



WHITTLESEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLLECTION POLICY

1. Aims of the Collection Policy

The purposes of the Whittlesea Historical Society (WHS) are:

- * The encouragement of the study of Australian, Victorian and local history.
- * The production of properly researched analytical local histories.
- * The collection, preservation, dissemination and publication of historical documents and photographs and, when necessary, other items of historical interest.
- * The location, identification and preservation of significant local heritage features.
- * Encouragement of and participation in the study of Australian, Victorian and local history in schools and other educational institutions in the area.
- * Promotion of cultural tourism.
- * Exchange of information, and co-operation with other historical societies through membership of the RHSV, and co-operation with other bodies in related fields of conservation and genealogy.
- * To so conduct its affairs that it has a continuing existence and is financially viable.

This Collection Policy is consistent with these purposes, and provides the objectives and the processes governing management of the collection. The objectives of the Collection Policy as they relate to the purposes of WHS are:

- * Preserve and promote the knowledge and appreciation of the built heritage, social and cultural history relevant to the City of Whittlesea.
- * Actively collect appropriate new materials which will improve and extend the collection.
- * Digitise documents and photographs in order to preserve information.
- * Ensure that the collection has a key focus on changes in built form and social and cultural themes over time.
- * Demonstrate good governance and sound management of the collection.
- * Ensure that the collection is accessible to members, the general public and researchers.

2. What does the WHS collect?

The collection consists primarily of photographs and other images, documents, civic materials, souvenirs, primary source research information and ephemera relevant to the City of Whittlesea and the families and ethnic groups of the local area. Some items from adjoining areas may also be collected, unless an historical society exists in that area. Other items may be included if agreed by the Committee and/or the Collections sub-committee.

The collection is limited by the following constraints:

- * storage capacity and suitability.
- * preservation requirements of the item/s.
- * WHS acknowledges a mandatory obligation under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 to register Victorian Aboriginal collection items in its possession with Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV).

3. Acquisition process

Items are acquired by donation, purchase, bequest or transfer. The WHS Committee and/or the WHS Collections sub-committee determine the suitability of all new items to be added to the collection.

Acceptance Criteria:

- * Priority is given to items with associated documentation and supporting material.
- * Reasonable efforts will be made to identify the provenance of the item and ensure its legal ownership at the time of acceptance.
- * Generally, items with conditions attached will not be accepted.
- * Condition of the item is considered suitable.
- * Item can be safely and securely stored.
- * Item is of identifiable significant local historical or cultural value.
- * Item is not legally prohibited.

Documentation Procedure:

- * Donors sign a Transfer of Ownership Agreement. Where the items form part of an oral history, the document includes agreement for on-going public access to the material.
- * All items are recorded by date into the Collections Register, including a brief description and record of the donor's contact information.
- * Where items are refused, this information is included in the Collections Register as 'refused', 'returned', or 'disposed of'.
- * Accepted items are photographed and provided with an identification number appropriate to the type of item, and this information will be stored in the digital database.
- * Accepted items are tagged with the identification number and stored appropriately.

4. Deaccessioning and Disposal:

An item can be deaccessioned from the WHS collection if:

- * It does not comply with the current collection policy of the WHS.
- * It is damaged beyond repair.
- * The conservation and storage costs for it are beyond the means of the WHS.
- * It is a lesser quality duplicate of an item the WHS already owns.
- * It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection.
- * A substantiated request for the return of the item to its original owner/donor is received. This could be the return of sacred material to Indigenous peoples, where compliance will be with the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

Deaccessioning and Disposal Procedure:

- * Items under consideration for deaccessioning are set aside for a period of three months before a final decision is made by the Committee and/or the Collections sub-committee with reference to the acquisition criteria.
- * An item can be sold including by public auction where appropriate, or destroyed or recycled if appropriate.
- * WHS members and volunteers may purchase, or otherwise obtain, a deaccessioned item as long as this interest/purchase has been notified to the Committee.
- * Any funds acquired from the sale of the deaccessioned item should be used for acquisitions or care of the collection.
- * Deaccessioned items may be passed on to a more appropriate organisation and/or returned to the original donor or family where possible.
- * Deaccessioned items will be noted on the database, including the reason for deaccession.

5. Storage and Conservation:

The Committee aims to store and care for items in the following ways:

- * Storage areas must remain clean, secure, and sealed against the weather.
- * Temperature and relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible
- * Access to storage areas is to be controlled.
- * Ultra-violet light should be excluded from storage areas. When storage areas are not in use, lights must be turned off.
- * Archival quality storage materials should be used for all significant items.
- * Storage areas must be regularly checked for pests and other problems.
- * Items are not to be stored on the floor.
- * Untrained personnel should never attempt to clean, treat or restore items.

6. Loans:

The Society may lend or borrow materials at the discretion of the Committee and/or the Collections sub-committee, to support its stated aims, purposes and objectives.

Loan Procedures:

- * All loans are mandated by endorsement of the Collections Team Leader.
- * Details of all loans, both inward and outward, are recorded.
- * A maximum outward loan period is 3 months. An extension of the term can be negotiated in consultation with the Committee in exceptional circumstances.
- * Handling and conservation arrangements are negotiated and monitored for all loaned items.
- * Insurance arrangements are considered and negotiated.

7. Policy Review Process:

The Collection Policy is reviewed by the Committee and the Collections sub-committee every two years, or earlier as required.