in a collection are removed, documentation amended and item made ready for disposal.
Disposal	Formal removal of an item for the collection after a de-accessioning decision has been made.
Interventive conservation	Conservation work undertaken to preserve, restore, reconstruct or adapt a building or item.
Item	Generic term that includes documents, pictures, artefacts, specimens, artworks, equipment, structures and buildings.
National Standards	National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries
Preventative conservation	All actions undertaken to prevent deterioration of an item (maintenance).
Provenance	Proven or documented place of origin, use, history and ownership of an item.
Resources	Funding, items, staff and volunteers, storage and display space.
Searching aids	MOSAiC and hard copies of archive lists.
Significance	The historical, aesthetic, scientific or social value of an item, as well as its rarity and representatives.

APPENDIX 2- ICOM Code of Museum Ethics

APPENDIX 3- Museums Australian Code of Ethics

APPENDIX 4- Australian Society of Archivists Code of Ethics