

Connections **Indigenous Cultures**  
and the Australian National Maritime Museum

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Every effort has been made to determine and contact individual or communal creators and owners of the works reproduced in this document.

The ANMM acknowledges that the museum is on the land of the Gadigal people and therefore wishes to pay respect to Elders present and past of the Eora nation.

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# Preface

At the Australian National Maritime Museum we have always believed that to understand Australia fully, you have to understand its peoples' many and varied links to their waterways and the seas. None have links that are longer or deeper than those of Indigenous Australians.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures celebrate the richness of the maritime environment, and their living relationship with it, through painting and sculpture, story, dance and song. Far more than simply documenting this relationship, these works are the expression of a deep spiritual connection. Moreover, they celebrate survival and contribute to ongoing struggles for land and sea rights, and for justice.

The Australian National Maritime Museum collection has been deeply enriched by many, many Indigenous works from all over Australia, and by collaborations with Indigenous artists and communities in exhibitions and other programs for our visitors. By way of illustration, they include watercraft of Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and the Murray River; masks and dancing canoes from the Torres Strait Islands; reed sculptures from South Australia and delicate shell jewellery from the Bass Strait Islands. Media range from engraved pearl shell to polychrome sculpture to the 80 magnificent barks of the collection *Saltwater: Yirrkala bark paintings of Sea Country*, shown here in 2002 in an exhibition of the same name.

Since this museum began, we have strived to create a more knowledgeable environment for the appreciation of Indigenous cultural heritage. This has been based upon respect for, and a commitment to consultation with, Indigenous communities and artists at every stage.

**Connections** *Indigenous cultures and the Australian National Maritime Museum* was developed to guide ANMM staff in their relationships with Indigenous cultures and people, and at the same time to be a public resource helping to build understanding and encourage interaction with Indigenous communities, artists and organisations. Its publication reaffirms our longstanding commitment towards these goals.

I would like to acknowledge the team that worked to create this protocol document, headed by Michael Crayford, assistant director, Collections and Exhibitions, and John Waight, our Indigenous curator and liaison officer. Thanks to the many other staff who worked with them to bring **Connections** *Indigenous cultures and the Australian National Maritime Museum* to fruition, and shared their dedication and passion.

**Mary-Louise Williams**

Director

Australian National Maritime Museum

**Connections** *Indigenous Cultures and the Australian National Maritime Museum* is presented in two sections.

The first provides **background and principles** which represent ANMM's policy on Indigenous cultural heritage. The second presents some broad **policy guidelines** based on these principles, together with a set of **procedures**. Throughout, the document is specific to ANMM and provides guidelines for museum representatives and staff in dealing with Indigenous artists, visitors and communities, as well as artefacts held in the collection, in order for us to act in culturally appropriate ways that respect the diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures in Australia.

PART 1

## Background and Principles

# Purpose

The Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) has undertaken to produce this document out of respect for the Indigenous people of Australia and a desire to understand and accept differences between peoples. Its guiding principle is captured by Terri Janke in *Our Culture Our Future* (1998):

**The sharing of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property by museums and all those who seek to make use of Indigenous cultural material other than in its traditional or customary way must proceed on the basis of respect, open communication, negotiation and prior informed consent.**

The purpose of this document is to highlight the importance of professional cultural relations between the ANMM and Indigenous people, and to explore ways in which the museum can develop a more inclusive approach to Indigenous people and their concerns for their cultural heritage.

It will enable ANMM staff across a number of branches, and others involved with the museum who have varying backgrounds, needs and levels of knowledge to act confidently on the basis of a sound understanding of ethics and issues.

The document is designed not only to protect Indigenous cultural expressions in the museum but also to assist those who support and practice integrity in arts and culture, heritage and history, and particularly maritime heritage. It will therefore be useful in fostering ways to share Indigenous cultural expressions within a set of expectations and/or obligations within the broader museum community and the cultural sector.



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## **VISION**

The document accords with the ANMM's vision and values:

Our vision is to be Australia's most dynamic and innovative cultural resource, enriching lives by promoting knowledge and enjoyment of our relationship with the waterways and the sea.

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## **MISSION**

Our mission is to bring maritime heritage to life and preserve it for future generations through:

- national leadership and international collaboration
- programs and products that are creative, inclusive, enjoyable and memorable
- research, acquisition, conservation, interpretation, outreach and education
- fostering traditional skills and practices.

## Sources

Australian governments, both state and federal, as well as museums, galleries and associated organisations, have recently developed protocol documents to provide guidance for interacting with Indigenous communities and individuals in the use and marketing of Indigenous cultural heritage. For more detailed information see bibliography for a full list of sources.

Museums Australia's indispensable *Previous Possessions New Obligations: policies for museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* (1993) was endorsed by ANMM's Collection Development Policy 2003. *Previous Possessions New Obligations* has been substantially revised and renamed *Continuous Cultures Ongoing Responsibilities: principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage* (2005).

The Australia Council's series *Cultures – Protocols for Producing Indigenous Australian Arts* is essential reading. Written by Terri Janke and published in five booklets, each addresses discrete art forms: *Visual (Visual Arts and Crafts)*; *Performing Arts (Drama/Dance)*; *Writing (Literature)*; *Song (Music)*; and *New Media*. *Respecting Cultures: Working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community and Aboriginal Artists* (2004) provides a valuable, though specifically Tasmanian perspective as a companion text to *Cultures – Protocols for Producing Indigenous Australian Arts*. Terri Janke's *Our Culture Our Future: report on Australian Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights* (1998), commissioned by AIATSIS and ATSIC, is an important contribution to the literature. So, too, is *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for libraries, archives and information services*.

Collectively, these publications promote reconciliation, cultural harmony and goodwill through best practice methods of interaction and negotiation. While drawing on these and other documents (see bibliography) ANMM's guidelines have been written specifically for ANMM.

## Introduction

The relationship between museums and Indigenous people has gradually and relatively recently developed from an involvement based mainly on scientific and ethnographic methodologies to one that promotes interaction with a living, continuous, evolving culture. ANMM's collection and the ways in which it is acquired, accessed or exhibited reflects the continuity and harmony between the art and the culture from which it arises. Uniquely, ANMM enjoys not only a relationship with the individual artists through their artworks, but with the Indigenous community and their wishes for the way their cultural material is exhibited in the museum.

Indigenous people have and assert the right to self-determination in cultural affairs. ANMM endorses the principle of Indigenous people being guardians of their cultural heritage and their right to negotiate their role in the management and interpretation of their cultural heritage in the museum.

# Definitions

In this document, the term Indigenous refers to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal people are the original owners and inhabitants of the Australian mainland, various small islands and Tasmania. Their spiritual and custodial relationship with the land and seas extends over many tens of thousands of years. Torres Strait Islander people are the inhabitants and traditional owners of the islands of the Torres Strait, between the northern tip of Cape York in Queensland and Papua New Guinea.

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## **INDIGENOUS CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Tangible and intangible Indigenous cultural heritage includes:

- literary, artistic and performance works (including music, song, dance, ceremonies, narratives, poetry, symbols and designs)
- languages
- spiritual knowledge
- scientific, technical, agricultural and ecological knowledge (including cultigens, medicines and sustainable use of flora and fauna)
- human genetic material (including DNA and tissues)
- ancestral remains
- burial artefacts
- cultural environment resources (including Indigenous sites of significance)
- representation of Indigenous peoples in all media (including scientific and ethnographic research reports and papers, books, films, sound recordings, CD-ROM and other digital formats).

# Terminology

**Respect** should underlie any verbal or written communication with or about Indigenous peoples. Inappropriate terminology reinforces stereotypes, even if that is not the intention of the speaker or writer. Using the right terms will help museum staff to recognise and understand the beliefs of Indigenous people and help them start thinking about the way Indigenous people are represented in the museum.

- **Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Indigenous** should always be capitalised (like Australian, Fijian, Irish or German).
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and Indigenous Australian people** are to replace **ATSI**. ATSI is an inappropriate abbreviation that most Indigenous people and many other Australians find offensive and demeaning. With names of other groups, consultation at a community level is important to determine what is acceptable.
- **Aboriginal nations/communities and language groups** should now replace **tribe**. Some Indigenous people are comfortable with the term, but 'nation', 'community', 'people', 'clan' or 'language group' are preferable.
- **Elders** should now replace **chiefs**, with the word Elders capitalised to show respect.
- **Indigenous (Australian) history** should now replace **prehistory**. 'Prehistory' is Eurocentric, referring to a time before European history was written and not acknowledging the lives of Indigenous people in Australia before colonisation.
- **Invasion** may replace **colonisation/settlement**, since, while many non-Indigenous Australians may be uncomfortable with the term 'invasion', 'settlement' does not reflect the experience of Indigenous Australians at the time. 'Arrival of Europeans' can be appropriate in some contexts.

- There are many different beliefs and versions of how Australia was populated including archaeological accounts. Many Indigenous people believe that their ancestors and ancestral beings were here from the beginning, originating from the land and the sea. Therefore, it is best practice always to consult the relevant artist or communities when interpreting or representing their tangible and intangible culture.
- **The Dreaming** or the **Dreamings** should now replace **Dreamtime**. Indigenous Australian nations have their own concepts and terminology about creation – when and where the law, language and ceremony came into being.
- **Creation/Dreaming stories** should now replace **myths/legends**, which connote untruth. The use of ‘stories’ alone is to be avoided as it also implies make-believe.

- Reference to Indigenous cultures as if they exist only in the past is erroneous and denigrating. Cultural heritage is being created now, for the future. The terms **traditional** and **contemporary** are not synonymous with **past** and **present**. Traditional techniques can be used in modern contexts to create contemporary works. 'Traditional' is often used incorrectly to describe a work that has an Indigenous 'look', but which has been created in new forms unrelated to cultural tradition.
- **Uluru** should now replace **Ayers Rock**, since **Uluru** is the name given the rock before colonisation. This applies to all place names – it is better to use the first and original name where available.
- Remember that **context** is important. It may be appropriate for an Indigenous person to call another 'blackfella' but not for a non-Indigenous person to use the expression.
- Terms such as **half-caste** or **full-blood** are offensive, representing the language of assimilation and the imposed value systems of colonisers.
- **Words or phrases** from a particular Indigenous group should not be used just because they are Indigenous. If the use of Indigenous language is being considered, contact the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (see resource list), who will refer you to the appropriate Indigenous organisation.
- Finally, it is **inappropriate to correct** an Indigenous person still using the terms he or she grew up with eg 'blackfellas/countrymen', although they are terms that reflect the negative and derogatory ideas for which change is advocated here.

# Indigenous control

There are many ways in which Indigenous people's right to self-determination in the expression of their cultural heritage can be respected in the development of museum projects.

Consultation with those concerned is the appropriate and essential first step in the development of any museum project involving Indigenous communities or individuals. An idea might seem good from an external viewpoint, but consultation will establish the internal cultural perspective and it is this perspective which should determine the course of action.

- ANMM's Indigenous policies are meaningful only if Indigenous people are involved in meaningful ways.
- Indigenous people will where possible participate in making suggestions for the storage, research and display of their cultural and intellectual property.
- The knowledge behind Indigenous material in the collection is as important as the objects.
- ANMM will inform Indigenous people about Indigenous cultural material in the collection.
- ANMM will acknowledge that Indigenous people can have important information as to who has access to Indigenous cultural material and intellectual property held within the museum.



PART 2

## Procedures and Guidelines

## Management of Indigenous cultural material

ANMM is sensitive to Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs in the purchase and display of their material. In accordance with various policy documents and guidelines (see bibliography), advice is sought from relevant communities and specialists in the acquisition and display of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material. The museum does not intend to acquire secret or sacred objects and supports the principle of repatriation wherever relevant.

ANMM acknowledges that collections of objects and stories form part of the cultural traditions of Indigenous communities, and therefore must take into account the views of these communities in matters relating to the collection, care, return or removal of the items and who may access them.

Management of non-accessioned collections of cultural material, such as collection documentation, photographs and archival records are undertaken in accordance with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols for libraries, archives and information services (see resource list).

# Interpretation and display

The four fundamental principles in the management of ANMM's Indigenous collection are **communication, representation, consultation and consent.**

Any expression of Indigenous cultural heritage by ANMM whether in exhibitions, education programs, publications, public relations, marketing or any other project will acknowledge the principles of communication, representation, consultation and consent.

It is important to recognise cultural diversity among Indigenous peoples and that beliefs, customs and art forms may vary from community to community. Likewise, the teaching of the making of traditional art forms requires consultation with authorised Indigenous community representatives, as does the use of Indigenous history and writing.

When engaging in Indigenous projects it is sensible and courteous to comply with the following:

- Introductory protocols are important formalities.
- Self-disclosure is vital to making genuine contact – share where you're from and where you live.
- Indigenous people like to know with whom you're connected – personal networks are often more important than other kinds of status.
- Trust is established through these credentials as well as through the manner in which further transactions are undertaken: whether promises are kept, whether the concerns of the community are considered, whether courtesy follow-ups are made after consent has been given.

- Allow time (more than one meeting) to communicate a proposal.
- Allow time for a decision to be made.
- Remember that decisions will be made on bases other than those you have assumed, and that different types of knowledge operating in Indigenous communities may conflict with the nature and requirements of your proposal.
- Be prepared to take no for an answer – but don't take it personally.
- Respect the views of all factions within a community and ensure that consent comes from the appropriate quarter.
- Be aware of the importance of gender divisions of responsibility and knowledge in many Indigenous communities. In tradition-based communities men and women have different custodial responsibilities in relation to land, Dreamings, and their expression through performance and other art forms.
- Watch for comfort – some Indigenous people find eye contact offensive.
- Avoid yes/no questions and asking 'do you understand?'.  
Paraphrase what has been said and wait.
- In a conflict of opinion, opt for consensus.

[ Full page image ]

## Restricted knowledge

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, some knowledge belongs only to specific members of an Indigenous community. It is important for everyone, particularly those developing projects, to understand and acknowledge that certain knowledges are inaccessible to all except those deemed appropriate by the specific community.

Secret/sacred materials are items of special religious and spiritual significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and are usually associated with men's and women's private ceremonies. Best museum practice requires that special measures be undertaken in accordance with the requirements associated with the religious and ceremonial significance of secret and sacred items. It is also important that the museum recognises cultural diversity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and that the degree to which an object or image is secret or sacred may vary from community to community.

Understanding 'restricted knowledge' is particularly important to ANMM staff members or people representing the museum.

## Copyright, cultural & intellectual property rights

This is a complex and contentious area. The purpose of the summary that follows is simply to acquaint museum staff with some general principles. For more specific and detailed information see the resources listed in the appendixes.

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### **COPYRIGHT**

- **Copyright laws** are the main laws in Australia governing the use, production and dissemination of original artistic works. Copyright protects literature, paintings, sculpture, drawings and engravings, photographs, dramatic and musical works, sound recordings, films, buildings or models of buildings, and craftworks.
- The Indigenous artist has rights to his or her artistic works as the creator or producer, under the Copyright Act 1968. While there are no special laws for the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage under the Copyright Act, they are embedded in the Australian legislation pertaining to copyright.
- Artworks are protected from unauthorised reproduction as soon as they are created.
- Copyright protects works during the lifetime of the artist or photographer, and for 70 years after their deaths. After this time, the work is said to be in the public domain and is no longer protected by copyright.
- Indigenous people's right to protection of their cultural heritage exists in perpetuity. To show respect to Indigenous culture, it may be necessary to seek permission to use Indigenous stories, designs and motifs for example, even though legally they are in the public domain.

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## MORAL RIGHTS

**Moral rights** were introduced into the Copyright Act in 2000, providing ways to challenge derogatory treatment of Indigenous artworks. The new provisions include:

- **The right of attribution**, which gives the artist the right to be identified as the creator of the work if any exclusive rights are exercised. Artists can require their name to be prominently reproduced alongside all reproductions of their work, and can take action against parties falsely attributing others as the creator of their works.
- **The right of integrity** is the right of artists to take action against parties who adapt, edit, alter, manipulate or treat works in a derogatory way to cause harm to the artist's reputation.



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## **CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

The expression 'Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights' refers to Indigenous Australians' rights to their heritage, and applies to the tangible and intangible aspects of the entire body of cultural practices, resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous people.

*Our Culture our Future: report on Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights*, published in 1998, has been an important guide to issues relating to the recognition of the rights of Indigenous Australians with regard to cultural and intellectual property rights. The report made clear the desires and expectations of Indigenous people with regard to their rights to control their heritage in all areas of its use including in museums. It should be noted that, as with copyright, the museum is bound as a matter of law to Australian legislation pertaining to cultural and intellectual property rights and must factor that into all its activities.

**Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights** include the right to:

- own and control Indigenous cultural and intellectual property
- ensure that any means of protecting Indigenous cultural and intellectual property is based on the principle of self-determination
- be recognised as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures
- authorise or refuse to authorise the commercial use of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, according to Indigenous customary law
- maintain the secrecy of Indigenous knowledge and other cultural practices
- full and proper attribution
- control the recording of cultural customs and expressions, and particular languages which may be intrinsic to cultural identity, knowledge, skill, and teaching of the culture.

# Implementation Options

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## **EXTERNAL RELATIONS UNIT**

The head of the external relations unit recognises the important role of the Indigenous curator, who will provide advice in areas where external relations staff are in doubt. The head of external relations will instruct staff, as well as freelance journalists, and all members of the media, that there are sensitivities in many Indigenous areas and any museum material should be approved by the Indigenous curator before it is submitted for publication, and/or it may well be necessary to seek further outside advice.

A similar protocol should be followed by publications staff, front-of-house, volunteer guides and anyone writing or speaking on the museum's behalf at exhibition openings and other events.

FOH and volunteer guides should be advised for example on how to greet Indigenous people, address elders, gender protocols (under what circumstances women should be met by women, men by men) and how and when to conduct a 'welcome to country'.

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## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Indigenous protocol issues impact upon a number of human resources areas. In each of these areas, access and equity concerns need to be addressed, and an effort made to ensure that language is as inclusive as possible, and that cultural sensitivities in these areas are respected:

- duty statements and selection criteria
- advertising of positions
- employment contracts and conditions
- training and development

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## VISITOR SERVICES

- Special attention must be given to training teacher guides and others about sensitivities with regard to exploration and settlement.
- Teacher guides are to be aware of protocols regarding the display or mention of names of the deceased.
- Teacher guides are to ensure that Indigenous explorations are included in all Navigators tours and that the notion of 'discovery' of Australia by Europeans is to be avoided.
- Volunteer teacher guides should be careful not to talk about Indigenous knowledge such as navigation methods as 'primitive'.
- Volunteer teacher guides should remind all visitors that:
  - a. Indigenous culture is integral in all museum-developed exhibitions
  - b. Coastal Indigenous Australians are maritime people
  - c. Indigenous Australians have actively participated in the Australian military since WW1
  - d. Indigenous Australians played an important role in the exploration of Australia and the Pacific
  - e. There is a long history of cultural exchange between Indigenous people in North Australia and Indonesia
- Overseas visitors should be reminded (when appropriate) how attitudes to Indigenous culture have changed.

## Executive Summary

- ANMM will involve Indigenous people in all processes that concern their cultural heritage.
- Proper classification of cultural material is critical. It is important to maintain and display correct information and spelling and to seek advice to ensure this is done.
- ANMM's new Collection Management and Information System (CMIS) will accommodate appropriate cataloguing principles of Indigenous works held in the National Maritime Collection.
- An Indigenous perspective will be sought on all issues surrounding an Indigenous project and documented in the proposal. Projects must acknowledge the owner/s of the cultural material or expression and satisfy the Indigenous community on any concerns about the proposal. These may include aims and outcomes, methodology, how results are interpreted, and the end product – which may be an exhibition, publication or public event.
- The project developers (or program/event managers) must ensure that Indigenous artists and the community are recognised for their involvement and ownership. Project proposals need to specify that intellectual property rights belong to the providers and specify appropriate ownership rights.
- Written agreements, releases and contracts should be obtained, and examples included in the proposal.
- Issues of copyright, royalties and fees need to be discussed from the beginning of the project, including informing the Indigenous community and Indigenous artists of the potential for commercial returns.

- Indigenous people will be encouraged to apply for vacant positions at the ANMM and Indigenous consultants will be engaged through formal training programs to familiarise staff, board members and volunteers with Indigenous culture and Indigenous sensitive issues.
- Expressions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the museum should be pervasive, and not confined to a separate space.
- ANMM should develop then maintain ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is not sufficient to consult or liaise with them only when issues arise.
- Finally, Indigenous Australians are museum users as well as the creators and traditional custodians of cultural material held in museums. It is important that there is access to artworks and other material in public collections by artists, their relatives, or members of their community who may have a cultural link to acquired works, and that they feel their presence is welcomed.
- ANMM shall document its achievements in implementing this protocols document in its annual report.
- An integral complement to the document will be a series of cross-cultural training sessions held throughout the museum.

## Appendixes

# 1

## ANMM COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY JULY 2003

### SECTION 8: COLLECTION FOCUS AREAS

#### FOCUS AREA NO 1: INDIGENEOUS COMMUNITIES

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##### STATUS

Indigenous Communities covers the history and contemporary life of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their maritime culture. Implicit within the policy parameters is an acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems and the intangible and tangible aspects of Indigenous cultural practices and relevant cultural property rights. Since [the museum's] opening, previous collecting has focused on exhibitions including watercraft, maritime technology and artistic reflections of maritime culture. The museum collection, although small and recent in comparison to other institutions, is extremely dynamic. Indigenous access to the collection is encouraged.

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##### CURRENT COLLECTION

###### THEMES

- 1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land/sea rights and sovereignty
  - 2 The maintaining and appreciation of Indigenous cultures
  - 3 The influence of the sea on the people
  - 4 The interplay between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures
  - 5 Ceremonial objects from the coastal communities of Torres Strait and the Tiwi Islands.
- 

##### AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

- 1 The future scope of the collection will be expanded to build on existing themes and collections and to illustrate regional differences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Future collecting will also include gathering documentation on the objects collected and the people who produced or used them. This information is considered of equal importance to the object itself and will be collected as directly as possible from the original source, either from the producers themselves or from advisers in the field.



- 2 Explore the social and material exchanges that have occurred and continue to take place between Indigenous communities such as the transference and modification of language and spiritual concepts across communities.
  - 3 Objects relating to national and international trade.
  - 4 Torres Strait Islands' traditional shipbuilding technologies.
  - 5 Objects that are not of Indigenous origin but have influenced or impacted on Indigenous communities, for example the King George plates, Makassan tools, pearling and fish technologies
  - 6 Non-Indigenous archives, manuscripts and diaries that contain representations of Indigenous cultural practices.
  - 7 Water tenure and management systems on the reefs and islands of Western Australia and the Great Barrier Reef.
  - 8 Current commercial enterprises operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, such as fishing.
  - 9 Pearling in the Torres Strait and Northern Australia.
  - 10 Indigenous relationship with the Australian Navy past, present and future.
  - 11 Maritime and river trade routes including the Torres Strait trade routes to the Pacific.
  - 12 Material produced by women and children.
- 

**PRIORITIES FOR THE  
NEXT THREE YEARS**

- 1 Inland river and coastal communities
- 2 Indigenous concepts of time, navigation, astronomy
- 3 Traditional crafts and textiles from the communities of Cape York, Torres Strait, Western Australia and Tasmania.

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## ISSUES FOR THIS FOCUS AREA

- 1 An important aim of the collection is to show the rich and diverse maritime culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and its relevance to life today.
- 2 The museum will consult the appropriate people before collecting a particular object or group of objects to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders greater say in the collection and management of their material to ensure that it is broadly representative of their culture. The appropriate people could be the local Aboriginal-controlled art centres or keeping places or the Island Coordinating Councils of Torres Strait.
- 3 The museum will not collect secret sacred material or human remains. Consequently, issues of repatriation of this type of material should not arise.
- 4 The museum will subscribe to the principles enunciated by Museums Australia in the document *Previous Possessions New Obligations: Policies for Museums in Australia and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples* (Sydney, 1993). In the past, Australian museums have tended to collect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands material with a strong emphasis on utilitarian objects and items of scientific interest. Objects that were sacred to Indigenous communities and the skeletal remains of people have not always been treated with sensitivity.
- 5 The Australian National Maritime Museum will respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs and express the wishes of Indigenous communities in matters relating to the use of their cultural heritage and protocols.

[ Full page image ]

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INDIGENOUS CURATOR

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### POSITION SUMMARY

This position has primary responsibility for assisting with the development, management and interpretation of the museum's collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander material. The Indigenous Curator and Liaison Officer acts as a facilitator between museum staff, the public and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and provides advice to all museum staff on issues relating to the portrayal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the museum and on issues relating to their cultural heritage.

The position is advertised in accordance with clause 4.2 (6)(b)(i) of the Public Service Commissioner's Directions 1999. It is to be occupied by a person of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

[ Full page image ]

## DISPLAY OF INDIGENOUS MATERIAL IN EXHIBITIONS

Assistance with making exhibitions of Indigenous art or other works accessible to a non-Indigenous audience should be sought from Indigenous artists, curators, educators, consultants or reference groups.

ANMM endorses the principle of Indigenous people being guardians of their cultural heritage and their right to negotiate their role in the management and interpretation of their cultural heritage in the museum.

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## TRADITIONAL AND COMMUNITY OWNED IMAGES

Follow the recommendations in the Australia Council's *Visual Cultures: protocols for producing Indigenous Australian Visual Arts and Crafts*, written by Terri Janke and *Valuing Art, Respecting Culture*, written by Terri Janke and Doreen Mellor for the National Association of the Visual Arts (NAVA).

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## LABELS

There are conventions for label and caption text layouts in exhibition and museum settings. Within these conventions, contextual variations can occur. Information on these conventions are to be found in various publications – see bibliography. Extended captions or labels may contain further details about the Indigenous artist or artwork displayed.

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## LABEL SAMPLE 1

Sample 1, an extended label from the Art Gallery of NSW containing cultural information provided by Papunya

Tula Artists:

Tjunkiya Napaltjarri (Pintupi)  
Subject Umari  
1998 acrylic on canvas  
610 x 310 mm

Papunya Tula Artists

Napaltjarri has depicted the travels of a group of senior women from the rock-hole site of Umari, east of the Kiwirrkura community. In this work the artist has shown the edible seeds known as Wangunu (woolybutt) which are ground and mixed with water to a thick paste and formed into a type of damper which is cooked in the ashes. The women represented by the U shapes later travelled east to Pinari, northwest of Kintore.

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## LABEL SAMPLE 2

Sample 2, from ANMM's exhibition *Saltwater – Yirrkala bark paintings of Sea Country* (2002):

Artist	Rerrkirwana Munungurr
Moiety	Dhuwa
Clan	Djapu
Homeland	Wandawuy
Saltwater country	Latumba
Title	Dhäpuyu Mäna
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Rerrkirwaa is the youngest daughter of Djutjadjutja Munungurr, a senior custodian of Mäna the shark and associated knowledge. This painting has direct connections with the work of her father. The same shark is depicted here, reaching his final resting place at Umbakumba on Groote Eylandt. The Bundhamarr (sacred string) has followed Mäna out from Lutumba on the mainland side of Blue Mud Bay through sacred deep waters shown here in the middle. The black area at the top of the painting depicts the sacred sandbar off the shore of Umbakumba. The surrounding miny'tji (sacred clan design) represents the agitated saltwater of the Dhäpuyu Clan and is caused by Mäna's action in the area. It is here that Mäna rested, leaving behind the sacred spear on the coast to venture further into the fresh waters inland.



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## NAMING AND DEPICTING

### THE DECEASED

There are sometimes restrictions on displaying the work of a recently deceased artist, for example the artist's name or photo may need to be removed from display for a period. The curatorial section is most likely initially to have to deal with this protocol, and they will consult surviving members of the family/language group, or art centre, for guidance. Exhibition labels should state that relatives have given permission for the continued display of the deceased's work, name or photo; or the museum should indicate that the display has photos or objects of the deceased which may be offensive to people of that particular region. An example from ANMM's exhibition *Saltwater – Yirrkala bark paintings of Sea Country* (2002) follows:

#### Acknowledgement

In Yolngu culture people show respect for the dead by not using their names or pictures of them. The Australian National Maritime Museum gratefully acknowledges the families of deceased artists Dula Nurruwuthun, Dju<sup>t</sup>jadju<sup>t</sup>ja Munungurr and Lar<sup>t</sup>ia<sup>n</sup>nga Ganambarr for their permission to display their works and to name them.

## RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### 1 ART CENTRES

#### ELCHO ISLAND ARTS AND CRAFTS

Community-owned art centre on Galiwinku, Wessel Islands, NT  
[www.galiwinku.com](http://www.galiwinku.com)

#### BUKU-LARNGGAY MULKA

Yirkala, East Arnhem Land, NT  
[www.aboriginalart.org/buku](http://www.aboriginalart.org/buku)

#### BULA'BULA ARTS ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Ramingining Arnhem Land, NT  
[Bulabulaarts@bigpond.com.au](mailto:Bulabulaarts@bigpond.com.au)

#### INJALAK ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSOCIATION

Oenpelli, West Arnhem Land, NT  
[www.injalak.com.au](http://www.injalak.com.au)

#### MANINGRIDA ARTS AND CULTURE

[www.bu.aust.com/maningrida](http://www.bu.aust.com/maningrida)

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### 2 COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

Australian Copyright Council  
[www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au)

Arts Law Centre of Australia  
[www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)

CAL - Copyright Agency Limited  
[www.copyright.com.au](http://www.copyright.com.au)

Desart Inc  
[www.desart.com.au/law\\_pages/](http://www.desart.com.au/law_pages/)

Viscopy  
[www.viscopy.com.au](http://www.viscopy.com.au)

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### 3 DIRECTORIES

Australian Network for Art and Technology  
(represents the concerns of art and technology practitioners)  
[www.anat.org.au](http://www.anat.org.au)

Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne  
[www.acmi.net.au](http://www.acmi.net.au)

ATSIC's 2000–2001 *Visual Arts and Craft Resources Directory*  
Available from media office, Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination  
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services 6121 4000

*National Directory of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Organisations*  
(published for ATSIC)  
Available from Crown Content  
Phone 03 9329 9800 or [www.crowncontent.com](http://www.crowncontent.com)

*The Black Book Directory 2000 – Indigenous arts and media directory*,  
published by Blackfella Films  
Available from Publications Sales, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander Studies  
Phone 6261 4200 or [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

Centre for World Indigenous Studies website [www.cwis.org](http://www.cwis.org)

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