**Collection Development Plan**

**For the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House**

1. *Our Collection*

Collection Vision

The Museum of Australian Democracy collection, connected to and located within the historical heart of Australian government, captures the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy.

Collection Statement of Significance

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House encompasses the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy in its global context. It tells the stories and explores the spirit of Australian democracy in a place where democracy was enacted in Australia.

The Museum of Australian Democracy collection is of national, regional and local significance in documenting and illustrating the development of Australian democracy. Its key themes are the ideas of democracy and the workings of Australia’s government, Australian prime ministers, political influencers and movements and – at the heart of the collection – the nationally listed heritage place, Old Parliament House, the home of Australia’s federal parliament from 1927 to 1988.

In addition to *in situ* furnishings, the collection includes material culture and documentary heritage relating to people, institutions, organisations and events that have helped shape Australian democracy and influenced democratic practices internationally.

Elements of the collection display aesthetic significance, most notably the beautiful and iconic Old Parliament House designed by John Smith Murdoch in the interwar Stripped Classical style. This beauty extends to the design intention to enable access by the people – the modest grandeur of the building ensured that it truly became the ‘people’s House’.

The building and its collection have powerful symbolic meaning for many Australians. Generations of Australians continue to visit and experience the building as an historic and civic space, and it continues as a site for national debates, such as the Constitutional Convention in 1998. The building has further social significance because there is a living community linked to it. People who have worked in the building, including politicians, journalists and general staff who have affection for it, support its preservation.

As a resource, the collection offers insights and opportunities for research into Australian architecture, political history, government and parliamentary procedures and key people, events in the development of our democracy, the functioning of a twentieth century workplace and the development of Canberra as the national capital.

Sub-collections

The Museum of Australian Democracy collection is divided into three distinct sub-collections.

The *Heritage Collection* is all the objects that have a direct association with Old Parliament House. This includes the furniture and fittings that were designed for and used in the building, and other furniture, drawings and designs and found objects that were used during the building of and life of the place as a working parliament house. This collection forms part of the National and Commonwealth Heritage Listings for the place and is therefore subject to the requirements for conservation and interpretation under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. This collection is almost fully formed.

The *Political and Parliamentary Collection* is the collection of material culture that aligns with the purpose of the museum as a place to explore and communicate the ideas and issues around democracy and government in Australia. This collection comprises objects and artworks, oral histories and personal collections, ephemera and pamphlets, images and audio-visual material, books and serials. The majority of the acquisitions made become part of this sub-collection.

The *Interpretation and Learning Collection* is the group of reproduction and facsimile pieces, learning and display props that do not require the level of care provided to the more significant Heritage and Political and Parliamentary Collection items and therefore can be more freely used to interpret the museum’s values through public programs.

1. *Collecting Context*

Collecting Principles

Collecting at the Museum of Australian Democracy is directed by the following principles:

• *Significance –* The object has historic, aesthetic, scientific or research, and/or social or spiritual significance (as per *Significance 2.0*) that:

1. relates to the vision, statement of significance and the five collecting areas
2. relates to content areas nominated through the annual collection development priorities and/or related projects as outlined in the forward program
3. will assist in making a lasting contribution to understanding and interpreting the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy.

• *Provenance –* The origin and/or subsequent history of the object or collection can be thoroughly documented and authenticated to the highest standards as outlined in sector charters and guidelines and consistent with legislation. The Museum does not acquire material reasonably suspected to have been looted or stolen.

• *Originality or rarity –* The object or collection is unique or relatively rare, a fine example of its type, or not well represented in other museum collections.

• *Research value –* The object or collection has high research value.

• *Display and interpretation value –* The object or collection has high display and interpretation value.

• *Condition –* The object or collection is suitable for long-term storage and preservation with minimal resource outlay.

Influences

Acquisitions to the collection will be both opportunistic and strategic. Collection development activities will seek to take a representative and selective approach to building the collection rather than taking a comprehensive view.

The Museum of Australian Democracy seeks to balance its collecting activities between short and medium-term needs associated with exhibitions and public programs, and long-term obligations to document and represent the ideas, movements, individuals and events of Australian democracy. Collecting activity will be guided by content areas nominated through the annual collection development priorities and/or related projects as outlined in the forward program.

Objects for the collection are acquired through:

i) *Targeted collecting*

The Museum of Australian Democracy establishes targeted collecting guidelines for proactive collecting activities to address a specific collection need, address a weakness in the collection, and/or related projects as outlined in the forward program according to the annual collection development priorities and the Oral History Program.

ii) *Donation*

These offers are assessed in terms of the Collection Development Plan. In some cases offers are made under the Cultural Gifts Program administered by the Ministry for the Arts.

iii) *Commissioning*

On occasion, the museum may commission the creation of artworks for the purpose of display.

iv) *Purchase*

The Museum of Australian Democracy purchases objects at auction, through commercial vendors, and by agreement with private vendors. Proposals are made by curatorial or other staff using the established Collection Purchase Minute. If successful, the object is then documented according to the Collection Acquisition Proposal.

Governance

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. This Collection Development Plan sits with other specialised work area plans beneath the primary museum planning documents; the primary documents are the Strategic Plan 2013-18, the Heritage Strategy and the Draft Old Parliament House and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2014-2019. The two heritage documents are requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.*

The Museum respects the moral rights of the creators of works acquired for the collections by ensuring the integrity of use and proper attribution of those works.

The Museum recognises the principles in the:

* *Ethics and Provenance* statement from the Council of Australasian Museum Directors (2014)
* *Collecting Cultural Material: Principles for best practice* from the Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department (2009)

Museum staff abide by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) and Museums Australia codes of ethics with regard to collecting practices and procedures.

Material in the collection is deemed irreplaceable and is displayed or handled according to the highest standards of museum care. In 2014 the collection includes over 40,000 items. Policies 1.10 and 7.1 of the *Draft* *Old Parliament House and Curtilage Heritage Management Plan 2014-2019* specify the high level policy context for managing the collection. The Collection Management Procedures provide the detailed guidelines and processes for every aspect of the management of collection items. Additions to the collection are subject to the scrutiny and procedures of the Acquisitions Committee; the terms of reference for this committee are also included in the Collection Management Procedures and the committee delegate is the Deputy Director Audience, Programs and Partnership.

This Collection Development Plan informs the annual collection development priorities and related team workplans.

1. *Collecting Areas*

Category 1 – Development of democracy and the systems of Australia’s federal government

A collection of material which explores the ideas of democracy, places Australia’s democracy in a global context, and reveals the workings of Australia’s government.

This category includes material culture encompassing:

* objects that illuminate the history of democratic ideas with a direct link to Australia’s democracy
* objects that illustrate seminal moments in the history of Australia’s democracy
* objects that show aspects of the system and institutions of Australia’s government
* responses to the system and institutions of Australia’s government

This category of collection items covers a wide range of topics and periods of time. It has particular strengths in the areas of 20th and 21st century electoral and suffrage objects and ephemera. It includes some small but significant collections - objects belonging to British suffragettes, items relating to Governors-General, the National Tally Room board, and election papers and other materials from the first federal election in 1901. However there is scope for further development of materials relating to the development of democracy in colonial Australia (ie conditions relating to convicts, suffrage, uprisings such as Eureka), materials linking Australian democratic change to its international context, and indigenous governance and democracy.

Category 2 – Prime Ministers

A collection of material which illustrates the lives and careers of Australia’s prime ministers.

This category includes material culture encompassing:

* objects owned or created by Australia’s prime ministers
* objects associated with the careers of Australia’s prime ministers
* responses to Australia’s prime ministers

This collection has particular strengths in academic works, such as books, journals and pamphlets relating to Australia’s prime ministers. Various aspects of the life of Robert Menzies are also strongly represented through a significant donation from the Menzies family. The collection is also strong in material depicting Australian prime ministers in a satirical way. These items include cartoons, posters, tea towels, candles, badges and stickers.

Priority is accorded to collecting objects relating to the lives and careers of all of Australia’s prime ministers. The development of the collection complements existing collections relating to a number of individual Australian prime ministers. Academic and creative responses to prime ministers are also a collecting priority.

Category 3 – Political influencers and movements

A collection of material which illustrates the impacts of influential individuals and political movements in Australia’s democratic history.

This category includes material culture encompassing:

* Objects associated with the impact of:
  + leaders of political parties and movements
  + influential parliamentarians
  + individuals who have played a key role in significant political moments
  + prominent political commentators
* Objects associated with the purpose and activities of:
  + political parties with a national presence or influence
  + counter-movements or responses to political movements
  + community groups motivated by a desire to bring about change

The strengths of this collection of items lies in 20th and 21st century election campaign ephemera, clothing, badges, cartoons and posters. It also contains significant personal collections relating to influential members of parliament, including the Neville Bonner, Kevin and Jocelyn Newman, Arthur Calwell and Jim Killen collections.

Areas for growth in this category include campaign material and protest ephemera across the political spectrum. Other material to be targeted in this category includes objects relating to public intellectuals, journalists, unionists, business leaders, and those involved in the campaign for social, environmental and human rights.

Category 4 – Old Parliament House

A collection of material which illustrates the construction, design, iconography and history of Old Parliament House as a functioning parliament house.

This category includes material culture encompassing:

* the construction and physical changes to the building, including furniture, fittings and items used here
* objects associated with the people who worked in the building and their duties
* the social significance of the place.

Old Parliament House is the strongest item in this collection, followed closely by the extensive heritage furniture collection and objects created and used by those who worked in the building between 1927 and 1988. A substantial collection of oral histories with those who worked in the building, both as members of parliament and as support staff, is another feature of this category.

Any gaps in this category relate mainly to the personal stories of those who worked in the building, and these will continue to be a focus for collecting, in the form of oral history, objects and ephemera.

Category 5 – Activities at Old Parliament House since 1988

A collection of material which shows the development of, and outcomes from, key audience engagement and heritage activities conducted by organisations at Old Parliament House from 1988, with a particular emphasis on the Museum of Australian Democracy.

This category includes material culture encompassing:

* resource material to support museum activities
* works commissioned or otherwise generated through the activities of the museum

*Note: this collection does not include government records that are collected under the Archives Act 1983.*

This category of items has strengths in relation to images and documents from key events which have taken place at Old Parliament House since 1988 including the *Prime Ministers on Prime Ministers* event held in 1997 in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of the opening of the provisional Parliament House and the Constitutional Convention in 1998. Other strengths include materials relating to exhibitions developed at the Museum of Australian Democracy including Mrs Prime Minister and Billy Hughes at War.

Future collecting in this category will continue to prioritise images and documents from salient events held at Old Parliament House, as well as materials which highlight the importance of, or innovation in, the activities conducted by the Museum of Australian Democracy.

1. *Evaluation and Review*

The Collection Development Plan is implemented using annual collection development priorities. Acquisitions are reported against the collecting areas and an assessment made as to the extent to which they contribute to the collection vision and statement of significance and deliver on the MoAD Strategic Plan. This plan will be reviewed in 2018 in line with the Strategic Plan 2013-18.