

CITY OF BALLARAT

HISTORICAL COLLECTION POLICY



Buninyong Historical Society volunteer with part of the collection at Buninyong Court House, 2007

2008

Ballarat Heritage Services

PART A

BACKGROUND, SWOT & KEY RECOMENDATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Ballarat has a rich and diverse heritage. This is represented in the unique heritage items and artworks in the City of Ballarat Historical Collections. This policy focuses on three of these collections:

- Buninyong
- Her Majesty's Theatre
- Ballarat Town Hall

These collections are substantial and contain a variety of moveable heritage items such as paper based items, furniture, artworks, books, photographs, maps, plans, costume, audio-visual, electronic media, objects and ephemera. The items are specifically relevant to the history of the City Ballarat and Council related activities, and should be maintained according to international museum standards of collection development, preservation and access.

This Collection Policy sets a framework for decision making in relation the City of Ballarat Historical Collection/s, and aims to provide a best practice model. History and Heritage is important to Ballarat. The BCC Collection/s have the opportunity to be recognised for excellence, relevance and industry standing, while attracting donations, bequests and other means of support. The Blueprint Ballarat Strategy starts its vision with a reference to heritage:

In 2030 Ballarat will be a confident, outward-looking city, as proud of its heritage as it is ambitious for the prosperity and wellbeing of its people.¹

The proposed City of Ballarat Collection Policy highlights preservation, conservation, security and enhancement opportunities for the City of Ballarat's Historical Collection.

Many organisations publish criteria for significance assessment.² When applying such assessment to movable heritage, such as the City of Ballarat Collection/s, it becomes apparent the collections are significant, as outlined below.

The Australian Heritage Commission publishes criteria it uses to assess whether a place should be included on the Register of the National Estate. Freely adapting from those criteria, an object of cultural property could be considered significant if one of more of the following applied.

1. Importance to the evolution of the cultural landscapes (eg farm machinery)
2. Importance to the human occupation of a region (eg objects of transport)
3. Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design not longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest eg Aboriginal tools
4. Importance in contributing to a wider understanding of natural history (eg fossils)
5. Importance in contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation in Australia (eg archaeological objects)
6. Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment, including ways of life, philosophy, custom, process, land use, function, design or technique (eg objects of social history, works of art)
7. Importance to a community for aesthetic reason (eg objects of social history works of art)

¹ Blueprint Ballarat, [http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/6/96.pdf&str_title=Blueprint Ballarat Strategy Document.pdf](http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/library/scripts/objectifyMedia.aspx?file=pdf/6/96.pdf&str_title=Blueprint+Ballarat+Strategy+Document.pdf), p. 8

² One such set of criteria, The Burra Charter, can be located at <http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

COLLECTION IDENTITY

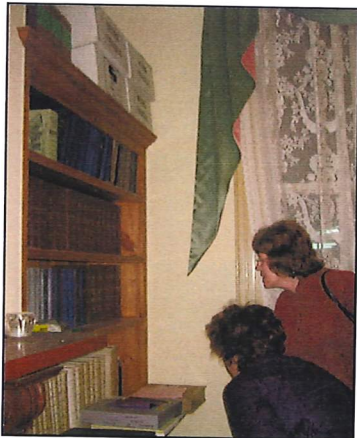
The City of Ballarat Council is the result of the merging of several former Councils in 1994, and includes Ballarat, Alfredton, Buninyong, Canadian, Learmonth, Nerrina and Sebastopol. The former Municipality of Ballarat was proclaimed in 1855, with the former Municipality of Ballarat East being proclaimed in 1857. The two Councils amalgamated in 1921. The former Shire of Buninyong was proclaimed in 1864, the former Shire of Bungaree in 1871, and the former Borough of Sebastopol in 1864.⁴

The date ranges of the Historical Collections encompass the time period relating to the establishment of the settlement of the district before the official discovery of payable gold, as well as after the discovery of gold in July 1851, to the current time, and into the future.

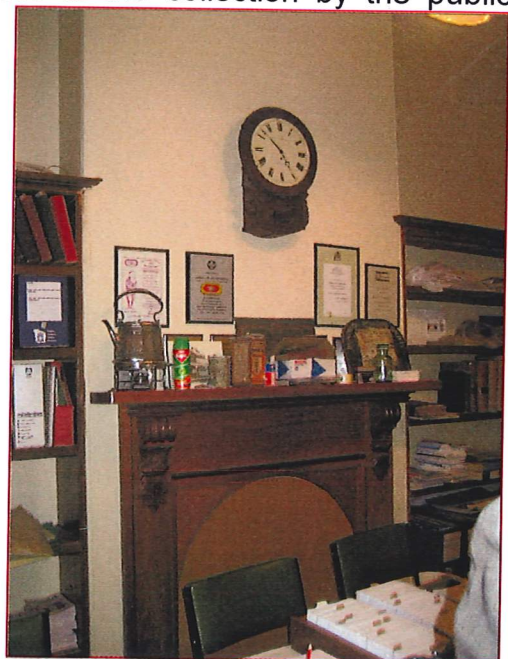
The City of Ballarat's Historical Collections are informative socially and culturally. They tell us about the people, places, and institutions that made the City of Ballarat what it is today. The story behind the development of Ballarat and district can be seen through the collections and a sense of community and shared history within Ballarat and district can be nurtured. The role of local government in the evolution of the social and cultural life in the City of Ballarat can be told. The content of the collection reflects current and past municipal practice, as well as the social and cultural development of Ballarat and district.

The Collection contains unique material in a variety of formats, such as parchment, paper, CD-ROM, film, cassette tape, costume, furniture, art, maps, rate/valuation books, electronic media, audio visual, microform, etc. relating to its geographical area.

Buninyong Collection



The Ballarat City Council Collection at Buninyong is situated in the Ballarat Town Hall and is cared for by the volunteers of the Buninyong Historical Society. The society has a collection policy, and provides access to the collection by the public during opening hours, or by appointment. The Reading Room in the Old Library is open from Wednesday to Sunday, between 11am and 4pm; and the Old Court House History Centre is open from 11am to 4pm on the first Sunday of every month (Buninyong Craft Market day). Buninyong holds a significant place in the BCC collections due to its origin as one of the the first major inland communities of pre-goldrush Victoria.



⁴ Victorian Municipal Directory, 1978

Her Majesty's Theatre Collection



Her Majesty's Theatre, known originally as the *Academy of Music*, first opened its doors in 1875. Considered one of Australia's finest preserved theatre buildings, it has been continuously used as Ballarat's home of live performance since its inception. It has been owned and operated by the City of Ballarat since 1987 and functions as Ballarat's performing arts centre.⁵



The Ballarat City Council Collection at her Majesty's is situated at Her Majesty's Theatre, Lydiard Street, Ballarat, and is cared for by interested staff. There is no specific position description, time allotment, or budget identified by Council to care for this collection.

Some staff members have a good working knowledge of this collection, but it is uncatalogued and requires adequate archival storage. There appears to be no collection policy and access is difficult.

The book *Her Maj: a History of Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat* by Peter Freund will be helpful in informing the cataloguing of this collection.



⁵ <http://www.hermaj.com/cms/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=40>

Ballarat Town Hall Collection



The Ballarat City Council Collection is held at a number of sites, including the Ballarat Town Hall. A number of records created by the City of Ballarat [and its predecessor organisations] are under the custodianship of the Public Record Office Victoria and are held in their Ballarat Archives Centre repository, Doveton Street, Ballarat. Other sites around Ballarat also hold items of significant historical interest, but this study concentrates on the Town Hall Collection.

A few staff members have a working knowledge of the Ballarat Town Hall Collection. There appears to be no collection policy and access is difficult. The collection is made up of a variety of items, including paper based items, furniture, artworks, maps, plans, plaques, books, costume, gifts, audio-visual, electronic media and a variety of other material. It is largely uncatalogued and requiring adequate archival storage.

It should be noted that parts of the Ballarat Town Hall Collection are inadequately housed, dirty, dusty, subject to pest infestation, water damaged, UV damaged, and the majority of Council Officers potentially do not know what is in the collection.



Security of the Ballarat Town Hall Historical Collection, which houses many significant items and Public Records, appears to be a major concern. It is important that Council addresses access by unauthorised personnel (including unsupervised Council officers and tradesmen).

COLLECTION IMPORTANCE



The City of Ballarat Collections are historically, socially and culturally important, and are a valuable source of

- Social and cultural development and history
- Ballarat and district history
- Municipal history and local governance
- Built environment
- Culture and cultural diversity
- Family history
- Natural landscape
- Monetary value and capital appreciation

The collection reflects the significant role of the City of Ballarat [and its predecessor Councils] in the establishment of Ballarat and district. It consists of items of national, state and local significance.

The collection reflects, at a local and national level, the role and importance of many past and present Councillors, staff and ratepayers. It also reflects an international significance due to the discovery of gold and subsequent immigration which was recorded on a world wide scale.

The City of Ballarat's Collections have the potential to:

- create interest in Ballarat and district
- to enhance tourism to the region
- reflect the political and cultural development of the City of Ballarat
- engender an interest in history and heritage, especially the enjoyment of social and local history
- sustain a diversity of views and interpretations
- reflect museum industry standards of collection management practice.

Ballarat City Council Historical Collections SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The collection comprises irreplaceable items of historical and municipal significance at a local level, but, because of its association with the gold era of Victoria, also at an international level. The collection dates from the beginning of the gold era, c1851. • The collection is unique in its connection to Ballarat and District and its municipal history. • The collection is of value to the city on many levels, including intrinsic, monetary, legal, and tells the story of the city and its citizens. • The collection is such that it will appreciate in value if it is maintained and curated adequately. • Much of the collection is still in the hands of the creator – Council – from its inception to present day (ie still active and growing, and relates to today's organisation). • The three collections visited have strong advocates (ie Buninyong HS, Her Majesty's volunteers, and long-term employees and custodians.) There is thus a degree of intact corporate history and memory. • The collection links current ratepayers, councillors and staff to ratepayers, councillors and staff of the past, allowing comparison and research, as well as linking to localities and communities. • The collection complements and supports the heritage status of buildings and historical precincts. • Not many council have a collection dating from the 1850s relating to events, decisions and peoples that have shaped the municipality. • The collection comprises of a broad range of artefacts relating to the region, and international artefacts through gifts from sister cities, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one person appears to have responsibility for the collection. Therefore Council do not know who to turn to for advice, or do not realise they should be asking for advice. • Some parts of the collection are housed, itemised, and maintained adequately (ie Buninyong) while other parts are not. • The collection is spread over numerous locations, so that it is difficult to maintain a central point of access and security. • The main problems are associated with security, documentation, storage, pest infestation, moisture, sunlight, and general caretaking of the collection. • The value of the collections, both intrinsic and monetary, does not appear to be recognised by some council employees to the level warranted. In-servicing is required to improve storage and care, and knowledge of correct environment conditions. Parts of the collection are not housed within good or even adequate conservation parameters.* • Parts of the collection are not adequately listed, itemised or catalogued either on hard copy card indexes or computer and therefore knowledge of what is in the collection, access to the collection and security is a problem. • Supervision and access to the collection is poor. There is no supervised reading room or person dedicated to caretake or curate the collection.* • There appears to be no budget allocated to the collection. This is reflected in the inappropriate storage facilities, lack of correct storage furniture such as compactuses and archival boxes and lack of good management and conservation practices for many valuable and irreplaceable items. • The breadth of the collection is not known by the wider community, nor to the Council staff. • There has been minimal assessment of historical significance/relevance of important

<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By maintaining and conserving valuable asset Council has the opportunity to promote the heritage of the Ballarat locality. • By conserving the records Council will continue as caretakers of a valuable asset which will appreciate in both heritage and monetary value. • By promoting the collection Council and the broader Ballarat community will gain intrinsically from visitors and tourists who are interested in their heritage. • Ballarat is known internationally as a city built on gold. Nearly every Australian of three or more generations has some connection to Ballarat or the Victorian goldfields. Genealogy is the second largest hobby in the world and it is one that as yet, has not been adequately promoted in Ballarat and district. • To conserve records for future generations • To save staff research time due to a well catalogued and locatable collection/s, and therefore to ultimately save Council money in staff payments. • To enable easy access to information found in the collection/s. • Conserving the records for future generations while saving staff time by recording material to enable easy access by designated personal. • To better market Ballarat's incredible history the collection/s. • To promote the story of Ballarat (and district), and its people through the collection/s. • To create special purpose tours of the collection/s. • To generate publications, multi-media avenues, illustrate 'My Ballarat', etc. • Publications, including website, podcasts, etc. • To create a collection and facility which shows BCC to be proud of its heritage and caretakers. • To promote the collection to ratepayers, councillors, staff, family historian and academic researchers enabling wealth of information to be interpreted. 	<p>items in the collection.</p> <p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCC staff generally don't know what and where the Historical Collection is, and who is responsible for it. • BCC staff unwittingly destroying or damaging items from the Historical Collection through ignorance or lack of knowledge or conservation values. • BCC Staff (and collection caretakers) unaware of good conservation practices. • Lack of security means that one off or unique items of high intrinsic and/or monetary value could potentially be 'misplaced'. As a protective device for both Council staff and researchers alike, the collection should be supervised and secure at all times. • Insect, mould, sunlight, water damage, dirt, pollution, and poor conservation and storage practices [ie drawing pins, sticky tape, photocopiers, laminators] • Volunteers can be time consuming, and while the work they do is outstanding, it also results in use of staff time. • Under the Public Record Act, the material created and generated by Ballarat City Council is subject to a Disposal Schedule. Unqualified or untrained officers may unwittingly or inadvertently destroy 'treasures' that would enhance the current era in the collection. • The disposal of records deemed not useful or necessary in 2008 is not necessarily good archival practice. Material kept today may be of great significance in 100 years time. (ie if there was the same disposal schedule 100 years ago would the collection exist?)
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- To better maintain and preserve the collections.
- Establishing a research scholarship to enable interpretation and publishing of BCC Collection holdings.
- The collection could enable cross communication between the BCC and the community it serves. Projects with titles such as 'Our Community, Our History, Our Stories', could become a reality.
- A well cared-for collection could attract sponsorship and greater potential for successful grant applications. A named and well cared for collection can attract funding through grant giving bodies for conservation, exhibitions, etc.
- Showcase a monthly 'highlight' in the Town Hall foyer and/or outline in 'My Ballarat'.
- Trained volunteers could catalogue and research the collection, and thereby make it more accessible for staff and other supervised researchers. Trained volunteers could also indexes and digitised records.
- Volunteers could assist in the conservation of the material.
- Good collection practices could put the City of Ballarat into the role of mentor for other Councils and collecting bodies.
- Life long learning in the Learning City through cataloguing the collection, or research into the collection.

*** This does not include the collection at Buninyong which is well cared for the volunteers at Buninyong Historical Society, is housed in a safe environment, and can be accessed by researchers under supervision.**

**** The map collection is a noted exemption. It is housed in Plan presses, in numerical order. Access to it should be under supervision. It is a notable example of a start of the cataloguing process.**

Key Recommendations

1. Improve storage systems of the Historical Collections in the Town Hall and Her Majesty's by identifying a long-term, environmentally sound room. [because location details are marked onto individual worksheets movement of the collection must be tracked on the catalogue worksheet or items will be difficult and time consuming to locate].
2. Formalise and improve security of the Collections at the Town Hall and Her Majesty's Theatre. Identify one person as the custodian (or curator). This one person supervises ANY access to the collection, including by tradesmen or council employees, as well as the public.
3. Catalogue the collections to enable ease of location, assist in conservation, and for insurance and valuation purposes.
4. Improve archival storage and create micro-environments. This can be achieved by housing the collection in appropriate rooms, and storing in archival bags and storage boxes of conservation standard.
5. Implement the Collection Policy with an annual allocation from the BCC budget, and seek other resources as required.
6. The Buninyong collection is quite safe in its current location. Support should be continued to ensure optimum long term conditions.
7. Seek to acquire items that best reflect the cultural development of the City of Ballarat (including consideration of items in use today, that should be collected for tomorrow)
8. The City of Ballarat's Historical Collections should reflect museum standards of collection management practice through making reference to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) *Code of Professional Ethics*

PART B

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

CITY OF BALLARAT MISSION

Our Mission

The City of Ballarat will provide to all its communities of interest efficient, responsive and accessible leadership, advocacy and service delivery that will also facilitate the realisation of the 25-year vision outlined on Blue Print Ballarat.

Our Values

- Putting in the extra effort
- Getting things done
- Working together
- Being Proud to Belong

The Blueprint Ballarat vision for 2030

Ballarat will be distinguished from other cities by its values and celebrates its natural environment, its history and its cultural life. A city in its own right.

City of Ballarat Annual Report, 2006-7, pg 17

CITY OF BALLARAT HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS MISSION

The Ballarat City Council seeks to collect, develop and maintain a permanent and accessible collection of historical items relating to the Ballarat City Council [and predecessor Councils], with high standards of cataloguing, conservation and security.

COLLECTION ORGANISATION AND DESCRIPTION

The 'Small Museums Cataloguing Guide' is a well-developed, widely used system and standardised cataloguing which has been in operation for over twenty years. It was developed by Arts Victoria and Museums Australia out to a need to educate museum personnel about the importance of documenting historical collections. It recognizes that no two collections are the same so is flexible and user-friendly in its approach. The standard procedures allow cataloguing to proceed in a consistent manner that complies with other organisations in the field, and therefore allows for transferral of data between key organisation by generic classification and descriptions.

The 'Small Museums Cataloguing Guide' also gives clear instructions on filling out catalogue worksheets, and includes a materials authority list and Classification list, storage, numbering items, correct object handling

All items, whether owned by, or loaned to, the Ballarat City Council should receive appropriate handling and care, and should be securely stored under appropriate conditions of heat, light and humidity.

With the exception of the collections cared for by volunteer run historical societies, the City of Ballarat historical collections are generally unorganised, unlisted, and undescribed. An exception at the Ballarat Town Hall is the City of Ballarat Map Collection which is listed and housed securely. This is a good starting point for the overall project. However, the maps are important historical material and should be fully catalogued, enhancing intrinsic value and allowing for the objects and special attributes to be known throughout its history.

Objects permanently acquired by the City of Ballarat should be subject to ongoing management, and placed under the responsibility of an informed, and ideally, qualified person.

Each object should be assigned a unique accession number, and be physically numbered, according to correct museum and archival procedures, for identification purposes. Every step in the process should ideally be reversible. A barcode has been attached to some items, but this can cause future conservation problems to fragile heritage items, can decrease their value, and over time most stickers fall off. All known details should be recorded on a hard copy Catalogue worksheet. Brief details should be entered onto a database to enable the item to be easily located.

Many databases are available for collections. It is optimum to use a program that can be easily used and accessed by many people, and is easily manipulated to and from other programmes.

ACQUISITION

Museum collections are not static. They must continue to grow - and to some extent, to change - to reflect trends and changes in society and the environment. Important objects and collecting categories need to be identified, so that priorities can be set for acquisitions and allocating resources. Duplication needs to be reduced, within and between museums. Stories about objects need to be recorded which the raconteurs are still alive to tell them. We need to be alert to contemporary as well as historical issues in framing our acquisitions policies.

Caring for Our Culture: National Guidelines for museums, galleries and keeping places,
May 1998

A well developed Collection Policy will enable the City of Ballarat's Collections to be orderly and secure.

Acquisition into the collection is made by in-house collection, donation, purchase, gift exchange or loan. Items generated by Council, or acquired by Councillors or executive staff are also eligible to enter the collection.

Items should only be accepted into a collection where they fit within the Acquisition Policy. Items should have clear collectable or intrinsic significance which will enhance the Ballarat City Council Historical Collection mission and policies in the foreseeable future.

Clear legal title is required for all objects of collectable or intrinsic significance permanently acquired by the Ballarat City Council. If clear title cannot be provided, a proposed acquisition should not proceed. Where an item is accepted the title shall pass to the City of Ballarat as a whole, and not to any person or Department, although, as with loans, it is appropriate for the title to include the request that the object be housed and cared for by a specified department.

Donations and bequests

All potential donations should be subject to an Acquisition Policy, and considered by an Acquisition Committee to ensure relevance to the collection, lack of duplication, and Council's long-term ability to adequately care for the item/s.

Where potential donations of relevance to the City of Ballarat's collection/s are sensitive a donation may be negotiated subject to a confidentiality clause. Such material can be designated "on closed access" for a specified time. This allows for material of great historic interest to be protected for posterity, while protecting those mentioned in the material.

Acquisition Committee

Once an artefact is gone, it is gone forever. It is the Acquisition Committee's responsibility to ensure informed collecting occurs within the boundaries of the Mission and Collection Policy.

It is proposed that an Acquisition Committee be formalised to approve additions to the collections. This enables an informed and experienced committee to apply the

Acquisition Policy to the proposed item/s under consideration, and decide whether an item is suitable to collect within a City of Ballarat Collection.

A potential 'hole' in the City of Ballarat Historical Collection/s is the current era, including the past 30 years. Creation and storage of records has changed markedly during this era. Differences in computer programs have resulted in the loss of much data, and few Councils put informed consideration into what they should be collecting today for the people of tomorrow.

The destruction schedule of local council bodies is also a potential threat to the collection. Before destruction of records, the Acquisition Committee should meet to discuss material not considered a permanent public record, but still of intrinsic value to the City of Ballarat.

The Acquisition Committee may consider:

- Relevance of the item/s to the City of Ballarat
- Accompanying documentation and provenance (items with accompanying identification to be given priority over unsupported material of a similar nature).
- Condition (the conditions of the item/s should be reasonable. Badly damaged material will not normally be accepted into the collection. Infested item/s will not be accepted without appropriate treatment).
- Availability of storage and display conditions suitable to the item (adequate environment for storage of the item/s should be available).
- Enhancement of the current scope of the collection
- Duplications (duplicates of items already in the collection will not normally be collected unless with particular provenance)
- Legal requirements (The donor/vendor must be legally entitled to donate/sell the item/s being considered for acquisition).
- Whether it is an unconditional donation
- Whether the necessary resources related to conservation, presentation and storage are available
- In the case of photographs the donor is copyright owner, and permission should be sought for the transfer of copyright ownership.

Documentation

Full documentation should take place at the time of acquisition. This includes:

- Donor form, completed for each item
- Each item to be approved by Acquisition Committee before officially accepted into the collection
- On acceptance, a letter of acknowledgement sent to the donor
- Where not accepted, the item is returned to the donor with written explanation and thanks
- On obtaining title to an item an accession entry is made, the item given a number, identified and any conservation work or protection done. A photograph may be taken or a copy made.
- Full detail to be entered on a catalogue worksheet.
- The item is then correctly stored or displayed.

Deaccession

De-accessioning and disposal should occur only as a result of routine review or with good reason, and not for capricious, immediate need. Items to be de-accessioned should be discussed by the Acquisition Committee.

The de-accessioning and disposal of any object, group of objects, or the entire holdings of the Ballarat City Council Historical Collection should not only occur after appropriate publicity and consultation, and then only following written approval from a designated body or individual. Where a Deaccession is proposed the Acquisition Committee will meet to consider, and consider whether the item/s:

- falls outside the current Acquisition Policy
- is damaged beyond repair or in very poor condition
- requires conservation
- has storage costs which are prohibitive
- is a lesser quality duplicate of an item already on the collection
- lacks supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection
- has clear title
- is cultural property and should be repatriated
- is subject to new information which leads to a reappraisal of its relevance.
- Is stolen with no hope of return

Safeguards should be built into the Deaccession procedure, including:

- Completion of a Deaccession form describing the item, and listing reasons for deaccession
- Items identified for deaccession should be held for a 12 month "cooling-off" period before final disposal
- Staff, volunteers, committee members and their families are not permitted to purchase or otherwise obtain deaccessioned items
- Donors of deaccessioned items should be given the opportunity to have the item returned to them
- Where the item is not returned to a donor it will be disposed of in the following order of priority:
 - Transferred to another appropriate institution
 - Sold by public auction, where appropriate
 - Used as an interpretive or educational aid
 - Destroyed or recycled.

CONSERVATION AND STORAGE SYSTEMS

The Ballarat City Council Historical Collection should be given the best possible physical care. Knowledge of temperature and humidity control, appropriate storage, security and access, pest control, ultra-violet light exclusion, a conservation policy and disaster planning is a necessity for those responsible for its care. The bulk of the collections viewed at the Ballarat Town Hall do not appear to be adequately housed or maintained.



Storage of Historical Items, Ballarat Town Hall

High standards of collection care and storage, as well as the maintenance of comprehensive and accurate collections records are necessary to ensure the longevity of the collection. This can be achieved by:

- Only allowing items from the collection to be moved by personnel trained in preservation handling
- Using archival quality storage materials and furniture wherever possible
- Keep storage areas clean, secure and weatherproof. Housekeeping should be efficient and regular
- Checking storage areas regularly for pests and atmospheric deterioration
- Raising items from floor level
- Leaving conservation procedures to professionals
- Controlling access to storage area
- Supervising access, especially to researchers

- Keeping a duplicate of the accession register, and, where possible, keep up-to-date catalogue worksheets separately
- Displaying items in a place that does not put them at risk of damage, accelerated deterioration, or increase the threat to security. Where possible the displayed items should be rotated, especially if the items are sensitive to deterioration.

Items for priority conservation should be listed annually according to budget allocation, and be assessed and treated by professional conservators where required. A Disaster Preparedness Plan should be developed and implemented.

Environmental Control

It is important for a collection to be housed in optimum conditions to achieve appropriate preservation. Safe storage of precious items requires quite careful attention, including,

- Temperature
- Relative Humidity
- Light
- Pest Control
- Air Quality

Correct light and climatic conditions should be monitored and regulated. Of these environmental factors, temperature and humidity are two of the most crucial components for a storage facility. Optimal levels for a small museum are:

20° Celsius and 50% Relative Humidity

Source: (National Archives of Australia, Guidelines for Preservation, Care, and Handling of Archives)

High Temperatures and humidity levels can cause mould to grow. Conversely, low humidity levels will also have a deleterious effect on records causing paper-based records to become brittle. When temperature and humidity levels fluctuate sharply, moisture is absorbed and released frequently, causing stress to records, and causing them to degrade at a much faster rate than otherwise. Temperature and humidity levels should remain as stable as possible and measures should be taken to ensure that they are sustained over time.

Optimum Storage

According to the Small Museums Cataloguing Manual, storage areas:

- Must be secure, there should be locks on doors and storage cupboards, etc. Access to storage areas must be restricted and carefully monitored.
- Should be fireproof and include fire safety equipment which must be maintained.
- Should be clean and uncluttered. Do not mix collection and non collection items. Passageways, aisles, exits and entrances must remain unobstructed.
- should not have objects stored directly on the floor but have them raised on pallets or shelving
- should be dusted and vacuumed regularly, It is advisable to fumigate storage areas before use and then make sure that only clean, non-infested material enters.
- Must be inspected by staff on a regular basis (including off-site locations). This will ensure that any problems such as pest infestations, defective plumbing, etc. are spotted and dealt with quickly.⁶

⁶ Small Museums Cataloguing Manual, page 150

Furniture such as shelving, compactus, plan presses, etc should be designed to suit all types of objects, and constructed of neutral material that will not give off fumes over time, are transfer acidity. Items in a sealed, secure environment are at risk if they contain pollutants such as chemicals which can affect the items.

Many objects can be affected by other materials in their immediate environment. The following list of good and bad materials—from a preservation viewpoint—can help you choose your storage and display furniture; or to choose the materials to use when making them yourself.⁷

Good	Bad
enamelled metal	chipboard, Customwood, unsealed woods, especially hardwoods
glass	PVA glue
ceramic	protein-based glues, for example, animal glue
acrylic paints and varnishes	uncured paint
inorganic pigments	cellulose nitrate
polystyrene, but preferably not in direct contact with objects	polyurethanes
polyester film	PVC
cotton and linen	wool and felt

Shelving should be covered with a layer of protective foamcore and acid free tissue paper. Fabric drop sheets will keep dust of items.

Storage specifications should include eliminating all daylight from storage areas, and installing artificial light with low UV, which are turned off when not in use. All openings (ie doors and windows) should be sealed to prevent the entry of natural light and contaminants such as dust, dirt and pollution. Temperature should remain at 20 degrees Celsius (+ or – 2 degrees)

Particular items should be stored in particular ways to ensure longevity. For example, textiles should be rolled, paper should be laid flat, and photos should not be piled on top of each other.

If in doubt about storage a trained conservator should be consulted.

Archival materials

Archival quality materials should be used for conservation, preservation and storage.

Disaster Planning and Recovery

Upon implementation of the Collection Policy a Disaster and Recovery plan should be developed.

⁷ Recollections <http://archive.amol.org.au/recollections/6/3/06.htm>

ACCESS TO THE COLLECTION

The Ballarat City Council Historical Collections are rare and valuable. Access should be strictly controlled, and access allowed only under strictly supervised conditions. The collection policy aims to assist in the preservation, valuation and presentation of the Ballarat City Council's collections; bring coherence to the collections and track them in a cost effective way.

Currently access to Ballarat City Council collections, other than those in the care of volunteer historical societies, appears haphazard and difficult to access due to its uncatalogued status.

Public access should also be supervised and controlled to ensure the longevity and security of the item/s in the collections.

STAFFING

To ensure the conservation, longevity and growth of a prestige collection, such as the City of Ballarat's Collections, a qualified curator or archivist should be employed to care for it. Such a staff member will be experienced in cataloguing, management, planning, conservation, collection handling and storage, climate control and volunteer management. A qualified curator / archivist will also know the appropriate bodies to seek funding from, and will be conversant with the correct terminology and requirements of such funding bodies. The Council Officer should also be conversant with the Public Record Act, Privacy Act and Copyright Act as they relate to historical collections, their legal access and use.

A qualified curator / archivist can also ensure:

- Correct cataloguing of material
- Staff and volunteers should be conversant with correct procedure for accessing records.
- Staff and volunteers should be trained in correct manual handling of items.
- Optimum storage and environmental conditions
- Loan arrangements are documented
- Inventory

VOLUNTEERS

The person delegated to care for the collection must grant permission for volunteers to work on any aspects of the collection/s. Volunteers must be supervised at all times they are working on the collection. A list of volunteer workers, their names and addresses and a record of times and dates when they are working as volunteers should be kept. (This information is required in case of insurance claims related to injury.)

The work of volunteers allows for an ability to provide public access to a range of important historic items, as well as the potential of generating indexes and digitising the collection.

Volunteer training should include overviews of the Privacy Act and Copyright Act as they relate to Historical Collections.

LOANS

All loans to the City of Ballarat shall be made to the institution as a whole and not to any person or unit, although it may be appropriate for the loan document to include the request that the object be housed and cared for by a specified person or unit. The conditions of any loan shall be clearly specified, and shall include the proposed term, and define the responsibilities for transportation, conservation, security and insurance. Each loan should be documented and dated.

The Ballarat City Council may lend and borrow items under strict conditions, such as:

- Completion of inward or outward loan forms which include details of the loan, and listing in a Loans register. (See Appendix 00)
- All loan forms to be signed by authorised members of Council. Each party to hold a copy.
- The item/s on loan are to remain solely in the possession of the borrower for the agreed period of the loan, and not be transferred to another party.
- Outward loans should not exceed 12 months
- Inward loans will only be accepted for specific exhibitions or research, and for a specified period.

PEOPLE

COLLECTION POLICY REVIEW

A collection policy is not a static document. It may need to be changed as the circumstances or conditions alter. This policy should be reviewed regularly to re-assert the objectives and focus of the organisation.

Further reading

Burra Charter

Caring for Your Collections, 1992.

Conservation and Care of Collections, 1998.

Conservation and Restoration for Small Museums, 1981.

Heritage Collections Council, reCollections, caring for collections across Australia:

Heritage Collections Council, (Significance), a guide to assessing the significance of cultural heritage objects and collections, Canberra, 2001. [Available online](#)

International Council of Museums (ICOM) *Code of Professional Ethics*

Managing Collections, Canberra, 1998. [Available online](#)

Museums Australia (Inc), Caring for our culture, national guidelines for museums, galleries and keeping places, 1998. [Available online](#)

The Small Museums Cataloguing Manual: A Guide to Cataloguing Object, Document and Image Collections, 1996.

The Small Museums Cataloguing Manual: Cataloguing Supplements, 1996.