

Collection Care Policy

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1. Purpose of this Policy

One of the Goals of the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA), as set out in its Charter, is to ensure its collections will be maintained and displayed in accordance with international standards and conventions of museum conservation, handling and security. This policy outlines the principles, key controls and strategies that AGSA undertakes to achieve its goal of caring for, safeguarding and preserving its collection and works of art under its care whilst maintaining the aesthetic, cultural and historical characteristics of these heritage assets.

2. Scope

This policy covers the physical maintenance and protection of all works of art in the AGSA permanent collection and all works of art under its care and custody.

It is recognised that the known inadequacy of the building fabric of AGSA's storage facilities places increasing demands and limitations on the key controls and strategies used to ensure the safety and security of AGSA's collection. All collection care approaches outlined in this policy are conducted in an ethical manner and aim for the highest museum standards achievable under current storage conditions.

3. Definitions

In this policy:

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Art means a work of art by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist or containing Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander themes or content.

Building Management System (BMS) is an electronic network used to monitor and control a building's electrical and mechanical services, including heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), and lighting.

Collection means works of art in various media that are the property of AGSA and have been formally accessioned. For the purposes of this policy, the terms “work of art”, “work” and related terms are used interchangeably to describe all works of art acquired into the permanent collection.

Collection Management System (CMS) is a software system designed to catalogue and manage the objects in a collection allowing collecting institutions to organise, control, and manage their collections' objects by tracking all information related to and about those objects.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an ecosystems approach to the control of pests that is preventive, proactive and preferably non-chemical and when applied in the museum context employs a variety of techniques to prevent and solve pest problems in an efficient and environmentally sound manner without compromising the safety of collections, museum staff or visitors.

Preventive conservation is an agreed plan of non-invasive action to slow the rate of deterioration and reduce risks for museum and gallery collections by focusing on the surrounding of the collections ranging from building maintenance, staff practices, public attitude, environmental control and legislation.

Remedial conservation involves actions directly applied to a work of art aimed at arresting current damaging processes or reinforcing their structure. These treatments are carried out after seeking conservator advice and only by trained conservators.

Risk Management involves identifying, assessing, and prioritising risks. The identified and prioritised risks then inform a planned program to minimise and control the probability and impact of identified threats to the collection.

Stock-checking is the process whereby an inventory or itemised list of objects that a gallery has accessioned or received via loan is physically located and recorded as sighted on a regularly occurring schedule.

4. Principles

The core principles of this policy are to support the preservation and protection of AGSA's significant collection for the benefit of future generations. AGSA will ensure the collection and works in its care are managed on terms that are respectful, ethical, honourable, responsible and visible for public scrutiny.

Preventive conservation principles underpin the collection care practices at AGSA. Preventive conservation is recognised as a whole of collection approach and is based on the concept that deterioration and damage to works of art can be substantially reduced by controlling some of the major causes of this in gallery environments when works are on display, in storage or in transit.

In addition, the risk management framework of AGSA as outlined in the AGSA Risk Register (Version 2.0) is referenced and integrated into all collection care decision-making. Asset risks encompassing the collection and concomitant storage facilities are a critical part of the overall AGSA risk profile and management of these risks is an important principle for ensuring that the collection is given appropriate levels of care at all times.

AGSA acknowledges its significant holdings of works of art by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and is committed to the care and preservation of these works in accordance with all state, national and international legislation, regulations and guidelines. All actions regarding the stewardship of these works will be undertaken in consultation with AGSA's Curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and where appropriate members of the Cultural Advisory Committee, other appropriate individuals, groups or communities within Australia and in accordance with AGSA's Reconciliation Action Plan.

These principles also align closely with the National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries (Version 1.5) and the ICOM code of Ethics for Museums.

5. Key Controls and Strategies

Preventive conservation aims to minimise and manage risks to works of art thus avoiding remedial and invasive treatment. AGSA makes decisions on collection care practices based on current conservation advice and guidelines and the key controls and strategies of this policy promote the cost-effective use of limited resources to obtain the greatest possible reduction of all predicted and known risks to the collection. AGSA also promotes green and sustainable cultural heritage practices. The key controls and strategies are:

1. Building maintenance and regular housekeeping

Buildings housing the collection are regularly inspected and assessed for damp, pests, dust, pollution, rubbish and other potential risks. Regular housekeeping and cleaning practices are undertaken.

2. Environmental conditions and monitoring

AGSA actively strives to create and maintain appropriate and stable environments in line with current recognised standards for all works on display and in storage. AGSA endorses the Bizot Group Green Protocols that support a pragmatic approach to the use of wider environmental parameters to meet the specific needs of collections and the ability of AGSA's buildings to maintain sustainable conditions. AGSA endeavours to reconcile the long-term preservation of the collection with the ongoing need to reduce the expenditure of resources and AGSA's carbon footprint. Conditions are maintained by the BMS with readings monitored and stored for future reference.

3. Integrated pest management

IPM is utilised to monitor, detect and reduce pest and vermin presence in all display and storage areas by the employment of sustainable and non-toxic techniques. AGSA is permitted to manage its own biosecurity risks under its approved arrangements with the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment.

4. Lighting

AGSA aims to meet all recognised museum standards for light exposure (including uv light, visible light, lux, infra-red and lumen) and all decisions regarding lighting incorporate consideration of display and storage requirements along with the long-term preservation of the work.

5. Display

All exhibition design, display techniques and strategies are informed by preventative conservation principles and are developed in consultation with curators, conservators, artists, lenders and other stakeholders. All installations and de-installations are coordinated to identify and manage risks to the works and to people and to ensure the sustainable use of resources.

6. Access

AGSA facilitates access to its collection and works in its care through a range of programs including temporary and touring exhibitions, outward loans, physical viewing of works not on display and its online environment. AGSA is committed to providing access to its collection wherever possible without compromising the safety and security of the works of art. AGSA reserves the right to restrict access when works of art are considered fragile, at risk or culturally sensitive.

7. Conservation

Remedial conservation and restoration will be undertaken when the focus is on stabilising the work of art and preventing further deterioration or to enhance or facilitate the display of the item. All conservation treatments are undertaken by trained conservators at Artlab Australia in consultation with the relevant AGSA collection curator and when required the owner, lender or agent. External conservators are utilised if specialised expertise is required. AGSA curators determine the conservation priorities for the AGSA collection and all conservation work is recorded with full documentation.

8. Handling and transport

All AGSA staff engaged in handling works of art are appropriately trained in safe handling, display techniques and sound collection management principles. AGSA is committed to utilising appropriate methods and materials in the packing and transport of works. AGSA only engages appropriately qualified, experienced and established contractors for the packing, crating and transportation of collection works and loans.

9. Storage

AGSA is committed to safe and effective storage for all works in its collection regardless of size, shape or material. Where necessary for the safety and preservation of a work appropriate and sustainable storage crates and containers will be utilised with the aim to long term preservation. AGSA maintains a valuation limit of \$1,000,000 for works stored off-site. Any works over the designated value limit that by necessity are stored off-site will be reported to the Art Gallery Board along with justifying rationale.

10. Disaster preparedness

Disaster planning and preparedness is an integral part of risk management. The AGSA Disaster Plan for Collections provides a framework for the management of incidents affecting AGSA's collection and works in its care while on display or in storage. The Disaster Plan aims to provide a prompt, targeted and coordinated response and is reviewed and updated annually by conservators from Artlab Australia. Select AGSA staff are trained to be familiar with, and act in accordance with, disaster recovery and salvage procedures when the need arises. AGSA undertakes formal risk assessments in consultation with Artlab Australia for all large-scale exhibitions and displays in order to identify and mitigate, where possible, all threats to the collection and loans. Staff and volunteers are trained to promptly report all incidents involving the collection and loans.

11. Documentation

AGSA is committed to documenting its collection and works in its care according to internationally accepted registration and collection management standards. AGSA recognises that disassociation of works of art from the knowledge and information about them will significantly impact AGSA's ability to safeguard its heritage assets from damage, theft and fraud. AGSA utilises an industry standard CMS to manage and maintain the physical, digital and intellectual control of the collection. The CMS is structured to manage and facilitate broad access and knowledge of the collection while ensuring respect for, and

compliance with, security, risk management, confidentiality and privacy issues. AGSA assigns unique identifiers for all works of art and maintains strict location processes and protocols.

12. Stock-checks and Valuation

In accordance with statutory reporting requirements AGSA maintains a schedule of stock-checks with a ten-year rotation that encompasses all parts of the collection and long-term loans. A regular inventory of the collection is an important asset management tool and provides information on the reliability and accuracy of physical location information and the condition of works. Annual results of the stock-checks are reported to the Art Gallery Board along with recommendations.

In compliance with accounting requirements for heritage collections AGSA undertakes a valuation of the entire collection every five years.

This policy is supported by written procedures for collection care that are informed by regular collection assessments and the legal, ethical and statutory requirements that underpin management of a collection.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for collection care will vary across AGSA's business units but this policy recognises that all AGSA staff play a role in caring for and protecting the collection.

7. Related Policies and Procedures

7.1 AGSA Policies and Procedures

Art Gallery of South Australia Strategic Plan 2019-22
AGSA Disaster Plan for the Collections 2020- 2021
AGSA Risk Assessment for Temporary and Long Term Loans
Art Gallery of South Australia Emergency Plan (Draft) 2020
Art Gallery of South Australia Risk Register V2.0
Acquisitions Policy
Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector
Due Diligence and Provenance Policy
Due Diligence and Provenance Procedures
Furnishing Loan Policy
Inward Loans Procedures – to be revised 2021
Outward Loan Procedures – to be revised 2021
Outline of process to ensure the custody and management of works in the care of the Art Gallery of South Australia
Risk Policy
Reconciliation Action Plan

7.2 National and International legislation, guidelines and procedures

The Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018
Risk Management – Guidelines
National Standards Taskforce National Standards for Australian
Museums and Galleries, Version 1.5 September 2016
Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986
Protection of Moveable Cultural Heritage Regulations 2018
Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Act 2013
Protection of Cultural Objects on Loan Regulation 2014
ICOM Code of Ethics
Museums Australia Code of Ethics
Australian Best Practice Guide to Collecting Cultural Material
Bizot Group, Loans Guidelines, 18 December 2009
Bizot Green Protocol 2015
AICCM Environmental Guidelines for Australian Cultural Heritage
Collections (2018)
ICOM-CC and IIC Declaration Environmental Guidelines
Heritage Collections Council (HCC) Guidelines for Environmental
Control in Cultural Institutions 2002
A Practical Guide for Sustainable Climate Control and Lighting in
Museums and Galleries 2014
UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the
Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
CITES: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of
Wild Fauna and Flora (Amendment) 1979
United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 – SA Legislation
Biosecurity Act 2015
Customs Act 1901
Public Finance and Audit Act 1987 (SA)

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed after its first year of operation and then on a five-yearly basis.

Policy endorsed by Audit Committee	3 March 2021
Policy approved by Art Gallery Board	21 April 2021
Policy reviewed after first year of operation (to be reviewed again in 2026)	