

Queensland Military Historical Society Incorporated

Museum Collection Policy 2017-2020

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1. Statement of purpose

The mission of the Queensland Military Historical Society Inc (QMHS) (the Society) is to promote an understanding of Queensland's military history, through research and scholarship, the provision of a forum for discussion, and the development and exhibition of our collections. To deliver on this mission, the Society will, among other things, develop a museum collection known as the Queensland Military Museum (the Museum) that portrays the military heritage of Queensland, and display, exhibit and interpret museum objects

2. Purpose and scope of the collection policy

This policy outlines the principle areas of collection focus for the Museum, prioritises collection areas to enhance or preserve, and provides a framework for developing and preserving the collections. The policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier at the request of the Committee requests

3. Ownership

Legal ownership of objects in the collection of the Museum is vested solely in the Queensland Military Historical Society Incorporated. Unless specifically recorded as being transferred to the Society, copyright in collection objects is vested in the original creator in accordance with the *Copyright Act 1968 (Commonwealth)*.

4. Collection scope

4.1 Key Themes

The Museum will collect Queensland related military objects under the following key themes:

- a. Imperial forces that served in Queensland;
- b. Colonial military and naval forces of Queensland;
- c. Australian Defence Force Units (Navy, Army and Air Force) based in Queensland
- d. Australian Defence Force Units based outside of Queensland where there is a clear connection to Queensland in terms of history, operations, or co-operation;
- e. Military objects owned by, or connected to, Queensland Military Officers or highly decorated service persons
- f. Military objects relating to Allies of the colony of Queensland or the Commonwealth where the object has a direct relationship to Queensland
- g. Military objects relating to enemy forces of the colony of Queensland or the Commonwealth where the object has a direct relationship to Queensland

4.2 Historic period

The Museum collection will cover the period from settlement in 1824 to the present day.

4.3 Geographic area

In respect of the collection, 'Queensland' refers to the geographical borders defined by the *Letters Patent altering the western boundary of Queensland 1862* and any adjacent territories or islands under administration from time to time, including such areas within these borders previously administered by New South Wales.

4.4 Physical objects to be collected

The Museum collection is focussed on three-dimensional objects that have significance in terms of their intrinsic value as an object. While the majority of the collection will be military equipment and armaments, the collection also includes uniforms, flags, papers, documents, maps, plans, photographs, and ephemera.

4.5 Books and publications

The principal collection of books, published editions, manuscripts and digital information resources is held in the Queensland Military Library, and this will be the usual repository for material to be used for reference and research. The Museum will be the repository for any of these items that have intrinsic value as an object due to their association with a military event, campaign or person.

5. Access

The Museum Curator will select objects suitable for display by the Museum. Such objects will be accessible to view free of charge by members of the Society, and by payment of a Museum Admission fee to members of the public. The Committee of the Society may grant free admission to persons or groups at its discretion on receipt of a written request. Requests may be submitted, considered and granted electronically by email.

Items not currently on display may only be viewed by members and bona fide researchers by appointment. Items considered by the Curator to be fragile may have restricted viewing conditions imposed.

Images of selected objects are accessible through the Society website and its collection pages. Copies of manuscripts, documents, photographs, maps and plans may be provided to members and the public for a fee, but not so as to breach the *Copyright Act 1968*. The preferred method of providing copies is through the provision of a digitised copy made available on the Society website. [A schedule of charges is at Attachment 1.](#)

6. Acquisition

6.1 Acquisition Committee

The Acquisition Committee will consist of the Curator and two other Committee members. All recommendations made by the Committee will be documented and retained by the Museum and made available on request to Society members.

6.2 Priority object acquisition

The Acquisitions Committee will prepare an annual schedule of priority objects to seek for inclusion in the collection. These objects will be recommended for acquisition where they may fill a perceived gap in the collection, or may replace a poor example currently held. The Acquisitions Committee may delegate acquisition of pre-defined priority objects to the Curator and/or other Society members only where such acquisition does not create any form of liability.

6.3 Acquisition Criteria

6.3.1 Relevance

The Museum only collects objects that relate to the Museum's purpose and key collecting areas. Priority will be given to objects that may supplement collection areas the Society considers to be lacking in interpretation, quantity or quality.

6.3.2 Significance

Priority is given to objects which are significant for their historic, aesthetic, research or social value.

6.3.3 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.

6.3.4 Condition, intactness, integrity

The condition of the object must be taken into consideration when acquiring material. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the collection unless it is of particular rarity or value, or where the damage forms an intrinsic part of the object's story.

6.3.5 Interpretive Potential

Priority will be given to objects that tell a story that adds to the interpretation of Museum themes.

6.3.6 Rarity

Objects may be prioritised if they are rare examples of a particular kind of object.

6.3.7 Representativeness

Objects may be prioritised if they are an excellent representative example of a particular kind of object.

6.3.8 Duplications

Objects that duplicate objects already in the collection will not be accepted unless they are of superior condition and/or historic value. In such a case the duplicate may be considered for deaccessioning.

6.3.9 Legal Requirements

The Museum will only accept objects where the donor/vendor has legal title to the object.

6.3.10 Safety

The Museum will not accept objects where the safety is not assured.

6.3.11 Ethical obligations

The Society acknowledges that it has mandatory obligations to protect significant cultural objects under the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 (Commonwealth)*, which includes the return of foreign cultural property which has been illegally exported from its country of origin and imported into Australia.

6.3.12 Prohibited weapons and firearms

The Museum will not accept prohibited weapons. Firearms will only be acquired if they are of a 'military' nature and are of a type used by the Imperial forces, the Queensland colonial forces, the Australian Defence Forces, or against these forces by enemies in wars involving Queenslanders and Australians. The Curator is responsible to ensure that all firearms for the collection are legally acquired and registered with the Firearms Licensing Branch of the Queensland Police Service. The Armour is to render all firearms to be displayed in the gallery inoperable, not innocuous. All firearms not on display are to be secured in the vault.

6.3.13 Shipwreck material

The Museum acknowledges that it has mandatory obligations to preserve and protect shipwreck relics in its custody under the *Historic Shipwrecks Act 1976 (Commonwealth)*.

6.4 Method of acquisition

The Museum shall acquire objects for the permanent collection by donation, bequest, transfer of ownership, purchase. Any member may suggest or refer an item to the Acquisitions Committee for potential acquisition. The total funds available for all acquisitions in any financial year will be clearly outlined in the annual budget of the Society.

The Curator may purchase on the open public market, including at auction or online auction, any object that satisfies the acquisition criteria, and any pre-defined priority object. Any purchase, or in the case of an auction anticipated purchase, must only be made with prior approval by a majority of the Committee of the Society. In the case of a purchase at auction, including online auction, this approval is to be up to a set maximum bid amount. This approval can be sought by email.

The Museum will not accept conditional donations, bequests, or transfers of ownership where any conditions restrict the Museum from exercising the typical full ownership rights of the object. In this respect, the conditions that may apply to such donations, bequests, or transfers of ownership will be limited to public acknowledgement of the source of the object.

All acquisitions will be recorded on an acquisition register. The register will include:

- a. an acquisition register number
- b. the date of acquisition
- c. the method of acquisition
- d. object description
- e. object condition, noting any damage or identifying features
- f. full name, address and contact details of the previous owner
- g. known information about the provenance, history, associations or significance of the object
- h. any identifying documentation (which may be copied and returned to the donor if required)
- i. any known preservation needs or special storage requirements
- j. Confirmation from the Acquisitions Committee of receipt of the object

All objects held by the Museum and not recorded in the acquisition register must, within 6 months of this policy, be accessioned with the minimum requirement of (a) an acquisition register number, and (d) an object description.

Donation, ownership transfer and purchase forms will facilitate collection of this acquisition data. **A sample acquisition form is at Attachment 2.**

7. Collection care

7.1 Documentation and record keeping

The Museum aims at all times to maintain an effective documentation system. Donor forms, receipts, Registers, and catalogue information will be kept at the Museum and available for inspection by any member of the Society.

7.2 Storage and conservation

The Museum aims to achieve high standards of collection care and storage.

- a. Storage and display areas must remain clean, secure and sealed against the weather.
- b. Temperature and relative humidity should be kept as stable as possible and recorded over time. Forecast extreme weather events that create a risk to the collection are to be mitigated where possible.
- c. Access to storage and display areas is to be controlled.
- d. Ultra-violet light should be excluded from storage and display areas. When areas are not in use lights must be turned off.
- e. Archival quality storage materials should be used for all collection objects.
- f. A Pest Management Plan approved by the Committee should be in place, and include regular checks for pests and other problems.
- g. Objects are not to be stored on the floor.
- h. Untrained persons should never attempt to clean, treat or restore Museum objects unless under the direction of a trained conservator

8. Deaccessioning and disposal procedures

8.1 Criteria for deaccessioning

An object can be deaccessioned from the Museum's collection if:

- a. It does not comply with the current collection policy of the Museum.
- b. It is damaged beyond repair.
- c. The conservation and storage costs for it are beyond the means of the Museum.
- d. It is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the Museum already owns.
- e. It lacks supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection.
- f. A substantiated request for the return of the object to its original owner/donor is received.
- g. Transfer or return of ownership is required by law.

8.2 Deaccession procedures

An object can only be considered for deaccession if it is recorded in the Acquisitions Register with the minimum required information being (a) an acquisition register number, and (d) an object description. The Acquisition Committee must be satisfied that the Museum has full rights to ownership of the object and, if not recorded, should document any known provenance and likely method of acquisition prior to any disposal decision.

The object identified for removal from the collection must come before the Acquisition Committee for consideration with close reference to the criteria stated above. The notice should include a recommended disposal action based on the following preferred order of disposal actions:

- 1) If the object was donated and the donor or their family can be contacted, it should be offered to them free of charge apart from freight if required.
- 2) If the donor is not known or contactable, or if the donor or their family do not want the object returned, ownership of the object should be offered to another museum or collecting institution. Such a donation may not be warranted if the Acquisitions Committee considers that the potential monetary gain from disposal outweighs the goodwill or relation building opportunity of the donation.
- 3) If actions 1 and 2 are unsuccessful and the Acquisitions Committee considers the object has a monetary value on the open market, the object should be offered for sale by public auction, online auction or tender, with the method of disposal selected by the Acquisitions Committee based on the greatest potential return.
- 4) If actions 1, 2, and 3 are not successful, the Acquisitions Committee should consider whether the object could deliver a benefit to the Society if it were to be broken down for parts to assist in the repair or restoration of another object (recycled).
- 5) If actions 1, 2, 3 and 4 are not suitable, the object should be disposed of by destruction, recycling or as general refuse.

The method of disposal of any firearms or controlled weapons must accord with all legislation that applies to such an item at the time of disposal.

Members, volunteers, committee members and their families are prohibited from purchasing or otherwise obtaining a deaccessioned object unless the object is sold by way of an open public or online auction.

Any funds acquired from the sale of a deaccessioned object will be banked in accordance with the current finance rules, and should be set aside for future acquisitions or care of the collection.

The Acquisition Committee will report all deaccessions, the disposal action, and any sale proceeds to the next Society Committee meeting.

A report outlining the date of disposal, reasons for de-accession, method of disposal and authority for disposal will be added to the Museum register entry for the deaccessioned object.

9. Loans

9.1 *Loan principles*

The Museum acknowledges that cooperation between collecting institutions can result in enhanced community understanding of military and Queensland heritage.

9.2 *Inward loans*

The Museum will seek, request and accept objects for temporary exhibit purposes by loan where the object enhances interpretation of the theme of the exhibit.

Inward loans shall only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research and for fixed periods of time. Inward loans shall be recorded in a Loans Register. The Museum will not accept a loaned object where the loan might create any form of liability to the Museum or the Society. Any loan accepted by the Museum must be for an agreed time not exceeding two years, with arrangements for its return specified in the loan agreement. Permanent and long term loans will not be accepted by the Museum.

A representative of both the Museum (generally the Curator) and the lender (generally the owner) will be required to sign an inward loan agreement. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record conditions of the loan and the period of the loan. Loans shall remain in the possession of the Museum for the time specified on the form. [A sample inward loan agreement is at Attachment 3](#)

The Museum agrees to exercise the same care with respect to loans as it does for its own collection.

9.3 *Outward loans*

The Museum will consider loans of collection objects to other collecting institutions and will accommodate the loans where such a loan does not detract from an existing or planned Museum exhibit.

The Museum will lend objects to other museums and organisations holding collections on approval by the Committee of the Society. The Committee may approve the loan of items for specific purposes other than exhibit where such a loan is considered on the whole to be of benefit to the Museum. It will not lend to private collectors. The Museum will not lend items requiring specialised storage, or items in poor condition.

Borrowers and a representative from the Museum (generally the Curator) will be required to sign an outward loan agreement. Each party will hold a copy of this agreement. This form will record condition of the loan and the period of the loan. Objects cannot be treated or altered in any way without the written permission of the Museum. [A sample outward loan agreement is at Attachment 4](#)

Loans will remain in the possession of the borrower until returned to the Museum. The borrower must exercise care in the handling, storage and display of the loan object and must be prepared to meet the storage, display and security conditions outlined in the outward loan agreement.

The maximum loan period is 12 months. Applications for extension of this period must be made prior to the loan expiry date.

Attachment 1 - Schedule of Charges

[to come]

Attachment 2 – Acquisition form

[to come]

Attachment 3 – Inward loan agreement

[to come]

Attachment 4 – Outward loan agreement

[to come]