

<b>COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Collections Management</b>
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COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.0 Collection Management Policy Objective .....	3
1.1 Mission.....	3
1.2 Values .....	3
1.3 Activities .....	3
1.4 Policy Objectives .....	3
2.0 Legal and Ethical Requirements.....	4
2.1 Legal and ethical requirements .....	4
2.2 Taonga Māori.....	4
3.0 The Existing Collection .....	4
4.0 The Ideal Collection .....	5
4.1 Collecting for whom?.....	5
4.2 Collection Scope and Focus .....	5
4.3 Shaping the Ideal Collection .....	6
5.0 Acquisition – Adding to the Collection .....	6
5.1 Acquisition Criteria .....	6
5.2 Acquisition Decision Making.....	7
5.3 Custody and ownership .....	7
5.4 Collecting and other Institutions .....	7
5.5 Taonga tūturu (Found Taonga) .....	8
5.6 Kōiwi tangata (human remains).....	8
6.0 Deaccession and Disposal.....	8
6.1 Deaccession Criteria .....	8
6.2 Deaccession process requirements .....	9
6.3 Repatriation .....	9
7.0 Caring for the Collection .....	9
7.1 Standard of Care .....	9
7.2 Insurance .....	10
7.3 Security and Risk Management .....	10
7.4 Documentation.....	10
8.0 Access to the Collection.....	10
9.0 Loaning Collection Objects .....	11
9.1 Outgoing Loans .....	11
9.2 Incoming Loans .....	11
9.3 Long-term Loans .....	11
10.0 Handling and Reference Collections.....	11
11.0 Review .....	12
12.0 Corresponding Policies .....	12
Appendix 1 – Weighted Acquisition Criteria .....	13

## **1.0 Collection Management Policy Objective**

The purpose of the Tasman Bays Heritage Trust (TBHT) is to:

*“Create unforgettable experiences that stimulate awareness, celebrate diversity, entertain, and excite action”*

### **1.1 Mission**

The Nelson Provincial Museum is the regional museum of Nelson Tasman. The Museum is the repository of material culture and a proponent of local, distinctive intangible culture. It will present regional history, natural history, mātauranga Māori and contemporary narratives through profiling its collection, and with an ongoing programme of displays and events; by maintaining its collection and records; and by providing lifelong learning opportunities to challenge, inform, and engage the wider community including manawhenua iwi, as well as visitors to the region.

### **1.2 Values**

The following principles underpin decision-making and set the standard for performance interactions with the Museum’s communities:

- To be culturally inclusive by celebrating and respecting our region’s cultural heritage in respect of Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, along with Nelson Tasman’s diverse multi-cultural mix, both past and present, and to show how that contributes to our distinctive regional identity.
- To be innovative, with imaginative approaches and solutions to all activities we undertake.
- To be customer focused: a primary objective of the Museum is to serve its visitors and be responsive to their needs.
- To act professionally, upholding quality museum practices within a context of scholarship and the Museums Aotearoa Code of Ethics.
- To be relevant to our community.
- To preserve our region’s important heritage items and protect them for future generations.
- To be a good employer.
- To be commercially positive, attracting resources and revenues that will underpin our Purpose, Mission, and related activities.

### **1.3 Activities**

Nature and scope of activities to be undertaken:

- To manage and operate the Museum for the benefit of the residents of Nelson Tasman and visitors to the region.
- To acquire, manage, interpret, preserve and make accessible the Museum’s collection for the benefit of residents and visitors.
- To promote understanding and appreciation of the region’s rich cultural heritage and environs.
- To develop and maintain partnerships that mutually benefit the Museum, the community, and allied organisations.
- To professionally manage and maintain all of the Trust’s assets, including the regional heritage collection.

### **1.4 Policy Objectives**

In order to achieve its mission, this Policy adopts the following objectives:

- To actively represent the diverse natural, cultural, and social history of the Nelson-Tasman region in the Collection.

- To actively include the Collection in meaningful visitor experiences both physically and digitally.
- To strategically manage the Collection.
- To work in partnership with iwi and our communities
- To ensure all collection items are managed in a culturally appropriate manner.
- To safeguard the Collection and ensure that the Collection is preserved for the benefit of the Nelson-Tasman region, its residents, visitors and future generations.

## **2.0 Legal and Ethical Requirements**

### **2.1 Legal and ethical requirements**

Nelson Provincial Museum (henceforth referred to as the Museum) is administered by the Tasman Bays Heritage Trust (TBHT), which is the legal entity.

TBHT acknowledges that objects in the Collection are to be protected, cared for and shared with the public.

All Trust staff and Trustees shall regard the Collection as being held in trust for the public and shall act in a manner consistent with this view.

TBHT will act in compliance with the ethical and legal framework for museums as set out in the current Museums Aotearoa Code of Ethics and Professional Practice, the current International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Natural History Museums and any other relevant legislation.

### **2.2 Taonga Māori**

Under the guidance of Te Tai Ao Komiti who represent the manawhenua iwi of Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāti Kuia and Te Ātiawa, staff will observe appropriate cultural practices with regards to Taonga Māori and seek advice in the research, interpretation and display of them.

## **3.0 The Existing Collection**

This Collection is the oldest museum collection in New Zealand. The current Collection draws its roots from the Nelson Literary & Scientific Institute, founded at sea en route to the new settlement of Nelson. Officers aboard the ships *Whitby* and *Will Watch* established the Institute in 1841 and the 700 books they had amongst them became the start of the Collection.

The original focus of the Collection was on “books, maps, charts, manuscripts, drawings, paintings, engravings, sculptures, casts, models of invention and objects of natural history.”<sup>1</sup>

For the next 120 years, the organisation continued to serve the Nelson community in the dual role of both a lending Library and a Museum. The Collection grew through donations, bequests and purchases over this period.

The early 1960s was a time of change for the Collection and for how the functions of ‘lending Library’ and ‘Museum’ were formally organised. In 1963 the Nelson Literary & Scientific Institute formally transferred all Museum Collection objects, including historic publications to the newly formed Nelson Provincial Museum Trust. The Nelson City Council took over the function of ‘lending Library’ and the ‘Library’ stock of publications was transferred to the council in 1965.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the first edition of the *Nelson Advertiser*, Sept 6, 1841. Quoted in *The History of the Nelson Institute*, p.12, C.B. Brereton, A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1948.

The Collection of the newly established Nelson Provincial Museum substantially grew that same year when the Nelson Historical Society (NHS) transferred its sizable collection to the Museum. NHS had formed in 1953, and had actively collected historic material from the region over 12 years, mainly but not limited to archives and social history objects.

In 2000, the Collection was transferred to the Tasman Bays Heritage Trust, which, on behalf of Tasman District Council and Nelson City Council administers the Nelson Provincial Museum.

The Collection is currently comprised of the following categories:

- Taonga Māori (incl. Archaeological material)
- Works of art
- Archives and Publications
- Photography
- Objects (Costume and Textile; Domestic and Technical; Foreign Ethnology; Natural History)

Collection strengths include:

- Archaeological material from Māori occupation sites, pre-1500 (AD)
- The Photographic Collection which dates from 1860 to today. It is considered to be the largest regional collection of photographic material in Aotearoa New Zealand, with an estimated 1.5 million images.
- A comprehensive set of photographic negatives from a single photographic studio documenting over 60 years of the region's history (Tyree Studio Collection, 1878 – 1940s)
- Pre-1900 clothing and textiles, with strong provenance to local and regional individuals
- Primary archival material, art and personal belongings relating to the European settlement of the region (circa 1840s-1890s)
- Early original maps, plans, charts and newspapers of the region
- Taonga Māori
- Special named collections:
  - Bett Collection
  - Marsden Collection
  - Knapp Collection

#### **4.0 The Ideal Collection**

##### **4.1 *Collecting for whom?***

The Museum aims to collect and preserve objects, which together create the finest, most complete and diverse representation possible of the natural, cultural, and social history of the Nelson-Tasman region. This Collection of objects is held primarily for the benefit of the Nelson-Tasman region, its residents, local iwi, visitors, researchers and future generations.

##### **4.2 *Collection Scope and Focus***

The existing Collection has been shaped throughout the 175 years of its history. The collecting focus has shifted and developed through time, as broader ideas around the 'purpose of the Museum' have changed. The original collecting themes were wide and tended to focus on objects from around New Zealand and the world with historical, artistic or scientific merit.

As time has passed, the regional focus has strengthened. Now, material with strong historical and/or contemporary significance and relevance to the Nelson and Tasman region is the most important collecting theme.

### **4.3 *Shaping the Ideal Collection***

The Museum adds to the existing Collection by donations of material from the public (including bequests) and via purchases.

The Museum refines the existing Collection by deaccessioning and disposal.

The Museum will add to and refine the existing Collection in line with the current Collection scope and focus.

**Active measures** will also be taken to develop the following areas, which are under-represented in the Collection:

- Natural history from the region
- Photographic images taken during the 1950s
- Archives from the region created 1900 onwards, particularly letters and diaries
- Historic daywear/casual clothing from the region
- Decorative arts and crafts from the region
- Contemporary social history
- Contemporary Taonga Māori

## **5.0 Acquisition – Adding to the Collection**

### **5.1 *Acquisition Criteria***

The acquisition criteria listed below are used to inform the acquisitions process. In general, items will be assessed against the specified criteria allowing TBHT staff to determine the suitability of an object to join the existing Collection. As some factors are more significant than others in shaping the ideal Collection, the criteria have been weighted. (See Appendix 1.)

TBHT Board reserves the right to decline or accept any item regardless of its acquisition criteria rating.

#### **5.1.1 The Museum will add the following to the Collection:**

- Material with strong historical and/or contemporary significance and relevance to the Nelson and Tasman regions<sup>2</sup>
- Material for which there is strong research potential
- Material in a good, stable physical condition which can be maintained in the long term, or, if not, material which can be repaired, restored and/or stabilized by a qualified conservator at the current time at a cost which reflects its worth
- Quality and fine examples of object type, for example, representing fine workmanship and/or strong aesthetic appeal, with particular focus on exhibition and interpretive potential
- Material that can be stored adequately and safely at the current time and in the near future
- Material that complements and enhances the existing Collection or in accordance with the Museum's purpose
- Taonga Māori in partnership with iwi

#### **5.1.2 The Museum will not add the following to the Collection:**

- Material which does not meet the acquisition criteria
- Kōiwi tangata / human remains

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<sup>2</sup> This region is geographically defined by the area that is currently administered by Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council. For Taonga Māori and all other items relating to Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) this region is geographically defined by Te Tai Ao Komiti.

- Material in a physical condition which may damage the existing Collection
- Material that is, or could be, a health and safety risk to Staff and/or the public which cannot be reasonably mitigated
- Material which is duplicated by a stronger example in the existing Collection
- Copies of original material, unless it is known or strongly suspected that the original is lost or badly damaged
- Material with unclear legal title
- Material which has, or is suspected to have, an unethical or illegal provenance
- Material with disproportionate and/or unachievable conditions attached which cannot be facilitated

## **5.2 Acquisition Decision Making**

The weighted acquisition criteria will be used in the decision-making process. (See Appendix 1)

Objects offered for donation which clearly meet the specified acquisition criteria are acquired for the Collection. Objects which clearly do not meet the specified criteria are not acquired for the Collection.

In the case where the weighted acquisition criteria do not clearly indicate a decision, an object will be considered by the Collection Acquisition Committee consisting of the CEO and senior Collection staff. If required, further research and consultation with external parties will be carried out to clarify the object's position in relation to the specified acquisition criteria.

If a clear decision is still unable to be made, the Collection Acquisition Committee will make a recommendation to THBT board regarding acquiring or declining the object.

Funds will be apportioned annually by TBHT Board for Collection purchases.

All purchases for the Collection must be approved by the Collection Acquisition Committee prior to acquisition.

All purchases for the Collection over \$5000 must also be formally approved by TBHT Board prior to acquisition.

Guidance must be sought from the Te Tai Ao Komiti before any Taonga Māori object formally joins the Collection.

## **5.3 Custody and ownership**

The Museum requires clear legal title for all items that are to be acquired for the Collection.

In special circumstances, the Museum may hold items on behalf of another party for an extended period of time. See long-term loans section (9.3) of this Policy.

## **5.4 Collecting and other Institutions**

### **5.4.1 Regionally:**

We acknowledge the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the region. We recognise that objects should be placed in the most appropriate collection possible. We may recommend a more appropriate museum or organisation for the donor to approach.

### **5.4.2 Nationally:**

If the Museum is offered material of national significance which does not fit within this Collection Policy, we will actively work with the current owner and appropriate National Collecting Institutions in finding an appropriate place for this material.

### **5.5 Taonga tūturu (found taonga)**

On occasion, and as directed by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, the Museum identifies and cares for taonga tūturu found by members of the public or from archaeological sites. Any taonga Māori found post 1975 comes under the Protected Objects Act. Under the Act, all taonga tūturu found are in the first instance (prima facie) Crown owned to allow claims for ownership to be heard by the Māori Land Court.

These items are not part of the Collection but will hold the same level of documentation and receive the same level of care as Collection items.

### **5.6 Kōiwi tangata (human remains)**

The Museum does not collect kōiwi tangata. If the Museum is made aware of kōiwi tangata, we will refer the individual to the appropriate organisations as required under legislation: New Zealand Police and Heritage New Zealand.

## **6.0 Deaccession and Disposal**

Deaccession and disposal are essential parts of managing the Museum's Collection and maintaining its significance to the Nelson-Tasman region.

The Museum has a responsibility to identify and consider for deaccession, any object whose significance, relevance and merit fall below the acquisition criteria for the Collection.

### **6.1 Deaccession Criteria**

Objects proposed for deaccession **must meet at least one of these criteria:**

- Does not fall within the current scope of the Collection or meet the Collection acquisition criteria
- Is a duplicate of, or very similar to, another object in the Collection and is inferior to it in terms of relevance, significance, and/or condition
- Poor physical condition / badly damaged to the point where it is unworthy of conservation or restoration and is not suitable for display or reference
- Incomplete to the point of irrelevance and is not suitable for display or reference
- Can no longer be physically cared for or is a physical threat to other collection objects or staff e.g. insect infestation, poisonous materials
- Is required for approved destructive analytical techniques
- Proven to be a fake or forgery, or has false provenance/history
- Has an unethical or illegal background
- Is the subject of a substantiated request for return to its original or cultural owners or descendants (i.e. repatriation)
- Is better suited to another collecting institution

The following types of items currently held in the care of the Museum may be evaluated and identified for deaccession:

- Material which is known to be accessioned and is part of the existing Collection
- Material which is 'found in the collection' with no known provenance (original acquisition method)
- Old loans which, after reasonable attempts have been made to return to the last known owner, still remain in the physical care of the Museum
- Anonymous and/or unsolicited donations (e.g. 'door-step' or postal donations) in which the intention of the current owner is deemed to be a donation

- Any other heritage material held by the Museum which, after reasonable attempts have been made to return to the last known owner, still remain in the physical care of the Museum.

## **6.2 Deaccession process requirements**

The Museum will undertake due diligence to establish that no legal conditions preclude deaccession / disposal and a risk assessment will be performed.

The Museum will advise the original donor/s, their family, or descendants of an item recommended for deaccession whenever possible. These parties may have an interest in the disposal method.

In the case that Taonga Māori is recommended for deaccession, the deaccession recommendation will be created in partnership with Te Tai Ao Komiti.

Items recommended for deaccession will be reported to and approved by TBHT Board. Deaccession recommendations will include the following:

- Detailed rationale for deaccessioning
- Proposed method of disposal
- Original acquisition method
- Risk assessment
- Cultural considerations

Items approved for deaccession will be disposed of by return to donor, gift, exchange, sale, destruction, repatriation or burial.

All decisions and resulting actions relating to the deaccession and disposal of items from the Collection will be documented.

## **6.3 Repatriation**

In the event that Taonga Māori in the Collection are requested to be returned to traditional owners, the Museum will act under the guidance of Te Tai Ao Komiti.

In the event that other culturally sensitive objects in the Collection are requested to be returned to traditional owners, the Museum will act on advice from Te Tai Ao Komiti and other groups as appropriate.

All discussions will be entered into with concerned parties in good faith.

## **7.0 Caring for the Collection**

### **7.1 Standard of Care**

TBHT Board has a responsibility to ensure that the Collection is passed to future generations in as good and safe a condition as practicable.

Physical storage for the Collection and a protective museum standard environment will be created and maintained in-line with museum standards and current best practice, whether in storage, on display or in transit.

On occasion, an object may require intervention to halt active deterioration in condition. In this case, the expertise of a qualified conservator will be sought to stabilize the object at a cost which reflects its worth.

Restoration and/or repair of an object will only be undertaken in exceptional circumstances, and with TBHT Board approval.

Funds will be apportioned annually by TBHT Board for Collection care.

## **7.2 Insurance**

TBHT Board will ensure adequate insurance cover is in place for all aspects of the Collection; in storage, on display and in transit.

## **7.3 Security and Risk Management**

Adequate security measures will be in place at all times to ensure the physical security and mauri of the Collection.

Active measures will be taken to prevent damage or loss to the Collection.

A current Disaster Management Plan will be in place.

## **7.4 Documentation**

All items accepted into the Collection will be documented to current museum standards and current best practice using the approved computerised Collection Management System.

## **8.0 Access to the Collection**

The Museum strives to share knowledge about the Collection in a meaningful way, both physically and digitally.

Access to the Collection is provided through:

- galleries and exhibitions
- facilitating access to Collection storage
- facilitating loans
- education
- special Museum events
- community outreach, including displays and events
- publications
- online channels
- actively supporting researchers

We encourage the widest possible access to the Collection entrusted to our care, within operational constraints and without detracting from high standards of object security and care.

We encourage physical access to the Collection from members of the public and researchers. Requests for access will take into consideration the conservation status of the item and any other applicable factors.

Access to the Collection is subject to any legal conditions agreed when the item came into the care of the Trust, or conditions imposed by the Trust.

Access to and research of Taonga Māori by an external party requires approval from Te Tai Ao Komiti.

The Museum is committed to digitising the Collection to facilitate wider access to information for all users.

The Museum acknowledges the interests of commercial users, such as television production companies and publishers, in its Collection. Commercial use of the Collection is encouraged, unless it compromises the integrity and/or preservation of the items in question, as a means of raising and increasing public awareness of the Museum Collection. Any commercial income directly arising from the use of the Collection will be applied for the benefit of the Collection.

## **9.0     Loaning Collection Objects**

All loan arrangements will be for a defined time period and documented to museum standards and current best practice.

Both outgoing and incoming loans with an insurance value greater than \$5000 will be approved by TBHT Board.

### **9.1     Outgoing Loans**

- Objects from the Collection may be available for loan, subject to agreed terms and conditions.
- All outgoing loans shall be approved by the CEO.
- Guidance must be sought from the Te Tai Ao Komiti before any Taonga Māori object in the Collection is approved for loan.

### **9.2     Incoming Loans**

- The Museum may, from time to time, request Collection items from another institution or in private ownership, subject to agreed terms and conditions.
- Items on loan will receive the same level of care as Museum Collection items

### **9.3     Long-term Loans**

In special circumstances, rather than seeking the transfer of ownership to TBHT, the Trust may hold items on behalf of the owners on a long-term basis.

Examples include Crown property, the safekeeping of Taonga Māori or other significant items which are in group ownership or partnership arrangements.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) document will be agreed to by the owners, TBHT Board and (if appropriate) Te Tai Ao Komiti. As these agreements can exist for many decades, the MoU must include a timeframe of the loan and review periods, clearly defined contact people, and terms of usage of the object/s both for the Museum and the owners.

Items on long-term loan will hold the same level of documentation and receive the same level of care as Collection items.

## **10.0    Handling and Reference Collections**

The Museum may hold original or replica items for interpretive and handling purposes. These items are not part of the Collection and do not come under this Policy.

They may include, but are not limited to the Education Handling Collection and the Reference Library Collection.

These items will be cared for, changed and renewed by appropriate staff managing the items.

These items will be clearly labelled, so there is no confusion with Collection objects.

Should items be offered to the Handling and Reference Collections which appear to be historically significant, Museum staff are required to seek advice from members of the Collection Acquisition Committee. The item may be considered for the Collection.

#### **11.0 Review**

This Collection Management Policy will be reviewed every three years.

#### **12.0 Corresponding Policies**

Policy 04 - Recording and Reproduction

Policy 06 - Asset Management

Policy 07 - Social and Digital Media Policy

Policy 08 - Code of ethics

Policy 13 - Collections and Heritage Advisory Committee

Policy 17 - Health and Safety

Policy 22 - Delegated Authority

Policy 24 - Digital Preservation

Policy 25 - Digital Collection

## Appendix 1 – Weighted Acquisition Criteria

Acquisition Criteria	Poor	Medium	Strong
Strong historical and/or contemporary significance and relevance to the Nelson and Tasman regions. <sup>3</sup>	0	2	8
Future research potential is deemed to be strong	0	2	5
Good, stable physical condition which can be maintained in the long term, or, if not, material which can be repaired, restored and/or stabilized by a qualified conservator at the current time	0	2	3
Quality and fine examples of object type, for example, representing fine workmanship and/or strongly aesthetically appealing, with particular focus on exhibition potential	0	1	3
Can be stored adequately and safely at the current time	0	1	2
Complements and enhances the existing Collection or in new areas in-line with the Museum's purpose.	0	1	2

### Category A (object scores 16 or higher)

Object clearly and strongly meets the criteria and should be added to the Collection.

### Category B (object scores 10 or lower)

Object does not meet the criteria and should not be added to the Collection.

### Category C (object scores between 11 and 15)

The Significance weighting does not clearly indicate a decision. Further consideration is required. Clarification can be gained through further research; consultation with other Museum staff; consultation with appropriate external parties.

If still unresolved after further research and consultation, the object will be considered by the Collection Acquisition Committee consisting of the CEO and senior Collections staff. If a clear decision is still unable to be made, the Collection Acquisition Committee will make a recommendation to THBT board regarding acquiring or declining the object.

<sup>3</sup> This region is geographically defined by the area that is currently administered by Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council. For Taonga Māori and all other items relating to Te Ao Māori (the Māori world) this region is geographically defined by Te Tai Ao Komiti.