



The Local Government & Cultural Collections in Victoria report has been produced by Museums Australia (Victoria) through the Exhibition Services Program.

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Images

Cover: Australian made commercial ceramic from the Shepparton Art Museum collection on display in the SAM exhibition *Cornucopia*, 27 February - 22 May 2016. Photo: Chris Hawking.

Above: Mark Strizic, *Brighton Municipal Offices*, c.1960, silver gelatin print. Photo courtesy the Estate of Mark Strizic. Image featured in the exhibition *It Landed in Brighton: Modernism and the Municipal Offices*, 23 June - 5 August 2012, The Gallery @ Bayside Arts & Cultural Centre.

ISBN: 978-0-949069-99-3

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following people who contributed to the research project and the report, firstly Adelle Talarico, intern for this project, chief interviewer for the telephone surveys and main data analyst, who also provided valuable feedback on interpreting the data and on the format and content of the report.

Thanks to the initiator of this project, Georgia Rouette, former Exhibition Services Manager at Museums Australia (Victoria) for the project concept, and initial research, and Lyndall Metzke and Dr. Kim Dunphy, Administrator and Research Program Manager respectively from the Cultural Development Network, for assistance with research design.

Thanks to my colleagues at Museums Australia (Victoria), Rosemary Hanscombe and Caroline Deighton, Museum Accreditation Program Managers, for assistance with survey interviews, data analysis and references, Roisin O'Dwyer, INSITE Editor, for the report design, and volunteer Mark Lowrey, for telephone survey assistance.

For expert feedback on the draft report, thanks to Laura Miles, Executive Director of Museums Australia (Victoria), Dr. Kim Dunphy, Cameron Auty, Museums Australia (Victoria) Victorian Collections Project Co-Manager and History and Heritage Consultant at the City of Glen Eira, and Julie Skate, Gallery Supervisor, The Gallery@BACC, Bayside City Council.

Thanks also to the members of the Exhibition Services Committee who contributed to early discussions about the project, Wendy Garden, Senior Curator, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Georgia Cribb, Director, National Exhibition Touring Support (NETS) Victoria, Rhonda Diffey, Collections Archivist, Greater City of Dandenong Caroline Carter, Manager, Exhibition Collection Management, Museum Victoria.

Thanks to the survey participants for their time and for sharing their expert knowledge and insights, and thanks to all the colleagues who supplied images and permission to reproduce them in this document, particularly the artists whose work is featured.

Last but most importantly thanks to Creative Victoria for funding the Exhibitions Services Program and this research project.

Executive Summary



Historic natural history specimens on display, Burke Museum, Indigo Shire Council.

This report identifies the cultural collections under the custodianship of Victorian local government agencies, including art, public art, civic and history collections, and how councils support local community collections, mainly through provision of premises and/or advice. This research also describes the challenges faced by local government, opportunities for Museums Australia (Victoria) to support them, and recommendations for effective change.

Local government is a critical segment of the 1000 plus organisations that care for Victoria's Distributed State Collection, estimated to comprise at least 43 million artefacts and artworks. The care of collections by Victoria's 79 local government organisations is an essential part of the creative industries ecology across the State of Victoria. Local government employ many talented and committed staff who deliver collections activities in a resource-constrained environment. Survey participants from each of the 79 councils provided extensive new data to our research team.

This report provides evidence for actions to enhance the care of council cultural collections, to support the role that cultural collections can play in community well-being and attracting visitors. The report also includes recommendations and links to resources. The recommendations focus primarily on improving storage and display infrastructure, increasing investment in collection care and access programs, achieving higher staff levels and collections expertise, and developing more networked council collection practices.

The report findings draw on survey responses by participants representing all 79 Victorian councils, who completed the survey either online or through telephone interviews during the second half of 2015 and early 2016.



Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, Warnambool. Photo Museums Australia (Victoria).

Survey Summary

- What kinds of cultural material do Victorian councils manage and display?
- Which council staff teams look after council cultural collections?
- What kinds of outstanding cultural collection programs and projects are being undertaken by local government?
- What types of cultural collections do councils display, and what facilities do councils use to display cultural collections?
- What are the challenges for councils caring for their collections?
- What are the information needs of council collection custodians?
- What kind of help are councils providing to community collecting groups?
- What are the challenges for council staff supporting Community Collecting groups?

Key findings

1. Victorian councils maintain a vast and significant range of cultural collections (a significant part of the distributed state collection), with most councils owning several collections including art, public art, civic and/or history collections, with prevalence in that order. Councils continue to develop important cultural collections, particularly visual and public art, though not all have acquisition budgets.
2. Local government collection practices are fragmented, with cultural collections typically managed by several council departments.
3. Council cultural display facilities include some excellent facilities, particularly galleries, however the preservation of many collections may be affected by a lack of museum and gallery standard storage and display facilities.
4. Council libraries play an important role in caring for and displaying cultural collections.
5. Council-run galleries and libraries presenting cultural displays significantly outnumber council-run history museums, with many municipalities leaving the care and access to local history collections to community volunteers.
6. Access to cultural collections is not consistent across the state. Non-metropolitan communities are likely to have less access to council cultural collections, particularly contemporary and public art. Metropolitan communities are less likely to have access to council-run history museums.



Bendigo Art Gallery 2013. Photo: Museums Australia (Victoria).

7. Councils provide a range of collection-based exhibitions and programs, with many presenting high-quality, innovative and engaging exhibitions and programs, across both art and history, enhancing the cultural life of local communities and visitors.
8. Low staffing capacity is a major challenge for preserving and accessing council collections.
9. Public knowledge of the extent and significance of council-owned collections is being hampered by cataloguing backlogs, and by the limited council collection information that is available online.
10. Council collection custodians are challenged by low levels of financial resourcing for collections, both internally through council budget processes, and a lack of external funding opportunities for council collections.
11. Most councils employ museum or gallery professionals, but many councils do not employ staff with the expertise to manage the council cultural collections, particularly outside metropolitan areas.
12. Most local government cultural collection custodians are interested in enhanced learning opportunities, particularly networking opportunities, and learning more about funding for collections projects and systems supporting collection management. Non-metropolitan council collection custodians are particularly interested in collection related learning opportunities.
13. Some local government cultural custodians are interested in advocacy tools to demonstrate the community impact of collection activities.
14. Councils play an important role in housing community collections and advising community collecting groups.
15. Council staffing levels impact on the support provided to community owned collections, with a minority providing a dedicated museum professional to support local community collections. Some councils do not have staff with the specialist skills to assist community collecting groups.
16. Many councils are frustrated by the lack of external funding available to community collecting groups.
17. Local government cultural staff are proud of the achievements of some community collecting groups, but there is also concern about the level of care and community engagement that some groups can provide for local history collections.
18. The sustainability of some community cultural collections is becoming an issue for local communities, as current volunteers are ageing and may not be replaced.

Introduction to the Research



The *Connections: Stories, People, Place* display at the Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Yarra Ranges Council.

Aims

These findings provide an overview of local government cultural collection management and exhibition practice, and the issues local government staff face, both in caring for their own collections and in their support for community collecting organisations. The findings and recommendations are intended to facilitate evidence-based decisions for support and professional development for local government collection custodians, for peer to peer learning, and to encourage investment from funding bodies. It is hoped that the *Local Government and Cultural Collections Report* will contribute to the vitality of local government cultural collection work in Victoria.

Background

This section provides background information for the report, including information on Museums Australia (Victoria) services to the local government sector to date, a snapshot of relevant studies about local government and cultural collections, and the current funding environment of local government cultural collections in Victoria.

This research project emerged from previous research generated by Museums Australia (Victoria), including work conducted by the Exhibitions Services Program.

According to Museums Australia membership data in June 2015, almost half of Victorian local government organisations have an employee who is a member of Museums Australia (Victoria). Staff from many local government organisations participate in Museums Australia (Victoria) programs, events, and committees. Museum Australia members from local government organisations tend to be curators, collection managers or gallery or museum directors, rather than managers of local government departments.

In 2009 Museums Australia (Victoria) commissioned the *Review of Exhibition Capacity of Victoria's Community Museums* (NFS, 2009). This report raised the issue that paid staff members at professional community museums (largely local government funded) often had responsibility for several areas of museum work, and "some of whom had specialised curatorial or exhibition skills, but many did not." (NFS, 2009, pg. 9)

Over the last ten years the branch has been actively building connections with local government staff. During 2010-11 the



Mardi Nowak, Senior Curator and Kent Wilson, Assistant Curator, Town Hall Gallery, City of Boorondara. Photo: Museums Australia (Victoria).

Museums Australia (Victoria) Exhibition Services Manager visited 27 Metropolitan local government organisations, as part of information gathering on Victorian exhibition venues and capacity (Rouette, 2011). A range of issues were raised by metropolitan municipal cultural collection custodians, including the banding of cultural collection positions at officer level (impacting cultural collections custodian's ability to make independent decisions concerning the collections), and a lack of understanding of the special requirements of managing, preserving and displaying cultural collections at senior management level. Most collections were inventoried with generic database programs such as excel spreadsheets, and some local government collections were housed in sub-standard storage rooms within council, or offsite. The consultation also indicated that many local government collection custodians were not aware of Museums Australia (Victoria) services.

During the past ten years the Museums Australia (Victoria) Exhibition Services Manager supported several local government initiatives involving collaborations with local collecting groups, and in 2009 the state government ran a pilot project involving a 'Community Museum Officer' who collaborated with the Cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo to support community museums, and achieved "significant outcomes for a modest investment" (Smart, 2013, p 6). Local government appear to be the sole level of government currently providing this 'collections hub' model of support, a model which has been recommended and successfully trialled throughout Australia for decades (Pigott et al. 1975, Dunn 2007, Pope 2009, NFS 2009). Museums Australia (Victoria) work very closely with community collecting groups, many of whom have positive things to say about the assistance they receive from local government, but most of whom are keen for more council support.

The fieldwork and studies described above provided the impetus for this research project – to gather evidence on the issues for raised by metropolitan collection custodians (and see how these issues played out beyond metropolitan areas), to gather evidence on the activities of local government with community collections, and to develop some possible strategies to support local government cultural collection activities.

An online literature review was undertaken to understand the existing knowledge base about council collections, how councils resource collections care and display, and how accessible their collections are to the public, both physically and online.

Museums Australia (Victoria) has previously commissioned two publications that focus on Victorian local government and collections, one on competitive tendering (Museums Australia (Victoria) 1999) and an information sheet for small museums wanting to work more effectively with local government (Brophy, 2004). There has not been a comprehensive review of Victorian museums since the early 1990s. Although the sector has developed considerably since then, it is interesting to note that in 1992 Victorian local government ran 63% of the state's art museums, 4% of historical societies, 23% of historic

properties, 30% of historic collections, 16% heritage parks, 60% of archives, and 48% of research collections. (Freeman, 1993, pg. 29)

The 2002 report *A Study into the Key Needs of Collecting Institutions in the Heritage Sector*, by Deakin University (Brophy et al. 2002) reported on what state and local history museums would like local government to do (more for heritage collections), but did not survey local government about their activities and needs.

The Public Libraries Victoria network publishes the results of an annual survey of Victorian libraries, however cultural collection activities are not included as data sets, (Public Libraries Victoria Network, 2015). In 2015 Museums Australia (Victoria) staff presented a curatorial skills professional development session to librarians (facilitated by the State Library of Victoria's Public Libraries & Community Engagement service), and undertook a rough hands up survey to get a sense of the workshop attendees display activities, facilities and equipment. The workshop attendees probably over-represent libraries presenting displays (since the participants chose to attend a curatorial skills workshop), and were a mixture of local government and independent library services, but the survey produced interesting responses. Out of the 28 workshop attendees 15 presented displays from library cultural collections, 12 presented displays sourced from community clubs and art groups, and 10 presented displays sourced from historical societies. About 10 libraries had hosted a touring exhibition. Eight had wall space for displays and 20 had display cases, although only three had a dedicated gallery space, or a budget for displays and exhibitions. There were 12 libraries that had monitors, and 10 had projectors that could be used for digital displays. One library had adjustable directional lighting, five had movable walls or display panels, five had re-usable frames and one had produced a touring exhibition.

In looking online for information on council cultural collections, it is clear that there is movement on making council collections more visible online, but there is still a long way to go. Some council webpages provide brief descriptions of the councils' cultural collections, and four local government collections are listed on Victorian Collections and Culture Victoria (which are sibling websites). Some councils have also submitted a *Collection Level Summary* (which includes detailed information about the collection in a standardised format) to Victorian Collections and Culture Victoria. Culture Victoria has published some 'digital stories' highlighting local government visual art collections, for example about Gippsland Art Gallery's collection of artwork (Gippsland Art Gallery/Culture Victoria, 2013).

Some object-level data about Victorian cultural collections is available online, provided via commercial museum catalogue programs or council library catalogues, and some councils are beginning to take up the free state-wide online collection platform Victorian Collections. (Victorian Collections, 2016).

Information about public art galleries who are members of the Public Galleries Association of Victoria (many of which are local government



Irianna Kanellopoulou, *Wild Things Roam*, 2014 ceramic, glazes, mouldmaking, handbuilding and slipcasting, multifired, 29 x 29 x 12 cm
Acquired Manningham Victorian Ceramic Art Award 2015, Valley of the Arts Award.

run or supported) is available on their website, as well as relevant research reports and submissions which report on art collections, for example, “public galleries across Victoria have significant holdings of visual art – spanning European masterpieces, Australian art from the colonial era to the present time and exemplary works of Aboriginal art” (Public Galleries Association of Victoria, 2015).

The positive impact of arts activities in on community well-being is well established, there has been limited research so far in Australia on the impacts of cultural collection activities. A 2013 report on the impact of public art museums indicated that they can “play an important role in community identity, civic pride and social inclusion” (Evans et al. 2013, p134). Further research about the impacts of different types of collection and museum and gallery activities would be very useful as planning and advocacy tools.

Recent studies of local government cultural practices include *Cultural Planning Practices in Local Government in Victoria* (Dunphy, Metzke & Tavelli, 2013) and *Findings of Survey of Victorian Councils’ Cultural Development Activity* (Dunphy & Smithies et al. 2016), which examine council cultural departments, planning processes, artist and community engagement and cultural facilities.

Based on an online search, this project appears to be the first Australian research project that focusses solely on the activities of local government cultural collections as the main topic of investigation.

Since funding was raised as a major issue in earlier research and consultations, a brief look at current funding of council collections was undertaken as background for this project.

Local governments provide 33% of the funding received by state government funded museums and galleries in Victoria (Creative Victoria, 2015), largely through funding council-run cultural facilities, such as galleries, in their municipalities. In 2008 the Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded that local government provided 6.6% of all government funding for museums and galleries in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Many councils fund libraries and galleries, but only a few fund historical museums at the same level. Museum consultant Kylie Winkworth notes that “while local government has accepted libraries and even galleries as an integral part of its cultural services, it is less common for councils to manage historical museums.... It is difficult for local history museums to make the transition from a volunteer-managed operation to one funded and managed by local government with paid professional staff” (Winkworth, 2011, pg. 3).

The majority of external funding for local government cultural collections comes from the State Government. Creative Victoria provides funding (including some salary funding) for 17 local government cultural collecting and exhibition venues, from a total of 31 Victorian art galleries and museums that receive Creative Victoria core funding (Creative Victoria, 2015).



Tom Finnigan, 2½ years, on his Malvern Star 1890, Stonnington Local History Catalogue online, MP 2716. Tom's father was the inventor of the Malvern Star bicycle.

There are a few state and federal funding programs which allocate funds for cultural collection projects, although some programs specifically limit the eligibility of local government. See Appendix A for links to information resources on funding and other topics.

The 2009 *Review of Exhibition Capacity of Victoria's Community Museums* showed that the vast majority of museums and galleries nominated grants as the most important support that they needed to create cultural exhibitions. In particular the report indicated that council run museums and galleries need more professional staff, and infrastructure funding for increased storage and display spaces, and lighting systems (NFS, 2009, pg. 24).

It is possible that some government and philanthropic funding is more difficult to obtain by local government agencies than independent not for profit organisations. An example is provided in the business case commissioned by Shepparton Art Museum, which proposes increased independence from local government for the gallery, partly to become more attractive to philanthropists. (Simon McArthur and Associates, 2015, pg. 13).

Method

A survey was developed in consultation with representatives from local government collections. A review of existing literature helped with developing survey questions, and Museums Australia (Victoria) received valuable input from the Cultural Development Network research staff on the design of the research project and the survey questions.

The research project targeted the Managers of Arts and Culture/Cultural Development teams, and staff from all 79 Victorian local government organisations. They were surveyed between June 2015 and January 2016 with 27 participants completing the survey online and 52 in a phone interview. In the majority of cases the Manager of the Arts/Culture type department was able to respond to the survey, but some Managers referred the survey to another staff member who worked more closely with the collection, or a staff member from another department.

Survey participants responded to seven questions with tick boxes (multiple boxes could be ticked) and had the opportunity to add a comment for each question, plus two additional questions were open-ended. Most participants made multiple comments, resulting in some rich qualitative data. Information was recorded by Museums Australia (Victoria) staff about whether the relevant council was 'municipal' or 'non-municipal', using the Community Indicators Victoria Categories (Community Indicators Victoria, 2016). Technical Notes provide more information on the research project design and on the interpretation of the data (Appendix B).



Mayoral Badge, Port Melbourne
Historic and Preservation
Society Collection, 284, Victorian
Collections CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.

Definitions

These definitions are specific to this report, and include definitions that were provided to the survey participants, or how a word or phrase was understood by the survey participants, as indicated in the comments section for that question. These definitions are not necessarily industry standard glossary terms, which are listed in the 'Glossary' of the *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*, (National Standards Taskforce, 2014). Museums Australia (Victoria) is the Victorian representative of the National Standards Taskforce.

Collection types - survey participants were provided with the following definitions of the collection types for Q1:

- Art – movable artworks, not tied to particular site.
- Botanic Gardens – scientific living plant collections were intended by this term, but some participants also included 'Heritage Gardens' as gardens that are open to the public and are interpreted in relation to their historic significance.
- Civic - from council's own history, e.g. mayoral robe.
- Local History Collection – items relating to history of the area.

Community art - was defined to survey participants as art by non-professional artists, as opposed to contemporary art.

Cultural collections- in the context of this report means object and image based cultural collections, not including library lending collections.

De-accessioning – the formal protocol and process for removing items from a cultural collection.

Heritage village – a group or precinct of heritage buildings that collectively form a museum experience. Building types sometimes include relocated and/or recreated buildings as well as onsite heritage buildings, and heritage villages are sometimes called heritage parks.

History museums- a museum primarily presenting history displays, including local and specialist history museums, includes house museums and heritage villages; in the section on history museums participants use this term to refer to council museums rather than community owned collections run by volunteers.

House museums - museum/historic home, telling stories of previous resident/s through in situ displays (as opposed to a cultural facility that happens to be in an old building).

Local history - items relating to history of a neighbourhood, suburb, town, city or district.

Managing collections – the term 'managed' was interpreted in the reported data as 'who cares for and interprets the collection?'

Public Art - site specific, and/or large scale outdoor artworks.

See also Technical Notes, Appendix B

Findings



Alex Goad, *Tethya*, 2015, concrete and steel. Photo: City of Port Phillip.

The report findings are grouped into themes suggested by the survey comments. Each section of the findings analyses the data, and illustrates the findings through charts based on the data, participant comments, and photographs relating to council collection activities.

Sections of the survey was flagged to the participants as 'anonymous' in the way the comments would be reported, but due to the frankness of responses in all sections it was decided that some participants had not registered which sections were to be de-identified, and so in general, council names are not provided for participant comments. Unattributed quotes are from survey participants, and the wording from online comments is reported verbatim, with the phrasing and spelling used by participants.

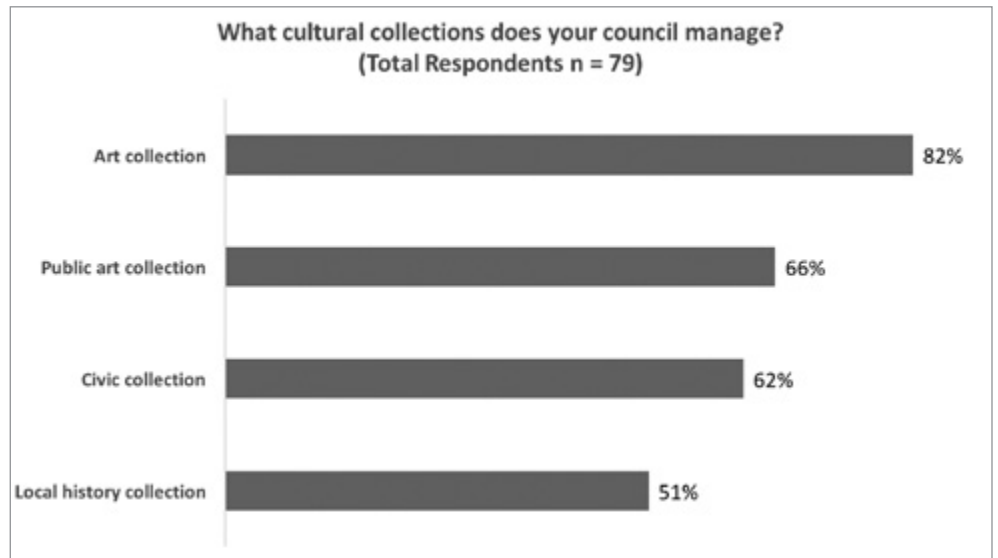
To improve the quality of the data a small amount of the data has been re-classified from original survey responses, on the basis of the comments provided. Technical notes indicate significant reclassifications (Appendix B).

There may be some information about council collection collections that was not captured, or not accurate, as participants did not necessarily have extensive knowledge of other council departments' collection related activities.

What kinds of cultural material do Victorian councils manage and display?

Victorian councils maintain a vast and significant range of cultural collections (a significant part of the distributed state collection), with councils owning several collections including art, public art, civic and/or history collections, with prevalence in that order. Councils continue to develop important cultural collections, particularly visual and public art, though not all have acquisition budgets.

Most Victorian councils manage several types of collections and 76 out of 79 manage at least one collection, although not all collections are actively managed. Almost all Victorian councils manage an art collection, and most manage a public art collection and a civic collection. About half of Victorian councils manage a local history collection. Raw data for this section is provided in Appendix D, listing which local governments own which types of collections.



Art collections are the most commonly owned collection held by local government, with 82 % of councils owning an art collection. Many Victorian local governments own extensive and important art collections, including some art collections of national and international significance.

Art and public art appear to be the main cultural collections that have acquisition budgets, although not all local governments are in the position of the survey participant whose team “are very active with the art collection with a healthy acquisition budget.”

Public Art appears to be a cultural collection type that has gained significant local government support in recent years. 66% of Victorian councils manage a Public Art collection, for example one participant noted that “council’s recent collection includes artists of international standing and reputation.” Some innovative work is being done in this area, and not all works are necessarily permanent, creating an unusual collection type, which may be maintained in the short term but then self-destruct after a set period, for example “commissioned street art murals.”

The spread of major council art and public art collections is not consistent across the state. Metropolitan councils were more likely to have art collections, with 28/31 (90 %) of metropolitan councils owning art collections compared to 37/48 (77%) of non-metropolitan councils with art collections. This trend was even more pronounced for public art, with 28/31 (90%) metropolitan councils compared 24/48 (50%) of non-metropolitan councils managing public art.

More than half of Victorian councils manage a ‘civic collection’ relating to their own history and almost half of Victorian councils manage a collection relating to the history of the municipality.

Several interesting and significant historic sub-collections and individual items owned by Victorian local government organisations were specifically mentioned in the comments by



Hon. H.H. Skinner, M.L.C. Memorial 1913, City of Port Phillip. Photo: Museums Australia (Victoria). This monument is also viewable on the History Pin mapping website, tags: Memorial, South Melbourne.

the survey participants, including collections of boats, surfboards, Indigenous and Oceanic Art, and oral history collections. Council cultural collections include many collections that are nationally or internationally significant. Some comments about the need to learn more about de-accessioning suggest that council collections often include less significant items in the mix of collection items.

A few interesting boundary issues emerged regarding council collections. There was mixed opinion about whether 'monuments' (described by one participant as "fountains, gates, statues, war memorials, and other outdoor heritage items") are a form of public art, historic items, or part of cultural collections at all. Five participants mentioned 'monuments' as an 'other' category of local government cultural collections, three count 'monuments' as part of their public art collection, while three others do not consider these items to form part of the cultural collections. For example, "we don't count the monuments as public art - we don't manage them, Property looks after them." Parks and Gardens is another council department mentioned in comments as managers of council monuments.

Two participants noted that they did not know if they owned certain community collections, and there was some general confusion about which collections and facilities were council 'owned' or 'managed' and which were actually community collections; this confusion is evident in how some survey questions were understood. Many community collections are housed in council run buildings and receive some kind of council assistance, which does not necessarily mean that the collection is owned by council, particularly if the group is an independent legally constituted body.

Many participants mentioned the important role that local community collecting groups play in caring for the cultural collections of the municipality. Three council collections are actually managed by volunteers. One council mentioned council memorabilia being donated into the care of a local historical society, this is likely to be the case for other councils.

Which council staff teams look after council cultural collections?

Local government collection practices are fragmented, with cultural collections typically managed by several council departments.

It was difficult to present clear data for this section due to the diversity of organisational structures and naming of departments. Most Victorian councils manage at least part of their collections through the Arts/Culture type department, with the exception of a few of the smaller regional councils, who do not have specialist arts professionals and rely on the Community Services team or person to manage cultural collections.

There are likely to be many municipal library departments managing collections, 51% of libraries present cultural displays and 51% of



Craig Baird, Curator, Australian National Surfing Museum, Surf Coast Shire. Photo: Museums Australia (Victoria).

councils manage local history collections. Only 33% have a 'history museum' and many council history collections may be managed by municipal libraries, particularly document and photographic collections.

Tourism and Economic Development form a minority of departments nominated as managers of cultural collections, but these are notable as they operate under such a different paradigm from arts and community focussed departments.

There are some surprising council departments managing cultural collections (from a curatorial point of view anyway). There are 12% of councils that have a collection managed by Asset Management or Outdoor Spaces and Property departments. Other council departments managing collections include Customer Service, Risk Management and Executive Services, for example, "Council art collections is managed by the office of the CEO." Some councils make do with a mixture of existing staff, for example, "some 'Civic Collection' management is shared across our building services and communications (in the guise of display teams)."

Most participants nominated more than one 'department' managing the collections, and 10 of the participants made additional specific comments on the issue, for example, "Pieces of the collection are managed by different departments - Public and 2D artwork is managed by the Culture department, Customer Service manage historical objects on display in council offices, and Library also have a historical collection, the Outdoor Spaces department manages war memorials and monuments." In some municipalities the councils' museums and/or galleries are overseen by different departments. Three participants noted that no-one managed their councils' collections.

It is likely that the fragmentation of collections across council departments impact on the development of cohesive collections, for example if Collection Policies and documentation systems vary across council departments.

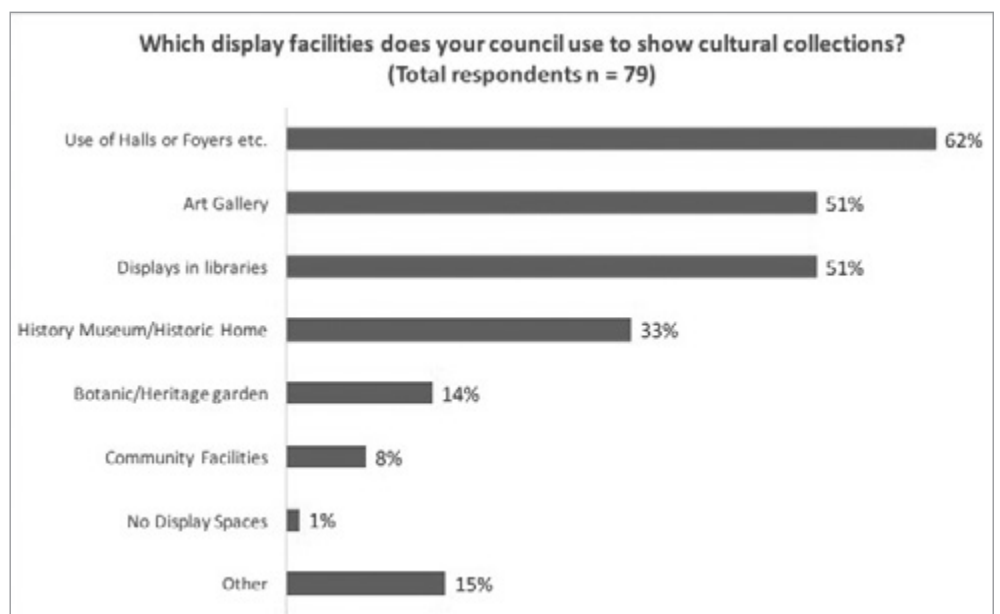
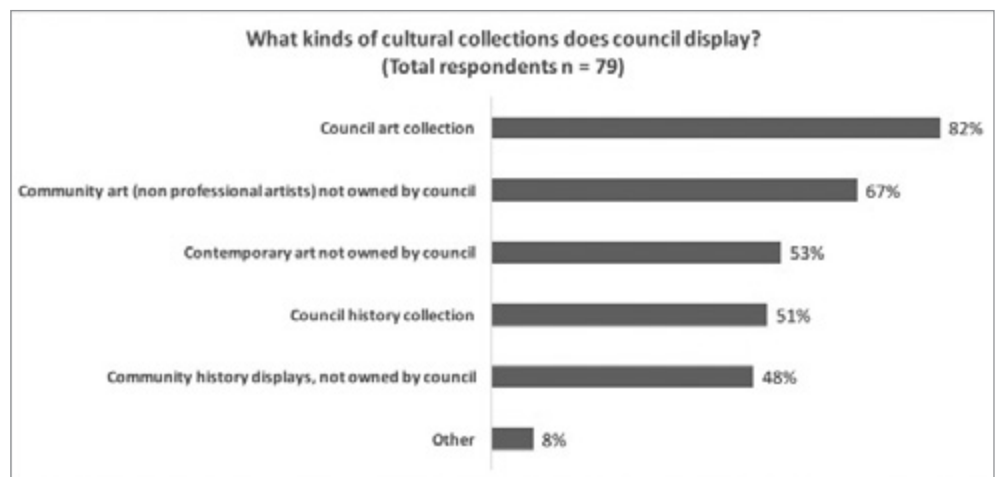
On a related issue many participants noted that they felt isolated from their collection colleagues at other councils. Networking was the most popular option for training and information provision in relation to cultural collections, with many participants keen to discuss collection issues with colleagues from other councils, including discussion on specific issues, for example, "Training with managing memorials - registering/benchmarking. How other LGAs are managing these?" and "Would love to talk to other councils about insurance about artworks, re depreciation issues with finance."

What types of cultural collections do councils display, and what facilities do councils use to display cultural collections?

Council cultural display facilities include some excellent facilities, particularly galleries, however the preservation of many collections may be affected by a lack of museum and gallery standard storage and display facilities.

Council libraries play an important role in caring for and displaying cultural collections.

Council-run galleries and libraries presenting cultural displays significantly outnumber council-run history museums, with many municipalities leaving the care and access to local history collections to community volunteers.





Display panel from touring exhibition *Moreland Remembers WWI*, produced by Moreland City Library Service, Photo: Coburg Library 2015, Museums Australia (Victoria).

Access to cultural collections is not even across the state, non-metropolitan communities are likely to have less access to council cultural collections, particularly contemporary art and public art. Metropolitan communities are less likely to have access to council run history museums.

Most councils present some cultural displays, with half of councils reporting that they have a dedicated art gallery. A large number of councils use libraries, council halls, foyers, lobbies, and offices to display collection items. Metropolitan councils are more likely to display cultural collections.

Most councils display some cultural collection items in one or more council spaces that are not purpose built display facilities. This figure is likely to be much more than 62 %, due to the way the question was answered, see Technical Notes (Appendix A). Comments frequently mentioned foyers of a community centres or performing arts spaces, council chambers and council offices types of non-purpose built display spaces.

Five non-metropolitan councils reported that halls, foyers, etc. are the *only* display spaces available for collection displays. One participant explained that "I utilise any display space I can find." Nine councils rely on a combination of libraries and halls, foyers etc. to display cultural collections. Many councils display items in halls and foyers as well as their gallery or museum, perhaps showing other types of displays than those usually featured in their main venue.

The use of 'halls, foyers, etc.' for display of cultural collections is not common practice in professional museums and gallery organisations, as such spaces are unlikely to meet museum and gallery standards. One participant noted that a "community hall has built in space for art display, but it was deemed not fit-for-purpose due to warm light coming in through the windows." One way the risk, especially of light damage, is managed by some councils is through the rotation of items, for example, "coordinating changing displays in council offices," although staffing levels can make this difficult to achieve.

About half of councils display cultural collections in their libraries (51%). This is an important finding and of great interest to Museums Australia (Victoria) in terms of capacity building for cultural collection care and exhibitions in Victoria. It is clear that libraries and librarians play a very important role in making Victorian council cultural collections accessible. Three councils reported on library facilities that are specifically designed for the display of cultural material, but the comments regarding conservation issues for collections in 'halls, foyers, etc.' may also apply to library display spaces, particularly where display spaces have not been developed with the preservation needs of cultural collections in mind.

Most Victorian councils display artwork (82%) from their own art collection and non-council owned art, predominately community art (67%), however more than half of Victorian councils also display contemporary art (53%). It is much more likely for a metropolitan council to display an art collections 29/31 (94%), compared to a non-



Exhibition shot, *Lazy Days and Landscapes*, Mildura Art Gallery Collection 2013. Photo: Museums Australia (Victoria).

metropolitan council 36/48 (75%), with an even larger disparity for displaying contemporary art; 22/31 (71%) metropolitan to 20/48 (42%) non-metropolitan.

Around half of Victorian local government organisations have a dedicated art gallery to display their art collection and other artworks (51% overall). Metropolitan councils are more likely to have Art Galleries 22/31 (71%), than non-metropolitan councils 18/48 (37.5%). Council galleries range from small gallery spaces within other facilities, to sophisticated professional venues, for example, a suburban council gallery is described as “quite large with three galleries.” Many council galleries are located in older buildings which have been adapted as art display spaces, although a few are purpose built. Some participants mentioned art spaces catering for specific art forms such as installation art and digital art. Five councils mentioned upcoming gallery upgrades.

One third (33%) of councils nominated that they use a history museum for display, this figure includes house museums and heritage villages. It appears that around 20 councils run a history museum that is managed by museum professionals employed by council, including specialist history museums, such as a Chinese cultural museum.

One council facility is simultaneously an art gallery and history museum, the “City of Melbourne’s Art and Heritage Collection inspires the exhibitions.” Three participants note that their history museum is co-located within a Visitor Information Centre, and four more are co-located with libraries. A few council history museums present exhibitions that are curated by a council employed museum professional, but the display items are drawn from community collections. Inversely some council owned collections are presented in council owned spaces, but the collection management and curatorship is undertaken by volunteers.

Non-metropolitan councils are more likely to utilise history museums (42%) for displaying cultural collections, compared to metropolitan councils, with 6/31 (19%), and they are also more likely to display civic collections. However, 17/30 (57%) of metropolitan councils displayed history collections as opposed to 23/48 (48%) of non-metropolitan collections, as metropolitan councils are more likely to display cultural collections generally. They may utilise libraries or other council spaces rather than developing a museum. The relatively low number of metropolitan councils with history museums is notable and further research on this topic is recommended.

Botanic and Heritage Gardens

14 % or 11/79 councils ticked the box for ‘botanic garden,’ but comments make it clear that at least some of these gardens are actually heritage gardens such as period home gardens owned by council and open to the public, rather than botanic gardens in the scientific sense. It is likely that there are many more heritage gardens managed by council and there may be more botanic gardens as well, see Technical Notes for more information.



Grant Hobson, *McNab Avenue*, digital print, 2012, Footscray in Transition Commission, Maribyrnong City Council.

What kinds of outstanding cultural collection programs and projects are being undertaken by local government?

Councils provide a range of collection-based exhibitions and programs, with many presenting high-quality, innovative and engaging exhibitions and programs, across both art and history, enhancing the cultural life of local communities and visitors.

Participants were provided with an option to comment on an outstanding collection project or program, and most of the participants had something to say about the good work that their council is doing with cultural collections, although one participant said she was “just keeping my head above water.” Participant comments paint a positive picture of community outcomes across a range of collection practice, often against a background of very tight staffing and a limited resource base. Given these restraints, most council cultural staff appear to focus on one or two main areas of collections practice and rely on the resourcefulness, talent and commitment of Victorian council staff members to deliver quality experiences and community connectedness through cultural collection programs.

There were 15 participants that described a rich array of collection based exhibitions, including both art and history exhibitions. Participants reported “8-10 new displays and exhibitions generated annually from the collection” and exhibitions “incorporating school activity programs.” A “national collection displayed along local resident memorabilia” and “two blockbuster exhibitions recently from collections.” Some council exhibition practice “pushes curatorial boundaries” and feature specialist collections such as textiles.

There were 11 participants that mentioned their council acquisition or commission program as a strength, for example, “since 2010 Council has allocated an annual budget of \$10,000 for acquisitions.” Focussed development of specialist art collections are also mentioned, such as ceramic and photographic collections. Some councils are engaged in ‘contemporary collecting’ to record the ongoing history of their area. One council captures “Enews as a piece of the collection.” Another council commissions photographs each year “adding to Council’s art collection and becoming a living document of the municipality’s changing environment.” Five councils commented on their strong public art programs, including art incorporated into new building developments and participatory projects, for example, “working with troubled kids to create street art.”

Some councils are developing innovative arts programs to highlight and reinterpret cultural collections, for example, “a funded series of projections” and other projects where artists or poets respond to collection items. Non-traditional display spaces for council collections included a ‘street museum’ in public spaces.

Nine participants commented on their councils' outstanding work supporting community collecting groups. More details are included in a section on councils supporting community collections, below.

Three participants commented on the excellent work their council collections team was doing displaying or acquiring items from Indigenous communities, for example "launching first Indigenous public art work."

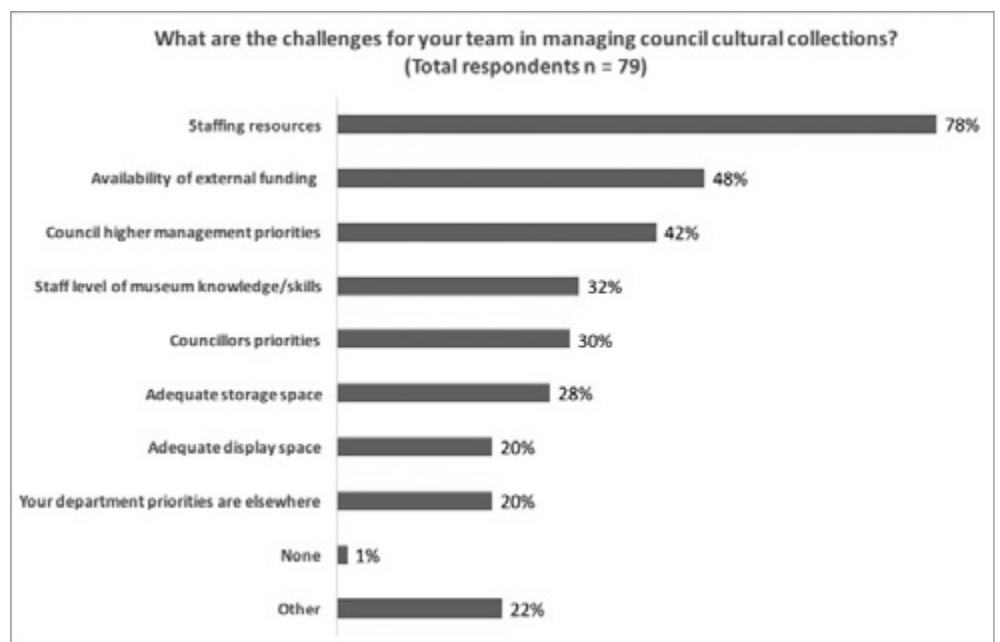
Digitisation of cultural material is beginning to take off within some municipalities, for example scanning of historic photographs, and some 'born digital' content is being acquired, for example video art. Some participants mentioned working toward online access for collections, for example, "cataloguing is well under way using Victorian Collections" and we are "commencing a project to create a local history website where key items/documents are accessible online." One council recently commissioned the creation of "an app for people to explore and look up information on public artwork."

What are the challenges for councils caring for their collections?

Low staffing capacity is a major challenge for preserving and accessing council collections.

Public knowledge of the extent and significance of council-owned collections is being held by cataloguing backlogs, and limited council collection information is available online.

Council collection custodians are challenged by low levels of financial resourcing for collections, both internally through council budget processes, and a lack of external funding opportunities for council collections.





Artist talk with Garry Bish, 2015, The Gallery @ BACC Bayside City Council.

Most councils employ museum or gallery professionals, but many councils do not employ staff with the expertise to manage the council cultural collections, particularly outside metropolitan areas.

Lack of appropriate staffing resources is by far the main challenge councils face in caring for the cultural collections that they own (78%). Lack of staffing appears to particularly affect the cataloguing of council collections in particular, which could impact on council and public knowledge of municipal cultural collections. Some councils employ part time staff with multiple responsibilities, who find that “prioritising and managing arts projects with tight deadlines often impacts on resolution of collection tasks.”

Metropolitan and non-metropolitan councils both reported staffing pressure, although comments indicate the extent of collections staffing shortfall may be more acute in smaller regional councils. “The Arts and Cultural officer... position was cut. Currently the Manager of Community Development has just one community development officer.” One regional council is short of staff to audit a collection affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. “Post fires, we lost some artworks, we need to review the collection to establish exactly what we have... but we are currently limited in how active we can be.” “Banding’ (the level of pay and responsibility of a council position) can also affect the level of decision making power of council collection custodians. “Currently the position is only Band 3... lack of awareness by council on what it takes to manage a collection properly.”

Councils often rely on assistance from community volunteers to care for and interpret council collections. Many council run galleries use volunteers, for example, as “gallery guides and installation technicians” and “a lot of responsibility is given to the historical societies.”

Participants also rated limited staff time as the main challenge council cultural staff face supporting community collecting organisations, with 67% nominating this issue (see chart on page 28). Comments included the “Challenge to up-skill volunteer committee members and succession of volunteers. There is no staff member dedicated to looking after service level agreements with our Museums” and there is “barely enough time to run the Art Gallery, let alone assist community groups.” One participant noted that a local group lost its collection, partly due to lack of staff time to assist. “If we had State government support we could have a more pro-active role with community collections e.g. group lost collection and (we) couldn’t help much.”

Almost a third of participants specifically mentioned lack of suitable storage as an issue in the comments section, and storage problems were by far the most common comment made throughout the survey. It would have been interesting to see how many participants would have ticked ‘storage’ should that option have been listed on the survey, it may have been the vast majority of participants. This issue could have long term impact, as crowded and unsuitable storage is



Hands on Conservation workshop, Museums Australia (Victoria) 2015, hosted by the University of Melbourne Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation Laboratory.

potentially a major risk to collections. It appears that many councils are not meeting the *National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries* in relation to storage and display spaces (see Appendix A for relevant storage standards and benchmarks).

Lack of storage seems to affect the range of council collections, including some leading art galleries and regional museums. "The museum has a major off-site collection, taken us years to get budget to get it assessed, and trying to address it is the greatest urgency." One council relies on "external storage space ... which is costly and impractical." Lack of storage may limit acquisition possibilities. "The Art Gallery receives most of its artwork through donations. However, storage space is quickly running out so the rate of items being acquisitioned will become an issue soon."

Storage conditions are also an issue. It is a "Challenge meeting requisite industry standards regarding collection storage, climate control care." A couple of councils are currently in the process of addressing cultural collection storage problems and are "In the process of a building redevelopment project - new storeroom and racking system."

20% of participants also mentioned a lack of suitable display facilities: "Without a designated gallery, the Council indoor art collections can be compromised - either left in storage for long periods or hung in offices and/or corridors exposed to potential security breaches or damage." The "Collection needs to be more accessible to the community, but is not currently available for viewing."

The availability of funding for cultural collections from external sources was a challenge for almost half of the participants (48%) and internal funding is tied to the priority rating of the collections.

External funding sources were valued, where available. "The thing we have loved about MA (Vic) is the grants that have really helped us do things, the pool of money was so useful to us, metropolitan galleries are often only funded through council." (Museums Australia (Victoria) no longer receive funds to devolve for exhibitions or equipment.)

Participants were concerned with possible changes to funding opportunities in the future. "The rate capping means we are very limited, it will be very tough for council Arts and Culture in next 5-7 years, as arts is often targeted for money saving." A couple of participants also mentioned that the "shifting funding from the Australia Council is going to be interesting."

The availability of external funding was also rated as a challenge for supporting community collections by almost half of the participants: "We can see investments that would assist community collecting groups, but we don't have the money to pay for those investments."

Internal funding for council collections varies a lot between municipalities, depending on council resources and priorities. Overall 42% of participants indicated that council higher management priorities are a challenge for cultural collections, however this was perceived as a bigger problem in metropolitan areas 18/30 (60%)



Touring exhibition poster for *Postcards Stories from the Mornington Peninsula*, Sorrento venue. Mornington Peninsula Local History Network project, funded by Mornington Peninsula Shire and grants from Museums Australia and PROV.

than non-metropolitan areas 15/48 (31%), with councillors showing slightly more interest in council collections than higher management, especially in non-metropolitan areas. A couple of participants commended their council “can’t complain about resources or budget - pretty good,” but several participants expressed a perception that the arts had a low priority within council. For example, art has a “low priority compared to sporting facilities.” Some participants described the difficulties small rural councils face in supporting arts and culture, due to high community needs and infrastructure costs, for example “lots of bridges.” Some participants also noted that their own department’s priorities are elsewhere (20 %), as some councils have “little interest for building and maintaining a collection and believe that cost is prohibitive.”

Council support for community collections were also affected by the priorities of senior management (29 %), and the priorities of cultural departments themselves (27%) (see chart on page 28). As with support for council collections there appears to be slightly more support for helping community collections from councillors rather than from higher council management. Participants also perceived that councillors and higher management rated their work with community groups more highly than work on the council’s own collections.

The levels of council staff with specialist museum and gallery appears to be very uneven between different Victorian councils. There are many museum and gallery professionals employed by local government, and some participants expressed pride in the expertise of their teams, “staffing resourcing and skills are really good - full time staff and [they] are highly skilled.”

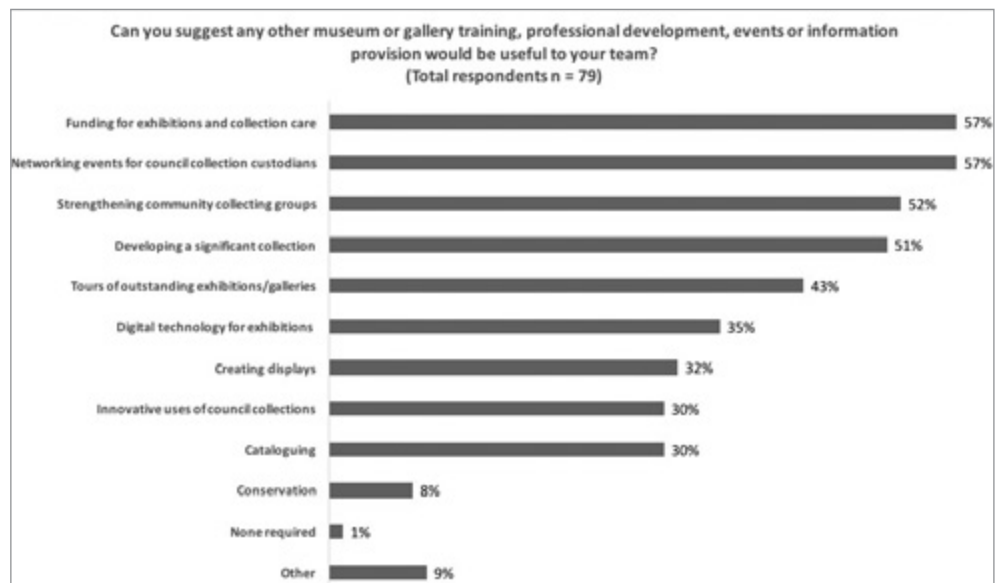
Around 36% of participants indicated that the level of museum skills was a challenge for managing the council collections, which means almost a third of Victorian councils manage cultural collections without appropriately qualified/experienced staff. Most of these were non-metropolitan councils 21/48 (44%) compared to 4/31(13%) for metropolitan councils. Participants mentioned both a lack of trained staff employed by council, and a lack of formal collection training provided by council to staff tasked with collection care. Lack of museum and gallery skills training puts pressure on existing staff, who have to try and learn how to manage collections and present displays ‘on the job’. It may be that local government is not tapping into relevant job seeking networks for collections and curatorial staff, or providing access to relevant training opportunities (see Appendix A).

Understanding of collection processes at higher levels is also an issue that could be improved, for example, “Council don’t always understand the logistics and how much it takes to manage a collection.”

What are the information needs of council collection custodians?

Most local government cultural collection custodians are interested in enhanced learning opportunities, particularly networking opportunities, and learning more about funding for collections projects and systems supporting collection management. Non-metropolitan council collection custodians are particularly interested in collection related learning opportunities.

Some local government cultural custodians are interested in advocacy tools to demonstrate the community impact of collection activities.



Most Victorian cultural collection custodians would like to enhance their work with collections through specialist museum and gallery skills training, professional development, and/or information provision. Most participants indicated that several of the sample topics are of interest and quite a few ticked all the boxes for, "Any information and help in regional areas would be helpful!"

This section saw a significant difference in responses by metropolitan and non-metropolitan participants – there was a much higher demand in the regions for training, professional development and information across all topic areas. While not many metropolitan councils required training in cataloguing and display skills, these were of interest to regional councils.

Non-metropolitan groups were also more interested in training about supporting community collections, which indicates that assisting community collections may be seen as a more pressing council issue and/or an area where council expertise is lacking outside of Melbourne, as 64% (30/48) of non-metropolitan selected this as training issue versus 11/31 (35%) of metropolitan councils.

Training for creating displays was cited as much less pressing for metropolitan groups 6/31 (19%) than non-metropolitan 18/48 (39%), with similar figures for cataloguing.



Working with Exhibition Designers, a Museums Australia (Victoria) masterclass 2012, hosted by the National Gallery of Victoria.

Funding opportunities for council cultural collections and networking opportunities were the most pressing type of information provision nominated overall, with 57% of participants ticking each of these boxes. The only comment relating to funding was that there isn't much collection related funding around.

More than half of participants were interested in learning more about the "best way to support and engage community groups." One participant was keen to address the risk to collections cared for by aging, unqualified volunteers ("a national disgrace") and would like evidence about effective council strategies to assist community collection organisations.

Half of the participants were interested in high-level information about collection management, and planning and policy for collections, represented in the chart above as 'Developing a significant collection.' A couple of participants were interested in information about "creating an Arts and Cultural strategy," but not many participants mentioned collection specific policies or plans, although de-accessioning was mentioned. "De-accessioning policy training would be really useful - have also spoken to other councils that have the same issue." "Training on how to assess significance" was also mentioned as a training topic. It would be interesting to know how many councils have a collection policy defining the criteria and processes for their collection development, and specific Collection development strategies - or goals within broader strategies - for the development and care of councils' collections, and for providing access to the collections.

Many council cultural workers are interested in learning more about exhibition development possibilities, particularly non-metropolitan councils. About a third of all participants were interested in learning more about collection cataloguing. For example, a "Current catalogue exists in Excel, so cataloguing training in particular would be good." This topic rated more highly with regional museums 31/48 (65%). A couple of participants mentioned that digitisation training would be useful.

Among councils with expert staff "resourcing staff is the main issue." Many curators are interested in sophisticated professional development opportunities, for example, seminars on emerging trends, ("PGAV - attending insight programs has been really helpful") mentoring opportunities, and collaborations with larger collecting bodies, such as "networking with more major institutions like ACMI and NGV." Some council staff are keen to learn more about collections work in an international context, for example, allowing staff "do scholarships or secondments interstate and overseas."

Preventive conservation was also mentioned as a training need, for example, "some art curators don't have collection care experience, especially in local government, so often need assistance." Preventive conservation may have been nominated as a training issue by many more participants had this been provided as a box to tick. Specific conservation needs were of interest as well as general principles, for

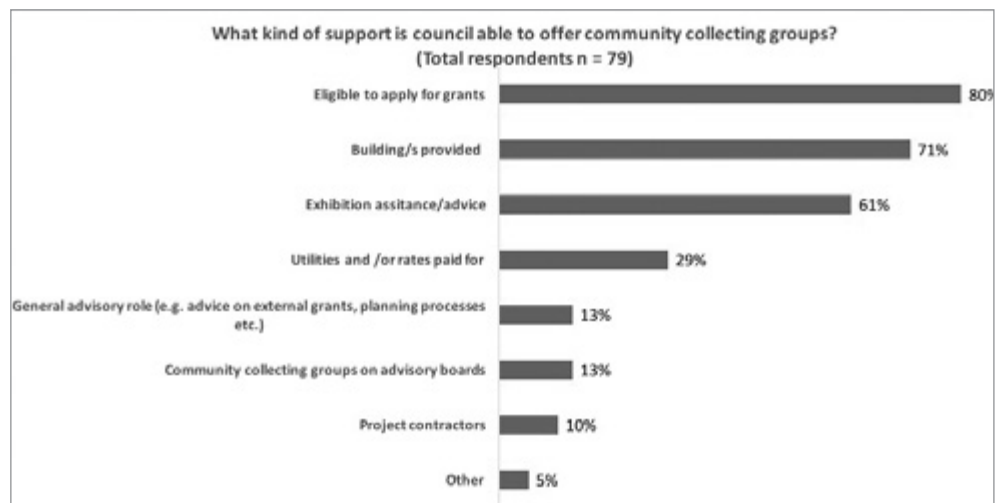
example, one participant “recently engaged a conservator to assess a possum-skin cloak in the collection and teach the team how to manage the item with the lack of proper storage. Another participant would like training that provided a “general overview of museum/gallery installation for staff – e.g. the reasons behind certain ways of hanging and lighting.”

Some participants were keen on a short overview of curatorial processes. “Our team in Events and Culture is one staff member. Short curatorial training in the context of local government would be ideal.” This style of training was also suggested for “the whole team” of librarians and the broader council, so that they could have “at least a general idea on how the processes work.”

Many of the topics listed as boxes to tick in the survey are covered in Museums Australia (Victoria) training events and publications on a regular basis, and some of the challenges described by local government cultural collection custodians could be met or assisted by Museums Australia (Victoria), or through other opportunities promoted through Museums Australia (Victoria) information channels.

Several participants raised a need for advocacy tools and external promotion of council collections, to raise the profile of cultural collections within councils. We are “Often ‘preaching to the converted’ when it comes to training needs for arts and culture teams - it’s higher management in council that needs to be educated on the importance of the collections.”

Comments show the urgency of this issue for some participants. “Give us some tools so we can demonstrate the importance of cultural collections. Historical collections need a piece of the council budget pie. PD for councillors and senior managers so they hear about the importance of collections externally, so not just coming from cultural staff.” Other comments asked “What is the social engagement and health benefit of the volunteer hub our collection creates?”





Uta Wiltshire, Secretary/
Treasurer, Wodonga Historical
Society, with Simone Nolan,
Curator, Arts Space Wodonga,
during a Museums Australia
(Victoria) Roving Curator
Program visit.

What kind of help are councils providing to community collecting groups?

Councils play an important role in housing community collections and advising community collecting groups.

Many participants acknowledged the contribution of community collection groups, for example one participant described “the important contribution to community connectedness provided by history groups and collections. The stories behind these collections... form a strong platform... from proceeding generations down to this time.”

Victorian councils overwhelmingly support the work of community cultural collecting groups by providing free or low cost use of council buildings. This is by far the main support that local collecting groups receive from council. Council buildings provided to community collection groups are typically older buildings not currently utilised by council. A few council facilities share some space with local collecting groups for example, the “Historical society is given use of a section of the Performing Arts Centre - peppercorn rent” and there is “space in [the] library provided to house one of the local historical societies.”

Most councils offer a small grants program that local collecting organisations are eligible to apply for on a competitive basis, some of which are arts and/or culture specific, but generally collecting groups compete for community grants against sporting, welfare and other community groups. The availability of a small grants program by no means implies that community collecting groups receive regular council project funding. Not all community collecting groups are regular applicants to council grants and not all applications are successful. Most groups would only receive a grant every few years at the most, as councils try to spread support across community organisations.

Approximately one third of councils support local collecting organisations with rates and utilities. It is possible that this financial support is greater in total than council project grant funding to community collections (more research would be required to establish this). Some councils have service agreements with local history collections or networks and provide an annual sum.

More than half of the participants noted that their council supported community groups with curatorial/museum/heritage staff time. Comments indicate that this is mostly through existing staff providing advice and assistance to collecting groups. Those providing advice and assistance are typically staff from the council gallery, museum, library, or heritage collection, or other arts and cultural staff, for example, “we provide ad hoc advice to community collecting groups as part of our curatorial duties.” Support provided to collecting groups can include regular networking support, but most support is project based and “Tends to be on a case by case basis such as book launches, local exhibitions” or “held [in] a pop-up museum in collaboration with the historical society.” Some participants mention that they support



City History and Collections Curator, City of Greater Bendigo, Clare Needham presenting at the How to Create a Small Exhibition, Museums Australia (Victoria) workshop at the Post Office Gallery, Bendigo, 2013.

local groups to access Museums Australia (Victoria) training and professional development experiences, for example one council provides “two free bursaries to the MA (Vic) state conference.”

About 10% of councils provide groups general assistance, such as help with marketing events at community museums, help with event planning, obtaining council permits, and writing funding applications. Metropolitan councils are more likely to provide exhibition advice and assistance 26/31 (84%), than non-metropolitan councils 22/48 (46%), which may reflect metropolitan councils employing more staff with specialised curatorial skills. Some councils are reviewing their model of support to community collecting groups, for example, “we provide some advice but it is issue based, we are working toward being more strategic.”

A small number of councils (6 out of 79) appear to currently employ a museum/curatorial professional in a dedicated role to support community collections. Examples of this model include a local history coordinator who “supports historical societies, assists with collections management training, cataloguing, digitising cultural collections.” In 2015 an outer metropolitan council employed a part time “Community Engagement Officer, Heritage.” In addition 10% of councils employ contract museum and gallery professionals to assist community collecting groups with specific projects. Contractors are funded through the council budget, the council grant system, or external funds.

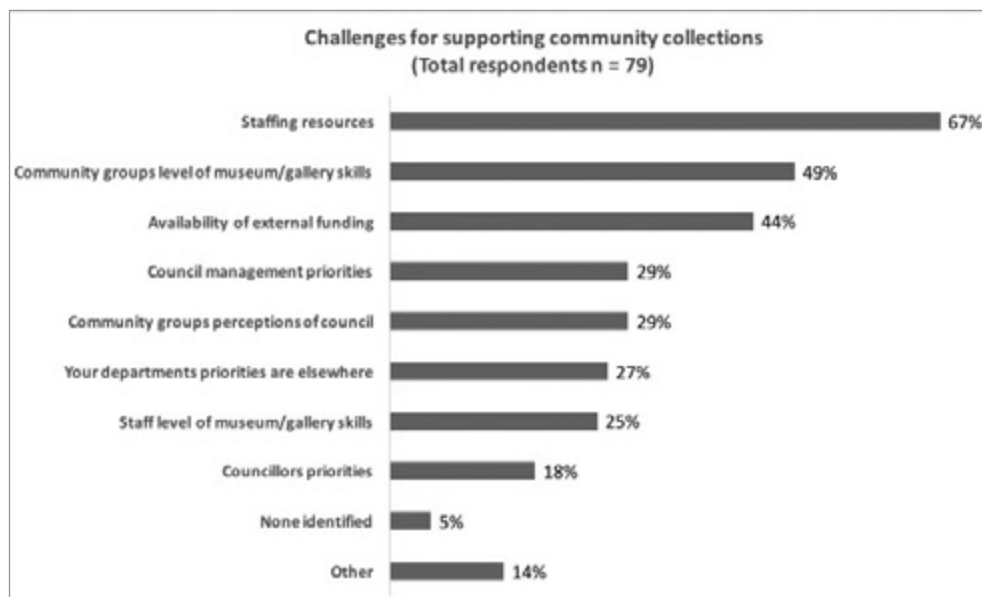
What are the challenges for council staff supporting Community Collecting groups?

Council staffing levels impact on the support provided to community owned collections, with a minority providing a dedicated museum professional to support local community collections. Some councils do not have staff with the specialist skills to assist community collecting groups.

Many councils are frustrated by the lack of external funding available to community collecting groups.

Local government cultural staff are proud of the achievements of some community collecting groups, but there is also concern about the level of care and community engagement that some groups can provide for local history collections.

The sustainability of some community cultural collections is becoming an issue for local communities, as current volunteers are ageing and may not be replaced.

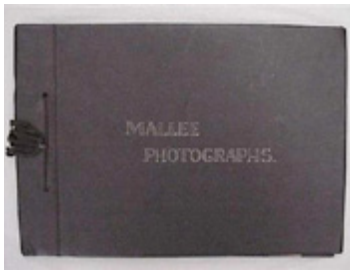


Many council staff are proud of the achievements of collecting groups that they work with, for example a regional volunteer maritime museum that “has won many awards.”

Two-thirds of participants appear to have good relations with community collecting groups, for example “the ground level connection with council staff is pretty good with our community.” Some participants noted that council cultural staff were challenged by “expectations of the amount of assistance council can provide” and one participant recommended “training on how to store collections from external bodies as (groups) won’t necessarily listen to council.”

Succession for volunteer workers is a huge issue for community collecting groups, and one that can possibly impact on local government, should collecting groups lose the ability to care for collections relating to the history of the municipality. “The numbers of volunteers at community collecting organisations is dwindling, and new volunteers are contributing in different ways, they are running out of people to run them, that is the biggest issue - building capacity of the community collecting sector to look after the things they have developed.” There is a real risk of cultural collections being lost to local communities and some local governments may find themselves called upon to accept large collections in such instances. One participant noted that it would be “of enormous benefit” if councils were able to provide and manage “a purpose built” or adapted facility, that could hold both council museum and gallery collections, and important community cultural collections.

Museum/gallery skill levels among community volunteers was nominated as a challenge by about half of the participants. “Groups vary hugely, some are great and some are terrible” and “Most of the Historical Societies are reasonably skilled in collection management,” however participants struggle to effectively assist those collecting groups who are unaware of the basics of museum practice, or who believe that museum standards do not apply to their work on a community level. Council staff can feel frustrated when they see



Mallee Photographs, of properties during 1944/5 drought period, National Wool Museum Collection 6905, Victorian Collections CC BY-NC-SA 3.0.

community efforts that are potentially detrimental to the districts' cultural collections. One participant noted that it is "often difficult to teach these groups or help them understand the importance of correct collection management."

A few museological issues recur, such as community collecting groups lack of understanding and application of significance criteria. For example, "We can't keep giving them more space, some don't care for collections well and keep accepting more and more items of low significance." Another participant notes that "groups collect randomly as they sense the enormous potential loss of historic items due to lack of focus on cultural collections from government." Documentation can be an issue and "sometimes groups resist documenting what they do, as 'red tape' even though it would save time in the end." Preservation skills can be a serious concern and "community collections are vulnerable to disasters – most don't have any disaster recovery plans or protection." Outdated ideas can also be an issue with some volunteers. For example a "range of knowledge/interest is a challenge - volunteers of historical society are mainly interested in White Settler history" and it is "difficult training groups to keep their collections relevant e.g. with digital record keeping, just 'local history buffs."

About a quarter of participants noted that a lack of council staff with specialist museum skills affects council's ability to support community collecting groups. For example, "The current Cultural Development Co-ordinator doesn't have formal museum/gallery training so it is a challenge to teach the community groups."

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the analysis of the evidence provided in the findings. They provide some suggestions for a diverse range of actions, taking into account the breadth and distribution of council cultural collections, and the interesting work and challenges managed by local government staff. The recommendations provide a pathway to enable local government collection activities to flourish, by improving the quality of collection care and enhancing community access, and increasing the impact of council activities supporting community collections.

The recommendations are grouped according to which type of organisation has the mission and capacity to action the recommendations.

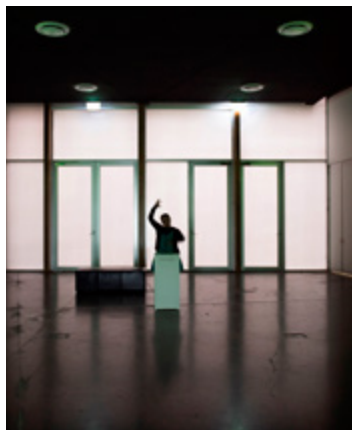
Recommendations for local government include suggestions relating to staffing, planning and budgeting, improving the profile of collections and developing better facilities for collections.

Recommendations for funding bodies include ideas for funding programs to support local government collection activities and further research to increase the knowledge base around the impact of museum and gallery activities.

There are also recommendations for Museums Australia (Victoria), that inform our action plan based on the report. These include actions that we can undertake within our current capacity, building on our current activities, and further activities that we could deliver with additional staffing and travel resources. We acknowledge that colleagues from other organisations also provide vital support to the arts, local government, gallery and heritage sectors, and we hope that the report findings provide them with useful information, new possibilities, and evidence for their work supporting local government cultural collections.

Recommendations for Victorian Local Government

These recommendations are largely aimed at management/senior management and Councillors, but will also be of interest to council collection custodians, who may be able to address some of the recommendations. To assist with the implementation of the recommendations, relevant resources are listed in the next section of the report, with web links.



Roger Alsop, *Image 3, "HOME"* (2016) solo exhibition, La Trobe Regional Gallery. Photo: Eli Smith.

Recommendations for Council Collections Staffing

- To ensure best practice in the management of cultural collections, council should:
 - a. Employ sufficient curatorial staff.
 - b. Seek to employ museum/gallery professionals that are qualified and experienced.
 - c. Position banding should reflect the professional skills and responsibilities of collection oversight, for example Band 5-6 to attract qualified staff.
 - d. Support the development of the expertise of current collection custodians by supporting learning opportunities in collection management, preventive conservation, and curating and collection access skills.
- To support the sustainability of community collecting groups councils should promote awareness of community collecting groups, and support groups with volunteer recruitment and skill development, ideally by devoting staffing through a dedicated position, or by providing appropriate time allocations to existing staff with collections expertise.

Recommendations for Council Collections Planning and Budgeting

To maximise the preservation and potential value of municipal and local collections to the community, both now and in the future:

- Minimise the spread of collection responsibility between different council teams, and consider developing standardised collection management systems and reporting across collections.
- Develop appropriate collection policies and processes, including de-accessioning policies to address items that do not meet the collection policy.
- Identify significant sub-collections and items that should be prioritised for collection projects.
- Include goals for council collections within relevant strategy and operational planning documents, for example: goals, KPIs, responsibilities, and budget lines for collection development, management, care and access.
- Consider providing increased financial support for council collections through budget allocations for the most significant collections and most relevant projects for the community.
- Provide staff with the opportunity to join professional networks that offer professional development and provide information on upcoming cultural collections funding.
- Leverage external funding and professional development support from collections funding bodies and collections service providers.
- Support important community collections through council funding allocations and grant programs.

- Work with community collections that are in danger of folding, to build viability of the group and (plan B) help plan for the future of those collections, especially for significant items.

Recommendations for Improving Profile of Council Collections

- To increase council knowledge of their collections and improve understanding about the meaning of collections, undertake cataloguing or auditing projects and significance studies.
- To provide enhanced public visibility of council collections, councils should make collection information accessible through information on council websites, and/or through online collection overviews, online catalogue entries and/or stories.
- Highlight council collections by considering increased exhibition and other programming.
- Record and promote positive community outcomes of cultural collection projects and programs, including within council and to the wider community.
- Consider providing detailed information to Creative Victoria about the extent and nature of council collections, by completing a Collection Level Description form on Victorian Collections/Culture Victoria.

Recommendations for Managing Council Collection Facilities

- To preserve collections for future generations, strive to store and display significant cultural collections in museum standard facilities.
- Appropriately manage risks to cultural collections displayed in non-museum standard spaces, for example by taking steps to minimise potential damage due to UV light, changes in temperature and humidity, theft, and handling damage.

Recommendations for Funding Bodies

These recommendations may be of interest to a State and Federal Government agencies and philanthropic organisations.

Additional and adjusted funding programs recommended:

- Grant programs that local government is eligible to apply to, for:
 - a. Infrastructure and equipment for cultural collection exhibitions and preservation, such as improved storage and display facilities.
 - b. Programs to enable community engagement with cultural collections, including funding for exhibition production costs.
- A Local Government Cultural Collection Program, administered by Museums Australia (Victoria) with a focus on:
 - a. Developing networking events.
 - b. Training and professional development opportunities on the priority topics identified in the research, including training for arts and culture staff but also for councillors librarians and other

council officers that have a role in collection care and access.

c. Developing planning, policy and advocacy tools for local government collections.

d. Facilitating collaborations between local government and community collecting organisations.

e. Advocating for council museum, gallery and collection activities to councillors.

f. Researching and promoting case studies on best practice art and history experiences delivered or supported by local government, including contemporary and public art in regional areas and urban and suburban history projects.

- The establishment of a network of regionally based museum brokers to support the work of community museums. This program would respond to the recommendations of the 2013 review of the Community Museums Pilot Program. Museum practitioners would work working closely with local government.

Council-run galleries and libraries presenting cultural displays significantly outnumber council-run history museums, with many municipalities leaving the care and access to local history collections to community volunteers.

Access to cultural collections is not even across the state, Non-metropolitan communities are likely to have less access to council cultural collections, particularly contemporary art and public art. Metropolitan communities are less likely to have access to council run history museums.

- Continuing and bolstering programs delivering art experiences in the regions.
- Supporting professional staff for more of the most important community museums.
- Project funding for urban and suburban history exhibitions.

New Research Projects to Fund

Some local government cultural custodians are interested in advocacy tools to demonstrate the community impact of collection activities

- Research to investigate the impact of museum and gallery activity on the wellbeing of local communities.

Museums Australia (Victoria) Next Steps

Museums Australia (Victoria) undertook this project to gather evidence for improved support for local government cultural collections, including investigating how Museums Australia (Victoria) could provide more targeted assistance to this important segment of the Victorian cultural sector. Museums Australia (Victoria) has a long-term interest in strengthening local networks to protect and share local material culture. Our analysis provides us with insights into possible actions which would support local government staff and

community collections. Museums Australia (Victoria) will continue to liaise with the local government cultural staff who generously participated in this study.

Museums Australia (Victoria) will use the report findings to:

- Build communication with local government cultural collection custodians, enhancing local government collection management and curatorial practice through participation in Museums Australia (Vic) professional development events, Victorian Collections, Museum Accreditation Program, Roving Curator Program, and increasing access to information about collection opportunities provided by a range of organisations, including funding programs.
- Pioneer new programs for local government cultural collections custodians, beginning with a networking event in June 2016, and followed by at least one event annually targeting local government staff and addressing priority training needs for local government.
- Deliver an evidence-based new program to enhance local government cultural collection activity (subject to funding), with a focus on:
 - a. Developing networking events
 - b. Training and professional development opportunities on the priority topics identified in the research, including training for arts and culture staff but also for councillors, librarians, and other council officers that have a role in collection care and access.
 - c. Developing planning resources for local government collections.
 - d. Promoting case studies of outstanding council collection projects.
 - e. Advocating for council museum, gallery and collection activities to councillors.
 - f. Facilitating collaborations between local government and community collecting organisations.
- Publicise findings to council management and councillors, and external funding bodies, to create better awareness of the opportunities and issues facing local government collection custodians, and to facilitate evidence based decision making.

Appendix

Appendix A – Information Resources for Local Government Cultural Collections

A selection of resource information and links relating to report recommendations

Funding For Collections Projects

Museums Australia listing of funding sources:
<http://www.mavic.asn.au/services/advice>

Making Collection Information Accessible Online

Victorian Collections free online catalogue, partnership between Museums Australia (Victoria) and Museum Victoria:
<https://victoriancollections.net.au/>

Culture Victoria, sister site to Victorian Collections, digital stories presented by Creative Victoria: <http://www.culturevictoria.com/>

Some commercial cataloguing programs also provide online options.

Council websites for collection summaries, and library catalogues are other options.

Collection Management, Care and Access Guidelines

National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries:
http://www.mavic.asn.au/assets/NSFAMG_v1_4_2014.pdf

Storage Guidelines

Relevant national standards include: “The museum dedicates appropriate spaces to all activities (Standard A4.2). Benchmark A4.2.1 directs readers to the *Museum Methods* [2002], section 1.2 where it is recommended that museum space is dedicated to one third display, one third storage, and one third workspaces, and Benchmark C2.2.1 states that “approaches to storage and display show appropriate understanding of the collection’s condition and the environmental requirements of individual items. Environmental considerations include: dust and other pollutants, humidity, light levels, and temperature levels and fluctuations.” (National Standards Taskforce, 2014): http://www.mavic.asn.au/assets/NSFAMG_v1_4_2014.pdf



The National Wool Museum Reminiscence Cottage, a sensory experience reflecting Australian home life 1930-1950 for people with dementia and their families, City of Greater Geelong.



Reg Parker, *Untitled 8/73*
1973, steel. City of Darebin.
Whitlam era abstract sculpture,
commissioned to place
contemporary Australian art in
overlooked communities. Photo:
Museums Australia (Victoria).

Cultural Collection Resources

Museums Australia (Victoria) provides a gateway to collections related information resources, including templates for a variety of museum and gallery documents. For example, Collection Policies and Exhibition Loan Forms, as well as videos on museum practice, for example on collection storage. Selected articles from INSITE magazine are accessible online: www.mavic.asn.au

Further Resources

Museums and Galleries New South Wales: <http://mgns.w.org.au/>

Museums and Galleries Queensland: <http://www.magsq.com.au/>

History SA: <http://history.sa.gov.au/>

Te Papa Museum Services: <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/learn/for-museums-and-galleries>

Professional Development Opportunities

- Museums Australia (Victoria): <http://www.mavic.asn.au/events>
- Public Galleries Association Victoria (PGAV): <http://www.pgav.org.au/works>
- Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV): <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/whats-on/seminars-and-workshops>
- Creative Victoria expert events: http://creative.vic.gov.au/Expert_Program/Expert_Events
- Copyright Council national seminar series: <http://tinyurl.com/copyright-council-training>
- Oral History Association of Victoria: <http://www.oralhistoryvictoria.org.au/>

Information On Upcoming Opportunities

Membership of Museums Australia provides Victorian members with regular e-bulletins informing members of collections related funding and training opportunities.

Advertising To Attract Museum And Gallery Professionals

The Museums Australia 'Jobs Listing' is the main listing for museum professionals seeking work here, who either receive updates as members, or check the site online:

http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/site/whatwedo_communications_jobs.php

Arts Hub (more gallery jobs listed than museum, membership based, some information publicly viewable): <http://tinyurl.com/arts-hub-jobs>

Appendix B - Technical Notes

General Notes

The key element of the Local Government and Cultural Collections report project design was to contact all 79 Victorian councils, to achieve a comprehensive snapshot of a range the local government activities in relation to cultural collections across the state. The Cultural Development Network (CDN) take this approach (100% coverage) in their annual surveys, to build up a detailed picture of local government cultural activities.

A longer list of questions were whittled down to the number of questions that were answerable in a 15-20 minute time-frame, and that most managers of arts and culture teams would be able to answer without having to contact various other staff members for further details, focussing on questions whose answers would make the most impact on decision making. Our consultation with local government cultural collection custodians strongly suggested that managers of cultural development or arts and culture teams are key figures in the management of Victorian cultural collections, so it was important to get their views where possible.

The survey was developed on the Wufoo platform as an online form that could function as a data collection point for phone interviewers, and could also be used by the participants to enter the data themselves. Several Museums Australia (Victoria) staff completed a few interviews each, and an intern undertook the bulk of the interviews, as part of an internship with the Exhibitions Services Program. In order to keep the data as consistent as possible, the same questions and definitions were used across both online and telephone survey formats, and a script was provided to staff and volunteers undertaking phone interviews.

Some of the wording may have been slightly paraphrased from telephone interviews in the note-taking process.

The following notes provide technical information on the reporting of the research data in this document.

Museums Australia (Victoria) Membership

Membership information is drawn from Museums Australia (Victoria) membership data, June 2015 with the member address indicating a municipality followed by "vic.gov.au"

Photographs

Images were primarily selected based on projects nominated as particularly outstanding or effective by participants, with some additional images sourced from Museums Australia (Victoria) of Victorian museums and galleries, and from collections or projects known to Museums Australia (Victoria) via previous fieldwork.

Data Category Alterations

Participants were very generous with their time and many provided extensive comments. Going through the comments made it clear that there were a few sections of the data where some adjustment was required so that the findings would be more accurate and meaningful. For example, where there was variation in the way a question was interpreted by the participants. Some data was reclassified, for example where there have been a significant number of comments have been made about an issue in the "Other" option, that issue has been made into a new data category. Where there was ambiguity about the way a question was read we have left the data as it stands. Data alterations were double checked by different people, to minimise the impact of particular interpretations of the comments.

Public Art As Display Space?

Some councils mentioned public art as a type of display, those responses are not included in the results as an 'Other' display space, since most councils didn't list public art as a display space, even though responses to Q1 indicated 64% of councils have public art collections. Presumably most of these are displayed in streetscapes and parks and other public spaces, predominately outdoors.

Council Run Galleries

Victorian council galleries appear to be governed under two main models. Firstly, those directly managed by council, for example sitting within a council department such as 'Cultural Development' or 'Arts and Culture.' Secondly, those that are substantially funded by council but managed by an independent board, with an independent legal status. There is some blurring of the lines between these models and detailed research on this topic was beyond the scope of this report, so both types have been included in the data, unless it was noted in the comments that the art gallery is not a council facility.

Council Libraries

As with galleries, some are run by councils, others by other organisations, for example corporations that work closely with council.

History Museums

Community run museums who own their own collection were not included in the data for council 'history museums'.

Historic Homes

A question relating to historic homes was removed as most participants that ticked this box referred in the comments section to a cultural facility housed within an older building, rather than a house museum that is interpreted in relation to the former residents. Three councils that do present house museums were added to the history museum category.

Council display facilities

The meaning of use in the question “Which display facilities does your council use to show cultural collections?” appeared to create some confusion. The intention was to capture council facilities displaying cultural collections, but some comments mentioned non-council facilities. To present more accurate data, some answers were removed, for instance where a participants’ comment makes it clear that a non-council facility has been nominated. Where it is unclear whether the facility is council-run or not, the data has been left as it was entered.

Use of Halls

This section was renamed, as many participants who nominated that their council had a gallery or museum also ticked a box titled ‘No dedicated display space use halls, foyers, etc.’ It is likely that there are also some participants that use a gallery or museum as well as using halls, etc. to display council cultural collections did not tick the box, so it may that nearly all Victorian councils display collection items in council spaces that are not dedicated gallery spaces.

Civic Collection/History Collection?

Civic collections are listed as a specific collection type in the section on council collections, but are included under the heading of ‘history displays’ in the section about types of council displays.

Botanic Gardens

There were not many comments about botanic gardens, but it would be interesting to know more about scientific plant collections within councils. A rough comparison to other existing information is that there are 25 botanic gardens and arboretas (trees only) in Victoria, excluding the Royal Botanic Gardens (Wilson, Vallee, & Fagg, 2015).

Due to the fact that “most are administered by local governments, some are privately owned” the number of local government botanic gardens may have been underestimated by the survey participants’ which could easily happen as the gardens are managed by other local government departments.

Council Staff Managing Collections

In addition to the 54% of participants that ticked the ‘cultural development’ box, most of the 29 % that nominated ‘community services’ noted in the comments that they work for an arts/culture department that sits within community services. This was also true for those who nominated a sport/recreation/leisure department (6%). Many of those that nominated ‘Other’ (24%) were arts/culture type departments by another name.

Council Assistance To Community Collecting Groups

A new category ‘Exhibition assistance/advice’ was created to capture exhibitions assistance from two survey categories. ‘Museum/heritage

staff member to work with groups' and 'Curatorial' staff. Assistance by librarians may not be fully captured.

A new category of 'general advice' was added reflecting comments about advice that was not collection or exhibition specific, but might be provided to any community groups, for example planning processes, applying for grants.

The term 'grants' was changed to 'eligible to apply for grants' as comments made this distinction clear.

Storage and Display

Storage and display challenges were new categories added to the data, after the survey results came in, due to the large number of comments. It is likely that both categories would have attracted many more votes had there been 'storage' or 'display' boxes to tick.

Training Section

'Developing a significant collection' renames the original option 'policy and planning' and incorporates collection management comments.

Conservation is a new category added to the report due to several comments, this may be under-represented as an issue as there was no box to tick in survey.

Appendix C - References

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Appendix D – The survey

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CULTURAL COLLECTIONS

Museums Australia (Victoria) 2015

This research is for a report for Creative Victoria and to help Museums Australia (Victoria) better support to local government.

Survey results will be published on the MA (Vic) website and presented in other formats, and data will be shared with the Cultural Development Network. Individual names and contact details will not be published, nor will council names for answers involving an opinion rather than information.

(For online survey completers) Instructions pop up when you fill in a field. Comments are optional and comment boxes are expandable, so write as much or little as you like.

COUNCIL

(Name of council)

Name (of survey respondent)

Email

Phone number

COUNCIL COLLECTION/S

What cultural collections does your council manage?

- Art collection Public art collection Civic collection
 Local history collection Other

Collection definitions:

Art: movable, not tied to particular site

Public: site specific, and/or large scale outdoor artworks

Civic: from council's own history, e.g. mayoral robe

Local history: items relating to history of the area

OPTIONAL. Overview of collections/anything amazing or notable

DISPLAY FACILITIES

Which display facilities does your council use to show cultural collections?

- Art Gallery
- History Museum
- Historic Home
- Botanic Garden
- No dedicated exhibition space but use halls or foyers etc.
- Displays in libraries
- Other

OPTIONAL Any further comments on council display facilities

TYPES OF DISPLAYS

What kinds of cultural collections does council display?

- Council art collection
- Council history collection
- Contemporary art not owned by council
- Community art (non-professional artists) not owned by council
- Community history displays, not owned by council
- Other

OPTIONAL. Any further comments on types of displays that council presents

DEPARTMENT MANAGING COUNCIL CULTURAL COLLECTIONS

Which department manages the council cultural collections?

- Cultural Development
- Tourism Sport and Recreation/Leisure
- Community Services Other

Any further comment or explanation about council department managing collections

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS

What kind of support is council able to offer community collecting groups, e.g. historical societies, local museums or heritage homes, non-council art museums?

- Project Contractors
- Curatorial staff
- Museum/Heritage staff member to work with groups
- Grants
- Building/s provided
- Utilities and /or rates paid for
- Community collecting groups on advisory boards
- Other

OPTIONAL. Any further comments on councils support for community cultural collecting orgs

CHALLENGES FOR COUNCIL COLLECTION/S

What are the challenges for your team in managing council cultural collections?

(Report will not attribute responses in this section to particular councils)

- Availability of external funding
- Staffing resources
- Staff level of museum knowledge/skills
- Council higher management priorities
- Councillors priorities
- Your department priorities are elsewhere
- Other

OPTIONAL. Any comments on the challenges faced by your team managing council cultural collections

CHALLENGES FOR SUPPORTING COMMUNITY COLLECTIONS

What are the challenges for your team in supporting community collecting groups, e.g. historical societies, community clubs, non-council art collections?

(Report will not attributed responses to this section to particular councils)

- Availability of external funding
- Staffing resources
- Staff level of museum/gallery skills
- Council management priorities
- Councillors priorities
- Your departments priorities are elsewhere
- Community groups level of museum/gallery skills
- Community groups perceptions of council
- Other

OPTIONAL. Any comments about the challenges for your team in supporting community collecting groups?

STRONG COUNCIL COLLECTION PROGRAMS/PROJECTS

OPTIONAL. Would you like to mention any council programs relating to cultural collections that are working well or any outstanding projects?

TRAINING/INFO NEEDS

What kind of training, professional development, events or information provision would be useful to your team?

- Cataloguing
- Creating displays
- Strengthening community collecting groups
- Tours of outstanding exhibitions/galleries
- Networking events for council collection custodians
- Innovative uses of council collections
- Policy and planning for collections
- Funding for exhibitions and collection care
- Digital technology for exhibitions
- Other

OPTIONAL. Can you suggest any other museum or gallery training, professional development, events or information provision would be useful to your team?

LAST COMMENTS

OPTIONAL. Anything more you would like to add in terms of your council and cultural collections?

OFFICE USE QS

Person who completed (for phone interview option), Metro/Regional council

Appendix E – Data on individual local government collection types

Raw data provided by survey participants, in response to the question:

“What cultural collections does your council manage?”

Collection definitions provided for this section:

Art - movable, not tied to particular site

Public - site specific, and/or large scale outdoor artworks

Civic - from council’s own history, e.g. mayoral robe

Local history - items relating to history of the area

Note an option for “Other” was provided but is not included in the chart below. See the body of the report for a summary of other collections mentioned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	TYPE OF CULTURAL COLLECTION			
Alpine Shire Council	Art			
Ararat Rural City Council				Local History
Ballarat City Council				
Banyule City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Bass Coast Shire Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Baw Baw Shire Council	Art	Public Art		
Bayside City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Benalla Rural City Council	Art	Public Art		
Boroondara City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Borough of Queenscliffe				Local History
Brimbank City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Buloke Shire Council				
Campaspe Shire Council	Art			Local History
Cardinia Shire Council	Art			Local History
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
City of Casey		Public Art	Civic	
City of Darebin	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
City of Greater Dandenong	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
City of Melbourne	Art	Public Art	Civic	
City of Moreland	Art	Public Art		Local History
City of Port Phillip	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Colac Otway Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Corangamite Shire Council	Art			

East Gippsland Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Frankston City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Gannawarra Shire Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Glen Eira City Council	Art			Local History
Glenelg Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Golden Plains Shire Council			Civic	
Greater Bendigo City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Greater Geelong	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Greater Shepparton City Council	Art			
Hepburn Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Hindmarsh Shire Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Hobsons Bay City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Horsham Rural City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Hume City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Indigo Shire Council	Art		Civic	Local History
Kingston City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Knox City Council		Public Art	Civic	
Latrobe City Council	Art		Civic	
Loddon Shire Council			Civic	Local History
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Manningham City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Mansfield Shire Council	Art			
Maribyrnong City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Maroondah City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Melton City Council		Public Art		
Mildura Rural City Council	Art		Civic	Local History
Mitchell Shire Council	Art		Civic	
Moira Shire Council	Art			Local History
Monash City Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Moonee Valley City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Moorabool Shire Council	Art	Public Art		
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Mount Alexander Shire Council		Public Art	Civic	
Moyne Shire Council			Civic	
Murrindindi Shire Council	Art		Civic	Local History

Nillumbik Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Northern Grampians Shire Council	Art		Civic	
Pyrenees Shire Council	Art			
Rural City of Wangaratta	Art	Public Art	Civic	
South Gippsland Shire Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Southern Grampians Shire Council	Art			
Stonnington City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Strathbogie Shire Council	Art	Public Art		
Surf Coast Shire Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Swan Hill Rural City Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Towong Shire Council	Art			
Warrnambool City Council	Art	Public Art		Local History
Wellington Shire Council		Public Art	Civic	
West Wimmera Shire Council				Local History
Whitehorse City Council	Art		Civic	
Whittlesea City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	
Wodonga City Council		Public Art	Civic	
Wyndam City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Yarra City Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Yarra Ranges Council	Art	Public Art	Civic	Local History
Yarriambiack Shire Council				



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Image: Conservator Samantha Hamilton presenting a Museums Australia (Victoria) Museum Practice workshop at the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum.

Museums Australia (Victoria) is supported through the Creative Victoria Organisations Investment Program.

