

ITEM 3. CURATORIAL POLICY OF THE CIVIC COLLECTION**FILE NO: X000972****SUMMARY**

The City of Sydney is custodian of a collection of artworks, furniture, memorials, historical items and official gifts, which document the civic history of the city and comprise the Civic Collection. Many of these items have a contextual relationship to Sydney Town Hall and have been associated with the furnishing and presentation of the building for over a century. The Civic Collection (the Collection) also includes items that have contextual relationships with civic buildings significant to the cultural landscape of Sydney.

The purpose of the Civic Collection is to preserve the tangible evidence of the civic history and everyday traditions significant to the history of the City of Sydney and its properties, including Sydney Town Hall.

The Sydney Council Curatorial Policy was first adopted by Council on 7 November 1994. It was superseded on 21 February 2000 when Council adopted the Sydney Town Hall Curatorial Policy. In December 2006, Council resolved that “the former Sydney Town Hall Curatorial Policy be reviewed, particularly in light of the extended requirements arising from the amalgamation.” In 2008, the Curatorial Advisory Panel was re-established to assist with the development of a strategic framework for the collection and its management. The revised Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection, adopted in 2010, is the current defining document for the management of the Collection.

The 2010 Policy has established clear guidance for the ongoing curatorial management of the Civic Collection in accordance with accepted collection management practices. It provides a rationale for the acquisition, display, storage, loan, conservation and disposal of items. The Policy also addresses curatorial criteria specifically relevant to Sydney Town Hall, with particular reference to its unique collection of furnishings, artworks and historical items. The Policy has also established general and specific guidance for the on-going curatorial management of the Collection of furniture and furnishings, artworks, decorative arts, historical items, memorials and civic gifts.

The revised Curatorial Policy provides updated internal processes for collection documentation, financial audits, asset management and risk management. In addition it:

- refines collecting areas, enabling honours, awards, trophies and photographs to be managed by City Archives and the reproduction furniture cared for by City Property;
- strengthens the protocols for deaccessioning and disposal processes; and
- aligns the management of official gifts with the Gifts and Benefits Guidelines.

Consultation with the Curatorial Advisory Panel has assisted with the development of the revised Policy.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council adopt the draft Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection, as shown in Attachment A to the subject report.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection

BACKGROUND

1. The City of Sydney maintains a collection of artworks, furnishings, memorials and official gifts significant to the history of Council and the people of Sydney. The number of items in the Civic Collection database to date is approximately 1,813 (not including the minor gifts and items under \$500). A stocktake of Sydney Town Hall and all Council properties in which there are further items of the Civic Collection will be completed prior to the next valuation to ensure that all items in the Collection are fully accounted for and documented.
2. The last valuation of the Civic Collection was completed in 2011. The value of the collection was registered as \$6,251,000 (replacement value) and \$2,867,150 (market value). The Civic Collection is scheduled for revaluation in March-April 2016.
3. The Civic Collection is located across numerous City-owned properties, including Sydney Town Hall.
4. The objectives of the Curatorial Policy of the Civic Collection are to:
 - (a) manage and develop the Collection through acquisition, commission, donation and management in accordance with standard procedures and requirements;
 - (b) display and interpret the Collection for the benefit of the people of Sydney, its workers and visitors; and
 - (c) provide acquisition, display and disposal strategies for the Collection as a whole, and for each of the following categories:
 - (i) furniture, fixtures and fittings;
 - (ii) artworks, decorative arts and historical items;
 - (iii) civic memorials; and
 - (iv) architectural fabric.
5. The Policy outlines the roles of the Curator and the Curatorial Advisory Panel.
6. The Curatorial Advisory Panel guides the implementation of the Curatorial Policy. The Panel is chaired by the Lord Mayor or her nominee (currently Councillor Kemmis). It comprises the City's Curator, the Chief Executive Officer's representative, the Director City Life's representative and two external representatives with professional expertise in the Collection disciplines. Those positions are currently filled by Ann Toy, formerly Supervising Curator, Government House and Katie Dyer, Curator Contemporary, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.
7. The Policy also provides specific guidance for acquisition, deaccession, disposal, display and use, access to and interpretation of the Collection, loans, valuation and insurance, storage, conservation, documentation and copyright and reproduction.

Aboriginal Art

8. In 2014, the Curatorial Advisory Panel initiated discussions with the Curator, Eora Journey, Hetti Perkins, to develop a strategy for the acquisition of Aboriginal art. The first commission, a set of four digital prints from Nicole Foreshew's digital installation, Place Projections, was delivered in June 2015. Further commissions to increase the works by Aboriginal artists whose work accords with the acquisition criteria in the Curatorial Policy are in development.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

9. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. The Curatorial Policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – specifically by promoting access to the Civic Collection through a wide range of programs, sharing information about the Collection with the public, and providing opportunities to artists to create artworks for public spaces in civic buildings.

Organisational Impact

10. The Civic Collection is currently managed by a part-time Curator, with part-time assistance. The part-time Assistant Curator has been extended to an ongoing full-time position. The primary responsibility of this position will be management of the database.

Risks

11. An Internal Audit conducted in May 2013 identified some key areas that did not meet the standards established by the Policy. The key failings related to the storage environment provided for items not currently in use, and the ability of the database (Past Perfect) to provide reporting of the complexity and quality required by Finance and Audit.
12. The database was replaced in 2014 and the items requiring storage have been relocated from Bay Street to temporary premises pending a long-term solution.

Social / Cultural / Community

13. The Policy provides mechanisms for public access to the Civic Collection through a variety of methods, including exhibition, tours, publications and online media. It also supports the acquisition of artworks by local artists for public display.

Economic

14. The Policy supports the acquisition of artworks by Sydney artists.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

15. Funds have been provided in the 2015/6 budget to support the management, acquisition and display of the Civic Collection.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

16. The Policy provides a strategy for compliance with provisions under the Local Government Act 1993 in respect of Financial Reporting (s412) and Code of Conduct (s440).

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

17. The Curatorial Advisory Panel was consulted for the purpose of the review of the Curatorial Policy.

ANN HOBAN

Director City Life

Sasha Baroni, Manager Creative City