

COMMUNICATIONS

Community Consultation Report La Perouse Museum Collection Policy

24 November 2020

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1. Summary

The La Perouse Museum has developed a Collection Policy, that reflects where the Museum has come from and where it might go in the future. Based on national museum standards, the policy outlines the museums key collecting focus and collections management.

The Policy has been developed by consultant Margaret Birtley AM of Significance International Pty Ltd in partnership with the Curator La Perouse Museum, and funded through a grant from the Australian National Maritime Museum.

The policy has also been developed through consultation with key stakeholders including the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NSW), the Friends of Laperouse Museum, the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council and the La Perouse Museum and Headland Trust.

The following report outlines the consultation program undertaken to exhibit the policy and gather feedback from the community.

The Your Say Randwick webpage received 144 unique visits, 39 downloads of the policy and two submissions.

All community feedback will be considered, and the final Collections Policy will be published on Randwick City Council's website.

2. Community engagement strategy

2.1. Background and objectives

A community consultation program was undertaken to publicly exhibit the La Perouse Museum Collection Policy and gather community feedback on the policy.

The consultation program aimed to:

- Inform the community about the Collection Policy
- Gather community feedback on the policy.

2.2. Consultation period

The consultation was open 21 October to 17 November 2020.

The project was assessed as having a low-level city-wide impact.

The community were asked to read the policy and make a submission to provide their feedback.

2.3. Consultation activities

Community engagement activities undertaken:

- Dedicated consultation website to read the policy and make a submission
- Randwick News (weekly email): 21 and 28 October 2020
- Listing on Randwick City Council's *Current Consultations* webpage
- Email to all precincts
- Councillor notification

3. Consultation outcomes

3.1. Your Say Randwick website

A dedicated Your Say Randwick website was created to exhibit the policy and take submissions from the community:

www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au/https://www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au/museumcollectionpolicy

The website was launched on 21 October and was open for 28 days, closing on 17 November 2020.

During this time, the site experienced the following:

- 144 visits to the Your Say Randwick webpage
- 2 submissions
- 39 document downloads

3.2. Submissions

Two submissions were received, one from Significance International who worked with Randwick City Council to develop the Collection Policy and the other from the public. The submissions are outlined in the following table.

	Submission
1	Submission 1 Significance International P/L. We congratulate RCC on Council's recent endorsement of the Collection Policy and on reaching the stage of public consultation on this document. We are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the endorsed version of the Collection Policy, and acknowledge RCC's prerogative to accept or decline our suggestions. 1. Regarding the embedded Statement of Significance (section 5.2), we note that the entire SOS appears in italics and quotation marks. As a number of changes have been made to the original SOS (authored by Veronica Bullock and dated 18 June 2019), we request that it neither be presented as a verbatim quote nor carry the original date. Indeed, footnote 10 suggests that an event on 3 June 2020 prompted some text changes. 2. Following Significance 2.0, we advise that a movable cultural heritage SOS is meant to be able to stand alone as a concise, self-contained statement about a collection. It follows that a good SOS does not carry footnotes (whereas the RCC-endorsed Policy has introduced two footnotes). It also follows that acronyms and abbreviations (e.g., NPWS at the top of page 8) should be avoided – or at least not used before they are spelled out. Similarly, 'Laperouse' (France) is quite difficult to understand before Jean-Francois de Galaup, comte de Lapérouse is introduced. Lucidity and succinctness demand that specialist terms should not be repeated, if at all possible. 3. Regarding the use of 'Guriwal' in the SOS and elsewhere in the Policy, we note that this is one spelling of the local Aboriginal language group of this area – as we were best able to determine at the time of our research. We acknowledge that this spelling, and indeed the preferred term of the ongoing Aboriginal inhabitants and language speakers of the area surrounding the museum site, is an important topic for the current stakeholder consultation. We also suggest that RCC seek advice from linguists at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) about how best to combine Indigenous language group names (often presented as nations) with local, state and national geographical naming authority rules.

Submission

4. The web page for RCCs current consultation on the La Perouse Museum Collection Policy fails to mention SI and incorrectly states that Margaret Birtley is 'former Head of Museums Australia'. We would appreciate it if the web page could be corrected ASAP at:
<https://www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au/museumcollectionpolicy>

We recommend that the first paragraph of the 'Background' paragraph on that page be amended to read:

The Policy has been developed by consultant Margaret Birtley AM of Significance International Pty Ltd in partnership with the Curator La Perouse Museum, and funded through a grant from the Australian National Maritime Museum.

5. RCC's inclusion of a new section 8 in the RCC-endorsed Collection Policy has altered the numbering of all following sections. The new section-numbering is correct, but many cross-references within the text have not been updated to correspond. Further, we note that RCC has renamed Appendix B, but that new name is not reproduced consistently on the Contents page. We also note some typographical errors and outdated URLs that could helpfully be corrected at this stage.

We therefore suggest that changes be made, as shown in the following table.

RCC-endorsed policy		Text should be:
Reference	Current text	
Page 10, §10	... Acquisitions Policy (section 10);	... Acquisitions Policy (section 11);
Page 10, §10	... Deaccessioning Policy (section 16).	... Deaccessioning Policy (section 17).
Page 11, §11.1	... must adhere to the criteria specified in 11.3. <i>SI notes that this RCC-inserted sentence lacks the word 'section'. For consistency with all other internal cross-referencing in the Policy, we recommend that 'section' be included here.</i>	... must adhere to the criteria specified in section 11.3.
Page 11, §11.4 [Third dot point]	... of the Management Agreement	... of the Management Agreement?
Page 13, §13.2	As mentioned in section 12.1, ...	As mentioned in section 13.1, ...
Page 14, §14	... in accordance with section 16 (Deaccession Policy) ...	... in accordance with section 17 (Deaccession Policy) ...
Page 14, §14	... in accordance with section 17 (Disposal Policy)).	... in accordance with section 18 (Disposal Policy)).
Page 16, §16.1	... sections 15.2, 15.3 and 15.4	... sections 16.2, 16.3 and 16.4
Page 17, §17.1	... sections 16.2, 16.3, 16.4 and 16.5	... sections 17.2, 17.3, 17.4 and 17.5
Page 17, §17.2	... the key themes set out in section 8 ...	... the key themes set out in section 7 ...

Submission

RCC-endorsed policy		Text should be:
Reference	Current text	
Page 18, §17.2 [Third line on page 18]	Section 16.4 lists the formal criteria ...	Section 17.4 lists the formal criteria ...
Page 18, §17.3 [First paragraph]	... the criteria set out in section 16.4 ...	... the criteria set out in section 17.4 ...
Page 19, §17.5 [Third para.]	... relating to criteria (a) to (c) in section 16.4.	... relating to criteria (a) to (c) in section 17.4.
Page 19, §17.5 [Fourth para.]	... relating to criteria (d) to (j) in section 16.4.	... relating to criteria (d) to (j) in section 17.4.
Page 20, §18.3	... section 17.1, 17.2, 17.4 and 17.5 ...	... section 18.1, 18.2, 18.4 and 18.5 ...
Page 21, Appendix A	Heritage Collections Council (2001), <i>Significance: a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections</i> , Heritage Collections Council, Canberra. Accessible at: https://www.significanceinternational.com/Portals/0/Documents/significance2001.pdf	The Significance International website is closing. A long-term URL for this resource is: https://web.archive.org/web/20150309070138/http://significanceinternational.com/Portals/0/Documents/significance2001.pdf
Page 21, Appendix A	International Council of Museums (2013), <i>ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums</i> . Accessible via: https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics	New URL is: https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/
Page 21, Appendix A	International Council of Museums 2007. Museum definition. Accessible via: https://icom.museum/en/activities/standards-guidelines/museum-definition	New URL is: https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition
Page 21, Appendix A	Janke, Terri (2018), <i>First Peoples: A Roadmap for Enhancing Indigenous Engagement in Museums and Galleries</i> , Australian Museums and Galleries Association, Canberra. Available at: https://www.mgaandigenousroadmap.com.au	New URL is: https://www.amaga-indigenous.org.au/
Page 22, Appendix B	Collection Sub-Collections: thematic categories	<i>These two titles should be identical. SI suggests that a suitable title might be:</i> Additional sub-collections
Page 3, Table of Contents	B. Classifications and Sub-Categories	

2 Submission 2

Concern re Collection Statement

- Highly legalistic but necessary
- State Collection can never not belong to the people of NSW
- Agreement between the Minister and RCC – protects totally the State Collection.
- Allows RCC to start developing its own collection and not in any way part of the State collection.
- NB RCC has trophies, gifts from sister cities which must be separate from the Museum collection.
- Safeguards the whole Collection.
- Preserves and enshrines Collection.
- Does not mean frozen – not actively adding to it.
- Artefacts found in vicinity; from France may be added.

Separation between the State Sub-Collection and the Council Sub-Collection

Although this is not explicit in the document, it is clear that the French collection is part of the State Sub-Collection which is described as a “closed” collection. This implies that, unless RCC intends to expand the French Collection, an intention which is not stated in the Collection Policy document, the French collection will gradually decline in comparison with collections benefiting from acquisitions favoured by RCC.

Submission

Signs of the lower priority of the French theme in the Policy document

- There is no reference in the document to the presence of the Lapérouse monument or the tomb of Père Receveur in the immediate proximity of the Museum, thus weakening the total weight of the French component on the site
- There is no reference to the unique characteristics of the French components at La Perouse, in contrast to the indigenous components which can be found on many other sites.

Details in the Mission Statement calling for comments

- The order of the seven points in the Mission Statement (p. 4) is completely haphazard and illogical.
- In the Mission Statement the very first point restricts “to the indigenous community and the Bidjigal elders” the “local, national and international significance” of the Museum’s, thus absurdly contradicting the second point which asserts that Museum is “inclusive”.
- The last point suggests that the Museum’s collection “reflects and interprets regional and national history”, leaving out the international dimension, even though that dimension is mentioned in the first point.

Mission statement is contradictory and confused.

The downgrading of the collection of Lapérouse material and story was particularly disappointing and counterproductive in terms of both the local and international dimension of the Museum. Lapérouse was an important French navigator and is celebrated internationally as such. That aspect of the Museum is important in terms of Franco-Australian relations and as well as being an important Australian and international tourist attraction. Foregrounding the Lapérouse visit and story (which is not part of colonialism in Australia!) would not take away from the importance of the Indigenous and other local components but would rather make the Museum an even more significant and popular attraction and also an important adjunct for school educational programs.

The statement in relation to the local inhabitants making first contact with white settlers in the region is factually incorrect. The contact was between the local inhabitants and the crew of the First Fleet ships in the form of a landing party undertaking reconnoitre for a possible settlement. The inhabitants of the current CBD were the first to meet white settlers and that occurred at what is now Circular Quay and actual contact with the reconnoitre was at Matraville (Bunnerong Creek) and at Mascot (Northern reaches of Botany Bay) where the crew reported about 50 canoes. No colonisation occurred in the La Perouse or Northern foreshore area although colonialism occurred in later years.

First Contact was made at Kurnell in 1770 (Captain Cook), 18 years previously.

In 1988 the Laperouse Museum was of international standard of world renown. Its integrity as the Bicentennial Gift should now be re-established.

4. Next Steps

All community feedback will be considered, and the final Collections Policy will be published on Randwick City Council’s website.

