



# COLLECTIONS POLICY

## 2017 - 2025

### 1. SUMMARY

The Whitehorse Art Collection was established by the former City of Box Hill in 1927 and was developed from a core of artworks created by artists who attended the famous Box Hill Artists' Camp in the 1880s. Included are artworks by Frederick McCubbin, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton. The main subject of the early artworks is the landscape.

The Collection is a notable public collection, with a wealth of historic and contemporary art. In recent years, the Collection has developed with the acquisition of contemporary landscapes, the urban and suburban landscape, and a large amount of ceramics. The region is renowned for tile manufacturing, potteries and brickworks.

Generous donations and an acquisitions budget have ensured the longevity of this significant collection for the benefit of future generations. The Whitehorse Art Collection currently comprises almost 1,700 items.

The Collections Policy combines the former Art Collection Policy, the Exhibition Policy and formalizes the development of a memorabilia collection to be known as the Civic Collection.

### 2. PURPOSE

To ensure sound management and development of the collections managed by the City of Whitehorse, the Whitehorse Art Collection and the Whitehorse Civic Collection, together with the provision of guidelines for visual arts exhibitions in Council venues.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

- To conserve, document and develop the Art Collection and Civic Collection in accordance with current museological practices.
- To facilitate public access to the Art Collection and Civic Collection.
- To curate a diverse exhibition program for the residents of Whitehorse and beyond.
- To implement the Statement of Purpose.

### 4. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Whitehorse Art Collection and Civic Collection reflect, engages with and inspires our diverse community. The City of Whitehorse exhibits, develops and preserves the collections for the benefit of residents and visitors into perpetuity.

### 5. SCOPE

The policy applies to all art works, including public art, in the Council's Art Collection and items within the Civic Collection. In relation to exhibitions, this policy applies to exhibitions held in the following precincts:

- Whitehorse Artspace and within the Town Hall
- Box Hill Community Arts Centre (when the Collection is exhibited there)
- Box Hill Branch of the Whitehorse Manningham Library Corporation

- Whitehorse Civic Centre and other Council facilities where adequate security permits.

## **6. POLICY**

### **6.1 Role of the Collections**

Council holds the Art Collection and Civic Collection in trust for the community. Council is responsible for the proper stewardship of these valuable assets and will provide maximum access for community and Council benefit. Council respects the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics and in the management and display of Council's collections, endeavours to follow internationally recognised best practice.

### **6.2 Benefits of the Collections**

The City of Whitehorse Art Collection:

- identifies the City's heritage and honours creative work in all media, including Indigenous art and, in particular, recognises the area as the genesis of Australian Impressionism
- assists in building community identity
- integrates works of art into the community so the community is regularly exposed to inspiring art
- reflects the culture and interests of the community
- provides an educative function which allows residents to enjoy a range of quality visual art, thereby enriching their lives
- provides access to key aspects of the development of fine art and craft in Australia
- has an ambassadorial role for the City
- is a valuable drawcard for cultural tourism
- acts as an important reference point for historical studies
- is a valuable resource for schools and tertiary institutions
- sustains the tradition established by the foresight of early Councillors.

The Civic Collection:

- celebrates the work of current and former Councillors and Council (but does not seek to replicate the archives held by Council's Corporate Information Department), and commemorates important civic events and achievements (this is known as the Civic Theme),
- respects the Sister City relationship Whitehorse Council has maintained with Matsudo, Japan, since 1971 (the Sister City Theme),
- applauds and commemorates sporting accomplishments in our city (the Sporting Theme), excluding merchandise,
- includes gifts to Council and Councillors from visiting dignitaries, and also
- honours those from the community who have served our Country in campaigns overseas by maintaining war memorials and conserves the historic integrity of the Box Hill Town Hall, particularly the original Council Chambers and main Hall facility, including the fittings and artefacts contained therein (the Heritage Theme).

## **7. THE VISUAL ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Council will maintain a Visual Arts Advisory Committee, subject to the Terms of Reference. Management will adopt terms of reference for the Visual Arts Advisory Committee and thereafter review the terms every three years.

## **8. THE CIVIC COLLECTION COMMITTEE**

The Council will maintain an internal committee of appropriate Council Officers to manage the Civic Collection. This group will meet twice a year to review the Civic Collection and will follow museum

standards with regards to incoming artefacts and the de-accessioning of such. No merchandise associated with City celebrations is to be collected.

## **9. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The collections will be managed and documented by appropriately qualified staff.

Council will endeavour to keep the collections housed at current museum industry standards.

The City will seek community and industry expertise to counsel on management of the collections. This expertise will be harnessed through the Visual Arts Advisory Committee, and other recognised museum, educational and visual arts professional organisations.

Council in appointing the Visual Arts Advisory Committee acknowledges that the Committee is a body with specific expertise with the role of maintaining high standards of advice for management of the Art Collection and making recommendations on acquisitions (by purchase, donation or gifting) to the Art Collection and any necessary de-accessions from the collection.

A professional Valuation of the Art Collection, for insurance purposes, is to be undertaken every 3 years as per Council's insurance requirements.

## **10. ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT**

The works in the Art Collection will be of the highest affordable quality and consist of professional work displaying excellence in that medium. Such an Art Collection will stimulate artists and students in the community and encourage them to aspire to greater creative accomplishments.

New acquisitions to the Art Collection will consolidate the existing collection, collection themes and media.

The developing Art Collection will primarily be from emerging and established artists living and working in Victoria. New additions should strengthen long established collecting media, namely works on paper, ceramics, paintings, sculpture and textiles.

Acquisitions will be made taking into account the strengths and holdings of neighbouring collections.

Donations and gifts to the collections will not be accepted if they do not accord with the acquisition policy for the collections.

The City will not be bound to acquire work from any exhibitions held within the City of Whitehorse.

All acquisitions to the Art Collection will be made on the advice and recommendation of the Visual Arts Advisory Committee.

Acquisitions through gifting and donation to the Civic Collection will be upon the recommendation of the Civic Collection Committee. Collection acquisitions will be made taking into account the collecting themes noted in 6.2 of this document – namely the Civic, Sister City, Sporting and Heritage themes.

Consideration will be given to public safety, display, storage, conservation and transport issues of a potential acquisition at the time of acquisition.

The following themes will be the main focus for the future direction of the Art Collection, being mindful of Indigenous and multicultural responses to each theme. Priority for acquisition will be given to filling "gaps" in the collection to ensure a comprehensive body of work across these themes.

- The Australian Landscape Theme – celebrating the landscape as it has developed from bush to pastoral concerns through to the suburban landscape. This theme relates to historical aspects of the collection.
- The Urban/Suburban Theme – is a natural extension of the Australian landscape theme that reflects residents’ lifestyles and challenges perceptions. The urban/suburban landscape, with a thriving street art and photography focus, has a broad appeal and is a theme of palpable interest to both artists and educationalists.
- The Australian Impressionism Theme – builds on the core of valuable nineteenth century works in the collection – the ‘en plein air’ Australian Impressionist works. Ideally works by all significant artists in this period with works relating specifically to the Box Hill Artists’ Camp, or surrounding district, would be included. Development of this aspect of the collection is a long-term goal.
- The Craft Theme - includes exemplary examples of craftwork (notably Ceramics) that represent a maker’s continued and skilled practise and addresses issues of relevance to the cultural heritage of the City. The maker should have an identifiable connection to the City of Whitehorse. The 2015 donation of the Ceramics Victoria Collection (CV) to Whitehorse is an exception. Works from the CV Collection comprise works by Victorian ceramicists, works by ceramicists from across Australia and works by notable international ceramicists who gifted their work to the Ceramics Victoria Collection. This collection encapsulates work collected during the 45 years of the organisation’s existence and will not to be extended. Future ceramic acquisitions are to be accessioned into the wider Whitehorse Art Collection.

Approval from Management will be sought for purchases recommended by the Curator and the Visual Arts Advisory Committee on items up to \$20,000 (excluding GST). Recommended purchases of items in excess of \$20,000 (plus GST) are to be approved by Council.

Council will continue to secure a non-exclusive copyright licence from the artist when new works are acquired for the Art Collection. This will allow for reproductions of works for educational, promotional and research purposes.

In the longer term all artists with works currently in the Art Collection will be approached in an endeavour to secure a non-exclusive copyright licence for those works.

Consistent with the City Of Whitehorse Conflict of Interest Policy, no works by members of the Visual Arts Advisory Committee, or their connections, can be considered for paid acquisition whilst they are members of the Committee.

## **11. EXHIBITIONS**

The exhibition program at Artspace will focus on providing and promoting access to the Art Collection and Civic Collection through exhibitions that present the collections in innovative and informative ways.

The Exhibition Program at Artspace will endeavor to include an Invited Artist and Invited Group exhibition, on a bi-annual basis in alternating years if programming permits. If Council does not attract sufficient and appropriate applications, Council may choose to postpone or withdraw this program from an annual exhibition calendar.

The program will provide for occasional exhibitions by education groups such as art departments in education institutions following submission of an exhibition proposal. Such submissions will be assessed according to the policy objective, the quality of the items to be displayed, the interpretation of the items and the ability of the group to independently install, monitor and dismantle the exhibition.

The exhibition program may occasionally include exhibitions from external sources such as packaged travelling exhibitions and exhibitions arranged with other institutions. All such exhibitions are to be of a high professional standard and must support the policy objectives. No more than four external exhibitions will be included in the annual exhibition calendar at the Artspace.

The exhibition program will:

- integrate works of art into the community so the community is regularly exposed to quality exhibitions
- provide an educative function that allows residents to enjoy a range of quality exhibitions
- assist in building a community identity reflecting people's experience of life and the culture and interests of the community, and responding to the multicultural nature of the community
- represent the environment and encompass a sense of history, people, place and identity, which indicates the dynamic nature of the community
- provide for special focus exhibitions, where possible, acknowledging national and international occasions such as Chinese New Year, Heritage Week, NAIDOC Week, Senior Citizens Week, ANZAC Day and etc.

The aim of the exhibition program is to provide an educative and access role, appropriate to a public collection. There is a community expectation that the venue does not charge for admittance to an exhibition of a community-owned asset. Invited exhibitors may provide sale price information to visitors should visitors wish to purchase exhibited work. Council staff will not be responsible for exhibition sales.

The exhibition program will target the following audiences:

- Residents - to encourage a sense of ownership of the City's collection and its wider visual arts programs by the community.
- Education institutions – to provide a high level of exposure to the collection and a wider educative function within the City.
- Visitors - to encourage visitors to the City of Whitehorse with inspiring, quality exhibitions
- Nationwide art museums and scholars - the Whitehorse Art Collection is identified as an important part of Australia's national collection. Works from the collection have been and will continue to be exhibited in major exhibitions staged by other institutions.

The exhibition program will be subject to ongoing evaluation. The following information will be employed in this process;

- records of visitor numbers where possible;
- public perception via resident surveys;
- wider recognition of the collection measured by requests for loans and reproductions;
- the number of visiting education-based groups requests from teachers and lecturers;
- and the Visitor Comments book.

## **12. DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS TO THE ART COLLECTION**

Every effort should be made to encourage gifts of works and monetary funds, to enhance the City's Art Collection, consistent with this Policy through the Federal Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Council has had 'deductible gift recipient status' (DGR Status) since 2000 for donations of artworks and funds to the Whitehorse Art Collection.

At the time of acquisition, the costs associated with conservation, restoration, preparation, presentation and storage will be considered as part of the cost of acquiring the work.

Conditional gifts and funds will be discouraged, other than in exceptional circumstances. Donors of artworks will relinquish all rights, except copyright if the donor is the creator and copyright holder.

### **13. DEACCESSION AND DISPOSAL**

Works from the collections which are in poor condition or damaged beyond reasonable repair, or do not meet with the requirements of Acquisition and Development, will be considered for removal from the collection.

The Curator will from time to time recommend works for deaccession to the Visual Arts Advisory Committee or Civic Collection Committee. A review of the collections for this purpose will take place every 5 years.

Where a work has been nominated for removal from the Art Collection it will be fully documented before disposal. A report of intent to deaccession any work is to be prepared for Senior Management. Undamaged works to be deaccessioned will either be offered to the artist, offered to another non-profit organisation that manages a similar collection or be put up for public auction.

Similarly, where a work has been nominated for removal from the Civic Collection it will be fully documented before disposal. A report of intent to deaccession any work is to be prepared for Senior Management. Undamaged works due to be deaccessioned (such as ephemeral works) may be offered to another non-profit organisation that manages a similar collection, be put up for public auction (if applicable) or otherwise disposed of.

Deaccessioned works will not be made available for acquisition by Councillors, Visual Arts Advisory Committee Members, staff or their connections.

Where works are recommended for deaccession because of irreparable damage a similar work by the artist of the damaged work could be selected at the discretion of the Committee if such a work is still available and affordable.

In the event that proceeds have been collected from the sale of deaccessioned works, funds will be used to conserve works in the collections.

### **14. PUBLIC ACCESS, DISPLAY AND EXHIBITIONS**

The Whitehorse Art Collection will be documented and research information made available to the public. Aspects of the Civic Collection may be made available to public if appropriate.

The collections will be exposed to as wide an audience as possible, and this may encompass the use of temporary displays in appropriate public places, including council buildings and facilities.

Display spaces will be established within the City to museum standards. This will facilitate loans to the City of significant works, which will complement the City collections.

The possibility of work from the collections being included in travelling exhibitions will be considered subject to appropriate loan agreements being negotiated.

Display of artworks, or civic collection works, in any Council building or facility is at the discretion of the Curator, taking into consideration the care and preservation of the collection.

### **15. PUBLIC ART**

Artwork commissioned or acquired for the outdoors will be included as an integral part of the Whitehorse Art Collection. The use of Public Art has the capacity to enhance the environment and to engender a great sense of community pride.

Public Art sites should be significant or strategically important public places, with high visibility and/or accessibility. In addition the site must be in public ownership.

Public Art sites may be selected because they are:

- highly visible to the community generally;
- places of high pedestrian and/or recreational activity;
- places of civic importance and/or cultural significance.

Public land within key shopping precincts, transport interchanges, major intersections, key capital works projects, recreation sites and Civic Centres are all considered as appropriate sites for Public Art.

Public Art will be acquired either by acquisition, commission or bequest. Council may seek corporate sponsorship or assistance with major commissions.

Council will maintain a commitment to Public Art with specific projects being identified as appropriate for recommendation for inclusion in Council's budget. Projects to be developed under this scheme will be recommended by the Visual Arts Advisory Committee taking into account the major capital works projects under consideration by Council.

Public Artworks are to be designed and created by an accomplished artist or artists and be of a robust nature, needing minimal maintenance over the first ten-year period, except where a temporary installation work is specifically commissioned.

Developers are encouraged to contribute to public art in Whitehorse. If changes to the planning scheme occur, requiring a mandatory financial developer contribution, then Council staffing resources would be required to further administer municipal art in the public realm.

## **16. RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION**

- Local Government Act 1989